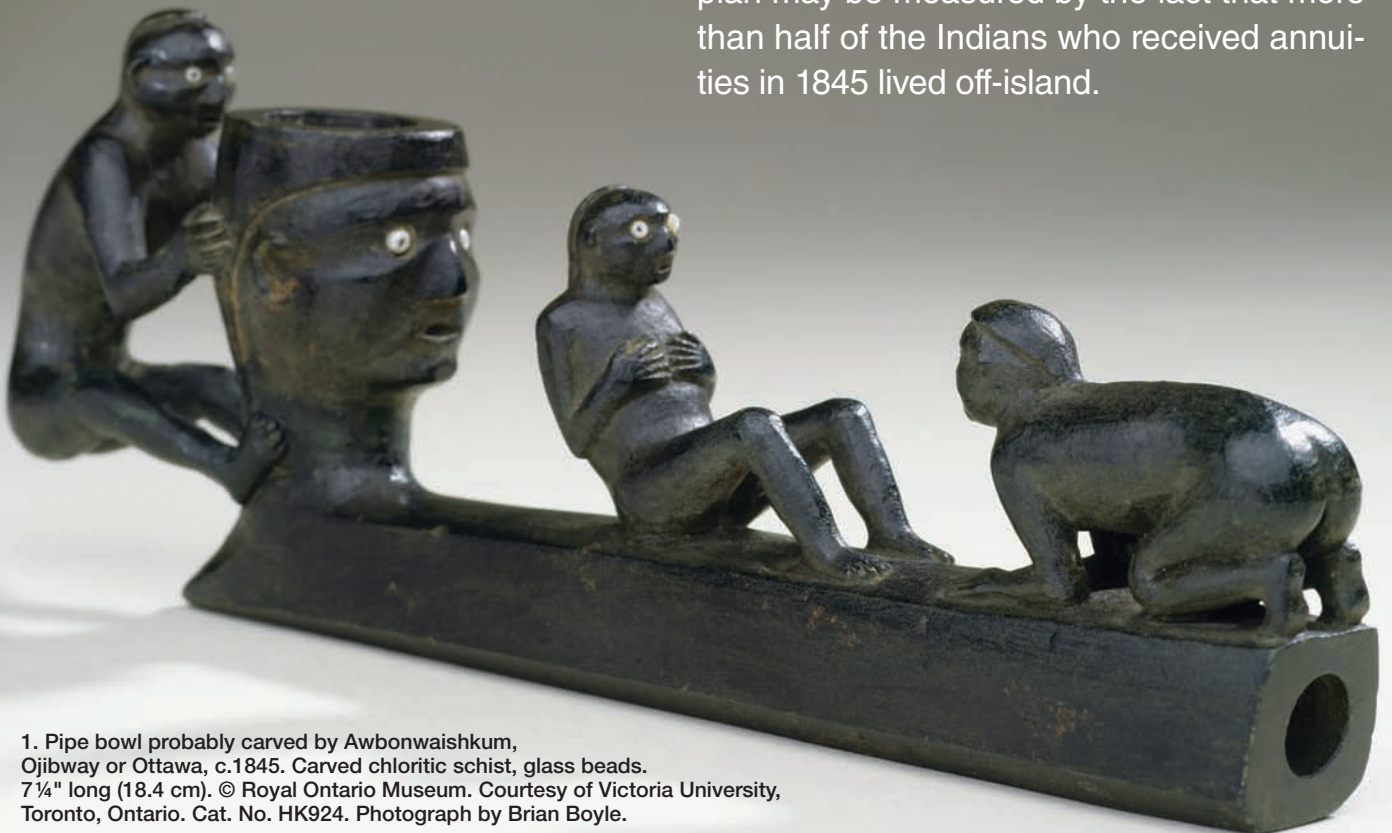


Mysteries of the Sculptural Narrative Pipes from Manitoulin Island

Arni Brownstone

In 1845, a year before he made his famous journey across Canada, the painter Paul Kane sketched Indian life in the Western Great Lakes. He arrived on Manitoulin Island on July 26 to find some 2,500 Indians waiting to receive their annual treaty payments. Less than ten years earlier a treaty had been made to relocate all the Indians of southern Ontario and those in Michigan loyal to the British Crown onto Manitoulin Island. The 100-mile-long island in Lake Huron in the province of Ontario, said to be the largest in fresh water in the world, was to be turned into a giant reservation the inhabitants of which would be taught self-sufficiency through the pursuit of agriculture and other trades. The failure of the plan may be measured by the fact that more than half of the Indians who received annuities in 1845 lived off-island.

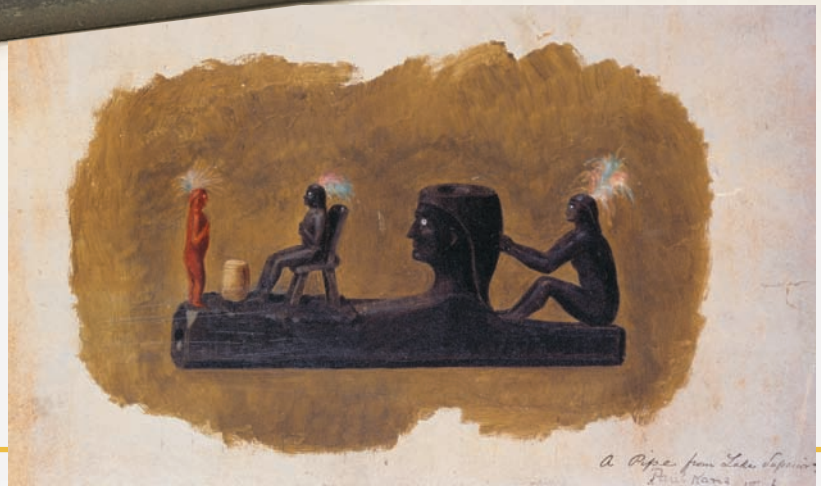


1. Pipe bowl probably carved by Awbonwaishkum, Ojibway or Ottawa, c.1845. Carved chloritic schist, glass beads. 7¼" long (18.4 cm). © Royal Ontario Museum. Courtesy of Victoria University, Toronto, Ontario. Cat. No. HK924. Photograph by Brian Boyle.



