

## PETROGLYPHS ON AFOGNAK ISLAND, KODIAK GROUP, ALASKA

by

Donald W. Clark

National Museum of Man

Petroglyphs are infrequently found in the Eskimo area and all occurrences there are of particular interest (cf. d'Anglure 1963, Heizer 1947, Irving 1961:81, and Solecki 1952). Probably the largest locality in Eskimo territory is a Cape Alitak on Kodiak Island (Heizer 1947). It is characterized by a few anthropomorphic figures and geometric and zoomorphic representations, but mainly by stylized faces. A small petroglyph locality in Marka Bay on the south side of Afognak Island (Fig. 1) was examined in 1964, and additional petroglyphs have been observed elsewhere on the island by the writer.\*

The figures at Marka Bay are located on seaward facing surfaces of a dike that intrudes rocks of the slate-graywacke group on the southwest shore of the bay. The dike is exposed on a boulder strewn bench or beach that even before subsidence of the region in 1964 was submerged at high tide. For a distance of about 20 yards in the area of the petroglyphs the dike has a vertical outcrop relief of one to one and a half yards. The figures are in an advanced stage of obliteration and the eight figures illustrated (Fig. 2) are all that could be discerned with any degree of accuracy. No accurate estimate was made of the total number of petroglyphs at the site but there appear to have been at least 30 figures. Two habitation sites, at least one of which belongs to the relatively late Koniag phase, are situated within a few hundred yards of the petroglyph group.

\* The 1964 survey (Clark n.d.) was undertaken by William B. Workman and the writer supported by National Science Foundation grants to the University of Wisconsin Aleut-Konyag Prehistory and Ecology Project, co-principal investigators Dr. William G. Reeder, zoology, and Dr. William S. Laughlin, anthropology. Several persons in the town of Kodiak and outlying villages were particularly helpful towards implementing the survey. Final preparation of this manuscript has been supported by the National Museums of Canada.

A similar dike outcropping on the beach in front of habitation site at Lipsett Point on Afognak Bay appears to have had a few petroglyphs on the seaward face but these are in the final stage of obliteration and have lost their identity.

Nearby, adjacent to Afognak village and a multicomponent kitchen midden, is a small group of figures on the seaward facing surface of a graywacke ledge (Fig. 3). These were pointed out to the writer by a local boy in 1951, and they have been briefly noted and illustrated in the context of a related art form – incised figurine tablets (Clark 1964:Fig.8 D). Traces of other petroglyphs, possibly zoomorphic, were seen elsewhere about the ledge but they are no longer discernable. This site is now completely submerged at high tide.

In the context of petroglyphs I will mention round-bottomed conical depressions or cups seen on large boulders between two sites at the mouth of the main salmon stream in Perenosa Bay on the north side of Afognak Island. Most of the depressions are about one and one quarter inches in diameter but they range up to two inches. Also, on the beach of the lagoon in front of one site near the end of a stone alignment across the stream is a slate or graywacke boulder about four feet long that bears saw cuts which are one to five inches long, up to about one quarter inch deep, and are V-shaped in cross section.

The Afognak petroglyphs are nearly identical to some of those at Cape Alitak, and may be related also to the rock paintings in Prince William Sound (de Laguna 1956). Seaward orientation and close proximity to the edge of the water are factors common to most localities although the rock paintings, found mostly in caves and overhangs, are excepted, but in that case factors of preservation may be involved. Similarly situated petroglyphs have been reported for southeastern Alaska. Significantly these include cups and cut grooves in addition to figures in a Northwest Coast style (Keithahn 1940:Plate XI c and Fig. 14-la). Although the cuts and pits may not be petroglyphs in the strict sense, their presence on Afognak strengthens Heizer's (1947) hypothesis that the Alitak petroglyphs were derived from the Northwest Coast. A feature seen in the Afognak village group (Fig. 3), the diagonal lines extending down and outward from the eyes, was also seen in an ivory figurine, reportedly from a Koniag phase site on Afognak, shown to us in 1964 by an employee of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game at Kitoi Bay. This can be taken as evidence,

