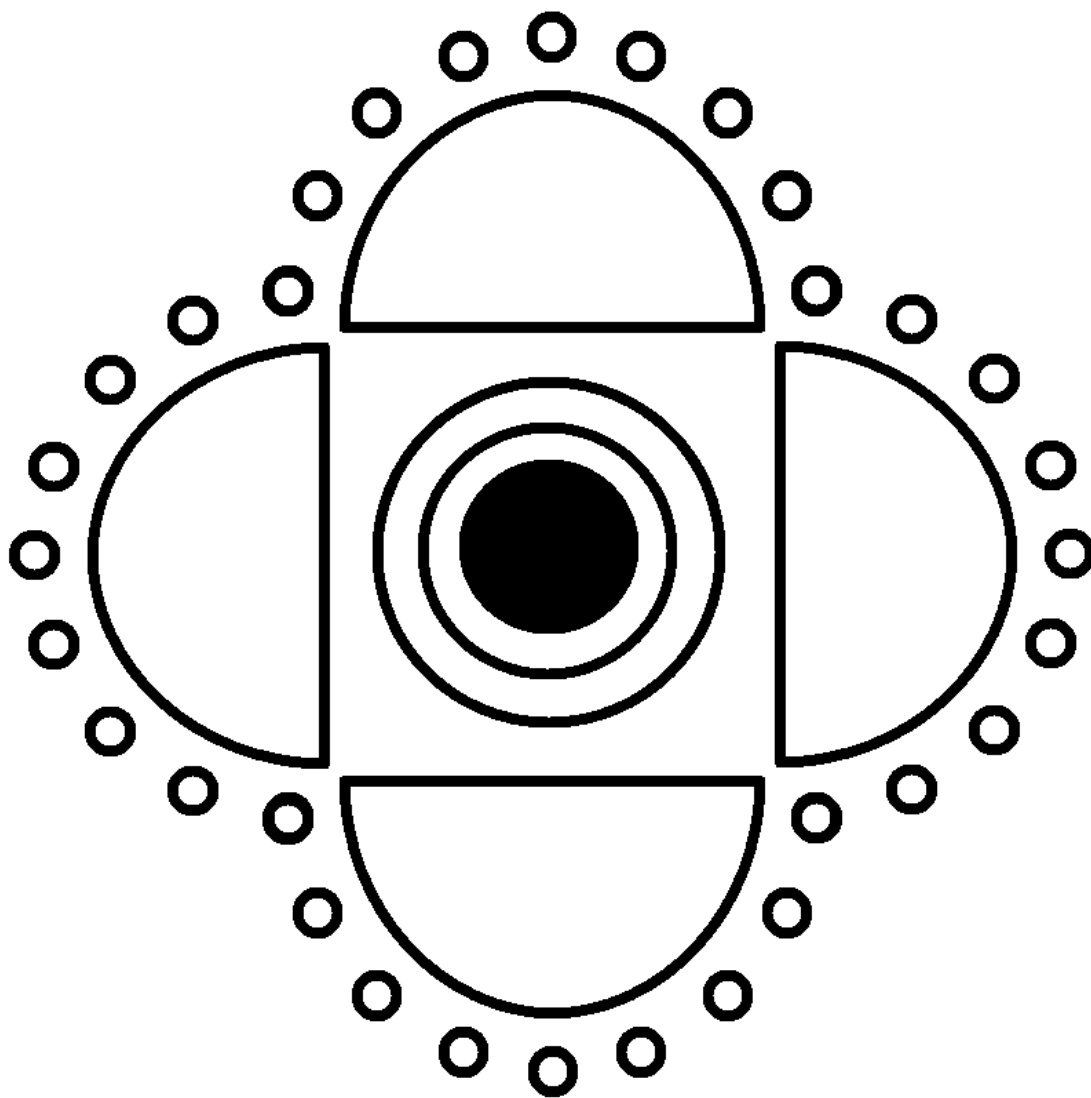


**The Mashantucket Pequot
Language Department**

**Southern New England
ALGONQUIAN
Symbols and Design**

Reading our Designs

**By
Al D'Ercole and Connor Smith**



Produced by MPTN Cultural/Language Dept.

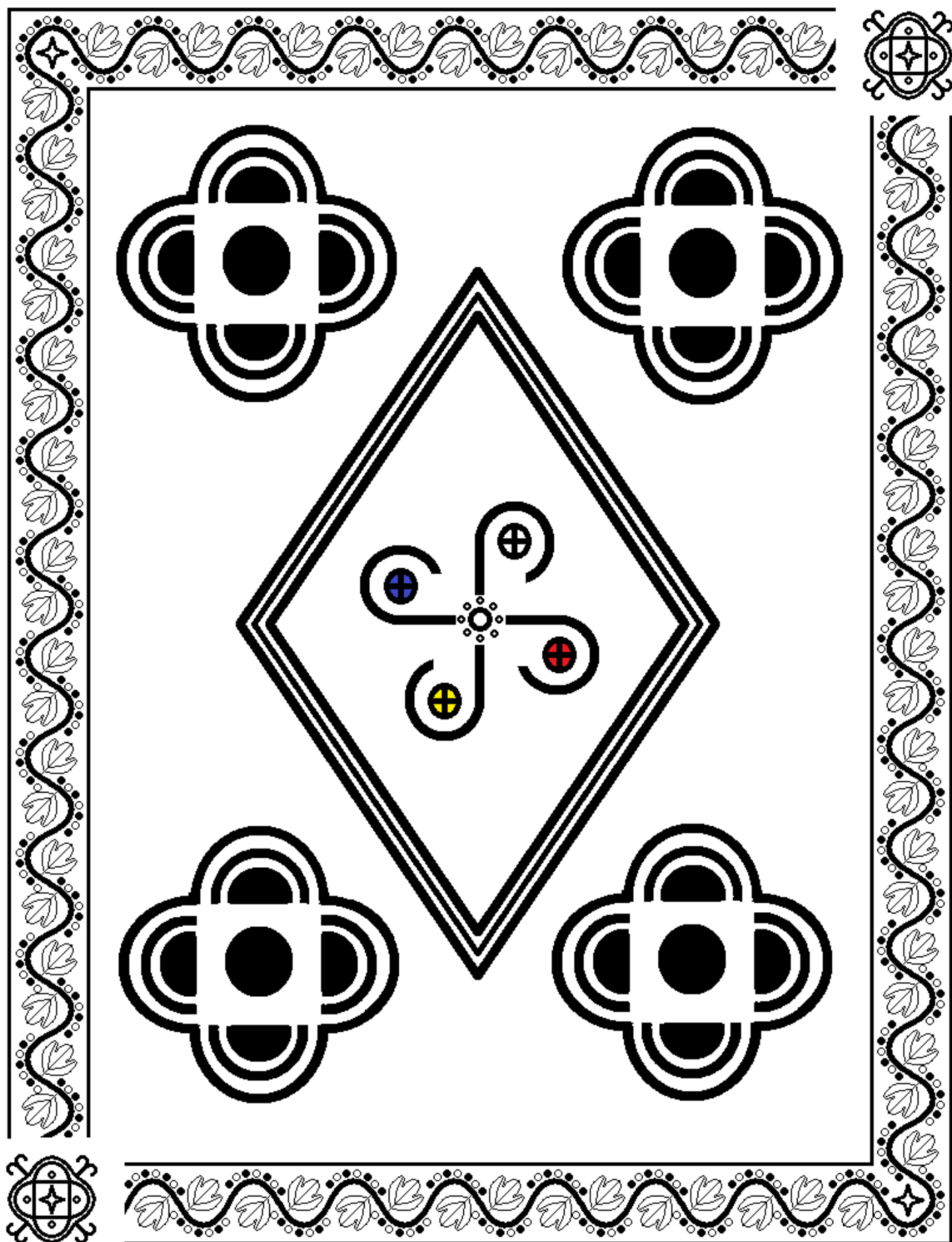
Al D'Ercole

Design layout by MPMRC Educator

Connor Smith

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SNEA DESIGN TEXT

Southern New England Algonquin (SNEA) design can possess symbolic content more meaningful than simple decoration. Design can represent the spiritual force (manut) that emanates through all things. Symbols are representations of that force. Design symbolism can function as a way of defining cultural separation, social interaction, and in some cases, an opportunity for economic exchange.

- Design can imbue an object with manut.
- Design can help maintain balance and harmony. It is an agreement with nature.
- Design can record history using ancestral symbols to provide a frame of reference to the present.
- Design can document agreements.

Design interpretation is based on the tradition of symbols passed culturally. Design symbols can be specific to a region, a particular community, a particular clan, or to an individual.