2. Pipe bowl carved by Awbonwaishkum, Ojibway or Ottawa, Manitoulin Island, 1845. Carved chloritic schist, glass beads. 6¼" long (15.9 cm). Collected by Paul Kane. A human figure and keg are missing from the end of the shank. © Royal Ontario Museum. Courtesy of Victoria University, Toronto, Ontario. Cat. No. NS38457. Photograph by Brian Boyle.

3. Stone Pipe Carved by Awbonwaishkum by Paul Kane, 1845. Oil on paper. 7½" x 12¼" (19.1 cm x 31.1 cm). Shows the complete pipe bowl shown in Figure 2. Courtesy of the Stark Museum of Art, Orange, Texas. Cat. No. 31.78.184.



Among those sketched by Kane was Awbonwaishkum, or One Who Uplifts By His Company, who has been variously identified as a “second chief of the Ojibbiways” (Kane 1996:9) and an “Ottawa Chief” (Kane 1971:174, Fig. 29).¹ His tribal affiliation may be moot, however, since in the nineteenth century the Algonquian-speaking Ojibway, Ottawa and Potawatomi were perhaps more accurately described as related brotherhoods than distinct tribes (Johnston 2010).² On the Manitoulin treaty payment lists of 1845, Awbonwaishkum was cited as a “deserving warrior” for his participation in the War of 1812, indicating that he lived on the island at that time.

During his two weeks on Manitoulin, Kane collected a pipe head that Awbonwaishkum had carved with “an old knife and a broken file” (Kane 1996:9). The pipe later came into the possession of Kane’s patron, G. W. Allan. In 1920, more than half a century later, a collector named Frank Eames discovered the pipe in a shop in Toronto, Ontario and presented it to the Ontario Provincial Museum (Wilson 1857:332; Boyle 1920:86). In 1933 the Provincial Museum transferred its collections to the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) in Toronto, where the pipe is currently preserved (Fig. 2).

The pipe is carved from volcanic, Precambrian rock identified as chloritic schist and most likely obtained from exposures above Lake Huron.³ The pipe bowl, which shows no sign of use, is in the form of a human head. Kane thought it resembled an Egyptian sphinx. At the prow of the pipe, a diminutive seated man holds onto the back of the bowl. At the front of the bowl, on the shank, is a ruglike platform upon which a man is seated on a European-style chair. He presses his hands to his chest. He and the figure holding the back of the bowl have remnants of downy feather headdresses atop their heads. The three heads on the pipe have white seed beads for eyes. We know from a painting Kane made of the pipe that two figures have disappeared: a standing man with hands on his chest carved in catlinite and a barrel carved from white stone (Fig. 3).

The University of Toronto acquired a similar pipe sometime before 1862 (Wilson 1862) and transferred it to ROM around 1912 (Fig. 1). There is no documentation on its tribal origins. Like the previous example, the bowl is in the form of a large head with a diminutive figure grasping the back. Two men face each other on the shank, one seated and pressing his hands to his chest,

the other prostrated before him with his open anus toward the smoker. The bowl does not appear to have been used. While researching his 1857 article on pipes and tobacco smoking, Sir Daniel Wilson exchanged letters with the Church of England missionary on Manitoulin, Reverend Frederick O'Meara, who mentioned a well-known Ojibway pipe maker, a chief named Pabahmesad, or the Flier. O'Meara described a pipe he had acquired from Pabahmesad, noting that Pabahmesad used a saw made from hoop iron to rough out his pipes, which were made of white stone from St. Joseph's Island, red stone from Couteau de Prairies and black stone from Lake Huron (Wilson 1857:333). Based on O'Meara's information, Wilson attributed the two ROM pipes to Pabahmesad (Wilson 1862, 1857:333). Wilson's attribution is at odds with Kane's identification of Awbonwaishkum as the pipe maker (1859), despite the fact that the two men were acquainted and even discussed Indian pipes together (Wilson 1857:254).

O'Meara donated his pipe to the museum at Trinity College, Dublin in 1846–1847.⁴ A number of years ago the Trinity College Museum transferred its collection to the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin. Today the latter museum appears to have only one Manitoulin-type pipe, which, according to the catalog record, was transferred from the Royal Dublin Society. There is no evidence that the museum records are incorrect, but it is likely that this is the same pipe deposited by O'Meara.

This pipe is almost identical to one, cataloged as Ojibway, that entered ROM in 1913 as part of the Edmund Morris Collection (Fig. 5). Its bowl is in the form of a human head

looking toward a seated figure on the shank. The front of the pipe features a gracefully curving horse's neck with the head nuzzling the bowl. The heads on this example all have seed beads for eyes, and the human figure is pressing his hands to his chest, as on the previous pipes. This figure was carved separately and socketed into the shank with a wooden peg. There are three additional peg holes, which presumably held elements now missing from the shank. The National Museum of Ireland pipe displays all these features, except that the two or three elements that once decorated its shank are missing.

A closer look reveals a number of differences between the first two ROM pipes (Figs. 1, 2) and the third (Fig. 5). Like its counterpart at the National Museum of Ireland, the finish on the ROM's pipe with the curved-neck horse is the dark matte gray color of the natural stone, whereas the other ROM pipes appear to have been finished with the smoke-blackening technique described by John C. Ewers (1963:53–56). Each of the shank figures on the curved-neck horse pipe was carved separately and attached by a dowel and socket. In contrast, on the other pipe, figures were carved in



4. Detail of *Two Pipes and Portrait* by Paul Kane, showing an Ojibway pipe bowl, Manitoulin Island, 1845. © Royal Ontario Museum. Courtesy of Victoria University, Toronto, Ontario. Cat. No. 946.15.36. Photograph by Brian Boyle.



5. Pipe bowl probably carved by Pabahmesad, Ojibway, Manitoulin Island, c.1845. Carved chloritic schist, glass beads. 7" long (17.8 cm). Three figures are missing from the shank. © Royal Ontario Museum. Courtesy of Victoria University, Toronto, Ontario. Cat. No. HD15A. Photograph by Brian Boyle.

