

Anthropology of the North Pacific Rim

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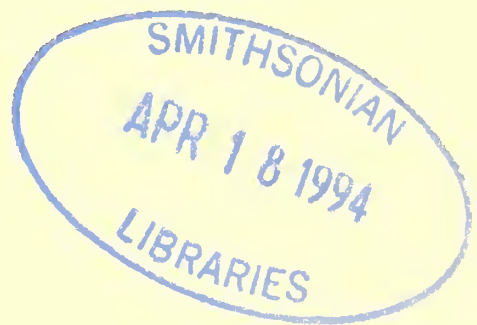
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EDITED BY

WILLIAM W. FITZHUGH

AND VALÉRIE CHAUSSONNET

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MICHAEL KRAUSS

This collection of essays is dedicated to the memory of Sergei Ia. Serov, our friend, colleague, and the helping spirit of “Crossroads of Continents.”

The first principle we can learn is how to coexist with nature, to live together with nature and not destroy the environment. The second is that all peoples of the world may have different cultures, but the essence of their culture is human. We are the same breed. We are all human.

—SERGEI IA. SEROV, 1940–92

Contributors

SERGEI A. ARUTIUNOV is a corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences and chairman of the Department of Caucasian Studies, Institute of Ethnology, Moscow. He obtained his doctoral degree from the Institute of Oriental Languages in Moscow, specializing in traditional Japanese culture, its transitions, and modernization. In the late 1950s, he became interested in prehistoric cultural relations in the North Pacific and Arctic, and since then has made several trips to Northeast and Northwest Siberia. The results of his research have appeared in numerous monographs—notably *Ancient Cultures of the Asiatic Eskimos* (Moscow, 1969) and *Issues in Ethnic History of the Bering Sea Region* (Moscow, 1975), both coauthored with Dorian Sergeev, and *The Whale Alley* (Moscow, 1982), coauthored with Igor Krupnik and Mikhail Chlenov—and numerous papers and international presentations.

LYDIA T. BLACK is professor of anthropology at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. A specialist in anthropological theory and ethnohistory, she has focused on Siberia, the North Pacific, and the circumpolar cultural regions. Since 1975 she has worked with native Alaskan communities, particularly with the Unangan (Aleut). In 1992, she was elected foreign member to the



“Crossroads of Continents” symposium participants and catalogue authors, September 1988. *Standing, left to right:* Galina Pendill, Richard Jordan †, Christy G. Turner II, Edwin Hall, Aron Crowell, James W. VanStone, William W. Fitzhugh, Sergei Ia. Serov †, Ernest S. Burch, Jr., Rudolf Its †, Vladimir I. Vasil’ev, Il’ia S. Gurvich †, Nikolai N. Dikov, Chuner M. Taksami, Michael Krauss, Valerii A. Tishkov, Stephen B. Young, Margaret Blackman, Liudmila P.

Center for the Study of Russian America and Russian-American Relations, Institute of History, Russian Academy of Sciences. Her recent publications include *Glory Remembered: Wooden Headgear of Alaska Sea Hunters*. A major work, *Russia’s American Possession: Alaska 1741–1867*, is in preparation.

VALÉRIE CHAUSSONNET has been associated with the Arctic Studies Center at the Smithsonian Institution since 1986. A member of the “Crossroads of Continents” curatorial team, she contributed a chapter on clothing to the exhibition catalogue and translated the Russian chapters into English. She has lectured in the United States and Canada on Arctic clothing and on the peoples of Siberia. She is currently curating “Crossroads Alaska,” a small traveling version of “Crossroads of Continents,” designed for rural venues in Alaska and Siberia.



Kuz'mina, Bill Holm, George MacDonald, Elena M. Mikhailova, Bernadette Driscoll, Valerii O. Shubin, Jean-Loup Rousselot, William C. Sturtevant. *Seated:* Valérie Chaussonnet, Galina I. Dzeniskevich, Ann Fienup-Riordan, Mariia I. Zhornitskaia, Frederica de Laguna, Zoia P. Sokolova, Lydia Black, Rosita Worl. (Photograph by Chip Clark)

† Deceased.

ARON CROWELL was the co-curator of the "Crossroads of Continents" exhibition. His research has focused on the archeology and cultural history of southern Alaska, where he has directed projects for the Smithsonian Institution, University of California, U.S. National Park Service, state of Alaska, and the Kodiak Area Native Association. He is currently finishing dissertation research at the University of California, Berkeley, on the eighteenth-century Russian fur trade settlement of Three Saints Bay on Kodiak Island. In addition to the *Crossroads of Continents* exhibition catalogue, his publications include recent journal articles and reports on southern Alaskan ceremonialism, paleodemography, and settlement patterns in the Gulf of Alaska region.

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NIKOLAI N. DIKOV is a corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences and chairman of the Department of Archeology and Ethnography,

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BERNADETTE DRISCOLL, a specialist in Inuit art and ethnography, is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Anthropology at the Johns Hopkins University. Since the late 1970s she has worked on historical Inuit clothing in museum collections and through her fieldwork with seamstresses in the Canadian Arctic. As former curator of Inuit art at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, she organized more than 30 exhibitions. Her catalogue publications include *The Inuit Amautik: I Like My Hood to Be Full* (1980), *Legends, and Songs* (1982), *Inuit Myths*, and "Pretending to Be Caribou: The Inuit Parka as an Artistic Tradition" in *The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples* (1987). She is currently guest curator for the exhibition "Northern Light: Inuit Textile Art of the Canadian Arctic," organized by the Baltimore Museum of Art.

GALINA I. DZENISKEVICH is North American curator at the Museum/Institute of Anthropology and Ethnography in St. Petersburg. She is a recognized expert in traditional cultures of the Athapaskan Indians of Central and Southern Alaska and of museum collections brought by the Russians in the 1800s from their colonies in North America. She has published a monograph, "The Alaskan Athapaskans: Essays in Material and Spiritual Culture" (Leningrad, 1987), and several papers on those subjects.

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IL'IA S. GURVICH, who died in 1992, was a leading figure in the studies of native peoples of Soviet Siberia throughout the 1970s and 1980s. His initial fieldwork was done among the Yakuts in northwestern Arctic Yakutia and it was later expanded to include several other native nations of Northeast Siberia. Dr. Gurvich headed the Department of Northern Peoples of the former Institute of Ethnography in Moscow for 20 years, and he personally supervised several long-term projects in ethnic history, the study of traditional cultures, and Soviet-inspired modernization of the Siberian natives. He published several books, notably *Ethnic History of Northeastern Siberia* (Moscow, 1966), and *The Culture of the Northern Yakuts* (Moscow, 1975), and about 200 papers.

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RICHARD H. JORDAN, who died in 1991, was chairman of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks. During his tragically short life, he established an international reputation as a North American Arctic archeologist whose field research ranged from Labrador and Greenland to Alaska. His major contributions were in Labrador prehistory and paleoecology, Labrador Inuit historical archeology, the theory of Arctic culture change and climatology, and the archeology of Kodiak Island, Alaska. Jordan was an avid participant in the Crossroads project. He will also be remembered as a superb teacher and as an early convert to community-relevant research in the North.

MICHAEL KRAUSS is a professor of linguistics and director of the Alaska Native Language Center at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks and a specialist in Athapaskan-Eyak and Eskimo-Aleut languages since 1960. The center's responsibilities include the documentation and study of all native Alaskan languages, and also their cultivation and promotion for future generations in Alaska, as well as on an international scale. Krauss has accordingly been active in efforts to reestablish relations between Yupik Eskimos of Alaska and the former Soviet Chukotka who speak the same language but were separated by political barriers for 40 years.

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ROZA G. LIAPUNOVA, who died in 1992, was curator of North America at the Museum/Institute of Anthropology and Ethnography in St. Petersburg. She was widely recognized as a leading expert in Russian museum collections from the Aleutian Islands and Southern Alaska dating to the 1700s and 1800s. In the late 1970s, she became involved in various field projects among the Commander Island Aleuts of the Russian Far East with a view to record-

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VALERII O. SHUBIN is a deputy director of the Sakhalin Regional Museum in the city of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, on Sakhalin Island. Her early work dealt with the Neolithic history of Sakhalin Island and its local Neolithic cultures, ancestral to historic Ainu. During the 1980s, Dr. Shubin started a long-term archeological survey of the post-contact sites on the Kurile Islands, mainly of the remains of the local outposts built by the Russian-American Company in the late 1700s and early 1800s. Some of the findings have been published in several papers and reports. He is currently involved in several Russian-American archeological projects on the Kurile Islands and Kodiak Island, and is the director on the Russian side for the small traveling version of the "Crossroads of Continents" exhibition.

ZOIA P. SOKOLOVA is chairperson of the Department of the Peoples of Siberia at the Moscow Institute of Ethnology. Her early fieldwork in the mid-1950s concentrated on the Khanty and Mansi people of Western Siberia, primarily on their dwelling and settlement patterns, traditional beliefs, social

structure, and ethnohistory. Results of her extended research have been published in several monographs, including *Social Organization of Khanty and Mansi during the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Moscow, 1983) and *Endogamous Area and Ethnic Group* (Moscow, 1990). She has also published numerous papers and several books: *The Land Yugoria* (Moscow, 1976), *In the Expanses of Siberia* (Moscow, 1981), and *The Trip to Yugra* (Moscow, 1982). Recently, Dr. Sokolova has become involved in issues pertaining to native Siberian social and cultural development, self-determination, and modernization.

CHUNER M. TAKSAMI, chairperson, Siberian Department, Museum/Institute of Anthropology and Ethnography, St. Petersburg, devoted his academic career to the study of his native people, the Nivkhs of the lower Amur River and of Sakhalin Island. His doctoral research focused on the traditional dwelling and residential pattern of the Amur River Nivkhs, and the results of his extended research have appeared in several papers and monographs, notably *The Nivkhs: Their Culture, Modern Economy, and Every-Day Life* (Leningrad, 1967) and in *Issues in Ethnography and History of the Nivkhs* (Leningrad, 1975). He is currently active in supporting political claims of the Siberian native people, who are seeking the restoration of their hunting grounds, subsistence patterns, and cultural life.

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papers, and a number of contributions to volumes on the culture and history of the Siberian native peoples.

MARIIA IA. ZHORNITSKAIA, of the Moscow Institute of Ethnology, began her career as a professional ballet dancer who became an enthusiastic ethnomusicologist. With her original experience in native dancing and music acquired in Yakutia, in Central Siberia, in the 1970s, she expanded her research to other native peoples of northeastern Siberia, mainly the Chukchi, Koryak, Siberian Eskimo, and Yukaghir. She has published two books: *The Dances of Yakutia* (Moscow, 1966) and *Choreographic Art of the Indigenous Peoples of Northeastern Siberia* (Moscow, 1983). She has also written several papers on traditional dances, music festivals, games of the aboriginal Siberians, and their transformation under contacts, innovations, and governmental cultural policies.

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Introduction

WILLIAM W. FITZHUGH AND
VALÉRIE CHAUSSONNET

SOMETIMES IT HAPPENS THAT AN event, a discovery, or an undertaking, or a photograph, a snatch of poetry, or a slogan captures the dynamic of a time and in so doing comes to symbolize or represent these events to later generations. So it seems to have happened in the case of the joint United States–Soviet Union–Canadian exhibition program, “Crossroads of Continents: Cultures of Siberia and Alaska.” What began as a scholarly project exploring cultural, historical, and scientific exchange across a politically sensitive border at first seemed likely to invite censure and political or financial disaster; but as it moved toward realization, the Crossroads program found itself swept along in a tide of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, and its theme of cultural exchange and openness at Bering Strait found broader reverberations in the evolving international arena.

Even during the life of the project itself, previously unthinkable developments occurred, such as the transformation of the previously hostile border at Bering Strait into a zone of free travel and cultural exchange for native peoples. This fortunate coincidence of timing underlines the central theme of the Crossroads project—the need for a greater understanding of North Pacific peoples and cultures, their relationships and histories, and the dynamics that

shaped their development across this geographical frontier. None of these subjects can be studied or understood without reference to Asian–American contacts and history. It is to this subject that the current volume is dedicated.

The essays presented here were prepared as contributions to a two-day symposium convened at the opening of the joint Soviet–American exhibition “Crossroads of Continents: Cultures of Siberia and Alaska” at the Smithsonian Institution’s Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C., September 18–19, 1988 (see figure 1).¹ This volume complements and expands on its companion volume, the exhibition catalogue, which bears the same title as the show. Together, both volumes provide a regional overview of the anthropology, history, and art of the North Pacific region from a comparative, trans-Beringian perspective. This viewpoint, pioneered by Franz Boas with the Morris Jesup North Pacific Expedition (1898–1903), was the driving force of integrative Asian–American anthropological studies of the early twentieth century. But the political barriers imposed in the ensuing years severed traditional contacts between native peoples and strangled a flourishing school of North Pacific anthropological, linguistic, and folkloristic scholarship. Therefore subsequent work was forced into more politically and geographically confined modes. While these midcentury years brought a better understanding of cultural diversity and dynamics within Siberia and Northwestern North America (see, e.g., *Handbook of North American Indians*, vols. 5, 6, 7; and Levin and Potapov 1961, 1964), the political barriers had a devastating effect on integrative North Pacific studies. Fieldwork exchanges were terminated, Russian language training declined, and anthropologists and folklorists turned elsewhere for research opportunities; even topographic maps portraying the Soviet Far East and Alaska on a single sheet ceased to be available.

From its inception, “Crossroads” was conceived as more than a joint Soviet–American–Canadian exhibition; its larger goal was to become a vehicle not only for increasing public understanding of the little-known cultures of the North Pacific and Beringian region, but also for building scholarly contacts and future collaborative and research programs. At the time that the exhibit concept was formulated, from 1977 to 1983, these larger aspirations took the form of dreams rather than of objective reality. In these difficult years, when our work was interrupted because official contact had ceased—after the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan and the 1983 downing of the Korean jetliner—the participants were less than sanguine about the prospects of success. On more than one occasion we wondered if there would ever be an exhi-



FIGURE 1. King Island Dancers at “Crossroads of Continents” opening, National Museum of Natural History/National Museum of Man, Washington, D.C., September 1988. (Photograph by Jeff Tinsley)

bition and if perhaps the major contribution of the project might not be of a more personal and educational nature—that it would consist of developing scholarly contacts, learning about trans-Beringian cultures, and initiating international and institutional ties. At that time it was difficult enough to arrange a single scholarly visit without tempting fate with larger plans. Yet, as our work progressed and the outlines of the exhibition emerged, we became bold enough to expand the framework of the traditional exhibition into a larger public and scholarly event and to think more seriously not only of Beringian history but also of a significantly different political reality and the new meaning of this continental “crossroads” today.

This volume is only one of the many “faces” of the Crossroads program, which also includes the central exhibition; film presentations; exchanges of curators and museum specialists; performances by native artists, dancers, and tradition-bearers; and smaller local exhibitions (still under development). Even museum activities are beginning to establish their own traditions; happily for scholarship, one of these is the inaugural symposium. In our case, this important event provided a mechanism to bring together a group of North Pacific and Beringian scholars, some of whom were not able to take part directly in the preparation of the exhibition but whose work was directly pertinent to the subject matter. The symposium was convened under the auspices

of the Smithsonian Institution, the Institute of Ethnography of the then USSR Academy of Sciences, and the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX). Sponsorship for the program, which was held adjacent to the "Crossroads" exhibition in the Museum of Natural History's Evans Gallery, came from the National Museum of Natural History/Museum of Man, the museum's Department of Anthropology and its newly created Arctic Studies Center, the Office of Conference Services, the Office of Interdisciplinary Studies, the Office of International Relations, and the Office of Fellowships and Grants. Without this assistance and the help of many other organizations, such as the conference translations services of the Organization for American Soviet Exchanges (OASES), the symposium could never have been held.

The purpose of the symposium was to provide an opportunity for North American and Soviet scholars to present original scholarly papers on research within the subject area of the exhibition, which included the Chukchi and Bering Sea coasts and the North Pacific/Beringian rim from the Amur River to the southern Northwest Coast. This geographic region was selected for a number of reasons—some cultural and historical; others related to pragmatic matters of institutional relationships and capabilities, the availability of collections, and project protocol agreements.

This region of the North Pacific has long been considered fertile ground for investigating the cultural and linguistic ties and cross-links between Eastern Siberia/the Russian Far East and Northwestern North America (Alaska/Northwest Coast) in prehistoric and historical times. Although the ties are to some extent geographic and ecological in nature, they have a deep cultural, biological, and historical foundation. Far from being lost in an icy, fog-bound fastness at the ends of the "civilized" world, the North Pacific-Beringian region can be more appropriately considered an "Arctic Mediterranean," a region rich in natural resources and cultural diversity where the movements of peoples, materials, and ideas across a major geographic divide have given rise to a distinct heritage and several common bonds, ranging from similar subsistence strategies and technologies to comparable art forms, rituals, and religious beliefs.

These ties appear especially strong when the groups on either side of the divide are viewed with a comparative lens. One of the surprising discoveries of the Jesup expedition was that widely separated fishing and seal-hunting cultures of the Northwest Coast and the Amur River/Sea of Okhotsk region show striking degrees of similarity in salmon and bear ceremonialism (Boas

1903, 1905; MacDonald 1983); likewise, some Siberian groups—such as the Koryak and Chukchi—have many folkloristic and mythological features in common with Alaskan and Northwest Coast groups, most prominent in their Raven cycle stories (see chapter 2). Whether or not these similarities result from similar adaptations, similar resources and subsistence strategies, or perhaps from deeply rooted historical ties is a complex research problem of the region. But as one follows the trend of coastal cultures north toward Bering Strait, Siberian and Alaskan groups increasingly shared a similar geographical and ecological region and employed technologies and economies that emphasized sea mammal hunting; and their cultural, biological, and linguistic relationships can be explained more readily by a common origin and historical contact.

North Pacific and Bering/Chukchi Sea cultures also share a history of contact and historical exchanges following the arrival of Europeans, who first came to Siberia shortly after 1600 and whose numbers increased following Vitus Bering's first voyage in 1728. Anthropological knowledge of this region is more specifically tied to the history of research on Siberian–American exchanges that began with two projects having this geographic focus: the Morris Jesup Expedition of the American Museum of Natural History, led by Franz Boas, which studied the ethnology, physical anthropology, folklore, linguistics, and ethnomusicology of the region; and Leroi-Gourhan's *Archéologie du Pacifique Nord* (1946), which attempted the first archeological synthesis of the region.

The results of the Jesup expedition and analyses of other early ethnographic collections had a great impact on the later development of anthropological theory in the Beringian region. Perhaps most important was the legacy of the “Americanoid” and “Eskimo wedge” theories developed by the Jochelson, Bogoras, and Boas team, which built on previous work by Sternberg and others (see chapter 1). Both theories are still entrenched in current interpretations of Beringian culture history; both need to be revised and reappraised.

After the Jesup expedition, North Pacific scholarship became eclipsed by developments in circumpolar culture theory (Bogoras 1924, 1929; Gjessing 1944). Then, with the onset of Stalinism, fieldwork and international contacts declined. Though folklorists and material culture specialists continued to publish comparative studies (e.g., Hatt 1969 [1914], 1949), linguists and social anthropologists became disenchanted with the broad generalizations derived from the Jesup expedition and turned away from comparative North

Pacific themes. Archeologists, however, continued to explore the possibility of prehistoric contacts with distributional and stratigraphic techniques (Leroi-Gourhan 1946; Quimby 1947; Collins 1937; de Laguna 1934, 1940).

