

Spiritual Life—*Katurtaallriit, Kac'imatallriit*

The objects in this category are associated with the spiritual life of Alutiiq ancestors, including those used in personal ritual, shamanism, and winter festivals (Table 8.15, Figure 8.23).

Table 8.15. Alutiiq terms for artifacts associated with spiritual life

English	Alutiiq	Comment
Amulet Box	Nakernauteq ^c	
Dance Wand	Lliil'rsuun ^c	
Drum Handle	Cauyam agaa	
Drum Rim	Cauyam awatiisqaa ^c	
Drumstick	Kaugtuutaq, Kaugsuun ^m	
Feast Bowl	Qantaruaq ^c (N); Alutaruaq ^c (S)	
Figurine – animal	Ungwallriangcuk ^c	
Figurine – human	Suaruangcuk [*]	“little doll”
Mask	Giinaruaq ^m ; Maas`kaa ^m ; Giinaquq ^h	
Mask Bangle	Awatiisqam ilakua`a ^c	
Mask Hoop	Awatiisqaa ^c	
Maskette	Giinaruangcuk ^c , Maas`kaaruangcuk ^c	
Ornament	Tangerhnit'staa ^m	“ornament, jewel”
Rattle Cross Brace	Awirlursuutem tuknisuutii ^c	
Rattle Hoop	Awirlursuutem awatiisqaa ^c	
Shaman's Doll	Samanam suaru`a ^c ; Kalla`algem suaru`a ^c	

m = term in modern usage, h = historic term, c = term created by Elder Alutiiq speakers
 N = northern way of speaking, S = southern way of speaking

Figure 8.23. Examples of objects associated with spiritual life.



Alutiiq Technological Inventory

Artifact Class Summary Sheet

English Names

Amulet Box

Alutiiq Names

Nakernauteq

Industry

Carving

Activity Festival

Function

Storage

Common
Materials

Wood

LxWxD (cm)

Tradition

Ocean Bay

Kachemak

Koniag

Alutiiq

Miniature

Yes

Example Sites Found

Karluk One

No/Unknown

Description

Hunters kept amulets in boxes, small containers they carried in the kayaks and kept hidden from view. Inside were personal talismans, or nekernat, that provided luck. Pictured below is a small 18 cm long, 6.5 cm wide, and 3.5 high wooden box carved in the shape of a fish, that may be an amulet box. The opening of the compartment is 5 cm long and 2.5 cm wide. The pieces has notches on the sides, perhaps for lashing it to a kayak frame.

References

Steffian, Amy F., Marnie A. Leist, Sven D. Haakanson, and Patrick G. Saltonstall, 2015, Kal'unek—From Karluk, Kodiak Alutiiq History and the Archaeology of the Karluk One Site. University of Alaska Press, Fairbanks.

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Amy Steffian

Alutiiq Technological Inventory—Carved Organic

AMULET BOX

Amulet box from Karluk One (AM193) – dorsal and ventral





Alutiiq Technological Inventory

Artifact Class Summary Sheet

English Names **Alutiiq Names**

Industry **Activity** **Function**

Common Materials

LxWxD (cm)

Tradition Ocean Bay Kachemak Koniag Alutiiq

Miniature Yes No/Unknown **Example Sites Found**

Description

Two flat, long, wooden objects from Karluk One maybe dance wands or dance sticks. These objects are curved on the end and taper to a handle. One has inset strands of baleen along the edge. The other has a diamond carved on its surface. These pieces likely had decorations attached t their edges and were used by dancers during festival performances to help interpret movements. Contemporary Yup'ik dancer use similar sticks.

References

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DANCE WAND

Dance wands from Karluk One (AM193)





Alutiiq Technological Inventory

Artifact Class Summary Sheet

English Names **Alutiiq Names**

Industry **Activity** **Function**

Common Materials

LxWxD (cm)

Tradition Ocean Bay Kachemak Koniag Alutiiq

Miniature Yes No/Unknown **Example Sites Found**

Description

Participants in festival performances included musicians—drummers, whistlers, and rattle shakers. Drumming provided both accompaniment and atmosphere throughout the dances. Men used a single, wooden drumstick to a beat circular, skin-covered drum with a wooden handle.

