

THREE RARE EXAMPLES OF HIDE PAINTING FROM RUPERT'S LAND

The Forbes Family and Collecting in Scotland

According to family tradition, the three unusual objects discussed below were brought back from Canada by George Forbes (1849-1936) who between 1891 and 1895 was consulting engineer of the Niagara Falls & River Railway Power House, Ontario, which put him far away from the probable time and place of the origin of the three objects. A more likely source for the artifacts may be found in the networks of relationships of his grandfather, Sir William Forbes, 7th Baronet of Pitsligo (1773-1828), or of his great-grandfather, Sir William Forbes, 6th Baronet of Pitsligo and Monymusk (1739-1806). The 6th Baronet had been a lawyer, co-owner of one of the most successful private banks in Edinburgh (one of the antecedents of the later Bank of Scotland), and in 1783 one of the founders of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. His son inherited his father's bank and was a close friend of the novelist Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), who unsuccessfully had been courting Sir William's later wife Williamina Belscher; among Scott's friends was also the 7th Baronet's nephew, William Forbes Mackenzie (1807-1862), who was married to a granddaughter of the 4th Earl of Selkirk (and niece of Lord Thomas Douglas, 5th Earl of Selkirk).

Substantial collections of Native American objects from Rupert's Land, the territory controlled by the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), reached Scotland through trading posts on the Bay and after 1774 also in the interior of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, which attracted not only the neighboring Cree and Northern Ojibwa, but also many other indigenous peoples, notably the Assiniboine and various Athapaskan groups. Since the eighteenth century, Scotsmen like Alexander Mackenzie contributed substantially to the exploration of this territory, while others (such as John Macdonell, Charles McKenzie, or George Sutherland) became fur traders of the HBC or the competing North West Company. In 1815, Scottish emigrants joined the Red River colony of the 5th Earl of Selkirk. The earliest known substantial collection of indigenous objects assembled by a trader of the HBC was that of Andrew Graham, who presented it in 1787 to the Royal Society of Edinburgh (Waterston 1997: 30-34), but others were given over the subsequent decades to various museums, universities, and local antiquarian societies in Scotland, were kept in the respective families, or entered the early collector's market for artificial curiosities.

Thus, for example, Sir Walter Scott, a founding member of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, owned a notable collection of ethnographic artifacts, which after his death were displayed in Sir Walter Scott's house in Abbotsford, Melrose, Roxburghshire. While some of his Pacific artifacts can ultimately be traced to the sales of the Leverian and Bullock Museums, some of the Native American artifacts from Rupert's Land (deaccessioned in the 1960s and acquired via a British dealer by the German collector Arthur Speyer [III]) may originally have been brought to Scotland by travelers, emigrants, or people involved in the fur trade (Maxwell-Scott 1891; Kaepler 2010: 94-96; Sturtevant 2001: 172). The famous geologist Sir Charles Lyell who, like Scott, had never been to western North America, also had in his private collection objects that must have come from Rupert's Land (Sturtevant 2001: 170; see also Appendix A).

In the absence of documentary evidence, it is idle to speculate about the original collector of the three objects. It is, however, obvious that the Baronets of Pitsligo and Monymusk would have been well positioned to have acquired them in Scotland. Since they did not form part of a larger collection, acquisition was more likely by gift than by purchase, perhaps from a relative or someone connected with their banking business and with close ties to Canada and the fur trade.

1. Side-fold dress

Side-fold dresses are a rare and early form of garment worn by women in an area at least from the Upper Missouri to Saskatchewan and Manitoba. They were made by horizontally folding a piece of tanned hide whose top has been folded down and sewing the lateral edges together to form the dress, leaving an armhole on the seam side; the other armhole is provided by a cut in the vertical fold on both sides of the horizontal fold. A strap or lacing is added above the armhole on the seam side. Side-fold dresses were worn with or without a pair of separate sleeves.

Only eleven full-sized examples (other than the one discussed here) and two dolls wearing this type of dress are presently known.¹ Those for which information is available were collected between the early nineteenth-century and the 1840s among the Yankton, Lakota, and Saskatchewan Cree, while one dress and one doll, labeled “Ojibbeway,” were probably made before 1800.² Two visual representations of Lakota and Cree side-fold dresses date from the 1833 and 1851, while a Cheyenne oral tradition about their use could refer to the period around 1800.³ No description of them is found in the accounts of travelers and fur traders of this period.⁴

In the following discussion the dresses will be referred to by the designations given in Appendix A.

A technical and stylistic analysis of the eleven previously known dresses reveals differences permitting us to distinguish at least two basic types. One, represented by Grierson, Salisbury, and Watmaugh, is distinguished by having been made of one large hide (identified as either elk or caribou) with long, plain fringes along the side seam. The main body of the skirt is undecorated, but a broad band above the hem is painted red (solid or with specks), and this decoration is repeated on the yoke. Pairs of long, quill-wrapped thongs are suspended from a line above the lower painted band, sometimes marked by a quilled or beaded horizontal line. Decorative panels with geometric patterns of quill-wrapped thongs are sewn to the hems of both the yoke and skirt; they terminate in long fringes, quill-wrapped only at the top. A

¹ The following account summarizes the result of the discussions by Feder (1984) and McLaughlin (2003: 170-188), but includes some corrections and offers a slightly different conclusion.

² See appendix A: Side-fold dresses.

³ Grinnell (1922, 1: 57): “in the time of our grandmothers,’ old women say, ‘perhaps a hundred years ago’.” For the visual representations see appendix A.

