

CHAPTER 26

Rock Art of the Lower Fraser River Region

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Introduction

Indigenous people of the lower Fraser River region have long known of various markings, anthropogenic and otherwise, in local landscapes. On June 18, 1808, Scottish explorer Simon Fraser and his men were led to a rock outcrop at *The'xelis* (DjRi-31) where, "...the Natives informed us that white people like us came there from below and they shewed us indented marks, by which the white people made upon the rocks." (Lamb 1960:100). Fraser understood these earlier visitors to be European and noted the location on his map but he was skeptical regarding the inscriptions "...which, by the bye, seem to us to be natural marks" (Lamb 1960:100). When he first appeared the local people inferred that he and his men might be returning "Transformer" beings. The marks, or *xela:ls*, according to their view, were not natural nor made by white men, but inscribed a long time ago by the original transformers – the mythological beings: *Xexa:ls* of the Halkomelem and *Xwakt'kwaktl* of the Nlaka'pamux (Teit 1898; Mohs 1987; York *et al.* 1993).

case with earlier regional rock art studies in the lower Fraser region that incorporated archaeological and ethnographic data from Harrison River, Harrison Lake and Pitt Lake (Smith 1946; Lundy 1972; Mohs 1985; Brown 1986). This chapter includes similar data from Boston Bar to the shores of Georgia Strait and Burrard Inlet to augment this previous work (Figure 1). While there are numerous rock art sites in the lower Fraser River drainage, very few have been investigated archaeologically in any detail (Ritchie and Springer, this volume) and most are not well documented.

Ethnography and ethnohistories regarding specific sites are limited. Indigenous teachings, (where they exist), may be available, restricted or reified. Although radiocarbon AMS dating of paint and/or mineral accretions at rock art sites has been attempted in many contexts (Watchman *et al.* 2000; Rowe 2005), no rock art anywhere has been directly dated using radiocarbon methods (Bednarik 2010:7). In other research avenues, Beth Velliky (2013) has pioneered the use of portable XRF at rock painting sites in Howe Sound and the Squamish valley demonstrating the potential to identify and chemical signatures of rock paintings with red ochre sources. Much more archaeological work, including comprehensive photogrammetric records of art found at individual sites, remains to be done.

Xela:ls/TSeQU (Rock Art)

While archaeologists generally distinguish two categories of rock art, based on their method of manufacture, either pictographs (rock paintings) or petroglyphs (rock carvings), Halkomelem and Nlaka'pamux etymology makes no distinction. In Halkomelem territory all rock art is called by the same descriptive term – *xela:ls* or "writing," which is an "action oriented naming" closer in meaning to "the act of writing" (Galloway 2009:1668). The Nlaka'pamux word for both methods of inscription is *TSeQU*, and carries the same meaning (Arnett 2016). Both words infer a purposeful marking, picture, drawing and/or writing. These words have a more inclusive meaning than just rock art imagery *per se* and refer to imagery depicted on clothing, artifacts, or bodies.

The rock art of the lower Fraser River and its tributaries is part of a wide continuum of cultural practices among Salishan peoples that involve marking particular landforms

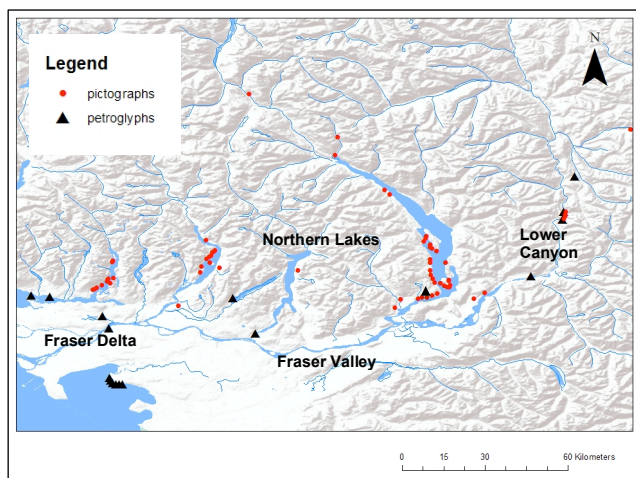


Figure 1. Distribution of pictographs and petroglyphs in the Lower Fraser River Region. Map by John T.T.R. Arnett

Ideally, rock art studies will combine archaeological data (i.e. site distribution, site formation processes and iconography) with location specific ethnographies provided by informants and anthropological literature. This has been the

with visible signs to communicate the presence or occurrence of non-material realities”. Ethnographic references and Indigenous theory (Atleo 2004) maintain that non-material (spiritual), although elusive to the uninitiated, can be signaled and thus partially quantifiable by signs or inscriptions created on bodies, artifacts, or geological formations. Pictographs and petroglyphs are empirical evidence of other, non-material, levels of cultural activity that connect people to a physical space and its non-material aspect.

Although landforms where rock art is found have the appearance of being randomly scattered throughout the landscape, indigenous ontology asserts that they are not random, and are deliberate creations of mythological events that can be only partially explained through materialist models. The indigenous terms for these landforms are *sxwóxwiyám* in Halkomelem and *sx^wax^way^m* in Nlaka’pamux, and refer to “transformed mythological beings of the ancient narratives” (Mohs 1987:72-5) sometimes referred to in English as “stone people.” They are non-random local monuments connected to larger universal narratives of the indigenous geography (Laforet and York 1998:209 ; Schaafsma 1985:261) with far-ranging ties of marriage, kinship and ceremony anchored to a local community composed of historically conscious human and immortal “other-than-human beings” (Miller 1999:10). Not all geological formations with known spiritual associations were so marked. Mohs’ (1987) study of numerous Sto:lo and Nlaka’pamux spiritual sites found only a few with any obvious associated archaeological signatures, suggesting that the practice of inscribing ontologically significant landscapes is variable, location specific, and secondary to the primary significance of the landform. With this in mind, the distribution of pictographs and petroglyphs in the lower Fraser River region may reflect historically contingent cultural practices in places significant to indigenous ontology.