Drum handles are short, cylindrical pieces with a notch carved about a third of the way from the distal end of the piece. Here the ends of the circular drum rim were united and attached to the handle. Drum handles are typically finely carved and some have painted or inlaid carvings at the distal end - the part that lay under the drum and faced the audience when the drummer held up his drum to play.

References

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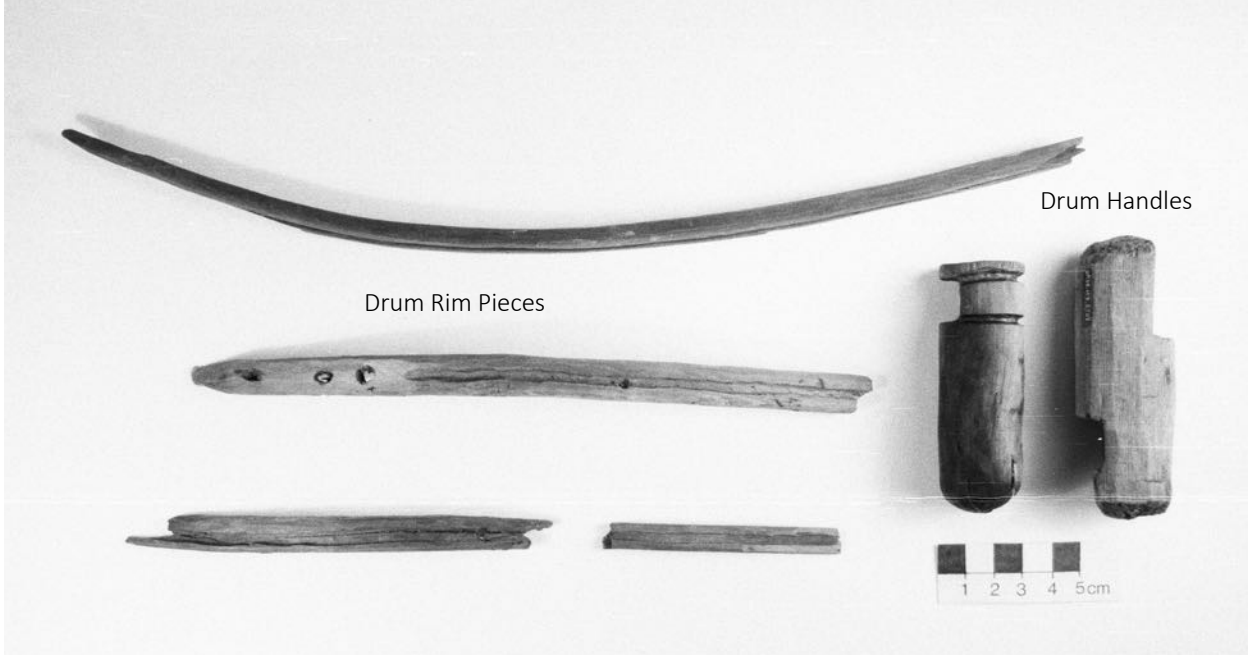
Alutiiq Technological Inventory—Carved Organic

DRUM HANDLE

Drum handles from Karluk One (AM193), courtesy of Ronnie Lind



Alutiiq Technological Inventory—Carved Organic





Alutiiq Technological Inventory

Artifact Class Summary Sheet

English Names **Alutiiq Names**

Industry **Activity** **Function**

Common Materials

LxWxD (cm)

Tradition Ocean Bay Kachemak Koniag Alutiiq

Miniature Yes No/Unknown **Example Sites Found**

Description

Drum rim parts from Karluk One are narrow, bent pieces of wood, with a groove running along the center of the outer edge where a string was fastened to hold a tight, flat, skin covering. Historically, these coverings were made of de-haired seal hide, a seal bladder, or even a halibut stomach. Drum rim ends, the parts fastened to handles taper to a triangular shape, have a stepped joint on one end (place where wood has been carved out to accommodate the other end of the rim) and feature holes for lashing the ends together.