⁴ Feder (1984: 49) cites Alexander Mackenzie’s report as a “good description of the “Cree-type” of side-fold dresses, but it actually refers to the then more commonly worn strap dresses also described by other observers.

similar panel is attached over the seam-side shoulder (and over both shoulders on Watmaugh). Leather thongs sewn or knotted to the neck opening serve as suspenders. Measuring between 128 and 136 cm in length, they are slightly longer than the other side-fold dresses.

Despite some minor variations in design, this is a very close group. Although there is no documented information on provenience (except “Saskatchewan” for Grierson), they have been consistently identified as “[Plains] Cree [style]” (Farabee 1921, Benndorf and Speyer 1968, Brassler 1975, Feder 1984), largely based upon the quill-wrapped panels also found on other Cree women’s dresses. Given the fragmentation of the Plains Cree in widely dispersed band, the close similarity of the three dresses is actually surprising and may be misleading; none of the three surviving dresses has tabs at the bottom of the seam side, but such tabs are shown on an 1851 drawing by Rudolf Friedrich Kurz of a Cree woman wearing a somewhat deviant type of dress, tentatively identified by Feder (1984; 54-55, fig. 15) as a side-fold dress.

Of the remaining eight side-fold dresses, measuring between 114 and 127 cm in length, seven form a distinctive subgroup and share a number of features with the otherwise deviant eighth one (Boston 1). They are sewn from three pieces—yoke, skirt, hem— (with a second hem added on Boston 2) and have a shoulder strap connecting the front and back sides on the folded side of the neck opening, with additional leather thongs serving as suspenders on the seam side. The body of the skirt is decorated with from seven to nineteen horizontal lines of porcupine and/or bird quill appliqué in alternating colors with evenly spaced tufts of red wool (the tufts only lacking on Oldman, the lines alternating with bands of rectangle-band quillwork on Boston 2). At the seam of the hem to the skirt, there is a row of sheet metal cones below a strip of blue or white on blue lane-stitched glass beads (missing on Wied and Jarvis), with a similar but more narrow strip also below on Boston 2, Wied, Catlin, and Oldman. Another such strip is found at the neck opening (except on Jarvis and Brussels).

Beyond these similarities, there is notable diversity in other details. While the long fringes on the side seam of the “Cree type” are throughout absent, Jarvis and Naval have sheet metal cones in their place and Wied and Oldman yet another strip of lane-stitched glass beads (with metal cones alongside on Oldman). Yokes differ in shape and decoration: on Jarvis, Catlin, Oldman, and Brussels they are plain, Boston 2 and Wied have groups of horizontal and vertical lines executed in sizing, while Naval has a complex painted design in red surrounding framed by four groups of horizontal lines in red and black. Wied, Jarvis, and Naval have tabs added at the lower end of the side seam; Catlin and Naval feature quill-wrapped fringes at the hem, which are found at the hem of the yoke on Boston 2. These differences do not define subtypes but illustrate variations in the repertoire of the makers.

Based on the documented provenance of Wied from the Lakota and of Jarvis from the Yankton, this type has been referred to as the “Sioux type” of side-fold dresses by Feder (1984). Unknown to Feder but in further support of this identification, Naval was also identified as “Sioux” in the earliest inventory of 1856. Although the variations could easily be explained as the result of differences between Lakota, Yankton, Yanktonai, and Dakota traditions, they more likely reflect an even wider regional diversity of origins. For example, the quilled lines with red wool tufts, which are one of the distinctive features of this type, are likewise found on robes associated either with women or bison hunting (McLaughlin 2003: 189, 193-194), on tipi liners, and on women’s work bags (Taylor 1998: 90-91, 116-117) from the Upper Missouri region. In other words, the “Sioux type” may not have been exclusively

produced by the Lakota, Yankton, Yanktonai, and Dakota or other Siouan speakers, but also by their non-Siouan neighbors such as the Cheyenne who are known to have made side-fold dresses in the past.

Boston 1, which lacks the quilled lines, but shares other features with the “Sioux group” (such as the painting—here both on the yoke and the skirt and specifically the diagonal bars on the seam side hem of the yoke—with Naval, or the quill-wrapped fringe at the lower hem with Catlin), should be considered part of this continuum. There is no proof for the possibility that Boston 1 could have been collected by William Clark among the Mandan, although there is also nothing to exclude this possibility.

The doll in the Cuming Museum, identified as “Ojibbeway” (obviously referring to the Northern Ojibwa) in museum records of the 1840s, probably on the basis of a now lost label, has a documented date of 1806, when its existence was first recorded in the sale catalog of the Leverian Museum in London. As on the “Cree type,” the dress is painted both in the lower parts of the yoke and skirt, but instead of a band of red paint or red specks there are two rows of triangles on the skirt and one of squares on the yoke, both between horizontal lines painted in black, red, and sizing. The fringes cut from both hems are partly quill-wrapped, resembling Boston 1 and Naval (both also prominently painted) rather than the “Cree type.” The side seam is on the wearer’s right and terminates in short, plain fringes. Its identification as a “Cree type” (Feder 1984: 51) is therefore questionable.

The undocumented Whyel doll appears to be wearing a side-fold dress of cloth with ribbon appliqué and beaded fringes terminating in red woolen tassels at the hem and below the belt. Oberholtzer reports the seam to be on the doll’s left side (as shown in Oberholtzer 1999: fig. 1), although the reproduction in Oberholtzer (2009: 42) is laterally reversed and shows it on the wearer’s right side. Certainly also because of the different material used, the style differs significantly from the full-size “Cree type” dresses and from the Cuming doll. The two dolls are the only examples of side-fold dresses featuring the detachable sleeves.

