

Northern Peoples

Alaska Native Culture and History. Papers from a symposium, Osaka, Japan, Aug. 1978. YOSHINOBU KOTANI and WILLIAM B. WORKMAN, Eds. National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, 1980. vi, 324 pp., illus. Paper, \$21. Senri Ethnological Studies, No. 4.

Until the Russian incursion about 200 years ago, Alaska was solely inhabited by Eskimos, Aleuts, and Athabaskan and Northwest Coast Indians, peoples speaking at least 20 distinct languages, culturally and biologically adapted to the entire range of Alaskan environments and resources, and having a culture history spanning perhaps 25 to 30 thousand years. Because of Alaska's remote location, severe climate, and inadequate logistic and transportation networks, these aboriginal inhabitants were not intensively studied by trained anthropologists until the 1930's. Given the brevity of the research history and the relative paucity of scholars who have been involved in Alaskan anthropology, this volume is a valuable contribution toward understanding various aspects of Alaskan native culture and history.

The 11 substantive papers included in the volume are the result of a symposium the primary purpose of which was to bring together Japanese and North American scholars specializing in Alaskan native studies. The papers are not meant to provide complete topical or areal coverage of Alaskan natives, but rather represent the current research interests of the individual participants. Four of the papers discuss native language and culture change in the 20th century, two deal with traditional or early post-contact societies, and five cover the prehistoric record.

In one of the contributions discussing native life in the 20th century, Worl describes the central importance of bowhead whale hunting to the social, cultural, and economic integrity of the North Alaskan Eskimo. This is one of a number of recent articles devoted to this subject in light of the current international controversy among North Alaskan Eskimos, the U.S. Government, and the International Whaling Commission concerning the continued exploitation of this endangered species. Miyaoka documents the continuous decline of native languages that began with Russian contact and rap-

idly accelerated under the American policies of assimilation. Even though the process of language extinction seems to be reversing somewhat since the introduction of bilingual education in 1970, he sees the current period as critical for the survival of a number of native languages. Gamo attempts to reconstruct traditional Nelson Island Eskimo band structure and provides a brief synopsis of the technological, economic, and religious changes in the 20th century that have altered it. His suggestion that traditional residence patterns were uxorilocal (matrilocal) and that the most important social and economic ties were between a male and the husbands of his daughters and sisters needs additional documentation. The pattern indicated in his case study strikes this reviewer as nearly identical to the matri-patrilocal system previously described for Nunivak and Saint Lawrence Island—that is, temporary residence of males with their wives' families immediately after marriage before permanent establishment of residence with their own male relatives. Nelson reviews the Athabaskan Indian subsistence and trapping economy and related ideology in the boreal forest zone of interior Alaska. Although this paper is a careful and accurate descriptive effort based on extensive and intimate knowledge of Athabaskan life, it does not break any fresh ground, since it summarizes Nelson's two excellent monographs on the subject.

Burch reconstructs traditional Eskimo societies in Northwest Alaska with all the rigor, precision, and careful documentation that we have come to expect from his work. He forcefully argues that the division of North Alaskan Eskimo society into Tariaurmiut (coastal) and Nunamiut (interior) components, so well entrenched in the anthropological literature, is a distortion of the actual case. He presents an alternative model of 25 independent socio-territorial units linked by formal and structured inter-group relations. He thus provides a much more complex view of Northwest Alaskan social, political, and economic organization than has previously been held. Townsend's paper is a provocative reconstruction of Eskimo, Aleut, and southern Athabaskan social and political organization. Townsend argues that all

of these were ranked societies based on social and political inequality, economic wealth and redistribution, and inherited status and role. By attributing the evolution of this complex system to cultural ecological factors, larger and more sedentary populations, and the production and redistribution of economic goods far above the subsistence level, she lays aside the sterile notion that these ranked societies emerged as a result of European contact or that they can be explained by diffusion from Northwest Coast Indians. It is now clear that relatively complex societies emerged along the entire North Pacific rim in environmentally productive zones and that they cross-cut diverse cultural boundaries.

The reviews on Alaskan archeology by Dumond, Workman, and Anderson and the preliminary reports by Okada and Kotani on the large and impressive Hot Springs Site at Port Moller are particularly welcome. Anderson's review of North Alaskan prehistory isolates critical matters on which we have only partial or inadequate data. Dumond provides a sweeping review of changing subsistence strategies over the entire state for the past 11,000 years and presents some daring proposals. For example, much additional fieldwork will be required to substantiate his suggestion that the Paleo-Arctic Tradition and its direct descendants provided the cultural baseline for subsequent Aleut, Pacific Eskimo, and Northwest Coast Indian developments. Even Workman's more cautious and detailed review of the relatively well-known South Alaskan sequence often relies on an inadequate regional data base—a point he explicitly details.