6. Pipe bowl in form of a horse's head, probably Ojibway, 1850(?). Carved stone, lead and brass details. 2" long (5.1 cm). © Royal Ontario Museum. Courtesy of Victoria University, Toronto, Ontario. Cat. No. HD10. Photograph by Brian Boyle.



one piece with the shank, except for two elements now missing from the pipe collected by Kane (Fig. 2): a keg, which was simply glued down, and a human anchored in shallow sockets. From x-rays of the three pipes, it is apparent that the bowl cavity of the curved-neck horse pipe is significantly rounder than the others, perhaps indicating that it was made with a different reaming tool. Although the three pipes are stylistically very similar and share a number of iconographic features, the carving on the first two pipes has a somewhat more monumental and confident quality; the figures are stronger and better defined than those of the curved-neck horse pipe. Perhaps these differences may be attributable to their having been made by the two carvers noted in the documentation. Partly based on the assumption that the National Museum of Ireland pipe was collected by O'Meara, the curved-neck pipe may have been carved by Pabahmesad, while the other two were carved by Awbonwaishkum. If this is the case, these pipe makers greatly influenced each other.

Judging by Kane's portrait, Awbonwaishkum may have been as old as sixty in 1845. Although Wilson described Pabahmesad as old in 1857, he was perhaps ten years younger than Awbonwaishkum. Given the difference in their ages, it is possible that Pabahmesad learned and copied from Awbonwaishkum. Carving in one piece may have been an older practice followed by Awbonwaishkum, and pegging-in separately carved figures may have been the younger Pabahmesad's innovation, perhaps inspired by one of the trade skills—lathe working, carpentry, masonry, shoemaking and barrel making—introduced on the island around 1845.

It is interesting to consider the possibility that two men would carve so similarly; and while difficult to imagine, we cannot ignore the documentation that identifies this set of pipes as being the work of two pipe makers.

While the identity of the pipe makers remains conjectural, the time and place of the pipes' origin are firmly established: Manitoulin Island, circa 1845. Using this as an anchor point, an examination of related pipes in a broader geographic and temporal range will deepen our understanding of the pipes in question. Pipes with images of living beings or material objects, sometimes termed effigy pipes, have a long tradition among historic eastern Indians. Their structure is essentially based on the elbow form, comprising a bowl set at right angles to a shank, which serves as a socket connecting the bowl to the stem. By the seventeenth century, pipe makers near the Straights of Mackinac, between Lake Huron and Lake Michigan, were carving with metal tools. This stimulated an increased production of stone pipes; and, with the advent of metal reamers, longer shanks came into prominence (Turnbaugh 1980:56). Based on extant examples, it seems that the earliest historical pipe decorated with figures on the shank is one presented to President Andrew Jackson between 1829 and 1837 by Indians of the lower Missouri (Ewers 1981:66). By 1850 pipes with shank figures were found among the Dakota, Wyandot, Pawnee, Iowa, Oto and Ojibway. A significant number of those pipes feature bowls in the form of human heads. At least a century earlier, human-headed bowls carved in stone and wood had become fairly common, particularly among the Ojibway and perhaps Iroquoian peoples. A large proportion of these featured carved humans and animals projecting from the front of the bowl. These anterior-projecting figures seem to have predated head-shaped bowls.⁵ There was a long tradition of decorating the bowl, shank and prow of pipe heads with carved figures; however, the Manitoulin pipe makers were unique in adding figures to all three structural segments of the pipe simultaneously. In this regard, these pipes were unmatched in their sculptural complexity and three-dimensionality.

7. Pipe bowl probably carved by Pabahmesad, Ojibway, Manitoulin Island, c.1845. 6½" long (16.5 cm). Courtesy of the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Cat. No. 12/105. Photograph by NMAI Photo Services Staff.



8. Puzzle stem, probably Ojibway, Manitoulin Island, c.1845. Carved, inscribed and painted wood. 31¼" long (79.4 cm). Collected with the bowl illustrated in Figure 5. © Royal Ontario Museum. Courtesy of Victoria University, Toronto, Ontario. Cat. No. HD15. Photograph by Brian Boyle.



I have located twenty-one Great Lakes Ojibway pipes that feature the head of a curved-neck horse touching the bowl.⁶ The oldest was collected by Colonel Arent Schuyler de Peyster, probably at Fort Michilimackinac where he was commandant between 1774 and 1779 (King's Regiment Collection, Museum of Liverpool, Liverpool, Cat. No. 58.83.6.3). Another example, carved in wood with a lead-lined bowl, was collected in 1796 from the Mississauga, a people closely related to the Ojibway (Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio, Cat. No. 43.2871/1796). Several were made after the Manitoulin pipes under consideration. The best documented of the later curved-neck horse pipes was collected by Lord Elgin, governor general of Canada from 1847 to 1854.⁷ It is an unused pipe with the bowl in the form of a European with a moustache, and holes in the shank indicating once-anchored figures.

At least six horse-neck examples were almost certainly carved by Awbonwaishkum and/or Pabahmesad.⁸ One of these, sketched by Kane, has two figures standing on the shank facing a beaver in the middle (Fig. 4). Only two of the extant pipes are complete. One, in the Karl May Museum, Radebeul, Germany, has two figures seated on a ruglike platform holding hands. The other, in the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (Fig. 7), may be the same black stone Ojibway pipe acquired from Kane by Allan, which Wilson described in 1857:

[a] square tube terminating in a horse's head, turned back, so as to be attached by its nose to the bowl...two figures are seated, one behind the other on the [shank], with their knees bent up, and looking toward the pipe bowl (1857:333).

Apart from the curved-neck horse pipes, horse imagery is rarely found in Great Lakes pipes (Fig. 6).

In addition to the six curved-neck horse pipes, there are six other pipes that were almost certainly carved by Awbonwaishkum and/or Pabahmesad.⁹ They share a

number of attributes, including bowls with almost identical sphinxlike faces directed toward the smoker. The one exception has a bowl in the form of a dog's head, probably an English Pointer.¹⁰ All the pipes appear to have been made from the same chloritic schist. All the figures have white seed beads representing eyes, in contrast to the carved almond-shaped eyes of earlier pipes.¹¹ The figures are consistently depicted with the hair above the ears and forehead pulled out, essentially leaving the scalp lock intact, the hairstyle worn by Awbonwaishkum in Kane's portrait of him (Kane 1996:9). Small figures with hands pressed to the chest are found on almost all the pipes. The Manitoulin pipes are also characterized by sculptural narrative scenes with repeated iconographic elements, which may be better understood in light of the ethnographic and historical record.

