

**Unanga's Mummies as Whalers: A Multidisciplinary Contextualization
of Human Mummification in the Aleutian Islands**

A thesis submitted to the University of Wales Trinity Saint David
in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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April 2019

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ABSTRACT

This thesis provides an analysis of Unanga (Aleut) mummification in the context of their other methods of body deposition. It explores the hypothesis that whalers and their families belonged to an ancient shamanistic whaling complex that existed throughout coastal regions that practiced whaling. This thesis presents an explanation pertaining to the reasons behind mummification and serves as an organized compilation of the most pertinent past and recent data regarding Unanga mortuary customs and rituals.

A multidisciplinary approach is used that combines social anthropological theory, archaeological data, and ethnohistorical records. The known methods of precontact body deposition are evaluated in contrast to mummification. It is suggested that mummification proved to be the most complex of these methods and was reserved for the whaling elite and perhaps others of high rank in Unanga communities. A comparative approach based on ethnographic analogy further explores the metaphysical relationship between hunter and whale. The geographical boundary for this study is also widened because mummification was practiced in regions contiguous to the Aleutians.

Literature pertaining to the passage between life and death focuses on the liminality of the soul. This concept is presented as one of the prime elements in understanding mummification. The interpretation offered in this thesis builds on a recent approach to this topic, which suggests that individuals were deliberately mummified so they could remain in a state of persistent liminality in order to be preserved for their power.

The findings of this thesis suggest that mummification in the Aleutians was a key aspect to whaling. Whalers needed courage and power, and this was accomplished through the use of mummified bodies of whalers and their lineage members that were

secreted in caves to be used as magical talismans. This ancient whaling complex is examined through the paradigms of liminality and shamanism. Members were initiated into a spiritual and dangerous world, which thereby elevated their status in the community. It is proposed that whalers also performed the mummification. This interpretation advances the study Unanga's mortuary rituals and sets the stage for further research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

No dissertation that takes this long to write can possibly have a succinct acknowledgement section. Without all of the people listed here (and others who remain uncredited), I probably would have given up on this project years ago. Luckily, I have been blessed with a multitude of supportive, patient, and perhaps most importantly – incredibly kind people in my life.

First and foremost, I would like to recognize the contributions of Dr. Penny Dransart, who helped shape this project and my thinking. It has been a very bumpy ride, and all the encouragement and (countless) edits were worth it in the long run; although they were not always appreciated at the time. It has been an honor working with her, and she forever has my respect and gratitude. She warned me on several occasions that writing a thesis is a very lonely process, and she was right. I must include all the anthropologists and individuals who were willing to provide me with their conference papers, unpublished works, and answers to my numerous questions.

A thanks also goes out to Dr. Rick Knecht and Dr. Martin Bates who helped make this thesis better. I must also express my gratitude to the Postgraduate Research Committee and their hard working staff. They granted me several extensions for very valid reasons and my questions were always answered during times when I really needed clarification. The establishment of the Postgraduate Research Department towards the end of my studies was much needed, and it helped make me feel that I was part of the university community even though I lived far away in Alaska.

I must also acknowledge two people who worked harder on this dissertation than I had the right ask. The first is my friend Dr. Alys Culhane. She acted as a coach the last two years, using her writing skills to help guide me through the thesis process, and her friendship helped to see me through some difficult times. Alys's husband, Dr. Pete Praetorius, acted as proofreader/editor extraordinaire, and he was willing to slog

through pages and pages (and pages) of various drafts. Alys and Pete both offered savvy recommendations and grammatical editing. While all the remaining mistakes are mine, this dissertation belongs to them as well.

I am forever grateful to my loving parents, Peter and Elizabeth Dissler, for all their encouragement and support over the years. My father was quite the comedian and would always tease me that he would not live to see me complete my thesis.

Well, he was right. He died in May of 2015. I also must include my grandparents who were very influential in my life and stressed I could accomplish anything I set my mind to. I was the first in our family of immigrants to not only complete high school and college, but also pursue an advanced degree. Last, but not least, my loving thanks go out to my husband, Wayne, who initially helped convince me to take the time and spend the time and money to follow this academic goal. Unfortunately, he passed of a brain tumor in 2006, an event that was life changing for me. I know they are all proud.

Kathleen Day, October 2019.

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“The dead don’t bury themselves, and ultimately, even when their specific wishes are carried out, their funerals are ultimately social presentations devised by the living”.
(Keswani 2004:1)

Chapter 1: The Dead Don’t Bury Themselves

1.1 Introduction

The term “Aleut” came from the Russians, but the people who occupy the Aleutian Islands call themselves Unanga. During precontact times they carried out a myriad of mortuary practices, but the main emphasis of this work will be on mummification. There are several theories as to who was mummified and why, yet no one has studied this topic in depth. Also, there is no information on who actually performed the mummification. Such questions have never been researched adequately and represent a gap in the knowledge pertaining to the Aleutian Islands. Because various forms of burial practice were used, this study departs from the idea that in the Aleutians and surrounding areas, mummification was just about preserving bodies for the afterlife. It develops the proposition that the mortuary practice of mummification in the Aleutians and surrounding regions was part of an elaborate expression of a complex shamanistic belief system that existed among cultures that hunted whales. These groups had a common world view, associated rituals and symbolic behaviors. Groups from Alaska across to Greenland and South to Vancouver Island and the Northwest Coast appear to hold in common the belief that animals have souls, and that hunting is a negotiation between human and non-human persons, imbued with various forms of ritual in order to be successful. Although it could be argued that these practices were prevalent in hunting all animals, this research will demonstrate that they were most important when hunting the whale, and as a result, whalers were afforded high status in their communities.

This study provides a detailed analysis of mummification from a sociocultural point of view while contextualizing this practice through the use of the archaeological data, historical accounts, and ethnographic studies. I have chosen this multi-disciplinary

approach due to the gap in the literature regarding the reasons as to why mummification was practiced and who it was practiced on. The bodies of the actual mummified individuals that remain have been studied and documented. There has also been a fair amount of archaeological work done in various parts of the Aleutians. It would have been much more convenient to speak directly of the archaeological sites that have yielded mummies. However, due to the consistent plundering of mummy caves since the time of contact, and my interest in the reasons behind mummification, a strictly archaeological approach would not lend itself to my research goals.

1.2 Background

My interest in the Aleutian mummies first began in 1990 when attempting to find literature about them. Various trips to the library yielded very little information and over time, as the Internet began to be a valuable research tool, my various searches were met with the same initially unpromising results.

When one thinks of mummification, Egypt tends to come to mind, and the process of mummification in that region has yielded not only a significant amount of fascination and research over the years, but an insight into the mortuary rituals and religious beliefs of the ancient Egyptians. For the most part, people around the globe have never heard of the Unanga mummies and neither have most Americans or Alaskans for that matter. This fact became apparent during the course of this research. There are numerous reasons for their obscurity. The Unanga had no written language, and the mummification techniques utilized were not the same as the ones used in Egypt. Instead, the Unanga mummies were bound at various joints while in the fetal position and then wrapped in woven mats and animal skins, after which they were usually placed in caves. To further complicate matters, mummification was just one form of precontact body deposition practiced in the Aleutians.

Therefore, it soon became apparent that in order to extrapolate information such as beliefs and rituals involved with mummification and the links to whaling, this practice would need to be studied in the context of the other mortuary practices as well. And because the Unanga passed traditions on orally, early information documenting body deposition would need to be gathered from reports based on anecdotal observations of the Russians, who almost exterminated the Unanga during the first twenty years of contact (Townsend 1983b:121; Reedy-Maschner 2010:589; Veniaminov 1984:251). In spite of these difficulties, I believe the story of Unanga mummification needs to be told.

1.3 Research Aims

This study was undertaken because the contextualization of Unanga mummification from a sociocultural perspective has never been attempted in depth. This section presents the aims of the research and provides a rationale for the approach adopted here. This thesis has two aims, both important to contributing to the literature and filling in gaps on mummification in the Aleutian region: My first aim is to examine the relationship between mummification and whaling. The expectation is that they are related but if so, what is the evidence? Some of the earliest accounts by Russians, Americans, and early explorers from other nations made references to mummies that were hidden in caves. Authors such as Henning (1874), Pinart (1875), and Dall (1878) thought the human remains were deceased whalers and or family members of whalers. Throughout the more recent literature, there are authors who continued to associate mummification with whaling in some manner (Black 1987; Maschner and Reedy-Maschner 1998; de Laguna 1946:204; Fitzhugh 2003:55; Corbett et al. 1997a; Holland 2001; Maschner and Reedy-Maschner 1998; Jordan and Knecht 1988). The reasoning that is cited usually entails the fact that whaling was dangerous, and whales were of

high value to the community. As a result whalers had high status in these stratified societies, and therefore would be afforded the most labor intensive body deposition, which was mummification.

The second aim of this research is to contextualize Unanga's mummification based on a theory of liminality I will develop in the subsequent chapters of this thesis, combined with the use of ethnographic analogy as an explanation for mummification. I intend to provide evidence that in the Aleutians and surrounding areas, selected men women and children were mummified and interred in a persistent liminal state that was associated with whaling. Further evidence will be provided to clarify that the words "whaling cult" so prevalent in the literature represents a misnomer. Instead the purpose of this thesis is to examine whaling in the context of ancient shamanistic belief systems.

1.4 Objectives

In order to examine the relationship between mummification and whaling the following objectives include:

- Reviewing the ecological aspects of the whale and other important sea mammals to the Aleutian economy
- Providing evidence that whales were hunted rather than scavenged. The need for this objective is related to the idea that other people would have afforded whalers high status in recognition of the extreme dangers of whaling, rewarding them with more complex mortuary rituals and burial rites than other members of society.
- Reviewing the different methods of whaling
- Contextualizing mummification in relation to other forms of body deposition
- Providing locations where mummies have been found to correlate with whale migration patterns
- Including data as to the age of mummification in the Aleutians in order to contextualize this practice within the chronologies of the region
- Evaluating evidence for artifacts associated with mummies at the various locations in order to find items of material culture tied to whaling

In order to contextualize the esoteric aspects of whaling in developing my theory of liminality in relation to mummification the following objectives will include:

- Examining the ideology concerning people and animals especially regarding the special status of the whale
- Discussing liminality in relation to mummification as well as the notion of powers residing in the body
- Examining the use of dead human body parts for hunting whales not only in the Aleutians, but other regions as well
- Defining whaling cult and shamanistic complexes, while arguing that the latter interpretation is more appropriate than the former
- Constructing a proposition that shamanistic practices in the Aleutians were founded conceptually on the notion of human-animal transformations.

These objectives are broken into chapters and are discussed individually or in combination with each other.

1.5 Other Topics of Relevance

The location of the mummies is included because research has shown that whaling was practiced in the Eastern and Central Aleutians but never made it to the westernmost islands (Corbett et al.1997b:101). Note should be made that there is limited research on the western Aleutians but this is changing due to the efforts of Virginia Hatfield, Debra Corbett, Diane Hanson, Dixie West , and Christine Lefevre as members of the Western Aleutians Archaeological and Paleobiological Project (WAAPP). Mummification is thought to be related to the degree of social complexity of the various island groupings, a topic that will also be explored. My examination of documentary and archaeological evidence provides an explanation for what is known of precontact family life and social stratification in relation to burials, but it also highlights that there are areas where available evidence is lacking. It is my contention that mummification was only performed on those of high status, such as the whalers and chiefs. However,

many infants and some women were associated family members or individuals who were mummified for other reasons.

Throughout this thesis I also explore whaling and mummification from a regional perspective examining areas contiguous to the Aleutians that also performed mummification which include the Kodiak Archipelago and Prince William Sound. The reason for including these areas is that they represent territorial variations of shamanistic belief systems among whaling cultures of the circumpolar north. This is especially true relating to the rituals and symbolism of whaling.

1.6 Historical Factors

In order to understand what is known and not known about Unangaâ mummification, this practice is evaluated by examining the broader historical trends that shaped the lives of the Unangaâ and those who subsequently came to the region. Understanding their history is crucial to appreciating some of the pragmatic problems of conducting this study. The record of contact begins when Vitus Bering and his men sailed in proximity to several of the Aleutian Islands in 1741. Although Bering died that same year after being shipwrecked on an island off the coast of Siberia, his men were able to salvage parts of their ship to return to Russia with the furs they procured throughout their ordeal. As a result, it soon became clear that the New World was rich in furs, and as a result, the Russians sent additional resources to obtain furs from sea mammals such as the sea otter and the fur seal (Liapunova 1996:23-25). The Russian men who came to the Aleutians early on were not scholars but *promyshlenniki* (Russian fur hunters), soldiers, and later administrators (Reedy- Maschner 2010:589) who included their own ethnocentric biases towards the Unangaâ in their writing. In the 1820s, after almost one hundred years of Russian domination and a good deal of intermarriage, Father Veniaminov (later canonized St. Innocent), a Russian Orthodox

priest, came to the Aleutians and generated, according to most scholars, the most reliable and accurate information on the Unangaĥ in his writings (Veltre and Smith 2010:491). Veniaminov is also responsible for translating the Unangaĥ language into written form, the first ever in an Alaska Native tongue with the help of a Unangaĥ chief. This occurred close to one hundred years after contact (Black 1977).

The United States era began in 1867 with the purchase of Alaska from the Russians. Geologists, traders, soldiers, and missionaries reported information about the Unangaĥ haphazardly (Hulley 1958:129-135). The most accurate information from this early time period comes from naturalist William H. Dall (1878), who came into possession of several of the Unangaĥ mummies which he bestowed to the Smithsonian Institution. Alfonse Pinart (1875), a Frenchman who first traveled to Alaska when he was nineteen years old (Desson 1995:8), also contributed greatly to the literature pertaining to the Natives of the Aleutians and Kodiak Island. From the early 1900s onward, archaeologists and physical anthropologists, such as Russian Vladimir Jochelson (2002a, 2002b) and Aleř Hrdliĥka, a Czech (1945), began conducting research in the Aleutians. In 1909 and 1910 Jochelson archaeologically investigated several of the Aleutian Islands, and although he excavated and documented numerous burials, his focus was not entirely on mortuary rituals but also many other aspects of Unangaĥ culture. He is credited with recording Unangaĥ stories and songs that were eventually translated by Knut Bergsland and Moses Dirks (1990). Hrdliĥka was primarily interested in examining Unangaĥ skeletal remains and sites to help determine the migration of the earliest Paleo-Indians into the Americas (Hrdliĥka 1927; 1945; Bever 2001; Crawford et al. 2010; Laughlin and Marsh 1951). Hrdliĥka, curator of Anthropology at the Smithsonian Institution, whose research will be discussed in great length in subsequent chapters, discovered a number of Unangaĥ mummies and other burials, which were brought to the Smithsonian for further study (circa 1936-1940).

With the outbreak of World War II in 1941, the Aleutians soon came to the

forefront not because of anthropology but because they had the distinction of being the only territory of the United States where fighting actually took place on American soil. In 1942, the Japanese began bombing various Aleutian Islands, and the Battle of Attu in May of 1943 claimed the lives of 550 Americans and 2,350 Japanese (Garfield 2010:55-59). Many Unanga¹ perished during this time as well, not at the hands of the Japanese, but by the Americans who relocated numerous families and individuals to Southeast Alaska for their own protection, placing them in abandoned canneries with little food and no medicine (Mobley 2012). To add insult to injury, during the period from 1965 to 1971, the United States Atomic Energy Commission detonated three nuclear bombs off the coast of Amchitka, in the Aleutians, which became a catalyst to the destruction of the ecosystem of the region (Benning et al. 2009).

After World War II, numerous anthropologists and other scientists traveled to the Aleutians engaging in scholarly pursuits, the majority being in the realm of archaeology. During this period several ethnographies and ethnohistorical accounts were published on the Aleutians and adjoining areas of Alaska (Lantis 1970a; Oswalt 1990; VanStone 1967; de Laguna 1972). With the 1960s, and due to the contemporary processual paradigm of archaeology (Binford 1968), an increasing amount of data was gathered archaeologically for the purposes of reconstruction, including research on burial practices (Laughlin and Marsh 1954; Aigner 1976; Laughlin and Aigner 1975). And as time went on, the body of literature on the Unanga¹ expanded. Topics included their migration into the Aleutians, and their precontact culture, some of which continue to be debated. The body of work on mortuary customs continued to expand, and some of the most recent literature will be highlighted in subsequent chapters.

The passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 served as another benchmark in the anthropological history of the Aleutians. The Act necessitated archaeological surveys on various parcels of land that were eventually conveyed to

Alaska Native tribes and corporations. These culminated with the reports of Richard Bland (1992), Matthew O’Leary (2001) and many others. In the last several decades, a myriad of archaeological and ethnographic research has been collected by numerous anthropologists either alone or in conjunction with colleagues such as Richard Knecht (1995), Richard Davis and Rick Knecht (2005,2010,), Bruno Frohlich (2002), Bruno Frohlich and Sara Laughlin (2002), Lucy Johnson (2017), Virginia Hadfield (2010), Charles Egeland and others (2009), Douglas Veltre (1979, 2010, n.d.), Rachel Mason (2013), Don Dumond and Virginia Hatfield (2010) to name just a few. Added to this list are the other of the members Western Aleutians Archaeological and Paleobiological Project (WAAPP) previously named. Please note that this list is far from complete and all authors have many publications too numerous to mention in this section. The bibliography of this thesis attests to those who have made great contributions to the various aspects of Aleutian and Alaskan anthropology.

1.7 Rationale for this Research

At the time of this writing, there has been no comprehensive attempt to specifically address the topic of Unanga’s mummification from a non-biological or non-archaeological perspective. In order to address the aims of this thesis, it is necessary to contextualize this topic through anthropological theory in conjunction with ethnographic analogy. Previous studies on Aleutian precontact mortuary practices concentrated on archaeological reconnaissance, excavation, limited ethnography, and physiological studies on the actual mummified human remains. It has also been the practice in Alaskan archaeology to focus on one specific region, so little research has been conducted to include contiguous areas in studies such as this. Exceptions have been Lantis (1938a, 1940) who was the first to investigate the notion of similarities in whaling practices, rituals, and beliefs that existed throughout coastal Alaska. Her focus

was on the “whaling cult” so mortuary practices were not discussed in depth. Lydia Black (1987, 1991, 2003) wrote about whaling in the Aleutians and Kodiak. She recognized the strong possibility that the people of the Islands of the Four Mountains, especially on Kagamil Island (where a majority of the mummies were found), were whalers. However, Black stopped short of writing in depth on mummification in relation to whaling. Fitzhugh (2003) also incorporated numerous regions for his in-depth analysis regarding the origins of cultural complexity throughout the North Pacific Rim and discussed mortuary rituals in his discussion of the secret whaling society on Kodiak Island.

1.8 Methodology Summarized

Anthropological literature on the mortuary practices of Alaska Natives continues to accumulate, and Barbara Crass (1998) compiled an extensive analysis of mortuary data in “Pre-Christian Inuit Mortuary Practices: A Compendium of Archaeological and Ethnographic Sources” for her Ph.D. thesis, Crass’s work focused primarily on the Inuit and does not include any data on the Unanga. In her attempt to document Inuit mortuary practices (which included the areas of Alaska, Canada, Siberia and Greenland), Crass’s main goal was to compile as much information as possible on Inuit mortuary burials.

Her methodology included the use of archaeological data and ethnographic descriptions pertaining to the deposition of human remains. Originally the goal of this thesis was to apply Crass’s model to Unanga data, in particular, to mummification. However, upon further scrutiny, it appeared unrealistic to apply this archaeologically based model to data on the Unanga mummies and the artifacts associated with them. Unfortunately, up until the 1950s there were few scientifically based excavations of the Unanga mummy caves, and removal techniques did not include provenance data for stratigraphy of the caves and artifacts in association with the mummies. In most cases

only the cave or island information was included especially in relation to those artifacts collected by Hrdlička (1945).

Additionally, due to animal predation, natural rock fall, and souvenir hunting over the last two centuries, a majority of the mummies were not found in their original placements but instead were collected and examined in other locations. As a result, for this study it is unrealistic to use Crass's thesis as a model. Instead, this thesis focuses on the collection, consolidation and analysis of information pertaining to mummification and whaling from primary and secondary sources. It applies a theory of liminality as a reason for mummification, thereby supplementing what has been gathered archaeologically historically and ethnographically. Based on the aims and objectives of this thesis, it also became apparent that I would need to incorporate several additional concepts currently at the forefront of social anthropology to include the ontological relationship between humans and whales as well as shamanistic practices among whaling societies.

1.9 Geographical Considerations

The Aleutian Islands extend over an area of approximately 6,821 square miles (17,666 km) and extend 1,100 miles (1,900 km) west from mainland Alaska towards Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula (Figure 1.1). They are the westernmost part of the United States. Within the Aleutian boundaries are 57 volcanoes, placing them in the northern "Pacific Ring of Fire" (West et al. 2010; Laughlin 1980a). A majority of the islands are of volcanic origin. There are also violent surfs and extremely rocky shores that make landings very difficult. The climate of the islands is different from most of Alaska, with milder temperatures and heavy rainfall. Based on all these and other factors of significance, as well as the remoteness and large geographical area, may be reasons why more anthropologists have not flocked to this area to conduct their research.

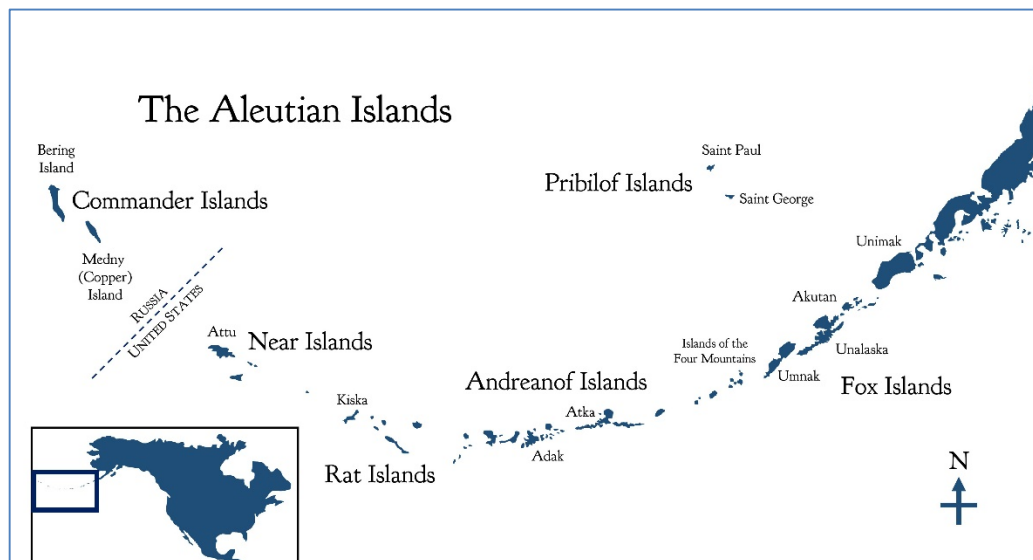


Figure 1.1. Map of the Aleutians

These factors, and the sheer volume of research that needed to be evaluated, presented epistemological difficulties in accomplishing my research objectives. A positive aspect was that, aboriginally, the Unanga^x experienced convergence in many aspects of their culture throughout the chain. One language was spoken with three dialects. Eastern Aleut was spoken by Unanga^x residing from the lower Alaska Peninsula to the Fox Islands, Western Aleut was spoken primarily in the Andreanof Islands, and a third dialect, Attuan, was spoken further west. It is unclear what language the inhabitants of the Islands of the Four Mountains or Rat Islands spoke (Bergsland and Dirks 1990:2-5). It is also noted that archaeologically there were distinct differences in cultural traits between the Eastern and the Western islands (Corbett et al. 1997b:102).

Besides occupying the numerous islands now called the Aleutians, the Unanga^x inhabited an area of Alaska referred to as the “Panhandle” or lower Alaska Peninsula. The boundary appears to be at what is now the village of Port Moller, Alaska (Figure 1.2). For the purposes of this thesis, this entire region will be defined as the “Aleutians”.

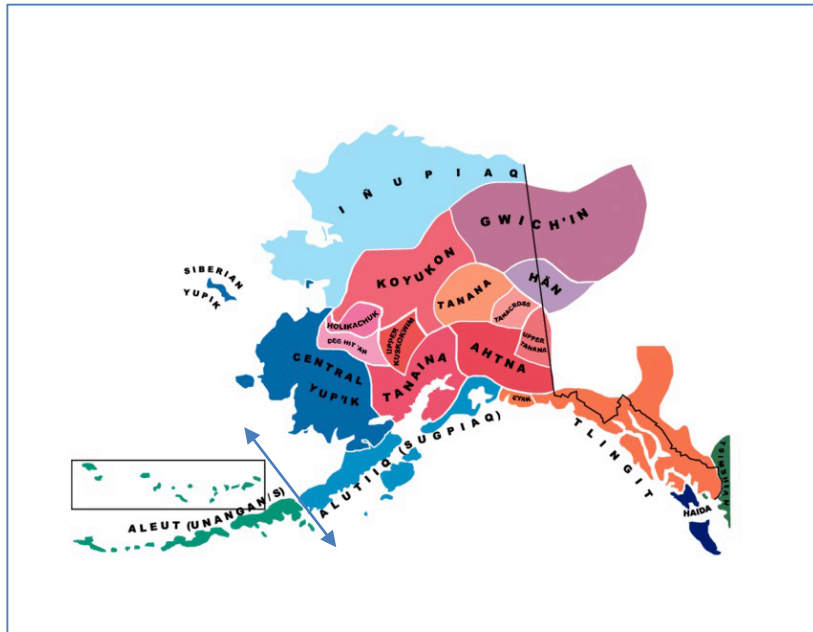


Figure 1.2. Boundaries between Unanga and Alutiiq designed by arrow (from Alaska Native Language Center)

For simplicity, the Aleutian region was then divided into smaller segments to account for regional variations of mummification and other forms human body deposition. On modern maps of the Aleutians, the islands are broken into groupings based on clusters of islands. These consist of the following from east to west:

- Fox Islands and Region of Peninsula
- Islands of Four Mountains
- Andreanof Islands
- Rat Islands
- Near Islands

Of even greater significance is the fact that many of these geographical groupings coincide with aboriginal tribal groupings delineated by Bergsland and Dirks (1990:xviii) (see Figure 1.3).

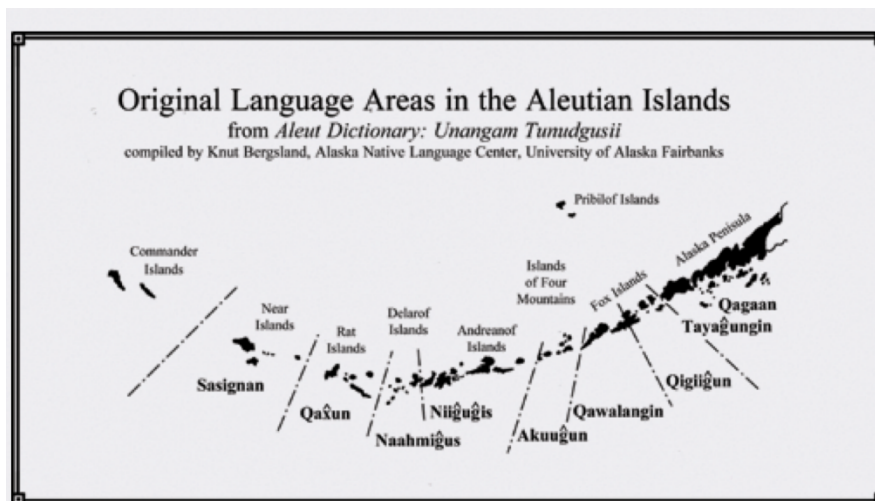


Figure 1.3. Precontact groupings (modified from Bergsland and Dirks 1990:xviii).

As a result, the locations of the mummy caves and finds will be delineated using the divisions explained above, which I have coded as indicated in the chart below (Figure 1.4).

Island Cluster	Tribal Name	Number of Islands
Alaska Peninsula	Alaxsxiin	
Fox Islands		
Shumagin Islands	Qagiigun	10
Sanak Islands	Qagaan	1+ Islets
Krenitzin Islands	Qigiigun	8
Umnak-Unalaska	Qawalangin	2
Islands of Four Mountains	Akuugun	8
Andreanof Islands	Niigugis	52
Delaroff Islands	Nashmigus	11
Rat Islands	Qaxun	13
Near Islands	Sasignan	16

Figure 1.4 Tribal names of the various islands.

If one looks at the number of islands in each group (Figure 1.4), it is understandable why more archaeological work has not been done. Finally, please note that due to the geographic configuration of the Aleutian Islands, maps of the area may not be ideal or aesthetically accurate as the western segment of the Aleutian Islands is usually placed in an insert because of their lengthy extension into the Pacific Ocean.

1.10 Multidisciplinary Approach

Early on it seemed most logical that a multidisciplinary approach would be the most effective method to fully examine what was known about Unanga's mummification. This type of strategy can be misconstrued without clarification. For this thesis, it will entail the citing, evaluating and analyzing of the ethnographical, archaeological and historical literature that has been generated regarding mortuary practices and whaling. Also included are data from physical anthropology regarding studies that have been conducted on the bodies of Unanga's mummies. Such analyses enabled me to construct my proposition regarding shamanistic practices.

Ethnohistorical information is also included to provide the context for the various cultural changes that occurred after contact. Ethnohistory has a variety of definitions, and although it is an accepted methodology in the United States, the term sometimes is subject to scrutiny in other parts of the world (Trigger 1982:2). In this study ethnohistory will be defined as "the use of historical documents and historical method in anthropological research" (Wood 1990:81). The debate about the various aspects of ethnohistory is not in the scope of this work. Ultimately it represents a form of culture history (Axtell 1979:2) and can also be called "historical anthropology" (Krech 1991:365). Wood (1990:82) outlined a preferred method of establishing baselines for historical research, citing the most important aspect as being the search for documentation authenticity and credibility of the data. Many practitioners (Carmack 1972; Leacock 1961) contend that the field represents a set of methodologies rather than a theoretically based discipline. However, others argue it is a valid way of incorporating history into anthropological pursuits. I agree with the latter.

Margaret Lantis (1970a:53-54) noted that in Alaska, ethnohistory has produced successful works by anthropologists such as James VanStone (1967), Wendell Oswalt (1963, 1990), and many others. More recently, Lydia Black (1984a, 1984b), Black et al.

(1999), Herbert Maschner and Katherine Reedy-Maschner (1998), and Roza Liapunova (1996) have published works on the Aleutians using this approach. In the research just cited, the authors were either capable of translating documents from Russian to English or used a very reliable translator to do so. They evaluated the credibility of the writer(s) (in this case mostly Russian). Douglas Veltre (1979) and Douglas Veltre and Allen McCartney (2002) combined archaeology with ethnohistorical Aleutian data, labeling this methodology as “ethnohistorical archaeology”. This entailed the use of archaeological information as well as all other source historical documents for cultural reconstructions (Veltre 1979:11). This use of different data sets, including those based on archaeological evidence or ethnographic reports, helped to evaluate the authenticity of historical documentation as well as oral traditions and is a reliable methodological approach. This is especially true for studying cultures in Alaska that are either undergoing or have gone through the processes of change. The Unanga fall into the latter category and ultimately the historical documents that have been generated about the Aleutians, especially reports by those who were agents of change, provide windows on the culture at different stages. In the Aleutians these agents of change were explorers, soldiers, missionaries, traders, and even Creoles (the offspring of Russian and Unanga). All sources include in this study have consistently served as the baseline for much of the research that has been conducted by a majority of Aleutian scholars. This is especially due to the Unanga history of contact and the lack of modern day informants. These records are inferred to be reliable although ethnocentric attitudes and biases are noted where appropriate.

1.11 Data Collection

The data for this research were gathered from a variety of sources. As previously mentioned, there is a heavy reliance on already translated Russian writings, vetted or

translated by reliable sources. In addition, anthropological, archaeological, historical, and osteological data were used. These include archival materials such as the collection “Documents Important to the History of Alaska” as well as various theses that were written pertaining to the Aleutians, Kodiak, and Prince William Sound areas. Partial translated segments of the “Alaska Russian Church Archives” are included in the “Documents Relative to the History of Alaska”, which were compiled from 1936 to 1938 as part of the Alaska History Research Project of the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. This fifteen volume typewritten set of documents was reviewed on microfiche. The Municipality of Anchorage’s Loussac Library Alaska Collection was also consulted. The Loussac Library has an entire annex set aside for their Alaska Collection, which attempts to gather all sources written about Alaska up until the present. The University of Alaska, Anchorage’s Consortium Library also has accumulated a collection of resources in their Alaska Collection as well as subscriptions to a number of journals that were consulted in the library or via the Internet through the JSTOR database. The University’s Archival Collection Section currently houses the documents compiled and written by Aleutian scholars such as William Laughlin, Alan May, and Theodore (Ted) Bank, which were donated after their respective deaths. These men (except for Bank) accompanied Aleš Hrdlička on his Aleutian expeditions in the 1930s while still students. The items in these collections were reviewed and yielded a significant amount of information not only about their professional contributions, but their private lives as well. Their published works, as well as unwritten manuscripts and personal papers, have added insight not only in the realm of Unanga’s burials but on the process of mummification of which they wrote.

The past agendas of the Alaskan Anthropological Association Meetings were viewed online. Several papers presented directly related to Unanga’s mortuary practices were never published. For these cases, the authors were contacted and graciously

provided their unpublished texts. Felix Torres of France (2007) wrote of the early myths and stories that dealt with mummification. Richard Bland (1992, n.d.) and subsequently Richard Bland and Matthew O'Leary (n.d.) documented the use of *umqan* and other methods of burial that will be discussed. Individual researchers were also contacted. In 2006, a trip was made to the Smithsonian Institution for a conference with David Hunt and Bruno Frohlich concerning their work and knowledge of the Unangaâ mummies in their collection. In 2019 another visit was made to the Smithsonian. At that time I met with Eric Hollinger and Chris Dudar. During the visit I was able to view some of the mummies that were at the Institution. In 2001 the 36 mummies at the Smithsonian were CAT scanned. In 2019 they were being CAT scanned again in preparation for repatriation, so many were not available for viewing. I was also able to view the available CAT scans, the reports associated with them and a number of artifacts that were gathered by Alex Hrdlička. Information from this visit is incorporated into this thesis. Throughout the course of this thesis I remained in contact with them and their comments are noted where relevant.

I placed a post on the Aleut Listserv to generate information about Unangaâ mortuary practices and mummification. This was done in January of 2010 and I received numerous responses, primarily from academic contributors. Other academics were contacted by email over the years spanning this work. They include Guido Lombardi (1997), Michael Zimmerman (1981) who conducted several studies on the actual mummified bodies, and Ray Hudson (1992), who collected many narratives during his time in the Aleutians. I interviewed Lucy Johnson at the 2013 meetings of the Alaskan Anthropological regarding her research on the artifacts and mummies found on Carlisle Island, and Douglas Veltre at the University of Alaska, Anchorage was also consulted on several matters.

On August 5, 2013, I interviewed Millie McKeown, Cultural Director of the Aleutian Pribilof Island Association. During our meeting it became apparent that a trip

to the Aleutian Islands specifically to interview elders was not warranted for a variety of reasons. Many Unanga and their families have long since left the Aleutians for better opportunities in urban centers such as Anchorage. Additionally, out of the numerous Native Alaskan groups, the Unanga were assimilated very early on by their Russian invaders and have been practicing the Russian Orthodox religion for over two hundred years. As a result, it did not appear realistic that current elders would have knowledge of aboriginal practices or would be willing to share their knowledge due to the sensitive nature of speaking about the dead, which will be discussed.

In March of 2017 I traveled to the Aleutians, in particular to Dutch Harbor on Amaknak Island, Unalaska. The purpose of the trip was to experience the landscape at least of this part of the Islands and to view the mummies that had been repatriated back to the Museum of the Aleutians. Prior permission was obtained from the Qawalangin tribe. While there, within 24 hours the climate went from extremely cold and very windy to sunny and pleasant. The stark, treeless landscape framed by the sea and beautiful snowcapped mountains was captivating. While at the museum one infant mummy, complete with x-ray was examined. It was collected by Ted Bank presumably from Kagamil Island. It is unclear as to the whereabouts of the other human remains that were to be repatriated back to the museum. It was thought that they are now with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service in Anchorage. However, the chief archaeologist of that agency indicated that they had no mummies at their facility, and he knew nothing about them (Ed DeCleva, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, personal communication, August 10, 2017). Note should be made that the museum was in the process of initiating a twenty-year inventory and were working with the Tribe and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to determine the location of the human remains that were repatriated. While at the Museum I was able to view numerous artifacts, especially kayak parts, and other wood and skin items pertinent to this study.

1.12 Implicit Problems

From the onset there were a number of perceived problems that were taken into consideration during the course of this research. As stated in the previous section, using historical sources could not be avoided. It needs to be emphasized, however, that many of the earliest accounts of mortuary rituals are anecdotal, in many cases written by Russian officers, merchants, fur traders, and administrators. The true purpose of recording information about the Unanga^â was not to do ethnography. Many accounts were biased and either portray the Unanga^â as savages (presumably to justify their subjugation) or portray them as heathens who needed to be converted. Many of these original reports have been found and translated into English, and most of the translations have been verified for accuracy by various bilingual scholars who are cited as the translators (Black; Liapunova; Lantis; Pierce; Bland; etc.).

Place names and dates continue to cause difficulty because over time village names have changed or were called something different during the Russian era. Some villages were abandoned or no longer exist. And, because there are so many islands, there probably was some confusion of reporting by the Russian soldiers, hunters, and explorers.

There are also dating discrepancies and lack of specific archaeological context, except for island name and sometimes place or cave names. During Russian times, Unanga^â practices were merely described, more as curiosities with no attempt to speculate about their longevity or significance. After the Russian era, there were many individuals visiting the Aleutians, including Alfonse Pinart from France, Captain E. Henning from the Alaska Commercial Company, and William H. Dall and Aleš Hrdlička from the Smithsonian Institution. In many cases, skeletal remains were taken out of context so that they could be collected and/or studied. It is no secret that Aleš Hrdlička, one of the most prominent men in his field at the time (1930-1940), practiced

excavation techniques that left a lot to be desired (Loring and Prokopec 1994; de Laguna 1956; Spaulding 1953). At this juncture it is noted that because this research spans a time period from the mid-1700s to the present, various methods of archaeological dating are included. These range from authors using dates, years, and eras as well as radiocarbon notations that have changed over time. In all cases I present the dating as written by the author(s), except for omitting the periods after era designations per the Society for American Archaeology (2017:15).

Another area of concern in the realm of translation and categorization is the use of the term *Aleut* and what the people of the Aleutian Islands not only called themselves prior to contact but also presently. This is problematic and must be discussed in order to clarify terms that cause confusion as well as to define those that will be used in this work. The word *Aleut* was a word placed on the Unanga^â by the Russians (Black 1998:126; Veltre and Smith 2010:488). The Unanga^â language is *Unangam Tunu*. According to Veltre (n.d.:2), by the 1800s there were three dialects. Currently many people of the Aleutian Islands refer to themselves as Unangan or Unanga^â although there are variations, and a consensus has not been reached by all tribal members (McKeown personal communication 16 September 2013). In this thesis the words *Aleut* and Unanga^â (with its grammatical and regional variations) will be used somewhat interchangeably, but with a tendency to employ *Aleut* in contexts where that word was used historically by various authors and Unanga^â at other times.

In the realm of semantics, the word *Aleut* is problematic for another reason. Upon the arrival of the Russians, the Sugpiaq Eskimos of the northern Alaskan panhandle and Kodiak Island resembled the Unanga^â both physically and culturally. As a result, the Russians also called them *Aleut*. Consequently, in the early literature, they were categorized as *Aleuts*, so additional scrutiny of documents was warranted (Haakanson and Steffian 2009:205). Once anthropologists got involved and realized

they were of different groups, these Natives were referred to as the Chugach Eskimos for Prince William Sound and Koniag or Pacific Eskimos for the Kodiak area. This was primarily because their language falls into the Eskimo language family. For many years the Natives of this region called their language and themselves Alutiiq, but in the last decade they changed their ethnic designation to Sugpiaq, which is their aboriginal name. As a result, throughout this thesis both words will be used (De Hass 2007).

Aboriginally, the Unanga and these people spoke different languages. For further clarification, the Unanga of mixed heritage with Russians were called Creoles.

Social stratification also complicates the information pertaining to Unanga mortuary practices. Because there were various social strata ranging from slaves to elite individuals, it is speculated that this resulted in the dead receiving differential treatment depending on their status. There was also dismemberment of enemies and the taking of trophy heads. Thus, a burial could contain several bodies that were laid in the grave in different manners but contiguous to one another. This could account for the fact that the masters were sometimes buried with slaves or single skulls were found in burials (Jochelson 2002b:53; Hrdlička 1945:149). These factors will be taken into consideration in subsequent chapters.

It also is evident that the loss of aged elders and knowledgeable Unanga informants is a severe handicap to both archaeological and ethnographic studies. Unanga culture was decimated during the early days of the Russians (Veltre n.d.:18). And, although it would have been ideal to interview living elders about past mortuary customs, all indications are that this knowledge is partially lost. Laughlin (n.d.) expressed this concern when he wrote:

In 1948 a sixty-year-old man could identify most excavated artifacts and give their names, names of parts and their uses...More recently in 1971, male informants born around the turn of the century and female informants some ten years older, could not identify excavated specimens of bladder nozzles, ivory gaming figures or an image of a deity with well delineated face and diagnostic vertical suspension girdling.

However, there are exceptions. Mason and Hudson (2014) were able to collect narratives of whaling and other aspects pertinent to this study that are included in subsequent sections providing evidence that some elders still remember the old ways.

1.13 Ethical Considerations

Although this thesis crosses international boundaries, anthropological ethics remain consistent throughout the discipline regardless of borders. Currently, there are approximately 8,000 Unanga people living throughout Alaska. Many have moved into the Anchorage area. There are thirteen separate tribal governments in the Aleutians created under the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (Aleutian Pribilof Island Association Website: "Tribes", last accessed 15 September 2015.

<http://www.apiai.org/tribes>). The Aleutian Pribilof Island Association (the non-profit counterpart to the corporation) was contacted both at the beginning and conclusion of this study. It needs to be mentioned at this juncture that most of the Aleutian mummies were taken without permission. This was done primarily by Captain E. Henning of the Alaska Commercial Company (1874) and by Ales Hrdlička (1936-1940), curator at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C., where a majority of the mummies still remain. Most indigenous Alaska Native cultures had and still have various taboos and beliefs about human remains and the Unanga are no exception. Additionally, the matter of the mummies was further complicated in 1990 when the United States Congress passed the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). American Indians and Alaska Natives were very much aware that for decades anthropologists had been collecting Indian and Alaska Native human remains without permission from cemeteries and burial grounds and warehousing them in universities and museums around the country (Rose et al. 1996). NAGPRA halted this practice.

The Unanga mummies fell into this category and became just one group of

thousands of specimens stored at the Smithsonian. Even more importantly, another provision of NAGPRA was that all specimens must be catalogued and repatriated to their various groups and tribes when requested. In the case of the Unangaâ mummies, various examination procedures were not done until the past two decades. These included scans and autopsies, and more recently DNA and other studies (Coltrain et al. 2006; Thompson et al. 2013; Jonsdottir 2002; Lombardi 1997; Zimmerman et al. 1981). The issue of repatriation of the mummies is in the process of being resolved and because of this the mummies are being scanned again prior to being returned to tribal authorities. It is also noted that even through the Smithsonian Institution abides by NAGPRA guidelines, the Institution falls under the jurisdiction of the National Museum of the American Indian Act which was passed in 1989.

For this thesis, the Aleutian Pribilof Island Association requested that no current photographs of the mummies be included. Throughout, there are several photos of the mummies, but these specimens have been included in many publications. The intent for inclusion was not meant as disrespect of the Unangaâ and their ancestors, but instead to help tell their story.

1.14 Thesis Organization

I have arranged this thesis in an order so that my research goals are presented in the most logical and organized fashion given the amount of data that have been reviewed as a basis for developing my arguments.

“Chapter 2: ‘Location, Location, Location’” discusses the ecological importance of whales and whaling. By doing so I set the stage to begin examining the importance whales, and by proxy, whalers. Migration routes and species of whales are included. I also discuss several important sites that provide definitive proof of whale utilization.

“Chapter 3: Theories Pertaining to Mummification” details the theoretical basis

for this thesis. The writings of van Gennep (1960 [1909]) Hertz (1960 [1907]) and Turner (1967) provide the framework for my analysis of mummification, especially pertaining to the concept of liminality. I then discuss the research of Rakita and Buikstra (2005) and their conceptualization of Inca mummification as a method of keeping the mummified individuals in a state of perpetual liminality. I then use their model to present my own version of why individuals in the Aleutians were mummified and therefore became more powerful in death than in life

“Chapter 4: The Danger of Whales and Species Selection” includes a discussion of the symbolic aspects of whaling. Among whaling cultures, all animals, but especially whales, were viewed as sentient beings. Unanga whaling is examined using ethnographic analogies from other cultures around the world that use dead bodies as whale hunting aides. The relationship between man and whale is examined as well as the reason for all of the secret rituals and taboos associated with the hunt. Here I make the argument that during the hunt, the whaler entered a liminal state at which time ontological boundaries were crossed.

Chapter 5: “Shamanism, Liminality and Transformation” introduces the concept of an ancient shamanistic complex that permeated the whaling cultures of the Arctic and Pacific Northwest. I propose that in the literature, the notion of a “whaling cult” can be better understood when examined within the context of shamanistic practices. I then focus on the inherent aspects of shamanism in relation to liminality, transformation, and spirituality that was an inherent part of whaling.

In “Chapter 6: Archaeology, Death and Maritime Adaptations”, the archaeological sequences of the Aleutians and surrounding regions are discussed. Here I include the various chronologies in order to examine the material evidence for the origins of whaling and discuss the earliest evidence of complex mortuary rituals including mummification. Evidence is presented that there were numerous similarities

among cultures indicating a transmission of ideas and material culture.

“Chapter 7: Whaling and Secret Ingredients” includes information pertaining to the various types of whaling that was practiced in the Aleutians and surrounding regions. The use of the poison aconite is examined in the context of the various historical accounts documented not only of whaling but also the use of “mummy grease”. Here I examine whether aconite and its lethal properties was the carefully guarded secret known only to whalers

“Chapter 8: Unangaâ Culture at the Time of Contact” consists of a summary of Unangaâ culture first documented by those who traveled to the Islands. This is to better contextualize mummification and whaling by examining topics such as social stratification, kinship, and medicinal knowledge. These aspects of culture have a direct bearing on examining the status of whalers and also to help determine those who may have been mummified and why.

“Chapter 9: Variations in Unangaâ Body Deposition and Mummification” includes a discussion of the divergent types of body deposition in the Aleutians This is done to add credence to my argument that mummification was the most elaborate and labor intensive mortuary practice and therefore would only be done to individuals of high status such as whalers. I also examine what other statuses would be afforded mummification such as chiefs and shamans.

“Chapter 10: The Chronological Sequence of Mummification” is a discussion regarding the past and most recent literature pertaining to the chronological age of the mummies. This is important in order to further correlate mummification with what is known archaeologically and historically regarding whaling.

“Chapter 11: Mummy Locations, Archaeologists, and Contextualization” provides documentation of all the known locations where mummies have been found in the Aleutians. Included here is also how the mummies were found, and what was found

with them. Although in most cases the mummies and funerary objects were plundered, I include all known accounts in order to extrapolate information pertinent to this study.

“Chapter 12: Mummification in Contiguous Regions” covers what is known and not known about mummification in the regions geographically close to the Aleutians. The information from Kodiak regarding whaling ceremonialism supplements what is absent for the Aleutians. The important sites and archaeological items found in Prince William Sound is also examined.

In “Chapter 13: Mummies and Artifacts”, the actual artifacts found in caves and sometimes in direct association with Aleutian mummies are examined. The purpose is to examine the material remains that link mummification to whaling either practically (whaling spears, etc.) or ritually such as masks.

In Chapter 14 I discuss my conclusions and recommendations for future studies. I demonstrate how the different chapters contribute to the development of the core proposition of this thesis that shamanistic practices focusing on whale hunting were founded on ontological relationships concerning human animal transformations.

Chapter 2 “Location, Location, Location” and the Ecological Importance of Whaling

2.1 Introduction

This chapter serves as an introduction to the whales and whaling in the Aleutians. Evidence is provided to establish why whales were of such high value to the precontact Unangan economies on many of the islands. It also sets the stage to establish why whalers were afforded high social status in these economies. The logic for this argument follows that if whales were economically important, and only certain initiated individuals could hunt whales, the status of these individuals would be elevated. They would be held in high regard not only due to their physical prowess but also due to their affiliation with a shamanistic complex that was secretive in nature and that included the use of mummified human remains as part of their whale hunting rituals.

2.2 Whale Migrations

There are only limited data pertaining to the migration of whales for the study regions at the time of contact. Following the lead of McCartney (1984:80-81) more recent documentation on whale migration is presented. Judicious analogies and inferences are substituted as needed and historical information cited if known. It is common knowledge that whaling was important to the subsistence strategies of the sea mammal focused economies of the north, especially along the coasts of northern Alaska, parts of the Chukchi Peninsula, and St. Lawrence Island. There are fewer data regarding the actual contribution of whales to the precontact Aleutian economies compared to their Inupiat neighbors to the north. What is known is that the southern North Pacific is one of the world's most productive whaling grounds. This is due in part to winter turbulence and a density inversion, which bring bottom nutrients into the upper water column (Ackerman 1988). In the spring, the water column becomes stable and the amount of light increases, with the result that phytoplankton, zooplankton, and

invertebrate populations are able to expand rapidly. The invertebrates include animals important in the diet of baleen whales, copepods, euphausiids, and squid.

Herring and capelin are eaten by baleen whales as well as toothed cetaceans and other sea mammals. Many species of whales congregate in the region's shallow coastal waters and bays during the warm months to feed and spawn. While documentation of prehistoric Alaskan cetacean samples is more elusive, there is clear evidence that large baleen whales and porpoises were being utilized by at least 4,000-3,000 B.P. (Yarborough 1995:72).

It is also noted at this juncture that due to the diversity of their habitats and climactic differences, the Unangâ and Sugpiaq were afforded a more variable diet than some of the more northern groups. A variety of birds were accessible, as well as marine mammals including harbor seals, sea lions, sea otters, fish (cod), and in some areas salmon (O'Leary 1984:81). There were also crabs, sea urchins, and other cetaceans represented by dolphins and porpoises (Laughlin 1975a). Based on this variability, it is plausible that most of their food could be procured within three miles of the coastline, near strand flat streams, and inside bays. By implication, if a hunter could obtain all his family needed close to home, there would be more trepidation about hunting whales in the open seas. Thus starts my discussion of whalers. Whalers courted unpredictability. Not only did they have to strike the whale, but they then had to return to land and be dependent on the winds and currents to strand the whale in a place both known and accessible (O'Leary 1984:98).

2.3 The Taxonomy of Whales

There are numerous species of whales that migrate through the waters of the Aleutians, Kodiak Archipelago, and Prince William Sound traveling south to north and back again. They travel along the waters once exploited by the Tlingit of the Northwest

Coast and the Nootka of the Vancouver area, up to more northern areas already mentioned. Most species of whales, with the exception of the right whales, bowhead whales, and killer whales, are primarily summer migrants who take advantage of the high productivity of the Bering Sea during the longest days of the year. As a result, in the Aleutians it would thus appear that whaling was most likely to have been a summer or early fall activity that was dependent on area and species.

Whales are of the family Cetacea, which includes dolphins and porpoises. Within this order there are suborders. Here whales are primarily divided into those with teeth, Odeontoceti (whether functional or not) versus those with baleen, Mysteseti. The baleen whales have a plate that serves as a filter in the mouth of the whale for ingesting plankton and small fish. The baleen whales documented for the Aleutians currently include the blue, fin, sei, minke, humpback, bowhead, Pacific right, gray, and bowhead. The toothed whales include the sperm, beluga, beaked (to be discussed), and orcas (killer) whales (O'Leary 1984:82-83). In a subsequent chapter documentation will be provided indicating that the orca was perceived as separate from other whales by the Unanga. Due to this distinction, the word whale will refer to all whales except for the orca. The orca whales hunt and kill other whales, and as a result, the orca figured most prominently in the rituals associated with whaling.

2.4 Types of Whales and Known Migration Routes

Much has been written pertaining the propensity of whales in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea regions. In an older study, Berzin and Rovnin (1966) compiled data on whale populations as reported by Soviet and Japanese expeditions from 1950 through the 1960s with details of known migration routes. More recent anthropological studies have since been compiled by Crowell (1994:221-223) who wrote of prehistoric whale populations in the Gulf of Alaska with emphasis on Kodiak. Yarborough (1995:66)

provided similar data while focusing on Prince William Sound. Both cite whale species, size, and precontact population estimates. A valuable source for archaeologically documented species specific to the Eastern Aleutians can be found in research reported by Crockford et al. (2004). These authors included the analysis of the cetacean (and other species) excavated at the Amaknak site, indicating the type and frequency of whale species that traveled prehistorically through the Aleutians, Kodiak, and contiguous areas. Assuming that most whale migration patterns and feeding grounds have not changed considerably over time, the data helps demonstrate the potential of whale species to the Unanga. From what is known of migration patterns whales would have been accessible throughout the Aleutians in prehistoric times. This is especially true for the Eastern islands that were afforded a prime location for accessibility to whales by either stranding or hunting. Data has shown that presently and in the past, Unimak Pass (Figure 2.1) was a favored area that whales frequented while traveling north to reach the feeding grounds of the Bering and Chukchi seas (see sections 2.5 and 2.6 below). There were alternate routes near other islands as well. This would place numerous whales in close proximity to Unalaska and several sites that will be highlighted. The evidence provided here does not include the hunting of whales, which will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

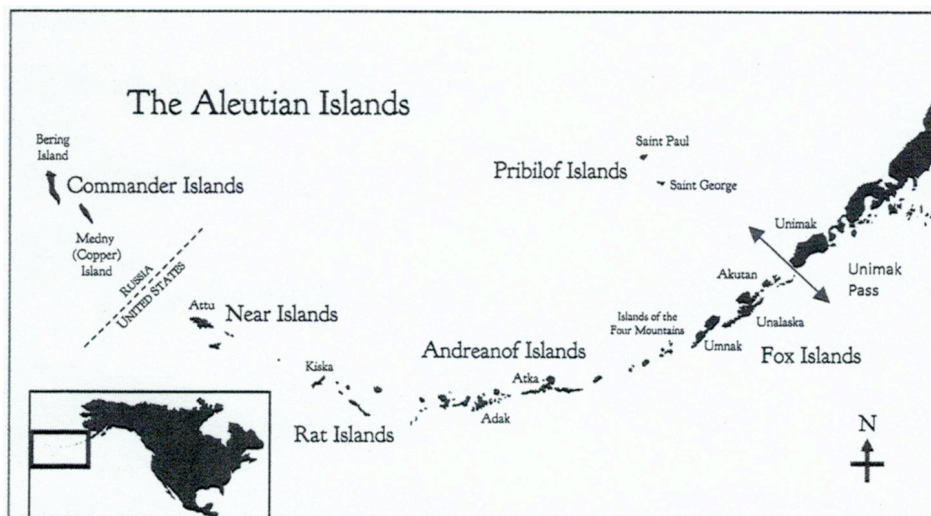


Figure 2.1 Map Showing location of Unimak Pass (designated by arrow)

2.5 Baleen Whales

The gray whale is known to pass through the Aleutians during spring and fall migrations. Unimak Pass is a known favored migration route. It is also well documented that these whales avoid deep water areas and tend to remain along shores in bays, lagoons, and areas where it is sometimes hard for them to swim. As a result, they have been subject to human predation (Banfield 1974:279; Leatherwood et al. 1988:39-50).

Historically, Turner (1886:200 in Murie 1959:334) witnessed several gray whales in Umnak Pass in 1878. Blue whales currently frequent the waters near Unalaska and Kodiak and have been spotted in the Bering Sea. Fin whales are widely distributed in summer and are known to be on the Bering Sea side of the Aleutians. Numerous fin whales are also known to travel through the Unimak Strait. Large numbers have been documented in May and June along the Aleutian Islands close to the mainland (Berzin and Rovnin 1966:205). It is inferred that these routes have not changed.

Sei whales are known to be plentiful along the Aleutian Islands in July and August. They are smaller whales and the fastest of all cetaceans. North Pacific right whales are known to enter the Bering Sea through the Unimak Strait, but it is thought that they also travel through other straits in the Aleutians. Prior to commercial whaling in the North Pacific (i.e. pre-1835), the populations in the North Pacific probably were over 20,000 animals. This was known to be the largest historical concentration and occurred near Kodiak Island and the Eastern Aleutians. They now can be found near Atka Island from June through August, and they are also abundant throughout the Bering Sea region (Bernin and Rovnin 1966:250).

They are slow moving and easier to catch than other whale species. Jochelson indicated that the Pacific right whale ranged in the Aleutian waters in former times (Murie 1959:334). Osgood (1904:27 in Murie 1959:335) mentions a stranded whale on the southern coast of the Alaska Peninsula in 1902, which he tentatively assumed to be a

right whale.

Humpbacks are distributed widely in the North Pacific (Johnson and Wolman 1984). They are abundant in the Aleutian Islands as well as the Bering Sea. Humpback whales eat a mixture of fish and euphausiids. Because of their prey preferences, humpbacks feed closer to the shore than most of the other great whales. They are presently the most abundant species of large whale in the inshore waters of the Gulf of Alaska and Eastern Bering Sea (Rone et al. 2016:124). Murie (1959:335) recorded one at Agattu Island, four at Kiska, and three at Amchitka.

Bowhead whales are well adapted to cold waters, with a layer of blubber that can reach 1½ feet thick (50 cm). They can be found in the Bering Sea and during winter and summer in the Beaufort Sea. Work at the Amaknak site by Knecht and Davis (2004) has yielded evidence of bowhead whales. The authors propose that the southward expansion of Bering Sea ice to the Eastern Aleutians during the cold neoglacial may have brought significant numbers of bowheads within easy reach of the Amaknak site inhabitants. Bowheads tend to winter at the southern edge of the pack ice and move north as the ice recedes in spring (Reeves et al. 2002). Even during the coldest years bowheads would have been accessible to Eastern Aleutian hunters but seasonally during winter and spring.

Minke whales feed on small schooling fish. During the summer Minke populations move into coastal shelf regions of cool temperate waters including the Bering Sea, some go north to the ice edge (Reeves et al. 2002).

2.6 Toothed Whales

According to Crowell (1994:221), the toothed cetaceans found in the Gulf of Alaska are all year-round residents. These include orcas and several species of dolphins and porpoises. Beluga whales are found primarily in Cook Inlet. Stejenger's beaked

whales are the largest of the toothed whales and range the furthest north of all beaked whales. They travel across the subarctic and cool temperate waters of the North Pacific from Japan through the Bering Sea. According to Reeves et al. (2002) since 1970 many strandings have occurred in the Aleutians including 11 incidents (involving 23 individuals) on Adak Island alone. This whale has the propensity to strand fairly regularly.

Sperm whales travel from California along the Pacific Northwest coast to the Aleutians. They are found off Kodiak Island, to the west along the Aleutian chain and as far as the Commander Islands. Large accumulations of sperm whales have been observed south of Kodiak Island, south of Unimak Strait, northwest of the Rat Islands, and south of the Near Islands. It is thought that their range probably changed over time but not significantly (Berzin and Rovnin 1966:184). According to Crockford et al. (2004:D-12) long finned pilot whales are considered extinct in the North Pacific. Along with Knecht and Davis (2004), they suggest that in the past, the Bering Sea may have provided a suitable habitat for this species. They are known to regularly associate with other cetaceans, including dolphins and large whales, suggesting they may represent an incidental catch to other species. A specimen was discovered at the Amaknak Bridge site. This find is the first record of this species being in the Eastern North Pacific. Baird's beaked whales frequent the South Bering Sea and Aleutian regions. They have been sighted within pack ice of the Sea of Okhotsk during winter and spring suggesting they are not adverse to cold waters (Crockford et al. 2004:D-11).

As stated earlier, the orca or killer whale will be discussed at length in subsequent chapters. A brief summary is provided here: Orcas are recognized by their distinctive black, white and grey coloration with a white eye patch. According to Black et al. (1997) there are at least three recognizable ecotypes (residents, transients, and offshores) in the Eastern North Pacific that do not associate with other groups. They

have different home ranges, dietary preferences, foraging patterns. Residents prey mostly on fish, transients on marine mammals, and offshores on both but prefer sharks. According to Murie (1959:336- 337), killer whales were common along the Alaska Peninsula and throughout the Aleutians. He found a dead one on Agattu Island. They have been spotted near Unimak Island. Turner (1886:198) reported seeing as many as one hundred and fifty at one time in the Aleutians.

2.7 Archaeological Clues of Whale Utilization

The intent of this section is to review data from several archaeological sites where whale remains have been identified and examined. The purpose is to provide evidence of whale utilization versus other fauna to extrapolate the contribution of whales to the economy of various villages, which would then contribute to the high status of whalers. It must also be noted that it is very difficult and sometimes impossible to identify as to species, the fragmented remains of whales. In most cases complete skulls or other osteological specimens that would allow for more precise identification are not recovered (Yarborough 1995). However over the last few decades some analysis has been undertaken (Crockford et al.2004, Denniston 1974).

2.8 The Amaknak Bridge Site

The first site of importance to this study is the Amaknak Bridge site (UNL-50), which is located on Amaknak Island. This site is situated on Unalaska Bay in an area that separates Amaknak and Unalaska Islands. Note should be made that this site is important for a variety of reasons too lengthy to be covered in this work. Of relevance is the fact that this site was occupied during an important period of climactic change, the end of the Neoglacial period and the onset of the post Neoglacial warming. Crockford et al. (2004) and Knecht and Davis (2004) contend that during this time there was a

significant southward extension and persistence of the sea-ice edge that caused the redistribution of ice adapted pinnipeds and migrating whales for more than 2,000 years. This was known as a period of cooling, which began after 4,000 B.P. During this time it was cold enough locally to create pack ice, connecting most of the Fox Island group of the Eastern Aleutians and Alaskan Peninsula. Remains of fauna such as walrus and polar bear, currently outside the range of the Aleutians and located much farther north, have been identified. This site was occupied during a time of transition between the Margaret Bay and succeeding Amaknak phase, which is thought to have occurred 3,000 years ago (Knecht and Davis 2004:16-18). These archaeological sequences will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

A detailed analysis of the fauna was conducted by Crockford et al. (2004). Of the vertebrate species identified, there were 44 species of birds, three species of land mammal, 16 species of sea mammals, and 20 species of fish. Mammals included the Northern fur seal, Northern sea lion, walrus, bearded seal, ringed seal, and several species of porpoise. Of note is the fact that the only whale bones identified by species consisted of two humpbacks, Baird's beaked whale, right whale, long finned pilot whale (Crockford 2008:120), and a tentative identification of Stejneger's beaked whale (Knecht and Davis 2004:137-138). This is the first discovery of a long-finned pilot whale in the eastern Pacific as it is now extinct in the North Pacific (Crockford et al. 2004: D-65; Knecht and Davis 2004:138). Right and fin whales are known to summer off the north coast of Unalaska as well as Baird's beaked whale. The discovery established that many habitats did not change significantly over time. Approximately 70 pieces of whale bone were recognized as part of whales but not species could be determined.

It appears that at this site, subsistence consisted of sea bird hunting and deep-sea fishing. During this time the inhabitants took advantage of the pack ice due to climatic

cooling (Davis and Knecht 2004:163). Crockford et al. (2004) contend that the sea ice lasted until summer, suggesting that the Bering Strait was blocked with ice year-round from 4,700 B.P. to 2,500 B.P. thus preventing whales from migrating to the Arctic waters. This argument would also account for the walrus and polar bear remains found. Specimens of ringed seals, associated with sea ice year-round comprised the largest category of mammals because 90% of those appeared to be newly weaned. It is speculated that the ice edge habitat for animals this young must have been available close to the site location from early to mid-summer. There was no conclusive evidence that whales were hunted although it could not be ruled out.

