

# DEFINING THE MIDDLE PERIOD *(3500 BP to 1500 BP) in Tsimshian History through a Comparison of Archaeological and Oral Records*

---

ANDREW R.C. MARTINDALE  
AND SUSAN MARSDEN

## INTRODUCTION

**I**NDIGENOUS ORAL TRADITIONS are compelling sources of information for archaeologists. They represent situated narratives on culture and history, which introduce a people's record of their history to the otherwise materialist database of archaeology. Archaeologists routinely make comparisons between indigenous cultures and archaeological data, either in the form of generalized analogies or as direct historical analogies between ethnographically known cultures and their archaeologically known antecedents. The use of indigenous oral narratives in archaeology is less common, although much of what is known ethnographically is based on the indigenous oral record. Several successful comparisons are known, however (Klimko and Taft 1990; MacDonald 1984; Marsden 2000; Martindale 1999a; Sharpe and Tunbridge 1997).

In this paper, we compare archaeological data for the cultural history of the Tsimshian people of the northern Northwest Coast of North America to information from their oral histories. Analysis of archaeological data and indigenous oral records presents distinct but comparable views of Tsimshian history. We discuss the history of the Tsimshian from about 3,500 to 1,500 years ago and argue that such a comparison clarifies an evolving pattern of settlement that earlier interpretations of the Tsimshian have not brought into focus. Specifically, we argue that, during the Middle Period between 3,500 and 2,000 years ago, the northern Tsimshian area (Figure 1) consisted of two settlement regions, one on the coast north of the mouth of the Skeena River and the other in the interior around Kitselas Canyon. Interactions between these two areas existed but initially were limited.

However, the Middle Period saw successive waves of migrations as people from the northern interior moved south and west. The effects of these population movements were varied but included the introduction of new technologies, population increase and movement, conflict, and greater integration of the two regions. These effects first appeared in the interior region about 3,000 years ago and followed in the coastal region about 2,500 years ago. Newcomers were first incorporated into existing communities, resulting in conflict and the emergence of social distinction. Eventually, the pressures of increased populations through internal growth and migrations throughout the north, culminating in the southward advance of Tlingit groups, resulted in conflict and the temporary abandonment by ancestral Tsimshian of their coastal territory about 1,900 years ago. In response, Tsimshian communities from the interior and the coast united in a regional alliance, drove out the northern invaders, and established the ethnohistoric settlement pattern of aggregated winter villages in Metlakatla Pass and summer communities in the lower Skeena River watershed. Thus we argue that the ethnohistoric Tsimshian settlement pattern of seasonal mobility between coast and interior developed after 1,500 years ago and does not date from the beginning of the Middle Period as others have argued (see, for example, MacDonald, Coupland, and Archer 1988).

Our analysis of Tsimshian history is based on a synthesis of data from oral records and archaeology. Previous analyses of Tsimshian postcontact developments suggest substantial conjunction between archaeological and oral sources (Allaire 1984; MacDonald 1984; Marsden and Galois 1995; Marsden 1990, 2000; Martindale 1999a, 2000b, forthcoming). Other scholars have produced similar results elsewhere from the postcontact era (Day 1973) and much earlier times by comparing oral records and geological data (Budhwa 2002; Sharpe and Tunbridge 1997). Since particular pieces of archaeological data or elements of an oral tradition are relatively meaningless outside of their historical context, such syntheses are established by comparing reconstructions of history from each perspective. In our case, we have summarized key historical themes in archaeological data and oral records that have been published elsewhere in greater detail. Our analysis of oral records, presented in summary form and in maps and charts, is based on a larger body of published and unpublished work (Marsden 1985, 2000, 2002; Sterritt, Marsden, Galois and Overstall 1998). The archaeological analysis also refers to both published

material and unpublished site reports. In syntheses of this nature, the data are comparable on many levels (Hawkes 1954; Martindale n.d.). We use settlement patterns as the primary scale of comparison since they are historically significant and are interpretable from both the archaeological and oral records.

The study of indigenous history on the Northwest Coast of North America includes a longstanding relationship between ethnographic data, archaeological reconstructions, and the indigenous oral record. Ethnographic data, collected during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, are often regarded as authoritative sources of recent indigenous history. Archaeologists have taken the ethnographic sources as a starting point for cultural histories that catalogue developments leading up to the ethnographically defined traditional cultures (Martindale 1999b). For this reason, archaeological data tend to be supplementary to ethnographic data with regard to the analysis of the recent indigenous past. What is not fully acknowledged is that the historic information in the ethnographic data is itself derived from the indigenous oral record.

Among the Tsimshian of northern British Columbia, much of the anthropological literature is based on the earliest fieldwork of Boas (1912, 1916), Barbeau (1929, 1950, 1961), Barbeau and Beynon (n.d.), Beynon and Barbeau (n.d. [a, b, c and d]) and Garfield (1939). In each of these cases, the original ethnographic data collection and interpretation was performed by indigenous scholars for the anthropologists. Boas, Garfield, and Barbeau relied on the work of William Beynon (1969) and Henry Tate. These indigenous scholars had acquired their knowledge of Tsimshian history by collecting and translating oral traditions from those in the culture whose responsibility it was to remember and pass on the knowledge. Archaeologists of the Tsimshian have generally accepted ethnographic data more readily than oral traditions, perhaps because the latter are complex documents that are difficult to understand outside their cultural context.

The use of ethnographic data in archaeology is not without its own challenges. Archaeological comparisons to ethnographic data tend to simplify such sources into what has been called an ethnographic model: the construction of an archaeological culture using ethnographic sources. Shennan (1989, 5) associates an archaeological culture with the assumption that distinct cultural identities correlate with different groups of people behaving in different ways, leaving different patterns of material remains. The archaeological focus on modelling general

patterns of relationships between behaviour and material culture (Gibbon 1984, 106) lends itself to ethnographic tendencies to create an essentialized view of indigenous society and the subsequent creation of what Trigger (1997, 7) calls a “flat history,” a simplified and static model of traditional indigenous culture. We argue that, since ethnographic data either are not applicable to an analysis of the more distant past or are derivative of oral traditions, the most fruitful comparison is between archaeological data and the indigenous oral record.

However, the history of human settlement in Tsimshian territory is complex and can only be partially reconstructed even from a synthesis of different data sources. There are significant differences in the reconstructions of this history by different authors using both archaeological (Archer 1983, 1984, 1992, 2001; Allaire 1979; Drucker 1943; Coupland 1996, 1998; Coupland, Bissel, and King 1993; Inglis 1973, 1975, 1979; Inglis and MacDonald 1979; MacDonald 1969; MacDonald and Inglis 1976a, 1981; Martindale 1999a, 1999b) and oral records (Coupland, Martindale, and Marsden 2001; Marsden and Galois 1995; Marsden 1990, 2000, 2002; Martindale, forthcoming). Reconstructions based on archaeological data tend to divide Tsimshian territory into separate zones, while those using oral records integrate the region into a single historical trajectory. Archaeological chronologies emphasize variability in space and time based on differences in material culture and, by inference, in social and economic organization. In contrast, indigenous histories using oral data focus on historic and ancestral similarities that link people through history even where the material and economic circumstances of their lives have changed. We take the position that these parallel culture histories are sufficiently similar to reflect different aspects of the same history.

Tsimshian oral traditions, called *adawx*, are a complex body of texts. Each Tsimshian lineage owns its own *adawx*, which explains the significant relationships that legitimize its place in the social and geographical landscape (Marsden 1990). They provide each lineage with a record of historical events, explanations for territorial ownership, descriptions of significant relationships with other lineages – such as marriage and trading alliances – and remembrances of key figures in the lineage’s past (Marsden 1990). Since each lineage owns *adawx* that speak of events and relationships in the wider society, collectively the *adawx* are a record of the history of Tsimshian life preserved from multiple perspectives. Performance of the *adawx* at socially sanctioned public events such as feasts helps to transmit them to younger

generations and also helps to ensure an accurate historiography, since any deviations by the speaker can be challenged. The texts of oral traditions were preserved intact and inherited by each subsequent generation (Marsden 1990, 2000; Vansina 1985).

Adawx have an inherent chronology based on references to generally known eras in the history of the Northwest Coast. Eras are defined by such terms as “before the flood,” and “after the flood,” “in the beginning,” “after the dispersal from Temlaxam,” and “after the white man came.” An adawx is not complete without reference to this chronology as an adawx is the history of a lineage told from the earliest times to the present. Individual adawx are thus part of a larger mosaic of narratives from which a cultural history can be assembled. Each of these narratives presents history from the situated perspective of individual lineages. From a study of the adawx of all the lineages of the Northwest Coast nations emerges a view of the history of the region that includes the broad periods since the last ice age.

Three different archaeological culture histories report on most, though not all, of the territory of the Tsimshian (Figure 1). The Prince Rupert Harbour sequence, developed by MacDonald (1969) and MacDonald and Inglis (1981), is based on coastal sites and is strongly influenced by variability in artifacts and analogies to ethnographic data. Archer (2001) has shown that the dates of changes in village form and occupation in the harbour region do not clearly correspond to MacDonald’s scheme. In the Tsimshian interior, Martindale (1999a) has proposed a Skeena Valley sequence based on settlement patterns reflected in 163 sites, supplemented with data on changes in stone tool technology and on seasonal indicators. Allaire (1979) and Coupland (1988a) have developed a separate sequence for the Kitselas Canyon area based on excavation data and lithic technology from two deeply stratified sites, Gitaus (GdTc-2) and Paul Mason (GdTc-16). All three are comparable to each other in terms of general trends, but there is little correspondence in terminology or regional patterns. Furthermore, they do not include data from the north coast of Tsimshian territory, which extends to the estuary of the economically significant Nass River.

MacDonald and Inglis (1981:45) argue that, despite continuity of material culture in Tsimshian territory extending back 5,000 years, a significant cultural shift occurred between 3,500 and 1,500 years ago. There is a common assumption that the archaeological culture history of Tsimshian territory represents the development of residentially mobile foragers after 5000 BP, sedentary hunter-gatherers after 3500

BP, and complex collectors similar to the ethnographically known Tsimshian after 1500 BP (Ames and Maschner 1999; MacDonald 1969; MacDonald and Inglis 1981; Matson and Coupland 1995). This evolutionary scheme is based in part on the assumption that the ethnographically known coast-to-interior seasonal mobility cycle existed in some form after 3500 BP. Such seasonal mobility implies the existence of an intensified salmon-fishing and storage economy and of canoe transport that is possible only with a sophisticated wood-working technology. The changes of the Middle Period are thought to have derived from these technological and economic developments.

Since this scheme was developed during the 1970s, new data have become available, and the settlement history of the area has become more complex. Divisions between the proposed periods are less clear since the suite of characteristics that defines these transitions did not appear simultaneously across the region. In this paper, we agree that the time between 3500 BP and 1500 BP is sufficiently distinct to warrant its designation as a Middle Period. However, it is defined not by the emergence of cultural traits characteristic of the later ethnographic cultures, such as a delayed return economy, but by a complex series of historic events related to westward and southward migrations by interior and coastal peoples. This movement of people, for which there is evidence in both the archaeological and oral records, amplified local population growth and resulted in socio-political changes that culminated in a period of warfare between the Tsimshian and invaders from the north and east. The formation of a northern Tsimshian alliance as a result of this invasion created much of what is recognizable as ethnohistoric Tsimshian culture. The Middle Period is thus characterized by gradual but profound changes to the earlier occupations of the northern Tsimshian area and its neighbouring regions. During this time, there is evidence for increases in population and economic intensification, changes in technology and settlement patterns, status differentiation, and warfare.