Reading of design symbolism uncovers a script of traditions that preserves and maintains spirituality, honoring manut, continuity of culture, empowering one's self and one's people, and the resistance to the effects of others/ to not be controlled. Historically, design was separated into three zones or into three horizontal or strongly diagonal bands. Generally, 2 colors were most commonly used. Red, (from cranberries) and dark blue, (from pokeweed berries) has been used by Mashantucket Pequot people for generations.

Some of the ways design symbols have been employed

- Etched into stone, shell or bone
- Etched into skin (tattoos)
- Etched into ceramics
- Carved onto wood
- Pokerwork (Pyrography/ wood burning)
- Woven into objects
- Embroidered onto objects
- Painted, stamped, and swabbed onto objects
- Inlaid into objects
- Constructed within ceremonial structures

As in all forms of communication, designs have transformed and continued over time.

THE FOLLOWING ARE INCLUDED BUT NOT LIMITED EXAMPLES OF SNEA DESIGN

3 banded motif: The 3 band motif is 3 distinct bands of design encircling objects. Each band represents realms of the Sky world, the Earth, and the Underwater world.

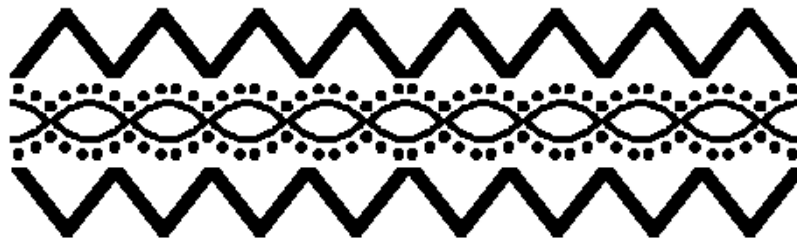
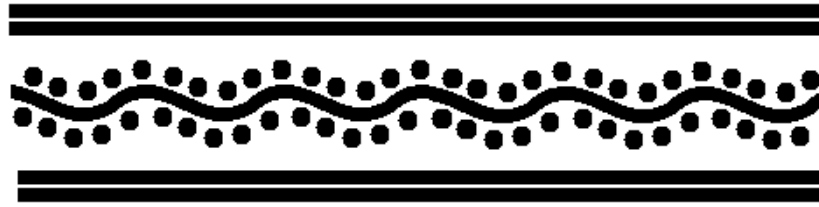




Fig. 1

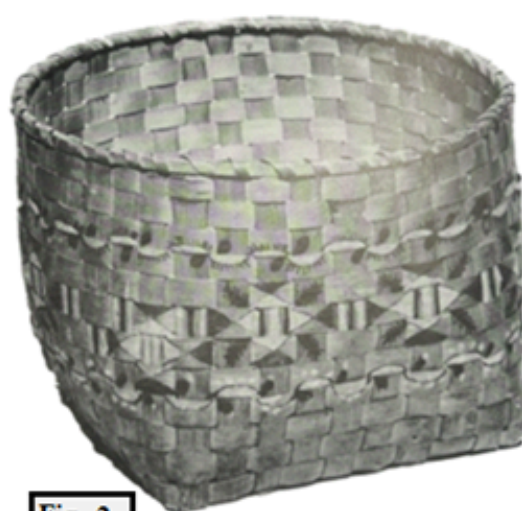


Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

Fig. 1 Caleb Cheeshahteaumuck's bag from the 1600's
 Fig. 2 A basket believed to be Pequot, due to the
 black and red fill color and "fringed chain" (seen on
 top band.)
 Fig. 3 Contemporary twined bag by Julia Marden
 (Aquinnah Wampanoag)

Fig. 4 Arm tattoo at the Mashantucket
 Pequot Museum and Research Center.
 Fig. 5 Contemporary quilled knife sheath

Dots: Can represent beings, such as human beings, ancestral beings, and star beings. They can also represent the spirit force when placed centrally.



Life Trails: Represent one's life's journey depicting the people one meets (represented by dots) and the food and medicine plants one encounters (represented by floral motifs). Undulations represent the successes and challenges in one's life.

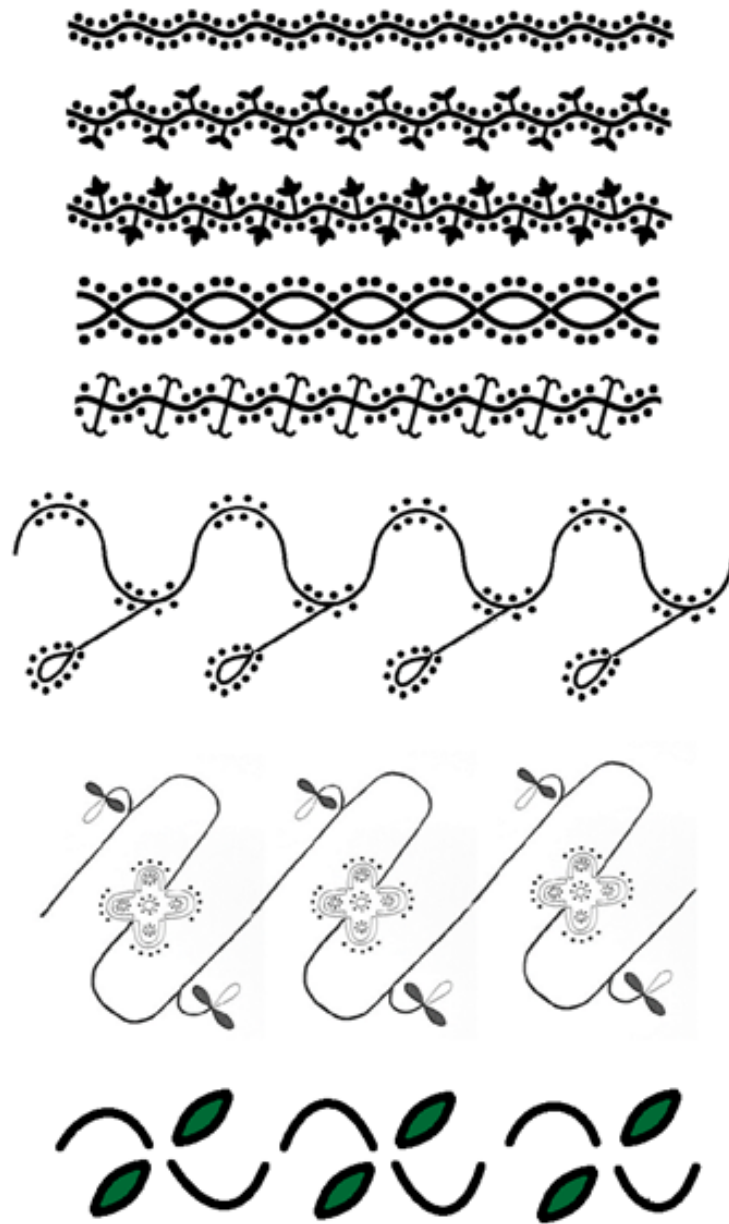




Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

Fig. 6 Mashantucket Pequot basket 1830-1840
Fig. 7 Clothing at the Mashantucket Pequot
Museum and Research Center

Fig. 8 burl bowl from the Mashantucket
Pequot Museum and Research Center

Medallions:

Domed: Can represent homes, conveying group cohesion and community. The central dot represents the spirit force. Concurrently this can represent the 4 directions emanating from the spirit force as domes and the additional 4 directions represented with differing design elements.

