Postcontact Koniag Ceremonialism on Kodiak Island and the Alaska Peninsula: Evidence from the Fisher Collection

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POSTCONTACT KONIAG CEREMONIALISM ON KODIAK ISLAND AND THE ALASKA PENINSULA: EVIDENCE FROM THE FISHER COLLECTION

ARON CROWELL

Abstract. Late nineteenth century dance masks, beaded headdresses, and other ceremonial articles from Kodiak Island and the Alaska Peninsula provide evidence for the extended postcontact continuity of Koniag religious beliefs and shamanic practices. Objects were selected for study from the large and well-documented William J. Fisher collection at the National Museum of Natural History. Postcontact innovations in the styles, media, and uses of ceremonial art are discussed on the basis of the Fisher materials. Results include documentation of a Koniag hunting ritual similar to the "Doll Ceremony" of the mainland Alaskan Yupik. Sources employed in the description and interpretation of the objects include Fisher's field catalogs and correspondence, ethnographic and historical records, recent archaeological research, linguistic analysis, and materials studies.

Introduction

The Koniag dance masks, headdresses, and shamanic articles discussed in this paper were collected between 1879 and 1885 on Kodiak Island and the Alaska Peninsula by naturalist and amateur ethnographer William J. Fisher. These materials were selected for study from the Fisher collection at the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C.,[1] which includes a total of nearly 400 ethnographic and archaeological objects from several southern Alaskan cultural/linguistic groups: the Alutiiq-speaking Koniag and Chugach; the Aglurmiut and Kiatagmiut (Central Alaskan Yupik speakers), and the Tanaina (Athapaskan Indians of the Cook Inlet region) (Fig. 1).[2]

A century after control of the region was seized by Russian fur trading companies, late nineteenth century southern Alaska was coming under the influence of a new set of external economic interests. Jurisdiction by the United States had commenced in 1867, 12 years before Fisher took up residence in the town of St. Paul on Kodiak Island in 1879. The maritime fur trade was entering its final decade, as sea otter and fur seal populations succumbed to intensified exploitation by American companies (Elliott 1875; Hussey 1971; Petroff 1884). The salmon canning industry, established on Kodiak in 1882, would soon draw much of the surviving Native population into a booming wage economy as seasonal plant workers (Roppel 1986). Social impacts would include the abandonment of many villages, reconsolidation of the population at cannery locations, and increased dependency on company stores and credit (Befu 1970; Davis 1984).

With the end of sea otter hunting and the influx of new store-bought goods came the disappearance of many types of traditional clothing and implements that had continued to be made and used throughout the Russian and early American

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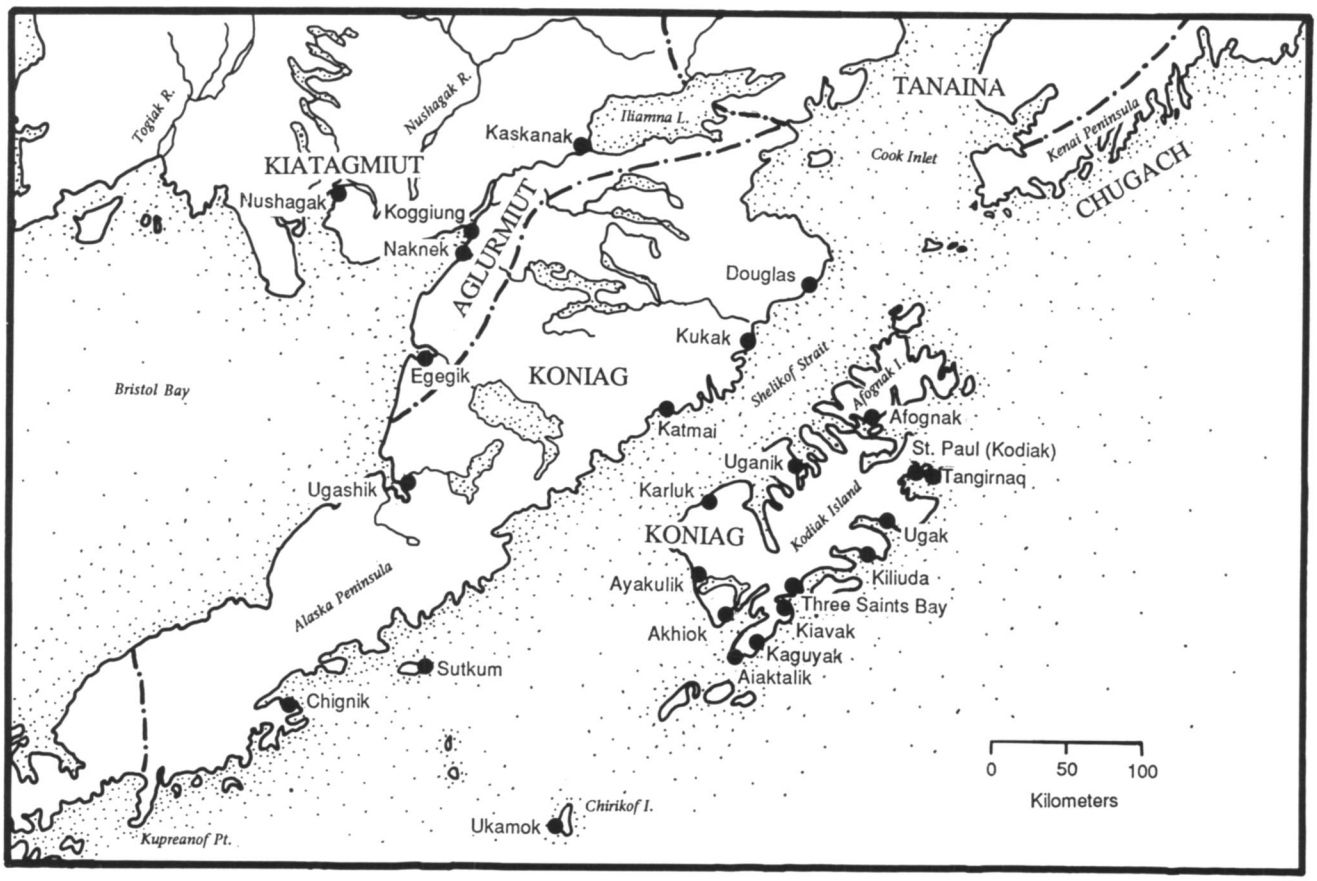

Figure 1. Culture areas of Kodiak Island and the Alaska Peninsula, with nineteenth century villages and place names mentioned in the text.

periods. The Fisher collection includes some of the last stone-bladed knives, sea otter darts, whale lances, hunting hats, skin clothing, bentwood bowls, and hair-embroidered bags to be produced on Kodiak and the Alaska Peninsula.

Fisher's collection and notes also contribute to an understanding of late postcontact Koniag ceremonialism. Masks, rattles, headdresses, and other objects in the collection display overall continuity with earlier traditions of ceremonial art. New media are freely utilized, however, including glass beads and commercial paint. In addition, certain stylistic innovations suggest new directions in Koniag spiritual thought and expression. The interpretive value of the collection is enhanced by its careful documentation, which for most objects includes village of origin, Alutiiq name, and supplemental notes on related beliefs, manner of use, and cultural currency. These commentaries provide data on the continuation, abandonment, or modification of traditional ceremonial practices, providing an opportunity to survey one area of Koniag response to the severe social, economic, and demographic impacts of the fur trade era (1784 to ca. 1895).

These issues are best framed by a brief review of late eighteenth and nineteenth century information on Koniag religion and ritual. During the early years of Russian contact, descriptions of ceremonies and shamanic performances were recorded by Shelikhov in 1784 (1981), Merck in 1790 (1980), Davydov in 1804 (1977), Gideon in 1804–1807 (1989), and Lisiansky in 1805 (1814). These sources indicate that ritual observances of chiefly succession, preparation for war, and other important events took place throughout the year as occasion demanded, with an intensification of ceremonial activity during the months that followed the end of the fall salmon runs. Village chiefs hosted winter hunting ceremonies and memorial rituals that included masked dance performances, public displays of shamanic healing and augury, lavish feasting, oratory, and gift exchanges. Hosting of feasts was reciprocal between villages and/or kin groups, serving to display the wealth and prestige of each group and its headman.

Lavish ceremonial display in support of a system of social ranking was a feature of Koniag culture that paralleled the Northwest Coast potlatch, as noted by Lantis (1947), Townsend (1980), and Jordan (n.d.). On the other hand, many characteristics of Koniag ceremonial costume, equipment,

and performance, as well as the overall concept of ritually honoring the spirits of game animals, indicate a close similarity to the Yupik hunting festival complex of mainland southwestern Alaska (Lantis 1947:52).