Comparing the archaeological and oral data introduces a methodological issue of epistemological difference. Frequently, the data from each source reflect different understandings of the past. Some have argued that this fragmentation is the product of data constructed under culturally distinct and hence incomparable epistemological systems (Mason 2000). However, Whiteley (2002) argues that there is a methodological middle ground that recognizes both the historical content of oral traditions and the encoded mythological

aspects of scientific archaeology. This synthesis rests on the demonstration of internally coherent, structured history within oral records (see Marsden 2000 for a discussion of these in Tsimshian records) and on the realization that archaeological interpretations are frequently privileged as more factual than other sources of history (Whiteley 2002, 408). Thus oral traditions and archaeological interpretations contain, at various levels of interpretation, both historical fact and other less objective elements.

We argue that, despite the differences in the form, content, and preservation of the data in archaeological and oral records, the challenges of comparison derive from the complexity of the past and the fragmentation of preservation rather than from any inherent incompatibility between archaeological and indigenous views of history (Martindale n.d.). Problems of fragmentation between divergent sources are common in historical archaeology as they derive from the very nature of the data (Hodder 2001; Johnson 1999). Our solution to these difficulties is to focus on data that we believe most clearly reflect significant historical trends that define the Tsimshian past. We have chosen the history of settlement patterns in Tsimshian territory as the primary organizing principle of this comparison for three reasons. First, changes in settlement patterns tend to affect large numbers of people and how those people interact with each other and with the natural landscape. Since characteristics of site distribution, architecture, mobility routes, and the duration and scale of occupation permit or restrict social and economic activity, they underlie cultural organization and identity in a more direct manner than, for example, do developments in artifact styles. Second, settlement patterns reflect historical processes that have a reasonable chance of being preserved in both archaeological and oral records. Some data in the oral record, such as descriptions of interactions between people and the spirit-world, are not identifiable archaeologically. Similarly, some archaeological data, such as the differential use of variants of a resource type, are not recorded in the oral record. The third reason for using settlement patterns as the basis of our analysis is somewhat teleological. Settlement patterns have already been used as defining criteria in both archaeological and indigenous reconstructions of history.

A detailed examination of this conjunction for the entire span of Tsimshian history is beyond the scope of this paper; instead, in the following section, we analyze the period from about 3500 BP to 1500 BP for the northern Tsimshian area as a detailed case study of

archaeological and oral records. The Tsimshian area can be divided into three cultural regions. The focus of this paper is the northern Tsimshian, whose territory includes the coast from just south of the mouth of the Skeena River to the Nass River estuary, and the lower Skeena River east to the Kitsumkalum River. The territory of the interior Tsimshian includes the Skeena watershed from the Kitsumkalum River to past Kleanza Creek. The southern Tsimshian have territory on the coast from Douglas Channel north almost to the mouth of the Skeena.<sup>1</sup>

#### BEFORE THE MIDDLE PERIOD

Archaeologists identify an Early Period (5000 BP to 3500 BP) in northern Tsimshian territory when settlement was focused on two separate zones: the coast around Metlakatla Pass and the interior around Kitselas Canyon (Allaire 1979, 29,46; Coupland 1988b, 230, 232; Fladmark, Ames, and Sutherland 1990, 232; MacDonald and Inglis 1981, 42-5; Matson and Coupland 1995, 90-1). The earliest archaeological data in Tsimshian territory dates from about 5000 BP at the Paul Mason site in Kitselas Canyon, where there is evidence of a small seasonal camp associated with the North Coast Microblade Tradition, one of the early archaeological cultures in the area (Coupland 1988a). Microblades are small stone flakes that were hafted into handles of bone, antler, or wood to make barbed points and serrated knives. They appear in archaeological components through the coastal areas of Alaska and Northern British Columbia dating from 9000 BP to 4500 BP and are thought to represent the technology of the earliest inhabitants of the coastal region, where they are interpreted as evidence of a generalized hunting, fishing, and collecting economy (Carlson 1996, 9; Fladmark, Ames, and Sutherland 1990, 211). There is also evidence of small communities, perhaps even villages, evenly distributed throughout the coastal landscape from after 5000 BP (Ames 1976, 8, 12; Ames and Maschner 1999, 159; Calvert 1968, 32; Inglis 1973, 5; Inglis 1975, 1; MacDonald 1969, 251; MacDonald and Inglis 1976a, 12). Though rare, architectural features are present

<sup>1</sup> The northern Tsimshian tribes are the Gitwilgyoots, Ginax'angiik, Gitzaxlaaḷ, Gitsiis, Gitnadoiks, Gitando, Gispaxlo'ots, Gitlaan and Giluts'aaḡ. The Gitwilkseba became extinct. The interior Tsimshian tribes are Kitselas and Kitsumkalum. The southern Tsimshian tribes are the Kitkatla, Gitk'a'ata, and Kitasoo. As this paper outlines, these areas evolved from Middle Period settlement patterns. The four clans are Gispwudwada, Laxgibuu, Laxskiiik, and Ganhada – Killerwhale, Wolf, Eagle, and Raven respectively.



at some of the earliest coastal sites (Figure 1), including Boardwalk (GbTo-31), Lachane/Co-op (GbTo-10/33),<sup>2</sup> and Garden Island (GbTo-23) (Ames 1976, 8, 12; Calvert 1968, 32; Inglis 1973, 5; Inglis 1975, 1; MacDonald 1969, 251; MacDonald and Inglis 1976a, 12; Simonsen 1988). Ames (1998, 75) and Ames and Maschner (1999, 159) state that Boardwalk was a two-row village after 4000 BP, but it is unclear what data provide evidence of this. Some authors (Archer 1983, 77; MacDonald and Inglis 1976b, 74) state that the arrangement of these features is consistent with the construction of multiple houses in a row facing the beach. There is some evidence of mobility following resources, but this remained localized within catchment zones around habitation sites (Ames 1998, 75; Maschner 1991, 930; Stewart and Stewart 2001, 197).

The archaeological data are patchy but consistent with the development of a pattern of small communities distributed throughout the coast and in the canyon area, characterized by local resource collection and some contact between regions. Regional interaction is evident in the distribution of leaf-shaped points in the coast and canyon areas, but this is not sufficient evidence for seasonal mobility between these zones.

The oral record portrays a similar picture with settlement areas on the coast and the middle Skeena River as well as upriver at Temlaxam, at the confluence of the Skeena and Bulkley Rivers. These settlement areas were single communities made up of clusters of distinct villages. Temlaxam, one of the important ancestral settlement areas of Gitksan and Tsimshian lineages, is said to have extended from Kispiox to Gitksigyukla along the Skeena River, a distance of approximately forty kilometres (Beynon and Barbeau n.d.[c]; Duff n.d.) Similarly, coastal ancestors of northern Tsimshian lineages, called Laxmoon (On Saltwater People), were clustered on islands at the mouth of the Skeena and on the Tsimpsean Peninsula. The Laxmoon were distinguished from inland ancestors of the northern Tsimshian whose villages were clustered in the area around Lakelse Lake, Kitselas Canyon, and the Shames River (Archer, Marsden, and Dick 2000; Duff n.d.; Marsden 2002). Figure 6 identifies the lineages<sup>3</sup> of the

<sup>2</sup> Though identified separately, GbTo-10 (Co-op) and GbTo-33 (Lachane) are contiguous, and archaeologists working at Lachane have argued that the two sites were parts of the same village (Inglis 1973:2; Simonsen 1988:3). With the destruction of the Co-op site in 1954 by construction, it became impossible to verify their association.

<sup>3</sup> In this figure, the Sm'algyax (Tsimshian) word is the name of the chief, by which his housegroup is also identified. As a result of the subdivision and fusion of housegroups over time, the number of houses in a particular lineage in a particular tribe may vary

coastal and inland Tsimshian, while Figures 2 and 3 indicate the locations of their known villages (MacDonald and Inglis 1981; Archer 1983, 1984, 1992, 2001; Duff n.d.). The divide between the two regions appears to have been at the Exchamsiks River watershed, which is the upriver extent of saltwater. There is no indication that either group travelled outside its region for resources or for trade, except in the spring to their eulachon grounds at the mouth of the Nass River, where they would have met and traded (Marsden 1997). It is also likely that the ancient pattern of trade at the borders of adjoining territories allowed the peoples of these two regions to exchange items while on their hunting grounds and other territories.

#### THE FIRST 1,000 YEARS OF THE MIDDLE PERIOD (3500 BP TO 2500 BP)

The Middle Period is divisible into two broad stages of about 1,000 years each. The first 1,000 years is a time of population growth and migration into the area. During the second 1,000 years, there is evidence of the entrenchment of social distinctions and the emergence of regional conflict. Two broad themes define the period from 3500 BP to 2500 BP: growth and development of populations in areas focused on the coast around Metlakatla Pass and in the interior on the middle Skeena River, and the migration of people westward from eastern settlements in the interior.

#### *Interior*

In the interior, there is evidence of population movement westward into the regions bordering northern Tsimshian territory starting about 3600 BP. Allaire (1979, 47) refers to this time as one of “newcomers” to Kitselas Canyon and the lower Skeena. He interprets the Skeena Phase (3600 BP to 3200 BP) at Gitau (GdTc-2) as an intrusion of interior people, perhaps Athapaskan speakers because of their preference for riverine environments such as canyons (46-7). This association is based on the appearance of eastern lithic forms in the Kitselas area, evidence of population decline and a break in the settlement pattern

---

from period to period. The founding role of a lineage in a tribe is recorded in the oral traditions. The English terms the Tsimshian use are “original” and “local.” We have used these words in Figure 6 as they were recorded, but we have replaced several more complex Tsimshian terms, where the meaning was the same, with these words as well. Housegroups that were formed by offshoots of lineages already established among the northern Tsimshian are not included in this figure or in Figure 7. These figures therefore do not represent every northern Tsimshian housegroup.

in Hagwilget Canyon, and population growth and a new settlement at Kitselas. Artifact styles such as parallel flaked lanceolate points similar to those found at interior sites such as GhSv-2 in Hagwilget Canyon appear for the first time in Levels V–III at Gitaus. GhSv-2 is located at the junction of the Skeena and Bulkley Rivers, in the area identified by the oral records as Temlaxam. Ames's (1979) excavation at GhSv-2 identified the lowest cultural strata as Zone A, dated to between 4500 BP and 3500 BP, during which the site was a large village. After 3500 BP, the site was occupied less intensively, and the subsequent cultural Zone B is interpreted as a fishing station. At Gitaus, the Skeena Phase is associated with a decline in the number of groundstone and cobble tools, which are found in both earlier components at Gitaus and at coastal sites, and an increase in chipped stone tools similar to forms found in the east. The use of interior raw materials such as obsidian and green chert also increased. Coupland (1988a, 234) argues that the relative increase of chipped stone tools from earlier times indicates a shift to more mammal hunting. Allaire (1979, 47) goes further and argues that this technology has more in common with the Northern Archaic of the boreal forests of north-central British Columbia than with local or coastal technologies.