Throughout the twentieth century, studies of Asian-American contact and culture history have been the subject of a number of symposia, first at international meetings such as the Twenty-First Congress of Americanists (1925) and the Fifth Pacific Science Congress (1933). After a long hiatus, these meetings began again recently with the convening of special conferences, such as the U.S.–USSR Symposium on the Peopling of the New World held in Washington, D.C., in 1977, published in part in *Arctic Anthropology* 16(1), 1979. As the title suggests, most of the contributions were archeological, with a few ethnological presentations: “conspicuously missing from this symposium [were] linguistic studies” (Michael 1979:1)—a weakness that was to be somewhat corrected by Michael Krauss at the next conference, held two years later in Moscow. The most recent international conference to reflect this crescendo of interest was a meeting in Moscow in 1979, on the same theme, published in Russian under the title *Traditsionnye Kul'tury Severnoi Sibiri i Severnoi Ameriki* (Traditional cultures of Northern Siberia and Northern [North] America, Gurvich 1981), and distributed in the English translation under the title *Cultures of the Bering Sea Region* (Michael and VanStone n.d. [1983]). Also in 1983 a collection of Soviet papers appeared: *Na styke Chukotki i Aliaski* (Crossroads of Chukotka and Alaska, Alekseev 1983), consisting of ethnohistorical, demographic, ethnological, physical anthropological, and archeological studies. That volume was followed in 1986 by another, focusing primarily on physical anthropological data (Velikanova and Zolotareva 1986). IREX played a central role in supporting these later efforts through its Commission on History and Anthropology, whose sponsorship of scholarly exchanges beginning in 1978 led directly to the “Crossroads” exhibition and research project.

The latest contribution in this series is the catalogue *Crossroads of Continents: Cultures of Siberia and Alaska* (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988a). Planned as more than an ordinary exhibition catalogue, its 360 pages of illustrated text summarize the prehistory, history, anthropology, and art of the North Pacific region from Paleolithic times to the present, with emphasis on the material culture and societies of the nineteenth century.² A number of reviews of this multiauthored book (it has 37 chapters) have appeared (see, for example, Gamble 1989; Krech 1989; Dyson 1989; Ray 1990; Steelquist 1990). A

Yale-Smithsonian seminar held in the spring of 1989 provided an additional opportunity to discuss Crossroads themes (Hoover et al. 1990).

Like the exhibition itself, the symposium contributions presented here address issues pertaining to cultural adaptation, the history and relationships of traditional cultures, archeological relationships and origins, material culture studies, art, physical and cultural anthropology, and history. The contributions have been organized thematically rather than culturally, geographically, chronologically, or by nationality of author. This arrangement better reflects the orientation of the exhibition and the original comparative motives of the organizers. Rather than emphasize differences in scholarly traditions, research topics, the degree of regional or topical knowledge, we intend this volume to promote greater understanding of the broader anthropological and historical issues surrounding the study of North Pacific peoples and to stimulate new research across these long-sealed borders.

The first of these themes, treated in Part I, is the reinvestigation of the long-standing questions concerning the links between Asian and American culture originally studied by the Jesup expedition and central to the exhibition. Part II focuses on particular symbolic, ritualistic, or stylistic aspects of a specific culture, developing this subject in greater detail than was possible in the catalogue or in the exhibition itself. The essays in both parts point to a culturally rich and complex North Pacific region. Part III deals with the peaceful and not so peaceful way in which exchanges, communication, cultural contacts, and contemporary "ethnic processes"³ occurred at the crossroads of Siberia and Alaska from prehistoric times to the late 1980s and with the long-awaited reopening of the border.

PART I: RESEARCH HISTORY AND ASIAN—AMERICAN LINKS

Few subjects have been of such long-standing interest to anthropologists as the origin of New World peoples and their relationships to the Old World. The first scholar to propose affinities between American Indians and the peoples of Asia was José de Acosta (1598). In the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries, speculation on Indian and Eskimo origins concentrated on ties with Western or Northern Europe, but in due course, knowledge of the peoples,

culture, and languages of Asia and western North America gained through the observations of explorers like Krasheninnikov (1735–41, in Kamchatka), Steller (1741, in Alaska), and Cook (1778, in Alaska) led them and others to ponder seriously the prescient views of de Acosta. In the mid-nineteenth century, geologists and paleontologists came to the conclusion that a land link had existed across Bering Strait during the last ice age and that animal and perhaps human migrations had used this route to enter (or leave) the New World. Yet it was not until Franz Boas arrived at the American Museum of Natural History that these hypotheses were put to the test in a systematic fashion. Boas's organization of the Morris Jesup Expedition was the first serious investigation capable of confirming the extent and nature of these trans-Beringian ties, and his multidisciplinary, five-year research program was a logistical and intellectual tour-de-force without rival in subsequent anthropological studies of large-scale regional relationships. Unfortunately for posterity, Boas, who oversaw the completion of a 12-volume series of descriptive monographs, grew increasingly skeptical of his early pronouncements supporting the theories of Asian–American ties and, perhaps for this reason, never completed his own promised synthesis. The *Crossroads of Continents* catalogue and symposium volume have been designed in part to fill this void and to serve as a starting point for reassessing this long-standing problem.

This history and the theories of Asian–American contacts are discussed in chapters 1–4, which present the intellectual foundations and historical issues that have motivated North Pacific anthropological studies. Chapter 1 argues for a maritime North Pacific–Beringian entry route into the New World for Early Man and supports the idea of a North Pacific, rather than a *trans*-Pacific, contact diffusion zone, with a predominantly west-to-east flow, as a continuing force in cultural relations since the entry of man into the New World about 14,000 years ago. These subjects, together with a discussion of the goals and results of the Jesup expedition, amplify introductory materials presented in the *Crossroads* catalogue (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988b).

These themes are developed further in chapter 2, by Dzeniskevich, who considers the “unity” of North Pacific cultures to be well established and weighs issues of convergences against diffusion as explanations for Asian ties of Athapaskan peoples—the latter usually considered the latest of the “Indian” groups to arrive in the New World (Turner 1988). Elements of Athapaskan material culture (such as quill work techniques) and mythological themes

appear to support a trans-Beringian cultural linkage, Dzeniskevich argues. Her conclusions on mythology expand the results of the Jesup team and other studies pointing out Alaskan-Siberian links, especially in raven mythology (Bogoras 1902; Boas 1903, 1905; Iokhel'son [Jochelson] 1904; Meletinskii 1979; Gurvich 1979, n.d. [1983]; Liapunova 1987). As Dzeniskevich points out, however, "although not one of the facts mentioned contradicts the hypothesis about the possible migration of the NaDene-speaking tribes from Northeastern Asia, none of these . . . serves as indisputable proof," with the result that the debate wages on.

Chapter 3 examines the history of the Jesup expedition from both the Russian and American perspective. Kuz'mina amplifies Boas's description (1903, 1905) and explains the roles played by the wives of Bogoras and Jochelson in the field research. Next, chapter 4 provides a summary of fieldwork and ethnographic collections from the Russian Northeast in the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (MAE) in St. Petersburg (on MAE American collections, see Kinzhalov n.d. [1983]). Mikhailova notes important advances in field collecting techniques pioneered by Bogoras and Sternberg. Her essay complements the chapters on museum and collection history in the *Crossroads* catalogue.

Chapters 5 and 6 present archeological and biological evidence (from dental morphology) on Asian-American culture and population history that reaches back to the appearance of late Pleistocene man in northeastern Siberia and the peopling of the New World. In chapter 5, Dikov reviews important findings from the lower levels of the stratified site of Ushki on the Kamchatka River. Tools, dwellings, art, and other materials from this site date to ca. 12,000–15,000 B.P. and bracket the earliest sites found in Alaska. New finds from early sites in the intervening regions of Chukotka are also discussed. In chapter 6, Turner updates his contribution (1988) in the *Crossroads* catalogue on prehistoric population relationships with results from 700 additional individuals from European and Asiatic skeletal populations. He defines a "Greater Beringian" geopopulation center of distinct and long-standing tenure "whose people are distinct, yet resemble much more other northeast Asian Sinodonts than European Russians, Mesolithic-Neolithic Ukrainians or hybrid West Siberians. These data strongly dispute the notion that the Greater Beringian Realm inhabitants and other Native Americans had roots in late Pleistocene Europe."

PART II: SYMBOL AND OBJECT — COMPLEXITY IN
NORTH PACIFIC CULTURES

Part II moves off in another direction, departing from the broad geographic, cross-cultural approach of Part I. The essays here—except for those in chapters 7 and 13—treat the details of discrete cultural traditions that are bound up with another theme: the high degree of sociocultural complexity in the anthropology of the North Pacific region.

Until a few years ago, most anthropologists saw little potential for complex forms of culture in the northern groups, which instead were considered to be examples of extreme adaptations or analogs or relics of earlier (Paleolithic/Mesolithic) stages of evolutionary development. However, recent studies have shown that northern maritime peoples may achieve remarkably high levels of cultural achievement (Fitzhugh 1975; Yesner 1980; Fitzhugh and Kaplan 1982; Nash 1983; Jordan and Knecht 1988) and that of all northern regions, the North Pacific and Bering/Chukchi seas have higher population densities. In effect, the social, economic, and artistic achievements of this area are comparable to, or even surpass, those of many simple chiefdoms and small-scale agriculturalists or more temperate regions (see, e.g., Price and Brown 1985).

Two chapters focus more particularly on the meaning and symbolism of material culture: chapter 7 on North Pacific clothing styles and chapter 8 on Aleut/Koniag iconography. The extraordinary aesthetic quality of the artifacts displayed in the exhibition, noted by critics and reviewers alike, compels researchers to try to “decipher,” as Black writes in chapter 8, its association with the spiritual and the ritualistic. The study of symbolism is easily prone to attack at least on two fronts: first, the line between interpretation and speculation is often a thin one in areas where little oral tradition has survived and where historical sources must be viewed with caution; second, any comparative approach to style and symbolism raises the thorny issues of degrees of similarity and questions of origin and function. Also, any significant local variations within one cultural group in the meaning, the myth, or the rules associated with a certain practice or stylistic feature might seem to question the validity of one or another explanation, such as the variation in local interpretation of the meaning of “gusset” patterns (wedge-shaped fur insets on the chest, chapter 7) on the male Alaskan Eskimo parka. But these variations may only testify to the rich spiritual, symbolic, and aesthetic life of the native in-

habitants of the North Pacific area, as variation in mythology does also. Inspired by Hatt's classic study of circumpolar clothing (1969 [1914]) tracing relationships between Arctic and Subarctic styles from Scandinavia to Greenland (but diverging from his stress on a search for origins and clothing-based culture areas), Chaussonnet and Driscoll in chapter 7 analyze garments from the *Crossroads of Continents* catalogue (see also Chaussonnet 1988), as well as from various museum collections. They view clothing as a carrier of the group's sense of identity and beauty, but also, more significantly, of its cosmology. Clothing is like a second skin that betrays a group's fears of powerful spiritual forces through the display of equally powerful protective symbols employed on garments. In the socially stratified Northwest Coast cultures, these symbols are also, in an unclear combination of the secular and the spiritual, symbols of power over man. Similarly, Black explores iconographic traditions and symbolism of the whaler's costume, especially the richly elaborated bentwood hunting hat, whose signification or rank and prestige make this object the "Chilkat blanket" of the North Pacific Aleut tradition. These two chapters, following a path opened by Victor Turner (1967) and both provoking considerable conference debate, converge in characterizing North Pacific (or specifically Koniag/Aleut in the case of Black) clothing, headgear, and adornment as a means to seeking special power or protection by appearing as a transformed creature or animal spirit (a whale, in the Koniag/Aleut case; see also Ivanov 1930). This theme was echoed in Fitzhugh's discussion of the importance of animal iconography in chapter 1 (see also Fitzhugh 1984, 1988; Fitzhugh and Kaplan 1982) and is further developed in chapters 9, 10, 11, and 16.

Closely linked to the theme of animal metamorphosis and hunting ritual is the subject of dance and dance costume. These subjects are addressed from different perspectives and traditions in chapters 7, 10, and 11. Chaussonnet and Driscoll (chapter 7) analyze the symbolic and ritual aspects of dance clothing, especially among the Koryak, and propose an astronomical theme in the decoration of shaman clothing. Liapunova (chapter 10) discusses a group of Koniag masks from the MAE collections obtained during a festival season in the 1840s by Ilia Voznesenskii, two of which appear in the *Crossroads* catalogue (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988a:fig. 50 [MAE 571-6]; cover and fig. 368 [MAE 571-12]). Liapunova presents a substantial part of Voznesenskii's detailed notes describing the Koniag "six-act mystery" in print for the first time. Zhornitskaia (chapter 11) examines the choreography among Northeast-

ern Siberian groups and describes the pantomimic character of Eskimo, Itelmen, Koryak, and Chukchi dances. She relates choreography to festive occasions and the reenactment of a successful hunt (especially whaling), or to imitation of familiar animals. Dance, like masks and costumes bearing powerful images or animal representations, is an integral part of the rich cycle of ceremonies characteristic of North Pacific maritime cultures in particular. The importance of dance is also exemplified by two remarkable occurrences reported in chapters 19 and 23, where dance was used as a political strategy and a manifestation of joy after a long painful political situation.

Complexity in northern maritime cultures is expressed in many other contributions in Part II. Rousselot (in chapter 13) and Holm (in chapter 14) describe stylistic, functional, and distributional aspects of the region's watercraft, which demonstrate the remarkable ingenuity used in applying local materials to the creation of highly sophisticated, yet beautifully constructed, vessels (Sauer 1802:274; Dyson 1986). In addition, Vasil'ev (in chapter 15) discusses the social system of the cultures of Chukotka and Kamchatka, noting, in particular, the apparent lack of clan organization among the Chukchi, Koryak, Eskimo, and Itelmen. This issue was theoretically and historically important in Soviet anthropology because it was related to the definition of classic Marxist stages of cultural evolution. In chapter 16, Taksami describes features of the cultures of the coastal Pacific Siberian cultures, "cultures of fishermen and sea-mammal hunters," focusing on those common elements, ideological and cosmological, as well as material, found in all groups from the northern part of Chukotka to the delta of the Amur River. Crowell (chapter 12) explores the technological, social, ritualistic, and symbolic aspects of the Koniag poison-dart whale-hunting complex, a practice that had only modest subsistence value to Aleuts but that supported complex social and religious hierarchies and the transmission of esoteric knowledge. As with so many features of North Pacific cultures, even the origins and efficacy of poison technology itself is open to debate. In contrast to the strong economic basis of North Alaskan whaling, which was conducted by politically powerful *umialiks* with large skin boats and crews and was critical to community survival, Koniag (and eastern Aleutian) whaling had an esoteric, ritualistic cast and was carried on, as Black notes in chapter 8, as "ritual warfare" waged one-on-one between individual shaman-hunters and whales.

In chapter 9, Jordan shifts this discussion to matters of social, artistic, and technological production based on analysis of prehistoric Koniag settle-

ment patterns and material culture. The emergence of lineages, establishment of elites, and growth of intervillage competition and warfare are all features associated with a dramatic increase in cultural complexity that surround what appears to be the emergence of the potlatching system shortly after A.D. 1400. These data scream for as-yet-unavailable comparative material from the Northwest Coast.

What fueled these massive social changes, and where did they originate? Some Koniag elements, such as the technology of warfare (plate or rod armor), seem to have Aleutian and Asian origins, while its art has a Bering Sea Yupik cast and its dental morphology suggests Northwest Coast biological affinities. It seems that Kodiak, located in perhaps the most productive biological region of the North Pacific and at the nexus of a number of different cultural traditions, was a “crossroads” of its own.

One consequence of the high-density population and mobility of the North Pacific area was exchange, not only of ideas and technology, but also of material goods (see Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988a:126–37, fig. 316). Chapter 17’s detailed catalogue of glass trade beads found on many of the exhibition artifacts highlights cultural and individual preferences as much as it does material availability (see also Francis 1988:341). As Francis argues, the movement of beads and their usage as charms, items of value, and ornaments in all of these cultures testifies to the importance of trans-Beringian trade for all peoples of this region; following the development of the historic sea otter fur trade, new trans-Pacific links began to unite Siberia, Alaska, the Northwest Coast, the Pacific Islands, and China. Francis emphasizes the great utility of the lowly bead in the reconstruction of culture history and calls to mind the need for detailed stylistic, functional, and symbolic studies of the relationship of beaded designs to dyed hair and quill embroidery, precursors that have long been suggested as evidence of Asian–American contacts. Francis provides the link to the third section of this volume, whose central theme relates to cultural and social processes.

PART III: INTERACTIONS — TRADE, WAR, AND PEACE

While the first two sections of the book present data and reflections on objects and elements of cultural exchange, on history, the evolution of complexity, symbolism, and iconography, Part III is concerned primarily with the process-

es of sociocultural change in its social, cultural, technological, demographic, linguistic, and biological dimensions. The social relations of interchange are, after all, ultimately responsible for most of the changes recognized in the cultural record. The studies in this section are concerned not so much with the archeological or ethnological elements proving (or disproving) the connection between cultures in the North Pacific area as with the way peaceful or hostile exchanges took place before historical times (chapters 18, 19), with population movements related to Russian expansion in the North Pacific (chapter 20), and with contemporary ethnic relations and the ethnic processes in the northeastern part of the former Soviet Union and the impact of Russian numerical dominance on demography, ethnic identity, native language usage, and bilingualism (chapters 21 and 22). One conclusion that can be reached is that the processes at work in the twentieth century do not seem qualitatively different from those in early historical reports (Merck 1980), as discussed by Gurvich and Fienup-Riordan here (chapters 18 and 19), and by Burch, Worl, and Lebedev in the *Crossroads* catalogue. In chapter 23, Krauss concludes with a review of the political history of border contacts.

Gurvich provides a scenario for interethnic contacts that emerges from the ethnohistorical record of the coastal peoples of Chukotka. Contacts between these groups were based on economic and social exchanges, which were frequently—but not always—beneficial to both parties. Economic exchange was required to equalize regional imbalances in resources, or to acquire goods that could be exchanged through a remote network. Ritual exchanges were also common, between individuals, villages, and even cultural groups. A variety of mechanisms existed to support these exchanges, including long-distance trade, trade fairs, and plunder and raiding for slaves, as well as goods. Historical analysis in Chukotka shows clearly the trend toward more competitive trading, raiding, and warfare after the establishment of the regional trade fairs in northeastern Siberia in the 1600s. In Siberia, this development caused the expansion of reindeer breeding and European and Chinese trade goods, including tobacco, beads, and metal into eastern Chukotka and the gradual assimilation of Siberian Eskimo groups by the Chukchi traders. Effects were also felt across Bering Strait as trade fairs, raiding, and general warfare increased in response to the expanding market for Siberian goods in exchange for Alaskan furs.