Koniag ceremonialism survived under Russian domination despite economic hardships, epidemics of smallpox and other introduced diseases, drastic population decline, and Russian Orthodox missionary efforts that commenced on Kodiak in 1794. Although Holmberg observed in 1851 that "Few of the customs and rites of the Koniags, their shamanism, and their religious views now persist" (Holmberg 1985:51), other reports suggest that the abandonment of traditional religious observances was far from complete by the mid-nineteenth century. Relatively late reports include those of Russian collector I. G. Voznesenskii, who witnessed dance performances and collected masks on Kodiak in 1842–1843 (Blomqvist 1972; Liapunova n.d.), and of French scholar Alphonse Pinart, who obtained masks and recorded ceremonies in several villages on Kodiak Island in 1871–1872, less than ten years before Fisher's arrival (Bancroft Library PK-49; Lot-Falck 1957).[3]

Several factors may account for the extended postcontact vitality of Koniag ceremonialism. An ideal of tolerance toward Native cultures and non-Christian beliefs existed among many Russian Orthodox missionaries (as exemplified by Veniaminov), although exceptions to this attitude were not uncommon (Kan 1988:510). In addition, Russian American Company antagonism toward early missionary efforts on Kodiak may have slowed the spread of Christian doctrine (Kan 1988:507). Spicer (1971), Salisbury (1982), and others (cf. Simmons 1988) have also argued that acculturation in colonial situations is a complex and uneven process, in which indigenous religious institutions may remain strong as focal points of cultural identity in the face of external pressures and domination. New syncretic forms frequently emerge that reflect the accommodation of traditional and introduced belief systems.

In the present paper, the themes of religious continuity, change, and syncretism are addressed primarily through the discussion of masks and other ceremonial objects in the Fisher collection. Descriptions and interpretations of the objects utilize Fisher's documentation as well as relevant archaeological and ethnohistoric data. Fisher's travels, field methods, and sources of information are discussed to provide historical background for the assembly of the collection, and to allow a critical approach to the information supplied in his records. The arguments and interpretations presented here are preliminary, offered with the intention of stimulating future work with Koniag ethnographic collections, historical records, oral history, and archaeology.

Primary sources consulted for this paper include Fisher's published articles (Fisher 1880, 1883); unpublished ethnographic and linguistic notes dated 1882 (National Anthropological Archives Doc. 210); field catalogs, accession records, and correspondence with William H. Dall (Smithsonian Institution Archives 7073/10/20), Smithsonian Secretary Spencer F. Baird (Smithsonian Institution Archives R.U. 305), and George Davidson of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey (Bancroft Library C-B 490/Box 37). Lydia Black provided a valuable reference to Fisher from the journal (1880–1905) of Vladimir Stafeev, currently being translated from the Russian by Lydia Black and Marina Ramsay for The Limestone Press (Stafeev n.d.). Alutiiq and Central Yupik words and place names recorded by Fisher are given here in the modern standard or "practical" orthography (Leer 1985), courtesy of Jeff Leer of the Alaska Native Language Institute (Leer 1988).

Future archival research may reveal additional correspondence, journals, or photographs. Other known Fisher objects are widely dispersed, and have not been examined. More than 170 Fisher pieces from Kodiak, Norton Sound, and Sitka are cataloged at the American Museum of Natural History in New York (Bill Weinstein, personal communication, 1988). As a result of collection exchanges, small numbers of additional pieces ended up at museums around the world, including the Museé de l'Homme in Paris, the Museo Etnografico in Buenos Aires, the Peabody Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, and Harvard's Peabody Museum in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Fisher in Alaska

Fisher's tombstone in the American Cemetery in the city of Kodiak provides birth and death dates (1830–1903). Records at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco indicate that he was a member from 1870 to 1876, and served as librarian and curator of conchology. During these years he made several Pacific voyages aboard the *U.S.S. Tuscarora* as a marine biologist for the U.S. Fish Commission, then headed by Dall. In 1879, Fisher took a position offered by Davidson as tidal recorder at St. Paul, now the city of Kodiak. The town had been an important center of the maritime fur trade since its founding by the Russians in 1792.

Fisher wrote to Dall from St. Paul and offered to collect natural history specimens for the Smithsonian in his spare time, asking only for preserving alcohol and collecting equipment. He received an enthusiastic response from Baird, who added as a postscript that the museum was also "ravenous for Indian relics, and modern manufactures" (11/22/1880, Smithsonian Institution Archives, R.U. 305).

Baird had become the Secretary of the Smithsonian two years previously, and at this time was overseeing a massive expansion of the Smithsonian's ethnographic holdings (Cole 1985; Deiss 1980; Hinsley 1981). Fisher was one of a number of government agents in the newly-acquired Alaska Territory who were engaged as collectors for this purpose. Edward W. Nelson was working to the north, among the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Yupik and the Inupiat of Norton Sound, James Swan and John J. McLean traveled Tlingit territory in southeastern Alaska, and Lucien Turner was making ethnographic and natural history collections in the Aleutian Islands (Fitzhugh and Selig 1981).

Collectors for European museums were also in the field, sparking a nationalistic spirit of competition that is evident in the Fisher-Baird correspondence. The two men bemoaned the "piracy" of Chugach materials by Johan Jacobsen in 1881–1882 for the Berlin Museum für Völkerkunde (Jacobsen 1977), as well as the removal to France of extensive southern Alaskan collections by Alphonse Pinart in 1871–1872 (Pinart 1872). The latter collection is particularly strong in Koniag materials, including dozens of dance masks (Lot-Falck 1957).

Fisher settled into a leaky, deteriorating log house in St. Paul, bickering with a reluctant Davidson over the need to spend money to fix the roof. The Russian American Company had departed in 1867, transferring the town to the control of the U.S. Army. By the time of Fisher's arrival the army was also gone, and St. Paul had fallen into a general state of soggy disrepair. The streets were muddy gullies, and footbridges were treacherous due to lost and rotten planks. Fisher counted 125 Russian-style log dwellings and a few Koniag semisubterranean houses, in addition to stores and warehouses of the Alaska Commercial Company and Western Fur and Trading Company, abandoned army barracks, and a Russian Orthodox church. Of the town's 500 residents, mostly of mixed Russian and Native descent, he wrote:

> The general health of the inhabitants is good. The most prevalent sickness among them is consumption. Their principal food consists of fish, either fresh or dried. The natives are all members of the Greek Catholic [Russian Orthodox] church, which is supported by the Russian Government. But very few of them speak the English language, the current language being either bad Russian or Aleut [Alutiiq]. There is no doubt that the native population, as well on this island as on the main land, is gradually dying out (Fisher 1880:3).

St. Paul remained the hub of the Alaskan sea otter trade, started by the Russians and carried on by the Alaska Commercial Company and by other firms and individual entrepreneurs. A visitor to St. Paul several years before Fisher's arrival gave a vivid description of the return of a sea otter expedition, which at the same time conveys some of the flavor of nineteenth century racial attitudes and opinions about Alaskan Natives:

> The news that the hunters are returning soon spreads, and every one in the village runs to the bluff to see them enter the harbor. The head of the column pulls around the point of Blisky [Near] Island, keeping time to an Indian boat song. There are several hundred *bidarks* [kayaks] and large skin-boats. The hunters are clad in skin-coats, and their bronzed faces, from constant exposure, give them a hardy, warlike look. Their spears lie alongside, lashed to their canoes, and in the bow of each are two images of the fur-seal carved from walrus-tusk—talismans to bring good fortune. The harbor is covered with boats, and there is no sound heard but the splash of the paddles and the low monotone of the boat-song. During the following week, the village is full of strangers. There may be seen hunters from Afognak and the neighboring islands, many showing traces of White blood; tall and fair-featured men from the main-land, with black hair and eyes, and aquiline noses; scowling Koloshians [Tlingit] from the village near Kodiak—savages held in check by numbers but always ready to fight; Aleuts, with small heads and almond-shaped eyes, betraying their Mongolian origin, but become stronger in frame and hardier since their immigration to these islands: all these are laying in their stores for the winter, and selling the furs they have caught (Wythe 1872:507).

These passages by Fisher and Wythe touch on the legacy of Russian colonialism: Koniag-Russian intermarriage, continuing population decline due to the ravages of introduced diseases, and increased contact between various southern Alaskan peoples caught up together in the pan-North Pacific sea otter trade. Acculturation effects on Kodiak were mixed, in that a partial language shift and at least nominal acceptance of Christian beliefs had occurred, while dependence on European trade goods and technology remained incomplete.[4] Semisubterranean houses were still being built, and kayaks and traditional weapons continued to be used to hunt sea otters, whales, and other sea mammals.

Continuity of traditional religious concepts concerning animal spirits is suggested by the mention of kayak charms, and similar beliefs were recorded by Fisher in connection with several hunting hats that he collected (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:Figs. 202 and 406). These beaded and painted hats were thought to be critical to the wearer's success at hunting sea otters.

The observance of hunting ceremonies or other traditional rituals may also have continued in some villages. In an 1883 letter to Baird (5/19/83, Smithsonian Institution Archives, R.U. 305), Fisher passed on an unconfirmed report that the residents of the village of Aiaktalik "still adhere to some of the rites of their pagan ancestors, and on this ac-

count [Aiaktalik] would be *the* place to gain valuable ethnological information regarding the prerussian inhabitants . . ." (emphasis Fisher's). Fisher also recorded a detailed informant account of contemporary first menstruation rites at Ugashik, which included a feast for the girl's family and acquaintances, the distribution of gifts to the guests, tattooing and ceremonial costuming of the celebrant, and her confinement and subsequent reemergence into the community (National Anthropological Archives, Doc. 210).