References

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DRUM RIM

Drum rim fragments from Karluk One (AM193)





Alutiiq Technological Inventory

Artifact Class Summary Sheet

English Names **Alutiiq Names**

Industry **Activity** **Function**

Common Materials

LxWxD (cm)

Tradition Ocean Bay Kachemak Koniag Alutiiq

Miniature Yes No/Unknown **Example Sites Found**

Description

A single drum stick from Karluk One is a long, narrow wooden baton with a rounded end. It resembles drum sticks used by Alutiiq musicians today.

References

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DRUMSTICK

Drum and drumstick replica by Jim Dillard





Alutiiq Technological Inventory

Artifact Class Summary Sheet

English Names	Feast Bowl		Alutiiq Names	Qantaruaq (N), Alutaruaq (S)	
Industry	Carving	Activity	Festival	Function	Serving food
Common Materials	Wood				
LxWxD (cm)	Up to 51 cm long and over 30 cm wide				
Tradition	<input type="checkbox"/> Ocean Bay	<input type="checkbox"/> Kachemak	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Koniag	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alutiiq	
Miniature	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes	Example Sites Found	Karluk One		
	<input type="radio"/> No/Unknown				
Description	<p>These distinctive wooden bowls were made in a variety of sizes to hold oil</p> <p>Some of the food served at winter festivals was offered to guest in special bowls. Examples of feast bowls were recovered at Karluk One are long oval dishes with flat, flared ends. They are shaped like boats and were made in many sizes. Some very large examples are suited for serving large groups. Others appear designed for family or even individual use. Some of the Karluk One examples have small, carved recesses along their rims or in their flared ends for inset decorations. Most of these decorations have been lost, although a few retain circular pieces of shell. They are reminiscent of Tlingit feast bowls, which also has shell inlays.</p>				
References	Knecht, Richard A., 1995, The Late Prehistory of the Alutiiq People: Culture Change on the Kodiak Archipelago from 1200–1750 AD. PhD dissertation, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA.				
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FEAST BOWL

Feast bowl fragments from Karluk One (AM193)



Alutiiq Technological Inventory—Carved Organic





Alutiiq Technological Inventory

Artifact Class Summary Sheet

English Names **Alutiiq Names**

Industry **Activity** **Function**

Common Materials

LxWxD (cm)

Tradition Ocean Bay Kachemak Koniag Alutiiq

Miniature Yes No/Unknown **Example Sites Found**

Description

Alutiiq artists created a variety of small animals carvings—carefully made pieces that easily fit in the palm of your hand. These may have been amulets, carried to help connect with animal spirits. Whatever their use, they show birds, sea mammals, bears, and otters.

References

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Alutiiq Technological Inventory—Carved Organic

FIGURINE-ANIMAL

Animal carvings – Top row: Ivory bird from the Kizhuyak site, courtesy of Myrtle Olsen (right), ivory whale carving from the Uyak site (AM3) (left). Second row: Ivory whale tale carving from Igvak (AM34), ivory bear (?) carving from Perenosa bay, courtesy the Kozak family and the US Fish & Wildlife Service. Bottom row: wooden animal carvings from Karluk One (AM193).





Alutiiq Technological Inventory

Artifact Class Summary Sheet

English Names	Figurine-Human		Alutiiq Names	Suaruangcuk	
Industry	Carving	Activity	Festival	Function	
Common Materials	Wood, ivory, bone				
LxWxD (cm)	Great variation				
Tradition	<input type="checkbox"/> Ocean Bay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kachemak	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Koniag	<input type="checkbox"/> Alutiiq	
Miniature	<input type="radio"/> Yes	Example Sites Found	Karluk One		
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No/Unknown				
Description	<p>This is a catch all category for carvings of the human form that don't fit into the doll or mask categories. Many such carvings focus on the face and have carefully constructed features. Others are more abstract or include some depiction of the torso. These are often made of ivory or compact pieces of land mammal bone.</p>				
References	Knecht, Richard A., 1995, The Late Prehistory of the Alutiiq People: Culture Change on the Kodiak Archipelago from 1200–1750 AD. PhD dissertation, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA.				
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Alutiiq Technological Inventory—Carved Organic

FIGURINE-HUMAN

Left: small Ivory figurines from the Uyak Site (AM3), Right: Bark figurine from Karluk One (AM193)



Left: Large Ivory figurine from Afognak Island, avocation collection, Right: whale bone sculpture of a head, Carlson collection.