War and peace are subjects that have been neglected in the anthropologi-

cal literature of the North Pacific, despite frequent note of warfare throughout the region. Here we encounter numerous stereotypes, but little in the way of solid data. Northeast Siberians, especially the Chukchi, are renowned warriors of the open tundra who for centuries successfully resisted Cossack subjugation by force of arms. Warfare was also widespread in South Alaska and the Northwest Coast. Some evidence suggests it was present as early as 2,000–3,000 years ago (MacDonald 1983; Crowell 1988). Less well known is the fact that warfare was widespread among Eskimo groups of western Alaska, in contrast to the stereotype image of the smiling, “nonviolent” Eskimo. Violence was in fact an important part of Alaskan Inupiat and Yupik life and was expressed in a wide range of behaviors between individuals, communities, and larger cultural groups (Burch 1974, 1988; Fienup-Riordan, this volume and 1990). This behavior is only beginning to be recognized and researched. Among the many facets needing investigation are the relationships between warfare and economic contacts, population growth, and population movements, all of which increase dramatically in the North Pacific region beginning about 2,500 years ago, as seen archeologically by the increased presence of exotic trade goods, war technology, the mutilation of human skeletal remains, appearance of fortified sites, and other signs.

The impact of white presence and of what can be called white colonialism is also assessed in this last part of the volume. Fienup-Riordan notes in chapter 19 that although the advance of the whites in North American Indian territory resulted from their more aggressive posture, the arrival of Europeans in Western Alaska marked the end of “the violent interregional struggles that had characterized the region before their arrival.” The impact of the Russian presence in the Northern Pacific in the nineteenth century is assessed from an archeological point of view by Shubin (chapter 20), who throws light on the little-known history of Kurile Island and shows that the involuntary participation of Aleuts and Koniags brought there by Russians to develop the natural resources of the islands (fur) was crucial in the development of a distinctive Kurile culture through the influence of Russian and Ainu elements on Koniag culture.

The evolution of demography and ethnic identity in Siberia is discussed in chapter 21 and the shift in the use of native languages in chapter 22. The approach to questions of contemporary ethnic identity reflected in these chapters is characteristic of a dominant focus of research in former Soviet ethnogra-

phy (Bromlei 1974; Arutiunov 1989; see also Lebedev 1988). At the same time, the recent opening of Soviet information about the situation of its “nationalities” brings a promise of more accurate and complete data than provided in conservative works of the past 30 years.

At the same time that Siberian data were becoming scarce to the western researchers, the U.S.-USSR cold war was affecting millennia-old relationships between Siberian and Alaskan peoples. The volume closes with a comment on the first sign of progress in the reopening of state-imposed boundaries in the “*glasnost* age.” In chapter 23 Krauss explores the recent political history of Beringian contacts and the circumstances leading to a long-awaited renewal of direct ties and concludes on a note of both hope and uncertainty about the future.

This section points out the uneven coverage given to many subjects that received much attention in earlier research. In particular, contemporary American scholarship has given almost no attention to comparative folklore and linguistics relating to Asian–American cross-ties, subjects that were of primary interest to the Jesup expedition and subsequent research through the 1940s. Although these topics have been neglected in the North American tradition, they remain strong in Soviet and Russian scholarship (e.g., Chlenov n.d. [1983]; Meletinskii n.d. [1983]). Any new work in this area obviously needs to take a structuralist approach.

We might also conclude with the obvious: that from the time of the Jesup expedition, Asian–American anthropological, archeological, and historical studies have benefited enormously from internationalism and scholarly exchange in which specialists trained in a Russian/Soviet or North American tradition have conducted fieldwork across Bering Strait and have participated widely in conferences and publication projects. The decline in progress in resolving many problems noted in recent years can be attributed directly to this century’s political history—the closing of borders and subsequent abandonment of Russian language scholarship and integrated North Pacific area studies, especially by North Americans. From the chapters in this volume we can clearly see that our knowledge of trans-Beringian issues and dynamics has barely progressed beyond the level of the Jesup expedition’s achievements. While our knowledge of Asian and American cultures has advanced greatly, our knowledge of their interrelationships is almost nil. The time is now ripe for a reanalysis and rediscovery of culture contacts and exchange in this vast northern crossroads region.

NOTES

We have respected the authors' transliteration of Russian sources in English language papers, but for those contributions originally written in Russian and translated by us, we have followed the simplified Library of Congress transliteration system used in the *Crossroads of Continents* catalogue. Valérie Chaussonnet translated the Russian contributions, and edited those previously translated in the Soviet Union; Muriel Joffe and Valérie Chaussonnet jointly translated Vasil'ev's contribution. Between the time this volume was prepared and was printed, the Soviet Union ceased to exist. The references to the former Soviet Union as a country have therefore been "updated" when appropriate, but the references to Soviet social sciences, politics, and so on have accurately remained "Soviet" in the text, as historical realities.

1. Except for one communication, all given at the symposium were included; three contributions, namely by Holm, Vasil'ev, and Francis and originally written for the *Crossroads* catalogue but omitted or dramatically shortened because of space considerations, were added to this volume as important contributions to the research themes.

2. References to artifacts and illustrations from the *Crossroads of Continents* catalogue are indicated by figure number, followed by the museum of origin and the original museum catalog number in brackets.

3. "Ethnic processes" is part of Soviet anthropological terminology. Soviet studies of ethnic processes describe the dynamics of ethnic identity and include, among other aspects of cultural phenomena, studies of linguistic evolution (e.g., the impact of bilingualism, loss of native languages), demographic changes (e.g., the shift in ethnic affiliation and merging of ethnic groups, impact of mixed marriages), and the general transformation of the way of life and ethnic self-identity. These studies were numerous in Soviet ethnographical research and focused, as a rule, on the evolution in the twentieth century of ethnic groups under the tremendous economic, social, and political changes of the contemporary world (see, e.g., Bromlei 1974).

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PART *1.* *Research History and American–
Asian Links*

1. *Crossroads of Continents: Review and Prospect*

WILLIAM W. FITZHUGH

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE cultures of the New World and the Old is one of the most enduring subjects in American anthropology (Boas 1925). The central problem has persistently been whether native cultures of the Americas are a product of a unique history and development or whether they were significantly changed after the peopling of the Americas by Old World migrations or influences. Does the geographic isolation of the New World cultures warrant studying them as an evolutionary system separate from the Old World? Or should they be considered part of a larger, interactive world system?

NEW WORLD CONTACTS

Early theories of New World civilization attributed many achievements of American Indian cultures to foreign intervention. These theories argued that midlatitude voyages by European, Asian, or Oceanian peoples account for similarities between the Old World and the New in architecture, technology, art, religion, language, and cultigens (Heine-Geldern and Ekholm 1951;

Ekholm 1953, 1964; Smith 1953; Heine-Geldern 1959; Estrada and Meggers 1961; Meggers, Evans, and Estrada 1965; Riley et al. 1971; Barnard 1972; Meggers 1975). Few such theories traced out any associations with North Atlantic voyaging, despite the acceptance of Norse contacts (Jones 1968; Ingstad 1977; McGhee 1984); those that have (Greenman 1948; Ridley 1960; Kehoe 1962, 1971; McGhee 1983) are generally discounted.

Strangely enough, in the past diffusionist and migration investigations gave little thought to the possibility of contacts around the rim of the North Pacific and Bering Sea. Non-arctic specialists were usually concerned with only the transit span of the "first Americans." Apart from the claims of visionaries like José de Acosta (1598), Thomas Jefferson (1787), and the dispassionate Thomas Haven (1856), who chronicled early theories of New World native peoples, little attention has been given to the region where the continents virtually touch and geography has channeled the movement of people since man arrived in the New World 14,000 years ago. It was almost a century after the 1741 voyages of Bering and Chirikov that paleontologists and anthropologists began to accept the reality that man came to the New World as a result of Beringian migrations. In view of the similarities that Steller, Krasheninnikov, Cook, Sauer, Merck, and other explorers noted across the Bering Strait, this neglect is surprising.

In recent decades the isolationist position has become entrenched in academic circles, partly in reaction to an excess of epigraphic and linguistic contact theories spawned by lingering beliefs in Phoenicians (Gordon 1971) and dynoflagellates borne by ocean currents (Fell 1978), and partly in reaction to the more scholarly diffusion literature of the mid-twentieth century. As a result, many archeologists apart from those familiar with Alaskan evidence almost automatically reject claims of external contact except for a few population influxes across Bering Strait. In accepting this widely publicized view—which is supported by some interpretations of linguistic, dental, morphological, and genetic evidence (e.g., Greenberg, Turner, and Zegura 1986)—people tend to overlook the fact that Asian and Alaskan Beringian peoples have shared a similar territory, ecology, and way of life for thousands of years. Throughout this period, Bering Strait has been more a link than a barrier to cultural transmission. In rejecting the claims of transoceanic contacts, researchers have been so blinded by midlatitude bias that both diffusionists and isolationists have ignored the large body of archeological evidence for contacts in the North Pacific and Bering Sea, believing it to be of only re-

gional significance (e.g., Collins 1937a, 1937b, 1951; de Laguna 1940; Leroi-Gourhan 1946; Quimby 1947; Larsen and Rainey 1948; Griffin 1953, 1960; Rudenko 1961; Arutiunov and Sergeev 1968; Irving 1970; Alekseev 1979; Arutiunov 1979; Mochanov 1980; Ackerman 1982; Dumond 1982; Dikov 1985; Fitzhugh 1988; Powers and Jordan 1990, and essays in this volume).

Historical trends are apparent in the different cultural polarities of the East and West coasts of the Americas. Although the Archaic cultures of the Far Northeast are similar to those of the Scandinavian Younger Stone Age (owing to convergence and parallel development [Fitzhugh 1975]), later North European cultures, having come under the influence of Western civilization, exhibit few similarities to Northeast American cultures; and, except for early theories of an Argentinean "Paleolithic," eastern South American cultures have never been seriously studied for African or European contacts. By contrast, contact theories concerning the cultures of western North and South America have long cited similarities to Asian and Oceanian cultures. Whether or not one agrees with the transoceanic mechanism (e.g., Heyerdahl 1963; Edwards 1972), the stylistic parallels around the Pacific rim are more abundant and more convincing than those around the Atlantic. While the greatest attention has been directed at the common features in Asian art and the architecture of the high civilizations of Central and South America, the number of parallels increases and becomes more specific as one proceeds north from the mouth of the Columbia River to Bering Strait.

THE JESUP NORTH PACIFIC EXPEDITION

This brings us to the art and culture history of the North Pacific and Bering Sea. Strictly speaking, *Anthropology of the North Pacific Rim* is about an exhibition and not a research project. Its primary aim is not to settle Boas's questions about the history and relationships of American and Northeast Asian peoples and cultures, but rather to explore these questions; to display the remarkable diversity as well as the similarities of cultures; to illustrate, mostly from ethnographic data, processes that resulted in Asian–American interactions in the historic period; and to spark renewed research. Boas and his Russian ethnographer colleagues, Bogoras and Jochelson, concluded that the cultures of the North Pacific, from the central Northwest Coast to the Amur River, were linked by a wide range of linguistic, folkloristic, and ethnographic ties.

Lacking sufficient archeological and physical anthropological information, they based their reconstructions on ethnographic and linguistic evidence. However, Boas never wrote his promised monograph synthesizing the Jesup North Pacific findings, and the only other comparative project on this region—Leroi-Gourhan's *Archéologie du Pacifique-Nord* (1946)—also failed to produce a synthesis. As a result, compilation and comparison became a *Crossroads* priority.

The first question we posed, then, was what do we know and what do we need to find out about Siberian–Alaskan relationships? The first half of the twentieth century saw many contributions built on Jesup research data and new discoveries in Alaskan archeology. Many were presented at Americanist Congress meetings and at special symposia devoted to American–Siberian relationships and the “Eskimo problem.” The death of many primary scholars and the cold war put an end to these exchanges, which were not revived until recent years by the International Research and Exchanges Board (Michael 1979; Michael and VanStone n.d. [1983]). Today the ground is prepared but not thoroughly plowed. I. S. Gurvich (1979, n.d. [1983]), the most active ethnologist writing about Siberian–Alaskan cross-ties in recent years, has called attention to the shortcomings in ethnographic data and pointed out the need for more detailed studies of trans-Beringian cultural elements (see also Chlenov n.d. [1983]; Faynberg n.d. [1983]; Meletinsky n.d. [1983]). But the truth is that there are no ethnographers practicing today with a thorough knowledge of Soviet and American literature and collections. A generation of politically imposed isolation has stifled the tradition of scholarly exchange begun by Boas and his colleagues. Consequently, we need a fresh start, new projects, language training, and greater access to research collections and data across international borders; indeed, it is necessary to repeat the call issued 55 years ago at the 1933 Pacific Science Congress by Knud Rasmussen, the great arctic scientist, for an internationally integrated program of northern research (Rasmussen 1934:2772).

ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE NORTH PACIFIC AND BERING SEA

The great problem confronting us is in identifying and understanding the similarities and differences between the cultures surrounding the northern

rim of the Pacific (figure 1-1). This subject, of course, was at the heart of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition (see bibliography) and has been treated by many other specialists. After reviewing the Jesup data, Boas (1903, 1905), Bogoras (1902), Jochelson (1908, 1926a), and Laufer (1902) came to the following general conclusions: (1) strong ethnographic ties linked Northwest Coast cultures with Shrenk's (1883) linguistically defined "Paleo-Asiatic" groups of eastern Siberia—specifically, the Itelmen, Koryak, Chukchi, Chuvantsy, and Yukaghir; (2) these ties were established when American cultures spread back into northeastern Siberia sometime after people first migrated to the New World from Asia, an idea Jochelson (1928) called the "Americanoid" theory (now discounted by most scholars, even though the cultural similarities it was based on—Raven mythology, linguistic, and ethnological traits—remain unexplained); (3) this distribution of North Pacific culture traits terminated at the border between Paleo-Asiatic, Turkic-, and Tungus-speaking Yakut, Evenk and Even; and (4) the distribution of similar cultures was interrupted in the middle by a group of Eskimo cultures that intruded into the North Pacific culture group from Canada (Boas 1905; this idea later become known as the "Eskimo wedge" hypothesis).

Through the years, many of the conclusions reached by the Jesup team have remained influential, whereas others have proven controversial and have been substantially modified or abandoned (e.g., theories of linguistic ties). Henry Collins's archeological work on St. Lawrence Island (1937a, 1937b, 1951) firmly established the ancient origins of Eskimo culture in Bering Strait and laid to rest Boas's theory of a Canadian origin; but Collins continued to believe in a Thule "back-migration" into Alaska and Siberia from the eastern Arctic, ideas that supported, in part, the Jesup Americanoid theory. Hatt (1949) and Collins also pointed out that these conclusions relied on Inupiat Eskimo mythology and failed to note that the Raven mythology of the Bering Sea Eskimo (Yupik) (Nelson 1899) closely resembled Northwest Coast and Siberian mythology. Thus, only the Inupiat-speaking Eskimos north of Norton Sound were possibly part of the "wedge" population. Apart from the now-discounted Canadian origin theory, the Eskimo wedge theory has never had a full critique in American literature, probably because most American specialists continue to favor a Bering Sea/Bering Strait origin of Eskimo culture, while most Soviet specialists emphasize Siberian origins (Zolotarev 1937:51-52; Okladnikov 1941:30-31; Rudenko 1961:179). Nevertheless,

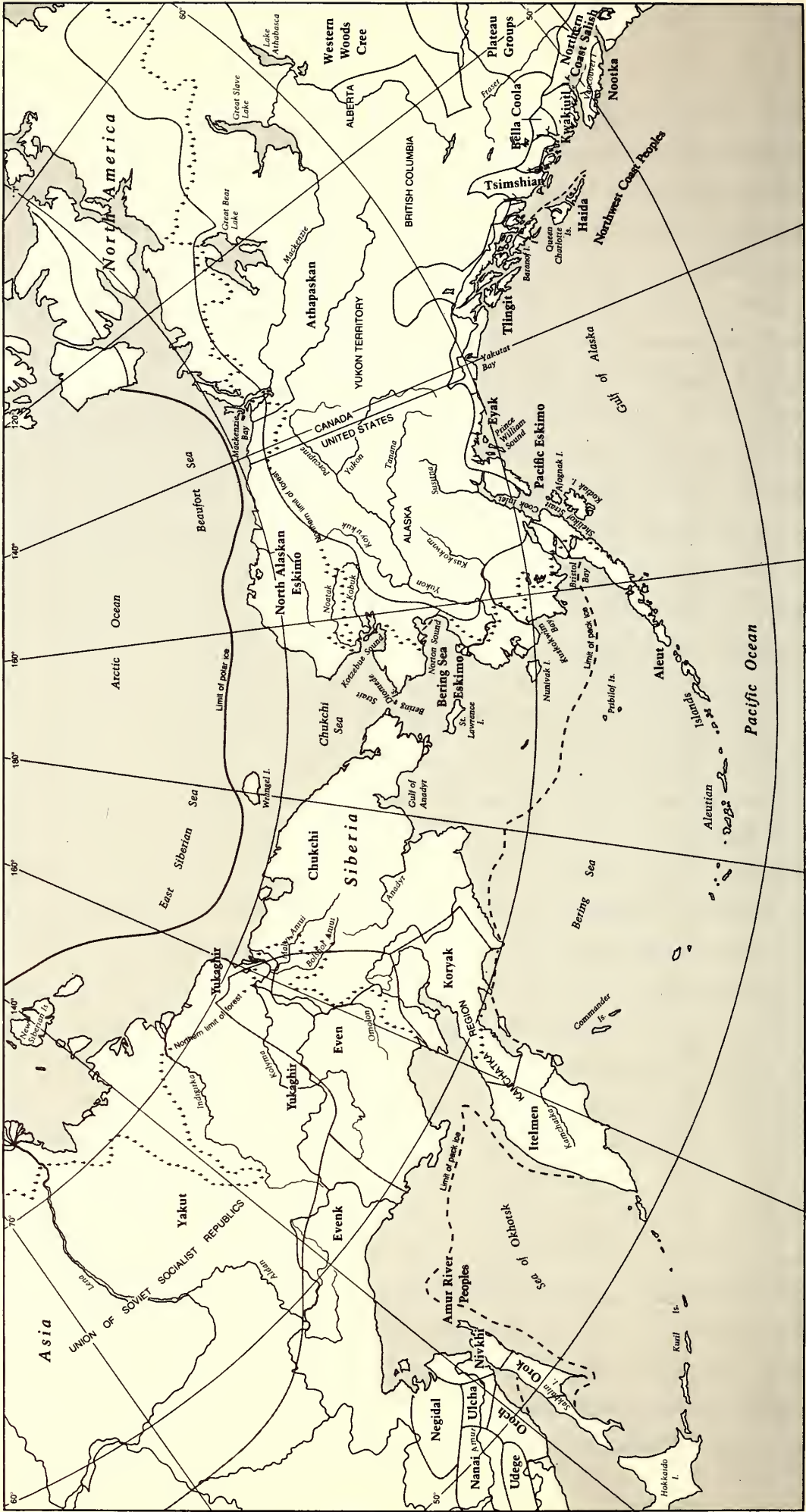


FIGURE I-1. Cultures of the North Pacific-Bering Sea region ca. 1900. (Arrwork by Jo Moore, adapted by Julie Perlmutter)

the wedge concept still figures prominently in modern interpretations, many of which suggest that an “ethnic mass” of Bering Strait Eskimo was a barrier to the wider distribution of Asian elements (e.g., iron, Asian tobacco and pipes) beyond Eskimo culture borders. This notion has led researchers to investigate alternate routes, via the Aleutian Islands, for the non-Eskimoid similarities (roof-entry dwellings, mummification rituals, oil lamps, labrets, slat armor, poison hunting techniques, and so on [Collins 1937a, 1937b; de Laguna 1932/33; Quimby 1947]).