Fisher's failure to personally witness any such "pagan rites"—despite an evident desire to do so—may reflect the rarity of such performances by the 1880s, and/or a desire on the part of the Koniag to keep them hidden from outsiders.[5]

Fisher began his work for the Smithsonian by sending off shipments of local fishes, birds, fossils, and other natural history specimens, but his interest in ethnography came increasingly to the fore. He began studying Alutiiq and buying all types of Native manufactures from local residents, visiting sea otter hunters, and fur company agents. In some cases, Fisher commissioned traders to bring back objects from their travels to the Alaska Peninsula and other parts of southern Alaska. Fisher himself was at first restricted to St. Paul by his daily responsibility for tending the Coast Survey's tide gauge, but the hiring of an assistant allowed him occasional forays to outlying villages. He visited the Creole settlement of Tangirnaq on nearby Lesnoi (Woody) Island, and made trips to Three Saints Bay and the Koniag villages of Kaguyak and Killiuda. Pencil sketches made by Fisher of these settlements in 1881 are held in the Davidson Collection (Bancroft Library, 1946.4-A/ Folder 4).

At Baird's request, Fisher commissioned the production of a large set of Koniag, Chugach, Aglurmiut and Tanaina beaded items, including necklaces, bracelets, and dance headdresses (probably including the headdress in Fig. 10), which were sent to the Smithsonian in 1884. These items were made at St. Paul by the Native wives and daughters of Stafeev and Nikoforov, two local Russian fur traders:

> Professor Fisher came in to see his curios which my wife and daughter are making from beads, my wife the Kenai type and my daughter the Chugach ones, such as necklaces, earrings, bracelets, hats, bags, cases, sheaths for knives, etc. He is very taken with the Chugach adornments which are made from very fine glass seed beads in pretty patterns. The Kenai ones are made from larger beads and the designs are not as beautiful. Fisher has quite a large collection of curios, tusks, various shells, stone bowls and missiles, slate knives and arrowheads, stone axes, and hats, and necklaces, bracelets and earrings of Nushagak and Ugashik [designs] which were made for him by Nikoforov's wife and daughter, also from beads, as well as hats from ermine with heads and eyes also beaded; these are quite pretty (Stafeev n.d.: journal entry for March 30, 1881).[6]

Stafeev's wife, Evgeniia Myshak, was a daughter of the Tanaina chief of Tyonek, on Cook Inlet (Lydia Black, personal communication, 1990). His daughter, Tat'iana, grew up in the Nuchek area (Hinchenbrook Island) in Prince William Sound, where Stafeev was stationed before coming to Kodiak in 1880. Stafeev's journal indicates that Fisher later married Nikoforov's young daughter Anna.

As for the "relics" requested by Baird—in Fisher's usage meaning both archaeological finds and old masks that were hidden away in burial caves and rock crevices—Fisher found that local people were "superstitious" and uncooperative, refusing for the most part to divulge where such items might be found or to handle them. Several sets of weathered cave masks did come his way between 1880 and 1884 (Figs. 2–8). Fisher provides no details on how these masks were acquired, although the proveniences he supplies indicate that most were from the Alaska Peninsula. It seems most likely that they were purchased from visitors at St. Paul, or from hunters who had traveled to the mainland on sea otter expeditions. Fisher also spent "a great many days" digging in old house pits for artifacts, and sent Baird what was probably the first systematic listing of archaeological sites on Kodiak Island and the Alaska Peninsula (Fisher to Baird 5/19/83, Smithsonian Archives, R.U. 305). A map which accompanied the list has not been located.

When Baird suggested in 1883 that Fisher undertake an extended collecting expedition through the Alaska Territory, Fisher eagerly assented and proposed an itinerary that included Kodiak Island, the Alaska Peninsula, Cook Inlet, and Bristol Bay. Smithsonian funding for this project was delayed, however, and in the meantime Fisher's tenuous financial situation worsened. He had been absent from St. Paul for several weeks during the spring of 1884 on a bird and egg-collecting trip to the Semedi and Shumagin Islands, and returned to discover that his assistant (Frederick Sargent) had successfully petitioned to replace him as tidal observer. Requests for a Smithsonian salary did not meet with success, but Baird finally managed to arrange the funding necessary for a collecting expedition to the Alaska Peninsula. As a result, Fisher and Native assistants were able to make a two-month kayak journey along the southern shore of Bristol Bay in the summer of 1885, visiting the villages of Ugashik, Egegik, Naknek, and Koggiung, as well as Kaskanak on the Kvichak River near Iliamna Lake (Fig. 1). This trip yielded a total of 175 archaeological and ethnographic objects, including the shaman's costume from Ugashik which is shown in Figures 13–17.

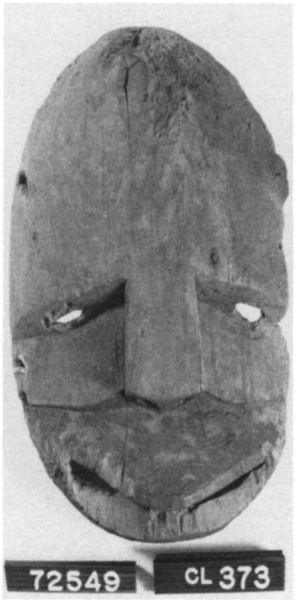

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

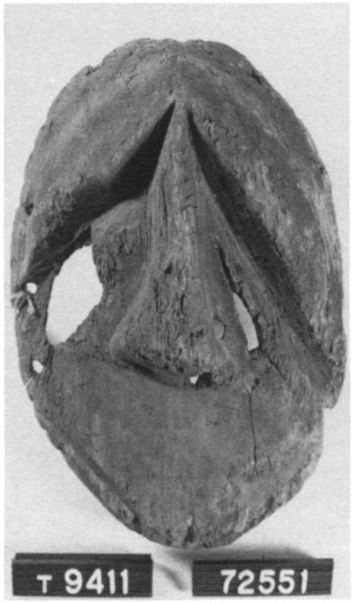

Fig. 4

Fig. 5

Figure 2. Mask (NMNH 72549), Katmai, Alaska Peninsula. Collected 1880–1882. 41 cm × 22 cm. **Figure 3.** Mask (NMNH 72550), Katmai, Alaska Peninsula. Collected 1880–1882. 51 × 19 cm. **Figure 4.** Mask (NMNH 72551), Katmai, Alaska Peninsula. Collected 1880–1882. 36 × 24 cm. **Figure 5.** Mask (NMNH 74692), Douglas, Alaska Peninsula. Collected 1884. 56 × 15 cm.

The 1885 trip appears to have ended Fisher's involvement with the Smithsonian, except for a small additional shipment in 1894 of ethnographic materials from Prince William Sound. No research has yet been undertaken on Fisher's later life and career. He resided in the Kodiak area until his death, and his descendants live there to this day (Chaffin, Krieger, and Rostad 1983).

Object Descriptions and Discussion

This section describes some examples of ceremonial clothing and equipment in the Fisher collection (Figs. 2–17). National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) catalog and accession numbers, as well as Alutiiq and Yupik object names, village proveniences, and group names—all from Fisher's field catalogs—are listed in the appendix, along with detailed descriptions of the objects. Species identifications of fur types used in the manufacture of the shaman's hat (Fig. 13a,b), charm belt (Fig. 14), and bracelets (Fig. 15) were provided by Bonnie Farmer of the Department of Vertebrate Zoology, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution (Farmer 1991). Bead identifications are by Peter Francis (cf. Francis n.d.).

Masks

The masks in Figures 2–4 are described in Fisher's 1882 field catalog as "ancient wooden masks," which were "hidden in caves near beaches." The provenience for all three is listed as Katmai village, on the Alaska Peninsula. Figures 5 and 6 illustrate masks that were part of a set of five sent from Douglas, an Alaska Commercial Company trading post near Cape Douglas on the Alaska Peninsula (Hussey 1971:180). A third mask from this set (NMNH 74690) is illustrated in Fitzhugh and Crowell (1988:Fig. 441); the remaining two were not available for examination.[7] Two additional masks came from Kodiak locations in 1883, the first (Fig. 7) "found in a crevice among cliffs on Lesnoi [Woody] Island" and the second (Fig. 8) found on Sitkinak Island. All of the masks are weathered and cracked to some degree, and bear only remnant traces of paint. Occasional patches of dried moss are present in small holes and recesses.

The placement of masks in caves—often in association with mummies or other types of burials, and possibly linked to the southern whaling cult (Lantis 1938)—is reported for Prince William Sound (de Laguna 1956; Jacobsen 1977; Meany 1906), the Aleutian Islands (Bank 1953; Black 1982), and at Unga Cave in the Shumagin Islands (Dall 1880; Pinart 1875). Masks used in Koniag festivals were also placed in caves, according to Shelikhov's observations on Kodiak Island in 1784:

> At the end of the games they either break the masks and tambourines or put them into mountain caves and never remove them again (Shelikhov 1981:81).