2.9 Ashishik Point

Another site of importance to this thesis is Ashishik Point. It is located on the Bering Sea coast of Umnak Island and the site of a former village. In an ambitious study, Denniston (1972, 1974) attempted to determine how the individuals of this village subsisted and which items were most valued. Here an oversimplification of her research is presented. Similar to Amaknak, inhabitants were fisherman, sea mammal hunters, and scavengers. The category of importance was based on the use of various animals. Denniston took into consideration the relative weights of the fauna identified, the possible use of their byproducts, the ease of obtaining the animals, and the availability of the animals during periods of scarcity. It was noted only a small portion of the site was excavated, and dates were significantly younger than those at Amaknak. Results indicated that a protohistoric stratum had the same fauna as an earlier occupation levels. These consisted of sea mammals thought to provide the most calories followed by fish (cod). Birds were thought to contribute the least. For the middle strata, starting at 1,500 B.P., the amounts of fish and sea mammals consumed appeared equal, with birds still playing a minor role. The value of these animals was then compared with

respect to the food energy they provided. Whale vertebra and epiphyseal plates plus fragments of cut whale bone and tools of whale bone were found throughout the various deposits (Denniston 1972: 134). It was assumed, based on ethnohistoric reports (to be discussed), that most or all of the whale remains were those of the humpback whales. Based on the small sample, an accurate assessment of the number of whales represented in the deposits could not be made. All that could be said with certainty was that there was at least one whale in each of the four major occupation levels (Denniston 1972:191).

The inference that the whale remains were humpback comes from the fact that historically those were common whales in the Eastern Aleutians and the ones most heavily exploited for food by historic Aleuts (Veniaminov 1840:150). Logic followed that an average humpback weighs 34,000 kilograms of which 26% is blubber, 42% total meat, 18% bone, and 14% internal organs and waste. Calculations indicated that this represented a significant number of lean edible meat (protein), blubber, internal organs, and waste that added fat and a small amount of carbohydrates to the Unanga's diet. It was also inferred that food obtained from a whale was almost certain to have been shared by all members of the prehistoric community and perhaps even by individuals of other villages (Turner 1886:200-201). Thus, the amount of whale meat and blubber actually utilized by the individuals whose living space was represented by the excavated portion of the site was surely considerably less than that taken from an entire whale.

Denniston (1972:253) also examined a related question as to whether or not the food obtained from particular types of animals could be preserved and stored for use during the period of scarcity in historic times. The meat and blubber from whales, as well as that of seals and sea lions, was preserved for the winter, and no doubt this was also the case in prehistoric times.

The use of by products other than for food was also taken into consideration

(Denniston 1972:255). In the case of mammals, many parts that were not eaten but otherwise utilized were examined. Baleen from whales was used for making snares with which to capture birds. Large bones were used as supports and braces in house building and also cut up for use in the manufacture of tools. Skin from the flippers was used in making the soles of boots and sometimes intestines were used for raingear. Blubber oil from whales and other sea mammals was used for burning. The external rather than internal burning of marine oils was perhaps the most efficient use of blubber. It provided heat and therefore conserved energy in human bodies without the health hazard possibly involved if all the blubber obtained by the hunters had been eaten.

A series of implements were excavated, but it was difficult to determine for what specific purposes various implements were used. Among the tools probably used directly in subsistence activities were foreshafts, barbed points, and end tips of harpoon and lances. The smaller pieces, including one recent toggle head harpoon part, could have been used to kill marine mammals such as seals.

After a series of lengthy calculations and considering all of the fish and fauna available at the site, it was calculated and speculated that the whale appears to have been ranked first in value to the Unanga. After whales, sea lions and then cod were deemed next important. Although I present a much condensed version of Denniston's analysis of faunal remains here, I provide myriad of reasons that helped formulate her conclusions. The whale had the following benefits to the community:

- Tremendous quantities of food were obtained from a single whale and meat and blubber could be preserved for winter use.
- The bones, baleen, blubber, and other by-products had important uses for shelter, clothing, and fuels (all of which conserved body energy) as well as for tools useful in obtaining other food animals.
- In making the assumption that whales were hunted, despite the difficulty of killing the whale and the uncertainty of recovering it, little actual manpower was necessary for the hunt (as compared to the whaling crews of the north).

- The skin might have been an important source of vitamin C (Denniston 1972:258).

The utilization of blubber cannot be overlooked. Blubber was an item of prestige among the Unanga (O'Leary 1884:94). It was rendered by boiling, yielding a great quantity of oil. It was stored fresh or used as a preservative for other foods as evidence by the Nootka of Vancouver Island. It is reported throughout the literature on the Northwest Coast that whale oil indicated prestige and that accumulation of it by a chief was an indication of his wealth. Whale oil was also prized for trade (O'Leary 1984: 95). The Aleuts and Koniag had stone lamps, which were used for holding blubber/oil for domestic purposes (Denniston 1966).

2.10 Importance of Whales in the Kodiak Region

Although large whale bones have been found at various archaeological sites on Kodiak there has been little species identification of them (Clark: 1974). Several small cetaceans (porpoises, belugas, Stejneger's beaked whales) were identified at the Uyak site (Heizer 1956).

Crowell (1994:228) attempted to quantify the contributions of whale products in relation to other items in the Sugpiaq diet but found it difficult based on incomplete historic accounts or lack of archaeological data. The relative proportions of shellfish, fish, sea mammal, and bird bones at old Kodiak village sites varied widely (Clark 1974). This was probably a result of local and seasonal variations in subsistence efforts. Crowell determined that direct calculation of whale consumption based on the bones found in settlement middens would be misguided since a majority of whale bones could have been left on distant shores where the animals were butchered.

Historically, there are references regarding the importance of whales to the inhabitants of Kodiak. Gideon (Black 1977:91) provided a list of stored belongings marking a wealthy Aleut (Koniag). Besides clothing, skins, tools, and items of personal

adornment, the list included “plenty of whale meat” two sea lion bladders of whale oil, along with baskets of berries and roots preserved in oil, a sea lion bladder filled with caviar and 10 large bundles each of salmon, halibut and cod. Whale meat and blubber were among the most prized delicacies of the Koniag according to Davydov (1977:175). He wrote that salmon was the staple food, but whale was most prized. Dall (1878:402) wrote that the Koniag considered the flesh of the whale a prime delicacy, even when it was putrid. According to Elliott (1886:152), “nothing fit to eat is or was as highly prized by the Aleuts or Koniags as blubber and gristle of the whale”. Crowell provides the most logical conclusion based on the variable Koniag diet. He concludes that whale was a highly valued addition to an eclectic diet and possibly an elite source of meat and blubber rather than a central staple, as was the case among northern whaling groups. His research substantiates the findings of Egeland et al. (2009). This study examined the levels of methylmercury levels of a sample of Aleutian mummies. This study found peak and low MeHg exposures over time correlated with exposure to the availability of a subsistence fish and marine mammal diets. Ultimately, their research validated that there was seasonal variability in the migratory patterns of sea mammals and the availability of fish traveling to spawn (2009:2004-2005).

2.11 Summary

There is no doubt that prehistorically and up to the present, the Eastern Aleutians and the Kodiak Archipelago were at the confluence of the super highways of whale migrations. They were also the home to year-round residents. The evidence indicates that whales were prolific throughout the island chain. The ecology of the marine ecosystem during the warmer months provided excellent feeding grounds for whales. The myriad of species that traveled through the various passes, especially Unimak Pass, during their migrations came in close proximity to numerous Unanga villages

including Amaknak and Ashishik providing ample opportunity to harvest species of whales. It is also stressed, as McCartney (1984:79) acknowledged, that among whaling coastal societies in the arctic, there were strong correlations of whale hunting to social rank, and a community's ritual and economic organization. This was due to the food and material surpluses these mammals provided. Ultimately, in order to understand the esoteric nature between hunter and prey, between human and whale, and the key ceremonial activities that stem from the cosmological importance of whales to these groups, a number of other factors need to be established and will be provided in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 3: Theories Pertaining to Mummification

3.1 Introduction

This chapter serves as a review of the anthropological literature on death and dying. Significant studies on the topics of group solidarity, concepts of liminality and their relation to mummification most applicable to this study are presented. In the anthropological literature, liminality is usually seen to be a period during which normal behavior and expectations of daily life no longer apply, as exemplified in the work of Arnold van Gennep, Robert Hertz and Victor Turner. In the context of this thesis, I extend the concept of liminality to account for some of the special characteristics I have observed in Unanga society in relation to whaling.

Anthropologists have proposed a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of death, but these are varied when examining its cultural aspects as well as death's perceived ambiguity. Russell Judkins (1973:6) wrote that variability occurs when death is viewed from a cultural perspective rather than just a biological one. When death is studied in a cultural context, it changes from a unilineal event to one with multidimensional facets. To develop a case for a special type of liminality in Unanga society, it seemed most appropriate to first examine the literature of Émile Durkheim (2008), Robert Hertz (1960), Victor Turner (2008, 1967), and Arnold van Gennep (1960). Based on their research and how they applied theories of liminality, death can be viewed as a manifestation of social solidarity, life transitions, dual obsequies, and includes the notion of the ambiguity of the soul through mummification.

This review also incorporates the more recent works of Sergei Kan (1999), Bruno Frohlich and Sara Laughlin (2002), Katherine Verdery (1999), and Gordon Rakita and Jane Buikstra (2005) to name just a few. It needs to be noted at this juncture that for this study, Hertz's work on double obsequies will be presented in a more restrictive manner and will concentrate primarily on secondary burials. At the

conclusion of this chapter I also introduce the notion of a whaling complex, first introduced by Lantis (1938, 1940) and Heizer (1943) but using the word “cult”. I will clarify the semantic issues with these words and why I propose the use of the former rather than the latter.

3.2 Setting the Theoretical Stage

Durkheim (2008:424) wrote that religion expressed the moral cohesion of society rather than the personal fears of individuals. He theorized that the function of mortuary rituals was to recreate communal solidarity by reaffirming and reinforcing the feelings of the group. Durkheim also addressed the subjects of the sacred and the profane that were later elaborated on by Mary Douglas (1966) and Mircea Eliade (1987 [1959]). He (2008:426-437) interpreted mortuary rituals as a renewal of public values, a reinforcement of social ties, and a reaffirmation of communal conceptions.

Van Gennep demonstrated that the rituals performed at death resembled those exhibited during other critical periods in the life of an individual (birth, puberty, marriage, etc.). In *The Rites of Passage* (1960), he regarded the funeral as one of the largest classes of rituals concerned with transitions from one state to another. All rites of passage shared a common three- part structure (Van Gennep 1960:25-30). The first consisted of a separation, the recognition of the deceased’s departure from his or her former life and the social structure of the living. This was followed by a transition or liminal period, a time of ambiguity as the halfway point between the living and the dead. The third period included the incorporation of the deceased into the land of the dead, at which time status was once again defined and the process completed.

Hertz (1960:37-42) elaborated on this tripartite structure acknowledging three participants in death: the corpse, the soul of the deceased, and the mourners left behind. His observations were based on fieldwork among the Dayak of Borneo. After death the

body was placed in a box so it could decompose. During this liminal period the deceased was feared and the burial site avoided. The dead could do harm to the living, so all things associated with the deceased were destroyed including their home, clothes, etc. Here Hertz noticed a paradox because the living mourners still cared for the dead both emotionally and physically. This liminal status continued until the corpse was reburied. Hertz (1960:37-42) theorized that through secondary burials the human remains were used as a metaphor for the fate of the soul. The soul, like the body, would undergo a transition. It would wander during this liminal state and could not enter the land of the dead until the completion of various ritual duties by the survivors. The soul lived marginally between two worlds, belonging to neither. It could seek revenge against the living if they failed to fulfill their funeral obligations. Because of death, the mourners were also plummeted into a liminal world. Restrictions were mandated on their dress, food, travel and they were shunned. The survivors became outcasts by both the living and the dead who could not assist them during this time. Similar to Durkheim, Hertz (1960:38-40) argued that socially constructed death rituals orchestrated the collective representations of death. The sequence of temporary and secondary burials permitted the social group to readjust while the soul of the deceased was incorporated into the society of the dead. This helped to explain why the corpse was feared. Until it moved on to the next world, its spiritual essence remained behind where it menaced the living with the threat of further death.

Hertz (1960:42) applied this framework to mummification as a method of temporary body disposal. Mummification was viewed as another category of secondary burials using the example of environmental preservation. The practice was described as a method of disposing the body with as little decay as possible. While being mummified, the body underwent a transformation that was painful and dangerous and this status transcended to the mourners (Hertz 1960:78-80). Mummification shortened

the putrefaction process to neutralize its sinister effects. The funeral ritual served as a process rather than just an occasion at through which social cohesion was promoted as a mechanism through which the status of the living changed (Hertz 1960:78-80).

Turner (1967) elaborated on Van Gennep's notion of liminality in his study of the Ndembu of Zambia. Through rituals the body transitioned from one state to another. In *The Forest of Symbols*, Turner (1967:93) explained the state of liminality as one of transition in which the inhabitants are "betwixt and between" their normal social status. The person was neither living nor dead and due to this ambiguity, was devoid of gender, rank and class.

In Alaska, little has been written incorporating these broader theories or providing an analysis of the ritual and symbolic aspects of death. The work of Kan (1999) is an exception. He applied Hertz's concept of dual obsequies to the study of Tlingit mortuary rituals to explain socioeconomic complexity among the Tlingit who inhabit the west coast of Alaska and parts of Canada. The Tlingit cremated their dead, and afterwards the remains were placed inside the clan grave house. The secondary treatment of the ashes did not occur until a year after the death, during which time the relatives of the dead had time to gather numerous gifts. These served as displays of wealth to be given away to members of the opposite moiety who had performed the initial death services. Over time, the Tlingit developed the complex practice of holding extravagant potlatches. These were elaborate ceremonies to honor the deceased and to help release the spirit of the dead through secondary bodily treatment. The potlatch therefore had two functions. It was a spiritual ceremony for releasing the spirit of the dead and was of great economic value because serving as a mechanism in the redistribution of wealth (Kan 1989:289).

3.3 Unangaâ Mummification and Theory

Given the variability in Unangaâ mortuary practices, an approach based on the concept of liminality seemed most appropriate to explain Unangaâ mummification. The work of Kan (1999) on Tlingit secondary burials provided a regional comparative framework. It will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters that the varied methods of corpse disposal in Unangaâ society were in direct relation to rank and prestige (Hrdlička 1945; Lantis 1970b) and that in various locations, Unangaâ mummification was reserved only for a select group of individuals

In the Aleutians there were prescribed rules pertaining to the mourning period of relatives while the deceased was in this liminal state. These controls were imposed on the entire village if it were the death of a headman, while even more restrictions were placed on a widow and widower who were viewed as “unclean” during a time of seclusion (Veniaminov 1984:197; Frohlich and Laughlin 2002:108-109). At the end of the mourning period there was usually a funeral feast. Material possessions of the deceased were distributed and the mourning period ceased. These processes enabled mourners to proceed through the rites of separation, transition, and reintegration (Van Gennep 1960; Veniaminov 1984:198; Liapunova 1996:34). By abiding by these restrictions the solidarity of the group was maintained (Durkheim 2008) and upon completion of the mourning there was usually a rite that signaled a return to normality which sometimes was a potlatch (Veniaminov 1984:197; Liapunova 1996:151-153). In this scenario, normality referred to the continuity of the normal day-to-day activities of life and the reassertion of the collective continuity of the social group in spite of the loss of an individual.

There is no documentation to confirm that the rituals and observances as described by Veniaminov occurred for mummified individuals. There are no recorded accounts regarding the souls of the mummified individuals ever entering the land of the

dead or secondary burials occurring. According to Laughlin (1980:97-99) mummification was performed to preserve the power in the body and if that were the case, there was no reason for the soul to move on. Instead the mummified individuals took on active roles in the community as sources of magic and power (Verdery 1999). Their spirits lived on and they were given the name *asxinan*, departed or dry ones. They carried on a full round of activities at night that included eating, hunting, and dancing (Jochelson 2002a:44; Laughlin 1983:42). They (*asxinan*) were not dead or alive; they entered a spiritual realm and held great power. Their body parts were used as talismans by whalers. These facts set the stage to confirm that whalers and their family members were afforded this honor.

3.4 Mummies and the Persistent State of Liminality

Rakita and Buikstra (2005) presented a model for the examination of mummification that proved to be most useful to this study. Using Andean mummification as an example, they challenged some aspects of Hertz's work, especially regarding mummification. . They rejected the status of temporary liminality as applied to mummification and so do I in the case of the Unanga. Hertz (1960:41) wrote of mummification and portrayed it as a way to prevent the decomposition of the body. The body would eventually be skeletonized and then be reburied. This was not the case with the Unanga mummies and represents another instance in which Hertz's theories are not always universally relevant (Metcalf and Huntingdon 1991:107).

Rakita and Buikstra (2005:105-106) explained mummification as the protracted period of putrefaction when the deceased is avoided until the embalmed or desiccated corpse is commensurate with clean, dry, bone. The completion of the mummification process is not marked by the final removal of the corpse from the world of the living. Neither are the mourners reinstalled in society in new configurations. Instead both

mourners and deceased maintain their former roles despite the physical death of the individual.

Rakita and Buikstra's interpretation portrayed Incan mummies as very powerful due to their liminal status. Mummification became a method for sustaining the position of the soul in a permanent liminal phase. The relatives and villagers encountered a situation in which their ancestors never entirely left the world of the living but instead existed in a zone of marginality. This same line of reasoning is applicable to Unanga's mummification. When the mummies were placed in caves, they maintained a status of fixed liminality in which they forever left the sphere of the living but also never entered the land of the dead. According to Turner (2008:107), the fixed nature of liminality occurred when "the suspended character of social life took on a more permanent character". This concept has been modified by Rakita and Buikstra to apply to the dead rather than the living. They refer to this state of mummification as permanent liminality (2005:105).

In this thesis the terms *fixed* or *persistent* liminality are used interchangeably. The definition of liminality in this context signifies that as mummies the individuals never left the ambiguity of their marginal status after death. This also challenges the writings of Frohlich and Laughlin (2002:113-115) who hypothesized that the mummies remained in the liminal status until the living determined they had completed their unfinished business on earth, at which time they were reburied. This line of reasoning is borrowed directly from Hertz (1960:34) as cited above. Frohlich and Laughlin came to their conclusions in an attempt to explain the disproportionate number of infants that were mummified. They obtained this information from elders in the village of Nikolski. According to the elders, infants were mummified to make sure their spirit was settled or gone from the body before interment near the settlement, and the caves provided a location for this separation. Children, especially infants, had not become part of the

community, so they needed even more time to pass on to the other realm. David, Hunt of the Smithsonian, a colleague of Frohlich, provided the following comments regarding the status of mummified infants (personal communication July 26, 2016):

This might have some bearing on the higher number of children found in the caves, but there is also the fact that there are more deceased children in the demographic record in all populations....One must also be careful on how much weight you put on informant interviews, especially when it comes to “magic” such as beliefs or power derived from mummies for making the harpoon true for the kill. But because he (Frohlich) received this information from several independent interviews, either they all have been given the same story in their oral traditions, or there is fact in the information gained.

Hunt also had not heard of child or baby mummies being used for whaling power. The Nikolski elders confirmed that mummies were used as part of their beliefs about whaling power and they considered the practice to be very potent.

A problem arises if the elders’ statements are deemed credible. If infants were eventually reburied after their time on earth and they were eventually placed in secondary burials, where are those burials? The literature reveals the Unanga mummies were visited by the living, but these visits were made only by the bravest of men and after much ritual preparation (Veniaminov 1984:223; Laughlin 1983:43). Numerous accounts will be provided throughout this thesis that these men, the still living whalers, were then regarded as polluted and dangerous. There is no mention of individuals going back into the caves with the purpose of reburying those whose souls had settled. And, following this logic, what accounts for the female mummies found? Could they have been the beloved wives of the mummified whalers? These questions will be explored throughout this thesis.

A final note on this topic pertains to the 36 mummy specimens that are curated at the Smithsonian Institution. In 2001 Jonsdottir (2002) performed CAT scans on 32 of the human remains. The process entailed estimated ages at death based on either dental age, long bone age or both. The results indicated that 2 samples had insufficient remains to test. There were 11 mummies found to be between the ages of birth to 11 months of

age. Ten individuals were between 1 and 2.5 years of age. The remaining were the following ages: 3, 7, 10, 17, 20, and 30 years at death with three additional individuals being over 35 years of age. Although the sample is small and considering that Hrdicka macerated many human remains, there does not appear to be a disproportionate number of infants. As Hunt pointed out, infant mortality must also factor in.

3.5 A New Model for Unangaâ Mummification

Rakita and Buikstra (2005:98-106) hypothesized that Andean mummified individuals became conduits between the living community and their dead ancestors. Here I deviate from their model. Instead evidence will be provided that in the case of the Unangaâ mummies, their spirits were deliberately preserved and suspended, and as a result, they became more powerful. They interacted with the living whalers through a series of negotiated rituals and observances. However, they remained members of the Unangaâ society they left behind but because of their power, their body parts were stolen and secretly guarded for luck in hunting whales. The mummies and the whalers who interacted with them were considered extremely dangerous due to their affiliation with a secretive whaling complex to be discussed. Following this logic, relatives were able to move on with their lives after a prescribed period of mourning, thus leaving their own state of liminality. This demonstrated that the fate of the soul and the experiences of the mourners were not always parallel (Barley 1995:164). In the case of the Unangaâ mummies, after the death there would be a new configuration of the living whalers, who would continue on with the rituals and processes involved in the procurement of whales.

3.6 Current Theories Pertaining to Mummification

To demonstrate how my interpretation of Unangaâ mummification agrees with or differs from those of previous authors, the main theories that have been put forth

pertaining to Unanga's mummification are presented here. As already stated in Chapter 1, most were not in-depth analyses. The work of William Laughlin was one of the earlier exceptions. He wrote on the symbolic aspects of mummification (Laughlin 1980, 1983) and tied the practice to the Unanga's belief that they could preserve, regulate, or extinguish the power in the body through mummification, joint binding, and dismemberment. Due to the presence of women's and children's mummies, Laughlin wrote that it is a "mistaken belief that only honored whalers were mummified and preserved" (1983:41). It is not clear by this statement if Laughlin felt that the mummified remains of women and children were honored family members of whalers, or that they were mummified for other reasons. Such a belief would correspond to Turner (1967:93) in that during the period of liminality, there was no distinction between gender, rank, or status. Ultimately, Laughlin's statement acknowledged that there was sufficient evidence indicating that some of the mummies represented whalers.

The following presents a synopsis of the current theories pertinent to Unanga's mummification:

- The Unanga's individuals who were mummified were high status individuals and their families (Maschner and Maschner-Reedy 1998).
- The Unanga's individuals who were mummified were whalers and their families (Black 2003).
- The Unanga's individuals who were mummified and their families were members of a whaling cult and therefore had high social status (Lantis 1984:176, 1940, 1938a; Heizer 1943).
- The Unanga's individuals who were mummified were perceived by the living to still have unfinished business left on earth, and when that was completed, they would be placed in a secondary burial (Frohlich and Laughlin 2002).
- In Unanga's culture it is thought the spirit should be preserved after death so all individuals were mummified and later placed in different types of burials (Laughlin 1980; Coltrain et al. 2006).

These theories will be explored in subsequent chapters with the main emphasis concentrating on whalers and the notion of a whaling cult first proposed by Margaret Lantis (1984, 1940, 1938a) and Robert Heizer (1943a; 1943b).

Throughout this thesis evidence will be provided to substantiate that whalers were of high status. It is assumed a partial reason for this ranking is because whaling was dangerous. There is also documentation that their status was elevated due to their affiliation with a secretive and loosely knit whaling cult that existed in the Aleutians and other parts of coastal Alaska (Lantis 1984; Heizer 1943). Chapter 4 of this thesis is devoted to an in depth focus on Unanga whaling, but to proceed, the concept of cult needs to be defined. Within the anthropological literature, much has been written about cults, usually under the domain of religious beliefs of past and present societies. When examining specific cults, authors generally neglect to define the word *cult*, assuming the same semantic interpretation can be used interchangeably with secret societies (Weckman 1970:84). In this study the definition provided by Wallace (1966:75) was most applicable. He defined cults as “community institutions that include religious content and a set of rituals all having the same general goal, all explicitly rationalized by a set of similar and related beliefs, and all supported by the same social group”. Cults, therefore, draw attention to the religious aspects of what are generally secular or political in nature. Participation is usually based on the presence or absences of prescribed traits (Knight 1986:675-676), and each cult also has its own corpus of rites. In his work on the Yoruba Ogboni Cult in Nigeria, Peter Morton-Williams (2009:362) addressed what aspects of a cult also classify it as a secret society. Secret societies include what he terms a “secret in virtue”, in which members claimed mystical and secular power and privileges in dealing with non-members.

Secret societies have a selected membership based on some predetermined achievement and have the ability to impose sanctions over those who reveal its secrets and procedures to others. Secret societies possess religious aspects such as rituals but also an element of danger. Secret societies are usually secular in nature but can include cults. There has to be a secret for a cult to be a secret society. The fact that whalers had

numerous rituals and taboos pertaining to all aspects of whaling will be discussed in subsequent sections. The Unangaâ (and Sugpiaq) whalers were considered polluted and dangerous. They were initiated into this special status and the entire process of hunting whales from beginning to end was steeped in ancient beliefs and rituals. It was associated with danger and secrets that were well-guarded among the cult's members. It required the use of mummified bodies for spiritual power. By the definitions cited above, whaling in this manner can be deemed a secretive cult. However, in subsequent chapters I will provide an alternative version and present a more appropriate explanation in which to contextualize Unangaâ whaling. The ideas of Lantis were not wrong, but they can be framed more efficiently using a different paradigm, the one that is developed in this thesis.

3.7 Summary

In this chapter I situate my research within the broader context of anthropological theory. This thesis contributes to the existing understanding of liminality and builds upon the growing body of literature on this topic. I draw from various authors (Frohlich and Laughlin 2002; Black 2003; Maschner and Reedy-Maschner 1998; Lantis 1984; Laughlin 1980; Heizer 1943a) in order to provide useful insights into Unangaâ mummification. What is known is that men, women, and children were mummified, but this practice was not bestowed on all individuals in every community. The number of infants in the small but only sample of mummies at the Smithsonian lends credibility that individuals of all ages were mummified. And, by approaching mummification through a reworked theory of liminality it is plausible to argue that the purpose of mummification was to place esteemed individuals, such as whalers and their families, in a state of persistent liminality. As a result, they were feared and revered. Current theories by various authors explaining mummification will

be examined in subsequent chapters.

Finally, due to the numerous references in the literature pertaining to a whaling cult, definitions were provided of both a cult and secret society. I find that the words “whaling cult” are too restrictive and of narrow focus to describe the ancient belief system centered on whaling. Instead, in a subsequent chapter I present another approach in order to contextualize the practice. It is noted that the word “cult” appears throughout this thesis as written by the various authors.

In the following chapter the nature of the whale will be explored. Among the whaling cultures of the North Pacific Rim, including the Unanga, whales were considered sentient beings and other than human person. This is important in order to fully understand why the practice of whaling was so dangerous and entailed rituals, secret ceremonies and contact with the dead.

Chapter 4: Humans, Whales and Danger

4.1 Introduction

In human interactions with mammals, whales occupy a special place. They figure prominently in many myths and legends throughout time and across the globe. Whale species are estimated to be least 25 million years old, representing some of the largest animals on earth, with a brain to match (Barstow 1989:10). This chapter continues to examine the sorts of relationships humans and whales have been able to establish with each other. While Chapter 2 offered a characterization of different kinds of whales and their migration routes through the Aleutian Islands, here the specific quality of the relationship people had with whales in the Aleutian Islands acquires more focus. Comparative material is included to demonstrate how, in many maritime societies, whales are endowed with mythical and ominous characteristics. In different parts of the world they bridged the gulf between human and animal, as explored in the context of Tierra del Fuego by Dransart (2014:184). This information is presented to further my proposition that among the Unanga, whales were viewed as unique and apart from other mammals. To hunt whales, whalers and their wives had to go through certain bodily transformations in order to establish communication with them and guide them to be caught.

4.2 The Whale as Human of the Oceans

In many human societies, people considered whales to be the counterparts of humans but in the sea rather than on land. Claude Levi-Strauss (1966:37), recognized that perceived affinities between people and whales have led people to regard the whale to be seen as the “human of the oceans”. This special status, however, should not be understood to mean that communication between whales and human beings was easy. The following examples in this section indicate that whereas whales were seen as “monstrous” in Graeco-Judeo-Christian traditions, in other parts of the world people

cultivated qualitatively different kinds of relationships with whales, in recognition of their personhood.

Ancient Greeks named the largest constellation visible to them as Cetus, the whale, which they portrayed as a sea monster (Waugh 1961:363). Whales were named in the Bible from the stories of Jonah and Leviathan and more recently in modern literature such Melville's novel *Moby Dick*. Numerous authors (Cowan 1982; Myers 1942) have discussed the allegory Melville used for his nemesis Moby Dick. The consensus was that Melville constructed Moby Dick in the likeness of the Biblical creature/whale Leviathan who was represented as a symbol of human fears and the embodiment of evil (Young 1982:388-389). Scholars agree that Melville constructed Moby Dick as a true sea monster, borrowing from the Biblical story of Jonah, who was swallowed by a whale (Wright 1965:190-192).

In Vietnam, in contrast, the whale is still honored as an ancestor and protector of all those who fish. The ancient practice of holding funerals continues to be conducted for beached whales. The center of this tradition is the village Phan Tiet, where whale temples attract devotees to revere the whale (Parnwell 2013). The honoring of cetaceans in the past is evidenced in Japan by cemeteries designated for whales that included memorial stones with inscriptions in which a petitioner implored Buddha to be reborn as a whale (Nauman 1974).

To many of the people in the arctic and Pacific Northwest, Sedna was the goddess of the sea, and the whale was one of her creations. Sedna sent the whales (and all sea mammals) to give themselves to humans. However, the whales' perceptions were far superior to that of humans. As a result, humans were instructed that they needed to take special care to not offend whales. This involved performing strict rituals prior to the hunt. To these groups, the hunting of whales involved a social transaction between human and animal, with Sedna being the mediator (Sabo and Sabo 1985:81-83).

The story of Sedna varies considerably from place to place and from teller to teller. It has many levels and interpretations. In a more esoteric analysis than the story at face value, Sedna was portrayed as a woman who rejected many suitors to marry a boastful hunter because of the wealth he promised to bring. He took her away from her family to an island where he transformed into a birdman who could only feed her fish. Her father came to rescue her, but on their return home their kayak sunk and Sedna fell to the bottom of the sea. She could not return to land and transformed herself into a sea goddess, serving as the keeper of all the ocean's game. When such game was scarce, a shaman was required to journey to her maritime realm in an effort to appease her, usually by combing her hair. The idea of an underwater female keeper of game was widespread and conjured the conception of hunting being inherently moral and a spiritual act in coordination with various spirit entities of the ocean. Relevant to this study, the Sedna story evoked a concept of liminal transformation, in which a shaman has to undertake a dangerous journey under water. The journey was associated with the consequences of breaking taboos regarding marine animals. If these are broken Sedna will not provide the village with game (Laugrand and Oosten 2008:21; Jonaitis 1983:45).

In some cultures, like the Unanga^x, the whale was a totem animal, a force to be reckoned with. It was not viewed as a god, but instead, Durkheim (2008:139) described this type of interaction as a relationship of equals. Taking this concept one step farther, respect for whales has existed around the world. In these examples from Vietnam, Japan and the Pacific Northwest, as well as from Arctic regions, people classified whales differently from other non-human animals. They considered cetaceans to be "other than human persons", to be honored as well as feared. This concept stems from the work of Alfred Irving Hallowell, based on his ethnographic fieldwork among the Ojibw . He found that it was impossible to use Western concepts of the person and notions of other

beings when discussing Ojibwa cosmologies. He instead encountered a world of mutually interdependent beings in which other beings can present a human appearance and in which human persons can morph into non-human animals (Hallowell 1975:147). To the Ojibwa, a person's body may be easily located and observed in time and space, but his or her vital part may be somewhere else. This is because there are no sharp lines dividing living beings, so shamans can metamorphize into other beings such as thunderbirds. This concept has taken hold in social anthropology and those who have adopted this paradigm now view the words "supernatural" and "inanimate" outdated and ethnocentric (Hollbraad and Pederson 2017; Dein 2016).

As in the case of the Unanga, mutual obligations were inherent in all interactions throughout their world. Relationships were both moral and reciprocal, not only among humans but between humans and other-than-human persons. These social relations were also of the cardinal importance. Hallowell (1975:167) stated "The world of personal relations in which the Ojibwa live is a world in which vital social relations transcend those which are maintained with human beings".

This concept was expounded on by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, a South American anthropologist who worked with Amerindians in the Amazon. He is responsible for developing a paradigm known as perspectivism. He defines it as "the conception according to which the universe is inhabited by different sorts of persons; human and nonhuman which apprehend reality from distinctive points of view" (2014:229-230). Many animal species as well as other non-human beings have a spiritual component which qualifies them as "people". These beings see themselves as humans in appearance and culture while seeing humans as animals and spirits. Ultimately, the visible body of animals is viewed as an appearance that hides the anthropomorphic invisible essence that can be put on and taken off like a dress or garment. Viveiros de Castro saw interspecies metamorphosis as a fact of nature. In his

book *Cannibal Metaphysics* (2014), metamorphosis is not just the standard etiological process of myth, but it is still very much possible in present-day-life. Spirits, the dead, and shamans can assume animal form, beasts turn into other beasts, humans can turn into animals. Bodily metamorphosis is the Amerindian counterpart of European conversion (Viveiros de Castro 2009). Shamans are transformers and can see animals in their inner human form because they don animal clothing and thus transform themselves into animals. What differentiates species is not their “sprit or soul” which is essentially human, but rather their bodies. Jaguars have different bodies from human people. They see as we do but their bodies are different. According to Viveiros de Castro (1998:470) what to us is a tree, to a snake is a home with bedrooms. What appears as a rotting corpse to humans is grilled fish to vultures.

Adopting a comparable paradigm, the shaman-whaler in Unanga culture was regarded as a cosmological mediator because he could switch perspectives and socialize with non-humans. Whalers and their wives both had a relationship with the whale, especially since the whale provided food, and other necessities of living. It was the whaler’s job to remove the dangerous spiritual essences from the mammal to make it safe for these functions. According to Viverios de Castro (1998:481) to eat an animal that has a human perspective from its own point of view would be tantamount to an act of cannibalism. In the case of whales, once the danger of the whales was removed, even after the death the animal and artifacts still needed to be respected (2004:468). In some cultures like the Unanga there was also a hierarchy of rituals regarding the shamanism of various animals used for food, such as large hunted game. Viverios de Castro explained such a worldview through the concept of multinaturalism, which differs from multiculturalism, in which there is one nature and different cultures. In multinaturalism, there is one soul/spirit and different natures (1998:487). Just as the most important animals are attributed a human perspective in multinaturalism, only those most

important as sources of food had to be “shamanized”. These consisted of large game animals who required the most elaborate rituals, whereas readily available fauna (and flora) were placed in a much lower category (C. Hugh-Jones 1979:120).

This section has discussed human ideology regarding the special status of the whale as an “other than human person”. This discussion is important to demonstrate one of the objectives of this thesis, precisely that of demonstrating the whale’s special status. It also provides a necessary step for considering what happens during preparations leading to the whale hunt and the hunt itself. Ethnographers, particularly those working in sub-Arctic and Arctic regions, have analyzed the social relations that take place between hunters and their prey, in which hunters, on killing an animal, are obliged to repay the debt incurred in order to maintain an ongoing relationship between them and the prey they hunt (Nadasdy 2007:25; Hill 2011:407). In the following sections I examine how practical and ritual actions were performed in order to bring a hunt to a successful conclusion through the use of specific forms of bodily transformation, including items of dress devised for the hunt. My discussion continues to use comparative materials to help demonstrate the significance of the preparations and actions performed.

4.3 The Danger of Whaling

Whaling was very dangerous. No matter the culture it was always considered dangerous business, but it was especially perilous from kayaks, canoes, or other small, open boats. It was extremely time consuming and sometimes yielded no catch at all if the whale sank or drifted away (Ackerman 1988:69). Whales could also cause loss of life and or property by capsizing the boat if the whalers got too close or if the whale went under the boat. This section deals with strategies hunters use in an attempt to successfully hunt the whale.

In many northern coastal communities, all sea mammals, especially whales, continue to be considered living beings with human like qualities that require vigilance and respect. Whales are regarded as persons due to the complex interactions that exist between hunter and whale. They are treated with a reverence that was defined through social exchanges among members of their own species as well as the humans they came into contact with (Hill 2013:121-122). When a whale is killed, the debt incurred by hunters is paid in the form of various taboos, rituals, and prescribed methods of engaging in this drama. There is a reciprocal relationship between the whale and the hunter. Death would befall any hunter who failed to perform the prescribed rituals (Nadasdy 2007:25; Hill 2011:407). Over time, anthropologists have recognized the fluidity of the human-animal divide, and nowhere is it more intensely negotiated than through the engagements between hunters and their prey, especially the whale. Hunting whales has always been a time of intense spiritual combat during which senses are heightened and the reciprocal relationship between hunter and prey unstable. It is also the time when the boundaries between human and whale are blurred and result in transformation and liminality (Hill 2013:121). This heightened reciprocal relationship occurs when the hunter sheds his humanness in order to transform into his animal counterpart, the whale (Viveiros de Castro 1998:470).

The following information takes “hunting” to be a larger process than just the chase leading to the death of the whale. It has to do with the constant monitoring of and other forms of engagement with whales. The physical hunt itself and the processing of the body after the whale has been killed take place in a moral climate and, as a result, rituals must be performed at various stages of the process. In this process men and women had different tasks to perform.

In many societies, interactions with animals do not end with the death of the animal’s body (McNiven 2010:227). Hunter and animal continue to engage throughout

the processing, consumption, and discard of remains. The animals are believed to be conscious of the ways hunters speak and are aware if the proper rituals are not performed. The hunt only forms part of the social interaction between animal and hunter. In some cultures even the dead are summoned and used to perpetuate these fluid ontologies (McNiven 2013:99). Unanga whaling will be explored within this framework.

McNiven (2013, 2010) researched the spiritual aspects of hunter and prey by studying the relationships between the natives of the Torres Strait regions of southwest New Guinea and northern Australia to the dugong, a sea mammal. The hunters in this area visited the graves of dead hunters and in some cases used their bones as good luck charms for hunting. He noticed a close ritual relationship between the living dugong hunters, the dead hunters as well as the dead dugong. McNiven (2010:217) reminded archaeologists that sometimes the relationship between hunter and prey becomes ritually mediated when material culture also incorporates the body parts of the prey. It was apparent that in these instances, this relationship not only consisted of hunter and prey but also extended to the entire community. McNiven (2013:98) examined the use of skulls, particularly those of dugong hunters, which took on greater power after death.

In these circumstances, the skulls were curated for ongoing social engagement and had an ambiguous status because they inhabited a liminal realm. This liminal state reflected their condition as both the remains of the dead and the embodiment of living spirits. The materiality of such skeletal remains became more powerful which presented archaeologists the opportunity to access not only the ritual dimensions of past hunting practices but also the broader spiritual context of such practices and perhaps even ancient relational ontologies (McNiven 2013:200).

To advance his argument, McNiven (2013:204) provided similar examples from around the world. He drew attention to the Yuquot (Nootka) whaling shrine from

Vancouver Island, Canada, which consisted of carved wooden figures of at least 88 humans and eight whales in association with human skulls (Jonaitis 1993:3) that will be discussed in Chapter 12. The shrine was thought to be a place where chiefs (senior whale hunters) were buried and where whale hunters, as members of chiefly lineages, visited to seek out assistance for hunting success. This was a secret and sacred whaling shrine that included models of spirits and animals, masks, human corpses, and skeletons. The Yuquot believed that the dead had the power to summon the whales so whalers would steal human body parts to ritually assist with the hunt (Jonaitis 1999:5-9, 23-24). McNiven (2013:230) then concentrated on Unanga's mummification as another example. He acknowledged that the Unanga were known to keep the mummified bodies of whale hunters and sometime shamans in secret caves for the purpose of hunting magic and accessing extraordinary power (2013:104). These were sacred landscapes and required vigilance and restrictions as to who could enter.

4.4. The Symbolic Aspects of Whaling

Whales were important to the Unanga on a symbolic level. Saba and Sabo (1985) addressed the role of belief systems in the ecology of sea mammal hunting for Baffinland Eskimos. Their research has implications for the study of whaling among the Unanga. The importance of myth, rituals, and taboo represent a second reality for the hunter to be successful. Black analyzed the various words the Unanga constructed for sea mammals (1998:131, 1987:42-43). Whales were classified separately from other mammals and were distinguished linguistically as a special class (*Alan*) or whale. In the Eastern Aleutians, numerous species of whales were named. Black (1991:129-130, 1987:42-43) found that in the Central Aleutians the number of specific names was much lower. There is little documentation for whaling in the western islands although new data are now available to provide tentative evidence of a symbolic interpretation for

whaling in the west (Corbett 2013), to be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

Black's linguistic recognition indicates that among whalers in the Aleutians, whales were viewed as non-human creatures of the sea. They had numerous special powers, and although they were not necessarily viewed as monsters, they possessed an element of danger. As a result, numerous rituals were required for whale hunting. There are two tales recorded by Jochelson (2002a) and, in both instances, men, in order to hunt the whales, had to associate themselves with powerful forces in the form of killer whales (Black 1991:129, 1995:143). It was also noted by Veniaminov (1984:174) and others (Black and Liapunova 1988:53; Laughlin 1980:96) that because whaling was both physically and spiritually dangerous, most whalers met with premature death, or, if not death, suffered from physical ailments or insanity.

What earlier writers called "sympathetic magic" was also employed during the time of whaling. Veniaminov wrote (1984:357) (Laughlin 1980:41) that as soon as a hunter struck a whale, he would return to shore, blow on his hands, and then retreat to a structure specifically built to isolate the hunter. After all of these acts were performed, if the whale had not died or been located, the whaler would return to his hut for an unknown amount of time and torture himself (Veniaminov 1984:357-358). Other practices were involved. According to elder Nick Galaktionoff (Hudson and Mason 2014:13-14):

Sometimes a rope with magical powers was made by women with grass and sometimes female hair. It was said to stretch from a beach to the top of a mountain and back down again. When finished, the rope was long enough to stretch across the inlet. Then two kayaks would load up and watch for whales (or sea lions). When an animal entered the bay, the men would block the bay with the rope. Nothing could pass underneath it and the animal was killed.

4.5 The Role of Women as Guides of the Whales

This chapter would not be complete without providing data on the role and status of women in Unanga society relative to whaling – in light of the roles they

played in other whaling groups in the Arctic and further afield.

According to Rasmussen (1929:188), in the Aivilik area of Eastern Canada, at the time of whaling, women were obliged to wear an ornament consisting of a white stone strapped to their foreheads. This provided light that guided the whale to land. After a whale was struck, the hunters' wives had to retreat to their beds to symbolically help bring the whale to shore. The act of lying down placed the women in a liminal state during which they were also thought magically help the whaling effort (Sabo and Sabo 1985).

Although focusing primarily on the Chukchi of Siberia with references to Alaska, Chaussonnet (1988) documented that the wife of a whaler was a position of importance. Women were responsible for helping to distribute the whale meat. This was also true of the wives of whaling captains in the Inupiat region of Alaska (Chance 1990:22). The whalers were considered headmen in these societies, and this status also extended to their wives. The diagram below (Figure 5.1) provides an example of how whale meat was distributed in Northern Alaska.

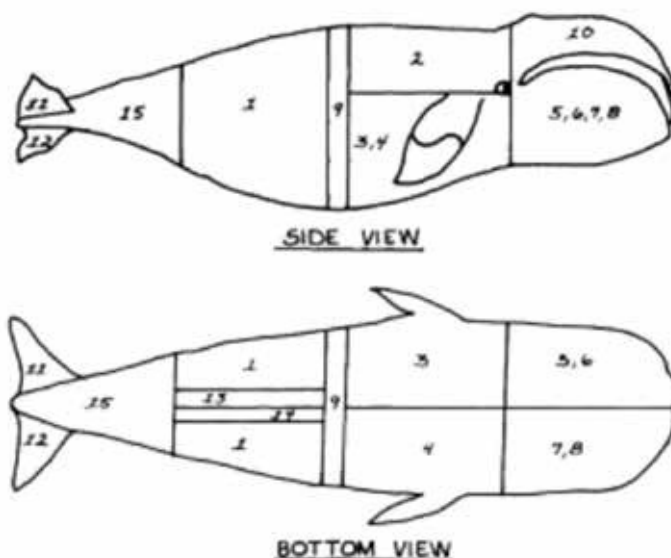


Figure 4.1 Division of the whale: 1 choice section to the Umialik whose crew was the first to strike the whale, 2 to his crew, 3-9 to succeeding crews in order of arrival, 10 divided among all boats, 11 to 12 saved for spring whaling feast, 13-14 to the Umialik (whaling captain) but usually passed to Umialik's shaman or harpooner, 15 saved for early Spring (from Sheehan 1985:130).

In Northern whaling societies the wife of a whaler was also a seamstress. Animal skin was transformed into a “second skin” for human use through sewing. There was a spirituality while sewing that linked animals, hunters, and seamstresses together in a sacred circle (Chaussonnet 1988:212). As a result, women were required to observe certain rules and perform rituals to show respect for the animals that were hunted. It was the women who not only dressed their hunter husbands but who were responsible for sewing the skins of their kayaks. On Nunivak Island, Alaska, women were required to wear waterproof parkas to prevent disrespected animals from contaminating the new kayaks (Curtis 1930:13).

Unangâ women were taught to be very careful while sewing. They could not to let any hair be caught in the seams of the kayak for fear of polluting the seam. Women performed a ritual of wiping their hands with special bundles of grass to disguise their scent so that whales would not flee (Robert-Lamblin 1980:10). It was the seamstress who transformed the skins of animals into the protective garments and implements of the hunter (Chaussonnet 1988:213). Even the gutskin parkas worn by the Unangâ had religious connotations. Shamans donned them while curing and traveling to secret places. It was a belief that the gutskin garment endowed the wearer with power and helped create a boundary around the hunter, especially when going after a whale (Ray 1981:56).

4.6 Whaling Headgear

A further aspect of the bodily transformations that garments provided to assist the whaler concerns the whalers’ headgear. Hats were crucially important for whaling in warding off the sun and also on occasions to entice the animals they hunted. This was done with painted scenes on the hats, sometimes in color. Native groups who subsisted from sea mammals used various hats to ward off swells, the sun and to sometimes entice

the animal they were hunting. The Unanga developed a very sophisticated and unique type of headgear. Black (1991) devoted an entire book to the subject based on her own research and the earlier writing in the 1930s of Russian scholar Sergei Ivanov. Both Black and Ivanov had access to the collection of ancient Aleutian headgear in the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (MAE) of the Academy of Sciences, USSR. This headgear dated to the beginning of the nineteenth century. The collection included eighteen hats from the Aleutians. Others were found in several additional museums located in the Soviet Union. Both Black and Ivanov used a comparative method to analyze the hats comparing them to styles from Eskimo populations and the Northwest Coast of Alaska.

According to Black (1991:17; Black and Liapunova 1988:56) the bentwood headgear used by whalers diffused into the Aleutian Islands from the Sugpiaq (Kodiak) region with the “whaling complex”. Black noted that on Kodiak there were different types of headgear used depending on the prey that was hunted. Ivanov and Black named Kodiak (with Northwest Coast Tlingit traits) as the center of this wooden headgear complex. Kodiak was raided by the Northwest Coast people and the Northwest Coast cultures wore similar hats. According to Black (1991:33), on Kodiak the entire hat was viewed as a zoomorphic image representing the animals that were hunted. Some hats had snouts, beaks, ears, and teeth (1991:33). She argued that during the cultural transmission process from Kodiak to the Aleutians, these hats were modified by the Unanga. The end result was that the headgear used in the Aleutians (Figure 4.2) soon became more an indicator of social prestige and rank (Black 1991:17). The hats below are thought to represent the beaks and crests of birds, which were symbolic to whalers as noted in the subsequent section, Note is made that there is no direct evidence regarding the actual transmission of hunting hats from Kodiak to the Aleutians.



Figure 4.2. Open Crown hats used by 18th-century Unangaġ in ritual dancing. Detail on a map by an unknown Russian voyager on a chart compiled by or for T. Shmalev no later than 1775 (from Black 1991:35).

Black also theorized that in Southwestern Alaska, it was necessary for a man to be symbolically transformed into an orca in order to hunt whales. The hat (Figure 5.3) was made in the likeness of the orca emphasizing its teeth and watchful eyes. It became a mask, and the mask transformed the man into a mighty hunter, with the headgear being an image of power (Black 1991:35). This occurred through the use of rituals and secretive practices to entice the spirit of the orca.



Figure 4.3. Killer whale image collected by Captain James Cook, Unalaska (from Black 1991:33).

4.7 The Symbolism of Birds

Because headgear often had various avian characteristics, birds eventually had special associations with the whale hunt. Such associations were symbolic and are confirmed by ethnographic evidence among the Unangaâ and the Sugpiaq (Black 1991:36). This was especially true while whaling. Birds were found in association with the mummies (Dove and Paurach 2002). Whale hunters' parkas were made of avian feathers, and they decorated their headgear with ivory carvings of birds. The eagle also had great symbolic significance, tame eagles were kept, and eagle feathers were used in ritual dances, especially by whalers (Black 1991:36). An ivory plaque excavated by Hrdlička at Uyak in 1934 (Figure 4.4). It portrays a human face flanked by two whales on both sides; while the plaque itself ends on two transverse sides of eagle heads (Black 1991:36-37). It can be inferred that this could be the face of a whaler shaman and the artifact a talisman used in whaling.



Figure 4.4. Ivory plaque excavated by Hrdlička at Uyak Bay, Kodiak. Human face, whales, and eagles (from Black 1991:37).

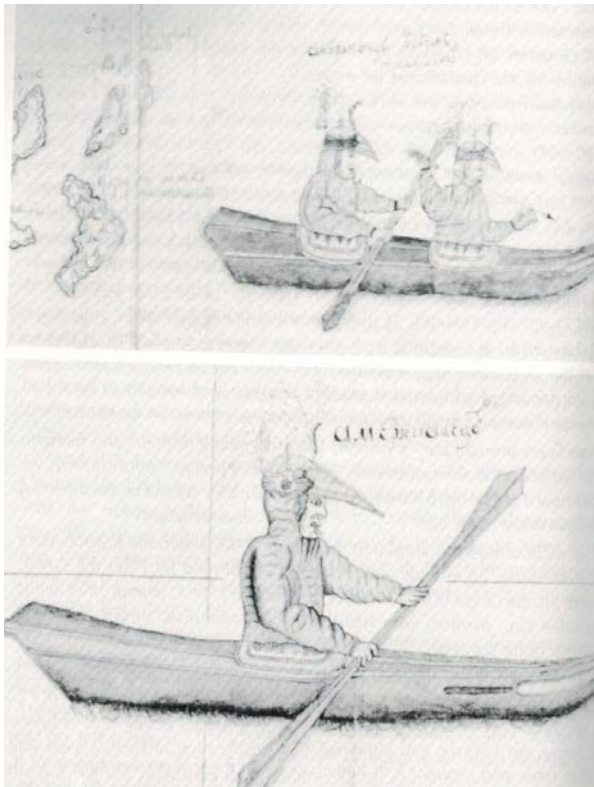


Figure 4.5. Illustrations from Shemaliev map dated 1775. It shows central and eastern Unanga hunters hunting sea mammals (from Black 1991:78).

Black called attention to the beak-shape of some of the headgear (Figure 4.5) that became popular in the Eastern Aleutians, most likely as part of the whaling complex (Black 1987:79). The price for a rare hat was one to three able bodied slaves which exceeded the price of a kayak. Ivanov pointed out that unlike the Northern Eskimo groups, the Unanga and Kodiak Islanders used paint on their hats (cited in Black 1991:113) (Figure 4.6). The illustrations below show images found on one Unanga hat. Of note are the scenes showing whale hunting (Figure 4.7). The large whale is surrounded by kayaks. The whale is dragging behind several animals tied to the line (most likely bait). There is a harpoon in the back of the whale, and the whale appears to bleed to death. There is red color coming from the mouth and other parts of the animal (1991:144). It is believed that this hat was made shortly after contact, as indicated by the multiple kayaks surround a large whale.

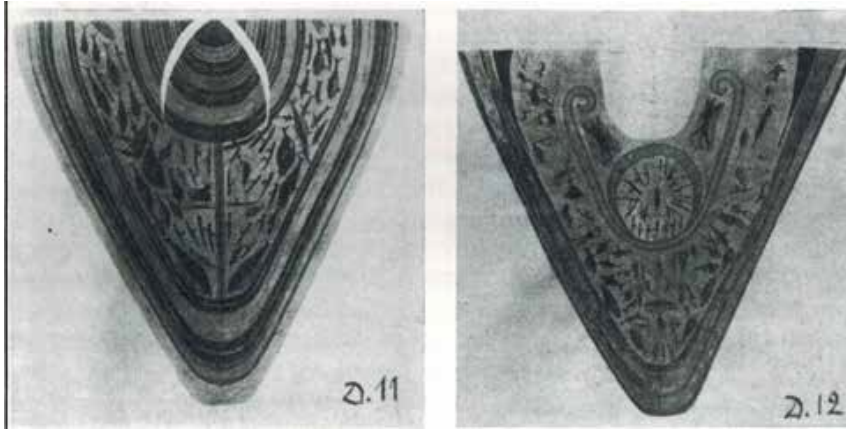


Figure 4.6. Painting on Aleutian Wood Hats (from Ivanov 1991:126).

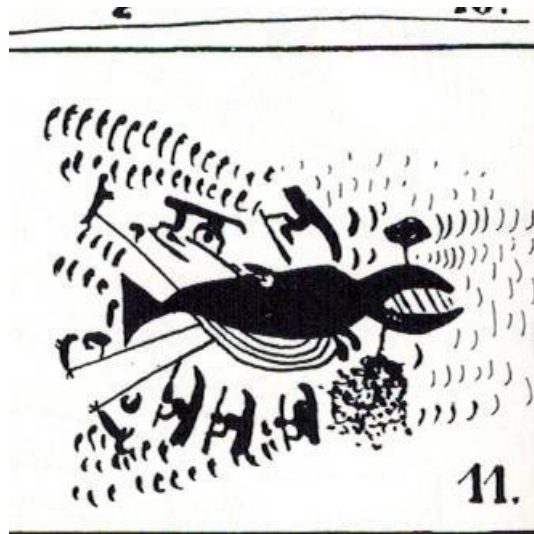


Figure 4.7. Communal whale hunting (from Ivanov 1991:142).

4.8 Summary

This chapter has examined whaling as a dangerous practice. The actual hunt was just one part of the ritualized drama of enticing the whale to give itself to humans. Various restrictions and taboos were required prior to heading out. Afterwards, the entire community had to partake in the processing of this nonhuman being and it was the women who were in charge of the actual distribution. The spirit of the whale was considered very powerful and even after death was cognizant of the way hunters and villagers would treat the remains. This enhanced the status of the whaler because hunting put him in grave danger. The danger from the sea was only once aspect. In reality, in order to hunt whales, whalers also had to appease the spirits of the dead whales. By donning his whaling hat and partaking in secret rituals known only to

whalers, the hunter transformed into an orca. Here he crossed ontological boundaries and was aided by various rituals in order to influence the behavior of the whale. Throughout this chapter, numerous examples are provided of the liminal and transformational aspects of whaling, which were manifested in the artifacts left behind including whaling hats, the use of birds, and items that depict human/whale transformations. This chapter also provides cross-cultural examples of other cultures that required the procurement of human body parts as spiritual talismans as well as items of material cultural to be used while hunting sea mammals.

Black (1991:80) theorized that whaling was transferred from Kodiak Island to the Aleutians, the centers existing on Unalaska and Islands of the Four Mountains. It is noted Black consistently exhibited a bias towards Kodiak as the center of transmission for many cultural items and practices. It is speculative on her part. In a subsequent chapter evidence is presented that places the eastern Aleutians as a probable center of a whaling/shamanistic complex.

Chapter 5: Shamanism, Liminality and Transformation

5.1 Introduction

It remains unclear when the first references were documented linking Unanga's mummification to whaling. Was this just an embellishment that went awry over the years? Were at least some of the mummies the remains of whalers who were members of a secretive society/cult? Based on my examination of the available documentary sources, it appears that the words "whalers" and "cult" were first associated in anthropological circles by Margaret Lantis (1938, 1940) in her seminal work(s) called "The Alaska Whale Cult and its Affinities". While studying whaling cultures she identified common beliefs regarding the nature of human- animal interactions. Among these societies, animals were recognized as non-human persons. They had souls and were cognizant of human actions and thoughts. To counter this phenomenon, there were prescribed rituals and actions that had to be performed before, during, and after hunting the whale. Lantis proposed that the function of these rituals and symbolic behaviors were to attract, please, and respect the whale. She recognized that all whaling cultures had cult or ritualistic behaviors, and compiled a list demonstrating that there were commonalities among the groups but also distinct variations. Since that time, the notion of a whaling cult has been bantered about in various anthropological papers (Soby 1969; Taylor 1985) past and present with no operational definitions provided. In this chapter I further my argument that a shamanistic whaling complex existed among the whaling cultures of the circumpolar north in which the concepts of liminality and transformation were paramount. As a result this chapter presents a further step in my objectives to construct a proposition that shamanistic practices in the Aleutians were founded conceptually on the notion of human-animal transformation.

5.2 Cult versus Shamanistic Complex

Lantis compiled a list of attributes common to the ritual aspects of whale hunting in the North Pacific and Bering Sea regions. Her study included the Alaska Eskimos, Aleuts, Nootka of British Columbia, Makah of the Pacific Northwest and Inuit of Greenland. These groups hunted other animals that were important to subsistence. However, there was no doubt that the whale occupied a special status.

The word cult conjures up a variety of images, mostly negative in modern society. Its use as proposed by Lantis placed emphasis not only on the animal/human interactions of hunter and prey but also the ritualistic and religious aspects of whaling. In the literature there were also references to a whaling “culture” (Black 1987:42-43; Mathiason 1927:204-208; Smith 1894:209-216) which described similar esoteric aspects of whaling. Common to all descriptions were the recognition of basic ideological beliefs and the pervasive aspects of liminality. Here I propose that the esoteric beliefs and practices of whaling groups were representative of an ancient shamanistic belief system that permeated their actions and lives.

Examined in this fashion, the term “whale cult” seems a misnomer. Although there were diverse cultural manifestations relating to hunting whales, these phenomena were improperly labeled as cults. In truth, the so called “whaling cult” cannot be studied exclusively, because other factors contribute to the particular expressions first described but not elaborated on by Lantis. These include the methods of hunting whales, the economic importance of the whale, the social structure of the community, and the ecology of their surroundings. In this thesis I propose substituting the term “whaling cult” with the phrases “shamanistic complex” or “shamanistic belief system”. These will be used interchangeably. In this way I am able to better contextualize the practice of mummification as it relates to this ancient belief system while examining the liminality inherent in it.

5.3 Shamanism Defined

Price (2011:991) provided an excellent discussion on shamanism. He also accentuated its ecological/geographical aspects that have direct relevance to this study. Evidence will be provided to substantiate there was a consistent pattern of spiritual belief, practice, and material culture across the circumpolar region, which Price described as “overwhelming”, and which I will apply to the whaling groups of this study. Here I begin a discussion of what is meant by a “shamanistic” complex or belief system. Like the word *cult* the words *shaman* and *shamanism* are controversial, especially regarding their meaning and usage. Some scholars argue that “shaman” should only be used in relation to the classic shamanic complex of the Siberian-Arctic region. Conversely there are those who apply the term to describe the totality of ritual trance-like and ecstatic states in any culture by special practitioners (Kehoe 2000).

The concept of shamanism is not a monolithic phenomenon but one that I will use as a foil that enables me to bring forward my alternative hypothesis of liminality. For the purpose of this work, I provide a working definition of the word as applied to whaling cultures. As used here, shamanism is defined as a complex set of beliefs, experiences, and practices that provided the keystone for peoples who hunted marine mammals. Shamanism entailed all the elements of myths and realities from which they emerged including the prescription and prohibition included in their rituals. Rather than presenting shamanistic cosmologies as timeless and overreaching deterministic structures, I will briefly explore how these beliefs represented specific understandings of the world that were upheld as forms of knowledge. These beliefs and understandings occurred through social practices and necessitated relationships of power and authority, especially between those who knew and those who didn't. This was especially true of whaling groups. These beliefs were socially constructed worldviews reproduced and transformed through time and over inhabited spaces.

The word *shaman* came into being in the late seventeenth to late eighteenth centuries as Siberia was traversed by missionaries, explorers, and fortune hunters. Anyone who spent time with these and other native groups of the arctic noticed their belief that everything in the world had a soul, was alive, and filled with spirits. Animals and natural features were included in this cosmology (Price 2011:983-984). Also pervasive was the notion that every aspect of material life- sickness and health, food and shelter, success in hunting, and the wellbeing of the community consist of a web of relations that required negotiation with this spirit world. Crucial to these concepts was the maintenance of good relationships with spirits, especially those of animals. As travelers' stories were written, notes were made of special individuals who took charge of the spiritual world. These individuals were able to attain altered states of consciousness. In the Evenki language they were called "*saman*" and were perceived as persons with supranormal skills (Jordan 2001:3). These individuals inhabited a world of mediation and negotiation between the realm of human beings and adjacent planes of existence in which dwelt the gods of nature and the souls of the dead. They were no longer of earth while in this realm, but instead, they entered into a liminal state allowing communication with the spirit world. These individuals stood out because they also possessed a complex variety of equipment linked to various rituals. These included strange headgear, hats, jackets hung with amulets, masks, and even whole animals (Price 2011:984-985).

As time went on and anthropology developed as a discipline it became apparent that the geographic distribution of societies that shared these fundamental similarities of belief (especially of the whale) in the circumpolar north suggested a great time depth for these cosmologies (Sutherland 2001:135-138). As shamans and Siberian spirituality became of even greater interest to Western scholars the perception of shamanism was contextualized and interpreted in disparate ways at different times in divergent cultures.

It was eventually recognized that shamanism was not a religion but rather a worldview. It functioned as a system or a grammar of the mind having many intercorrelations with ecology, economy, and social structure (Penttinen 1998:59 in Jordan 2001).

Shamanism therefore provided anthropologists with a useful terminology for describing patterns of ritual behavior and spiritual beliefs found across much of the arctic and subarctic regions of the world (Price 2011: 98). These were inherent in the belief systems of the Unanga and Koniag and this leads to a discussion of the beliefs regarding spirits, transformation, sacred geography, and liminality.

5.4 Shamanistic Complex

In this section I advance the notions of shamanism and liminality as they apply to this study. In order to do so, it is important to discuss Hultkrantz's analysis of shamanism. Hultkrantz (2004:148, 1994:4) moved beyond simplistic assumptions that portrayed shamanism as a former religion of northern Eurasia. He proposed that shamanism consisted of very specific values, thus forming a "complex". The purpose of this complex was the establishment of contact with the world of spirits. It represented a comprehensive worldview encompassing ecology, economy, and social structure.

Hultkrantz argued that inherent in a shamanistic complex was its "ideological premise". This was the basic structure of historically constituted and socially sanctioned cosmologies that enabled the shaman to communicate with the spiritual world. It allowed the practitioner to travel among a number of different realms inhabited by spirits, deities, and humans whether living or dead. In this context, the shaman represented a liminal being. He was the mediator between this and the other world; his presence was betwixt and between the human and the non-human (Takiguchi 1990). I will provide evidence that among the Unanga and Koniag, whalers were perceived as shamans for the reasons just cited.

5.5 Cosmological Aspects of Whaling

For my analysis, I will focus on the beliefs and values of those who practiced whaling. There is no doubt that there was an underlying cosmology shared by all groups regarding human-animal relations in the arctic. This was the assumption that animals had souls. Subsequently hunting involved more than possessing the appropriate technology and technical knowledge. It required establishing the proper relationship with animals' souls in order for animals to surrender themselves to the hunter. The human/animal interaction was not restricted to just whaling, but throughout this study I provide evidence that of the myriad animals hunted, the whale required the most elaborate manifestation of spiritual beliefs, rituals and power.