Today, we recognize a host of cultural ties among cultures across Bering Strait, Raven mythology being but one of them. Others include plate and rod armor, the sinew-backed bow, wrist-guards, and sinew-twisters; snow goggles; semisubterranean log houses with roof entries; the use of ground slate, oil lamps, ulus, and skin boats; dog or reindeer traction; whaling by both float and poison techniques; mummification ritual; harpoon and fishing technology; spring traps; beliefs about similarly named evil spirits (*kele*, *kala*, *kalag*) and similar deities of the sky and sea world; harvest festivals (whale, bladder, *keretkun*); specific features of the shamanism complex; and many more.

This literature of trait comparison and ethnic reconstruction, however, speaks little about history and process. How and when did these parallels become established? How are the traits distributed geographically, and in what cultural or economic contexts? Why do they occur in some groups and not in others? How can the study of parallels lead to an understanding of the history of North Pacific peoples and of relationships between groups? In searching for culture elements and traits, twentieth-century anthropology has neglected Boas’s original goal and has failed to realize the potential of the Jesup expedition data. Therefore, rather than review ethnological parallels, I will concentrate here on distributions of systems, complexes, and structures that may provide evidence of a larger historical framework surrounding Bering Strait. I believe that ethnographic distributions in particular, together with historical and archeological data, provide insight into the cultural processes at work in the Beringian region for at least the past 2,000 years. A similar approach was taken in a study of Inupiat-Yupik relationships in western Alaska (Fitzhugh 1988). In addition, recent studies have applied linguistic and physical anthropological data to these trans-Beringian questions (e.g., Greenberg, Turner, and Zegura 1986).

SIMILARITIES

Crossroads encompasses many of the same culture groups included in the Jesup expedition. The emphasis is on groups adapted to the Pacific and Bering Sea coast, beginning in the south with the subarctic fishing and marine mammal hunting cultures of the Northwest Coast (principally Tlingit) and the Amur River groups of southern Okhotsk Sea (figure 2-1). Both groups inhabited regions with ice-free waters, used toggling and barbed harpoons (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:161), lived in large plank houses (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:205-6), had clan-based social organizations (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:28, 60), and exhibited considerable specialization in their social, economic, and religious life (de Laguna 1988). Many specific features of bear ceremonialism, especially in connection with harvest festivals, are found in these groups (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:29, 274). Graphic and sculptural art (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:294) was important in the life of both Tlingit and Amur peoples and was conspicuously displayed on garments and everyday artifacts (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:209-26) and in similar types of petroglyphic art (Okladnikov 1981; Lundy 1983). Of course, there were also great differences, not the least of which had to do with metal technology, which was important to peoples of the Amur region but did not exist in Alaska and on the Northwest Coast, where smelted metal was present in pre-contact times only as a rare trade item or as a scavenged find from disabled Asian drift wrecks (Brooks 1876; Quimby 1985). Chinese and Japanese cultures also placed a special stamp on the culturally diverse Amur peoples, who have complex and deeply rooted traditions about which little is yet known archeologically.

In similar ways, Itelmen and Koryak can be compared with the Aleut culture (which Soviet archeologists often see as closely related to, if not derived from Kamchatka) and with Bering Sea Eskimos, with whom Maritime Koryak share many cultural parallels, including hunting methods and equipment (harpoon equipment, skin kayaks; Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:158-9, 168), hunting festivals (Nelson 1899:379; Jochelson 1908:65; Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:255, 267), raven mythology (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:243), ritual life (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:49, 88, 222, 225, 255, 265), belief in the spiritual power of grass (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:255), and shamanism (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:246-8; Fitzhugh and Kaplan 1982). A third set of interesting comparisons lies with the interior-dwelling Reindeer Even,

Reindeer Koryak, and Reindeer Chukchi groups and the interior Athapaskan Indians. Despite a radical difference in their economy, subsistence technology (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:183–93), and material culture (related to the existence of reindeer nomadism on the Siberian side), interior Siberians and Athapaskan Indians shared certain clothing concepts and embroidery techniques and designs (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:220, 23).

The fourth group, the Maritime Chukchi/Asian Eskimos and the Alaskan Eskimos share a large array of cultural traditions, as expected, given their close linguistic and historical ties. Among the parallels worthy of note are similar marine hunting technologies and transportation (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:159), spring traps (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:187) and rifle equipment (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:186), parka clothing styles, religious life, festivals, and fur embroidery. Of course, some cultural features are spread throughout the region, many of which have both general and specific similarities, including shamanism, hunting equipment, weapons and military technology, and aspects of ceremonial and religious life.

South to north, these four groups (Amur River peoples and Northwest Coast Indians; Maritime Koryak and Aleut/Bering Sea Eskimo; Reindeer Even/Koryak/Chukchi and Athapaskan Indian; and Maritime Chukchi/Asian Eskimos and Alaskan Eskimos) inhabit an area ranging from temperate forested coasts, to cold but ice-free coasts, to coastal ice-choked coasts, and treeless tundra environments. Several general observations can be made about these groups: (1) some similarities between Northeast Asia and North America are the result of parallel changes in environment, ecology, and economic potential (e.g., wood/hide boats and open water/ice hunting harpoon gear); (2) there was a significant decrease in geographic distance separating Asian and American cultures and increased opportunities for indirect and direct contact; (3) specialized arctic adaptation was required in northern regions; (4) systematic changes in social, demographic, and economic structures are evident as one moves from temperate coastal environments to arctic regions; and (5) cross-cutting all of the above is a fifth factor relating to history and acculturation. Cultures on both sides of Bering Strait were in direct or indirect contact with more advanced societies in Asia and were progressively acculturated or modified by animal domestication, metal production, trade, warfare, and the introduction of products such as glass, cloth, and ceramics and artistic designs (geometric and floral themes). This acculturation gradient followed a distinct west-to-east trend in Siberia. Its effects were also felt in western Alaska, in the

Canadian Arctic, and to a lesser degree on the Northwest Coast. In northern North America, there was nothing comparable to the pervasive force of the social, economic, and technological change emanating from Eastern Asia and Siberia. In the historic period traditional Siberian influence in Alaska became attenuated south of the Kuskokwim and nearly ceased in Bering Strait after American whaling began in 1850.

DIFFERENCES

These Asian and American cultures, especially the maritime groups, also differed in important respects. One of these, as already mentioned, was the distribution of higher technology. Metal production was not known among Alaskan peoples, but they were at the receiving end of an Asian and European trade that supplied them with metal products such as firearms, along with glass beads, cloth, tobacco, and other items. Knowledge of metal production spread into northeastern Siberia during the contact period from the south and west. Until Europeans disrupted native trade (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988: 234–40), Alaska was part of an expanding Siberian trade frontier that linked peoples with diverse cultures and economies in a far-reaching network whose centers lay to the west in Siberia and south in Korea, China, and Japan. Archeological finds suggest that metal, shamanistic paraphernalia, and ornamental objects from Siberia were important in the Eskimo culture of western Alaska for more than 2,000 years (Collins 1937a; Larsen and Rainey 1948; McCartney 1988). Although economic ties in the historical period were primarily Siberian, the presence of Chinese pipe styles, trade beads, and tea, and earlier Chinese influence in art, mythology, religion, and military technology (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:127–8, 230, 235, 238; Larsen and Rainey 1948; Collins 1971; Fitzhugh 1988:103) suggest eastern Asia was an important source of early influence.

Second, the marked diversity in the ethnic clothing and decorative styles of all the coastal North Pacific groups, Siberian and American, is in sharp contrast to the rather similar styles of clothing worn by the interior Siberian groups, namely, the Even, Evenk, Evenk-acculturated Yukaghir, and Reindeer Koryak. The similarities among the interior Siberians resulted primarily from their having adopted a reindeer economy and its associated technology, dress, and decorative patterns from Evenk (Tungus) and Yakut peoples (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:35–38; Krupnik 1975; Vainshtein 1986). Their cultural

orientation was therefore to the west, to the Siberian interior, rather than to the North Pacific maritime regions and cultures. These styles of clothing, geometric embroidery in reindeer hair and beads (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:36–37, 210), and artifacts associated with reindeer nomadism (saddles, cradles, bags, hobbles, prods; Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:178–82, 297) continued to expand into the Maritime Koryak and Chukchi areas together with the reindeer economy in the historical period.

Third, differences are also evident in charms and amulets. Alaskan peoples universally ornamented their hunting equipment and many other implements with hunting art depicting semihuman or beastly animal spirit helpers or spirit controllers intended to please or influence guardians, master deities, and spirits of their prey (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:122–23, 151–72). North of the Amur River, Siberian cultures rarely decorated their tools, which tended to be designed for function, without symbolic overtones. However, many of their charms and spirit images were anthropomorphic (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:152, 194, 244, 248–49, 254, 297), in contrast to the animal or animal-human imagery used by most American groups (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:152, 173, 166, 168, 256–60; but note the exception in Alaskan doll charms, death masks, and ancestor figures, Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:84, 126, 135, 171). This pattern of conventionalized anthropomorphic guardians was especially common in Chukchi material culture but is also present in Even and Koryak implements. The pattern was most accentuated among reindeer herding groups; it was less developed among the Maritime Koryak (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:34, 254, whale effigies), and even less among the Amur groups, whose artifacts and charms frequently were ornamented with animal art, as were those of the American cultures (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:296).

Fourth, one of the most striking differences occurs in Siberian and Alaskan masking complexes. Masking was extremely important to Alaskan coastal groups south of Bering Strait (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:256–70, 306–7). While each group and region had its own characteristic styles, there are nevertheless some pronounced similarities between some types of Eskimo, Aleut, and Northwest Coast masks. An especially close relationship exists between Yupik Eskimo and central Northwest Coast (Tsimshian, Kwakiutl) plaque, animal, and human-animal mechanical transformation masks. The absence of a strong masking tradition among the Tlingit is a peculiar feature of this distribution (Drucker 1955). Still more unusual, perhaps, is the fact that Tlingit shaman masks (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:272) bear closer stylistic

relationships to North Alaskan Inupiat Eskimo representational masks (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:301) than to geographically closer Yupik conventionalized ones.

In contrast, Siberian masking complexes were weakly expressed in the nineteenth century. Siberian masks were extremely simple; most were used in funerary ritual, to drive away evil spirits, or “to scare children” (Jochelson 1908:79–86; Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:300). These Asian masks represent faces with human anatomical features that emphasize gaunt demeanor and facial hair (cf. Japanese Samurai helmets). Alaskan masks (with the exception of Inupiat Eskimo masks) rarely portray human faces and are often very elaborate portrayals of beastly or semihuman forms (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988: 256–70, 306–7). Simple grass masks were also used in the Koryak whale festival (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:255).

The contrast between the highly developed American masking tradition and the weakly expressed Siberian complex is especially interesting, because masking was once more widespread in Siberia, according to archeological evidence: for example, the portrait-like funerary masks and semihuman spirit images in Old Bering Sea culture (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:126–27); semihuman visages in North Pacific rock art (Okladnikov 1981; Lundy 1983); and, farther afield in southern Asia, semihuman beastly faces in ethnographic Chinese, Japanese, and Buriat traditions (Ivanov and Stukalov 1975). Jesup expedition ethnographic data suggest that at that time masking traditions were dying out in northeastern Siberia, where they were once more common. In contrast, masking remained a vibrant tradition elsewhere in Asia and in Northwestern North America.

Differences in the geographic distribution of masking traditions must reflect important changes in the history of North Pacific cultures. To North Pacific peoples, masking symbolized a core belief about human identity—about one’s definition of self with respect to economic, social, and spiritual forces. What factors caused masking traditions to diminish in importance in northeastern Siberia while they maintained or elaborated their function in northwestern North America and Asia south of Siberia?

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These patterns are likely an expression of a long-standing Asian-American interaction that began when humans first crossed Bering Strait about 14,000

years ago. At present we cannot be certain about the nature of the earliest trans-Beringian contacts, which resulted in at least some degree of cultural homogeneity, probably Asian-inspired, in the form of the Siberian-Alaskan Paleoarctic tradition. But by 5,000 years ago, archeological evidence of Asian influence on Alaskan cultures begins to mount. An Asian neolithic-derived tradition (ASTt/Denbigh) appears in the American Arctic after 4,500 B.P. (Irving 1970; Dumond 1977:92; Powers and Jordan 1990), and by the late first millennium B.C. similarities between Okhotsk and Norton cultures suggest a possible Asian influx (Dumond 1982:47). By 2,000 years ago, bronze and iron artifacts appear in early Eskimo sites in Bering Strait as a result of the northeastward expansion of Asian metallurgy and trade contacts. New elements of Asian shamanistic art also appear at this time (Larsen and Rainey 1948; Collins 1971; Fitzhugh 1988), as does Asian military technology, which suggests increased warfare and population movements.

One of the elements shared by the cultures of the North Pacific at this time (ca. 2,000 B.P.) was the elaborate decoration of material culture, especially of hunting implements. The profusion of hunting art, including the decoration of even simple tools like ulu knives and boot creasers used to process animal materials, is a striking feature of archeological complexes. Old Bering Sea, Ipiutak, Kachemak, Locarno/Marpole, and other American cultures all demonstrate this characteristic. Asian cultures (e.g., Okhotsk, Old Koryak, early Ainu, and others) also utilize hunting art, while the presence of Asian elements incorporating Scytho-Siberian elements in early Alaskan complexes suggests a widespread distribution of animal-style hunting art in northeastern Siberia (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:129; Dikov 1972; Okladnikov 1981).

The function of hunting art in these prehistoric societies is perhaps best understood by analogy with the Old Bering Sea culture's spiritual descendant, ethnographic Bering Sea (Yupik) Eskimo in southwest Alaska. Here we see art used as one of the hunter's principal means of communicating respect for prey spirits through artfully designed and decorated hunting implements, images of helping spirits depicted as powerful predators or mythological beasts on harpoon gear, and private and public ritual honoring animal spirits and spirit-controllers (Nelson 1899; Fitzhugh and Kaplan 1982). As in the prehistoric period, even implements used to process animal materials are decorated in this fashion. Similar concepts motivate the ethnographic arts of the Koryak, Ainu, and Amur River peoples.

About 2,000 years ago, the bearers of these traditions came under the influence of reindeer herding peoples who were expanding into western

Northeast Siberia. As they advanced, taking over prime grazing lands and exterminating wild reindeer stocks to reduce competition, resident hunters were displaced or assimilated, and some adopted herding themselves (Krupnik 1975; Vainshtein 1986). By this process, between 500 and 1,000 years ago, Even and Chukchi herders reached the Chukotka and Okhotsk coasts; came in contact with Koryak, Eskimos, and other maritime groups; and established themselves as middlemen in the rapidly expanding Siberia-Alaska trade.

The reindeer herding economy drastically changed the lives of the former hunting peoples of interior Siberia. In addition to providing a more secure subsistence, herding brought opportunities for population growth, territorial expansion, and trade and produced changes in dress and ornamentation; it also gave rise to increased use of metal and other foreign products. Moreover, because the new economy made it necessary to manage and control animals whose spirits had previously been considered independent and beyond human powers to control (except through gentle persuasion), herding required new religious beliefs and iconography.

Judging from ethnographic evidence, one of the principal consequences of this Siberian economic transformation was a devaluation of animal-style hunting art in weapons, clothing, and other types of material culture. What appeared in its place, and is seen throughout the region occupied by herding groups, is a religious view that portrayed guardians and other spirits as simple conventionalized human figures (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:194) and crotch-shaped human stylizations (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:242, 244). Whereas previous religious iconography was dominated by semihuman spirit-controllers and human-animal transformation art symbolizing reciprocity, partnership, and mutual respect as operative principles governing human-animal relationships, the reindeer economy was contextualized in a human-form iconography that defined the human-animal relationship in human terms. In this system spirits formerly defined as "non-human persons" (Fienup-Riordan 1988) and visualized as part-man/part-animal took strictly human shape, and new forms of ritual, including blood sacrifice, appeared.

Yet whereas human-image charms predominated in the reindeer herding areas, they only partly replaced zoomorphic and semihuman spirit figures among the sedentary Maritime Koryak sea mammal hunters and fishermen, and among the Amur groups where the ancient animal-based art (seemingly with a strong *t'ao-t'ieb* legacy) continued in the decoration of clothing and

other material culture. In Alaska and the Northwest Coast, beyond the influence of Asian reindeer-herding peoples, the old tradition of animal and animal-human transformation art continued, except among the Alaskan Inupiat. Here, the Asian social and economic influence caused a decline in animal-human hunting art with the appearance of Punuk culture and the whaling economy ca. A.D. 700.

This hypothesis, which is grounded more in ethnographic than in archeological data, may help explain some of the larger patterns in iconography and material culture in Siberia and Alaska during the past 2,000 years. It links a decline in masking and animal-human transformation art in Siberia to the expansion of reindeer herding, the growth of Asian-Alaskan trade, and new religious concepts. (Not all of these changes are necessarily original to the reindeer economy and may have originated elsewhere, e.g., in Taoism.) It also allows for a buffering of these changes among Asian coastal populations in the Amur-Kamchatka region where a marine mammal hunting and fishing economy persisted, together with traditional North Pacific hunting art and ritual. That this shift in ancient patterns was essentially a Siberian/Central Asian phenomenon is suggested by the continuation of masking and zoomorphic or semihuman beastly art in eastern Asia, where domesticated economies were also present but did not result in a similar loss of masking and animal art. Furthermore, it explains the persistence among Alaska's Yupik Eskimo, Aleut, and Northwest Coast hunting and fishing peoples of the ancient hunting religion and hunter's art, the roots of which ultimately lie in Old World Paleolithic traditions. For this reason, I believe that the thematic and design similarities seen in the ethnographic art of Northwest Coast and Amur peoples (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988: 309) will eventually be linked archeologically to Old Bering Sea, Ipiutak, and ancient Chinese art. If so, theories such as Covarrubias's (1954) Shang ties and Heine-Geldern's (1966) "Old Pacific Style" will eventually be recognized as convincing frameworks for a North Pacific oecumene.

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2. *American–Asian Ties as Reflected in Athapaskan Material Culture*

GALINA I. DZENISKEVICH

FOR MANY DECADES ANTHROPOLOGISTS, archeologists, and ethnographers have speculated about the ancient relationships between the peoples of North Asia and North America. The extensive literature that has accumulated on the subject over this period provides some evidence to suggest that America was populated from Asia in a few migrational waves across the Bering Strait. For example, geologists have found indications of a Late Quaternary land bridge and archeologists have discovered microblades in the early industries of Alaska and Northeastern Siberia (Dikov 1967:22–28; Mochanov 1977; Fladmark 1979:63–64). Physical anthropologists believe that the kinship between the aboriginal population of these northern regions goes back to a very early epoch and that these two populations display genetic *continuity* (Hrdlicka 1923; Debets 1951:523–38; Roginskii 1969:5–32). Folklorists point to the presence of a similar raven mythology as a striking cultural phenomenon uniting the peoples of Northeastern Asia and Northwestern America (Meletinskii 1981:182).

The problem for ethnographers dealing with the origins and genetic ties of these populations is that the archeological evidence they need to substantiate their hypotheses is as yet scant and does not establish clear ties between

archeological complexes and historic peoples. Nevertheless, archeological data on the theme of American–Asian ties continue to come in, with the result that some new ideas about the role of Bering Strait in the history of these ties have begun to take shape (Gurvich 1981). One view in particular that has been gaining strength is that contacts between Alaska and Northeastern Asia were not discontinued after the final disappearance of Beringia. This chapter draws on materials from the Athapaskans of Alaska to offer support for this point of view.

