

ARTIFACT CLASSES

This chapter discusses a number of artifact types frequently found as grave inclusions on the Plateau. An attempt has been made to take into account both the emic and the etic perspective in assigning a relative value to various artifact classes. To this end, the discussion encompasses specific ethnographic accounts of the use and meaning of those artifact types for which information is available. In addition, it provides an etic model for the value attributed to different artifact types, based on considerations of raw material, labour investment, and context.

Attempts have recently been made to "objectively" measure the amount of wealth represented in an assemblage of grave goods. Randsborg (1974), for example, weighed the amounts of gold, silver, and bronze present in a series of Danish Bronze Age burials as a means of quantification. Mainfort (1985) attempted to estimate actual costs, as measured in beaver skins, of items sold at a Miami fur trade post dating to 1761 to calculate the amount of wealth present in historic period Native burials at the Fletcher site. Such an approach is not altogether out of the question for the historic period on the Plateau. Teit (1900:260-262), for example, provides a brief list of the relative values of trade goods in the Thompson area at the turn of the last century, and far more information is available in the Hudson's Bay Archives. Such accounts are, however, of only limited use when dealing with earlier periods and different regions due to the disruption of the early historic Native economy brought about by the influx of European goods, combined with a dramatic decrease in transport costs due to the horse and the presence of fur traders. Another problem is simply the incomplete nature of the information available in lists such as Teit's, which do not approach the variety of types of goods found in late prehistoric and protohistoric burials. In any case, no attempt will be made to calculate the amount of "actual" wealth in emic terms represented by various grave inclusions. In fact, it is held that such a scale is not necessarily preferable to one derived on more theoretical grounds.

Ethnographic documentation on the use, value, and meaning of material objects is often limited and too frequently tends to be inadequate for the purpose at hand. It is also recognised that it is sometimes desirable to be as free of the tyranny of ethnographic documentation as possible, and for the archaeological data to stand on their own (Wylie 1985). To this end, there exists a more general set of principles widely accepted in archaeology, at least implicitly, for assigning relative values to classes of material objects.

Binford's (1962) system of technomic, sociotechnic and ideotechnic artifact types is probably the first explicit formulation of these principles, and certainly remains the most widely known and utilised. Winters' (1968) system of Class I, II, and III artifact types represents a similar attempt to broadly classify artifacts in terms of their relative value. While there are differences between the two systems, the basic underlying principles are the same. The general idea behind both is that utilitarian items of common everyday usage tend to be assigned little real or symbolic value, while special objects, such as those involved in ceremonial activities, tend to be perceived as having a higher value.

The raw material of which an item is manufactured is seen as having a critical role in determining the item's value. Easily worked, abundant, locally available materials represent the lowest value category, which then proceeds logically in terms of increasing difficulty of access to the opposite extreme of very rare materials, often imported from great distances. Long distance trade in small-scale societies in general is often difficult and relatively dangerous (cf. Dalton 1975). Difficulty of access need not always be geographically defined; the use of certain classes of items or certain raw materials may be socially prescribed. That is, such items and/or materials may be restricted to certain groups within a society, and this may be accomplished through a variety of means ranging from social conventions and ideas about what

34 Mortuary Variability and Status

is "proper", to active enforcement of a prerogative (i.e. sumptuary rules). This idea as it relates specifically to the Plateau is explored further below.

Besides or in addition to the worth of the raw material, the expenditure of labour on an item's manufacture is another factor to be considered when attempting to assign value. Classes of artifacts that require particularly laborious and/or highly skilled work are expected on average to have greater value than those that require less time and effort (keeping in mind the above discussion on socially defined difficulty of access). For example, a carved bone implement is expected to be of greater value than a plain one.

It is important to emphasise that the above discussion outlines a model that can be used to generate expectations for the treatment of different artifact classes. When there are glaring discrepancies in the "fit" of the model to the data, the particular context must be examined in greater detail, and an attempt must be made to bring additional considerations and lines of evidence to bear. One simple means of testing ideas concerning the relative value of different artifact classes is to examine their depositional context. Clearly items that were more liable to be lost or discarded in general middens were probably perceived by their users as having less intrinsic worth than those classes of items which are found exclusively (or nearly so—a gradient is to be expected here) in "special" depositional contexts such as burials (cf. Winters 1968), ritual hordes, temple caches, etc.. Expectations of what types of items should be more valued, then, can be tested by independent means, particularly in those cases in which a burial assemblage can be associated with an occupation site. In practice, firm associations of this type are unfortunately relatively rare. The method is still useful when applied at a more general scale, such as when comparing artifacts found in all roughly contemporaneous middens in an area to all burial sites in the same area and dating roughly to the same period.

Intensity of curation may be viewed as something of a confounding factor here, since it could be argued that items which required a great deal of time and effort to manufacture would never be casually discarded or lost unless worn or broken. Nephrite celts/adzes may belong in this category, for example. But by the same token, such artifact classes *are* expected to have greater real and symbolic value when found in ritual contexts such as burials. Of course, it must also be recognised that some items, such as celts/adzes, probably functioned in both the technomic and sociotechnic spheres.

Objects of ornamentation, such as beads, pendants, bracelets, and hair ornaments, operated principally in the sociotechnic sphere. That is, they were used as status display items. In view of the fact that the significance of grave inclusions representing body and clothing ornamentation has in the past frequently been dismissed by archaeologists as "mere decoration" (cf. Winters 1968; C. King 1990), a brief discussion might be of benefit at this point.

The idea that fashions in dress are strongly related to social status is hardly a new one in anthropology; as early as 1886 Herbert Spencer noted that changes in dress could be seen in response to changes in social organisation. Similarly, anthropologist Bernard Baker in 1957 noted that: "The style and quality of clothing for both men and women have been among the more obvious symbols of social class position in all societies" (cited in C. King 1990:11). That ornaments can function in an analogous manner was recognised by Spencer (cited in C. King 1990). There is in fact little that needs to be added to his argument today, and I simply repeat it verbatim: "A chief element in the conception of value, acquired by ornaments as they pass into a currency, is the *consciousness of labour expended either in making them or finding them*" (Spencer 1896:398) (emphasis mine). Body and clothing ornamentation is highly visible to other members of the community, and in small-scale societies, is immediately recognised by outsiders as well (cf. Stryd 1973:90).

Items of decoration, such as *Dentalium* and *Olivella* shells, are frequent burial inclusions on the Plateau, and were involved in long distance trade networks. Native copper ornaments and fine polished nephrite celts or adzes would be relatively difficult both to acquire and to process. Other prestige items include bone and antler carvings, tubular pipes, and stone, antler, and whalebone clubs. Again, these items would be highly visible and not readily available to all who might desire them. Some represent a significant input of labour, while others incorporate exotic materials. There is some evidence for sumptuary rules regulating and limiting the use of such items. Hayden (1993) further suggests that many of these items were part of a regional, Plateau-wide elite exchange system or interaction sphere (after Caldwell 1964).

These items meet the requirements of what Dalton (1975) has referred to as "primitive valuables". Primitive valuables are generally not used for commercial transactions, i.e. they do not function as money, although their acquisition can require payment in non-prestige goods. Rather they are "... the means of

acquiring superior political, military, judicial, and religious roles in the form of Big Man status, prerogatives, power, and an entourage of followers" (Dalton 1975:98). The suggestion that some classes of artifacts functioned as primitive valuables on the Plateau is certainly not a new one (Hayden 1993; Richards and Rousseau 1987); I do, however, explore the relationship in more detail than has been previously attempted. The remainder of this section provides both emic and etic accounts of specific artifact classes as they potentially relate to socioeconomic status. It is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather to illustrate some examples of what sorts of material culture were involved in the wealth and prestige spheres and why.

Sociotechnic Items

Burial Shrouds, Clothing, and Insignia

The most common late prehistoric burial types on the Plateau are pit inhumations and, in certain geomorphologically suitable areas, talus slope burials. The body is almost invariably flexed and deposited on the side, often wrapped in mats, blankets, or animal skins. This latter feature potentially offers information on status, since it has been widely noted for the ethnographic period (Ray 1932; Teit 1900, 1906, 1909, 1930) that the poor would be wrapped only in mats, while the rich would be wrapped in fine blankets or skin robes. A similar dichotomy has been noted regarding clothing, especially among the Lillooet, but also among other groups, where the poor are often referred to as "scantily clad", while the wealthy possessed fine fitted buckskin clothing with many ornaments attached (Nastich 1954; Ray 1932; Romanoff 1992; Ross 1969; Teit 1900, 1909, 1928; see also Hayden 1990c for a discussion of this topic from a cross-cultural perspective). Where preservation is exceptionally good, such evidence might be expected to survive and can be correlated with other lines of evidence.

Ray (1939:21), summarising the available information, notes that distinctive insignia were assumed by the chiefs of the Umatilla, Kalispel, Sanpoil, Sinkaietk, Shuswap, and Lillooet. Ruby and Brown (1972:14), in a summary of early ethnohistoric sources regarding the Cayuse (who during the early historic period shared many similarities with the neighbouring Umatilla), note that chiefs wore wolfskin headdresses adorned with bear-claws and eagle feathers. The Sanpoil chiefs' "badge of office" was an headdress with buckskin pendants covered with eagle feathers (Ray 1932:111). At Okanagan Falls (occupied at the time by the Sinkaietk) in 1811, fur trader Alexander Ross (1969:313-14) observed on a pole in front of a chief's lodge what he called a "chief's banner", consisting of the skin of a white wolf painted and decorated with *higua* or dentalia shells, along with bear claws and elk teeth. Among the Wishram, only chiefs, shamans, and war leaders owned wolf skins, which, before the introduction of firearms, were difficult and dangerous to acquire (Spier and Sapir 1930:182). Wishram chiefs wore two eagle feathers in their hair together with strips of skin covered with dentalia, "... in order that people might readily identify them" (Curtis 1911a:93).

It is apparent that the majority of these special chiefly insignia would not survive in the archaeological record. The use of more durable materials such as dentalia and elk teeth in this context is noteworthy. While there is little evidence to suggest that these materials were restricted solely to chiefly use, the fact that they were seen as appropriate for such use provides an indication of the value placed on them. Furthermore, the mere fact that special insignia of rank were used at all is important, and presents the possibility that other items not specifically mentioned in the ethnographies could be similarly restricted in use. The point is that items of material culture were involved in display and in the differentiation of certain social positions and statuses.

Marine Shells

A number of species of marine shells were imported into the Plateau for use as ornamentation either as beads or pendants. By far the most common genera are *Dentalium* and *Olivella*. These are invariably used as beads on necklaces, bracelets, earrings, and, in the case of dentalia, also as nose pieces. Also fairly common are abalone (*Haliotis*) shell pendants, and shell disc beads. Rarer shells, largely restricted to the Columbia Plateau, include *Aletes* and *Glycymeris*, also used as beads. In all, nearly 20 separate species of marine shell have been identified in the archaeological record from the late prehistoric period on the Plateau (Erickson 1990). Little information is available on whether manufacture of the finished shell items took place on the coast or in the interior. Indeed, with the most common shells—*Dentalium* and *Olivella*—minimal modification is required in any case. All marine shell artifacts invariably, with one or two possible exceptions, functioned as ornamental or, less commonly, as ceremonial objects (Erickson 1990). Freshwater shells available from the Columbia and Fraser were apparently only

36 Mortuary Variability and Status

rarely used in this capacity. As a first approximation, then, all marine shell species are expected to have functioned in the display of wealth and prestige on the Plateau.

