

Prehistoric Art of the Lower Fraser Region

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The present paper attempts to delineate the sequent manifestation of prehistoric art in the Lower Fraser valley. Located on the southwestern mainland of British Columbia, the study area extends from a few kilometres above the terminus of the Fraser Canyon at Yale to the mouth of the river. At the time of White contact this part of the Fraser Valley was inhabited by tribes of the Halkomelem-speaking Stalo Indians (Duff 1952), a major division of the Coast Salish (*Fig. 8:1*). Although a study of early art may help to shed light on various problems of local prehistory, this paper will be mainly devoted (a) to analytical descriptions of some of the known regional art forms, and (b) to presenting these as closely as possible in proper chronological sequence.

Part of the basic chronology to be employed is that developed for the Milliken-Esilao locality about four kilometres upriver from the settlement of Yale, B.C. The chronometric data, phase names and other details of this framework are shown in the right column of Figure 8:2 (cf. also Borden 1960, 1961, 1965, 1968b, 1975). Developments at the mouth of the river, though somewhat similar to those in the Canyon, are by no means identical. Investigations by the University of British Columbia (Borden 1950, 1951, 1954, 1968b, 1969b, 1970, 1976) have traced developments in the Delta region back to about 1000 B.C. Thanks to other investigations, especially by S. Gay Calvert-Boehm (Calvert 1970, Boehm 1973) and by R.G. Matson (1976), the prehistory of the Fraser Delta has now a known time depth comparable to that in the Canyon region. Phase names, chronometric and other data pertaining to developments in the Delta region are entered on the left of Figure 8:2. Research in the Fraser valley between the Canyon and the Delta is progressing (e.g. Crowe-Swords 1974, Hansen 1973, Kidd 1968, LeClair

1976), but is as yet not sufficiently advanced to permit the construction of detailed local chronologies.

I have divided the manifestations of artistic expression into five provisional periods on the basis of their association with various radiocarbon-dated components and/or phases. The sequent periods, their respective duration stated in approximate calendric dates, and the culture phases encompassed by each period are presented in Figure 8:3. These are provisional periods and subdivisions, and modifications of this chronological scheme may be expected in future.

It is desirable at this point to note that the term "phase" is used here in the sense defined by Willey and Phillips (1958:22). A useful feature of the concept as defined here is that a phase has both a temporal and a spatial dimension. Moreover it is well to point out that "it is quite possible for more than one archaeological phase to occupy a region at the same time". As will become evident from stylistically distinct but contemporary art forms there appear to be several instances of the simultaneous presence in the Lower Fraser region of different cultures or sub-cultures.

The Early Period

This period encompasses the Milliken and Mazama phases in the Canyon and Component I (i.e. Early Glenrose) at the Glenrose site in the Delta. The upriver and downriver components dating to this time appear to be closely related culturally. The main hints of possible artistic activity during this period are the extensive use of ochre as well as of the requisite grinding tools documented at the Milliken site, and the occurrence at the

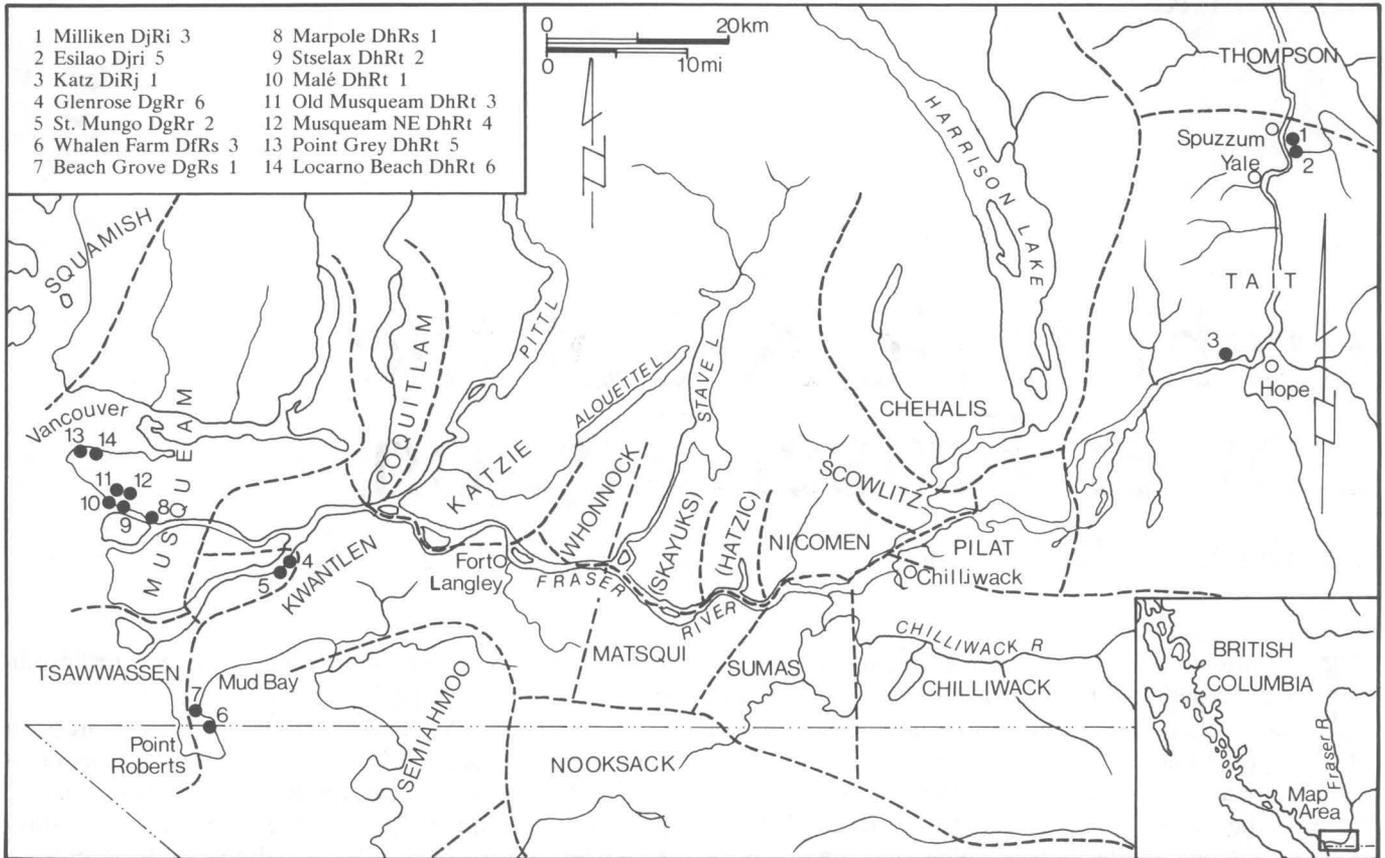


Fig. 8:1. Map of the Lower Fraser region, showing the territory of Stalo Indian and adjoining Coast Salish tribes as well as the location of archaeological sites mentioned in the text. (Based in part on Duff 1952:Map 1).

same site of fragments of abraded and polished steatite. Present also are modified quartz crystals, quartz crystal chips, burins and abraders all of which would have enabled these groups to work not only steatite, but also antler and bone. However, because of soil acidity bone and antler artifacts are not preserved in any of the Canyon phases. No art work has been recovered from the early deposit at Glenrose, even though bone is preserved there.

The Developmental Period

This period is represented in the Lower Fraser region by several components, some of which have been assigned phase names, among which the Eayem phase in the Fraser Canyon and the St. Mungo phase in the Delta are the most important. This period is characterized by increasing technological complexity. The ground slate industry is introduced early in this period (c. 5000 B.P.), bone ornaments are perforated with chipped stone drills, and bone, antler and soft stone are incised and shaped with stone and rodent incisor tools. In this period we find the first definite known manifestations of art, including the first sculptures in the round.

A small fragment of a siltstone plaque with smoothly finished surfaces, one of which is engraved, was recovered from an Eayem phase stratum radiocarbon dated to about 5000 B.P. (Fig. 8:4a). The incised straight lines appear to be deliberately cut to different depths and widths and intersect, seemingly again deliberately, at different angles. Because of the smallness of the fragment, the full extent of the pattern of these various lines is not discernible, but obviously we are not dealing here with simple cross-hatching.

Both components of the St. Mungo phase in the Fraser Delta have produced fragments of ground slate plaques. Calvert reports two specimens incised with a simple feather design from early in this phase, the beginnings of which date to about 4300 years ago at the type site (Calvert 1970:57,70). Of similar age are ground slate fragments incised with lines arranged and combined in various ways from the type site (Fig. 8:4e) and the St. Mungo component at Glenrose (Fig. 8:4b-e). Design elements include drilled pits, notched or scalloped edges and a rudimentary curvilinear design in which a series of lines run more or less parallel to the curving edge of the specimen. The function of these plaques is as yet unknown, nor can we say anything definite regarding the

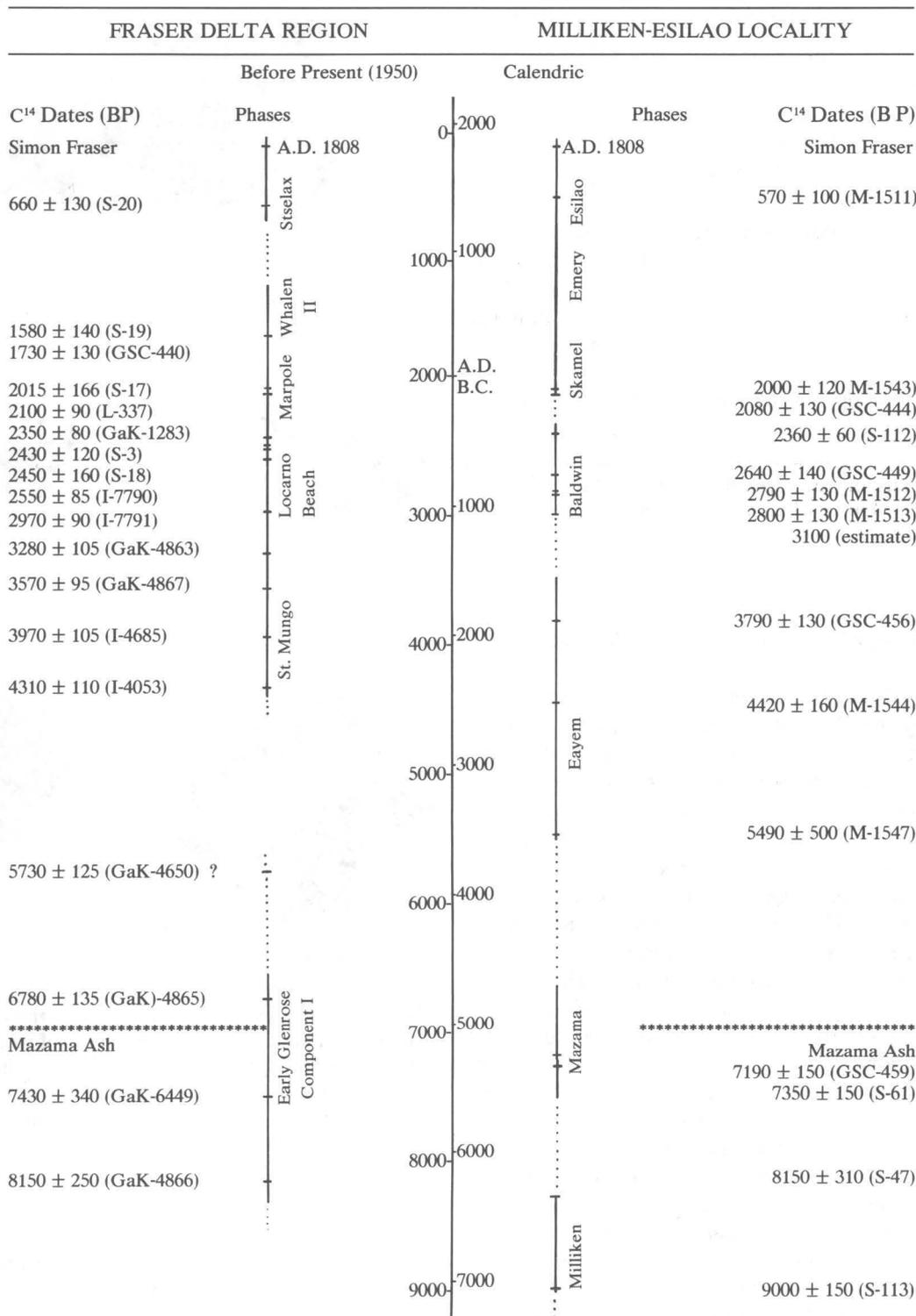


Fig. 8:2. Cultural chronology of the Milliken-Esilao locality and of the Fraser Delta region. Chronometric chart of named phases: their age and duration. Dates in radiocarbon years before the present (B.P., that is A.D. 1950). Based on Borden 1960, 1961, 1965, 1968b, 1969, 1970, 1975, 1976; Calvert-Boehm 1970, 1973; Matson 1976).

Period	Approximate Calendric Dates (Based on C ¹⁴ Estimates)	Culture Phases	
		Fraser Canyon	Fraser Delta
Late	c. A D 1200 - Historic (1808-)	Esilao	Stselax
Post Climax	c. A D 350-1200	Emery	Whalen II
Climax	1100 B C - A D 350	Skamel Baldwin	Marpole Locarno Beach
Developmental	3500 - c. 1100 B C	Eayem	St. Mungo
Early	7000 - c. 4000 B C	Mazama Milliken	Glenrose

Fig. 8:3 Outline of the prehistory of art in the Lower Fraser Region. Main periods and the phases encompassed by each period.

possible meaning of the various design elements found on them.

"Decorations" were also applied to bone and antler objects during the Developmental Period. Although no artifacts of these materials have been preserved in the acid soils of the upriver sites they do occur in the shell strata of coastal components. Several fine examples were recovered from the St. Mungo site. The most interesting is a broad, flat, originally pointed antler object, perhaps a ceremonial knife or dagger, from an early level in the deposit (Fig. 8:5a). The handle is provided with a scalloped margin, each rounded projection having a rather large circular perforation. In addition, a cruciform element has been boldly incised through the middle of the handle. The edges of two fragmentary bone artifacts from the same component at St. Mungo feature notched or serrated edges, and the surface of another is delicately incised with a series of parallel lines (Fig. 8:5b-d).

Among the most intriguing objects of this time are small spindle-shaped, segmented carvings in the round fashioned of bone or easily worked soft stone (Fig. 8:6). Evidently not ornaments, these carefully crafted creations appear like realistic representations of the larvae of flies or similar insects. It is worth noting that until recent times insect larvae, grubs, and worms played an important role in the mythology of various Northwest Coast groups and others along the Pacific rim. They were believed to be endowed with supernatural powers and the ability to grow into huge size or to change into other beings (Barbeau 1951; de Laguna 1934: 116, 204, Plate 52 no. 5; Nelson 1899: Fig. 158, Nordenskiöld 1882:507). The

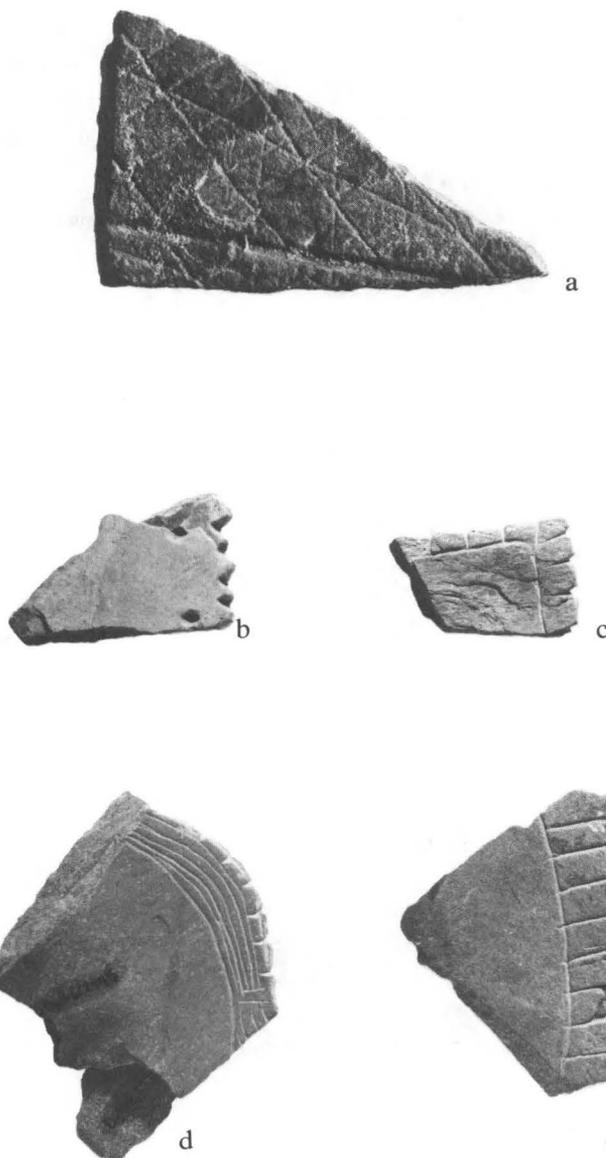


Fig. 8:4. Developmental Period art from the Eayem and St. Mungo Phases. a enlarged fragment of incised siltstone plaque from the Eayem phase at Esilao. b-e incised and notched ground slate plaques of the St. Mungo phase. b-d Glenrose site. a St. Mungo site. Maximum dimension of a: 2.46 cm.

earliest of these little carvings was found at Esilao in deposits of the Eayem Phase and radiocarbon dated to about 5000 B.P. (Fig. 8:6a). They are also found in components of the St. Mungo phase at the mouth of the river (Fig. 8:6c-e). Similar carvings and variations on this theme persist into later periods.