Problem-oriented archeological research in Alaska has always suffered from the problems noted at the outset of this review. But in the past decade or two research efforts have become additionally hampered by complex regulatory procedures in obtaining permits, lack of coordination among agencies, and uncertainty about the ultimate disposition of numerous parcels of land. Research-oriented scholars have also been pressed into providing environmental impact statements for oil and utility companies or for implementing land conveyance procedures. The result has been a rather hit-or-miss approach to northern prehistory in the form of numerous but largely unpublished manuscripts. One hopes that these papers will begin to reorient Alaskan research into more productive channels.

This volume thus is a noteworthy contribution for scholars interested in such diverse topics as Alaskan native prehis-

tory, cultural ecology, ethnohistory, sociopolitical organization, and modernization. It is fortunate that our Japanese colleagues have provided the financial and institutional support for publishing these papers. Their research efforts in Alaska, as evidenced by these papers, have been very productive, and it is to be hoped that they will continue.

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Iron Age Europe

Culture Contact and Culture Change. Early Iron Age Central Europe and the Mediterranean World. PETER S. WELLS. Cambridge University Press, New York, 1981. xii. 172 pp., illus. \$24.95. New Studies in Archaeology.

The later prehistory of northwestern Europe has until recently attracted relatively little interest among American archaeologists. In part this was due to the strong traditions of archaeological research in such countries as France, England, and Germany, which limited opportunities for Americans to undertake excavations and other major research projects. As a result, scholars from the United States concentrated on the Mediterranean and more recently on the Balkans. The lack of interest was also due in part to a perception of European prehistoric studies. Migration maps showing Battle Axe and Urnfield peoples moving like armies across Europe or detailed classificatory object studies with a 19th-century flavor hardly appealed to archaeologists exploring new frontiers in social-science-oriented cultural reconstruction.

This picture is changing. Scholars in both the United States and England, countries where archaeology has been most innovative with respect to theory, have become increasingly interested in Iron Age European material. Not only does Iron Age Europe provide well-excavated sites and carefully analyzed bodies of material culture, it also offers problems of culture change produced by a combination of internal evolution and contact with the Mediterranean and other areas. Such concerns are important for archaeologists involved in the reconstruction of complex societies.

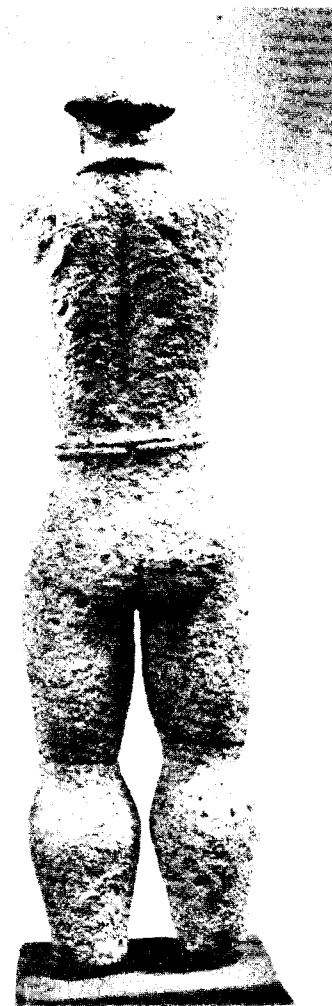
This study by Peter Wells of Harvard is an important contribution to this emerging body of research. The author is well trained in the traditional areas of later European prehistory, knows the

collections and sites, and has considerable excavation experience, especially in Germany. He also has the advantage of a thorough grounding in anthropological theory and the various schools of the "new" archaeology and relevant branches of history such as the *Annales* school. This allows him to see traditional processes and materials in new, interesting ways.

The book centers on two important Iron Age cultures, the Hallstatt and the La Tène, and in particular on the impact that trade with the Mediterranean had on their economic and social structures. The basic information on this trade and the archaeological context within Hallstatt and La Tène where the Greek and Etruscan material appears is succinctly and clearly presented. The description of the German material, the author's specialty, is especially good. A selection of photographs, some very useful maps, and a full bibliography accompany the description.

The archeology shows clearly that major changes took place in Iron Age west-central European society during the period of contact with the Mediterranean. The most obvious manifestation of this is the appearance at a limited number of centers of rich burial groups indicating concentrations of wealth and power. The author attempts to explain this process using current anthropological theories of cultural change. The range of his reading is impressive. To explain Hallstatt development he uses a "chieftain" model according to which certain individuals enhanced their own position by controlling trade with the Greek colony of Massilia. For the succeeding La Tène groups, he sees less concentration of wealth and power and argues that the La Tène Mediterranean goods reflect more widespread contact with Italy, arising from migration and mercenary service.

The archeological information and the many insights make this a most stimulating book. Not irrelevant for those who



Sandstone figure from a burial mound at Hirschlanden. Height, 1.5 meters. "The modeling of the legs shows familiarity with Mediterranean artistic traditions. The neck ring, belt, and dagger are objects typical of Late Hallstatt Württemberg." [From *Culture Contact and Culture Change*]