Further evidence for the possible distribution of side-fold dresses beyond the documented cases among the Lakota, Yankton, Cheyenne, Cree, and possibly the Northern Ojibwa and the Mandan may be supplied by the distribution of side-fold moccasins, which are found in the same region during the same time period and which follow a similar technical idea. Documented examples from the Lakota, Hidatsa, Crow, Atsina, Plains Ojibwa, and Plains Cree

were collected during the first half of the 19th century and also attributed to the Mandan and Yanktonai.⁵

Where does the Forbes dress stand in this comparative overview? Like the “Cree” type it is made of one hide (identified as moose) and only has thongs as suspenders and no shoulder strap. It also has long fringes on the side seam (although they are much thinner and quill-wrapped) and a simple-patterned wrapped-quill panel covering the hem of the very narrow yoke. Above this panel as well as above the hem of the skirt there are narrow bands with painted designs made up of groups of horizontal lines with alternating sections in black and red with white frames. These, in structure if not in pattern, resemble those found on the dress of Cuming doll 1, with which it also shares the short and partly quill-wrapped fringes at the hem. The Forbes dress lacks the pairs of long, quill-wrapped thongs suspended above the lower painted area and the quill-wrapped panels over the seam-side shoulder, but here the yoke is cut into partly quill-wrapped fringes. The seam appears to be on the right side of the wearer, as in the Cuming doll 1, although this is difficult to prove beyond reasonable doubt. Feder (1984: 49), partly supported by the evidence supplied by the drawings by Bodmer (Lakota) and Kurz (Cree), asserted that the seam was always on the left side, but this was not universally the case as indicated by the details supplied by Grinnell’s Cheyenne informants and by the dress of Cuming doll 1.

Measuring 117 cm in length, the Forbes dress is far shorter than the other “Cree type” dresses and actually is among the shortest of all side-fold dresses. The greater length of the “Cree type” suggests a lower hemline (also seen on Cuming doll 1) than that of the “Sioux type” (supported by Karl Bodmer’s drawing). Thus, the wearer of the Forbes dress was either a petite woman or was wearing it “Sioux style.” Not only is the Forbes dress small, its yoke is proportionally much shorter than those of the other examples and measures only one-seventh of the total length as compared to one quarter on the “Cree type” and between one quarter and one third on the “Sioux type” dresses.

Given the reported Canadian provenience of the Forbes dress, the similarities with the “Cree type” do not come as a surprise. The differences from the three known examples of the “Cree type” suggest a greater antiquity (supported by the complete absence of beads, which occur in small numbers on two of the “Cree type” dresses, and the adherence to the old red/black/white color scheme), a regional variation within or outside the Cree territory, or both. The painted pattern has a remote relationship to the arrangement of quilled lines on “Sioux

⁵ See, e.g., Ethnologisches Museum Berlin, cat.no. IVB260 (Wied coll., 1834, “Dakota” [Lakota]; Krickeberg 1954: 104, pl. 23 c, d); IVB305 (Duke Paul collection, undocumented; Klann 1999: 41, 44); Weltmuseum Wien, cat.nos. 428, 420 (Klinger coll., before 1825, Plains-Ojibwa; Feest 1968: 80-81, pls. 18, 19); Historisches Museum Berne, cat. nos. N.A.10ab, N.A.12ab (Schoch coll., before 1838, Crow; Thompson 1977: 154-155, figs. 80-81); Brooklyn Museum, cat.no. 50.67.23a,b (Jarvis coll., before 1836, undocumented; Feder 1964:49, fig. 32 [“Chippewa”], BMA website [“Yanktonai”]; Canadian Museum of History, cat.no. CMC V-H-1 (ex Arthur Speyer, ex Grand Duke of Baden coll., undocumented; Benndorf and Speyer 1968: 112, pl. XVa [“Mandan”]; Brassler 1975: 120 [“Mandan”]); Musée du quai Branly, cat.nos. 71.1909.19.58-59, 63 (Musée Naval, before 1856, no. 58; “Sioux”; Feest 2007: 80); Karl-May-Museum, Radebeul, cat.no. D15.692 (Duke Paul coll., undocumented; Dräger et al. 1992: 80 “Cree”), Klann 2001: 70); Linden-Museum, Stuttgart, cat.no.36080 (Wied coll., 1834, Minnetaree); Museo de América, Madrid, cat.nos. 13977ab, 13978ab (Toledo coll, late 18th c., undocumented; Sánchez Garrido 1992: 23, figs. 9, 10); see also Hatt 1916: 179-181, fig. 31 (Assiniboine, Atsina, Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Cree, Nez Perce, Ojibwa, Sarsi, Shoshone, Thompson); Lowie 1922: 226 (Crow); Wilson 1924: 232-233, fig. 67 (Hidatsa); Mandelbaum 1940: 208 (Plains Cree).

type” side-fold dresses, but in the color scheme resembles the painting found on early examples of Cree/Northern Ojibwa coats or pouches. The basic structure of the Forbes dress does not deviate more from the “Cree type” than the eight other side-fold dresses differ from one another. Even if included, together with Cuming doll 1, in a more broadly defined “Cree type,” however, it was not necessarily made by a Cree woman since the other eight examples were not exclusively made by Sioux women. In fact, “Saskatchewan/Manitoba type” may be a more appropriate designation of this group of side-fold dresses.