Certainly the most remarkable art object from the Developmental Period is an anthropomorphic sculpture from the St. Mungo component of the Glenrose site (Fig.

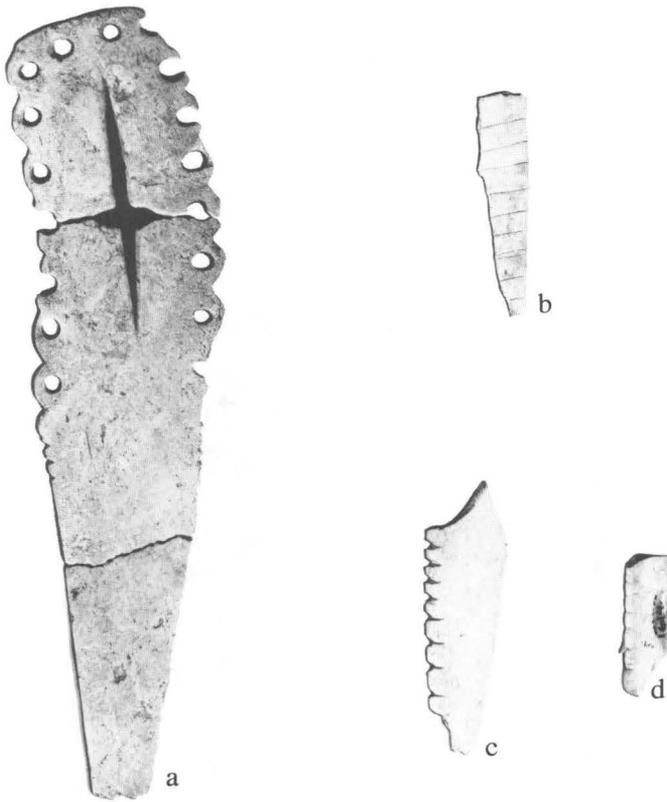


Fig. 8:5. Art of the St. Mungo Phase. Developmental Period. *a* antler "knife" with elaborately embellished handle. *b-d* selection of variously decorated bone artifacts. All from St. Mungo site. Length of *c*: 5.1cm.

8:6f; Matson 1976:183, Fig. 8-30f). Based on the antler tine, the sculpture depicts the head and legless torso of a human figure carefully carved in considerable detail with special emphasis on the face. Deeply gouged almond-shaped eyes slant upward and outward. Eyebrows and nose together form a single unit, which is carved in prominent relief. Broad lips in low relief form an oval, slightly open mouth, and excessively long jaw lines converge to form a sharply pointed chin. The hair is drawn firmly upward over the rounded crown of the head into a flat-topped knot which is tightly constricted at the base. The resulting groove may have served for the attachment of a thong. Demonstrating a long persisting trend in Northwest Coast art is the emphasis on the head which, together with the top knot, accounts for well over half of the entire figure. By contrast, the torso seems to have been of little importance to the artist. The only details shown on it are the tightly flexed arms and flat open hands, both firmly pressed against the chest. Gouged into the distal end of the back of the artifact is an open socket, the dimensions of which suggest that the object was intended as a haft for a beaver-incisor carving tool.

The recovery of this skillfully sculptured human figurine from an early context like the St. Mungo phase comes as a surprise. It is the oldest anthropomorphic sculpture known in the Pacific Northwest to date. The available C^{14} dates on the St. Mungo phase deposits at Glenrose range from 4240 ± 110 (GaK-4648) to 3280 ± 105 B.P. (GaK-4683), that is, from about 2290 to 1300 B.C. In sum, we perceive during the Developmental Period the appearance of certain important technological innovations as well as others of an aesthetic and perhaps cult significance which presage the startling and almost explosive cultural developments of the ensuing centuries.

The Climax Period

The Climax Period encompasses several regionally and temporally separable phases. Virtually coinciding in time are the Baldwin phase in the Canyon and the Locarno Beach phase in the Delta region. Both probably had their inception shortly before 1000 B.C. The earliest C^{14} date on a mainland component of the Locarno Beach phase is 2970 ± 90 B.P. or 1020 B.C. (I-7791). The earliest available dates on the Baldwin phase fall in the ninth century B.C. but since the samples were obtained at some distance above the bottom of the Baldwin phase deposit the phase must have come into operation somewhat earlier. Both the upriver and downriver phases seem to have lasted until well into the later half of the last millennium B.C. The beginnings of the ensuing Marpole phase in the Delta at around 400 B.C. seem to have overlapped with the later stages of the Locarno Beach phase. The same may have been true with respect to the onset of the Skamel phase which in the upriver region follows upon the Baldwin phase at approximately the same time (Fig. 8:2).

Although the archaeological manifestations of the Baldwin and Locarno Beach phase cultures have certain traits in common they also exhibit significant differences (cf. Borden 1968b). This statement also applies to their art forms. Because by contrast with the Locarno Beach phase the Baldwin phase seems to have retained more traits which probably had their inception at an earlier time it seems advisable to discuss it first. Among definitely persisting traits are, for instance, insect-larva-like carvings very similar to those of the proceeding period as well as incised feather-like designs.

New in the Baldwin phase are carvings of vertebrate animals, both real and fantastic in soft stone, such as phyllite, steatite and fine-grained sandstone. Some are simple outline carvings (Fig. 8:7), others are sculptures in the round. Occasionally no details other than the outline are rendered, as, for instance, in a flat, cut-out cookie-like representations of what is probably meant to be a bear (Fig. 8:7a). More often a few additional features, external and/or internal are shown.



Fig. 8:6. The earliest known sculptures in the round. Developmental Period. Eayem and St. Mungo Phases. Segmented insect-larva-like carvings. *a, b* of phyllite from Esilao and Milliken. *c, d* of bone from St. Mungo. *e* of one from Glenrose site. *f* human figurine of antler from Glenrose. Front and side views, and rear view showing open socket for hafting beaver incisor carving tool. Note also perforated ear lobe. Length of *c*: 2.7 cm, of *f*: 10.35 cm.

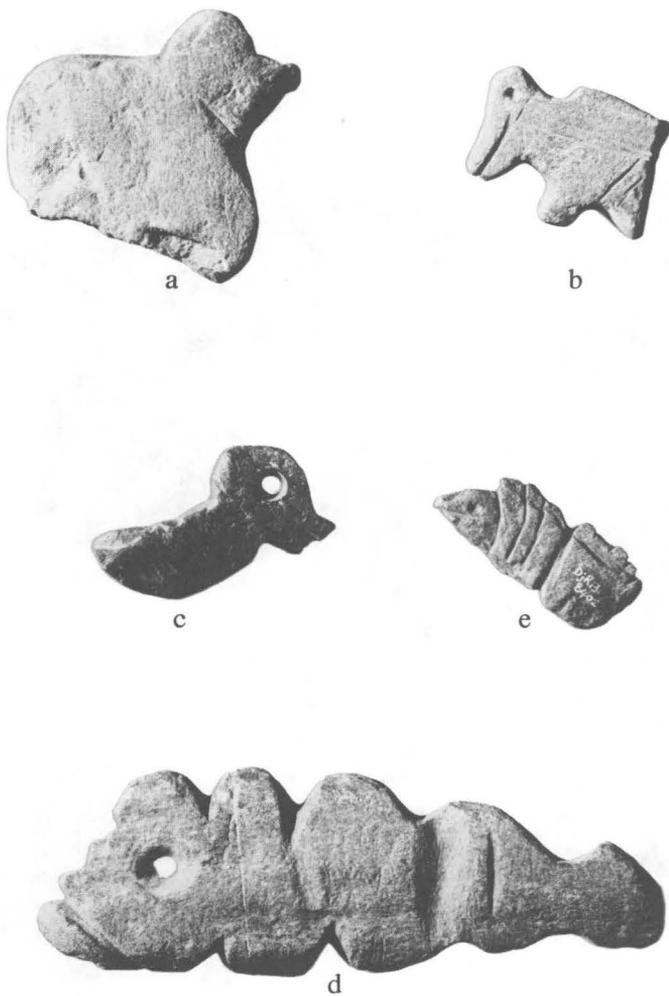


Fig. 8:7. Flat outline carvings in stone of animal figurines. Climax Period. Baldwin Phase. *a* Bear (?). *b* Anterior fragment of an unidentifiable quadruped. Note X-ray representation of ribs and esophagus or spinal column. *c* Pendant showing the head and neck of a bird (?), tip of beak missing. *d* Figurine of some fantastic segmented creature. *e* Another fantastic animal. All specimens from the Milliken site. Length of *d*: 11.43 cm.

The carving illustrated in Figure 8:7b may have been intended to be a realistic representation of some actual four-legged animal although the species is unidentifiable. The rear half of the creature is missing, yet deliberate smoothing of the fractured area indicates that the figure continued to be used even after it was broken. Noteworthy are the peculiarly shaped head, the deeply incised mouth, and the x-ray representation of ribs and what may be the esophagus which extends inward from the mouth toward the stomach (?). The latter may have been present on the missing half. The same features appear on both flat sides of the creature. The figurine thus begins to approach a carving in the round.

A pendant in the form of the neck and head of a bird (?)

lacking the broken tip of its beak (Fig. 8:7c) is like the preceding specimens a flat outline carving, but unlike them it is provided with a large circular perforation which served both for suspension and to indicate the eyes.

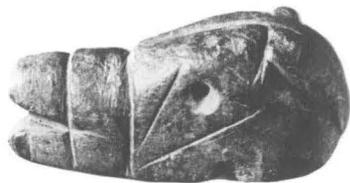
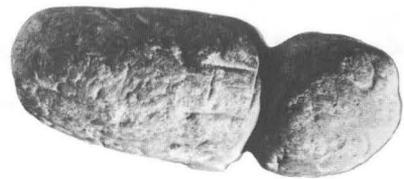
Figure 8:7d shows a peculiar, segmented creature which seems to be a large fantastic elaboration in outline form of the insect-larva-like carvings of the Developmental Period. Unlike these earlier creations, this creature has a head and a tail end. The head is provided with a large bilaterally incised fish-like mouth, and the eyes are represented by a circular perforation which, as in the bird pendant, may have served for suspension. The considerable weight of this specimen argues against its having been used as a pendant. Another fantastic segmented creature is illustrated in Figure 8:7e. The head has a pointed snout and small pit eyes.

Whereas the foregoing animal figurines from the Baldwin phase are all essentially outline forms with more or less flat surfaces true carvings in the round also occur in this phase. An at first glance unprepossessing sculpture in phyllite of a plump mammal (Fig. 8:8a) is of special interest because it anticipates several features which persist in later Northwest Coast art. The large head takes up more than one third of the total length of the creature, and the excessively large eyes, here represented by incised circles, presage the subsequent emphasis on animal and human eyes, a stylistic trait which is so characteristic of later Northwest Coast art. These are not the only features which persist into later times. The spinal column is clearly indicated on the back of the animal by two finely incised parallel lines, divided into a series of squares by transverse incisions. Further, barely visible along the flanks of the much handled sculpture are several incised chevrons indicating ribs. The animal species is uncertain, but the round eyes, large voracious mouth and the short limbs (flippers?), dragging the belly along the ground suggest that the beast is meant to represent a seal. Seals used to range far up the Lower Fraser in pursuit of the annual salmon runs. Found at the very bottom of the Baldwin phase component, this little work of art is at least 3000 years old.

Also of great interest is a steatite sculpture in the round of a bear's head (Fig. 8:8b). Considerable attention has been focused on depicting various features of the animal: the short rounded ears, the eyes, as in the outline carvings represented by drilled pits, and vertical incisions around the mouth, an early attempt to indicate teeth. Small pits at the front of the snout represent the nostrils. However, the most intriguing aspects of the carving are the deeply incised grooves around the elongate snout and over other parts of the head, a strong suggestion that the artist meant to show the animal in a muzzled state. The practice of muzzling was still in vogue among some recent North Pacific groups who raised young bears in connection with bear ceremonialism.



a



b

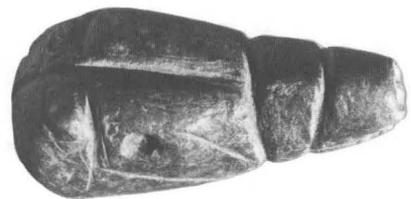


Fig. 8:8. Stone sculptures in the round. *a* Carving in phyllite representing a seal (?). View of right side (photograph by Hilary Stewart). Left side. Note incised chevrons indicating ribs. Top view showing vestige of incised backbone. *b* Side and top view of a muzzled bear's head. Steatite. Both figures from Milliken site. Length of *a*: 5.78 cm, of *b*: 7.52 cm.

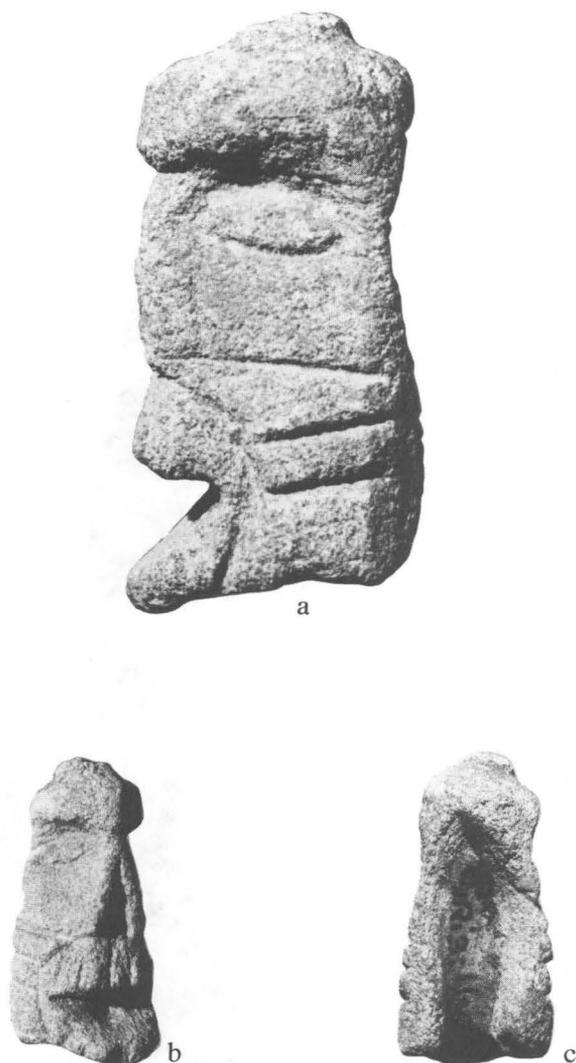


Fig. 8:9. Miniature death mask carved in sandstone. Climax Period. Baldwin Phase. *a* Left side, *b* and *c* front and rear views. Milliken site. Height: 2.49 cm.

Figure 8:9 shows three views of the striking sculpture of what is very likely a miniature human death mask. Noteworthy are the hollow eyes with their raised centres, the large triangular nasal cavity, the exposed teeth indicated by incisions around the front of the upper jaw and along the margin of the drooping mandible. The side view reveals incised lines across the cheek which suggest tattoo marks. Indications are that a small top knot was once affixed to the crown of the head. The fact that the bear and the base of the carving are hollowed out further supports the suggestion that we are dealing here with the miniature representation of a mask.

