


THE WASHINGTON ARCHAEOLOGIST



NEXT MEETING: Seattle Chapter - Wednesday, March 16, 1960 - 8:00 P.M.

MEETING PLACE: City Light's North Service Center at North 97th St. and Stone Avenue—2 blocks east of Aurora on North 97th St.

PROGRAM: DOUG ANDERSON, senior at the University of Washington, will speak on Amateur Archaeology in Germany. Mr. Anderson spent last year in Germany studying archaeology and visiting museums and archaeological sites throughout Europe. After graduation this June he plans to go on a dig at Kotzebue, Alaska.

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At the February meeting of the Seattle Chapter, MR. IRVING HUMBER, an amateur photographer, presented an informative program consisting of interesting 35 mm. slides accompanied by commentary on Etrurian Archaeological Excavations.

Mr. Humber, who was born in Vienna, has spent seven years in the Mediterranean area and plans to return there again as well as covering the Near East and North Africa in the near future to take more pictures.

Etruria, which is an ancient Italian country, occupies the areas now known as Tuscany and Umbria. The Etruscans were the result of a formation of people and language, being formed by people from Asia Minor, who arrived about 800 B.C., combining with the Villanovans, who are thought to have come from central Europe, and were already living in Etruria. During the 6th Century B.C. they reached their highest cultural peak but after the Romans started encroaching in 400 B.C. the Etruscan civilization gradually diminished and was finally absorbed by Rome in the 1st Century B.C.

The pictures Mr. Humber showed were mainly of tombs which have been excavated. Near Tarquinia one large necropolis covers 140 acres with the burial places

hewn in large rock mounds. The interiors of the tombs are often replicas of houses such as the deceased once lived in with utensils, vases, and other objects being present as well as sculptures which show us how the people looked and dressed.

The sarcophogae of the Etruscans differed from those of the Greeks and Romans in that they always show a reclining figure of a man or woman carved on the Etruscan type. The faces of the people are not idealized but are quite realistic. Another mark of Etruscan carving is the elongated figure reminding one of El Greco.

Outside some of the graves are found small columns and houses carved of stone which were used to indicate the number of people buried within.

Some of the most beautiful slides Mr. Humber showed were those of the painted tombs which are also located near Tarquinia. Here are seen murals, painted sometimes on rock and sometimes on plaster, depicting many scenes of Etruscan life both here and in the afterlife as they envisioned it. In those murals painted between the 6th and 4th Centuries B.C., the afterlife is pictured as cheerful and happy, but in those done between the 4th and 1st Centuries B.C., there is a gloomy atmosphere with a sense of impending doom.

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MORE ON FISH TOWN SITE

During his recent visit to the Northwest, Dr. Douglas Osborne took time from his busy schedule to visit the Fish Town Site to review the work being done and give suggestions and comments about future digging.

He has confirmed other expert opinion that because of its size and strategic location and unusually high artifact yield for this type of site, that extensive additional excavation should be made.

Because of the obvious value that would result from a comparative study of this site with the Lower Fraser Delta sites, it would be desirable to develop as much stratigraphic data as possible as well as building up a representative sample of artifacts for each component.

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NORTHWEST ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONFERENCE

The 1960 Northwest Anthropological Conference will be held in Seattle at the University of Washington. Conference dates are Friday and Saturday, May 13th and 14th.

Details of the program will be published in a future issue of the Washington Archaeologist.

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A CARVED WOODEN BOWL FOUND IN THE SNOQUALMIE RIVER VALLEY

Del Nordquist

The winter flooding of the Snoqualmie River washed up a carved wooden vessel on the Robert Barry farm northwest of Duvall. The bowl was found on December 18, 1959, imbedded in blue clay. The clay was a part of the debris deposited in a pasture east of the Barry barn. Recognizing that he had found something unique, Mr. Barry cleaned away the accumulation of mud revealing an excellent example of American Indian relief sculpture.

The singularity of the piece brought about speculation as to its origin. With no local specimens of the type known it was easy to give the provenience as of some remote area. In spite of superficial similarities to Oceanic kava bowls, early Chinese bronzed, and even Peruvian cat-faced designs, the work is local and most likely Salish in origin. It is impossible to say that the piece is Snoqualmie — the native group who inhabited the area — for property exchange was practiced in the potlatch ceremonies of the Coast Salish. Furthermore, at this time there are insufficient grounds to say that the piece was carved anywhere, but in the area in which it was found.