Masks worn in the Chugach Feast of the Dead are also supposed to have been hidden in caves after

Fig. 6

Fig. 7

Fig. 8

Figure 6. Mask (NMNH 74694), Douglas, Alaska Peninsula. Collected 1884. 51 × 31 cm. **Figure 7.** Mask (NMNH 90465), Lesnoi (Woody) Island, northeastern side of Kodiak Island. Collected 1883. 27 × 19 cm. **Figure 8.** Mask (NMNH 90466), Sitkinak Island, southeastern side of Kodiak Island. Collected 1883. 31 × 18 (est.) cm.

the ceremony (Birket-Smith 1953:113). Hypothetically, death masks differ from dance masks by their lack of eye apertures and/or tooth grips or other support features (Black 1982:33). By these criteria, the Fisher examples would be considered dance masks, since all have eye holes and several have perforated lugs for the attachment of head straps. The masks also have regularly-spaced holes or perforations around their margins, into which pegs or cords would have been inserted for the purpose of attaching hoop-frames. Koniag dance masks often had such outer hoops, to which were affixed carved and painted wooden bangles, feathers, and quills (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:Figs. 50, 96; Krech 1989:Figs. opposite pp. 65 and 96; Lot-Falck 1957:Plates IIc, IVe, Vb–j, VIa–f, VIIa,e,i). Alternatively, ornaments could be inserted directly into the body of the mask (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988: Fig. 368). Mask bangles were found in association with the Unga Cave masks and also in late precontact (fifteenth to eighteenth century A.D.) Koniag house floor deposits at the KAR-001 site at Karluk, on the west side of Kodiak Island (Jordan and Knecht 1988).

Features of the Fisher masks include high rounded or pointed foreheads, beak-like or puckered mouths, accented brows, and square or triangular noses. The circular eyes of mask 90465 (Fig. 7) are unusual, as is the mask's pegged-together construction; most known examples are carved from single blocks of wood. Painting on the masks consists of solid red and black fields, accents, or stripes, with many areas apparently left uncolored. This painting style differs from the more elaborate polychrome decoration of some ethnographic masks in the Voznesenskii and Pinart collections.

The iconography of Koniag masks is poorly understood, and no information on this topic is supplied by Fisher. Some Chugach masks also had pointed heads, a feature which may identify them as shamanic spirit helpers (Birket-Smith 1953:124 and Fig. 41). Lydia Black discusses the relationship between hunting power and bird imagery on Aleut and Koniag hunting hats (Black n.d.), a symbolic association which may account for the projecting, beak-like mouths of many Koniag masks. Bird imagery is ubiquitous among the archaeological examples of precontact Koniag wooden masks, charms, and carved handles from Karluk.

Figure 9 illustrates an unusual mask that was designed to frame, rather than to conceal, the face of the wearer. The body of the mask is a flat plank, squared across the top and rounded below, with a centrally placed opening for the face. The mask is painted with bright blue oil paint. A braided sinew head strap decorated with glass and brass beads is fastened on both sides of the face opening, and the top of the mask is ornamented with an array of hawk feathers with beaded shafts. A zigzag line is painted in red across the upper brow of the mask, above a second red line which crosses the brow and descends along the sides of the facial aperture, ter-

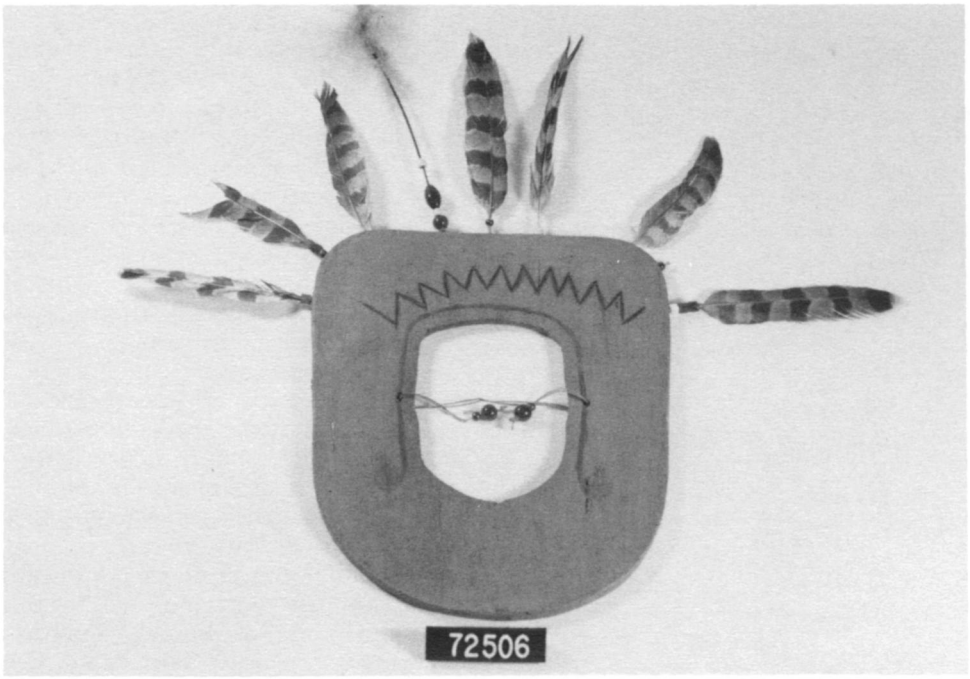

Figure 9. Plank mask (NMNH 72506), Ugashik, Bristol Bay. Possibly made at Kodiak. Collected 1880–1882. 42 × 34 cm (not including feathers).

minating in a spiral at each end. Fisher notes that this mask and a nearly identical companion piece (NMNH 72507) were "worn by women at dances." A round, flat, skin-covered drum (49 cm in diameter) with a plain wooden handle (NMNH 72505), and two "wands held by men over dancers" (NMNH 72508 and 72509) were purchased with the masks as part of a sequentially-numbered set (not illustrated). The long, narrow wooden wands (92 cm × 3 cm) have carved grips. One wand is painted red and the other blue, matching the mask colors. Four or five feathers, all now missing, were at one time pegged into a line of holes along one side of each wand. Except for these missing feathers, the objects in the set appear newly made and show little wear or damage.

Fisher gives Ugashik as the provenience for all the pieces, and *Ugasaarmiut* (Alutiiq, "people of Ugasaak" [Ugashik]) as the cultural designation. Given the mixed Koniag and Aglurmiut population of the village (cf. endnote 2), either cultural attribution is possible. Alutiiq names for these objects are recorded in Fisher's notes: **ggiinaquq* ("mask"), *cauyaq* ("drum"), and **keniraun* ("pointing implement"). Fisher must have purchased the set at St. Paul, since its 1882 accession predates his trip to the Alaska Peninsula.

No masks of the open-face plank type are known from museum collections or mentioned in translated historic accounts of the region. Archaeological examples are also lacking. The unusual form and decoration of the masks raise the possibility that the style is a postcontact one. The red lines which would have framed the wearer's face may represent a crown and European-style hair, referring stylistically to Russian Orthodox painted icons (suggested by Richard Knecht). This hypothesis deserves further investigation, as a possible example of syncretism in Koniag (or perhaps Aglurmiut) religious art. A remark made by E. W. Nelson may be relevant to an interpretation of these masks, since it suggests a similar integration of traditional and introduced religious symbolism:

> Curiously enough, the great mask festival (*A-gai'-yu-nûk*) of the Eskimo south of the Yukon mouth has supplied terms by which the natives speak of the Greek church and its services among themselves. When they saw the Russian priests in embroidered robes performing the complicated offices of the church it was believed that they were witnessing the white man's method of celebrating a mask festival similar to their own (Nelson 1983:422).

Sonne's analysis of masks, notes, and drawings collected by Rasmussen in 1924 suggests that postcontact Nunivak Island ceremonialism also included syncretic elements drawn from Russian Orthodoxy or Roman Catholicism, including the hierarchical ranking of spirits in the Messenger Feast (Sonne 1988).

Beaded Headdress

The woman's headdress shown in Figure 10 (illustrated in color in Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:Fig

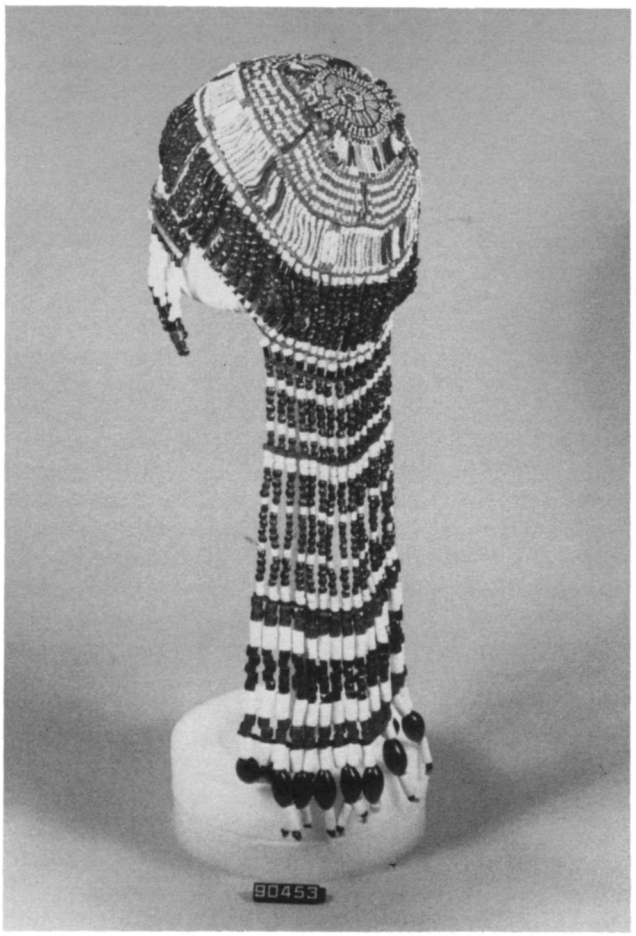

Figure 10. Beaded headdress (NMNH 90453). Provenience listed as Ugashik, Bristol Bay; probably made at Kodiak. Collected 1883. Length 51 cm.