Before European contact, sacred pipes played an important role in the elaborate ceremonies that preceded intertribal trading, declarations of peace and the formation of alliances. These same pipe rituals were enacted when the Indians sat in council with Europeans to trade or negotiate treaties (Rotstein 1972:1, 5, 9). Thus, pipes may be viewed historically as central points of contact between Europeans and First Nations (King 1977:7). Samuel A. Barrett, director of the Milwaukee Public Museum, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, noted in 1910 that the pipe bowls used for sacred ceremonies by the Ojibway and Menominee of upper Wisconsin tended to be "very plain" and "exact in form," whereas pipes used in more ordinary circumstances were much more highly ornamented (West 2007:257; see also Paper 1989:75). Two Manitoulin pipes with ornate bowls and ceremonial stems appear to contradict this notion. The first is the ROM's curved-neck horse pipe (Fig. 5), which has the same catalog number as an ornate puzzle stem (Fig. 8).¹² Since the bowl shows no evidence of use and the stem is much worn, however, the two may not belong



9. X-ray of a puzzle stem, probably Ojibway, early nineteenth century(?). Carved, painted wood, impressed with a hot file. 33¼" long (84.5 cm). The smoke passage is highlighted in red. © Royal Ontario Museum. Courtesy of Victoria University, Toronto, Ontario. Cat. No. HK926. Photograph by Brian Boyle.

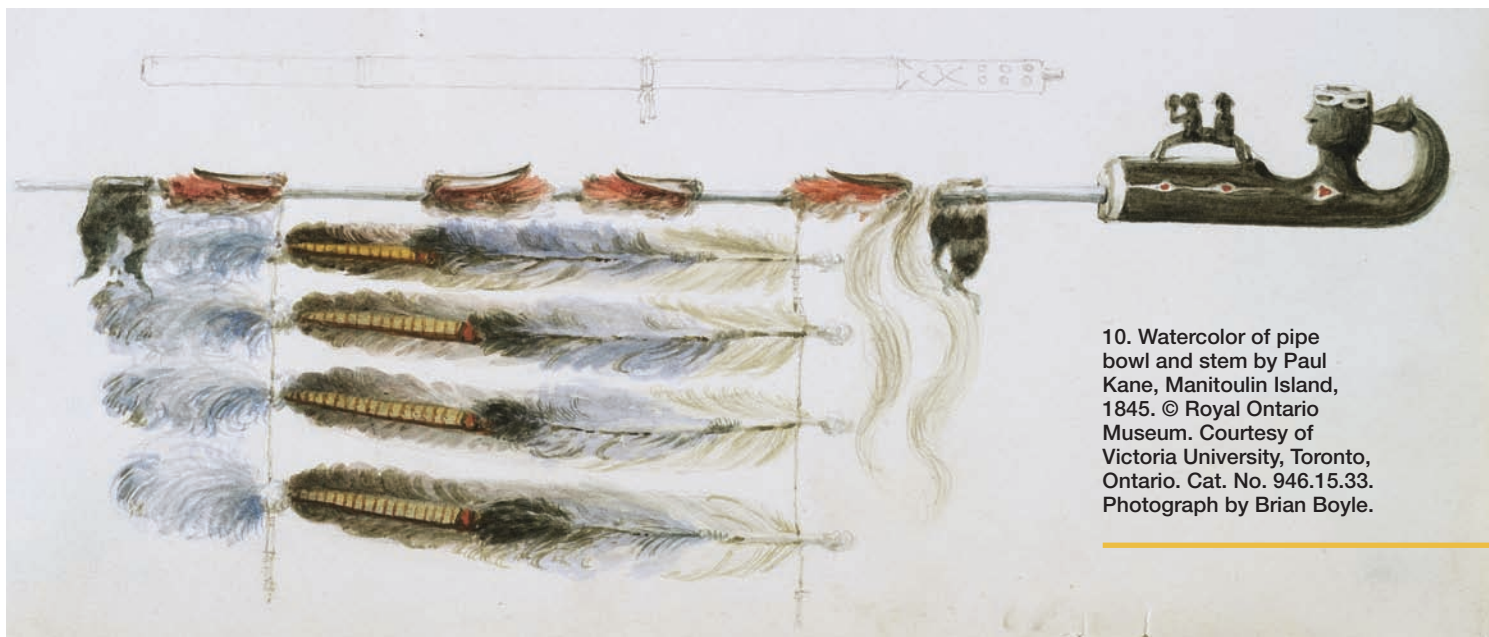


together. The other example survives in a Kane painting; it has an elaborate stem decorated with four woodpecker bills, a ladderlike trailer of four quillworked eagle feathers and what appear to be two scalps or hanks of horsehair (Fig. 10). Calumet-type stems with woodpecker bills were probably uncommon among the Ojibway, since their center of distribution was among middle Missouri River peoples (McLaughlin 2003:223). Nonetheless, in 1833 artist Karl Bodmer portrayed a Blackfoot man in western Montana holding such a stem (Hunt et al. 1984:347).

Most historical eastern pipes with sculptural narrative scenes involving multiple figures were made between 1830 and 1850. They were carved by a number of eastern tribes, including the Iowa, Pawnee, Oto, Cherokee, Wyandot, Dakota and Ojibway. As effigy forms became increasingly elaborate and varied, pipe making grew more specialized and was concentrated in the hands of fewer craftsmen (Turnbaugh 1980:62). Johann Kohl noted that in the mid-1850s a pipe maker in an Ojibway community on Lake Superior sold stone bowls to other Indians and his prices were high, four or five dollars and more (1956: 283). Pipe makers also sold their wares to Europeans; Fort Leavenworth and Fort Snelling were primary markets for ornate pipes made by the Pawnee and Eastern

Dakota (Santee Sioux), respectively. Among the buyers were traders, Indian agents, military men, artists and scientists, some of whom became serious pipe collectors (Ewers 1979:17, 1986:209; Paper 1989:74).