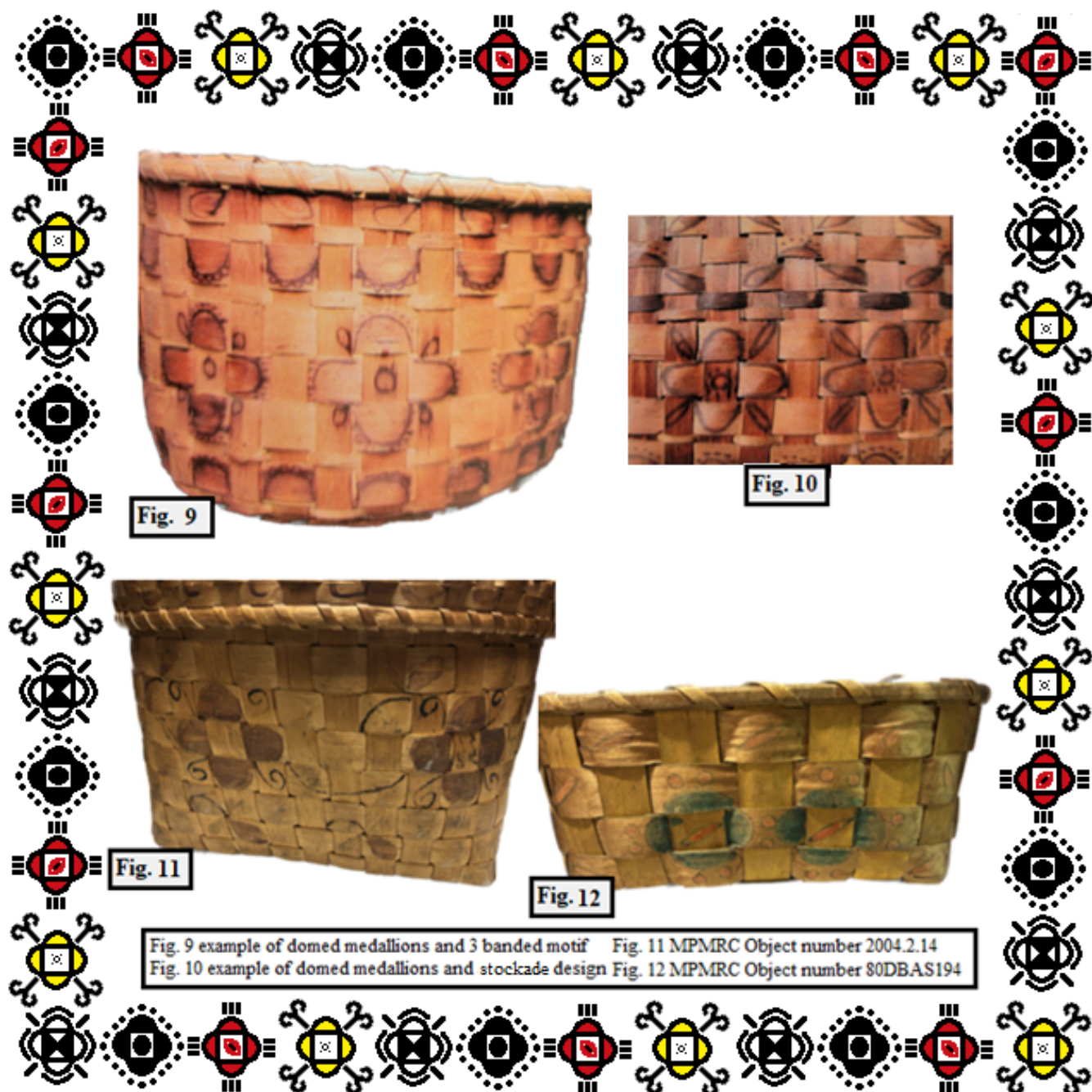
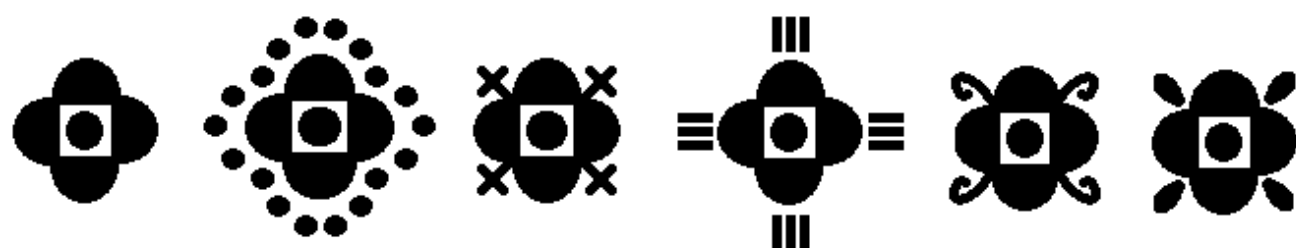




Fig. 13



Fig. 14

Fig.13 MPMRC Object number 2004.2.50 Fig. 14 MPMRC Object number 2004.2.17

Stockade: Stockaded medallions can represent borders of the community. Design elements outside the borders represent community members living outside the community in enclaves.

Mashantucket Pequot Stockade Design 1840-1850

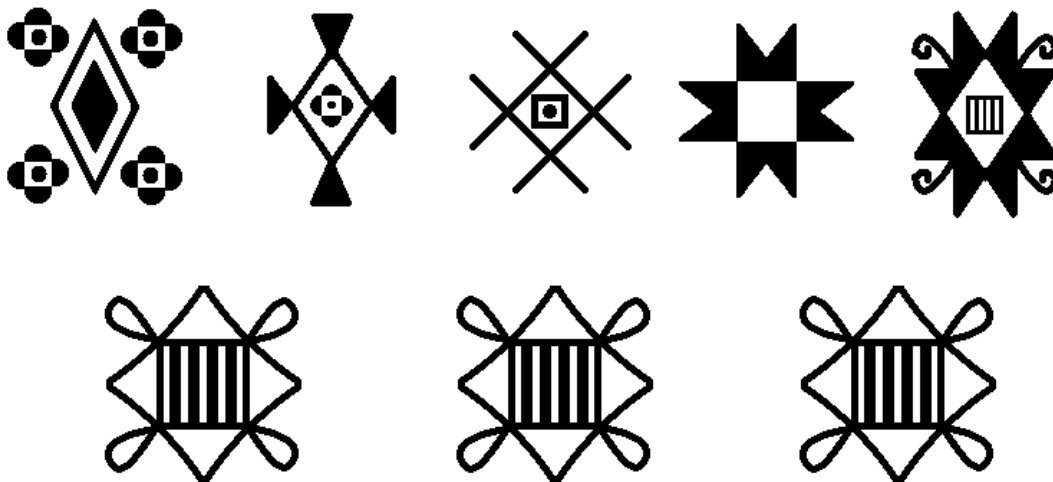


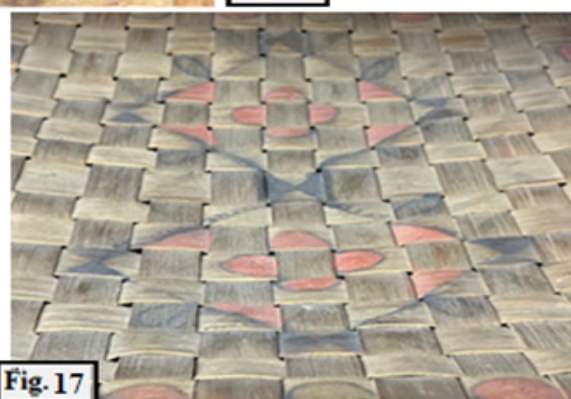
**Fig. 15****Fig. 16****Fig. 17**

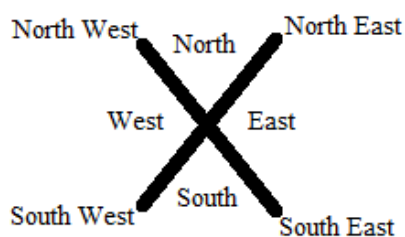
Fig. 15 MPMRC Object number 2010.3.2
Fig. 16 MPMRC Object number 2004.2.13

Fig. 17 MPMRC Object number 2004.2.4



Fig.18 MPMRC object number 2004.2.4 Fig. 19 MPMRC object number 2006.5.1

Crosses: Crosses can represent the 4 directions. Supplemental design elements to the basic “X” represents the additional cardinal directions.



Pinwheels: Can represent the 8 directions / winds. Each line representing North/Northwest, East/Northeast, South/Southeast, West/Southwest.



Pinwheel in the form
of a flower



Fig. 23 Mpmrc object number 1028Cdr1

Fig. 25 Makers mark of Rashad Young MPTN

Fig. 24 Rain in face (Mashpee Wampanoag1935)

Fig. 26 MPMRC object number 38Bus34

Triangles: Can represent community or alliance.





Bars: Bars incorporate the 3 band motif (Sky, Earth, Underwater). Can be used to separate design zones or border an object. Bars can also represent the weave of a basket.