48) was annotated "fr. Ugashak" in Fisher's 1883 field catalog. It was, however, almost certainly among the beaded pieces made at St. Paul for Fisher by the Stafeev and Nikoforov families, along with five other beaded skull caps and three ermine hats that are in the Smithsonian collection. One of the latter is illustrated in Fitzhugh and Crowell (1988: Fig. 361). Although Ugashik, Nushagak, Katmai, and Lesnoi (Woody) Island are listed as proveniences for these headdresses—with corresponding variations in bead types and colors—it is probable that all or most were made at St. Paul. The listed villages were probably intended as stylistic references only.

Fisher reports that beaded skull caps with long tails and dangling eye flaps, of the type illustrated here, are women's headdresses formerly "worn at dances and feasts," while similar caps without tails were worn at such occasions by young men. The Fisher collection includes examples of both types.

The history and geographic distribution of this ceremonial garment are intriguing. The earliest evidence may be from a burial at the Late Kachemak period Cottonwood Creek site in Kachemak Bay, which contained 3300 bone and shell beads scattered about the neck, shoulders, arms, and upper chest of the skeleton of a woman in late middle age (Workman, Lobdell, and Workman 1980:392). The find is at least 1500 years old. The exact type of garment represented is unclear, however, and the beads may be the remains of a decorated cloak, parka, or headdress of a different type than the Fisher examples.

Glass trade beads from Europe and China came into use during the early Russian period, when they almost completely replaced precontact bone, shell, jet, amber, and stone varieties. Beads were one of the few classes of imported trade goods that were available in abundance on Kodiak and the Alaska Peninsula by the early nineteenth century.[8] Glass beads were being used for Koniag headdresses at least as early as 1818, when Mikhail Tikhanov painted a woman from Chirikof Island wearing a long-tailed skull cap made from blue and white beads (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:Fig. 49). The headdress in the Tikhanov painting is very similar to the Fisher examples, except that eye flaps are lacking.

Beaded hair ornaments with long tails, but lacking the closed crowns of the Kodiak and Alaska Peninsula examples, were worn in postcontact times by the Chugach of Prince William Sound:

> On ceremonial occasions a chief's daughter would wear a sort of "veil" or nape ornament of beads and Dentalium shells hanging down the back and sometimes reaching the heels (Birket-Smith 1953:68).

The distribution of this Chugach type of woman's headdress or hair ornament extended east and south into the Northwest Coast area (de Laguna 1972:446; Drucker 1951:Fig. 16). Among the Tlingit, the types of beads used indicated family wealth, with dentalium shells reserved for the headdress of a chief's daughter (Frederica de Laguna, personal communication, 1990).

Puffin Beak Rattle

Circular rattles hung with puffin beaks are mentioned in almost all accounts of Koniag ceremonies, including Billings' in 1790:

> Dancing and singing and drum beating culminate these celebrations. The dancers paint their faces and hold rattles in their hands; the rattles are made from two or three hoops of various widths, which are fastened by a band decorated with feathers, used in place of a handle. Many sea parrot beaks are tied to these hoops so that when they shake the rattle to the drum beats, a very loud sound is produced . . . (Dmytryshyn et al. 1988:397).

According to Fisher, the Uganik Island puffin

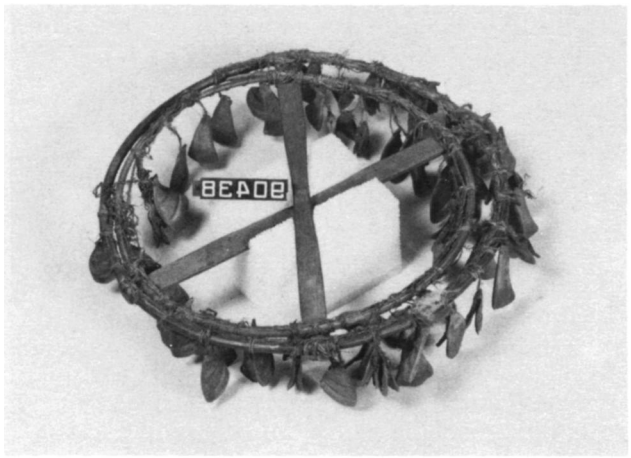

Figure 11. Puffin beak rattle (NMNH 90438), Uganik Island, western side of Kodiak Island. Collected 1883. Diameter 25 cm.

beak rattle shown in Figure 11 was "used at dances & by shamans." It lacks the feathered band or strap mentioned by Billings. The hoop rattle was a traditional ceremonial implement that was used over a wide area, including many parts of the Northwest Coast. Late precontact use by the Koniag has been confirmed at Karluk, where rattle frames were recovered (Jordan n.d.). A figure costumed in an embroidered parka and holding a puffin beak rattle is depicted on an incised pebble from Kodiak Island (Reinhardt 1981). Based on recent radiocarbon evidence, engraved slate pebbles are a precontact artifact type dating to about A.D. 1350–1500, so that puffin beak rattles must be at least as old (Jordan and Knecht 1988:271).

Ceremonial Figurine

Figure 12 shows a large wooden figurine wearing gutskin garments, red and black face paint, and a bead labret. The provenience of this piece is vague, specified only as "Kodiak native." A second, probably similar figurine from Naknek or Egegik—now apparently missing from the Smithsonian collection—is also listed in Fisher's 1884 field catalog. Fisher provides the following information concerning the function of these two pieces:

> One of these images is kept in each native settlement. It is in [the] charge of the Shaman of the tribe. Once a year—in early spring—the image is brought forth by the shaman with great festivities. The shaman previously decks the image out with pieces of the skins of animals which the natives hunt for their furs or meat—pieces of "Ukala" (dried fish)—berries—tobacco—tea—sugar—in fact appends samples of anything the natives most desire, and according to the size of the sample predicts either the abundance or scarcity of the several articles through the coming year. After the conclusion of the festivities the image is returned by the Shaman to its hiding place—only known to him—to be reproduced after another year (Smithsonian Institution Archives R.U. 305, 1884).

Figure 12. Shaman's figurine (NMNH 74719), collected 1884 from "Kodiak native." Height 71 cm.

This ceremony demonstrates one of the principal functions of the Koniag shaman—prediction of the future—which in this case involved an annual forecast of the hunting success and material well-being of the village. The following passage from Nelson leaves little doubt that this Koniag ceremony was a regional variant of the widespread Doll Festival. Nelson's passage refers to the Doll (Yugiyhik) Festival of the lower Yukon River.[9]

> The festival is characterized by the placing of a wooden doll or image of a human being in the kashim and making it the center of various ceremonies, after which it is wrapped in birchbark and hung in a tree in some retired spot until the following year. During the year the shamans sometimes pretend to consult this image to ascertain what success will attend the season's hunting or fishing. If the year is to be a good one for deer hunting, the shamans pretend to find a deer hair within the

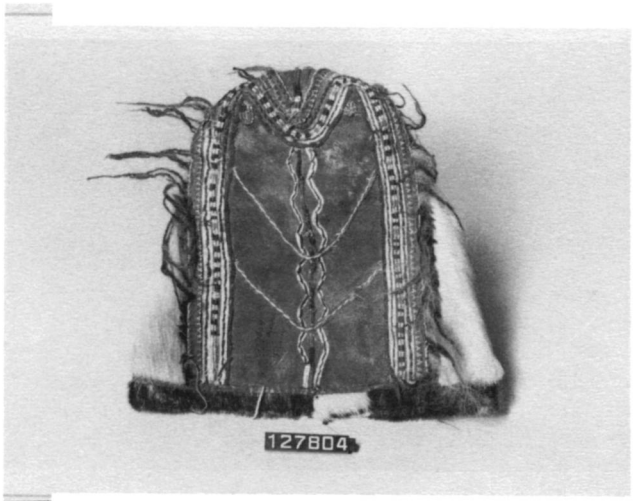

Figure 13a. Shaman's hat (NMNH 127804), Ugashik, Bristol Bay. Collected 1885. Height 25 cm.

Figure 13b. Shaman's hat (NMNH 127804), obverse.

> wrappings of the image. In case they wish to predict success in fishing, they claim to find fish scales in the same place. At times small offerings of food in the shape of fragments of deer fat or of dried fish are placed within the wrappings. The place where the image is concealed is not generally known by the people in the village, but is a secret to all except the shamans and, perhaps, some of the oldest men who take prominent parts in the festival (Nelson 1983:494).

The actual ceremony in the kashim was not described by Nelson, but the origin myth associated with it (Nelson 1983:494–497) demonstrates that its purpose was to promote good hunting and the replenishment of game animals. Koniag ceremonies associated with the display of the doll may have had a similar purpose. The performance of a variant of the Doll Festival on Kodiak Island and the Alaska Peninsula supports Lantis' conclusion that the Koniag ceremonial complex was closely related to the annual sequence of hunting festivals observed by the mainland Yupik (Lantis 1947:52).

Fisher's account indicates that the Koniag Doll Festival continued into the postcontact period and was modified to include forecasts of the availability of scarce trade commodities such as tea, tobacco, and sugar. The magical increase of these goods may also have been sought. The postcontact manufacture of the Kodiak figurine is confirmed by the use of glass beads, cotton thread, trade cloth, and nails.