A number of the pipes displayed scenes from mythology. For example, a Pawnee bowl collected by the natural scientist Duke Paul Wilhelm of Württemberg around 1830 depicts a seated boy and a bear facing each other; the bear is drawing supernatural powers from the sun and transmitting them to the boy through his extended paws (Ewers 1986:52–53). Similarly, anthropologist Alanson Skinner noted Iowa carved bowls bearing two faces representing the Janus-like beings found in Iowa folklore (1926:232). Several pipes featured a bowl in the form of a large head facing a diminutive seated figure on the shank. Artist George Catlin was told that the seated figure stood for its Pawnee owner and the bowl represented a white man; the pipe signified that its owner “could sit and look a white man in the face” (Ewers 1979:36). A number of other pipe heads provided “frank and witty” (Ewers 1979:18) commentary on the overlapping worlds of Indians and Europeans. Indeed, in a number of instances, the thematic content of narrative pipes was tailored to appeal to non-Native clients (Ewers 1979:18, 1986:91). As well, Europeans no doubt asked carvers to render subject matter of their own choosing. In this regard, Catlin made drawings of three erotic pipe bowls in the collection of Toussaint Charbonneau, interpreter for the Lewis and Clark Expedition (Ewers 1979:62, 1986:15, 1997:65). Inter-relations such as these between pipe makers and their clients may well have occurred on Manitoulin Island. Like Fort Snelling and Fort Leavenworth, Manitoulin was a gateway to the western frontier and a melting pot of European and aboriginal cultures.



10. Watercolor of pipe bowl and stem by Paul Kane, Manitoulin Island, 1845. © Royal Ontario Museum. Courtesy of Victoria University, Toronto, Ontario. Cat. No. 946.15.33. Photograph by Brian Boyle.

11. Pipe bowl, Ottawa, 1845(?). Carved chloritic schist(?), glass beads. 6½" long (15.6 cm). An otterlike animal is carved on the shank. Inscribed "Odahwa." © Royal Ontario Museum. Courtesy of Victoria University, Toronto, Ontario. Cat. No. HK927. Photograph by Brian Boyle.



The narratives on the Manitoulin pipes reference a number of themes, including Ojibway religious life. Pipes traditionally bridged the human and supernatural worlds, primarily through prayers sent with the ascending smoke to the Great Spirit (King 1977:7; McGuire 1899:508). “Manitou,” as in Manitoulin Island, signifies the Great Spirit or, perhaps more accurately, the Great Mystery. The notion of mystery, signifying an experience or entity that defies or seems to defy laws of nature and human expectation, loomed large in Ojibway thought (Colombo 1993:XVI). While at Manitoulin, Kane sketched Pabahmesad’s father, Shawanosoway, who was renowned as a “necromancer or conjuror” (Kane 1996:11).

It may be argued that the art of the Manitoulin pipe maker shares a number of features with the art of the conjuror. The high level of skill needed to carve fine designs in the relatively hard black stone does arouse a sense of marvel. The figures on the pipe, some of which may represent spirits, are engaged in a dialog, perhaps involving the viewer/smoker as well. Humor is an aspect of both the pipe narratives and conjurors’ personas.

Puzzle stems also served to create a sense of marvel or mystery. Conceptually, the prayers carried by the tobacco smoke along the flat wooden stem increased in strength as they passed through the symbolic pierced motifs. The puzzle stem associated with the ROM’s curved-neck horse bowl is made of soft wood with red, green and blue colors delineating the inner walls of the pierced motifs (Fig. 8). X-rays indicate a smoke passage identical to the type noted by George West (2007:265–266). Most of the smoke passage was formed by cutting a channel or groove along one side of the stem, which was then covered by gluing down a thin strip of wood. Two holes were bored to make a dog-leg connection from the side channel to the mouthpiece, and the same procedure was repeated at the stem end. Once the stem was polished, incised

and painted, the smoke passage was extremely difficult to detect.

The x-ray of another Ojibway puzzle stem reveals an alternate method of construction, employing a crooked smoke passage (Fig. 9).¹³ The passageway curves around a series of apostrophelike openings, which have an inner coating of red pigment. The stem maker would have first selected a branch with an appropriate curve. After cutting out a straight, flat section he would have carefully studied the woodgrain to determine the pathway of the pith and establish the placement of his pierced motifs. He would have created the smoke passage by burning out the soft pith, either

with a hot wire (Pond in Ewers 1979:30) or by successively dropping in short pieces of heated copper of about one-eighth-inch thickness (Hoffman 1896:248–249). Catlin noted and illustrated a similar puzzle stem, said to be made of ash, that also features a crooked pith passageway (Ewers 1979:38). The carving of these stems reflects a tradition of performing feats requiring abnormal skill in order to get in touch with supernatural powers. In the same vein, during some public rituals, a conjuror would manipulate concealed sticks that caused carved wooden puppets to appear and disappear seemingly by magic (Ritzenthaler 1976:36, 38, 40). Some of the marionettes were similar to the figures on the Manitoulin pipes, particularly in the use of glass beads or shiny metal for eyes and tufts of down for headdresses.

All the head-shaped bowls on the Manitoulin pipes face the smoker, although some contemporaneous pipes, including an Ottawa example (Fig. 11), face away from the smoker. When Kane asked Awbonwaishkum to explain the imagery on his pipes, Awbonwaishkum replied only that his forefathers had a long tradition of making similarly shaped heads (Kane 1996:9–10). Perhaps he was referring to the style of pipe illustrated in Figure 12, which was collected just across the water from Manitoulin Island, or the bowl type of the second puzzle stem (Fig. 14), both of which were probably made a generation or two before Awbonwaishkum’s time. It has been suggested that some types of effigy pipes with “self-directed” orientation are indicative of a dialog between the smoker and the guardian spirit or other supernatural being represented by the bowl figure (Brasser 1980:100; Mathews 1979:46–47). Indeed, the heads on the Manitoulin bowls evoke a sense of great intensity and awe. Coupled with their scale and position in relation to other figures on the pipe, it would seem that they represent beings with extraordinary power.

They are not, however, oriented solely toward the smoker, for their gaze also falls on the figures on the shank, as if overseeing the actions of the ordinary humans before them.