These sculptures of the Baldwin phase artists reflect a growing interest in depicting the natural and imaginary creatures that dominated the thoughts and anxieties of their society. Bear ceremonialism is clearly indicated. Suggested also is a ritual preoccupation with death

although the nature and significance of this cult must remain unknown. Despite certain incipient stylistic traits that become important in later Northwest Coast art, such as the x-ray representation of internal organs and skeletal structures, the occasional emphasis on the eyes and the head at the expense of other parts of the body, on the whole, Baldwin phase art seems still considerably removed from what one would readily recognize as Northwest Coast art. It seems highly likely that Baldwin phase groups also used other materials such as bone, antler and wood for their artistic creations. Since none of these materials have survived in the acid soil it is fortunate indeed that these people also turned to various stones as media for their artistic endeavours as well as for their numerous and varied personal ornaments.

We shall now move downriver and examine some of the artistic expressions of Locarno Beach phase groups. Except for one or two simply incised siltstone concretions, all their known art is in organic materials.

During investigations at Musqueam Northwest (DhRt 4, Fig. 8:1, No. 12) excavators came upon a cache of four wapiti antler tine spoons, each spoon provided with a decorated proximal end. According to stratigraphic evidence and chronometric data, this cache dates between 600 and 700 B.C. (Borden and Archer 1975). The best preserved of the spoons features at the proximal end a complicated set of subrectangular perforations of enigmatic significance (Fig. 8:10*a*). Unfortunately, the second spoon is quite fragmented. Carved in low relief on its proximal end is the head of an unidentifiable animal. The proximal end of the third spoon, illustrated in Figure 8:10*b*, bears a magnificent anthropomorphic carving showing a man wearing a ceremonial fur (?) cape and headdress tipped with two short, pointed animal ears, the inside surface of each ear bearing an "inverted U" symbol, a design element which recurs frequently in recent Northwest Coast art. The raised lenticular eyes of the figure are set in large circular, deeply carved hollows. This type of eye configuration is somewhat reminiscent of the eyes on the miniature death mask of the Baldwin phase. The cheeks and nose, including the alae, are well modelled. Unfortunately, the front of the face, particularly the mouth region, has been so badly marred by a small rodent that details are no longer clearly discernible.

The sculpture of an animal head on another spoon is truly a masterpiece and can be readily recognized as being in the best Northwest Coast tradition (Fig. 8:10*c*). The conformation of the head, the absence of teeth characteristic of carnivores as well as the long ears suggest that the animal represented is probably a deer, perhaps a doe. The exaggeratedly large almond-shaped eyes and again the "inverted-U" symbol on the inner surface of the ears combine to impart to this sculpture in the round an air of early Northwest Coast art.

On contemplating these 2600 year old spoons, skilfully



Fig. 8:10. Carved antler tine spoons from Musqueam Northeast. Climax Period. Locarno Beach Phase. *a* Spoon with a set of oblong perforations. *b* Proximal end of a spoon showing a man wearing a cape and headdress tipped with two short animal ears. *c* Spoon whose proximal end features the head of a mammal with long ears. Note the “inverted-U” symbol on the ears of *b* and *c*. Length of *b*: 7.0 cm.

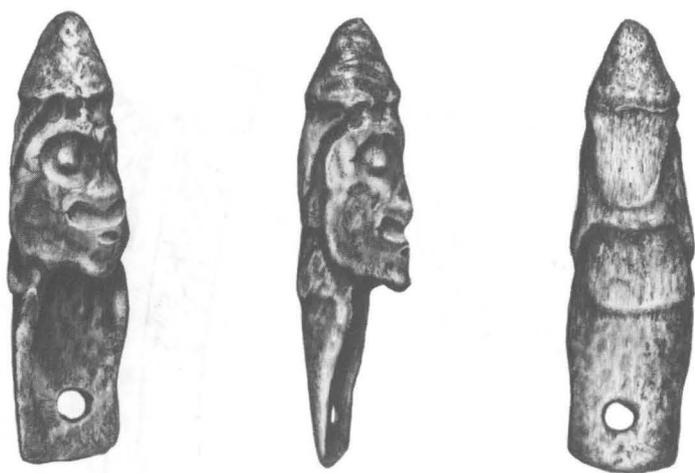


Fig. 8:11. Three views of an anthropomorphic atlatl hook. Climax Period. Locarno beach Phase. Note cone-shaped basketry (?) hat, depression for insertion of medial labret, and hair-do. The protruding chin of the figure served as the hook of the atlatl. Material: tip of a wapiti antler tine. Locarno Beach site. Illustrations by Mrs. Nan Cheney. Length: 7.5 cm.

fashioned and sculptured of wapiti-antler tines, it is difficult to escape the conclusions that they are somehow conceptually ancestral to analogous recent manifestations on the northern Northwest Coast: the mountain goat horns spoons whose handles feature the stylized carvings of crest animals and other mythological figures. Somewhere in the archaeological deposits of the intervening coast may still lie hidden the intermediary manifestations that bridge the long temporal gap between the 7th century B.C. and the 19th century of the Christian era. Unfortunately, whereas antler is usually well preserved in the coastal shell deposits the horn of the mountain goat rapidly decays without a trace. Thus, this hoped-for intervening evidence may forever elude discovery.

Locarno Beach (DhRt 6, Fig. 8:1, No. 14), the type site of the Locarno Beach phase, has yielded several fine examples of early Climax-Period art, dating to around 500 B.C. (Borden 1970:96-100). Among the specimens from this site is an anthropomorphic atlatl hook (Fig. 8:11). Based on an antler tine tip, the artifact shows a human figure wearing a cone-shaped basketry (?) hat and in the lower lip a medial labret. Similar to other human carvings from the early Climax Period discussed above, this figure has large circular hollow eyes with a raised centre. When the artifact is attached to the distal end of the atlatl shaft, the prominent chin of the figure served as the hook which engaged the pit at the proximal end of the spear or harpoon shaft. Other artifacts and faunal remains indicate that these groups engaged in sea-mammal hunting.

A small effigy of a human skull from the Locarno Beach site is fashioned from the split distal end of deer metapodial bone (Fig. 8:12a). Salient features of the specimen



Fig. 8:12. Art of the Locarno Beach Phase. Climax Period. a Human skull effigy sculptured from the split distal end of a deer metapodial bone. b, c. Bone knives decoratively carved with a distinctive whale-tail motif. Locarno beach site. Length of 12 c: 15.61 cm.

are the deeply drilled eye sockets of even bore, the nasal cavity, the prominent row of teeth and the ingenious utilization of the natural contours of the bone. Like the miniature stone death mask of the Baldwin phase, this skull effigy may hint at ceremonials associated with the widespread belief in the coastal area that the dead had power over animals of the food quest and in this case especially over marine game (Drucker 1955b:73). On the other hand, it should be noted that the human skull effigy closely resembles the carved skulls attached to the ceremonial costume of the cannibalistic hamatsa and ghost dancers of recent Kwakiutl groups (Hawthorn 1967:129-132). The possibility of a relationship of this ancient skull effigy with similar ceremonials at an early time cannot be ruled out. Provision for attachment of the effigy to another object is made through a transverse perforation of even bore from one side of the skull to the other.

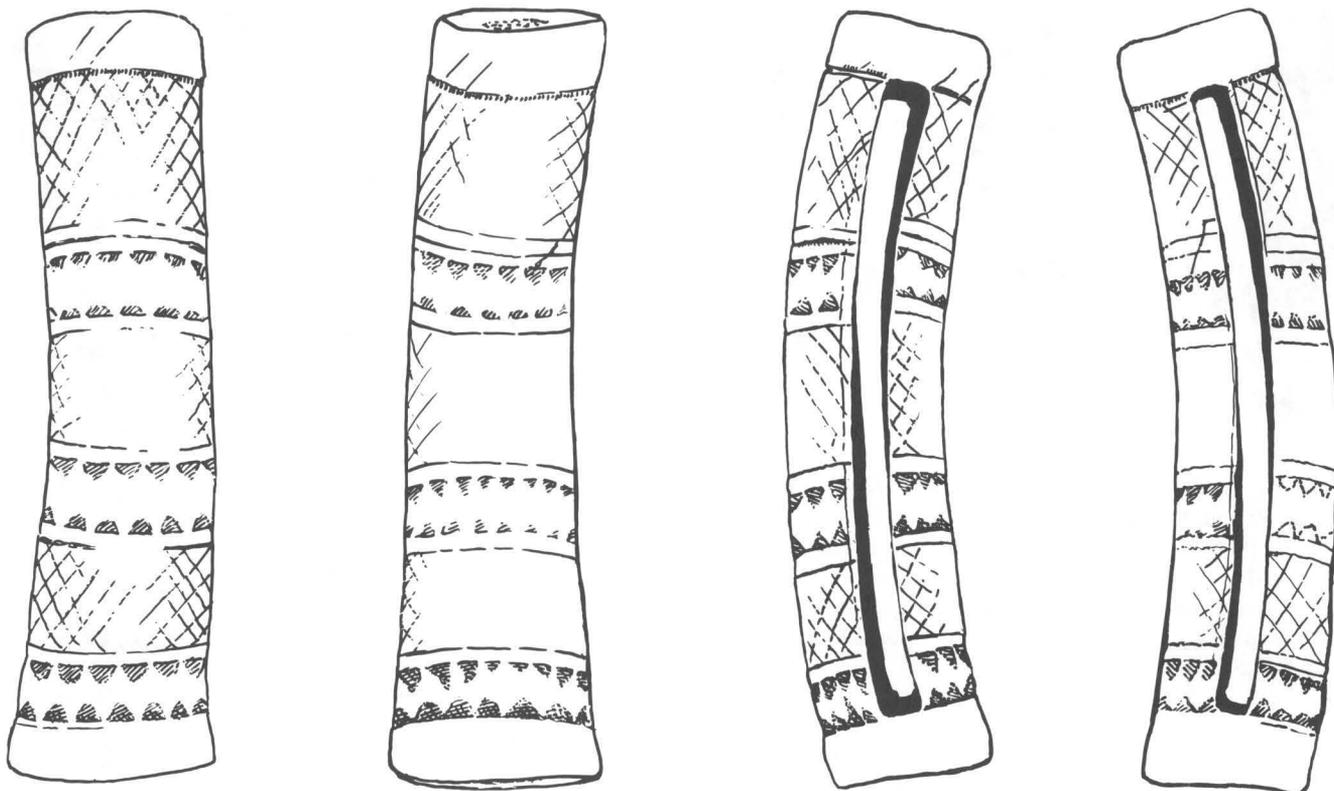


Fig. 8:13. Four views of a slotted antler cylinder decorated with geometric motifs, both incised and in low relief. Climax Period. Locarno Beach Phase. Locarno Beach site. Drawings by Mrs. Nan Cheney. Length: 9:9 cm.

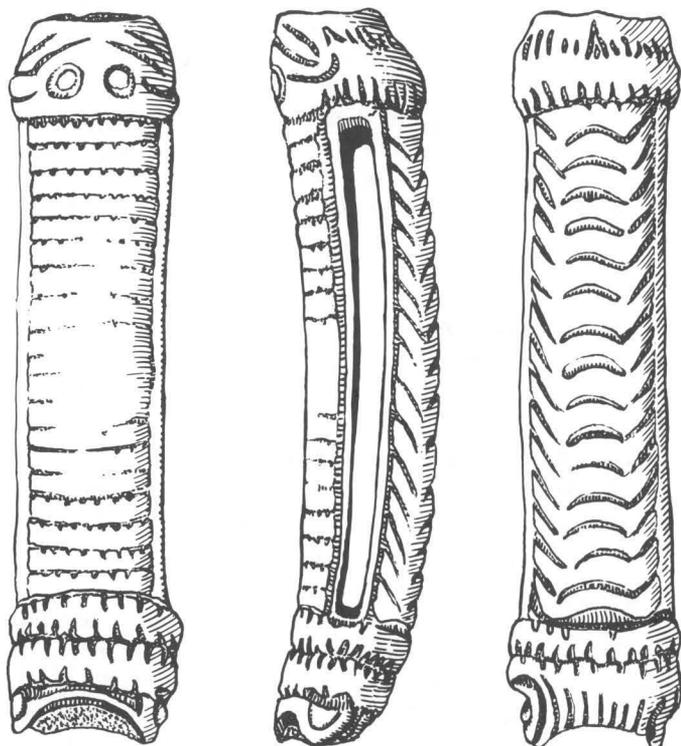


Fig. 8:14. Three views of a slotted antler cylinder combining zoomorphic with geometric decoration. Climax Period. Locarno Beach Phase. Locarno Beach site. Drawings by Mrs. Nan Cheney. Length of specimen: 9:55 cm.

Fitting once more into the context of sea-mammal hunting are two bone knives (Fig. 8:12b,c), each decorated with a distinctive whale-tail motif, set off from the handle and blade by three transverse lines. The same motif, characterized by the inward turning of the tips of the flukes recurs on the tail of a sea monster carved on a yew-wood atlatl that was dredged from the Skagit River. Persuasive indirect evidence suggests that this artifact with its magnificent wooden sculpture dates to the time of the Locarno Beach phase (Borden 1969a:13-19).

Found so far only in components of the Locarno Beach phase are slotted antler cylinders. Three of the four available to date are elaborately decorated. Of significance no doubt regarding their use and function is the heavy wear on these artifacts which on the specimen illustrated in Figure 8:13 has nearly obliterated the purely geometric decoration in the medial portion of the design. Distinguishable are rectangular fields filled with finely incised cross-hatching. The fields are bordered by transverse lines and broad zigzag motif in low relief. This combination of motifs is repeated three times on both faces.

Another slotted antler cylinder is of special interest in that it combines zoomorphic with geometric decoration (Fig. 8:14). Clearly carved in low relief at one end is the head of an animal with closely set circular eyes. On the bottom side of the legless animal is a series of segments which unquestionably are meant to depict the relatively

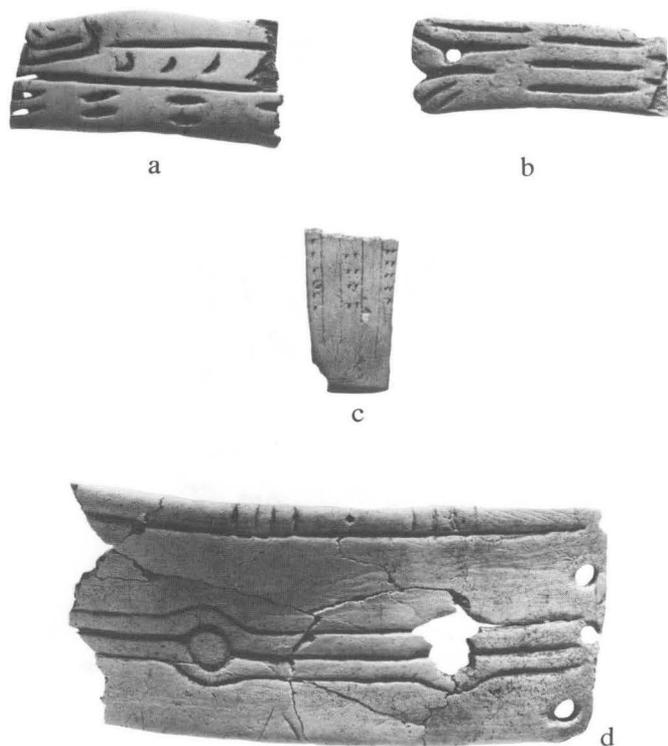


Fig. 8:15. Fragments of browbands *a*, *b* and other wapiti antler artifacts, decorated with incised geometric designs. Climax Period. Marpole Phase. Marpole site. Length of *a*: 5.57 cm.

large ventral scales of a serpent. The geometric decoration on the dorsal side consists of a series of spurred transverse lines which in an abstract way represent the small scales on the back of the snake.

Clearly, some of the art forms of the Locarno Beach phase reflect in significant ways the general spirit, concepts, and style of later Northwest Coast art. The recent recovery of basketry and wooden artifacts from water-saturated Locarno Beach phase deposits raises the hope that we may eventually find impressive works of art in wood dating to this phase (Borden 1976; Borden and Archer 1975). On the other hand, we may also note certain important limitations in the creative efforts of Locarno Beach phase groups. Thus, whereas wood requires certain special conditions for its preservation, stone does not. It is noteworthy, therefore that groups of this phase, by contrast with their upriver contemporaries of the Baldwin phase, failed to apply their skill and imagination to the creation of works of art in stone, unless one includes here certain of the enigmatic small artifacts of the so-called "Gulf of Georgia complex" (Duff 1956a), isolated examples of which have been found in Locarno Beach phase components of the Fraser Delta. But all of these are either ornaments or devices of unknown function and none are zoomorphic or anthropomorphic. Moreover, although these people were familiar with the techniques of pecking-and-grinding stone they used these techniques very rarely. Only few stone mortars or bowls and girdled

sinkers of igneous rocks have been found in their deposits and none of these artifacts are sculptured or geometrically decorated. Still absent also are pestle-shaped hand mauls of tough stone which had to be fashioned by a long and painstaking pecking, grinding and polishing process. The lack of this extremely effective tool for pounding chisels and wedges probably placed significant limitations on the nature and the scale of what artisans of the Locarno Beach phase could produce in wood. It is among other things such limitations which set off these earlier groups from those of the ensuing Marpole phase whose artistic creations reflect their delight in the creative manipulation of a wide range of raw materials.