There are no known carved vessels which have the shape of this piece. The bowl is supported on four short legs. Two incurved handles, joined together, surmount the bowl. The body is tapered from end to end terminating in prow-like facets giving the suggestion of a boat. This particular bowl form is found elsewhere in the Northwest, but not combined with feet and handles.¹ The dimensions of the whole vessel are roughly 11" in length and 11½" high. The greatest width is 7". The external bottom is slightly convex from end to end with a length of 9½" and a width of 5". There is an upturning of the upper surface of the bowl toward the ends. The lip of the opening overhangs the cavity almost closing in slits at either extremity. Suggested cross-sections are indicated in Plate 1 which reveal the oval contours of the interior. Plate 2 gives four views of the vessel which approximate its general appearance: above in Figure 1, below in Figure 2, from one end in Figure 3, and from one side in Figure 4. Statements of the owner suggest that the interior of the bowl was charred. Whether this was part of the technique of hollowing it out, or a result of its use, is not ascertainable. The whole piece was quite dark making it difficult to determine its material, although it is some soft wood, probably cedar. The grain of the wood ran up through the piece, predominantly standing out in the designs on the sides.

Carved on both sides are the facial representations which make this one of the most provocative examples of native art found in this region. (See Plate 1, Figure 1). Since both sides are nearly identical they will be discussed as one. The low relief fills the entire space from end to end. The features are concentrated in the lower half, attenuated, and surrounded on both sides and above with radiating elements. Those on the sides tend to be parallel sided and rounded at the ends. They have a center vein which relates them to a well established design motif in Northwest Coast art. The upper half of the design

1. See Inverarity: Art of the Northwest Coast Indians, Figure 204;
Niblack: The Coast Indians of Southeastern Alaska and Northern
British Columbia, Plate XL, Figure 209.