Alutiiq Technological Inventory

Artifact Class Summary Sheet

English Names	Mask		Alutiiq Names	Giinaruaq, Maas'kaa, Giinaquq	
Industry	Carving	Activity	Festival	Function	Calling spirits to festivals
Common Materials	Wood				
LxWxD (cm)					
Tradition	<input type="checkbox"/> Ocean Bay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kachemak	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Koniag	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alutiiq	
Miniature	<input type="radio"/> Yes	Example Sites Found	Crag Point, Karluk One		
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No/Unknown				
Description	<p>Alutiiq craftsmen carved masks in a variety of styles and sizes, but all depicted faces, and most were decorated with paint and encircling attachments.</p> <p>Face masks are the most common style in historic collections. These masks feature a hollowed back, eyeholes, and sometimes a bite bar—a place for the dancer to hold the mask in his teeth. Some masks are roughly size of a human head. Others are much larger. Some nineteenth-century masks collected on Kodiak and Afognak islands are up to 60 cm long and weigh as much as 9 kg (20 lbs; Haakanson and Steffian 2009). These may have been suspended from the ceiling of the qasgiq during performances, so that dancers could perform behind them. The design of face masks varies from stylized faces that may represent specific supernatural beings, to more realistic carvings that may be portraits. Animals' faces are rarely represented in Alutiiq masks although there are a few examples.</p> <p>In addition to face masks, Alutiiq people carved two styles of plank masks. Some plank masks are largely two-dimensional. They are large, shaped and painted boards with slits cut for eyeholes and occasionally other minimally carved facial features (Haakanson and Steffian 2009:118–123, 144). Other plank masks feature a small three-dimensional face mask carving lashed to a large decorated plank (Haakanson and Steffian 2009:128).</p>				
References	Knecht, Richard A., 1995, The Late Prehistory of the Alutiiq People: Culture Change on the Kodiak Archipelago from 1200–1750 AD. PhD dissertation, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA.				
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Alutiiq Technological Inventory—Carved Organic

MASK

Wooden owl mask, front and back, Karluk One (AM193)



Bark mask of a human face, in situ at Karluk One (AM193)



Alutiiq Technological Inventory—Carved Organic

Wooden plank masks, Karluk One (AM193) – front (left), back (right)



Alutiiq Technological Inventory

Artifact Class Summary Sheet

English Names

Mask Bangle

Alutiiq Names

Awatiisqam ilakua'a

Industry

Carving

Activity Festival

Function

Mask decoration

Common
Materials

Wood

LxWxD (cm)

Tradition

Ocean Bay

Kachemak

Koniag

Alutiiq

Miniature

Yes

Example Sites Found

Karluk One

No/Unknown

Description

These wooden ornaments were attached to the hoop surrounding a mask. Many are shaped like miniature paddles or feathers, others feature a geometric shape on the distal, decorative end, or even a shape that resembles a whale's tail. Below the decorative end, there is a narrow, cylindrical shaft. At the proximal end of the shaft, most bangles have a grooved or notched end for attachment to a mask hoop.

References

Knecht, Richard A., 1995, The Late Prehistory of the Alutiiq People: Culture Change on the Kodiak Archipelago from 1200–1750 AD. PhD dissertation, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA.

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Alutiiq Technological Inventory—Carved Organic

MASK BANGLE

Mask bangles from Karluk One (AM193)



Alutiiq Technological Inventory

Artifact Class Summary Sheet

English Names **Alutiiq Names**

Industry **Activity** **Function**

Common Materials

LxWxD (cm)

Tradition Ocean Bay Kachemak Koniag Alutiiq

Miniature Yes No/Unknown **Example Sites Found**

Description

A nearly complete plank mask from Karluk One illustrates the construction of a mask hoop, the bent piece of wood that encircled a mask and to which bangles were attached. This cylindrical shaft used to create the hoop tapers at either end to support lashing the end together to form a circle. Two cross pieces, narrow cylindrical shafts a little longer than the width of the mask were part of the hoop assembly and helped to secure the hope to the mask and support its shape and weight. See photo below.