The Marpole Phase (2350 - 1600±B.P.; 400 B.C. - 300±) represents the apogee of the Climax Period and thus of all local art history. Marpole phase peoples perfected techniques of fashioning artifacts out of a wide range of local and imported raw materials, including igneous and volcanic rocks that had been generally shunned by earlier groups along the Lower Fraser. A favorite raw material for a great variety of manufactures was the antler of wapiti (*Cervus canadensis*), the largest deer on the southern Northwest Coast. As we noted previously, some artwork in wapiti antler had been created earlier by Locarno Beach phase groups and even by craftsmen of the St. Mungo phase; but the artists of the Marpole phase exploited the possibilities of this medium with greater skill and imagination than any one had done before. Especially useful to them was the thick hard cortex of the huge antler beam of the wapiti. When separated from the soft cancellous core the cortex provided an excellent medium not only for common artifacts of every day use, but also for artistic creations. Manifest in many of their manufactures is a fine sense of form, a pride in craftsmanship, and an obvious delight in representing the creatures of their environment and the supernatural beings of their myths. Mention should also be made of the importance Marpole phase groups placed on personal ornaments, including labrets, nose ornaments and a great variety of pendants and beads. Some caches contained tens of thousands of disc beads.

Fairly common among artifacts of the Marpole phase are browbands of wapiti antler to hold the hair in place. Since many of these artifacts were worked down to a thickness of only a few millimetres, nearly all of the recovered specimens are fragmentary. A single complete browband for a child's head was found in the Marpole phase component of the St. Mungo site (Calvert 1970:61). Many browbands and other antler artifacts are decorated with incised geometric designs (Fig. 8:15), but zoomorphic designs also occur. Figure 8:16a illustrates a fragmentary browband incised with a series of leaping spotted toads, probably the common northwestern toad (*Bufo boreas*). Noteworthy is the extraordinary economy of line employed in the simple yet lively representation of these amphibians.

The head of a sinister-looking animal, perhaps a super-



Fig. 8:16. Incised and sculptured animals on antler artifacts. Climax Period. Marpole Phase. *a* Browband fragment incised with a series of spotted toads. *b* Head of a horned serpent (?) carved on the proximal end of a broken artifact. *c* Sea monster bifacially engraved on the basal portion of a barbed harpoon head. *a, c* Marpole site. *b* Old Musqueam (DhRt3). Length of *a*: 6.75 cm, of *b*: 4.80 cm, of *c*: 11.57 cm.

natural serpent (?) is carved in low relief at the end of a broken antler artifact (*Fig. 8:16b*). Pointed appendage-like extensions rise upward and outward from the closely-set, sharply slanting oval eyes. It is these eyes that completely dominate this creation. Their fixed piercing gaze is bound to hold the attention of any onlooker.

Figure 8:16c illustrates the basal portion of a broken barbed harpoon head, which is bifacially engraved with the head of some mythical animal, probably a sea monster. The back of the head is bordered by a fringe of radiating appendages, while the first or proximal barb of the harpoon may have been conceived as a horn-like appendage rising from the creature's nose. The relatively small oval eyes have small dot-like centres.

Birds of various species were favourite subjects of Marpole phase artisans. Like most of their representations of animals, all of the birds illustrated in Figure 8:17 and 18 are conceived as parts of utilitarian artifacts. Interest-

ingly, it is especially in these representations of birds that we note the first appearance of open-work, that is, sizable portions of the carvings are not merely outlined, but excised completely.

Figures 8:17a and b are basically outline carvings representing the heads of two species of raptorial birds, perhaps of owl and eagle. These two creations are reminiscent of similar outline carvings in stone of the Baldwin phase in the Fraser Canyon, particularly the Baldwin phase pendant representing the head and neck of a bird (*Fig. 8:17c*). Even the double function of the large perforation on Figure 8:17a which, in addition to representing the eye of the bird probably also served for the passage of a cord, recalls the eye perforation on the Baldwin phase bird pendant which likewise doubled as a means for suspending the ornament. The two bird heads of the Marpole phase have in addition the maxilla and mandible of the beak separated by an excised slot. The function of

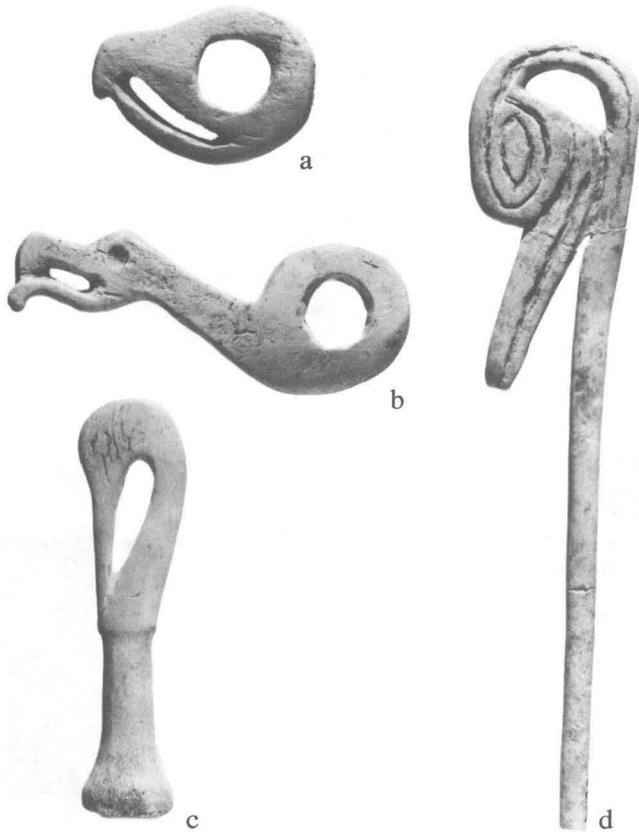


Fig. 8:17. Bird forms incised and sculptured in antler. Climax Period. Marpole Phase. *a, b* Buckles or cord adjusters in the form of two species of raptorial birds (owl and eagle?). *c* Miniature pestle featuring the sculptured head and neck of a water bird preening its breast feathers. *d* Long-shafted pin with the head of a long-beaked bird on the proximal end. *a, b* Beach Grove site. *c, d* Marpole. Length of *d*: 13.0 cm.

these two Marpole phase pieces is not clear; they may have served as buckles or cord adjusters.

The miniature pestle shown in Figure 8:17c is one of the most exquisite creations of the Marpole phase. The proximal end of the artifact features the gracefully curving neck and head of a water bird. The tip of the downward pointing beak is shown preening the bird's breast feathers. Unfortunately, the almond-shaped eyes of the much-used artifact are so worn as to be barely visible. An elongate portion between the head and the neck of the bird has been cut out. This open work combined with the well rounded neck and head, considerably enhances the aesthetic appeal of this creation. At the same time the perforation served for the attachment of a cord so that the artifact could be worn as a pendant.

Another example of a zoomorphic artifact utilizing a bird motif is a large antler pin, the proximal end of which has been carved in the shape of a bird's head (Fig. 8:17d).

Judging from the long beak, the carving probably represents another water bird, but because of the semi-abstract execution of the piece the species is indeterminable. The design is simple but nonetheless very effective. The ascending shaft of the pin passes without a break into the bird's neck which then proceeds to curve in what is virtually a semicircle until it reaches the head. The outside perimeter of the neckline then continues downward to outline the top and front of the head as well as the long, downward pointing, tapering beak. A centre line, incised in the neck, follows the latter's curve until it reaches the head from where it continues to form the outer outline of a large lenticular eye. In doing so it effectively frames the lenticular iris. Basically, the creation is a flat outline carving with incised details, the same details appearing on both sides of the artifact. A distinctive aspect is imparted to the piece through the careful excision of antler between the straight rear of the bird's head and the curving upper part of the neck, thus creating a semilunar aperture. This open work interrupts the otherwise continuous flat surface thereby greatly enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the design. At the same time the aperture provides a means by which the pin could be suspended, the other end of the cord being perhaps attached to a robe worn around the shoulders. In sum, this zoomorphic artifact is another masterpiece of early Northwest Coast art which clearly anticipates "classic art" of later times.

Perhaps the finest example of Marpole phase antler sculpture is a partly realistic though nevertheless stylized rendering in the round of the complete figure of a great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*), standing on the bulbous form of a miniature pestle (Fig. 8:18). The sculpture is carried out in remarkable detail. The toes of the feet are outlined in low relief, and the individually carved legs are separated by an open space between them. The legs support a well proportioned rounded body which is thicker than any other part of the animal. A short tail protrudes from the folded wings each of which exhibits long individually incised feathers. The long rather sturdy neck supports in classic Northwest Coast style an exaggeratedly large head and beak. The over-sized eyes occupy the greater part of each side of the head, indeed, they are the most dominant aspect of the entire sculpture. In form they represent one of the classic Northwest Coast eye styles: a large ovate, set in an elongate, bi-pointed, raised outline. The pointed proximal extension of the eye points almost straight downward, thus forming in effect an "angled eye." Crowning the head is the majestically raised crest of the male heron. Behind the head and below the rear of the crest is a small eyelet, indicating that this artifact was to be worn like the preceding miniature bird pestle, as a pendant. Perhaps they were used to mix small amounts of pigment for painting face and body.



Fig. 8:18. Miniature pestle carved in antler, the handle featuring the sculptured full figure of a great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*). Climax Period. Marpole Phase. Marpole site. Height: 11.2 cm.



Fig. 8:19. Anthropomorphic sculptures in antler. Climax Period. Marpole Phase. *a* Pendant in the form of a human head with a mask-like face. *b* Miniature pestle topped by a human head with huge orbits dominating the face. *c* Human figure with a miniaturized body and a large head. *a, c* Marpole. *b* Old Musqueam. Length of *b*: 5.52 cm.

Anthropomorphic sculpture in antler is relatively rare in the Marpole phase, and individual examples vary greatly in style. A small pendant in the form of a human head is carved with a mask-like face (*Fig. 8:19a*). An eyelet on top of the sculpture crumbled during excavation. Basically prismatic in shape, the head has three flat planes, one of which forms the rear of the head, while the stylized features of the face are carved and incised on the two converging anterior planes. The brow arches are boldly incised over the large almond-shaped eyes. The nose is slightly arched, and a long line curves from the well-formed alae down each cheek and past the protruding mouth to the chin. Perhaps this little carving with its distinct Northwest Coast cast is a small replica of a mask representing some mythological character.

There can be no doubt about the mythological nature of the next specimen, which is another example of a miniature pestle (*Fig. 8:19b*). The apex of the cone-shaped shaft of the implement is topped by a human head with a flat face whose most prominent feature is two enormous round eyes or rather orbits. Other facial

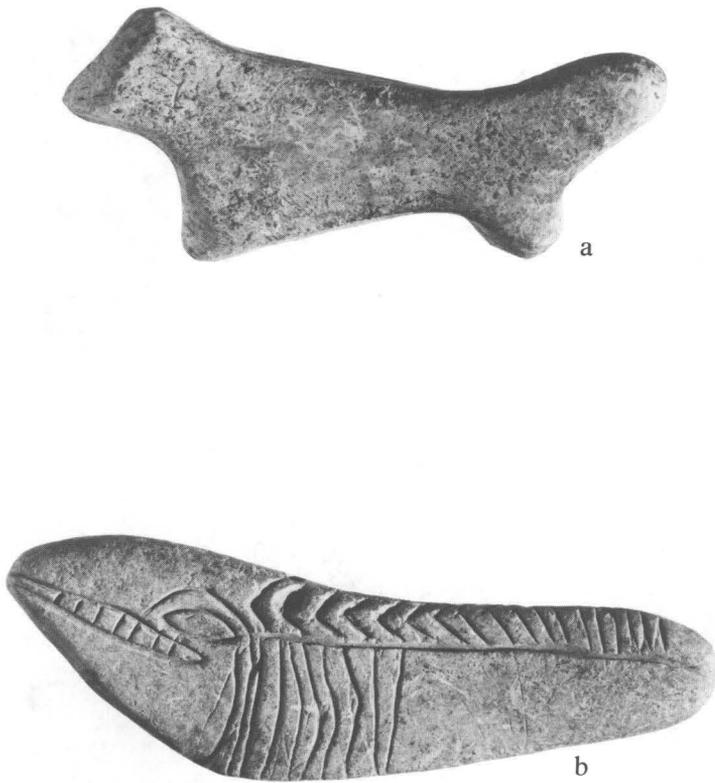


Fig. 8:20. Animal figurines in stone. Climax Period. Marpole Phase. *a* Siltstone concretion slightly modified to resemble a fox. *b* Siltstone concretion engraved to represent a fish, probably a salmon. *a* Beach Grove. *b* Marpole. Length of *b*: 11.3 cm.

features are only perfunctorily indicated. Still visible in the hollows of the orbit is a greenish tinge, the vestige of a greenish substance which most likely was cupric oxide. Since we know from other evidence that native copper was used for ornamental purposes during the Marpole phase (Borden 1970: 96, Fig. 29; p. 102, Fig. 31o). It seems reasonable to infer that the orbits were originally inlaid with two shiny circular sheets of native copper. An eyelet on top of this remarkable composite sculpture indicates that, like the other miniature pestles described above, this piece was meant to be worn like a pendant.

The small figurine shown in Figure 8:19c is executed unifacially in low relief on a thin curving piece of antler. In this specimen some of the major stylistic traits of Northwest Coast art are carried to an extreme: a huge head with large bulging eyes and a prominent forehead and nose surmounts a body and limbs so reduced in size that it is difficult to distinguish individual parts. The figure lacks a neck and all that remains of the body is the rib cage to which vestigial arms and legs are attached to the sides and lower corners respectively. Perforation on the

margins of the head indicate that the figure was part of a composite object. Interestingly, this caricature of the human figure bears a marked resemblance to a figurine on a "soul catcher" used by a northern Kwakiutl shaman during the nineteenth century (Inverarity 1950: No. 163).

Artists of the Marpole phase also worked in stone. They often used relatively soft kinds of rock such as local siltstone and sandstone as well as steatite imported from upriver. However, they did not shrink from also utilizing less easily tractable local rocks like vesicular lava, andesite and even granite.

The peculiar natural shapes of siltstone concretions occasionally stimulated the imagination of artists to modify them slightly or sometimes more extensively into animal forms. The specimen illustrated in Figure 8:20a is based on a siltstone concretion which has been altered only slightly through abrading to create an animal form whose pointed head, short legs and long bushy tail suggest the figure of a fox. No attempt has been made to indicate other details such as eyes and mouth. It is essentially an outline carving not much different in character from those of the Baldwin phase.

Some concretions were modified more extensively into fish effigies, as shown, for instance, in Figure 8:20b. The overall outline of the flat stone has been left unchanged, but external and internal details of the head and body have been elaborately engraved on both sides of the stone in a conventionalized naturalized style which anticipates that of later Northwest Coast art. Boldly incised on the oversized head, which occupies more than one third of the effigy's length, are large lenticular eyes, each superimposed by a prominent, arching browline. The wide tooth-filled mouth extends from the blunt anterior of the head downward to a point beneath the eyes. A strong straight line runs from the proximal corner of the eyes across the length of the body to the tail. Closely spaced rib-bones extend downward from the front portion of this line, while the backbone is indicated by bilateral rows of overlapping chevrons. The effigy, most likely that of a salmon, was intended for suspension by means of perforations through the back near the centre of gravity. The care devoted to the creation of this effigy suggests it was meant for use in some ritual.

Marpole phase components have yielded numerous stone bowls fashioned of vesicular lava, andesite, and other igneous rocks. Sandstone was used relatively rarely; some were made of steatite. Many are plain, like the few stone bowls fashioned of vesicular lava, andesite and derable number of Marpole phase vessels are zoomorphically or anthropomorphically carved.