Stylistically, the large size and detachable arms and legs of the image bring to mind the large painted wooden figurine discovered in Unga Cave (Dall 1880; Pinart 1875). Spirit-helper figurines used by Chugach shamans were almost as large (about 30 cm high), and could be dressed in furs and beads (Birket-Smith 1953:127–128). Eyak and Tlingit shamans also employed human and animal figurines (Birket-Smith and de Laguna 1938:210; de Laguna 1972:697).

The significance of five parallel knife cuts which angle across the chest of the Kodiak figurine is undetermined, although similar chest cuts are present on small archaeological figurines from the KAR-001 site at Karluk (Richard Knecht, personal communication, 1990).

Shaman's Costume

Fisher's 1885 trip along the north shore of the Alaska Peninsula included a stop at Ugashik, where he purchased a unique set of shaman's objects. The pieces are consecutively numbered, and were probably the property of one individual. In reference to this set, Fisher wrote:

> These articles were formerly used by the shaman in his rites. Shamanism does not exist at present among the Ugashagamyutes [Alutiiq *Ugaasarmiut*, people of Ugashik] & Agliamyutes [Yupik **Agl(i)amiut*, people of Naknek and Egegik], all of them being members of the Greek Catholic church. Specimens of Shamanism are extremely rare at present, the Russian priests making relentless war upon & destroying them whenever found (Smithsonian Institution Archives, R.U. 305).

The set includes a peaked caribou skin hat with front and rear panels of black-painted leather (Fig. 13a,b). The panels are embroidered with central linear designs and borders of caribou hair, red and blue yarn, and painted leather strips. The top of what is probably the frontal panel (Fig. 13a) is indented in a way that is curiously reminiscent of the foreheads on some Chugach masks (Birket-Smith 1953:Fig. 41). The bottom of the hat is trimmed with seal and caribou or blacktail deer fur, and the sides are fringed with strands of yarn and long

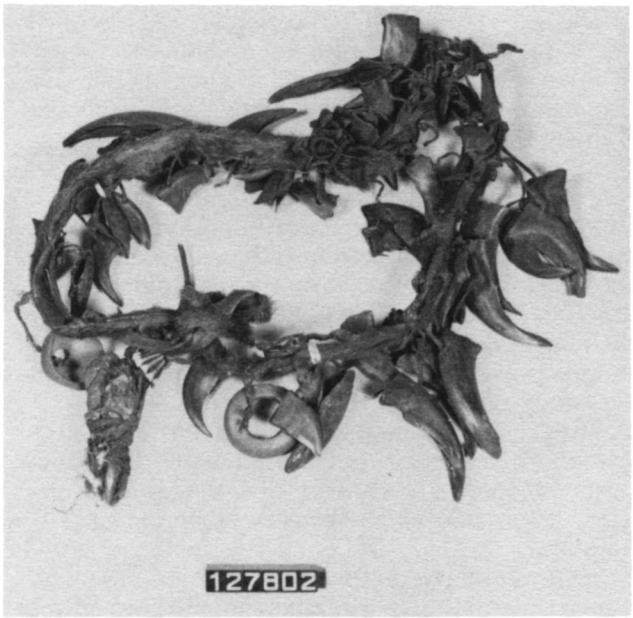

Figure 14. Shaman's charm belt (NMNH 127802), Ugashik, Bristol Bay. Collected 1885. Diameter 30 cm.

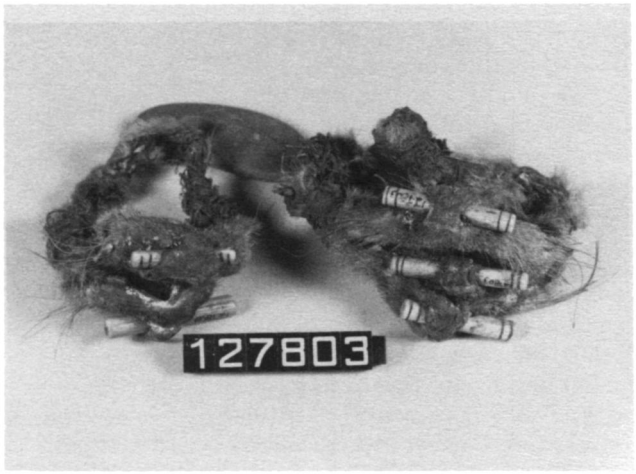

Figure 15. Shaman's bracelets (NMNH 127803), Ugashik, Bristol Bay. Collected 1885. Diameters 7 cm.

wispy hairs from the grizzly or Alaskan brown bear (Farmer 1991).

Fisher obtained a stylistically similar hat at the village of Sutkum (NMNH 90446), made of ground squirrel skins with red-painted embroidered panels front and back, and decorated with tufts of sea otter and ermine fur. Although no descriptions or illustrations of this type of hat have been found in the literature, the existence of a second example from Sutkum—a Koniag village on Sutwik Island off the Pacific coast of the Alaska Peninsula (see Fig. 1)—supports a Koniag attribution for the Ugashik hat as well. Similar hat forms include the high-peaked Koniag "grenadier's cap" with embroidered front panel and open crown illustrated in Birket-Smith (1941:Fig. 6), and certain Aleut ceremonial hats (Black 1982:Plate XVIIIa).

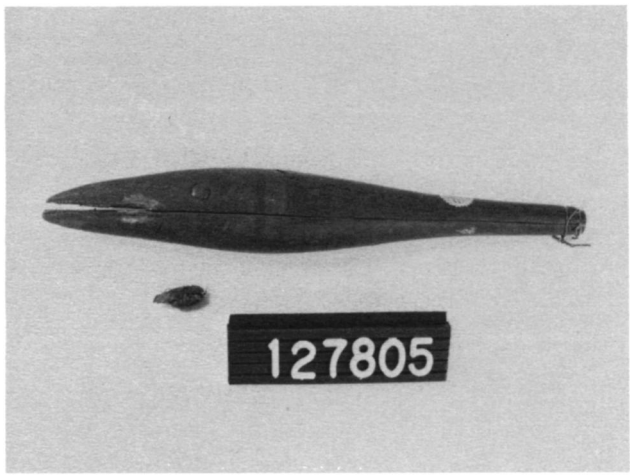

Figure 16. Shaman's rattle (NMNH 127805), Ugashik, Bristol Bay. Collected 1885. Length 25 cm.

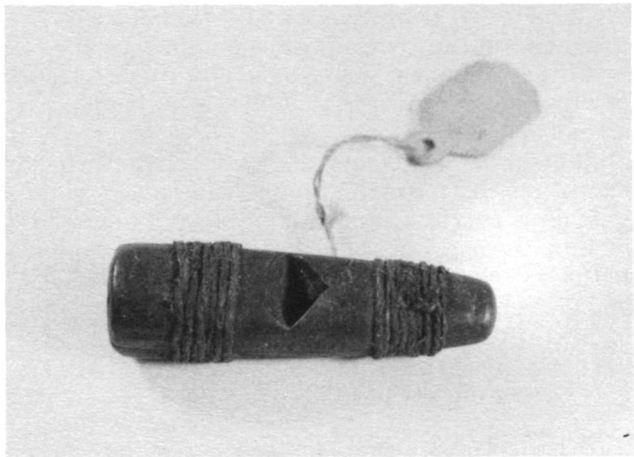

Figure 17. Shaman's whistle (NMNH 127807), Ugashik, Bristol Bay. Collected 1885. Length 5 cm.

Collected with the Ugashik hat were a charm belt (Fig. 14), a pair of bracelets made of river otter snouts with inserted ivory nose pins and hung with waterworn perforated stones (Fig. 15), a carved and painted bird rattle containing a quartz crystal charm bundle (Fig. 16), and a wooden whistle (Fig. 17). Detailed descriptions of these objects are supplied in the appendix. The sealskin belt is hung with grizzly/Alaskan brown bear claws, a stone ring, a set of caribou incisors, and other charms. While the morphology of the rattle strongly suggests a bird, it also possesses mammalian characteristics: carved teeth and traces of unidentified hair glued to the base of the beak.

Little information exists upon which to base an interpretation of these objects, because most

shamanic beliefs and practices of the Koniag and Yupik were concealed from European visitors. According to the Russian missionary Gideon (1804–1807):

> I was not able to obtain detailed knowledge about shamanism, because many of the old shamans had died during the epidemic which raged through Kodiak in all of 1804. Others were secretive about it. While I was visiting the Igak [modern Ugak] settlement, one of the shamans pretended that he had lost his power of speech from a fright he experienced during a horrible dream (Gideon 1989:60).

The meager data collected by Gideon and other early observers—e.g. Merck in 1790 (1980: 107) and Lisiansky in 1805 (1814:207)—indicate that Koniag shamans communicated with spirits, performed rituals to cure the sick and quell storms, and told of future or distant events. These sources mention the wearing of face paint, feathers, a human hair wig, and a reversed parka during shamanic performances, but special clothing, charms, or ritual equipment similar to the Ugashik pieces are not described.