5.6 Sacred Landscapes

As previously stated, although whaling cultures had comparable ritual practices and ideologies, there were variations. This introduces the concept of regional ecologies first suggested by Hultkrantz (2004:152). He examined the environmental factors crucial to the development of these primary arctic belief systems. He realized that research and the archaeological record provided support for the existence of a circumpolar shamanic complex that could not be refuted. Price (2011:995-997) further acknowledged that archaeologists had to implicitly understand the dynamic nature of the shamanic concepts that were manifested in different ways at different times and places with varying degrees of social emphasis. This included the operation of shamans alongside other spiritual specialists. This approach is crucial to my study, because, the belief systems of the Unanga and Koniag eventually lead to mummification of some members for the sole purpose of keeping them in a state of persistent liminality. I propose that whalers were considered shamans due to their interactions with the dead and the non-human beings even though there were other ritual specialists in these groups.

Also inherent in the discussion of shamanism is the notion of place or the landscapes of shamanism. Peter Jordan (2001:97) studied the Khanty who exhibited a combined network of spirits and forces encoded in the natural landscape. He recognized that a sacred geography prevailed in which the consciousness of the community was encoded within people's spatial perceptions with spiritual meanings. The Khanty believed that the souls of the dead lived on after death in the cemetery. If the dead were made to feel comfortable there was less of a chance that their unsettled souls would wander back to the community at night. After communal visits, the cemetery was strictly avoided, especially in the course of procurement activities. Here, I make parallels to the mummy caves, which will be discussed in subsequent chapters. Suffice to say that the liminal status of those spirits was reinforced by the entire community. In this manner, ritualized forms of communication took place at the hierarchical network of sacred sites. And like the Khanty, among the Unanga the outcome of hunting was as much about relationships with other beings of the universe as about an individual's technical ability. This relationship never ceased after the death of the whale. After killing and consumption of the animal, the appropriate treatment and deposition of its parts and bones became paramount if this respectful relationship was to be preserved.

5.7 Material Remains

It is accepted that shamans were members of the community in which he or she resided. It is more difficult to identify the artifacts of shamanistic practices (Jordan 2001:102). For the Unanga, this will be addressed in a subsequent chapter. In general, Hultzkantz (1996:28-29) argued that artifacts associated with shamanism constituted elements within an expanded material context. If the actions of the shaman were contextualized within a wider suite of practices a number of themes could reveal the material dimensions of a shamanistic worldview. These could be manifested in the

routine and ritual treatment of specific animal body parts including their bones. Aspects of broader cosmological concepts could then be associated with a wider recognition of landscape or enculturation that included the maintenance of sacred sites for special veneration and subsequent transformation. At such places, the conceptual treatment of material cultural forms was perceived as being animate and having a soul (Jordan 2001:102). On this note, to the Unanga and their neighbors, the objects that were left behind in caves in all likelihood were viewed as possessing life forces.

5.8 Acknowledgement of Places, Kayaks, and Tools

Places were important to whalers regardless of the geographic region. There were words for cardinal directions. Houses possessed their own symbolic meanings to various groups. They represented great condensations of meaning and memory with their own special phenomenology. This has been highlighted for the Thule culture by Bachelard (1994:8), Whitridge (2004), and Patton and Savelle (2006). The kayak also had symbolic and sociopolitical significance related to the complex hierarchical practice of whaling. Various hunting artifacts demonstrated evidence of use, including breakage, and repair. These could embody the telling of hunting stories to novice whalers about spiritual formulations. In this vein the actual whale carcass had politics involved with various prized resources at stake, requiring whalers and their wives, while cutting the body of the whale, to follow ritualized aspects of dissection as well as distribution (Whitridge 2002).

5.9 Human/Animal Transformation

A crucial component to my argument of liminality is the concept of mutability or transformation. This involved blurring the distinctions between humans and animals (Jordan 2011:994). The shamans maintained a pact of responsibility with the

community and the domain of the spirits. Through various rituals they transformed into animals. The clues to the presence of transformational beliefs are manifest in masks and objects that portray items that were part human, part animal. The transformational manifestation of humans into killer whales, other animals and vice versa were conceptualized throughout the mythology and ceremonialism of whaling cultures.

To further validate this phenomenon three interrelated themes emerge from items of Paleo-Eskimo art providing evidence of the intersection of shamanic belief systems and the artifacts of northern groups. According to Sutherland (2001:137-138), these are: human/animal transformation, shamanic flight, and the skeleton as an avatar of the soul. The representation of human animal transformation can be ascertained by the carved items of animals that incorporate the form of a human face. Shamanic flight is sometimes represented by images of a flying bear that is common among northern whaling groups or the symbolic aspects of birds. And finally, among many groups, the skeleton is not just what remains of the dead animal but can be viewed as a vessel of the soul or spirit of the creature. It will be documented in subsequent chapters that among the Unanga, all three categories are represented. In the Aleutians, whale bones were used not only for housing supports but for other objects of everyday life. They were also found in some of the caves and with burials. To some these could be viewed as utilitarian items made of bone due to the scarcity of wood. However, in all likelihood, they functioned as sacred items with souls that to be treated with ritual and respect.

Sutherland (2001:139) associated the notion of transformation with the concept of regeneration among northern groups. This was based on the belief that the life force of beings resided in their various body parts, especially skeletal and were regenerated from them. This concept applied to both humans and animals. The need to treat the bones of whales and other sea mammals with respect in order to insure their rebirth runs throughout circumpolar mythology. Crucial in these cosmologies was the notion that an

individual could be regenerated through skeletal remains, returning in succeeding years through rebirth (Carlson 2011:644). Regeneration was one aspect in the death and rebirth rituals included in the initiation process of many shamanic and secret society initiations throughout the regions (Eliade 1964:59-63). The artistic portrayal of ribs, backbones, and joint marks on human and animal forms were found both ethnographically and archaeologically throughout the Northwest Coast and among other whaling societies of the north. This clearly relates to their belief in regeneration (Kan 1989). I propose that this belief was paramount to the Unangâ, who acknowledged the concept of the power residing in the human body. There was also evidence in both the Aleutians and on the Kodiak Archipelago of human bones being drilled for rearticulation. This will be a key concept in my subsequent discussion regarding mummification. It is also apparent that liminality endured as a crucial component when boundaries were crossed be it from earth to another sphere or human to animal. In circumpolar regions, crossing and recrossing ontological boundaries were taken as fact and enabled transspecies communication. Ultimately transformation was accomplished through the movement of souls entering a liminal realm, because all entities whether animate or inanimate had spiritual power (Cassady 2008:8).

There is little doubt that in Unangâ culture, through transformation, the whaler/shaman entered a liminal state during which time he transformed into an animal, the killer whale. According to Turner (1982), during this liminal phase the ritual subjects pass through a period of ambiguity and the cognitive patterns that create order and meaning in everyday life are no longer applicable. For the whalers, there were observances that had to be followed and rules that had a very special purpose: to conciliate the souls of game. “‘Life’s greatest danger’, said an old Iglulik shaman, ‘lies in the fact that man’s food consists entirely of souls’” (Birket-Smith 1936:166). According to this worldview, animals were cognizant beings with souls who could

observe and respond to human behavior in a number of ways (Lantis 1938; Birket-Smith 1936; Watanabe 1994). Hunting, therefore, was not just the pursuit and capture of an unsuspecting animal; but rather, it was a negotiation between a human person and a non-human person at which time the animal decided and agreed to give itself to the worthy hunter.

5.10 Animal Metamorphosis and Hunting Rituals

The use of hunting rituals is also relevant to this study. In whaling societies, such efforts were conducted to control the movements of the whale, both before and after striking it. According to one report, an intestinal pouch filled with the “fat drawn from a dead male child” was dragged by a shaman in a kayak across the mouth of Kizhuyak Bay (Kodiak) behind entering whales, confining them in the bay where they could be attacked (Hrdlička 1944:126). Additionally, a poison made from human fat was deployed by the Chugach to prevent the wounded whales from escaping into open waters (Birket-Smith 1953:33). After striking his prey, an Aleut whaler would withdraw to a special hut for three days, where he fasted and mimicked the sounds of the dying animal in order to hasten its death and prevent its escape (Veniaminov 1984:224).

Aleutian peoples saw whales as being more powerful than human beings, and whalers compelled cetaceans to do as they wished through the use of these ritual practices. Whalers also used charms in an attempt to persuade powerful spirit helpers to attract whales. They recognized that ritually unclean persons, such as women during certain times, repelled whales.

5.11 Summary

To conclude this chapter, it is highlighted that within the shamanistic belief complex, animals, especially whales, were thought to have the same faculties, feelings,

and attributes as humans. Whales were considered more highly developed, more sensitive, and more powerful. Whales could see farther, had feelings, and because they had immortal souls, could be reincarnated. They also had spiritual powers far superior to that of humans, which is why hunters needed spirit helpers.

The relationship between hunter and whale had to be negotiated. In the Eastern Aleutians and on Kodiak, whale hunters were a hereditary group of specialists who knew secret methods, both esoteric and practical, which made them successful in their occupation. Intrinsicly, the primary concern of the hunter was to keep the powers or spirits of the dead whales under control through various rituals and actions; because if the whaler became weak or did something to displease the whales, they could turn against him and destroy him. For this and other reasons a whaler isolated himself from the community during the hunting season because he became permeated with the powers of the dead and could secondarily harm those not immunized against their lethal effects.

Chapter 6: Archaeology, Death and Maritime Adaptations

6.1 Introduction

Much has been written regarding mummification and the intensification of whaling as correlates of cultural complexity in the Aleutians and surrounding regions. The goal of this chapter is to evaluate the current archaeological sequences in order to determine if any temporal correlations exist between whaling and mummification. In order to do so, first literature is presented discussing the hunting vs. scavenging of whales in the Gulf of Alaska.

Supplemental information is included for Siberia, Northwest Alaska, and the Pacific Northwest (Figure 6.1) on this topic. The discussion includes the interaction, early on, amongst groups that hunted whales and the ideologies and technologies that appear to have been transmitted throughout the regions. The ultimate goal is to contextualize the spread of a shamanistic belief system linked to cetacean utilization and mummification. The evidence in this chapter is based on materials that help to demonstrate the development of a maritime focus in people's subsistence economies prior to returning to the theme of a shamanistic belief system in this and other chapters. I will use various criteria to help establish that social complexification was occurring through changes in settlement architecture, with some families starting to occupy larger houses while others remained in smaller dwellings. There was also evidence of increasing populations, warfare, trade and complex ceremonialism. I plan to provide evidence that during the time period when whaling intensified, so did the complexity of the curation of human bodies after death. Information will be presented substantiating that there was interaction, early on, amongst groups that hunted whales and that through contact their ideologies and technologies appear to have been transmitted throughout the regions. It is noted that what was selected for inclusion in this chapter is based on the available evidence for the remains of sea mammals found in specific cultural contexts

and also for the treatment of human remains. Additionally, as stated in my introductory chapter, various methods of archaeological dating remain as written by the author(s).

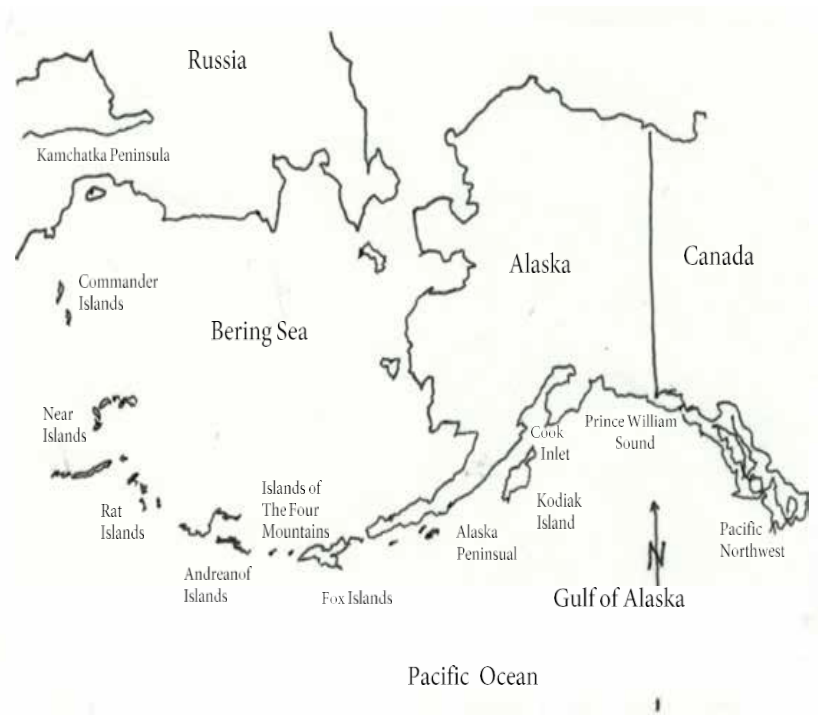


Figure 6.1. Map of Study Area

6.2 The Hunting versus Scavenging Archaeological Dilemma

One of the objectives of this thesis is to explore the idea that people would have afforded whalers high status in recognition of the extreme dangers of whaling, rewarding them with more complex mortuary rituals and burial rites than other members of society. It is therefore necessary to establish whether whales really were hunted and that people did not just rely on scavenging whales. Several studies exist based on archaeological and anthropological approaches to prehistoric whaling in Alaska (Yesner 1992; Mulville 2002; Holland 1992). Savelle and Kishigami (2013) provide an excellent overview and classify whale scavenging as passive versus hunting as an active method of procurement. Whitridge (1999) reviewed the evidentiary traits used by various archaeologists to determine active whaling in antiquity based on the work of various archaeologists including McCartney and Savelle (1993). They (McCartney and Savelle

1993:40) hypothesized that active whaling could be ascertained by an analysis of faunal remains, the logic being that the consistent selection for young animals would indicate a hunting strategy. Further research on this topic was examined on the Alaska mainland (Workman 1998) and the North Pacific (Monks et al. 2001).

Anangula Island currently provides the earliest evidence of maritime procurement and sea mammal usage in the Aleutians, firmly dated at 8,000-9,000 years B.P. (Laughlin and Aigner 1966:45; McCartney 1984:122). (Please refer to Figure 6.2 for the most widely accepted chronology for the Aleutians by Davis and Knecht (2010) to be referenced throughout this chapter). As stated in Chapter 2, few studies exist (Knecht and Davis 2005, Denniston 1972) examining faunal remains at various sites in order to determine species and age (Yesner 1978, 1992). The earliest known coast archaeological site with cetacean remains date to 3,120 ± 59 B.P. at Chaluka (Laughlin 1963:76).

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Approximate Chronology (Cal B.P.)</i>	<i>Type Site in Unalaska Bay</i>	<i>Diagnostic Artifacts and Features</i>
<i>Late Aleutian</i>	<i>1,000-200</i>	<i>Tanaxtaxak (UNL- 55) Eider Poin (UNL- 19) Reese Bay (UNL- 63) Morris Cove (UNL-9) Bishop's House</i>	<i>Abundant ground slate, ulus, and limited chipped-stone inventory; multiple-room houses and longhouses and fortified refuge rocks</i>
<i>Amaknak</i>	<i>3000-1000</i>	<i>Summer Bay (UNL- 92) Cahn site D (UNL- 18) Amaknax (UNL- 54)</i>	<i>Appearance of stemmed, notched lithics, elaborate barbing on bone, hunting implements, toggling harpoons, asymmetric knives, spall scrapers, and umqan, rectangular houses</i>
<i>Margartet Bay</i>	<i>4000-3000</i>	<i>Amaknak Bridge (UNL- 50) Margaret Bay UNL- 48) levels 2 and 3 Tanaxtaxak Basal (UNL-46) Agnes Beach upper level</i>	<i>Blades, ASTt-like tools, stone bowls, plummets and angle and polished burins; first appearance of labrets, unilateral barbs and harpoons, bone socket pieces, net sinkers, and exotic lithics; stone-walled houses</i>
<i>Late Anangula</i>	<i>7000-4000</i>	<i>Margaret Bay levels 4 & 5; Agnes Beach, lower level; Airport Site (UNL-105) Powerhouse Site (UNL-114) Cahn Site K (UNL-47) Quarry Site (UNL-469)</i>	<i>Abundant blades, stemmed points, and bilateral barbed harpoons with line guards; first bifacial tools; Shallow semisubterranean</i>

<i>Early Anangula</i>	9000-7000	<i>Russian Spruce (UNL-115) Uknodok (UNL-318)</i>	<i>Abundant blades, unifacial tools, transverse burins, large end scrapers, grooved cobble sinkers, ocher grinders, stone bowls, and oil lamps, tent like houses on shallow depressions</i>
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Figure 6.2. Aleutian Chronology, showing artifact discovery by age of artifact and location (from Davis and Knecht 2010:213).

The estimated date of 3,500 B.P. provides a benchmark for the archaeological manifestations of whaling in the regions to be discussed. Yesner (1992:177) reviewed subsistence data for the Aleutians and Kodiak confirming that environmental changes facilitated the subsistence strategies people used during the Kachemak period on Kodiak which will be discussed. The archaeological record provides evidence of population growth and greater technological efficiency, which aided the intensification of hunting larger mammals such as whales, porpoises, and sea lions. It is, however, extremely difficult to demonstrate conclusively that active whaling was present or absent in prehistory (Black 1987:33-34). What is certain is that the Unanga and their whaling neighbors engaged in a delayed-return economic system when harvesting whales, regardless of whether the animal was acquired through hunting or scavenging (Woodburn 1982:433). Social stratification is inherent in a delayed-return system, elevating those who could bring in and butcher the whale, and control the storage and distribution of the body parts (Ingold 1983). This will be elaborated on in Section 6.8.

Heizer (1943a:427), reviewed Steller's reports from the 1740s and found that the Unanga followed the same common-sense protocols of their Eskimo neighbors when dealing with decomposing whales. The meat would not be used if the whale was rotting by the time it reached shore, but the bones would be harvested and the oil burned for light. They were able to obtain valuable resources from the whale, no matter how it was obtained or what condition it was in. Yesner (1995:157-160) addressed the scavenging vs. hunting problem for sites that yielded numerous whale bones. His model was based on the cetacean remains left by the Thule (thought to be the ancestors of the modern

Inuit), for which there was a myriad of archaeological data (Haynes 1992; McCartney and Savelle 1995) but for which there were no historical accounts. He looked to hunting of elephants for an appropriate analogy. Although Alaska was not a suitable habitat for elephants in prehistoric times, mammoths and mastodons roamed throughout due a more temperate arctic. Yesner drew on the work of others (McCartney and Mitchell 1988; McCartney and Savelle 1993; Krupnik and Kan1993). He concluded that among prehistoric populations there was selective culling of young animals. Yesner hypothesized that young whales (and probably mammoths) were most desirable. The juvenile animals were easier to hunt or even scavenge due to their higher mortality rates because of their need for greater caloric intake. He concluded (1995:160) that in all probability, both strategies, hunting and scavenging, were utilized in ancient populations, and that as hunting technology became more sophisticated, whale procurement by hunting became more desirable.

6.3 Chronology of Whaling and Arctic Small Tool Tradition

To return to the Aleutian chronology, over time the remaining western islands of the Aleutians were inhabited. Radiocarbon dates suggest an extended expansion westward that brought early settlers as far west as the Rat Islands by 5,500 cal B.P. and Near Islands by cal 3,000 B.P. By this time substantial settlements, some with multi-room houses, deep middens, and rich artifact inventories were excavated at several locations. There was continuity of occupation during the first 6,000 years, but also evidence for culture contact and population movement (Davis et al. 2016).

The Margaret Bay phase, named after the location of a strategic site, is thought to have occurred between 4,000 and 3,000 cal B.P. During this phase, at approximately 3500 B.P. there was an influx of Arctic Small Tool traditional elements on Unalaska (Davis and Knecht 2005:58), Concurrently the beginning of the widespread Neoglacial

climatic change also brought about modifications of diet and technology (Steffian and Saltonstall 2005:24). Settlements in Unalaska and Umnak grew, and permanent semi-subterranean dwellings appeared. The first evidence of labrets (lip plugs) and art also were also documented suggesting advances in stratification and complexity (Davis et al. 2016:284).

The Arctic Small Tool Tradition (ASTt) has relevance to this study because it is connected with maritime subsistence adaptations, meaning they took advantage of the resources on coasts and in streams. The excavation of site KTZ-325, yielded the oldest securely dated evidence for sea mammal use in Northwest Alaska supporting the hypothesis that ASTt people had a maritime economy in place at the start of their florescence in Alaska and beyond (Treymane 2016:4). Research by Odess (2005), Steffian and Saltonstall (2005), Davis and Knecht (2005) and others provide a much more detailed analysis of this topic. The ASTt may have originated in the Western Arctic or Siberia a few centuries prior to 4,000 cal B.P. although another theory will be presented. It spread rapidly across the high Arctic all the way to Greenland (Davis and Knecht 2005:51). People leading this way of life maintained a hunting tradition and left a distinctive set of stone tools, weapon tips, and adzes of small size (hence the name).

While the eastward migration of ASTt foragers is well documented, the southern boundary of their movement in Southwest Alaska is not thoroughly understood. Archaeologists have identified evidence of ASTt occupations on the central Alaska Peninsula (Dumond 1998) and the southern Kenai Peninsula (Workman and Zollars 2002). Researchers continue to debate the extent of ASTt occupations along the North Pacific Coast (Dumond 2001:292-298). ASTt-like tools occur repeatedly in adjacent areas, which has forced researchers to consider broader connections with this pervasive tradition (Steffian and Saltonstall 2005:17). All indications are that with the ASTt came

a diffusion of material and possible intellectual culture that probably included knowledge of sea mammal hunting.

6.4 Shamanistic Complex and Active Whaling

Maschner (2016:331-332) contends that during the Margaret Bay sequence the Eastern Aleutians and the western Alaska Peninsula appeared to have taken a divergent paths until historic contact. There were differences in architecture, village structure, and subsistence technologies, and these alternated between periods of expansion and contraction. Maschner noted one broad area of similarity across the regions. Approximately 3,300 years ago a ceremonial or shamanic complex arose that appeared to be very large in scope (Maschner 2016:332). He identified two items of significance leading to this inference. The first is the occurrence of small masks made of whale bones. Too small to be worn on the face Maschner thought they were hung from the neck, perhaps against the chest similar to the Ipiutak burins (a cultural tradition from the Point Hope region of Alaska) (Mason 2009). Whale bone masks are known from only four locations in Alaska; Amaknak and Umnak Islands in the Eastern Aleutians and from Izembek Lagoon and Port Moller situated on the Alaska Peninsula (Rogers and Anichtchenko 2011:73-74). Only one is known to be associated near a burial and that was at the Hot Springs site on the Alaska Peninsula. The others were found near house pits. However, not everyone agrees with Maschner as to the use and function of the masks or how they were worn. Ivanov (1930) as well as Liapanova (1996:233) situated the masks in the same symbolic realm as Unanga's hunting headgear. Adding to this explanation Black (2003:71) viewed them as one in a series of items that could help transform the wearer into a great hunter or shaman, hiding his or her identity while providing a spiritual vision. Rogers and Anichtchenko (2011:77) recognize that masks were important in Unanga's ceremonialism and highlight their extensive geographic

distribution from these regions when they state "...the distribution suggests mutual influences and connections, even ritual continuity along a wide fringe of the southern Bering Sea ca. 2800-3300 B.P." (2011:78).

The second items of significance to be linked to ceremonialism are a group of small ivory figurines also thought to be worn around the neck by Maschner (.2016:332). They had life like faces with tattoos and labrets. They were found at two of the locations as the whale bone masks, Hot Springs village at Port Moller and the Amaknak Bridge site of Unalaska. Similar figurines were also found in association with whale bones outside the Gulf of Alaska in a large oval house at Cape Krustenstern, near Kotzebue, Alaska. This site is linked to the Choris and Old Whaling cultures of the Bering Straits (Maschner 2016:331). Darwent and Darwent (2016) provide a detailed study of what is known of the Choris and the Old Whaling Cultures. In relation to this study, this place and these artifacts provide evidence of trade and the transmission of rituals and beliefs over a large geographic area. This information is important to the development of my hypothesis regarding the spread of a shamanistic complex with links to whaling.

6.5 The Importance of the Margaret Bay and Beyond

During the Margaret Bay phase there was also evidence of sustained contact between Kodiak and the Eastern Aleutians due to the appearance of occasional ground slate points, ground jet beads, and labrets (Davis et al. 2016:284). It is speculated that active whaling occurred prior to 3,000 B.P. This places Margaret Bay as an important site in relation to this study because it provides proof that marine mammal hunters had contact with each other. At the Margaret Bay site the uppermost strata contained stone lined semi-subterranean houses, small chipped projectile points, larger bifaces, end scrapers, polished burins, stone labrets, and stone bowls including oil lamps. Margaret Bay had an occupation spanning 3,000 years (3,000-6,700 B.P.) earlier than most of the

Aleutian tradition sites (Davis et al. 2016). As discussed previously, two stone labrets were discovered and appear to be the oldest in the Aleutians even predating the earliest found on Kodiak. This is relevant as it contributes to the evidence social stratification. It also refutes previous statements by Black that cultural traits of the Aleutians were transmitted from Kodiak (1991:17).

Faunal remains associated with an ice edge habitat peaked around 3,500 B.P. (Davis 2000). Evidence reveals that subsequent archaeological sequence did not develop in a vacuum. The relationship between the early prehistoric cultures of the Gulf of Alaska and the whaling groups to the north is evident. Exotic artifacts indicate contact among early prehistoric assemblages in both areas. The ethnic boundary archaeologically dates to at least 6,000 years B.P. (Knecht and Davis 2005:57). The mechanisms of contact among the Eastern Aleutians and the rest of the arctic are not yet fully understood. Data confirm the Eastern Aleutians had sustained contact with an intrusive culture from the north. Knecht and Davis (2005:58) propose that perhaps the ASTt was rooted in the Anangula tradition and that maritime adaptations actually began in the Aleutians and spread north and east close to 4,000 B.P. If true the Eastern Aleutians could be one of the centers where active whaling developed. Several researchers (Clark 1996; Dumond and Bland 1995; Crockford 2008:119; Davis 2001, Dumond 2006) also consider the Gulf of Alaska, especially the Margaret Bay site, as an Eastern Aleutian origin for Thule cultural elements. Corbett et al. (2016) provide further evidence of contact between the Eastern Aleutians and the Alaska mainland between 4,000 and 3,000 B.P.

The Amaknak Phase of the Aleutians existed from approximately 3,000 to a 1,000 years ago, during which time a new toggling harpoon technology appeared along with decorated hunting equipment and additional evidence of art. Umqan, V shaped earthworks thought to be burial features, and stone lined houses become more complex

(Davis et al. 2016:286). Ground slate lances and later toggling harpoons were associated with maritime hunting, especially for whales. Umqan used for burials will be discussed at length in subsequent chapters.

After 1,500 B.P. there was a time of cultural change that engulfed the islands and surrounding regions. This was exhibited by increasing populations with numerous cultural connections to the east (Dumond 2001). People, ideas, and technology traveled from the greater Gulf of Alaska region, specifically from the Eastern Aleutians to Kodiak Island. The late Aleutian toolkit is distinguished by the appearance of abundant ground slate tools, primarily *ulu* blades (Davis and Knecht 2016:290). Also excavated were longhouses and evidence of defensive sites, which suggested long distance trade and inter-village warfare (Maschner 2016:340). The late Aleutian phase began close to 1,000 B.P. During this time the warming sea surface and higher temperatures are thought to have led to a new emphasis on whaling (Maschner 2016:340).

This section provided a summary of Aleutian archaeology highlighting cetacean remains and the influx of new groups into Alaska along with the spread of a shamanistic complex with robust ceremonialism. However, the use and procurement of whales was not exclusive to the Aleutians. The following sections provide brief summaries of the archaeological manifestations of cetacean use throughout the Pacific Rim. These are included to provide an archeological backdrop as further proof that over time, the various whaling cultures would have had some contact with one another which in turn would serve as mechanisms for the transmission of ideas and technologies including a shamanistic whaling complex.

6.6 Prince William Sound

In a subsequent chapter, a detailed description of the mummy finds from this area is included. Prehistorically Prince William Sound was occupied by the Chugach

Eskimos. What is known is that cetacean species remains were excavated from archaeological sites in Prince William Sound with whale usage beginning at 2,230 B.P. Bones of porpoise and large whales were recovered in several sites. De Laguna's (1956) 1933 excavations at Palugvik Cave resulted in the recovery of large baleen whale remains including three vertebral *epiphysis* fragments. One skull fragment and two pieces of bone from large whales were also identified (Yarborough and Yarborough 1998:74). However, there is no way to ascertain if active whaling was practiced during this time period.

6.6 Evidence from Cook Inlet

Workman (1992) found numerous skeletons that had been disarticulated and subjected to invasive treatment at Cottonwood Creek (located near Homer, Alaska), dating from approximately 1000B.C. These finds included eleven burials in addition to numerous isolated bones. Frederica de Laguna called the burials evidence of a "bizarre mortuary cult" (de Laguna 1975:vii-viii) primarily due to the mutilations that proved to be an anomaly in the region. She also found evidence of mummification on Yukon Island in Kachemak Bay. De Laguna elaborated on the Yukon site, where two complete wrapped skeletons were found in a surface midden consisting of a man and a child. Two other skulls (trophy?) were near the man's head. Artificial eyes made of bone were placed in the sockets of all four individuals. Both the man and the child also had labrets. The child's skull was found with a hole drilled through the mandible and all indications were that the brain was taken out. . She wrote the following:

We know that the Kodiak and Aleut whalers made use of corpses, but the bodies are thought to have been those of the members of their own secret society of prominent men. It seems unlikely that they would have taken that of a child. Note should be made that the Indians of this region practiced cremation. (1975:45-47)

Workman et al. (1980:396) recognized that between 1000 B.C and 500 A.D. the

prehistory of this region was closely related to that of Kodiak Island but after that it became more aligned with Alaska Peninsula cultures. The treatment of human remains in this section is relevant to my theme of mummification.

6.7 Siberia

According to Fitzhugh (2016:258), dates for the Kuril Islands regarding maritime adaptations near the Sea of Okhotsk are thought to be from 8,000 cal B.P. and the more remote islands at 4,000 cal B.P. On southern Kamchatka, maritime resource utilization appears at approximately 3,500 cal B.P. (Fitzhugh 2016:259). The westernmost islands in the chain, the Commanders, may have remained unoccupied until the first Russian landing in 1741. Important to this study was the discovery of an ivory carving of a whale hunting scene found at the Un'en'en site on Chukotka. It depicts men in *umiaks* harpooning whales and was found within a wooden structure the team excavated. According to Odess (in Powell 2009) with a date at more than 3,000 years ago, it provides further proof for active whaling in this region. (Figures 6.3 and 6.4). The site is at an excellent location for hunting whales, and numerous whale remains were found in addition to tools indicative of whaling. Fitzhugh (2016:260) added “that if the dates are accurate this would be the first clear evidence of whaling in the Bering Strait region”.

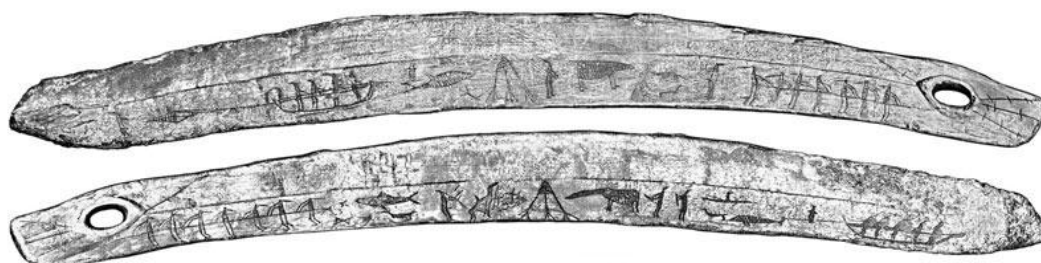


Figure 6.3. Arctic carving shows complexity of ancient hunting groups (from: Witze 2008).



Figure 6.4 Magnification of whaling hunting scene shown above (from Witze 2008).

6.8 Northwest Alaska

The earliest evidence of maritime focused occupation in Northwest Alaska is estimated between 5,400 cal B.P. to 3,700 B.P. Gusev (2014 in Fitzhugh 2016:260) reports dates between 3,500 and 3,000 cal B.P. After reviewing the engraving shown above in Chukotka, Odess believed it is related to the Old Whaling Site, found at Cape Krusenstern, mentioned above, on Kotzebue Sound, Alaska. This site represents a significant investment in maritime hunting sometime between 3,100 and 2,700 cal B.P. The Old whaling culture is important in the development of Eskimo culture because its members are believed to have been the first people to hunt large baleen whales in the Bering Strait (Wolff and Odess 2010).

In this region, sites of the Choris culture were found, starting at 3,000 cal B.P. These provide the first evidence of widespread maritime activities throughout the coastal regions of northwest of Alaska. Proof is based on remnants of toggling harpoons that have been found (Yarborough 1995:71). Based on the information provided above, there is enough evidence to substantiate that throughout the regions of there was scavenging of whales early on and then there was a progression to hunting whales.

6.9 Pacific Northwest

According to Monks, et al. (2001), for the Nootka, the evidence of whales as a significant part of the economy occurred as early as 4,000-3,000 years ago. Hunting or scavenging is substantiated by the presence of a deep incision on a whale scapula. The similar quantities of whale bone per unit volume may indicate that hunting whales began before that date. After 1,200 B.P. sites increase and artifacts are found consistent with ethnographically described whaling equipment. It is thought that for this region, the longstanding importance of whales seems clear. Even if whaling met only with occasional success, the dietary impact of even just a few animals would be significant. Trade in whale products between communities appears to have fostered intergroup alliances and resource distributions (Jones et al. 1984:91). More will be discussed on this region in subsequent chapters.

The previous sections focused on the evidence of whale usage and/or hunting over time. Because the intensification of whaling is correlated with the advent of cultural complexity in the Aleutians and nearby regions, the following sections provide a discussion of the criteria used for determining complexity and how it correlates with whaling.

6.10 Cultural Complexity and the Intensification of Whaling

Although utilization of at least scavenged whale carcasses has been occurring for millennia, many archaeologists proposed that a focused whale-hunting economy developed relatively recently in the Gulf of Alaska with the florescence of cultural complexity. This occurred when the symbolic and economic benefits of successful whale hunts outweighed the labor costs and bodily risks involved in these pursuits (Fitzhugh 2001; Whitridge 1999; Yarborough 1995; Yarborough and Yarborough 1998).

There are myriad of traits used by archaeologists to determine the advent of cultural complexity. Here complexity is defined as the increase in societal size, scale and organization (Habu et al. 2003:3). Much has been written on the rise of complexity of the North-Pacific Rim (Habu et al. 2003; Fitzhugh 2003; Davis and Knecht 2010) especially pertaining to maritime adaptations (Veltre 1998; Orekhov et al. 1998; Workman and McCartney 1998; Yesner 1998; Maschner 199). Schweitzer (2003:83) defines the North Pacific Rim as the Kamchatka Peninsula, north to Chukotka and across the Bering Sea to the Inupiaq and Yupik regions south to the Gulf of Alaska and North Pacific. Some regions mentioned here are outside the scope of this work but are included to demonstrate the geographical dispersion for cultural interactions among groups that utilized whales. For the Eastern Aleutians, there are a number of factors suggestive of complexity including house size, ceremonialism, complex burials, external contacts, warfare, the elaboration of personal adornment, technological innovations, resource intensification, occupational task specialization, dietary surplus, territorial boundaries, long distance trade, and warfare (Jordan and Knecht 1988; Knecht and Davis 2008; Price and Brown 1985; Fitzhugh 2003).

The time depths for complexity are geographically dependent with the general consensus being that the manifestations of complexity in the Aleutians occurred first in the east with ideas and technology eventually diffusing westward (Corbett et al. 2003:462). The exact reasons are elusive but influenced by several factors including but not limited to climate change and population pressure. The growing body of archaeological investigations provide evidence of contact with intrusive cultures precipitating the transmission of numerous cultural traits including whaling technology (Tremane 2016:42; Odess 2005; Steffian and Saltonstall 2005; Davis and Knecht 2005). Faunal evidence provides clues that early on there was selective culling of younger animals which is clear evidence of a hunting strategy (Yesner 1995:160.) The earliest

evidence for whaling and subsequent intensification was dependent on these technical developments that were invented and or diffused.

A delayed return system for whaling is implicit and also leads to social stratification regardless if the whale was hunted or scavenged. In a previous chapter the role of the whaler's wife was highlighted regarding the distribution of whale meat. Ingold (1983 563-565) emphasized that storage also greatly affects wealth in a delayed return system. It involves the keeping various byproducts that could not consumed or used immediately. For the whale these would include bones, oil and baleen. It is inferred that the distribution of meat and then these byproducts would provide the whaler and his wife status due to the overt distribution and consumption of these products. But the accumulation of wealth and status was not be limited to the whale's meat and byproducts. The weapons used for whaling would also be of great value and were secreted in caves for use only by whalers. For a delayed return system the complexity of distribution and wealth were even more complex, especially since the whale was conceived as a sentiment being, even after death, and would be cognizant if the correct rituals and respect towards its body were not performed (Ingold 1983:569).

It is archaeologically documented that by 3,500 B.P., during the Margaret Bay tradition, there was evidence of the Arctic Small Tool Tradition that appeared. Their emergence would have influenced the regions, especially in the realm of coastal adaptations. By this time social stratification also existed based on house size and labrets. Whaling was occurring and expanding, indicating complexity throughout the North Pacific Rim.

If Maschner (2016:323) is correct, the approximate date of 3,300 B.P. was the time when the cultures in the Gulf of Alaska came into contact with other groups from the North and West. This would have led to the spread of the ceremonial or shamanistic complex based on the distribution of several ceremonial type artifacts found in the

North and Southwest regions of Alaska. He labels this group marine mammal hunters (whalers) with their movement generating a transmission of beliefs and rituals. This corresponds with the evidence of whaling and the diffusion of various cultural traits and beliefs in Northwest Alaska, Siberia and the Northwest Coast of Alaska.

6.11 Culture Change and Complexity

By 1,000 B.P. widespread cultural change occurred throughout the North Pacific Rim (Dumond 1986). The mechanism for change is not understood but in North Alaska it was linked to whale hunting and a possible influx of people from Asia (Corbett et al. 2003 463-465). Items characteristic of the Thule culture appeared including ground slate tools and pottery (Hatfield 2010:554). It also appears that whaling intensified among cultures that had access to cetaceans in both the northern and southern limits of the congruent environmental and economical regions discussed above. Whaling was important to these groups. It eventually led to the separation of whalers as a special caste, which had more to do with the cultural construction of whaling as an enterprise, requiring extraordinary spiritual powers that were at the same time dangerous. For these reasons, whalers were considered to be shamans (Crowell 2000:233). There also seems to be evidence that some of these esoteric rituals and beliefs spread along with the sustained practice of poison dart whaling. This type of whaling also supported complex social and religious knowledge (Fitzhugh 2003).

By this time there were new forms of religious and symbolic expression as evidenced by masks and bentwood hats that were found throughout southern and western Alaska from Prince William Sound to Bering Straits. (Black 1982). Burial patterns also changed throughout Alaska. Between 500 B.C.E. and 500 A.D. methods of body deposition grew increasingly complex and on Kodiak, included dismemberment and body curation. Aleut burial practices were correspondingly complex and varied, but

due to the lack of chronological data, the origins and spread of this complexity remains elusive (Corbett et al. 2003:465). Later developments included mummification, cremations, inhumations in above ground sarcophagi, and *umqan*. The dating on these burial techniques is inconsistent. Evidence of mummification is documented for Kodiak, the Aleutians and the Alaska Peninsula, but this practice is lacking for the western Aleutians (Corbett et al. 2003:465). In order to explain the origins and transmission of some of these burial characteristics Hrdlička (1944, 1945) identified cranial differences among specimens. For Kodiak and especially the Aleutians he attributed these cultural changes to the arrival of new people by 1,000 B.P. He deemed these groups whalers who brought with them not only advances in technology but also elaborate mortuary practices including mummification. Hatfield (2010:551) summarized the various influences and the spread of complexity by simply indicating “there appears to have been several influxes of people or ideas enter the Eastern Aleutians at different times, indicating a complex history of population movements”.

One of the most pertinent developments of the Aleutian tradition to this study is the appearance of mummification, mirrored in the Kachemak tradition of Kodiak Island. Maschner (2016) argued that these two regions had very similar mortuary practices involving ancestor veneration and a common genesis. He proposed that the eastern Aleutians and Kachemak phase on Kodiak share a common legacy which remains elusive.

What is known is that after 1,000 B.P. the Aleutians experienced larger populations and increasing stratification and complexity. Middens became larger, longhouses appeared and fortifications were constructed or used (Corbett et al. 1997a:464). Groups were coming into more frequent contact and the level of violence was escalating amongst them. Raids and warfare were well documented in recorded oral histories (Maschner and Reedy-Maschner 1998:28-29). Warfare occurred in the Late

Aleutian phase as indicated by Knecht and Davis (2010:213), and such conflict also corresponds to the Late Kachemak Tradition of the Gulf of Alaska that is discussed below. Maschner and Reedy-Maschner (1998:28) argue that this resulted from a migration of people moving from the Alaska Peninsula and Kodiak regions into the Aleutians that brought about some of these changes. There is no documentation to support this statement and there is a possibility that people and ideas traveled the opposite way, which is a point that will be considered.

An equally profound cultural shift occurred about 850, and is signaled by the appearance of ethnographically known multifamily longhouses in several variations distributed from the Alaska Peninsula to the Islands of the Four Mountains (Corbett and Yarborough 2016:612-619). It is thought the inhabitants of the latter grouping were whalers of renown (Black 2003:43). The prehistory of the Four Mountain Islands is based on poorly reported analysis of fragile, perishable materials from burial caves plundered by collectors. Archaeological surveys in the 1980s recorded 23 settlements on seven of the islands (Corbett and Yarborough 2016:612-616). This grouping is at the forefront of my research as a majority of the known mummies came from these islands.

As time went on it was recorded that the Unanga^x were able to travel for distances in their kayaks and these voyages would facilitate inter regional contact. According to Denniston (1972:99) long distance trade and travel were reported during historic times. Veniaminov (in Hrdlička 1945:143,) wrote “Audacious young men used to undertake voyages into faraway regions, even as far as to the Kenaitze and Chugachi for the sole object of getting through purchase or bravery of dentalium or something similar for their sweethearts”. These passages provide insight into the extensive contact among regions, even over long distances. However, to fully study the parallels regarding mortuary patterns, whaling, and the exchange of ideas during these times,

the following section documents what is known archaeologically for the Kodiak Archipelago.

6.12 Archaeology of Kodiak and Complexity

Ocean Bay is thought to be the oldest tradition of the Kodiak Archipelago, settled 7,500 B.P., with environmental conditions being warmer and drier than presently. The Kodiak region was colonized by people from Southwestern Alaska who already exhibited a maritime adaptation. Their cultural inventory consisted of barbed harpoons, chipped stone points, and ground slate lances to hunt sea mammal, but cod and clams supplemented their diet. Whales are thought to be part of a trend towards subsistence intensification (Savelle and Kishigami 2013, Fitzhugh 2003:124, McCartney, and Savelle 1993). The earliest evidence for the use of cetacean species for the Kodiak Archipelago comes from the Ocean Bay tradition, at the Rice Ridge site, dated to about 6,500- 6,200 B.P. Deteriorated pieces of large whale bone were recovered at the site (Steffian et al. 2016:303- 305).

The Kachemak Tradition began approximately 4,000 years ago on the Kodiak Archipelago corresponding to the first 4,000 years of the Aleutian Tradition (5,000- 1,000 B.P.) and ending at the same approximate time (Workman and Workman 2010). It is represented by small villages with a number of independent households (Maschner and Reedy-Maschner 1998:27). During the Kachemak phase there was an intensification of fishing for cod and salmon. Slate *ulus* were used, and evidence of smoke houses was found. By the end of the Kachemak period, proof of trade included the appearance of antler, ivory, coal, and exotic stones. Social stratification was indicated by labrets and an inferred competition for resources. Evidence of active whaling comes from the later Kachemak tradition site at Crag Point, in the form of a large whale rib with a projectile point embedded in it. (Maschner and Reedy-Maschner

1998-29). Material culture associated with Kachemak ceremonial life is also viewed as a reflection of significant increase in social complexity. Items of personal adornment such as labrets were found that were made from a variety of materials.

It has been archaeologically proven that by this time house structures in the Kodiak and Aleutian regions became larger and there were population increases in the various villages (Fitzhugh 2003:49-52, Jordan and Knecht 1998:336, 409-411). It has therefore been established that by 1,200-1,500 years ago, the demography continued to expand and change. These changes are no longer thought to have occurred through population replacement, as Hrdlička argued. It remains unclear, however, what precipitated these changes. Fitzhugh (2003:54), based on the work of Jordan and Knecht (1988), argued that the changes appeared to be evolutionary, not revolutionary, with different novelties appearing at different times. Jordan and Knecht (1988) found evidence that the late Kachemak population was healthy and growing by 900 B.P. and that an invasion or abandonment followed by replacement seemed unlikely. Knecht (1995) attributed such anomalies to climatic changes.

The following sections expand on the archaeology of the other regions where whaling was practiced but the focus is primarily on body curation to provide further links to complex mortuary practices that spread during the similar time periods throughout the Gulf of Alaska. It has been established that by approximately 1,000 B.P. there was a continued emergence of social complexity in the regions. This brought trade and even more social division and violence. Although mortuary practices were divergent, I point out an additional similarity among whaling groups to give credence to the existence and transmission of a shamanistic belief system. This involved the invasive treatment of human remains in addition to the specific practice of inserting ivory eyes into human skulls.

6.13 Kachemak Violence and the Ritualistic Use of the Human Body

On Kodiak, the remains found at the Uyak site cannot be ignored and are relevant to this study. According Maschner and Reedy Maschner (1998 36) the earliest detected evidence for violence occurred during the Kachemak tradition. They cite “mutilated” skeletons documented at several sites spanning the 2,500-year duration of this tradition as proof. Their interpretation of violence and mutilation is based on human remains that had been subjected to scalping, dismemberment, and rearticulation of bone. It is noted that subsequent to the year 1,00 B.P. there was evidence of increased war and violence which eventually filtered into the Aleutians. (Maschner and Reedy-Maschner 1998). However, it could be that Maschner and Reedy-Maschner (1998) were partially wrong with their interpretation. Instead, it could be that the dismemberment of human bodies on Kodiak were not examples of mutilation in the truest sense, which connotes violence. Instead, they could represent the ritualistic invasive treatment of human body parts. The discussion of the remains found on Kodiak is pertinent to this thesis as it correlates with occurrences that influenced the transmission of various mortuary practices between the Sugpiaq and Unanga, including mummification.

On Kodiak, the source of the controversy centered on the human skeletal material found at the Uyak site, excavated by Hrdlička between 1931 and 1936. At this site Hrdlička directed the most large-scale excavation ever done on Kodiak Island aimed at recovering a large collection of prehistoric human skeletal remains (Loring and Prokopec 1994:30). Hrdlička excavated 500 human skeletons, including one skull with ivory inset eyes, and 4,600 artifacts (Hrdlička 1944a:141). Hrdlička hypothesized that this site yielded two distinct skull types, representing separate populations, Pre-Koniag and Koniag. He determined that the earlier Pre-Koniag people were not ancestral to the later Koniag and surmised that neither group were related to Eskimos. He applied a similar typology to his Aleutian collection, which he linked to whale hunting. He

inferred the Koniag were great whale hunters and that the Pre-Koniag showed no evidence of such activities. He found older archaeological deposits that were relatively poor for whale remains.

Hrdlička labeled the Pre-Koniag cannibals based on the human long bone shafts that appeared to have been broken open for the marrow. He later qualified this by indicating that only women and children from different areas were consumed due to the age and gender of the samples (1944a:146). This population also yielded evidence of ritual ablation, drilled skulls and bones for suspension (in order to be rearticulated), and skulls as possible trophies. Burials throughout the deposits were exclusively in the contracted position. According to Speaker (1994:54-55), Hrdlička's most contentious idea was that these human remains at the site were from two distinct and unrelated populations. Simon and Steffian (1994:97) reexamined the remains. They believe the various procedures performed on human bones could be narrowed down to three different explanations; violent encounters, ritual processing or medical examination. Further study revealed (Simon and Steffian 1994; Simon 1992; Urcid 1994) that holes in the skeletal remains may have been drilled for rearticulation. Workman (1992:21) argued that these practices indicated a complex mortuary pattern from another region while Urcid (1994:116-119) hypothesized that they were used for trophy display.

As previously stated, it is not definitive that the condition of the human remains in question were all the result of violence. To draw comparisons, they may have been used for ancestor veneration or even whaling ceremonialism. Gustavo Martinez et al. (2012), in their analysis of Argentinean human remains, found similar evidence of dismemberment, cutting, and fracturing, which they linked to cultures that viewed the body as a symbol. Through these practices group solidarity was reinforced during certain periods of intense change. Based on this information, the idea of body mutilation on Kodiak is speculative at best. There was violence related to warfare but in all

likelihood this resulted in scalping and the taking of trophy heads. In the following chapters information will be included that mummification was also performed on Kodiak. Mummification is an art that requires an extensive amount of medical knowledge for the practice to be done properly. It could be that the whalers on Kodiak either participated in a variation of the whaling complex or had ritual and educational uses for the bodies that were disarticulated and the rearticulated.

To provide evidence of contact among whalers and their uses of human body parts for ritualistic purposes, the example of skulls with ivory eye insets provide just one example. The groups that practiced whaling ranged from Cook Inlet, to Kodiak, to Arctic Alaska.

6.14 Similarities in Skull Treatment

As previously stated, on Yukon Island, de Laguna found the remains of four individuals with artificial eyes made of bone placed in their sockets (1975:45-49). At the Uyak site on Kodiak Island, Hrdlička discovered the skull with such eyes (Figure 6.4) (Hrdlička 1944:13). For Northern Alaska, Mason wrote of the “warrior shamans” of the Ipiutak culture of Point Hope who were whalers, approximately dated at 1,500 to 1,100 B.P. (2014:38). After death ivory inserts were placed in their eye sockets and mouth shields were also added. These skulls do not represent mere coincidence. Instead, it is more than likely they represent one facet of a shamanistic complex that spread throughout Alaska and nearby regions affiliated with whaling. This idea is corroborated by Mason (2014:38-40) using outdated terminology when he labeled the skulls from Point Hope part of a “cult” indicating that the origins of this ritualized use of skulls could have been the Kodiak Archipelago or Cook Inlet. Once again the origins are mere speculation.

There were other sites that included human remains that were intrusively altered.

At the Amaknak site, fragmented human bones were found that were purposely broken. Potter (2005:C-9), who conducted the analysis, linked the practice to the possible ritualistic extraction of marrow. A stone lamp and red ochre were also discovered near the human remains. It was inferred that this lamp could have been used for viewing the dead. Red ochre was generally thought to be associated with ritualistic behavior (Davis and Knecht 2005:192). All of these factors ultimately strengthen the case not only of a strong correlation between intensification of whaling and complex mortuary practices but also evidence of a shamanistic complex whose practices are not fully understood.

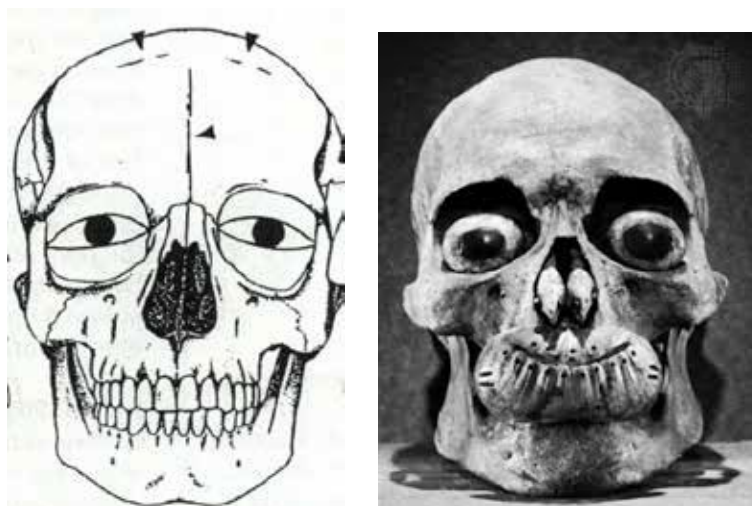


Figure 6.5. Left: Skull with inlaid eyes from Uyak Site, excavated by Hrdlička (Urcid 1994:107). Right: Skull with inlaid eyes and mouth guard discovered at Point Hope (Maschner 2014:36).

From the discussion above, all indications are that over time, population pressure, climate change and social stratification lead to raiding and warfare among groups, especially between the Unangaġ and the Koniag who were traditional enemies. However, both groups practiced whaling and both performed various rituals that appear to be associated with whaling that involved the invasive treatment of human body parts. And, there is no doubt that the “mutilation” of some enemies was evident based on trophy heads and scalping. However, there is also clear proof of practices that involved ritualistic and medical uses of human body parts that were secretive and known only to whalers.

6.15 Summary

This chapter focused on the temporal manifestation of whale procurement in conjunction with complex burial practices. The chapter had two main themes. Were whales hunted or scavenged and how far back does the evidence date? The other theme had to do with providing information that societies where active whaling was practiced were gaining were becoming increasingly complex as time went by. Peoples increasingly came in contact with each other through trading relationships and through hostility. Chronologically concurrent with these changes was mummification was accompanied by the invasive treatment of human remains.

There is no doubt that there was substantial contact among whaling cultures early on. The date of 3,500 B.P. appears to be an approximate benchmark for whale procurement (hunting and scavenging) and usage. The data places the Eastern Aleutians at the epicenter for whaling intensification for the Gulf of Alaska, if not the North Pacific Rim. There is also strong evidence that a shamanistic belief system permeated throughout the regions that centered on whaling with both traits being diffused through contacts among groups. The ivory engraving from the Un'en'en site, Siberia could be interpreted as a ritualistic representation of spiritualism to help in the hunt, or an account of a hunt. It is proof that active whaling was occurring by that time and even earlier. Further evidence for the diffusion of shamanistic beliefs and practices in association with whaling stem from the items pointed out by Maschner (2016:323) in the form of masks made of whale bone and the figurines found throughout the regions.

From 3,500 B.P. onward, the various groups perfected their own methods of whale procurement and social systems to support this effort. And because whale procurement was representative of a delayed return systems, this inherently would have led to social stratification elevating the whalers apart from other members of their groups. This could also validate the appearance of labrets on some of the mummies, to

be discussed. The date of 1,000 B.P. is also consistently mentioned throughout the regions discussed in this chapter as a time of change. This was also a time of increased complexity which is represented by a number of factors, but most significant to this study were whaling intensification and complex mortuary practices including mummification a relatively short time later. It appears that there were also several intrusive groups that entered the Aleutians over time, bringing with them more efficient hunting weapons and perhaps more sophisticated belief systems. Although we may never know if intensified whaling and or mummification originated in the Aleutians or spread to the Aleutians, what is known is that among whaling groups, there are clear indications of contact through which secretive ritualistic beliefs and practices spread. This included mummification and the invasive treatment of human bodies. Ultimately what may appear to be the mutilation of bodies from our Western point of view, could actually be the ritualized treatment of dead bodies associated with whaling. This was because whaling cultures in the North Pacific Rim consisted of people who had to live through the taking of whale lives, which was very dangerous because whales were considered a special kind of person and needed special ritualized treatments before, during and after they were killed.

Chapter 7: Types of Whaling and Poison

7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the origins of whaling were discussed, placing whale procurement along with its ceremonialism as very ancient and contributing to complexity in the various regions. It is also well documented that the Unangâ were still whaling into the nineteenth century, and that human mummification was also being practiced although secretly (Berreman 2002). While in the Aleutians, Adelbert von Chamisso spent several months at Unalaska in 1817 (Laughlin 1980:63; O’Leary 1984:93). He not only recorded the numerous words that the Unangâ had for species of whales harvested (Pacific right, bowhead, gray, finback, sei, blue, humpback, sperm, and orca), but also procured wooden whale carvings and information concerning cetacean fabrication and uses (Laughlin 1963:76). Von Chamisso noted that humpback calves were extensively hunted. The three most important products from these were blubber/oil, meat, and bone. Whale bones were utilized for construction and items of everyday use. Most important to this study, they were found in association with mummified human remains. (O’Leary 1984 93-94; Whitridge 1999:112-113). In this chapter, the various methods of whaling are discussed, along with the use of poison. The ceremonialism and esoteric aspects of whaling will be highlighted to emphasize the rituals that were needed to appease the souls of the whales as well as the human dead which is an ongoing theme throughout this study.

7.2 Two Main Methods of Whaling

There were two main whaling techniques practiced in Alaska, and the reason for their inclusion in this thesis is tied to the origins and geographic dispersion of whaling. The first was “poisoned lance whaling” or “Kodiak type” whaling (Crowell 1994; Black 1987:9). Veniaminov described the whalers on Unalaska as very solitary, the whaler being set apart from society and in need of ritual purification after the whale hunt

(1984:224) (Figure 7.1). In this type of whaling the tip of the lance was treated with a concentrate of aconite, a poison rendered from the monkshood plant ((Black 1987:25; Heizer 1943a:427-431). Whalers kept many talismans in their kayaks and believed that by smearing secret substances on the tip of their spears, whales would be more likely to die. The most potent of these were the fluids and body parts of mummified whalers that will be discussed. These substances probably had different intended purposes and that in the Aleutians their use belonged to a complex that was associated with shamanistic knowledge.

According to Knecht (personal communication, July 16, 2016) slate points are considered to be the primary marker for the presence of aconite whaling in the North Gulf Pacific. Slate was still in use in the 1840s (Knecht and Jordan 1985:27) even when iron was available. It was a known practice as noted by the Russian Zagoskin (1967:113) “they could not bring themselves to cut the beluga with iron knives”. Slate was rare in the Aleutians while obsidian was available. (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:137) There are conflicting opinions of where whaling combined with the use of slate points, aconite poison and fluids from body parts originated. It is speculated that the use of aconite originated with the Ainu (of what is now Japan), from whom the Kurile Island Ainu, the Kamchadals, the Koryaks, and the Chukchi eventually learned of its use and put it to practice in varying degrees (McCartney 1984:86). According to Heizer (1938) the most likely mode of transmission from Asia to the New World was through the Kamchadals. There is no way to validate the origins of the use of aconite poison but by the beginning of the nineteenth century this technique was well entrenched in the Eastern Aleutians.

Black (1987) argued that Kodiak Island was the prehistoric place of origin for this method although this is unsubstantiated. For many years it was also thought that active whaling was never practiced in the western islands (Heizer 1943:290). Whales

migrate throughout the Chain and recently proof of whale utilization has been found in the western islands (Corbett 2011). There is also evidence of an Eastern Aleutian origin to be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

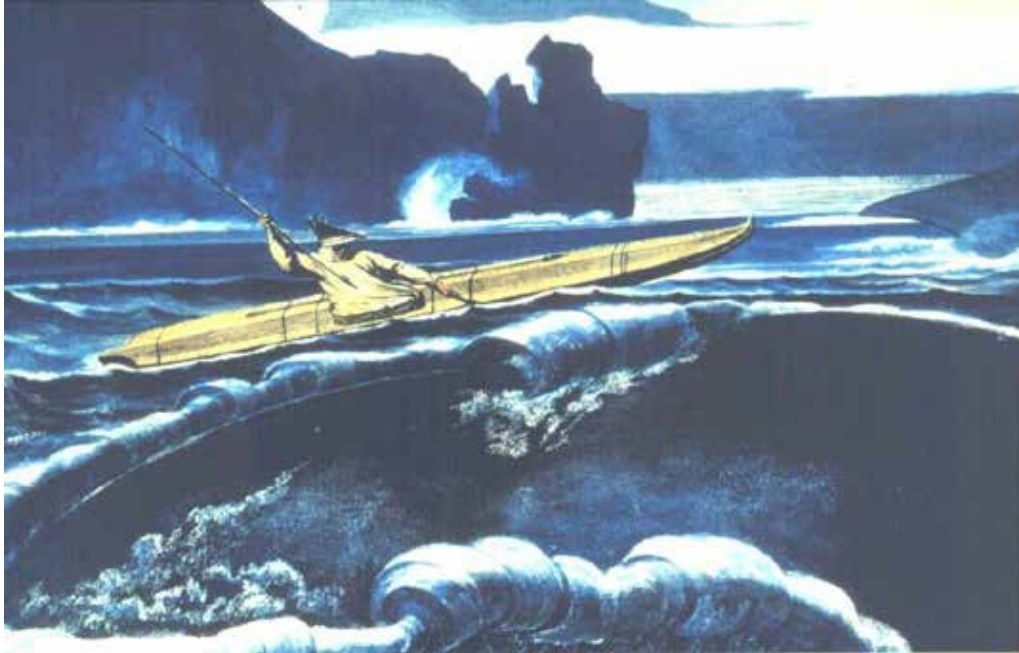


Figure 7.1. The painting “The Whale Hunter” by Tikhanov - who was on Kodiak in 1818. The whaler is probably Alutiiq and indicative of the solitary hunter (from Lydia Black 1991:1).

The second type of whaling involved the use of a harpoon with a line and a float attached (Figure 7.2). This technique was practiced by the northern Alaskan Eskimo groups. A large boat (*umiak*) was often used and paddled by a crew of several men. When a whale surfaced, the individual designated to strike used a harpoon with a detachable pole. A long line with sealskin floats was attached to this harpoon. When the wounded whale attempted to move on, it was impeded by the floats and was killed by a successive strike.



Figure 7.2. Makah whaler (from Edward Curtis 1930).

These techniques were not exclusive in Alaska. Dumond (1995) found evidence of whale traps on the Alaska Peninsula at Izembek Lagoon. He documented housing structures with rafters of whale mandibles lining the shore. He speculates that the water level was probably higher at the time. He also contends that this method is also documented for the Northwest Coast (1995:51).

The Dena'ina Athabascans of the Cook Inlet hunted whales although sporadically. They favored beluga whales, but they also hunted porpoises and seals. Beluga hunters employed several techniques of capture. One unique to the Dena'ina included the use of a hunting platform or “*yuyqal*” meaning spearing tree, as well as fences, weirs, and moveable dams made of poles. Each apparatus was designed to take advantage of seals and belugas that entered streams and rivers during high tide. Dams and fences trapped the animals as they attempted to leave. A hunter in the spearing tree would then harpoon the animal as it swam past. The harpoon was attached with a toggle point and a floating bladder made of seal skin, secured with sinew ropes. Hunters in kayaks would then pursue the struck whale, subsequently killing it with a lance. Hunting platforms were still in use in Cook Inlet during the 1830s (Sheldon 2011:3).

The archaeological and historical records validate that various whaling strategies were probably introduced/developed in the various regions during different time

periods. It remains unclear if whaling techniques diffused from neighboring regions or developed independently (Whitridge 1999:112). Black (1987:9) suggested that whaling in the Aleutians was probably intermittent in antiquity.

7.3 Whaling from Kayaks in the Aleutians

The use of kayaks by the Unanga^ˆ for hunting whales is important since going out in these vessels added another level to the mental and physical aspects of whaling. The Unanga^ˆ valued the whale as a subsistence animal and also considered it a powerful creature with a strong spirit that could easily kill a hunter. Kayaks could be overturned or be dragged out to sea. There appear to be varying descriptions of whaling by the Russians as to the size and types of kayaks used. Von Wrangel and Von Kittlitz (Heizer 1943a:431) wrote of brave Aleut men heading out in single hatched kayaks with only a short spear. Veniaminov (1984:22) added that although one man hunted alone, he would later return with a companion once the whale died. The evidence supports that in aboriginal times the one-man kayak was used. Over time, two-man kayaks were favored (Black and Liapunova (1988:172). There was also a Russian account of Unanga^ˆ communal whale hunting (Figure 7.3). This was reported by Lisenkov, who was in the



Figure 7.3. Drawing of whaling by Henry Elliot (from “Our Arctic Provenance” 1886:152).

Aleutians from 1768-1769 (Black 2003:17). He witnessed communal whalers using the line and float method in the Eastern Aleutians (Black 2003 38-39). Below (Figure 7.4) is a sketch of an *umiak* type boat similar to those used by the northern whalers of Alaska that was documented for the Aleutians.

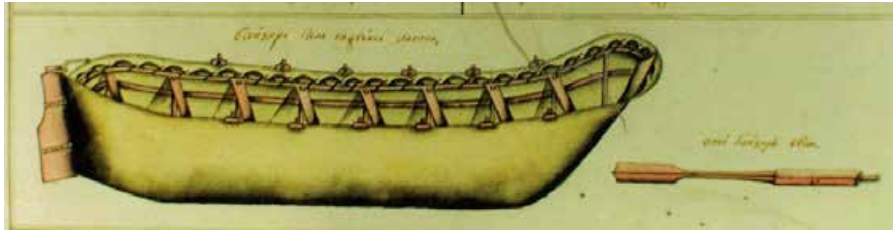


Figure 7.4. (from Black 2004:Plate 4).