A zoomorphic stone bowl from the Marpole phase component of the Point Grey site (DhRt 5, Fig. 8:1, No. 13) is based on an ovate boulder of vesicular lava (Fig. 8:21). The face of an animal is pecked petroglyph fashion on the narrower end of the stone. Faint grooves on the

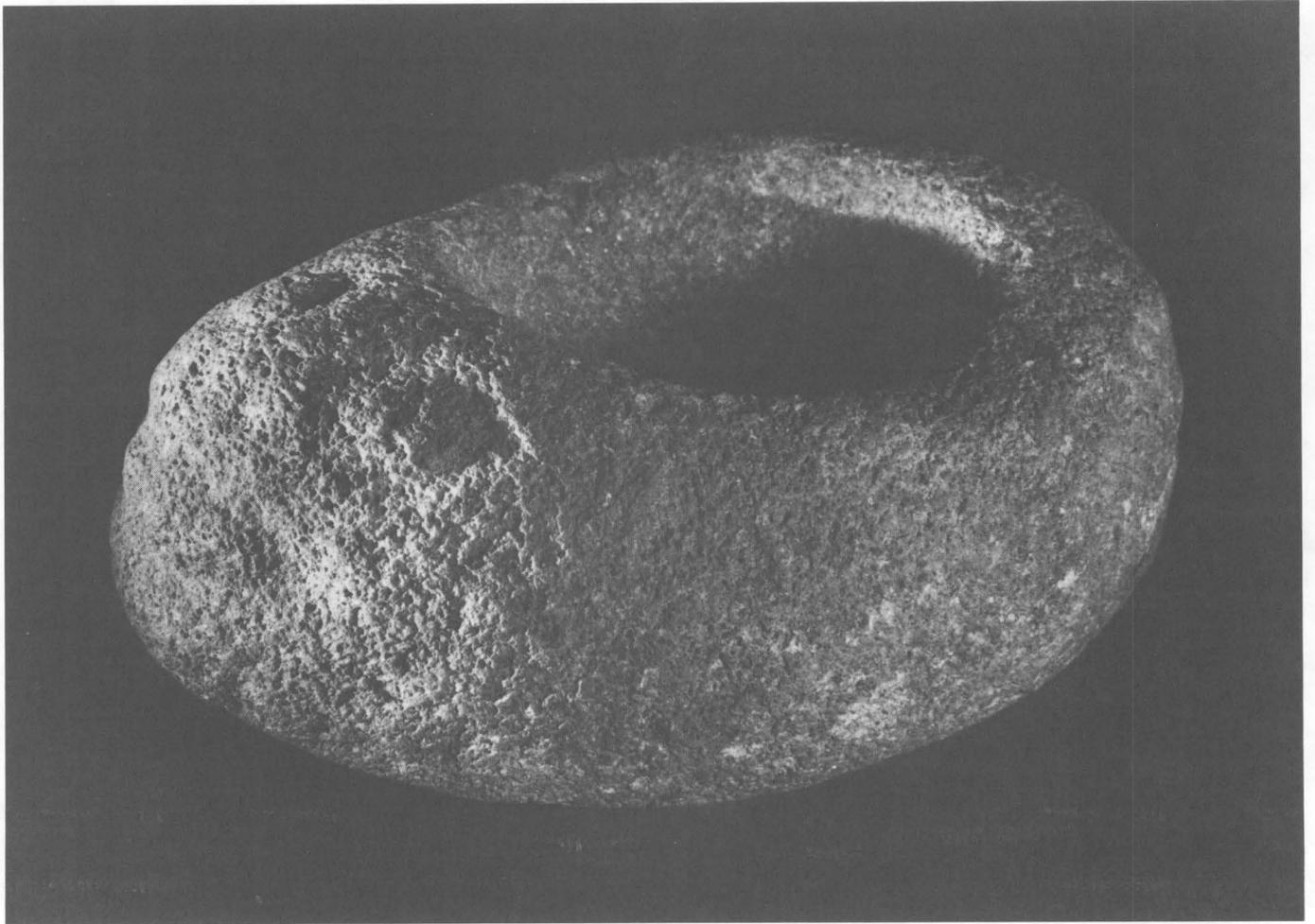


Fig. 8:21. Zoomorphic stone bowl of vesicular lava, probably representing a seal. Climax Period. Marpole Phase. Point Grey site. Overall length: 19.62 cm.

sides behind the head as well as on the posterior suggest the front and rear limbs of the animal, perhaps the flippers of a seal. As in many recent stone and wooden bowls of the more northern Northwest Coast the entire artifact is conceived as representing the animal. Similar zoomorphic vessels as the one described are fairly common in the Marpole phase. Another good example is illustrated by H.I. Smith (1903, Fig. 54a).

Space limitations make it impossible to describe all zoomorphic vessels from the Marpole phase in detail, hence a brief summary must suffice. Other examples of such vessels known to be from or attributable to the Marpole phase include a heavy sandstone bowl in the shape of a mammal whose cloven feet suggest some ungulate, perhaps a mountain goat. The specimen was found in situ at the Beach Grove site (DgRs 1: U.B.C. Museum of Anthropology); a "paint mortar" of hard igneous rock, probably from Marpole, depicting a diving porpoise (Provincial Museum No. 618; Duff 1956a:63, No. 22, 1975 No. 16; H.I. Smith 1903, Fig. 54b); a bird bowl from the Marpole site showing an inverted bird

with a bowl on the ventral side and supported on the back by a cylindrical pedestal (Duff 1956a; Plate 17G); and finally another sculptured vessel from Marpole described by H.I. Smith (1903: 184, Fig. 56:186) as "a mortar with four legs, and a handle in the form of an animal. The head seems to be that of a bird, probably an owl, while the mortar itself gives the impression of being the body of a quadruped."

In addition to zoomorphic stone vessels from the Marpole phase there are a number of anthropomorphic bowls which originated in Marpole phase components. The artifacts fall into three types:

- Head Mortars
- Bowls with Head on one End
- Seated Human Figure Bowls

Head Mortars. The Marpole phase component of the Beach Grove site which yielded the bowl in the form of a mammal with cloven feet also produced a massive head mortar laboriously sculptured from tough red granite (*Fig.*



Fig. 8:22. Human head mortar from the Beach Grove site, sculptured in red granite. Climax Period. Marpole Phase. (Specimen in private hands). Height: 21.3 cm.

8:22). As in a number of other human sculptures from this phase the face is based on two planes which converge in the middle, the centre ridge being dominated by the broad, downward expanding, slightly beaked nose. Arching brows meet in a prominent wedge over the depressed bridge of the nose. Great care has been devoted to the oversized eyes, each consisting of a raised oval ridge which completely surrounds a raised centre. The artist seems to have experienced some difficulty in shaping the mouth which is slightly askew and off-centre. Moreover, the perhaps unfinished lower lip protrudes unnaturally beyond the upper lip. On the whole, however, this head mortar is one of the more impressive works of art from the Marpole phase.

Bowls with a Human Head at one End. The head from the end of a bowl of this type was recovered during systematic excavations at the Marpole site (Fig. 8:23). Sculptured of vesicular lava, this head resembles the head mortar from Beach Grove in some details, particularly in the arching brows which converge in the middle to form

a prominent descending wedge above the nose. The most startling aspect of this sculpture is the huge thick-lipped, wide-open, almost circular mouth, a feature which strongly suggests that the figure is represented as shouting or singing.

Harlan I. Smith (1903: Fig. 53a) illustrates a "stone mortar" which he excavated at Marpole. Carved of sandstone, the piece features a small realistically sculptured human face protruding from the rim of one end of the bowl. This specimen is unique in that, apart from the carved face, the flat rim of the bowl and the outer surface immediately below it are each incised with a simple zigzag line.

Seated Human Figure Bowls. Duff (1956a) lists a total of fifty seated figurines from the entire area of their distribution, and since then a number of additional specimens have been found. Unfortunately, evidence on their provenance is lacking, incomplete or questionable in nearly every instance. It is all the more important that the most reliable contextual and chronometric data come from

the Marpole site where no fewer than three of these sculptures were recovered. Two were excavated and one was found entangled in the roots of a large tree, that had grown on the shellmound after the site was abandoned. Statements alleging that one specimen "was found on the surface of disturbed deposits" (Duff 1956a; 43, 94; 1975:173) are in error. All of these sculptures originated at depths of from 1 to 1.5 m within the deposits of this village site. Since radiocarbon assays on samples from this component of the Marpole phase range from about 350 B.C. to A.D. 200 it seems likely that at least the known specimens from the type site date to sometime within this time span.

One of the seated figures was recovered at Marpole in 1930 by Herman Leisk. This "Marpole Image" (Fig. 8:24) is one of the larger seated figurines. It is 28 cm high, 18.8 cm wide, 25.5 cm from front to back and weighs about 18 kg. Apparently made of local sandstone, the figure appears unfinished, that is, of having been merely blocked out by pecking. No part was smoothed by abrasion. The massive, grossly oversized head comprises about two-fifths of the total height. The face is composed of two slightly excurvate planes which meet in the middle at an obtuse angle forming a convex ridge which extends from the crown to the mouth. The nose is merely a part of this median ridge and lacks other details. Two large shallowly pecked oval grooves form the eyes. The mouth consists of a large deeply pecked rectangle with rounded corners and a raised oblong centre. A form of headdress appears to be framing the face. The neck is short and massive. Carved in low relief, the arms extend forward from the shoulders, holding a slightly dished "bowl" which is fused with the chest and abdomen. Hips and buttocks are also outlined in low relief, merging with barely indicated outstretched legs at the base of the figure. Both hands and feet are omitted. The seated figure is leaning backward slightly with face and eyes raised, and perhaps singing as suggested by the open mouth. With a remarkable economy of effort, but motivated by a powerful drive, the ancient sculptor has wrought a work of art which exudes an air of impressive solemn reverence.

The largest of all known seated human figure bowls was found in 1913 in the "Eburne shell heap" (that is the Marpole site) among the roots of a tree three feet (ca. 1 m) below the surface. The height of the sculpture (Fig. 8:25) is 53.3 cm and the width 25.4 cm. Since the head with its headdress is 22.8 cm high it comprises well over 40% of the total height. Fashioned, like the preceding figure, of local sandstone by pecking only, the statue exhibits relatively few parts that are worked out in detail, most of the attention as usual being devoted to the head and especially to the face. The thick, nearly parallel lips are slightly parted as though the figure were singing.

By contrast with the preceding largest of all known seated human figure bowls, the third specimen is one of

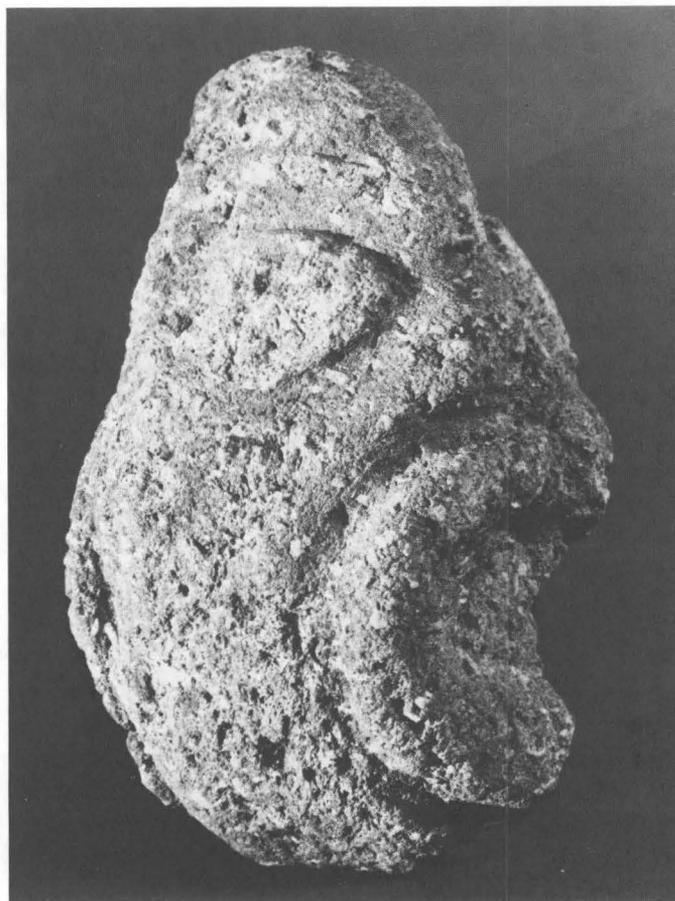


Fig. 8:23. Human head broken from the end of a stone bowl of vesicular lava. Climax Period. Marpole Phase. Marpole site. Height: 10.28 cm.

the smallest. Indeed, it *is* the smallest in the Lower Fraser region (Fig. 8:26). In view of repeated statements made by Duff (1956a:43, 94; 1975:173), alleging that this figurine had been found in disturbed surface deposits of the Marpole site it is important to set the record straight and to describe briefly the circumstances of the recovery of this specimen.

In 1949 an archaeological field crew from the University of British Columbia was conducting excavations on a back lot of the Marpole site. This work inspired a next-door neighbour to dig a test pit in his own backyard. In the process the man found the small statue at considerable depth in stratified shell deposit well beneath the thick cultivated topsoil. There can be no question either about the assignment of this specimen to the Marpole phase or about its creation and use prior to the abandonment of the Marpole site. The figurine is now in the Museum of Anthropology, U.B.C.

Only 10.2 cm in height, this seated human figure bowl is the smallest of all the specimens known to have originated in the Lower Fraser valley. It is fashioned of a good grade of steatite, but because the stone is fairly

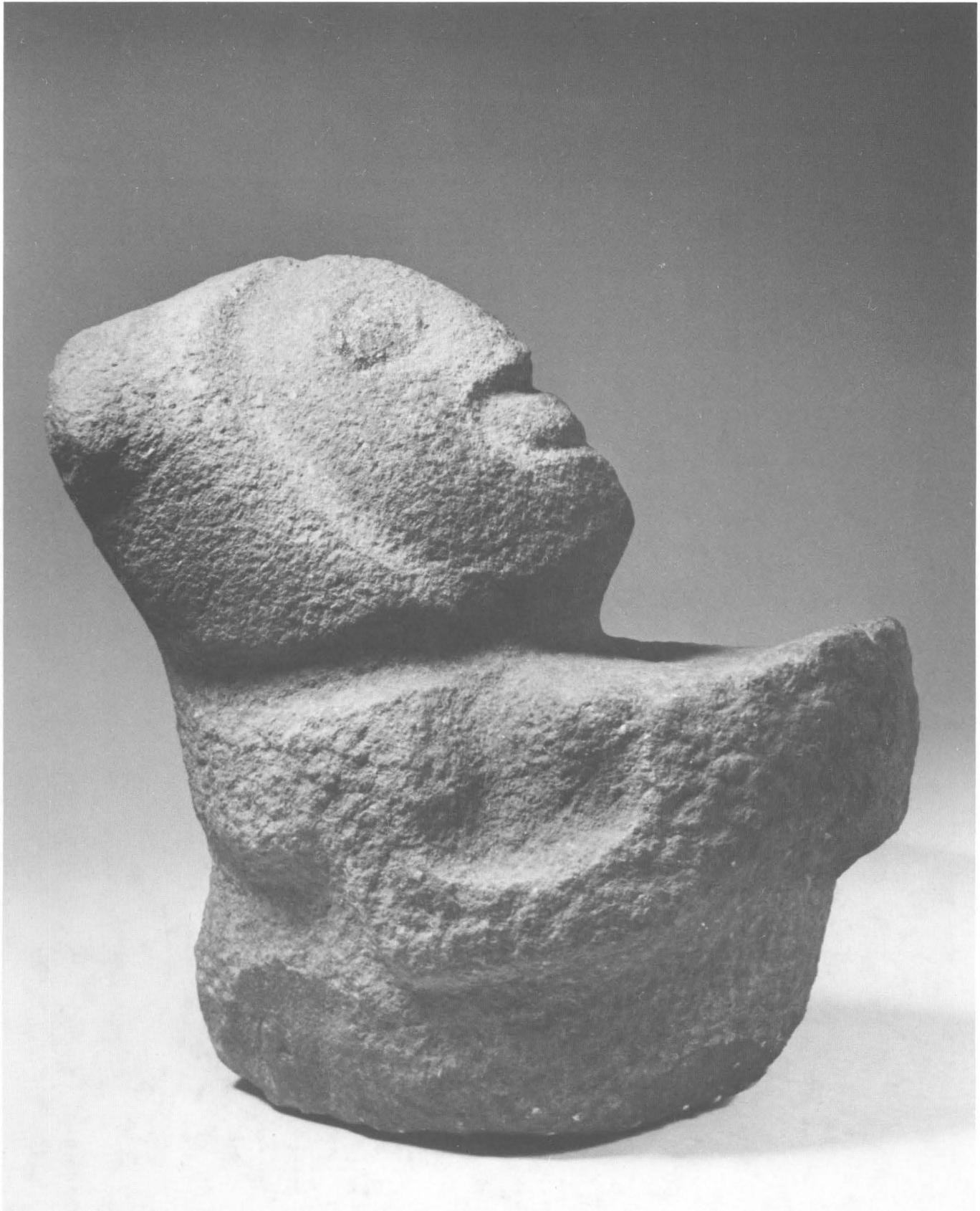


Fig. 8:24. The so-called "Marpole Image," a seated human figure bowl carved in sandstone, excavated at the Marpole site. Photograph by Hilary Stewart. Height: 28 cm.