2. Fold-over cape

Fold-over capes consist of a more or less rectangular piece of leather or cloth the upper part of which is folded over the back, covering the central third of it and leaving the lower part exposed. They are worn over the shoulders and held in place in front by ties attached to the fold. Both the fold-over part of the cape (“collar”) and the visible lower part of it (“body”) may be used for decorative purposes.

While side-fold dresses are rare, the Forbes fold-over cape is nearly unique as far as full-sized leather capes are concerned. Except for a fragment, preserved in Madrid, that may have been such a cape, they have so far been known only from a series of representations on dolls including a companion of the Cuming doll already noted, a doll in the Warnock collection, another one in the Rosalie Whyel Museum of Doll Art, and one in the National Museum of the American Indian.⁶

On all of these dolls, except for Cuming doll 2, the capes are of cloth rather than leather. As Oberholtzer (2009: 39-41, 45, figs. 12, 13) has pointed out, descriptions and depictions of Cree women’s clothing are fairly poor and do not mention or show fold-over capes, which leaves the dolls to be the best source of information on female costume ensembles, although for most of them the exact origin has not been documented. I am also not aware of any description or depiction of fold-over robes from the Northern Ojibwa or from the whole area from the central Plains to the eastern Subarctic.

Decoration of the capes on the Whyel and Warnock dolls consists of ribbon applique both on the collar and body, with polychrome fringes of glass beads terminating in red woolen tassels. The ties are attached to two buttons well above the lateral hems. The cape of Cuming doll 2 is painted both on the collar and body in red and black with a pattern of dots and lines in the lower part of a rectangular frame, open at the top,⁷ in a style similar to that found on the side-fold dress on Cuming doll 1. The hems of both collar and body are cut into fringes, partly wrapped with white porcupine quills. The cape is tied with leather thongs attached to both ends of the fold.

The painted decoration on Cuming doll 2 suggests the identification as a fold-down cape of a previously enigmatic painted hide preserved today in the Museo de América, Madrid. Its collection history cannot be traced farther back than to an 1865 inventory in Toledo, where it was associated with two other painted hides of an early style, but it is likely to date from the

⁶ See appendix B: folded capes.

⁷ Unfortunately, none of the published images gives a complete view of the cape’s backside

second half of the 18th century. It was first attributed to the Quapaw or Arkansas (Ballesteros 1935), later and more likely to the Northern Ojibwa or Eastern Cree (Feder 1977: 49), and most recently misidentified as a side-fold dress presumably from the Midwest (Brasser 2009: 126). The Toledo cape is badly damaged and may be missing the upper part, although it cannot be ruled out that it was a single cape (see below). Its red and black painted decoration consists of a rectangle, open at the top and enclosing two horizontal bars in sizing, and a border at the hem, where the areas painted black have been cut into fringes.

The Forbes cape can clearly be identified as a fold-down cape by the leather thongs attached to the top fold at about the same distance of its ends as on the Warnock and Whyel dolls. It differs from them in having only the collar painted, which covers most of the body of the cape. Moreover, the painted design is utterly different from that on Cuming doll 2. The central design is a square horizontal box, flanked by vertical bars and surrounded by a complex frame open at the bottom, painted in black, red, white, orange, and blue. The structure of the design follows the pattern found in variations on the box-and-border bison robes worn by women of the Sioux and some of their neighbors.⁸ On the Forbes fold-down cape, the pattern has been vertically compressed and adjusted to the different format but is still recognizable. Particularly close to this pattern is that of a box-and-border robe in the Peabody Museum of Harvard University of Archaeology and Ethnology, Boston Museum coll., perhaps collected by Lewis and Clark at Fort Mandan in April 1805.⁹

There are, however, some major anomalies. In virtually all box-and-border robes, the box is subdivided into two horizontal sub-boxes, both of which are bilaterally symmetrical, and usually into three or five columns, each with identical or alternating elements. In the case of the Forbes cape, there is only one bilaterally symmetrical box and ten columns with identical elements. The red and black horizontal bars separating the rows are visually dominant and enclose hourglass-shaped, cross-hatched negative spaces; neither hourglass shapes nor cross-hatching are found on box and border robes. In the classic type, the lateral vertical bars are always joined to the box and are sometimes even integrated into its frame; here, the bars have been separated from the box to which they are only loosely connected by columns of chevrons.

Although the execution of the painting on the Forbes fold-down cape shows considerable skill, these oddities may suggest that it was the work of somebody not fully familiar with the principles underlying the design, such a non-Siouan woman married into a Siouan community.

In addition to the dominant abstract design, there are above it and near the center of the fold small pictographic signs consisting of arrows pointing at open-sided hourglass forms of unknown significance. The appearance of what are apparently war-related signs on a woman's robes is unusual.

⁸ The vast majority of box-and-border robes have been collected among the "Sioux" (Lakota, Yankton, Dakota), but more than one also among the Siouan Mandan, Hidatsa, Crow and the Algonquian Blackfoot, Cheyenne, and Arapaho.

⁹ Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, cat.no. 99-12-10/53124 (Boston Museum coll., probably from Peale's Museum, perhaps collected by Lewis and Clark at Fort Mandan in April 1805; McLaughlin 2003: 264-266). This was attributed by Gaylord Torrence (in McLaughlin 2003: 266) to the "Sioux," although the box design conforms more closely to Mandan examples collected by Maximilian Prince of Wied in 1833/4 (Ethnologisches Museum Berlin, cat.no. IVB204; Krickeberg 1954: pl. 7) and by Robert Lowie in 1910 (American Museum of Natural History, cat.no. 50.1/4306).