Ethnographers long ago noticed the cultural unity of the circumpolar areas of Asia and America. Franz Boas (1929:4–7) pointed to elements such as reinforced bows, dwelling designs, dog traction, the use of birchbark for utensils, and the flat drums of shamans; he also noted similarities in religious ceremonies and beliefs, as well as common folkloristic traditions. There are also many similarities in clothing, decoration, and ritual. Despite the numerous concrete examples illustrating cultural analogies on the two continents, the reasons for this similarity are as yet unexplained. The question remains, is it convergent development, genetic kinship, or cultural exchange? This question is difficult to answer definitively, even with respect to the much later migrants such as the NaDene-speaking tribes, including the Athapaskans who are believed to have appeared on the North American continent in the last migrational wave that took place some 6,000 to 10,000 years ago (Boas 1933:357–70; Dumond 1969).

We should not forget that the modern Athapaskans are separated from the migrants, who could, hypothetically speaking, be their ancestors, by at least a few thousand years. Can any elements of the cultural tradition of such a remote past be preserved over that length of time? Even its most stable element, language, must have been completely transformed over that period.¹ Through the many millennia, the culture of the Alaskan Indians has developed along a path in many ways different from that of the inhabitants of Siberia; hence, even if the Athapaskans are the direct descendants of the Paleolithic migrants from Siberia, they have not preserved unchanged those elements of their earliest material culture that they brought with them from Asia. This does not mean, however, that we should not search for ethnographical traces of their ancient relationships with the peoples of Northeastern Asia. Rather, our task is to select from the multitude of analogues those that make a convincing argument in favor of our suppositions.

We might ask, for instance, whether the similarity in the types and de-

sign of dwellings prove that there are genetic ties between the Northern Indians and the peoples of Northeast Asia. The answer is most probably not, although it has been established that Upper Paleolithic man was already able to build skin tents and consequently could have brought this tradition with him when he migrated to new areas with similar climatic conditions. Although it may be tempting to use the parallel existence of the conical skin-covered tent (*chum*) to verify the genetic relationship between the territorially separated ethnic communities, the notion of convergent development of similar traditions is equally plausible if we consider that these communities had a similar ecology, hunting economy, and seminomadic way of life.

Comparative studies in the clothing styles of the Alaskan Athapaskans and of the aboriginal population of northern Siberia provide little help in clarifying the matter. The tribes that migrated across Beringia a few millennia ago undoubtedly wore warm clothes because the prevailing conditions there at the time were those of the tundra and cold steppes. Many elements of Athapaskan clothing were similar to the clothes worn by the Chukchi, Koryak, Tungus, and other peoples of Siberia, as demonstrated by materials in the "Crossroads" exhibition (see also Chaussonnet and Driscoll, this volume). Clothes are a part of the cultural complex of northern hunters that either could have formed before the migration to America or, with equal probability, could have developed independently in the New World. Therefore certain parallels in clothing appear to argue in favor of ancient historical ties, whereas others—such as footwear styles, which coincide with the Evenk (Tungus), and the cut of their hoods, which is similar among many North Siberian peoples—most probably indicate later ties.

In some instances, similar elements in the culture of the Athapaskans and North Siberian peoples are more likely the result of borrowing than convergence. The trigger mechanism of pressure-type traps is a case in point (Osgood 1937:98, fig. 24/Yupa, #16; Popov n.d.:d.3, table 8). It seems highly improbable that exactly the same complex mechanism would have been invented a second time. It is more realistic to attribute this to borrowing, and a late one at that. By themselves, studies of hunting tools and comparisons between similar hunting techniques do not throw much light on the problem of the ancient historical ties of the Athapaskans. If judged by the inventory of sites classed as Proto-Athapaskan culture (Dixthada, Campbell, Old-Crow, Tuktu), however, the hunting economy of the Indians had very deep roots, and according to the archeological data, the tribes that moved along the

Bering bridge some ten millennia ago were mostly hunters of large forest game.

Noteworthy among the examples of possible early borrowing is the ornamentation of Athapaskan buckskin clothing with split and flattened porcupine quills. That there are common elements in the technique of decorating with reindeer neck hair among the peoples of Siberia and with porcupine quills among the Athapaskans is indisputable. As some researchers have pointed out, such an involved ornamentation technique could hardly have developed independently, and since the reindeer hair ornamentation is probably the more ancient one, the borrowing in this particular instance came from Asia.

It is still impossible to ascertain when porcupine quill ornamentation first appeared among the Athapaskan Indians. The only available evidence consists of some fragments of clothing with porcupine quills sewn onto them that were found in Lovelock cave, Nevada, in 1929. This clothing dates to approximately the sixth century A.D. It can therefore be concluded that this tradition of ornamentation was known to American Indians at least thirteen centuries ago. Because there is no evidence to suggest that this tradition emerged during the earliest stage of Proto-Indian culture, that is, during the time of their hypothetical split from the peoples of Siberia (Turner 1955:70-71; Sternberg n.d.:d.24, 1.23), and because specialists think that the tradition originated in Asia, the only possible conclusion is that Alaskan Indians exchanged cultural traditions with their northern Asiatic neighbors many centuries before the contact period (in the seventeenth century).

The most convincing evidence of very ancient Athapaskan ties with the peoples of Northeast Asia can be found in folklore parallels, or, to be more precise, in the Raven myths. Some researchers even see this as testimony to ethnogenetic relations. That is to say, they argue that the Raven series may serve to confirm a single origin for the peoples of America and Northeast Asia at that remote stage of their history.

Even a brief comparison points to some common traits in the Athapaskan and northeastern Paleoasiatic variations. The analogies become particularly distinct when we compare the plots and themes that preserve the traits of the most ancient stage of the series, namely, those related to the obtaining of light and to the making of land in the Ocean. Note, too, that the coincidence is not limited to the thematic range of the myths and that the formal traits of the Athapaskan myths about Raven also bring them close to the Paleoasiatic ones.

From the late nineteenth century on, the epic Raven series was investigated by ethnographers searching for the most ancient American–Asian cultural and historical ties. Although their conclusions do not altogether coincide, they have some bearing on the discussion here and merit some attention.

Without negating the possibility of cultural ties in the distant past, F. Boas (1914:310) argued that it would, however, be impossible to prove that the similar folkloristic series of the peoples of these areas had a common origin. In his opinion, the Raven series had developed independently on the Asian and American coasts. Jochelson (Jochelson 1904:41), in contrast, argued that such a close similarity could not be explained by an independent emergence and suggested that either their kinship is a result of the common origin of the tribes presently in possession of similar myths or that the myths themselves have a common source from which they spread by way of borrowing. Convinced that America was peopled from Asia across the Bering bridge, Bogoras (1902:636, 670) surmised that, having migrated to America, the folklore traditions of the Paleoasiatic peoples were able to maintain a feedback connection with the folklore of the northeastern tribes in Asia until newcomers, Eskimos, arrived in the Bering sea area and separated the carriers of a kindred culture on the two continents.

Note that all three researchers supposed that in the distant past there could have existed some close and stable ties between the population of North America and the ancestors of the modern inhabitants of Far Northeastern Asia.

More recent explanations for the Raven myth's similarities have been summarized by Soviet folklorist Meletinskii (1959:88–89, 92–95). After carefully analyzing the texts of the epic, he concluded, first, that the oral traditions about Raven have a common base and constitute the most ancient mythological series of the early inhabitants of the North, moreover, that the nucleus had formed among the northeastern Paleoasiatic people. Second, the similarity between the Asiatic and American series reflects both typological and genetic analogies, as well as contact ties in the past. Like his predecessors, Meletinskii thus confidently speaks about contact in the past.

Many other examples can be found to illustrate the striking similarity in the phenomena of the spiritual culture (notions about the soul, burial cult, shaman practices, etc.) among the northern peoples of Siberia and the northernmost Indians, but they would not help us move beyond what has already been established. In the final analysis, the conclusion that suggests itself is as

indefinite as before: the resettlers from Asia to America could have brought with them a number of archaic ideas, but the possibility remains that past contacts and similar environments played a role in producing the similar cultural forms. Gurvich (1981:125–27) arrived at almost the same conclusion following a detailed analysis of the burial ceremonialism among the peoples of Siberia and North America.

To sum up, although none of the facts mentioned above contradicts the hypothesis that the NaDene-speaking tribes migrated from Northeastern Asia, neither do they offer indisputable proof of this theory. The folklorist parallels are the most convincing (but not irreproachable) evidence of an ethnogenetic relationship between the Athapaskans and the population of the northeastern areas of Siberia, but this is certainly an insufficient basis for turning the hypothesis into an axiom. At the same time, although the similar elements of traditional culture may not shed much light on genetic ties, they do draw attention to the influence of historical ties on this similarity.

If it is difficult to see the ethnic cultures of the northern area of Asia and America as a single whole a few millennia ago, it is equally difficult to accept convergence as the explanation for the entire complex of similar traditions. However, there is a third possibility to consider: that the parallels are to a large extent a result of continuing contacts, since it is improbable that America remained completely isolated.

As is well known, the Athapaskans had obtained some European goods and artifacts from the peoples of Eastern Siberia long before the early Europeans came to Alaska. These goods arrived through exchanges with Malemiut Eskimo, who were closer to Bering Strait than any other peoples and for a long time had acted as mediators in the exchange operations with the northeastern inhabitants of Asia. The collecting point for the Asiatic and American traders were the Diomedede Islands, which the Indians could reach by canoe or by dog sled in the winter. To Chukchi traders, the trip across the Bering Strait was a routine part of life and it was timed to coincide with the end of winter or the beginning of spring (Anonymous 1978:121; Wrangel n.d.:d.341, I. 30–32 ob.). Occasionally, raids were organized from both sides, as a result of which some inhabitants of Alaska found themselves captive in Chukotka and those of Siberia in Alaska. Some cases of marriage between captive Indian women and the aboriginals of Kamchatka and Chukotka have also been reported, as well as some cases in which captive women were used to es-

establish trade contacts with the neighbors on the opposite side of the Strait.

If the narrow strait between the continents did not obstruct the diffusion processes two or three centuries ago, then it could hardly have been insurmountable in the fifth to tenth centuries, and earlier. Thus it should not be surprising that some similar, although distinctly specific, features (such as the technique of ornamentation with reindeer hair and porcupine quills, or the identical ornamentations found on the Kenai tomahawks and Koryak bone tools) come to us as traditional elements in the culture of the inhabitants of both Alaska and Northeastern Siberia. Some exchanges did not require repeated or lengthy contacts. It was quite sufficient to have sporadic ties for the exchange to take place, which seems to have been the situation within the contact area of the two continents over the centuries. In other words, the contact between Northeastern Asia and Alaska was not interrupted, even after the final disappearance of Beringia.

NOTES

1. According to Michael Krauss, the Proto-Athapaskan language is no more than 2,500 years old, and its motherland is Eastern Alaska and Northwest Canada (Krauss 1981:152, 155).

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3. *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition: A History of Russian–American Cooperation*

LIUDMILA P. KUZ'MINA

RUSSIAN–AMERICAN COOPERATION in the scientific investigation and comparative study of traditional cultures of the aboriginal populations of North Siberia and North America has a long history. One instance of this cooperation is the North Pacific expedition, organized by the American Museum of Natural History and its president, Morris Jesup, in the early 1900s. The scientific leader was Professor Franz Boas of Columbia University. With strong support from St. Petersburg's Academy of Sciences, he was able to conduct a long-term survey of Northeast Asia and of the northwestern coasts of North America, which yielded significant results. The two Russian ethnographers on the team, W. G. Bogoras and W. I. Jochelson, had already participated in Sibriakov's Yakut expedition of 1895–97 and thus brought valuable experience to the Jesup venture (Zelenin 1937; Tokarev 1956; Gurvic and Kuzmina 1985:145–51).

The Jesup expedition collected a vast amount of data using the methods of various disciplines, including ethnography, anthropology, archeology, linguistics, folkloristics, and history. These materials yielded valuable information on the traditional cultures of the peoples of the North Pacific area and proved that the cultures on both sides of Bering Strait represent a single

ethnocultural territory, which was an important scientific discovery of that time (Gurvich 1981).

Bogoras and Jochelson used these materials to prepare a series of extensive monographs published in English by the American Museum of Natural History (Bogoras 1902, 1904–9, 1910, 1913; Jochelson 1908, 1926) that provided new insight into the ancient cultures of these areas. Unfortunately, only a small part of this work has been translated into Russian (Bogoraz 1934, 1936a, 1936b; Iokhel'son 1904). A wealth of interesting material also resides in their diaries, correspondence, unfinished scientific articles, reviews, and material gathered during subsequent expeditions with the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences—all of which create a broad picture of the history of the ethnocultural ties and ethnolinguistic studies in these northern regions. This chapter focuses on just a small group of sources, the documents and letters pertaining to the history of the organization of the Jesup expedition, its routes, and program.

Preparations for the expedition began in 1897. The scientific program was organized by specialists with much experience in long-term field research and provided detailed instructions in gathering anthropological, zoological, and linguistic data, as well as collecting ethnological artifacts. The organizing committee—which included Franz Boas, Alfred Kroeber, and D. Allen—selected the following groups for study: Eskimo, Aleut, and Indians in Alaska and British Columbia; and Koryak, Chukchi, and Yukaghir in Siberia. It was necessary to study such a large number of peoples if the expedition expected to fulfill its purpose, which was to explore the history of the peopling of the American continent and of the ethnic relationships between the peoples of Northeast Asia and Northwest America. The thought that such ties might exist had already been entertained by scholars and travelers as far back as the eighteenth century, particularly among the participants of the Second Kamchatka Expedition.¹ In the nineteenth century, the question attracted even wider attention, especially in relation to the communities near the Bering Sea and in the adjacent areas. Among the various points of view that emerged, one was that the aboriginal population of America had developed as a separate independent group; another was that most of it arrived some time in the past from Asia via Northeastern Siberia (Bogoraz 1926:40–46).

In their quest for a solution to the question, scholars turned their attention to the little-known peoples of the Northeast Asia. The American Museum of Natural History invited the St. Petersburg's Academy of Sciences to

cooperate in such studies and to recommend specialists who had done ethnographical work in the circumpolar north. The director of the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Academician V. V. Radloff, recommended Jochelson and Bogoras for the project, who were both members of the Russian Geographical Society and were experienced in conducting research in the rigorous climatic conditions of Northeast Asia.²

Jochelson was working at the University of Berne in Switzerland when he received a letter from Boas in early 1898 inviting him to take part in the expedition and to conduct an ethnographical study of the Koryak. Shortly thereafter, Jochelson left for St. Petersburg to draw up suggestions for the composition of the group and the route they should follow. He strongly urged Boas to include Bogoras in the expedition: "In regard to my friend Bogoras, I beg to repeat that he is by far the best man for the investigation of the Chukchee and the other tribes of the Bering Peninsula. Mr. Bogoras speaks Chukchee fluently. He is well prepared to conduct ethnological work, and he is willing to start at once, if so required" (Jochelson to Boas, November 1898).³

By early 1900 the planning committee had settled on the main subjects of the scientific studies, the forms of financial support, the composition of the expedition, and the participants' duties. Jochelson was put in charge of the entire project in Northeastern Asia. As Morris Jesup, president of the American Museum of Natural History, told him: "You [are to] take charge of the work of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition in Northeastern Asia. . . . It will be your duty to plan and arrange the expedition in such a way as to ensure its most complete success. You will take charge of, and be responsible for, the property of the expedition, including funds, outfit, and collection; and you will take such steps that the property will be secured to the Museum under all circumstances. . . . Your party is to consist of yourself as leader, Mr. Waldemar Bogoras, Mr. N. G. Buxton, and Mr. Alexander Axelrod. . . . In consideration of the fact that, at your request, Mrs. Jochelson and Mrs. Bogoras are going to accompany the expedition to the field, and thus form part of your party and that [you] will have to purchase provisions and clothing for this part of your families before starting, I agree to pay in advance \$1700 on account of your salary, and \$1200 on account of the salary of Mr. Bogoras. . . . We have provided for the possibility of hiring workers and guides from local people" (Morris K. Jesup to Jochelson, 24 March 1900).

On the eve of the expedition, the participants turned their attention to

the details of the route and the anticipated results. The initial plan was to have the two Gizhiga-Kolyma and Anadyr parties work separately, but later it was decided both groups should begin studying the Koryak in Gizhiga together to shorten the time allotted to learning the Koryak language. Since Bogoras knew Chukchi, he could quickly learn Koryak and help Jochelson in the process. Thus they expected to depart from Gizhiga for Anadyr at the end of winter in 1900 and planned to spend three or four months in Anadyr. They were to split up in the spring of 1901, with Jochelson returning to Gizhiga to complete his Koryak studies and then proceeding by the Kolyma River to the Yukaghirs. Meanwhile, the Bogoras party was to go to the Arctic seacoast of the Bering Strait (Bogoras and Jochelson to Jesup, 30 October 1899).

Jochelson and Bogoras planned to prepare monographs on the Chukchi, Koryak, and Yukaghir with the scientific results of the expedition, and to provide a comparative analysis of their material culture, original forms of beliefs, and social organization. There was also to be an analysis of the mythological epic traditions of the Chukchi-Koryak language group, based on generic-typological and cultural-historical comparisons with the epic traditions found along the entire northwestern coast of North America. These were added to the plan of publication for the materials from the North Pacific Expedition, and Boas was recommended as editor of the basic studies of the 12-volume series, *Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History*.

It is important to point out that the organizers of the expedition paid a great deal of attention to collecting items of material culture. Specialists in this field—namely, Professors Allen, Boas, Butenmuller, and Gratakap—put together some guidelines for the preparation and description of thematic collections.

Technical equipment for the expedition received special attention. M. Jesup wrote in this connection: "You are to receive, in addition, necessary medical and scientific outfit, including drugs, plaster of Paris, photo equipment and materials, meteorological, geological and anthropometric instruments, weapons and ammunition" (Jesup to Jochelson, 24 March 1900). Up-to-date scientific equipment was bought in Western Europe and sent to Vladivostok from Antwerp; equipment acquired in St. Petersburg was shipped north from Odessa. These and other operations, including financial transactions, were performed by the German firm Kunst and Albers through its branch in Vladi-

vostok. The firm was in permanent contact with the expedition and transmitted all the information to St. Petersburg and New York through Mrs. A. I. Gromova, who was living in Irkutsk at that time.⁴

The Russian Imperial Academy of Sciences and the Russian Imperial Geographical Society provided local support along the planned route. Jochelson and Bogoras wrote: "Being members of the Russian Geographical Society we applied to it for assistance and obtained it on the same terms as from Academy of Sciences: to wit, the Society wishing to promote our investigation will give us recommendation letters and will employ its influence on the authorities in all those districts we intended to go" (Bogoras and Jochelson to Jesup, 30 October 1899).

The expedition was to depart from Vladivostok in the spring of 1900. Axelrod arrived from Germany in April and was later joined by Jochelson, Bogoras, and Buxton. Mrs. Jochelson and Mrs. Bogoras arrived a week later, for they had stopped off at Irkutsk to meet Mrs. Gromova on their way to Vladivostok.