McCartney (2004:85) wrote that in the late eighteenth century there were several ethnographic portrayals documenting the *umiak* method of whaling in the Aleutians. After a kill, the whale was towed to shore suggesting a major shift in whaling techniques. Captain Cook, in 1778, witnessed Unalaska Natives towing two whales behind a large boat (1967:785). This provides further evidence of contact among whaling groups. It remains unclear if this type of whaling was practiced prehistorically and replaced by aconite whaling or vice versa (Heizer 1943a; Bissest 1976). The discussion above has never conclusively been resolved. Black (2003: 39-42) has argued that prior to and at the time of contact, there was a distinctive group of Unanga whalers who resided in the area of the Four Mountains. They were ethnically distinct and are credited by Black as introducing the practice of mummification. She hypothesized that cremation and extended burials were the earlier types of body deposition. There is not enough data to support her theory based on burial documentation. There is limited information on cremation aside from Hrdlička's (1945:399) discovery on Kagamil Island. Black never took into account the appearance of *umqan* and the evidence of mummification found at other locations that will be described in Chapter 9. There are very limited data on extended burials, except for the descriptions by Pinart (1875:12) and Bank (1975:49).

It is also inconclusive that the people of the Four Mountains area had distinct cultural traits compared to their eastern neighbors. Their language is unknown (Bergsland and Dirks (1990:2-5). Lubischer (1993) examined kayak parts found in Aleutian burial caves. He suggested that the residents of the Islands of the Four Mountains, the *Akuugun*, were a unique cultural group set apart by art, whaling, and burials (1993:107). He identified a distinctive kayak style found on Kagamil Island (1993:109). There was no way to verify this information, and Lubischer acknowledged that various traits could overlap over time. He concluded that perhaps older styles were replaced by later developments (1993:108).

7.4 Aconite Poison

Much has been written pertaining to the use of aconite and its effectiveness for whaling. It is important to this study because mummification is thought to have been associated with this type of whaling. Aconite poison was usually smeared on slate lances. A summary of ground slate tools and their relation to aconite poison is provided by Osborn (2004). He reviewed the various theories regarding the spread of whaling tools found throughout the circumpolar arctic. Linking the two together, he wrote “Adoption of aconite poison and ground slate dart and lance points can be viewed as a technological response to increased pursuit costs associated with marine mammals, especially whales” (2004:172). It was inferred that as time went on, hunting technology became more efficient. Advances shortened pursuit time and the risk of losing animals. Over time poison tipped darts and lances soaked in aconite were replaced by toggle-headed harpoons to reduce the risk of losing prey. He surmised that the former method was probably still used even after the introduction of the latter.

In 1943, Robert Heizer wrote his landmark work *Aconite Poison Whaling in Asia and America: An Aleutian Transfer to the New World*. He reviewed the accounts of

explorers, missionaries, and hunters who visited Kamchatka, the Aleutians, and Southwestern Alaska. In many accounts there was mention of the use of aconite in conjunction with ground slate arrows, darts, spears and lances using in whaling. Explorers in the mid eighteenth century provided accounts of the Koryak and Chukchee of Eastern Russian who “smear their arrows with the root of the cursed crowfoot... The largest whales and seals, even if only slightly wounded, hurl themselves on shore and perish miserably” (Karshennikov 1755 in Osborn 2004:173). Slate tipped projectiles were reported for the Aleut (Dall 1877; Markoff 1856:99-100; Wrangell 1839:54) and the Koniag (Holmberg 1985:108; Lisiansky 1814:174; Osgood 1937:39; Pinart 1872:12-13; Sauer 1802:177). It was noted that many whale hunting methods employed by the Unanga were shrouded in ceremony and secrets. Therefore information on the actual mixture of poison was restricted to the inclusive group of whalers. On this note, Fitzhugh and Crowell wrote the following:

Kayak whaling using poison tipped darts was practiced... The rituals surrounding the hunt and the preparation of whaling poison, including the use of the mummified bodies of dead whalers... were elaborate and suggest ancient roots. The whalers were feared for their supernatural power. (1988:172)

Heizer supported the fact that Unanga hunters traveled to Kamchatka, although infrequently. When the Russians arrived, they were astounded that Unanga hunters could paddle up to twelve hours without stopping (Liapunova 1996:110). These trips could have led to the diffusion of the use of aconite. Despite the skeptics, it is indubitable that whalers used aconite poison, especially in association with slate tools. But, the effects the poison had on the whales is a more controversial topic, partly because it was a highly guarded secret. Its use was known only to whalers. Heizer (1943a:437) surmised that although human fluid was probably also used by whalers, this information constituted a ruse to keep non-whalers from learning about the secret poison. Laughlin (1980:41-42) did not believe poison was used. He included a list of magical potions that supposedly would kill a whale, one being bumblebee legs. He

added that these various combinations did not make the whale happy, but it did not poison the animal either. It is unclear how he knew this. Some of the skepticism came from earlier accounts. Father Gideon (Morgan 1978:45-46) wrote in 1804 that whale hunters used to disinter dead bodies and use worms from them to smear on their whaling arrows.

There was a custom documented for the Aleutians and Kodiak of the hunter removing the whale flesh from the site of the wound after the kill. The reason behind this practice was allegedly to prevent humans from getting sick from any remaining residual poison. For the Aleutians and Kodiak, mention is made of this practice. Laughlin (1980:42) reported that sometimes the hunter was made to eat the area as a precaution. An elder's commentary on this topic came from Nick Galaktionoff (Hudson and Mason 2014:15) who spoke of aconite: "After the pass to the bay was blocked, the chiefs would go around and find the best hunters because they couldn't afford to miss getting the animal," he said.

It might take them two or three days to finish the hunt. The hunter who speared the whale would have to cut the spear out of the animal and leave some of the meat still on the spear. He would cook the meat and fat over an open fire. The hunter would have to eat the meat first. Nobody would touch the whale until the next day to see if that guy was still all right. The reason nobody would touch it until the next day was because the people used poisoned tips for hunting the whale. You couldn't tell who was using it or what was being used, so they let the hunter eat it first.

Others believed that this was done more for ritual purposes to honor the whale that had been killed (Black 1987:12). It remains unclear, however, as to the exact nature of the aconite poison and the dose required to kill a whale

Ted Bank, a trained botanist, while in the Aleutians in the 1950s, attempted to obtain stories from living Unanga about the use of monkshood in making poisons. Sometimes it was chewed and then used. All denied use of the plant on enemies. At Nikolski, an informant added that old harpoon poisons were made from decayed human fat mixed with crushed bodies of small, poisonous worms that could not be identified.

Bank (1950:87) concluded that the use of aconite was in all probability the secret of whalers.

The most logical explanation comes from Bisset (1976) who conducted a pharmacological study regarding the use of aconite with whaling. He determined that a small amount of aconite that would fit on the tip of a spear would not be sufficient to kill a whale. It could cause paralysis, and if the whaler struck on the flipper, the animal would not be able to remain upright and would eventually die. This was also true of a tail strike (Black and Liapunova 1988:172). It is thought (Rousselot et al. 1988, Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:172) that death to the whale would generally occur in three days. While waiting the whalers would sing songs in front of a sacred cave containing the mummified bodies of their great whaling ancestors (Rousselot et al. 1988:172). It therefore becomes apparent that the use of aconite elevated the effectiveness of this type of whaling (Heizer 1943a:443). Petroff (in Veniaminov 1994:154-155), said of the Aleuts:

The pursuit of whales was encumbered with many observances, superstitions and secrets. The spear heads used in hunting the whale were greased with magical substances and with human or portions of human bodies obtained from corpses of former whalers found in burial caves.

Unanga and Kodiak whaling is thought to have declined in the latter part of the eighteenth century when the Russians aggressively enlisted Native men to hunt sea otters and seals for the fur industry (Heizer 1943).

7.5 Summary

This chapter highlighted the different types of procurement methods used in hunting the whale. There were two main methods, although, in the Aleutians, variations of these methods were observed intermittently. The line and float method using an *umiak* was employed in Northern Alaska. Because a head whaler and crew were needed, it resulted in divergent social configurations. These hunters were still obliged to honor

the spirit of the whale through various rituals and taboos. The poison dart method is most associated with the whalers of the Aleutians and Kodiak. It involved men going out alone in kayaks, which made for a dangerous undertaking, even when they targeted younger whales in protected bays. Due to the escalation of danger, these whalers needed additional support through the use of shamanistic practices involving special rituals and material artifacts to assure the safety and appeasement of the whale during the chase, kill, and distribution of its meat and bones. This type of whaling therefore belonged to a complex number of practices and beliefs founded on a core idea that whalers could undergo a transformation into predatory orcas, at which time they entered a liminal realm. The use of mummified human body parts for luck and protection shows that they also sought the assistance of spirits of the dead. Wooden hats and actions of the whalers' wives facilitated their transformation and helped induce the whale to die.

The use of aconite was part of the secretive world of whalers. It is not clear if it was used in warfare, as it could have also aided in quicker defeat of enemies, depending on what the motivation for going to war was to kill. Either way it was a deeply guarded secret. There are sufficient accounts to substantiate that aconite was used in conjunction with "mummy grease" (blood or decomposition fluids) to endow the whalers with spiritual power. Studies done on the pharmaceutical aspects of aconite prove that it could disable the whale enough to hasten its death. Mummified body parts were powerful talismans, and it is also plausible that the very mention of their use kept non-whaling individuals from learning about the poison. In this type of whaling, the processes of transformation and liminality were paramount. It is also evident that secret knowledge was also an inherent aspect of whaling.

Chapter 8: Unangaâ Culture at the Time of Contact

8.1 Introduction

This chapter provides documentation pertaining to what is known about Unangaâ life at the time of contact. The topics covered have a direct bearing on my research goals. The first goal is to examine the relationship between whaling and mummification. In order to accomplish this information has been extracted as best as possible in order to include information regarding what was known regarding Unangaâ beliefs, especially regarding spirituality, medicine, death and the reasoning behind mummification. The information in this chapter is included because the material and intellectual culture of the Unangaâ in relation to topics such as settlements, prestige, kinship, and social stratification are important. These topics were also hard to develop because the sources of information from colonial times are sporadic and incomplete. However, I am reliant on them for building my case. It is also unclear how family structure influenced burials but known accounts are included. Indicators of status and prestige are also unclear, especially if whalers were also chiefs. This was probably dependent on the island and group. What is known is that the Unangaâ lived in a world filled with spirits and sentient beings. Even the kayak was thought to be living and had ivory joints placed within it. Although I have briefly touched on some of these topics in previous sections, this chapter provides more detail on relevant topics to further the overall goals of this thesis.

8.2 Environment

The Aleutian Islands are of volcanic origin, the terrain being rugged with higher elevations inland than in coastal zones. Past volcanic activity resulted in ash layers. When excavated under archaeological control, the stratigraphic layers of sites provide a context to assist in the dating of artifacts and burials (Bank 1953:40; O'Leary 2001:215; Knecht et al. 2001:35; Davis and Knecht 2010:510). The Aleutian Islands are also rich

in basalt and obsidian, which allowed for the manufacture of projectile points and tools. There are no trees, so inhabitants often scavenged the beaches for driftwood that was used for tools, shelter, and the construction of kayaks. Whale skeletal parts served as rafters and supports of houses, frames for kayaks and material for household items such as lamps and bowls. The dead were also buried under whale bones (Jochelson 2002b:47-48; Hrdlička 1945:219). The procurement of whales for sustenance as well as practical and ritual use was of the utmost importance (Hrdlička 1945:612; Black 1987:7; Jochelson 2002a:109). Whale bones represented a significant resource that would place whalers in a high esteem.

8.3 Unanga World View and Belief Systems

Little is known about specific Unanga spiritual beliefs prior to Russian contact except for those inferred archaeologically and/or interpreted by the Russians. It appears that as cultural complexity spread throughout the Aleutians, an elaborate cosmology emerged that is best interpreted through their mortuary rituals. There is no way to extrapolate the details of Unanga religion prior to contact, and as Dall wrote “I can only offer a repetition of remarks which have been printed before in various places” (1884:138).

What is known is that the Unanga had a belief in earthly spirits that occupied their world. Mummification and dismemberment (to be discussed) provide some insight into their beliefs about life, death, and the afterlife. They understood that each person had a spirit that lived on after death, and that contact could be made between this world and the next. Illness was thought to be caused by evil spirits. It was also up to the shaman to ward off the bad magic of hostile shamans or other enemies. They also believed in a universal creator (Black and Liapunova 1988:57). One of the most cited comparative works on Unanga religion comes from Gordon H. Marsh. He was a

linguist and an anthropologist who studied the Eskimo and Unanga religions from the late 1940s through 1950s. He described the features that the Unanga religion shared with the mainland North American Eskimo (Inuit) as follows:

- Charms, amulets, talismans, magic formulas and songs
- The immortal and perpetually reincarnated souls of men and animal
- Persons of Creatures: a class of spirit
- The demonic spirits of the earth and air is the set of spirit powers in the Eskimo-Aleut cosmology that are the demonic spirits or daemons.
- The persons or spirit powers directing the universe and forces of Nature. (Marsh 1954:21-23)

Unfortunately his classification generalized all Eskimo groups as well as the Unanga, and made simplified statements about them, their individual aspects being ignored.

Corbett (2006) extrapolated other concepts in their belief system through the examination of folktales. *Hamadan Kuyyudax* was a sky world. The souls of the dead could enter and they became birds awaiting rebirth. Additional information about beliefs were recorded by Father Veniaminov (1984). More recently, Livingston (2016) employed the use of ethnoscience to determine how the Unanga employed spiritual beliefs to ward off evil spirits that could be violent or aggressive. He analyzed several words, one being red ochre, which was thought to symbolically represent blood. Both had the same word, *aamax*. This word was also used for tissue, saliva, and menstrual blood, and it was believed they all had potent qualities. Men would paint their cheeks with this pigment. It was also used on masks for whaling ceremonies. Laughlin and Aigner (1975:190) noted that ochre not only connoted blood but danger and protection as well. This is probably why the color could still be seen in at the mouth of some burial caves. After examining several other words, Livingston concluded that for ancient Unanga, words for actions or items possessed dual or multiple purposes such as form,

function, and spirituality.

8.4 Habitation and Burial Sites

The historical account of village positions provides clues as to where Unanga cemeteries existed in relationship to settlements. It is probable that many burial areas remain undiscovered. Criteria for village locations included access to water and safety. Many precontact settlements were adjacent to hills so members could keep watch for enemies or game (Jochelson 2002a:22-23e). Locales close to the sea were also preferable for escape via the water in the case of attacks (Veltre n.d.:5). Some villages existed on land in between two bays (Jochelson (2002a:23). Archaeological investigation has proven that cemeteries were not always near permanent villages. More data exist on known habitation sites and land use in the eastern Aleutians, but there is a growing body of work on sites in the west (Hanson and Corbett 2010).



Figure 8.1. Example of a small shelter. (Courtesy of Heritage Futures 1937 image, reproduced by 1942. Accessed June, 25, 2013, www.gophoto.us/key/aleut%20shelter).

Edward M. Weyer (1929:226), a member of the Stoll-McCracken Expedition, found that buried villages were only visible as shallow pits. He added that sometimes the dead would be placed on inaccessible islands or in caves where they would be safe and secure.

8.5 Housing

Housing size is equated to status. The Unangâ resided in a distinctive type of house. The most substantial were longhouses, thought to be the largest dwellings constructed by Alaska Natives (McCartney and Veltre 2002:2551). These were occupied by chiefs and/or great hunters and their families. They were labeled as *barabaras* and *yurts* by the Russians (2002:249). Not all *barabaras* were large (Figure 8.1). In 1778 Captain Cook journeyed to English Bay on the eastern side of Unalaska. Unangâ houses could not be seen until his crew came up close on them. Entry was made by a ladder on top (Beaglehole 1999:820). All were semi- subterranean, with central floors having a width to length ratio of 3:1. Several families resided within these structures with partitions made out of grass mats. Driftwood or whale bone were used as frames.

Veniaminov (1984:261-262) labeled these structures *ulygamax* and commented that the partitions came after contact. Prehistorically the Unangâ lived communally in the dwelling (Figure 8.2). Burials were sometimes included in parts of houses. Size was dependent on the region, the period, and the group's level of social complexity. There were construction size differences between the Eastern and Western Aleutians (Corbett et al. 2001).



Figure 8.2. Interior of Aleut *barabara* Unalaska Island (from John Webber, accessed February 24, 2012, http://www.nps.gov/aleu/Unangâ_HistoryAndCulture.htm).

On Unimak Island and the Alaska Peninsula satellite houses were also found (Hoffman 1999). These had central floors up to about 7 x15 meters in size to which some 2-24 side rooms were attached by low, narrow passageways. Houses in the Western Aleutians were not well documented. The Russian, Cherapanov reported while in the Near Islands that there were earthen yurts of various sizes that were entered through the roof (Liapunova 1996:168-169).

8.6 Family Structure

There is no consistent documentation pertaining to the constitution of Unanga families prior to contact. The configuration of kinship could aid in explaining which family members among the men, women, and children were mummified. There are, however, multiplicities of variables that make kinship reconstruction difficult. When the Russians arrived, they soon began converting, marrying, and siring children (Reedy-Maschner 2010:586). Aboriginally, the Unanga practiced matrilineal kinship (Veltre n.d.; Lantis 1970:267; Liapunova 1996:145). There was evidence of an avunculate (Veniaminov 1984:193). Polygyny and polyandry were reported but were dependent on the wealth of the spouse (Reedy-Maschner 2010:586).

Studies reveal that with complexity came a change in housing styles (Reedy-Maschner 1998:27). There was a switch from single-family houses to the multi-family *barabaras*. Changes were the result of economic pressures, political motivations and social status (Hayden and Cannon 1982; Hoffman 1999:159-160). Large households were thought to be comprised of corporate kinship groups (Lantis 1970:205-213), and many marriages were motivated by alliance formation.

Men's and women's roles were interdependent (Reedy-Maschner 1975:47-48; Veltre n.d.). Women were considered powerful from puberty through menopause. Menstruation resulted in many restrictions. If these were violated, they could adversely

affect a man's success in hunting. A woman's role was as important as her husband's, but the greatest prestige went to the Aleut hunter as supplier of whale meat (Robert-Lamblin 1982:201). Women caught fish in streams, dug roots, picked berries, and performed weaving, and sewing. These tasks were important for the sustenance of the family (Liapunova 1996:138). Women were also subjected to taboos, especially while menstruating.

There is little information on how family structure influenced burials. In 1776, the Russian, Zaikov reported that the body of a high ranking man's favorite wife was mummified, put in a coffin, and hung opposite the place where the husband slept (if he were still alive). A similar practice was done with his favorite children (Lantis 1970:219). There appear to be a variety of configurations determining who would be mummified along with a great hunter or chief after death. The decision may have been based solely on practicality, status, or selection prior to the husband's death.

Current research (Johnson 2016) supports that not all mummies were whalers, and it is probable that others were those of high status such as chiefs, and even shamans and family members. The testimony by elders regarding infants and their reburial should not be discounted (Frohlich and Laughlin 2002:113-115). However, as cited in Section 3.4, there is no information regarding the reburial of any infants, men, or women. In 1990, on Carlisle Island a number of mummies including men, women, and children were discovered. Johnson (2016) hypothesized that these individuals represented the bodies of several families interred in the cave. Although she discounts the fact that they were all whalers, she could not rule it out.

8.7 Kayaks

The kayak is one of the most ancient types of watercraft (Laughlin 1980:33). No intact kayaks have been found in association with mummies, but many parts were

collected in the caves. In the Aleutians, evidence of paddles and ivory kayak parts are considered pre-Aleut dated to 2,700 B.P. (Zimmerly 1986:45). The kayak is thought to be the greatest technological achievement of the Unanga. This is important because many kayaks were found in association with the mummies in caves. The Russian word for this craft was *baidarka* (Laughlin 1980:34). It is believed this watercraft was invented by ancestral Aleuts, probably as a modification for the open Eskimo whaling boat called an *umiak* (Laughlin 1980:34; Dyson 1986). Kayaks have also been found at ancient Eskimo sites throughout Alaska (Zimmerly 1986). In the Aleutians, the frames were usually constructed of driftwood or whale bone and sea mammal skins for the covering. It emulated a sea creature, and because it contained ivory joints, it took on the persona of a living vessel (Dyson 1986:6; Lubischer 1991). Kayaks were described frequently during the Russian period and consisted of one, two, or multiple hatches (Black 1987). The single hatch was the main type of vessel used, and the two-hatch model was only for an old man to train a younger boy or for transporting women. The triple hatch boat was used after contact for transportation (Figure 8.3) (Liapunova 1996:109).

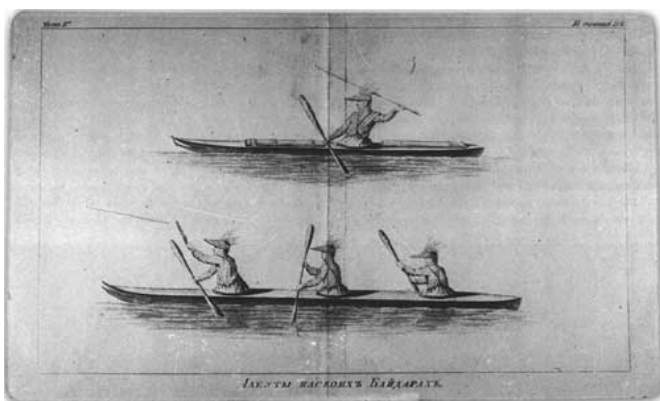


Figure 8.3. Sketches of two *baidarkas* (from Sarychev from “Unangan/Aleut Culture”, <http://unimak.us/ethnography.shtml>, accessed June 25, 2009. Atlas of the Northern Parts of the Northern Pacific Ocean 1826, Alaska State Library Collection PCA 20-56).

Single hatch kayaks were found in the mummy caves on Kagamil Island and Ship Rock (Coltrain et al. 2006:545; Lubischer 1993:54-55; Hrdlička 1945:255). This style is thought to be the oldest design. It is inferred that when a whaler died, he would

be buried with his kayak (Lantis 1970:17); although all Unanga^x used kayaks in the procurement of sea mammals and fish. A new kayak made of sea mammal skins could remain in the water for over a week, but then it had to be dried and oiled. Placement of kayaks in burial caves appeared to be dictated by the size of the cave. The Russians (Lantis 1970:216, 222) reported that when a great whale hunter died, his kayak was killed and interred with him in a cave. The Koniag and Chugach of Prince William Sound also used kayaks (Lantis 1938; Black 2004; Zimmerly 2000; Birket-Smith 1953). There are several publications specifically addressing the manufacture and use of kayaks (Arima 1999; Laughlin and Marsh 1951:76).

There is limited information pertaining to a woman's role in relation to kayaks. There were many taboos and rituals that needed to be performed when sewing the kayak skins (Laughlin et al. 1991:199-200). If a woman's hair was sewn into the kayak by mistake, a sea lion or whale would be angered and would come and bite out the sewn hair as well as the arm of the hunter. Women were not allowed to step over a kayak because it would bring bad luck and insult the hunted animals. According to the Nikolski elders, a hunter also needed to share symbolic sex with his kayak. If the hunter had intercourse with his wife, he was obligated to rub his kayak or it would get jealous and could kill the hunter by breaking apart at sea. To the Unanga^x, the kayak was viewed as a living being and a hunting partner. It therefore shared in the all aspects of the hunter's life, including his marriage (Robert-Lamblin 1980). A story was told by elders that reinforced this theme in the tale of two men who failed to perform the various rituals for their kayak and ultimately never returned from the sea (Laughlin et al. 1991:200-201).

8.8 Clothing

Clothing is another aspect of body modification (Gilligan 2008:487) and can provide a statement of group identity (Svensson 1992:62). Although it is difficult to

ascertain any affiliations in the case of the Unangaĥ, this section is included because remnants of clothing were found on some mummies. Design and construction of clothing, using the various parts of the animals they hunted, demonstrated Unangaĥ expertise in the anatomical knowledge of animals (Marsh and Laughlin 1956). The Unangaĥ wore waterproof clothes made out of the intestines of sea mammals such as the fur seal and sea otter (Figure 8.4). The shirts were called *kamleika* by the Russians and usually had a drawstring hood. The Unangaĥ hunters were also known for their elaborate bentwood hats. Their parkas were made either of sea mammal fur or bird skins (Laughlin 1980:55; McCartney and Veltre 1999:506). Boots were constructed using the flipper of a sea lion for the sole, sealskin for the upper part, and the esophagus of the seal or sea lion for leggings (Laughlin 1980:55).

Veniaminov (1984:266-268) described the parka as being a long shirt that went a little below the knee with a collar and sleeves. Dall (1878) provided a detailed description of the clothing found on the Kagamil mummies that will be included in a subsequent section.



Figure 8.4 Men wearing traditional gut skin parkas (from Jochelson 2002a:57).

8.9 Body Modification

In this section, I will address specific types of modification, which, on the basis of my evaluation of the evidence, can be used to suggest different statuses of the wearers. Many of the Aleutian mummies had body modification (Hrdlička 1945:88),

which demonstrated status (Figures 8.5, 8.6, 8.7) (Veltre n.d.:15). Labrets consisted of ornaments placed in skin piercings, usually in the nose or corners of the mouth or on the chin. This practice was prevalent throughout the Aleutians and Kodiak Island (Hrdlička 1944:44). From earliest times they were markers of identity and status, and probably corporate groups (Maschner and Reedy-Maschner 2005:64). By the historic period, both men and women wore them. They were mentioned frequently by the Russians (Steller 1993:79) from the earliest times of contact, probably because of their conspicuousness and the exotic nature of this practice (Lantis 1970:144, 147; Fortuine 1985:24). Labrets were inserted during infancy, but the practice died out after contact (Hrdlička 1945: 85-86). Piercings were performed in the Aleutians and in many other parts of Alaska (Figure 8.6). The Unanga pierced holes around the rim of their ears with dentalium shells, bone, feathers, dried bird wings or skulls, and or amber (Osborn 1990:57). These were done to signify social standing, reputation, and sometimes the age of the wearer. The individual with the most piercings had the highest respect. Hrdlička (1945:88-89) documented Unanga mummy piercings of coral or beads all the way around the outer edge of the ear. There is insufficient data from Russian sources or archaeologically to determine if whalers and or their family members had more elaborate labrets and piercings than others.



Figure 8.5: “A Woman of Oonalaska” with tattooed face and linked nose labret (from engraved portrait by John Webber). (From: Captain James A. Cook, 1728-1779. *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean*. Alaska Digital Archives, accessed June 14, 2007, <http://vilda.alaska.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/cdmg21/id/6647/rec/5>).



Figure 8.6: “A Man of Oonalaska” with various piercings (from portrait by John Webber). (From: Captain James A. Cook, 1728-1779, *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean*. Kanatak Tribal Site, accessed June 14, 2007, <http://www.kanatak.com/documents/NewsletterMarch11.pdf>).

Labrets signaled an increase in social complexity as not everyone had them. They were used by groups to identify themselves in relation to foreigners. Labretifery had a wide distribution from the Kuriles and as far south as British Columbia (Mason and Gerlach 1995:16), further indicating contact among groups. Two labrets were found in upper layers of the Margaret Bay site, and they are among the earliest ever found in the North Pacific (Knecht et al. 2001). Sixty-one were found at the Amaknak Bridge Site (2004: 75-76), signaling the origins of stratification at that site.

Tattooing was also practiced in the Aleutians, and they were obtained by both men and women (Fortuine 1985:26-27). They were signs of status and accomplishments for men and maturity markers for women. In the Aleutians, tattoos were also displayed for spiritual purposes (Krutak 2015). They were worn to honor the spirits of hunted animals and/or protect the wearer from the malevolent forces that were in the nearby waters). This adds credence to the fact that whalers, more than anyone else in Unanga culture, would need such protection due to the dangerousness of the hunt. Tattoos signaled social class. Sometimes the daughter of a wealthy hunter and or family ancestor would work hard at her tattoos to advertise on her body the accomplishments of that ancestor or father, especially if they were great whalers (Osborn 1990:56).



8.7 Kagamil Island mummy with feather pierced through the ear (from Hrdlička 1945:183).

8.10 Social Stratification

There is sufficient evidence to substantiate that differences in burial types can be equated with differences in status and wealth (Binford 1971). The archaeological record indicates that as time went on, the Aleutians became more populated (Reedy and Maschner Reedy 1998:27). The archaeological evidence also indicates that growing population density was accompanied by greater social stratification. The study of complexity and its relation to archaeological thinking can be viewed in a variety of configurations. As stated previously, social stratification is just one of the many criteria used as an indicator of complexity. In the anthropological literature, the usage of basic epistemological hierarchies has been challenged, in many cases being replaced by an examination of heterarchy and the contextual flow between them. Heterarchy is defined as the relation of elements to one another when they are unranked, or when they can be ranked in a number of different ways. It is when the power base changes in response to the context of the interaction (Crumley 1995:1-3). Documentation supports that the role of whalers and shamans fluctuated in Aleutian societies for a variety of reasons. Heterarchy is an important aspect to this thesis because it validates that the status of whalers was not one dimensional. This could be the reason why the information regarding whalers was sometimes ambiguous because on various islands they could also

be warriors and or chiefs. The status would then influence their body deposition and that of their family. Ultimately, by examining whalers based on heterarchy, it reinforces that notion that different categories of people had different spheres in which they could exercise their powers. If there were chiefs and powerful shamanistic whalers who did not or only partially overlapped, then this is a demonstration of a heterarchal situation.

Lantis (1970b, 1984) conducted extensive research on Aleut social structure for the years following Russian contact, but information is limited. Categories of rank were dependent on the geographical position of the various islands. More is known about the easternmost islands, and because of this, it has been inferred that the eastern islands had a higher degree of social complexity (Corbett et al. 2001:251; Maschner and Reedy Maschner 2007:586). It is also known that intensified whaling also took place in the East, which correlates one with the other. The special rights and powers of whale hunting were said to pass from father to son, as did chieftainship. Kin membership was separate from inheritance of office, and whaling was confined to a few families and brought high status (Lantis 1984:176). It is noted that for the Sugpiaq, whaling was also practiced by elite linages within highly stratified societies (Whitridge 1999:104).

Were the whalers chiefs? The evidence is conflicting. Whalers brought in much prized bounty. On some islands they probably were chiefs (Figure 8.8). In most of the accounts of hierarchies in Unanga communities there is no mention of whalers or shamans. Their status appeared fluid depending on the context. They were members of the community, they must have had families, and were sometimes were warriors. However, during whaling season, they were separated from the rest of the community. They were also considered shamans.

The Aleuts were divided into three classes as noted by Veniaminov (1984): the honorable ones (notables), the common people, and the slaves. Those who became famous for military exploits and skill in hunting (along with their descendants)

constituted the notables. The headman of each village was called a *toion* (Veniaminov 1984:2, 1984:240). The most esteemed notables included the *toion*, his children, and his nephews (and their families). They were represented by a hereditary lineage (clan). They had special spaces in the longhouses and were differentiated by burial and garments. They had better sources of food and had more opportunities to accumulate wealth. The authority of a *toion* could be hereditary, but this was not always the case (Liapunova 1996:138-146). Rank and status could also be determined by the number of followers each person could claim (Townsend 1983:221), which included relatives. A man could also be a leader if he earned the reputation of being a skillful and brave hunter and possessed much wealth. The Unanga words for *toion* and wealth were literally synonymous (Liapunova 1996:147). Black (2003:41) suggested that the individuals that were mummified would have the highest status. Many accounts indicated that such burials were for whalers, but other accounts indicated it was for chiefs or those who drowned. Black acknowledged chiefs had the most wealth and the most kin, and as a result, in some locations chiefs were probably also whalers. Whaling was very prestigious, but it was also very dangerous.



Figure 8.8. In the drawing, a chief is seen with a whaling lance. He is also thought to be holding a slate whaling point as a badge of honor (Knecht 2016 personal communication) (from Pierce 1984: xxvi).

Black (1991) wrote that in some locales whalers were controlled by chiefs. This is substantiated by current elders (Hudson and Mason 2014:15-16). Heizer (1941) wrote that among the Aleut, both the whaling boats and the whale fishery sometimes belonged to the chiefs and particular families, which handed them down to their children (Heizer 1941). That whalers were separate from chiefs was also noted by Lisiansky (1968:209), Savelle and McCartney (1991:222), and von Langsdorff (1813:45). A conflicting opinion is from Heizer (194:23) who wrote that “in some places they [chiefs and whalers] could be one and the same” (Figure 8.8). Black (1991:80) also argued that the hunting hats worn by whalers were indicators of status and power, and as a result the whalers’ hats became the chiefs’ hats (Black 1991:80).

Less information is available on social stratification in the Western Islands. It is known, however, that leadership included a chief and sometimes a “second chief”. Chiefs were also spiritual leaders in the Near Islands (Corbett 2011: 47-48).

For the Eastern Islands, little is known about “commoners”, and they were probably everyone who did not fit into the category of an elites or slaves. The slave class consisted of disenfranchised individuals and orphans (Reedy-Maschner 1975:45). A considerable amount of labor was done by slaves (Townsend 1983:124), and they assisted in doing daily tasks, some of which included tool making, fire upkeep, and dwelling maintenance. Slaves were sometimes freed by kind masters (Veniaminov 1984:243). Townsend (1983:121) categorized slavery as an institution in the Alaska Pacific Rim rather than just the incidental retention of captives. The masters had discretion over the fate of slaves, and they were sometimes killed, traded for goods or other slaves, or given away as presents. The slaves were almost always prisoners of war along with their descendants. There was much prestige and power in owning slaves. Masters had to support their slaves as well as their slaves’ families. There was variability in the treatment of slaves. In some cases slaves were treated very well.

However, the slave could also be killed by his master or be sold (Veniaminov 1984:241).

The prices of slaves were nearly always as follows: for a *baidarka* and a good parka those of wealth gave a pair of slaves, a man and a wife; for a stone knife or pairs of beads, one slave each. It was noted that orphans were also the property of those who brought them up and were frequently redeemed by the relations of the parent (Veniaminov 1984:241). When slaves were killed, it was not to serve their masters in the afterlife. Instead, the killing of slaves was done to show grief for a loved one as well as indifference to the value of property (Veniaminov 1984:241). This practice served as a public notice of the importance of a death, akin to the giving away of property in other regions.

Previous studies on the archaeology of slaves in the Pacific Northwest (Ames 2001:2-5) have drawn attention to the methodological problems in extrapolating data pertaining to the archaeology of slavery. This has bearing on my research due to the divergent burials and trophy heads found with mummies. In many instances, trophy heads were found in association with the mummies. Because slaves were kept in the Eastern Aleutians, the actual deposition remains unclear given the type of body deposition that has been found. The Pacific Northwest had many similarities to the Aleutians and archaeological problems remain similar. In both regions, slaves maintained residence in the home of their master, but there were no specific slave tools, and slaves were not that numerous. There was some significant difference between slaves and the rest of the population. Slaves did not have the freedom of movement as their owners. Their fate after death was also significantly different. In the Pacific Northwest, the bodies of slaves were sometimes thrown in the forest or into the sea. They could be buried with their masters or parts of their bodies used for ceremonial purposes. In the Aleutians there is evidence that some slaves may have been cremated if

they weren't killed and dismembered or buried in pits (Hrdlička 1945:399).

8.11 Prestige of Whalers

Throughout this study various accounts have been presented pertaining to the prestige of whalers. Additional information is placed here because it is relevant to one of my overall objectives arguing that because of their prestige, whalers were afforded the most complex of body depositions after death. According to Turner (2008:200-201), whalers were given great care and were mummified at death. This was due to “the danger both physical and magical of their profession and the tremendous importance of their catch to the entire community when they were successful”.

Alfonse Pinart (1875) was fascinated by whaling and the various cultural practices surrounding it. He declared that that among the Eskimo groups and the Unanga, whalers were considered superhuman because whaling was extremely dangerous and affiliated with evil spirits and premature death. He compared Aleutian whaling with similar practices on Kodiak and Prince William Sound, commenting that the only difference was the material used for the points. He did not specifically mention a cult or complex set of beliefs, but he recognized many similarities among the whaling groups both in the North and Gulf of Alaska. He described whale hunters as belonging to a special status due to the ritualistic nature of whaling that included special ceremonies and interaction with the dead. Men were required to undergo an initiation and if they refused and still hunted, they would be killed by the other whalers. While whale hunting, men lived apart from their villages due to their association with the other animal beings and the dead. It was the whalers who performed the mummification techniques on the dead, and they placed the dead in inaccessible places known only to other whalers. The mummies became very powerful and had to be appeased. As a result, whale meat was taken to them to eat, and the whalers also brought them the stones that

would be made into spear points. The mummies' power would then be harnessed by the living whaler at the exact moment the hunter thrust his spear (Pinart n.d. [1875], 1875:12-13).

8.12 Warfare

This section has relevance regarding status and rank pertaining to the heterarchical role of whalers as well the divergent burial practices that have been recorded. Trophy heads were found in caves with mummies and it is inferred that these were usually slaves or prisoners of war. At the time of contact the Unanga^h inhabited 120 villages on 26 islands. They were loosely grouped into smaller divisions based on alliances with inhabitants of nearby islands. If war captives were slaves, it is likely that they would receive the most undesirable or least elaborate methods of body deposition. Maschner and Reedy-Maschner (1998) conducted extensive research on warfare and social stratification in the Aleutians. They argue that there were two main reasons for warfare: boundary protection and status. The latter consisted of fighting for slaves, women, and revenge. The Unanga^h also practiced intra-tribal feuding (Lantis 1970:263-274).

The discussion of warfare is important for several reasons. It was reported that sometimes the remains of war captives were placed in the graves of the Unanga^h warriors (Lantis1970:225; Hrdlička 1945:149). Trophy skulls were found in association with mummies as well in other methods of burial. It has been argued (Hrdlička 1945:399; Black 2003:40) that slaves were also cremated. Veniaminov (1994:242), in speaking of the Natives on Atka Island, indicated that slaves were sometimes burned alive or beaten to death (1984:242).

When the Unanga^h decided to kill a prisoner, they cut off body parts such as the head, the genitals, arms or ears (Maschner and Reedy-Maschner 2007:36). The interred would have these trophies buried with them when they died. The taking of war trophies

indicating that warriors would sometimes bring home the head of someone killed in battle and display it on a pole on the roof of his home (Jochelson 2002b:28). The taking of trophy heads was not restricted to the Aleutians and has been documented throughout the Americas (Chacon and Dye 2007). There was an extensive amount of violence throughout Alaska that was a byproduct status and prestige. Trophies of war represented material symbols of violent encounters. The taking of trophy heads was especially prevalent among the Indian groups of the Northwest coast. John Lovisek (2007:49) documented numerous accounts from the works of Franz Boas and Helen Codere (1966:105), Aurel Krauss (1956[1885]:172-173), and de Laguna (1990) to name just a few. The taking of trophies in the Northwest Coast region was first documented by Captain Cook who wrote that the body parts offered for barter included not only heads that appeared to be of the recently killed, but also preserved hands and limbs (Lovisek 2007:50). The beliefs behind these practices included the beliefs about reincarnation and dismemberment and the life force in the body, all parallel to those of the Unangâ.

The taking of trophy heads was also prevalent among the Nasca of South America, as discussed by Urcid (1994) while reviewing Hrdlička's finds from Kodiak Island. Proulx (2001:130-132) examined the ritual use of Nasca trophy heads. Of importance to this study is that this ritual had various religious overtones associated with whaling. The Nasca believed in powerful creatures that existed in the spirit world from both land and sea. To the Nasca, the human head also was a source of power. Therefore, by taking human trophy heads captured during war and placing them in caches, these areas became great places of power. The Nasca shamans would go to these caches to help control the forces of nature.

The oral traditions of the Unangâ include many stories of warfare, conquest, and revenge (Davydov 1977:163-190; Bergsland and Dirks 1990). Veniaminov wrote that the Sugpiaq (their neighbors) typically extended raids on Unangâ as far as Unimak Island. Warriors from Umnak and Unalaska traveled to Kodiak to attack other tribes

(Veniaminov 1984:230). Due to the turbulent nature of life in the islands, men had designated places of safety and provisions for their families when they were away hunting. They had secret passages, compartments built in their homes, and designated fortified refuge areas for hiding and/or easy escape (Lantis 1984:177).

As a result of the constant warfare (both among the various islands as well as with other groups), refuge rocks became very important (Maschner and Reedy-Maschner 1998:32- 35). These were small islands located near principal villages that afforded high vantage points and limited access. They allowed those on the defense to use rocks or projectiles on the intruders below. Mummies have been found on several of these sites associated with and implements of war (Weyer 1929:232; Hrdlička 1945:433).

8.13 Unangaâ Medicinal Knowledge

Most societies that practiced mummification were experts in human anatomy, and the Unangaâ were no exception (Halioua and Ziskind 2005:43-44). Laughlin and Marsh (1956) documented the extensive vocabulary that the Unangaâ possessed for various parts of the body. They also wrote about Unangaâ understandings of anatomical features. On this topic Veniaminov (1984:290) wrote:

In the Aleut language there are and formerly were words referring to anatomy. I do not have in mind such ones as heart, liver and intestines and so forth, but those, which are of some higher understanding, such as *tugix*, a large blood-carrying vessel, *cugudagil'uk*, and so forth, which I through downright ignorance of anatomical language am unable to translate.... The Aleut medicine men in former times were famed for their knowledge. In order to more properly learn the internal parts of man, especially those parts they used for operations, they used to open up dead serfs or killed enemies in combat.

Laughlin and Marsh (1956:40-41) delineated the five main sources used for study before the arrival of the Russians. They consisted of:

- The study of anatomical structures: This was learned practically through the butchering of animals and using various body parts to make rain clothing from intestines, the skin of whale's tongues as water bottles, etc.

- The rational use of medicine and physical culture—this occurred through their daily lives by such things as medicine, hygiene, and through which they learned the structural similarities between man and animal.
- The dissection of human bodies—this was usually done to find out why someone had died.
- True comparative anatomy—dissecting animal bodies, especially the sea otter, to learn about human bodies. The sea otter was very close anatomically to man and some believe man was descended from the sea otter.
- The making of dried mummies.

During their fieldwork at Nikolski, Laughlin and Marsh (1956) collected hundreds of anatomical words in Unanga from various informants. Elders were still able to identify structures and knew much of anatomical processes. Prior to contact the Unanga practiced acupuncture, bloodletting, and massage techniques. Surgery was also employed, but few references to this practice remained. Suturing with whale sinew was common (Laughlin and Marsh 1956:78). More serious operations were performed while the patient was kept warm in a sweat bath. Trepanned skulls were documented by Hrdlička on Kodiak, in Prince William Sound, on Atka (Fortune 1985:28). Evidence of this practice has been disputed (Urcid 1994:119).

8.14 Mummification, Dismemberment, and Joint binding

Mummification, dismemberment, and joint binding were aspects of the underlying cultural complex that permeated Unanga life (Laughlin 1980, 1983). Mummification functioned to promote solidarity in Unanga spiritual culture. It was a material manifestation of their belief in the power that existed in the body. There is no documentation that mummification was performed on all members of society. It was reserved for those who would need their power preserved for later use (in the form of mummified body parts) during whale hunting. Improper use or abuse of them could lead to disastrous consequences of blindness and premature death (Laughlin 1980:96).

Many of the Unanga's mummies were wrapped and bound. This was a necessary aspect of the mortuary complex linked to preserving the power in the body. The physical manifestation of this belief was reflected in the placement of the body in an "enclosure" so it could be kept dry and intact (Laughlin 1983:7). The bodies were then later dissected so that whalers "could either eat pieces of flesh of the dead whalers, wear parts of them or even rub their whaling lances to give them spiritual power to kill the whales" (Fitzhugh 2003 236). This is the only reference found of whalers eating the actual mummified bodies and there are no references to ritualistic cannibalism in their oral traditions or recorded histories.

8.15 Dismemberment

Dismemberment of a slain enemy or dangerous person was a necessary to protect the living survivor of a fatal encounter. Just as mummification preserved the spirit of the deceased, dismembering of enemies achieved the opposite result. Through dismemberment the spirit of the dead person would be extinguished. It is thought that in Nikolski, both practices occurred well into the nineteenth century (Laughlin 1983:7).

Many accounts of dismemberment occur in the legends of the Aleuts (Bergsland and Dirks 1990). Some early accounts refer to the horrible mutilation practiced upon the dead Russians by the Aleuts (Maschner and Reedy Maschner 2007:36).

Dismemberment was not confined to the Aleutians but also appeared frequently in the Eskimo world (Maschner and Reedy-Maschner 2007:33-34; Laughlin 1980:103-104).

The practice of dismemberment is problematic when attempting to interpret the archaeological record. As stated previously, severed heads were found in the archaeological assemblages of the Aleutian and Kodiak regions (Maschner and Reedy-Maschner 2007). Among the Unanga's and many other cultures, the dismembered head was the most coveted of war trophies (Keenleyside 2003). Hoffman (1995) discovered a

Koniag slate point in an Aleut skeleton on Unimak Island in a large side room of a house. The remains were dated between 1550 and 1650. The individual showed signs of dismemberment with the hands, feet, and head having previously been removed.

Veniaminov (1984:205) described “a gruesome practice following a raid, in which most old men and women were slaughtered and younger men and women were taken prisoners”

8.16 Joint Binding

The Unanga practiced joint binding on both the living and the dead because joints were viewed as places of great power. The mummies were bound usually at the wrists, knees, and ankles. Laughlin (1983:9-11) argued that joint binding was practiced on the dead and the living to regulate the power in the body. This concept was central to Unanga beliefs and associated with the practices of mummification and dismemberment. Supernaturally speaking, joints were places where spirits could get in and out. Failure to bind joints (at menarche and widowhood) brought premature senility and joint disease to women and brought harm to the village. Joint binding was practiced when a young girl had her first menstrual period. Her joints were bound and she was kept in isolation because she was deemed especially powerful. If a man suffered from sea sickness he would go to her hut, bring her food, have her touch the food with her hands and then feed it to him (Laughlin 1980:104-105). Joints were also bound on individuals when their husband or wife died. This custom continued into the 1950s and perhaps later (Laughlin 1983:11).

The Unanga were not the only group in the Americas that believed in the life forces and power within the human body. In his study of the Nahua (Aztec), Alfredo Lopez Austin (1988) found that the body was equated with cosmic balance, and a variety of souls were within it that both animated the body and survived after death.

There were various areas of the body such as blood vessels, which were viewed as conduits for vital substances. Joints were minor centers compared to internal organs, but they were thought to be centers of powerful forces that were vulnerable to attack. These centers consisted of the neck, shoulders, elbows, wrists, finger joints, waist, hips, knees, ankles, and toe joints (Lopez Austin 1988:198-199). In both Aleutian and Nahua cultures it was therefore believed there was power in the body that could be regulated.

Although some authors understood joint binding to be symbolic, especially during mummification, Jochelson provided a practical explanation for this practice. He attributed the flexed position to their natural proclivity to squatting (Figure 8.9). They (men and women) did so in their kayaks and also while in their homes or working. For this reason, the dead bodies were placed in the favored position they had in life (2002b:42-43). It is more than likely that the squatting pose in daily life had cultural and symbolic significance of power both for the living and the dead and could have served as a way of keeping the joints less vulnerable from attack.



Figure 8.9. Sketches of the typical squatting pose (from Jochelson 2002b:44).

8.17 Shaman Practitioners

It is not known who performed the various procedures in the Aleutians. For the majority of the practices just discussed, excluding mummification, there were individuals who were skilled in specific tasks such as the shamans or perhaps women who acted as midwives. There is mention that sometimes close relatives would help heal a sick or injured relation (Fortuine 1985:37-38). It can be inferred that it was the

whalers who performed the actual mummifications as part of the ritualistic and clandestine practices associated with their shamanistic complex. As stated by Fitzhugh (2003:236) “whalers from the Aleutians and Kodiak Island stole the dead bodies from graves and preserved them as mummies in caves”.

The Unanga word for shaman is *quagga*, meaning someone possessed, the inference meaning by spirits (Muslimas 1995:4-5). Whalers were not only viewed as shamans on Kodiak, but this phenomenon existed throughout the polar regions of North America extending to the Eastern part of Canada. It was documented that when the Yankee whalers arrived in Cape Dorset, Canada in the 1860s, they called on whalers and viewed them as shamans. The whalers went to work for the Western bosses because they could predict where the whales were and sometimes were even thought to summon the whales (Eber (1989:36-37). There is enough evidence to believe that this was also true for the Aleutians. Shamanism was still being practiced into the twentieth century (Berriman 2002). This could mean that individuals were still secretly being mummified in the not so distant past, or at least mummy caves were still being visited for ritual purposes.

8.18 Historical References Pertaining to Spiritual Beliefs

There were comments made by the Russians pertaining to Unanga religion early on. Veniaminov (1984:188) wrote a great deal about Unanga religious beliefs. He wrote of the Unanga belief in sacred places. Usually these were places near villages represented by a physical feature such as a cliff, a hill, and (sometimes) a cave. Women and young men were prohibited from visiting such places or from taking anything from these areas. If these rules were violated the offender would either die suddenly or be declared insane. He noted that no such places survived except for the caves where the mummies were found (1984:218).

8.19 Mythology of the Aleut

Some discussion of mythology is included at this juncture in order to gain insight into how ancient tales, especially about animal spirits and transformation, figured into Unanga's cosmology. The best collection on this topic comes from Jochelson, who between 1909 and 1910 collected 140 texts told either by native narrators or special interpreters (Bergsland and Dirks 1990). Jochelson (2002a:75) divided Aleut lore into different categories that included tales of mythical animal protectors and other than human beings. From these categories he inferred that various animals, such as the killer whale, served as guardians of human beings. Of particular relevance to this study is that the "old Aleuts" believed they originated in the Islands of the Four Mountains (Veniamiov 1984:59).

8.20 Amulets

Amulets are briefly mentioned here as items of material culture that also took on spiritual significance. The most powerful of amulets throughout the region and used specifically for whaling were pieces of the mummies that were hidden away in the caves (Veniaminov 1984:222-223; Jochelson 2002a:77-78).

Jochelson (2002a:79) found that many other objects could serve as amulets for a variety of purposes, but the feathers of a rosy finch (remnants of these birds were found in association with some of the mummies) were also very powerful. These birds were referred to as *gulgax* and were believed to attract whales. It was also understood that a whale hit with a dart with feathers at the tip would die quicker.

8.21 Burial Customs

Veniaminov (1984:196) wrote that, in earlier times, several days after death, the body was embalmed, all the internal organs were removed, and the cavity was stuffed with grass and then sewn up. The body was then dressed in the person's best clothes and

placed into a *zybka*, a frame over which skin was stretched and kept in the place where the person died. The body remained in the house for 15 days. During this time the body was visited by relatives who mourned and recounted the achievements of the person. On the sixteenth day the body was brought to the cemetery, and if it was a chief, it was escorted by all village members. The relatives continued to mourn for 40 more days, and if the deceased was a chief, the village members also for this time period. The mourning included the prohibition of feasts or merriment. When the mourning period was over, the relatives held a large feast (*pominiki*) for several days, and on the last day gifts were given in memory of the deceased, according to the wishes of the deceased or of living relatives. Once again, it is reminded that Veniaminov was writing one hundred years after contact and his account could also include elements of Russian Orthodoxy mixed with precontact beliefs and practices.

8.22 Summary

The Unanga possessed a very complex precontact culture with a rich and active cosmology. Through the literature reviewed in this chapter, I was able to further refine my hypothesis by gathering specific information pertaining to aspects of material culture, religious practices, and beliefs about life and death. Spirits permeated all aspects of their lives, as evidenced by their beliefs in the spirits of animals and the power that resided in the deceased body (Lopez Austin 1988:198-199; Laughlin 1979:11). There is no doubt that whale hunting was both spiritual and dangerous. All parts of the whales were valuable, and their bones were used for housing construction, kayaks, ritual items, and in burials. The kayaks, which were sometimes constructed out of whale bones and included bones as joints, were viewed as living entities that formed a partnership with the whaler (Lubischer 1991). Unfortunately, there remains no specific information pertaining to family structure. It can be inferred using the analogy

of Northern Eskimo groups of Alaska that whaling was pursued by lineage members, this elite practice being handed down from father to son (or nephew) (Whitridge 1999:104; Veltre n.d; Lantis 1970:267; Liapunova 1996:145). It has also been documented that shortly after Russian domination, more patriarchal habitation situations occurred. Women and children were also mummified, and there is no doubt that in many cases they were related to the whalers and also placed with them in the caves.

It is also obvious that as social complexity increased, social stratification became more prevalent throughout the Aleutians (Maschner and Reedy-Maschner 1998:27). A class system emerged, and it is my contention that whalers were of high status, and sometimes even chiefs of villages. Social status is manifested in the mortuary rituals and patterns that emerged, and no one disputes that mummification required the greater investment of time as well as the use of scarce resources (Saxe 1970; Binford 1971). These mortuary patterns not only affirmed social solidarity among the Unangaĥ, they also reinforced the social hierarchy as well as heterarchy because whalers held hierarchical positions of status in some contexts but not in others. It has also been documented by Townsend (1983:125) that status and rank were attested by the number of followers a man had. I also infer that, similar to Kodiak, Unangaĥ whalers were perceived as shamans and acted as warriors. In all probability it was the whalers who performed the mummification.

The Unangaĥ were masters of their environment, and their knowledge of anatomy was advanced and complicated. They used all parts of the animals for their clothing, even making waterproof clothing from sea mammal intestines. As a result of this expertise in comparative anatomy, they were adept in medicine, surgery, and mummification (Marsh and Laughlin 1956). It also is plausible that whalers performed the actual mummification as part of their clandestine rituals and practices.

The Unangaĥ also had very complex religious beliefs that to this day are poorly

understood due to the effects of colonization by the Russians. The Unangâ believed in the power that existed in the body (Laughlin 1983:11). Mummification preserved it, dismemberment extinguished it, and joint binding regulated it during crucial times of the life cycle. As a result of the preservation, mummies not only had power, but they became even more powerful after death. It is no accident that most mummies were found with their joints bound. It is also no accident that their body parts were stolen by whale hunters to be used as talismans.

The following chapter will focus on the divergent methods of body deposition found in the Aleutians. Mummification was the most elaborate form but not the only one. Reviewing the various ways the Unangâ disposed of their dead will enable me to better contextualize mummification and its place in the ethos of the people.

Chapter 9: Variations in Unanga Body Deposition and Mummification

9.1 Introduction

The relationship between mummification and the disparate methods of burial in the Aleutians are poorly understood and according to Black (1984:68) have not been addressed adequately in the anthropological literature. Although divergent practices do not necessarily imply radical differences in beliefs, the mummification process points to cultural constructions of spirituality and the afterlife that differ significantly from other methods. In this chapter, variations of Unanga body deposition are presented in the context of where human remains were kept in different parts of the landscape. These are included in order to evaluate how the precontact Unanga dealt with their dead. By reviewing what is known and not known about these methods, the practice of mummification can be better contextualized within the broader scope of the known mortuary practices in the Aleutians. The liminality of mummification will also be addressed. This is to further hone my argument in relation to mummification as a means to harness certain powers residing in the body after the death of the persons who underwent such a treatment. I end this chapter with an operational definition of “mummification”, a description of how mummification was practiced as well as a discussion of the approximate number of mummies that were taken from the Aleutians.

9.2 Other Methods of Body Deposition

Mummification was just one of many methods of body deposition practiced in the Aleutians. Numerous individuals have attempted to classify the types and or methods that the Unanga used in disposing of their dead. Such categorizations have already been advanced by various anthropologists (West et al. 2003; Frohlich and Laughlin 2002; Laughlin 1983; Aigner and Veltre 1976; Bland and O’Leary n.d.). Here I present my own configuration in order to provide a better fit for my research objectives. I place Unanga mortuary practices into the following six categories:

- Cremation (Hrdlička 1945; Bank 1950:171)
- Burial in Pits or Walled-Up Side Rooms of Occupied Houses (Jochelson 2002b:49-52; Dall 1878:7; McCartney and Veltre 2002:258)
- *Ulaakan*-Burial Pits (Veniaminov 1984:196, Laughlin 1980:99, Bland and O'Leary n.d.:22)
- *Umqan* (burial mounds) (Frohlich and Laughlin 2002; Knecht and Davis 2001:277; Aigner and Veltre 1976; Bland and O'Leary n.d.)
- *Qumnan*-Deposition in Specifically Built Structures (Aigner and Veltre 1976a; Frohlich and Laughlin 2002:97-108; Jochelson 2002b:49; Laughlin 1980:99; Weyer 1930, Veniaminov 1984:96, Bland and O'Leary n.d.:24)
- Caves and Rock Shelters (Frohlich and Laughlin 2002; Laughlin 1983; Dall 1878 Hrdlička 1945:412-420; Jochelson 2002b:45-45; Pinart 1873).

In this chapter I discuss how these varying methods of body deposition factor into the overall knowledge of the region in terms of practices and beliefs. This has proven difficult, and it remains unclear if one main method of burial or deposition was used or favored over others or if different methods were used in different areas at different times. Logically, it would make sense that practicality factored into the deposition of the dead. In all likelihood, the method of burial was related to the time period, the individuals' functions and social status within the community, circumstances of the death, availability of ideal deposition sites, the time of year when the death occurred, the number of surviving relatives, changes in religious beliefs over time, variability due to distances across the Aleutian chain, and contact with other groups with divergent beliefs about the interaction between the spirits of the living and the dead. These factors also influenced the type of grave goods found with the burials

Interpretation is further complicated due to the inclusion of slaves or parts of dismembered enemies placed in graves (Laughlin 1980:103). Obtaining an accurate chronology of mortuary practices also remains elusive based on the lack of radiocarbon dating on a majority of burials that have been found (West et al. 2003:73).

There is conflicting information about how accessible the placement of the dead

was in relation to villages. The common practice for body deposition (except for mummies), appeared to be placement in or close to the villages. Of course, this is relative in terms of distance. Laughlin (1983:41-43) wrote that mummies were placed in caves and places where they were clearly intended to be accessible for visitation by the living, and also where the dead would feel comfortable, continuing on in their role as community members. This statement acknowledges their liminal status in an earth-bound destination. The Unanga had several guidelines for the deposition of mummies: the burial needed to be close to the village and the sea, and the body needed to be intact and dry. On the topic of location, most cave burials were located in isolated areas separated from settlements by a body of water where they could be protected from environmental degradation. If this was the case, the caves had to be accessible only by boat (Frohlich and Laughlin 2002:95).

Were the mummies or burials of higher status individuals placed a little further out of reach, compared to regular burials? This seems logical but hard to prove. The sheer number of islands and islets in the Aleutians has hindered the development of a consistent model pertaining to this issue. It is presumed that it is easier to find caves, enter them, and see what is inside versus excavating open air terrain that might lead to potential burials. Legislation is also now in effect (Veltre and Smith 2010:500), so the excavation of human remains or suspected features that contain remains is problematic. It is known that some caves were located high on cliffs and on islands that had no easy areas for landing a craft. The common denominator for a burial site would consist of a place where the dead would be safe and secure. Quite often the most inaccessible locations were chosen for mummy placement, which contradicts Laughlin's theory that entailed placement near a village (1983:44). This was certainly true of the buried sarcophagus discovered by the Stoll-McCracken Expedition (Weyer 1929) to be discussed, and perhaps the reason why more of these structures have not been found. It

also needs to be noted that there were distinct differences between burial types in the Western versus Eastern Aleutians. Frederic Bouchet et al. (2001:257) stated that on the Near Islands in the western-most burials consisted of flexed or extended bodies that were located in abandoned dwellings or in rooms in communal houses although there is not enough evidence at this time to validate this statement.

The following sections present additional data on the various practices the Unanga used for their dead. They are ordered from depositions that are small in numbers leading up to the placement of mummies in cave. This information is provided to help me frame mummification as the most complex of practices.

9.3 Cremation

The discovery of cremated remains seems to be an anomaly in the Aleutian Islands. Hrdlička (1945:399) “excavated” cremated remains and inferred that the found cremations were most likely the remains of slaves. He (1945:399) discovered evidence of cremation during his 1930s excavations at Warm Cave on Kagamil Island. The cremated remains of a woman and child were found under a stone slab. The burnt remains of possibly ten other individuals were found at a lower level of the cave. He assumed all the burned bodies were women or children because the bones were “short and rather weak” (1945:399).

Black (1984:40) took exception to Hrdlička’s findings of cremation indicating that there is no way to tell who was cremated and why. She also noted Hrdlička’s sloppy archaeology and his disregard for analysis of context when human remains were found. Black argued that cremation predated cave burials based on stratigraphy, but there was no other information to understand the beliefs and practices of it due to the lack of trees in the Aleutians, and the fact that whale fat, which might have been used a fuel, was a valuable resource. The Dena'ina Athabascans of the Cook Inlet region

cremated their dead and this practice was the primary form of body deposition for most Athabascans (Potter et al. 2011). The cremated remains might represent Athabascans who had died in the Aleutians, although there is no evidence to support this suggestion.

9.4 Burials in Abandoned Pits or Dwellings within a Village

There is little documentation on pit burials because they appear almost randomly at excavation sites. Frohlich and Laughlin (2002:95) made note of pit burials that were found outside of house structures and within or close to village sites. Hrdlička (1945:364-381) mentioned these in his writing, but he merely described them as bodies buried in pits of various depths with few or no grave goods. Of these, Jochelson (2002b:49-52) wrote that “The greatest number of skeletons were discovered through the excavation of the large pits”.

9.5 Deposition in the Walls and Floors of Houses

Interment methods were discussed in both historical and anthropological publications beginning with the Russians and later during the American period, starting with Dall in the late 1800s. He wrote that sometimes a body would be placed in a home until the final resting place could be found or constructed (Dall 1878:6-7; Laughlin 1983:42-43). The body was placed either in a grave dug into the floor or in a covered niche within the wall structure, usually in or near where the person dwelled in life (Dall 1873:284, 1878:6; Laughlin 1983:41-42). Black and Liapunova (1988:56) also documented the use of side chambers of dwellings for burials. House burials were common. This obvious placement of the dead with the living indicates that the Unangaâ did not fear the dead. There is no direct evidence that the bodies were reburied after they were placed there. The antiquity of this practice also remains unclear.

Jochelson (2002b:26-28) excavated several house structures on the islands of

Attu and Atka. At one site he found parts of skeletons and skulls above a kitchen midden. He also found remains of eight other individuals in a different house structure. Four of the individuals had been crushed by the weight of a heavy whale bone found on top of them. It appeared that the roof made of the whale bone collapsed, but it could have been misinterpreted. The whale bone could have been placed on top of the bodies intentionally for symbolic purposes.

Much more work needs to be done on the symbolic aspect of whale bones used in house construction, following the work of Whitridge (1999), Savelle and Habu (2004), and Corbett (2011). All that is currently left of domestic sites are indentations in the ground where the longhouses once stood. Archaeologists refer to them as pits, and burials are only found if the pits are excavated.

9.6 *Ulaakan*- Burial Huts

Russians such as Sauer (1972:161) and Sarychev (1969 [1806]:77), and the German Merck (1980:177-179) (all part of the 1790-1792 Billings expedition) noted that Unanga burials were based on status and rank. Low status individuals were buried in huts, in contrast to driftwood or whale bone above ground coffins made for high status individuals (Veniaminov 1984:196; Coxe 2004:154-155). There is much confusion regarding the discovery and excavation of these features. They were not correctly identified early on, and only a few have been excavated. Bland and O'Leary (n.d.) conducted a comprehensive study of these burials in contrast to *umqan* (burial mounds). They utilized Bureau of Land Management (BLM) data, based on the numerous archaeological surveys done in the Aleutians in 1991 for the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. At that time the archaeologists were tasked with only site identification and mapping, with no testing being allowed, particularly if it was suspected that a feature contained human remains (Bland 1992; Bland and O'Leary

n.d.:22). With the exception of these surface surveys, what is known about these burials comes from reports beginning in the late 1700s.

As already mentioned, the *ulaakan*, or small burial huts, were thought to be the disposal sites for lower class individuals. According to Coxe (1966:154-155), when the Russians visited the Fox Islands in approximately 1763, earth covered burial sites were described as being for low status individuals. Veniaminov (1984:198) also noted that poor and ordinary people were placed in a hole in the ground in a sitting position, although it is unclear if he was referring to *ulaakan*.