References

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Alutiiq Technological Inventory—Carved Organic

MASK HOOP

Plank mask with hoop — top (front view), bottom (back view), Karluk One (AM193)





Alutiiq Technological Inventory

Artifact Class Summary Sheet

English Names **Alutiiq Names**

Industry **Activity** **Function**

Common Materials

LxWxD (cm)

Tradition Ocean Bay Kachemak Koniag Alutiiq

Miniature Yes No/Unknown **Example Sites Found**

Description

Maskettes are small, stylized carvings of human faces that are similar in design to historic full sized masks. However, they too small to cover the face. Most are hand-size, and some are tiny. Moreover, only some of them have hollowed backs. Others have a flat back as if the maskette had been mounted on something. The function of these small carvings is not known, and they may represent several functionally different objects—amulets, drum handle attachments, masks for dolls or human figurines, shamanic pieces, etc.

References

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Alutiiq Technological Inventory—Carved Organic

MASKETTE

Miniature plank masks of bark, Karluk One (AM193)



Miniature masks with human features, Karluk One (AM193) – front and back



Alutiiq Technological Inventory—Carved Organic

Mask-like carving of bark with bird and human features, Karluk One (AM193)



Alutiiq Technological Inventory

Artifact Class Summary Sheet

English Names	Ornament		Alutiiq Names	Tangerhnit'staaq	
Industry	Carving	Activity	Festival	Function	Unknown
Common Materials	Ivory, bone				
LxWxD (cm)	Highly variable				
Tradition	<input type="checkbox"/> Ocean Bay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kachemak	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Koniag	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alutiiq	
Miniature	<input type="radio"/> Yes	Example Sites Found	Uyak site		
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No/Unknown				
Description	<p>In addition to carving human and animal figurines, Alutiiq ancestors made a variety of other ornamental carvings. These are particularly common in Late Kachemak assemblages and are often made of ivory. They are typically unique pieces, rather than a standardize type. They may have been person amulets, decorative pieces, or even miniatures used for play or ritual. An example is a tiny ivory carving of a throwing board from the Uyak site. This site also held some ivory chains and ivory eyes with inset coal pupils have been found in Kachemak sites in association with burials.</p>				
References	Heizer, Robert F., 1956, Archaeology of the Uyak Site, Kodiak Island, Alaska. University of California Press, Berkeley.				
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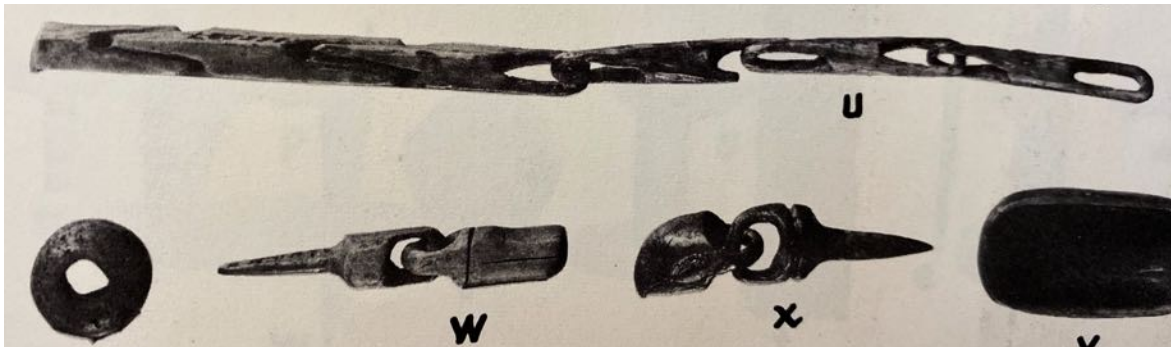
Alutiiq Technological Inventory—Carved Organic

ORNAMENT

Miniature throwing board of Ivory, Uyak Site (AM3)



Carved ivory chains from the Uyak site (from Heizer 1956)