The earliest marine shells from the Columbia Plateau are *Olivella*. They are found with burials at Marmes Rockshelter (45-FR-50) dating to before 8000 B.P. (Rice 1969). And *Olivella* dominates the Columbia Plateau for the next 6000 to 7000 years (Erickson 1990). *Dentalium*, so much more visible in the ethnohistoric and ethnographic literature, does not appear until ca. 3000 to 2000 B.P., and even then it is very rare. Its first occurrence is in south-central British Columbia, at the Lochnore site (EdRk 7). *Dentalium* becomes progressively more common after 2000 B.P., but it never replaces *Olivella*.

The use of *Dentalium* in the Pacific Northwest has long been a subject of interest. A number of researchers (Barton 1990; Clark 1963; Erickson 1990; Weld 1963) have provided summaries of references to the shell in the early historical literature, and these need not be repeated in detail here. The availability of the shell in British Columbia is highly localised along limited stretches of the west coast of Vancouver Island; such areas were highly valued and strictly under the control and explicit ownership of Nuu-chah-nulth chiefs (Drucker 1951). From here *Dentalium* was very widely traded up and down the coast as well as into the interior, where it was, by most ethnohistoric and ethnographic accounts, held to be extremely valuable (Erickson 1990; Lamb 1960; Spier and Sapir 1930; Ross 1969; Teit 1900; Thwaites 1904-05). In some areas of California, Oregon, and Washington, the use of *Dentalium* closely approached that of a currency in early historic times; possibly it served this function in the late prehistoric period as well (Clark 1963; Weld 1963). Predictably, value seems to have increased with distance from the coast. Early historic sources (cited in Clark 1963; Ruby and Brown 1976; Weld 1963) relate that *Dentalium* was assigned a standardised value, this being 40 shells to a fathom, which would purchase a slave. The fewer shells needed to make a fathom, the greater their value. Long complete shells were more valuable than smaller ones or cut beads (Clark 1963). Considerable value could also be added to the shell by applying fine decorative incisions (Spier & Sapir 1930), which would then often be rubbed with red ochre (Weld 1963). Erickson (1990) notes that, while incised dentalia shells are widespread on the Plateau, they are relatively rare, and seem to occur only after ca. 1000 B.P.

Dentalium, besides being used for beads, was frequently used for both ear and nose ornaments. There is evidence that in at least some Plateau groups, nose and/or ear ornaments were associated with wealth and status. Spier and Sapir (1930) make the most explicit connection, noting that among the Wishram children of both sexes had their ears pierced with as many as five holes, the number giving prestige. (This, incidentally, provides excellent evidence of ascribed status, as does the practice of cranial modification, since both were carried out only during infancy.) Curtis (1911a:9) adds that a feast would be held in honour of the occasion, supporting the connection to wealthy families. A similar situation could be found among some Coast Salish groups around Puget Sound (Elmendorf 1960:207). The Wishram also pierced the nasal septum and inserted long dentalia shells; anyone lacking these ornaments "looked like a slave" (Curtis 1911a:93). Among the Sanpoil (Ray 1932) and Sinkaietk (Cline *et al.* 1938), on the other hand, the ears of both sexes were pierced but apparently with no status connotations. A few wealthy individuals among the Sinkaietk did, however, pierce the nasal septum and wear a "shell" through it (Cline *et al.* 1938:49). Nastich (1954:64) states that the nose and ears of Lillooet infants were pierced when they were only one week old. Teit (1900:321) notes that, among the Thompson, nose and ear perforations were generally made about the time of puberty or after the ceremonial training, but were being made during infancy by the turn of this century. Finally, Teit (1930:236) states that nosepins of shell and bone were worn by a few people of both sexes among the Okanagan. Neither Nastich nor Teit, however, discuss the status implications of the practice. I would suggest that it is likely that piercing of the ear and nasal septum also took place in the wealth and prestige spheres in these groups.

More recently, Barton (1990) has examined the taxonomy of the shell itself as well as its procurement and the context of its early trade. While the occurrence of *Dentalium* in interior sites has often been used as evidence of long-distance trade contacts with coastal peoples, Barton (1990) notes that Euroamerican traders very quickly became heavily involved in the shell's trade as middlemen. This would argue for some caution when interpreting the significance of the presence of dentalia in protohistoric (contact on the coast preceding the interior on the order of some 50 years) and early historic contexts. It is also likely that in the late prehistoric period strategically positioned native groups took upon themselves the same role as middlemen (cf. Ross 1969; Teit 1909). During the ethnographic period, the Chilcoltin were aggressive traders, and apparently controlled the movement of *Dentalium* into the interior of British Columbia, from whence it was actually traded down the Fraser and so back to the coast (Teit 1900). The

Wishram would be excellent candidates for a similar position on the Columbia Plateau, as they were widely noted as traders and were in control of the main access corridor from the coast to the interior.

Dentalium is a very common item in Plateau burials, to the extent that, from the late prehistoric through to the early historic period, it is probably the single most common class of burial inclusion. This would argue that, while it may have still had wealth connotations, access to the shell, at least in some quantities, was not particularly restricted or symbolically powerful. In fact, if the use of the shell approached that of a general currency, it would be expected to be widely distributed throughout society. It may be that it was in the display of large quantities rather than simple presence/absence that *Dentalium* and other marine shells communicated above-average wealth and status. This statement may have to be modified somewhat to take into account the "value-added" incised forms of the shell, which are far more restricted in abundance and apparently in distribution as well. Also, Ray (1938:100) notes that, among the Lower Chinook, the shells of exceptional length maintained a very high market value even after the price of smaller shells had dropped rapidly due to the great numbers of them that became available through the fur trade.

Interestingly, Ray (1932:50) states that among the Sanpoil, clamshell disc beads were valued more highly than *Dentalium*, a double handful being equivalent to a large tanned buckskin or a horse. No other source that I am aware of proposes that clamshell beads were rated above *Dentalium* in value. No information is available concerning the value of the other species of marine shell relative either to *Dentalium* or to one another. Abalone may have been particularly valuable given its wealth and prestige associations on the Northwest Coast in ethnographic times and its relative scarcity on the Plateau.

Large scallop or pecten (*Pecten caurinus*) shells appear to be largely restricted to the Canadian Plateau, from burial sites near Lillooet and Chase (Sanger 1968a, b), but a number of specimens are also known from burial sites in the Middle Columbia, including Fish Hook Island (Combes 1968), Pot Holes (Crabtree 1957), and Wildcat Canyon (Dumond and Minor 1983). While they are usually pierced at the hinge, these shells, with the possible exception of those from Pot Holes, do not appear to have been used for ornamentation. Sanger (1970:101) reports finding a series of seven shells lying nested inside one another at the Mile 28 Ranch site. As noted by Sanger, this strongly recalls the scallop-shell rattles used ethnographically by the Coast Salish during the performance of family-owned cleansing rites (see Suttles 1983, 1987). It is likely, given the concentration of the shells at late prehistoric/protohistoric burial sites along the Fraser Canyon, that the coastal analogy holds in this case.

Bone and Tooth Ornamentation

Bear, cougar, and raptor claw cores, bear canines, and elk teeth were all perforated for use as ornamentation. Perforated elk tooth pendants are by far the most common of these materials found in Plateau burials. The teeth used consist almost exclusively of upper canines. A total of 223 elk teeth found during excavations by Collier *et al.* (1942) in the Upper Columbia, for example, included only a single incisor. It should also be noted that all but one of the teeth were found with burials rather than in occupation debris. The potential importance of this as an indicator of wealth and prestige, at least in terms of hunting success, should be obvious: each elk provides only two upper canines (the lower canines in the elk have become modified to resemble incisors). Burials containing more than 20 elk canines are not uncommon on the Plateau, and the grave of one adolescent female (Burial 25) from Whitestone Creek, 45-FE-24, a site in the Upper Columbia included 80 perforated canines, representing a minimum of 40 elk. The occurrence of such large numbers of teeth appears to be more prevalent in the protohistoric and early historic periods, and is likely related to the introduction of the horse and firearms, but graves including over 20 elk canines are also known from prehistoric contexts (e.g. Cache Creek [Pokotylo *et al.* 1987]). Incised decoration on any claw or tooth ornaments is relatively rare but may vary regionally; only eight of the 223 elk teeth mentioned above were decorated, while eight elk canines out of a total of 21 were decorated in a single burial at the Cache Creek site in British Columbia (Pokotylo *et al.* 1987). Interestingly, a number of burials at Old Umatilla contained, in addition to actual elk tooth pendants, imitation pendants carved from bone (Rice 1978a:65, Figure 47).

Turquoise

Turquoise ornaments are extremely rare on the Plateau; there are five or six specimens documented from the entire area, all of which are from burial contexts. Turquoise ornaments have been reported for one or two burials in The Dalles area, a burial near Vantage along the Middle Columbia (Brennan 1981), a burial in the Upper Columbia (Collier *et al.* 1942), and another in the Canadian

38 Mortuary Variability and Status

Okanagan (Atkinson 1937; Caldwell 1954b). Turquoise as a raw material is certainly exotic to the Plateau, the closest known source being in Nevada, and it is from there that Collier *et al.* (1942:115) propose that the turquoise ornament found with a child burial (Burial 10) at 45-ST-47 in the Upper Columbia originated (see Chapter 6). While it is postulated that turquoise functioned as a high prestige material, the lack of adequate documentation for the few burials in which it is found make it impossible to even tentatively test this hypothesis. It is interesting to speculate on ties, even if minimal, to the Southwest, but the material identifications may be open to question, since there are a number of other more widely distributed minerals that, through their copper content, also have a blue-green colour similar to that of turquoise (see Weigand *et al.* 1977). Without access to the actual specimens for further analysis it is not possible to address this possibility.

Bone and Antler Combs

Elaborately carved bone and antler combs are occasionally found in Plateau burials. As far as I am aware, they have not been found outside of mortuary contexts. While they are referred to as "combs", this should not be understood in the modern usage of the term. Rather, these often elaborately carved objects functioned as hair ornaments, as can be seen in a number of antler carvings (discussed below). Examples of carved bone or antler combs are known from the following sites: Bell, Lytton, 45-ST-47, Pot Holes, Fish Hook Island, Berrian's Island, and Beek's Pasture (see Chapter 6). Where it can be determined, they appear to be found in burials containing higher than average numbers and types of grave inclusions. The emphasis on the head and especially the hair as a means of making status distinctions is a well-known and widespread phenomena.

Steatite

Steatite is not a widely distributed material on the Plateau, with known sources occurring in the Middle Fraser Canyon near Lytton (MacKay in Duff 1956; Sanger 1968a:131), near Cawston in the Canadian Similkameen (Atkinson 1952:11), on the Skagit River (Duff 1956), near Blewett's Pass west of Wenatchee in Central Washington (Butler 1959:19), and on the John Day River in northern Oregon (E. Strong 1960a; Butler 1959). Other sources may exist, but even so they are far more limited than the distribution of steatite artifacts. Therefore in many cases it can be thought of as an exotic material.

Steatite is a rare material in sites in the Dalles-Deschutes area (Strong *et al.* 1930:112), for example, and does not occur locally. The nearest source is probably the Blewett Pass area, west of Wenatchee (Butler 1959:19). Its frequent occurrence in elaborate cremation pits and its near absence in any other context together with the forms it takes—beads, zoomorphic stone rings, and carved tubular pipes—all indicate that the material itself was probably highly valued and reserved for use in the manufacture of prestige items. The iconography seen on some of the pipes in particular suggests imagery having significance beyond that of simple embellishment.