Fisher's data on late nineteenth century shamanism is also minimal, probably reflecting a similar lack of access to culturally protected information. His account of the participation of shamans in the Doll Ceremony has already been discussed, and the use of puffin beak rattles by shamans—perhaps in curing ceremonies—is also mentioned in his notes. In addition, Fisher made the following note pertaining to Ugashik:

> The hair of girls prepared for the *ai-a-wik* [the menstrual lodge] is given to the Shaman and by him used for ornamentation of his official robes (National Anthropological Archives Doc. 210).

Comparative data from other groups in the region is suggestive with regard to shamanism among the Koniag, and to the interpretation of the Ugashik shaman's costume. Chugach shamans are reported to have worn aprons trimmed with puffin beaks, and to have used drums and rattles to accompany themselves as they sang, chanted, and danced (Birket-Smith 1953:126–127). Masks and wooden dolls served them as spirit helpers. By analogy with the Chugach and with Yupik shamans to the north (Nelson 1983:427–441; Fitzhugh and Kaplan 1982: 188–202) and Tlingit shamans to the east (de Laguna 1972; Jonaitis 1986), we may suspect that the Ugashik belt, bracelets, and rattle embodied animal spirits that aided the shaman in the performance of cures, and accompanied him during journeys through the spirit world. The use of river otter snouts for the bracelets finds an interesting parallel among the Tlingit, who considered the river (or land) otter to be the most potent shamanic spirit (Jonaitis 1986:90).

Conclusions

The ceremonial objects discussed above offer material evidence for not only the long-term survival of Koniag religion, but also for postcontact innovations in styles and materials (e.g. dance headdresses made of glass beads), retention of other traditional elements (e.g. puffin beak rattles), concealment of certain objects and practices from European observation (shamanic equipment, old masks), possible reinterpretation of introduced beliefs (open-face plank masks), and accommodation to the new economic order (the altered Doll Ceremony). Overall, this evidence suggests that Koniag religion remained a "living tradition" which retained continuity with the past but which was also open to change and able to meet new circumstances and social needs in a colonial situation.

It was suggested in the introduction to this paper that Koniag ceremonialism may have endured after contact because it offered a focus for the expression of cultural identity in the face of disruption, despair, and epidemic disease. The issue is a complex one, however, because ceremonialism was grounded in both a system of spiritual belief and a system of social order, both of which were confronted by the Russian presence.

Systematic missionary attempts to suppress traditional shamanism and ceremonies are suggested in comments by both Fisher and Nelson (quoted above), but variation in the attitudes and effectiveness of individual missionaries was probably considerable. One factor which could have promoted the survival of traditional religious practices despite efforts to suppress them was the focus of Russian American Company policies on the exploitation, rather than destruction, of the aboriginal social hierarchy. Traditional lines of Native authority and social organization survived or were even reinforced by the Russian system, in which headmen (now designated as *toions*) organized the supply of labor to sea otter hunts and other Russian enterprises (Tikhmenev 1978). Despite the imposition of Russian authority over Native affairs, Koniag *toions* would still have been able to call upon kin group support for the hosting of winter feasts and ceremonies, while the competitive aspects of ceremonial wealth display may even have been accentuated by access to Russian trade goods.

The disappearance of traditional ceremonialism in the years following Fisher's ethnographic work may have resulted from a combination of factors, including the greatly reduced importance of hunting after the end of the sea otter trade, and social changes accompanying the introduction of a cash wage system by the canneries, i.e. the beginning of individualistic rather than group relations to the external economy.

Appendix: Object Descriptions and Linguistic Data

Additional data on the objects discussed in the text are provided below. Objects are listed in catalog number order, with figure references. Each entry begins with the indigenous name of the object and the group and/or location of origin recorded by Fisher. Spellings are given in the modern standard orthography; starred (*) linguistic items are unattested other than in Fisher's data (Leer 1988). This information is followed by collection and accession dates, dimensions, and description.

NMNH 72506, Plank mask (Fig. 9)

**Ggiinaquq* (Alutiiq, "mask"; cf. Yupik, *kegginaquq*); *Ugaasarmiut* (Alutiiq, "people of Ugashik"); collected 1880–1882, by William J. Fisher. NMNH accession 12209 (1882). Height 42 cm (not including feathers); width 34 cm.

Blue painted plank mask with red zigzag line across upper brow, and another line (possibly representing hair) that extends down along both sides of the central face hole; spiral terminations at both ends. Commercial oil paints appear to have been used. Hawk feathers and a down plume attached along top of mask; beads strung on shafts of feathers. Braided sinew cord with beaded ends served as head strap to hold mask in place. Bead types include white drawn tube beads, Bohemian drawn hexagonals in amber and blue (not produced until 1820), and large wound ellipsoids in translucent blue, possibly Chinese in origin (Francis n.d.). Similar bead assemblage present on dance headdress 90453 (Fig. 10).

NMNH 72549, Mask (Fig. 2)

**Agayullquutaq* (Alutiiq, "mask"); *Qa'irwik* (Alutiiq, "Katmai," Alaska Peninsula); *Qa'irwigmiut* (Alutiiq, "people of Katmai"); collected 1880–1882, by William J. Fisher. NMNH accession 12209 (1882). Height 41 cm; width 22 cm.

High rounded forehead, upward-slanting brows and eye holes, straight-sided nose with perforated nostrils, beak-like mouth with lateral slits (broken in front). Holes around the margin for attachment of hoops or appendages. Back roughly hollowed out to fit face of wearer. Remnant red pigment on upper beak, green on underside of brows. Eyes rimmed with red. Faint red stains present on forehead, but this area may have been unpainted.

NMNH 72550, Mask (Fig. 3)

**Agayullquutaq* (Alutiiq, "mask"); *Qa'irwik* (Katmai, Alaska Peninsula); *Qa'irwigmiut* (Alutiiq "people of Katmai"); collected 1880–1882, by William J. Fisher. NMNH Accession 12209 (1882). Height 51 cm; width 19 cm.

High narrow forehead with medial ridge, beetled brows, and narrow, downward-slanting eye slits. Nose straight, with parallel sides and perforated nostrils. Mouth has lateral slit openings. Holes around the margin for attachment of hoops or appendages. Back of the mask has hollowed face area and a perforated lug at top-of-head level, evidently for attachment of a headband to support the mask on the wearer's head. Entire mask painted black, except for red-rimmed eyes; some red staining on upper mouth.

NMNH 72551, Mask (Fig. 4)

**Agayullquutaq* (Alutiiq, "mask"), *Qa'irwik* (Katmai, Alaska Peninsula); *Qa'irwigmiut* (Alutiiq "people of Katmai"); collected 1880–1882, by William J. Fisher. NMNH accession 12209 (1882). Height 36 cm; width 24 cm.

Highly exaggerated slanting brows, accented by red and black chevrons painted on forehead; red-rimmed eye holes, broken out on one side; large nose with rounded contours and perforated nos trils; red-painted beak-like mouth without slits. Holes around margin for attachment of hoops or appendages.

NMNH 74692, Mask (Fig. 5)

**Ggiinaquq* (Alutiiq, "mask"; cf. Yupik *kegginaquq*); Douglas, Alaska Peninsula; *Qa'irwigmiut* (Alutiiq, "people of Katmai"); collected 1884, by William J. Fisher. NMNH accession 15687 (1885). Height 56 cm; width 15 cm.

Very high narrow forehead (one side broken) with medial ridge; upward-slanting brows, narrow eye slits; straight-sided nose with drilled nostrils; puckered "O-shaped" mouth. Holes around edge for attachment of hoops or appendages. Back roughly hollowed out. Faint red stain present over entire mask, which is less weathered than other examples.

NMNH 74694, Mask (Fig. 6)

**Ggiinaquq* (Alutiiq, "mask"; cf. Yupik *kegginaquq*); Douglas, Alaska Peninsula; *Qa'irwigmiut* (Alutiiq, "people of Katmai"); collected 1884, by William J. Fisher. NMNH accession 15687 (1885). Height 51 cm; width 31 cm.

Large, broad mask with medially-ridged forehead, square nose with perforated nostrils, rounded cheeks, curving eye slits, incised eyebrows, and beak-like mouth with lateral slits. Perforated lug on back for fastening headband, and marginal holes for attachments. Surface worn and cracked, with faint traces of red paint around eye slits, under nose, and on top of mouth. Faint red stains on the inside of mask around mouth area.

NMNH 74719, Shaman's figurine (Fig. 12)

**Sugaq* (Alutiiq, "doll"); "Kodiak native." Collected by William J. Fisher, 1884. NMNH accession 15687 (1885). Height 71 cm.

Torso and head carved from a single block of soft wood. Moveable arms and legs attached to the torso with leather thongs. Eyes made of shell, with pupils painted in brown. Additional facial ornamentation includes black painted eyebrows, red and black cheek bands, and labret made of a large dark blue bead with smaller sky-blue bead jammed inside. Metal staple under the nose. Ears nailed on with small copper brads. Nails in top of head probably once held on a fur hairpiece. Clothing consists of a red-painted gutskin choker, gutskin shirt and pants sewn with cotton thread, and boots of thin stiff leather sewn with sinew thread. Five diagonal knife cuts into wood of chest.

NMNH 90438, Puffin beak rattle (Fig. 11)

Uganik Island, Kodiak. Collected by William J. Fisher, 1883. NMNH accession 14024 (1884). Diameter 25 cm. Wooden cross frame with two hoops. Puffin beaks attached with sinew cord.