The extensive use of cross-hatching in white (or sizing) is strongly reminiscent of the same practice found on painted pouches from French collections of the 18th century (and a related pouch in Germany) and usually attributed to the Ojibwa (Feest 1986: 282-275; 2007: 41, 57).¹⁰ Cross-hatching as a background or as a filler in designs, mostly executed in yellow, is also a feature commonly found on Naskapi coats (Burnham 1992: 73-74), which may reflect a shared northern Algonquian heritage, although it appears to be rare or absent on Cree/Ojibwa coats. It also appears on early Siouan box-and-border robes and thus may be an indicator of age irrespective of ethnic origin.¹¹

The original distribution of fold-over capes is unknown, because they are neither reliably described nor depicted in historical sources and are—with the exceptions described above—absent from collections. That their use may have been much more widespread is indicated by the existence of two textile objects that have previously been identified as wraparound skirts, one from the Menominee, collected around 1830 (Kasprzycki 2007: 120, fig. 12), and the other from the neighboring Winnebago (Brasser 2009: 134-135). Both follow the pattern of the fold-over capes and would have been difficult to wear as skirts; but in this case as well, there is no supportive textual or visual evidence.

Any suggestion about the probable provenience of the Forbes fold-down cape must necessarily remain somewhat hypothetical. On the reasonable assumption that all three pieces here considered had come from the same source, we would have to look primarily at the Manitoba/Saskatchewan area or the Cree and their southern neighbors, an area characterized by substantial individual mobility across tribal boundaries and a resulting exchange of ideas and practices.

Although the Cree (and the Northern Ojibwa, based on a possible “Ojibbeway” origin of the Cuming dolls) are known to have used both side-fold dresses and fold-over capes, the painting on both items bears only a partial relationship to Cree and Northern Ojibwa painting styles.

¹⁰ In addition, also Musée du quai Branly, cat.nos. 71.1878.32.127, 71.1878.32.176.

¹¹ Extensive cross-hatched sizing is also found on a group of four enigmatic painted hides, none of which has a documented provenience.

(1) Museo de América, Madrid, cat.no. 16371 (no documented history prior to 1865, when it was listed on an inventory in Toledo; previous attribution to the Lorenzana-Borbón collection of the late 18th century unlikely, no documented provenance, later attributed to New Mexico and even to the Navajo). This robe comes from the same collection as the probable fold-down cape discussed above. See Ballesteros 1935: 70 (attributed to the “Quapaw or Arkansas”); Feder 1977: 48, fig. 13 (attributed to the “Northern Ojibwa/Eastern Cree”); Sánchez Garrido 1992: 25, 29, fig. 19 [“Plains”]).

(2) Ethnologisches Museum Berlin, no cat.no. [destroyed in World War II] (acquired without documentation in 1925 from the dealer Paul Klostermann in Berlin). See Krickeberg (1954: 12, 71-72, pl. 8; attributed to “Eastern Plains”).

(3) Museum der Kulturen Basel, cat.no. IVa164 (formerly in the collection of the Geographical-Commercial Society in Aarau, without documentation). See Feest (2008: 209, “Central Plains”).

(4) Warnock Splendid Heritage Collection, cat.no. WC8709017 (formerly owned by Alexander Gallery, and subsequently by Epic Fine Arts Co./Masco Corp.). Identified by Ted J. Brasser on the Splendid Heritage website as “Mescalero, New Mexico,” partly because of the “New Mexico” attribution of robe (1).

With respect to parfleche decoration, Gaylord Torrence (1994: 55, 92, 94) found painted cross-hatching to be an almost exclusively Siouan trait (borrowed to some extent by the Arapaho), although it appears incised rawhide objects also outside the Siouan area. The relationship of incised and Siouan painted cross-hatching to the cross-hatched sizing on this set of robes (and of the Subarctic tradition) still needs to be investigated.

The box-and-border-style painting on the cape, however, suggests a link to Siouan traditions. The primary candidate fulfilling the condition of representing the blend of Algonquian and Siouan features in the region are the Assiniboine, who in the eighteenth century had closely allied themselves with the Cree against their own Siouan relatives to the south. Unfortunately, next to nothing is known about the material culture and arts of the Assiniboine during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, but in the 1790s, the fur trader John Macdonell noted that the Cree of Red River region dressed “generally after the Assiniboil manner” (Wood and Thiessen 1985: 88). The uniqueness of the Forbes fold-down cape and the high quality of its painted decoration make it an outstanding work, irrespective of the doubts surrounding its maker.

3. Simple cape

The final item of this group is also highly unusual. It consists of a nearly square (bison?) hide whose design indicates that it was probably worn with the head-end of the hide up. In this respect it differs from the painted bison hide worn all over the Plains, which were generally worn horizontally with the head-side on the wearer’s left (and in some cases perhaps the right). The only other known specimen of this kind of hide painting in museum collections is an eighteenth-century Naskapi cape at the Musée du quai Branly (cat.no. 71.1878.32.135), whose painted design consists of a broad rectangular frame enclosing vertical lines and closed at the top by only another narrow line.¹² Its design structure is not only similar to the Toledo cape discussed above, but also to the Forbes simple cape. Forbes and Toledo differ from the Naskapi cape in the style of painting, and in both cases the enclosed lines are horizontal. The Forbes simple cape has in addition a small square box enclosing an X at its top center and a series of small squares filled with cross-hatched sizing above the lower bar of the frame. Squares enclosing an X, castellations as those formed by the small squares, and borders reminiscent of the lower bar of the frame also appear on Cree/Ojibwa coats and reinforce the notion that this garment represents an eastern Subarctic tradition.¹³

Although there are no other known surviving specimens of simple capes, they do appear in the visual record from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth century, such as in the depiction of an Ottawa warrior on Samuel de Champlain’s map of 1622, of two unidentified warriors in du Creux’s *Historiae Canadensis* (1664), and of a manikin wearing a Naskapi woman’s dress in the Museum Kircherianum in Rome (Bonanni 1709). The latter is particularly interesting in showing a painted decoration consisting of a broad frame open on top, which is less clearly indicated in du Creux’s engravings, but reappears in modified form in a c. 1815 watercolor drawing of two Ottawa chiefs attributed to Sir Joshua Webb. In all these cases, the

¹² See appendix C for this item and related visual documents.