The tubular stone pipe is a relatively common artifact type found in late prehistoric burials on the Plateau. It is often made of steatite, sometimes ground and polished so thin that the glow of the embers inside the bowl would be visible through the stone. Ethnographically, Spier and Sapir (1930) note that smoking among the Wishram was a prerogative reserved solely for chiefs and shamans. Similarly, Teit (1906:250), with regard to the Lillooet, states the smoking was largely confined to elderly males (who would often be the heads of families and clans, i.e. "chiefs") and shamans. Ray (1932:167), in contrast, states that among the Sanpoil all men smoked. This may, however, refer to a later period in which tobacco became far more accessible through the fur trade. Even so, during the historic period tobacco remained a highly desired commodity (see Parker 1844), and would be given by the fur traders to chiefs periodically in order to maintain their support and friendship (see accounts in Ross 1969). The chiefs in turn would distribute the tobacco amongst their people, possibly gaining prestige in the process. Indeed, smoking in many small-scale societies cross-culturally can often be viewed best within a prestige context.

The early use of pipes on the Plateau probably occurred in a more ceremonial context than subsequently (cf. Spinden 1964:189; Teit 1900:349-350), although even today tobacco retains an important ceremonial character among many Native peoples. It has been suggested, for example, that tubular pipes were not necessarily solely used for smoking. In California tubular pipes were apparently often used as sucking tubes during shamanic performances (West 1934:155). In other cases they were used to blow smoke over the patient. The use of sucking tubes is a common practice in shamanism worldwide (the link between ritual and status on the Plateau is made in some detail later in this section). Some pipes on the Plateau are particularly elaborate, bearing zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figures, in some cases incised

and in others fully carved, probably representing guardian spirit power (e.g. Teit 1900:360; Smith 1899:157; E. Strong 1960a; Carlson 1983a). There are some clear connections between Middle Columbia rock art motifs and images seen on steatite pipes, probably relating to both guardian spirit power and possibly also to what may be territorial rock art (see discussion below). The "twins" motif known from rock art (McClure 1981; Keyser 1992) appears on a steatite pipe from the Leachman site cremation pit (E. Strong 1959a, b), and the "grinning face" image (discussed further below), found on at least two pipes, can be related to a painted petroglyph overlooking Wakemap Mound. The incised designs on some pipes are rubbed with red ochre. In at least one case dentalia inlay was added to an elaborately carved pipe (Crabtree 1957), while in another a series of four copper bands were added to the stem (Strong 1957a). Lead inlay on steatite elbow pipes becomes a common feature in the protohistoric and historic periods. While pipe fragments are occasionally found in occupation contexts, complete pipes are almost entirely limited to burials. Taken together, the available information strongly suggests the use of tubular pipes in ritual and prestige roles.

Duff (1956, 1975) has provided strong arguments linking the seated human-figure bowl complex of the Fraser River and Gulf of Georgia with shamanism. The majority of the figures, particularly those from the interior, are made of steatite, while others are made from locally available sandstones. Those bowls found on the Fraser River above Yale have all been from burial contexts (Duff 1956). The seated human figure bowls are stylistically similar over a large geographic region, encompassing the Kamloops area, the Mid-Fraser Canyon, the Fraser Valley, the Lower Mainland, the Gulf Islands, and southeastern Vancouver Island (Duff 1956, 1975). The complex imagery depicted on the bowls, involving skeletal imagery, representations of liminal animals, and visual punning, may be largely associated with the guardian spirit complex. Hill-Tout writes concerning a bowl found at Kamloops (Duff 1975:80, Figure 57; see also Smith 1900 and Chapter 6):

Said by the Indians to have been used in puberty ceremonies. The sitting figure is supposed to represent a woman giving birth to a child. The depression held the sacred water with which the shaman sprinkled the girl on her return from retirement in the woods (Hill-Tout cited in Duff 1975:80).

Boas (cited in Duff 1975) provides a similar account of the use of a steatite human figure bowl in the context of puberty ceremonies in the Yale area. If seated human figure bowls were indeed used by shamans for puberty ceremonies, I suggest that this involved primarily or even exclusively high status individuals. Alternatively, Carlson (1983b) suggests that the bowls were used by the shaman in the preparation of tobacco for ritual smoking (which itself may have occurred in an high status context). In any case it seems certain that seated human figure bowls are shamanic. The complex interrelationships between the guardian spirit quest, wealth, and status are discussed later in this chapter.

Other uses of steatite on the Plateau include manufacture into beads, large zoomorphic stone rings, zoomorphic bowls, spindle whorls, possible labrets and/or ear spools, and various forms of pendants, including three-dimensional zoomorphic figures (see illustrations in E. Strong 1960a; Seaman 1946; Bergen 1989; Borden 1983). Without exception all artifact types made of steatite appear to have functioned primarily as ritual and/or prestige objects (even when assuming an outwardly "utilitarian" form, as in the case of the spindle whorls). The Mid-Fraser Canyon may have been a centre for the manufacture and distribution of steatite artifacts in British Columbia (cf. Fladmark 1982). It is more difficult to postulate a similar centre for the Columbia Plateau, but The Dalles-Deschutes region would appear to be the most appropriate choice, despite the fact that steatite was not native to the region.

Stone and Antler Clubs

A variety of stone and antler clubs have been found on the Plateau. Relevant ethnographic information is limited, presumably because their use declined sharply after contact. The most common form of stone club is probably what has become known as the "slave-killer", so-named because it was supposed to have been used to dispatch slaves at the deaths of their owners, or as a gesture of disdain in the potlatch. But, as a number of researchers have pointed out (Peterson 1978:198; Gunther 1972:39-41, 60), there is little in the way of ethnographic support for either proposition. On the other hand, the identification does appear consistently in a number of different museum collections made at different times and by various collectors (Gunther 1972). The category "slave-killer", if these designations are anything to go by, actually includes a number of different types of club manufactured in a variety of different materials and in

40 Mortuary Variability and Status

completely different forms. As Gunther (1972:60) suggests, it may be that some of the forms described as slave-killers did indeed function partly in that capacity, but that others did not.

The classic slave-killer club form (see illustrations in Galloway 1956:377-378, Plates 55 and 56; E. Strong 1960a:143, Figure 52; Smith 1907:418-420, Figures 179, 180, and 181) is typically made of some hard stone, such as basalt, and is somewhat curved, with two projections on the edge near the distal end. Often the tip of the weapon depicts a zoomorphic form. On the Plateau, the distribution of slave-killers is largely limited to the area around and to the south of The Dalles, continuing down to northern California.

Another type of stone club appears in the form of large pestle-shaped objects. One particular class of items that amateur collectors have labelled as "salmon packers" (supposedly used to push dried salmon into large bags—an unlikely function at best) are especially likely candidates for use in a more ceremonial function (cf. E. Strong 1959a:178). These objects are finely made and polished, and are frequently decorated (see illustrations in Smith 1910:46-49, Figures 30-35). Concentric rings often appear at the smaller end, similar to those sometimes found on mauls. An excellent example of a long basalt pestle club with concentric rings was found in a burial at the Juniper site (see Chapter 6), and is illustrated in Bergen (1959; see also Bergen 1989). Some clubs are manufactured of steatite, which, as argued above, appears to have functioned largely as a prestige material. Two large clubs with zoomorphic ends and one bearing two snakes carved in relief on its sides are illustrated in E. Strong (1959a:179, Figure 73). The snake motif is combined with three interlocking heads on another large club (over 27 inches in length), reportedly from the Yakima-Vantage area (Wingert 1952:Figures 34, 35, and 37). This form of club, as far as I am aware, has not been found on the Canadian Plateau, but is limited to the Middle Columbia region.

Wingert (1952) describes yet a third, cross-shaped form of stone club, referring to the presence of three pointed projections at one end. This appears as though it would make a particularly formidable weapon. Examples may be seen in Wingert (1952:Figure 42) and in Seaman (1946:119). A perforated paddle-shaped club form is known from a number of areas (see illustrations in Smith 1907:431, Figure 172 and E. Strong 1959a:146, Figure 54). An unusual "monolithic axe" form (E. Strong 1959a:147, Figure 56), found near Alderdale, Washington, appears completely out of place on the Plateau, being more typical of the Southeast, from whence it might conceivably have come by some circuitous route. A quite different type of monolithic axe with double bits was found near Yale, British Columbia (Smith 1907:366, Figure 149). Grabert (1968) describes a four-bladed monolithic axe found on the Middle Columbia as being very similar to the one illustrated in Smith. Additional stone club forms are illustrated and discussed in E. Strong (1959a:146, Figure 54) and Smith (1910:77-81, Figures 62-69).

A group of antler clubs shares a form very similar to that of the stone slave-killers. The antler clubs may have either one or two projections in the same position as seen on the stone clubs, and often are decorated with incised lines and/or a zoomorphic figure at the tip. These clubs, in contrast to the stone versions, have been found on the Canadian Plateau. Baker (1970:52, Figure 12) illustrates a specimen found at a disturbed burial site near Lillooet. Far more elaborate versions, in which the club's entire length is often carved with crest animals and inlaid with abalone, are known from the northern Northwest Coast, where they may have been both weapons and badges of office. There is probably some connection between the stone and antler forms of this club. Given its natural shape, it seems more likely that the antler version gave rise to the stone version rather than the other way around. Clubs of either type found in archaeological contexts on the Plateau are, as far as can be determined, entirely restricted to burials.

Copper

The initial appearance of metals in small-scale societies is almost invariably seen in a high status context (cf. Binford 1962; Bradley 1984; Darvill 1987; Fallers 1973; Randsborg 1982; Shennan 1982). Metals are often either used for ornamentation or made into prestigious copies of utilitarian items manufactured in more traditional materials such as stone or bone (Binford 1962). The difficulties usually involved in acquiring and working metals make them very well suited to this prestige role. Examples of this pattern are so numerous cross-culturally that they do not merit further comment here.

Copper has been found on the Plateau in secure pre-contact contexts (Chatters and Zweifel 1987; Dawson 1891; Hayden pers. comm., 1993; Richards & Rousseau 1987; Skinner and Copp 1986; Smith 1900; Stryd 1973) demonstrating that the use of native metal was known on the Plateau prehistorically. Despite this knowledge, however, surprisingly little use was made of the metal. It may be that it simply occurred in too small quantities in a workable form to be worth bothering with. Small nuggets of almost pure copper were cold hammered into flat sheets and then shaped, typically into pendants and tubular beads—with one or two possible exceptions, I am not aware of any instances on the Plateau in which native

copper was used for anything but ornamentation. It is assumed, based both on general and specific analogy together with the limited available contextual information on copper found archaeologically on the Plateau, that native copper was a high prestige material.