The oral record describes a parallel series of events. Settlements at Temlaxam at the confluence of the Skeena and Bulkley Rivers were abandoned after a period of cold weather and famine forced the people to disperse throughout their territories and to the Nass and Bulkley Rivers and down the Skeena Valley (Beynon and Barbeau n.d.[c]; Marsden 1985). This took place after a massive landslide at Temlaxam, which has been dated at 3500 BP (Beynon and Barbeau n.d.[c]; Overstall 1998). As some of the groups from Temlaxam attempted to join settlement areas downriver on the Skeena, they were driven away, first at Gitwinlikstaat (at Wilson Creek) and then at Kluiyu (near Usk). They eventually found refuge on the north bank of Kitselas Canyon, where they started their own village, Ts'myaaw. At the time, there were no other villages in the canyon. Later, they retaliated against Gitwinlikstaat and Kluiyu, dispersing the people of Kluiyu to Kitsumkalum Lake and the Nass River (Wright 1962).

After the people of Temlaxam had consolidated their position in the area, groups from several nearby settlements joined them in the canyon and made their villages across from Ts'myaaw on the south side of the river (Wright 1962). The Temlaxam also formed alliances with some of the nearby tribes to the west, the Giluts'aaw, the Gitando,

the Gitlaan, and the Gitnadoiks, and eventually some of their people joined these tribes, forming a network of housegroups that provided access to resources and trade (Beynon and Barbeau n.d.[c]; Wright 1962). It is also said that a number of the Temlaxam did not remain at the canyon but continued downriver and joined the Gitwilgyoots, one of the original tribes in Metlakatla Pass. According to the oral record, the coastal-inland relationship was now primarily one of alliances and trade, while the people of the two regions continued to pursue their main economic activities in their localized region (Duff n.d.). Figure 7 identifies these Temlaxam lineages.

The archaeological data of the canyon suggests local continuity as well as coast-to-canyon interaction, even in the context of this expanding eastern influence. Coupland (1988b, 235) notes that similarities at Kitselas sites between the Skeena Phase and both the earlier Gitauas Phase and the concurrent Prince Rupert Harbour data exist in the continuation (albeit at lower levels) of groundstone tools (points and abraders), cobble tools, and cortex spalls. Leaf-shaped points are found in both Prince Rupert Harbour and Kitselas Canyon sites from prior to and during the Skeena Phase. These similarities suggest that coast-to-canyon interaction continued into the Middle Period.

Following this era of eastern movement, there is archaeological evidence of the first permanent village occupation in Kitselas Canyon. The Paul Mason Phase (3200 BP to 2700 BP) is associated with intensified use of salmon and year-round occupation of the area in a permanent village. Coupland (1988a, 229, 231) argues that the Paul Mason village of twelve house depressions represents a winter occupation and an egalitarian social structure. Large exterior hearth features suggest salmon processing, which is corroborated by a technological shift from chipped stone (reduced from 46 per cent to 17 per cent of the lithics compared to the Skeena Phase) to groundstone and bone implements and the association (with this phase) of cache pits, a food storage system originating in the interior (Coupland 1988a, 237-38; Coupland 1988b, 225). In addition, new tool forms appeared, such as ground slate points and hexagonal groundstone "pencils" characteristic of Middle Period sites in Prince Rupert Harbour (Coupland 1988b, 225). Groundstone tools, especially slate knives, are associated with large-scale fish processing because they are durable tools that are easily resharpened. Ives (1987) argues that these developments represent the movement of coastal people upriver, but Coupland (1988a) interprets Paul Mason as an *in situ* development.

The earliest archaeological sites yet recorded in the Lower Skeena Valley are two rockshelters that date from about 2,700 to 1,600 years ago. Although the data are modest, the prevalence of chipped stone tools in the lowest levels of these rockshelters and their use as hunting camps indicates that people from the east were using the tributaries west to the Exchamsiks. The GaTh-2 and Wayne Ryan (T2000-1) sites are located in the upper reaches of the Gitandoix and Exchamsiks Rivers, respectively (Figure 1). Data from these sites, which have only recently been excavated, have not yet been published other than in reports (Martindale 1998, 2000a). The oldest date of 2700 BP comes from the lowest component of seventy-five centimetres of deposit at the Wayne Ryan site. GaTh-2, located on Alastair Lake at the headwaters of the Gitnadoix River, has three dates from 1.1 metres of deposit ranging from 2400 BP to 1700 BP. Data from both sites indicate that they were used as seasonal summer-to-fall hunting camps. The strata contain a series of hearths and bone lenses under the dripline. The faunal assemblages contain fragmented and burned bone but include only mammalian elements. Most of these were large species such as mountain goat and cervids (moose), although small mammals such as marmot, beaver, and lagomorphs (probably rabbits and hares) were represented, suggesting seasons of use other than winter.

Certainly at Kitselas Canyon, there is clear archaeological evidence that people from the east moved into Tsimshian territory as described by oral tradition. The arrival of these newcomers is associated with an economic shift towards more intensive hunting and salmon fishing for food storage. However, there is further evidence of both continuity from earlier times and the maintenance of links between canyon and coastal inhabitants, suggesting that these migrants were incorporated into existing community networks and fostered new ones.

### *Coast*

The archaeological data for the coastal region during the period from 3500 BP to 2500 BP indicate that, as in the canyon area, coastal populations were growing and developing new technologies focused on storable resources from seasonal exploitation of local resource zones. Connections to the interior continued, but there is no evidence of coastal or interior populations moving into the river valleys seasonally for salmon fishing; instead, the coastal populations appear to have exploited local marine and terrestrial resources, although there is some evidence that the people from the Metlakatla Pass area also

used the Nass River estuary at this time (MacDonald and Inglis 1976b, 46; MacDonald and Inglis 1981, 44), and oral histories indicate use of the Lower Skeena up to the limit of tidewater.

Three lines of evidence indicate that coastal populations were growing between 3500 BP and 2500 BP based on increased use of local marine resources, including salmon and eulachon. The number of sites increased (Ames 1994, 219; Fladmark, Ames, and Sutherland 1990, 233), the rate of deposition in middens increased (Matson and Coupland 1995, 191), and there is evidence that house sizes were larger (MacDonald and Inglis 1976b, 16). The settlement pattern continued to be one of scattered communities along the coast and nearshore islands, with some evidence of expansion into previously uninhabited areas such as outer island sites like Lucy Island (GbTp-1) (Figure 1) that gave access to kelp beds and offshore fishing areas (Ames 1998, 78). Middens associated with habitations became larger and were composed of a greater variety of shellfish, sea mammals, and marine fish species (Ames and Maschner 1999, 97).

One of the factors contributing to the increase in population may have been the arrival of foreign peoples among the coastal tribes. In addition to the lineages that arrived earlier, when Kitselas Canyon was first settled, the oral record describes another migration of people, originally from Temlaxam, who had resettled within Gitksan territory then later left the upper Skeena to join their relatives at Kitselas Canyon. They subsequently moved further downriver and settled on the coast among the Ginaxangiik and Gitsiis (and also among the southern Tsimshian), and, in so doing, further expanded the network of housegroups originating at Temlaxam (Figure 7). These people and those who had earlier joined the Gitwilgyoots were the first foreign peoples in centuries to settle among the coastal tribes, who until then had resisted migration into their territory.

The introduction of groundstone netsinkers and ground slate points during this period is evidence of increased fishing and fish processing, which is often associated with both more intensive use of marine resources and the intensified exploitation of storable foods (Fladmark, Ames, and Sutherland 1990, 233). Maschner (1991, 930) argues that the prevalence of seasonal fish species associated with large shell middens is itself evidence of storage. The use of bentwood coffin boxes starts about 3800 BP (Cybulski 1996), and this may indicate the beginning of box building for other purposes, including food storage (Ames and Machner 1999, 140). In addition, post-mould patterns in

middens in the Prince Rupert Harbour area are interpreted as fish-drying racks (Coupland 1988a, 220). The appearance of groundstone adzes, mauls, and chisels indicate an increase in woodworking (Ames 1998, 78; MacDonald and Inglis 1981, 46).

Several authors suggest that seasonal indicators from the Middle Period could be interpreted as the beginning of a coast-to-interior seasonal mobility cycle (Fladmark, Ames, and Sutherland 1990, 233; Matson and Coupland 1995, 191). However, the data are consistent with seasonal use of local resources rather than regular travel to the interior. There is evidence of year-round occupation at sites such as Boardwalk, although with a higher concentration of winter and spring indicators than of those from other seasons. Middle Period components from Lachane/Co-op (Calvert 1968) and Dodge Island (GbTo-18) (Ames 1976) contained a considerable variety of marine and terrestrial species. Mountain goat and other terrestrial mammals were found at coastal sites in the context of marine resources, indicating use of riverine hunting territories. Salmon and eulachon remains were first noted in quantity during this period, and Ames (1998, 78) argues that, even with inconsistent recovery methods, salmon vertebrae would have been recovered from earlier components had they been present. Zone II at Lachane/Co-op contained evidence of a house structure in a matrix of ash, sand, and gravel with greater similarity to the lower Zone I (generalized hunting and gathering) than to the later shell midden of Zone III above (seasonal village occupation) (Calvert 1968, 26-30; Calvert 1968, 90-8), suggesting that the economy remained focused on local resources. The one exception to the pattern of local resource use may be travel by people from the Prince Rupert Harbour area northward to the Nass River for eulachon, an inference based on the abundance of eulachon at the Ridley Island site (GbTn-19) dating from the beginning of the Middle Period (Ames and Maschner 1999, 141; Fladmark, Ames, and Sutherland 1990, 233; MacDonald and Inglis 1981, 44).

While there is little evidence of seasonal movement between the coast and interior regions, a modest level of contact between these peoples is evident in the similarities of material culture, including the use of interior-style leaf-shaped points that appear in coastal sites throughout the Middle Period. In sum, the archaeological data and oral history data from the coast suggest continuity and elaboration of trends from earlier times. Communities grew, technology developed to reflect a more sedentary way of life, and regional contacts continued with interior peoples to the east.

THE LAST 1,000 YEARS OF THE  
MIDDLE PERIOD (2500 BP TO 1500 BP)

The latter millennium of the Middle Period is characterized by change as a consequence of developments during the first half of the period – the increasing populations in the coastal and interior regions and the continued movement of people westward and southward towards the coast. These developments culminate in a time of conflict between Tlingit populations moving southward and the coastal Tsimshian groups they encounter. This conflict itself has two phases, an initial period when the coastal Tsimshian communities retreat to the interior river valleys, and a final period when an alliance of coastal and interior Tsimshian communities return to the coastal area to reclaim their territory.

According to the oral record, the migration from Temlaxam was followed by a period in which many people north of the Gitksan and Tsimshian moved to the coast, where they converged with northern coastal peoples moving south (Beynon and Barbeau n.d. [a,b,and d]; Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1987; Duff n.d.; Beynon 1969; Olson 1967; Marsden 2000). Some of these groups invaded the southern Tlingit, who were forced to take refuge in the territories of the coastal Tsimshian, on islands and inlets remote from the main Tsimshian settlements. Here they were discovered and attacked, and those who survived were absorbed by Tsimshian tribes throughout the region and became known as the Gidaganits (Figure 7).

The Tsimshian were subsequently faced with another invasion, this time by the same Tlingit and northern interior groups who had forced the earlier Tlingit into Tsimshian territory. The conflict that ensued escalated to the point that the northern and southern coastal Tsimshian moved to fortified sites within their territories. The northern coastal Tsimshian eventually retreated up the Skeena River, some as far upriver as the inland settlement area. Here the coastal and interior groups became allies as they faced a common enemy. Figure 4 shows the known coastal settlements of the northern Tsimshian prior to their retreat upriver (MacDonald and Inglis 1981; Archer 1983, 1984, 1992, 2001; Duff n.d.).

