

Conditions of Use

This dissertation and the accompanying photographic files of shell gorgets are all
© 1966 Jon Muller.

They are not for publication without the permission of the author, but they may be distributed on a private basis for criticism and research providing that this statement is included.

Individual gorget photographs taken by me may be published with the following citation:

Photograph by Jon Muller, ©1966 Jon Muller.

The entire corpus may not be published without the permission of the author.

An Experimental Theory of Stylistic Analysis

A thesis presented

by

Jon David Muller

to

The Department of Anthropology

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the subject of

Anthropology

Harvard University

Cambridge, Massachusetts

August, 1966

Copyright reserved by the author.

The Indians oftentimes make of a certain large sea-shell a sort of gorget, which they wear about their neck on a string, so it hangs on their collar, whereon is engraved a cross or some odd sort of figure which comes next in their fancy.

Lawson

description of travels in North Carolina in 1700

Entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem.

William of Occam

Table of Contents

Preface	i
Chapter	
I. Introduction	1
II. Some Historic Aspects of Aesthetics	15
III. Style and Anthropology	35
IV. Theory of Style	53
V. The Lick Creek Style	79
VI. The Citico Style	123
VII. The Saltville Style	149
VIII. Other Possible Styles in Shell Gorgets in Aboriginal America	166
IX. Summary and Conclusions	186
Bibliography	192
List of Sites	
Plates	

Preface

This paper is an attempt to develop and assess a new approach to the study of artistic styles. Therefore, three major obligations must be met. The first of these is to provide some measure, however brief, of previous work. Since this study is directly concerned with an anthropological theory of art styles, the work of anthropologists will receive somewhat more detailed treatment than can possibly be accorded to the vast numbers of scholars concerned with the same problems in other disciplines. Accordingly, the discussion of the work of art historians, aestheticians, and others will be restricted to certain representative or seminal studies relevant to the theory developed in Chapter 4. The second obligation is to present a theory and a methodology. The general theory provides criteria by which to judge the analysis of styles. The methodology deals with the manner by which these criteria can be met. The last obligation is the testing of the methodology and, indirectly, the theory through the analysis of real art styles.

The data used here to test the theory consist of engraved shell pendants of the type known as "gorgets". These objects, manufactured in the southeastern United States after A.D. 1000 show many different styles, however, and a single thematic group has been chosen for analysis - that of the "rattlesnake" theme which was used in the Tennessee River Valley after the 14th century. In the process of analyzing this material, certain hypotheses about the archaeology of the area may be suggested. In part, the data with which to test these hypotheses is lacking either through lack of research directed to these specific questions or to lack of publication, especially in cases of much archaeological work in the Tennessee Valley before the turn of the century. It does seem clear that stylistic analysis does not

support much of the synthesis which has been achieved. I am here, perhaps, somewhat in the position of being inclined to use the dinner knife where the butcher's cleaver is still required. The archaeology of the area simply has not achieved fine enough distinctions to be of much assistance in solving the difficult problems of isolating the various functions of time, society, and individual in style. I would especially caution against blind usage of any temporal or social units defined here on the basis of style. In short, these units are to be tested, not used as established fact. In an attempt to prevent some of these problems, I have avoided, as much as possible, drawing more than tentative conclusions about which variation is a result of time and which of region.

Before preceding directly to a consideration of some of the contributions which humanistic studies can make to an anthropological theory of art styles, the first chapter will discuss briefly the relationship of the concept of style to the broader concepts of art and culture.

The data which are analyzed in the last part of this paper were collected by means of four-by-five Polaroid photographs which were mounted on cards and catalogued by state, county, and site. The use of Polaroid film allowed absolute assurance of useable results while traveling. Funds for travel expenses were generously made available by the Peabody Museum of Harvard University and the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation. The latter source also supplied funds for manuscript and illustration preparation. In collecting data, I travelled throughout the greater part of the southeastern United States visiting both private and public collections.

I wish to thank the following individuals and institutions who provided me with access to collections and assistance at every turn:

3

Junius Bird, American Museum of Natural History, New York; Leonard W. Blake, St. Louis, Missouri; H.C. Brehm, Nashville, Tennessee; James Brown, Stovall Museum of the University of Oklahoma, Norman; Paul Brown, Chattanooga, Tennessee; Jack Cambron, Decatur, Alabama; Kwang-chih Chang, Peabody Museum of Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut; Marshall Dial, Portageville, Missouri; Dickson Mounds State Park, Illinois; Frederick Dockstadter, Heye Foundation, New York; James Durham, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Philip Gifford, American Museum of Natural History, New York; Mrs. Hampson, Hampson Museum, Wilson, Arkansas; A.B. Hooper, Albertsville, Alabama; J.T. Hurt, Scottsboro, Alabama; A.R. Kelly, University of Georgia, Athens; A.G. Long, Guntersville, Alabama; David MacAllester, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut; Robert McGaw, Vanderbilt University, Nashville; George Metcalf, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; Richard K. Meyer, Peoria, Illinois; Dan Morse, Sr., Peoria; Charles K. Peacock, Chattanooga; Gregory Perino, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma; Viggo C. Peterson, Marion, Massachusetts; Dan Printup, Memphis, Tennessee; George I. Quimby, Chicago Museum of Natural History; E. Ratliff, Decatur, Alabama; St. Louis Academy of Science; James Scholtz, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville; Guy Stack Collection, Nashville; State Museum, War Memorial Building, Nashville; C. Thornbull, Pisgah, Alabama; Pat Wolford, Cartersville, Georgia; John Wear, Fairmont, Georgia.

Particular thanks should go to Dr. Philip Phillips who has provided laboratory facilities and assistance in every quarter. The suggestions and helpful criticisms of Dr. Stephen Williams are also gratefully acknowledged. Of course, full responsibility for any errors is

mine alone.

No listing of debts owed would be complete without mention of the contribution made by my wife, Julia King Muller. Others who deserve thanks are Mr. and Mrs. Fred Foss of Bolton, Massachusetts, who assisted me greatly with various aspects of manuscript preparation. Thanks, too, should go to Miss Judy Rubenstein who prepared the maps and most of the textual illustrations and to Miss Margaret Currier and the staff of the Peabody Museum Library.