To discuss non-random culturally-determined inscription of ontologically significant places over time, pictographs and petroglyphs in the study area are considered separately in terms of distribution, ethnography and taphonomy. Although indigenous terminology does not discriminate between these two types of inscription, spatial analysis and ethnographic data show variability in the practice of inscription that also seems dependent on factors of time, place and authorship.

Both types of inscription suggest selective attention to natural features in the rock, a regard (and respect) for the landform *per se* that may represent an archaeological signature of Salishan principles of mutual recognition and interaction between persons and place (Bierwert 1999; MacHalsie 2007). The “making” of imagery is the most important facet of its “meaning” thus rock art paintings can be treated “as material practices and performances with linkages to social facts and cultural logics” (Conkey 2010:204). In this context indigenous ontology asserts that

place is prior to the practice of inscription which is historically contingent.

Petroglyphs

Petroglyphs (“stone/carving”) are the result of a relatively time-consuming reductive process by which a rock surface such as boulders or horizontal bedrock is inscribed or altered through incision (scratching, abrading, e.g., Figures 2 and 3), or battering (Figure 4). Subject matter is limited to carved lines, round holes (cupules) and some occasional figurative designs. Only 17 petroglyph sites have been recorded in the study area below Boston Bar. Some sites have been deliberately hidden to prevent desecration (Mohs 1987:87, 106-107; Daly 1991). Current data shows a generalized lateral (east/west) distribution along the lower Fraser River drainage (Figure 1).

Of the petroglyphs (n=17) found between Boston Bar and the coast, over a third (n=6) are associated with Origin stories involving Transformers, (*Xexa:ls* among the Sto:lo/Yale; *Xwakt’kwaktl* among the Nlaka’pamux) supernatural beings who appeared at the time of the Sto:lo *sxwóxwiyám* and the Nlaka’pamux *spetaklh* (“ancient narratives”) to put the world in order and teach humanity the arts of living from the land (Carlson 2002:6-7; Mohs 1987). Petroglyphs of the Fraser Canyon and the Fraser Valley can be distinguished on the basis of location and technique of manufacture which may reflect linguistic boundaries and internal cultural distinctions recognized today by the Sto:lo between the upriver (*teltiyt*) and downriver (*tellho:s*) divisions (Duff 1952; Smith 1946; Mohs 1987:12).

Fraser Canyon

In the Fraser Canyon, five known petroglyph sites (DhRk-6, DjRi-41, DjRi-31, and one unrecorded site at *Xelhalh*, feature lines abraded into the rock surfaces with compositions conforming to the natural features of the rock surface. The furthest upriver site (DkRi-6) is located ~1000 m elevation above the east side of the Fraser River in the Gilt Creek drainage (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Petroglyph at DkRi-6, Gilt Creek. Photograph by Richard Daly.

Once proclaimed in popular press as ...“the largest known petroglyph, or Indian rock carving known in the whole of Canada.” (*Chilliwack Progress* 1927), the 75 x 50 m shale outcrop has flat longitudinal surfaces marked with natural fissures and sub-parallel glacial striations that display some figurative but mostly linear parallel patterns that have been abraded into the shale. Although half of the original site is now destroyed, photographs from 1941 show flat areas of bedrock marked by scores of near-parallel lines and schematic figures arranged in rows along the natural linear features and panels of the bedrock surface (Lundy 1979, Fig.8; York *et al.* Fig.84). Variation in depth between images suggest different visits and episodes over time. Amateur archaeologist Bruce McKelvie visited the site when it was intact and distinguished between earlier work and what he termed ...“the characteristic picture writings of a much later period” (*Chilliwack Progress* 1927).

Nlaka’pamux elder Annie York and her cousin Arthur Urquhart provided information regarding this site originating from Chief Henry James of Spuzzum (*Sto:lo Nation News* 1987; Mohs 1987; York *et al.* 1993; Daly n.d.). Annie York attributed the work to *Xwakt’kwaktl* and interpreted one panel of lines as his teachings about canoe construction (York *et al.* 1993:121) Arthur Urquhart alluded to information from Chief James regarding an unspecified calendrical function as well (Daly pers. comm.).

On the west bank of the Fraser River, 200 m upriver from the Eayom burial site (DjRi-2) is DjRi-41, another petroglyph location on a bedrock outcrop with over 43 forty-three individual grooves and possibly more hidden under lichen (Lundy 1979:23). The area of carving reportedly measures 3 m by 2 m in extant. This site has not been studied in any detail though it may represent one of the “configuration” of sites mentioned by Chief Henry James.

The’exelis (DjRi-31)

Two of the most culturally and archaeologically important Fraser Canyon petroglyph sites lie on either side of the river at *The’exelis*, and *Xelhalh* inside a significant cultural landscape associated with the activities of the *Xexa:ls* or *Xwakt’kwaktl* Transformers. (Mohs 1987) includes a detailed account of this location and the ethnography associated with it (see also Bierwert 1999). Eng also provides a description and discussion here in Chapter 3.

The petroglyph images at *The’exelis* (DjRi-31) are located just south of Lady Franklin Rock 10 m above the river on an east facing weathered rounded granite bedrock outcrop speckled with quartz inclusions (Figure 3). The prominent quartz inclusion shown in Figure 3 has a deeply carved flat-bottomed groove 22 cm long, from 3 mm to 1 cm wide, and 2 cm deep that Duff compared to the sawing of nephrite (Duff 1950). Flanking this deep groove are at least 34 shallower markings, only six of which are fairly distinct, of varying length in near-parallel lines.



Figure 3. Petroglyph at DjRi- 31 (*The’xelis*) at Yale showing incised lines.