The prow figures on the first two ROM pipes (Figs. 1, 2) are perhaps intermediary supernatural beings, secondary to the colossal heads to which they cling. The popular horselike figures that nuzzle the backs of bowls are more enigmatic. Simply designated in the Ojibway language as “undivided hoof” (O’Meara n.d.), the horse does not appear to have played an important role in Ojibway culture in the mid-1840s. There were apparently only twenty-one horses on Manitoulin Island in 1843 (Major 1934:25). One author described the figure as “dragon-like,” primarily based on the sawtooth motif running up the neck, which is a feature of Ojibway underwater spirits (Brasser 1976:112). In this regard, we might also note that Manitowaning, or “spirit hole,” the community where several Manitoulin pipes were acquired, sits on a bay with a giant marine cave believed to be the dwelling of an underwater spirit. It should also be noted that two Manitoulin pipes have abstract sawtooth, finlike anterior projections without horse features, suggesting that the zigzag edge may in itself hold meaning.¹⁴ Thus while the morphology of these prow figures clearly indicates that they represent horses, the stylized sawtooth mane may also possibly reference an underwater spirit.

Apart from figures on the bowls and anterior projections, certain motifs found on the shanks of Manitoulin pipes may be interpreted in light of the ethnographic and historical record. One such motif is the ruglike platform underneath the figures on the shanks of three pipes, including the ROM example collected by Kane (Fig. 2).¹⁵ The carving of the platform must have required much effort, since it is integral to the shank and most of the surmounted figures. The platforms do not contribute to the structural integrity of the pipes, nor do they appear to serve an aesthetic function. However, they may have symbolic significance. In his 1934 study of Native American pipes, West gives a number of accounts of important ceremonies in the Great Lakes area where pipes were placed on special mats or animal skins (2007:233, 249, 264; see also Skinner 1926:222). *The Gore Bay Recorder*, a local newspaper, noted that in a special council in 1818 on Manitoulin Island, a wampum belt was placed on a mat (Major 1934:7). In the same vein, when a missionary would visit an Ojibway or Ottawa home, a “good and clean” mat was spread for him to sit on (Major

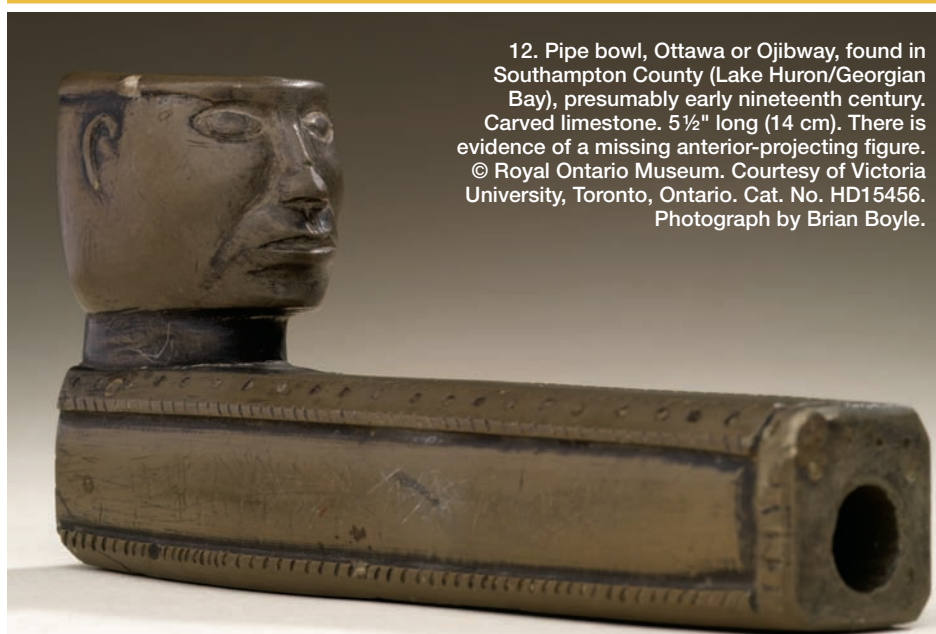
1934:12). Accounts of special robes for dignitaries participating in ceremonies are widespread (West 2007:238, 250; McLaughlin 2003:153). The shanks on a set of five catlinite pipe bowls, probably carved by a single Eastern Dakota man in the 1830s, have narrative scenes involving men and liquor on platforms.¹⁶ The platforms surely signal that the scenes that unfold on these and several of the Manitoulin pipes are of a special nature.

Daniel Wilson noted that Kane had

an ingeniously carved red stone Sioux pipe, in the form of a human figure lying on the back, with the knees bent up toward the breast, and head thrown forward. The hollowed head forms the bowl of the pipe and the tube is perforated through the anus (1857:331).¹⁷

This description has a number of features in common with another pipe sketched by Kane on Manitoulin Island in 1845 (Fig. 13), although it fails to mention the small seated figure with hands to his chest and the keg. Kane painted two other Manitoulin pipes with such kegs. One is of the ROM pipe that he collected (Fig. 3). The other pipe has a bowl with a face, the curved-neck horse motif and two figures seated back to back on the shank, one drinking from a keg (Fig. 10). It is inlaid with lead and catlinite. Since there are some ten elements detached and missing from other pipes in the Manitoulin series, the number of kegs may have originally been significantly higher.

It appears that the kegs depicted on pipes contain alcohol. Since before contact, the ritualized giving of presents signified the binding character of political negotiations between First Nations. From earliest contact, alcohol was among the most valued gifts given by Europeans to Indians in their political and commercial negotiations (Rotstein 1972:9, 22; Umfreville 1954: 28–32). In time, drinking alcohol became an integral



12. Pipe bowl, Ottawa or Ojibway, found in Southampton County (Lake Huron/Georgian Bay), presumably early nineteenth century. Carved limestone. 5½" long (14 cm). There is evidence of a missing anterior-projecting figure. © Royal Ontario Museum. Courtesy of Victoria University, Toronto, Ontario. Cat. No. HD15456. Photograph by Brian Boyle.

part of many religious ceremonies practiced by Indians of the North-east (Trenk 2001:74, 76, 80). Apparently alcohol assisted in communicating with the spirit world, for the “closer a shaman is to the powers, the more he needs liquor to get them to guide and tell him what he cannot know in his soberness” (Skinner and Satterlee 1915:496). Sacred pipes were also used in these ceremonies, and in a sense both liquor and tobacco served as intermediaries between man and the supernatural. As visual evidence, Seth Eastman’s illustration of a Midewin ceremony in progress shows a liquor keg beside a long-stemmed pipe in the center of the medicine lodge (Schoolcraft 1969, Vol. 3:286f).