There are a number of known and suspected occurrences of native copper in archaeological sites on the Plateau. While most of the copper in The Dalles region cremation sites is undoubtedly of Euroamerican origin, there are a number of possible incidences of native copper. A copper "awl" from Congdon II (see Chapter 6) is unusual, since all other prehistoric copper seems to have been used for ornamental items such as beads and pendants. In light of this, I would suggest that the "awl" may have in fact functioned as a nose ornament inserted through the septum, as was done ethnographically with sharpened bone and large whole *Dentalium* shells (Cline *et al.* 1938; Curtis 1911a; Nastich 1954), or possibly as a pin for a high-prestige garment (elaborately carved bone pins found on the Northwest Coast likely also served this latter function [see Schulting 1994]). The Atlatl Valley site contained two copper beads in apparent association with two atlatl weights (E. Strong 1958); metallurgical analysis suggests that the copper may be native (E. Strong 1959a:36). The Leachman site cremation pit (see Chapter 6) contained a single copper piece that is described as being too thick for trade sheet copper (E. Strong 1959b). Bergt (1978) presents a limited trace element analysis using x-ray fluorescence on four specimens from burials at Old Umatilla, and suggests that they may be of native origin, but the analysis is inadequate in many respects, including first and foremost the absence of any native ore control samples. A copper armband in a burial from Fish Hook Island was analysed spectrochemically and found to be very pure, suggesting that it could be native copper (Combes 1968:32-33), although the excavator is equivocal about the specimen (see discussion of the site in Chapter 6). Finally, some of the copper artifacts found with burials in the Kamloops area (Smith 1900) may be prehistoric.

Copper artifacts from definite prehistoric contexts are usually very badly corroded and retain little indication of their original form. A notable exception involves the recent discovery of two well preserved copper pendants or ear ornaments from excavations at the Scowlitz site (DhR1 16), located at the confluence of the Harrison and Fraser Rivers (Coast Salish Halkomelem territory). The items were associated with a single adult male interred in a large burial mound. Human bone collagen has yielded a radiocarbon age estimate of approximately 1400 B.P. (Blake *et al.* 1993). This presents the distinct possibility that some burials containing well-preserved copper artifacts may be far earlier than is usually recognised. Copper pendants illustrated in Smith (1899, 1900), for example, appear almost identical in form to those from Scowlitz. While the existence of native copper is frequently acknowledged by researchers on the Plateau, in practice the presence of copper artifacts with a burial is often sufficient for it to be attributed to the protohistoric or historic period. The expense involved in radiocarbon dating and its destructive nature frequently means that dates are not run in these situations, thereby perpetuating the idea that the copper is Euroamerican in origin. It is suggested here that the occurrence of native copper may be underestimated, thereby precluding a full evaluation of its context.

That having been said, there is no doubt that the vast majority of copper recovered archaeologically is derived from post-contact Euroamerican trade (Stapp 1984). The earliest smelted metals were probably introduced some time before actual Euroamerican contact through the beachcombing of material from shipwrecks (Rickard 1939). Thus, iron was found in the Ozette village site on the Olympic Peninsula in late prehistoric levels dating from 300 to 500 B.P. (Wessen 1990:416).

During this initial period both copper and iron were considered very valuable, so much so that among the Lower Chinook one slave would be given in return for a two-inch-wide copper armband (Boas 1894 cited in Ruby and Brown 1976:21). It is interesting to compare this value with that seen less than a century later, when it took ten sheets of copper and a fathom's length of tubular copper beads to purchase a slave among the Lillooet (Teit 1906:233).

Once more direct Euroamerican trade with the groups of the Northwest Coast commenced, most copper was obtained in the form of sheeting, subsequently worked into the desired items. Other forms were acquired either partially or completely manufactured. Euroamerican traders quickly took advantage of the initial Native demand for the metal among the Northwest Coast groups, often stripping the copper plates from the hulls of their own ships, to the extent that the market for more raw metal was quickly glutted along most of the coast (Wike 1951). However, the metal may have retained much of its symbolic significance as a wealth commodity, as is suggested by its occurrence almost solely in burial contexts, at least on the Plateau. Stapp (1984) suggests that the groups of the Lower Columbia hoarded much of the copper that came their way, only slowly passing it on up the river into the interior, thereby maintaining its high value. Brass and copper kettles were also popular trade items, and to judge from their frequent occurrence hung on

42 Mortuary Variability and Status

poles around historic graves in the interior of British Columbia, they may have shared some of the wealth associations of the pure ornamental forms.

In both the prehistoric and the protohistoric periods it seems that, not surprisingly, the value of a copper ornament increased with its size. This simple equation has obvious theoretical support, in that a greater quantity of an exotic material will represent greater wealth. It has been suggested, for example, that copper tubular beads, the most common form of copper ornament, at least in the protohistoric period, copy the shape and function of dentalia shells (Stapp 1984), the value of which was also based almost entirely upon length. Copper pendants, another common artifact type in the protohistoric and historic periods, may have been modelled on pre-contact copper and/or shell pendants. One of Harlan I. Smith's (1900:441) Nicola-Thompson informants thought that copper pendants (see Smith 1899:151, Figures 87-89 and 1900:425, Figures 365 and 366) were worn on the chests of chiefs' daughters.

Copper swords were reportedly a valuable trade commodity along the Lower Columbia, although there is some debate over who was manufacturing them (compare Ray 1938 to Ruby and Brown 1976). These were apparently preferred over iron swords despite the former's inability to hold an edge, an eloquent illustration that the primary demand for the metal originated in the wealth and prestige spheres. Teit's (1906:204) Lillooet informants explicitly support this interpretation: "It is said that in ancient days copper knives were sometimes used, but they were considered more for their value (because scarce) than for their utility". Native groups along the Oregon coast were in possession of "copper swords" and "iron battleaxes" by 1792 (Ruby and Brown 1976:56). Lewis and Clark in 1805-06 described and sketched two large copper swords with fishtailed handles from a village on the Lower Columbia near Vancouver, Washington (Jones 1972:116; see also Ray 1938:61). Ruby and Brown (1976) illustrate a very similar copper sword found in an unspecified Chinook burial site on the Lower Columbia River. They add that in 1793 the Chinooks would trade a sea otter pelt for such a sword. A copper sword described and illustrated in Jones (1972:116-118), found in a cremation burial on an islet near the Bonneville Dam, may refer to the same specimen, or it may be another example. Two swords of the same form, one of copper and the other of iron, were found in the forest near Sweet Home, Oregon, apparently not in a burial context (Jones 1972:114-117). An identical copper sword was found in a burial at the Juniper site opposite the mouth of the John Day River (Bergen 1959, 1989). Finally, Cole (1958) noted a "large number" of sheet copper swords, each approximately three feet long, during the burial disinterment project on Upper Memaloose Island in the Long Narrows. During the same project, Cole observed an individual burial on nearby Grave Island to contain a copper breastplate, two copper swords, and two copper bracelets.

At least four copper clubs have been found on the Plateau, three of which are known to have been in burial contexts. James Teit was given a copper "war-club" reportedly found in a grave at Spuzzum, British Columbia (Smith 1899:150, Figure 82). The grip and base have been flanged though pounding, and both sides bear an incised design showing a simple face near the tip with long lines extending down from below the mouth to the handle. An almost identical copper club was found by Bergen (illustrated in Bergen 1959; see also Bergen 1989) in an adult (probable male) burial from the Juniper site. This same burial also contained the large copper sword mentioned above. Barlee (1969a) reports a copper "slave killer" club from a talus burial site in the Canadian Similkameen Valley referred to locally as the Brigade Stopping Place, near Snehumption Creek's confluence with the Similkameen River. No illustration is provided of this artifact, apparently now in the hands of a private collector, and so it is not possible to compare it in more detail to the previous two examples. Finally, Caldwell (1954b) recovered what he referred to as a copper war club during excavations at a housepit village overlooking Sawmill Creek near Kelowna. Again, no illustration or description is provided.

Both their overall shape and specific design elements strongly link the two copper clubs for which descriptions and illustrations are available with whalebone clubs (discussed in more detail below). The same motif, a simple face near the tip of the blade with a line extending down towards the handle, is found on numerous whalebone clubs (see illustrations in Boas 1907, including Figures 165e, 166a, g, 167c, and 168c, d, h, and i) collected before the turn of the eighteenth century from various Nuu-chah-nulth groups on the west coast of Vancouver Island. (A stylistically very similar face also appears on the wooden handle of an iron knife from a late prehistoric context at Ozette [see Wessen 1990:417, Figure 5].) This clearly suggests the transference of an image of power from one high status material to another, although in this case whalebone clubs also retained their high status position. The specificity of the image could suggest a rich, extra-regional iconography shared by the elite over a vast area.

Whalebone Clubs

Whalebone clubs, characteristic of the Northwest Coast, and particularly the west side of Vancouver Island, also occur on the Plateau. Details concerning the distribution of whalebone clubs in the interior are relatively poorly known. The Dalles-Deschutes region has produced both the greatest number of clubs and the greatest stylistic diversity, but clubs have also been found in the Willamette Valley, at the mouth of the John Day River, at Keller Ferry (45-LI-27) on the Upper Columbia, near the northeastern Washington town of Republic (Sprague 1971b), near the city of Kelowna in the central Okanagan Valley, at Fountain (EeRl 19) near Lillooet, and in the Kamloops-Chase area. A number of clubs are known from this last area. The majority appear to be associated with burials, but context is poor for many of the specimens.

In The Dalles region, whalebone clubs are known largely or possibly only from elaborate cremation burials. Some appear to show direct stylistic affinity with the Northwest Coast whalebone clubs of southern Vancouver Island, where they clearly operated as high status objects (see below). W. Strong *et al.* (1930:Plate 9l) illustrate a fragment of the handle of a whalebone club from either Site 15 or 21 on Miller's Island that appears to follow Northwest Coast design principles. Steward (1927:259, Plate 3a-c) illustrates fragments of three additional whalebone clubs from the two aforementioned sites, at least one of which (Plate 3a) demonstrates Northwest Coast influence. An unnamed site some ten miles below Miller's Island, on the Oregon side of the Columbia, presented nine cremation pits and several burials; the handle of a whalebone club from one of the cremations depicts a human head in profile surmounted by a bird headdress (Steward 1927:258, Figure 1). Boas (1907) illustrates the head of a club carved in the typical coastal style, but made of serpentine. It was found on Blalock Island opposite Umatilla. Two additional stone clubs that appear to copy Northwest Coast-style whalebone clubs are illustrated in E. Strong (1960a:146, Figure 54).

Downriver of The Dalles, towards the mouth of the Columbia, whalebone clubs seem to occur more frequently and display the clearest stylistic affinity to the Northwest Coast (see clubs illustrated in Boas 1907; see also Phebus 1978). Boas (1907) attributes the origin of this type of club to the Nuu-chah-nulth of western Vancouver Island, but in many respects it displays equal affinity with the Coast Salish artistic style. Duff (1956:111) has suggested a stylistic relationship between the seated human-figure bowl complex, which seems to be restricted to the Salish, and whalebone clubs. This could offer further support to the idea that the whalebone clubs themselves are as or more strongly associated with the Salish artistic tradition as with the Nuu-chah-nulth tradition. In either case, strong ties to the Northwest Coast are indicated in material culture associated with prestige. In this regard, it is interesting to note W. Strong *et al.*'s (1930:53) comment regarding their excavations on Miller's Island: "Bones of sea mammals decidedly predominate in the bone artifacts from the cremation pits". Although this statement is not expanded upon, it would seem that more than the whalebone clubs are being referred to.

Not all whalebone clubs are necessarily stylistically linked with coastal influences. Others clearly exhibit local stylistic traditions (cf. Ames 1991:940). A specimen found by a collector in The Dalles area depicts the "grinning face" motif, the possible significance of which is explored further below (see Screenings 1965 for a photograph of this club). A whalebone club from the Leachman site cremations has a design which also bears some resemblance to the "grinning face" motif, although this is far less clear than in the previous example. But in both specimens the carved heads are shown in full frontal view rather than in the profile view characteristic of Northwest Coast whalebone clubs. The head on the Leachman club shows what appears to be a topknot (see E. Strong 1959b for a photograph of this club). Another club similar to this one was apparently found at the mouth of the John Day River (E. Strong 1959b).