The return of the northern Tsimshian to their coastal territories was led by the famous warrior Aksk of the Gitwilgyoots tribe, who moved back to Kxeen (Kaïen) Island with his warrior sons and built a fortified house of logs. When the Tlingit attacked, they were caught off guard by Aksk's ingenious defences, and many were killed and



decapitated (Marsden 2000).<sup>4</sup> The rest of the Gitwilgyoots then returned to the coast, followed by the other coastal tribes that had retreated upriver, and together they settled in Metlakatla Pass – on Digby Island and the Tsimpsean Peninsula. Over time, all the inland groups (other than the people of Kitselas) also moved downriver and established villages there as well (Figure 5).

By this time, all these tribes were formerly living in Skeena River now had permanent homes and living in large villages. Houses have been built in every village, each sheltering many families. By this time, each tribe has two villages, one at Metlakatla and another one up in Skeena River (Pearce n.d.).

After their final defeat by the Tsimshian, the last of the invading groups were absorbed into Tsimshian tribes, especially into the interior tribes prior to their relocation to the coast. They remained distinct among themselves, and among the Tsimshian, being identified as the Gwinhuut and the Lax'wiiyip (Figure 7). At the same time, a group of southern Tsimshian called the Gitnagwin'aks also migrated into northern Tsimshian territory, adding their ranks to the interior tribes and then moving with them to the coast (Marsden 2000). The Kitselas remained upriver and continued to grow, becoming (with the people of Kitsumkalum) the interior Tsimshian. The Kitselas built on their position in the canyon, strengthening their ties with the Gitksan and the northern Tsimshian to play an important role in the future trade economy of the region.

While the Tsimshian were successful in routing the invaders and reclaiming their coastal territory, the effect of the attacks, the retreat and the formation of alliances that led to their victory, and the influx of more foreigners had profound consequences for them. At the end of this period, they were a changed people (Beynon 1969; Beynon and Barbeau n.d. [a, b, and c]; Duff n.d.). The ten tribes, both riverine and coastal, of the northern Tsimshian, their numbers considerably increased by the newcomers, now wintered together at Metlakatla Pass in a tight cluster of villages united in self-defence and increasingly interdependent. They travelled together to the eulachon grounds on the Nass River and camped together along the way. In the summer, all ten tribes moved to the lower Skeena, the territories

<sup>4</sup> To the authors' knowledge, no other Tsimshian or Gitksan oral history refers to decapitation, indicating perhaps that this event was unique and therefore warranted mentioning.

of which accommodated both coastal and inland tribes and their salmon fishing, berry harvesting, and fall hunting. These changes also initiated an increasingly important role for trade in the Northwest Coast economy.

While the archaeological record does not indicate exactly when the Tlingit incursions began, there is evidence for changes in status differentiation after 2500 BP, both on the coast and in the interior. Artifacts such as groundstone netsinkers, labrets, slate mirrors, and slate daggers appear in both coastal sites and at Gitau (Allaire 1979, 48). These objects are interpreted as evidence of increased status differentiation in both zones as well as indicating increased coastal connections between the interior and the coast and, perhaps, new artifact types from the northern invaders.

The evidence for status differentiation on the coast is found especially in burials at Boardwalk, Garden Island, and Dodge Island (Cybulski 1990, 55; Fladmark, Ames, and Sutherland 1990, 234; MacDonald 1983, 105-6). Ames and Maschner (1998, 189) identify four levels of status in these burials starting after 2500 BP. More than two-thirds of the interments have no grave goods at all, while others contained numerous ornaments made of local materials. The highest rank includes ornaments made from exotic imports such as copper, obsidian, jet, amber, sea otter teeth, and dentalia shell beads (Matson and Coupland 1995, 233). Ethnohistorically, these objects were associated with high status, and while such meanings may not have been preserved from so long ago, the coastal burial populations indicate that distinctions existed in some form. However, the appearance of ornaments is neither widespread nor itself indicative of the emergence of social difference, which no doubt existed in some form prior to this; rather, the use of copper as beads and plain sheets indicates that the coastal people had connections to the north, where native copper is found in the Copper River. Its apparent association with high status may indicate that the symbolic meaning of copper was being imported along with the metal, both of which may be evidence of the incorporation of northern people into communities of the coastal zone. Based on dates derived from shell at the surface of middens at village sites (Figure 1), Archer (2001) has argued that villages with similar house sizes existed between 2500 BP and 1900 BP. Village sites such as GbTo-46, -70, and -77 (Figures 1 and 4) display a characteristic pattern of houses smaller than those from later periods and oriented in a row along a beach front. Archer evaluates the statistical variability in floor

area and demonstrates that these houses show little difference. He suggests that house size and distribution of these sites across the coastal landscape is consistent with the model of egalitarian villages each located at the centre of its resource catchment area.

Matson and Coupland (1995, 233) argue that the burial data are evidence of emerging social complexity, which usually refers to both the increasing scale and variability of cultural traits and the institutionalization of social inequality (Martindale 1999a, 1999b). However, complexity is a poor description of these developments; instead, the archaeological data up to about 2000 BP indicate that communities in the northern Tsimshian area were growing, perhaps in part as a result of migration from the north. Initially this resulted in the appearance of new artifacts and practices of social distinction in both coastal and canyon areas, especially involving personal ornamentation. On the coast, these distinctions were manifest in the treatment of burials that began to show social stratification. Socio-political hierarchies are sometimes a solution to internal conflict related to community growth (Johnson 1983). However, these pressures seem to have exceeded the capacity for emerging social hierarchies to control as the period after 2000 BP was marked by regional warfare.

It is after 2000 BP that the evidence from the archaeological and oral records most clearly converges, indicating a period from 2000 BP to 1500 BP during which warfare intensified and the northern Tsimshian retreated from their coastal villages. Based on data from Tlingit territory in southeastern Alaska, Moss and Erlandson (1996) argue that the initial appearance of defended fort sites on the northern Northwest Coast dates from between 2,000 and 1,500 years ago. Many forts were separate constructions from villages that served as short-term redoubts, although there are some examples of large defended villages. No such forts have been found in northern Tsimshian territory, although the upper components at the Lachane/Co-op site showed substantial log construction dating to this time (Inglis 1976). The Tsimshian identify this site on Kaien Island as the location of Aksk's famous battle (Marsden 2000, 48).

Maschner (1991, 931) argues, based on a settlement shift to defensible village locations, that violence escalated during this period as a result of increased raiding and warfare. Matson and Coupland (1995, 231) describe this as a "warfare complex" in the Prince Rupert Harbour region. Burial data from the latter part of the Middle Period indicate that this was a time of increased warfare (Cybulski 1974,

1978, 1990, 1992). Almost 40 per cent of adults from this era show fractures of the forearm, face, and skull. Cybulski (1990, 58) attributes 60 per cent of these fractures to interpersonal violence. Decorated bone and stone clubs, similar to the warclub weapons of the historic era, also appear late in this period at sites like GbTo-34, Kitandach (Figure 3) (MacDonald 1969, 244; MacDonald and Inglis 1981, 45; Matson and Coupland 1995, 231). MacDonald (1983, 110) identified a burial at Boardwalk of an adult male associated with body armour of copper-wrapped sticks and a cache of weapons, including stone and bone clubs and slate knives. Although initially dated to 2500 BP, it has been redated by Cybulski (1993, 6) to 1800 BP. In addition to the armour and weaponry, he describes a decapitated female skull and jaw that may represent a trophy of war. Decapitation is said to have been common in Northwest Coast warfare (Suttles 1990, 465), but the only direct archaeological evidence of it anywhere on the Northwest Coast comes from the Lachane/Co-op site dating to about 1750 BP. Here, two young adult males and a female were found with removed heads and cut marks on their vertebrae.

The archaeological data from the end of the Middle Period indicate that the emerging conflict throughout the coastal region resulted in significant settlement shifts between 2000 BP and 1500 BP, including a period during which all the village sites in Metlakatla Pass were abandoned. Archer's (2001, 214) regional analysis of terminal dates on shell middens associated with villages indicates that the egalitarian villages were abandoned between 2500 BP and 1900 BP.

There is also archaeological data that the period of conflict and abandonment of the coast was followed by a return of more hierarchically organized Tsimshian communities. Archer (2001) suggests that new villages began to appear between 1900 BP and 1600 BP and argues that the new villages represent a more hierarchical social order. Evidence for this comes from changes in architecture, specifically the construction of a few very large buildings in each village. The large houses usually occurred in the front row of the village, a location that is ethnohistorically associated with the residences of lineage heads and chiefs (Garfield 1951). One so-called "ranked" village, McNichol Creek (GbTo-6) in Prince Rupert Harbour, is the best documented case of this development (Figure 1). GbTo-6 is a village site of fifteen house depressions dating to about 1600 BP, although there is an earlier, poorly defined occupation (Coupland, Bissel, and King 1991, 43; Matson and Coupland 1995, 279). House

sizes averaged about ten by six metres, with one exception. House depression "O" is more than double this average, and, because of its large size, is interpreted as the residence of a high-status lineage.

Technological changes occur mostly in the woodworking toolkit and include new forms of stone mauls and adzes, and shell knives and blades (Fladmark, Ames, and Sutherland 1990, 235). Personal ornamentation continued in this period but was restricted to labrets, shell, amber, and copper beads (234). Fewer burials occurred at Prince Rupert area sites after 1500 BP, probably because the interior practice of cremation had been adopted. Salmon is the most common faunal species, accounting for 65 per cent of the faunal assemblage from McNichol Creek, which has yielded the only systematic sample of subsistence data from a village site in this region (Coupland, Bissel, and King 1993, 60, 62). The faunal data are indicative of a delayed return or storage economy based on salmon fishing and supplemented through the winter months by sea mammals, shellfish, and coastal marine fish resources. Coupland, Bissel, and King (1993) argue that the occupants of McNichol Creek spent their summers in the Skeena River valley collecting salmon for their winter stores. The rate of shell midden accumulation remained constant during this period, indicating a stable population (Fladmark, Ames, and Sutherland 1990, 234; Matson and Coupland 1995, 278).

After the reoccupation of the Prince Rupert Harbour area, the archaeological data show increasing similarity to ethnohistoric Tsimshian people in terms of status, subsistence, technology, and settlement patterns. During this time, settlement was characterized by seasonal mobility between winter villages around Metlakatla Pass (Archer 2001; Coupland, Bissel, and King 1991, 43; Matson and Coupland 1995, 279), spring settlement on the Nass estuary, and summer occupation of interior areas, including the lower Skeena River (Allaire 1979; Fladmark, Ames, and Sutherland 1990, 234). Winter villages are known from the coast and also the Kitselas Canyon and Kitsumkalum Valley areas. They conform to the ethnographic pattern of large numbers of large houses (Drucker 1965, 119; Martindale 1999a; Matson and Coupland 1995, 280). This period is also associated with the establishment of traditional Tsimshian protocols of social rank based on the surplus economic production of extended family households (Coupland 1995; Coupland, Bissel, and King 1993; MacDonald and Cove 1987). The ethnohistoric pattern of seasonal mobility developed at the end of the Middle Period (Ames 1998;

Coupland, Bissel, and King 1993, 60, 62; Fladmark, Ames, and Sutherland 1990, 239; Maschner 1991, 929; Stewart and Stewart 2001). Tsimshian archaeological sites are known from the Nass River estuary during this era, suggesting ongoing use of eulachon territory by the northern Tsimshian. In sum, the reoccupation of the coast at the end of the Middle Period represents the development of what has become familiar as traditional Tsimshian society: ranked social order, hierarchical villages, and seasonal coast-to-interior mobility.