Although archaeologists have sometimes interpreted the linear markings of the Fraser Canyon to be the result of stone tool sharpening (Lundy 1979:55,63) (Chapter 3), when Wilson Duff visited *The’exelis* in 1950 his guide Patrick told him that while there were places in the mountains where hunters did sharpen arrows, the markings at DjRi 31 were “different” (Duff 1950).

Xaxa

The Yale and Sto:lo Transformer narratives describe a contest at this place between *X:al’s* (the singular of *Xexa:ls*) who is approaching from the coast and *Kwiyaxtel*, an Indian Doctor from Spuzzum who takes a seat with his daughter on the east side of the river at *Xelhalh* “injured person” (Mohs 1987). *X:al’s* arrived at the place and sat down in a depression still evident in the rock (Duff 1950 Book 2:2, Mohs 1987:91). They proceed to have a duel across the river. Gritting his teeth *Xa:ls* scratches the rock beside where he his sitting with his thumbnail and with each scratch weakens his opponent. *Kwiyaxtel* is eventually turned to stone along with his seat and that of his sister. Alternative versions suggest that *Xa:ls* made the marks while waiting for *Kwiyaxtel* to appear and not during the actual fight (Mohs 1987). On the other side where *Kwiyaxtel* was sitting is a vein of quartz said to represent a thunderbolt fired at him by *Xa:ls*. Here, at a site that has not been officially recorded, there is another set of lines made with same technique at DjRi-31 and incised across a vein of quartz in a zig-zag pattern that incorporates natural features in the rock (Mohs 1987:Fig.29). These are said to have been made by *Xa:ls’* adversary, *Kwiyaxtal*.

Nlaka'pamux narratives recorded in the late 19th century and late 20th century also recognize the significance of the place and make direct reference to the markings at DjRi-31 (Teit 1912; York et al. 1993; Mohs 1987; Daly n.d.). They attribute the petroglyphs to *Xwakt'kwaktl* the Transformer, but offer a different explanation regarding their creation (Teit 1912:227; Mohs 1987:89). At the border of the Spuzzum Nlaka'pamux country on his way towards the coast, *Xwat'kwaktl* observes:

“...at the canyon known as Tsaxalis [that] the people were trying to catch fish with their hands while being held by their legs upside down by others. The Transformer was sorry for these people, and said to himself, "They have no fishing-utensils, I will try to help them". So he sat down and began to think. "There was a rock in front of him, and he scratched it with his fingernails. With each scratch a thought came into the heads of the people, and they gained knowledge. After the first they said, "Let us make nets!" and so on with each scratch until they had obtained the whole knowledge of catching and curing salmon as the Indians do at the present day. After the people had learned everything, and had begun to catch fish in the proper way, he showed them all the best places for the purpose; and the Indians have always used these fishing-places or stations since that time" (1912: 227).

Annie York gave a similar account to Gordon Mohs and added that the oral tradition was pictorially portrayed on the first page of a 19th century “Dream Book” described by Annie York as “a book of prophecies” (Mohs 1987:93; Carlson 2001:156-161).

In an 1991 interview with Richard Daly, Spuzzum elder Annie York (Daly 1991) said that the markings at Gilt Creek (DhRk-6) and at *The'exelis* (DjRi-31), were once painted with *tumulh*, (red ochre) a practice also documented for certain petroglyphs on the coast (Barnett 1955:89) and in Washington State (Boreson 1974).

Lower Fraser River

The few known petroglyph locations in the lower Fraser river region differ significantly in production technique from upriver examples and bear a closer resemblance in manufacture and subject matter to those found at saltwater sites and to petroglyph sites on the mid-Fraser north of Lytton (Lundy 1978) fitting comfortably within the “basic coast conventionalized style” identified by Lundy (1974). Typical motifs are cupules ranging from 2 cm to 4 cm in diameter battered or pecked into the rock surface sometimes with associated figurative iconography, mainly “faces” (Lundy 1974; Hill and Hill 1974; Inglis 1996). An ethnographic account by Teit, (cited years ago by Lundy 1979:61) describes how young men made similar holes in boulders with a jade adze as part of their puberty training:

“He made round holes in rocks or boulders with a jadeite adze, which was held in the hand. Every night he worked at these until the holes were two

or three inches deep. When making them he prayed, 'May I have strength of arm, may my arm never get tired –from thee O stone.' This was believed to make the arm tireless and the hand dexterous in making stone implements of any kind.” (Teit 1900:320).

Note that the youth spoke to the rock as he carved, indicating that the practice was a conscious effort to have a social interaction with a non-human. Cupules have wide distribution throughout Western North American petroglyph sites and are indicative of an ancient practice that continues to have significance in Coast Salish culture. As design elements they significantly outnumber other types of figurative imagery. Snuneymuxw elder Ellen White referred to pitted dots or cupules visible at sites on east Vancouver Island and Gabriola Island as “points of access” where one could dip one’s fingers into pools of energy and reservoirs of strength”(Adams 2003:13).



Figure 4. Petroglyph detail from site DiRj-1 (*Sxela:ls* meaning “the writing”) at Chawathil near Hope. UBC Archives photograph by W.B. Hope.

At Chawathil on the north bank of the Fraser is a large petroglyph site (DiRj-1) known as *Sxela:ls* (“the writing”) located on a 10 x 15 m horizontal smooth granite exposure overlooking a once productive salmon fishing station within a landscape associated with known locations of *sxwóxwiyám* (“ancient narratives”). Six clusters of *xela:ls*, or petroglyphs, were removed, transported and curated in 1971 prior to expansion of Highway 17 (Simonsen 1971). Photographs reveal at least one circular face image incorporated into a natural feature in the rock, a circular design and cupules (Figure 4). The carvings mark a distinct change in technique and subject matter from the Fraser Canyon reflecting the battering/pecking and abrasion technique characteristic of the cupule and curvilinear carving of the coastal and mid-Fraser traditions. The stylized face consists of two eyes and an open mouth (as if singing) and said by local people to represent *Xa:ls* (Grant Keddie, Dave Schaepe, pers. comm.).