Curtis (1911a:89) states that whalebone clubs were used by a "class" of men who functioned as public assassins among the Wishram. The slaves of nobles were sometimes engaged in this activity, but while it is possible that they would be temporarily given the use of an elaborately carved club belonging to their owner, it is highly unlikely that slaves would typically be buried with such weapons. On the Northwest Coast, whalebone clubs operated both as actual weapons and as badges of office or status symbols (Arima and Dewhirst 1990:401); use of the weapon was limited to chiefs (Jewitt 1987; Drucker 1951). This is likely to have been true of the other club forms—in stone, antler, and copper—discussed earlier as well. The already high status associations of elaborately carved clubs on the Northwest Coast could only be intensified on the Plateau, where the material itself had to be imported from considerable distances, and probably symbolised a connection with what were viewed as the more powerful chiefs and clans of the Northwest Coast cultures.

44 Mortuary Variability and Status

Utilitarian Objects

There is limited ethnographic information—really just isolated comments—on a small number of additional artifact types. Many of these are what would normally be considered utilitarian objects. As our earlier discussion indicated, however, sometimes, whether because of the incorporation of exotic materials or the expenditure of additional labour, such objects can assume a prestige role in addition to their other functions. And, in the absence of much ethnographic information, it is easier to approach this question from a more theoretical perspective. The following examples offer some cases in point, utilising both lines of evidence.

Nephrite Celts

Nephrite celts form a particularly important artifact class concerning which there is little ethnographic information. Nephrite as a material is highly localised on the Plateau, being concentrated mainly along the Middle Fraser Canyon, although other sources are reported for the Rogue River in southern Oregon (E. Strong 1960a), the lower reaches of the Nooksack River (Smith 1900), and the Upper Skagit River Valley (R. Meirendorf 1993, letter on file with author; R. Babcock, pers. comm. 1993). Occasionally, nephrite cobbles have also been found in the Upper Columbia, probably carried in by ice during glaciations (Hibbert 1985). The production of nephrite celts may have been a specialised activity at certain sites, especially in the Middle Fraser Canyon region between Hope and Lillooet where all stages of manufacture have been found. Evidence of on-site manufacture in the form of sawn nephrite cobbles has been reported from the Hope/Yale area (Hanson 1973; von Krogh 1976), Lytton (Smith 1899:145) and Texas Creek, near Lillooet (Sanger 1968b:4, 21). Unfinished celts also accompanied some of the burials at Chase (Sanger 1968a) and at Texas Creek (Sanger 1968b).

Nephrite is an extremely hard material. Intensive and laborious effort is required to saw a suitable piece from a nephrite boulder and then grind and polish it to its final form, so much so that Hayden (Hayden and Ryder 1991) has suggested that the presence of celts may be a fair indicator of slave labour. The finished tool was widely traded up and down the Plateau and the Northwest Coast from its origin in the Middle Fraser Canyon, and without doubt was highly prized for its usefulness in woodworking. But typically only small broken or damaged nephrite tools are found in occupation contexts, and even this occurs far more frequently on the Northwest Coast than on the Plateau. There may be a bias in recovery contexts on the Plateau. If utilitarian, nephrite adzes would generally be damaged, lost, or discarded during use away from village contexts, and so would not be found in village deposits (cf. Hodder and Lane 1982). But the available evidence argues against this. I am aware of no nephrite adzes/celts from isolated, non-burial contexts on the Plateau; at least a few examples might be expected to have turned up if they were commonly used in this way. Many, however, are found in burial contexts.

Celts found in burials on the Plateau range greatly in size; some are far larger (the largest being longer than 30 cm) than would seem optimum for actual use in woodworking; certainly they tend to be larger than those found in midden contexts. Larger celts are expected, of course, to have greater prestige value than smaller ones (cf. Hodder and Lane 1980; see also Gero 1989). Almost without exception the large celts found in burials are finely polished over their entire surface. Teit (1906:234), with regards to the Lillooet, states that “jade” celts were sometimes used as club heads in warfare. And among the Thompson, Teit (1900:320) states that “jadeite adzes” were used by boys during their spirit quests to peck holes in boulders. Given the exotic nature of the material and the labour required to work it, nephrite celts were undoubtedly valuable items, and, if purely utilitarian, would be expected to be highly curated. Their removal from circulation, then, makes little sense except in their role as prestige objects (cf. Earle 1982). Furthermore, while some celts occur in what appear to be “poor” graves, they seem to be more commonly found in burials with above average wealth. Thus it seems likely that nephrite celts, and particularly large specimens, functioned at least partly as symbols of prestige and wealth, and as media of exchange (Hayden 1993; Fladmark 1982). Some variation in the use of, and value attributed to, nephrite celts can also be expected between different regions of the Plateau, particularly as one moves further away from its sources. To my knowledge this has yet to be addressed.

Atlatl Weights

The presence of atlatl weights in assemblages on the Columbia Plateau is generally accepted now and has been for a number of decades, although it did create some controversy prior to the 1960's (Butler and Osborne 1959; Duff 1956; Strong 1958, 1960a, 1966). A number of problems were brought forward in E. Strong (1958: 1) it makes little sense in terms of performance to have a weight on a throwing board, 2)

many of the so-called atlatl weights weigh up to 10 ounces, thought to be too heavy to be practical, 3) the weights often occur in unmatched pairs, which again would not seem to yield an obvious functional explanation, 4) many specimens exhibit signs of battering on the base, difficult to reconcile with their postulated use as weights, and 5) the shape of the base often does not appear to facilitate attachment to a board. Since first brought forward, most of these objections have been satisfactorily dealt with. Finally, although it is not commonly cited, Astorian fur trader Robert Stuart's 1812 journal (Spaulding 1953:41) clearly describes the use of the throwing board in historic times for hunting sea mammals on the Oregon coast near the mouth of the Columbia River, although the use of weights in conjunction with the board is not mentioned.

In 1956, Wilson Duff tentatively identified ten objects from the Lower Fraser River as atlatl weights. This article provided the impetus for Butler and Osborne's (1959) important study of 104 similar objects, most of them from the vicinity of The Dalles. Three general types of weights, designated I, II and III, were identified. I would like to focus here briefly on Types I and III. Type I weights are of interest because of the material used in their manufacture. The majority are of lead ore, commonly called galena, although examples in other rock types also exist. Butler and Osborne (1959) report 13 complete and three fragmentary galena atlatl weights, all of which were located in the Dalles-Deschutes area as defined by W. Strong *et al.* (1930). Those found subsequently by Bergen (1989) at the Congdon site, also near The Dalles, may be added to this total. Undoubtedly many more examples exist in similar private collections. No sources of galena are known in the vicinity of The Dalles, the nearest sources being located along the western slopes of the Cascades (Butler and Osborne 1959:216). E. Strong (1958) notes that galena weights have reportedly occasionally been found as far east as the shores of the Coeur d'Alène River in northwestern Idaho. The unusual appearance and properties of the material, together with its scarcity, could impart prestige associations. To the north, Dawson (cited in Smith 1899:159) reported finding galena beads or pendants at Lillooet on the Canadian Plateau.

Type III weights are the most common in the collection assembled by Butler and Osborne (1959). Many are beautiful, symmetrical, finely finished objects, made of hard stone clearly selected for its colour and patterning. Some include a series of parallel longitudinal grooves that serve no function relating to the attachment of the stone to the board. In short, many display craftsmanship far in excess of that required to produce a functional implement. Furthermore, some of the weights, particularly those described by Duff (1956) from the Lower Fraser Valley, are fully carved zoomorphic images. Atlatl weights of all types appear to be known largely from burial contexts. Taken together, this information at least suggests the possibility that some atlatl weights or objects that appear similar in form may have been partly involved in the prestige sphere, rather than being purely utilitarian (see also Hall 1977). But, as an artifact class, they occur too infrequently—and even then often in poor archaeological contexts—to make any firm conclusions in this regard.

Projectile Points and Knives

While most projectile points and knives can be viewed as strictly utilitarian equipment, a small proportion appear to exhibit characteristics more typical of prestige objects. Such points are exceptionally finely made, often being so thin and delicate that they seem impractical for actual use either as projectiles or as knives, and they are typically made of high quality exotic lithic materials.

The use of some projectile points and knives as prestige items appears to have been most prevalent along parts of the Lower Columbia, especially in The Dalles-Deschutes region. The majority of projectile points found in large cremation and non-cremation burial sites along the Middle Columbia seem to have been exceptionally well-made, and are often of gem quality lithic material, which, although available locally, is still relatively rare. The highly distinctive type known as the "Columbia River dagger point" provides one example of what was probably at least partly a prestige item.

Roughly 10 percent of the knives and points at sites in the Dalles-Deschutes region are made of obsidian (W. Strong *et al.* 1930), most likely originating from central Oregon. Obsidian bifaces are frequently of unusual size, up to 18 cm or even larger, but very thin in cross-section, making them impractical for use. Further up the Columbia River obsidian becomes even rarer and, when, it does occur, tends to be in the form of large, finely flaked bifaces (see sections on Pot Holes and Wahluke sites in Chapter 6). Most likely such objects functioned as prestige items on the Plateau, as they did in California (Rust 1905) and the Great Basin (E. Strong 1969), where they are commonly known as "wealth blades" by amateur collectors, and are generally found in caches and in burials (see also Cressman 1933 on southwestern Oregon). Spier (1930:76), for example, refers to the "exaggerated" value placed by the

46 Mortuary Variability and Status

Lower Klamath groups of Oregon on these obsidian blades as symbols of wealth. Pavesic (1985) suggests that large "turkey-tail" points and cache blades found with burials in western Idaho, the eastern edge of the Plateau, were prestige items manufactured by specialists specifically for burial with the dead. They are invariably of excellent workmanship in high-quality lithic materials, of larger than average size, and show no signs of use-wear (see also Gero 1989).

More obviously non-utilitarian are a group of chipped stone objects sometimes called eccentrics. Examples of this rather eclectic group of objects are rare but widespread throughout the Plateau. The forms are sometimes recognisably zoomorphic, and sometimes more abstract. Interpretation of these items is difficult. With one possible exception (Atkinson [1937] states that an unusually shaped chipped agate piece belonged to an Okanagan chief and was sacred), there is no ethnographic information on their use, and the scarcity of examples from secure contexts makes any evaluation along these lines tenuous. A few have been found in burial contexts on the Canadian Plateau, but others have been found in middens. While they are provisionally viewed as prestige items, there is in any case very little that can be said about them given their low frequency of occurrence and often poor context.

Mauls and Pestles

Spinden (1964:185), with reference to the Nez Percé, notes that the time involved in manufacturing pestles made them valuable property, sometimes handed down for generations. It is possible that he was referring to mauls rather than pestles, since the former are more often finely shaped. Mauls are also sometimes elaborately carved into zoomorphic forms. It may be questioned why so much effort would be put into making such fine symmetrical tools when appropriately shaped river cobbles were so abundant along the shores of the Columbia and Fraser Rivers. And indeed simpler mauls and pestles are also found, far more frequently in fact (e.g. Grabert 1970:49). Large well-made pestles sometimes grade into a form that might be better described as stone clubs, as discussed earlier.