Laughlin (1980:99) referred to *ulaakan* as sod huts made for the purpose of burials. Hrdlička's team (1945:342) found one on Kanaga Island in 1938. The most descriptive information concerning *ulaakan* was told to Ted Bank (1956:181-182) by one of his Native informants. They were described as consisting of a hole in the ground in which a body was placed and covered with either driftwood or animal bones (Figure 9.5). In most cases they were found in close proximity to village sites. These were the most common forms of burial (Bank 1956:183).

9.7 *Umqan* Burials/Pit Burials

Umqan is the Aleut word for storage place or root cellar (Laughlin and Marsh 1954:28). There is some speculation that Captain James Cook might have described one such site found on Unalaska as he mentioned seeing beach stones on a hillock and had it pointed out as a place of burial by a Native (Cook 1961:519). Laughlin and Marsh (1951) inquired about the trenches they discovered (which they eventually determined to be *umqan*) and were told by their Unanga informant that they were root cellars. It remains unclear if the informant was hiding their actual function or really believed that they served the above-noted purpose. Veltre returned in the 1970s and confirmed that they were burial mounds. In a personal communication with Veltre (May 10, 2012) it

was his opinion that the informant sincerely believed they were root cellars.

Excavations between 1972 and 1975 confirmed that *umqan* were used frequently for burials (Aigner and Veltre 1976:113-127; Aigner et al. 1976:128- 131; Frohlich 1974:480; Laughlin and Aigner)

Frohlich and Laughlin (2002:96) excavated several *umqan* burials and described them as pit burials that resemble mounds from the surface (Figure 9.1). They were usually located behind a village, most often positioned on hills and therefore subject to erosion. Few have been excavated, but the ones that have enable the archaeological community to learn more about their structure and function. In the 1972 field season, Aigner and Veltre found 62 *umqan* on Umnak Island at various locations (Aigner and Veltre 1976).

Frohlich (1974) excavated *umqan* on Anangula Island immediately behind and around the Anangula Village site. Those found there consisted of circular mounds, inside of which were cobblestone floors, one or more burials, and often the ubiquitous whale bone overlaying a skeleton.



Figure 9.1. Demonstration of the rock layer on the *umqan* (from Frohlich and Laughlin 2002:105).

Frohlich (1974) indicated that evaluating the human remains was close to impossible because the bodies had undergone so much decomposition that they were only distinguished by a color shift in the soil. Multiple individuals were found in several *umqan* which also consisted of a burial chamber made of logs, indicating repeated use.

They were subsequently able to date the *umqan* at no less than 3,000 years using an ash layer for comparison. They excavated several other *umqan* during the 1970s, at which time they found one that contained children, inferring that it was constructed just for one time use (Frohlich and Laughlin 2002:102-103).

Aigner and Laughlin excavated an infant *umqan* burial on Umnak Island (1976). A geologist thought it was built in 1,500 B.P. based on geological stratigraphy and because this particular pit had no evidence of Western contact (Aigner and Veltre 1976:129).

These discoveries were proof to archaeologists that *umqan* were of various sizes and were used well into the Russian period (Figure 9.2). This reasoning was based on the presence of copper objects, preservation of the burial structures, and some human skeletal material (Aigner and Veltre 1976:121). Aigner and Veltre (1976:127) noted that for nearly 100 years archaeological work was done on Umnak Island, yet only the conspicuous Anangula *umqan* were recognized (this was in 1952). This suggests that *umqan* may have been common but overlooked. At the time of surveys in the 1950s archaeologists were unaware of these features. Aigner and Veltre also (1976:122) speculated that *umqan* burials were used as places to store the bodies when caves were not present. This theory has since been disproven and will be discussed in Chapter 10 as they were found close to burial caves. Only a total of five *umqan* have been excavated, and what was left of any bodies found represents various ages and both sexes (Frohlich and Laughlin 2002:108). Though not much is known about construction or burials contained within *umqan*, there is no indication that they represented secondary burials as described in the literature (Goldstein 1995; Schroeder 2001; Black 2000; Goldstein 1995). The use of *umqan* remains unclear and further investigation is warranted pertaining to the use of these structures

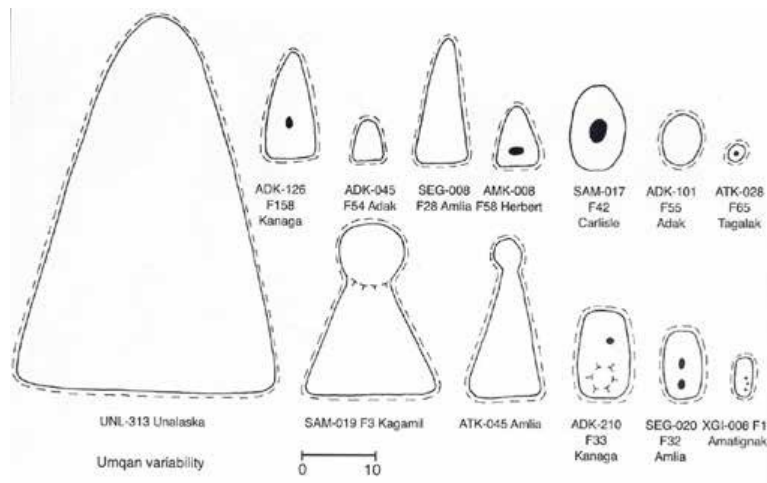


Figure 9.2. General sizes and shapes of *Umqan* (from Bland and O’Leary n.d.:43-44).

9.8 Burials in Specially Built Structures- above Ground Coffins (*qumnan*)



Figure 9.3. The only known representation of an Eastern Aleutian (Unalaska 1790-1791) sub- aerial sarcophagus burial. After Sauer 1802, a sketch by Captain Sarychev (from Black 1984:41).

Qumnan have been described as “sarcophagus tombs” (Lantis 1970:215; Black 2003:41) or box type burials. These were either partially buried or placed on pedestals. The word *qumnan*, cited by Veniaminov (1984:196) and Bergsland (1994:336), was adopted by Bland and O’Leary (n.d.) for their research on the archaeological issues relating to these and other forms of burials. *Qumnan* were coffins of whale bone or wood, found at open-air burial grounds and within burial caves (Bergsland 1994:336). One was recorded on Unalaska (1790-1791) by the Russian Sauer (Figure 9.3). Merck (1980:177) described such a structure in “more detail noting men being buried in a decorated strong box with their tools and mats. Sometimes these were large enough to

hold ten bodies. Dall (1873:284) was the first American to make mention of *qumnan*, noting that the Unanga were sometimes buried in log structures he called sarcophagi. On the island of Unalaska at Chernofsky Harbor he found a rock shelter near a village that had bodies placed in it with masks and carvings (Dall 1878:8). Nearby was a wooden tomb, with stone tools inside. He inferred it contained the remains of a famous hunter surrounded by sea otter skins and clothing, all in good condition. He discovered whale bone sarcophagus on Adak Island near a midden site. It was overgrown and contained a badly decayed male skeleton (Dall 1878:63).

Another description of a sarcophagus/*qumnan* burials came from Edward Weyer. Weyer was part of the Stoll-McCracken Arctic Expedition that was sent to the Aleutians on behalf of the American Museum of Natural History in 1928. The expedition's members were tasked with documenting Unanga funeral practices and burials. They were aware of sarcophagus burials after reading the earlier literature by Dall. The result of their efforts was the discovery of a buried sarcophagus containing four mummies with grave deposits, believed to be untouched since they were interred (Weyer 1929:225).



Figure 9.4. “Fortress Rock” or Split Rock (from Weyer 1929:226).

The expedition first located the “Fortress Rock”, in June, 1928 (Figure 9.4). Weyer provided a lengthy description of finding the “crypt”, which was buried at the

edge of a flat part of the summit. It was under approximately 1½ feet of soil and topped with 8 by 10 feet of driftwood planks with a stone lamp placed directly in the center (Weyer 1929:226-230). It remains unclear if the soil was placed on top of the structure after the death or after the site was abandoned. Inside he found four flexed, mummified bodies. Based on their positions and the space allotted each one, it was thought they were of different social statuses. The individual identified as Body #1, a male, had considerably more space, and more elaborate grave goods. He was wearing a gut skin parka and had bird skin leggings. Numerous spear points and a harpoon shaft were nearby. A wooden helmet, a bowl, and a labret were under his feet. He wore a limestone labret. Weyer and his team thought that he was a skilled whale hunter since whale hunters were provided special attention at death (Weyer 1929:231-236)”. Body #2 was identified as that of a woman. Her artifacts and clothing were described as ordinary. Near her head was the gut sack that contained the head of an eight-month-old infant. Sinew was strung through her nose, with four beads of Korean amber. Body #3 was determined to be that of a man. Weyer thought this individual was not given as much care as the others because he had been placed on the bottom of the structure. His skull was crushed, and it was determined that this had occurred prior to death. It remains unclear how this was determined as it could have been post-mortem. Body #4 was that of a 3-4 year old child.

Of note is Weyer’s inference regarding Body #1 as being a whale hunter. There is no way to know what the status of these individuals was. This could be an example of heterarchical relationships. The bodies could be a whaler and family members but it could also be a chief with family members. Taking this speculation one step further it could be a rare example of a social group engaged in both chiefly leadership and whaling activities, especially due to the prominent placement of the *qumnan* in the landscape. Another explanation could be that perhaps chiefs were buried in *qumnan* and

whalers placed in caves. Weyer noted the woman's dress as ordinary yet she was buried with amber beads, indicating a higher social status.

These mummies were taken back to New York, but it remains unclear as to their final deposition. Similar structures thought to be *qumnan* were found in mummy caves and near the villages of Prince William Sound. It was also noted that by the late 1700s they were being used by the Tlingit of the Southeast (de Laguna 1972:540) and Natives of the Gulf of Alaska (Lantis 1970b:216). There is a high probability that *qumnan* made of whale bones were symbolic and were constructed and placed in burial caves but were not recognized as such due to looting, falling rock, and fox damage.

Bland and O'Leary (n.d.:8), recognized that archaeologists had a hard time distinguishing *qumnan* from *ulaakan* from the ground level since they both resembled pits in the landscape (Figure 9.5.) To avoid further confusion among the archaeological community, they proposed that the term *ulaaka* be used to describe both.

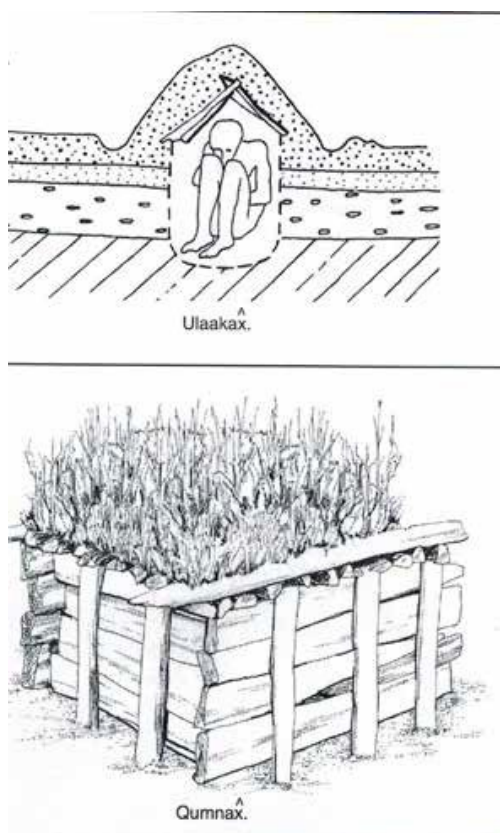


Figure 9.5. Illustrations of *qumna* (from Bland and O'Leary n.d.:47).

9.9 Rock Shelters and Cave Burials

Human remains have been found in rock shelters and caves throughout the Eastern Aleutians, on Kodiak and in the Prince William Sound region. Rock shelters or *abri* are overhanging cliff faces. (Chesson and Comton 2011:2). They are formed by erosion. Unlike caves, depending on the size, rock shelters can offer light and warmth because they were generally shallow in depth. The ceiling can also protect people and human remains from harsh weather. Jochelson (2002b:46-48) found what he referred to as “cemeteries” in rock hollows or rock shelters on the islands of Atka and Amaknak (Figures 9.6). On Atka, he found so many skeletons in a shallow cave that he labeled it a village cemetery. He described the skeletons as being piled on top of one another. Evidence supports the belief that low status individuals were sometimes placed under rock overhangs, and sometimes buried in caves with little or no grave goods (Veniaminov 1984:198; Jochelson 2002b:52; Hrdlička 1945:267) (Figure 9.7).



Figure 9.6. Rock shelters (from Jochelson 2002b:37).



Figure 9.7. An example of a rock shelter (from Hrdlička 1945:326).

For the purposes of this thesis, burial caves will be defined as hollow openings in hills or cliffs where bodies were intentionally placed or buried. Caves are natural formations with features that can be perceived as betwixt and between. They are neither inside nor outside mountains, neither above nor below the ground. They have always been places in the landscape that provide a natural setting for ritual activities. Because shamans perform in liminal spaces between the world of daily practical life and the world of the spirits (Haaland and Haaland 2002:27) caves could also be used as passageways to the world of the spirits, the place of the dead, partially due to their seclusion (Thomassen 2012; Dowd 2012:27, 2007:305). Caves have also been used as community dumps, workplaces, and living sites (Strauss 1979:5). Cross culturally, caves represented a symbolic realm where valuables were stored and where important individuals were sometimes buried (Skeates 1997:80; Lubin 1997:146). It has been established that they were frequently chosen as clandestine sites where secret societies kept special items and performed their rituals (Juwayeyi 1997:185) as in the case of the Unanga. Unfortunately, although caves have provided archaeologists with snapshots

into past human behavior, they also pose numerous interpretation problems because of disturbances by water, carnivores, and their use through time (Strauss 1997:2).

In the Aleutians, caves are numerous, and only a small number appear to have been used for burials, although many islands have not been thoroughly investigated. The Unanga's mummies were usually found in caves, but caves were also used for burials of non-mummified bodies (Jochelson 2002b:46- 48). Based on the material items found in the caves, they were multi-functional and were used for shelter, storage, cooking, and other activities (Hrdlička 1945:267; Nelson and Barnett 1955:390; Frohlich and Laughlin 2002:95). This seems plausible, particularly given that Unanga's needed shelter from rough seas while hunting, traveling, or engaging in prolonged mortuary rituals.



Figure 9.8. Kagamil Cold Cave where many mummies were found (from Hrdlička 1945:94).

Currently, no concrete evidence exists pertaining to the number of burial caves in the Aleutians and other nearby locations. The photo above (Figure 9.8) is of Cold Cave, one of the most famous mummy caves from Kagamil Island. For practical purposes, burial caves had to be relatively large. When a great hunter or person of high status died, his body was first mummified, placed in a cradle like structure, and then

sometimes placed in a skin boat, which was hung on poles in a cave (Hrdlička 1945:419). Sometimes kayaks were found in caves with mummies, but sometimes models of them were included instead of the real vessel (Lantis 1970:216). The amount of grave goods placed with the body was dependent on the status of the deceased, the size of the cave, and on how far the relatives had to travel for body placement. In terms of actual cave burials, Lantis (1970b:217-218) speculated that in the Eastern- and Middle-Aleutians, only the most honorable individuals were mummified, at which time the body was placed in a cave with assorted goods and perhaps even a slave. There would be no way to distinguish a slave from a person of low status, unless perhaps the slaves were cremated. She speculated that those mummified in caves were shamans or members of a special status group like whale hunters. Even more problematic when discussing the subject of cave burials is the definitional meaning of the term “cave”, because the Unanga dead were also found under rock shelters. The terms have been used interchangeably. Lydia Black (2003:41) commented on this confusion, noting that what some explorers and researchers defined as cave burials were actually rock overhangs.

9.10 Mummification

In the previous sections I provided information on the various ways the Unanga disposed of their dead. Here I provide a definition of mummification, what is known of the process, and how it relates to the other methods of body deposition. The term mummy usually conjures up images of a dead body well preserved enough to resemble a once living person (Cockburn et al. 1998:1). Aufderheide (2003:1) adds a caveat to this definition pointing out that it is too broad and includes everyone preserved naturally due to extreme cold or heat. Many such mummies have been found in Alaska due to extremely low temperatures. A frozen 1,600 year old Eskimo woman was found on

Saint Lawrence Island in 1972 (Aufderheide 2003:74; Zimmerman and Smith 1975), and an entire family was discovered at Utqiagvik in 1982 dated to approximately 510 B.P. preserved due to natural causes (Zimmerman 1998). Since the 1990s, research focus has shifted from studying the physical bodies of mummified individuals to understanding the purpose of anthropogenic mummification (Cockburn et al. 1998:1; Aufderheide 2003:1). As applied to the Unanga, mummification was deliberate and related to the regulation and preservation of the power in the body, which also became an indicator of social status (Jochelson 2002b 43-44; Laughlin 1980 97-98; Frohlich and Laughlin 2002 93-95).

After reviewing the literature regarding Unanga mummification, it soon became obvious there were definitional problems when speaking of “mummies” in the regions to be discussed. Laughlin (1983:43) and several Russians (Sauer 1972:161; Coxe 2004:218; Sarytchev 1969:77-78) wrote of bodies being “preserved” . Veniaminov (1984:196) explained “in the case of every Aleut, the body was embalmed after fifteen days”. Zaikov (in the Aleutians from 1775-1778, in Masters and Brower 1948:902) is credited for stating that after death the body was mummified, placed in a coffin, and hung in the living structure. Frohlich and Sara Laughlin (2002:93) cite William Laughlin (1983:41), who claimed that the Unanga “preserved” all members of their villages.

On the basis of having reviewed archaeological reports, historical sources and ethnographic studies, there is no evidence that every person in the Aleutians was mummified. What emerges from the literature is the fact that in some cases, bodies were eviscerated and wrapped in animal skins before their final deposition. However, this was not always the case. The numerous skeletonized bodies found in graves throughout the Aleutians, in contrast to those that appear to have been purposely mummified, are a testament to this fact. It could also be that bodies of loved ones were kept in the home as

long as possible, but that once decomposition began, their disposal became dependent upon the wishes of the deceased, the family and their status (Merck 1980:77).

For the purposes of this study, the definition of the term “mummy” will be modified from the one proposed by Cockburn et al. (1981:1) and Aufderheide (2003:1). My definition excludes mummification by natural causes such as temperature. Instead, mummification will be defined as the intentional process of preserving or modifying dead bodies for cultural reasons so the remains resemble the once living person.

9.11 The Process of Mummification

The most comprehensive account of mummification was recorded by Dall (1875:434-436, 1878:6), as told to him by a Russian Orthodox priest. It was repeated by Jochelson (2002b:42-43), Hrdlička (1945), and Laughlin (1980:101). The mummification process began when an opening was made in the pelvic region and all organs were removed. The cavity was filled with dry grass and the body was placed in running water. This process removed the fat, eventually leaving only the skin, muscles, and bones. Then the body was placed in the fetal position at which time it was compacted by using cords. This is similar to the procedure in joint binding discussed in Section 8.16. Sometimes, the bones of the arms were broken to help this compression. The body was then dried by frequently wiping off any moisture. Once dry, the cords were removed and it was wrapped in fur, and then in a garment made of aquatic bird feathers with embroidery. Over this was placed grass matting and sometimes another layer would include a waterproof wrapping of sea lion intestines sewn together. The mummy bundle was then securely fastened with more cords so that that it could be suspended. Dall added that if it was an infant, the bundle configuration would resemble a cradle. For infants, the cradle would also include wood that was sometimes painted. Occasionally infants would also be placed in a wooden box. Dall speculated that after

mummification the bodies were always prepared for suspension so they wouldn't get wet in the caves. He added that weapons or other items were usually not placed directly in the mummy bundles, except dishes with food.

It is noted that Dall did not arrive in the Aleutians until approximately 130 years after the initial contact with the Russians. And although the accounts of the mummification process are consistent, many other aspects of this practice remain secretive, especially regarding who performed the actual mummification. The most logical explanation is that the mummification process was performed by whalers. Additionally, if there was great care to preserve and dry the mummified human remains, what is meant by the term "mummy grease" that was allegedly placed on the lances used for whaling? In all probability sometimes decomposition and blood were retained during the mummification process and these fluids were used symbolically for power. It also seems plausible that actual pieces of mummies were tied to the spear used in the actual strike of the whale.

In 2002, Birna Jonsdottir (2002) CAT scanned the thirty- six mummy specimens at the Smithsonian. This method was chosen since it represented the most non-evasive method used to exam the mummies. Her findings confirmed the suggestion that mummification was practiced on young and old individuals of both sexes. No signs of trauma were found on the mummies in the Smithsonian collection, and many of them were children and infants. Most died of natural causes. The pathological findings represented a normal range for a similar population of Alaska Natives from the same time period. She discovered that women died due to complications during childbirth, and the young children died during the first few weeks of life. The elderly suffered from heart disease and infections (Jonsdottir 2002:164-165). Heart disease was also validated by a separate study (Thomas et al. 2014). At the time of my most recent visit to the Smithsonian in February 2019 staff were in the process of replicating the CAT Scans to

retrieve additional documentation. They were also preparing the mummies for repatriation back to the tribe(s). I had the opportunity to review the scans on ten of the mummies that had been completed. In some cases the actual bindings were still intact in the mummy bundles. In other cases, especially with infants, the mandible had disarticulated from the jaw and could still be seen within the bundles. In my viewing I was particularly interested in artifacts that could be seen in the mummy bundles, especially beading. This information will be included in Chapter 13.

9.12 Numbers and Mummies

No one knows how many mummies were taken from the Aleutians, from what islands, or with which artifacts. From the time of contact and through the twentieth century, searches for human remains by both collectors and scientists led to a situation in which those who took the mummies eschewed the use of archaeological recording techniques (Hunt 2002).

Laughlin (1980:96) estimated that approximately 234 mummies were taken from the Aleutians by Hrdlička between 1936 and 1938. No one knows how many others were removed over the years by curiosity seekers. Just one example of the disrespect accorded to these preserved individuals is provided by an Aleutian mummy found in New Orleans, Louisiana. Guido Lombardi (1997:10-12) discovered that the Middle American Research Institute (MARI) of Tulane University was in possession of a Unanga mummy. There was no written record of the mummy's arrival at MARI, but a card accompanying the remains indicated it arrived in the 1930s in a wooden box along with a model of a kayak. Of greater interest is that the catalog tag indicated it was given to Tulane University by the New Orleans police department. The Police confiscated it from a carnival where it was displayed as an oddity. At the time it was confiscated, the owner of the sideshow indicated he purchased it from the Alaska Commercial

Company; although he had no dates for the mummy's acquisition (Lombardi 1997:10-12).

9.13 Summary

This chapter helps to establish that mummification was the most elaborate of burials, and thereby would be practiced on this of high status such as whalers. This is not to discount that others of high status, shamans and chiefs probably were also mummified. Bland and O'Leary (n.d.) reviewed a significant amount of data on *qumnan*, *ulaakan*, and *umqan*. In the discussion of their research, the issue of social stratification was frequently addressed (n.d.:28-29). They contend that the *qumnan* were eventually replaced by *umqan*. *Umqan* have been found situated closer to villages, and the status of the burials found within them can only be inferred based on the size of the mounds and amount of labor invested in them. Bland and O'Leary (n.d.:28-29) also concluded that *umqan* were constructed based on the wealth of the deceased. Evidence of this is that *umqan* have been found in varying sizes and shapes, which in all probability was indicative of class. Larger ones were visible from far away. This could represent family plots for the wealthy, although the lack of grave goods conflicts with this theory.

Currently, there is no evidence of mummies being placed in *umqan*, and the limited number of these features provide scant data on those individuals who were interred within them. As previously stated, Aigner and Veltre (1976:126-127) suspected that no *umqan* would be found near burial caves, but specific examples of *umqan* in association with cave burials will be provided in the next chapter. *Umqan* were ignored until modern times and Unanga did not remember them as burial features. Although Frohlich and Laughlin (2002) make a good case for multiple methods of burying the dead depending on the availability of geology, the purpose of these *umqan* raise more

questions than answers. The earliest *umqan* found are on Unalaska (Knecht 2001) and extend as far back as 2500-3000 B.P. Since they have been found near burial caves they could predate mummification or mummification could also be much older as previously thought. They could also represent family plots for members of the elite who weren't mummified.

In reviewing the information on divergent burial practices, several topics emerge that cannot be readily explained. Although outside the scope of this work, the fact that cremated remains were found in the caves that contained mummies remain as apparent anomalies. Cremation does not appear to be a common practice in the Aleutians, indicating that the cremated remains might represent slaves (as indicated by Hrdlička 1945:397) or non-Unanga (such as the Athabascans who practiced cremation). It also remains unclear whose bodies were placed in the side compartments of dwellings. The dating of the various methods of burial or the bodies within them is also very problematic and is virtually non-existent; although grave goods provide clues pertaining to antiquity. It appears that cave burials had multiple components that show evidence of usage over long periods of time. *Umqan* dates are also variable based on the ones that have been excavated (Frohlich and Laughlin 2002; Bland and O'Leary n.d.). Even more intriguing are the individuals that were found in the *qumnan* by Weyer and his team. Ultimately, we may never be able to reconstruct all of the methods of body deposition practiced in the Aleutians. The liminal nature of caves and the mummies placed in them also cannot be ignored. This chapter served to frame the practice of mummification in contrast to the other forms of body deposition. I have also provided evidence for the various distances and accessibility to sites where the dead were kept. In the next chapter I continue to frame my argument pertaining to mummification by providing the various methods and techniques that have been used in trying to ascertain the antiquity of the practice.

Chapter 10: The Chronological Sequence of Mummification

10.1 Introduction

In this chapter the evidence for the chronological age of mummification will be investigated. The information to be discussed will demonstrate that the mummies are of recent antiquity. Because of the lack of provenance provided during the procurement of many mummy specimens, aside from the island of origin and possible cave name, establishing a beginning date for mummification is not realistic. However, below I present the efforts that have been made in determining the antiquity of mummification in the Aleutians and other regions. The data will aid establishing chronological correlations between mummification and whaling. In Section 6.2 it was demonstrated that some Unanga people not only scavenged whales but that hunters successfully killed them too, by hunting them and using poison as part of the ritualistic aspects of whaling. In this chapter I will be presenting evidence for the dating methods, both direct and indirect, that have been attempted. Whereas Chapter 9 considered evidence for different types of treating dead bodies in relation to status, this chapter adds a complication, that of two different groups of people with possibly different mortuary traditions.

10.2 Craniometrics

Craniometrics was attempted early on to ascertain the dating of the mummies. This involved the quantification of skull and postcranial skeleton measurements. It enabled archaeologists and physical anthropologists to trace the differences among different populations (Ousley and Jones 2010:630). The use of this method inferred that by documenting changes in morphology, these changes could then be equated with non-metric time periods. In the case of the Aleutian materials, the quest for dating was affiliated with documenting the populating of the Aleutians rather than providing a time

depth for mortuary practices. However, the data overlapped. William Dall (1873:285) set the precedent for much of the early research in skeletal morphology on the Unanga. He was the first to discuss the robusticity of their long bones as well as their structural similarities to the Eskimos of Northwest Alaska. Dall (1873:285) also documented variations in the living Aleut population. Although he did not perform craniometrics or quantify his observations on the Kagamil skeletal remains, he conducted a thorough cataloguing of Hennig's collection of mummies at the Smithsonian (1878). By all accounts, Hennig, a boat captain, was the first individual credited for discovering and collecting the mummies on Kagamil Island to be discussed in the next chapter. These descriptions by Dall included items such as age at death, sex, body treatment, and pathologies of each recovered individual. He also was one of the first to make the assumption that mummification may have been practiced well after Russian contact due to the evidence he interpreted as syphilitic lesions (venereal) on two of the skulls (Dall 1878:20-21). To him, this was proof that they were deposited in the Kagamil caves later than originally thought and after "contact" (Laughlin 1980:101). By all accounts, syphilis was only introduced into the Unanga population at the time of contact and after by the Russians. This topic is included with a note of caution because there are many problems inherent in identifying syphilis in osteological specimens. For example, in many cases where lesions were present, the actual cause was leprosy or other diseases with similar etiological manifestations (Wright and Yoder 2003; Armelagos and Van Gerven 2003; Ortner et al. 1992). With that said, Frohlich and Sara Laughlin (2002:108) also documented what they called syphilitic lesions in the same specimens.

Hrdlička (1945:509) gathered over 250 Aleut crania, of which 230 were adult, in addition to many whole skeletons and various body parts. He reanalyzed all of the human crania from the Aleutians that were at the Smithsonian in 1924. After conducting his own fieldwork on mainland Alaska and the Aleutians, he concluded that all

indigenous people of the New World had derived from Asia. In the meantime, he conducted fieldwork on Kodiak Island, at which time he proposed the two main time periods already discussed. These were based on skull morphology and included categorizations of two time periods: a Pre-Koniag and a Koniag phase (Hrdlička 1944:369). Unfortunately, or fortunately, depending on how one views his body of work, he applied this same methodology to the Aleutian remains. This has caused a host of problems for subsequent researchers due to the manner in which his Aleutian samples were collected, and the categorizations he applied. Physical anthropologists have had no choice but to work with the legacy he left behind, which has hindered placing the original specimens in any form of chronological sequence (1994a BLM AA-12215/12216:24). The following brief summary provides an outline of his cranial classification system:

Hrdlička Classification System:

Pre-Aleuts (Later termed Paleo-Aleuts): Hrdlička's (1945:584-587) findings were based on specimens from the lower strata of the Chaluka midden site. These were oblong (also known as high vaulted) or dolichocephalic specimens and were morphologically different from later Aleut crania. He also found them more sexually dimorphic than later Aleuts and taller and less robust than their later counterparts. In comparison to Caucasians, these Pre-Aleuts were described as generally being short and robust. He also found more artifacts in the lower strata. Bodies were found in flexed positions

Aleuts (Later known as the Neo-Aleuts): These findings were based on the mummies and other specimens from Kagamil Island. They were found to be significantly different from Eskimo crania, including the Koniags, and were described as brachycephalic with a low vault. Hrdlička (1945:521, 545, 553) determined that Koniags were closer to Aleuts than other Eskimos. He also interpreted certain lesions as possibly indicating syphilis in one of the Kagamil remains. Of note is that there were little or no mention of associated artifacts with the mummies or other burials; although given his poor reputation for recording archaeological remains, he could have ignored them.

Hrdlička viewed the two different types of skulls as corresponding to the differences in the burial practices in which they were found. He surmised that by mummifying their dead, the Aleuts showed evidence of spiritualism and a more complex social system (Hrdlička 1945:587). This shift in burial practice was related to

his theory that Neo-Aleuts performed artificial preservation of their dead which held a much greater spiritual meaning to members of the society as a whole (Hrdlička 1945:587),

Hrdlička (1945:417) also argued approximately 1,000 B.P., Paleo-Aleut people on Umnak Island were replaced by Neo-Aleut groups moving west along the island chain. Since Hrdlička published his findings, many others have conducted studies on the Kagamil crania (William Laughlin 1956; Berman and Harper 1979; Utermohle 1984). It would be inefficient to describe all the research cited, but suffice to say that by the 1980s researchers had concluded “that the transition in morphology demonstrated by Hrdlička from a high oblong to a low vaulted wide faces is merely one example of a global trend in cranial morphology, and therefore population replacement had not occurred” (Coltrain et al. 2006:537). In a separate study Ousley and Jones (2010) reviewed these craniometric data using new molecular and spatial technologies and determined that there were a number of factors that contributed to the differences in morphology. They noted that all the theories previously presented had contributed to the changes originally noticed by Hrdlička.

10.3 The Legend of Little Wren

Dall attempted to find out the story about how and why mummification was practiced on Kagamil. This story is included at this juncture because it was originally believed to be a way of dating the Kagamil mummies and was viewed as a legend explaining how mummification began on Kagamil Island and perhaps even in the Aleutians. It was told to Dall by Russian Orthodox priest, Father Innokenti. Dall (1878:9-10), who was in the area, forwarded the story to the Smithsonian with the mummies found by Hennig on their journey to the Smithsonian Institution.

The legend is about a Kagamil chief, Little Wren, who had a thirteen-year-old

son. The chief built his son a small kayak, and as soon as it was completed the boy wanted to try it out on the sea. The boy's kayak overturned and the boy drowned. His body of the boy was eventually brought back to Kagamil, and the chief invited everyone from neighboring islands to attend the funeral. At the funeral, his pregnant daughter was so distraught that she slipped and fell, at which time she delivered a premature baby. Unfortunately, she and her baby also died. Due to his grief, the chief ordered that all his gear be taken out of a cave so he could place his son, daughter, and infant grandson in the cave. He made it a mausoleum and left instructions that when he died he also wanted to be placed in the cave. So from that time on, he and all his family were placed in the cave with their possessions including kayaks, furs, and other items. Dall (1878:11) ends with the following account:

Since then the island of Kagamil has become uninhabited by Aleuts and the bodies have been undisturbed until this year (1874). And these bodies, probably according to the saying of the older Aleuts, were placed there about 1720-1730, so that those first buried in the cave must have laid there 144-154 years ago.

10.4 Analysis of the Little Wren Legend

After Dall obtained the tale, he believed that by analyzing the story of Little Wren, and speaking to contemporary Aleuts, he could obtain a marker on the age of the mummies. After some scrutiny, Dall (1878:24-25) found evidence that the mummies from Kagamil were not those of Little Wren or his family. However, over time the story continued to be used in an attempt to determine the age of the mummies. According to Torres (2007:27), the first two attempts at dates were very close, but questions remained regarding these estimations. Dall's estimation is cited above. According to Laughlin (1979:21), "The great majority of the mummies were placed in the Kagamil caves in a one hundred year period from approximately 1700-1800. Some of the burials may be older, and a few may be later. However, most were probably interred before 1778". In his book "*Our Arctic Province*", Elliot (1886:186) alleged an even more exact date,

1724. His estimation corresponds to the eve of the arrival of the Russians or shortly before, hence just before the destruction of the Unanga culture.

10.5 Preservation

Hunt (2002:145) also attempted nonmetrically to speculate about the age of the Unanga mummies by examining their overall condition. As cited in the previous chapter, when the Kagamil specimens were catalogued by Hrdlička at the Smithsonian, he noted that the specimens were not more than 100-200 years old. If one recalls, Frohlich and Laughlin (2002:111), and later Hunt (2002:145-146), noted that the preservation of the mummies collected by Hennig in 1874, differed from that of Hrdlička's group of mummies collected 72 years later. They speculated that the mummies recovered by Hrdlička were placed in the cave after Hennig's expedition, indicating that mummification was practiced into the late 1800s to 1900s. If correct, this was an indication that the Unanga had not embraced the Russian Orthodox faith in totality, as also suggested by the writings of the various priests. Rather, the Unanga maintained aspects of their former religion (Hunt 2002:147-148). To add credence to this argument, Laughlin (1980:67) mentioned that when doing fieldwork in the 1950s at the village of Nikolski, villagers provided him with information about the Kagamil caves, and also gave him the names of people who had been placed within.

10.6 Artifact Analysis

Laughlin and Marsh (1951:80-2) studied the artifacts associated with the mummies to investigate whether a comparative approach might help to date the mummies. They compared the cultural objects accompanying the Kagamil mummies with artifacts in the uppermost levels of the occupied village middens at the Chaluka site. Laughlin (n.d.:8) later included this information in a report and suggested that bodies were being mummified from 1,500 B.P. onwards.

10.7 Medical/Physical Anthropology

A study was conducted by Keenleyside (2003:401) using pre-contact Aleut human remains from Umnak Island, and late pre-contact/early contact period human remains from Umnak, Kagamil, and Shiprock Islands. She found indications of anemia in the post-contact samples. This was indicative of a poor diet after contact. There was evidence of trauma in some of the specimens, which supported the idea that warfare existed in the region prior to contact. She also found trauma (Figure 10.1) as a result of the atrocities committed on the Aleuts by the Russians. A musket ball was found embedded in the pelvic bone of an adult male from Kagamil Island (2003:54-58)



Figure 10.1. Musket ball embedded in the left ilium of an adult male from Kagamil Island (from Keenleyside 2003:56).

The topic of syphilis emerged because Keenleyside also noted evidence of infections in the post contact populations, attributing the cause to a disease such as syphilis. Captain Cook (1967:1144) noted that while in the Aleutians some of his crew contracted syphilis from Aleut women. Ultimately, Keenleyside's study did not add new data pertaining to the age of the mummies, but it did acknowledge declining health of the Aleuts over time, probably due to contact.

10.8 Quantitative Research Human Remains

There have not been many studies that have provided quantitative data on the mummies. Ted Bank obtained a radiocarbon date of 900-1,100 B.P. from mask fragments he found at Cold Cave on Kagamil Island (Theodore Bank, personal communication cited in Black 2003:57).

One of the more recent studies providing a quantitative time depth for the Unanga remains was performed by Coltrain et al. (2006). These researchers re-visited Hrdlička's theory that Paleo-Aleut people on Umnak Island were replaced by Neo-Aleut groups moving west, and that this occurred around 1,000 B.P. They were able to obtain "calibrated accelerator radiocarbon dates" on purified bone collagen from 80 individuals recovered from the Chaluka site on Umnak Island, and other samples from Kagamil and Shiprock Islands as cited below (2006:536). For clarification purposes, it needs to be stated that Chaluka is now dated at approximately 3,000 B.P. It was one of twenty-two villages on the island of Umnak and the only surviving village is that of Nikolski. No mummified remains were ever found at Chaluka, but a number of burials were (Laughlin 1980:89). These included internments with individuals in flexed positions, and some with whale bones placed either above or below the burials.

The analysis by Coltrain et al. (2006) indicated that Paleo-Aleuts (the Chaluka specimens) were the oldest population in the Aleutians. Their research also determined that Paleo- and Neo-Aleuts were contemporaries on Umnak Island after 1,000 B.P., and that the former continued to bury their dead in inhumations long after the introduction of the Neo-Aleut practice of mummification. The researchers concluded that the appearance of Neo-Aleut people represents an influx of closely related people characterized by greater social complexity. The social disparities that may have existed between the Paleo- and Neo-Aleuts were largely subsumed in the social and demographic upheaval following Russian contact. (2006:537).

Coltrain et al. (2006:544) determined that Hrdlička was right in that two populations existed, but that he was wrong in his assumption that one group replaced the other. The evidence revealed that both groups co-existed after 1,000 B.P. (Coltrain et al. 2006:544). Of note is the fact that the youngest individual tested was from Warm Cave, and the human remains were dated to the mid-sixteenth century. They cited archaeological evidence that has already been presented, especially from Fitzhugh (2003), that increased competition, warfare, and social stratification caused a migration from the Alaska Peninsula into the Aleutians, and with the new arrivals came more complex mortuary customs, including mummification. Or could it have been the other way around? There is no way to substantiate the fact that mummification originated either on the Alaska Peninsula or on Kodiak.

The authors analyzed human bone rather than mortuary rituals using their analysis to explain the two groups' differing mortuary practices. Citing Frohlich and Laughlin (2002) they perpetuated the notion that the Neo-Aleuts preserved all deceased members of their community, with no substantiation of this assumption. They presented radiocarbon dates for Paleo-Aleut individuals ranging from ca. 3,400 to 400 cal B.P., which covered the entire temporal span of the study. They took these dates to indicate that Paleo-Aleuts coexisted in the study area with Neo-Aleuts from ca. 1,000 until well into the 16th century.

At a later date, the authors were notified that there were some cataloguing errors with the samples from their original study. After corrections, Coltrain (2010:391) found the results strengthened their findings indicating that mortuary practices and genetic and dietary patterning also distinguished Paleo-Aleut from Neo-Aleut groups. The results found that the Paleo-Aleuts subsisted on lower level marine resources such as sea otters and sea urchins. Neo-Aleuts subsisted on higher trophic foods such as the fur seals. Whales were not mentioned but can they can be inferred due to the high levels and

knowledge that these peoples engaged in whale hunting. The revised data also provided similar dates that correspond to artifacts found on Kagamil, at Asxaana-â Cave on Carlisle Island and Karluk One on Kodiak. The Kagamil mummies date between 1,034 and 1,546 B.P. Karluk One has been dated to 1,400 B.P. (West 2015:62) and there is “an uncalibrated date” of 1,250 B.P. for Asxaana-â Cave (Johnson 2016:53) on Carlisle Island to be discussed in the next chapter.

Of the specimens tested from the Smithsonian collection, radiocarbon dating provided an average age with a range of 630-1,750 B.P. After taking additional information into consideration, the marine reservoir effect dated the specimens to from 1,450 B.P. or approximately 500 years old (2009:3). On this note, there is a caveat. According to Rick Knecht (personal communication, July 16, 2016), there is another way of viewing this material. It could be that fragile artifacts and mummies could have disintegrated long ago. If that were the case, the idea of new individuals coming into the area might not be accurate.

10.9 Age Data from Examination of Individual Mummies

Lombardi (1997) was able to examine the mummy at Tulane University in 1996 using the non-destructive methods of anthropometry and radiology. He found one iron nail “impaled” on the left thigh. He speculated that it may have been placed in that position prior to the body’s flexion. Four other nails were found inside the abdominal-pelvic cavity. He added that “This is the first case of an Aleut mummy study that shows clear evidence of a violent death that can be traced to a particularly dramatic period of time, the contact between the Aleutian Island natives and invading Russians” (1997:19). Note must be made that this body is the one that was confiscated from the carnival mentioned in Chapter 9, so there is no proof that it came from the Aleutians. Mummification was also practiced on Kodiak and the Prince William Sound areas. If

this mummy is authentic, it provides additional proof that mummification was practiced into post-contact times since iron nails were not introduced until after Russian contact.

Two multidisciplinary teams conducted autopsies on two Aleutian mummies (Zimmerman et al. 1971, 1981). The first body (Zimmerman et al. 1971) was a Kagamil mummy housed at the Smithsonian. It was found to be a man who died of pneumonia. It remains unclear which collection (Hennig vs. Hrdlička) it was from. The second was a woman, fifty years of age, who had also died of pneumonia (Zimmerman 1981). The mummy was housed at the Peabody Museum at Harvard University. It was catalogued as being from the Aleutians and was said to be from the early eighteenth-century. It had been in the museum for over 100 years and forgotten. Once again, there is no way to verify how the date was obtained.

10.10 The Exchange of Ideas

William Laughlin and others believed that mortuary complexity and other indicators of social stratification developed independently in the Aleutians. He wrote that mummification was an Aleutian invention, and that the distribution of mummies was an Eastern Aleutian trait that diffused to the central area, never making it to the Near Islands (Laughlin and Marsh 1951:75).

Coltrain et al. (2006:545) noted that the level of complexity that developed in the Aleutians was a product of a very successful adaptive strategy that was significantly shaped by contact with the people of Kodiak and the Alaska Peninsula. It also is apparent that life was significantly disrupted by the Russian occupation. This thesis corroborates that cultural complexity, and with it more complex mortuary practices, was the result of such contact that will be discussed further in Chapter 12.

10.11 Summary

The intent of this chapter was to place the practice of Unanga's mummification in a time frame in order to evaluate this practice with data pertaining to the practice of whaling. There is no dispute that the Unanga's mummies are not ancient, and in all likelihood the practice of mummification evolved into the Aleutians sometime after 1,000 B.P. either independently or through the result of contact with other regions. The latter would be the result of warfare, trading, and or marriage (Maschner and Reedy Maschner 1998). Hrdlička (1945:417) first proposed this approximate date, and although his cranial classification was found to be accurate, his theory about an abrupt replacement of the Paleo-Aleuts by the Neo-Aleuts was flawed. It appears, instead, that these two groups co-existed, which provides an explanation for the divergent burial practices found. It also appears that the Neo-Aleut group either developed or introduced the practice of mummification in conjunction with other cultural changes, including intensified whaling. The proposed date of approximately 1,000 B.P. is substantiated by the radiocarbon date obtained by Ted Bank (in Black 2003:57) on a mask fragment and is supported by the previously discussed archaeological evidence.

Although Hrdlička's methodologies were flawed, and his research classifications were selective, his legacy has some positive aspects. It appears as though mummification was slowly introduced from the Eastern Aleutians westward, and probably never made it to the westernmost islands due to the cultural upheaval that occurred after the Russians arrived.

Change occurred slowly, and over time the old ways of the Paleo-Aleuts died out and the more complex culture of the Neo-Aleuts flourished. This provides additional credence to the variability of found mortuary customs. It also helps to further establish the correlation between mummification and whaling, strengthening the argument that whalers gained high status during a time of increasing complexity and that as a result

they were afforded the most elaborate of body depositions which was mummification.

The following chapter will focus on the specific locations of where mummified remains were found and what has been associated with them.

Chapter 11: Mummy Locations, Archaeologists, and Contextualization

11.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the archaeological contexts of mummification and merges historical accounts with Unangax oral histories and archaeology. The Aleutians, especially in the East, experienced a higher degree of cultural complexity over time as revealed by larger population densities, evidence of inter-regional conflict, social stratification, and divergent burial practices as considered previously in Chapter 6. These were thought to be in conjunction with the intensification of whale hunting and the introduction of mummification as the most complex of mortuary practices (Maschner and Reedy-Maschner 1998; Corbett et al. 2010; Fitzhugh 2003; Corbett et al. 1997a; Black 2003, 1987; Heizer 1938; Lantis 1938, 1940; Collins 1937). Here I provide information on the locales where mummies have been found and provide documentation of either accounts specifically addressing the fact that many of the mummies were whalers and or citing artifacts that may have been included in reports regarding the mummy caves. These are presented in order to examine the full extent of known places where mummies have been found which is an objective of this thesis. Specific details of known associations of human remains with whale bones will also be examined as well as any accounts that document instances of mummies being visited by living Unangax that will corroborate their liminal status.

Much of this chapter brings together the results of scattered information on the recovery of interred human remains that leaves much to be desired from modern archaeological excavation standards. When viewed in a comparative light, however, contextualization of the evidence provides compelling support that specialist whalers were given different mortuary treatments than other people and that their mummified remains continued to be honored by the Unangax well into the 1860s. The material presented in this chapter culminates in a discussion of the excavation conducted by the

Western Aleutians Archaeological and Paleobiological Project, which provides an excellent case study for investigating the symbolic importance of whales to the hunters. Paradoxically, this project draws attention to the Western Aleutians which many writers have dismissed as not participating in the mortuary practices observed in the Eastern Aleutians.

11.2 Earliest Accounts of Mummification

Since the time of the Russians in the Aleutians (1741), rumors circulated regarding preserved bodies hidden in caves. The Russians had one agenda and this was the acquisition of furs (Torrey 1983:29-300). As they colonized the Aleutian Islands, Russian priests, soldiers, and merchants passed on their acquired knowledge regarding burial customs they had either witnessed or heard about. By the time of Father Veniaminov (in the Aleutians from 1824-1834), numerous rumors circulated regarding whalers that were mummified and placed in caves. Father Veniaminov is often credited with writing one of the first ethnographic reports of the Unanga (Shenitz 1959:77-78). His writing included information about mummies and where to find them (Veniaminov 1984:72-73). He specifically mentioned a cave on Kagamil (*Kagamilax*) Island where people were preserved, and danger would fall upon anyone who touched the mummies.

When the United States purchased Alaska from the Russians in 1867, there were numerous expeditions and archaeological endeavors into the Aleutians. Veltre and Smith (2010) and Virginia Hatfield (2010) provide excellent summaries of Aleutian archaeology. More recent syntheses have been provided by Davis et al. (2016), Steffian et al. (2016), and Maschner (2016). However, it must be stressed that the earlier paradigms in archaeology provide the backdrop for the way sites were excavated. The end result was a legacy of shoddy documentation by today's standards.

Aleš Hrdlička, the father of physical anthropology, was interested in finding mummies, but he had no interest in their context (Loring and Prokopec 1994). Hrdlička's almost obsessive quest for mummies is chronicled in the reports he wrote for the Smithsonian Institution along with those of his crew (students William Laughlin, Alan May, and others) who set out to find burial caves during the field seasons of 1936, 1937, and 1938. While working near Kiska Island, Hrdlička met Dr. Claus Murie (the famous naturalist) on the boat, the *Brown Bear*. In what appears to be a justification of himself to others, Hrdlička later wrote "...at that time they all got a good supper on the boat. But that is not all. Murie leads me to another part of the boat and there presents me with a sack full of skulls and bones, and another with a mummy from the hot cave on Kagamil Island" (1945:234). On the surface, it seems that v's main goal in going to the Aleutians was to find mummies. However, this was clarified by Bruno Frohlich of the Smithsonian (personal communication, May 10, 2013) who indicated that Hrdlička was more interested in the skeletal remains the mummies represented. This is why he defleshed many of them (Hunt 2002:137).

11.3 Locations

It is problematic that no operational definitions had been established for the human remains and places where they were found. Miraglia (1986:29) recognized this dilemma and wrote that terms such as mummies, mummy caves, skeletons, and/or burial caves were bantered about with little or no explanation. This issue is problematic because it causes difficulty when determining exactly what was found and where. Many of the human remains, whether mummified or not, were so badly deteriorated when found, that their original deposition could not be ascertained. Caves containing mummies were also looted by souvenir hunters. This was a consequence of the islands being visited by prospectors, trappers, and by U.S. military personnel

before, during, and after World War II.

It is unclear from the various accounts by the American collectors (Dall 1878; Hrdlička 1945) and museum holdings (Hunt 2002) what mummy specimens were kept, given away, or left in place. Hunt (2002) documented the Aleutian human remains that are housed at the Smithsonian Institution. Also, there are thirty-six mummies curated in the Physical Anthropology Division at the National Museum of History which is a branch of the Smithsonian Institution. This group represents the only collection available for study. Numerous other human osteological specimens collected in the Aleutians are included in Hunt's tabulation (Figure 11.1). Most are from the expeditions by Captain Hennig (1884), as described by Dall, and those collected by Hrdlička (1930s). These mummies came primarily from Kagamil and Ship Rock Islands. Because a majority of the mummies came from Kagamil Island, my discussion on location will begin with this island. The following sections provide a geographical indication of where the mummies were located and additional information pertaining to burial features when known. Figure 11.2 is included for general reference.

List of Human Remains at the Smithsonian

Geograp	L	No. of
Adak	K	12
Afognak	H	8
Atka	At	22
Attu	A	31
	At	9
	Sh	1
Kiska	Isl	23
	Ki	7
Port	Po	2
	U	13
Rat	A	38
Samalga	K	226
Seguam	A	17
Shishmar	Sa	50
Sitka	A	3
	O	1
	Si	3
Umnak	U	98
laska	Sh	101
	A	12
	A	1

	C	57
	K	28
	U	5
	W	43

Figure 11.1. Human remains at the Smithsonian (from Hunt 2002:138).

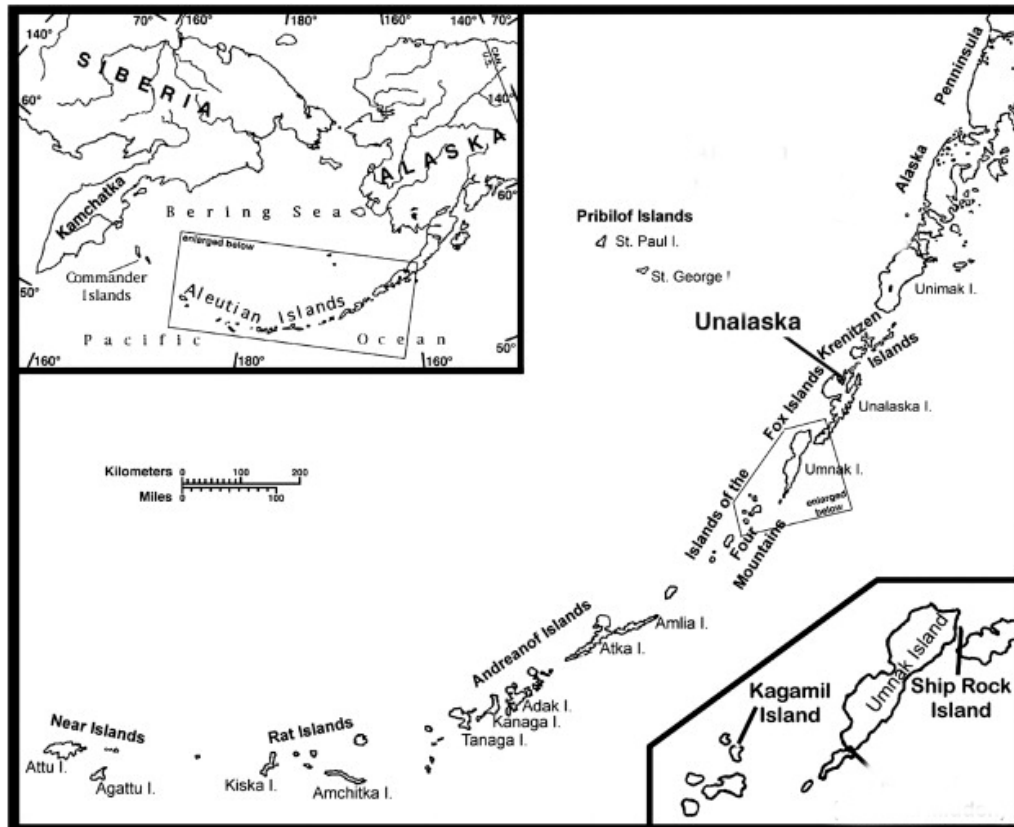


Figure 11.2 Map of Aleutian Islands for reference

11.4 Kagamil Island-Islands of the Four Mountains Group: Mummies, caves burials and *umqan* were found.

Kagamil Island is the location most associated with the Unanga^x mummies. The two caves housing mummies, Warm Cave (Figure 11.3) and Cold Cave (11.4), are part of fissures in an unbroken, sheer cliff face on the southern coast of the island. An active steam vent is located approximately 110 meters to the west of Warm Cave. It emits a strong odor of sulphur (BIA ANCSA 1994a AA-12215:6; Hrdlička 1945:99-100), which is how it got its name.

Veniaminov (1984:72, 223) wrote about mummified bodies that had been placed in caves in the Four Mountains area. He heard that whale hunters would steal body parts, most preferably from the joints or sometimes clothing from these remains. (It is

noted that the theft of body parts is thought to convey the idea of doing something secretly so that the Christian priests could not see them doing so.) Veniaminov (1984:223) also wrote that the bravest of whale hunters were said to visit the mummy caves, and those that did usually died a horrible death. Their bodies “would begin to putrify” while they were in their best years” (Veniaminov 1984:223).



Figure 11.3. Kagamil caves: The Stream Jet (Left). Warm Cave (Right) (from Hrdlička 1945:239-240).

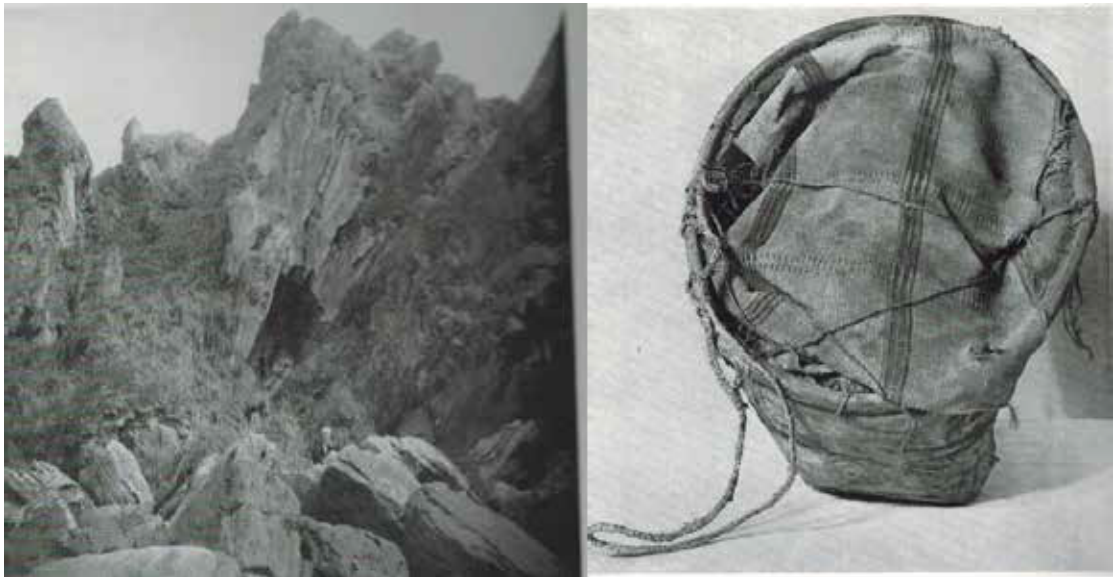


Figure 11.4. Cold Cave Entrance (left). Infant in Cradle from Cold Cave (Right) (from Hrdlička 1945:240-24).

In 1874 Captain E. Hennig, of the Alaska Commercial Company was the first on record to document a mummy cave. While transporting a hunting party, Hennig, who had heard tales of mummification on the island, got his boat close to shore, landed, and found one of the caves from which he took twelve mummies. He

made numerous previous attempts but storm surge and strong currents made it difficult to land a boat (Dall 1878:8-9). At this juncture, note should be made that there is some discrepancy as to whether 12 or 13 mummies were taken by Hennig from Kagamil Island (Elliott 1886:5; Hrdlička 1945:414). Perhaps the mummy that Murie gave to Hrdlička was included in this count. It is also unclear which cave Hennig entered. Dall (1878:9) thought the mummies came from Warm Cave. Ten mummy bundles were eventually sent to the Alaska Commercial Company Headquarters in San Francisco. The Company forwarded ten to the National Museum (Smithsonian) in Washington D.C. Records indicate that the remaining two mummies were given to the California Academy of Sciences (Dall 1878:12).

A San Francisco newspaper printed several articles on the mummies, which were later published by the *New York Times*. The first *Times* article (January 18, 1875) described wooden dishes, a comb, a green colored rock, and ivory carvings of whales, seals, and walrus that accompanied the human remains. The previously cited legend of Little Wren (Section 10.3), was also included. In a separate article written by an unknown author reprinted in the *New York Times*, November 7, 1875, it was noted that when Hennig entered the mummy cave, they were in lifelike positions. The mummified remains were thought to represent whalers who were considered unclean during the period they were hunting, and as a result were required to live separately from others. There was mention of whale hunters who stole mummy parts in order to insure success in the hunt. The mummies were thought to be very powerful, and therefore villagers were careful in approaching them. They needed to be appeased. Even though the caves were difficult to access, villagers placated them by taking them the first berries of the season and leaving food for them in the caves. The unknown author added that while in the Aleutians, he was given an Aleut mummy by a Russian fisherman.

Upon examining the mummies collected by Hennig, Dall (1878:349) described that they were wrapped up in skins or matting, and a few were also encased in frames covered with seal skin that still had the sinew grommets (rings) attached that were used to suspend them from the cave ceiling. Dall speculated that the mummies most likely represented the remains of wealthy whalers.

When Hrdlička (1945:238) entered Warm Cave in 1936, he documented numerous mummies, of both genders, and varied ages in different states of preservation. He noted children in baskets of woven grass. Of particular interest were a whale scapula and two complete kayaks. Because these were scarce resources that could be used by the living rather than the dead, it seems logical that a whale scapula and kayaks that were considered to have spirits, would be placed in the cave to allow the mummies to hunt the whale at night.

Hrdlička (1945:242) secured over fifty mummies, mostly children, and thirty separate skulls from Warm Cave. This is also where he found evidence of cremation (1945:150). Ted Bank, a botanist and amateur archaeologist from the University of Michigan, also visited this cave in 1948 and collected an unknown quantity of additional mummies (1950:237).

Hrdlička (1945:243-46) is credited with finding Cold Cave on Kagamil Island. There were no hot springs in the vicinity of Cold Cave, hence the name. Hrdlička found a collapsed driftwood scaffold inside, which he assumed at one time held several tiers of mummies. He did not find any evidence of Russian or American visitation inside the cave but noted that everything appeared to have been destroyed by foxes.

Ted Bank visited Cold Cave in 1948 (1950:237). He found that what Hrdlička thought was the floor of the cave was actually a layer formed of decayed older mummies, and the scaffolding upon which they had been placed. When he excavated

that layer he found numerous bodies, strips of fur that the mummies were wrapped in, and various bone and ivory artifacts (Bank 1950:238). Present were also a kayak frame, bone harpoon heads, a broken stone knife blade, obsidian arrow points, tangled masses of human hair, ivory harpoon toggle heads, and carved pieces of wood, some of which were painted an iridescent green. Bank also found a rear chamber at the end of a tunnel. This contained even more mummies. He collected at least five more individuals from Cold Cave using Minimum Number of Individuals (MNI) based on human mandibles. The skeletons, which were below the level that Hrdlička had disturbed, were fully extended in a supine position. Ted Bank and Richard Williams (1975:49) received radiocarbon dates of approximately 900 B.P. plus or minus 300 years on several of these specimens.

A third cave was discovered by Bank in 1948. Bank called it “Mask Cave” because portions of five masks were found, painted in green and black, making them appear luminescent (to be discussed in a subsequent chapter). Bank (1950:169) inferred that the one burial found in the cave was that of a shaman because of the association with the masks. In a letter Bank wrote to colleague, Alan May, Bank explained he found the entrances of four other caves nearby, but he could not enter due to the large rock fall in front of them. He believed dynamite would be needed to blast the openings. Several human bones were found in the vicinity (Ted Bank n.d. Letter to Alan May).

11.5 Recent Examination of Kagamil Mummies

In 2000, Frohlich and Laughlin (2002:109) inspected the twelve mummies collected by Captain Henning in 1874, along with those collected by Hrdlička (Dall 1878; Hrdlička 1941:9). The Hennig individuals were deteriorated, probably due to fox predation. They assumed that in 1936 Hrdlička visited the same cave as Hennig,

which was Warm Cave, (Figure 11.3) and removed all that was left to collect. These included twenty-nine bundles of mummified remains that were intact and preserved in their original condition (Hunt 2002; Jonsdottir 2002). They noted that the additional bundles and backpacks collected by Hrdlička were in pristine condition compared to the ones collected by Hennig. There is no way to verify the location or the dates, but their observations supported the theory that mummification continued after the Russian period (Hunt 2002:145-148; Frohlich and Laughlin 2002:109-110).

Hrdlička (1945:415) recovered seventy-one adult and juvenile mummies, numerous crania, and various axial skeletal remains from Warm Cave. We do not know how many he recovered from Cold Cave. William Laughlin (1980:97), who as a student assisted Hrdlička, estimated that one hundred and ninety-four bodies were taken from Kagamil Island overall based in MNI. In their examination of the Kagamil mummies, Frohlich and Laughlin (2002) found several adults, including those poorly preserved individuals that had been macerated by Hrdlička. They were found to have evidence of pathological anomalies such as leprosy (Jonsdottir 2002:165) probable syphilis, and smallpox (Frohlich and Laughlin 2002:108-110). The identification of lesions, if accurate, supported the theory that the mummies were put in the caves after the Russians arrived. There were no indications of these diseases in other human remains from the Chaluka/Nikolski site, approximately 26 km (16 miles) east of Kagamil Island (Frohlich and Laughlin 2002:110).

Fox damage was also to blame for some of the poor condition of many of the mummies. In speaking of Cold Cave, Hrdlička (1941:17) wrote that traders placed foxes on the island, but then left them with nothing to eat. As a result, the foxes ate the mummies, their bones, and the grass mats that bound them. These factors prevent further speculation as to the exact status of the mummies in relation to whale hunting.

11.6 Ted Bank and the Curse of the Kagamil Mummies

When Bank visited Warm Cave he was disgusted to find newspapers, and garbage he assumed had been left by Hrdlička's party, trappers, and perhaps a few curious members of the U.S. Coast Guard who were stationed nearby. Besides debris, he found numerous skulls and bones just lying on the cave floor, which he collected (Bank 1952a:82). Bank (1952a:84) believed there were more undiscovered caves on Kagamil and let it be known that he was planning to return there at a later date. This was not to be. Years later Ted Bank committed suicide. Producers of the TV show *Mystery of the Alaskan Mummies* (2001) led viewers to believe his death was due to his contact with the mummies. In promoting the film, it was noted that "Everyone knows that any mummy movie worth its salt has to have a curse.

Alaskan Mummies obliges with the gratuitous story of botanist and amateur archaeologist Ted Bank who committed suicide in 1981 soon after completing a map of all the Aleutian sites he discovered" (Powell 2001:24). After I reviewed his person papers at the University of Alaska Archival Department, it appeared that marital problems and not mummies were the reason for his untimely death.