An unusual spiral petroglyph exists at DhR1-22 on the Harrison River in association with rock paintings. It is

known locally as the timeline, and represents, “The connection between the physical and spiritual worlds.” (Willie Charlie, pers. comm.).

Isolated boulders were located recently on the Stave River at site DhRo-30 and on the west shore of Alouette Lake at site DhRo-64 that are both marked with cupule imagery (Figure 5). The area containing the boulder DhRo-30 was excavated but historic material found beneath the boulder suggests that it was moved from its original location (McLaren 1997). Three lithic items including a cobble tool, a large flake core, and a possible microblade core were excavated from disturbed contexts adjacent to the petroglyph. The irregularly-shaped boulder at site DhRo-64 on the shoreline of Alouette Lake has similar cupule markings arranged around a prominent fissure on the water side of the boulder (Cameron 2009, this volume).

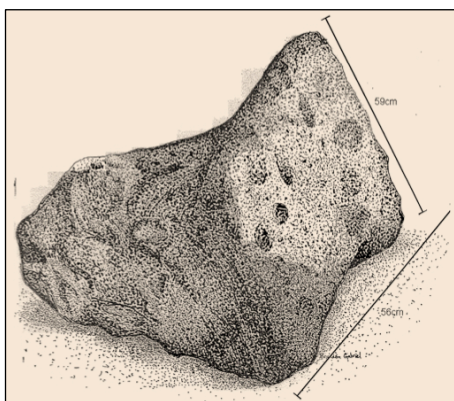


Figure 5. Drawing of boulder petroglyph with cupules, DhRo-30 on the Stave River. From McLaren *et al.* (1998: Fig.14).

In March, 1859, at *Kikayt* (DhRr-74) near New Westminster, the American agent George Gibbs examined a large horizontal rock that was reported to be approximately 1 m by 2 m with a carved head at one end with eye and mouth indicated (Figure 6). Gibbs made the sketch shown here and described it as a, “...stone image of a s’hw-yahm, at the Skwaumish fishery on the Fraser River. If anyone laughs too much, or plays near it, it will rain” (Gibbs 1857-1862). The word “s’hw-yahm” is probably Gibb’s rendition of *sxwóxwiyám*, which suggests that the stone is a Transformer rock.



Figure 6. *Sxwóxwiyám* rock at *Kikayt*, DhRr-74. Drawing by George Gibbs, 1857-1861.

On the Burnette River is a group of petroglyphs (site DhRr-30) rendered in a distinct curvilinear style pecked into a sandstone outcrop (Figure 7). The iconography and style of carving is unlike other petroglyphs in the study area and represents a unique local variant perhaps influenced by the nature of the sandstone medium. The carvings were exposed in an area cleared for power lines suggesting that some petroglyph sites in the study area remain hidden.

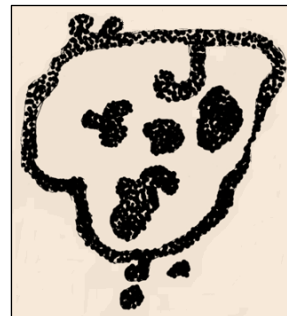


Figure 7. Drawing of petroglyph at DhRr-30, Burnette River.

Coast/Delta

Along the shoreline on either side of Kwomais Point, the prominent headland of the Semiahmoo Peninsula overlooking Boundary Bay and the entry to the Serpentine and Nickomekl Rivers, is the largest concentration of petroglyph sites (n=7) in the study area. Four of these sites (DgRr-7, DgRr-11, DgRr-14 and DgRr-44) consist of multiple boulders marked with cupules and one or two boulders with a figurative design (Figure 8), Leen (1979), and Don Welsh (pers. comm. 2012). Other sites include a small 63 cm wide boulder marked with face-like figurative imagery (DgRr-9), a large single boulder marked with cupules and circle “face-like” images (DgRr-7) (Hill and Hill 1974:56), and one other location marked by a single boulder with cupules (DgRr- 42). Most of the sites seem to be directly associated with canoe runs, and have been recorded and mapped by Don Welsh (pers. comm. 2012) who maintains that the boulders mark places of spiritual and economic significance to the numerous peoples who came yearly to the peninsula to gather food, visit and trade. Based on comparative analogy with art from portable contexts, Welsh suggests production during the Marpole phase (2500 to 1500 years BP).

While the petroglyphs *per se* have not been mentioned in any ethnography Wayne Suttles visited the area in company with an elder Julius Charles who provided a narrative about a group of people who were trying to hide from enemies when one of the men broke wind and betrayed his hiding position (Don Welsh pers. comm. 2012). His capture was prevented by *Xa;ls* who turned him to stone. Welsh suggests that the location of the petroglyph complex at DgRr-14 approximates the location of events in the narrative. A place-name *Sxwóxwiyám* recorded for this vicinity, likely refers to this carved rock (Suttles 2004:574).