Digging Stick Handles

Antler digging stick handles may have also been of considerable value to their owners. Cressman (1960:70) states that digging sticks were specially made for specific girls and kept as important personal possessions for life. Certainly they are found more often in burial contexts than in any other (although see Stryd 1983 for examples found in housepits), and they are often elaborately decorated (e.g. Sanger 1968a:111, 173, Plate VIII). The digging stick itself, while representing a relatively simple technology, was nevertheless an indispensable tool used in what was the second most important subsistence activity (in terms of caloric bulk) in many Plateau groups. Women, who were traditionally responsible for the majority of plant gathering, gained considerable status and became desirable as wives in proportion to their success at this activity (see Marshall 1991 specifically regarding the Nez Percé). While it is probably true that in the ethnographic period most or all adult women would own a digging stick, there is some suggestion that the handles on the majority of them would be of wood (Cole and Lockner 1989:417; Teit 1909:514; Nancy Turner, pers. comm. 1993); thus those with antler handles, a harder material to work, may have been of greater value and hence higher prestige (cf. Hayden 1993). In addition, antler digging stick handles would often be embellished with incised designs which may have been involved in advertising greater ability and prestige (cf. Sanger 1968a). The available evidence is very incomplete and thus the interpretation of this artifact class must remain tentative.

Tsagiglálal: The "Grinning Face" Motif

The "grinning face" motif, found on a series of small bone and antler carvings in Late Period cremations, is an important image in the lower Middle Columbia, and specifically in The Dalles-Deschutes region. The few known complete figures exhibit what appears to be tailored clothing with geometric designs below the waist. Ribs and navels are portrayed on all of the carvings complete enough to observe these details. The essence of the image, however, is in the head. Facial features are practically identical, with large, roughly almond-shaped, concentrically-ringed eyes leading to the nose, and a grinning mouth, sometimes showing teeth, and tongue. Elaborate hair styles and/or headdresses are often emphasised on the figures, and many are pierced at the sides of the head as if for earrings. The majority of the heads appear to exhibit marked cranial modification.

It may be that the use of elaborate hair styles can be linked to high status in many societies cross-culturally. McGuire (1992b) also implies this idea in his discussion of Hohokam graves with hairpins, which he found to have over twice the wealth of graves lacking hairpins. C. King (1990) suggests

something similar in his analysis of Chumash burial practices. The portrayal of ribs on all of the complete antler grinning face carvings may link the image to shamanic power through the use of skeletal imagery (cf. Furst 1977), while the depiction of cranial deformation, elaborate clothing, elaborate hair styles/headaddresses, and ear ornamentation strongly suggest, as argued in this chapter, a connection with elite members of society. All of this is in addition to and independent of the contextual evidence provided by the occurrence of these carvings in cremations containing many other artifact types best interpreted as prestige items (see Chapter 6).

There are other examples of the image in different media as well. A steatite pipe from one of the B. Stewart site single cremations near Celilo Falls clearly depicts the image (Butler 1957, 1959), as does another steatite pipe found at Horsethief Lake (Burgoyne 1966) (what used to be Colowesh Bottom before the completion of The Dalles Dam—see Chapter 6). The grinning face image also appears on an elaborately decorated stone mortar, found at either Site 22 or Site 19 on Miller's Island (Heizer 1942, using W. Strong *et al.*'s 1930 site designations) (see Chapter 6). Additional examples of portable stone sculpture that do not appear to have made their way into the anthropological literature may be found in Wingert (1952:Figures 6, 26, and possibly 7), in the photo archives of the Oregon Historical Society, and in the Vancouver, Washington Museum. Finally, a previously mentioned whalebone club from The Dalles area bears the grinning face image. It seems probable that most of these examples can be best interpreted in an high status context.

As has been noted by a number of researchers (Butler 1957; McClure 1979; E. Strong 1959a, 1960a; Keyser 1992), these highly distinctive figures bear a close resemblance not only to one another, but to the famous painted petroglyph of Tsagiglálal (45-KL-58). The Tsagiglálal image is not an isolated occurrence: additional stylistically very similar petroglyphs are known. One of these occurs near the original figure, and another (site designation 45-KL-86) near the present John Day Dam (McClure 1979). Loring and Loring (1982:13, Figure 1a) illustrate a Tsagiglálal-like petroglyph found on a boulder near Spearfish in Clark County. A number of other petroglyphs on both sides of the Columbia in the vicinity of The Dalles depict human faces with features similar to those of Tsagiglálal, even though the overall effect is slightly different (see illustrations in Loring and Loring 1982). Further abroad, Gerity (1964) describes but unfortunately does not illustrate what he identifies as a Tsagiglálal pictograph near an elaborate cremation pit in the Mt. Hood area of Wasco County, Oregon (see Chapter 6).

The overall style of the carved human figure has antecedents going back at least some 1000 years at Wakemap Mound, but the grinning face motif itself may be an eighteenth century phenomenon (Butler 1957, 1965; McClure 1979). This estimate is based solely on the context of portable antler and bone carvings depicting the image, which often occur in cremation pits also containing fragments of what is presumably Euroamerican trade copper. Beyond doubt the origin of the "grinning face" motif lies in the vicinity of The Dalles, where it is most highly concentrated and linked to the image of Tsagiglálal (McClure 1979). The motif also occurs elsewhere, however. On Sauvies Island, downriver from The Dalles, the Tsagiglálal image is found carved in relief on a small boulder (see Peterson 1978:82, Figure 15). A cremation pit on Badger Creek in Wasco County, Oregon contained the largely calcined fragments of two antler carvings bearing the motif (Gerity 1964). E. Strong (1960b) illustrates an example of the "grinning face" motif found at Summer Lake, Oregon. The most distant example known may be a bone carving of the image found near the confluence of the Williamson and Sprague Rivers at Klamath Lake in southern Oregon (Howe 1968:125, Figure 98). The image does not appear to be found a comparable distance to the north.

The interpretation of Tsagiglálal, and, by extension, the grinning face image in general, can be approached from a number of directions. But these all seem to converge to one explanation. "Tsagiglálal" translates as "She Who Watches", or, in Butler's (1957:162) more elucidating version: "She Who Watches All Who Are Coming and Going". This title alone strongly implies the territorial significance of the figure, strengthened by its location overlooking Wakemap Mound and the major fisheries of the Long Narrows, by all accounts the most productive aboriginal fishery in western North America (see Chapter 5). Thus the image may have served in part as a declaration of rights to, and control over, the surrounding fisheries. Indeed, the entire stretch of river encompassing many of the most important fisheries was, before being flooded by The Dalles Dam, known as Petroglyph Canyon, due to the large number of elaborate painted and pecked images found there. Rock art along the entire Columbia River Gorge is found mainly high on cliffs near good fishing spots and occasionally further from the river on trails to the spots (Seaman 1946; E. Strong 1960a:104; W. Strong *et al.* 1930:134; Bergen 1989; see also Cain 1950), supporting the hypothesis that the images were being used at least partly to identify ownership of important fishing stations.

48 Mortuary Variability and Status

Lundy (1974, 1977, 1978, 1979) presents a similar argument with reference to the petroglyphs of the Middle Fraser Canyon near Lillooet. She suggests that rock art is "... closely connected to salmon fishing on the Middle Fraser, perhaps as station markers, perhaps as seasonal indicators" (Lundy 1979:67-68), or perhaps, I would add, as both. This last suggestion stems from the observation that many petroglyphs on boulders along the shores of the Fraser River appear only during the low water summer months when the salmon are running. W. Strong (1945) made similar observations regarding the emergence of petroglyphs on the Long Narrows during the salmon runs before the inundation caused by the completion of The Dalles Dam.

Rock art on the Plateau in general has usually been interpreted as relating to the guardian spirit quest (Keyser 1992; York *et al.* 1993). There is little doubt that at least some rock art served this function. But if the images discussed above were involved primarily in the quest for spirit power, traditionally seen as a solitary and very personal quest, it is difficult to account for their presence in some of the most public and visible locations on the river. It is suggested therefore that these elaborate displays can best be interpreted as visual displays of ownership or access restriction to important resource extraction locations, i.e., as a form of territorial behaviour (cf. Dyson-Hudson and Smith 1978:22). Annie York, a Thompson elder, relates that one use of rock art was as territorial markers, marking boundaries and also acting to actively protect important resource areas from trespassers (York *et al.* 1993:247).

Associated oral traditions collected around the turn of the last century relate that Tsagiglálal portrays a female chief who ruled the Wishram in the past, before being transformed by Coyote (Curtis 1911a:145-146). An interesting possible connection emerges between this tradition and one mentioned in E. Strong (1960a:50): "Wakemap... is a corruption of the Chinook word *wuq'Emap* which means ogress or old woman. Legend says that *wuq'Emap* was an ogress full of sharp stones who led amorous men to a painful death until Coyote with five long pestles succeeded in slaying her". This recalls an aspect of Coyote familiar in the myth cycle of the neighbouring Shoshone: "Coyote's conduct is often associated with his glandular powers. His phallus impregnates. It titillates. It whips into conformity those who are ungracious. Any assessment of Shoshonean phallic art is in some fashion associated with Coyote. His penis is likened to a pestle, stone hard and capable of fracturing the teeth of the most powerful woman - Vulva Woman - the Tooth-Mother herself" (Pavesic and Studebaker 1993:53). The connection between Tsagiglálal and the Tooth-Mother is clear in this context, provided that the Wakemap ogress can be equated with Tsagiglálal, which seems at the least a reasonable proposal. And there may be connections even further abroad. Particular tall standing rocks in the south-central interior of British Columbia are even today known by the Lillooet and Thompson as "Coyote's Rock" or, depending on who is telling the tale, "Coyote's Penis" (cf. Teit 1917:19). James Teit (cited in Duff 1975) relates a Thompson myth concerning an old woman who developed a cannibalistic hunger to eat her own people. When confronted by Coyote and three other culture heroes, she also attempted to kill them "... with her privates, which bite and are poisonous, like the head of a rattlesnake" (Duff 1975:57).

An alternative account, obtained in an interview with a Wishram woman in 1958 (Burke Museum n.d.), identifies Tsagiglálal as the image of a death-cult guardian spirit created during the eighteenth century in response to the impact of introduced European disease. W. Strong (1945) developed this idea most fully, suggesting that the antler carvings and Tsagiglálal are part of an historic nativistic religious movement known as the Ghost Cult. But, as others have pointed out (e.g., Butler 1957), there is a well documented artistic tradition incorporating skeletal imagery on both the Northwest Coast and the Plateau, extending back thousands of years.

Yet another myth identifies Tsagiglálal as a kind of guardian spirit over salmon, assuring their annual return (Burke Museum n.d.; W. Strong 1945). Ostapkowicz (1993) suggests that the elite, through their control over and manipulation of the image, were able to in a sense manipulate the guardian spirit, and thus were perceived as controlling the return of the salmon, thereby legitimising their privileged access. These various accounts are not necessarily mutually exclusive; rather, they may be complementary.

The various depictions of the "grinning face" image are remarkable for their stylistic consistency, and likely represent emblematic imagery identifying a particular group (after Wiessner 1983). But the image is far too numerous and widespread to identify only a single family or lineage; it is more likely that it represents an iconography widely shared by the elite of different lineages and ethnolinguistic groups. The maintenance of such a supra-local identity among the elite is not unexpected. It is also reflected in the fact that, according to various ethnographic sources throughout the Plateau (Spier and Sapir 1930; Nastich 1954; Curtis 1911b), and indeed in societies throughout the world, the elite are far more likely to marry outside of the local group than are other members of the community (see Blau [1977] for an insightful discussion of

this phenomenon from a more theoretical perspective). These ties are, of course, more likely to be between families of comparable socioeconomic and sociopolitical standing (refer to Chapter 5 for more detail supporting this position). They contribute to processes by which the elite acquire and maintain privileged access to extra-local resources, including exotic prestige items. The elite emphasise their privileged position by symbolically (i.e. through the use of images with a specific iconographic content) alluding to their connection to one of the richest resource procurement locations on the Plateau, an area also associated with the highest degree of sociocultural complexity.