As the oral record described, the origins of the settlement patterns that define this period lie in the return of an alliance of Tsimshian village groups into the coastal zone after a series of conflicts have driven them east. Closely placed for defence, these communities had to look farther afield for subsistence resources. It was during the Late Period that the lower Skeena River territories were added to the coastal and Nass River zones to complete the historically known settlement cycle of the northern Tsimshian.

## CONCLUSIONS

We had argued that, while the archaeological and oral records are distinct sources and forms of data, they represent aspects of the same history. Archaeological data are the material correlates of human activity that tend to reflect recurring patterns in human behaviour. While only a fragment of the material culture of antiquity has been recovered, we can reasonably infer from these data the nature, scale, and source of settlement patterns that characterize Tsimshian history. Oral records are narratives of ancestral housegroups and lineages that convey the significant historical events in a community's past. Frequently, these stories refer to origins, migrations, settlements, and conflicts. Our comparison of the oral and archaeological data demonstrates conjunction between the two, especially in terms of settlement patterns. The implication of this work is that other comparisons between the archaeological and oral records are possible and can enhance an understanding of the past. Archaeological reconstructions are improved from the rich social and political history preserved in oral records. Oral traditions, in turn, can benefit from the structured chronological, technological, and economic data that archaeological culture histories provide.

Our analysis has reinforced the idea that the period between 3500 BP and 1500 BP was a distinct episode of Tsimshian history. However,

Gitwilgyoots	Gitzaxłaał	Ginax'angiik	Gitsiis	Gitnadoiks	Gitando	Gitlaan	Giluts'aaŵ	Gispaxlo'ots	Kitselas
Gispwudwada		Gispwudwada	Gispwudwada	Gispwudwada	Gispwudwada	Gispwudwada	Gispwudwada	Gispwudwada	Gispwudwada
Saxsa'axt <i>early Temlaxam</i>		'Wiiseeks <i>Temlaxam</i> ( <i>second group</i> )	'Wiilaxha <i>Temlaxam</i> ( <i>second group</i> )	Niswaaxs <i>Temlaxam</i>	Gamayaam <i>Temlaxam</i>	Ananaax <i>Temlaxam</i>	Nisłgumiik <i>Temlaxam</i>	Gamayaam <i>Temlaxam</i>	Nistaxho'ok <i>Temlaxam</i>
Yehan <i>early Temlaxam</i>			'Watida'ax <i>Gitnagwin'aks</i>			Niyuks <i>Temlaxam</i>	T'mnuu'nax <i>Temlaxam</i>	Tkwalaxha <i>Temlaxam</i>	Nishayweexs <i>Temlaxam</i>
Wuts'int <i>Gitnagwin'aks</i>						Wudimaas <i>Gitnagwin'aks</i>		Laans <i>Gitnagwin'aks</i>	
Lidaŵ <i>Gitnagwin'aks</i>						T'iibn <i>Gitnagwin'aks</i>		Lagaxnitsk <i>Gitnagwin'aks</i>	
<b>Ganhada</b>	<b>Ganhada</b>		<b>Ganhada</b>			<b>Ganhada</b>		<b>Ganhada</b>	<b>Ganhada</b>
Ligigyasgyoo <i>Gidaganits</i>	Xpenhoontk <i>Gidaganits</i> Nishoot <i>Gidaganits</i>		Nisyaganaat <i>Gidaganits</i> Nagaaxł <i>Gidaganits</i>			Xpihana'ax <i>Gidaganits</i> Niswaksenaatłk <i>Gidaganits</i>		Nismasgaws <i>Gidaganits</i>	Goom <i>Gidaganits</i>
			<b>Laxskiik</b>		<b>Laxskiik</b>	<b>Laxskiik</b>		<b>Laxskiik</b>	
			Nisłguts'olk <i>Gwinhuut</i>		Nis'wiibaas <i>Gwinhuut</i> Gwiłxeex <i>Gwinhuut</i>	Tgidiganits <i>Gwinhuut</i>		Niswamak <i>Gwinhuut</i>	
			<b>Laxgibuu</b>			<b>Laxgibuu</b>			
			Łabiksk <i>Lax'wiiyip</i>			Nislaganoos <i>Lax'wiiyip</i>			

Figure 7: 1500 BP - New Lineages of the Northern Tsimshian and Kitselas

Northern Coastal Tsimshian Tribes

Northern Interior Tsimshian Tribes

Gitwilgyoots	Gitzaxłaał	Ginax'angiik	Gitsiis	Gitnadoiks	Gitando	Gitlaan	Giluts'aaŵ	Kitselas	Gispaxlo'ots*
Gispwudwada	Gispwudwada	Gispwudwada			Gispwudwada		Gispwudwada	Gispwudwada	Gispwudwada
Ligiutkwaatk <i>local Laxmoon</i>	K'aalst <i>Laxmoon</i>	Liplits'iiwst <i>Laxmoon</i>			Gasyatk <i>ancient local</i>		Nisksanaat <i>original at Lakelse Lake</i>	Taxhaya <i>local</i>	'Wiiget <i>original (upriver)</i>
Gilax'aks <i>original</i>		Gigyooksmwalp <i>local Laxmoon</i>			Gyɛłuk <i>original at Shames River</i>		Nisp'iins <i>original at Lakelse Lake</i>		Suhalaayt <i>original (upriver)</i>
Spingn <i>ancient Gitwilgyoots</i>		'Liyaa'mlaxha <i>local</i>					Niskwaaxs <i>original</i>		Waxaayt <i>Laxmoon</i>
		Gyedmgik'oł <i>original</i>					Nee'gmdaŵ <i>original</i>		
		Nisałnaats <i>original</i>					Nisyuust <i>original</i>		
Ganhada	Ganhada	Ganhada	Ganhada	Ganhada	Ganhada	Ganhada	Ganhada	Ganhada	Ganhada
Ts'maymban <i>original</i>	Nispilax <i>local</i>	Łgulisyaa <i>Laxmoon</i>	Łüüm <i>original</i>	Ts'ihido'ax <i>original</i>	Nisyagayunaat <i>old Gitando</i>	Nistk'ooy <i>original</i>	Niskimas <i>original</i>	Sats'aan <i>local</i>	Sagipaayk <i>original (upriver)</i>
Algmxaa <i>original</i>	Niskiwa <i>original</i>	Woox <i>original</i>	Dago'milsk <i>original</i>	Nisganaas <i>original</i>	Lax'litkwa <i>old Gitando</i>		Mit'iibn <i>original</i>		Nismaagaws <i>original (upriver)</i>
T'mgawsmtkwa <i>original</i>	Gyaani <i>original</i>	Niskwil'aax <i>original</i>		Waas <i>original</i>	Gayalgwax <i>old Gitando</i>		Ts'axamaay <i>local</i>		
	'Aya'ax <i>original</i>								
Laxskiik		Laxskiik			Laxskiik		Laxskiik		Laxskiik
Yu'ns <i>original</i>		Xwingaws <i>original</i>			Nisxło <i>local</i>		Niskamts'iis <i>original</i>		Li'n'saanxs <i>original</i>
Halitkwa <i>original</i>					Nluu'lax <i>original</i>		Nisma'ol <i>original</i>		Gawalaa <i>original</i>
Laxgibuu	Laxgibuu	Laxgibuu	Laxgibuu	Laxgibuu			Laxgibuu	Laxgibuu	
Gwishawaal <i>local, original</i>	Niskyaa <i>original</i>	Gwishawaal <i>Laxmoon</i>	Asagalyaan <i>Laxmoon</i>	Nist'alaax <i>original</i>			Laxt'it <i>local</i>	Xnes <i>Laxmoon</i>	
	Nismaats <i>original</i>		Nłade <i>original</i>	Nisgwülb'oo <i>original</i>					
			Waalsk <i>Laxmoon</i>	Xpilo'op <i>original</i>					

Figure 6: 3500 BP - Lineages of the Northern Tsimshian and Kitselas

\* The Gispaxlo'ots tribe did not exist as such until around 1500 BP. These lineages developed in their distinct regions until they amalgamated to form the Gispaxlo'ots after 1500 BP.