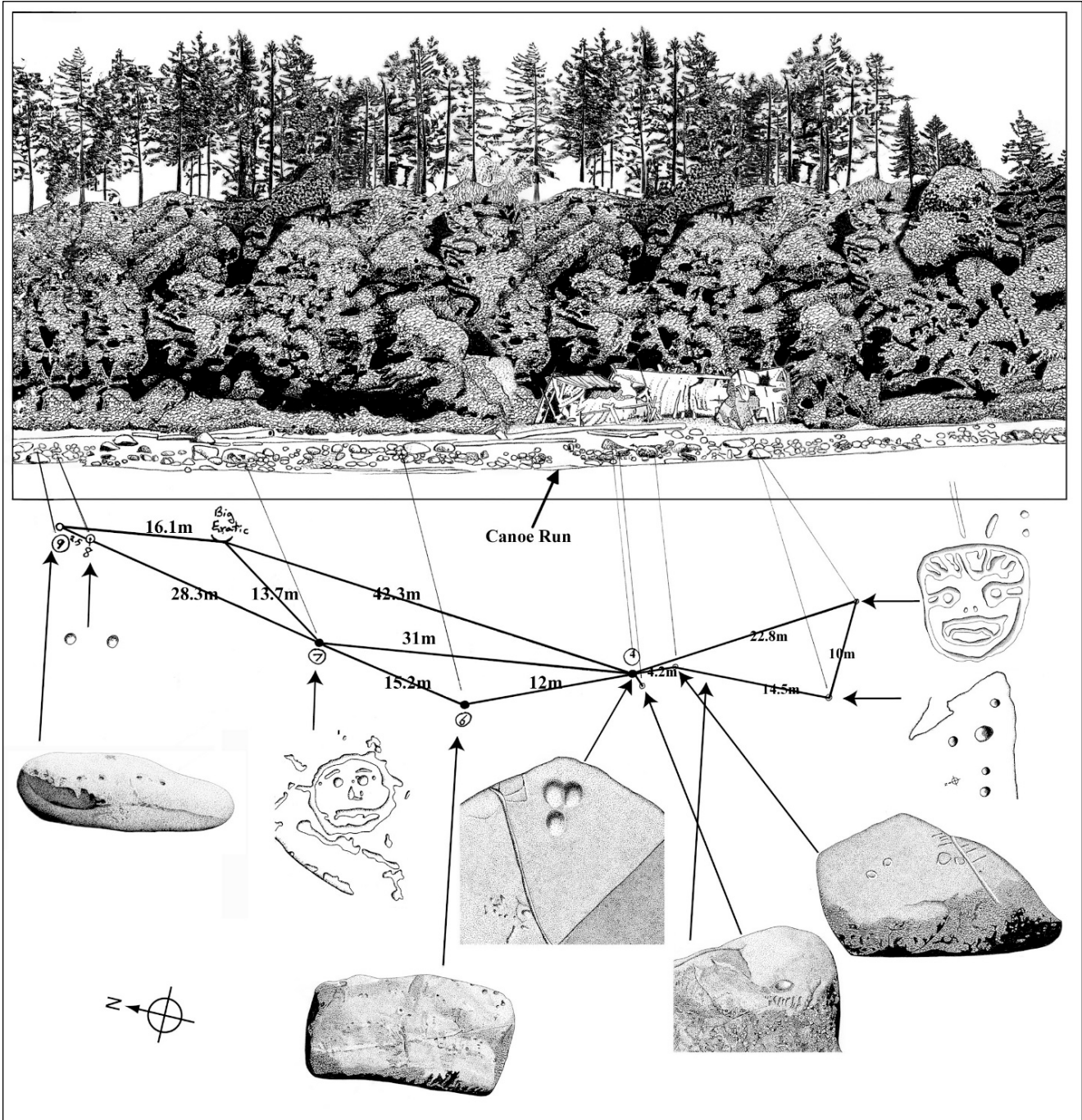


Figure 8. Petroglyph alignment at DgRr-14, Semiahmoo Peninsula. Drawing by Don Welsh.

Only two other petroglyphs are known at present on the coast in the study area north of Semiahmoo Peninsula. Both are found in Burrard Inlet. One is an unrecorded site, a large sandstone boulder now incorporated into the Stanley Park sea wall at First Narrows (Matthews 1955:40B). This rock, known as *Sunz*, was a woman who “had evil in her heart” and was turned to stone by the Transformers as she washed her hair. Fourteen cupules 4 cm across and 2 cm deep are arranged in two rows of seven on the southeast side of the stone. Many of these cupules are eroded, filled

with cement, or covered by the stone work of the sea wall. One other petroglyph, DhRs-24, was originally recorded as a carving on a granite boulder at low water mark near the south end of Lonsdale Avenue in North Vancouver. Based on a drawing by T.P.O Menzies (Figure 9) the carving style fits less comfortably within Lundy’s (1972) “basic coast conventionalized” category suggesting the possibility of another undefined, regional sub-style.



Figure 9. Image of petroglyph on granite boulder at site DhRs-24, Burrard Inlet. Drawing by T.P.O. Menzies.

Labour intensive manufacture, location contexts, use of boulder erratics, and limited subject matter all suggest that petroglyphs have a specific functional purpose that differs from pictographs. Petroglyph production does not seem to originate from the same impetus or circumstances as paintings, but rather, they were made where the rock was suitable, or at significant locations (i.e., fishing stations or spiritual sites), carvings tend to cluster. Their association with fishing locations is noted (Lundy 1974; 1979), but many good fisheries do not sport petroglyphs. Where ethnographic information is available petroglyph sites are associated with Transformer origin stories in the Fraser Canyon, on the lower Fraser River at Chatwathil and *Kikayt* and on the coast at Kwomais Point and *Sunz* at the entrance to Burrard Inlet. This association with transformer narratives and a general east/west pattern of distribution from the Fraser canyon to the coast reiterates some of the routes travelled by the Transformers (Carlson 2002:6-7) who are credited with creating the *sxwóxwiyám* rocks and sometimes the petroglyphs which appear upon them.

The marked differences between the Fraser Canyon and Fraser Valley petroglyph traditions may be explained in terms of cultural influences, intended meaning or function, and technique. The incised or sawed linear style is unique to the Fraser Canyon between Gilt Creek and Lady Franklin Rock, while the petroglyphs in the valley share affinity with more widespread coastal and mid-Fraser traditions of battered or pecked manufacture. In spite of these differences, petroglyphs are consistently associated with *sxwóxwiyám* (Halkomelem ancient narratives) or *spetaklh* (Nlaka'pmaux ancient narratives) anchoring stories to place for the benefit of future First Nation generations.