Fig. 8:25. The largest of all known human figure bowls. Climax Period. Marpole Phase. Found at the Marpole site in 1913 among the roots of a tree approximately 1 m below the surface. Height: 54.5 cm.



Fig. 8:26. Front and side view of the smallest human figure bowl of the Lower Fraser and the Strait of Georgia region. Climax Period. Marpole Phase. Dark brown steatite. Excavated at Marpole in 1949. Height: 10.2 cm.

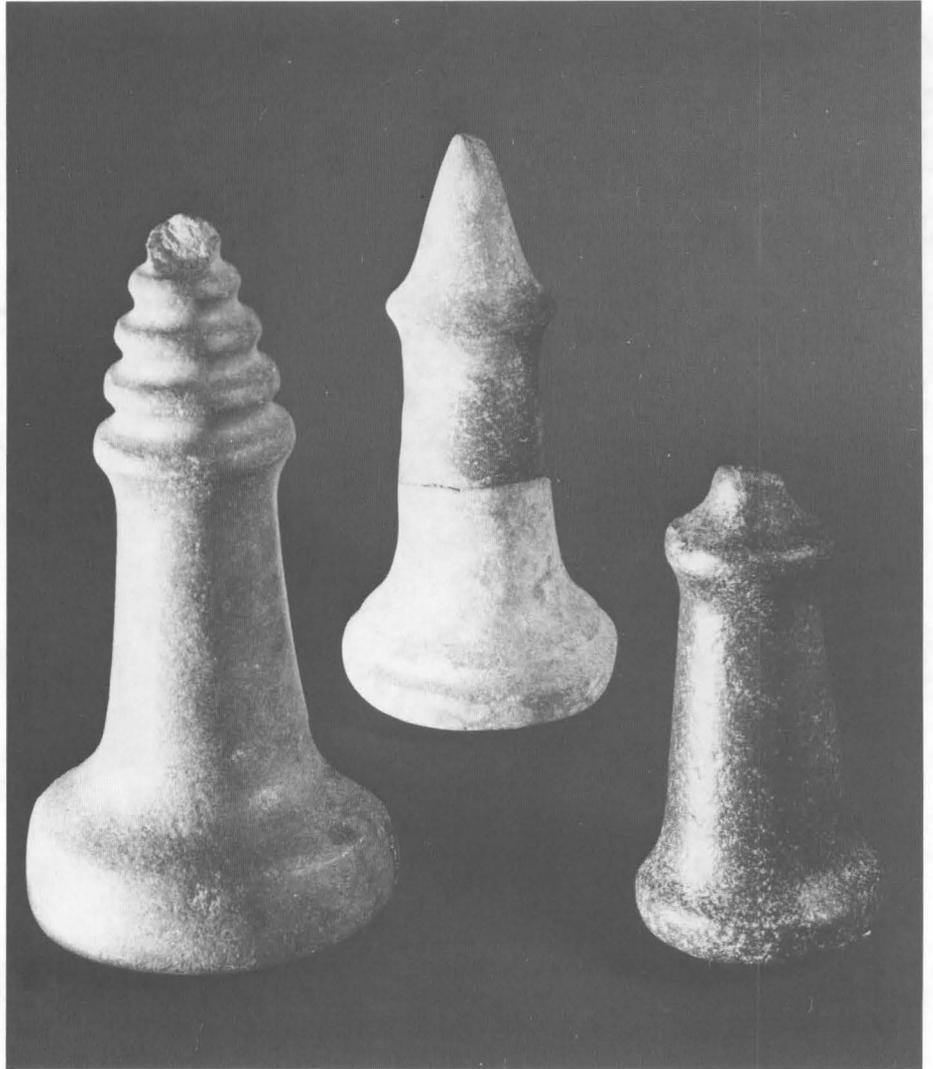


Fig. 8:27. Pestle-shaped handmauls of dense, tough stone illustrating variously finished tops. Climax Period. Marpole Phase. *a* DgRs4, *b* DgRs5, both located near Beach Grove site (DgRs1) *c* Marpole. Height of *b*: 21.17 cm.

hard, the artist, working only with stone tools and perhaps sharpened beaver incisors, may have had some difficulty in rendering certain fine details. Nevertheless, despite minor flaws and its smallness the figure has a powerful, dynamic quality about it.

As is common in late and, as we have seen repeatedly also in early Northwest Coast art, the head is accentuated out of all proportion to the rest of the figure, the part below the stout column-like neck comprising only a little more than half of the total height. The trunk is short and stocky. Rudimentary, loosely flexed, footless legs are shown in low relief extending forward from the buttocks. Scapulae and shoulders project outward like shelves, and long attenuated arms extend forward from them and embrace a bowl-like container while vestigial hands overlap in front. The deep, carefully hollowed-out bowl is not conceived as a separate entity, but as an integral part of the body.

Rising vertically from the sturdy neck is the disproportionately large head, the obviously dominant part of the sculpture. The artist has devoted much care to delineating

many of its features. As often in Marpole phase sculpture, the face is based on two converging planes which in this case meet at an obtuse angle. Both planes are quite flat, and the details of the face are engraved on them. Most prominent are the two relatively huge lenticular eyes whose flat centres are outlined by deeply engraved grooves. Above the eyes are clearly marked eyelids, and above these, browridges arch in low relief forming an acute "V" as they meet in the centre. The median ridge formed by the converging facial planes serves for most of the nose, except for the laterally incised alae and two small pits which indicate the nostrils. Two furrows curve from the nose down the cheeks toward the chin.

The artist has devoted considerable effort to sculpting the mouth into a pursed, open, rounded shape with the lower lip slightly protruding. No doubt this configuration is intended to suggest that the mythological figure represented is shouting or singing like a number of other seated figurines and human sculptures from the Fraser River-Straits of Georgia area.

The face is framed by a raised line which marks the

limits of a curious headdress which rises to a crest-like formation and ascends above the face when seen from the front. Attached to the rear of the crest is an elaborate form which is divided into segments by eight transversely incised lines. This strange configuration is strikingly reminiscent of the segmented insect-larva-like carvings of the Eayem-St. Mungo phases.

The recovery of three seated human figure bowls from deposits of the Marpole site and the possibility of placing these particular specimens within a certain time range, that is, from about 350 B.C. to A.D. 200, a time range which begins and terminates much earlier than the formerly assumed time-span of A.D. 1-1000 for the occupation of the important Marpole settlement (Duff 1956b:95), raise questions regarding previous attempts to assess the age of the entire seated human figure bowl complex and to estimate for how long the cult of which it was a part, played a significant role in the life of the Indians living along the Lower Fraser. All other known seated human figure bowls, as mentioned earlier, are random finds without contextual or radiometric data. Hence, up to now, there exists no concrete evidence for assuming that the seated human figure bowl complex and the practices associated with it persisted long beyond the early centuries of the Christian era. As will become evident, the same may be true of much of the impressive artistic activity which lends such glamour to the remarkable Marpole phase.

Present evidence of the impressive efflorescence of graphic and plastic art during the Marpole phase is confined to creations in bone, antler and various kinds of stone. The question naturally arises as to whether the artists of this phase also used wood as a medium of artistic expression. This question can with reasonable certainty be answered in the affirmative, for not only are many of the techniques applied to antler similar to those used on wood, but in the Marpole phase the entire complement of tools requisite for both small- and large-scale wood working is present for the first time (Borden 1970: Figs. 29 and 31). Aside from adzes and wedges, this complement included for the first time in local cultural development the highly efficient pestle-shaped hand mauls, the tops of which were finished in various decorative ways (Fig. 8:27). The presence of these stone pounders which are so very effective for driving wedges and chisels with minimum damage to the polls of these tools must have greatly stimulated large-scale wood working, including perhaps the creation of sculptures of much larger size than was possible in antler or stone.

Compared to the glorious efflorescence of art during the Marpole phase there is a marked dearth of evidence of artistic activity during the contemporary Skamel phase as well as during later phases of the Fraser Delta and perhaps along the length of the Lower Fraser. This dearth of evidence may in part be attributed to inadequate

sampling of critical components, to the vagaries of preservation, and especially to the paucity of excavations at crucial sites in the region between the Fraser Canyon and the Delta. Distribution studies have shown that this intervening region produced numerous excellent and fascinating stone sculptures of various categories (Duff 1956a). Unfortunately, because of lack of contextual and chronometric data we do not know whether these creations are contemporary with the Marpole phase or whether they date to later or perhaps even to earlier times.

The upper component at Katz and the component at Milliken-Esilao following upon the Baldwin phase together comprise the Skamel phase, *skamel* being the Upper-Stalo word for pithouse. The Skamel phase differs markedly from the preceding Baldwin phase. Whereas the latter was rich in stone sculpture and a great variety of stone ornaments the two known Skamel phase components are completely devoid of any decorative items and carvings in stone. Moreover, as usual in the upriver region soil acidity has destroyed all faunal remains including artifacts of bone and antler that probably were present. Nonetheless, the Skamel phase has produced evidence of quite remarkable artistic creativity in another medium, and has been included within the Climax period.

Among the debris of a burnt, collapsed and subsequently buried pithouse at Esilao were in addition to cordage and wooden objects, the fragmentary remains of two carved wooden artifacts. One of the latter comprises portions of a carefully smoothed board one surface of which is engraved with an elaborate curvilinear design, executed with great care and high technical skill (Fig. 8:28). No obvious animal or other representation is discernible. The design is unique for no closer parallels are known from any time at any other locality in the Lower Fraser or the Strait of Georgia region. Perhaps it was a design and a technique which were used mainly on suitable wooden surfaces, that is surfaces which were larger than those that could be worked on antler or stone.

The second engraved wooden artifact comprises highly fragmentary remnants of a rectangular box, gouged and carved from a single piece of wood. One end and most of the sides were consumed by the conflagration that destroyed the pithouse. The approximate dimensions of the box were: length over 30 cm, width at the rim over 11 cm and the total present height, including four small oblong feet near the corners, about 10.5 cm. Whereas the outer surface of the remaining outward leaning end is plain, the long sides of the box are elaborately engraved in a style apparently similar to the one on the illustrated board fragment. Since the design is executed with the same care and skill it seems likely that the two objects, which were found in close association, are the product of the same artisan.

Two radiocarbon assays on wood charcoal from the

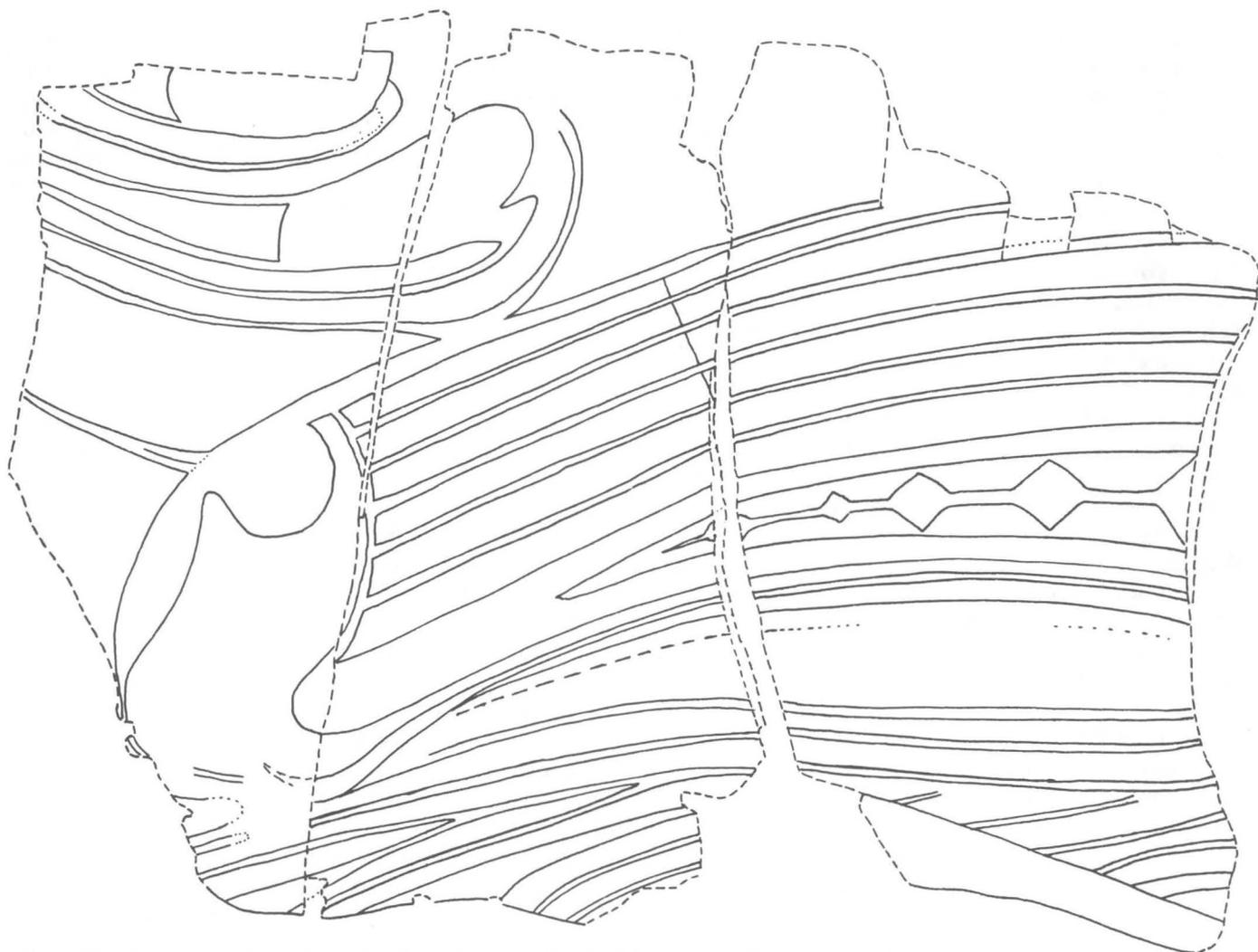


Fig. 8:28. Fragment of charred wooden board engraved with elaborate curvilinear design. Climax Period. Skamel Phase. Esilao site. Longest dimension: 21.3 cm.

fire-ravaged pithouse place these wood engravings fairly accurately in time. One sample yielded a date of 130 ± 130 B.C. (GSC-444) and the other 50 ± 120 B.C. (M-1543). Very likely, then, these artistic expressions date to early in the last century B.C. They are not only the earliest such artifacts along the Lower Fraser, but until now they are the only preserved manifestations of artistic activity of wood for the entire prehistoric period of this particular region.

Post-Climax Period.

The end of the Skamel phase and hence also the beginning of the ensuing Emery phase are uncertain. Perhaps it was a gradual transition from one to the other. A date of about A.D. 200 *may* fall within the period of this transition. Moreover, the Emery phase is still poorly defined because extensive earthmoving activities by the pithouse-

dwelling Indian occupants of the Milliken-Esilao locality scrambled much of the deposits. The only presently available way of obtaining some notion of the cultural content of the Emery phase component is by subtracting from a mixed assemblage of artifacts those items that definitely belong in either the preceding Skamel phase or the ensuing Esilao phase. At least some of the remaining items may be tentatively assigned to the intervening Emery phase. Such a tentative assignment applies, of course, not only to the general artifact assemblages of the Emery phase components at Esilao Village and the Milliken site, but more specifically also to the artistic manifestations of the Emery phase. Because of the slender evidence it is not entirely clear what happened during the Emery phase, but the few available data suggest a possible merging at this time of Skamel phase culture with traditions characteristic of the Baldwin and Marpole phases. Among indications in support of this conclusion is an "apparent" resurgence in the Canyon at this time of



Fig. 8:29. Art of the Emery Phase. Post-Climax Period. a Human-effigy pipe. b Cigar-shaped effigy pipe. c Bird-effigy pipe. d Bird-effigy mouth-piece of tubular pipe. a-c Milliken site. d Esilao. Length of d: 10.56 cm.

sculpture in steatite and phyllite. Other factors may have contributed to this resurgence. Indicative of strong outside stimuli from afar during the Emery phase, for instance, is the first evidence of pipe smoking. Both fairly simple and magnificently carved effigy pipes, evidently of local manufacture appear to date to this time.