Bank (1950:172) realized that the material from Mask Cave was different and older than that of Cold Cave. Bank dated a kayak part using radiocarbon dating that yielded a date of 1660 ±300 years. Due to the articles recovered on Kagamil Island, Bank formulated three major hypotheses concerning Aleut burial practices:

- Kagamil Island may have an older occupation than the surrounding islands, which would account for the large number of burials.
- Kagamil Island may have been the primary burial location for all the surrounding islands.
- The burial caves on Kagamil may have had a local environment more conducive to the preservation of funerary remains than the surrounding islands (1950:172-73).

Unfortunately these hypotheses cannot be tested at present.

11.7 Of Mummy Caves and *Umqan*

In 1991 two crews conducted a field reconnaissance of Kagamil Island. They generated two reports for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and for the ANCSA conveyances (1994a:BLM AA-12215/BLM AA-12216). One group investigated Warm Cave, and the other, Cold Cave. Surface surveys were also done. Two large house structures were found near the southeast section of the Island near Warm Cave on a bluff (first cited by Hrdlička 1945:147-148) and a large *umqan* feature was also discovered nearby. Archaeologists made note of the *umqan* or *ulaakan* directly to the left of Warm Cave, and almost equidistant from both caves. This confirmed that *umqan* were found in proximity to burial caves.

Fieldwork on Kagamil Island, therefore, confirmed several points. First, mummies in the caves were placed on scaffolds for what appeared to be practical reasons, most likely to keep them off the ground and dry. Second, the high count of mummies and associated artifacts, (painted masks) provided concrete evidence of ceremonialism. Archaeologists also inferred mummification was practiced in conjunction with whaling due to the placement of kayak parts and whale bones in the caves. Third, there was at least one village on the island and probably burials that remained undocumented.

Umqan found on Kagamil, near burial caves, provide proof for divergent burial practices and suggest that the different practices were related to status. This argument supports the hypothesis that only those of importance, including whalers and their families, were mummified. My hypothesis does not rule out that other persons of prominence such as chiefs might also be mummified and placed in caves or in *umqan* situated in a special place such as Fortress Rock. There were also a distinctive type of kayak found in Kagamil caves, and evidence of extended burials. There is, however, very limited data on extended burials, except for the description by Pinart (1875:12)

and Bank (1975:49). Black (2003:39-42) argued that prior to and at the time of contact there was a distinctive group of Unangax whalers who resided in the area of the Four Mountains. Attention now turns to this area as well as Carlisle Island.

11.8 Carlisle Island-Islands of the Four Mountains

Ted Bank (1950:196) visited Carlisle Island but made little mention of it. McCartney (1974) conducted a boat survey and identified potential sites. In 1980, William Laughlin (1980:99) found several mummies and a cave. The mummies had fallen to the shore below due to wave action entering the cliff cave where they had been placed. Laughlin found other objects of interest inside the cave including a pole rammed into the cave rock that could have served as a barrier to prevent people from entering.

On November 25, 1990 the *New York Times* (Batista, 1990) heralded the discovery of a 1,000 year old cave with more than thirty mummies. The Aleut Corporation feared possible looting and authorized an excavation of the cave by a team headed by Lucy Johnson of Vassar College. This team included Sara Laughlin of the University of Connecticut as well as other archaeologists including those from the Bureau of Land Management. The article indicated that all contents would be returned to the Aleut people.

At the time of its discovery, the cave was named Dead Fox Cave due to the fox eradication program and the dead fox in front of the cave that led to its discovery. Results of the 1990 Carlisle Island survey was documented in an unpublished report (1991:BLM AA-12204). On the island archaeologists discovered numerous archaeological features as well as two burial caves identified as Caves 1 and 2. Items from Cave 2 were not documented or removed because the cave was hidden and did not seem vulnerable to plundering. Cave 1 (Dead Fox Cave) contained the remains of

at least 37 mummified individuals. Most were placed in the cave as flexed bundle burials wrapped in grass mats and accompanied by burial goods. These included bentwood boxes, carved wooden bowls, kayak paddles, mask pieces, harpoon toggle heads, baskets, spear shafts, and kayak parts. Johnson (2016) also found a wooden figure that may have represented as an “object of a deity” that was also discovered near an intricately carved animal/human composite piece (to be discussed in Chapter 13). Other features were discovered nearby including house pits and *umqan*. This again established that more than one burial type occurred on islands with burial caves (1991:BLM AA-12204:1-20).

Unfortunately, the mummies of Carlisle Island faded into obscurity. A portion of their story and mystery was revealed at the Alaska Anthropological Association Meetings held in Anchorage on March 16, 2013. At that time Lucy Johnson presented a paper on the Carlisle Island artifacts. In 2016, she published an article on the analysis of the wooden artifacts found in the cave that was later renamed “Asxaana-x̂ Cave” (Cave of the Dead Ones).

In 1990, Johnson’s team collected the mummies and 623 artifacts. She sent the artifacts to Vassar College for analysis while the human remains were taken to the University of Connecticut to be studied by Sara Laughlin and her father, William Laughlin. For reasons unknown to Johnson, at some point in the last twenty years, the mummies were analyzed (although this is an assumption), and then were (secretly) sent back to the Aleutians where they were supposedly reburied at the Chaluka site on Umnak Island. Johnson never received any report on the human remains, and to her knowledge nothing was ever written and published. Johnson (2016) eventually published her own paper on the wooden artifacts found. She had numerous students conduct detailed analyses of these artifacts, and the only item she was not able to

formally examine was the image of what appeared to be a deity that was found and transported with the mummies.

In the 2013 in the personal interview I had with Johnson, she described the cave as being divided into three sections, a front, middle, and back. The middle section contained “ceremonial” items such as masks. These were different from the items found in the front and the back. Johnson speculated that the middle section could have contained the remains of shamans. The rear portion of the cave contained what appeared to be a whale bone sarcophagus (perhaps *qumnun*); however, the bodies within it were damaged, and the configuration of the whale bones had been dismantled due to rock fall and fox predation. Boat shafts, boat parts, and two greased poles were found inside the cave. Johnson surmised that the bodies belonged to individuals of high status due to the placement of scarce resources such as weavings and driftwood along with them. A radiocarbon dating of the artifacts yielded a date of approximately 700 B.P. No historic artifacts were found that would link them to the Russian time period. This cave was the first of the Aleutian mummy caves to be systematically excavated. It is my argument that the whale bone sarcophagus that contained several bodies provides additional evidence that these individuals had an affiliation with whaling.

Johnson reported the cave contained driftwood posts and whale scapula, as well as bentwood baskets with human skeletons underneath. In the rear was a body found along with another skull that appeared to be contained in a bentwood basket. Johnson (2016) thought that perhaps this was a war trophy head. A visor and oil lamp were also found.

A driftwood shaft with a whale and a bird on it were also discovered in the cave (to be discussed Chapter 13). It is possible to relate this artifact to several stories told by the Unangax to Jochelson between 1909 and 1910 that linked birds to orcas

(Bergsland and Dirks 1990:107, 116). In 2013 Johnson added that because whaling items and whale bones were discovered in Cave 1, the hypothesis that some of the individuals were whalers was speculative. In the subsequent publication, Johnson (2016) noted that wood was an extremely important resource to the Unanga, and one that is rarely found at sites due to rotting. She compared the wooden artifact in Asxaana Cave to those on Kagamil Island and Karluck One on Kodiak Island. The most frequent wooden objects found were pieces of unworked driftwood, brought in to serve as shelves for the mummies to rest on. Other artifacts included shafts of various sizes and degrees of workmanship that were broken, many kayak parts and fragments, hunting tools such as spear throwers, a hunting visor, carved bentwood trays, bowls and baskets, two “pillows”, mask fragments, and ornaments.

Remains of at least 44 individuals with their associated burial goods were recovered, (Figure 11.5) and Johnson felt confident all artifacts and bodies had been removed. It also needs to be noted that in 2018 Johnson published a second article on the bone and stone artifacts of Asxaana Cave. These will be discussed in Chapter 13.

Eleven *umqan/ulaakax* were found during the 1990 survey (1991 BLM AA-12204:18). There are no human remains at the Smithsonian from Carlisle Island. It remains unclear why the mummies were reburied secretly. These remains could have yielded significant scientific data pertaining to who was mummified and why. Whale bones in front of the cave as well as painted posts also have been found on other islands. As cited earlier, these may have served an ominous warning to stay out of the cave or danger would befall anyone who entered it without first performing the proper rituals. Of note is the fact Johnson (2016, 2018) believes different groups of people were using the cave to dispose of their honored dead, possibly two important families and/or the family of a shaman. She also found the evidence of whaling compelling.



Figure 11.5. Sketch of mummies found in the cave (from Johnson 2016:136).

11.9 Kanaga Island-Andreanov Islands: A Burial Cave, *Umqan*, Mummy, *Ulakan*, and Skeletal Remains Were Found

Kanaga is the last of the islands in the Andreanov group. Several sites have been found on Kanaga Island at different times, and human remains were located. Mummies, however, were not discovered until the 1990s. Hrdlička (1945:342) documented house pits, but he dismissed the island as having nothing of archaeological interest. William Laughlin (1980:98-101) wrote that they found a burial hut (*ulakan*) on Kanaga Island in 1938 (with Hrdlička). However, Hrdlička was not interested in documenting the site, so its validity is unknown. Hrdlička met United States Navy personnel while in the area, and they presented him with the specimens that they had collected while on Kanaga (Figure 11.6). Because military personnel were on the island, there exists the strong possibility that mummies may have been taken as souvenirs.



Figure 11.6. Artifacts excavated by Navy Personnel (from Hrdlička 1945:345).

A burial cave was discovered on Kanaga Island in July 1952 by Willis H. Nelson and Frank Barnett while conducting geological fieldwork in the area (1955). The cave was located at the base of a steep sea cliff. They speculated that the cave had not been inhabited, although they found sea mammal remains in a midden that could have been evidence of feasting associated with mortuary practices. Inside the cave itself, they discovered a circle of boulders around boat parts and human crania. Six of the seven crania were in pairs, male and female. In the cave they found additional artifacts including a carved wooden sea lion holding a ball in its mouth, a bone projectile point, and several wooden boat-frame parts. The pair inferred that the deceased individuals came from elsewhere and may have been traveling in the area, but it is not clear how they came to this conclusion. The cave was in an isolated location, and there was no evidence of long-term habitation. It was for this reason that they hypothesized that the cave was a place where bodies were placed after death. (1955:390). There was no mention of mummies and it was assumed that they documented everything they witnessed on the floor of the cave.

Ted Bank (1956:152-153) visited Kanaga shortly after Nelson and Barnett. He

determined that the kayak design found in the cave was similar in design to those found on Kagamil Island. There is no mention of what remained in the cave when Bank got there. Bank discovered several other sites on the island, but he did not go into detail about them. He made a map of a village located on the Island.

In 1991, BIA archaeologists (1994b BLM AA:12053) entered the cave discovered by Nelson and Barnet but noted that the contents had been disturbed by storm surge. BIA personnel relocated *Sisdular*, a village that had been documented by the Russians. It consisted of fifty-eight house and midden depressions. A burial cave was also found at the base of a terrace by the village (1994b:5). Upon examining Bank's map, they located what Bank called "Cape of the Dead Ones" near *Sisdular*. They documented six *umqan* burial mounds and another burial cave. The cave contained a mummy bundle and scaffolding. Archaeologists speculated that the person in the burial bundle was either a great hunter or someone of high social status although it could have been a combination of both. Their observations were based upon the amount of effort involved in the preparation and preservation of the body, which was in the flexed position. It was inferred that this was evidence of lineages who had been placed in the cave (1994b AA:12053:11-14). Another cave was found with a mummy thought to be a whale hunter. Scaffolding was found indicating that more mummies may have been present at one time. There are the remains of twelve individuals from Kanaga at the Smithsonian (Hunt 2002:138).

11.10 Amaknak Island-Unalaska-Fox Islands: Cave Burials, a Rock Shelter Burial, Probable Mummies as well as Probably *Umqan* and *Ulakaax* Were Found

Alfonse Pinart wrote of a burial cave he found on Amaknak in 1871 where he collected a whale spear and three human skulls (Hrdlička 1945:403). The Boulogne-sur-Mer Museum, which has a majority of the masks and other artifacts collected by Pinart, was contacted and they verified that the Pinart collection did not have any

whaling weapons from the Aleutians. They have several from Kodiak, but their actual provenance on the island remains unknown (personal communication Gaëlle Etesse, April 24, 2016). A photo of one from the Museum is found in Chapter 13.

Pinart's discovery was followed by Dall (1878:10), who claimed to have visited the same cave. Dall never explained exactly what he meant by stating he found the "remains of mummies" in the cave as this could mean just human remains. Jochelson (2002b:37) excavated on Amaknak and discovered a burial cave near the ancient village site of *Tanaxtaxax*. There he excavated whale bones at the threshold of the cave that were supported by rocks. Inside was what remained of sixteen individuals based on MNI. He commented that the bones were so decayed they turned to dust. Artifacts were located in the cave, which lead Jochelson to believe the remains were ancient. He also mentioned that although Dall claimed to have excavated the village site, he (Dall) probably never saw the cave. This was because Dall would have collected all the contents (2002:48-49).

Hrdlička (1945:249) traveled to Amaknak where he excavated several village sites. He documented many items made of whale bone but no contextual information. Hrdlička believed these items represented the importance of whale procurement (1945:475-476). As cited in Chapters 2 and Chapter 6, Amaknak has yielded a large amount of archaeological material in the last few decades. The whale bone mask (Figure 11.7) was discovered during the final season of excavations and was discussed in Chapter 6.



Figure 11.7. Whale bone mask found in 2007 (from Rogers and Anichtcenko 2011).

There are twelve sets of human remains from Amaknak located at the Smithsonian (Hunt 2002:138). Numerous *umqan/ulakaax* have also been found in the Unalaska area (Knecht 2001 in Frohlich and Laughlin (2002:97).

11.11 Unga Island-Shumagin Islands: A Possible Burial Cave, Mummies and Skeletal Remains Were Found

Unga is the largest island in the Shumagin group. Pinart found a cave on Unga in 1871 which he named “*Cave of Aknanh*” (1875). The cave is also known as Delarov Cave (Black 2003:70). Pinart (1875:12) wrote of bodies that were placed inside as being supine on a bed of moss. He collected painted wooden masks he believed were used for funerals and explicitly stated that the cave was a tomb for whalers. He described whalers as privileged and feared. These men had to be initiated into their “corporation” after a series of tests. Pinart indicated that only whalers were placed in such caves as they represented an “aristocracy of courage” while everyone else was interred in huts or in walls of their homes.

When Dall (1878:28-31) visited the same cave in 1873, he was critical of Pinart’s excavation and accused Pinart of taking the best specimens. Dall found several mummies in various crannies of the cave, but only took the heads reasoning their torsos were too decayed. He examined several mummy bundles of children wrapped in grass matting, but never indicated if he collected them. Dall was told

about other caves on the Island, but he either was unable to find them or lacked time to investigate them.

Black (2003:79-86) examined all the artifacts from both collections including the masks that Pinart collected. She was convinced that the masks were associated with what she called the whaler's cult and represented killer whales or men transformed into killer whales similar to ones found on Kodiak (Black 2003: 79-86). As previously noted in Chapter 5, I prefer the use of the concept of a shamanistic "complex".

According to Hunt (2002:138), thirteen sets of human remains are at the Smithsonian from Unga. What can be made of the extended bodies lying on moss that Pinart documented? Bank found a body in a similar position on the floor of Cold Cave on Kagamil (1950:238). One possibility is that the bodies represented an older tradition.

11.12 Shiprock-Fox Islands: Mummies Were Found

Shiprock is situated in Umnak Pass, less than one mile from the eastern coast of Umnak Island. It is steep, rugged and in total is about 22 acres. Shiprock had been well documented as a Unanga's burial place during prehistoric and early historic times (Hrdlička 1945, 1985 BLM AA-1225). Hrdlička (1945:334) and his crew traveled there in 1936 and 1938 and found a large number of human mummies and burial goods, which they removed (Figure 11.8).

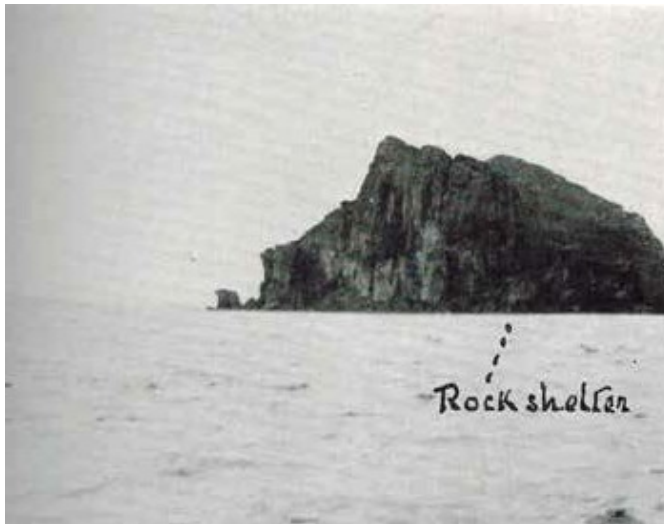


Figure 11.8. Photograph of Shiprock (from Hrdlička 1945:329).

Hrdlička identified and excavated two separate rock shelters containing human internments (Figure 11.9). A platform constructed of driftwood poles, a portion of a whale skull, and three whale scapulae upon which mummies had been placed were in the main shelter. Red painted stones, a bundle containing a hawk's claw, some feathers of a hawk, and some root fibers were also documented. Parallel poles leaning against the wall formed an inclined roof. There were indications that the roof had once been covered with sea lion skins (1945:325-6). He also found mummies similar to those found on Kagamil, but he did not find any remains of infants. The whale skull was cleaned revealing it was decorated with a red painted designs. Hrdlička documented a second shelter that contained the regular burials of six individuals (1945:328). The shelters had not been disturbed, and no elements from the historic (post-contact) period were identified. In 1938, Hrdlička returned to Shiprock and found numerous artifacts (1945:336). He later wrote that when they returned, they found petroglyphs in red on one of the large stones. These paintings consisted of lines and curves similar to those found on the base of the whale skull (1941b:120).

Hrdlička's published report did not include the specific locations of either the rock shelters or burials. His descriptions of burial goods and other archeological specimens were vague. It was also not clear exactly how many individuals were

removed from either rock shelter. Black (1987:36) commented on Hrdlička's discoveries and lack of recording on Shiprock. She was outraged because he did not photograph or make a drawing of where the whale bones formed the barrier in front of the cave, the painted whale skull, or the petroglyphs. She lamented that there is little documentation of such items in the Aleutians.



Figure 11.9. Photograph of Hrdlička's men on Shiprock (from Hrdlička 1945:328).

Black (2003:188-235) later wrote that the spiral motif Hrdlička described on the skull indicated that there was evidence of a whaling group (2003:188-235). Black believed this was similar to the motif found on a shield found in association with a mummy on Kagamil that will be discussed in Chapter 13 (Hrdlička 1945:460-464). BIA personnel (1985 BLM AA-1225) surveyed this small island but did not come across any *umqan/ulakaax* and reported that they saw caves on the northeast cliff face. There are 101 human remains from Shiprock in the Smithsonian (Hunt 2002:138).

11.13 Atka-Andreanof Islands: A Cave Cemetery, Rock Shelters, *Umqan/Ulakaax* Were Found

When writing of Atka, Dall (1978:5) hypothesized about the nature of the different types of burials he encountered. He concluded that it was lower class

individuals who were wrapped in cloth or mats and placed under rock overhangs in supine positions. He found fifteen skulls at such a place (1978:5).

Hrdlička (1945:191) doubted that Dall had discovered anything on Atka but instead suggested that he heard about human remains from some of the Atkans.

Jochelson (2002b:44-47) found several “cave cemeteries” on Atka and discovered two caves near an old village site. He assumed that both caves had served as burial places for the inhabitants of the village. Jochelson (2002 b:44) was told by an old Aleut informant that not all Aleuts were embalmed. Embalming was instead the privilege of noted hunters, especially whale hunters. Apparently, Atka Aleuts regarded them (the mummified remains) as bewitched after death, called them the “departed ones” and indicated that their families were also mummified. Jochelson found no mummies on Atka.

Bank (1950:156-158) discovered a burial cave on Atka in August of 1948. The cave contained three human skulls, one badly crushed, and two in excellent condition. Other broken human bones were found near the skulls. Sea mammal bones were associated with the burials, but the exact species was not revealed. All items were returned to the University of Michigan, and it remains unclear as to their deposition. Twenty-two human remains are at the Smithsonian from Atka (Hunt 2002:138). Numerous *umqan/ulakaax* have been found on Atka (Frohlich and Laughlin 2002:97). No mention is made of mummies being found, but it is believed that they were definitely there in the past (Bank 1950:158)

11.14 Amlia-Andreanof Islands: Mummies, Rock Shelters, Umqan/Ulakaax Were Found

In the travel journal of Father Lavrenty Salamatov (1862), under the date June 3, 1862, he wrote that the chief of Amlia informed him about the drowning at sea of thirteen Aleuts near Tanaga Island. They requested that he hold requiem services for

them. Father Salamatov traveled to the island and preached a sermon warning about worshipping false idols because he learned they were all practicing pagan superstitions by consulting with a “necromancer”. Apparently, before leaving on the fatal hunt, a few of the men visited a mummy on Kanaga Island. Salamatov wrote:

I have seen some mummies myself on Atka and Amlia. The pagan Aleuts paid the same homage to these mummies as to their idols and brought sacrifices to them. Then anybody who wished to learn about the success of a hunting expedition prepared himself with strict fasting, even keeping away from his wife for a definite time, then washed in the river and dressed in his best clothes. He went to the Dry One. Approaching the cave of the mummy, he cried loudly, I am coming to you to find out about the cave, carrying with him a gift to the Dry One. Sparkling black paint or ochre and a wing or a feather of a hawk was usually brought as a present.

The story is also found in an abbreviated version in Hudson (1952:83) and Laughlin (1980:102). The priest then asked permission to travel to the mummies that were known on Kanaga and Tanaga Islands and bury them in a Christian ceremony, but the Unanga would not let him do so. This passage provides several insights about mummification in the Aleutians. It was written 1862; over 120 years after the Russians came into the area. It demonstrates why there was a perceived danger involved in visiting the mummies without proper ritual observances, and provides an example of how the mummies were still being consulted. This caused much disdain by area priests. The priests considered their consultation as worshipping false idols, yet the Unanga still went to them. It also provides information pertaining to additional mummies being in different areas in the vicinity of Amlia.

Hrdlička (1941b:113) went to Amlia at least twice. He got there by going through a very dangerous, rocky passage called Hell’s Kitchen (Figure 11.10).



Figure 11.10. Photograph of Hell's Kitchen (from Hrdlička 1945:341).

BLM archaeologists (1994d BLM Site AA-12184:14) found evidence of a cave but thought that Hrdlička and others removed most of the human remains from it. They also predicted there were probably more human remains near an adjacent rock fall. Seventeen human remains from Amlia are at the Smithsonian (Hunt 2002:138).

11.15 Split Rock Islet-Fox Islands: Burial caves, mummies, rock shelters, and a sarcophagus burial was found

It is difficult to find Split Rock on any map because it is a large rock formation more than an island. This is where Weyer (1929:227) and his team located the sarcophagus burial containing the mummies. Hrdlička (1945:148, 270-271) climbed to the top of the rock with a ladder and surmised that it probably served as a refuge rock in the case of attacks. Due to its proximity to the village of Kashega, it was named *Mummy* or Cleft Island (1945:270). Hrdlička found a number of caves and rock shelters, at approximately 200 ft. All were empty.

Ted Bank (1954:5-6) and his University of Michigan expedition found several burial caves on Split Rock, or what he called "Mummy Island". He collected numerous skeletons with their heads missing, assuming they were decapitated. He

also found human bones charred by fire and cracked long bones. He surmised that these individuals may have been lookouts who were posted atop the isolated rock but were surprised by an enemy and slain. The bodies were left where they fell. The cracked bones may have been cannibalized, although there is little evidence for this. On Split Rock he also found large whale bones that were used to reinforce housing structures.

Bank entered a cave that contained several complete burials, grass matting, parts of fur clothing (sea otter), huge whale bones, wooden kayak parts, stone and bone points, and several ivory artifacts that were recovered (1954:5-7).

No human remains from Split Rock are at the Smithsonian, and no data are available pertaining to *umqan/ulakaax*. The finds from this Island are open to interpretation. Mummified human remains were found in the sarcophagus burial in the 1920s by the Stoll-McCracken Expedition as discussed in Chapter 9 (Weyer 1929). Because such landforms were used as refuge rocks, it seems credible that the decapitated individuals could have been lookouts. Or, perhaps they were enemies who were left where they died (their heads excepted). The cracked human bones are problematic. As noted in Chapter 6, on Kodiak Island Hrdlička (1944:146) found evidence of what he thought was cannibalism. There is no documentation in the literature or elder accounts of cannibalism in the Aleutians or on Kodiak Island. Whale bones were discovered nearby, but it remains unclear if they were used for housing structures, ceremonial purposes or both.

11.16 Tanaga Island-Andreanov Islands: A Burial Cave, *Umqan* and *Ulakaax* Were Found

Hrdlička visited Tanaga but could not find any of the caves that had been reported to him (1945:416). Ted Bank discovered a cave he called “Michigan Rock Cave” off Tanaga on a small islet. McCartney (1974:24) conducted an offshore survey

of Tanaga Island but did not observe any caves along its coast along Tanaga Bay.

BIA archaeologists documented several caves and approximately twelve sites on Tanaga Island (1994e:BLM AA-12038/BLM AA-12039; 1994f BLM AA-12043/1992 BLM AA12046). They documented a cave containing human remains near an old village site. There was a large chamber with six human skulls. A second cave was found, but it was reported that foxes were living inside at the time of the survey. Human remains and fox debris were scattered across the floor. The army had been stationed on the island during WWII, and numerous vehicles and oil drums had been left behind. Archaeologists assumed that military personnel and/or trappers may have looted the first burial cave because they found poles and planks that appeared to have been damaged at the front of the cave. They also found cordage, matting fragments, and kayak parts inside the cave (1994d BLM AA-12038:23). No human remains from Tanaga are in the Smithsonian collection, but numerous *umqan/ulakaax* have been found (Hunt 2002:138).

11.17 Iliak Island-Delarof Islands: Burial Caves, *Umqan* and *Ulakaax* Were Found

According to Hrdlička (1941b:114-115), an old chief on Amlia told him about several mummy caves that were on Ilak. Ilak was known as a place with bad storms and dangerous rocks. Hrdlička learned that the cave and its contents had been plundered by several fox trappers. The trappers took all the mummies and artifacts, and as a consequence, their boat capsized and they drowned. As a result, all the mummies were lost. Another version of this story was told to Hudson (1952:176-177) by elder, Sergie Sovoroff, who saw the mummies in a cave on Ilak in 1926, but he did not dare touch or take anything from them. Whether true or not, this tale reinforces the belief that anyone who disrespected the mummies would meet with death.

In the summer of 1948, Ted Bank (1956:117, 141) was informed by nearby

residents that there were numerous burials in the cliffs of Ilak Island, but many had been covered by falling rocks and earth. He visited the location and called it “Lost Mummy Island” (1956:137). All he found were human remains in a rock shelter.

In 1993, Ilak was surveyed by BIA archaeologists (BLM AA 12036 and BLM AA 12037). They documented two caves that appeared to be the ones recorded by Hrdlička. They found no human remains, but they located several possible *umqan* or *ulakaax*. No human remains from Ilak are at the Smithsonian.

11.18 Adak-Andreanof Islands: A Cave Cemetery Was Found

Veniaminov (1984:366) specifically mentioned Adak’s cave. He stated that the Aleuts carved man-sized idols of human shapes called *taiyaguligus* or puppets for magical purposes (Black 2003:30). They were disposed of in caves when the makers finished with them.

Veniaminov reported that in 1827 two Aleuts saw one of these idols in a cave on Adak. It was “killed” with a gun, cut into pieces, and burned. Dall 1878:7 visited the island and found nothing.

Hrdlička (1945:416) found a cave close by, but it was empty. He also found a village site. Bank was there in 1946, and found a large site near “Campers Cove” that included 35 house pits. (Bank 1950:97).

No human remains from Adak are at the Smithsonian collection.

11.19 Attu and Buldir, Near Islands: A Burial Cave and Whale Artifacts Were Found

It has been noted that a majority of the early works on the Aleutian Islands focused on the Eastern Aleutian archipelago. Those to the far west over time have been viewed as less sophisticated than their eastern neighbors (Corbett 2011; Black 1984; Hrdlička 1945). In 1998, however, the Western Aleutians Archaeological and

Paleobiological Project (WAAPP) team discovered a burial in a cave on the Island of Attu (West et al. 2003). And despite Hrdlička's (1945) and Jochelson's (2002b) active investigations, no cave burials had ever been reported from the Aleutians west of the Delarof Islands in the Central Aleutians (West et al 2003:81-85).

The WAAPP team, found hearths and work areas inside the cave entrance along with human bones associated with carefully arranged stones (West et al. 2003). A second partial stone arrangement was discovered at the rear of the cave which project members believed to be a burial, although no human bones were observed. These features were similar to the cave found on Kanaga (West et al. 2003:83-84). The team concluded that there were three occupation levels in the cave. The rear of the cave contained burials dated between 1,200 and 800 B.P. It appeared to be used as a temporary shelter/hunting camp approximately 390 years ago. They then found World War II debris including graffiti and evidence that both Japanese and American soldiers had been in the cave. This cave is the first such cave found in association with a burial in the Aleutians west of the Delarof Islands (West et al. 2003:83). The WAAPP researchers concluded that burial practices in the Near Islands appeared to be based on age. Juveniles and adults were placed in shallow graves demarcated by large stones and the bodies of infants were frequently tucked under overhangs and niches along the sides of caves. This made their bones more vulnerable to disturbance by scavengers. The team considered the hypothesis that cave burials were sometimes reserved for higher-ranking individuals or those with special occupations (e.g. whale hunters) in Aleut society as argued by Black and Liapanova (1988:54). They concluded that the presence of so many young individuals in the Near Islands cave suggested that rank/occupation did not always factor into Near Islands burial practices. A small piece of red ocher with a burial was the only grave object found in the cave. Ocher was often associated with Aleut burials (West et al. 2003:83-86).

Of particular interest to this study, is that between 1997 and 2003, the WAAPP members excavated two structures they found to be unusual on Buldir and Attu Islands. Corbett (2011) suspected that these were the homes of chiefs. They were larger than other residences, with a substantial amount of whale bone components. A whale skull was part of the home on Buldir along with ribs and mandibles. An orca tooth was also discovered in one of the structures. Similar use of whale bones were found on Attu. These homes on Buldir and Attu were found in association with an eagle buried with a sea otter. According to Corbett (2011:13)

The incorporation of whale bone into house construction is relatively common for the Aleutians. Using whale skulls is rare.... Aboriginal houses are social environments, sanctuaries from evil.... In most traditional societies there is no separation between the sacred and the profane, and therefore houses can be windows into long lost social worlds. They [whales] were viewed as sentient beings.

Based on the information cited above, Corbett (2011:14) affirmed that to the Unanga houses were viewed as living beings with bodies and souls. The concept is strengthened by a word for both a *hole* and for the whale's blow hole (*ang, angi-liz*), which means breath, life, and spirit. Corbett inferred that there was a symbolic significance to the houses in Western Aleutian society. These dwellings were indicative of the spiritual power that was affiliated with whaling. Corbett argued the homes belonged to chiefs, and she does not directly infer that these chiefs could also be whalers. It must be noted that this concept is similar to the ideas proposed by Patton and Savelle (2006) in their article "The Symbolic Dimensions of Whale Bone use in Thule Winter Dwellings". In this paper the authors drew parallels between the Thule winter houses made of numerous whale bones, which not only represented a whale structurally, but also symbolically. Little is known about whaling in the western Aleutians. There is no doubt whales migrated throughout these islands. Johnson (2016:137) discounts any whale ceremonialism that is alluded to in Corbett's study. Johnson contends the Neo-Aleuts previously discussed by Hrdlička (1945:521) as

whalers, did not spread farther than the Islands of the Four Mountains and what Corbett inferred was not related to the mummification complex. It is my assertion that Corbett's analysis is compelling and the presence of whale skulls and other parts make a strong case for some type of ceremonialism regarding the whale taking into account that it was a sentient being. .

11.20 Summary

The information presented in this chapter highlights the difficulty that exists in attempting to formulate a coherent theory pertaining to Unanga's mortuary practices based on the archaeological evidence (or lack thereof). In a majority of the literature, many of the references pertaining to human remains that have been collected over the years lack specific details especially related to their placement in time and space. There is little explicit detail regarding the placement of artifacts and other material remains in association with mummies or other human remains aside from island and sometimes cave names. Remote geographical locations and features also posed and continue to be problematic for archaeologists. In order to contextualize the information pertaining to mummification and whaling, in this chapter I reevaluated the various accounts pertaining to mummification, both historical and recent. It was expected that there would be variability in terms of body deposition, due to the vast distance from the eastern to the western segments of the Aleutians, which was validated by my research and that of others (Corbett et al. 2001). Unfortunately, it is also obvious that numerous mummies have disappeared and their whereabouts are unknown. Others probably were never discovered.

There are patterns that emerged while reviewing the data in this chapter. The use of driftwood/whale bone scaffolding seems to be a recurrent practice when multiple mummified individuals were placed in caves. These were found on Carlisle,

Kanaga, Shiprock, and Tanaga Islands. Whale bones were found in association with mummified human remains on Kagamil, Carlisle, Amaknak, and Shiprock. Of particular interest is the whale bone “sarcophagus” found on Carlisle Island along with the driftwood shaft with the whale motif. Also fascinating is the painted whale skull found on Shiprock decorated with a “red design” near undocumented petroglyphs. These provide clues pertaining to whaling and burials that remain elusive. The symbolic aspect of these features cannot be disregarded. Corbett pointed this out based on housing structures in the Western Aleutians. It appears that whales were valued for giving themselves to humans. They became aspects of material culture but always with spiritual overtones.

Hrdlička’s description of his findings on Shiprock gives credence to the fact that not everyone was mummified or preserved. Hrdlička (1945:72-73) specifically noted that there were regular burials with no wrappings found with the mummified remains. This was probably related to status. The archaeological practices or observations of the first individuals to record and document life in the Aleutians can be criticized; however, there appears to be a recurrent theme in these early accounts, especially indicating that the mummies represented former whalers, and that whalers were of high status and needed to be respected, even after death. It seems logical that those writing about mummification early on would be closer in time to accounts of the actual practices. Veniaminov (1984:72-73), for instance, indicated that whalers were the ones stealing body parts, especially the joints from the Kagamil mummies. Pinart (1875) was of the opinion that in most cases the whalers (and their families) were mummified. Could it be, as noted by Pinart on Unga (1875:6) and Bank on Kagamil (1950:238) that, in earlier times, mummified whalers were interred in a supine position at which time they were placed in a cave on a bed of moss or in a sarcophagus type structure? Were the Islands of the Four Mountains the center of a

whale hunting culture at some point in time prior to the arrival of the Russians? Until more data are published, and archaeological surveys and excavations completed, these questions will remain unanswered. However, the various accounts indicating the sheer number of mummified individuals found and or observed on these islands cannot be ignored. The map below (Figure 11.11) indicates the locations where mummies have been found, and other areas where they probably were placed at some point in time based on the accounts provided in this chapter.

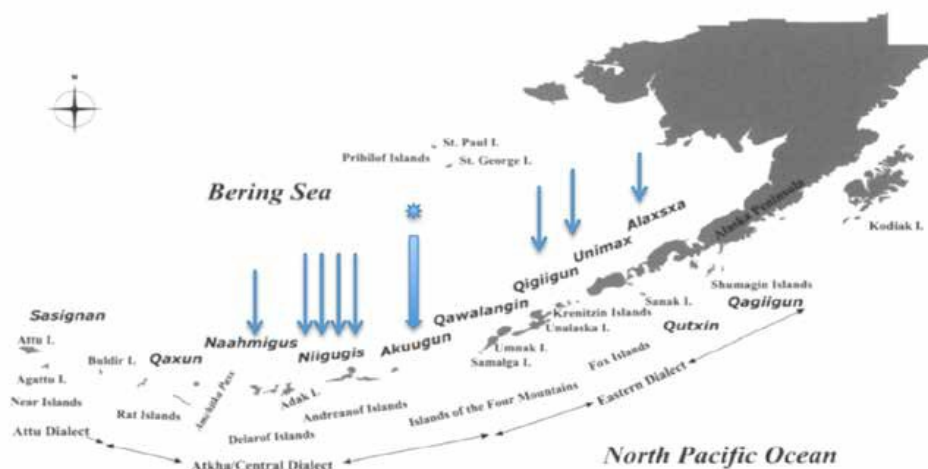


Figure 11.11. Map of the Aleutians showing the locations of where mummies have been found (modified from Reedy-Maschner 2010:57). *=Islands of the Four Mountains.

According to Reedy-Maschner (2010:586), it is estimated that at the time of contact there were approximately 10,000 Unanga^â in the Fox Island grouping alone and another 2,200 in the Andreanof, Near, and Rat Islands groupings.

Veniaminov (1984:246) estimated approximately 15,000 Unanga^â prior to contact. The Islands of the Four Mountains had a significantly smaller population than other groupings, especially to the east. It is difficult to explain the relationship between mummification and whaling in lieu of this information.

I propose several explanations. It could be that whalers used these islands (of the Four Mountains) to keep their mummies safe and hidden for exactly this very reason. These islands were sparsely populated and inhospitable compared to the other regions, especially in the east. Because of the difficulty in getting to this

island grouping, even in modern times, it is certainly plausible that there are many more caves hidden away that have not been discovered. Additionally, the placement of the dead in *umqan* also offers clues. Because they are now archaeologically recognized as burial mounds, many more have been documented. This is especially true in relation to caves containing mummies. I offer the explanation that these may be the final resting place of those of commoner status or perhaps those nobles whose deaths did not warrant mummification.

Of additional note are the caves on Carlisle Island that remained untouched and undiscovered until 1990. It could be, as Black (2003:36) proposed, that whalers in this island grouping were either culturally distinct or that whaling in this region and others occurred intermittently in different areas. Ultimately, we may never know the true answer, but all data point to the fact of the correlation between whaling and mummification.

In addressing the information presented in this chapter, there are other issues and the questions that remain ambiguous. It is an archaeological tragedy that Hrdlička never provided a detailed description of what was painted on the whale skull he found on Shiprock or information about the petroglyphs he discovered. The reburial of the Carlisle Island mummies is also unfortunate.

In spite of these discrepancies, in this chapter I was able to present the evidence from caves and evaluate claims that human remains were those of whalers. I highlighted the connection between human and whale remains in caves that were difficult to access. Despite such difficult locations, the evidence from Russian priests demonstrates that people were still honoring the mummified dead. These are all important stepping stones that help me in approaching my hypothesis that special kind of liminality pertained in this society of sea mammal hunters.

Chapter 12: Mummification in Contiguous Regions

12.1 Introduction

There were numerous early anecdotal references to the mummification that occurred throughout the Kodiak Archipelago and Prince William Sound. These have a direct bearing on my research. However, to date these areas have yielded few mummies intact and in situ. In this chapter, these various reports will be presented in order to better contextualize Aleutian mummification from a broader geographical perspective. This reinforces the notion of a shamanistic complex linked to whaling. Information is included regarding mummies found on Prince William Sound and how whaling shrines were constructed in the Pacific Northwest and Siberia. There has been a lot of documentation pertaining whaling ceremonialism for Kodiak over the years, especially involving mummification. However these mummies are presumed looted or have not been discovered. In spite of these problems, the literature supports the view that on Kodiak whalers maintained high status. It was the whalers who performed the mummification, kept the mummies in caves and used them as talismans for whale hunting. On Kodiak the role of whaler was so ritualized due to their contact with the dead and the “other than human whales” that they were given a specific named which translated as “shamans who hunt whales” And, because of these associations whalers were required to live away from their communities, entering their own liminal status during whaling times. These accounts can help to fill in the gaps of what is not known for their Aleutian neighbors and aid in my overall research objectives. It also needs to be noted that throughout this section there are references to a “whaling cult”. I have left the authors’ writings in their original forms. However, as previously stated, in all actuality what is really described is the shamanistic complex that was pervasive among Pacific Rim whaling communities.

12.2 The Sugpiaq

The people of the Kodiak Archipelago, the southern part of mainland Alaska, the Kenai area, and Prince William Sound now call themselves Sugpiaq, their traditional name, which replaced the name Alutiiq, which referred to the language they spoke (Figure 12.1). This chapter will only focus on the Kodiak Archipelago and Prince William Sound because these areas yielded mummies or data on whaling ceremonialism in relation to mummification. For the purpose of clarification, I will refer to both of these two areas only when I use the phrase “Sugpiaq region”. I will refer to each individually as an area. The designation of Kodiak will mean the entire Kodiak Archipelago, which also includes a number of smaller islands. The names Sugpiaq and Koniag will be used interchangeably referring to the Natives of this area and as originally documented by the various authors (Oswalt 1990; Crowell 1994). Finally, as mentioned in the previous chapter, although there were differences in language and ethnicity, both the Aleutian and the Sugpiaq regions represented a cultural continuum based on numerous similarities they shared (Pendleton 2008:23).

In the ethnographic literature, the residents of Prince William Sound, the mainland that is closest to the Aleutians, and sometimes Kodiak were referred to as the Chugach or Pacific Eskimos (Birket-Smith 1953; de Laguna 1956; Clark 1984). These names are still used in various publications. They all speak the Alutiiq (Eskimo) language. According to Brian Fagan (2008:51), “no specialists in these areas enjoyed more prestige than whalers”. There is no question that intensified whaling and mummification practices occurred in these two areas. The forthcoming review will include evidence to substantiate that in these two areas there was a shamanistic complex made up of whalers who practiced mummifications.



Figure 12.1. Map indicating Kodiak Island, Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet (in box)

12.3 Regional Colonization and Looting

The information about looting is important because it provides an explanation as to why additional mummified human remains are not available for study from these two areas. The Aleutians, although plundered by the Russians, are more remote. During the early days of Russian conquest, emphasis was placed on exploiting maritime resources and subjugating the Unanga^â rather than exploring the area for curiosities and obtaining anecdotal information about the Natives (Lantis 1984:163). The Russians did not infiltrate the Kodiak area until 1763 continuing with their quest for furs. They enlisted Unanga^â hunters and warriors to help subjugate the Sugpiaq because they were considered traditional enemies of the Unanga^â (Maschner and Reedy-Maschner 1998:20). Even though the Kodiak Islanders initially resisted, they were eventually conquered, and by 1784 Kodiak served as a labor colony (Cook 1981:162; Mason 1995). By 1792, Kodiak was the base of operations for the Russian American Company which engaged solely in the fur trade. It became a center of commerce at which time even a warehouse was built. As reported by the Russian priests and merchants, indications were that much of the complex features of their aboriginal culture and belief

system had been obliterated (Clark 1984:137; Mason 1995). It is speculated that on Kodiak, as in in the Aleutians, the Koniag beliefs were practiced secretly after conquest (Cook 1981:162).

The Chugach of the Prince William Sound area were colonized by the late 1790s, although this area was not as populated by non-natives. By the 1840s, due to pressure from Yankee whalers coming into the region, the Russians attempted whaling in the Gulf of Alaska. This venture ended after a decade. Russians did not have the technology to compete and were still relying on aboriginal whaling techniques. After the purchase of Alaska by the United States, the Alaska Commercial Company was formed to harvest what was left of the fur bearing animals in the region, and they expanded their operations to the Pribilof Islands, which were even more remote. The salmon runs of the 1880s brought a new crop of workers into the entire region. By the late 1890s, gold strikes farther north in Alaska also brought prospectors to Prince William Sound. The area was later mined for coal and copper (Lethcoe and Lethcoe 1994:25-30). Over time the Kodiak/Prince William Sound areas were more heavily frequented than the Aleutians (Hrdlička 1944:240; Crowell 1992). These areas provided easier access for mummy and artifact looting, the culprits being unscrupulous traders, soldiers, merchants, fisherman, prospectors, missionaries, settlers, and United States military personnel. Throughout the rest of this chapter, Kodiak and Prince William Sound will be discussed separately in order to clarify what is known and not known pertaining to the practice of mummification by whalers in each area.

12.4 Whaling on Kodiak

Whale usage on Kodiak has a time frame of at least 5,000 years (Saltonstall n.d.). All indications are that by the time of contact in the Kodiak area, the solitary poison dart method with the use of aconite was the most favored method. There are

accounts of aconite being so powerful when used for whaling that birds flying over a whaling kayak would drop dead from the mere smell of the poison (Fagan 2008:53).

12.5 Koniag Death Customs

At this juncture it is important to link death customs to the practice of whaling. Donta (1993:149-152) wrote that the most important and most frequently described ceremonies among the Koniag of the contact period were those held at the death of a village member. The German, Carl Merck (1980), on Kodiak from 1788-1792, included information on death and burial in his writings. He recorded that the Koniag dead were buried in a suitable place either near or in the village. The body was usually flexed (Merck 1980:107- 108; Black 1987:86). Cremation was rare (Birket-Smith 1953:43). According to Merck (1980:108), when individuals died, some were buried within their homes or side rooms, and the structure, subsequently considered unclean, was collapsed around them (Merck 1980:108; Holmberg 1985:53). However, several other Russian accounts indicate that the very important and wealthy were mummified and their bodies placed in caves (Masterson and Brower 1948:91-92; Sauer 1972:177; Dall 1875:439-440; Birket Smith 1953:89). Shamans were also sometimes buried inside their kayaks with their implements in caves (Holmberg 1985:53).

Among the Koniag, all things were tied to status, including death. The chief gained prestige through successful raids and economic strength by capturing slaves from neighboring groups (Black 1977:81). As in the Aleutians, whale hunting was restricted to the highest ranked individuals in the village who inherited this right from their ancestors (Lantis (1938:339-340, Heizer 1943a:26). Kodiak whale hunters were also members of the secretive “whaling cult” (Lantis 1938:439, Heizer 1943a:37). As a result, the knowledge related to whale hunting was closely guarded. The power to kill whales was obtained from the mummified bodies of high status individuals such as

other whalers. They were kept in secret locations known only to cult members. The whale hunters were greatly respected for their abilities and also feared due to their association with the dead. It is evident that Koniag whalers represented the elite, were powerful in life and even more so in death (Donta 1993:123). Unfortunately, information on the organization and activities of the Koniag secret societies, like the whaling cult, is extremely limited, leaving many important unanswered questions (Donta 1993:160-161).

12.6 Koniag Mummies and Ritual

On Kodiak Island there were many anecdotal tales of whalers taking mummified bodies for use in the hunt. These statements are problematic because no mummies have been found in the Kodiak region. There is also only limited mention made of mummification by the Russians. Sauer (1972:177) wrote of a dead chief that was embalmed with moss. Due to the absence of mummies found, Laughlin (1983:7) wrote that “Though the Koniag were reputed to have made and used mummies, none have been found and the related practices such as autopsy and comparative anatomy are similarly missing”.

In this passage, Laughlin does not discount that mummification occurred, but instead infers that because the mummies were all plundered, the knowledge about such Sugpiaq customs has stolen our understanding of them. The only exception comes from a mummy that was presented to Dall while on Kodiak Island (1870s). It was photographed and curated at the Smithsonian. The specific information known about this mummy is discussed below. There is no way to verify that the particular mummy actually came from Kodiak.

There are also no contextual artifacts and or human remains from any archaeological sites in the Kodiak area to substantiate the practice of mummification.

Instead, as already cited in Chapter 6, human remains were found that had cut marks, were dismembered, experienced perimortem breakage, and showed evidence of drilling and other modifications (Maschner and Reedy-Maschner 2007:34; Simon and Steffian 1994:97). It should be noted that these finds were restricted to a few sites, and they could represent a regional variation and secret ritual practice of the whaling complex. Desson (1995) wrote her thesis on the “Masked Rituals of the Kodiak Archipelago” and devoted a chapter to rituals pertaining to whalers, the hunt of the whale, and the Kodiak mummies. Desson used several sources including the statements of Pinart (she translated all of his diaries located at the University of California, Berkley that were dated in 1873). Her data are similar to Pinart’s other writings already translated by others such as Bland (Pinart n.d.) and found in earlier sections of this study. To help correlate whalers to mummification, Desson relied on a story told by elder Ralph Demidoff (Desson 1995) that was recorded and housed at the University of Alaska Native Language Institute. Demidoff explained that in the Kodiak region the hunting of the whale was more than a mere subsistence activity. For the whalers, it was a dangerous and powerful enterprise that included solitary ritual activity. It also placed the whaler in immediate contact with danger and with the spiritual world. Every aspect of the hunt was enmeshed in rituals, but the most important occurred prior to and during the hunt when the whaler transformed into a killer whale (Desson 1995:119).

12.7 Koniag Body Procurement

All accounts indicate that on Kodiak Island whalers took dead bodies (presumably of other whalers and or important individuals) to mummify. This practice was recorded by Pinart (Lantis 1938:451), who indicated that the mummies were those of former successful whalers. One hundred years earlier the identical information was record by the Russian Lisiansky (2010[1814]:124).

Lisiansky (2010[1814]:93) was the first to write that on Kodiak the dead were stolen by whalers from graves and placed in secret caves. Each whaler had his own cave, and this was considered his most prized possession. When a whaler died, his heir, if not already a member, would be initiated into the whaling cult. Their duty was then to continue the tradition by obtaining even more mummies. However, only those who excelled in hunting and intelligence were taken to be mummified. Since the passage just cited was in reference to whaling, it can be assumed that the bodies of other whalers were the most desirable. (Note should be made that these accounts only focused on whalers, but Pinart's evidence, to be cited below, suggests that other family members were also mummified.)

Pinart (Desson 1995:80-82) and Demidoff (Desson 1995:80-83) provided similar accounts (within almost a century of timespan) as to how the whalers stole bodies. The deceased person was placed in a grave at death. Shortly afterwards a solitary whaler, under the cover of darkness, visited the grave. In Pinart's account (Desson 1995:79-80), the whaler had to be dressed as a crab. Desson (1995:80) theorized that if this was true, that perhaps the crab costume was symbolic as crabs feed on dead organisms. The whaler then performed an array of rituals and entered a trancelike state, dancing frantically. A spinning green mist would then come out of the grave, causing the deceased to rise from the dead. As the body rose, it would moan, all the while enmeshed in the mist. Once fully out of the grave, it would fall to the ground and the mist would depart. Then the whaler carried the corpse into his cave to mummify (Desson 1995:79). These accounts add a further dimension as to the use of spiritual power and danger. In reality, I suggest that the whalers dug up the bodies after much transformation through ritual.

12.8 The Secrecy of Whaling

Holmberg (1985:159) reviewed the writings of the Russian Davydov, who reported that all matters pertaining to whaling was cloaked in secrecy. Pinart (Donta 1993:145) indicated that the secrets of the whalers were only revealed during the initiation ceremonies at which time only certain males could enter the cult. These included not only trials through which all the rituals were learned but also in the seeking of a vision (Lantis 1938:440-441).

This aspect is not explained but it can be inferred that the initiate learned how to contact the realm of the dead. Secrets thought to be revealed included the location of the caves where whalers would store and preserve the mummified bodies they procured. These caves were the places where the whalers gathered before a whale hunt began. Holmberg (1985:160) documented that on Kodiak, before hunting, the whalers took the mummies to a nearby brook and placed them in water. The whalers then drank the water for strength and protection. Then the bodies of dead whalers were sometimes cut into pieces and preserved so they could be smeared on the spear points. It is my interpretation that pieces would be cut off the body after mummification occurred.

12.9 The Relationship between Whalers and Mummies

From the preceding passages, it is obvious how crucial the mummification of dead bodies was to the practice of whaling. The whalers on Kodiak wore special garb, especially hats, similar to the Unangaâ, which would transform them into orcas during the hunt (Black 1991:33). On Kodiak, whalers were viewed as shamans. Whalers lived in isolation from the other members of their community during the whaling season. During this time the individual whaler performed many secret rituals (Desson 1995:85). To outsiders, whalers were therefore considered to be powerful shamans. However, after the hunter had killed the whale, he placed his ritual hunting gear in his cave,

fasted, and further isolated himself until he was reincorporated back from the spiritual realm to his former status in the community. This relates to the concept of liminality as pertained to whalers. As part of the whaling complex, the whalers observed, through rituals, the processes of separation, transformation, and reincorporation (Donta 1995:75). It was only at death that they achieved the more persistent liminal status through mummification.

12.10 Specific Mummies on Kodiak

Pinart (Desson 1995:340-342) provided a very detailed description of a cave on Kodiak he visited that contained mummies. If true his documentation provides information regarding women and children who were also mummified. The cave was divided into several sections by sealskins. Two mummified old men with white beards were at the entrance, sitting on their heels and were in the process of sharpening their slate spearheads. In the middle of the cave was a miniature lake on which a small whale and kayak were floating. There was a man in the kayak throwing his arrow at the whale. In the other sections of the cave, there were various mummies in the process of preparing some of the objects necessary for the whale hunt. There was a man holding the wood of an arrow, and across from him was a woman preparing whale nerve fibers, which were used to sew the *kamleika* (waterproof garment made from marine animal intestines). There was another mummified woman with a child at her breast who was sewing (Desson 1995:119). This account, if it is accurate, provides evidence that, as in the Aleutians, on Kodiak Island women and children were also mummified. Note must also be made that if the cave was divided into sections, this division is similar to the description of what was found in Asxaana-â Cave on Carlisle Island (Johnson, personal Communication, March 16, 2013).

Dall (1875:434, 439, 1878:350) also wrote of mummification on Kodiak. He

was aware of Pinart's writings because the two corresponded, and Dall contended that Pinart never found the mummy cave he (Pinart) described. Dall alleged that instead, Pinart wrote his account after talking to several elders (Desson 1995:35). As if to compete with Pinart, Dall (1878:27-28) wrote that while on Kodiak he was given a mummy of a "middle aged man with hair" found on Kodiak by an individual named Mr. Sheeran (Figure 12.2). Sheeran allegedly found it in an unknown cave location and then kept it in an outhouse in the town of Kodiak. When local natives learned of the mummy, they complained, indicating that the mummy was not being treated with respect and as a result had to be appeased or it would roam the streets at night. The Natives left berries and other offerings for the mummy outside his undignified resting place. After the mummy was presented to Dall, it was sent to and eventually curated at the Smithsonian. Its location of origin could never be verified.



Figure 12.2. Mummy presented to Dall in June of 1874 on Kodiak and donated to the National Museum by Mr. Sheeran (from Dall 1878: Plate 9).

The mummy (as shown above) was dressed in a gut shirt. In one hand was a stick to which was attached a narrow slate lance head (of the type used for whaling). On

the point of this lance was a crude figure of a person cut out of tanned sealskin. The local Natives explained that this figure represented an evil spirit that would plague all of them if the mummy was not given proper respect and food. Not heeding their warning, Dall had to break the mummy's left forearm to fit it in a container for shipping (Dall 1878:26-28, 49). Dall (1878:30) was told that sometimes living whalers would even steal mummies from the caves of other whalers to aid in their own success (1878:27). Apparently no one doubted that mummification occurred on Kodiak. Not only was there mummification, the caves were treated as shrines and the mummies were viewed as deities (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:171). It is inferred in this context that they were viewed as being in the realm of another world, and that they were worshipped, consulted, and feared, which provides further evidence of their power in this liminal state. For this reason, the whalers brought offerings to them. It is also apparent that the rituals and practices pertaining to mummification and whaling were almost identical when reviewing what was known about the Unanga. In both groups, the practice of mummification was tied to whaling, spiritual power, and hereditary social status (Donta 1993:411).

12.11 The Status of Whalers as Shamans

Koniag society was considered lineage based and extremely hierarchical, similar to that of the Unanga and the Natives of the Pacific Northwest (Crowell 1994:231). There was a chief of each village, then an elite class, commoners, and slaves (Crowell 1994:231). It is my assertion that as in the Aleutians, the role of the whaler was heterarchical in nature (Crumley 1995), with various functions and perceptions of their roles and status mediated depending on the circumstances. On Kodiak, whalers were considered among the elite because they hunted and procured whales for the village. The Russian Gideon (Black 1997:91) described whale meat and oil as possessions of the

wealthiest of natives. Patrick Saltonstall (n.d.), curator of archaeology at the Alutiiq Museum on Kodiak, also corroborated that whalers viewed as shamans. They were called *anwarculi*, which, according to Leer (1989:49), translated as “shamans who hunt whales”. The whaler/shamans were associated with the dead. They were regarded as a specialist caste because they were required to have extraordinary spiritual powers. As with the Unangâ, this was in part due to the poisoned dart whaling method that was used. They were members of the elaborate and secretive whaling complex that existed throughout the region (Crowell 1994:234). During the whaling season they were viewed as polluted and unclean due to their association with the dead and spirits. When the whaling season was over, they took on the status of husbands and community members, sometimes warriors (Desson 1995:75). They were not tasked with making predictions or taking care of medical matters in the villages as there were village shamans known as *kahahulik* who filled these functions. (Merck 1980:107; Donta 136-127).

12.12 Whaling Gear, Prayers, and Songs

Whaling paraphernalia was stored in caves, and these caves served as the sites where aconite poison was made. Pinart (Desson 1995:74) recorded that when a whaler was ready to leave for a hunt, he called to the sky, his talismans, and then spoke to his kayak. When the whale was sighted, he sang various incantations before casting the spear. The Russians wrote of aconite poison being used for whaling, and most accounts cite “mummy grease” as also being used on Kodiak (Saltonstall n.d.:6). This parallels similar accounts from the Aleutians, which in all likelihood served the same purpose in order to keep whaling and the use of aconite as secretive as possible. The whalers had specific spiritual gear including headwear similar to those in the Aleutians for whaling. Small isolated sites have been found on Kodiak, which may have been used by whalers during their time of social isolation before, during, and after the hunt (Saltonstall n.d.).

It was also documented that when not hunting, whalers married, had residences in the villages, and the whaler and his wife controlled the food resources when whales were procured (Desson 1995:75).

12.13 Petroglyphs

Many petroglyphs were found in the Kodiak area, some representing various marine mammals, other figures, and whales (Figure 12.3). Heizer (1947:288-292) found similarities between the Kodiak petroglyphs and those on the Northwest Coast further indicating the existence of a wide-spread whaling cult. Heizer (1947) analyzed the main petroglyphs from Cape Alitak on Kodiak. The drawings were made by scraping incisions into rocks sometimes one inch deep. Paint was used on some. The petroglyphs consisted of human figures or faces, cetaceans, land animals, and various geometric designs. The cetaceans represented orcas, sperm whales, and either porpoises or belugas. The whale petroglyphs were clustered together on a separate group of rocks. It is believed that they are only two hundred years old at the maximum and are similar to the petroglyphs found by de Laguna (1934) on Cook Inlet. They are thought to have been made by the whaler/shamans (Knebel 2003:24). Of note is the fact that petroglyphs were not characteristically made by Alaska Native groups, so it is inferred that they represent influences from the Pacific Northwest groups (Heizer 1947:284-292). Although the mechanisms of contact are not entirely clear, this rock art seems to be related to a transmission of ideas among members of whaling groups linked to whale ceremonialism. Cape Alitak, is located on the southern tip of Kodiak. Whales and other sea mammals migrate past this location on the way to the Bering Sea (Rick Knecht, personal communication, July 16, 2016).



Figure 12.3. Alutiiq Petroglyphs enhanced (from Saltonstall n.d.).

12.14 Similarities to the Pacific Northwest

The Natives of Kodiak Island (and the Aleutians) had many similarities with the Natives of Southeast Alaska and British Columbia. This indicates that there was contact among the groups; although the exact mechanism is unclear but probably occurred through trade or warfare. These similarities remain a consistent theme in the literature, and full consideration of the similarities would merit a much longer treatment of this topic. Suffice to say, these groups all placed a great emphasis on wealth and prestige (Kan 1999; Liapunova 1996:5). There were also many similarities pertaining to whaling that were outlined by Lantis (1938:451-453) indicative of a whaling complex. The Natives of Southeast Alaska and British Columbia used the bones of dead ancestors (whalers) when out whale hunting (Black 1997:23), which will be discussed in a subsequent section. There were also accounts of both groups carrying dead bodies to water and then drinking. They had similar petroglyphs as pointed out by Heizer (1947). Finally, in his original monograph on Unangaâ hunting hats, Ivanov (Black 1991:45) pointed out similarities between the zoomorphic masks used by the Tlingit to the designs of the hunting hats used on Kodiak and in the Aleutians.

12.15 Mummies of the Chugach (Prince William Sound)

The Chugach region has yielded many more stories, and remains of mummies than Kodiak, but less is known about the actual relation between whaling and mummification. Most of the work on Chugach mummification and whaling was gathered by Kaj Birket-Smith (1953) and Frederica de Laguna (1956) as members of the Danish-American Expedition of 1933. Although the main focus was on an archaeological survey of the region, de Laguna visited a number of caves and rock shelters while recording what was most known about mortuary patterns. Birket-Smith and de Laguna obtained ethnographic data. During the course of their fieldwork, they found numerous human remains in caves and rock shelters. Many of these caves were on small, uninhabited islands. The Chugach sometimes interred their dead in shallow graves dug in village refuse heaps, and it was assumed these individuals were of lower status. In contrast, it appeared the Chugach sometimes placed the bodies of more prominent individuals on top of inaccessible rocky islets, high cliffs, or in caves (de Laguna 1956:92- 94) similar to Unanga practices. Many of the Bureau of Land Management surveys (1992b:BLM-AA-1042; 1992c:BLM 11043; 1991b:BLM-AA-11142; 1984:BLM-AA-11025; 1981:BLM-AA 11038) were completed in this area during the 1990s for the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) land conveyances. Throughout surveys, it was reported that numerous parts of mummified human remains were documented in various caves and rock shelters.

12.16 Whalers of Prince William Sound

Birket-Smith (1953:33-36) was told by elders that whaling was an occupation of paramount importance in the area. Whales were hunted only by certain persons, and each village had whalers. Whalers received special training that was always secretive and steeped in ceremonialism. In the Prince William Sound area, the Kodiak style of

whaling was used, which included the use of aconite. There were also rumors that mummy fat was used. Whalers were highly respected and trained in many rituals. It was the whalers who drew the petroglyphs in secret places. They were also thought to be involved in killing people and secretly boiling their fat to make a poison. Birket-Smith was informed that the Unanga and Koniag whalers stole dead bodies, but the Chugach used corpses they had killed themselves. They had special songs and incantations that helped kill the whale (1953:36). Birket-Smith documented traces of mummies throughout the area. He was told they were the remains of dead whalers whose parts were later used for luck and power. However, they (he and de Laguna) eventually realized that by the time the Danish American Expedition reached the area, the majority of the mummies were plundered and taken to other countries or unknown locations. And, unlike in the Aleutians or on Kodiak Island, there were no ethnohistorical accounts of death, burials, and the rituals associated with mummification or whaling from the time of the Russians or even the late 1800s for this region.

12.17 The Collecting of Chugach Mummies

According to Crowell (1992:21), by the early 1880s collectors from numerous European museums came to Alaska and in particular to the Prince William Sound area to collect whatever they could. Men from several nations competed for bodies and artifacts, which they then brought back to their respective countries. Spencer Baird, Secretary of the Smithsonian, told his employees that worldwide collectors were ravenous for North American Indian mummies and artifacts. Numerous mummies had been taken back to Germany by one famous curator, and of note is the fact that Pinart brought numerous masks and other artifacts back to France.

Dall (1878:32, 1884:124-128) catalogued a mummy that had been retrieved from Prince William Sound when he arrived back in Washington D.C. The mummy was

reportedly collected by agents of the Alaska Commercial Company and then forwarded to the Smithsonian from the company's headquarters in San Francisco. Wooden masks were sent with the mummy, but it could never be established if they were found in association with the mummified body.

12.18 Prince William Sound: The Main Sites

The majority of work on the burial sites in Prince William Sound was conducted by Edmond Meany from the University of Washington in 1906 and de Laguna in 1930 and 1933. The Palugvik Village site was excavated by de Laguna (1956:68), where she collected numerous burials in rock shelters. Palutat Cave was thought to have contained one of the greatest archaeological treasures of southwestern Alaska (de Laguna 1956:55). Of note is the fact that when Meany (1906:465-466) investigated the site, he found the partial remains of mummies, but of greater interest is the fact that he found boards that were thrown in a pile indicating that they had once been on platforms similar to those in the Aleutians. When de Laguna (1956:561) entered Palutat Cave thirty years later, she was able to piece together four canoes, three of which she took. She also found the remains of several mummies wrapped in grass matting (1956:78), once again similar to the wrapping found with the Kagamil mummies.