The road to Gizhiga ran along the coast of the Okhotsk Sea, which normally remains frozen from October to June. In the spring of 1900, however, navigation began earlier than usual and the steamer that expedition members counted on left on May 23, before the party was completely ready. Since the next Gizhiga-bound steamer was not scheduled to leave until July, the planned program and route had to be scrapped. Bogoras and his wife left in June for Anadyr aboard a steamer used by the gold extracting industry and were to meet the other participants in Gizhiga two or three months later. In the meantime, the other members of the expedition paid a visit to the governor-general in Khabarovsk. They enlisted his support and learned that two Russian-American expeditions were scheduled to carry out surveys for deposits of rare metals around Gizhiga and the eastern coast of the Bering Sea. The heads of these expeditions promised to maintain contact with them and to provide whatever assistance they could. On the eve of their departure, they finished checking the cargo that had arrived in Vladivostok, replenished their stocks of food and warm clothes, and, most important, managed to find a secure place to store their property and collections. Jochelson sent the Museum of Natural History his financial account for the period of their stay in Vladivostok and informed the museum that the last steamer would be leaving for Gizhiga on August 4 and that all the mail should be sent to Vladivostok in

care of the governor of Primorie Province with a request that it be forwarded to Gizhiga, to the chief of the Siberian Department of the North Pacific expeditions (Jochelson to Jesup, 30 October 1899).

The steamer that Bogoras and his wife took from Vladivostok made a few stops, and after a brief stay in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii and in the Baron Korf Harbour, it reached Anadyr on July 13. The scholars arrived at Mariinski Post and were offered lodgings in a log house specially set up for their stay. The chief of the Anadyr territory, Mr. N. P. Sokol'nikov, was well-known for his articles about Russian culture in circumpolar Siberia, and he showed great interest in the scholars' program. He presented the American Museum of Natural History with a valuable collection of Chukchi clothes and decorations and provided Bogoras with an interpreter, workers, and guides (Sokol'nikov 1913; Zeninov 1914).

The scholars planned to do a great deal of work during their long stay in the vast Anadyr territory, located in the center of the Chukotka Peninsula. In the late nineteenth century, the area was inhabited by Chukchi, Eskimo, Lamut (the name for Evens that was in use until the 1930s), Yukaghir, Chuvan, and Russian. The total population amounted to some 6,000 persons, or less than one person per square kilometer. The nomadic Reindeer Chukchi occupied the greater part of the area, while the Maritime Chukchi and Eskimo lived in the coastal parts of the peninsula, and the Russian old-settlers, Chuvan, and Yukaghir lived in Markovo village and in a few other small settlements scattered over the middle reaches of the Anadyr River (Olsuf'ev 1896).

Over a period of three and a half months Bogoras visited many Chukchi settlements. Being an ethnographer, a physical anthropologist, a folklorist, and a linguist, he was able to collect data and record the essential details of the life and culture of the peoples of the Anadyr territory. He was particularly careful to establish the historical authenticity of the materials he collected.

It was a difficult year. An epidemic of smallpox had swept over many northern settlements, and the guides refused to go north. Bogoras was forced to postpone his visit to the northern parts to the spring of 1901. The epidemic disrupted life all over the Chukotka Peninsula. There was no annual summer fair at the mouth of the Kolyma River that year, and as a result the planned program of studies and the collecting work suffered another setback. At that time, the ethnographical objects Bogoras mentioned in his account—such as carved bone items, amulets, idols, and stone arrowheads and spearheads—could be acquired from the Maritime Chukchi who, in contrast to

their reindeer counterparts, had a great deal of trading experience. In exchange for their furs, they obtained textiles and rum from the Americans and tea and tobacco from the Russian settlements, primarily Markovo, whose inhabitants received supplies of these goods from Nizhnii-Kolymsk and Gizhiga. The account also mentioned the work that was started on describing the flora and fauna of the Anadyr territory. It noted, in particular, that Bogoras's wife had collected an extensive herbarium and a few stones with the imprints of plant seeds.

On October 20, 1900, Bogoras left his wife at Mariinski Post and went to Markovo, where he joined up with a company of guides and then headed for Kamchatka and Kamenskoe settlement, where he was to meet the Jochelsons and the other members of the party. The difficulties he encountered on the way are, in his words, beyond description: "Two times we were overtaken by heavy rains, which melted away any snow before our sledges. The snow storms were frequent and fierce, almost the third part of the journey we made simply on foot. Therefore I could reach Kamenskoe only on the 20 of November. I spent a little less than a month in Kamenskoe" (Bogoras to Boas, April 1901). Waiting for him there were the Jochelsons, Buxton, and Axelrod.

Jochelson's party did not leave Vladivostok until July and reached Gizhiga by steamer on August 3, 1900. In the next three months his party conducted an extensive ethnographical survey among the Koryak and gathered a unique collection of artifacts, as noted in the letters of Jesup and Boas. In view of the difficulties the collectors had encountered in acquiring these ethnographical objects, the museum allotted an extra \$800 to cover their unforeseen expenditures (Boas to Jochelson, 9 January 1902).

When Jochelson's party arrived at the mouth of the Gizhiga, they first worked in the small settlements of Kushka and Krestovo, and then among the Maritime Koryak in the settlements of Paren' and Kyuel.⁶ Jochelson proved to be a gifted organizer of fieldwork, and as a result of the instructions and assignments he gave to the personnel provided by the local authorities, he was able to obtain some valuable materials and data on the pattern of settlement and number of Koryak. Some beautiful sketches of their life were also completed.

Bogoras and Jochelson had known each other for a long time and frequently discussed questions of common interest. It was also important for them to be in constant communication since the expedition operated under a single program. Thus, when Bogoras finally reached Kamenskoe, the scholars

exchanged information regularly and, having analyzed the materials the expedition obtained, they arrived at a number of scientific conclusions, which have come down to us in their manuscript notes. Some of these were preliminary conclusions that were later revised, but many constituted the basis of future monographs and articles.

After four weeks in Kamenskoe, the expedition members began to split up. Axelrod went to Anadyr to continue the work started by Bogoras, in particular, to describe and evaluate the ethnographical items collected there, as well as to acquire more. Another of his tasks was to help Bogoras's wife describe the flora and fauna of the Chukotka Peninsula and take anthropometric measurements.

Jochelson, together with his wife and Buxton, continued working among the Reindeer Koryak. Snowstorms and fierce winds that season kept the reindeer breeders in the vicinity of their dwellings, and therefore the scholars were able to collect a great deal of material. Upon his return to Kamenskoe in January 1901, Jochelson decided "to return to Gizhiga to get some necessary things and provisions and then to go skiing with two guides northwards to the mouth of the Penzhina River, where in March there is usually a great fair and I will probably have a chance to assist at the gathering of the Penzhina Tungus [the Even]. If time permits, I still intend to make a trip to Olutora and at the end of spring will return to Gizhiga in order to prepare the collections for the steamer. After the ice on Gizhiga River breaks up, I will go in the boat to the mouth of Ovekova River, where the reindeer men of Taigonos catch fish about that time. In July, after . . . sending the collections to Vladivostok, I will begin my journey to Kolyma" (Jochelson to Boas, 1901).

After his painstaking work in Kamenskoe—where, in addition to everything else, he studied the Koryak language, recorded folklore texts, and collected information on the grammar and vocabulary—Bogoras went to northern Kamchatka to work among the Reindeer Koryak and Kamchadal. In the settlements of Tigil and Sedanka he gathered some ethnographical material and prepared it for shipping to Vladivostok. After two months in Kamchatka, he traveled back along the coast to Anadyr and on the way visited all the outlying maritime settlements and even separate dwellings of the Koryak. "My long journey from the mouth of the Anadyr River through the Gizhiga district to Kamchatka . . . was not made by any civilized man till now. Our journey took us through an unpeopled country, where we could find no guides

and had to make our way by following the sun and the rivers. I returned in a very poor state of health. There were a few days when I almost thought I would not be able to reach Anadyr at all. I still cannot say what kind of illness I caught; I have lost my voice, and my cough will not subside" (Bogoras to Boas, 1901).

Bogoras went back to Anadyr in early 1901. After a few weeks of rest, he started working on his report for the Museum of Natural History in New York. In addition to analyzing the work done and outlining his plans for the future work, Bogoras described the unusually hard winter of 1900 that brought hunger and numerous diseases to the population of the Chukotka Peninsula: "Last winter was unusual. According to the old people, such winters happen once in fifty years. After the October rains, the ground was covered with a sheet of ice and the reindeer were left with no food. . . . The winter affected every aspect of the life of the people. It was for this reason that three out of the five fairs that usually are held in this time of the year did not take place at all and the two that did were very poor" (Bogoras to Boas, 1901). Bogoras also mentioned that his wife and A. Axelrod, who had arrived at Markovo in December 1900, visited two fairs and obtained a large and valuable collection with the help of some Russified aboriginals who lived on the rivers of Northern Siberia, from the Ob to Kamchatka.

In April the preparations for the journey to the Bering Strait were completed. The packed collections were transported to Mariinski Post for shipment south once the waters were again open to navigation. The rest of the outfit was left in the care of Cossacks. Bogoras wrote Boas about the forthcoming journey: "As I am writing this letter we stay on at the Mariinski Post, pack our things, and prepare ourselves for the journey north. Our party of seven people with seven dog sleds will move northward till, possibly, the Indian Point [Chaplino]" (Bogoras to Boas, April 1901). That area around Bering Strait was not chosen by accident: Bogoras considered it to be the most interesting for ethnographical, anthropological, folkloristic, and linguistic surveys because he believed it was where the most intensive contacts had occurred between the peoples of North Siberia and North America.

The party worked for two months (May-June, 1901) in the Eskimo settlement on the Chaplino Cape (Indian Point) and on St. Lawrence Island. According to the report of the Anadyr party of the North Pacific expeditions, a large collection of valuable artifacts was amassed and some examples of Eskimo folklore were recorded. Bogoras later published the folklore texts in the

monograph *The Eskimo of Siberia*, which appeared in the Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History in 1913. The original transcriptions of the folk poetry are presented in Eskimo dialects with parallel English translations. Each text is supplemented with ethnographical and philological annotations. (Unfortunately *The Eskimo of Siberia* has not been translated into Russian.) Bogoras was also planning to compare the folklore songs and oral traditions of the Eskimo people of Northeast Asia and North America, the Canadian Arctic, and Greenland with a view to learning more about the history of ancient contacts among the cultures of sea mammal hunters and to determine the regularities in the interethnic folklore relations between circum-polar peoples. He only had enough time, however, to complete part of this project (Bogoraz 1936a).

A number of problems arose in the work on the Chaplino Cape. To begin with, expedition members did not know whether they would be able to return to Anadyr in the summertime. Bogoras felt he himself should be present at the final stage of the expedition. Since steamers, which were the only means of transportation at that time of year, seldom visited Chaplino Cape, he had to ask the local authorities to assist him by sending a postal vessel to the area to be investigated. Unfortunately, the steamer *Bear* that he had pinned his hopes on was delayed in the vicinity of Bering Strait helping a whaler wrecked on St. Lawrence Island and was unable to come to the northeastern coast. The ethnographical collections acquired at Indian Point were placed on board the American whaler *W. Beyliss*, whose captain agreed to deliver them to the New York Museum of Natural History.

By late June 1901 it was clear that if they had to wait any longer for a postal steamer the work in Anadyr would be delayed, and that meant they would be late for the last Russian steamer from Vladivostok. Bogoras thus decided to try a different course of action: "Because we were unable to induce any steamer to take us to Anadyr we had to make a skin canoe of medium size and try to make the trip together with my people. This alternative was not too convenient because I had to sell 100 dogs at a considerable loss. However, I cannot follow your advice and go to America—for there will be nobody to take care of the collections either in Anadyr or in Vladivostok. Moreover, I have to settle my accounts with the state depot in Anadyr. And, again, I have four people from Anadyr with me. If they are taken to America through St. Michaels Island, their return back to Russia will involve considerable expenditures" (Bogoras to Boas, Indian Point, Siberia, 18 June 1901).

Having reached Anadyr, Bogoras undertook two more trips to Chukchi settlements to check the data obtained earlier. In addition, he took care of his financial matters and spent nearly a month in Vladivostok preparing and packing the collections. Over 100 boxes with artifacts and materials were sent by steamer to Vladivostok–Shanghai–New York, Vladivostok–Vancouver–New York, and Vladivostok–Nagasaki–San Francisco–New York.

The plan was that after a brief rest in Petersburg, Bogoras would go to New York to edit the Jesup expedition's materials at the museum and prepare them for publication. However, the intensive work and the severe illness he had contracted during the trip to Kamchatka forced him to delay the journey for a few months.

In January 1902 Boas informed Jochelson, who was staying in Irkutsk after completing the work in Kolyma (Gurvich 1963:248–58), that Bogoras had not come to New York as planned and that illness had forced him to remain in St. Petersburg for a time (Boas to Jochelson, in care of Miss Anna Ivanovna Gromova, Irkutsk, Siberia, 9 January 1902). It was not until six months later that Bogoras was able to leave for the United States and begin work there. Writing to Boas from Paris, he mentioned that he had received Boas's letter a day earlier and was glad that the collections had safely arrived in New York. He informed Boas that he would be leaving from Liverpool on April 9 and departing from Cherbourg on April 12. He still had little progress to report as far as his health was concerned. His doctors had insisted that he go to Karlsbad for a month or two, but he believed that the most important thing was to reach America. He had great difficulty walking and was unable to stand much physical exercise. Still, he hoped to feel better in the near future (Bogoras to Boas, 2 April 1901).

In June 1902, Bogoras began working as an expert for the exhibition on the Chukchi and other peoples of the North that was being prepared by the Museum of Natural History. Since Boas was ill at the time, Bogoras, assisted by the museum's workers, prepared the model, having resolved all the spatial and design problems of the complex. With the arrival of Jochelson in New York, Bogoras could step up the preparations for publishing the twelve volumes on the results of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition.

In 1907 Jochelson spoke to a meeting of the Department of Ethnography of the Russian Geographical Society on the ethnological problems of the Northern seacoasts of the Pacific Ocean. In brief, his preliminary conclusions were as follows: The anthropological type of the aboriginals of the North

Pacific coasts is a mixed one. The northwestern Indians are quite similar in this respect to the Asians, while the northeastern peoples carry many Indian traits. The material culture of these peoples has three primary elements: Chukchi (i.e., reindeer-breeding), Eskimo (skin boats and sea mammal hunting tools), and Indian (e.g., plaiting technique). The Kamchadal, Koryak, and, in part, Chukchi mythology, on the one hand, and the mythology of the Indians (of the Tlingit and other tribes), on the other, form a single body of legends about the world's creator, that is, about Raven. At the same time, the Paleoasiatic peoples and Indians say nothing in their tales of Eskimo myths about the female deity called Sedna. There are some common elements in the religious and cultural ritual ceremonies and sacrifices of all the peoples (Iokhel'son 1907:33-35).

It is important to note that some of the preliminary conclusions drawn by Jochelson were revised by him and substantiated at length by additional materials from the Kamchatka expedition of 1908-10.

The Jesup North Pacific Expedition and its wealth of collected materials made it possible to describe the traditional cultures of the peoples of the North Pacific and to prove that the circumpolar territories found on both sides of the Bering Strait constitute a single ethnocultural area. This conclusion in itself was an important contribution, but in addition, with the help of factual materials, these scholars substantiated some important principles concerning the cultural and, possibly, ethnic kinship of the peoples inhabiting the northern parts of the Pacific basin. The articles and books published by Jochelson and Bogoras are among the world's finest ethnographical studies.

Since then, new and valuable archeological, anthropological, and ethnographical materials have been collected that in some cases have led to new interpretations of the role of the Bering Sea area in the history of the aboriginal populations of North Siberia and North America and of the ancient cultural ties between the peoples of the Old and New worlds. Despite these advances, the Jesup North Pacific Expedition indicated clearly the need for further research in this direction.

NOTES

1. The second Kamchatka Expedition, 1733-1743, headed by Russian naval officer V. I. Bering. A participant in this expedition, S. P. Krasheninnikov, prepared the

first description of the land of Kamchatka and put forward the idea that North America had probably been peopled from Asia.

2. As a matter of fact, Bogoras and Jochelson's first experience of Siberia was exile, which they owed to their participation as students in the revolutionary movement, the People's Will.

3. The correspondence quoted in this paper is kept at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, The Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Dept. 26/1.

4. Anna Ivanovna Gromova assisted in the scientific studies organized by the East Siberian department of the Russian Geographical Society. V. L. Seroshevskii's basic work *The Yakuts* was published with the money donated by Gromova.

5. The work in the Koryak camps is documented day by day in the Jochelson's field notes, found by I. S. Gurvich in the archives of the Institute of the Peoples of Asia in Leningrad (Gurvich 1963).

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4. *Collections of the Native Peoples of the Russian Northeast in the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography*

ELENA A. MIKHAILOVA

THE PETER THE GREAT MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY and Ethnography (MAE) in St. Petersburg was established through the merger of two academic museums, the Museum of Ethnography and Anatomy and the St. Petersburg Kunstkamera. In turn, its Research Division became the modern M. N. Miklukho-Maklai Institute of Ethnography of the USSR Academy of Sciences, now the Peter the Great Institute-Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography. Both the MAE and the Institute of Ethnography have traditionally concentrated primarily on ethnographic studies of the native peoples of Siberia and the north and the gathering of artifacts. The accumulation of collections from Chukchi, Koryak, and Siberian Eskimo cultures began in the first half of the eighteenth century and continues to this day. Because information on these collections has not been fully published, this chapter provides a brief description of the Far Northeast Asian ethnography collections available in the MAE Siberian Department.

The first Northeast Siberian collections came from the famous expeditions of the middle and late eighteenth century: namely, the Second Kamchatka Expedition (1733-43), which included G. F. Müller, I. G. Gmelin, and S. P.

Krashennikov; the Academic Expedition of 1768–74, with P. S. Pallas, I. Lepekhin, N. Ia. Ozeretzkovskii, V. F. Zuev, and others; and the Northeastern Geographical Expedition of I. I. Billings and G. A. Sarychev (1785–94). The significance of these expeditions for Russian science is widely acknowledged. A great number of artifacts were brought back to the *Kunstkamera* from these expeditions (Staniukovich 1978:50–51), but unfortunately some were lost in the *Kunstkamera* fire of 1745. Others present in today's collections cannot be positively identified because of poor documentation. Like many other museums, the MAE did not introduce the scientific artifact-by-artifact method of registration until the late nineteenth century. Before that time, the museum merely prepared lists of accessions indicating dates of arrival and short notes on the collection contents. However, part of the material from the Billings-Sarychev collection has been identified and the results published by R. G. Liapunova (1980:173–77). This collection contains ten unique Koniag Eskimo artifacts from Kodiak Island. It is believed that some of the eighteenth-century material is stored in the museum's Siberian section, mixed in with the collections assembled and described much later. The origin of these collections is rather vague; for example, some are said to be "from *Kunstkamera*," "from one of the old collections of *Kunstkamera*," or "from old unnumbered artifacts." By and large, however, the MAE collections consist of artifacts collected in the nineteenth century, following the discovery and development of the northern territories in North America during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. During this period several round-the-world voyages were made by Russians attempting to establish direct ties with Russian America. Apart from various other tasks, the participants were engaged in exploring the geology of the new lands and the ethnology of its peoples. These expeditions made extremely valuable contributions to the museum, primarily to the foreign sections, but some of the artifacts came from Northeastern Siberia, which was also visited by the expeditions. F. P. Lütke, for example, is known to have gathered several pieces that are now in the Siberian collection.¹

Two other individuals who contributed to the museum collections were connected with the Russian American Company: L. A. Zagoskin (a company officer) and I. G. Voznesenskii. A preparator at the Zoological Museum, Voznesenskii was sent to Russian America as an associate of the Academy of Sciences specifically to help build up the academy's natural science collections, which included ethnographic artifacts. Up to that time, items of interest from Northeast Siberian were gathered only incidentally; the systematic collecting

of museum objects had not been practiced on any of the early expeditions, but with Voznesenskii, fieldwork was for the first time specifically planned for artifact collection. A special program for ethnographic collecting was drawn up for Voznesenskii by Academician Shrader. The expedition took place between 1839 and 1849, and over these ten years approximately half of Voznesenskii's time was spent in North America, where he compiled a unique systematized collection, which today constitutes nearly two-thirds of the MAE's entire North American collection (Kinzhalov 1980:167). Voznesenskii also worked in Northeastern Siberia for almost five years, collecting artifacts of Siberian ethnography. Being a zoologist accustomed to collecting large biological series, Voznesenskii applied the methods of that discipline to gathering ethnographic materials, and thus collected whole series of clothing, boats, masks, and other objects. Voznesenskii also paid close attention to conservation and labeling (Staniukovich 1978:80).