¹³ E.g., for the castellations, Canadian Museum of History, cat.no. III-X-229 (ex Arthur Speyer coll., ex Sir John Caldwell coll., attributed by Brassier [1975: 98, color ill. p. 54] to “northern Ontario, c. 1780”); for squares with Xs, Musée d’Aquitaine, Bordeaux, no cat.no., no documentation, attributed to “Ojibwa or Cree, late 18th century in Notter 2013: 50-51; National Museum of Ireland, cat.no. 1892.20, unknown collection history, which also features castellations in appliqué quillwork and a lower border similar to the Forbes simple cape); National Museum of the American Indian, cat.no. 17/6343, acquired in 1939 in London by George Heye as Sarcee, later reattributed to the Plains Cree).

cape is tied in front of the body with leather thongs attached to the upper edge of the cape in the manner of the fold-down capes.

The identification of the cape in Paris as that of a woman was made by Hamy (1897) and as Naskapi much later by Marius Barbeau (annotation in the old inventory of the Musée de l'Homme, Paris). Both identifications are supported by the Bonnani engraving. Since such capes, however, are shown in the other visual representations as having been worn by men, it cannot be determined whether the Forbes simple cape was that of a man or a woman.

Summary

A comparative look at the three rare examples of hide painting has shown that both the artifact types and their painted decoration fit a provenience from Rupert's Land and more specifically the region of interaction between the Assiniboine and the Cree and/or Northern Ojibwa, the latter gradually replacing the Assiniboine on the Assiniboine River to the west of the Earl of Selkirk's Red River Settlement. Stylistically, the paintings are closer to traditions prevalent in the eighteenth century, which makes it likely that they were made prior to 1800 and were taken to Scotland at that time.

Christian Feest

APPENDIX A: SIDE-FOLD DRESSES

- Boston 1 Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, cat.no. 99-12-10/53046 (formerly in the Boston Museum, probably from Peale's Museum, probably collected on the Lewis and Clark expedition before 1805; Clark is known to have collected two women's dresses among the "Sioux" and Mandan).
Willoughby 1905: 639-641, pl. XXXVIIIa ("Cree"); Feder 1984: 48-49, fig. 1; McLaughlin 2003: 170-180.
- Boston 2 Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, cat.no. 99-12-10/53047 (formerly in the Boston Museum, probably from Peale's Museum, possibly collected on the Lewis and Clark expedition before 1805 or by George C. Hutter prior to 1805, in the latter case collected among the "Sioux").
Willoughby 1905: 639-641, pl. XXXVIIIb ("Cree"); Feder 1984: 48-49, fig. 2 ("Sioux type"); McLaughlin 2003: 180-188 ("Sioux type," "Lakota or Cheyenne[?]")
- Brussels Canadian Museum of History, cat.no. V-E-372 (acquired in 1980 from James Economos, formerly in a Brussels private collection, label reads: "male upper dress collected ... 81").
Feder 1984: 51, 54, fig. 12
- Catlin National Museum of Natural History, cat.no. E386526 (collected probably before 1837 by George Catlin, attributed to the "Sioux").
Taylor 1997: fig. 28
- Grierson Canadian Museum of History, cat.no. V-A-406 (acquired in 1969 from Arthur Speyer, who bought it in the mid-1960s from London dealer Ernest Ohly, who claimed to have acquired it from the Grierson Museum, Thornhill, Scotland, to which it had been donated by Sir Charles Lyell [1797-1875]; Lyell traveled in North America in 1841/2 and 1845, but only along the eastern seaboard. Old label "Saskatchewan").
Benndorf and Speyer 1968: 137, fig. 105 (attributed to the Saskatchewan River Cree); Feder 1984: 51, 53, fig. 10 ("Cree type")
- Jarvis Brooklyn Museum of Art, cat.no. 50.67.6 (collected between 1833 and 1836 by Nathan Sturges Jarvis, Yankton).
Feder 1964: 24, fig. 11, 42; 1984: 52, Fig. 8
- Naval Musée du quai Branly, Paris, cat.no 71.1909.19.60 (formerly in the Musée National des Antiquités; formerly in the Musée Naval, established in 1827, but including some objects formerly in the French royal collections; an 1856 inventory lists it as "Robe de femme de Sioux, ornée de piquants de porc épic, de verroterie & de ferrets en métal").
Dubois and Berger 1978: 68 ("Cree or Dakota" att.); Feder 1984: 51, 53, fig. 9 (undocumented, thought to have been collected in 1781 because Feder mistook old catalog number for date); Feest 2007: 78 (attributed to the Cheyenne[?])
- Oldman National Museum of the American Indian, cat.no. 2/9801 (acquired in 1911 without earlier history from William Oldman, later attributed to the Plains Cree).
Feder 1965: fig. 18 ("Eastern Sioux"); Feder 1984: 50-51, fig. 6 ("Sioux type")
- Salisbury Canadian Museum of History, cat.no. V-A-439 (acquired in 1969 from Arthur Speyer who had bought in the 1960s from the estate of Air Commodore Adolph Andree Walser, R.A.F. [*1889, died in the 1960s] of Salisbury; thought to have been Blackfoot on the basis of family tradition and acquired together with Blackfoot shirt and leggings; possibly

originally from the collection of William Blackmore [1827-1878], Blackmore Museum, Salisbury, dispersed after 1902).