In 1818, before Captain G. T. Anderson was placed in charge of the Indians on Manitoulin Island, he met in council with Ojibways, Ottawas and Winnebagos. One chief noted that the British had promised, in addition to a “bounty annually of fine things,” that the British “breasts would never be dry, but that we should have plenty of milk [rum]” (Major 1934:11). Interpreted in this light, the gesture of hands pressing breasts found on most of the figures on the Manitoulin pipes with kegs may be a metaphor for the giving and receiving of gifts of alcohol. However, when this gesture occurs in the absence of



13. Detail of *Two Pipes and Portrait* by Paul Kane showing an Ojibway pipe bowl, Manitoulin Island, 1845. © Royal Ontario Museum. Courtesy of Victoria University, Toronto, Ontario. Cat. No. 946.15.36. Photograph by Brian Boyle.

alcohol, its meaning is less clear. For example, in one Kane pencil sketch a beaver stands midway between two facing Indians, each with hands on his chest (Fig. 4). Perhaps this represents a trading event. The pipe with the bowl in the form of a gigantic English Pointer’s head also has a beaverlike figure. The dog faces a little kneeling man with hands on his chest, and the beaver behind him holds a similar pose. This scene may be a parody of a trader, represented by his dog, and his customers. Another pipe from the same general area with a trade-related scene, features a bowl in the form of a European head with a large moustache and three beavers on the shank (Fig. 15).

There are at least four pipes attributed to the Wyandot (Huron) with scenes involving kegs of liquor.¹⁸ These were perhaps meant to be humorous and may recall the annual ceremonies of the Lion or White Panther Society, where large quantities of rum were consumed (Brasser 1980:97). In a similar vein, Catlin illustrated a Pawnee pipe with two Indians having a tug of war over a keg of liquor, and another one where the bowl is in the shape of a keg with a smiling head of a man emerging from it (Ewers 1979:37, 45).¹⁹ The Kane pencil sketch of a pipe with a very large recumbent man facing a much smaller seated man with a keg in between also strikes me as humorous (Fig. 13), as does his watercolor of a pipe with two men on the shank who seem to support each other in seated positions while one drinks from a keg (Fig. 10).

Ewers noted that alcohol was difficult to obtain upriver from Fort Snelling in the 1830s, and possession of a keg of spirits was considered a symbol of chiefly status (1997:65). He illustrated his point with one of the Dakota pipes noted earlier. On its shank are two men seated at a European-style table. The much larger man, wearing a medal on his chest, is clearly a chief and is portioning out alcohol to the other man (Ewers 1978:54). On Kane’s painting of the ROM pipe there is a similar scene—a large man is seated in a European-style chair before a keg of liquor, with the standing man presumably waiting for a drink (Fig. 3). Historically, European treaty makers and traders presented alcohol to the chief, who then distributed it to



14. Pipe bowl, probably Ojibway, early nineteenth century(?). Carved sandstone. 3¾" long (9.5 cm). This pipe bowl belongs with the puzzle stem shown in Figure 10. The crest on the shank is fragmentary, and the anterior projection is missing. © Royal Ontario Museum. Courtesy of Victoria University, Toronto, Ontario. Cat. No. HK926. Photograph by Brian Boyle.

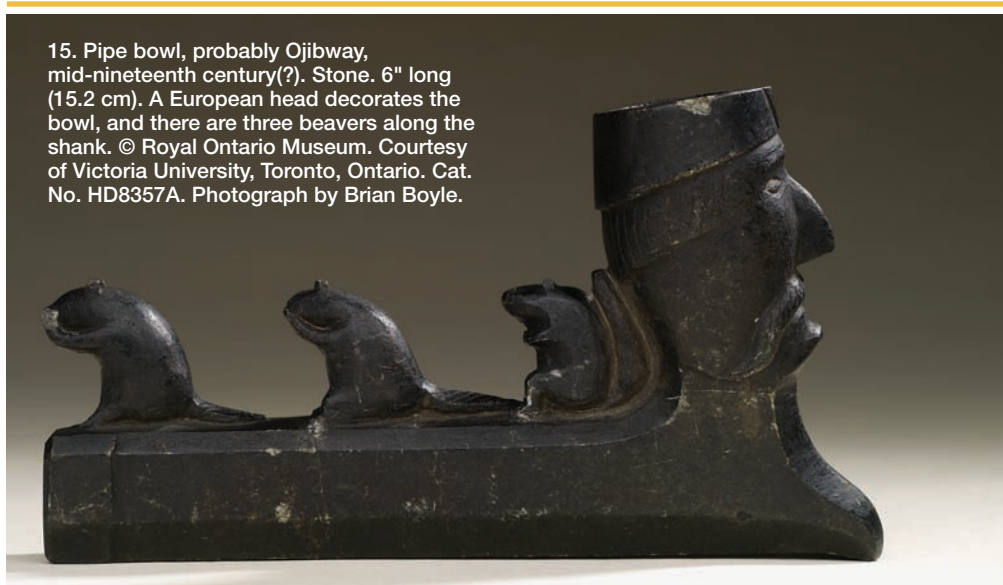
his people. In 1823, Italian explorer Giacomo Beltrami observed Ojibways receiving barrels of whiskey during treaty payments on Romaine Island in Lake Huron (2005, Vol. 2:447), but ten years later on Manitoulin Island the practice of distributing alcohol through the chiefs had ceased, and Indians then individually traded their treaty goods to a private trader for alcohol (Meyers 1959:4). By the time the pipes were carved, around 1845, alcohol seems to have been fairly easy to obtain on Manitoulin Island (Pearen and Lonc 2008:46–47, 81, 90; Meyers 1959:5, 15). Given these circumstances it seems likely that at least some of the pipe narratives refer to earlier times, perhaps based on the pipe makers' memories.