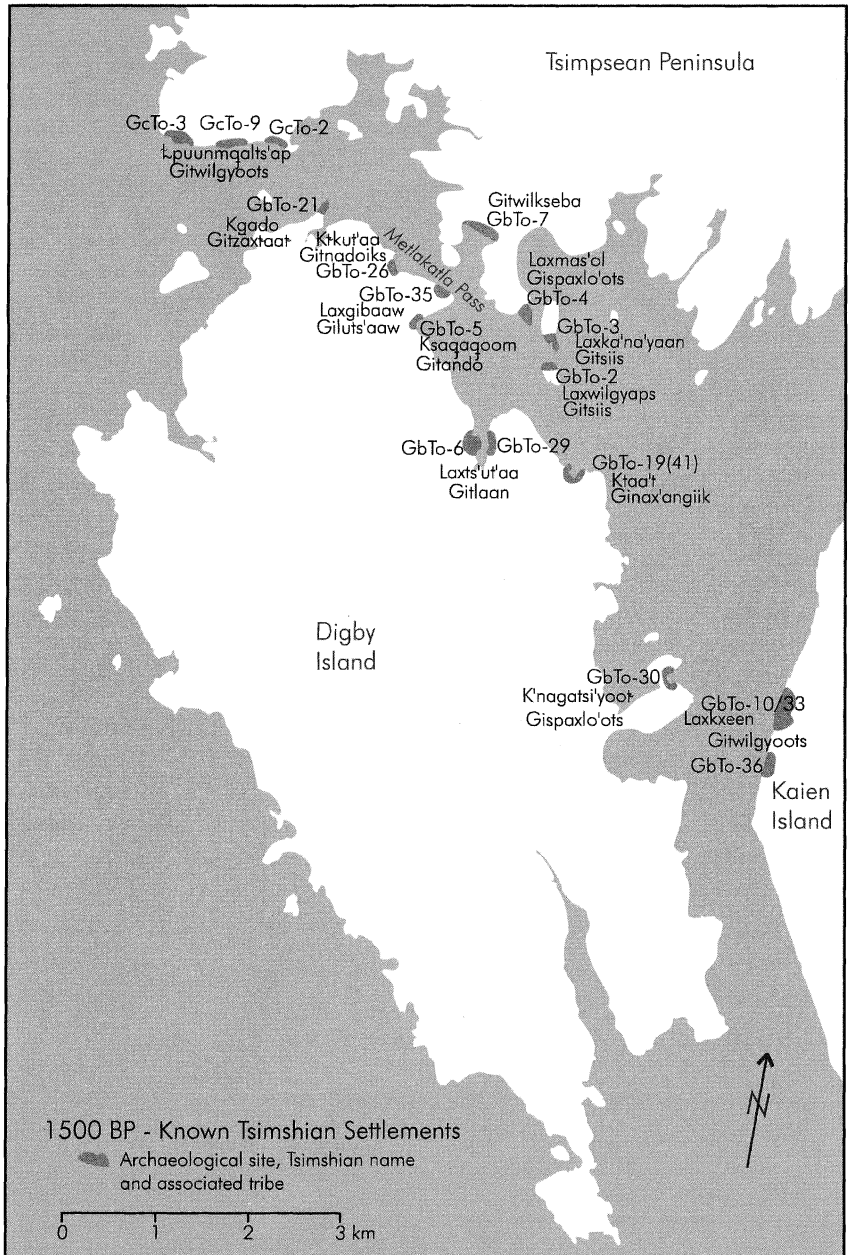


Figure 5. 1500 BP – Known Tsimshian Settlements

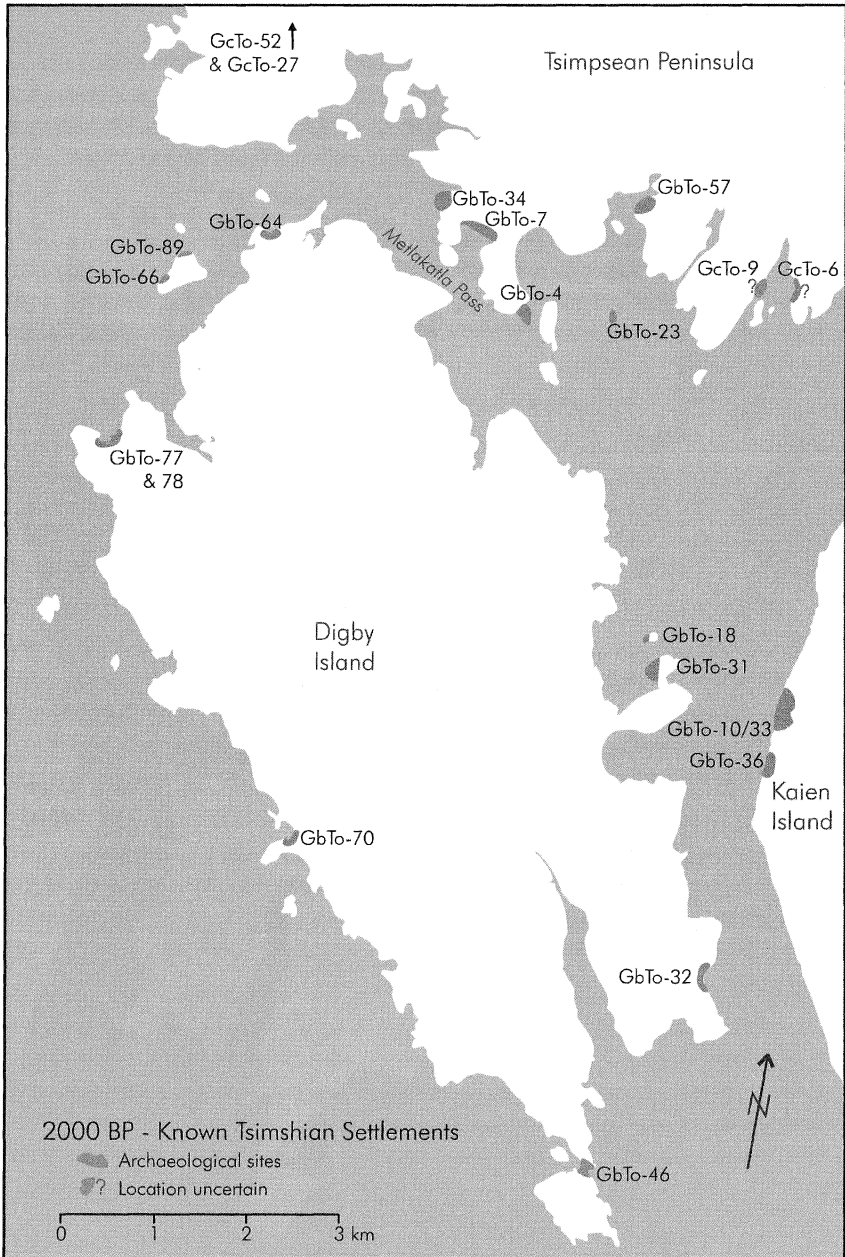


Figure 4. 2000 BP – Known Tsimshian Settlements

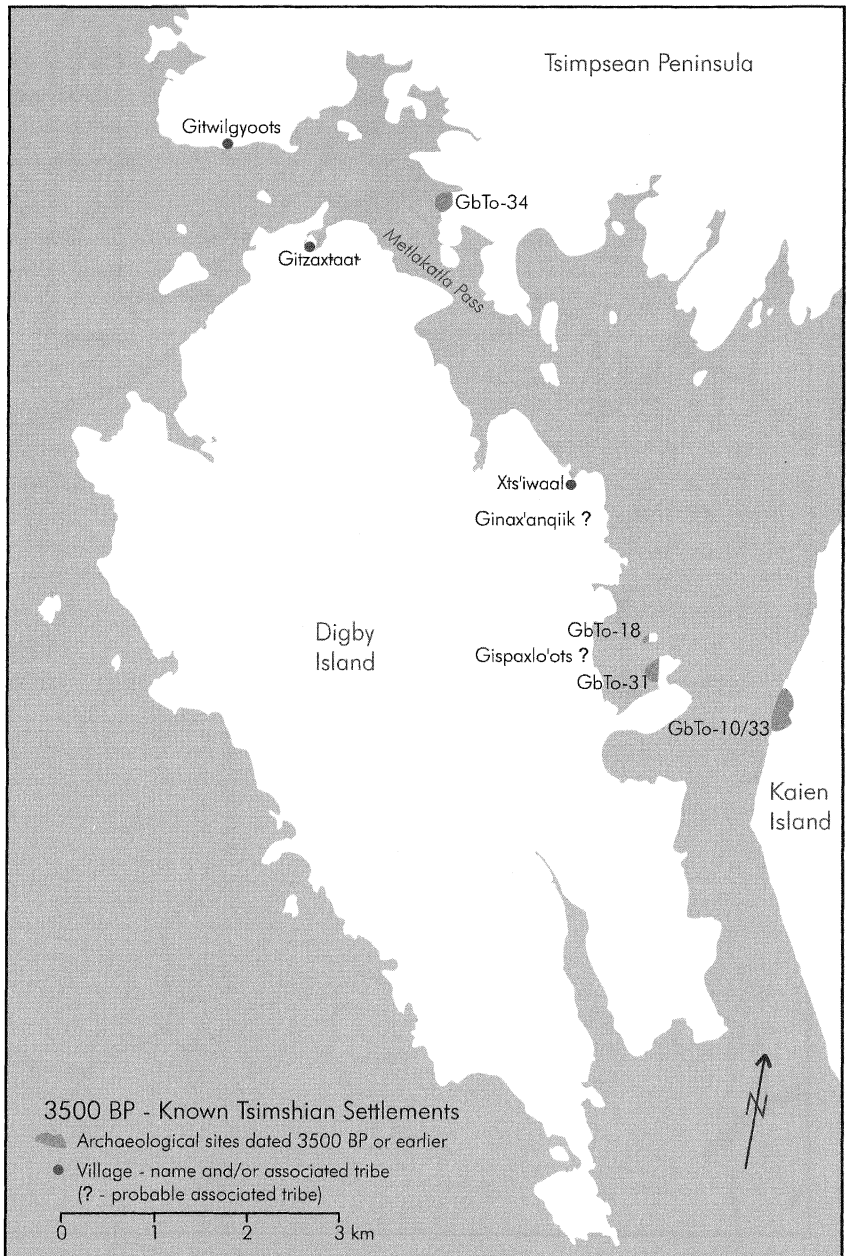


Figure 3. 3500 BP – Known Tsimshian Settlements

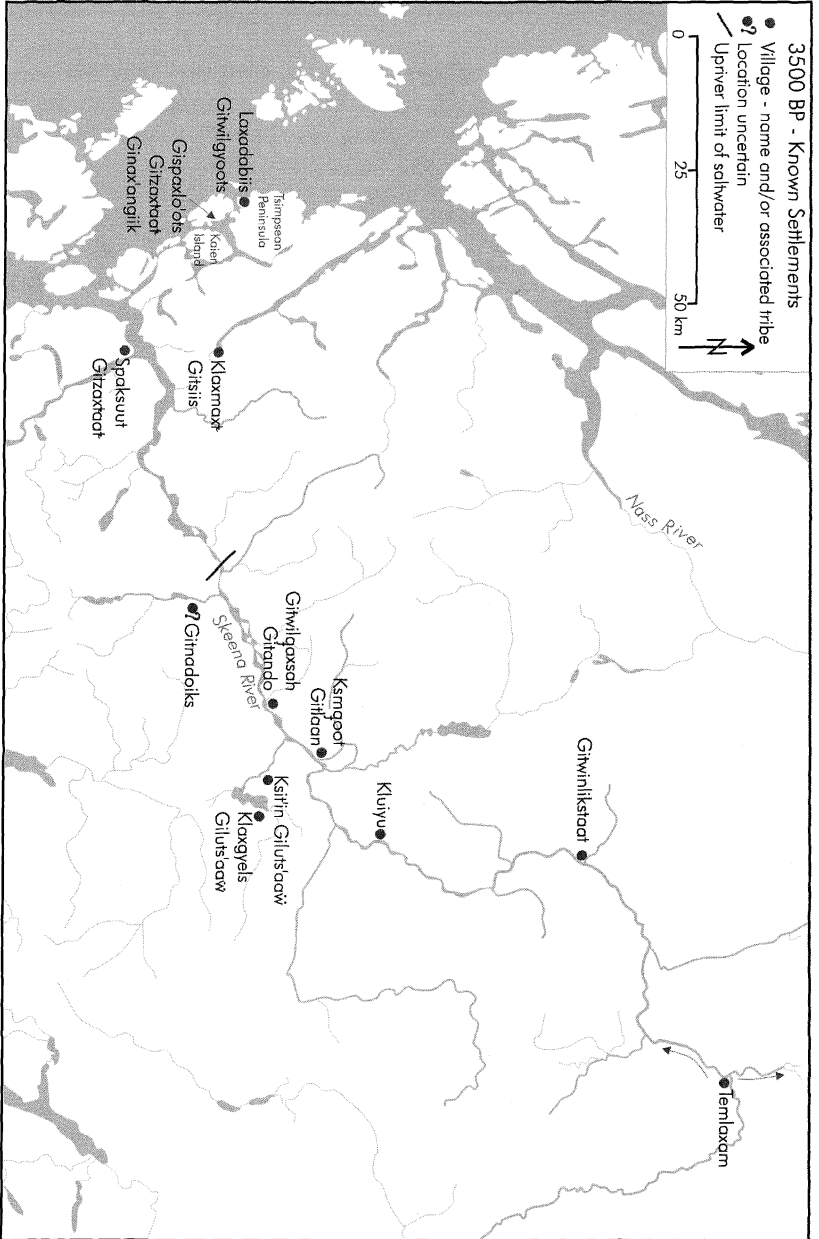


Figure 2. 3500 BP - Known Settlements

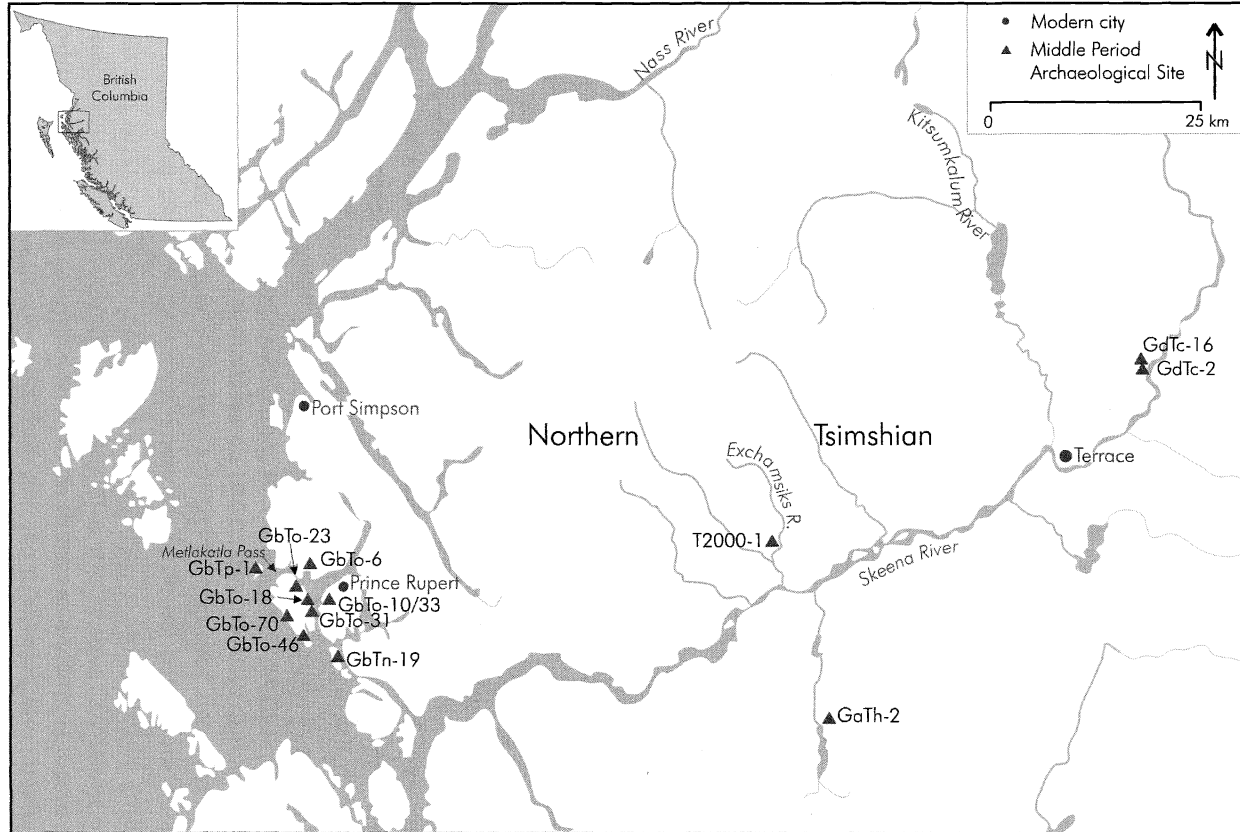


Figure 1. The Northern Tsimshian Region in the Middle Period

we have also shown that the Middle Period is defined not by the emergence of cultural traits associated with the ethnohistoric Tsimshian but as a story of growth and migration that led to conflict and change. Communities of the Middle Period grew in part as a result of internal demographics and productive technologies and in part as a result of waves of migrants entering northern Tsimshian communities from the north and east. Evidence for these movements, which has been preserved in the oral record, appears in Middle Period sites, first in the interior regions and ultimately on the coast. These pressures and growing local populations combined to create stress within coastal communities. Described in the oral traditions, they appear archaeologically in the form of emerging material distinctions of status and evidence for conflict and warfare. They culminated around 1900 BP when Tlingit invaders forced northern Tsimshian people to abandon temporarily the coastal region. This war and the alliance of communities that formed to reclaim the coastal territory are significant episodes in Tsimshian oral history as they are the catalysts that created the ethnohistorically known Tsimshian society. Many characteristics that define the northern Tsimshian, such as their seasonal mobility between the coast and the interior, date to the period after the reoccupation of the coastal villages. This analysis has shown that a synthesis of archaeological and oral records creates a richer understanding of history than is possible from either source on its own.

## REFERENCES CITED

- Allaire, Louis. 1979. "The Cultural Sequence at Gitaus: A Case of Prehistoric Acculturation." In *Skeena Valley Prehistory*, eds. Richard Inglis and George MacDonald, 18-52. Ottawa: National Museum of Man, Mercury Series, Archaeological Survey of Canada Paper 87.
- . 1984. "A Native Mental Map of Coast Tsimshian Villages." In *The Tsimshian: Images of the Past, Views of the Present*, ed. Margaret Seguin, 82-98. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Ames, Kenneth M. 1976. "The Bone Tool Assemblage from the Garden Island Site, Prince Rupert Harbour, British Columbia: An Analysis of Assemblage Variation through Time." PhD diss., Washington State University.
- . 1979. "Report of Excavations at GhSv-2, Hagwilget Canyon." In *Skeena River Prehistory*, eds. R. Inglis and G. MacDonald, 181-218. Ottawa: National Museum of Man, Mercury Series, Archaeological Survey of Canada Paper No. 87.
- . 1994. "The Northwest Coast: Complex Hunter-Gatherers, Ecology, and Social Evolution." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 23: 209-29.
- . 1998. "Economic Prehistory of the Northern British Columbia Coast." *Arctic Anthropology* 35 (1): 68-87.
- Ames, Kenneth M., and Herbert D.G. Maschner. 1999. *Peoples of the Northwest Coast: Their Archaeology and Prehistory*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Archer, David. 1983. "Heritage Overview Assessment of the Coast Tsimshian Territory in Relation to Proposed Development Projects." Unpublished manuscript, Heritage Conservation Branch, Victoria, BC.
- . 1984. "Prince Rupert Harbour Project Heritage Site Evaluation and Impact Assessment." Unpublished report prepared for National Museum of Man, Ottawa.
- . 1992. "Results of the Prince Rupert Harbour Radiocarbon Dating Project." Unpublished manuscript prepared for the British Columbia Heritage Trust, Victoria.
- . 2001. "Village Patterns and the Emergence of Ranked Society in the Prince Rupert Area." In *Perspectives on Northern Northwest Coast Prehistory*, ed. J. Cybulski, 203-22. Ottawa: Archaeological Survey of Canada, Canadian Museum of Civilization.
- Archer, David, Susan Marsden, and Lyle Dick. 2000. "Submission Report, Pike Island, British Columbia." Unpublished manuscript, Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.
- Barbeau, Marius. 1929. *Totem Poles of the Gitksan, Upper Skeena River, British Columbia*. Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, Anthropological Series 12, Bulletin 61.

- . 1950. *Totem Poles*. Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, Anthropological Series 30, Bulletin 119.
- . 1961. *Tsimshyan Myths*. Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, Anthropological Series 51, Bulletin 152.