Benndorf and Speyer 1968: 131, pl. XVII ("Blackfoot, before 1840"); Brassler 1976: 139, fig. 96, color ill. p. 55 ("Plains Cree"); Feder 1984: 51, 53, fig. 10 ("Cree type")

Watmough University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, cat.no. 29-47-262 (acquired in 1912 without earlier history from Marjorie Watmough [Mrs. Edward F.Hoffman, Jr.]).

Farabee 1921: 246-249, figs. 72-77 ("Cree"); Feder 1984: 48-49, fig. 3 ("Cree type")

Wied Ethnologisches Museum Berlin, cat.no. IVB112 (collected in 1833 Maximilian Prince of Wied among the Lakota).

Krickeberg 1954: 89-90, pl. 14b; Hartmann 1973: 314-315; Feder 1984: 49-50, fig. 4

Cuming doll 1 Cuming Museum, London, cat.no. C2337 (purchased in 1806 by Atkinson at the Leverian Museum sale ("North American Indians"), purchased in 1815 by Peter Dick, sold to unknown in 1821, acquired before 1841 by Richard Cuming whose manuscript catalog lists it as "Ojibbeway" probably on the basis of an attached label; see Kaeppler 2011: 227. For a time on loan to the Horniman Museum, London, cat.no. 1976.459, and cited as such in the literature. The English doll face dates to about 1770-1790.

Feder 1984: 51-52, fig. 7 ("Cree type," Ojibwa costume); Oberholtzer 2009: 38-39, fig. 2 ("Cree")

Whyel doll Rosalie Whyel Museum of Doll Art, Bellevue, WA, cat.no. unknown, acquired from a California collection without earlier history.

Oberholtzer 1999: 232-233, fig. 1 (tentatively attributed to York Factory Cree); 2009: 38, 42, fig. 8

Visual representations

Bodmer "Chan-Chä-Uiá-Teüin, Teton Sioux Woman," watercolor and pencil drawing by Karl Bodmer, June 1, 1833. Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, N

Kurz Cree woman. Pencil sketch by Rudolph Friedrich Kurz, July 23, 1851. Kurz sketchbook, Historical Museum, Berne.

APPENDIX B: FOLD-DOWN CAPES

- Toledo Museo de América, Madrid, ca.no. 16370 (no documented history prior to 1865, when it was listed on an inventory in Toledo; previous attribution to the Lorenzana-Borbón collection of the late 18th century unlikely, no documented provenance)
Ballesteros 1935: 70 (attributed to the “Quapaw or Arkansas”); Feder 1977: 49-50, fig. 15 (attributed to “Northern Ojibwa/Eastern Cree”); Sánchez Garrido 1992: 25-26, 29, fig. 20; Brasser 2009: 126 (identified as “woman’s dress?, Midwest, circa 1780”). The images reproduced in these sources also illustrate the continues loss of pieces, especially at the edges, as well as conservation efforts.
- Cuming doll 2 Cuming Museum, London, cat.no. C2338 (purchased in 1806 by Atkinson at the Leverian Museum sale (“North American Indians”), purchased in 1815 by Peter Dick, sold to unknown in 1821, acquired before 1841 by Richard Cuming whose manuscript catalog lists it as “Ojibbeway” probably on the basis of an attached label; see Kaeppler 2011: 227). For a time on loan to the Horniman Museum, London, cat.no. 1976.460, and cited as such in the literature. The English doll face dates to about 1770-1790.
Feder 1984: 51-52, fig. 7 (“Cree type, Ojibwa costume”; photograph shows doll without the cape); Oberholtzer 1999: 234-235; 2009: 38-39, fig. 4 (“Cree”)
- NMAI doll National Museum of the American Indian, cat.no. 14/7425 (purchased 1926 from an unknown source, cataloged as “Swampy Cree, Norway House, Manitoba)
- Warnock doll Warnock Splendid Heritage Collection, cat.no. WC8905032 (from British private collection, sold at Christie’s, London, Sale 3244 [April 4, 1989], Lot 3244; subsequently Alexander Gallery, Epic Fine Arts Co./Masco Corp.)
Oberholtzer 1999: 233-234; 2009: Brasser in Warnock and Warnock 2009: 136-137 (“Swampy Cree”)
- Whyel doll Rosalie Whyel Museum of Doll Art, Bellevue, WA, cat.no. unknown, acquired from a California collection without further provenance.
Oberholtzer 1999: 232-233, fig. 1 (tentatively attributed to Cree at York Factory); 2009: 38, 42, fig. 8

APPENDIX C: SIMPLE CAPES

- Naskapi Musée du quai Branly, Paris, cat.no. 71.1878.32.135 (Bibliothèque Nationale coll.; no documented history prior to 1880, but presumably collected prior to 1796, no documented provenance
Hamy 1897: 11-12, pl. VI (“Canada”)
Toledo See Appendix B above