We now appreciate that the narratives carved on the pipes from Manitoulin Island have complex religious, commercial, humorous, political, mythological and social overtones. Yet without further documentation, and with so many pieces missing from the pipes, we will probably never know their stories in detail. Since it is rare to have documentation providing the names of nineteenth-century First Nations artists, we are fortunate to know the identities of the Manitoulin pipe makers Pabahmesad and Awbonwaishkum. However, it is a source of both great frustration and fascination that their work is so similar. If a larger number of their pipes could be examined side by side, perhaps we would gain further insight into their origins. Even if that were possible, much about the Manitoulin pipes will remain a mystery.

Footnotes

- ¹ Basil Johnston (2010) translated Awbonwaishkum's name. Kane's oil painting of Awbonwaishkum is in the Stark Museum of Art, Orange, Texas (Cat. No. 31.78.175) and another painting is in the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (Cat. No. 912.1.5).
- ² Johnston (2010) termed the three groups within the brotherhood as follows: the Warriors (Ottawa), the Ghost Callers (Ojibway) and the Fire Keepers (Potawatomi).
- ³ Identified by Malcolm Back, Vincent Vertolli and Robert Ramic of the Department of Mineralogy and Geology, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.
- ⁴ Andy Halpin, Assistant Keeper of the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, confirmed that O'Meara and the pipe are mentioned in the 1846–1847 list of deposits in the second report of Director Robert Ball on the progress of the Trinity College Museum.
- ⁵ For example, a plain bowl from the Nebraska Phase, 1175–1450, with the prow in the form of a snake or animal head is at the Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln (Cat. No. WN5-22). Another stone pipe with a full figure of a dog or wolf clasping a plain bowl in the British Museum, London and is said to have been made around 1625 to 1675 (Cat. No. Db.2 F).
- ⁶ The curved-neck horse pipes that have been located are as follows: National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (Cat. No. 12/105); Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (Cat. Nos. 946.16.36a, HD 15, 946.15.33); Karl May Museum, Radebuel, Germany (Cat. No. D 11b:289); National Museum of Ireland, Dublin (Cat. No. MI 1893-732); Horniman Museum, London (Cat. No. 5.68); Canadian Museum of Civilization, Gatineau, Quebec (Cat. Nos. III-G-832, III-G-844a.b); Museum der Kulturen Basel, Basel, Switzerland (Cat. No. IV-A-18); National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian

15. Pipe bowl, probably Ojibway, mid-nineteenth century(?). Stone. 6" long (15.2 cm). A European head decorates the bowl, and there are three beavers along the shank. © Royal Ontario Museum. Courtesy of Victoria University, Toronto, Ontario. Cat. No. HD8357A. Photograph by Brian Boyle.



Institution, Washington, D.C. (Cat. Nos. E2594-0, 1838-42); King's Regiment Collection, Museum of Liverpool, Liverpool (Cat. No. 58.83.6.3); Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio (Cat. No. 43.2871/1796); Lord Elgin Collection, British Museum, London (Cat. No. unknown); British Museum, London (Cat. No. 1949.Am.22.151, known only through a drawing in the catalog book); Lake of the Woods Museum, Kenora, Ontario (Cat. No. 1964.1.27); McCord Museum, Montreal, Quebec (Cat. No. M11030); Detroit Institute of Art, Detroit, Michigan (Cat. No. 81.262); Vereinte Evangelische Mission, Wuppertal, Germany (Cat. Nos. 1896/1, Nam5017; Ewing 1982:125; Shaw 1999:20). Three of these have missing head portions, so that the horse motif cannot be identified with certainty.

- ⁷ Currently held by the Elgin family. I am grateful to Ted Brassier for his information and photographs of the pipe.
- ⁸ National Museum of the American Indian (Cat. No. 12/105); Royal Ontario Museum (Cat. Nos. 946.16.36a, HD 15); Karl May Museum (Cat. No. D 11b:289); National Museum of Ireland (Cat. No. MI 1893-732); Horniman Museum (Cat. No. 5.68).
- ⁹ Royal Ontario Museum (Cat. Nos. 38457, 946.15.36b, HK924); Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville (Cat. No. P-393); Sotheby's, Lot No. 132, May 1996 and Lot No. 18, June 1997.
- ¹⁰ Sotheby's, Lot No. 132, May 1996. I am grateful to Richard Meen, president of the Canadian Kennel Club, for identifying the dog's breed.
- ¹¹ Earlier horse-neck pipes with almond-shaped eyes include: Canadian Museum of Civilization (Cat. No. MC III-G-832, "c. 1840"); Museum der Kulturen Basel (Cat. No. IV-A-18, collected before 1844); National Museum of Natural History (Cat. No. E2594-0, 1838–1842).
- ¹² West illustrates a stem of this type used by the Ojibway chief Hole in the Day as a "war calumet" around 1840 (2007:842; see also Kohl 1956:350).
- ¹³ A hand-illuminated book titled *Address from the Royal Ontario Museum* was given to the Duke of Connaught at the opening of the museum in 1914 (ROM Library and Archives n.d.). It contains a drawing of the pipe that shows that eagle feathers decorated with finely quilled sticks were once attached flat on the pipe stem. The decorated feathers are extant, but presently separated from the stem.
- ¹⁴ Florida Museum of Natural History (Cat. No. P-393); Sotheby's, June 1997.
- ¹⁵ Royal Ontario Museum (Cat. No. 38457 [Fig. 2]); Karl May Museum (Cat. No. D 11b:289); Shaw (1999:20).
- ¹⁶ See Ewers (1978) for discussion of three of the pipes. The other two are in the Warnock Collection in California and the Civici Musei, Reggio Emilia, Italy (Cat. No. 133).
- ¹⁷ Catlin illustrated several human figure pipe bowls with the stem inserted in the anus (Ewers 1979; Johnson 1995:24).
- ¹⁸ National Museum of the American Indian (Cat. Nos. 22/3038, 21/3037); British Museum (Cat. No. 1949.Am.22.74); Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri (Cat. No. 2001.3.83).
- ¹⁹ A wooden pipe illustrating a tug of war over a keg of alcohol, attributed to the Pawnee around 1840, is illustrated in Shaw (2004:33).

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