Fig. 34



Fig. 35



Fig. 36

Fig. 34 Mashantucket Pequot basket 1830-1840
Fig. 35 Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation flag

Fig. 36 Modern twined bag by Julia Marden

Domes: Domes can represent the Sky World (covering Earth)

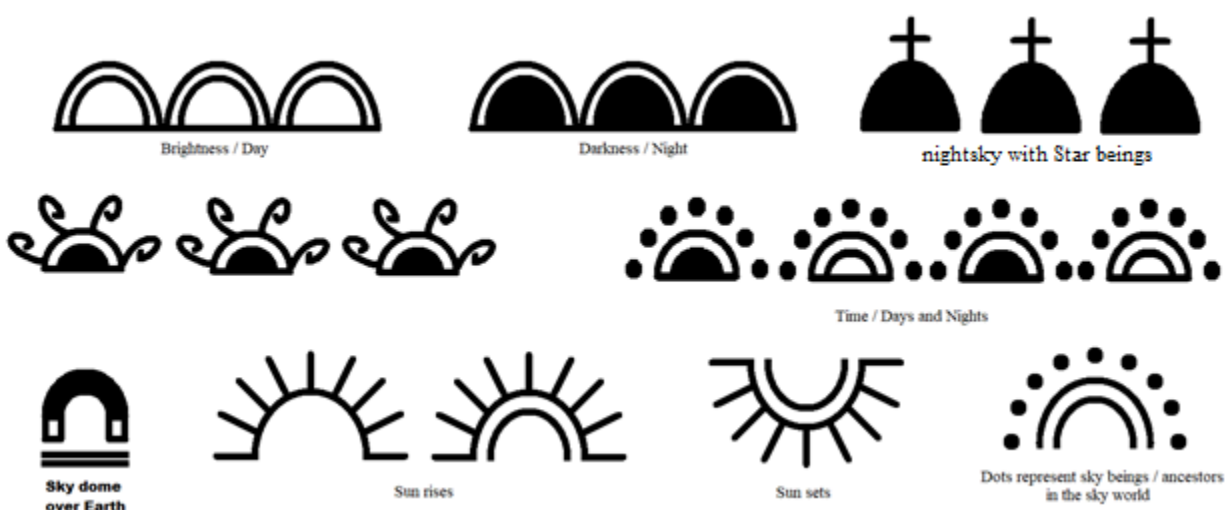


Fig. 37 Dress at the MPMRC
Fig. 38 MPMRC Object number 2004.2.50

Fig. 39 MPMRC Object number 2004.2.17
Fig. 40 MPMRC Object number 2010.3.2

Celestial Bodies: Circles can represent the sun, moon, or stars. These can also represent the spirit force when placed centrally.

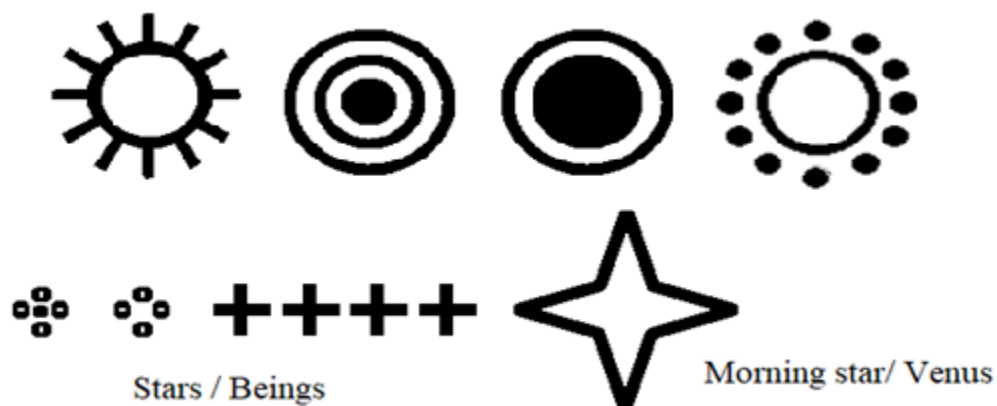


Fig. 41



Fig. 42

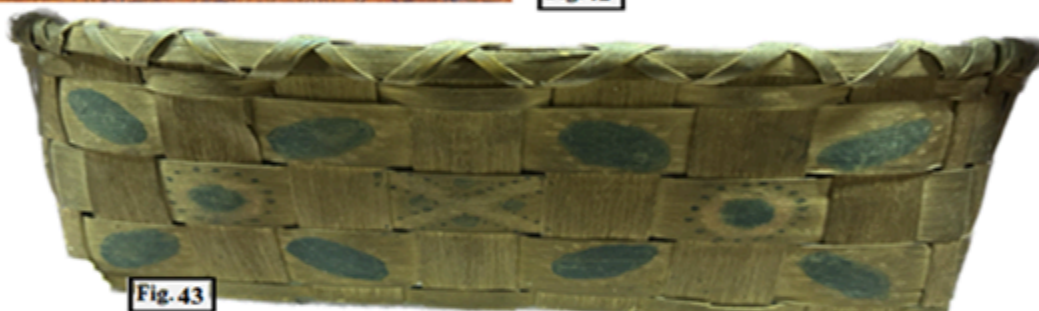


Fig. 43



Fig. 44

Fig. 41 Metal inlay on the Deerfield war club at Fenimore Art Museum
Fig. 42 Domed Medallion with **spirit force** in center

Fig. 43 MPMRC Object number 50 Bas 46
Fig. 44 Wampum on display at the MPMRC

Water: These designs can represent water and when inverted can represent rain.



Rain



Fig. 45



Fig. 46



Fig. 47

Fig. 45 Twined bag by Julia Marden Fig. 47 Tattoos at the MPMRC
Fig. 46 Tattoo at the MPMRC

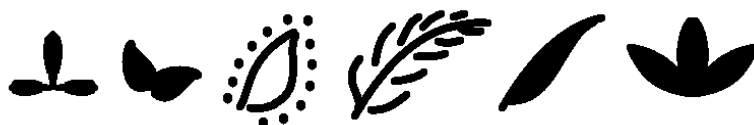


Floral Motifs: Plant depictions symbolize the food that sustains life and medicines to heal or ward off illness. Dots surrounding a floral image can indicate a plant particularly useful to people.

Leaves:



Ferns



Medicine Plants



Flowers:

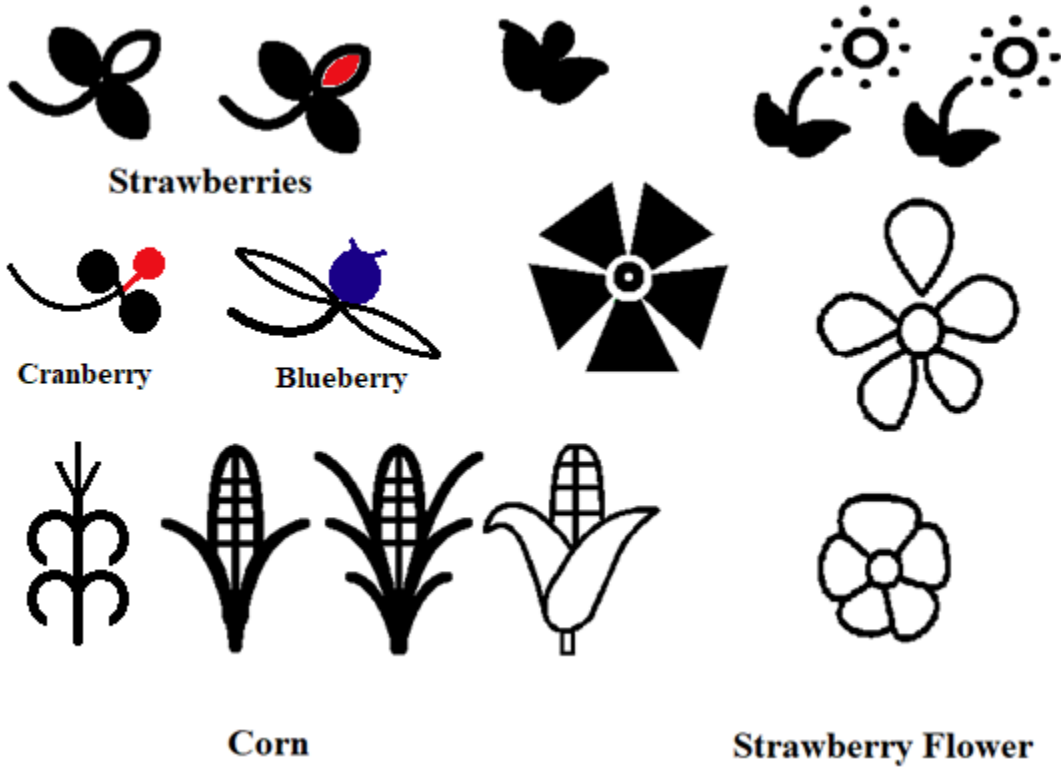




Fig. 52

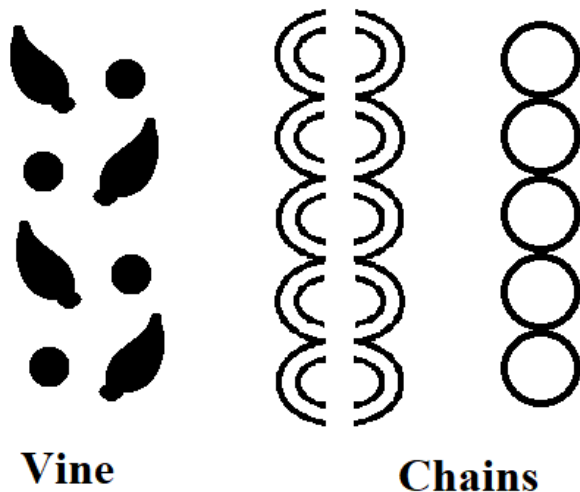


Fig. 53

Fig. 52 MPMRC Object number 2006.5.1

Fig. 53 (Cranberries) MPMRC Object number 41 Bas 37

Chains: Vertical chains sometimes were used to border a design field encompassing the design story within. Chains have also been used to indicate one's lineage.