The MAE inventory from the first half of the nineteenth century is composed of five collections, totaling 260 artifacts gathered by Lütke, Zagoskin, and Voznesenskii. These are the earliest collections and are of particular interest to scholars. Two out of the five can be clearly attributed. One, collection number 20, includes 41 artifacts brought back by Voznesenskii. It contains Chukchi, Koryak, and Itelmen artifacts such as bone pipes, Chukchi clothes, Koryak *opuvans* (embroidered fur bands), small ivory sculptures, and miniatures of dwellings and means of transportation. The Geographic Society provided another collection, number 337, which was gathered by A. F. Postels, a participant of Lütke's expedition. It contains six artifacts: ivory smoking pipes, an encased arrow, an ice-breaker of walrus tusk, and a necklace of dentalium shells. The origin of the three other collections is unclear, although they contain certain artifacts whose provenance has been identified. The bow, the tobacco-box, the plaited bag, and some other artifacts from collection 704, for example, retain their original labels from Lütke's collection. Collection 752 contains quivers, bows, arrows, and fishing rods—173 artifacts in all.

In the late nineteenth century the task of systematically organizing the museum's collections was undertaken by V. V. Radlov, a prominent orientalist who became director of the MAE in 1894. With the support of the General Assembly of the Academy of Sciences, he enlisted the aid of local administrators and amateur museologists to achieve his goals, and the results of this endeavor were extremely fruitful. N. V. Kirillov, a corresponding member of the muse-

um, collected and handed over to the museum 68 artifacts from Eskimo and Chukchi everyday life.

The pride of the museum is the late nineteenth-century collection made by N. L. Gondatti, which consists of more than 500 artifacts, mostly Chukchi, but also Koryak, Kerek, and Siberian Eskimo. One collection is exclusively archeological. Gondatti also made an extensive collection of artifacts from the Anadyr Russians (the "Markovtsy"). In the 1890s, Gondatti was secretary of the Society for Anthropology and Ethnography affiliated with Moscow University and consequently had some knowledge of ethnography and was interested in ethnographical themes. In 1893 he was appointed chief of the vast Anadyr territory, and during the three years of his administrative work he gathered some outstanding complete collections. Gondatti's collecting activities were held in high esteem by the Academy of Sciences, and he was awarded a gold medal for these efforts. Thanks to the systematic arrangement and completeness of Gondatti's collections, Waldemar Bogoras was able to prepare an essay on the material everyday life of the Reindeer Chukchi, published in 1901. This essay describes the material in detail, and touches on the spiritual culture of the Chukchi. The essay has sections on food, clothing, ornamentation, dwellings, utensils, weapons, implements and tools, reindeer-breeding, hunting, games and toys, idols and domestic guardian spirits, and bone and ivory artifacts.

In 1910 the museum received two extensive collections on the ethnography of Chukchi (some 300 artifacts) from M. Ia. Kozhevnikov, ship captain, and I. P. Tolmachev, senior geologist of the expedition organized by the Maritime Department of the Ministry for Trade and Industry to survey the coasts of the Arctic Ocean.

The work of the prominent scholars and collectors Waldemar Bogoras and Waldemar Jochelson began on the eve of the twentieth century. They were both recruited by D. A. Klements to participate in the ethnographical work of the Academy of Sciences. In 1900-1901, they took part in the Jesup North Pacific Expedition of the American Museum of Natural History (see L. Kuz'mina, this volume). The expedition's goal was to study the ethnocultural contacts and ties between the population of Northwestern America and Northeastern Siberia. It was organized by Franz Boas and carried out jointly by the Academy of Sciences and the American Museum in New York. Under the terms of their agreement, all the collections were to go to the American Museum, and it was only later that some of them were sent to Russia by way

of exchanges. A total of 176 artifacts reached Russia, and these now form MAE Collection 956.

These scholars made an invaluable contribution to ethnography through their innovative approach to fieldwork, which included stationary observation and collecting during a long stay among the people being studied and an obligatory knowledge of the native language. This approach not only increased the value of the artifacts they collected for the museum, but also had an important impact on their interpretations. The ethnographical traditions introduced by Bogoras and Sternberg were passed on to Soviet ethnography (Gurvich 1968:110). Bogoras and Sternberg brought up the next generation of students interested in Siberia in the same tradition, requiring both library research and fieldwork in the most remote areas of Siberia and the North.

Beginning in the late 1920s, the museum acquired new collections thanks to ethnographers working in the Far North in the so-called *Kul'tbaza*s (culture centers) as schoolteachers and as participants of different expeditions. One of the students of the Department of Ethnography of the Geographical Institute (and, later, Leningrad University) taught by Bogoras and Sternberg was S. P. Stebnitskii, who worked as a teacher among the Koryak people of Kamchatka. In 1929–32, Stebnitskii contributed 80 artifacts from the Koryak people. K. S. Sergeeva, a scientific associate of the Scientific Research Association of the Institute of the Peoples of the North, worked as a schoolteacher in Provideniia Bay in Chukotka in the 1930s and gave the museum 11 Siberian Eskimo artifacts. In 1935 a few other Eskimo artifacts were collected by another schoolteacher, I. Bratyshkina, who worked in the Eskimo settlement of Chaplino. The MAE received further material from N. B. Shnakenburg, a student of the Ethnography Department of the Leningrad Institute of Historical Linguistics, who worked at a Chukotka *kul'tbaza* in the 1930s and later participated in ethnographical expeditions to Chukotka. The collectors of the 1930s also included G. A. Menovshchikov, who began his career as a teacher in the Eskimo settlement of Sireniki, and who was a well-known specialist in the languages of the Asiatic Eskimo and an associate of the Institute of Philology. Another in the cohort of Bogoras and Sternberg students was A. S. Forstein, who taught among the Chukchi of Chaun and in the Eskimo settlement of Naukan in the early 1930s and made collections for the MAE there.

During the late 1930s and 1940s the museum received large works of art in walrus tusk to add to its collections. The earliest walrus and mammoth

ivory artifacts date to the early nineteenth century. These are mostly miniature sculptures, figurines of animals and people, bone needles, and pipes, all of which are characteristic of the Eskimo, Koryak, and Chukchi up to the end of the nineteenth century. The great interest in carved ivory and bone in the 1930s and 1940s reflects the sharp increase in the art of the Eskimo and Chukchi carvers; the range of their artifacts expanded during this time, and they mastered new carving techniques, especially after the establishment of the famous Uelen carving workshop in 1931. Last but not least, much of the popularity of this original art was due to the recognition and awards won by the Uelen carvers at international exhibitions.

A rich collection of carved ivory came to the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography in 1951 (Collection 6010). Almost all the artifacts in the collection were produced by the Uelen workshop in 1945–49. This collection is valuable not only because of the large number of artifacts (354) it contains, but also because of its artistic quality (Antropova 1953:9). Particularly striking is the diversity of the objects, which range from miniature sculptures to engraved tusks and utensils, and the great variety of the artistic techniques, which include bas-relief and fretting. All the artifacts are clearly dated and each carries the name of its carver. Prominent among the carvers' names are Vukvutagin, Emkul', Ichel', Renvil', and Khukhutan.

The Institute of Ethnography staff engaged in scientific research among various northern groups with the Northern Expedition of the Academy of Sciences contributed further to the growth of the MAE's Northeastern Siberian collections. Over 80 Chukchi and Koryak artifacts were presented to the museum by I. S. Gurvich in 1957 and 1971–73, 72 artifacts were presented by V. V. Antropova and Ch. M. Taksami in 1961, and 59 artifacts by I. S. Vdovin in 1969. The museum also has an extensive collection of archeological material from the ancient Eskimo burial sites of Uelen and Ekven resulting from excavations led by M. G. Levin, D. A. Sergeev, and S. A. Arutiunov (Arutiunov and Sergeev 1975).

Thus, as a result of more than 200 years of collecting activities, the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography now owns an extensive collection of ethnographic artifacts from the peoples of Far Northeastern Siberia. These collections contain over 80 accessions with some 3,700 artifacts that reflect diverse aspects of the culture of the Chukchi, Koryak, and Eskimo peoples. It is the richest collection from these peoples in our country, and it continues to grow.

Over the years, the museum's collections have been the basis for numerous publications by ethnographers, archeologists, and art students. These include such seminal works as *Peoples of Siberia* (from the series *Peoples of the World*), published in 1956 in Russian and translated into English in 1964, and the *Historico-ethnographic Atlas of Siberia*, published in 1961, soon to be available in English, both volumes originally edited by Levin and Potapov; *Ornamentation among the Peoples of Siberia as a Historical Source*, and *Sculpture of the Peoples of Siberia*, both by S. V. Ivanov (in Russian); and numerous "Siberian Collections" ("Sbornik" series). The museum collections are also used for educational purposes. In the mid-1920s, some temporary exhibitions of religious cults and art forms were on display within the permanent Siberian section. The "Gallery of Shamans" was composed of full-clad figures of shamans from all the peoples of Siberia, and of shamans' tombs (Taksami and Khomich 1980:46). Today, the MAE has no exhibits on peoples of the former Soviet Union in order to avoid duplicating the exhibits of the State Museum of Ethnography of the Peoples of the USSR. The material from the MAE, however, is widely used for temporary exhibits, both in Russia and abroad.

NOTES

1. Lütke's collection is mainly known for the remarkable artifacts brought back from the Caroline Islands (Micronesia).

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5. *The Paleolithic of Kamchatka and Chukotka and the Problem of the Peopling of America*

NIKOLAI N. DIKOV

THE ARCHEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS IN Far Northeastern Asia have long held great fascination for the scientific community. The history of man's mastering of this large geographical region (Kamchatka and Chukotka), located in an extremely rigorous high-latitude environment, is both interesting and instructive. This history testifies to the remarkable feat of the native peoples who created hyperborean cultures as early as the Late Pleistocene glaciation and successfully adapted to the severe climate of the far north—and who entered into North America at the end of the Ice Age, when the Beringian land bridge joined Asia and America. It is here, in Northeastern Siberia, that all the cultural and ethnic connections between the Old and New Worlds, from Ice Age times until the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus, occurred (see figure 5-1). For these reasons, there can be no doubt that the lands of Kamchatka and Chukotka contain antiquities that in due course will reveal more vividly and in more detail the history of this advanced detachment of early mankind as it made its way from Asia to America.

This history is already becoming clearer as a result of archeological and physical anthropological investigations (West 1981; Shutler 1983; Dikov 1979, 1985) on both side of the Bering Strait, which has been a physical bar-

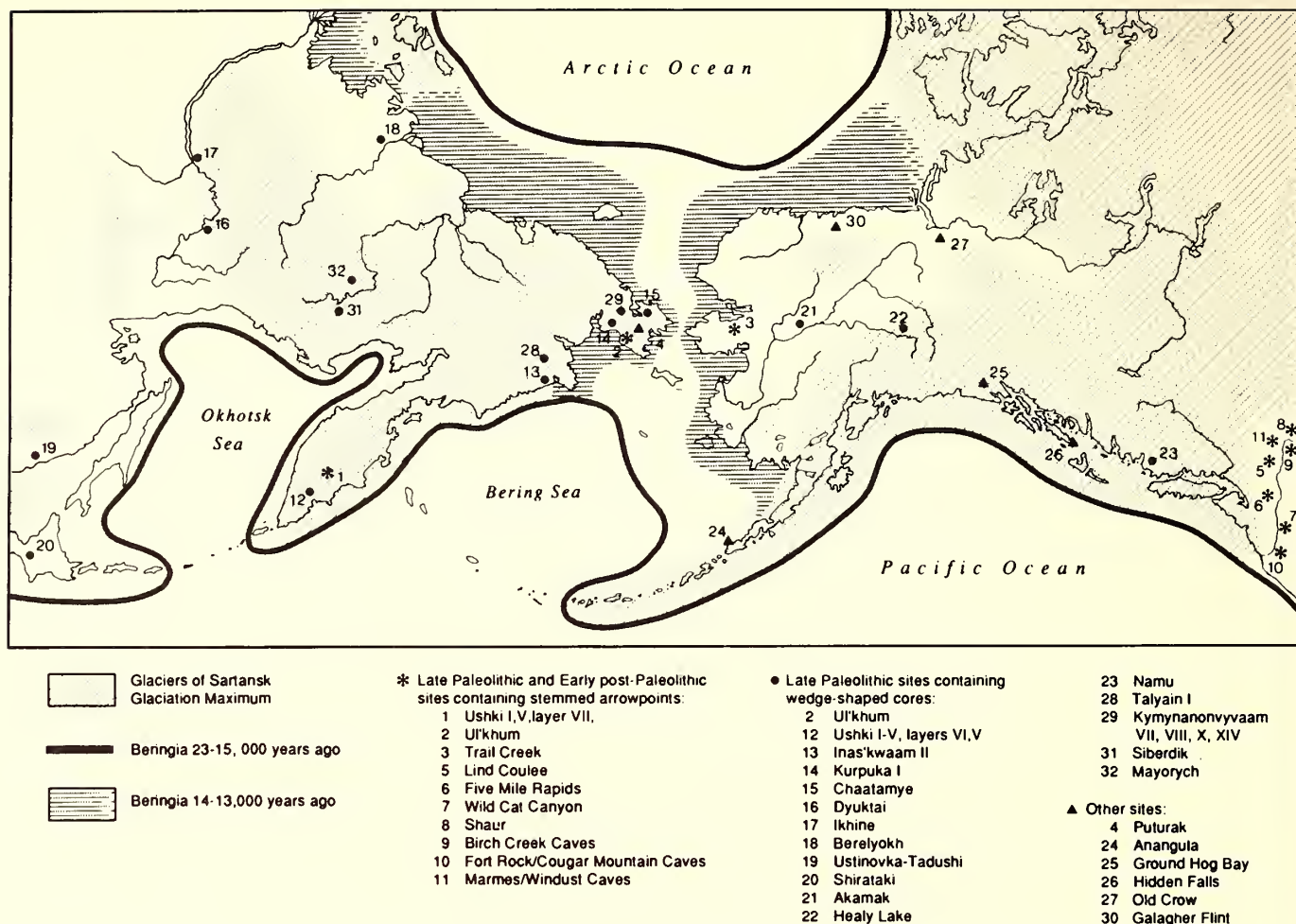


FIGURE 5-1. Ancient Beringia (according to Hopkins) and early man sites in Northeastern Asia and Alaska. (Artwork by Julie Perlmutter)

rier between the two continents for about 10,000 years. These investigations have been conducted for several decades and include the work of such noted American and Soviet scholars as A. Hrdlicka, C. Chard, W. Laughlin, L. Giddings, D. Anderson, H. West, A. Okladnikov, G. F. Debets, V. P. Alekseev, S. A. Arutiunov, and many others. In Magadan, for the past 25 years, the Northeast Asian Archeological Expedition of the Northeastern Interdisciplinary Research Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences, headed by myself, has also undertaken such investigations. The results of our study of the peopling of America during the Paleolithic are the subject of this report.

As early as 1961, I was fortunate to discover some Stone Age sites in the center of the Kamchatka Peninsula, on a terrace 8 to 12 meters above the shores of Lake Ushki. These sites proved to be multilayered with well-defined

stratigraphic zones (Dikov and Titov 1984). Three layers (V, VI, VII) are found 1.6–2.3 meters below thick, in situ volcanic ash layers and date to the Late Paleolithic. These sites (Ushki I–V) are still under investigation and will be for some time in the future, as they are among the most important Late Paleolithic sites in the world. Ushki I is of particular interest for it contains dwellings in its lowermost Paleolithic layers. During the many years this work has been taking place, the outlines of two Upper Paleolithic cultures—Early Ushki and Late Ushki—have become more distinct and convincing. These Ushki peoples hunted bison, reindeer (see figure 5-2a), and probably mammoth, as well as large salmon, which are abundant during spawning periods even at the present time.

Early Ushki culture is represented in layer VII at the Ushki I (figure 5-3) and V sites. Radiocarbon dates of material from this layer range from 14,300 + 200 to 13,600 + 250 years ago. An important find at Ushki I is a burial pit filled with red ochre and surrounded by large (about 100 square meters) dwellings, each of which contains hearths. This culture is characterized by rather small, stemmed, bifacial flint projectile points. They are most similar to the Late Paleolithic Paleo-Indian stemmed point tradition of Western North America (Bryan 1980). Analogous points of similar date have been found by us in the intervening territory at the Late Paleolithic site of Ul'khum on the Chukchi Peninsula, and by Danish archeologist H. Larsen at the Trail Creek Caves in Alaska (Larsen 1968). In view of these analogies, the easterly direction of cultural influence, and, perhaps, even migrations to America via Beringia, it appears that the Ushki points are the most ancient. However, it must be kept in mind that we are probably not dealing with the very earliest dispersal of people and with their culture from Asia to America.

The Late Ushki culture corresponds to layer VI at all the Ushki sites, I–V. Three radiocarbon dates were obtained from these sites and they range from 10,860 + 400 B.P to 10,360 + 350 B.P. This culture differs markedly from the Early Ushki culture. It has more dwellings (Ushki I has 25 dwellings and is only partly excavated), and they are generally smaller (about 20 square meters or less) and appear to be single-family dwellings. In addition, they have quite a different construction: they are sunk 0.3–0.5 meters into the ground, have a tunnel entrance, and a mushroom-like shape. They also have stone-bordered central hearths slightly offset toward the entrance. Projectile points are thoroughly treated with continuous bifacial retouch and are not stemmed, but leaf-shaped. Peculiar wedge-shaped cores for the pro-



FIGURE 5-2a.
Pegtymel' River petro-
glyphs, Chukotka, USSR.
Reindeer. (Photograph by N.
N. Dikov)

duction of microblades, entirely absent in Early Ushki culture, occur frequently in Late Ushki. In view of the character of the stone industry and the presence of stone lip labret ornaments, Late Ushki culture can be considered Proto-Eskimo-Aleut, and related to the so-called Beringian tradition of the latest Paleolithic of Alaska, represented by the Denali culture. One of the dwellings, belonging perhaps to a shaman, contained the grave of a domesticated husky-like dog that may pre-date the dog burial from the upper Jordan River in Palestine (Davis and Valla 1978). The Late Ushki dog was buried in a sleeping position, with its paws under its jaw, and had a scraper and a knife near its back. Thus, the dog was given the same treatment as a human burial, with all honors of the time.