Figure 8:29b illustrates a cigar-shaped pipe. Near the margin of the bowl may be seen what was probably an abortive attempt to create a small zoomorphic carving. This assumption is supported by a similar soapstone pipe from the Thompson Indian area. This pipe has a small, well sculptured animal head in the same position (H.I. Smith 1913, Plate VXC).

A small zoomorphic pipe-bowl exhibits the rather rudimentary carving of a bird's head and wings (Fig. 8:29c). Very likely the sculpture is unfinished because through an error of the artisan one side of the bowl became too thin and was pierced. The bowl no doubt was intended to be mounted on a wooden stem.

Long-stemmed steatite pipes were also made. These required an expertise in the technique of drilling stone, such as had not existed earlier. The mouth piece of one such pipe is very effectively modelled in the shape of a raptorial bird's head with circular eyes and a curving beak.

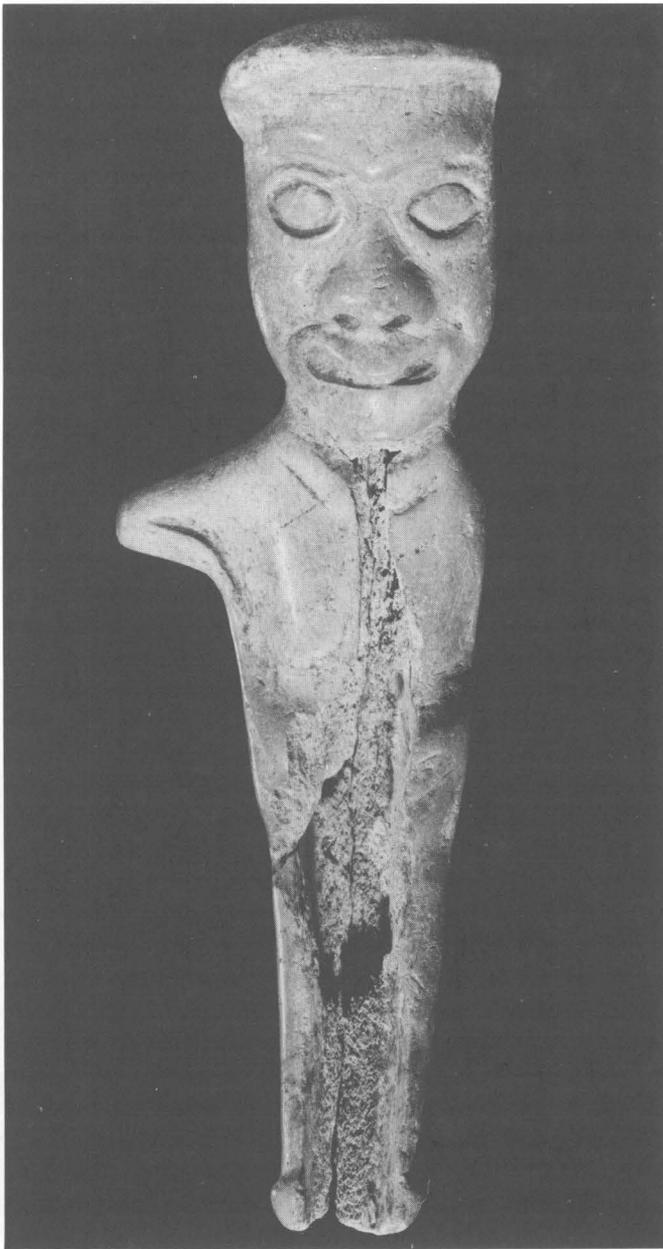
One of the most striking works of art, apparently dating to the Emery phase is an effigy pipe in the form of a seated human figure, strongly reminiscent of the seated human figure bowls although there are no indications that this figure was holding a bowl (Fig. 8:29a). Fashioned of light grey steatite, the figure is realistically carved in a sitting position with legs sharply flexed and the lower legs close to the body. Feet are absent. Issuing from carefully modelled shoulder blades, the arms are extended forward loosely flexed with the elbows resting on the knees. Unfortunately, the front of the figure is badly damaged. The back, however, is complete. Four pairs of ribs are incised beneath the shoulder blades, but details of the spinal column are omitted. Only part of the rear and a portion of one side of the head are preserved. The head is supported on a short neck, and the one remaining ear is pierced. Somewhat elongate vertically, the head forms the bowl of the pipe. A fairly large bore passes from the flat base of the figure to the bowl. A wooden stem must have been fitted to the base. Carefully smoothed and polished, the entire sculpture is executed with consummate skill and careful attention to detail, one of the few masterpieces of the Post-Climax Period.

Despite the high quality of some of the art work during the Emery phase we cannot escape the fact that beginning with the Skamel phase such manifestations become rare in the upriver region. This paucity is in sharp contrast to the obviously intense artistic activity during the Baldwin phase. Moreover, this decline in artistic creativity is paralleled by a disinterest in personal ornament, a social

attitude which is again in glaring contrast to that reflected by the numerous and varied beads, pendants, labrets and other ornaments of the Baldwin phase. One is tempted to attribute this apparent waning in cultural intensity in the upriver region to inadequate sampling if it were not for two important facts: (1) There is even less evidence in the available archaeological record of the Esilao phase, the last prehistoric phase in the Canyon, of work in stone for artistic or ornamental purposes, and (2) cultural developments in the Fraser Delta during the last two millennia are quite similar to those upriver although the decline in artistic creativity in the Delta region appears to begin somewhat later and by contrast with upriver sites, artifacts of bone and antler are well preserved in the shell middens of the Delta.

Whereas the termination of the Baldwin phase in the Canyon appears to coincide with the advent in the region of Skamel phase groups around 400 B.C. it is a curious fact that this date also marks the approximate beginning of the expansion of Marpole phase peoples in the Fraser Delta and the concomitant efflorescence of their remarkable culture which seemingly continued until at least the third century A.D. and at some localities (e.g. Beach Grove, DgRs 1) perhaps a little later. The demise of the Marpole phase culture seems to coincide more or less with the appearance in the Delta of the Whalen II culture identified at the Whalen Farm site, Fig. 8:1, No. 6, (Borden 1950, 1951, 1968b, 1970) which so far has only a single C¹⁴ date of A.D. 370 ± 140 (S-19) based on a sample collected from approximately the middle of the total depth of the Whalen II deposit so that the beginning of the phase may have been early in the fourth century. One of the most important aspects of the Whalen II phase, and one which distinguishes this stage from all preceding phases, is the fusion in this phase of two important complexes that were present in either the Locarno Beach or the Marpole phase, but which these two earlier cultures did not share, namely (1) sea-mammal hunting and fishing with composite toggling harpoons, first encountered in the Locarno Beach phase, but not adopted by Marpole phase groups; and (2) large-scale wood-working with the full complement of heavy-duty tools, including, aside from wedges and adzes, the extremely effective pestle-shaped stone hand maul which as we have seen, first appeared during the Marpole phase. The fusion of these important complexes in the Whalen II phase is part of the highly adaptive cultural synthesis which persisted into the Late Period and thus became an integral part of the efficient food procurement and manufacturing systems of the recent Coast Salish.

Notwithstanding these important developments during the Whalen II phase, certain other cultural aspects which had added lustre to Fraser Delta cultures of the Climax Period, such as the abundance and great variety of personal ornaments in both the Locarno Beach and



Marpole phases and stone sculpture during the Marpole phase appear to be rare or even lacking in the Whalen II assemblage. In part, this impression of cultural impoverishment may have been created by inadequate sampling. On the other hand, we may perhaps discern here the beginning of a trend toward a diminishing interest in representative and decorative art. A similar trend as we noted, had begun in the upriver region somewhat earlier. But, as in the Canyon, evidence of artistic activity is by no means totally absent during this Post-Climax stage of the Fraser Delta.

Proof that some master carvers were still present during the Whalen II phase is an expertly sculptured anthropomorphic haft for a beaver-incisor carving tool (Fig. 8:30a; Duff 1956b Plate Ib). Salvaged by Wilson Duff during a pause in bulldozer operations which levelled the nearly four-metre deep shell mound of the Whalen Farm site, the haft was one of several grave additions associated with a burial found partly exposed within the Whalen II component of the site. In true Northwest Coast tradition, the head of the man depicted is disproportionately large, comprising somewhat more than one third of the figure's total height (13.3 cm). The artist devoted much effort to modelling the features of the face and other details of the head, but he showed little interest in delineating much detail on other parts of the figure. Legs are not indicated at all. Instead, the figure tapers, and an open socket to accommodate the beaver incisor carving tool is gouged into the distal end.

Whereas the antler figurine from Whalen II is a fine example of Post-Climax art in the Fraser Delta region other known manifestations of artistic activity dating to this period are of a more modest quality. Also found among the grave additions of the same burial which yielded the sculptured antler haft was a dagger with a large chipped basalt blade inserted in a haft fashioned from the tapering distal portion of a wapiti antler tine (Duff 1956b, Plate Ia). The haft is laboriously incised with fifteen pairs of encircling lines, each line consisting of short, closely spaced "spurs."

Two additional artifacts recovered from the Whalen II component (Borden 1970:107, Fig. 32h,i) need to be considered. Perhaps functionally related to the miniature antler pestles of the Marpole phase is a small pestle-shaped object of siltstone (Fig. 8:30b). The artifact consists of a cylindrical shaft with an expanding basal end. The top third of the shaft features a complex of four incised

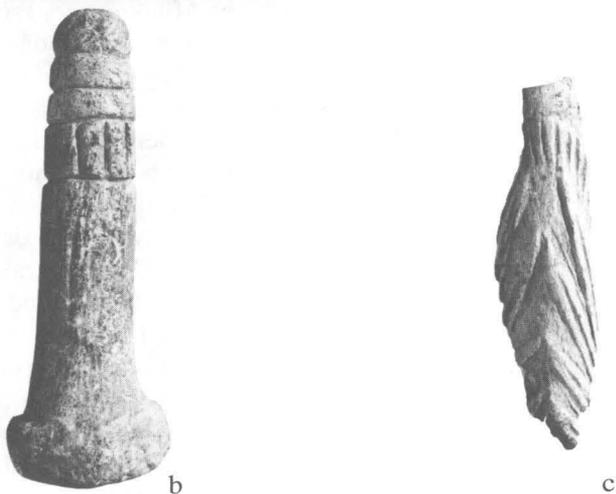


Fig. 8:30. Art of the Whalen II Phase. Post-Climax Period. *a* Anthropomorphic haft of deer antler for a beaver incisor carving tool. *b* Small geometrically incised pestle-shaped object of siltstone. *c* Bone artifact fragment carved in low relief. All specimens from Whalen II deposit. Length of *a*: 15 cm, of *b*: 7.29 cm.

encircling lines. The two lowermost lines, which are spaced more widely apart than the others, are linked by a series of vertical lines. Similar simple arrangements of encircling and vertical lines persist into the Late Period of the Fraser Delta.

Finally, mention must be made of a tantalizing fragment of calcined bone, meticulously carved in low relief (*Fig. 8:30c*). Unfortunately, the specimen is too fragmentary for adequate description. Visible are eight slender pinnate elements framed by a curving border of closely spaced radiating lines. The style of this intriguing fragmentary design has no close parallel in any other Lower Fraser period.

The items described above comprise all that is known about artistic activity during the Whalen II phase, the duration of which is unknown. There is some justification, however, for postulating a "Pre-Stselax phase," which may have intervened between Whalen II and the latest phase in the Fraser Delta region (Borden 1970:110).

Late Period

This final prehistoric period is represented by two spatially distinct and in part culturally differentiated phases which virtually coincide in time: the Esilao phase in the Canyon and the Stselax phase in the Delta. Radiocarbon assays and other evidence suggest that both began around A.D. 1250 or perhaps a little earlier, and both ended in 1808 when Simon Fraser made his perilous journey down the river which now bears his name. This event signified the terminatio along the Lower Fraser of prehistoric time and the onset of the Historic Period (Borden 1965, 1968b, 1970; Lamb 1960).

Excavations at both Esilao Village and at the Milliken site have produced no concrete archaeological evidence that the occupants engaged in artistic activity during the Esilao phase. Yet, decorated artifacts of bone and antler similar at least to those recovered from shell midden deposits at the mouth of the river were almost certainly also in use in the Canyon at this time. These artifacts from the Stselax phase will be described below. Moreover, Simon Fraser's journal makes repeated references to zoomorphic carvings in wood observed on mortuary houses and on houseposts, thus documenting that local craftsmen created sculptures in this medium at least in late prehistoric time.

At Spuzzum, which Fraser recognized as "the boundary line between the Hacamaugh (Lower Thompson) and Ackinroe (Upper Stalo) Nations" (Lamb 1960:97), he noted mortuary houses at the mouth of Spuzzum Creek and went to inspect them. This description fits Upper Stalo practices rather than those of the Thompson Indians. With some grudging admiration Fraser comments:

These Tombs are superior to any thing of the kind I ever saw among the savages. . . Upon the boards and Posts are carved

beasts and birds, in a curious but rude manner, yet pretty well proportioned. The monuments must have cost the workmen much time and labour, as they were destitute of proper tools for the execution of such a performance. (Lamb 1960:97-98).

The next day, when Fraser was well within Upper Stalo territory he described a plank house, the construction of which he found "excellent." Among other things he observed that the "very strong" posts, which support the rafter beams, are "rudely carved" (Lamb 1960:99). In the afternoon of the same day (June 28, 1808) Fraser's party arrived at an Indian camp not far from the Indian village at present-day Yale. At this place Fraser examined "a new tomb. . . supported on carved posts. . . the sculpture is rudely finished." (Lamb 1960:100). Three days later, when the party arrived at a village in the vicinity of today's Langley (Duff 1952:49), Fraser described a large plank house "640 feet long by 60 broad all under one roof." In one of the large frontal house posts, he continues, "is an oval opening answering the purpose of a door. . . Above, on the outside, are carved a human figure large as life, and there are other figures in imitation of beasts and birds." (Lamb 1960:103-104).

Fraser's brief but tantalizing observations, made at the very threshold of the Historic Period leave no doubt that the Stalo Indians of the Late Period possessed a well established tradition of wood sculpture and that representative carvings of beasts and men were relatively common. Unfortunately, no examples of these prehistoric carvings have been preserved. Photographs and examples of zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figures created much later in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by Stalo Indians *do* exist, but considering the rapid changes which occurred during the Historic Period it is uncertain how closely these later sculptures reflect the earlier tradition.

Whereas we may invoke lack of preservation as a likely reason for the absence of objects fashioned of organic materials we cannot do so for work in stone during the Late Period at Esilao village and the Milliken site, especially since the Esilao phase components have produced a considerable assemblage of artifacts fabricated of various lithic materials. The apparent absence of stone ornaments and art work in stone is, therefore, all the more significant. There is, however, one possible though unfortunately, uncertain exception. The artifact in question is an elaborately engraved spindle whorl of dark brown steatite (*Fig. 8:31*). The whorl might have provided direct evidence as to its antiquity had it been found in proper context. However, it was recovered from material that had sloughed off from the wall of an excavation unit so that no completely reliable contextual data are available. The area of its discovery at the Milliken site evidently was used as a cemetery by inhabitants of the nearby Esilao pithouse village for many centuries, probably from late

in the Emery phase onward to Historic time. Charred material from one burial, a partial cremation, yielded a C^{14} date of A.D. 1380 ± 100 (M-1511) placing this burial early in the Late Period. Repeated burial activity in this area caused many graves to be disturbed, and no dates on other graves are available. Circumstantial evidence make it seem highly likely however, that the spindle with the attached stone whorl was a grave addition. The crucial question is "When was it made and used?"

The artifact's general resemblance to recent elaborately decorated spindle whorls of wood dating to the Historic Period is obvious. Yet, there are also differences whose temporal significance is difficult to assess.

In a summary presentation of Lower Mainland prehistory I tentatively assigned the steatite spindle whorl to a late stage in the Emery phase (Borden 1968b:22). However, I have felt uneasy about this assignment ever since. A consideration which perhaps overrides all the others is the fact that the artistic manifestations on the flat surface of the steatite whorl represent a true composition, that is, in this instance the carefully planned arrangement on a flat plane and in a given limited space of several separate animal images as well as part of such animals as design elements. Such true compositions we find among the Halkomelem-speaking Salish only on recent, that is, historic spindle whorls. We have no evidence that such compositions were made in the Lower Fraser region during any of the prehistoric periods. On available evidence it is perhaps best to consider this steatite whorl more or less contemporary with the carefully designed compositions on some of the elaborately carved spindle whorls of the nineteenth century, bearing in mind, however, that future data and deeper insight may eventually justify placing this remarkable artifact into an earlier period.