Visual representations

- Bonanni Engraving in Philippus Bonanni, *Musæum Kircherianum sive Musaeum a. P. Athanasio Kirchero incoeptum* (Roma 1709: Plachus), p. 250.
- Champlain Samuel de Champlain, *Carte géographique de la Nouvelle France* (1622). Variants of the image appear elsewhere in Champlain’s writings, such as in the depiction of a [Huron] mortuary ceremony (*Les Voyages de la Nouvelle-France occidentale*, Paris 1632, p. 291)
- Du Creux Two untitled engravings in François du Creux, *Historiae Canadensis: seu Novae-Franciae libri decem, ad annum usque Christi MDCLVI* (Paris 1664), p. 70, pl. III, p. 72, pl. IV.
- Jebb (attributed to) Sir Joshua Jebb, “Two Ottawa Chiefs Who with Others lately Came Down from Michillimackinac Lake Huron ...,” watercolor on paper, c. 1815. National Archives of Canada, acc.no. 1981-55-41 / C-114375 (reproduced in, e.g., Brassier 2009: 132)

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Grierson



Salisbury



Watmaugh



Forbes



Boston 1



Boston 2



Brussels



Catlin



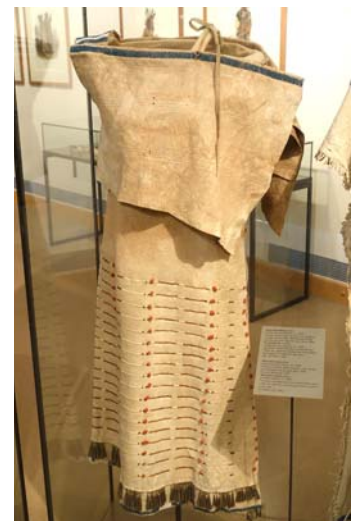
Jarvis



Naval



Oldman



Wied



Cuming doll 1



Whyel doll



Bodmer



Kurz



Forbes fold-down cape



Cuming doll 2



Toledo



Menominee fold-down cape, c. 1830, Weltmuseum Wien, cat.no. 11987 (J. G. Schwarz coll.)



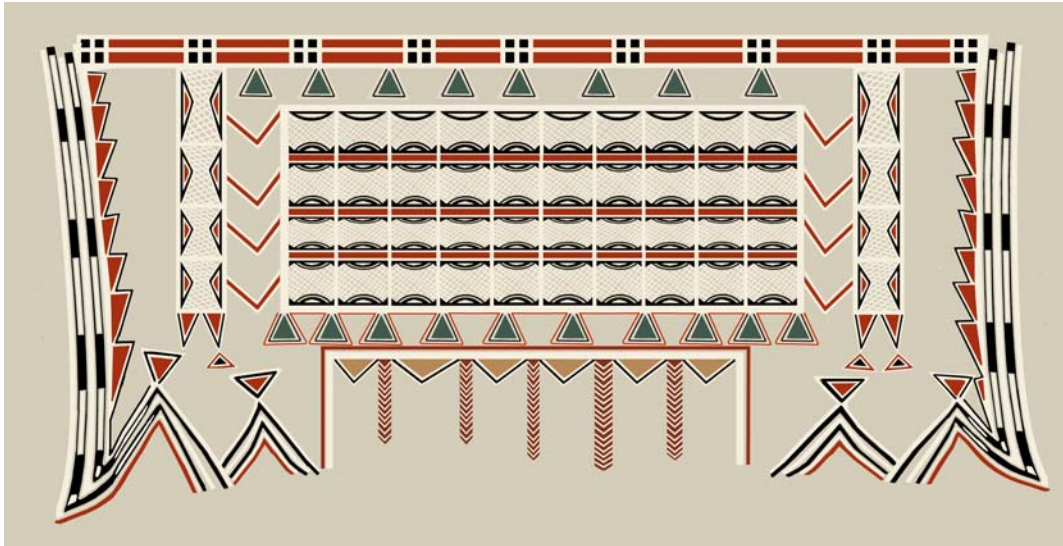
Warnock doll



Whyel doll



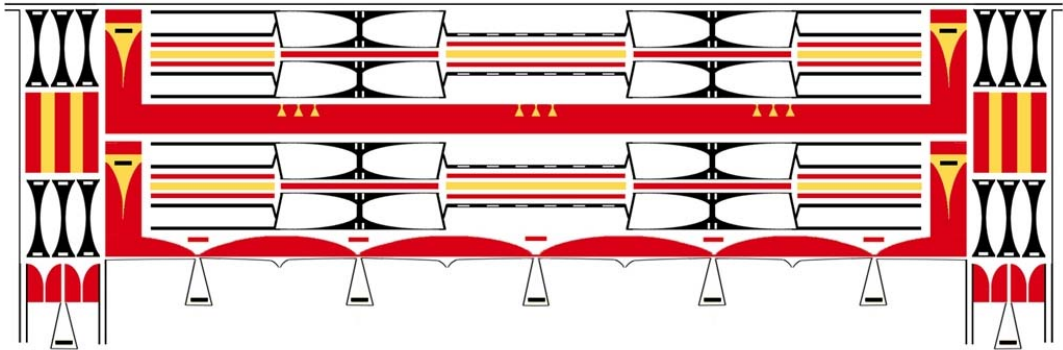
NMAI doll



Pattern on the Forbes fold-down cape



Box-and-border robe, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, cat.no. 99-12-10/53124



Box pattern on Mandan box-and-border robe, Ethnologisches Museum Berlin, cat.no. IVB204



Forbes single cape



Naskapi



Du Creux



Bonanni



Champlain



Webb