An antler carving of a human figure found in the grave of a child near Tampico in the Yakima Valley (Smith 1904, 1910) presents another example of how art may be related to high status on the Plateau. The lower body of the Tampico figure shows what appears to be tailored clothing, presumably buckskin, with distinctive incised designs that seem to suggest series of fringes. The upper body displays the incised rib motif common in the art of both the Plateau and of the Northwest Coast. Armbands or tattoos are also represented. The face is simply executed, with almond-shaped eyes, a straight bridge ending in two drilled nostril holes, and a close-lipped grinning mouth. The real emphasis of the figure seems to be in the hair and headdress. Part of the top of the figure is missing, but what remains depicts a very elaborate series of vertical and horizontal incised lines, a series of joined triangles superimposed on concentric arcs, and wavy vertical lines alternating with additional horizontal and vertical lines at the top. The lines may represent strings of dentalia shells, either on a headdress or suspended from the hair itself. Two ovals similar in form to typical abalone shell or copper ornaments appear at the lower end of this pattern. Writing at the turn of the century, Smith interpreted the costume of the figure with its elaborate "feather" headdress as a product of Plains influence. However, from a contemporary perspective, while some of the iconography may be influenced by contact with the Plains, the image is nevertheless to be understood within the context of Plateau culture. Furthermore, while the depiction of feathers is often stereotypically seen as denoting Plains influence, feathers were important symbols among many North American Native groups, including those of the Plateau (cf. Cline *et al.* 1938; Ray 1938; Teit 1900:357). Osborne *et al.* (1961:299) also question Smith's attribution of the Tampico figure to Plains influence, suggesting instead a relationship to the Columbia River "ghost cult" (cf. W. Strong 1945; see also Carlson 1983a).

Writing in 1904, Smith found the figure's closest stylistic parallels in a series of petroglyphs depicting human heads and figures with "feather headdresses" found at Sentinel Bluffs in Washington, as well as in an antler quill flattener from South Dakota (the affinity of the latter is seen by the present author as somewhat dubious). Excavations some two decades later in the Dalles-Deschutes area (W. Strong *et al.* 1930) revealed examples of bone and slate carvings which are, despite their very incomplete state, remarkably similar to the Tampico figure (Stewart 1927:Plate IIa, b, and c). They show parts of headdresses with nearly identical patterns of zig-zag lines and arcs with intervening vertical hatching as seen in the Tampico figure. The three, along with many other carved bone fragments bearing the "grinning face" motif, discussed above, were found in large multiple cremation pits on Miller's Island at the confluence of the Deschutes River with the Columbia. Another carving very similar to the Tampico figure was found by a collector at the mouth of the John Day River (E. Strong 1960a:121, Figure 40). This carving, made of steatite, is complete, and clearly depicts the same tailored clothing below the waist as seen in the Tampico figure; the incised designs on the waist and legs are nearly identical, though simplified on the John Day specimen. Also present is the grinning mouth and elaborate hair/headdress. Finally, Carlson [1983a] makes a connection between the Tampico carving and a number of anthropomorphic antler carvings found on the Northwest Coast.

The John Day carving does not, according to E. Strong (1960a:124), conform to the Columbia River art style. Presumably, then, neither does the Tampico figure. This interpretation may be called into question, however. Granted that the treatment of the face and head departs somewhat from that seen in the classic "grinning face" image, but the two complete carvings from the Leachman site (see Chapter 6) show a very similar treatment of the body below the waist, including the basic elements identified for the Tampico and John Day figures. The simple presence of a number of figures of the Tampico type argues that the style, while not identical with the "grinning face" motif, is nevertheless not an isolated occurrence but rather represents an alternative iconography, possibly with slightly different ideological or regional content and referents.

Thus the significance of the figure relative to the interpretation being developed here can be seen in terms of its stylistic similarities to both other small-scale carvings and to the petroglyphs and pictographs of the area. It is argued that these similarities can best be viewed in a context of high status emblematic

50 Mortuary Variability and Status

imagery involving recognition of the position of individuals and their relationship *vis à vis* important resources in the form of owned fishing locations or other important sites. A number of features point to the association of these carvings with positions of high status. The wearing of buckskin clothing has already been argued (see above) to be limited mainly to the elite of Plateau society; the abundant shell and possibly copper ornamentation portrayed lends support to this interpretation. The right to wear elaborate headdresses, such as indicated on the Tampico figure, was often the prerogative of high status males, particularly chiefs. Finally, there is the context of the Miller's Island figures in elaborate cremation burials containing many other items most easily interpreted as wealth and prestige items. That the Tampico burial may itself be considered a high status burial is supported by a number of lines of evidence: 1) the form of the facility itself (and hence the effort involved in creating it) is more elaborate than those typically seen in the area (Smith 1910); 2) the presence of long incised dentalia shells to which high value was attributed by Lower and Middle Columbia groups (Spier and Sapir 1930); and 3) the possible presence of occipital flattening, since such treatment in at least the lower Middle Columbia area was ethnographically considered essential in the upper classes. Cranial modification, when the practice can be linked with high status, is also an excellent indicator of ascription, since it can only be applied in the early years of life.

Status and the Guardian Spirit Complex

The guardian spirit complex was by all accounts very important and pervasive on the Plateau (Cline *et al.* 1938; Curtis 1911a, b; Marshall 1991; Ray 1932, 1939; Spinden 1964; W. Strong 1945; Teit 1900, 1906, 1909; York *et al.* 1993; Walker 1968). Its relevance to this work stems from the fact that many ethnographic accounts suggest that a significant amount of the "decoration" on many different types of items can be referred to guardian spirit power (Boas in Teit 1900; Carlson 1983a; Ray 1939). This brings us to the realm of art and its role in Plateau culture.

Art in general in small-scale societies is rarely purely "decorative" but is almost always imbued with religious or mythic meaning (cf. Clarke *et al.* 1985; Anderson 1989), which in turn is often strongly correlated with wealth and prestige. This relationship, it is argued, held for the Plateau. W. Strong (1945) has made one of the earliest and most explicit connections between art and power on the Plateau, in the form of the guardian spirit complex (see also Crabtree 1957, Sanger 1968a, and Carlson 1983a, 1993). The human figure in Plateau art typically exhibits a number of recurrent features: the depiction of ribs, malar lines (possibly related to tattoos, which Teit [1900, 1906] has also related directly to guardian spirit powers), and, often, the presence of an elaborate headdress or hair style. The last often includes the depiction of ear and hair ornaments, including combs. The use of skeletal imagery can be linked with the shamanic vision (cf. Duff 1956; see also Furst 1977 for a cross-cultural discussion of the use of skeletal imagery in the shamanic vision). In some cases, as discussed in the section on Tsagiglálal and the "grinning face" image, there seems to be a very clear emblematic (Wiessner 1983, 1990) aspect involved in the depiction of human figures. Furthermore, Teit (1930:194-195) specifically links the carving of small animal and human figures in stone with guardian spirit representations among the Columbia Plateau Salish. And Carlson (1983a:195) goes so far as to suggest that "All zoomorphic or anthropomorphic pendants should represent spirit powers of some sort".

Other, essentially unmodified items such as eagle feathers, bird beaks, raptor and bear claw cores, and bear baculae were likely also spirit power representations in many instances. While this might suggest to some that such items had little to do with wealth and status, functioning rather in the religious sphere (cf. Skinner & Copp 1986), it is argued here that a strong correlation existed between guardian spirit power, wealth, and status in many Plateau groups. Indeed, this situation would be expected given my earlier discussion concerning the lack of separation of religious and economic spheres commonly seen in small-scale societies (and many larger-scale as well). Guardian spirit power was thought to be responsible in large part for one's achievements and successes (Curtis 1911a, b; Nastich 1954; Romanoff 1992a; Spinden 1964; Walker 1968; see also Elmendorf 1977 and Suttles 1987 regarding the Coast Salish). Strong gambling power, for example, would lead to success in that activity and so to wealth (Maranda 1984); thus beaver tooth dice and lahal sticks (usually made of decorated wood but occasionally of bone) operated in this sphere.

Numerous other specific examples can be cited. The simple designs sometimes present on digging stick handles have been said to represent spirit powers conferring ability in the acquisition of root resources (Marshall 1991; Sanger 1968a), which were among many Plateau groups the most important economic resource after salmon. Antler tine clubs used in warfare were also said to be incised with representations of the owner's power (Cline *et al.* 1938). Teit (1930:283) states: "It seems that adolescents of some families

in all the tribes used scratchers, paint scratchers, drinking tubes, and whistles, as among the Thompson, while those of other families did not use them". The objects mentioned are all made of bone and usually bear finely incised abstract designs. They also occur as grave inclusions, possibly more often than realised, since they may be occasionally misidentified as utilitarian objects. Specific information is available linking all of these items to the quest for spirit power. During their training, for example, Thompson youths were not allowed to drink except through a special drinking tube; they could not even touch their heads, but must use a special bone object (a "head-scratcher") for this purpose (Teit 1900:313-318). The fact that the use of these items was limited to only certain families suggests that not all adolescents underwent the training for spirit power, and indeed this seems to be the case. It is argued that training for power occurred more frequently within a high status context; this in turn suggests that those individuals buried with these items were members of high status families (although once again, especially in prehistoric contexts, it is important to test this assumption against other lines of evidence rather than accepting it as given—it is only part of a model constructed using limited ethnographic data, the purpose of which is to generate expectations, not complacency).

The purpose behind the discussion of these specific examples is to suggest that "simple" incised designs on items, including even those usually considered to be purely utilitarian, may be of considerable significance through their relation to the guardian spirit complex (cf. Stryd 1983) and hence to socioeconomic status. This last connection will now be discussed in more detail.

Spinden (1964:247), in his ethnographic study of the Nez Perce at the turn of the century, states: "Those who were unsuccessful in obtaining a guardian spirit were regarded as unfortunate, and seldom rose to posts of honor and influence". The same idea is expressed by Farrand (1921:245): "Boys who did not go into the mountains to secure helpers were thought to be of no account" (see also Walker 1968). And apparently many Nez Percé youth *did* fail to acquire spirit power (Farrand 1921:247). Referring to the Yakima, Curtis (1911b:10) states: "Many failed altogether to obtain the pity of the spirits". Spier and Sapir (1930:238) write concerning the Wishram: "Success in life was contingent upon acquiring some power from the spirits, yet some never acquired any". Ray (1932:26, 182-185), once again emphasising the egalitarian nature of the Sanpoil in particular and Plateau culture in general, states that most Sanpoil men acquired at least one guardian spirit power. Those (males) who did not, however, were held to be of no account. Ray estimates that one out of ten men failed in the quest, while only 20 to 30% of women, for whom the endeavor was apparently less essential, succeeded. But while most men acquired at least one spirit, some acquired many more than this; in fact a famous Sanpoil shaman possessed six guardian spirit powers. Thus, despite Ray's interpretation, it appears that a very unequal distribution of spirit power still existed, even among the Sanpoil. The idea that individuals acquired varying numbers of guardian spirits, from none to one to many, is echoed by Curtis (1911b:82) for the Columbia Plateau Salish in general, and by Teit (1900:320) for the Thompson.