Skillfully engraved on the flat plane of the steatite spindle whorl (*Fig. 8:31a*), that is, the surface on which the spun yarn accumulates (Lane 1951:Fig. 3), we behold the dramatic confrontation of two powerful serpents with huge heads, large baleful eyes and relatively diminutive bodies arranged around the centre like two partially concentric circles. The typical Northwest Coast emphasis on the head at the expense of the body is so great in the left one of the two serpents that the length of the head equals that of the rest of the animal. In surface area the head actually exceeds that of the body. There is also considerable distortion in the right serpent, but because of the markedly greater length of the body it is less severe. The reason for the great difference in body length of the two facing serpents is not clear. A third rather small serpent encircles the central perforation in such a way that its large inverted head is positioned on the opposite side of the perforation but midway between the heads of the two snakes on the other side. Despite the different sizes of the three reptiles they are disposed in such a way



a



b

Fig. 8:31. Zoomorphically engraved spindle whorl. Context uncertain. Perhaps Late Period, Esilao Phase, but more likely Historic Period. *a* Flat face. *b* Convex face. Dark Brown steatite, Milliken site. Diameter: 11.45 cm.

as to achieve an admirable balance in the given circular field. It seems obvious that the artist was striving for balance rather than for bilateral symmetry. Eight adroitly spaced isolated eyes are arranged along the periphery of the circle. A ninth isolated eye fills the space between the tail and head of the innermost serpent. The heads and bodies of the three serpents are spotted with pits in diminishing rows of three and two and finally one. It is worth noting that a number of isolated pits are used as fillers in some of the vacant spaces of the circular field on both surfaces of the artifact.

The elongate, basically lenticular eyes are outlined by an upper and lower eyelid which encloses an oval centre. The converging ends of the eyelids are drawn out into thin tapering lines. Two other features of these eyes are noteworthy. The oval centre of all of them, whether part of a serpent or isolated, is partly covered by the upper eyelid, a fact which imparts to these eyes their peculiar baleful appearance. Another aspect of these eyes is that most of them are at least partially "angled," some markedly so, that is, their extended proximal ends are turned downward thus forming an angle with the main axis of the eye.

The composition of the convex face of the spindle whorl is no less dramatic than the one just described. No fewer than fifteen disembodied serpent eyes of varying sizes are whirling around the central perforation, all with their convex sides facing outward toward the rim, while the concave inner sides are turned toward the centre. Curiously, by contrast with the eyes on the obverse face, the eyes on this convex face are all wide open, that is, the oval centres are all completely uncovered. This consistent difference in the depiction of the eyes on the two faces of the whorl appears to be deliberate although the significance of this contrasting portrayal remains obscure. On the other hand, just as on the obverse face, all the eyes are "angled," some more so than others. There is a link here with the Climax Period since we first encountered this "angled-eye form" on the sculptured great blue heron of the Marpole phase (*Fig. 8:18*). The angled eye also occurs on some of the seated human figure bowls (cf. especially Duff 1956a; Nos. 11 and 17). However, the same eye form is also found on the secondary figures attached to the top of certain recent *sxwaxwe* masks of Halkomelem-speaking Coast Salish groups (e.g. Inverarity 1950: No. 62; Wingert 1949: Plate 34) of Vancouver Island and the Lower Fraser River. The "angled eye" is thus one of the longest persisting local stylistic traits.

The perforation for the spindle shaft is also engraved like an eye on the convex face of the steatite whorl. The centre of this eye is circular rather than oval because the perforation had to accommodate the round shaft of the spindle. It is possible that at one stage in the development of the design this central "eye" was intended to double as a mouth for a human face, the deeply incised outline of

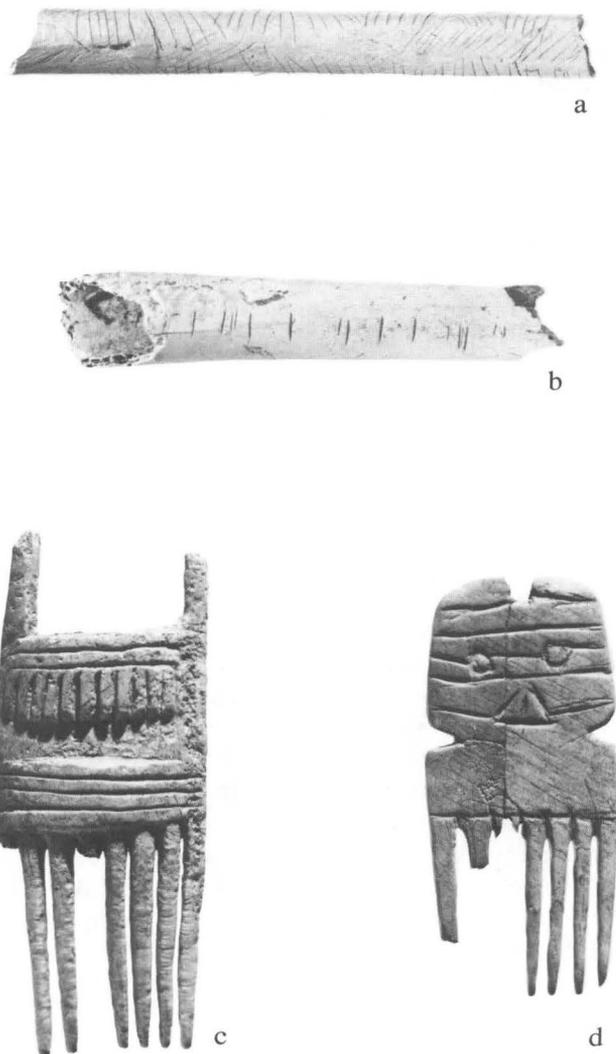


Fig. 8:32. Art of the Stselax Phase. Late Period. *a, b* Incised drinking tubes of bird bone. *a* Malé village site. *b* Stselax. *c* Comb with geometric carving in low relief. *d* Anthropomorphic comb. Both combs from Stselax. Length of *b*: 7.49 cm, of *d* 7.35 cm.

which is clearly discernible. The symbolism underlying the designs of this spindle whorl is enigmatic. One of the most fascinating questions is why this potent assemblage of serpents and serpent eyes was affixed to a woman's implement.

Stselax, a segment of the Coast Salish winter village of Musqueam (DhRt 2, *Fig. 8:1* No. 9) at the mouth of the Fraser's North Arm, has given its name to the latest culture phase in the Fraser Delta region (Borden 1970:110-112). A C^{14} date of 660 ± 150 B.P. or ca. A.D. 1290 (S-20) on charcoal from *near* the bottom of the village deposits suggests a beginning date for this occupation and by inference perhaps for the Stselax phase and the Late Period at around A.D. 1250 or possibly somewhat earlier (Borden 1968, 1970).

Extensive investigations at Stselax and other parts of

Musqueam Village, including excavations outside and inside of old Indian houses still in existence until recently, supplemented by systematic surface collecting have produced some 5000 artifacts, most of them assignable to the Stselax phase, but others of recent Historic origin. The Prehistoric assemblage includes a wide range of manufacturing tools, food procurement devices, household utensils and so forth. Despite this large sample from a winter village, inhabited continuously for the last six prehistoric centuries, the assemblage from this site includes only a relatively small series of artifacts that can be said to manifest some artistic activity. It is important to note moreover that not one of such artifacts is made of stone; all are made of either bone or antler, and with the exception of a few isolated anthropomorphic and zoomorphic items, all others are limited to rather simple and for the most part geometric designs.

Incised Drinking Tubes. During her first menses a Coast Salish girl was enjoined to use a bone drinking tube, allegedly to protect her teeth (Barnett 1955:151) or, according to one Musqueam informant, "because her lips were not supposed to touch water." Commonly made of bird bone, such tubes were provided near one end with a lateral perforation for suspension. A considerable number of drinking tubes have been found at Musqueam, most in fragmentary condition (Fig. 8:32a,b). Several of these bear a few or occasionally numerous fine lines seemingly incised at random without any deliberate arrangement or discernible design. Such manifestations can only barely be included under the rubric "art."

Combs. Combs are rare in archaeological deposits of the Fraser Delta region, a major reason probably being that, as in recent times, combs were usually made of wood and hence are not preserved. One *plain* comb of wapiti antler was excavated at Old Musqueam (DhRt 3), dating to about the third or fourth century B.C. of the Marpole phase. The only other two combs, also of wapiti antler, are from Stselax phase deposits (DhRt 2) and thus are examples of the Late Period.

Both of these Late Period combs are essentially rectangular in outline. The larger of the two (Fig. 8:32c) is provided with eight long tines, six of which are still intact. Topping the handle or bridge of the comb is a large semicircular (?) loop, the upper portion of which is now missing. Rectangular in shape, the bridge features a simple configuration consisting of rows of horizontal and vertical geometric design elements carved in fairly high relief. In addition, a number of forms are carved on the reverse face of the bridge, but their original shape is obscured by the advanced corrosion of the soft cancellous antler tissue of this face. The execution and finish of this comb seem rather casual.

The second, somewhat smaller and thinner comb is

anthropomorphic in a very simple way (Fig. 8:32d). A flat nearly square head with rounded corners and tapering only slightly upward is set directly on a short limbless "body," separated from it only by slight lateral indentations at the "shoulders." Originally the comb had seven tines, four of which are still complete. The tip of another is missing. Details of the head and face are executed in a rudimentary yet stylistically distinctive fashion. No hair and ears are indicated. Four straight, horizontal, equidistant lines are incised horizontally across the face. A somewhat greater distance separates a lowermost fifth line from the fourth. Moreover, this fifth line dips bilaterally towards the middle, where a small isolateral triangle, incised somewhat askew, and a short vertical line, running upward from the baseline of the triangle, serve to indicate both mouth and nose. Two minute circles interrupting the third line from the top mark the eyes.

On pondering this artistic expression of the Late Period one is struck with the realization that it would be difficult to depart further from what one would normally recognize as Northwest Coast art style than is exemplified by this anthropomorphic comb from the Stselax phase at Musqueam.

Blanket Pins. Fairly common among carved and/or engraved artifacts of the Late Period (Stselax phase) are blanket pins, a fact which reflects the importance among the Coast Salish of spinning and weaving mountain goat and/or dog wool into blankets. Such blankets were commonly worn around the shoulders and fastened in front by means of a pin. The function of the large, usually carved and/or incised head of the pin no doubt was to prevent the pin from slipping through the blanket. Most of the pins are fashioned of antler and only the occasional one of bone. They are most conveniently grouped and described according to the form of the head. Blanket pin heads with simple geometric designs are shown in Figure 8:33a,h. Zoomorphic blanket pin heads (Fig. 8:33i,j) suggest the heads of birds or of some other creature without actually revealing the animal's identity. Details are left perhaps intentionally too vague for specific identification.

Historic Period

Contrasting with the generally stark and sober artistic manifestations in the archaeological record of the Late Period at Musqueam are a few fragmentary bone and antler artifacts whose execution is patently more in the "classic Northwest Coast style." One example is the impressive zoomorphic blanket pin illustrated in Figure 8:34a. This impressive bifacial carving features the head of some mythical animal with a small backward slanting crest and large "angled eyes" with large oval centres.



Fig. 8:33. Stselax Phase blanket pins. Late Period. *a-h* Pins with heads of simple geometric design. *i* Pin with an abstract zoomorphic (?) carving. *j* Pin topped by a bird's head. All from Stselax site. Length of *a*: 10.87 cm.

The truly masterful execution of this piece with its meticulous attention to fine detail contrasts sharply with that of the previously described blanket pins. Moreover, the deep, sharply cut lines even in narrow spaces, such as the creature's mandible, suggest the use of steel tools in its creation, a circumstance which necessitates assigning it to the Historic rather than the Late Period.

Another of these historic specimens is a small fragment of a beautifully finished bone artifact, simply but precisely incised with a curvilinear motif (Fig. 8:34*b*). The third is a small marginal fragment of a large spindle whorl fashioned from the epiphysis of a whale vertebra (Fig. 8:34*c*). Judging from the design elements on this fragment, the entire surface of the whorl apparently was as intri-

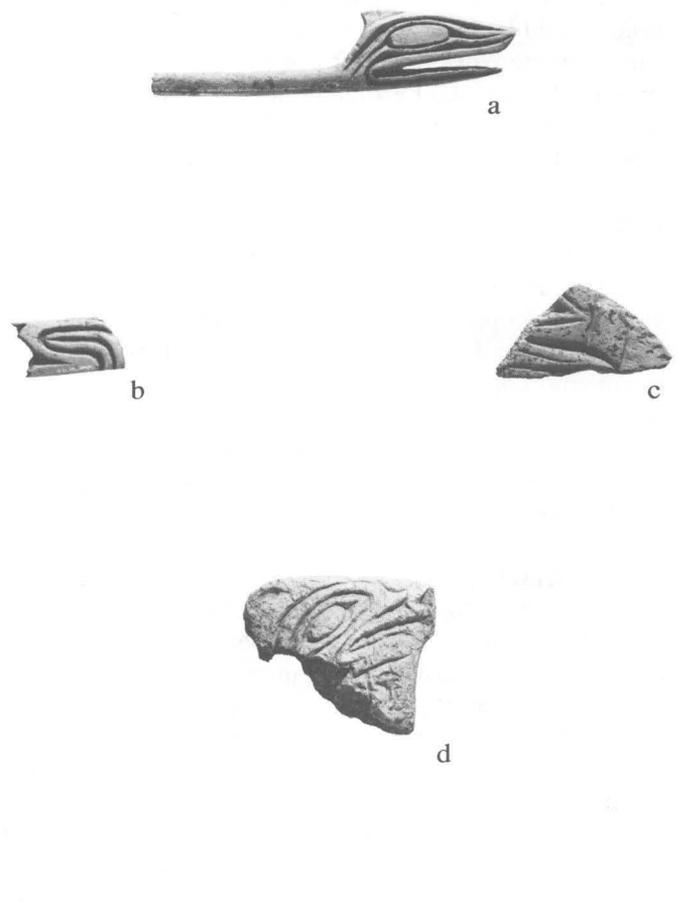


Fig. 8:34. Art of the Historic Period. Bone and antler artifacts from Stselax probably carved and engraved with steel cutting tools during the Historic Period. *a* Zoomorphic blanket pin head executed bifacially in "classic Northwest Coast" style. *b* Fragment of bone artifact deeply engraved with a curvilinear design. *c* Marginal fragment of an elaborately and bifacially engraved spindle whorl fashioned from the epiphysis of a whale vertebra. *d* Fragment of a zoomorphic antler artifact (comb?) executed in "classic Northwest Coast" style. Length of *a*: 8.23 cm.

cately engraved as some of the more magnificent recent spindle whorls of wood. The fourth specimen is the proximal end fragment of an unidentified wapiti antler artifact (Fig. 8:34*d*). Again judging from what remains, the specimen was bifacially and skillfully engraved with an animal form which is identical in style and virtually identical in detail to the "otters" on the splendidly designed and beautifully engraved and carved spindle whorl collected by C.F. Newcombe at Cowichan, B.C. in 1912 (Fig. 8:35). The resemblance in design and execution of the animal on the antler specimen from Musqueam with that of the supernatural "otters" on the spindle whorl is so close as to compel the conclusion that both of these artifacts were created by the same artist (Fig. 8:35). This



Fig. 8:35. The two sides of the fragmentary zoomorphic antler artifact from Stselax illustrated in Figure 8:34 *d* are superimposed here to show the virtual identity in design, style and execution with that of the so-called "otters" on the nineteenth century spindle whorl from the Cowichan district on Vancouver Island. Diameter of whorl: approx. 20 cm.

spindle whorl obviously was carved and engraved with steel cutting tools probably around the middle or in the latter half of the nineteenth century. This being so, it seems an obvious corollary that the fine detail and sharply cut lines of the closely similar animal figure on the fragmentary antler artifact also must have been engraved with the aid of steel tools and that this art object thus must date to about the same time as the Cowichan spindle whorl. Furthermore, it seems highly likely that the aforementioned zoomorphic blanket pin, which is so reminiscent of the traditional style of the more northerly Northwest Coast, as well as the other specimens in this small group also date to the Historic Period. Supporting this suggestion is the fact that all these object are finds

which originated from disturbed surface deposits of the Historic Period whereas examples from the various classes of artifacts executed and decorated in the simple geometric style of the Late Period have been uncovered during excavations in undisturbed prehistoric deposits of the Stselax phase at Musqueam.

From the above discussion it seems evident that during the nineteenth century Coast Salish artists of the Lower Fraser and southeastern Vancouver Island were subjected to strong outside stylistic influences of radically different character from the simple geometric style that had been in vogue during the Late Period. This new style was more akin to that of the recent "classic art" of coastal groups living to the north of Coast Salish peoples.

Herewith ends our overview of 9000 years of art along the Lower Fraser.