NMNH 90453, Headdress (Fig. 10)

Nacaq (Alutiiq, "skull cap, hair net, (archaic) headdress"); provenience listed as Ugashik, probably made at Kodiak. Collected 1883, by William J. Fisher. NMNH accession 14024 (1884). Length 51 cm.

Headdress made entirely of glass beads strung on twisted sinew cord, with leather spacer strips encircling crown and at intervals across tail and eye flaps. For a color illustration of this headdress, see Fitzhugh and Crowell (1988:Fig. 48). Complete description of bead types in Francis (n.d.). A variety of tube, faceted, and wound beads used, including orange-red cornaline d'Allepos.

NMNH 90465, Mask (Fig. 7)

**Agayullquutaq* (Alutiiq, "mask"); Lesnoi (Woody) Island, Kodiak; collected 1883, by William J. Fisher. NMNH accession 14024 (1884). Height 27 cm; width 19cm.

Small mask with unusual round, projecting eyes. Nose modeled as a sharply-defined ridge extending to top of mask. Pegged-on projection of the nose evidently once present. Beak-like mouth with lateral slits, also formerly fitted with a pegged-on extension. Holes around edges of mask for attachments. Wood soft and deteriorating. Faint red stains present around beak area.

NMNH 90466, Mask (Fig. 8)

**Agayullquutaq* (Alutiiq, "mask"); Sitkinak Island, Kodiak; collected 1883, by William J. Fisher. NMNH accession 14024 (1884). Height 31 cm; width estimated at 18 cm.

Features sculpted in high relief. Head pointed on top, with upward-sweeping brows, curved eye-slits, long nose with perforated nostrils, and sharply projecting beak with lateral slits. Inside of mask smoothly hollowed out. Right side of face (not shown in Fig. 8) is broken off and nose charred. Wood soft and fragile, but not weathered. Bright red paint on mouth, and dark black above brows; middle portion of face unpainted.

NMNH 127802, Shaman's charm belt (Fig. 14)

Naqugun (Central Yupik, "belt"); *Ugaasarmiut* (Alutiiq, "people of Ugashik); collected by William J. Fisher, 1885. NMNH accession 18490 (1887). Diameter 30 cm.

The belt is made of a 1–2 cm wide strip of sealskin. Attached to the belt are approximately 40 bear claws; largest ones consistent with grizzly/Alaskan brown bear *(Ursus arctos)*, while the smaller ones appear to be claws from the hind foot and are not identifiable to species. Also attached to the belt with sinew cord are a stone ring (probably a beach find), a perforated bowl-like concretion, a pair of large fish fins tied together with sinew, a set of anterior (caribou?) teeth, and a small, leather-wrapped bundle containing a large bird beak.

NMNH 127803, Shaman's bracelets (Fig. 15)

**Talliraq* (cf. Central Yupik *talliraq, "bracelet"); Ugaasarmiut* (Alutiiq, "people of Ugashik); collected by William J. Fisher, 1885. NMNH accession 18490 (1887). Diameters of both bracelets 7 cm.

Bracelets made of sewn-together river otter *(Lutra canadensis)* snouts, with bone or ivory nose pins inserted through nasal septum of each snout. One bracelet is made from three snouts, the other two. A beach pebble with a waterworn perforation attached to each bracelet (one grey, one black).

NMNH 127804, Shaman's hat (Figs. 13a,b)

All'ugaq (Alutiiq, "cap, hat"); *Ugaasarmiut* (Alutiiq, "people of Ugashik"); collected by William J. Fisher, 1885. NMNH accession 18490 (1887). Height 25 cm.

Side panels of cap made of fur that is probably caribou *(Rangifer tarandus)*. Bottom band made of sealskin with an inset patch of caribou or blacktail deer *(Odocoileus hemionus)*. Leather panels on both front and back painted with black "sparkle paint" (probably containing specular hematite), and embroidered with caribou hair and red and blue yarn over red and white leather strips. Edges of the panels fringed with red and blue yarn and long white hairs. The long hairs are grizzly/Alaskan

brown bear *(Ursus arctos),* with the exception of a few coarser strands of unidentified genus/species.

NMNH 127805, Shaman's rattle (Fig. 16)

Recorded as *"a-ga-shak"* by Fisher; word not identified. *Ugaasarmiut* (Alutiiq, "people of Ugashik"); collected by William J. Fisher, 1885. NMNH accession 18490 (1887). Length 25 cm.

Split and hollowed wooden rattle, with two halves joined together by sinew thread. Mammal-like teeth carved along inside edges of beak, which is slightly open. Bird-like nasal slits in front of eyes. Rattle negatively painted in black to leave light colored belly and two medial bands around the body. Remnants of fur glued to base of beak. Inset eye a dull copper color, either stone or metal. Inside rattle is a 2.5 cm-long charm bundle consisting of a sliver of wood, a quartz crystal, a flake of mica, and clippings of yellow and black hair wrapped in sinew.

NMNH 127807. Shaman's whistle (Fig. 17)

**kukumyararsuun* (Alutiiq, lit. "whistling implement"); *Ugaasarmiut* (Alutiiq, "people of Ugashik"); collected by William J. Fisher, 1885. NMNH accession 18490 (1887). Length 5 cm.

Whistle consists of two hollowed wooden halves lashed together with sinew thread. Diamond-shaped slot cut into upper half. Polished with wear.

Endnotes

1. An annotated catalog of the collection is in preparation. The research presented here was funded through Smithsonian contract SF807022. Project support from William Fitzhugh, Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History, is gratefully acknowledged.

2. Mapped distributions based on Clark (1984), VanStone (1984), and Townsend (1981). Specific proveniences supplied by Fisher for the objects described in this paper include Kodiak and adjacent islands, Katmai and Douglas on the Pacific coast of the Alaska Peninsula, and Ugashik village on the south coast of Bristol Bay. While the former locations have always been included in definitions of the Koniag culture area, Ugashik lies within what Oswalt termed the "Peninsular Eskimo" region (Oswalt 1967:8). This term refers to Alutiiq-speaking residents of the north slope of the upper Alaska Peninsula. However, a recent analysis of linguistic data, including an 1882 Ugashik vocabulary collected by Fisher (National Anthropological Archives, Doc. 210), indicates that there is no linguistic basis for dividing Bristol Bay and Pacific Coast Alutiiq speakers into separate ethnic groups, i.e. Peninsular Eskimo and Koniag, and this separation has not been maintained in this paper or in Figure 1 (Jeff Leer, personal communication). Cultural attributions for objects from the Alaska Peninsula must be made with caution, however, due to the early nineteenth century expansion of the Central Yupik-speaking Aglurmiut into eastern Bristol Bay, resulting in increased contact and mixing with the resident Koniag population (Dumond 1988; Oswalt 1967:4; Wrangell 1980:64). Alaska Church records for 1874 indicate the presence of an Aglurmiut minority among the predominantly Alutiiq-speaking population of Ugashik (Dumond, Conton, and Shields 1975:50–52; Yesner 1985:68).

3. Sources for the detailed information on dances, masks, songs, and costumes contained in Pinart's Kodiak field notes at the Bancroft Library are ambiguous. Pinart's data may have been obtained primarily through interviews rather than by direct observation (Dominique Desson, personal communication, 1990).

4. Fur trade era archaeological assemblages from Native villages on Kodiak and the Alaska Peninsula include a mixture of European trade goods and indigenous manufactures (Clark 1987; Dumond 1981:175). An 1840s Koniag house at Karluk, for example, produced English transfer-printed ceramics, glass beads, iron tools, gun parts, and bottle glass in association with a variety of traditional stone tools: lamps, whaling lances, ground slate knives, and a greenstone splitting adze (Knecht and Jordan 1985). A shift to almost complete dependence on imported goods occurred during the cannery period, as seen in the cultural materials recovered from a Native dwelling and midden at Ugashik (Yarborough 1983). The Ugashik collection (ca. 1890–1920) includes very few traditional items but contains a greatly expanded variety of imports: many types of metal tools and hardware, food cans, liquor and medicine bottles, window glass, beads, ceramics, and store-bought clothing and shoes.

5. In regard to the mainland Alaskan Eskimo in the 1880s, Edward Nelson wrote:

> This effect [the weakening of traditional religious beliefs] was more apparent than real, for the Americans and Russians alike had ridiculed or treated with contempt the old customs, until it had become almost impossible to prevail upon the people to talk of their beliefs and traditions until, by long acquaintance, their confidence had been gained (1983:421).

6. Translation from the Russian used by permission of The Limestone Press.

7. The collection inventory at the National Museum of Natural History indicates that mask

NMNH 74691 was sent to the Museé Guimet, Paris, in 1887. Mask NMNH 74693 was not located during inventory, and its whereabouts are unknown.

8. Glass trade beads were initially highly valued; a four foot-long string was worth a sea otter pelt in 1790, according to Sauer (1802:172). By 1805, however, Davydov observed that ". . . beads have lost most of their value on Kadiak because the inhabitants have accumulated a lot of them and have nowhere to dispose of them" (Davydov 1977:149).

9. Nelson (1983:494) states that the ceremony was practiced in both Yupik Eskimo and Tinné (Ingalik) villages along the lower Yukon River, as well as along the lower Kuskokwim. Like the Koniag variant, the Yupik festival was carried out in advance of spring hunting.

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