- Barbeau, Marius C., and William Beynon. N.d. "The Marius Barbeau and William Beynon Fieldnotes (1915-1956)." Unpublished manuscript, Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull.
- Beynon, William. 1969. *The Beynon Manuscript: The Literature, Myths and Traditions of the Tsimshian People*. Ann Arbour: University Microfilm International.
- Beynon, William, and Marius C. Barbeau. N.d.(a). "The Gwenhoot of Alaska in Search of a Bounteous Land." Unpublished manuscript, Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull.
- . N.d.(b). "Raven Clan Outlaws of the North Pacific Coast." Unpublished manuscript, Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull.
- . N.d.(c). "Temlarham: The Land of Plenty on the North Pacific Coast." Unpublished manuscript, Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull.
- . N.d.(d). "Wolf-Clan Invaders from the Northern Plateaux among the Tsimshyans." Manuscript, Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull.
- Boas, Franz. 1912. *Tsimshian Texts* (new ser.). Publications of the American Ethnological Society, vol. 3, pp. 65-285. Leyden.
- . 1916. *Tsimshian Mythology: Based on Texts Recorded by Henry W. Tate*. 31st Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology for the years 1909 to 1910, pp. 29-1037. Washington.
- Budhwa, Rick. 2002. "Correlations between Catastrophic Paleoenvironmental Events and Native Oral Traditions of the Pacific Northwest." MA thesis, University of British Columbia.
- Calvert, S. Gay. 1968. "The Co-op Site: A Prehistoric Midden Site on the Northern Northwest Coast." Unpublished manuscript, Department of Anthropology, University of British Columbia.
- Carlson, Roy. 1996. "Introduction to Early Human Occupation in British Columbia." In *Early Human Occupation in British Columbia*, eds. Roy L. Carlson and Luke Dalla Bona, 3-10. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Coupland, Gary. 1988a. *Prehistoric Cultural Change at Kitselas Canyon*. Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, Mercury Series, Archaeological Survey of Canada Paper No. 138.



- . 1988b. "Prehistoric Economic and Social Change in the Tsimshian Area." In *Research in Economic Anthropology*. Supplement 3: *Prehistoric Economies of the Northwest Coast*, ed. Barry Isaac, 211-43. Greenwich: JAI Press.
- . 1996. "The Evolution of Multi-Family Households on the Northwest Coast of North America." In *People Who Live in Big Houses: Archaeological Perspectives on Large Domestic Structures*, eds. G. Coupland and E.B. Banning, 121-30. Madison: Prehistory Press.
- . 1998. "Maritime Adaptations and Evolution of the Developed Northwest Coast Pattern on the Central Northwest Coast." *Arctic Anthropology* 35 (1): 36-56.
- Coupland, Gary, Craig Bissel, and Sarah King. 1991. "Final Report of Archaeological Investigations at the McNichol Creek Site in 1990." Unpublished report prepared for Province of British Columbia, Archaeology Branch.
- . 1993. "Prehistoric Subsistence and Seasonality at Prince Rupert Harbour: Evidence from the McNichol Creek Site." *Canadian Journal of Archaeology* 17: 59-73.
- Coupland, Gary, Andrew Martindale, and Susan Marsden. 2001. "Does Resource Abundance Explain Local Group Rank among the Coast Tsimshian?" In *Perspectives on Northern Northwest Coast Prehistory*, ed. J. Cybulski, 223-48. Ottawa: Archaeological Survey of Canada, Canadian Museum of Civilization.
- Cybulski, Jerome. 1974. "Tooth Wear and Material Culture: Precontact Patterns in the Tsimshian Area, British Columbia." *Syesis* 7:31-5
- . 1978. "Modified Human Bones and Skulls from Prince Rupert Harbour, British Columbia." *Canadian Journal of Archaeology* 2: 16-31.
- . 1990. "Human Biology." In *Handbook of North American Indians*. Vol. 7: *Northwest Coast*, ed. Wayne Suttles, 52-9. Washington: Smithsonian Institution.
- . 1992. *A Greenville Burial Ground*. Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, Mercury Series, Archaeological Survey of Canada, Paper No. 146.
- . 1993. "Notes on the Cache in Area A of the Boardwalk Site (GbTo 31)." Unpublished manuscript, Information Management Services (Archaeological Records), Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull.
- . 1996. "Context of Human Remains from the Lachane Site, GbTo 33 (Including Evidence for Decapitation)." Unpublished manuscript (MS 3973), Information Management Services (Archaeological Records), Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, Québec.
- Dauenhauer, Nora Marks, and Richard Dauenhauer, eds. 1987. *Classics of Tlingit Oral Literature*. Vol 1: *Haa Shuká, Our Ancestors: Tlingit Oral Narratives*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press.