Pictographs

Pictographs (“picture/writing”) are finger or brush paintings made of *tumulh*, an iron oxide (Fe₂O₃) based paint applied to bodies, clothing, artifacts and geological features (e.g., Figures 11 to 14). Rock painting practice continued among Salish-speaking people into the early 20th century (York *et al.* 1993). In marked contrast to petroglyph locations (n=17) in the study area, pictographs are significantly more common (n=68), and cluster within north south travel corridors along the inlets, lakes and rivers north of the Fraser River valley (Figure 1). Lundy (1974) refers to

coastal pictographs as an “Interior intrusive style” (1974) inferred by the relatively larger numbers of pictograph sites known in the British Columbia Interior. The discrepancy in numbers between petroglyphs and pictographs in various localities and regions appears to be related to a complex interaction of temporal and historically contingent factors (see below).

Tumulh (red ochre) is an extremely important substance to indigenous people throughout North America for physical and spiritual purposes (MacDonald 2008; Velliky 2013). The red ochre pigment was obtained from quarries and made into paint using a variety of substances (such as lipids, burnt tree pitch, and saliva) and methods according to family-owned recipes (York *et al.* 1993). Although the red ochre paint is durable, and images are often protected from direct exposure to the elements by rock overhangs or vegetation, in locations where there is less protection from sunlight and weather, paintings can be differentially and more quickly weathered (See Lundy 1972:3). Different marking episodes can be distinguished at individual sites based on dissimilarity of paint preservation, hue, line, subject matter and super-positioning (Lundy 1972:20). Repeated marking events do not seem to be common at individual sites. There are no palimpsests of superimposed paintings that one would expect to see with an ongoing lengthy tradition and frequent site visitations for the purpose of painting. This suggests that most of the art was created during single, short-term occupation events.

Compared to the few carved lines, cupules and occasional figures found in petroglyphs, lower Fraser River pictograph panels feature an incredible diversity of imagery reflecting individual inspiration and styles of the painters. Nevertheless, as Lundy (1972:1) points out, there are frequently depicted similar motifs and ubiquitous conformity to red ochre images that reflects a uniformity of meaning and intent associated with their production. In her survey of Pitt Lake sites she noted the frequent appearance of anthropomorphic figures with proportionately large heads occurring 17 times at nine sites (Lundy 1972:18). As with petroglyphs, pictographs actively incorporate rock surface features, especially cracks and speleothem into their creation.

No rock paintings have been directly dated, so temporal parameters of its production rely on proxy signatures from associated sub-surface deposits. Only one uncalibrated date (210±40 years BP) has come from the large Sts’ailus painted rock art shelter at DhRI-2 on the Harrison River in “pre-contact” levels 55 cm DBS (Ritchie and Springer 2011) (Chapter 12). Cultural deposits extended below this level and the date is not indicative of the earliest use of the shelter. Only one piece of ochre was found below the dated level with the remainder (n=26) occurring above and throughout the historic deposits suggesting an increase in the use of red ochre at DhRI-2 post 210±40 BP. Therefore the date may be coeval or earlier than the paintings on the rock walls when considered in relation to the relative amounts of recovered ochre in the excavated units.

Outside of the study area but within the Birkenhead River section of the Harrison -Lillooet travel corridor, cultural sediments containing with red ochre were radiocarbon-dated (Beta-283865) at 120.4 ± 0.5 BP (Gordon 2010). In the Stein River Valley, also outside of the study area but within the mid-Fraser region, AMS radiocarbon dates bracketing a 1 m^2 excavated 13 cm to sterile sand beneath a painted rock overhang at EbRk-2 yielded radiocarbon dates between 369 ± 29 BP and 138 ± 31 BP (D-AMS OO4483) (Arnett 2014). Though admittedly meager, data from these two sites supports post-Columbian practice at these rock painting locations.

Ethnographic data show a clear relationship between pictographs and the locations of Transformer or Origin Story events, attesting to a conceptual link between them, especially in the Fraser Valley, Harrison River, Harrison Lake, Pitt Lake, and Indian Arm, Burrard Inlet localities (York *et al.* 1993). While pictographs commonly mark places of mythological events, another not necessarily unrelated pattern is their prominent appearance along travel corridors adjacent to physical trails or along waterways such as rivers, lakes and inlets.

Fraser River

Paintings are rare along the upper portion of the study area in the vicinity of Boston Bar, although there are rumors of sites on the Fraser River below Anderson Creek and in the vicinity of Alexandra Bridge. Just south of Boston Bar, on the east side of the Fraser River, approximately 25 km up the Utzutlius Creek Trail is a large erratic boulder with paintings.

At Sawmill Creek, which marks a traditional border, red ochre pictographs are said to be located on the creek above a pool inhabited by a *stl'aleqem* (“dangerous being”) who protects the paintings (MacHalsie 2007:129) but these have not been identified in the field.

Four known pictograph sites are located below the canyon at Esilao, including three panels (DjRi-13) on an obvious cliff face overlooking a bay on the Fraser River, and two more sites with cave-like rock shelters (DjRi-5 and DjRi-12). Site DjRi-12 features ten “reclining-arc segments,” a “sun figure” and other “blurred designs” (Mohs and Phillips 1984). Site DjRi-5 is one of three caves, only one of which contains paintings of four horizontal bars stacked vertically at the entrance, undefined smudges and four small cross-shaped figures (Mohs and Phillips 1984). On the same side of the river 2 km north of Yale at *Q'alaliktel* is another cave (DjRi-62) with undescribed pictographs.

Below Yale, Fraser River rock painting sites decrease in number possibly due to the lack of suitable contexts, cultural necessity, or intensive archaeological survey. Site DhRk-1 or *Sqayexiya* (“mink”), is a Transformer site that was located, before its destruction, on the east side of the Fraser River opposite Herrling Island. Here, *Xa:ls* turned Mink’s grandmother *Sqi'* (“smoked salmon”) into a rock and painted an image of her presumably in red paint under an overhang (Smith 1947).