Alutiiq Technological Inventory

Artifact Class Summary Sheet

English Names	Rattle Hoop		Alutiiq Names	Awirlursuutem awatiisqaa	
Industry	Carving	Activity	Festival	Function	Part of rattle assembly
Common Materials	Wood				
LxWxD (cm)					
Tradition	<input type="checkbox"/> Ocean Bay	<input type="checkbox"/> Kachemak	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Koniag	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alutiiq	
Miniature	<input type="radio"/> Yes	Example Sites Found	Karluk One		
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No/Unknown				
Description	<p>The remains of a single rattle illustrate that prehistoric pieces closely mirror circular, puffin-beak rattles collected from Kodiak in the nineteenth century. The Karluk rattle features two concentric, wooden hoops fitted made with cylindrical pieces of wood bent to shape and joined at the ends to form a circle - like the construction of a mask hoop, only much smaller. These hoops were lashed to a two-piece wooden handle or cross brace that formed an X across the hoops on the proximal side of the piece.</p>				
References	<p>Steffian, Amy F., Marnie A. Leist, Sven D. Haakanson, and Patrick G. Saltonstall, 2015, Kal'unek—From Karluk, Kodiak Alutiiq History and the Archaeology of the Karluk One Site. University of Alaska Press, Fairbanks.</p>				
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Alutiiq Technological Inventory—Carved Organic

RATTLE HOOP

Rattle hoop and cross brace in a bentwood vessel, in situ, Karluk One (AM193)