Celestial Tree: The Celestial tree connects the earth to the sky realm. Can represent greater knowledge, growth, and understanding.

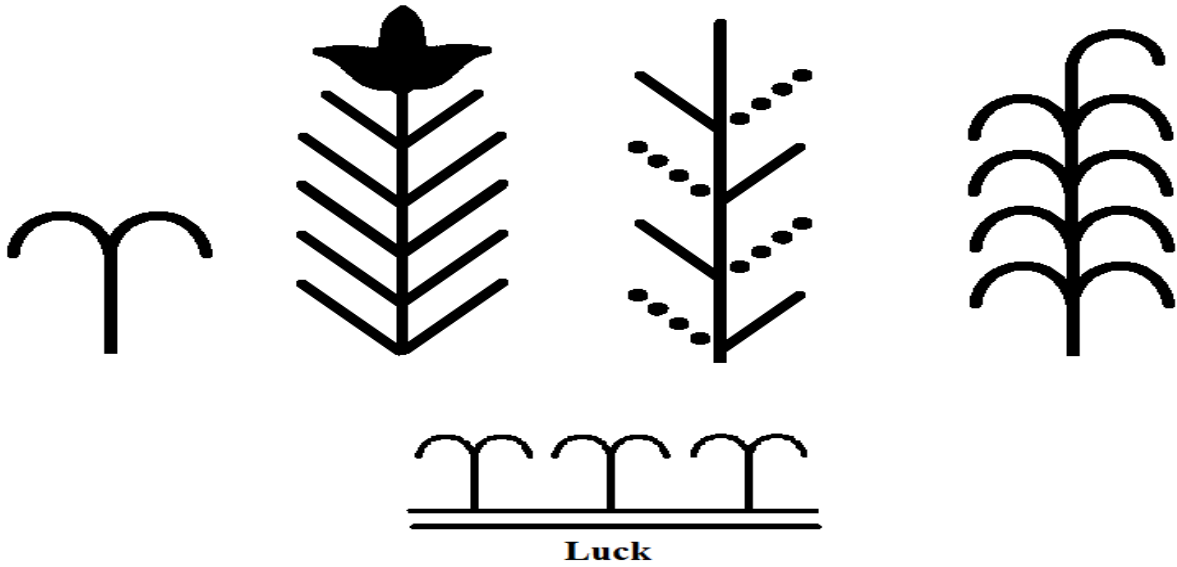




Fig. 58



Fig. 59



Fig. 60

Fig. 58 Twined bag by Julia Marden
Fig. 59 MPMRC Object number 2010.3.2

Fig. 60 Toy sled on display at the MPMRC



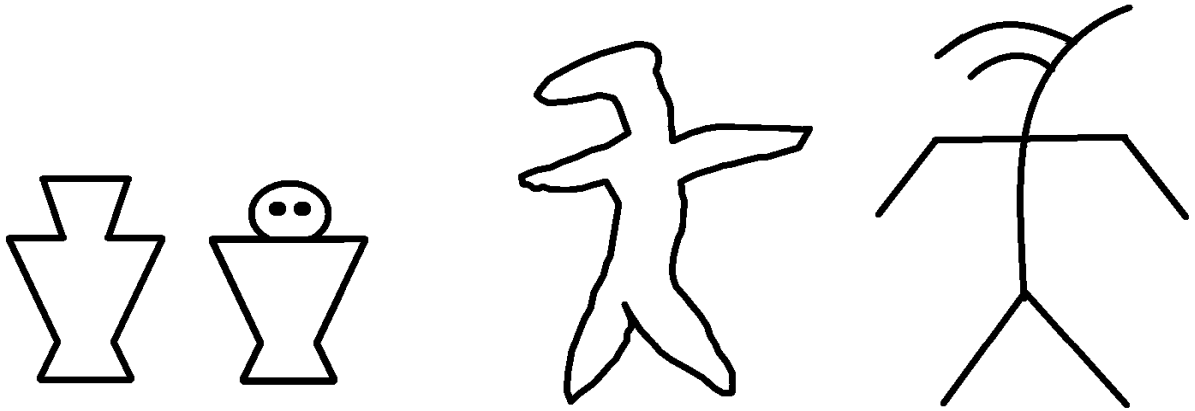
Celestial trees

Fig. 61 Basket with corn example

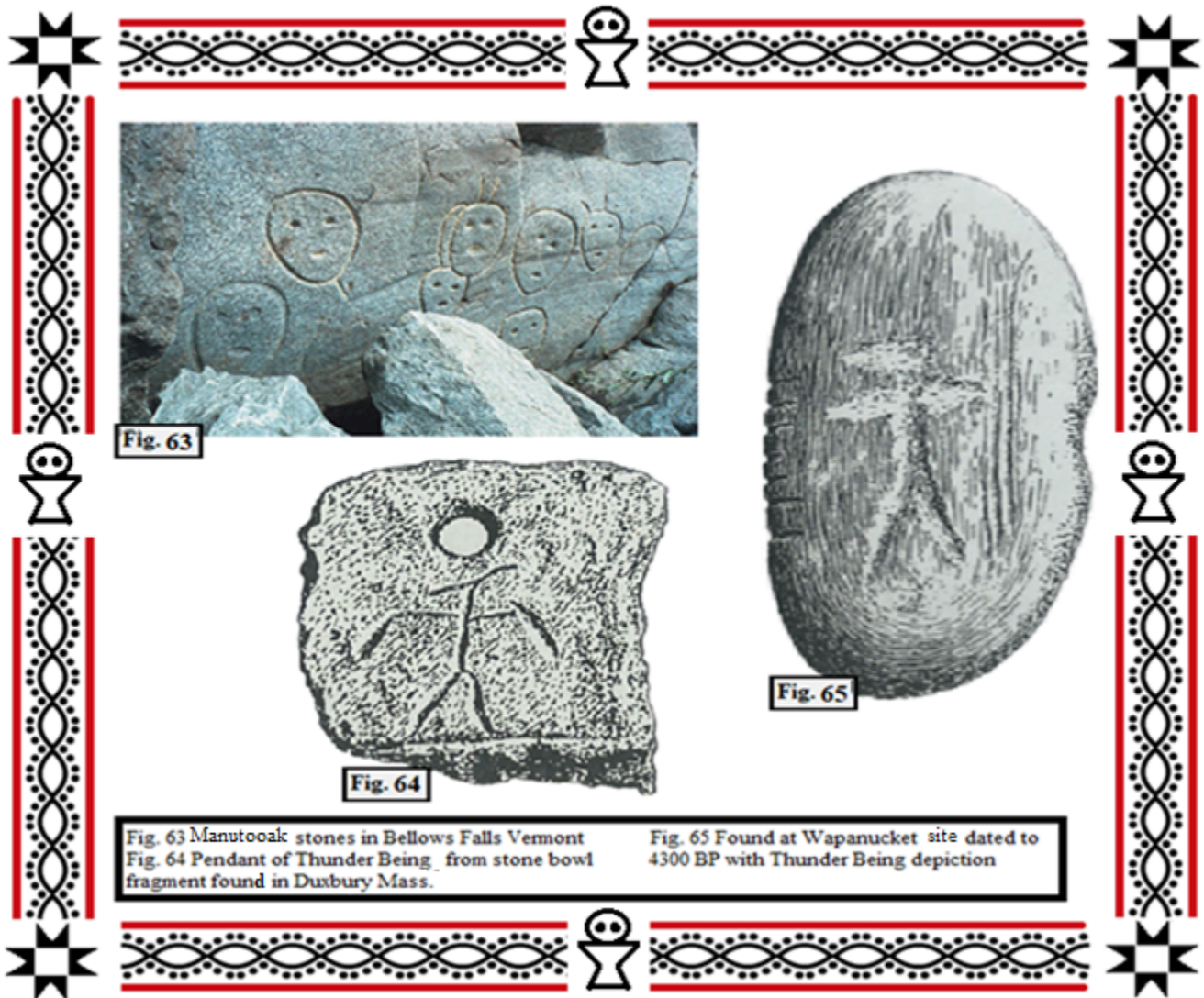
Fig. 62 MPMRC Object number 2006.5.3

Anthropomorphic:

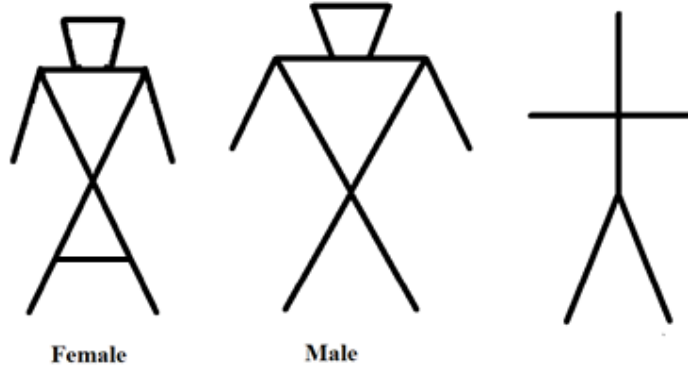
Manutooak: Depicting Spirit in design can imbue an object with manut. Depicting Spirits can also honor a particular Spirit.



Thunder Beings



Human Beings:



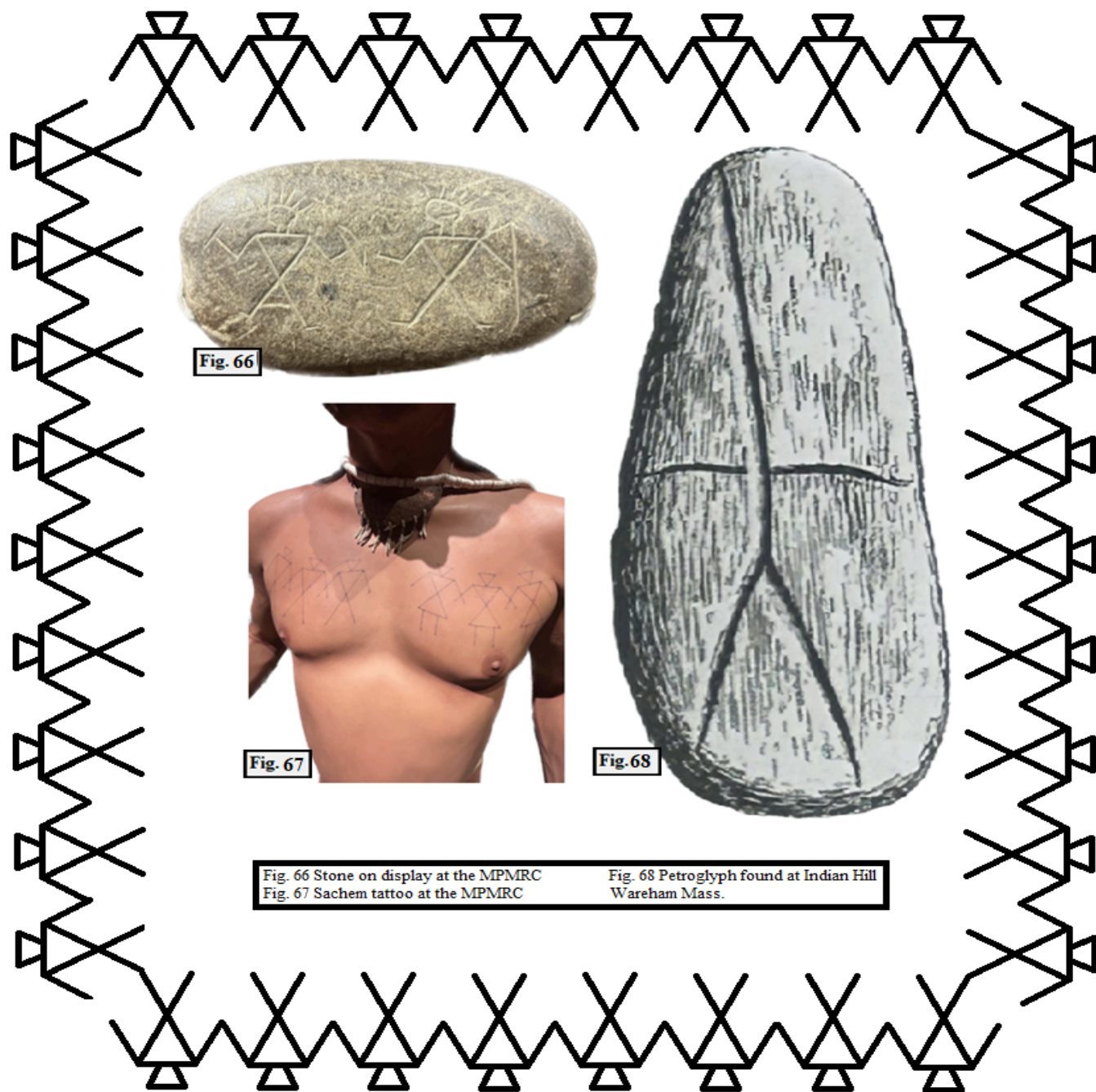


Fig. 66 Stone on display at the MPMRC

Fig. 67 Sachem tattoo at the MPMRC

Fig. 68 Petroglyph found at Indian Hill

Wareham Mass.

Thunder Beings: Sky Realm Beings. Maintain balance in the world. Communicate with the Stars/Star Beings



Thunder bird tattoo on
Ninigrit's thigh in the painting
"Native American Sachem"



Fig. 69



Fig. 70



Fig. 71

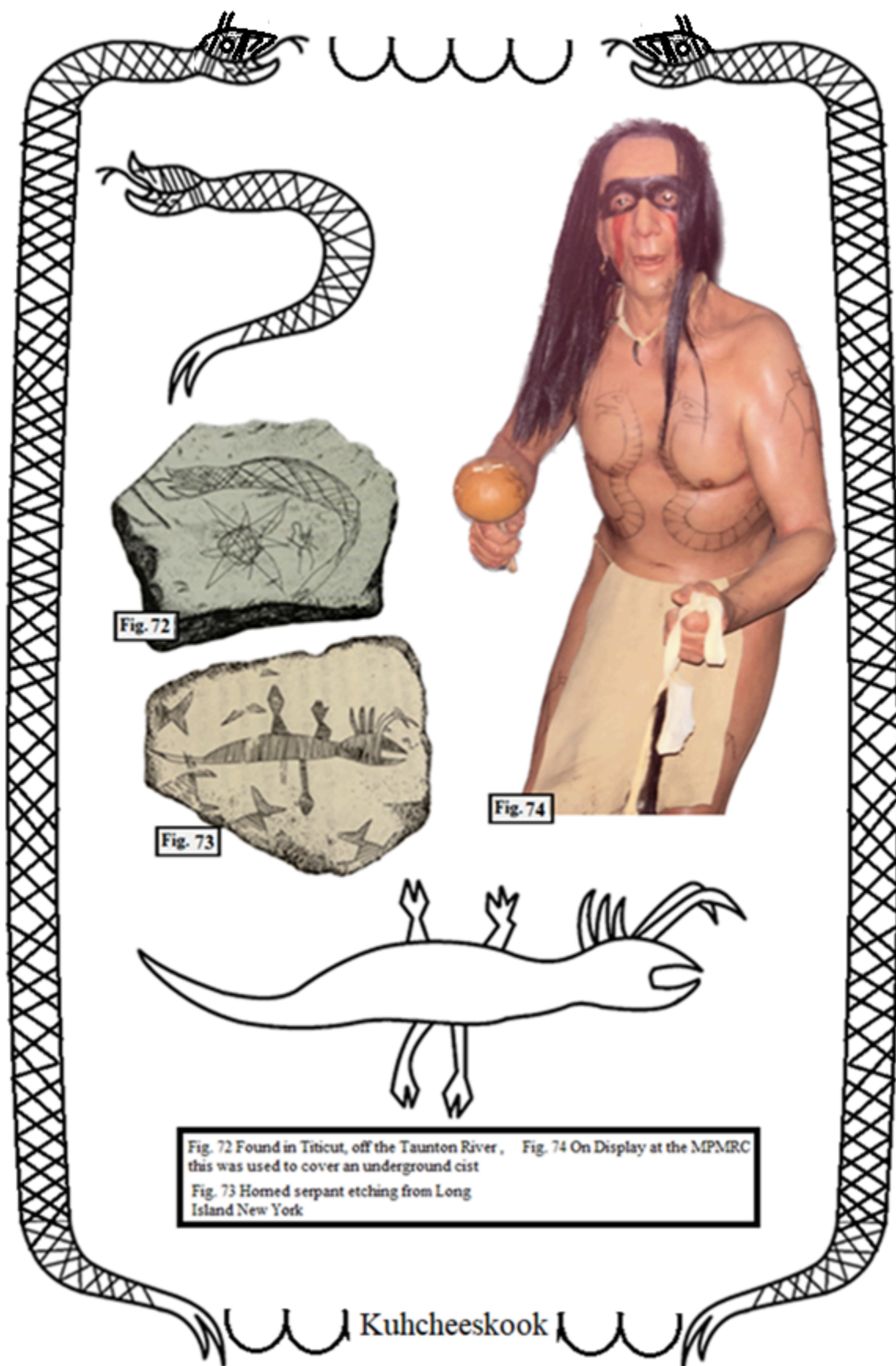
Fig. 69 Pendant of Thunder Being: from stone bowl fragment found in Duxbury Mass.