Fig. 1

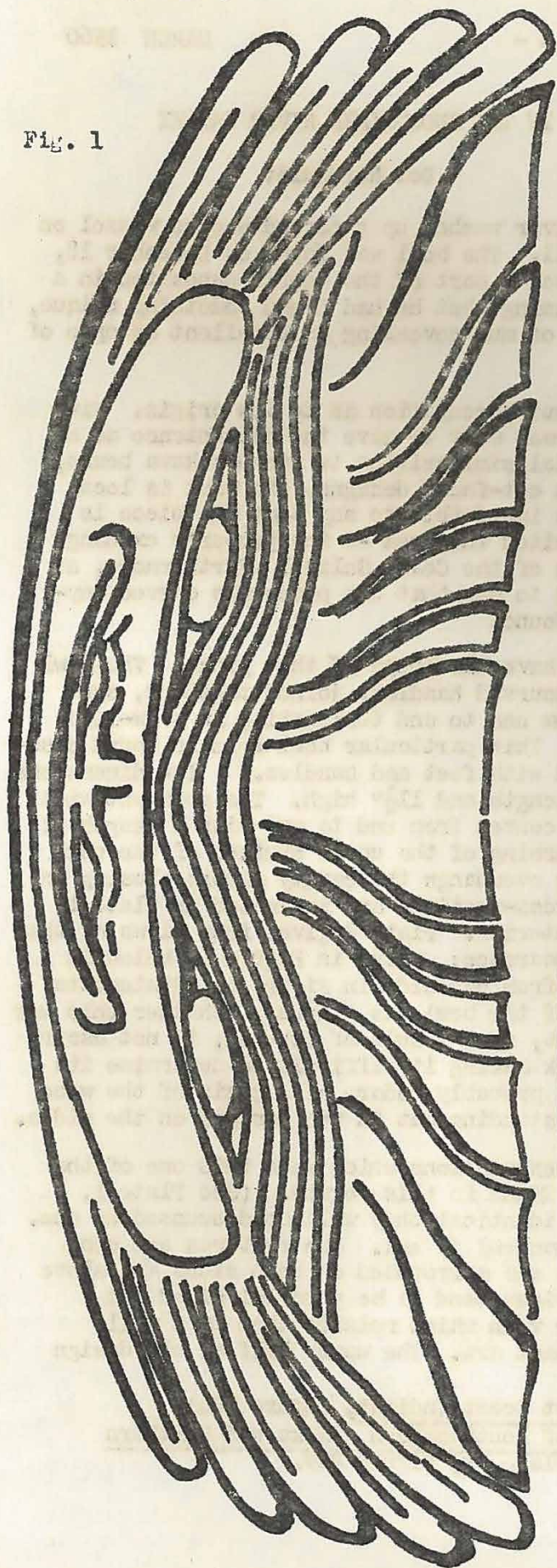


Fig. 2

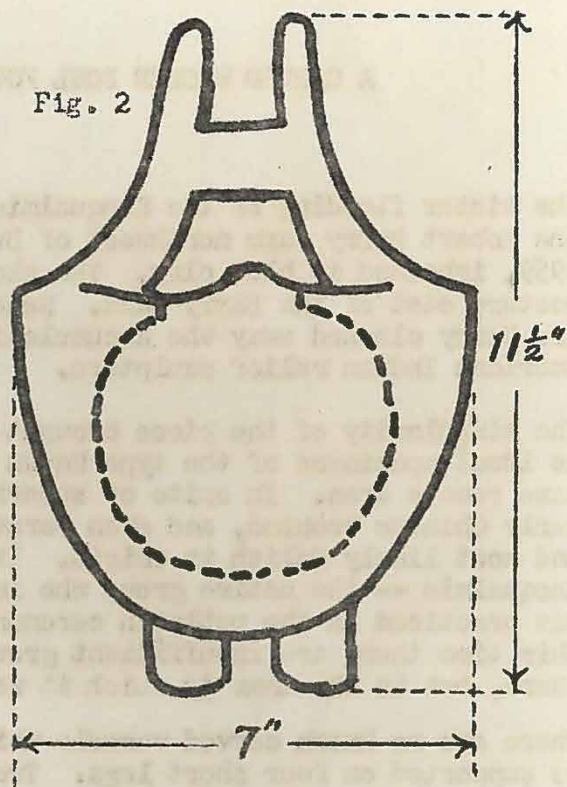


Fig. 3

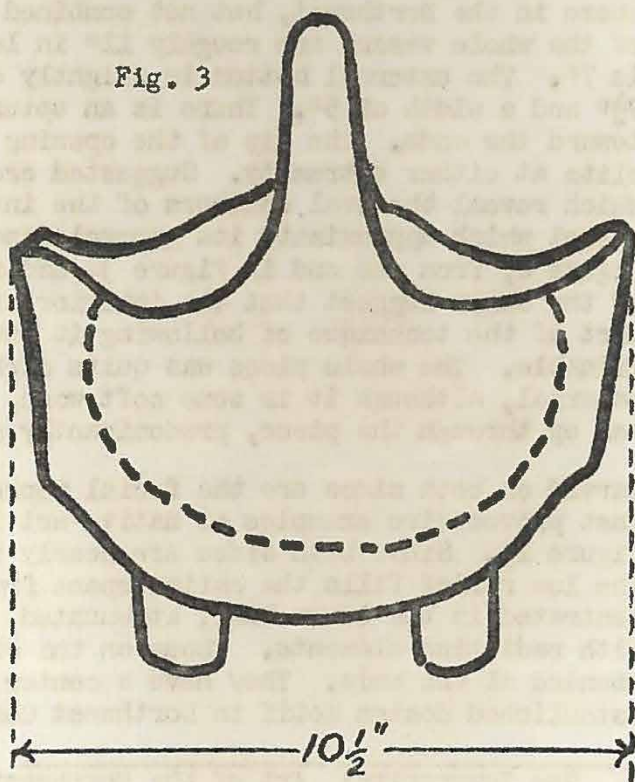


Fig. 1

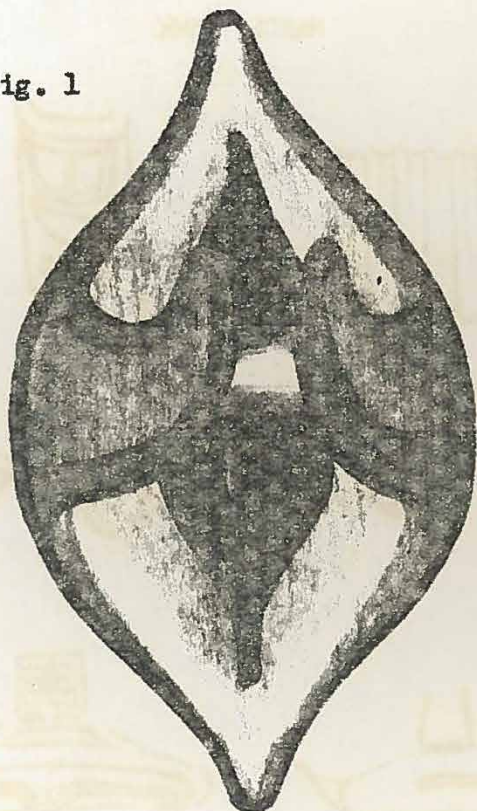


Fig. 2

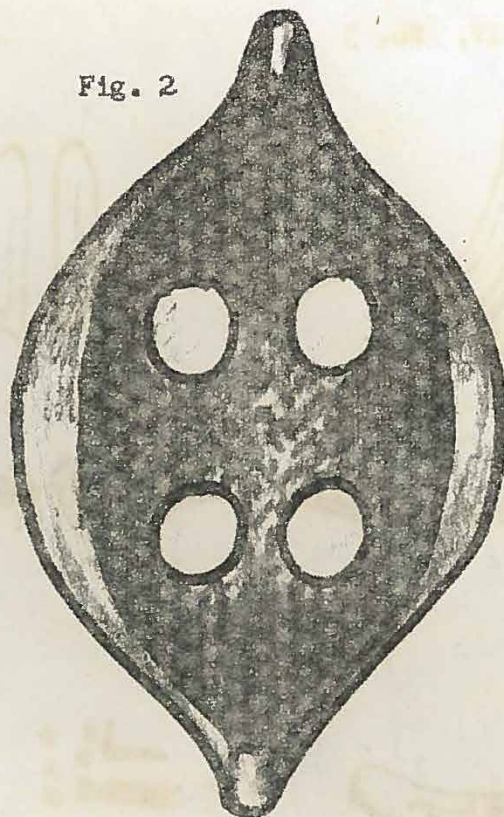


Fig. 3

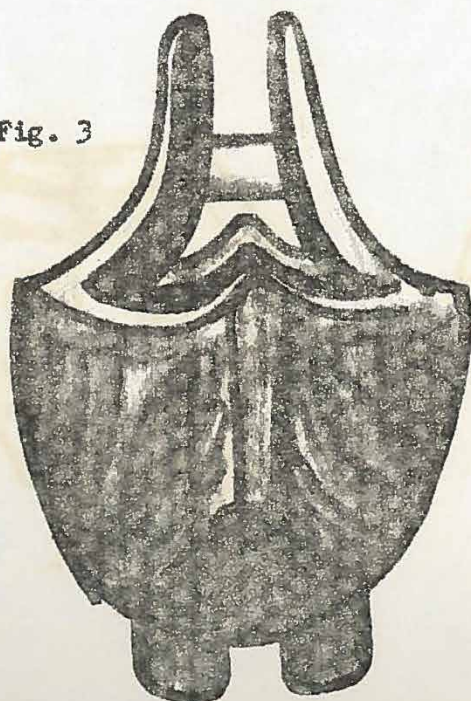


Fig. 4

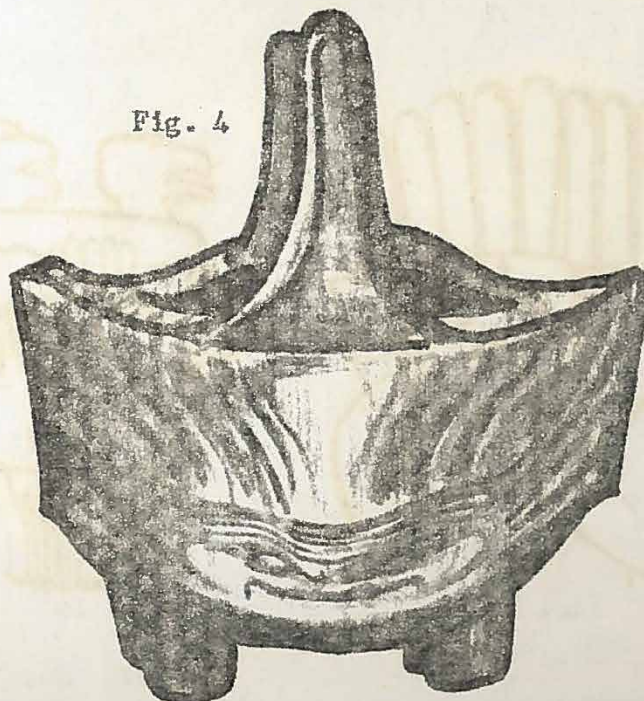




Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

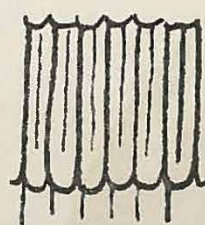


Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12

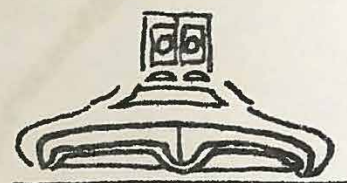


Fig. 13



Fig. 14



Fig. 15



Fig. 16

Explanation of Plate No. 3:

Figures 1, 6, and 10 are elements taken from the Barry vessel.