- Day, Gordon M. 1973. "Oral Tradition as Complement." *Ethnohistory* 19 (2): 99-108.
- Drucker, Philip. 1943. *Archaeological Survey on the Northern Northwest Coast*. Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology Anthropological Papers 20.
- . 1965. *Cultures of the North Pacific Coast*. San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company.
- Duff, Wilson. N.d. "Tsimshian File." Unpublished notes, University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver.
- Fladmark, Knut R., Kenneth M. Ames, and Patricia D. Sutherland. 1990. "Prehistory of the Northern Coast of British Columbia." In *Handbook of North American Indians*. Vol. 7: *Northwest Coast*, ed. Wayne Suttles, 229-39. Washington: Smithsonian Institution.
- Garfield, Viola. 1939. *Tsimshian Clan and Society*. University of Washington Publications in Anthropology, vol. 7, no. 3, 167-340.
- . 1951 "The Tsimshian and Their Neighbors." In *The Tsimshian Indians and Their Arts*, by Viola E. Garfield and Paul Wingert. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre.
- Gibbon, Guy. 1984. *Anthropological Archaeology*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hawkes, Christopher. 1954. "Archaeological Theory and Method: Some Suggestions from the Old World." *American Anthropologist* 56 (2):155-68.
- Hodder, Ian. 2001. "Introduction: Review of Contemporary Theoretical Debates in Archaeology." In *Archaeological Theory Today*, ed. I. Hodder, 1-13. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Inglis, Richard T. 1973. "Contract Salvage 1973: A Preliminary Report on the Salvage Excavations of Two Shell Middens in the Prince Rupert Harbour, BC GbTo-33/36." Unpublished manuscript, Archaeological Survey of Canada.
- . 1975. "Coast Tsimshian Prehistory: Recent Archaeological Results from Prince Rupert, BC." Unpublished manuscript, Archaeological Survey of Canada.
- . 1976. "'Wet' site distribution - the northern case, GbTo-33 - the Lachane site." In *The Excavation of Water-Saturated Archaeological Sites (Wet Sites) on the Northwest Coast of North America*, ed. D.R. Croes, Archaeological Survey of Canada Mercury Series Paper 50, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, pp. 158-85.
- . 1979. "Coast Tsimshian Prehistory: Recent Archaeological Results from Prince Rupert, BC." Unpublished manuscript, Archaeological Survey of Canada.

- Inglis, Richard T., and George F. MacDonald. 1979. "Introduction." In *Skeena Valley Prehistory*, eds. Richard Inglis and George MacDonald, 1-17. Ottawa: National Museum of Man, Mercury Series, Archaeological Survey of Canada Paper 87.
- Ives, John. 1987. "The Tsimshian Are Carrier." In *Ethnicity and Culture: Proceedings of the 18th Annual Chacmool Conference*, eds. R. Auger, M. Glass, S. MacEachern, and P. McCartney, 209-25. Calgary: University of Calgary Archaeological Association.
- Johnson, Gregory. 1983. "Organizational Structure and Scalar Stress." In *Theory and Explanation in Archaeology: The Southampton Conference*, eds. C. Renfrew, M.J. Rowlands, and B.A. Seagraves, 389-421. New York: Academic Press.
- Johnson, Matthew. 1999. "Rethinking Historical Archaeology." In *Historical Archaeology: Back from the Edge*, eds. P. Funari, M. Hall, and S. Jones, 23-36. London: Routledge.
- Klimko, Olga, and Michael Taft. 1990. "A Sense of Place: A Preliminary Report on an Experiment in Historical Archaeology, Folklore, and Oral Tradition." *Western Canadian Archaeologist* 7 (1,2): 139-55.
- MacDonald, George F. 1969. "Preliminary Culture Sequence from the Coast Tsimshian Area, British Columbia." *Northwest Anthropological Research Notes* 3: 240-54.
- . 1984. "The Epic of Nekt: The Archaeology of Metaphor." In *The Tsimshian: Images of the Past, Views for the Present*, ed. M. Seguin, 65-81. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- MacDonald, George F. and John J. Cove. 1987 *Trade and Warfare: Tsimshian Narratives* 2. Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization
- MacDonald, George, Gary Coupland, and David Archer. 1988. "The Coast Tsimshian ca. 1750." In *The Historical Atlas of Canada*, ed. C. Harris, 32-3. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- MacDonald, George F., and Richard I. Inglis. 1976a. *The Dig: An Archaeological Reconstruction of a West Coast Village*. Ottawa: National Museum of Man.
- . 1976b. "The North Coast Archaeological Research Project: A Ten-Year Evaluation." Unpublished manuscript, National Museum of Man, Ottawa.
- . 1981. "An Overview of the North Coast Prehistory Project (1966-1980)." *BC Studies* 48: 37-157.
- Marsden, Susan. 1985. "Ancient History of the Giska'ast." Report prepared for the Gitksan Wet'suwet'en Tribal Council.
- . 1990. "Controlling the Flow of Furs: Northwest Coast Nations and the Maritime Fur Trade." Paper presented at the Annual BC Studies Conference.

- . 1997. "Review of Archival Materials for Information Pertaining to Tsimshian Use and Occupation of the Nass River Area, Greenville to Kincolith Highway Section." British Columbia, Ministry of Transportation and Highways, Environmental Management Section, Engineering Branch, Greenville to Kincolith Road, Tsimshian Traditional Use Study and Impact Assessments, 19 October 1997, Victoria.
- . 2000. *Defending the Mouth of the Skeena: Perspectives on Tsimshian Tlingit Relations*. Prince Rupert: Tin Ear Press.
- . 2002. "Adawx, Spanaxnox, and the Geopolitics of the Tsimshian." *BC Studies* 135: 101-35.
- Marsden, Susan, and Robert Galois. 1995. "The Tsimshian, the Hudson's Bay Company, and the Geopolitics of the Northwest Coast Fur Trade, 1787-1840." *Canadian Geographer* 39 (2): 169-83.
- Martindale, Andrew R.C. 1998. "Final Report of Year 2 of the Gitnadoix River Survey and Excavation at GbTh-4, Psacelay, 1996, Permit No. 1997-122." Unpublished report on file with the British Columbia Ministry of Small Business, Tourism, and Culture, Archaeology Branch.
- . 1999a. "The River of Mist: Cultural Change in the Tsimshian Past." PhD diss., University of Toronto.
- . 1999b. "Maritime Adaptations on the Northwest Coast." *Revista de Arqueologia Americana* 10: 1-42.
- . 2000a. "Final Report of the Skeena River Survey below the Exchamisks River and Excavations at GaTh-2, Laxt'aa Rockshelter." Unpublished report on File with the British Columbia Ministry of Small Business, Tourism, and Culture, Archaeology Branch. 54 pp.
- . 2000b. "Archaeological Stories of the Tsimshian: Change in the Context of Contact." In *The Entangled Past*, eds. M. Boyd, J.C. Erwin, and M. Hendrickson, 90-7. Calgary: Archaeological Association of the University of Calgary.
- . Forthcoming. "Considering Complexity: Coast Tsimshian Developments through the Contact Period," In *Emerging from the Mist: Studies in Northwest Coast Culture History*, eds. R.G. Matson, G. Coupland, and Q. Mackie, 12-50. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- . N.d. "Methodological Issues in the Use of Oral Traditions in Archaeology: Cultural Dynamics among the Tsimshian during the Contact Era. Unpublished manuscript.
- Maschner, Herbert D.G. 1991. "The Emergence of Cultural Complexity on the Northern Northwest Coast." *Antiquity* 65: 924-34.
- Mason, Ronald J. 2000. "Archaeology and Native North American Oral Traditions." *American Antiquity* 65 (2): 239-66.

- Matson, R.G., and Gary Coupland. 1995. *The Prehistory of the Northwest Coast*. New York: Academic Press.
- Moss, Madonna L., and Jon M. Erlandson. 1992. "Forts, Refuge Rocks, and Defensive Sites: The Antiquity of Warfare along the North Pacific Coast of North America." *Arctic Anthropology* 29 (2): 73-90.
- Olson, Ronald L. 1967. *Social Structure and Social Life of the Tlingit in Alaska*. University of California Anthropological Records, vol. 26. Berkeley.
- Overstall, Richard. 1998. "The Gitksan Stikyooden Project: Towards a Methodology of Dating Northwest Coast Oral Histories." Paper presented at the 31st Annual Meeting of the Canadian Archaeological Association, Victoria.
- Pearce, Henry (Gawala). N.d. "The Alaska People." Unpublished manuscript prepared by William Kelly.
- Sharpe, Margaret, and Dorothy Tunbridge. 1997. "Traditions of Extinct Animals, Changing Sea-levels and Volcanoes among Australian Aboriginals: Evidence from Linguistic and Ethnographic Research." In *Archaeology and Language I: Theoretical and Methodological Orientations*. ed. R. Blench and M. Spriggs, 345-61. London: Routledge.
- Shennan, Stephen. 1989. "Introduction." In *Archaeological Approaches to Cultural Identity*, ed. S. Shennan, i-xxv. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Simonsen, Bjorn. 1988. "Final Report on Archaeological Salvage Excavations and Construction Monitoring at the Lachane Site (GbT0-33) Prince Rupert, BC." Unpublished manuscript, Bastion Heritage Consultants.
- Sterritt, Neil, Susan Marsden, Robert Galois, Peter R. Grant, and Richard Overstall. 1998. *Tribal Boundaries in the Nass Watershed*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Stewart, F.L., and K. Stewart. 1996. "The Boardwalk and Grassy Bay Sites: Patterns of Seasonality and Subsistence of the Northern Northwest Coast." *Canadian Journal of Archaeology* 20: 39-60.
- . 2001. "Prehistoric Subsistence and Seasonality at Prince Rupert Harbour: History and Synthesis of Zooarchaeological Research." In *Perspectives on Northern Northwest Coast Prehistory*, ed. J. Cybulski, 223-48. Ottawa: Archaeological Survey of Canada, Canadian Museum of Civilization.
- Swanton, John R. 1908. "Social Conditions, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians." In *Twenty-Sixth Annual report of the Bureau of American Ethnology for the Years 1904-1905*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 391-512.
- Suttles, Wayne. 1990. "Central Coast Salish." In *Handbook of North American Indians*. Vol. 7: *Northwest Coast*, ed. Wayne Suttles, 453-75. Washington: Smithsonian Institution.

- Trigger, Bruce G. 1997. "Foreword." In *At a Crossroads: Archaeology and First Peoples in Canada*, eds. George P. Nicholas and Thomas D. Andrews, vii-xiii. Burnaby: Archaeology Press.
- Vansina, Jan. 1985. *Oral Tradition as History*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Whiteley, Peter M. 2002. "Archaeology and Oral Tradition: The Scientific Importance of Dialogue." *American Antiquity* 67 (3):405-15.
- Wright, Walter. 1962. *Men of Medeek*. As told to Will Robinson. Kitimat: Northern Sentinel Press.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to respectfully acknowledge the generations of Tsimshian and Gitksan chiefs and matriarchs who have informed our knowledge of the past. Cole Harris, who was both the inspiration for our collaboration and a guiding force in the development of this paper, has always respected indigenous knowledge and we are grateful for his support and encouragement. We would also like to thank Catherine Griffiths for producing the maps and Jim Collinge for proofreading a late version of this paper. Martindale's archaeological research has been supported by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada regular grant.