12.19 Intact Mummies

Meany (1906:467-468) viewed the mummies of two men and one woman that had allegedly been taken from a cave near Knight Island, Mummy Bay in 1905 (Figure 12.4). They were displayed in the small town of Ellamar. He observed that the bodies



THE ELLAMAR MUMMIES
Photos by Author From Knight Island, Prince William Sound

Figure 12.4, Photograph “The Ellamar Mummies” (from Meany 1906:460).

had been eviscerated and were stuffed with grass and bits of otter skin. The female mummy was supposed to have originally held a mummified baby in her arms. This information and the photo above are from a magazine article written by Meany upon his return to Washington State. The deposition of these mummies is unknown.

12.20 Links to the Aleutians

In the previous sections I provided the evidence for mummification in the Kodiak and Prince William Sound regions. The various accounts of the secrecy of whaling, its rituals, and the mummification of bodies provide further evidence linking whaling to mummification in the Sugpiaq and Aleutian regions in conjunction with the proliferation of the shamanistic complex described throughout this thesis. In speaking of the regions in question, Heizer (1943b:121) was certain that aconite was the smokescreen that kept the whalers in a position of power. There is enough evidence already provided to substantiate that aconite was used by whalers. In actuality, it probably aided the lance in causing death to the whale. The use of mummy grease or the body parts of mummified individuals added a ritualistic element to aid in the striking of the whale.

Earlier I presented problems in the semantic use of the word “cult”. Here I come full circle and ultimately provide evidence that what Lantis had originally described as a cult, was the manifestation of a shamanistic whaling complex that was older and more entrenched than merely a whaling cult. Lantis (1938:450) wrote that although these regions had differences, common to all, and what drew all the whalers together, regardless of the region, was the honor that was bestowed on whalers, their high status, the solemnity of the profession, the precautions that needed to be carried out, and the overall bond they all had as a result of what they did and how they lived. All of these whaling cultures had elements of liminality, transformation, and magic. The shamanistic complex went deeper ideologically, which included notion of the spirit world and entering the realm of the dead. The following sections highlights whaling shrines that further give credence to a shamanistic complex.

12.21 Whaling Shrines

Evidence of the respect and status afforded to whalers at death is exemplified in whaling shrines that have been found. Such a shrine exists off the coast of Vancouver Island, Canada and was constructed by the Yuquot/Nootka Natives (Figure 12.5). It was first discovered by anthropologists in 1903 and was a center of whaling ritualism as discussed in Chapter 4. It remains unclear as to its exact age. In this region, only chiefly lineages could hunt for whales, and there were numerous rituals that had to be conducted before the hunt. It was through these rituals that the whalers obtained their supernatural assistance, and they were closely guarded secrets (Jonaitis 1999:4-5). This was the secret and sacred whaling shrine previously mentioned that included models of spirits and animals, masks, human corpses, and skeletons. The shrine was thought to be a place where chiefs (senior whale hunters) were buried and where whale hunters obtained spiritual assistance for hunting whales. The Yuquot believed that the dead had

the power to summon the whales so whalers would steal the human body parts of dead whalers to ritually assist with the hunt (Jonaitis 1999:5-9, 23-24).



Figure 12.5. Photograph by Hunt of shrine off of Vancouver Island, 1904 (from Jonaitis 1999:37).

In 1982, Russian archaeologists (Arutiunov, Krupnik, and Chlenov) published a book in their language that was reviewed by Lydia Black (1982). This group of archaeologists found what they deemed a whaling shrine (Figure 12.6). They named it “Whale bone Alley”, and it was located near the southeast coast of Chukchi Peninsula in Siberia. The Chukchi had similar traits to Alaska’s Inupiat Eskimos of the far north (Black 1982:563). The Russians discovered a significant number of bowhead whale skulls and mandibles arranged over a large area in strict geometric patterns. No artifacts were found in association with them. The archaeologists believed this functioned as a sacred precinct associated with unknown ritual practices, and that it was only used and or visited at intervals. In their article, they described a very complex social structure and ceremonial complex existing in the region, similar to those found among the Unanga and Northwest Coast societies in relation to whaling. The site is dated to 1628 and consists of whale skulls arranged in fifteen groups near the shore. The researchers argued that these functioned as marked landing spots, each for a specific group of

whalers in their *umiaks* (the larger boat used in Northern Alaska by whaling crews of several men). Numerous other sites have been found in the vicinity, indicating a long standing history of whale use and procurement.

It also needs to be added that Black (1987:37-38) found evidence of what could have been a ritual whale bone structure/shrine in the Aleutians. She was excavating a longhouse at Reese Bay on Unalaska Island when team members found a whale mandible and an arc of eight whale vertebrae at one end of the structure. On the opposite end were a whale skull, hearths, and red ochre. Whale bones were found all along the entire wall of the house. She conceded that the bones did not appear to be a structural component of the dwelling.



Figure 12.6. Russian Archaeologist Igor Krupnik standing in a circle of whale skulls (from Chlenov and Krupnik 1984:10).

12.22 Evidence of a Shamanistic Whaling Complex

To further demonstrate there were more similarities than differences among the Aleutian, Kodiak, and Prince William Sound regions, below (Figure 12.7) I present Lantis's 32 criteria for the existence of a whaling cult (1938). I propose that the criteria is representative of the shamanistic complex that existed with the focal point on whaling. The defined areas included the whaling cultures of Alaska, Canada, the Pacific

Northwest (of the United States), Labrador, Greenland, and Japan. She indicated that not all traits needed to be present in each group. Instead, these items represent all of the factors she recorded in the variety of groups she studied. It was her contention that not all groups manifested each category, but instead at least two or more would be sufficient for inclusion in this loosely based cult (1940:439-455). I took her categories and applied them to the Unangax and Sugpiaq.

Lantis' traits with some modification: X=trait,*inferred trait

Item	Unangax	Sugpiaq
High Social Position of Whaler	X	X
Boat owner, others held rights to whale parts	X	X
Initiation of young whaler	X	X
Esoteric knowledge inherited	X	X
Individual ownership of whaling song		X
Special whaling amulets	X	X
Whaling season filled with rituals and taboos for whaler	X	X
Sex taboos for whalers	X	X
Use of human corpses for ceremonial bathing	X	X
Carrying of human remains during hunt	X	X
Complete cleansing of boat and implements prior to hunt	*	*
Special implements used only in whale hunt	X	X
Special headgear	X	X
Face painting for whalers		
Imitating whale during preparations, or after strike	X	
Imitating killing of whale	X	*
Woman symbolizes whale spirit in opening season ceremony		
Special whaling songs		X
Stone harpoon points	X	X
Contamination free whaling grounds		
Villagers must maintain vigil during hunt	*	*
Whaler's wife subject to restrictions during hunt	*	X
Whaler's wife comes to meet the whale		
Whale is given a drink		
Ceremonial treatment of certain parts of the whale	X	X
Ceremonies conducted in ring of stones or whale bones		
Mourning for whale same as for a man		
Ritual to return whale's spirit to the sea		
Whale's eye cut, or body part cut	X	X
Whaling implements destroyed at the end of the season		
Tattoos for having killed whale	X	

Figure 12.7. Listing of similar traits pertaining to whaling (modified from Lantis 1938).

12.23 Summary

In this chapter I present further information linking the practice of mummification to whalers and the whaling complex in the Sugpiaq region. I also include examples of whaling shrines important to this thesis. By studying mummification from this broader perspective, more pictures of the puzzle emerge that can be applied to the Aleutians. By this I mean that there are enough similarities to assume that basic rituals and cosmology of whaling throughout the regions were conducted in a comparable manner. When incorporating what is known of whaling and mummification in the Aleutians to the data just presented, what emerges is a much better representation of who the whalers were and some insight into their secret domain.

There is no doubt that whalers were viewed as shamans on Kodiak and in all probability most of the Aleutians. This was due to the many rituals they performed especially in transforming dead bodies into mummies. These mummies were the individuals who existed in a state betwixt and between the living and the dead. And for the whalers, their rituals, their contact with the dead, and their transformation into orcas while hunting reinforces that during the whaling seasons, the whalers went through their own rites of passage. They were separated from the community they then went through a period of transition or liminality of their own when hunting, and when the whaling season was over, they returned to the community where they had wives and families (Donta 1995:75). Information on the family structure for this region remains undocumented, but matrilineal ties are suspected (Clark 1984:192).

To the whalers, the mummies were treated as sacred property or personal deities who needed to be respected and paid homage to. It was the remains of whalers and their families (most likely their own ancestors) who were mummified. The mummies were seen to give additional power to the living whalers when they were out hunting the whale, which was seen as a formidable adversary. Mummies were treated as being in a

state of persistent liminality because they were collected, revered and passed down from generation to generation due their great power. Nowhere in the literature is there any reference to mummies being placed in a secondary place of burial as theorized by Frohlich and Laughlin (2002). Additionally, these beliefs were not exclusive to the Gulf of Alaska. In the Pacific Northwest the Yuquot also hunted whales with the remains of dead chiefs who were also whalers. The use of dead human bodies in hunting whales in several geographical areas cannot be mere coincidence.

By reviewing the information from the contiguous regions, it also seems credible that through whaling, the practice of mummification spread among the Aleutians, the Kodiak region and Prince William Sound. At this juncture the origin of this practice remains unknown. However, its diffusion was probably not necessarily all through migration if at all, but through the interchange of people, ideas, and goods resulting from trade, warfare, and conquest. There also is enough evidence, based on the discovery of whaling shrines found in Canada (Jonaitis 1999) as well as Siberia (Black 1982:563) to further corroborate that the Unangâ and Sugpiaq versions of a shamanistic complex was just one part of a much larger paradigm that governed these cultures' intimate relationship with the whale.

Chapter 13: The Material Aspects of Mummification and Whaling

13.1 Introduction

In this chapter the material remains of both whaling and mummification in the Aleutians will be examined. It seems logical that if the mummified remains represent whalers, archaeologists should expect to find artifacts used in hunting whales as well as those of ritual significance placed near their bodies. These would possibly include whale body parts, whale hunting weapons, and other items such as hunting headgear and masks. However, the ritualistic aspect of whaling and the shamanistic belief system associated with it are hard to extrapolate and consist at best of information that is indirect and inferential. In this chapter I draw on anthropological theory as well as past studies that have faced similar challenges to draw my own conclusions. I also present some of the artifacts that have been collected in the Aleutian Islands and its caves to help extrapolate my research objectives.

Anthropologists currently accept that death must be contextualized by examining the time frame in which it occurs. The meaning of objects found in association with bodies is not static. According Ekengren (2013:175), bodies must be analyzed from a historical perspective and are dependent on such factors as ideology and social relationships among the bereaved. Therefore, grave goods and items associated with bodies are viewed as constituting social relationships rather than representing them (Ekengren 2013:175).

Recognizing these challenges, in this chapter information will be provided regarding the material culture that was gathered on the various Aleutian Islands representing both items of everyday use and those that are thought to represent symbolic aspects of death and burial. The Unangaâ mummies provide an excellent example of human remains that also became items of material culture by living whalers. Discussions pertaining to weapons, kayak parts, whale bones, birds and wooden

artifacts are included to highlight objects of high value, everyday use and/or inferred ritualistic significance that were placed either on human remains or in mummy caves. Emphasis will be placed on how these items represent aspects of liminality and transformation. Several photos of the mummies are also included in this chapter. They provide insight into the symbolic aspects of their material manifestations. The photos presented represent those housed at the Smithsonian Institution that were examined and photographed by Dall (1878) as well as several retrieved by Hrdlička (1945). These particular photos of mummies were chosen because they have been reproduced many times in numerous publications. Their inclusion is important for the contextual aspects of this study and not simply for the display of Unanga's dead bodies.

13.2 McCartney, the Thule and Provenance Issues

Similar to this thesis, McCartney (1980) attempted to provide proof that the members of the Thule archaeological tradition were whalers and that whaling was an important aspect of their culture. He conceded that it was difficult to provide direct evidence not only of whaling (versus scavenging), but also of what he labeled a whale "cult" and its ceremonialism. He pointed out inherent problems because ceremonial aspects of objects found at a site might be clear at the time when mortuary practices occurred but would not be recognizable at a later time and place (1980:520).

McCartney spoke of "archeological blindness" in this regard. He specifically stated that archaeologists work within a different data gathering and interpreting framework than ethnographers. He wrote:

The North Alaskan archaeologist a thousand years hence will find only an occasional carving that need not represent whaling. Most of the whale charms ...do not depict whaling. Masks, beads, labrets, nose pins, drums and other ceremonial objects are rarely whale specific. The archaeologist should expect to find villages, and other items of material culture like kayak parts, hunting gear and whale bone. However, will future archaeologists devise methods of discerning ritual wooden bowls from other bowls, whale charms from other site debris and ceremonial objects from non-ceremonial objects. (1980:520)

This study faces similar challenges. In the literature there is little mention of artifacts found specifically with the Aleutian mummies that were ceremonial or indicative of whaling. Mummy bundles were gathered up and in most cases, items found in and near them were collected in the same manner. While viewing Kagamil artifacts at the Smithsonian Institution in February of 2019 staff provided a list of “Kagamil Archaeology Artifacts” that included their curation location (at the Smithsonian), item number as well as several words of description. This list consisted of 382 artifacts, and although they were catalogued as collected on Kagamil Island by Hrdlička, staff could not guarantee that most were from caves (Eric Hollinger, personal communication February 12, 2019). They are all listed in Appendix 1. These were all reviewed and items determined as significant will be discussed where relevant. Because of the issues discussed above, ethnohistorical research will be used to provide a pseudo-provenance throughout this section for the artifacts that are believed to be remnants of past ritual behavior. This contextualization will aid in using artifacts to help further my research goals.

13.3 The Extraction of Ritual Behavior and the Symbolic Aspects of Caves

Fahlander and Oestigaard (2008:7) discussed the difficulty in attempting to archaeologically differentiate items of ritual significance used in actual funeral rites. This is because grave goods belonging to individuals are sometimes also placed with the corpse. It is further complicated in the case of the Unangâ because the living whalers also used the burial caves as places of storage. As described throughout this study, caves represent the ritual use of landscape. Archaeologists recognize that various aspects of the environment can be viewed as liminal. Caves are natural formations with features that can be perceived as betwixt and between because they are neither inside nor outside, neither above nor below ground. They provide natural places for ritual activity (Haaland and Haaland 2011:26). For the Unangâ and those of nearby regions, caves

were considered dangerous places where the living whalers would visit the mummies and hide away their various weapons, ritual items, aconite poison, and tools used for whaling and mummifying bodies. Because non-whalers were forbidden to enter the caves, they were the ultimate place for the safekeeping of secret ritual items. This poses a problem in ascertaining if the various items found in the caves were items stored, grave goods of the dead, or artifacts of ritual behavior used by the living.

13.4 Rituals and the Body as Material Culture

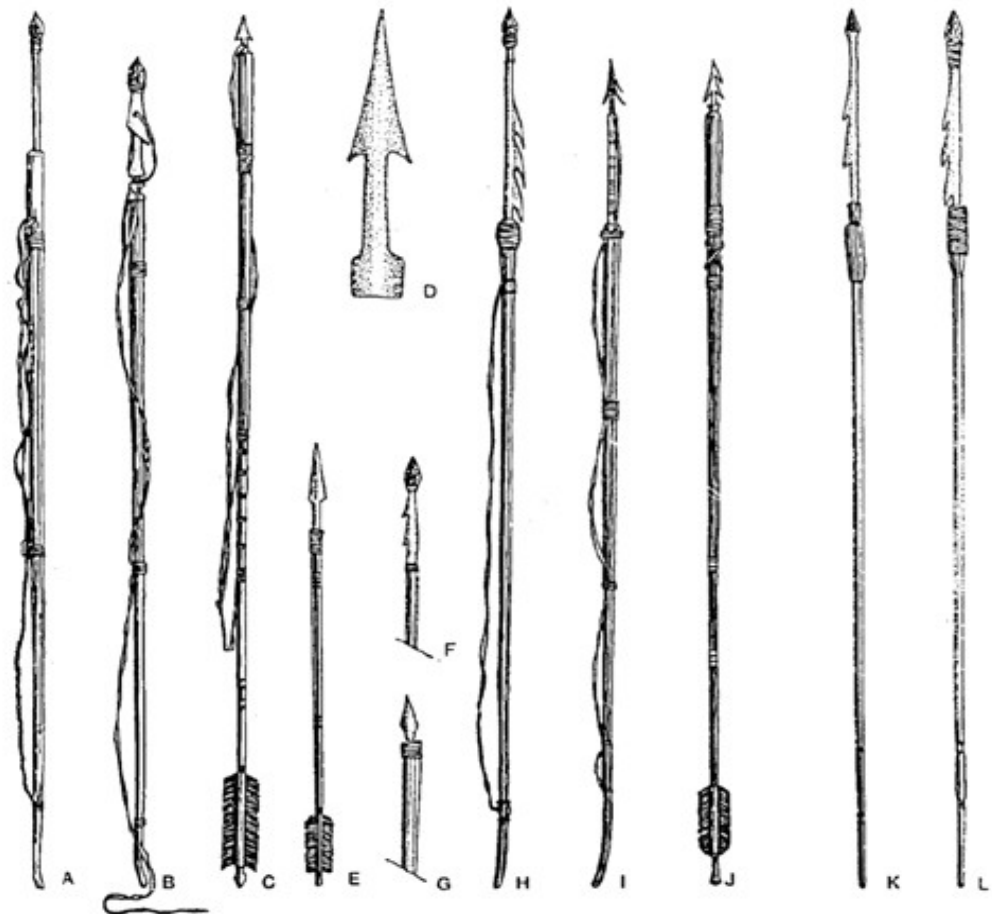
For this study, death is viewed as a change in social order for both the deceased and bereaved. Rituals therefore, help guide the living and the dead through the transitions in which the social order of the living is reordered and the dead transformed (Chapman 2003:306). Ritual behaviors can also be viewed as actions that leave behind traces of material culture. Mortuary rituals, therefore, are conducted in order to aid the deceased through the transition from living to dead (Renfrew et al. 2015:97). The artifacts presented in this chapter will be viewed in this manner although focus will be placed on their relation to the liminal and symbolic aspects of death.

Based on the information above the process of mummification is viewed as a representation of past behaviors and belief systems and the mummies as objects of material culture (Ekengren 2013:188; Sofaer 2006). Fahlander and Oestigaard (2004:5) addressed the materiality of the body when mummified and recognized that there does not necessarily have to be a division between the living and the dead. For the Unangax mummies, they became part of a powerful liminal connection in between both realms. Mummification was a method to preserve the power in the body (Laughlin 1979:2). Mummification was not just a static act but an entire process (Fahlander and Oestigaard 2008:5). According to Gramsch (2013:465), examined in this manner, the mummification ritual becomes a way for the living to control “the physical and the social transformation of the deceased”. I suggest that the Unangaâ bodies were

mummified by whalers at which time the dead were transformed into beings that were more powerful in death than in life. However, parts of these powerful bodies were also used as items of luck, power and transformation while hunting whales. In this respect, the actual bodies became items of material culture, along with other talismans that were used for ritualistic purposes. The bodies were intentionally modified for this purpose by other whalers (Sofaer 2006:xv, 85-88). As a result, they provide a dual level of interpretation (symbolic and materialistic) that does not have to be mutually exclusive.

13.5 Weapons for Whaling

The placement of specific whaling weapons with or near a mummified body would be a sign of who were whalers and who were not. Slate whaling points are considered the primary marker for the presence of aconite whaling on the North Pacific (Rick Knecht, personal communication, July 16, 2016). Lydia Black (1987) explored the topic of whaling in the Aleutians and on Kodiak Island. While reviewing the historical documentation of weaponry first described by the Russians, she encountered many difficulties due to semantic inconsistencies. After a thorough analysis of all the weapons named and sketched by the Russians, she compiled the information in a sketch as shown below (Figure 13.1). It is obvious from the variation in weapons that the information was not consistent due to individual preference among the Unanga depending on time and place. Black noted the first real description of such a weapon was by Veniaminov (1984:223) one hundred years after contact. He described that the whaling projectile was named *igigax*, and that it had a two-inch long blade of obsidian. The same word was used to designate a war weapon (Black1987:28). The word “harpoon” was not cited in the literature until Jochelson (2002b:53) in the 1920s. Black could not find a word that specifically mentioned whaling weapons. She identified weapon H below as the one used for whaling between 1828-1848.



- A. Weapon with unbarbed head, stone point, Unalaska 1768/69 after Levashev.
- B. Toggle harpoon, Unalaska 1768/69, after Levashev.
- C. Sarychev's weapon number 4, Unalaska 1790/91.
- D. Harpoon head (blade) from Tigel'da, bone, after Spaulding, n.d., plate III, 4.5 cm. long, Maximum width 0.5 cm.
- E. Arrow, for use with bow, Kodiak, after Lisianskii 1804/05, atlas 1812b.
- F. Barbed, stone tipped weapon, Unalaska 1768/69, after Levashev.
- G. Sarychev's weapon number 1, Unalaska 1790/91 (compare this, figure H Liapunova 1975 for museum specimen).
- H. Sauer, 1802, plate XI (location unspecified, presumably Unalaska) matches the later Akun whaling weapon illustrated in Liapunova 1963, and Mikhailov, whaling spear 1828 (this figure K).
- I. Sauer, 1802, location unspecified, may match Kodiak weapon "8p", Lisianskii atlas 1812b and this figure J.
- J. Kodiak weapon, after Lisianskii, 1804/05, atlas 1812b "8p".
- K. Aleut whaling weapon drawn 1828 by P. Mikhailov, staff artist with the Litke/Staniukovich expedition, 1828, after Liapunova 1975 : 77, figure 6.
- L. Aleut whaling weapon from the collections of the MAE, 4270-74, collector unspecified, after Liapunova 1975 : 81, figure 7.

Figure 13.1. Sketch by Timothy L. Sczawinski (from Black 1997:29).

At Ashikik Point, Denniston (1974:101) discovered two large, broad projectile points with barbs cut in flat lateral extensions, which she believed were possibly used for hunting whales. Jochelson (1925) illustrated a similar bone point and claims that it was also used when hunting whales. (in Black 1997:29). In Korsun (2012) there are

many photographs of hunting points used for whales on Kodiak Island. Figure 13.2 is an example of the harpoons used. Scammon (1874:47) sketched an Aleutian whaling weapon that was similar to the ones at Ashikik (Figure 13.3). These artifacts would seem to provide clear evidence of the hunting of whales (as opposed to only being used on whales found stranded and or scavenged) as early as 1,500 AD. It has already been proven that whaling dates back much further.



Figure 13.2. Example of point from Kodiak (From Korsun 2012:104).

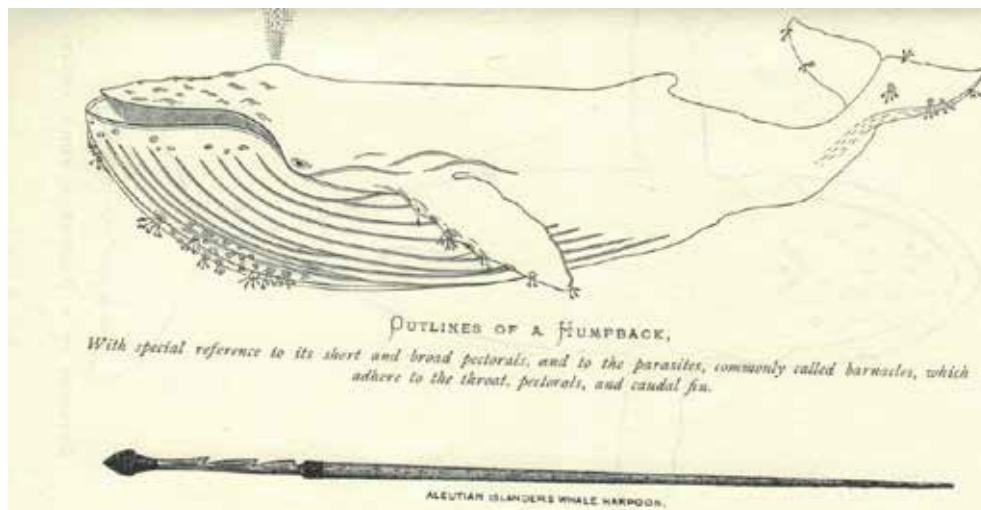


Figure 13.3. Drawing of whale and whale harpoon (From Scammon 1874:47).



Figure 13.4. Point of harpoon for whales, Kodiak (from Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:102).



Figure 13.5. Kodiak slate spear point, Musée de Boulogne-sur-Mer, Pinart Collection #988.2.039 (Gaëlle Etesse, personal communication, September 1, 2016).

Slate was the predominate lithic raw material used for whaling lances in many areas of coastal Alaska including Kodiak, Prince William Sound, and the Alaska panhandle, but it was rare in the Aleutian Chain where obsidian was more available (Crowell 1988:137). Numerous photos of harpoon points can be found in Fitzhugh and Crowell (1988:99-105) (Figure 13.4) and Korsun (2012:98-104). Slate implements were still being used well into the 1840s on Kodiak even when iron was readily accessible. Knecht and Jordan (1985:27) suggest that the continued use of slate over iron might have represented cultural conservatism because the Koniag did not want iron coming into contact with their food. On this topic, Holmberg (1985:49) wrote “They also tried replacing the stone points of the spears with iron but found these unsuitable for no whale wounded with such a weapon ever drifted ashore”. These various blades of slate are documented in Ocean Bay II on Kodiak at approximately 4,500 B.P. and continued to be used until the time of the Russians. (Fitzhugh 2001:151 Holmberg 1985:108-110; Osgood 1937:39; Pinart 1872:12-13). Several slate tipped projectiles were also discovered in the Aleutians (Dall 1877).

There is little documentation of weapons found in the caves associated with mummies. A partial ivory harpoon was found by Hrdlička (1945:460) on Kagamil Island. According to Hrdlička (1945:403), Pinart indicated he found a whale spear on Amaknak Island in 1871. The Musée de Boulogne-sur-Mer in France was contacted because they currently house the artifacts, especially masks that Pinart brought back from his travels on Kodiak. Gaëlle Etesse, curator (personal communication September 1, 2016), indicated that there is no such point housed in their collection. They do have

several blades that Pinart collected from Kodiak as shown above (Figure 13.5), but he wrote only vague location descriptions.

Weyer, (1929:34) found the sarcophagus on Split Rock in association with mummies. Inside he found what he described as a harpoon. Other points have been found throughout the Aleutians, but not specifically noted for the caves. It is my speculation that if such points existed, they were long ago looted or ignored. A projectile dart would be much easier to carry away than human remains. However, looting human remains and other artifacts such as masks would prove more interesting than stone implements.

At the Smithsonian there are several chipped slate and obsidian points collected from Kagamil Island but because they are not intact it remains unclear if they were associated with whaling. There are also several bone harpoon heads in their collection.

13.6 Kayaks Used in Whaling

Kayak parts were present in numerous mummy caves throughout the regions. It is not clear if they were placed with whalers after death. Kayaks were used by all people in the Gulf of Alaska as this was the primary method of transportation. It has also been established that kayaks were viewed as living beings (Lubischer 1991). There were strict taboos regarding their use as someone's life could depend on the stability and reliability of their vessel. Kayaks were also items of high value. Kayaks have been discussed in previous chapters.

Kayak parts found in Asxaana-x̂ Cave, on Carlisle Island were dated at 700 ± B.P. Johnson (2016) was able to analyze all the artifacts found in several areas of the cave. Numerous kayak pieces representing at least six kayaks were found. Their Unanga-x̂ name is *igy-x*. They were examined by several experts already cited in this research. Lubischer (1991:135) concluded that that Asxaana-x̂ Cave kayaks were

similar to those from the Kagamil Caves. They also shared unique characteristics of the Bering Sea kayaks (Johnson 2016:118). Lubisher wrote “Four Mountains kayaks exhibit a unique combination of features that sets the design apart as an identifiable style of the Aleutian Islands” (2002:3). Also found in Asxaana-x Cave was a model kayak with an individual wearing a hunting hat holding a paddle along with a full-sized paddle. If indeed these are representative of influences from Northern regions, they provide evidence that not only was there a great amount of contact among groups who hunted whales, but innovations occurred based on these contacts. The model kayak can be described as symbolic in nature.

At the Smithsonian (Appendix 1) several kayak fragments were collected from Kagamil as well as three other items listed as “toy kayak” parts.

13.7 The Kagamil Mummies and the Artifacts Found with Them

Early on, the Russians made notes and drawings of various aspects of Unanga-x material culture. It was noted by Crowell (1992) that by the late 1800s numerous individuals were sent to Alaska to collect mummies and the funerary items associated with them for European museums. Dall was one of the first to both describe the process of mummification and to photograph the mummies. He examined the human remains collected by Hennig on Kagamil Island. Dall (1878:11-21) provided a detailed description of one particular mummy he originally thought represented either chief Little Wren or perhaps his son from the legend he documented pertaining to the origins of mummification. He later recanted this theory. Dall described #17478 (figure 13.6) as a male individual, and the most elaborately prepared mummy, which he labeled as someone of importance. Tainter (1978) formalized obvious fact by theorizing that the amount of energy expended on a burial would be indicative of a person’s status.

As Dall was unwrapping the netting in which the mummy was placed, he found a

piece of body armor made of small wooden rods tied with sinew and fastened behind with two loops that fit on a wooden button (1878:11-21). Below are photos of several additional mummies from the Hennig collection along with abridged versions of Dall's descriptions (Figure 13.7 and 13.8). A photo of the armor is included as evidence that the male was also a warrior (Figure 13.9). Of course, this does not discount his status of whaler, but due to the nature of life in the Aleutians, probably all men were required to do battle. This was especially the case when attacked by Unanga from other islands or by enemies, such as the Koniag (Black 2003:37). Figure 13.10 represents a wooden shield found on Kagamil to be discussed below. Of note is the photo below (Figure 13.11) curated as either a whale bone shield or piece of armor and collected by Hrdlička from Kagamil Island. It measures 48 cm. in length and 38 cm. at its widest part. It has never been published and at the time of this writing no determination has been made regarding its use in funerary rituals. The Aleutian Pribilof Island Association agreed to let it be included in this study. There are two additional wooden shields curated at the Smithsonian. On a final note regarding weapons and warfare, Johnson (2018:5) found a long, narrow obsidian point in Asxaana-x Cave with its end snapped off which she referred to as a "people killer point" by Maschner and Reedy Maschner (1998).

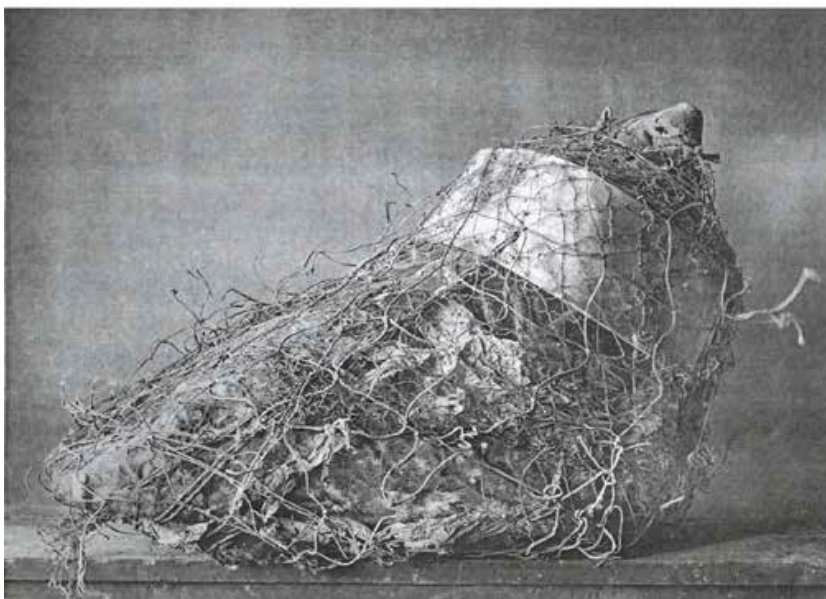


Figure 13.6. The most elaborately wrapped of the Hennig Kagamil mummies #17478 (from Dall 1878:39).



Figure 13.7. Aleutian mummies #17481 and #17480. #17481: an adult, probably male, wrapped in bird skin parka, mat similar to the external one. #17480: a child 4-6 year old bird skin parka, surrounded by matting (from Dall 1878:41).



Figure 13.8. Aleutian mummies #17483 and #17482. #17483: Remains of an infant 2-3 years of age, in a wooden hoop frame covered with grass matting (Dall 1878:20). #17482: Adult individual, rolled up very compactly in tanned sea lion skin, viscera had been removed. Mummy had been lashed with tucked feathers of some raptorial bird. These had been trimmed off and colored red with some pigment (Dall 1878:18-19).

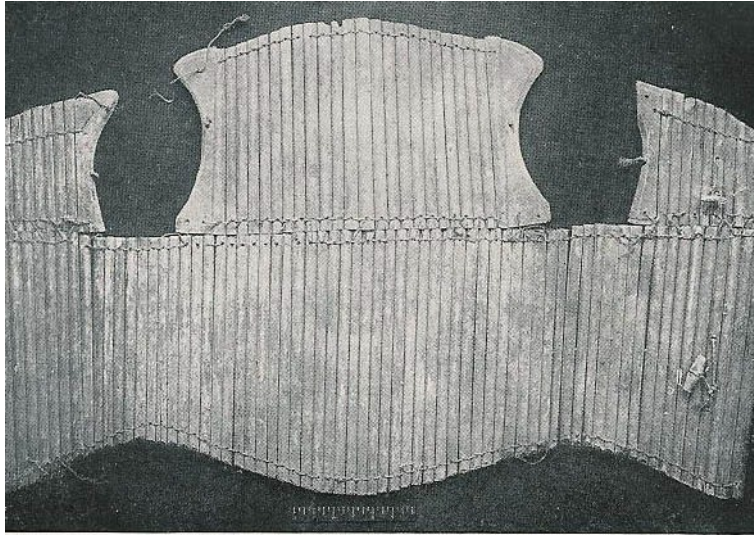


Figure 13.9. Armor (from Dall 1878:51).



Figure 13.10 Shield from Kagamil with spiral decorations collected by Hrdlička (from Hrdlička 1945:460-464).



Figure 13.11 Whale bone armor or shield, collected by Hrdlička from Kagamil Cave (#A386523-0).

The following section represents additional utilitarian artifacts found in the caves on Kagamil Island. Some were part of the Hennig collection as described by Dall. As already mentioned, Dall criticized Hennig's collection methods and indicated that he (Dall) obtained information on the various items by speaking with Unanga and Koniag Natives (1878:29). Other items were obtained by Hrdlička primarily on Kagamil Island (1945) and from Johnson (2018) at Asxaana-x Cave on Carlisle Island.

13.8 Grass and Weaving

The use of grass for the weaving of matting and baskets permeated all aspects of Unanga life. Grass mats were used for a variety of purposes including separating living spaces in the *barabaras* and wrapping the mummified bodies of departed relatives. The in-depth analysis of their textiles is outside the scope of this work, but such analysis has been covered in the literature (Jochelson 2002, Liapunova 1996, Wilmerding 1993, Gebhard and Peck 1941). Textiles also proved to be pervasive in Asxaana-x cave, on Carlisle Island (Johnson 2018:3).

Black (2003:161-163) studied the various techniques used for weaving the grasses throughout the Aleutians and Kodiak regions. She determined that the basketry

and mats made in precontact times by the women of the Islands of the Four Mountains (based on Kagamil Island materials) stood apart from other areas. Her conclusions were based both on the designs and the color scheme of the pigments used. According to Ivanov (1991:479), the tombs of persons of high rank were painted on the outer surfaces. Although Hrdlička (1945:102-103) cites numerous references referring to the paint used by the Unanga, most had to do with the painting of faces during ceremonies. It was a valuable commodity, and Ivanov indicated the lack of paint caused wars (1991:480). I infer that the use in weaving was indicative of wealth. It also needs to be pointed out that in some cases face cloths were placed on the mummies. These were woven out of grass and are mentioned in artifact inventories where mummies have been found. One is pictured as #17472 in Figure 13.15. It is unclear how they were used and what function they served. At the Smithsonian there are over fifty items consisting of grass bags, grass matting, grass mat fragments, bags of grass matting and grass baskets from Kagamil Island (Appendix 1).

13.9 Dolls

In reviewing the artifacts presented below, particular attention should be made of the carved human figures that Dall described as a dolls (Figure 13.12). They could have been symbolic in nature. A similar carved figure (Figure 13.13) was found in association with the mummies found on Carlisle Island (Johnson 2016, 1991:BLM AA-12204:20). Although the evidence is inconclusive this image could have served some ritualistic function in the pursuit of whaling and is similar to the ones from Kagamil Island (13.12).



Figure 13.12. Two carved figures from Kagamil Island found by Captain Hennig (from Black 2003:46).



Figure 13.13. Crude human figurine from Carlisle Island (from Black 2003:46).

13.10 Additional Kagamil Artifacts and Mummies

Several items in the photograph below (Figure 13.14) resemble weapons but are thought to have been used for sewing (17260, 17261 below). Because they were in the caves, these would be for women to use in their liminal state. There were other artifacts that represent jewelry and animal fetishes. They could have served as markers of group identity in the former and symbolic aspects of hunting in the latter, but this remains hard to prove. Number 17255 is described as a “beast”, but from the photograph below it resembles a whale (Figure 13.14).

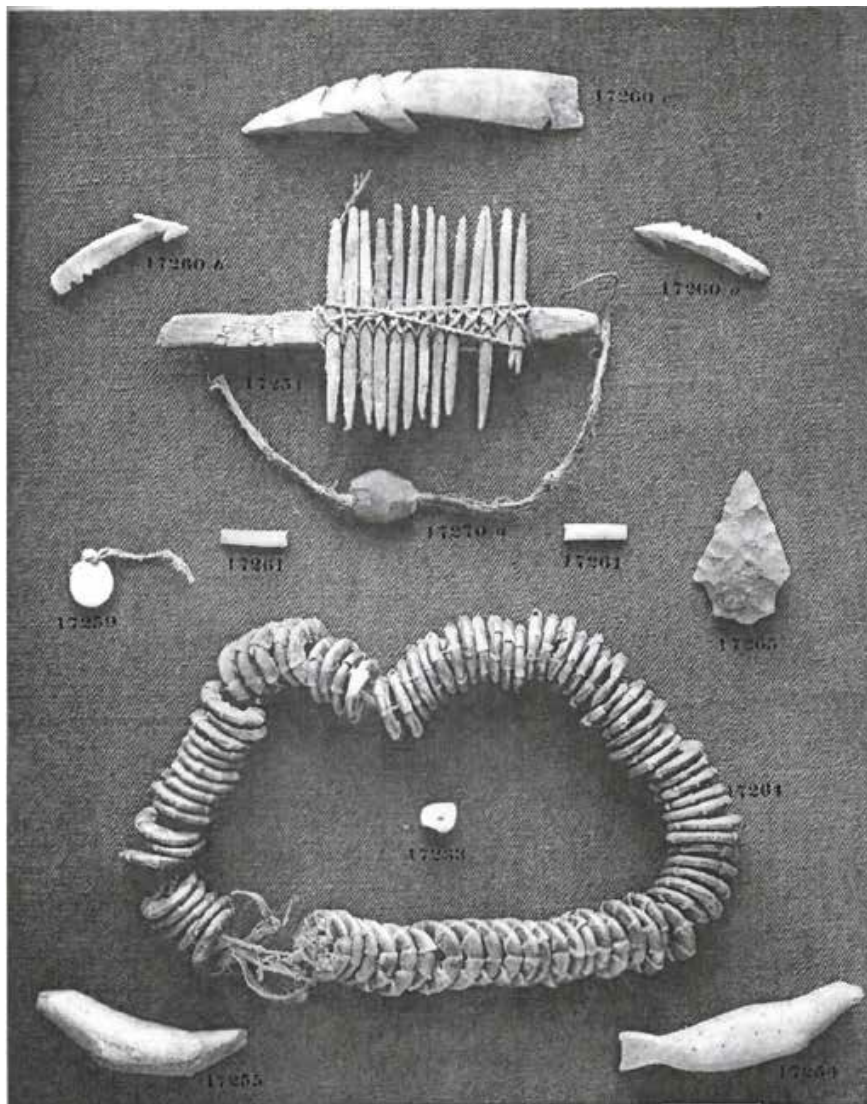


Figure 13.14. Various tools found in Kagamil Island cave (from Dall 1878:21-26).

Wooden comb 17254: Ivory image of seal 17255: Ivory image of fork tailed beast 17259: Ivory pendant 17260: Three fish hook barbs	Two beads made of bird's bones 17263: An unfinished gypsum bead 17264: Bracelet made of bird claws 17265: Stone dart head 1727a: Amber bead on sinew string
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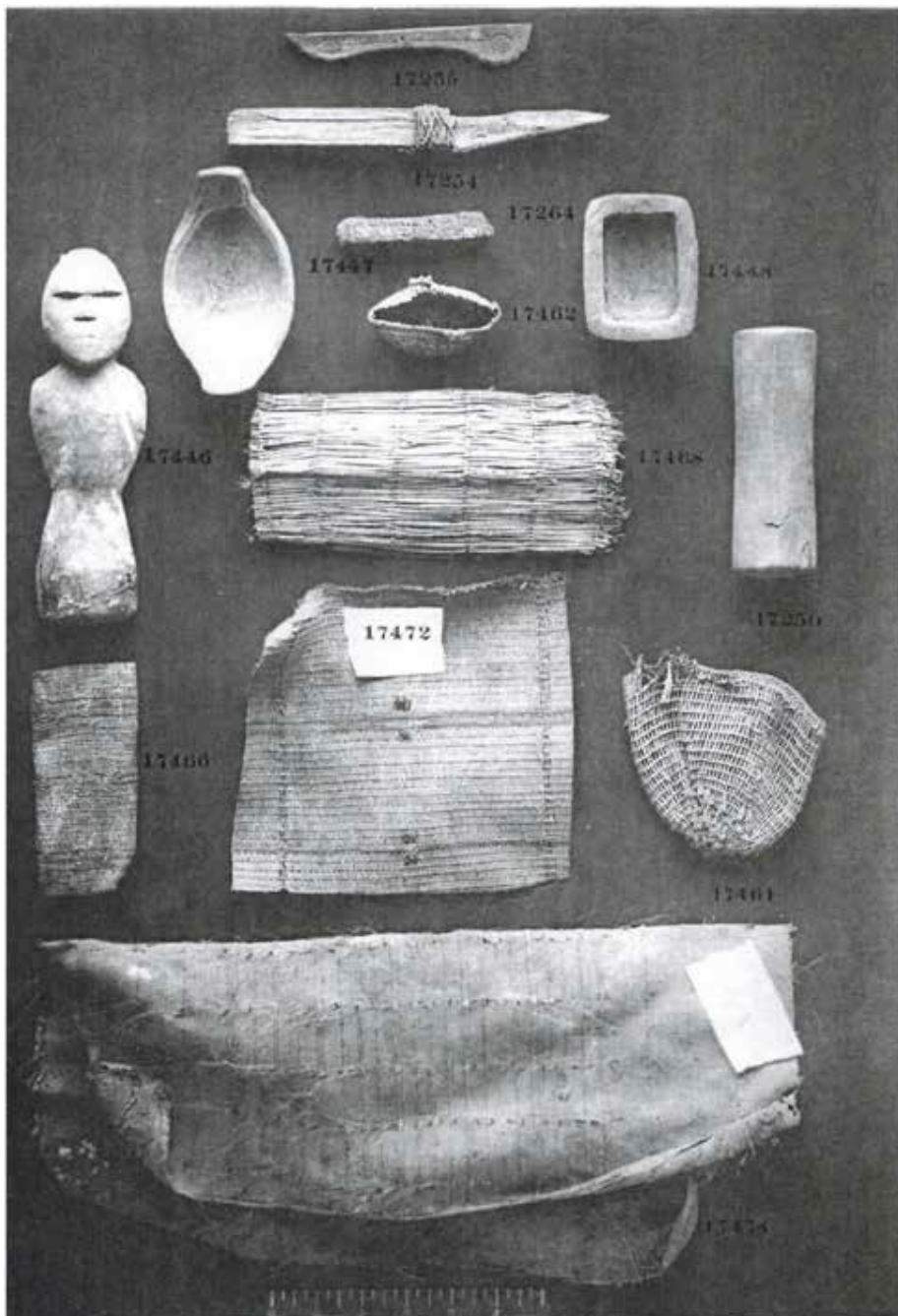


Figure 13.15. Various tools found in Kagamil Island cave (from Dall 1878:21-26).

Wooden implement for making fur trimming 17254: Bone knife and handle 17255: Piece of carved wood 17264: Pumice for dressing skins 17446: Wooden doll 17447: Toy dish 17448: Toy kantung	Toy grass basket 17462: Toy grass basket 17466: Fold for needles, of grass cloth 17468: Grass matting of the coarse common kind 17472: Piece of face cloth, found in large mummy case 17474: Mat from the large mummy case
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The artifacts above (Figure 13.15) also consist of some utilitarian items other items are included that were thought to be toys. Item #17446 is cited as being a doll but it is one of the items in the previous photo. (Figure 13.11). Once again, items cited as toys could have served ritualistic functions or they could have been placed in the caves for children to play with during their liminal state.

Numerous other items thought to be utilitarian in nature and also of value are curated at the Smithsonian. The list is too long to mention but consists of: numerous pouches of gut, baleen and sinew thread, sinew rope, pieces of tailored hide, numerous bone harpoon fragments, numerous wooden vessels (dishes), cutting boards, wooden handles for tools, slate knives and seven stone lamps (Appendix 1). Johnson (2018) also found numerous items such as lamps, *ulus* and hammers in Asxaana-x̄ Cave. This validates the belief that the *asxinan*, or dry ones, carried on with the normal activities of life during their liminal state. An example of this comes from the travels of Pinart on Kodiak Island. Pinart (Desson 1995:340-342) described the cave where he witnessed several mummies performing various tasks that were performed during daily life. The males were making weapons or hunting in a kayak, one woman was sewing and another nursed a baby.

It has already been established that while in the Aleutians Hrdlička collected numerous human remains, some of which he macerated (Hunt 2002:141). The following (Figures 13.16-13.20) include photos of mummified individuals, a trophy head (13.17) as well as the artifacts that were associated with them.

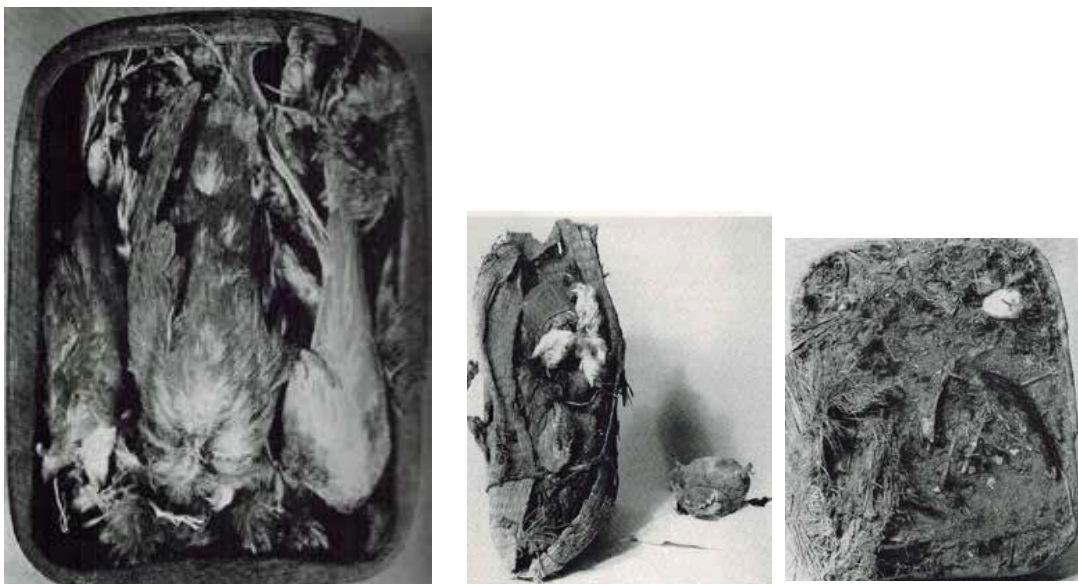


Figure 13.16. Top left: Warm Cave Kagamil, Island. Right: A wooden dish filled with 18 dried wings of a rosy finch. Bottom left: Two baby caps made of bird skins. The skull is still in each cap (from Hrdlička 1945:422-423).



Figure 13.17. Left: Warm Cave Kagamil, A newborn (or premature baby) “buried in moss in a wooden dish with a wing of a rosy finch and a bird’s egg offerings”. Right: Warm Cave Kagamil, mat and a skin cradle bag (from Hrdlička 1945:424-425).



Figure 13.18. A trophy skull buried separately in a wooden dish, Warm Cave Kagamil (from Hrdlička 1945:428).



Figure 13.19. Ivory end piece of a decorated harpoon (from Hrdlička 1945:460).

13.11 Items of Status: Labrets and Beads

It is significant that items indicative of status were also found either on or with the mummies. The discovered items functioned as symbols of status and protection. They were items of social display throughout Alaska (Jordan 1994:167) and would therefore outwardly show the high status of a whaler. The Smithsonian has numerous labrets (Figure 13.20) that were collected on Kagamil Island. There are oval bone labrets as well as several stone labrets. Johnson (2018:9) found several labrets made of ivory or tooth associated with several mummies, both male and female in Asxaana-â Cave. She also found two “strange looking labrets” that had not been described in any of the literature. Corbett (2017) thought they might be throwing board pegs.



Figure 13.20. A lignite labret decorated with a circular groove filled with red paint and central white peg, Kagamil (from Hrdlička 1945:460-464).

Beads were also a sign of status (Bundy et al. 2003). As stated previously, at the time of my visit to the Smithsonian in February of 2019, the mummies were being re-scanned, and detailed reports were being included. I was able to review the scans as well as the reports on the eighteen mummies that had been completed in order to document the inclusion of beads in association with the actual human remains. Based on the former scans and new documentation out of the 36 mummies, 5 individuals were found with beads. From the small sample below no inferences can be made except that perhaps they were included more frequently with younger individuals, especially infants. Below are the curation numbers and the approximate ages of the individuals that had beads in proximity to their mummified bodies (Figure 13.21).

Table of Mummies found with Beads at Smithsonian

A174806	12 months	Sex Unknown
A1748115	19 y.o.	Female
A174831	6 months	Sex Unknown
A3863806	12 months	Sex Unknown
A3863952	3 months	Sex Unknown

Figure 13.21 Mummy curation number, age and sex

Note should be made that beads were only identified as “small round, circular objects resembling beads”. The beads also appeared to be loose in the mummy bundles. It is known that in the Aleutians and in the Kodiak Archipelago, nose pins were worn with beads of coral and amber. Sometimes the piercings entailed beads hanging down from the chin. According to Krutak (2015), both dentalium and amber were highly prized by men and women as they could only be obtained from other groups living to the east and south of the Aleutians. Lisiansky (2010:57) stated in 1814 that “amber is held in as high as diamonds in Europe”. There is an amber bead curated at the Smithsonian.

The following sections discuss specific items associated with mummies and their links to whaling that are symbolic and ritualistic in nature.

13.12 Birds

In the particular group of items just discussed, of note is the prominent use of birds and or their feathers that were placed on or with the mummified bodies, especially those of infants. To the Unanga, birds were highly symbolic (Black 1991:36). In Chapter 8, a photo of an adult mummy head was included with a feather placed in the piercing of his earlobe. In the photos of the mummies collected by Hrdlička, and shown above (Figure 13.16), there is a dish containing eighteen dried wings of rosy finches, dried bird skins, and children’s caps made of feathers placed on their mummified heads. In Dall’s photos of the artifacts above, there was also a bracelet made of bird claws

(Figure 13.14), which was found in a grass woven pouch (not photographed). In a *New York Times* article (January 18, 1875), Captain Hennig reported that on one of the mummies he collected was a necklace of bird claws (probably the same item). As previously cited, Jochelson (1933:78) wrote that the feathers of a rosy finch were very powerful and used for whale hunting. Heizer (1943a) wrote that these birds were referred to as *gulgax* and were believed to attract whales.

Jochelson (1933:77) was one of the first to write about the symbolism of birds. On Atka, he found several raven beaks mixed in with the human skulls he found in association with kitchen refuse which he suggested served as amulets. Liapunova (1996:31) wrote that birds were significant in the religious beliefs of the Unanga. Birds were thought to be the embodiment of their family spirit guardians and protective spirits for hunters (Crowell 1994:157). Birds were also associated with symbolism and rituals because birds were prominent on the Unanga hunting hats. Evidence includes the visors of the hats worn while hunting that resembled the beaks of birds. Many of the Unanga hunting hats in various museums in Russia were decorated with the ivory carvings of birds (Black 1994:138). Crowell (1994:158) found miniature human heads wearing hunting visors and hats in the bird beak shape, on Kodiak at the Karluk site. It appeared that these heads were placed in miniature kayaks. He inferred that they could have been toys but supposed in all likelihood they were part of hunting rituals.

To further link whaling to the artifacts associated with the mummies, Krutak (2015) indicated that some birds in particular were viewed as protective in the afterlife. Hrdlička (1945:110) and Black (2003:43) commented that feathers of certain birds (although they are not specific as to which ones) factored into the spiritual beliefs of the Unanga. Dove and Peurach (2002) conducted an analysis on the microscopic feather fragments found on the Kagamil mummies at the Smithsonian. They found evidence of a dozen different bird species that coincided with the utilitarian use of feathers for insulation of clothing as well as for their symbolic value. They concluded that although

many items in the sample were poorly preserved, dirty, or stained, the evidence indicates that birds figured prominently into Unanga rituals (2002:59).

Johnson recorded bird bones in Asxaana-â Cave that indicated that some were placed there for cultural reasons. Others she felt were “clearly the remains of fox dinners and determining what each represents is impossible” (2018:8).

On a practical level, birds were eaten by the Unanga and their feathers were used for clothing and insulation. However, there appeared to have been an interdependent relationship between birds and whales, and their use in mummification only strengthened this relationship. In the north of Alaska it is still the snow bunting that signals the arrival of the bowhead whales for the Inupiaq hunters (Herbert Anaguazuk personal communication January 24, 1995).

13.13 Whale Bones/Related Artifacts

Representations of whales with burials would indicate their importance but also the special treatment they required even after death. If the examination of whale bones in association with burials is viewed not just as functional, but also a symbolic, this provides further evidence linking mummification to whaling. It has been established in previous chapters that the representation of humans and animals (whales) is consistent with a worldview that attributes both with souls and the ability to transform, one into the other.

Archaeologically, several sites have been documented where whale bones were used as housing supports. Their symbolic representation was probably misinterpreted as a functional support for a dwelling. This symbolism was recognized by Corbett (2011:13) and cannot be discounted. The use of whale bone for housing could further corroborate the importance of whales to the Unanga on a spiritual level. Finding whale skulls in houses is rare although one was documented at Reese Bay that Black (1997:37)

admitted was probably misinterpreted. In her examination of two chiefs' houses in the Western Aleutians, Corbett (2011) inferred that because they utilized whale remains (skulls) they were viewed as sacred spaces. The houses became sentient beings with souls as conjectured by Patton and Savelle (2006) for Thule dwellings. Once again, the concept of liminality surfaces. Corbett (2011:14) wrote that the entrance passage to these homes were "a passage between different states of being". The Point Hope Inupiat word "*anaï*" means both to leave the house and to be reborn. Therefore, the whale, who gave itself to the hunter, would still know all and help the house to become a living being.

Johnson (2016:137) dismissed Corbett's analysis as cited above by stating "the whale ceremonialism discovered and discussed by Corbett does not seem related to the mummification process". This is an odd argument given the transformational piece Johnson found in the cave consisting of a whale and two birds at each side at Asxaana-â Cave (Figure 13.22) on Carlisle Island.

Johnson correlated this object to one of the stories collected by Jochelson in which humans transform into killer whales and birds. The main body is an orca as represented by the rectangular shape. The jaw is capped by a little bird in a nest. On the upper jaw is a human face. There are teeth depicted on the whale's jaw and at the end of the jaw is a small bird with outstretched wings. Red paint was found on various aspects of this piece. The man's face has two eyes and a nose with pegs coming out. In the tale of *Tanax Amix*, before getting into his killer whale form, two bumblebees come out of a man's nose. Black (1983:16) viewed bumblebees as having the symbolic power to kill and it has also been noted that the color red was of ritualistic significance. (Black 1983:16). It is reminded that while speaking to Johnson in 2013, she indicated that at the back of the Asxaana-â Cave was what appeared to be a whale bone sarcophagus.

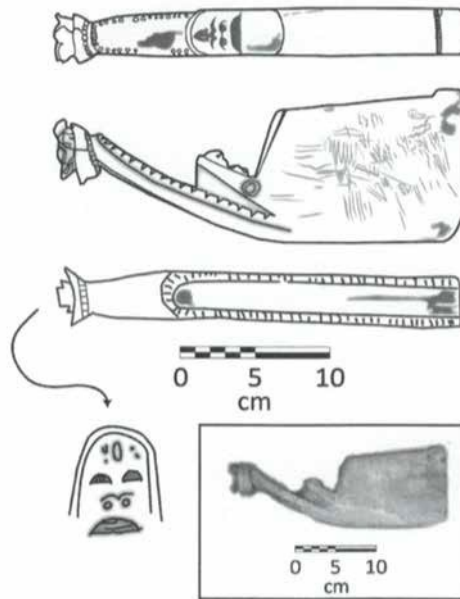


Figure 13.22 From Asxaana-x̄ cave (Johnson 2016:122) representing spirit transformation.

Johnson limited her 2016 publication to describing the wooden artifacts in the cave. However, the human transformation into animals including a killer whale and bird cannot be ignored. Similar to this item is the wooden object found by Hrdlička on Kodiak at the Uyak site (Figure 5.4 from Black 1991:137) that portrayed the images of a man, whale and eagles.

Several years later, Johnson (2018:10), recorded a number of whale bone artifacts in Asxaana-x̄ Cave. She indicated they were in the front and back of the cave. There were two whale bone planks forming a sepulcher for the major mummy buried in the area in the back of the cave. In that area there was also a carved whale bone she thought was a basket lid. In the front of the cave were two whale ribs, one decayed and the other decorated with carved lines. Also inside the cave were two whale scapulae, one with cut marks visible also near the front of the cave. It appears that while evaluating the whale bone items found, especially the sepulcher, Johnson (2018:11) acknowledged that some of the mummies represented whalers when she wrote “the whale bone sepulcher and other whale bones may reflect the prowess of buried hunters”.

Symbolic representations may have also been missed by those who found whale

bones on top of burials. They were likely mislabeled as caved in house supports that had fallen on top of the bodies. This error was probably made by Jochelson (2002b) when he located the ancient village of *Aglagax*, on Umnak Island. There he found a large number of whale bones with their ends dug into the soil, which he believed was a housing structure. In another section of the site, he found a stone carving of a whale near a skeleton (2002b:29-3, 118). On the island of Amalga, Black (1997:36) spoke to several elders who reported that whale bone arches, composed of mandibles, had been erroneously documented as housing structures at various sites when they were actually whale shrines.

The prominence and location of whale bones or lack thereof in caves has already been documented. There could be other caves that are now obscured due to rock fall containing whale bones as well as other funerary remains and mummies. Caves with mummies and whale bones were found on Kagamil, Carlisle, Atka, Amaknak, and Ship Rock. Black (1987:36) wrote that in each of the caves, whale bones were used as barriers or placed at the entrance of the caves as parts of thresholds. This was noted by Jochelson (2002b:37) on Amaknak in reference to bones found just at the outside entrance of a cave. There were also two poles and whale scapula found outside of Asxaana-â Cave on Carlisle Island (1991 BLM AA-12204).

Inside of caves, whale bones were used also used as platforms or scaffolding upon which mummies were placed. Remnants of such a structure was found in Warm Cave on Kagamil Island (Hrdlička 1945:238).and on Carlisle Island (Johnson 2018:10). It was in the cave on Ship Rock where Hrdlička (1945:325-328) discovered the whale skull that served as the base of a whale scapulae platform for mummies. The whale skull was painted red, but this and it was noted by Black (2003:188) that Hrdlička documented a spiral motif on the whale skull. Black determined this was an indication of the whaling “cult” because in all probability it was similar to the motif found on the

shield (Figure 13.10) from the Kagamil cave as shown above.

On Atka, Bank (1950:156-158) found evidence of whale bones in association with mummies. He described (1954:5-7) “huge” whale bones along with what he called cave burials on Split Rock. Dall (1878:63) found what appeared to be a whale bone sarcophagus on Adak that contained mummies. These associations cannot be ignored and on this topic McCartney (1984:124) made the following comment: “Whale bone parts have been found associated with burials as well as in mummy caves, suggesting some symbolic connection between whales and those interred”.

Numerous other household items made of whale bone were photographed and collected by Hrdlička from the various Aleutian Islands he visited. Of note are two bone faces, one he referred to as a child’s bone mask (1945:465) from Umnak Island. Two whale bone discs were found made of whale vertebrae with an opening in the middle that Hrdlička labeled as “use: problematic” (1945:466). As a final note on this section two whale bone vertebra pots were collected by Hrdlička on Little Kiska Island of the Rat Island group. One had a hole in the bottom and of interest is the fact that Hrdlička wrote of the pot, “killed, probably after the death of its owner”. Although he never wrote of the relationship between the Unanga and whales, this statement recognized that the vertebra was viewed as alive, until the owner died. This statement reinforces the blurred line between what was viewed as functional, symbolic and ritualistic or both.

13.14 Masks

As already cited in Chapter 12, Desson (1995) dedicated an entire chapter of her thesis to the rituals associated with the whaling “cult” on Kodiak Island. Desson (1995:31) argued that all masks were used in ritual contexts. They were objects imbued with supernatural or secular power that transformed the wearer as well as the participants for the duration of the ritual. This was based on transformation and the liminality of the mask. According to Black (2003:79), the masks recovered from Unga

Island in 1871 by Pinart were the most spectacular masks found in the Aleutian area (Figure 13.23). In Chapter 11 it was noted that Pinart named the cave he explored as *Aknanh*. Pinart (1875:12) was convinced the cave was used by whale hunters, not only for placement of their mummified comrades but also for placement of their ceremonial items. Dall later visited the same cave, but Pinart was the first to describe the masks he found in relation to the burials. Pinart discovered two elaborately carved heads of seabirds (their ritual connotation in relation to whaling already discussed). Other items found by Pinart and illustrated below consist of hands and arms with perforations made in them for cords, as well as a torso approximately 38 cm. tall (Figure 13.24). Black (2003:79-80) believed these were puppet parts. I content that they were more ritualistic in nature. They could have been used during mummification rituals and could represent the disarticulated human limbs found at the Uyak site by Hrdlička (1944). Also found by Pinart and Dall (in Black 2003:81) were carvings of two animals with teeth thought to represent killer whales (Figure 13.25).

Black never wrote in-depth about a whaling cult/complex. However, the most compelling statement made by Black (2003:80-81), in relation to this thesis, is the following:

I have examined the masks collected by Pinart and Dall and I too, came to the conclusion that the masks were associated with the whalers' cult and that in fact the majority represented killer whales, or better said, men transformed into killer whales. This association is well documented for Kodiak. This was also based on the two animal heads with predator teeth thought to be killer whales and mask parts. (Figure 12.23)

Black also examined two masks housed in Russia from a cave on Atka that were collected by Captain Illarion Arkimandritov in the 1800s. (Figure 13.26). He called them shamans' masks. It was obvious to Captain Arkimandritov that they, in all likelihood, had been worn by shamans because they had the customary tooth grip that was used by mask makers throughout coastal Alaska. The tooth grips were pegs inserted into the backside of masks, which the shamans could grip with their teeth. This created

the illusion that the mask was magically staying on their faces. One mask had a detachable helmet, the other did not. Black acknowledged that shamans may have worn these masks, but it is my belief these were worn by the whaler/shamans. According to Black (2003:68-70), these were the only surviving items of ritualistic behavior found on Atka. She also made the assumption all masks represent the physical manifestation of ritualistic transformation as discussed earlier.



Figure 13.23. Mask from Pinart Collection, Boulogne-Su-Mer France in rough and illustrated by Pinart 1875 (from Black 2003:82).