Alutiiq Technological Inventory

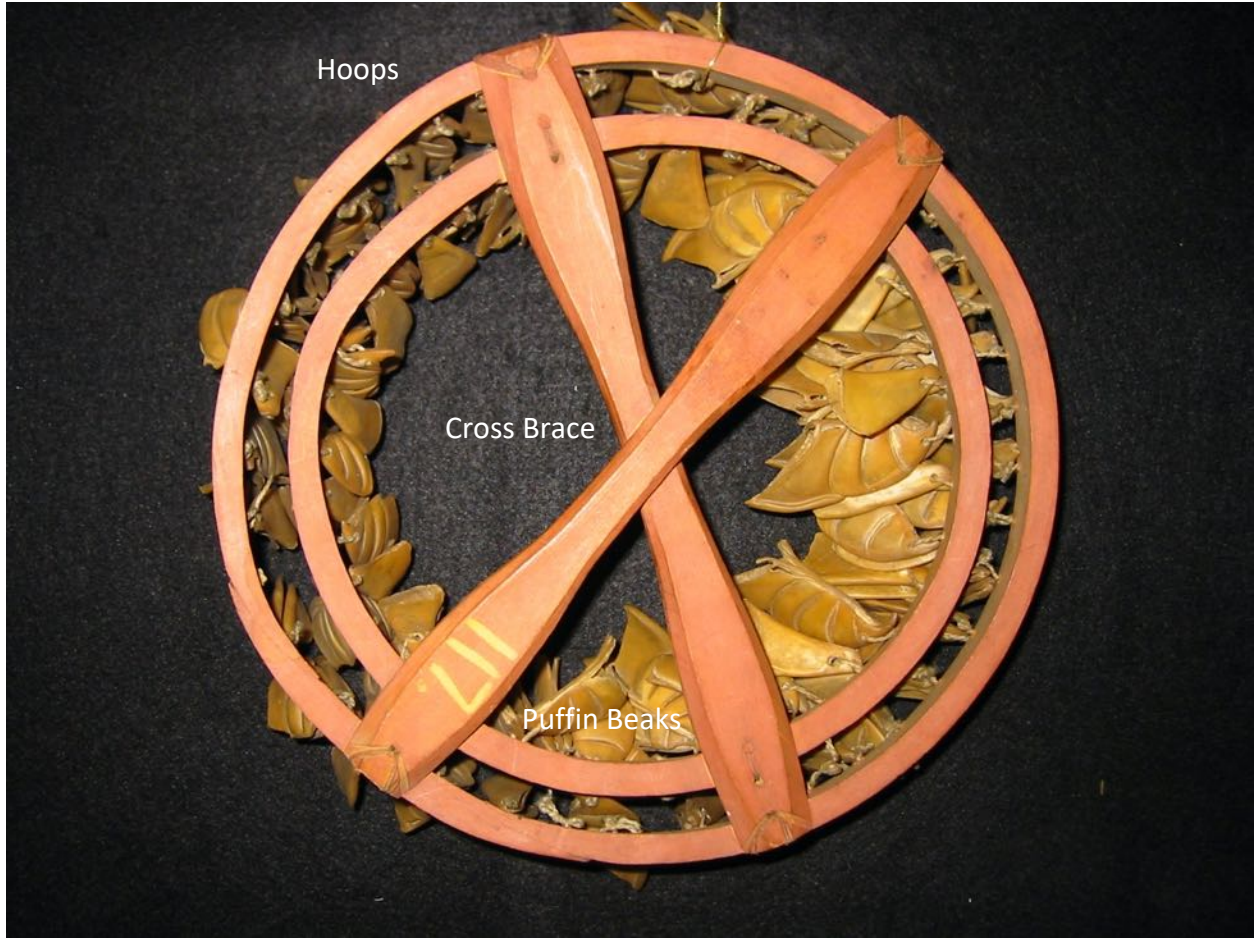
Artifact Class Summary Sheet

English Names	Rattle Cross Brace		Alutiiq Names	Awirlursuutem tuknisuutii	
Industry	Carving	Activity	Festival	Function	Part of rattle assembly
Common Materials	Wood				
LxWxD (cm)					
Tradition	<input type="checkbox"/> Ocean Bay	<input type="checkbox"/> Kachemak	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Koniag	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alutiiq	
Miniature	<input type="radio"/> Yes	Example Sites Found	Karluk One		
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No/Unknown				
Description	<p>An example of a rattle handle (or cross brace) from the Karluk One collection is made of two narrow lengths of wood forming an X and crossing the center of the rattle. They extend across the edges of the hoops. Unfortunately, the pieces of this object have been spread through the large Karluk One collection and have yet to be relocated. As such, it is not possible to describe how the handles were attached to the rattle. However, nearly identical historic examples feature small, drilled holes in both ends to which the hoops were pegged. To these hoops, craftsmen tied many puffin beaks.</p>				
References	<p>Steffian, Amy F., Marnie A. Leist, Sven D. Haakanson, and Patrick G. Saltonstall, 2015, Kal'unek—From Karluk, Kodiak Alutiiq History and the Archaeology of the Karluk One Site. University of Alaska Press, Fairbanks.</p>				
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RATTLE CROSS BRACE

Historic rattle from the Ethnolen Collection, courtesy the National Museum of Finland



Alutiiq Technological Inventory

Artifact Class Summary Sheet

English Names

Shamans Doll

Alutiiq Names

Samanam suaru'a'a; Kalla'algem suaru'a'a

Industry

Carving

Activity Festival

Function

Common
Materials

Wood

LxWxD (cm)

typically about 12cm tall

Tradition

Ocean Bay

Kachemak

Koniag

Alutiiq

Miniature

Yes

Example Sites Found

Karluk One

No/Unknown

Description

While there are no known records of the gear used by kas'at, historic sources indicate that shamans employed miniature human figurines in their work, among other items. A variety of human figurines recovered from Karluk may be related to shamanic practice. Shamans are reported to have led an annual doll festival at the conclusion of the winter ceremonial season to predict the condition of the coming year and they also carved dolls in the likeness of people they wished to harm. Such a doll was damaged and left in a place where the unfortunate person would encounter it. Alutiiq Elders still recall this frightening practice and note that it could cause a person's death.

A number of the human figures in the Karluk One collection feature unique, detailed faces, on top of a stake-like body without arms or legs. Several are made on knots of wood. We interpret this type of figure as shamans' dolls as many have been damaged—cut, gouged, burned, or broken.

References

Knecht, Richard A., 1995, The Late Prehistory of the Alutiiq People: Culture Change on the Kodiak Archipelago from 1200–1750 AD. PhD dissertation, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA.

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Alutiiq Technological Inventory—Carved Organic

SHAMANS DOLL

Shaman's dolls from Karluk One (AM193)