Figure 2: Detail of feather design from a bird representation.
From a spindle whorl. Salish. Provincial Museum, Victoria, B.C. See Inverarity, figure 31.

Figure 3: Detail from side of an animal representation, Also on a spindle whorl. Salish. Provincial Museum, Victoria, B.C.
See Inverarity, figure 33.

Figure 4: Detail from dress of a figure carved on a house post.
Salish, Vancouver Island, Chicago Natural History Museum.
See Wingert, plate 54.

Figure 5: Detail from a carved box. Tlingit. Washington State Museum.
See Inverarity, figure 18.

Figure 7: Detail of eyes from same origin as figure 3 above.

Figure 8: Detail of eyes from a carved wooden figure. Comox, Vancouver Island. American Museum of Natural History, N.Y.
See Wingert, plate 39, figure 1.

Figure 9: Detail of eyes from a mask. Tlingit. Washington State Museum.
See Inverarity, figure 77.

Figure 11: Detail of mouth on a spirit canoe figure. Snoqualmie.
Washington State Museum. See Wingert, plate 21, figure 1.

Figure 12: Detail of mouth from a carved house-post. Sanetch, Vancouver Island. Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, N.Y.
See Wingert, plate 51, figure b.

Figure 13: Detail of mouth from a carved box. Tlingit. Washington State Museum. See Inverarity, figure 18.

Figure 14: Detail of head from a grave figure. Lillooet, B.C.
American Museum of Natural History, N.Y. See Wingert, plate 28.

Figure 15: Detail of mask. Cowichan, Vancouver Island. Provincial Museum, Victoria, B.C. See Inverarity, figure 62.

Figure 16: Detail of head on a spirit canoe figure. Snoqualmie.
Washington State Museum. See Wingert, plate 21, figure 2.

is divided into inverted trapezoidal forms. They are bisymmetrically arranged around a center "key". A peculiarity of the design are the hiatuses between the upper radiating elements and those on either side. These leaf-shaped spaces, when seen from an end of the vessel, impart a suggestion of eyes. It is likely that this is only fortuitous suggestiveness, but it should be remembered that this feature is not uncommon in the treatment of designs in most of the Northwest. Eyes are often inserted as joints and areas of emphasis in Haida and Tlingit designs. The Barry bowl may represent a part of the evolution of the Northwest Coast art style.

The determination of an art style is not different from typological determination in archaeology. Fundamentally, the process requires the separation of salient features and their comparison with known examples.

Features which can most readily be used in the diagnosis of a Northwest Coast piece of art are the eyes, the mouth, appendages, and the combination of these and other elements. Plate No. 3 gives such comparisons. All are Salish except for the final example in the upper set of motifs. The figures on the right are given so comparison can be made with non-Salish groups. Figures 1, 6, and 10 are taken from the bowl in discussion.

The first row of designs represent an appendage motif. There are marked similarities between the first four. Figures 2, 3, and 4 are from Vancouver Island Salish art. Figure 5 is Tlingit. All have the basic elongation with a central division. The second row gives examples of eyes. Those on the Barry bowl are flattened and laterally elongated. This distortion is not uncommon, although seldom as exaggerated as in the Barry example. Salish eyes tend to be more circular. The example shown in Figure 15 makes the iris an actual protrudance. Figures 7 and 8 are Vancouver Island Salish; the remaining example is Tlingit.

Mouths are quite expressive in Northwest Coast Indian art. By comparison with most, the Salish mouth is little more than a slit. Figure 11 shows a mouth from a Snoqualmie Spirit Canoe carving that is hardly carved at all. It is accented by paint. A development of lips is suggested in the Vancouver Island example in Figure 12. Figure 13 is again, Tlingit. A feature of the mouth is its down-turning. This "frown" is much more common than the "smile" of the Barry design. There may be doubt as to whether the "smile" was intended or a result of making the design conform to the contour of the vessel. There is a decided depressing of the ends of the mouth which might suggest an attempt at conformity with more typical Northwest Coast design.

The parts of any design must be viewed in combination. This unification is the most significant aspect of any design and the strongest proof of design affinity. Three Salish examples are shown in Figures 14, 15, and 16. All three carry the salient features of the Barry facial design, eyes, appendages, mouth, and their combination. Figure 16 uses paint instead of carving for most of these elements.

There is need for further research into Salish decorative arts. Most household utensils are without ornament. Whatever the incentive of the artist, the maker of the Barry vessel must have considered his work worthy of exceptional effort. New discoveries, or the coming to light of examples in private collections which have little availability for study, may eventually place the Barry vessel in a more secure place in local native art. For the moment the piece must remain as a single example of a sub-style of Salish design.

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