Figure 13.24. Pinart's illustrations (1875) of objects found in association with masks in Aknanh Cave, on Unga Island (from Black 2003:80)



Figure 13.25. Two animal heads with predator teeth from Aknanh Cave, Unga Island. (Dall left and Pinart right.) These were thought to represent killer whales and believed to be parts of masks (from Black 2003:81).



Figure 13.26. Masks collected by Captain Arkhimandritov in the 1840s, a native from the Alaska Peninsula, from an Atka Cave (from Black 2003:23).

Black (2003:70) identified that the masks on Kagamil Island were different from others found throughout the Aleutians. Ted Bank discovered the masks at the lower levels of Mask Cave in association with the extended burials. He found one that he

described as being painted green and almost luminescent (1950:169). The mask shown below (Figure 13.25) was dated at 1,690 B.P. (Bank 1950:34). A similar mask was found on Kodiak by Crowell (1994:158) who associated it with mortuary rituals. Bank also found a number of mask fragments with the extended burial in Mask Cave (13.28). These were made of wood, colored predominately red, blue, and black, with white accents. Black believed the masks were split on purpose and were used during burial ceremonies. Ultimately, Black (2003:70-71) could not formulate any cohesive inferences from her study of the masks and instead called for more systematic excavations on Kagamil Island so comparisons can be made with masks found on Kodiak.

It is noted that Johnson (2016:121) found a number of mask fragments, all in the central section of Asxaana-x̂ cave. She likens them to those as shown below from “Mask Cave” on Kagamil Island but they don’t match exactly.

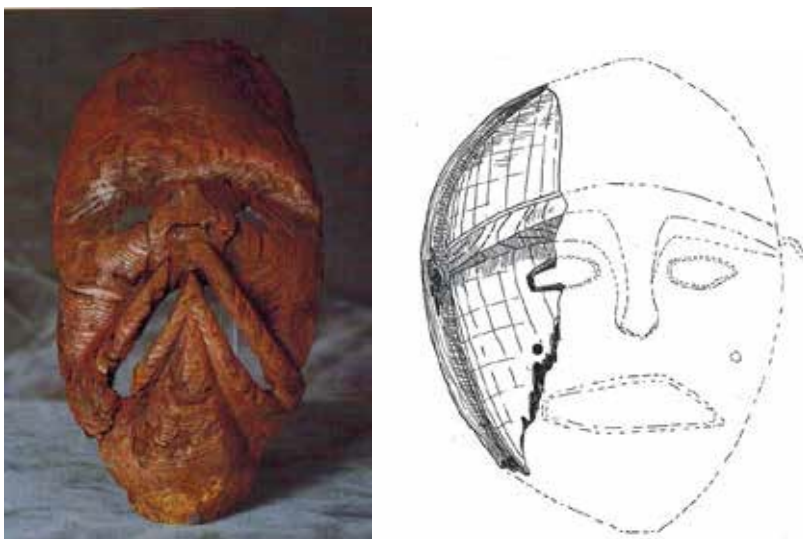


Figure 13.27. Left: Mask collected by Banks at “Mask Cave” on Kagamil Island. Right: Drawing from Bank Letter to May Unknown Date “Found in 1949, Ochre and a green aping still evident” (from Bank Collection, Series 2, Folder 10).

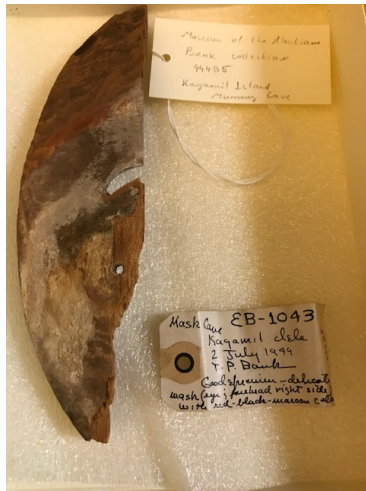


Figure 13.28. Mask fragment from Mask Cave, Kagamil Island, Museum of the Aleutians (EB-1043).

There seems to be no doubt that the masks presented in this section were used for ritual purposes. Some were part of the whaling complex; others were probably used for the complex mortuary rituals associated with it. The type and number of masks associated with mummification and or whaling cannot be ascertained due to the way the mummies and masks were procured, especially early on by the Russians, Dall, and Pinart. Desson (1995) studied the numerous masks that were on Kodiak Island. Based on her analysis of Koniag ceremonialism, she associated a majority of masks with the whaling cult/complex, and the minority with winter festivals. Liapunova (1994) who documented Kodiak masks that were housed in Russia, came to same conclusions. In all probability, Unanga masks were used in the same ways. It cannot be overlooked that Ivanov (1991:501) argued that the Unanga hunting hats also served as masks. He wrote that masks were used to disguise one's identity, but also to transform someone into another character or being such as the orca. This aspect highlights the liminality and transformation that occurred through the ritualistic aspects of masks.

13.15 Summary

The intent of this chapter was to analyze the various artifacts found in proximity of the Unanga mummies. The purpose in doing so was to support the notion that a

majority of the Unanga mummies represented whalers and their families who were ideologically affiliated with a shamanistic complex that was prevalent among whaling cultures of the Pacific Rim. On another level, this chapter also represents an attempt to extrapolate evidence of ritual behavior based on material items that have been left behind.

In reviewing the items of material culture presented, what stands out is the utilitarian nature of many of the artifacts that support the premise that not only whalers were placed in the caves but also their family members. Various items were found specific to gender and or family such as combs, sewing needles and dishes. It could be that all of the objects found with the mummies were to be used in their liminal state rather than for their journey to or enjoyment in the afterlife.

The items found with the mummies are also indicative of high status. This was corroborated due to labrets and beads placed on some of the mummified individuals. As discussed previously, although whalers' high status is not disputed, their status was fluid, representing heterarchy (Crumley 1995). Chiefs also had high status and on some islands were probably whalers. Items of wood, weaving, whale bone, kayak parts, lamps and many other items found in the caves were valuable resources, yet they were interred with the dead individuals. Armor (Figure 13.9) was found on one of the mummies, which is indicative that in all likelihood whalers were also required to defend their islands and wage war as needed. There is also the shield/piece of armor (Figure 13.11) collected on Kagamil Island made of whale bone that can lead to many inferences regarding the protective aspect of the whale to aid in battles or raids. The inclusion of trophy heads with some of the mummies also lend credence to the inference that great warriors, some of whom were whalers, were interred with their war captives. The painted shield (13.19) is further evidence of warfare, but of greater significance is the geometric design found on the shield, similar to the design found on the painted whale

skull described by Hrdlička on Ship Rock. Black (2003:188) links this design to the whaling cult (complex), and so do I.

The placement of kayaks in association with the mummified remains also provides more clues as to the mortuary and whaling rituals of the Unanga. Numerous kayak parts have been found with the mummies in the Aleutians and Prince William Sound. The probable placement was twofold. The first was to validate the status of the whaler by including such a valuable item in the cave as a grave good and the second was for his use in the liminal state. On a symbolic level, the kayak had great ritual significance to the Unanga. It has already been established that there were many restrictions, taboos, and rituals associated between a man and his kayak before engaging in whale hunting. The kayak had to be appeased because it was viewed as a living entity that could kill the whaler if not respected (Lubischer 1991:252).

There were also many other items of symbolic ritual significance found with the mummies. These provide definitive links to whaling but are also problematic as everything associated with the whaling complex was ritualistic. On a symbolic level, whalers used hats, and various talismans including mummy parts to transform themselves into killer whales while hunting (Black 1987:10, 1991:33). They were the ones controlling the transformation of the dead body into the mummy. Because of this the living whalers had the relationship with the dead that was very dangerous. They had to live separately during the intense time of whaling. They also turned the dead person into an aspect of material culture (Sofaer 2006) because mummified body parts became very powerful and this power was needed when hunting the whale.

Other items of ritual significance that cannot be ignored are masks and items from birds found either on the mummies or in the caves. Masks were another mechanism that aided whalers in their transformation process. Aboriginally, masks have been associated with most Alaska Natives groups as symbolic items. Their placement

could indicate that they were stored in the caves with other ritual items used by whalers as part of their rituals. They could have been used ritually used during the mummification process in order to transform the dead person into a liminal being or during other secret ceremonies. They could have also been placed as a grave good when a whaler/shaman died.

The symbolic use of birds and feathers also cannot be ignored. There are the carvings (Johnson 2016; Hrdlička 1945) of several items that have been found, linked to Unanga's legends regarding the transformation of men into whales that included avian symbolism. Bird feathers were part of the garb placed or wrapped on the mummies. There is also the importance of birds and their symbolic use during whaling.

The most telling items of material culture with links to whaling consist of the whale bone items found either in association with mummies or other burials. It has been established that whales were regarded as sentient beings, even after death. They commanded respect. Examples have been provided of whale bone sarcophagi, whale bone supports for mummies in caves, whale bones in association with burials and whale bone used in housing construction. Masks were made of whale bone and also items of everyday use. The whale had a very powerful spirit that required much ritualization in Unanga's life. Ultimately, there is no definite way to determine if birds, whale bones, and masks were used in mortuary rituals or used in the rituals associated with whaling because the two were so intertwined. All were symbolic and do not need to be viewed as mutually exclusive. In the following chapter I present my final analyses concerning the interdependent relationship between whalers, the mummies, and the artifacts found in the various mummy caves.

Chapter 14: Conclusions

14.1 Introduction

In this final chapter I summarize the results of my thesis research. This is the first attempt to provide a rigorous contextualization of mummification practices in the Aleutians from a sociocultural perspective. It makes an original contribution to Aleutian anthropology as it not only consolidates virtually all of the literature written in English on Unanga's mummification but also incorporates the data within the paradigm of liminality. It builds on the study of others in the field of mummification studies (Rakia and Buikstra 2005), especially in viewing the Unanga's mummies as being neither living nor dead, but instead in a state of persistent liminality. The information contained within this study advances knowledge about mummification and provides a novel way of examining this mortuary ritual from a non-biological/archaeological perspective. Ethnographic analogy is also utilized to further enhance the understanding of Unanga's whaling by including examples of other cultures from around the world that use human remains for power and protection while hunting sea mammals, in particular whales. This thesis also exhibits independent critical power, which has been used to examine the large body of literature that has been written regarding mummification and whaling in the Aleutians and surrounding regions.

Although my research represents a scholarly approach to the topic of Unanga's mortuary practices, in particular mummification, it is enmeshed in the story of the Unanga's people. Theirs is a narrative of survival in a region that would be considered inhospitable to many, yet in this region they thrived for thousands of years. They lived in a world full of spirits and rituals, and they had complex beliefs about life and death. What is known and documented regarding precontact mortuary practices is intertwined with the historical facts and the life histories of the individuals (Russians, explorers, priests, anthropologists, Unanga's elders) who recorded how the Unanga's disposed of

their dead. This thesis provides an original analysis of their precontact methods of body deposition in relation to mummification. It also includes my interpretation relating to the conundrum of explaining exactly who was mummified and why. To answer these questions, I realized very early on that in order to understand their beliefs about death, I first needed to understand their lives.

Not surprisingly this study has answered some questions and raised many others. In this final chapter I will discuss the results of my analyses using my original aims and objectives as a framework for my conclusions. I conclude by examining some of the issues that remain unanswered and presented themselves during the course of this research, as well as topics for further study.

14.2 Aim #1: The Relationship between Mummification and Whaling

My findings indicate that in the Aleutians there was a definite correlation between mummification and whaling. However my study has concluded that whalers were not the sole beneficiaries of mummification, this most elaborate form of body deposition. Chiefs and shamans were more than likely also mummified, but it is hard to differentiate between these categories of person because whalers were also chiefs and/or shamans in some of the villages. The literature in Chapter 8 also provides statements that sometimes whalers were controlled by chiefs. Factors of social stratification connected with this aim and will be discussed below.

14.2.a The Ecological Aspects of Whaling

My first step in investigating Aim #1 of the thesis that of examining the relationship between mummification and whaling, was to review the ecological aspects of whaling and its relations to prehistoric Aleutian economy. Chapter 2 provided data to indicate that large numbers of species of whales either migrated through or made the

Aleutian waters their home. This afforded ample opportunity for these large mammals to be harvested. Several studies on this topic were examined, including the results of the intensive archaeological excavations for the Eastern Aleutians that were carried out at the Amaknak Bridge site (Davis and Knecht 2004; Crockford et al. 2004) and Ashishik Point (Denniston 1972, 1974) on Unalaska Island. At both locations there is no doubt that the Unanga made early use of whale meat and by-products. In attempting to determine the most valuable of subsistence resources to the Unanga at Ashishik Point, however, the whale was found to be most valued to the Unanga for a period approximately dated 1500 B.P.. Denniston determined that the whale was the most important food resource because of the large amount of meat the whale rendered but also the numerous byproducts including baleen, blubber and their bones. This information confirms that whaling became an important and valuable part of Unanga subsistence strategies. It also affirms that most of the Aleutian Islands had some interaction with whales.

14.2.b Evidence that Whales were Hunted Rather than Scavenged

The logic of seeking to establish whether whales were hunted rather than scavenged is that if whales were hunted, whalers and their wives would be afforded higher status. They would more likely be given more complex burials than other members of society due to the many dangers associated with the hunt. In Chapter 6, I examined the evidence which substantiates that throughout the Pacific Rim, and especially in the Gulf of Alaska, whales were first scavenged and later hunted. It remains hard to determine when this switch occurred. McCartney and Savelle (1993:40) hypothesized that active whaling could be ascertained through the analysis of faunal remains, the logic being that the consistent selection for young animals would indicate a hunting strategy. The date of 3,500 B.P. represents the approximate time when whale

utilization became prevalent in the archaeological record, by which time active whaling possibly was occurring in different parts of Alaska, Siberia and the Northwest Coast of the United States and Canada. Note should be made, nevertheless, that if whales were still being scavenged, the economy would have been based on a delayed return system, including the distribution and storage of by-products (Ingold 1983:563-565). Once again, the people who brought in the whale and dissected its various parts would be afforded higher status. This approximate date also coincides with the appearance of the Arctic Small Tool Tradition in the area, representing perhaps the migration of a group of people moving into the Gulf of Alaska (Odess 2005, Steffian and Saltonstall 2005, Davis and Knecht 2005), who could have brought with them innovations, technologies and even ritualistic ceremonialism associated with whaling.

It was also around this time when the influence of a shamanistic complex among communities took hold in the regions that practiced whaling (Maschner 2016:332). This interpretation is based on several artifacts that were found to be ritualistic in nature and discovered throughout the Pacific Rim. After that time period, the Gulf of Alaska appeared to experience a vast amount of cultural complexity as evidenced by higher populations, resource intensification, trading and warfare from Asia (Hatfield 2010:554). After 1,000 B.P., widespread culture change occurred throughout the North Pacific Rim (Dumond 1986). It is important to acknowledge this change because people were actively whaling by this time. As whaling intensified, whalers became a special caste who could also be perceived as shamans (Crowell 2000:233). After a short time lapse, burial patterns changed and became more complex. Mummification soon was being performed in addition to other, more widespread, methods of body deposition. Currently, however, the origins and spread of mummification remains elusive (Corbett et al. 2003:465). On Kodiak Island mummification was also being practiced and other forms of body curation were being performed that included dismemberment and

rearticulating of human body parts. In all probability this could have been related more to whaling ceremonialism than violent mutilation. Another indication of the spread of a shamanistic complex linked to whaling is that human skulls have been found in several regions with ivory eye inserts (Mason 2014; DeLaguna 1975; Hrdlička 1944).

14.2.c Different Methods of Whaling

As whaling intensified the techniques changed depending on the region. The two main methods were the poison dart and the use of a harpoon with a line and float. Mummification became associated with people who used the former. These methods are discussed in Chapter 7. The poison dart method was most associated with the Aleutian Islands and Kodiak (Black 2003; Black 1987; Heizer 1943a). This method required a great deal of ritualism by the whalers and their wives. It was thought that the poison aconite was used to aid in the killing of the whale as well as the body parts of mummies. The poison dart method usually involved a solitary hunter going out in a kayak, which was extremely dangerous. As a result, whalers and their wives participated in many forms of ritual observances to convince the whale to give themselves to the whaler (Fitzhugh 2003). Because whalers had many secret rituals and practices including the use of aconite and mummified bodies as talismans, it would make sense that they and their family members would be mummified after death. The fact that aconite was used is not disputed. The amount and its effect on the whale was thought to vary but enough research has been conducted to substantiate that if wounded with aconite, the whale would eventually be in distress and eventually die (Bisset 1976). It is also reasonable to argue that whalers also used mummy parts as part of their hunting paraphernalia. The tales of dead bodies being used for whaling could also have kept people away from caves and the whaling endeavor so that the use of aconite would remain a secret.

14.2.d Contextualization of Mummification to Other Forms of Body Deposition

In order to provide evidence that mummification was the most complex method of body deposition in the Aleutians and therefore would be performed on whalers due to their high status, this thesis has provided a context for understanding mummification in relation to other forms of body deposition. All accounts indicated that whalers were mummified but chiefs and possibly shamans may also have been interred this way. In Chapter 8 I include information from Johnson (2018) who studied the artifacts from Asxaana-â Cave. She recognized that families may have been interred and she did not rule out that they were families who lived by whaling. In Chapter 9 the different methods of body deposition were discussed. In examining the way the Unangaâ treated their dead, there are many unanswered questions. Mummification appears to be the most complex method, but there is not enough data on the other forms in order to determine who was buried in what and when. The situation is also complicated because social stratification existed in the Aleutians. There were nobles, commoners and slaves (Veniaminov 1984). It can be assumed that chiefs were nobles so they would also be afforded more labor intensive burials. Whalers could also be chiefs in some localities. What happened to shamans and/ or commoners is not clear. The literature does not provide many clues as to who was placed in sarcophagus (*qumnan*) burials, but the few accounts indicate that they were status related. It is also unclear who was buried in the mound burials (*umqan*). One conjecture is that they were family plots (Frohlich and Laughlin 2002:102-103), perhaps for commoners. It was recorded that mummification was practiced from the Eastern to Central Aleutians, on Kodiak and Prince William Sound. These were areas where the poison dart method of whaling was used (Heizer 1943a).

What is known is that of all the methods of body deposition in the Aleutians, the most has been written about mummification. In Chapter 3 the different theories

pertaining to who was mummified and why were evaluated. I found the account by Frohlich and Laughlin (2002) to be the most controversial. They wrote that most infants were mummified because they had not finished their time on earth so they were preserved and at some point were reburied. I found data to contradict that. The ages of the mummies currently in the Smithsonian collection were examined (Jonsdottir 2002). As cited in Chapter 3, although the sample consisted of only 32 mummies, the age at death ranged from infancy to adulthood. The numbers do not reflect a disproportionate number infants. I have also not been able to find any accounts in the literature, past or present, to support the contention that there were secondary burials of mummies.

From the earliest accounts of the Unangaâ, there were many reference to the mummies representing whalers. It would make sense that the farther back in time one goes, the more accurate this type of information would be. A good deal of supplemental information comes from Kodiak on whaling ceremonialism in association with mummification (Desson 1995). McCartney (1984:79) acknowledged that among whaling coastal societies in the arctic there were strong correlations of whale hunting to social rank, and a community's ritual and economic organization. The early stories and accounts of mummies being whalers from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries cannot be discounted.

Ultimately because so little is really known of the other methods, it cannot be ascertained with certainty that only whalers were mummified with their families. There is also no concrete mention of who did the actual mummification, although on Kodiak there are indications whalers performed this process and all the rituals associated with it. However this is hard to substantiate (Desson 1995). I suggest it was the whalers.

14.2.e Mummy Locations and Whale Migrations

Chapter 11 presents the known locations where mummies have been found. This information is included in order to correlate mummy locations with whale migration patterns. The majority of mummies have been found in the Islands of the Four Mountains grouping of the Aleutians. A majority of the mummies were found the Eastern part of the Chain as far west as the Delarof Islands. Since whales traveled throughout the Aleutians, it appears many islands had access to whales. Many whales migrated through Unimak Pass and although not all islands had prolific numbers of burial caves there was a greater amount of cultural complexity in the Eastern Islands (Corbett et al. 2001:251; Maschner and Reedy Maschner 2007:586).

By establishing all the known mummy sites, I found numerous accounts by various individuals indicating that the people who were mummified were whalers. From these accounts, a lot of other valuable information was obtained. Dall (1978) and Pinart (1875) wrote extensively about the mummy caves they visited and the whalers that they found inside. We know from the account by Father Salamatov (1862) that on Kanaga Island the people were still visiting the mummies and paying homage to them (Hudson 1952:83, Laughlin 1980:102). Father Veniaminov (1984), Ted Bank (1950) and many others also wrote of the mummies being whalers. There are far too many references to whalers in Chapter 11 to summarize here (Black 2003, Jochelson 2002). Suffice it to say that, based on these various accounts, there is no doubt that there was a correlations between mummification and whaling.

14.2.f The Antiquity of Mummification in Relation to the Archeological Evidence

This objective is covered in Chapter 10 as well as Chapter 6. In Chapter 10 the numerous methods that have been used to indicate the antiquity of the Unanga mummies are discussed. These range from craniometrics (Dall 1873) to modern

quantitative data. Of interest is Hrdlička's (1945) classification of his skeletal finds as either Pre-Aleuts and Neo-Aleuts. He hypothesized that at approximately 1,000 B.P., the Pre-Aleuts were replaced by Neo-Aleuts based on skull morphology. He also indicated that the Neo-Aleuts were whalers and brought with them the practice of mummifying their dead. He found that these Aleuts showed evidence of spiritualism and a more complex social system (Hrdlička 1945). Many years later Coltrain et al. (2006) revisited Hrdlička's hypothesis. They conducted radiocarbon dating on the specimens that Hrdlička had worked with. They found that one group did not replace the other but that by 1000 B.P. both groups co-existed, with the Neo-Aleuts practicing mummification while the other group practiced basic interments based on the remains found at site Chaluka. Their findings correlate what is known archaeologically regarding the intensification of whaling and the other aspects of complexity that manifested in the Gulf of Alaska at that time. It can be said that with the appearance of mummification there also was an intensification of whaling or vice versa in the Gulf of Alaska.

14.2.g Artifacts with Mummies Linked to Whaling

In Chapter 13 the various artifacts found in association with the mummies are discussed. There are many factors cited in that chapter as to why it is difficult to pinpoint evidence for ritualism specifically connected with whaling. What is considered ceremonial at some date in time might not be recognized as such at a later date (McCartney 1980). In the case of the Unanga's mummies, most of the mummies were placed in caves. The caves were used as storage places for the whalers. It is where they would store their gear and other ritual items as well as items of everyday use. And, because the mummies entered a state of persistent liminality (see section 14.3 below), various utilitarian items were also placed in them for their use. The mummies

themselves became items of material culture, used by the living whalers (Fahlander and Oestigaard 2004:5). It is therefore hard to isolate items of ritual significance. All things (including body parts) associated with whaling had ritual significance, partly because whaling was secretive. In spite of this caveat, some associations can be made.

Numerous kayak parts have been found with the mummies both in the Aleutians and Prince William Sound. The kayak was thought to be a living being to the whalers and had to be treated with respect. Kayaks were also “killed” after their owner died, which would explain why the kayak, such a valuable resource, would be placed with the dead (Lubischer 2002).

A number of whale bones were found in association with the mummies. These are important on a symbolic level in their placement in the caves. They have been found in front of caves and as scaffolding for the mummies, standing for more than just mere bones. People thought these whale bones were cognizant even after the whale was killed and needed to be treated with respect. They were thought to have spirits. Their placement in front of caves probably served as a warning to anyone who dared enter a mummy cave. Of particular interest is the whale bone sarcophagus that was found in Asxaana-x Cave on Carlisle Island in which a mummy was placed (Johnson 2018).

Armor was found on one mummy and several other pieces have been found in association with the mummies, especially on Kagamil Island (Dall 1975). This indicates that all Unanga-x men, including whalers were warriors when threatened by violence from other islands. The whale bone shield/armor discussed in Chapter 13 is of particular symbolic significance. Masks also represent items of ritualistic behavior (Black 2003). Many masks were found in mummy caves and my discussion demonstrates that these masks could help the whaler transform into an orca to help kill the whale. Other items of significance are associations with birds that have also been deemed important to the Unanga-x on a spiritual and materialistic level (Black 1991).

Items labeled as dolls could have more symbolic meanings as figurines and possibly could have been used in rituals. Labrets and beads have been taken to indicate high status (Davis et al. 2016:284). There are also the portable items that consisted of individual pieces with the likeness of humans, whales and birds, some of which represent symbolic representations of stories of transformation and ritualism. Many items of everyday use were found in the caves. Stone lamps were of value, but there were spoons, sewing items, various bowls, combs and other objects.

The artifacts found make a strong case that some of the mummies were whalers. The most telling indication is the presence of whale bones. Smaller items found, like miniature canoes with hunters in them, probably served some ritually significant functions. There is no record of whaling hats being found and no real weapons that would definitively be linked to whaling. There were, however, many artifacts of grass and grass weaving. The Unanga were known to make the most elaborate of baskets and mats (Black 2003). There were placed in the mummy bundles and were also thought to be of high value due to all the work involved.

14.3 Aim #2 The Contextualization of Unanga Mummification Based on a Theory of Liminality

This thesis develops a theory of liminality as the main paradigm for explaining the reason(s) behind mummification. The mummies were named *asxinan*, the dry ones, and were thought to carry on their daily activities at night (Laughlin 1980a). They were feared and revered. And, based on my findings, there was no evidence found to indicate that the mummies were ever reburied or moved on to the land of the dead. Instead, they remained in secret caves and were visited only by the bravest people who could not enter until various rituals and fasting were performed (Veniaminov 1984). They were considered very powerful because of their liminal state and because of this power, their various parts were used as talismans by whalers to aid in their transformation to orcas

when hunting the whale. In order to further provide information on liminality and how it relates to the Unangaâ mummies I divided my research into the objectives listed below.

14.3.a Relationships between Human Beings and Whales

The relationship among many people of the world with whales is well studied. Chapter 4 of this thesis draws on anthropological theory and ethnographic analogy in order to elucidate the relationship between the Unangaâ and the whale, which was liminal in many respects. The whale was always associated with an element of danger. More than that, the Unangaâ are likely to have considered cetaceans to be “other than human persons “to be honored as well as feared (Nadasdy 2007:25). To address how the Unangaâ interacted with whales, in Chapter 4, I included additional paradigms that fit my research objectives. The first was put forth by Hallowell (1975) and the second by Viveiros de Castro (2015). Both examined people’s relationship with animals from a non-Western point of view. Hallowell (1975) introduced the concept that between non-human animals and humans exists a world of mutually interdependent beings in which other beings can present a human appearance and in which persons can morph into non-human animals. According to Viveiros de Castro’s paradigm of perspectivism the “universe is inhabited by different sorts of persons; human and nonhuman which apprehend reality from distinctive points of view” (2015:229-230). Many animal species as well as other non-human beings have a spiritual component which qualifies them as “people”. When applied to Unangaâ, whales fit this category. This is why whalers acquired communicative powers of the kind of which shamans are capable (Leer 1989:49, Crowell 1994). When they were whaling, they transformed into orcas (Black 1987). They were able to communicate with the whale as someone with an other than human being and who needed the utmost respect. Based on these ideas, when the Unangaâ were whaling they were not only transformed but they had the ability to see

animals in their inner human form. Even though the whale had on whale “clothing”, their inner essence was that of a person. What was thought to differentiate species was not their “spirit or soul”, which was essentially human, but rather their bodies (Viveiros de Castro 2015). Therefore there were many rituals by both the whaler and his wife to communicate with the whale and to insure it was respected even after its death and its bodily parts used for useful items for the Unangax̂.

According to Viveiros de Castro (1998:481), to eat an animal that had a human perspective from its own point of view would be tantamount to an act of cannibalism. In the case of whales, once the danger of the whales was removed, even after death the animal and artifacts still needed to be respected (Viveiros de Castro 2004:468). The physical hunt itself and the processing of the body after the whale has been killed represents a moral climate and, as a result, rituals must be performed at various stages of the process. In this arena men and women had different tasks to perform.

To prove that whales were of in a special category, Black analyzed the various words the Unangax̂ constructed for sea mammals (1998:131, 1987:42-43). Linguistically, whales were perceived as separate from other mammals and were distinguished linguistically. The closeness of the association between whalers and whales can be seen in the observation that as soon as a hunter struck a whale, he would return to a hut and pretend to be sick (Veniaminov 1984:357, Laughlin 1980:41).

14.3.b The Liminality of Mummification and Power in the Body

This thesis demonstrates that among the Unangax̂, individuals were deliberately mummified so they could remain in a persistent liminal state and never move on to the land of the dead. Chapter 3 focuses on this paradigm and affirms that people were mummified in order to preserve the power in their bodies. To develop my ideas, I drew from the works of Émile Durkheim (2008), Robert Hertz (1960), Victor Turner (2008,

1967), and Arnold van Gennep (1960). They viewed death as a rite of passage in which the dead person went through transitory phases of separation, liminality and incorporation. Hertz (1960:37-42) believed that there were also three participatory roles, consisting of the corpse, the soul of the deceased and the mourners left behind. He felt that eventually, after mummification, the spirit of the dead person actually was reburied and left for the land of the dead. Rakita and Buikstra (2005:105-106) applied such ideas to explain mummification, but they theorized that the dead person never left the period of liminality. In their explanation of Inca mummies, the completion of the mummification process was not marked by the final removal of the corpse from the world of the living. The mourners also did not make a transition to take up new social roles. Instead both mourners and deceased maintained their former roles despite the physical death of the individual. Rakita and Buikstra's interpretation portrayed Inca mummies as very powerful due to their liminal status. Mummification became a method for sustaining the bodily presence of the dead person. I applied this same theoretical framework to Unanga's mummification.

Among the Unanga it has been established that men, women and children were mummified. This could be explained by Turner (1967:93), who believed during the period of liminality, there was no distinction between gender, rank, or status. Ultimately, with the Unanga mummies, a situation occurred when the dead never really left but instead were more powerful in their liminal state where they remained on earth, and especially because they were used to aid in whaling through their body parts but they were also to be consulted and revered.

In chapter 9, I examined the process of mummification as described by Dall (1875:434-436, 1878:6), and as repeated by Jochelson (2002b:42-43), Hrdlička (1945), and Laughlin (1980:101). Chapter 8 adopted an assumption made by Laughlin (1983:11), who maintained that mummification was performed in order to preserve the

power in the body. In the same token, joint binding regulated the power and dismembering released the power of the body. Many of the Unangaâ mummies were wrapped and bound at the wrists, knees, and ankles. Joints were perceived as places where spirits could get in and out. Both the dead and living had their joints bound in Unangaâ culture. Failure to bind joints (at menarche and widowhood) brought premature senility and joint disease to women and brought harm to the village. Joint binding was practiced when a young girl had her period and her rags were considered very powerful (Laughlin 1983:9-11).

Joint binding was a necessary aspect of the mortuary complex linked to mummification and preserving the power in the body. The physical manifestation of this belief was reflected in the placement of the body in an “enclosure” so it could be kept dry and intact (Laughlin 1983:7). The bodies were then later dissected so that whalers “could either eat pieces of flesh of the dead whalers, wear parts of them or even rub their whaling lances to give them spiritual power to kill the whales” (Fitzhugh 2003 236).

The Unangaâ were not the only group in the Americas that believed in the life forces and power within the human body. In Chapter 8 I also included analogous information based on Alfredo Lopez Austin’s (1988) study of the Nahua (Aztec). Among the Nahua the body was equated with cosmic balance. They believed there were various areas of the body such as blood vessels, which were viewed as conduits for vital substances. Joints were minor centers compared to internal organs, but they were thought to be centers of powerful forces that were vulnerable to attack. These centers consisted of the neck, shoulders, elbows, wrists, finger joints, waist, hips, knees, ankles, and toe joints (Lopez Austin 1988:198-199). This sheds additional light on why some Unangaâ were bound and mummified after death.

14.3.c The Use of Dead Body parts for Hunting Whales

It has already been explained at various points in this thesis that mummified body parts, of whalers were used for power while hunting the whale. During the time of the hunt both the hunter and whale were in liminal states. This required a great deal of ritual preparation. In this context the bones of the whale were also considered as another form of the whale transformation and the whale hunter had to associate himself not only with the mummified remains of dead whalers but also the dead whales.

My thesis included other examples from around the world where dead people were used while hunting sea mammals. In Chapter 4, I discussed the work of McNiven (2015) who studied the Natives of the Torres Strait regions of southwest New Guinea and northern Australia. In order for them to hunt the dugong, a sea mammal, the bones of dead dugong hunters were used. This created a relationship among the living dugong hunters, the dead hunters as well as the dead dugong. McNiven stressed the facets of liminality that existed throughout the hunting process. Even after the animal's death, the hunter and animal continued to engage throughout the processing, consumption, and discard of remains. Just like with the Unanga, the animals were believed to be conscious of the ways hunters spoke and were aware if the proper rituals were not performed.

Another example in Chapter 4 came from the Yuquot (Nootka) whaling shrine from Vancouver Island, Canada. The Yuquot created a shrine that consisted of carved wooden figures of at least 88 humans and eight whales in association with human skulls (Jonaitis 1993:3). The shrine was thought to be a place where chiefs (senior whale hunters) were buried and where whale hunters visited to seek out spiritual assistance for hunting success. This was a secret and sacred whaling shrine that included models of spirits and animals, masks, human corpses, and skeletons. The Yuquot believed that the dead had the power to summon the whales so whalers would steal human body,

especially skulls, to ritually assist with the hunt (Jonaitis 1999:5-9, 23-24).

14.3.d Defining Whaling Cult and Shamanistic Complexes

For this thesis it was important to clarify the actual belief system that existed among Northern cultures that hunted the whale. In Chapter 3, I critiqued the notion of a whaling cult, so prevalent in the literature. Lantis (1938a, 1940) was the first to investigate the similarities in whaling practices, rituals, and beliefs that existed throughout coastal Alaska and the Pacific Rim. She referred to these common beliefs and practices as evidence of a whaling cult. Since then the term “cult” has been used in the literature to explain the ritualistic practices of whalers as well as the transformational power they had while whaling. Lantis recognized that among whaling societies, animals were recognized as non-human persons. She concluded that all whaling cultures had cult or ritualistic behaviors, and compiled a list citing that there were commonalities among these whaling groups but also distinct variations.

In reviewing the literature and the importance of whales on so many levels to these cultures, I found that the term “whaling cult” was too restrictive and of narrow focus to describe the ancient belief system centered on whaling. In Chapter 5, I proposed substituting the words “whaling cult” with “shamanistic complex”, especially among groups that hunted whales. The idea of a complex encompasses the recognition of basic ideological beliefs and the pervasive aspects of liminality. It consisted of esoteric beliefs and practices of whaling groups that had ancient origins and that permeated their actions and lives. The concept of a shamanistic complex included the methods of hunting whales, the economic importance of the whale, the social structure of the community, and the ecology of their surroundings.

Because I am using the words “shamanistic complex”, I provided a working definition of the word as applied to whaling cultures in Chapter 5. Shamanism was

defined as a complex set of beliefs, experiences, and practices that provided the keystone for peoples who hunted marine mammals (Price 2011:991). Shamanism entailed all the elements of myths and realities from which they emerged including the prescription and prohibition included in their rituals.

In order to elaborate on the notion complex, I drew partially on the work of Peter Jordan (2001:97) who studied the Khanty. They exhibited a network of spirits and forces encoded in the natural landscape. Jordan recognized that a sacred geography prevailed in which the consciousness of the community was encoded within people's spatial perceptions with spiritual meanings. His work allowed me to make parallels to the Unanga's mummy caves, liminal status of those spirits was reinforced by the entire community. In this manner, ritualized forms of communication took place at the hierarchical network of sacred sites. And like the Khanty, among the Unanga the outcome of hunting was as much about relationships with other beings of the universe as about an individual's technical ability. This relationship never ceased after the death of the whale.

14.3.e Shamanistic Practices and Human-Animal Transformation

As previously stated, although whaling cultures had comparable ritual practices and ideologies, there were variations. In Chapter 5, I also introduced Hullkrantz's concept of regional ecologies (2004:152). He examined the environmental factors crucial to the development of these arctic belief systems. He found evidence, as I have done throughout this thesis, that the archaeological record provided support for the existence of a circumpolar shamanic complex that "could not be refuted". Price (2011) also wrote extensively on this topic, contributing to the understanding that this complex was dynamic and that it manifested itself in different ways in different regions. This provides an explanation as to why not every whaling culture mummified their dead,

hunted the whale the same way or had the same rituals. In spite of these differences, a key aspect of this complex in addition to liminality was the concept of transformation. This involved blurring the distinctions between humans and animals (Jordan 2011:994). Evidence of the transformational manifestation of humans into killer whales, other animals and vice versa in the Gulf of Alaska stems from the symbolic aspects of hunting hats, masks and art depicting these transformation.

Another aspect of whalers' transformations has been pointed out by Sutherland (2001:139) who wrote of the concept of regeneration among northern groups. This concept was based on the belief that the life force of beings resided in their various body parts, especially skeletal and were regenerated from them. It applied to both humans and non-human animals throughout the Pacific Rim, explaining the need to treat the bones of whales with respect in order to insure their rebirth. The quote cited in Chapter 5, addresses this concept: "Life's greatest danger, said an old Iglulik shaman, lies in the fact that man's food consists entirely of souls" (Birket-Smith 1936:166). According to this worldview, animals were cognizant beings with souls who could observe and respond to human behavior in a number of ways (Lantis 1938; Birket-Smith 1936; Watanabe 1994). This is why the bones of whales were more than housing supports or scaffolds. They were living entities that paid homage to the whale and those who participated in whaling.

14.4 Summary of Aims and Objectives

My research goals and objectives have enabled me to produce an explanation indicating that a majority of the mummies found in the Aleutians, on Kodiak Island and Prince William Sound represent whalers and their families. This does not rule out the fact that chiefs and or shamans were also mummified. By adopting the paradigm of persistent liminality, I have presented a credible explanation as to why people were

mummified. By examining literature from Kodiak, the comparative evidence supports the proposition that it was the whalers who performed the actual mummification. This process was a ritual and the bodies were also used as items of material culture. I also have proposed changing the notion of a whaling cult to a shamanistic whaling complex due to the belief systems that existed among the groups that practiced whaling in the Aleutians and adjacent areas. The information I have presented supports the various aspects and themes of my research, which constitutes an original body of work that contributes to the understanding of Aleutian mummification.

14.5 Limitations of this Study

Because this thesis develops a proposition that has not been put forward before now, certain aspects remain to be tested. No one to date has addressed Unanga mummification as a sole topic. After years of writing this thesis, I now understand why. In anthropological circles it is now difficult to investigate Native human remains. The reasons for this are valid but they also limit what can be studied about aboriginal mortuary rituals. As stated in the introductory chapter, the research in this thesis, especially regarding mummification, is based on human remains that were not scientifically excavated. This causes many inherent problems. Because the Unanga mummies were plundered and there are no mummies that remain from Kodiak Island, limited information about the mummified individuals is speculative in nature. The lack of specific provenance aside from island location and sometimes a cave name, items such as grave goods associated with the mummies are forever lost. An exception are the wooden, bone and stone artifacts collected and examined by Johnson (2016, 2018) in Asxaana- x Cave, Carlisle Island. In the most recent publication she states that the 36 mummies found in the cave were reburied with no report generated. This is unfortunate although the suspected reasoning is understood. Additionally, at this point in time, if an

item has been determined a grave good, it cannot even be photographed accept with permission. Currently the only collection of mummies from the Aleutians is being prepared for repatriation. Once that occurs, it will be even harder to learn about how this group of people treated their dead.

In this section it is noted that the historical information regarding the Aleutians has been recycled many times. It is hoped that this thesis can be used as a resource for others who are studying the Unanga. As stated previously, there is little information in the literature regarding the final deposition of shamans and commoners. Additionally, although many inroads have been made with regard to the archaeology of the Aleutians, there are still significant gaps, especially relating to the westernmost islands.

14.5 Implications for Further Study

There will probably never be a single theory pertaining to Unanga mummification that can archaeologically and or ethnographically be verified with absolute certainty. As a result, even though I have provided explained the rationale for undertaking the objectives of this thesis, my research also lends itself to further study in many realms. The excavation of the Asxaana- Cave mummies remain an enigma and the story of this cave would make for a study that would be of interest regarding the nature of the relationship between tribes and archaeologists based on sins of the past.

It is also recommended that more research be conducted into the parallels drawn in the literature between the Unanga and peoples of the Northwest Coast (Maschner and Reedy- Maschner 2007:33; Black 2003:101; Liapunova 1996:43; Ivanov 1991:45). Although separated by distance and distinct ethnic origins, various traits such as social stratification, hunting hats, potlatches, and the practice of dismemberment are comparable. On a similar note, Lydia Black (2003:39-42) and Joseph Lubischer (1993:107) have indicated that the residents of the Islands of the Four Mountains may

have been culturally distinct from the other Unanga groups based on art and kayak styles. I considered this information to be outside the scope of my research due to the lack of data on this topic and also because mummies were found in numerous other locations outside this island grouping. Further investigation on this topic would also be of value.

Finally, additional information in relation to the triangular relationship between whalers, whales, and orcas as discussed by Dransart (2013) is intriguing. Of relevance is the fact that for the Aleutians there is a lack of data on the various whale bone specimens that were excavated over the years with little attention paid to identifying species (O'Leary 1984:93-94). Additionally, anthropologists are only beginning to recognize the metaphysical relationships between humans and animals. The further study of the complex relationships between the Unanga and whales has not been thoroughly investigated using this paradigm.

14.6 Conclusion

Alaska has captured the attention of the world in recent years, primarily based on television shows that portray Alaskan life, or at least a stereotype of what Alaska life is like. It would be wonderful if the information on the Unanga mummies would spark further interest not only in Unanga culture, but the other great Alaska Native tribes that have survived and thrived in the harsh Alaskan environment for thousands of years.

When all is said and done, my research demonstrates that Unanga culture was highly adapted to the austere Aleutian Islands. They had a rich intellectual and material culture. Scholars in the various anthropological disciplines have been doing their best to reconstruct Unanga society prior to contact. These attempts are aimed at bridging the gaps between past and present. This thesis provides further evidence to earlier claims that many of the Unanga were mighty whalers who were adept at procuring large

mammals in relatively small vessels and truly were aristocrats of courage.

14.7 Epilogue

My research is ultimately about death and how the living interpret and react to it. Death and dying are inescapable facets of our existence. On the most basic level, mortuary practices and rituals represent the attempts of the living at preserving and honoring the memory of those who are no longer with us in the physical realm. Ironically, as I wrote this last chapter, I was required to come to terms with the death of my father who passed with little warning. As a result, I experienced firsthand the overall power mortuary rituals have on those who are left behind. I also came to understand that these rituals and the choice of body deposition are the only ways the living, who are powerless over death, can participate in this final rite of passage. They provide the means for us to honor our loved ones while trying to ensure they are not forgotten

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Appendix 1

Kagamil Archaeology -Smithsonian Institution February 12, 2019 Sorted by Material

Location	Catalog Number	Object Name
1106B00810	A391718-8	Grass Mat
1106B00811	A391717-0	Grass Mat
2144C01608	A386434-0	Grass Mat Fragment
1105B00203	A39719-0	Grass Mat Fragment
1105B00204	A386426-0	Grass Mat Fragment
1105B00205	A391720-0	Grass Mat Fragment
1105B00207	A391716-0	Grass Mat Fragment
1106B00712	A386439-0	Grass Mat Fragment
1106B00714	A386440-0	Grass Mat Fragment
1106B00714	fA386443-0	Grass Mat Fragment
1106B00715	A386441-0	Grass Mat Fragment
1106B01814	A386421-0	Grass Mat Fragment
1106B01814	A386422-0	Grass Mat Fragment
1106B01814	A386423-0	Grass Mat Fragment
1106B01815	A386427-0	Grass Mat Fragment
1106B01816	A386406-0	Grass Mat Fragment
1106B00716	A386445-0	Grass Mat Fragment
1106B01714	A386410-0	Grass Mat Fragment
1106B01714	A386413-0	Grass Mat Fragment
1106B01714	A386418-0	Grass Mat Fragment
1106B01810	A386412-0	Grass Mat Fragment
1106B0801	A386408-0	Grass Mat Fragment

1106B0801	A386409-0	Grass Mat Fragment
1106B0802	A386401-0	Grass Mat Fragment
1105B01801	A386427-1	Grass Mat Fragment
1106B0801	A386404-0	Grass Mat Fragment Unfinished
1006B00705	A386428-0	Grass Mat Fragments
1006B00706	A386430-0	Grass Mat Fragments
1006B00707	A386431-0	Grass Mat Fragments
1006B00708	A386432-0	Grass Mat Fragments
1006B00709	A386433-0	Grass Mat Fragments
1006B00709	A386435-0	Grass Mat Fragments
1006B00709	A386444-0	Grass Mat Fragments
1006B00710	A386434-0	Grass Mat Fragments
1106B00711	A386436-0	Grass Mat Fragments
1106B00712	A386437-0	Grass Mat Fragments
1106B00712	A386438-0	Grass Mat Fragments
1106B00812	A386419-0	Grass Mat Fragments
1106B00813	A386419-0	Grass Mat Fragments
1106B00813	A386420-0	Grass Mat Fragments
1105B00201	A386429-0	Grass Mat Fragments
1106B00715	A386442-0	Grass Mat Fragments
1106B01713	A386407-0	Grass Mat Fragments
1106B01713	A386424-0	Grass Mat Fragments
1106B01714	A386405-0	Grass Mat Fragments
1106B01810	A386411-0	Grass Mat Fragments
1106B0181	A386415-0	Grass Mat Fragments
1105B01802	A386446-0	Bag of Grass Matting

1105B0803	A386447-0	Bag of Grass Matting
1106B0803	A386448-0	Bag of Grass Matting.
1106B0803	A386449-0	Bag of Grass Matting.
1106B0804	A386450-0	Bag of Grass Matting.
1106B0804	A386451-0	Bag of Grass Matting
1106B0804	A386452-0	Bag of Grass Matting
1106B0804	A386453-0	Bag of Grass Matting
1106B01004	A17468-0	Specimen of Course Matting
1106B0802	A386402-0	Bark Fiber Mat Fragment
1105B00206	A386466-0	Grass Bag Fragment
1106B00810	A391721-0	Grass Bag Fragment
1124C00201	A386496-0	Grass Bag Fragment
1106B00614	A386467-0	Grass Bag Fragment
1106B00712	A386464-0	Grass Bag Fragment
1106B00616	A386471-0	Grass Bag Fragment
1106B0804	A386461-0	Grass Bag Fragment
1106B0805	A386462-0	Grass Bag Fragment
1106B0805	A386465-0	Grass Bag Fragment
1106B0806	A386463-0	Grass Bag Fragment
1106B00615	A386468-0	Grass Bag Fragments
1106B00615	A386468-0	Grass Bag Fragments
1106B00615	A386470-0	Grass Bag Fragments
1124C00205	A386455-0	Grass Bag
1105B0803	A386460-0	Grass Bag
1105B01804	A386454-0	Grass Bag
1105B01804	A386456-0	Grass Bag

1105B01804	A386457-0	Grass Bag
1105B01804	A386459-0	Grass Bag
1106B01805	A386458-0	Grass Bag
1106B00616	A386473-0	Grass Basket
1106B00616	A386474-0	Grass Basket
1106B00616	A386475-0	Grass Basket
1106B01006	A17460-0	Grass Basket
1106B01006	A17461-0	Grass Basket
1106B01006	A17462-0	Grass Basket
1106B01006	A17463-0	Woman's Grass Work Basket
1106B01004	A17464-0	Woman's Work Basket
1106B00616	A386476-0	Grass Basket Lid
1106B00914	A389847-0	Grass Ball on Stick
1106B00616	A386477-0	Rattan
1106B0905	A389902	Reed Mat
1106B00907	A389902-0	Reed Mat
1106B0905	A389902	Reed Mat
1106B00702	A386490-0	Fiber Rope Fragment
1106B00701	A386488-0	Knotted Fiber Rope
1106B00701	A386489-0	Knotted Fiber Rope Fragments
1106B00701	A386487-0	Fiber Rope Fragment, With Noose
1106B00907	A389900-0	Grass Rope Fragment
1106B01004	A17267-0	Pine Bark and Resin
1106B01004	A17269-0	Piece of Braid
1106B00613	A395764-0	Shell Spoon
1105B01309	A17260-0	Ivory Tools

1106B00906	A38987-0	Ivory Cutting Tool
1106B00906	A389881-0	Ivory Object
1106B00906	A389882-0	Ivory Object-Yellow
1106B00906	A389864-0	Harpoon Foreshaft-Ivory
1105B01416	A386515-0	Bone Spoon
1105B01416	A386517-0	Bone Spoon
1106B00702	A386514-0	Bone Spoon
1106B00704	A386516-0	Bone Spoon
1106B01003	A17252-0	Worked Bone
1106B01003	A17253-0	Worked Bones
1106B00906	A389876-0	Worked Bones
1106B01003	A17254-0	Bone Awl with Handle
1106B00906	A389872-0	Bone Picks
1106B00906	A389873-0	Bone Punch
1106B00906	A389874-0	Bone Fish-Hook Shank
1106B00906	A389877-0	Bone Wedges
1106B00906	A389878-0	Bone Rasp
1106B00906	A389879-0	Bone Plug for Float
1106B00906	A389880-0	Bone Boss
1106B00906	A389865-0	Harpoon Foreshaft-Bone
1106B00906	A389866-0	Harpoon Foreshafts-Bone
1106B00906	A389867-0	Harpoon Heads-Bone
1106B00906	A389868-0	Harpoon Head-Fragment
1106B00906	A389869-0	Harpoon Heads-Bone
1106B00906	A389870-0	Harpoon Heads-Bone
1106B00906	A389871-0	Harpoon Heads-Bone

1106B01004	A17252-0	Worked Bones
1106B00617	A386478-0	Baleen Coiled Strips
1106B00702	A386495-0	Baleen Thread
1106B00617	A386480-0	Tendons for Threads
1106B00617	A386481-0	Sinew Ropes-Braided
1106B00617	A386482-0	Sinew Ropes Fragment Braided
1106B00701	A386484-0	Bundle of Sinew Cord Fragments
1106B00701	A386485-0	Sinew Cord Fragments Braided
1106B00701	A386486-0	Sinew Cord Fragments Square
1106B00701	A386492-0	Sinew Net Fragments
1106B00702	A386491-0	Sinew Net Fragments
1106B00907	A389899-0	Sinew Rope Fragment
1106B00702	A386493-0	Sinew Thread
1106B00702	A386494-0	Sinew Thread Wrapped in Gut
1106B00907	A389897-0	Sinew Line, Braided
1106B00907	A389898-0	Sinew Line Fragments, Bound with Sinew
1106B00702	A386497-0	Pouch of Gut
1106B00702	A386498-0	Pouch of Gut
1106B00702	A386505-0	Pouch of Gut
1106B00704	A386502-0	Pouch of Gut
1106B00704	A386503-0	Pouch of Gut
1106B00703	A386516-0	Pouch of Gut
1106B01004	A17467-0	Workbag of Seal Intestines
1106B00803	A386509-0	Fragments Gut, Hide, Harpoon Floats
1106B00804	A386509-0	Fragments Gut, Hide, Harpoon Floats
1106B00805	A386509-0	Fragments Gut, Hide, Harpoon Floats

1106B00717	A386511-0	Pieces of Tailored Hide
1106B00718	A386511-0	Pieces of Tailored Hide
1106B00719	A286511-0	Pieces of Tailored Hide
1106B00801	A386511-0	Pieces of Tailored Hide
1106B00802	A386511-0	Pieces of Tailored Hide
1105B01205	A386511-0	Pieces of Tailored Hide
1106B00617	A386483-0	Knotted Sinew Cords, Braided
1106B00907	A389898-0	Sinew Line Fragments Bound with Sinew
32-03H-008-02	A386400-0	Skin Bag Packed with Seaweed
1106B00806	A386510-0	Hide Bound With Sinew Rope
1106B01006	A17251-0	Comb Wood
1106B00704	A386520-0	Wooden Comb
1106B00808	A391697-0	Wooden Vessel (Pail)
1106B01006	A17453-0	Wooden Berry Pail
1104B00511	A386522-0	Wooden Shield
1105B00201	A386521-0	Wooden Shield
1106B00908	A389859-0	Shield of Wood
1106B00909	A389796-0	Shield of Wood
1106B00912	A389817-0	Shield of Wood
1106B00907	A389863-0	Braces for Wood Shield
1106B00902	A389818-0	Wooden Club
1124C00404	A17249-0	Wooden Armor Vest
1106B00808	A391702-0	Wooden Vessel
1106B00808	A391707-0	Wooden Vessel
1106B00808	A391710-0	Wooden Vessel
1106B00809	A391696-0	Wooden Vessel

1106B00809	A391698-0	Wooden Vessel
1106B00809	A391699-0	Wooden Vessel
1106B00809	A391701-0	Wooden Vessel
1106B00809	A391703-0	Wooden Vessel
1106B00809	A391704-0	Wooden Vessel
1106B00809	A391705-0	Wooden Vessel
1106B00809	A391706-0	Wooden Vessel
1106B00809	A391708-0	Wooden Vessel
1106B00809	A391709-0	Wooden Vessel
1106B00903	A389794-0	Wooden Vessel
1106B00903	A389795-0	Wooden Vessel
1106B00904	A389791-0	Wooden Vessel
1106B00904	A389792-0	Wooden Vessel
1106B00903	A389794-0	Wooden Vessel
1106B00910	A389931-0	Wooden Vessel
1106B00910	A389791-0	Wooden Vessel
1106B00910	A389796-0	Walls of Wooden Vessel
1106B00910	A389797-0	Base of Wooden Vessel
1106B00911	A389798-0	Base of Wooden Vessel
1106B00911	A389799-0	Base of Wooden Vessel
1106B00911	A389800-0	Base of Wooden Vessel
1106B00911	A389801-0	Base of Wooden Vessel
1106B00911	A389802-0	Base of Wooden Vessel
1106B01006	A17457-0	Wooden Dish
1106B01006	A17459-0	Wooden Dish
1105B01308	A17250-0	Wooden Cutting Block

1106B00613	A395762-0	Wooden Tray Restored
1106B00613	A395763-0	Wooden Box Cover
1106B00904	A389809-0	Wooden Bowl Fragments
1106B00903	A389803-0	Wooden Tray Curved
1106B00903	A389805-0	Wooden Tray
1106B00904	A389808-0	Wooden Bowl Fragments
Z20000000	A17454	Wooden Bowl
1106B00906	A389895-0	Work Board, Carved
1106B00903	A389857-0	Worked Sticks-Fragments
1106B00914	A389834-0	Sticks with Ends for Splicing
1106B00914	A389835-0	Wooden Picks
1106B00906	A389842-0	Wooden Sheath for Lance
1106B00913	A389843-0	Wooden Handle for Knife
1106B00914	A389837-0	Wooden Handle for Flaker
1106B00914	A389838-0	Wooden Handle for Flaker
1106B00914	A389846-0	Wooden Objects
1106B00913	A389844-0	Wooden Objects
1106B00913	A389844-0	Wooden Objects
1106B00914	A389844-0	Pail Handle-Wooden
1106B00911	A389836-0	Wooden Handle and Bone flaker
1106B00906	A389849-0	Lance Blade Sheath-Wood
1106B00906	A389850-0	Lance Blade Sheath-Wood
1106B00906	A389851-0	Lance Blade Sheath-Wood
1106B00906	A389852-0	Lance Ornament
1106B00906	A389853-0	Lance Ornament Fragment
1106B00906	A389854-0	Lance Object

1106B00906	A389855-0	Lance Cylinder, Drilled
1106B00906	A389856-0	Sliced Sticks Wrapped with Baleen
1106B00906	A389883-0	Float Plug, Wood
1106B00906	A389884-0	Float Plug, Wood
1106B00906	A389885-0	Float Plug, Wood
1106B00906	A389887-0	Float Plug, Wood
1106B00906	A389888-0	Float Plug, Wood
1106B00906	A389891-0	Float Mouthpiece-Wood
1106B00906	A389890-0	Wooden Top
1106B00906	A389889-0	Blunt for Arrow-Wood
1106B00906	A389890-0	Wooden Top
1106B00906	A389892-0	Reel of Wood
1106B00906	A389893-0	Carving of Wood
1106B00906	A389894-0	Carving of Wood
1106B00902	A389810-0	Cutting Board
1106B00902	A389811-0	Cutting Board
1106B00902	A389812-0	Cutting Board
1106B00902	A389813-0	Cutting Board
1106B00902	A389814-0	Cutting Board
1106B00902	A389810-0	Cutting Board
1106B00902	A389811-0	Cutting Board
1106B00902	A389812-0	Cutting Board
1106B00902	A389813-0	Cutting Board
1106B00902	A389814-0	Cutting Board
1106B00902	A389818-1	Cutting Board
1106B00808	A391711-0	Work Board

1106B00808	A391712-0	Work Board
1106B00808	A391713-0	Work Board
1106B00808	A391714-0	Work Reel
1106B00808	A391715-0	Throwing Stick Fragment
1106B01002	A174423-0	Pushing Stick
1106B00911	A389804-0	Wooden Tray
1106B00913	A389862-0	Wooden Tray
1106B01004	A17456-0	Wooden Dish
1106B01004	A17458-0	Wooden Dish
1106B01003	A17455-0	Wooden Dish
1106B01003	A17254-0	Wood Carving
1106B01003	A17446-0	Wooden Doll
1106B00911	A389817-0	Wooden Visor for Hunting Helmet
1106B00911	A389825-0	Wooden Object-Part
1106B00911	A389826-0	Wooden Notched For Splicing
1106B00911	A389827-0	Reworked Wood Fragment
1106B00911	A389828-0	Wooden Object
1106B00906	A38928-0	Birch Bark Rolls
1106B00911	A389819-0	Toy Paddle
1106B00911	A389820-0	Toy Throwing Stick
1106B00911	A389821-0	Toy Throwing Stick-Fgt
1106B00911	A389822-0	Toy Kayak Frame-Fgt
1106B00911	A389823-0	Toy Drum Ring and Handle
1106B01006	A17447-0	Toy Dish
1106B01006	A17448-0	Toy Dish
1106B01006	A17449-0	Toy Dish

1106B01006	A17450-0	Toy Dish
1106B01006	A17451-0	Toy Dish
1106B01006	A17452-0	Toy Dish
1106B00911	A389829-0	Wooden Prow of Kayak
1106B00911	A389831-0	Spreaders for Kayak
1106B00914	A389830-0	Ribs for Kayak
1106B00914	A389832-0	Spreaders for Kayak
1106B00914	A389833-0	Spreaders for Kayak and Fragments
1312A00202	A389815-0	Wooden Paddle
1106B01004	A17445-0	Wooden Hat Used in Baidarka
1106B00902	A389816-0	Paddle Fragment
1105B00206	A17444-0	Part of Keel of Baidarka
1106B00911	A389839-0	Graving Tool
1106B00902	A389943-0	Chipped Slate Points
1106B00902	A389844-0	Chipped Obsidian Points
1106B00902	A389845-0	Chipped End Scraper
1106B00902	A389846-0	Chipped End Scraper
1106B00906	A389892-0	Reel of Wood
1105B01308	A17266-0	Pumice Stone Skin Dressers
1106B00903	A389907-0	Slate and Obsidian Flakes
1106B00906	A38904-0	Slate Knives and Fragments
1106B00906	A38905-0	Slate and Stone Knives Unfinished
1106B00906	A38906-0	Flint and Obsidian Blades
1106B00906	A38909-0	Whetstone
1106B00906	A38910-0	Whetstone
11206B00915	A389918-0	Whetstone

11206B00915	A389919-0	Whetstone
1106B00902	A389947-0	Chipped Side Scrapers
1106B00903	A389948-0	Spalls
1106B00903	A389950-0	Stone Ax-Fragment
1106B00903	A389951-0	Stone Ax-Unfinished
1106B00903	A389952-0	Abrader-Tuff
1106B00906	A389911-0	Abrader
11206B00915	A389912-0	Abrader
11206B00915	A389913-0	Abrader
11206B00915	A389914-0	Abrader
11206B00915	A389915-0	Abrader, Oval
11206B00915	A389916-0	Abrader
11206B00915	A389917-0	Abrader
1106B00903	A389953-0	Abrader, Vesicular Lava
1106B00903	A389954-0	Abrader, Vesicular Lava
1106B00903	A38955-0	Abrader, Vesicular Lava
1106B00903	A389956-0	Abrader, Vesicular Lava
1106B00903	A389957-0	Abrader, Vesicular Lava
1106B00903	A389958-0	Hammerstone
11206B00915	A389927-0	Stone Hammers
11206B00915	A389920-0	Stone Lamp
11206B00915	A389926-0	Stone Lamp
11206B00915	A389921-0	Stone Lamp, Elliptical
11206B00915	A389922-0	Stone Lamp, Elliptical
11206B00915	A389923-0	Stone Lamp, Discoidal
11206B00915	A389924-0	Stone Lamp, Discoidal

11206B00915	A389925-0	Stone Lamp, Oval
1105B01308	A17488-0	Embroidered Tag
1106B01003	A17255-0	Sea Lion Tooth
1106B01003	A17256-0	Ivory Carving of Seal
1106B01003	A17257-0	Ivory Carving of Seal
1106B01004	A17270A-0	Amber Bead
1106B00617	A386523-0	Whale bone Breast Plate
1106B00806	A386496-0	Sealskin Belt
1106B00806	A386508-0	Garment of Intestine and Leather
1106B00911	A389649-0	Iron Knife in Handle
1106B00702	A386507-0	Red Ochre in Skin Bag
1106B00906	A38928-0	Bag of Mineral Dust
1106B00703	A386518-0	Bone Labrets, Oval
1106B00704	A386519-0	Stone Labret
1106B01006	A17264-0	Bracelet of Bird Claws
1106B00806	A386513-0	Cradle Fragments
1106B00807	A386513-0	Cradle Fragments
1106B00906	A389858-0	Feather Ornament
1106B00911	A389824-0	Drum Ring
1106B01004	A17465-0	Fillet of Human Hair
32-03H-008-01	A386398-0	Wooden Vessel with Bird Remains
32-03H-008-01	A386399-0	Wooden Vessel with Human Skull
1106B01004	A17470-0	Mummy Wrapping for Facecloth
1106B01004	A17472-0	Embroidered Bird Skin Shirt from Mummy
32-03H-003-01	A17478-0	Large Mummy Case of Cord (Animal Thong)
1106B01007	A17474-0	Grass Mat of Small Fine Grass from Mummy

1106B01004	A17473-0	Human Mummy Wrapping
1106B01005	A17469-0	Human Mummy Wrapping
32-01H-017-05	A386389-0	Mummy Bundle Infant
32-01H-017-06	A386389-0	Cradle with Infant Mummy
32-03H-008-01	A386395-0	Cradle With Infant Mummy
32-01H-018-01	A386382-0	Mummy Bundle Infant
32-01H-018-02	A17475-0	Infant Mummy
32-03H-006-01	A17480-0	Infant Mummy
32-01H-018-04	A386383-0	Mummy Bundle Infant
32-01H-018-05	A386386-0	Mummy Bundle Infant
32-03H-008-01	A386385-0	Mummy Bundle-Infant
32-03H-008-02	A386387-0	Mummy Bundle Infant
32-03H-008-02	A386388-0	Mummy Bundle Infant
32-03H-008-01	A386392-0	Mummy Bundle-Infant
32-03H-008-03	A386384-0	Mummy Bundle Infant
32-03H-008-03	A386390-0	Mummy Bundle Infant
32-03H-008-03	A386391-0	Mummy Bundle Infant
32-01H-019-03	A386393-0	Cradle with Infant Mummy
32-03H-006-01	A17483-0	Infant Mummy In Case
32-03H-008-02	A386396-0	Infant Mummy in Hide Vessel
32-03H-008-03	A386397-0	Wooden Dish with Infant Mummy
32-03H-001-01	A386377-0	Mummy Bundle Adult
32-03H-002-02	A386377-0	Mummy Bundle Adult
32-01H-017-04	A386380-0	Mummy Bundle Adult
32-03H-004-02	A386381-0	Mummy Bundle-Adult
32-03H-005-01	A386381-0	Mummy Bundle-Adult

32-03H-006-02	A386378-0	Mummy Bundle-Adult
32-03H-007-02	A386379-0	Mummy Bundle-Adult
32-03H-002-02	A17482-0	Adult Mummy
32-03H-004-01	A17481-0	Adult Mummy