Hill-Tout (cited in Teit 1906:295) states that, among the Lower Lillooet "... only those youths who had a desire to excel in any particular thing underwent the regular *kwa-za'ntcut*, the ordinary youth possessing no personal totem [guardian spirit]". Certain specialist occupations required particularly strong spirit power for success; these positions included chief, shaman, warrior, hunter, gambler, and foot-racer (Curtis 1911a, b; Ray 1932; Romanoff 1992a:474; Spier and Sapir 1930; Spinden 1964; Teit 1900:317-318; York *et al.* 1993; Walker 1968). With the possible exception of the last, concerning which no information is available, these can all be regarded as high status occupations. It should be noted that the position of "hunter" does not refer simply to an individual skilled at tracking and killing game, but to a leader of communal hunting activities. Even everyday subsistence activities such as fishing and root-digging were greatly enhanced by strong guardian spirit power (Marshall 1991; Ray 1938; Spier and Sapir 1930; Walker 1968).

Social perceptions of proper behaviour were such that one would be unlikely to assume the trappings of guardian spirit power one did not possess. Spinden (1964) states that among the Nez Percé it was a "sin" to pretend to have powers beyond one's capabilities, and that individuals who dared this could be killed by the mis-represented spirit power. Cline *et al.* (1938:47) state that, among the Sinkaietk (Southern Okanogan), certain emblems were restricted to strong old men with power: "... if an old man with strong power saw such a cap worn by a young man who lacked the privilege, he would ask his power to kill the pretender". They provide another example: "The wearing of feathers was also connected with power, in that an individual without the proper power could not wear feathers without suffering loss of prosperity or well-being" (1938:48). Similar restrictions to wearing certain items, particularly eagle feathers or other "unusual dress or ornament", were noted by Teit for the Thompson (1900:357, 361). The display of these

52 Mortuary Variability and Status

items was equivalent to claiming the power represented and so could be considered as a challenge to a shaman. It is interesting to note that among both the Sinkaietk and the Thompson specific eagle eyries were considered important property, individually owned and inherited in the male line.

Finally, there are indications that in at least some groups guardian spirit power could be inherited (Ackerman 1982:102; Miller 1988:157; Ray 1932:169, 1939:88; Spinden 1964:256; Teit 1900:354, 1909:605; York *et al.* 1993:227; Walker 1968:17), a situation somewhat at odds with the emphasis on the individualistic and egalitarian nature of the spirit quest as it is often portrayed (Ray 1939). In one of the more explicit formulations of this pattern, Walker (1968:17) writes: "Chiefship of either type and the corresponding supernatural assistants seem to have been semihereditary at all levels of aboriginal Nez Percé social organisation". The occurrence of objects strongly linked with the spirit quest in burials of pre-pubescent children further suggests some form of inheritance of power (cf. Sanger 1968a:136). I certainly do not mean to imply that the spirit quest did not occur—it certainly did—nor to belittle its significance to the individual, but simply to point out that it can, at another level, also be perceived as a vehicle to maintain spiritual power largely within certain high status families, much in the same way that early Medieval Christian clergy tended to be drawn from the upper strata of European society. Nastich (1954) states that wealthy Lillooet families consciously tried to preserve wealth and status for their children by training them from a very early age to acquire strong spirit powers, and later in life by arranging marriages. Failure to obtain a spirit despite the proper training was the fault of the individual: "His would be the life of the undistinguished many who eked out an ordinary existence" (Nastich 1954:84). Again, this statement implies that only a privileged few attained guardian spirit power.

Training, often long and arduous, thus played an important part in the guardian spirit quest (Curtis 1911a, b; Maranda 1984; Nastich 1954; Romanoff 1992a:473-474; Spier and Sapir 1930:239; Swanson 1973:361; Teit 1930:283; Tyhurst 1992:391; Walker 1968:18), and the training received in the "better" (words such as "decent" and "clean" are also often used in this context [York *et al.* 1993:228]) families was held to be superior to that received in the poor (Cline *et al.* 1938:94; Nastich 1954; York *et al.* 1993). In part this may have been because it was costly both in terms of time and of resources (Teit 1900:318, 1930:283; see also Jenness 1955 and Suttles 1987 regarding the Coast Salish, and Owens-Baird 1993 for a cross-cultural perspective), so that not all families could afford the same degree of preparation. Proper training is also often described by informants as conferring a kind of moral superiority that is largely responsible for one's success (Cline *et al.* 1938; Nastich 1954; York *et al.* 1993; see also Suttles 1987 for the most detailed investigation of this topic as regards the Coast Salish).

It is likely that the more desirable, socioeconomically important guardian spirit powers were perceived as requiring the most extensive training to acquire (cf. Romanoff 1992:474). It is not difficult to then imagine a scenario in which the feeling of psychological preparedness achieved through better training would play an appreciable role in the acquisition of a more powerful spirit during fasting and other trials undergone in this period. In another context, Werner (1981) makes an important distinction between absolute inequality and "inequality of opportunity"; it is the latter that seems to apply to the spirit quest on the Plateau.

The guardian spirit complex also presents, then, a means of justifying and perpetuating existing socioeconomic inequalities. The emerging elite attempt to justify their claims to resource ownership and/or control by virtue of their privileged knowledge (Hayden 1992b:545). In his discussion of Thompson rock art, or "writing", Richard Daly (York *et al.* 1993:227) writes: "A certain level of meaning is communicated by the symbols of an oral culture to all members, but fully elaborated meaning is restricted socially to only certain members, certain families, or certain experts." The social elite derive their authority partly from the control of access to this esoteric information.

The justification of privileges is, of course, a very typical function for "religious" (using a broad meaning of the term) institutions in small-scale societies, as well as in larger-scale societies. Referring specifically to Formative Mesoamerica but also meant to apply in a broader context, Drennan (1976:348) states: "One of the most important types of message that is apt to receive sanctification concerns social conventions dealing with economic matters". There are intriguing similarities between the guardian spirit complex of the Plateau and the secret societies of the Northwest Coast, where the noble/commoner dichotomy is paralleled in ceremonial life by the initiated/uninitiated dichotomy (see Ruyle 1973). This is not to repeat the error of assuming that the guardian spirit complex represents some kind of diluted borrowing from the Northwest Coast, but simply to add support to the proposition that supernatural power is cross-culturally often used to bolster and naturalise social inequalities based on very real differential access to resources.

Trade Networks

At this point it would be of benefit to expand briefly on the relationship between trade and status touched upon in Chapter 2. The linking of trade in luxury items with socioeconomic status justifies the analytical importance placed on exotica and strengthens the interpretations made concerning status both in overall mortuary assemblages and in particular burials. Certainly long distance exchange networks in small-scale societies, and even in state-level societies lacking effective means for bulk transport (e.g. Maya, Aztec), tend to focus overwhelmingly on prestige items. Prestige items become essential both as visible material indicators of status and as a means of maintaining a network of social relations and the allegiance of a group of supporters (Bender 1985; Earle 1977; Brumfiel and Earle 1987; Brumfiel and Fox 1994). Participation in such a network itself provides prestige (cf. Jackson 1991); clearly the distant origins of exotica are recognised by all members of the community, and serve as a constant reminder that differential access to such goods exists. As Paynter and McGuire (1991:7) state, acquiring the accoutrements of power is tantamount to having power. Bishop (1983, 1987) takes the position that hereditary rank first developed through exchange in luxury commodities (see also Pearson 1990; Renfrew 1975; Spencer 1994; Redmond 1994). This relationship between chiefly exchange of prestige items and political power has been explored in some detail in Polynesian chiefdoms (Earle 1977; Peebles and Kus 1977).

Exchange on the Plateau may be interpreted within the same framework. Inter-group trade on the Plateau was not always simply carried out between individuals at will. It was necessary to maintain "trading friends" in other villages through whom trade would be conducted (Cline *et al.* 1938; Cressman 1960; see also Jackson 1991 for a cross-cultural perspective on this phenomenon). Furthermore, trade often appears to have been dominated or even monopolised by the elite. For example, Spier and Sapir (1930:225) note that only higher class individuals such as chiefs and important shamans of the Lower Columbia Chinook came to trade with their Wishram counterparts at The Dalles. Cline *et al.* (1938:74) state that a chief of the Sinkaietk around A.D. 1800 would frequently conduct trading expeditions across the Cascades to obtain highly valued marine shells. Ross (1969:313) in 1811 mentions that an Okanagan chief (also Sinkaietk—in fact, possibly the same individual referred to by Cline *et al.*) travelled many times to the coast to trade for dentalia and other "trinkets". Fraser's (Lamb 1960:63) account of what was probably a Thompson trading party on the Fraser River in 1808 emphasises the rich dress and ornamentation of the mounted group, suggesting that these men were also of high status. Finally, Teit (1909:576) explicitly states that among some Shuswap groups the upper classes maintained special trading privileges. This was possibly most pronounced among the Canyon Shuswap, whose elite, taking advantage of their intermediate geographic position, regulated trade between other Shuswap groups to the east and the Chilcoltin to the west.

An interesting parallel to the Native trading partner system may be seen in the relationship between early fur traders and Natives. The fur traders tended to consider a single high-ranking individual, usually a chief, as their link to the rest of the community, or even to a number of communities, thus greatly enhancing the power and prestige of the individual so chosen. This situation was at least partly responsible for the rise to prominence of Chief Nicola (or Nicholas, after whom the Nicola Valley is named), who came to be recognised as chief of a large portion of the Nicola and Okanagan Valleys in the nineteenth century (Wyatt 1972).

It seems likely that the above ethnographic glimpses have relevance to much of the Plateau—that they are not more abundant is probably due to the fact that this type of information was not consistently recorded. The acquisition of the horse undoubtedly made long distance trade easier along certain corridors, but a possible concomitant increase in aggression, especially on the Canadian Plateau, may have made travel little safer (cf. Anastasio 1985:114). In any case, archaeological evidence shows that trade in many of the same prestige items extends back far into prehistory (cf. Richards and Rousseau 1987). Tracing the specific origins of exotica, such as native copper, various marine shells, steatite, nephrite, and obsidian, would allow far more detailed statements to be made concerning prehistoric patterns of trade, including an evaluation of possible changes through time in trade networks. One possible example of such a change involves the shift in emphasis from *Olivella* in the middle prehistoric on the Columbia Plateau to *Dentalium* in the late prehistoric (Erickson 1990; Pavesic and Studebaker 1993:23). The major sources of *Olivella* are far to the south of the best sources for *Dentalium* (Erickson 1990). Sourcing information would obviously be very useful in terms of identifying connections between different areas, but unfortunately relatively little research of this type has been conducted, particularly as regards materials other than obsidian.

There is also some evidence, although slight and inconclusive, of much wider-reaching trade networks. Links to the Southwest are suggested by the possible presence of turquoise at several sites on the

54 Mortuary Variability and Status

Plateau, cloud blower and nostril pipes, a maize kernel in a prehistoric dry cave site, and a possible copper bell from a site at The Dalles. Links to the Eastern Woodlands and Southeast may be indicated by a copper awl (E. Strong 1960a), tobacco, and monolithic axes (see also Mitchell 1971 and Fladmark 1982). But even if verified, these links would remain sporadic, and unlikely to have had much affect on local developments. They do, however, indicate the possible extent of trade networks, and the types of exotic prestige materials that travelled along them.