The only other known site (DhRk-54) on the Fraser proper is at *Xaxesxelem* (Seabird Mountain Bluffs). This site includes a single painting, much faded with the lower portion barely visible. A small rock shelter without paintings is located 10 meters east. The painting was identified by Sto:lo elder as *pipeholm* (frog) a powerful figure in Sto:lo mythology. Elders identified this and other pictograph sites in general as “power spots”.

The Harrison – Lillooet interaction corridor (Sanders and Ritchie 2008) has the largest number of rock painting sites ($n=27$) in the study area (Figures 10 and 11). There seems to be a correlation between this large number of pictograph sites and the cultural significance of the geography both as a setting for Transformer stories and as a major travel corridor from the Coast to the Interior (Bouchard and Kennedy 2002:118). One Nlaka'pamux account describes how *Xa:ls* transformed a shaman into a rock later used for rock painting (Maud 1978:38). This site has not been identified with any existing known Harrison Lake rock painting, and may refer to *Lhye:ylex* (DjRi-6) a well-known Transformer site on Harrison Lake where an anthropomorphic rock known as the “little doctor” or “Kaiyama” (Smith 1946:312), embedded in a vertical fissure in a cliff, is marked with red, white and black paint (See Carlson 2002:6).



Figure 10. D-Stretch enhanced image from pictograph at DiRi-3 Long Island, Harrison Lake. Adrian Sanders photograph.

Other Transformer sites on Harrison Lake and river are noted in Smith (1946), Mohs (1987:Fig.24), and Carlson (2002:6-7) and correspond with known rock painting locations at sites DjRi-5 and DjRi-6 on Harrison Lake, DhRk-12 and DhRk-13, DhRi-1, DhRi-2, and DhRi-22 on Harrison River, and DiRk-2 to DiRk-9 on Echo Island. All suggest a close connection between the rock painting practice and the location of geological Transformer sites. Sts'ailus elder Willie Charlie described these visible sites as mnemonic “billboards” where, “...every day you would see these sites and you would remember the story and the moral teachings.” (Ritchie 2008; Ritchie *et al.* 2008).

On Harrison Lake, paintings are also present along the western shoreline and on the inside passage between Long Island and the east shore (Figure 10). The lake was a significant travel route to the Interior during pre-contact times and into the European era (Carlson 2002:60-61; Sanders and Ritchie 2008) and there is likely a correlation between this fact and the large amount of rock paintings found along its shoreline. Brown (1994:10-11) suggests that certain paintings on the west side of the lake (DiRk-14 and DiRk-15) and Echo Island (DiRk-1, DiRk-8 and DiRk-9) feature large staring eyes whose fields of vision monitor important entry routes into the southern Harrison Lake and river area. Pictographs are also present at rock shelter site DhRI-2 (*Lho;leqwet*) at the south end of Harrison Lake (Figure 11) (Ritchie and Springer 2011) (Chapter 12).



Figure 11. Pictographs at rock shelter site DhRI-2 (*Lho;leqwet*), Harrison River.

An indigenous travel corridor from little Harrison Lake up Douglas Creek is associated with two sites: a large boulder near the mouth with amorphous red ochre paintings (DkRm-2) and site DkRm-5 further up on the east bank of the creek which has a very rare black pictograph image (the only one in the study area) painted with a presumed charcoal-based pigment (?) under the overhang of a large angular boulder (Figure 12). Xaxtsa elders state that these and other rock paintings, "...were used to mark trails" (Hudson 1994:42).

East of the major Harrison-Lillooet corridor there are several pictograph sites in the Chehalis River (n=1), Stave Lake (n=1), Pitt Lake (n=12) and Indian Arm (n=11) localities. The single recorded site in the Chehalis River has recognized local significance as a "calendar" while a larger

panel on Stave Lake (DiRn-3) is unusual in that it is located on the east side of the watershed instead of the prevailing west side where most rock painting sites are found. People traveled between the Lower Lillooet and the Fraser via this watershed (Hudson 2005:6) but the single recorded painting site on the Stave River/Lake corridor may indicate that this area was less significant, or accessible, as travel corridor compared to adjacent watersheds.



Figure 12. Pictograph at DkRm-5, Douglas Creek. Photograph by John Clark.

Pitt Lake is a travel route to the Lower Lillooet River and the site of important Transformer narratives (Suttles 1955:13; Hudson 2005:6). The number of paintings along this lake (n=13) is the second highest in the region again suggesting a correlation between the high number of paintings and a travel corridor (Figure 13). The locations and iconography of nine of these rock painting sites have been identified and described by Lundy (1972). All but one of these sites is found on the west shore of the lake. Lundy (1972) attributes this pattern to greater availability of rock surfaces on the west side of the lake but other culturally determined patterning may be indicated by a selective choice in orientation.

Lundy's survey of Pitt Lake (1972:20) identified a group of rock paintings (DiRp-1, 5, 6 and 11) on the west side of the lake making direct reference to Simon Pierre's epic account of *Xa:ls* who, in his journey along the lake, encounters a "another large tribe of foolish people" without homes, who ate "anything that grows on the mountain, and anything that drifts ashore" (Jeness1955:28). *Xa:ls* sends them to live under the lake where they become dangerous spiritual entities with the power to kill anyone but local people. *Xa:ls* proclaims that "...your customs shall be painted on this bluff as a warning to those who come hereafter" (Jeness 1955:28). It is not clear from the published account whether or not *Xa:ls* himself painted the figures at Pitt Lake only his admonition that "your customs shall be painted on this bluff as a warning to those who come after". The association of the paintings communicating the presence of a place of deadly supernatural power is, however, explicit.



Figure 13. Pictographs at DiRp-6, Pitt Lake.

Indian Arm has the largest concentration of rock paintings in the coastal lower mainland including Howe Sound, the lower Fraser River and the entire Salish Sea south to the head of Puget Sound. Indian Arm is also linked by overland trails at the head of the inlet to the Interior (Carlson 2002:60-1). Following the prevailing pattern seen in the other travel corridors, the Indian Arm paintings cluster along its western shore. In Indian Arm there is a strong correlation between the siting of the majority of rock painting sites and the location of events in a narrative intertwining elements of *sxwóxwiyám* and a suspected post-contact plague (Figure 14).