Fig. 70 Twined bag with Thunder Being on display at the MPMRC

Fig. 71 "Native American Sachem" painting at RISD

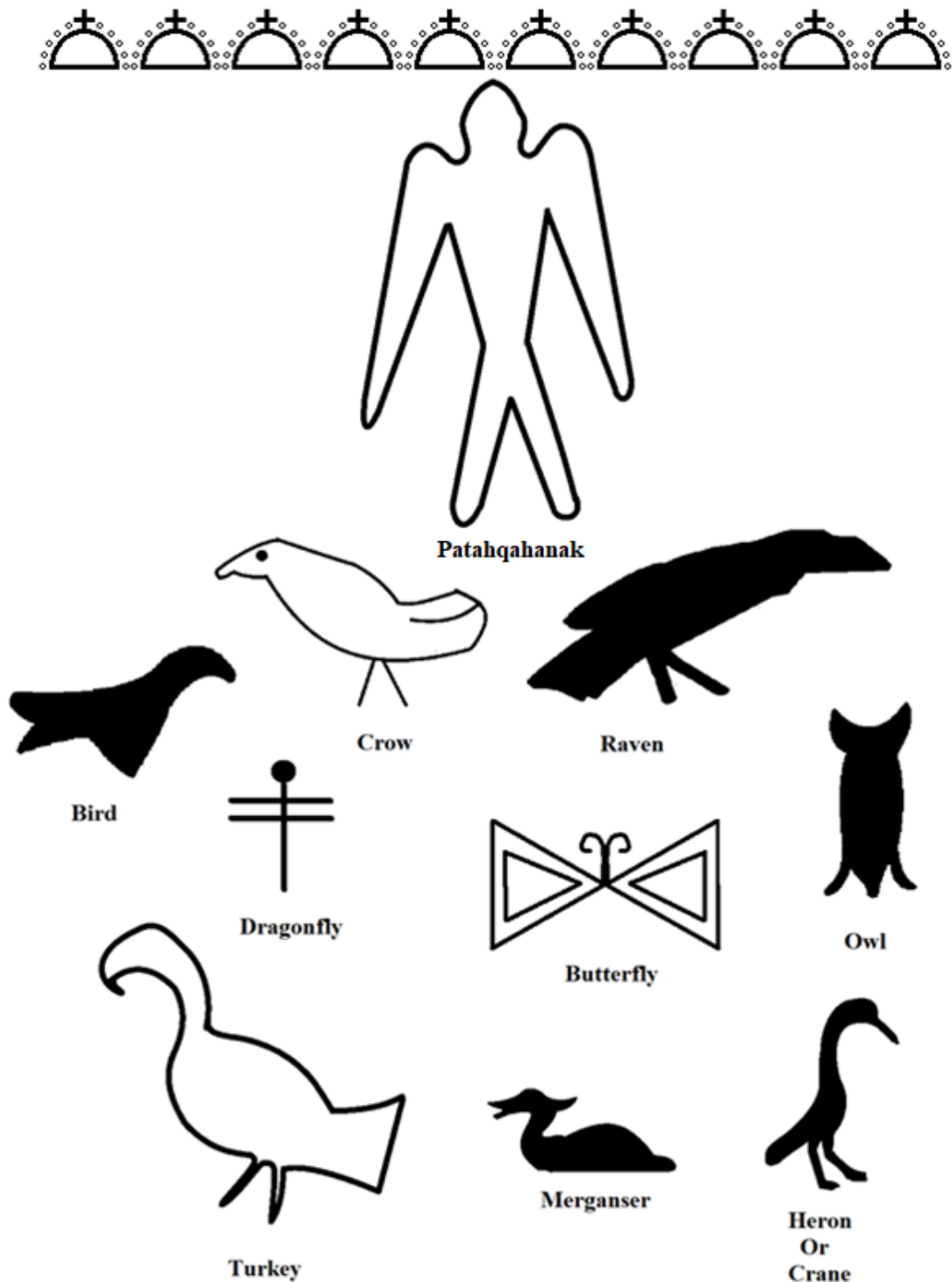


Horned Serpent: Maintain balance in the underwater realm. Often in opposition to the Thunder Beings.

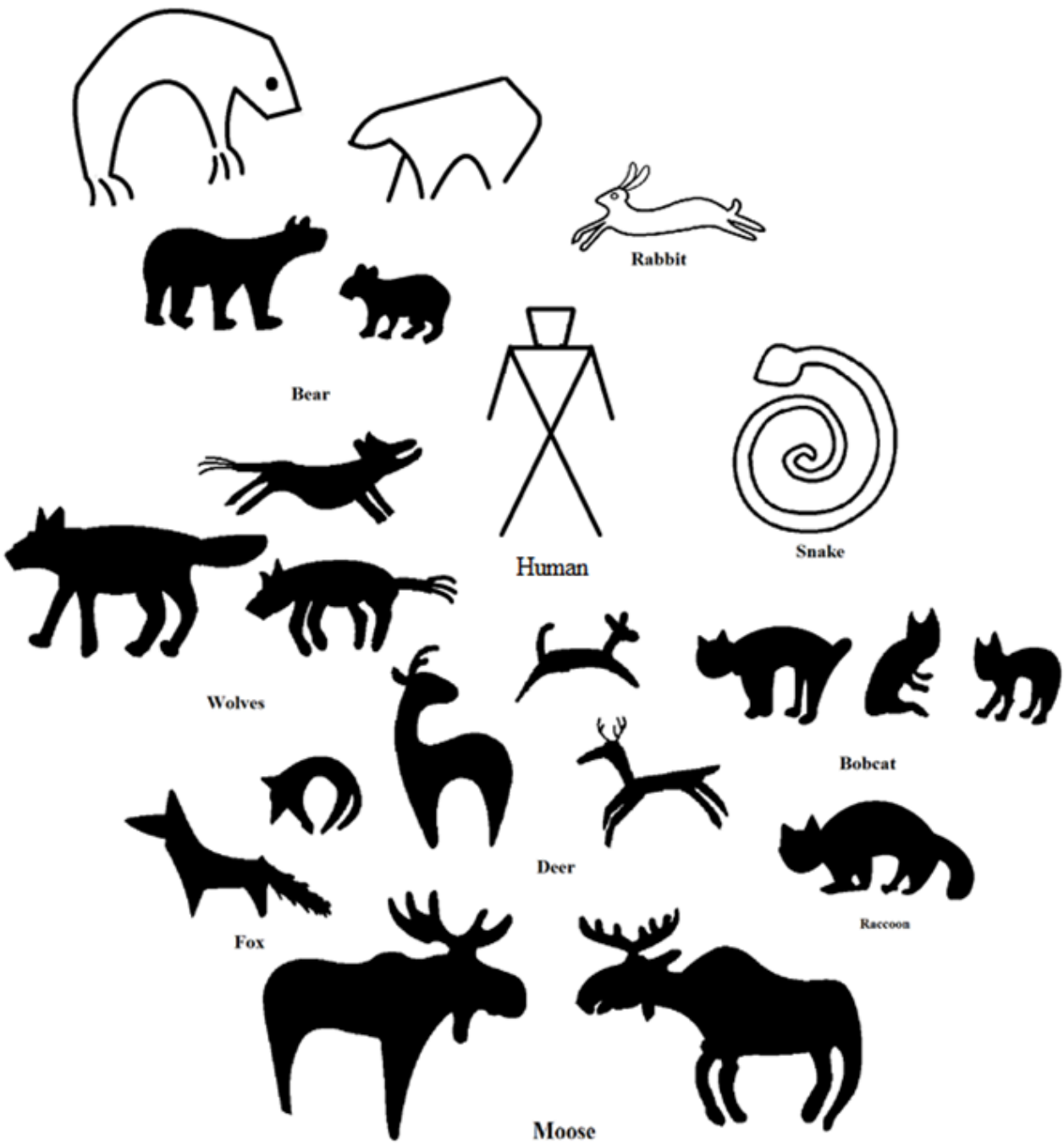


Animal depictions: Animal depictions can symbolize the respect for life and the importance of maintaining balance and harmony in nature. Vivid depictions generally are not used as to not offend or be directed at an individual animal. Similarly, eyes are generally not depicted. Eyes are used, however, when a spiritual quality is assigned to the depiction.