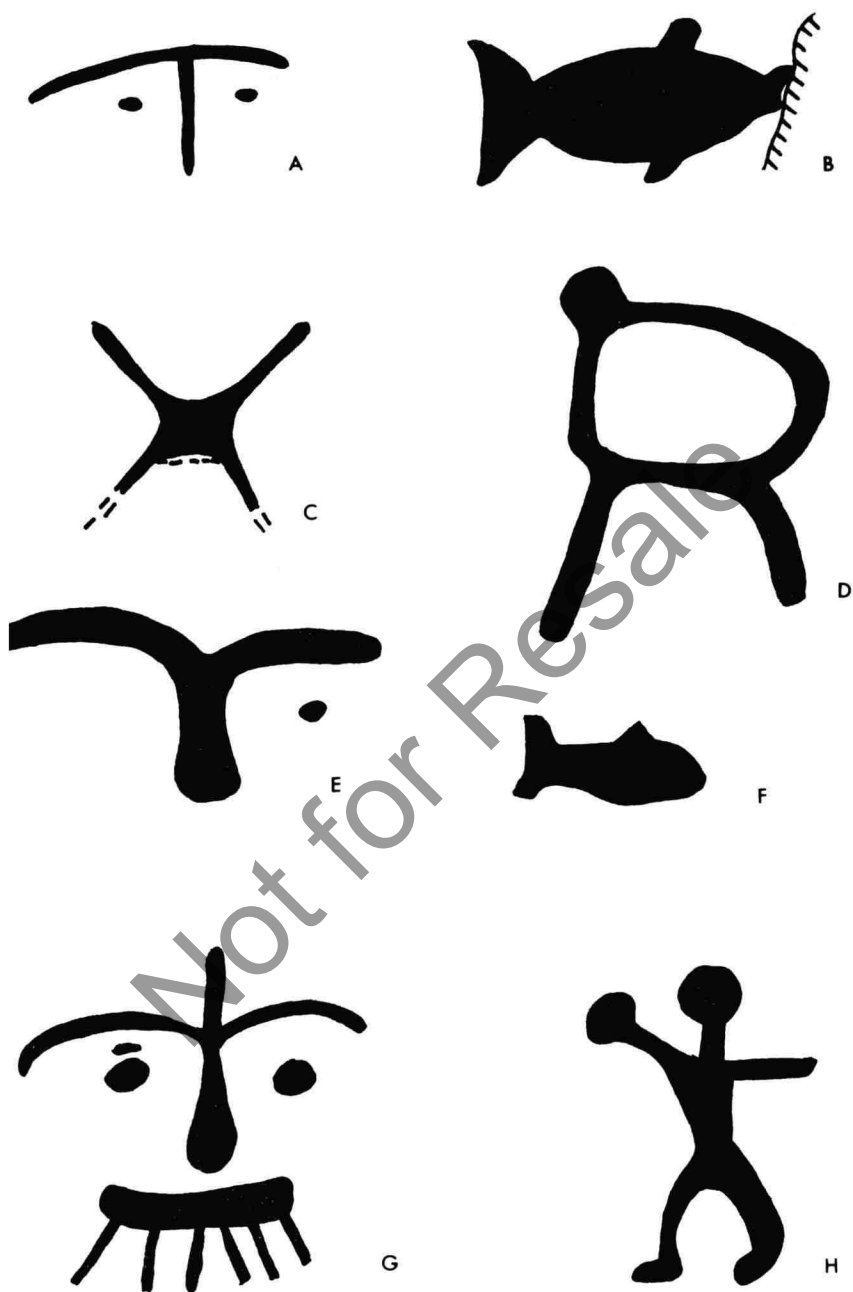


Fig. 2. Petroglyphs at Marka Bay. Not to scale. A is 21 cm wide; B, 19 cm long; C, 19 cm; D, 18 cm high; E, 18 cm wide; F, 10 cm long; G, 31 cm high and 28 cm wide; and H is 16 cm high.

in addition to the evidence provided by incised slate figurines as proposed by Heizer (1947; see also Clark 1964), for assigning the Kodiak petroglyphs to the Koniag phase.

Donald W. Clark,  
National Museums of Canada  
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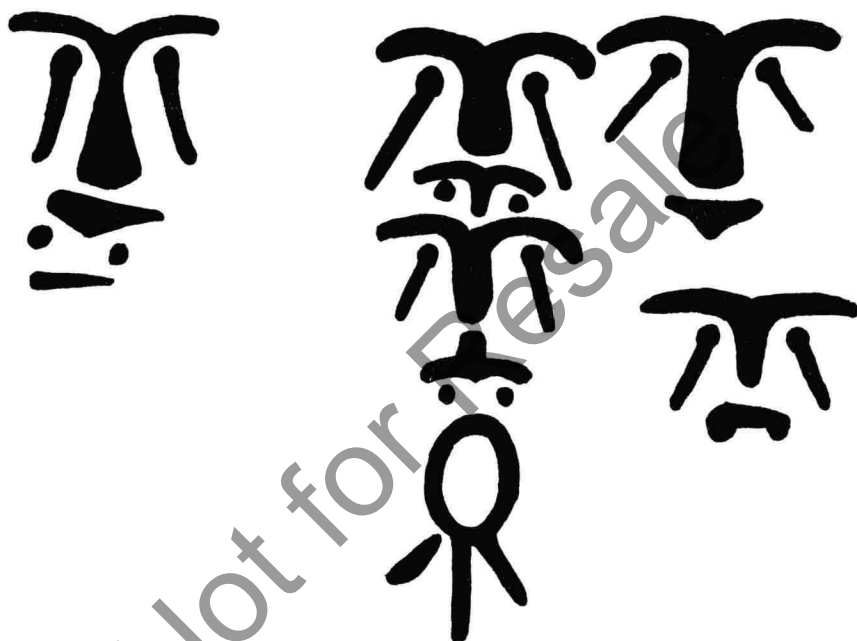


Fig. 3. Petroglyphs near Afognak village. One additional small face to the left is now shown. The group is approximately three feet wide.

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