On Indian Arm the majority of the rock painting sites are located in the vicinity of a narrative that describes the victory of a shaman over a large two-headed serpent blocking the inlet (Oliver 1966). Fully 66% (n=8) of the Indian Arm sites are located where the events in the story took place and there is one direct ethnographic reference between the narrative and the paintings. Describing the Indian Arm location of the last serpent that was, "...killed by a powerful man...in front of the BC Electric power station", Mathias Joe Capilano added that, "...the paint put by the Indians on the opposite shore is still there yet, I think." (Matthews 1955:408). This example from Indian Arm, and aforementioned references to paintings on Pitt

Lake and Harrison Lake, suggests that rock paintings reflect Origin stories specific to place.

Discussion

Boreson's (1974) study of Coast and Interior Salishan rock art considered petroglyphs and pictographs to be analytically distinct, and considered their distributions to isolate patterns of occurrence and correlations with respect to other archaeological data and ethnographic data. He concluded that the physical location of rock art had a positive correlation to a population's preferred habitat and subsistence resources. Boreson (1974) took a non-iconocentric approach that placed rock art into a broader perspective concerning its behavioral significance for anthropological study by focusing on a basic universal property of rock art – its physical location – to identify general behavioral patterns that might allow correlation with other archaeological patterns such as winter villages, resource extraction areas, and other "non-technological characteristics". She found that petroglyphs were commonly associated with fishing stations along major salmon streams, while pictographs were found along rivers, lakes and inland mountainous areas in proximity to winter village settlements and a land mammal hunting economy. This pattern is repeated in the lower Fraser Region where petroglyphs tend to be located at some, though not all,

important fishing stations while most pictographs in the lower Fraser area are found along rivers, lakes and inland travel corridors.



Figure 14. Pictograph at DiRr-12, Indian Arm, Burrard Inlet.

Schulting (1996:48) followed a similar cultural ecological model to interpret Kamloops Horizon Interior Salishan rock art site and suggested that, "...these elaborate displays can best be interpreted as a form of territorial behavior representing visual displays of ownership or access restriction to important resource extraction locations."

Lundy's initial work on the rock art of the Pacific Northwest identified the presence of red ochre pictographs as a Plateau-derived "intrusive style" on the northwest coast. Although a few are hidden, most rock paintings are located along well-used travel corridors along oft-travelled trails, rivers, inlets and lakes where they, "...were intended to be seen by all who passed by." (Lundy 1975:251). Motives behind their creation likely decided the location of the panels which in most cases can be readily seen (Lundy 1975:251-252).

One hypothesis is that the most of the pictographs visible today are more recent than the petroglyphs and date within the last few hundred years (Corner 1968; Boreson 1976;

Rousseau 1991:28), a time period associated with significant demographic collapse and subsequent social disruption influenced by early mediate, and later direct, contact with Europeans. Despite the antiquity of the practice, as suggested by Origin Stories, Lower Fraser River region pictographs visible today may represent a taphonomic threshold, an archaeological signature of a flurry of activity limited to a specific and relatively recent time period. This is suggested by the sheer number of paintings, relative to petroglyphs at least, and the ethnographic data concerned with the reputed protective qualities of *tumulh* (red paint) against a backdrop of uncertainty and change. The appearance of rock paintings in significant numbers with similarities in style over geographically contiguous areas could represent kinship connections and group solidarities employed as cultural strategies in response to demographic collapse.

Tumulh, red ochre paint, is a protective device, the "friend" all guardian spirits, possessed of its own agency and revered by spirit dancers, ritualists, and Indian doctors or shamans (Jenness 1955:38, 41; Galloway 2009:1428). Given the importance of *tumulh* in the ritualist's tool kit, the creation of rock painting displays in visible locations might have been motivated by specialists acting on behalf of the collective in response to the social disruption caused by European influence, direct and indirect, which began on the Plateau possibly as early as the 16th century (Campbell 1990).

Because of its "protective" qualities, places may have been marked with red ochre paint to protect communities from malicious enemies and disease. Brown (1994:13) suggests, "...that these sites are the material manifestation of a ritual relating to the powers of second sight, prophecy and/or protection of local inhabitants from intruders, human or otherwise.". The distribution of pictographs throughout the lower Fraser river region along similar corridors with attention to view sheds within a late period context (post-1500 AD) supports ethnographic descriptions regarding the use of red ochre paint and Brown's initial insight.

The association of pictograph locations with primary travel corridors from the coast to the interior reflects a purposeful concern to mark visible locations with images signaling group identity. The pattern of painting also correlates with the directional pattern of plague introduced to the area from the south in the late 18th century (Carlson 1997:33; Harris 1994; Jenness 1955:34; Mohs 1987:18-20) suggesting it spread via these well-used travel corridors.

The correlation of pictographs and petroglyphs with site specific ethnographic evidence in the lower Fraser River region from Boston Bar to Burrard Inlet suggests that both forms of artistic inscriptions have less to do with economic motivations, and are more synonymous with historically contingent signaling of ontologically significant landscapes. The few petroglyphs occupy an east-west orientation, while pictographs are exclusively associated with general inland north south travel corridors via inlets, lakes and rivers from the Fraser River and the coast to the interior. Ethnography

and taphonomy indicate that there are a number of distinctions in the rock art of the Lower Fraser River region. Petroglyphs are less numerous, labour-intensive, and associated with Transformer sites and salmon fisheries. Some may have considerable antiquity. Pictographs are more expediently created, far more common, and also associated with Transformer sites. Rock painting seems to

be a tradition that seems to have intensified as a culturally appropriate and highly visible resistive response to European presence in North America.

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