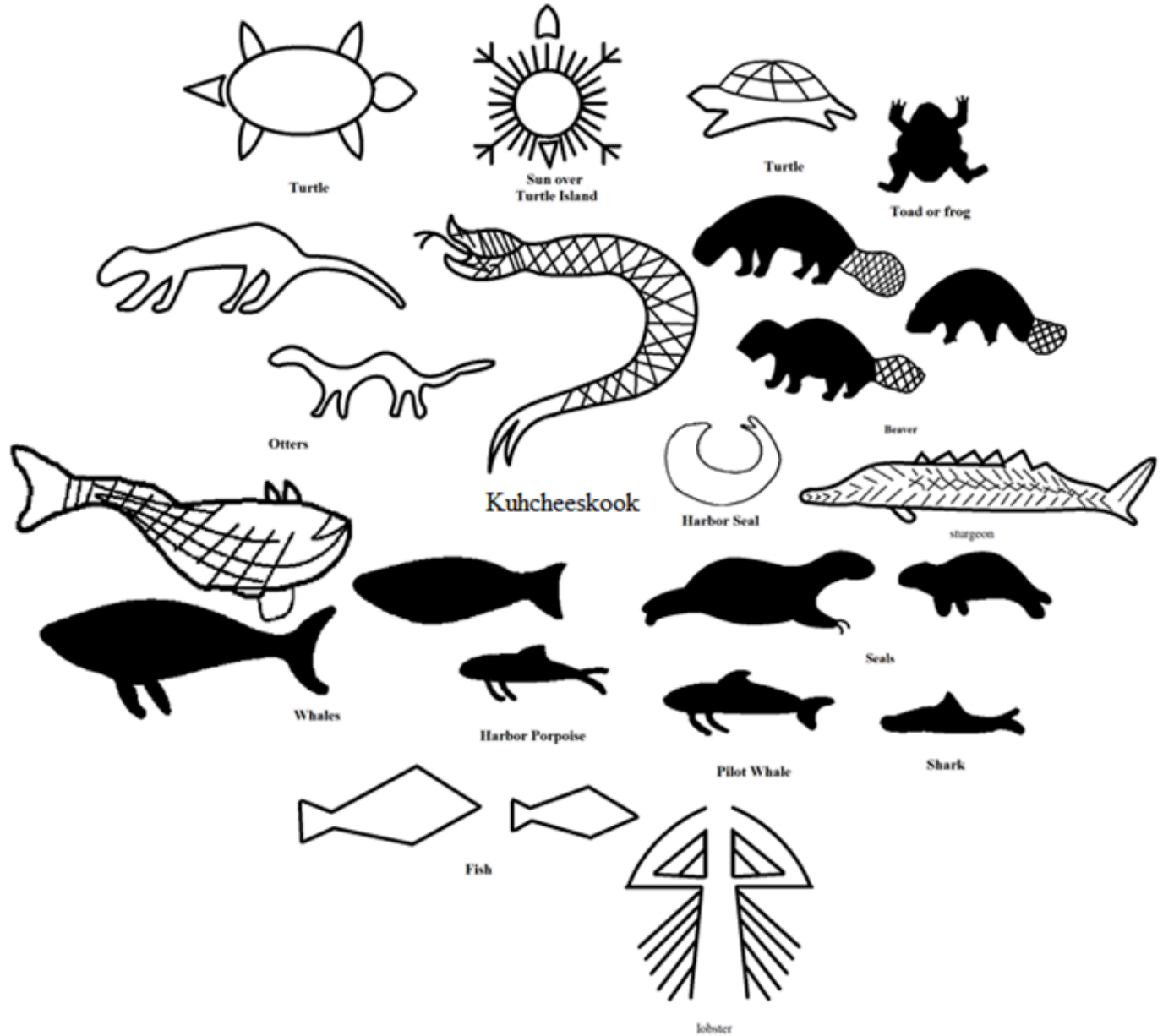
Sky Beings:



Land Beings:



Water Beings:



Sky, Land, Water animal motifs



Fig. 75



Fig. 76

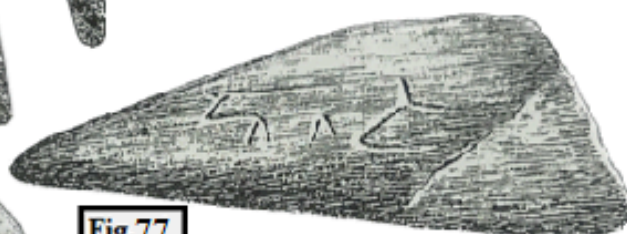


Fig. 77



Fig. 78

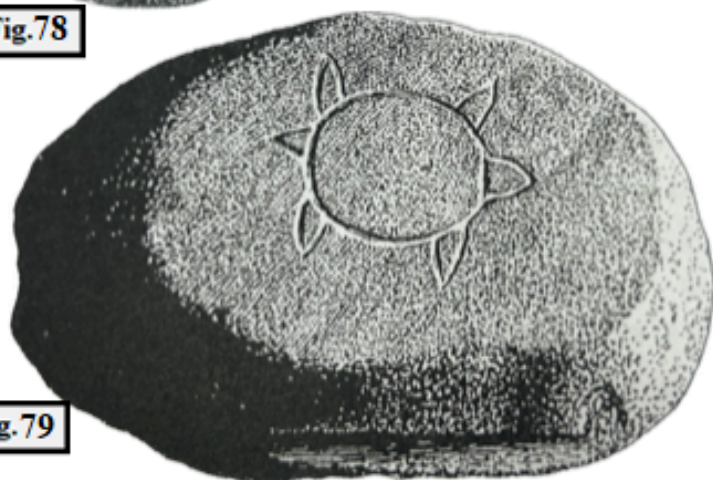


Fig. 79



Fig. 80

Fig. 75 Thunder Being amulet, Amoskeag, New Hampshire.

Fig. 76 Crow pendant

Fig. 77 Bear slate knife

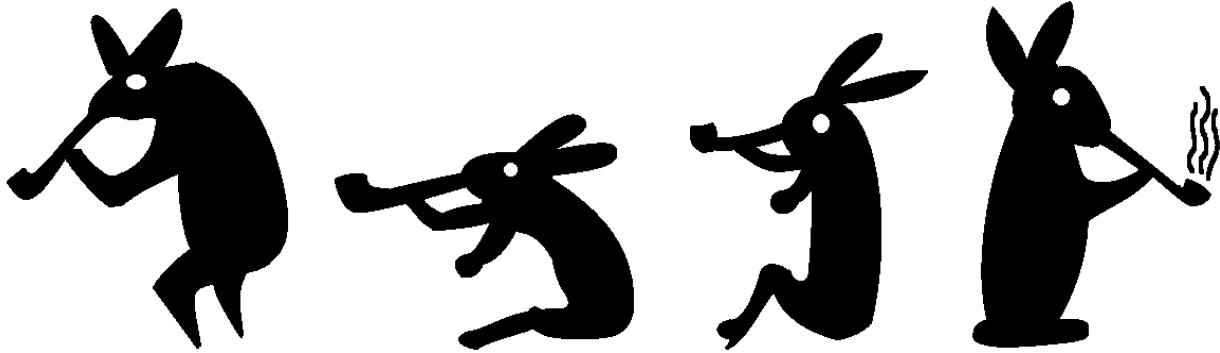
Fig. 78 Snake Pendant

Fig. 79 Turtle sandstone shaft abrading tool

Fig. 80 Weunquesh's metal otter hair comb

Northeastern Regional Depictions:

Trickster Rabbit: Pipe Smoking indicates magic/communication with the Sky World. Smoking Rabbit is depicted having eyes due to this magical quality.



Curvilinear Designs:



Double curved motif
traditions preserver
(medicine plant on top)



Pride in heritage motif
individuality
daily courage



Mentor motif
nurturer / caring
teacher / supportive



Truth seeker motif
awareness of actions
willingness to learn



Symbol to appease the
spirit of the north