Also unique among the remains of this culture are a few works of art: sandstone plates (one patterned with pits, another with the graphic design of hut-like dwellings, very likely of the Ushki Paleolithic settlement itself) and engraved on the dirt floor of one of the dwellings and close to one of the labrets, is an image of a fish.



FIGURE 5-2b. Pegtymel' River petroglyphs, Chukotka, USSR. Dancing fly-agaric people. (Photograph by N. N. Dikov)

Sites that I have recently found in the far east of the Chukchi Peninsula—at Kurupka I, Ul'khum, Chaatamyë, and Kymynanonvyvaam VII, VIII, and XIV—all contain wedge-shaped cores and bifacial leaf-shaped stone points or knives similar to the Late Ushki finds of Kamchatka. These sites are closer to America than any others yet found and are geographically intermediate between the Denali sites in Alaska and the Diuktai culture in Yakutia. Thus the Chukotkan Late Ushki sites provide evidence of another migration of northeastern Asiatic Paleolithic cultures to America via Beringia.

The largest site, Ushki I, is still being excavated. A proton magnetometer is being used to conduct a geophysical reconnaissance of the cultural layers. Paleomagnetic techniques are also being used to correct the radiocarbon

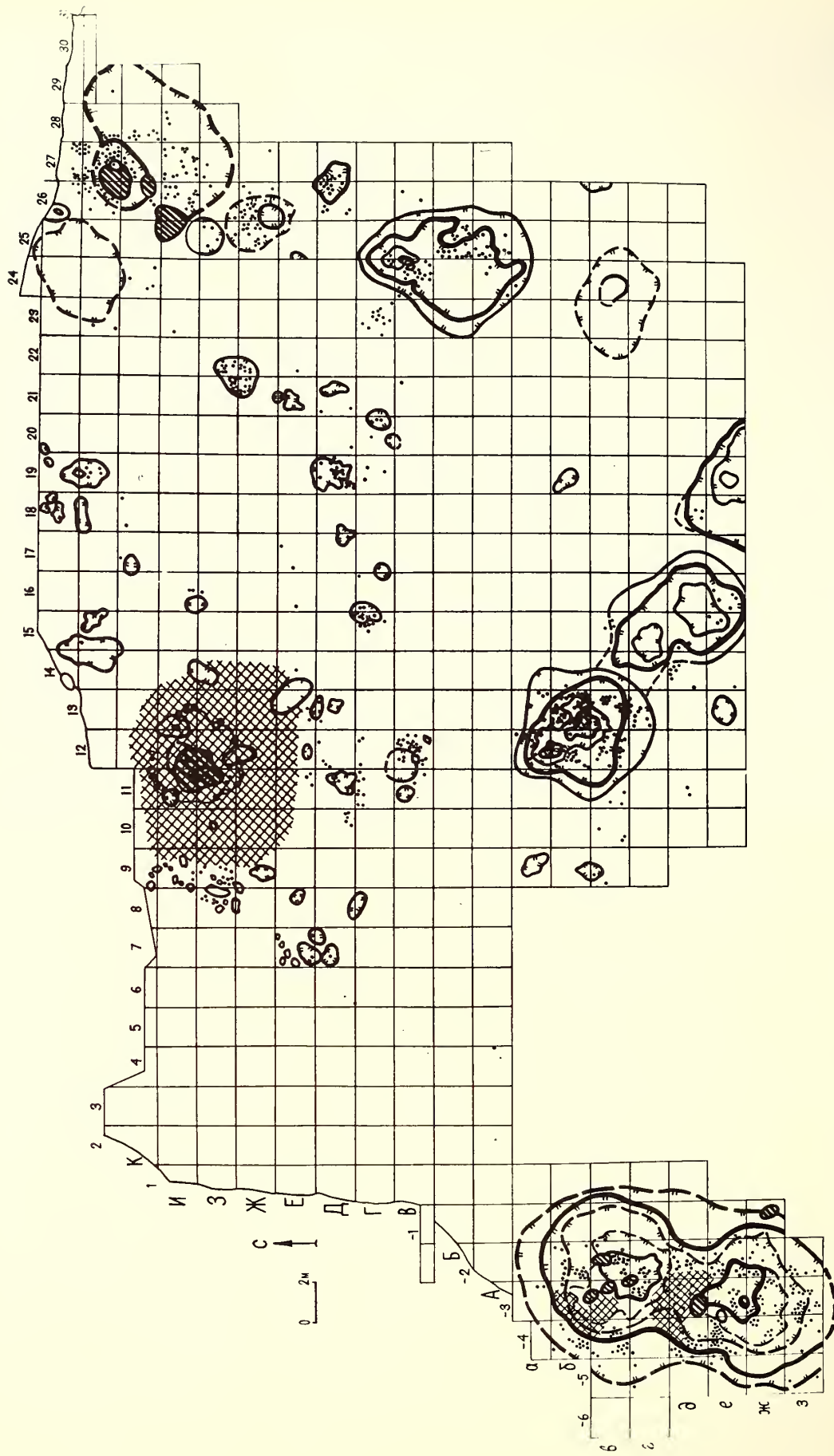


FIGURE 5-3. Plan of Paleolithic camp, layer VII of Ushki I site, Kamchatka. (Map by N. N. Dikov's laboratory, Magadan)

dates of Paleolithic layers, which are thought to be underestimated because the layers are saturated with groundwater. Preliminary results suggest that layer VI may be 1,500–2,000 years older, dating back to about 12,300 + 300 B.P. According to paleomagnetologist I. G. Dobretsova, this date would apply to the uppermost part of the cultural layer. The lowermost layer VIII would be correspondingly older. This research has not yet been completed, however.

We conduct excavations on Ushki Lake every autumn, and in the summer we resume our archeological reconnaissance work, begun in 1979, in the eastern part of the Chukchi Peninsula, close to North America. Besides the above-mentioned Paleolithic sites containing wedge-shaped cores (Kurupka I, Ul'khum, Chaatamyé and Kymynanonvyvaam VII, VII, and XIV), we have uncovered some sites of quite a different nature and, perhaps, of more ancient appearance. In 1984 we found the sites of Kusiueem IV and VI, which contain handaxe-like tools in the surface layer on the 25- to 30-meter terrace of the Kusiueem River, and the sites of Kymynanonvyvaam IX, XII, and XIII, which are also on river terraces and have handaxe-like tools similar to those found at the Calico site in South Carolina (Budinger 1985). Finally, in 1985 we discovered a stone workshop in the Puturak Pass, where we found numerous crudely worked lamellar flakes, scrapers, burins, and biface blanks (very few of the latter), all made of grey chert. Technologically, these tools are somewhat similar to the ancient stone tool complex of Central Alaska (Dixon 1975). However, the presence of more sophisticated unilateral prismatic cores together with large crudely worked conical cores suggests that this newly discovered stone industry in the southeastern Chukchi Peninsula (close to Cape Chaplino) is similar to the Early Holocene Proto-Aleut industry on Anangula Island in the eastern Aleutian Islands (Laughlin 1980). Eventually, we hope to obtain more precise dates for this interesting site.

As for the question of the peopling of America from Asia, so far the archeological data needed to substantiate this migration have not been as strong as the physical anthropological data. Biologically, it has been proved that American Indians are descendants of the early nonspecialized Asiatic Mongoloids or, as is now suggested by V. P. Alekseev, of Mongoloids mixed with the earliest Central Asian Europoids (Alekseev 1985). But the archeological evidence is still weak, and definitive dates are lacking. Nevertheless, some progress has been made toward a solution to this problem in the past two or three decades. Paradoxically, the American fluted points that are thought to mark the beginning of prehistory (but no earlier than 12,000 years ago) in

America have not been found in Northeastern Asia or elsewhere in the Old World. New light has been shed on this question by the recent discovery of more ancient archeological findings in Siberia and in the Far East, as well as in America. These findings suggest the presence of a "pre-projectile point" stage in America, in which there were no points (at least fluted ones) at all, and provide stronger archeological evidence of the Asiatic roots of the earliest American Paleolithic cultures.

Today, the search for the earliest archeological sources continues both in America and in Northeastern Asia. This work is extending the chronological framework of the problem far back into the depths of time, as indicated by the new North American findings, as well as the most ancient archeological discoveries in Eastern Chukotka reported on here.

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6. *New Dental Anthropological Observations Relevant to the Human Population System of the Greater Beringian Realm*

CHRISTY G. TURNER II

THE "CROSSROADS OF CONTINENTS" exhibition presumes that the many similarities between the aboriginal North Pacific hunting and fishing cultures are due to historic connections, cultural continuity, sharing and borrowing, and other conditions and processes operating in a linked system of geographically bounded, linguistically diverse human groups. The purpose of this chapter is to see if there is physical anthropological evidence to support or reject this presumption. I will refer to the "Crossroads" area as the Greater Beringian Realm instead of the North Pacific because the latter term is not inclusive enough and does not help identify the ancient or contemporary geogenetic center of the "Crossroads" population. The Greater Beringian Realm will be defined genetically rather than geographically. As will be shown, it is an acute accent-marked, A-shaped distribution of linked populations from the Amur River north to Bering Strait that encompasses all of Alaska, including the Aleutian archipelago, down the North Pacific coast, and across Canada to Greenland. The earliest inhabitants of the Greater Beringian Realm passed through to become North and South American Indians.

From February 1 to June 30, 1987, Jacqueline A. Turner and I collected dental anthropological data on 1,1400 crania belonging to several skeletal

populations curated in five institutions in the former USSR. These institutions and principal aids to our investigation include the Institute of Ethnography, Moscow (A. A. Zubov); Museum of Anthropology, Moscow State University (T. Svetlana); Institute of Ethnography, Leningrad (A. Kozintsev); Institute of History, Tallinn, Estonia (L. Heapest); and Institute of History, Philosophy, and Philology, Novosibirsk (T. Chiksheva). The two objectives of our data-collecting tour were to continue the dental search for the origin of all Native Americans, and to begin searching for the geographic and temporal branchpoint of Europoid and Mongoloid geographic races. Both of these objectives are germane to the history and composition of the Beringian population system.

Our procedures included a detailed anatomical workup of 200 crown and root variables on all permanent teeth. Examples of these variables include the occurrence and expression of incisor shoveling, molar cusp number, Carabelli's cusp, and root numbers of various teeth. The study of several of these traits in Native Americans and Asians was pioneered by A. Hrdlicka and A. A. Dahlberg. Additional Russian-American study is in progress by A. Haeussler, A. A. Zubov, and others. The analyses presented here are based on the key 29 of these largely independent polygenic traits, nearly all without significant age or sex dimorphism. Trait frequencies are based on numbers of individuals, not numbers of teeth. The multivariate mean measure of divergence (MMD) statistic is used to quantify the degree of similarity between groups. The clustering analysis employs Ward's algorithm. Details of these procedures are given elsewhere (Turner 1985).

From west to east, the new 1987 dental samples used in this analysis are a nineteenth-century series of western Russians; a pooled series of Mesolithic and Neolithic Ukrainians; Metal Age Kazakhs from a large cemetery near the Iranian border; Bronze Age crania from the west Siberian Sopka site; and a Neolithic series from an area near Lake Baikal. Although these series originate far from Beringia, they are needed to evaluate the internal genetic variation of, and possible external influence on, the people occupying the Greater Beringian Realm. Information on the other eight series was already in my existing data bank and has been described elsewhere (Turner 1985). Sample size for individual dental traits ranged from 22 to 123 for Russians; 22 to 158 for Ukrainians; 43 to 180 for Kazakhs; 88 to 212 for Sopka; and 12 to 49 for Baikal 2.

DISCUSSION

Table 6-1 provides the ranked intergroup mean measures of divergence. The few statistically nonsignificant MMDs are indicated with an asterisk. The nonsignificant values involve only the USSR Upper Paleolithic series, and then only sometimes. This series contains less than 10 individuals. A signifi-

TABLE 6-1. Ranked Intergroup Mean Measures of Divergence

USSR UPPER PALEOLITHIC		SOPKA	
Europe	0.000 ^a	USSR Upper Paleolithic	0.024 ^a
Meso. and Neo. Ukraine	0.000 ^a	Kazakhs	0.057
Russians	0.000 ^a	Baikal 2	0.069
Kazakhs	0.020 ^a	China-Mongolia	0.100
Sopka	0.024 ^a	NE Siberia + Amur	0.133
Baikal 2	0.234 ^a	Europe	0.163
China-Mongolia	0.267	Meso. and Neo. Ukraine	0.173
NE Siberia + Amur	0.355	Greater NW Coast	0.194
Aleut	0.433	Eskimo	0.203
Eskimo	0.491	N + S America	0.210
N + S America	0.504	Russians	0.219
Greater NW Coast	0.506	Aleut	0.235
BAIKAL 2		RUSSIANS	
China-Mongolia	0.033	USSR Upper Paleolithic	0.000 ^a
Sopka	0.069	Europe	0.027
Kazakhs	0.077	Meso. + Neo. Ukraine	0.068
NE Siberia + Amur	0.099	Kazakhs	0.115
Greater NW Coast	0.144	Sopka	0.219
Aleut	0.165	Baikal 2	0.330
Eskimo	0.168	China-Mongolia	0.377
N + S America	0.192	NE Siberia + Amur	0.456
USSR Upper Paleolithic	0.234	Aleut	0.553
Meso. + Neo. Ukraine	0.276	Eskimo	0.590
Europe	0.283	Greater NW Coast	0.613
Russians	0.330	N + S America	0.615

TABLE 6-1. Ranked Intergroup Mean Measures of Divergence (cont.)

KAZAKHS		MESO. + NEO. UKRIANE	
USSR Upper Paleolithic	0.020 ^a	USSR Upper Paleolithic	0.000 ^a
Sopka	0.057	Europe	0.047
Baikal 2	0.077	Russians	0.068
Europe	0.083	Kazakhs	0.142
Russians	0.115	Sopka	0.173
China-Mongolia	0.131	Baikal 2	0.276
Meso. + Neo. Ukraine	0.142	China-Mongolia	0.368
NE Siberia + Amur	0.157	NE Siberia + Amur	0.459
Eskimo	0.241	Eskimo	0.513
Aleut	0.258	Greater NW Coast	0.569
Greater NW Coast	0.277	Aleut	0.593
N + S America	0.326	N + S America	0.599

Note: Meso. and Neo. = Mesolithic and Neolithic.

a. Denotes nonsignificant mean measure of divergence.

cant MMD is one for which the probability of occurring by chance alone is less than 2 in 100. Stated simply, with the exception of the smaller MMDs for the USSR Upper Paleolithic sample, we can be confident that the values given in table 6-1 reflect actual average divergence or biological distance. A small MMD indicates greater intergroup similarity than does a large MMD. Because the dentition are inherited in a polygenic fashion, these MMD values are likely good signatures of overall genetic differences between each MMD pair.

Immediately apparent in table 6-1 are the marked divergences (large MMD values) between the various European and Asiatic-American series. It is unlikely that the European gene pool contributed to the initial or later formation of the peoples of the Greater Beringian Realm until historic times, when there occurred massive cultural, genetic, linguistic, epidemiological, and ecological disturbances throughout the population system. Less apparent but equally important are the intermediate MMDs between the Kazakhs, Sopka, and the remaining series. The Kazakhs are very similar to the USSR Upper Paleolithic, Sopka, Baikal, and European samples. Sopka is most like the USSR Upper Paleolithic, Kazakh, Baikal, and China-Mongolia series. These

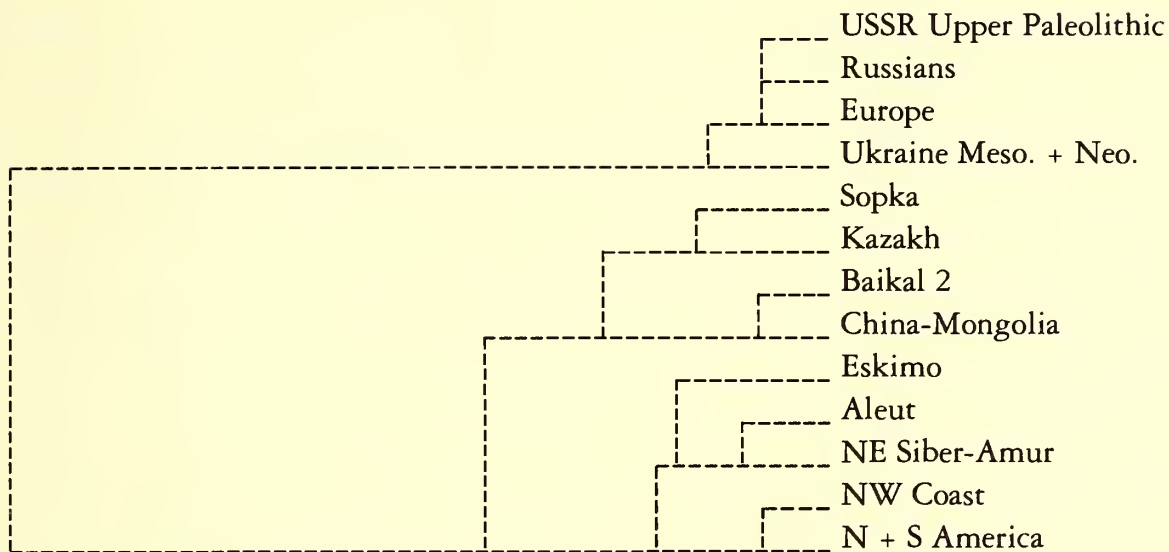


FIGURE 6-1. Dendrogram based on mean measures of divergence clustered with Ward's method. (Computer reference: *American Indian Origins* #3 4-4-88)

values suggest that both the Kazakhs and Sopka people were hybrid populations, with the former having less Asiatic admixture, and the latter, more. Neither Sopka nor the Kazakhs are like the people of the Greater Beringian Realm—Eskimo, Aleut, Northeast Siberia–Amur, or Greater Northwest Coast—which demonstrates that none of these groups has identifiable European genes. The east Siberian Baikal 2 series, geographically closest to the Greater Beringian Realm, joins up with China-Mongolia, suggesting a significant discontinuity in the northeast Asian Sinodont gene pool.

The intergroup MMDs for Northeast Siberia–Amur, Aleut, Eskimo, Greater Northwest Coast, and to a lesser extent North and South America, are all much more like one another than like the values between each of these groups and the remaining series. This suggests the existence, or past existence, of a distinct genetic network or population system centered in northeast Siberia and northwest North America, namely, the Greater Beringian Realm. While all the series from the Greater Beringian Realm are Sinodonts, they form a discernible network, according to the MMD values.

This distinct network and other Eurasian-American relationships are easier to visualize in the dendrogram of figure 6-1. Inspecting from top to bottom, we find that the European samples branch from those of Asiatics at the very base of the tree. Further down, a second branch includes Sopka, Kazakhs, Baikal, and China-Mongolia. Still further down, a third branch contains Eski-

mo, Aleut, and Northeast Siberia—Amur. The last branch, a minor one, links the Greater Northwest Coast and the North and South America series.

Clustering analysis can be used to test existing hypotheses or serve as the basis for new ones. The existing hypotheses offer two competing explanations for the origin of all Native Americans: the ancestors of Native American originated in (a) Europe (see Muller-Beck 1982; Fagen 1987; Haynes 1987), or (b) Asia (see, among others, Hrdlicka 1925; Stewart 1960, 1973; Laughlin 1963; Turner 1983). The European-origin hypothesis is based on interpretations of archeological materials from Europe and the Americas; the Asian-origin hypothesis rests on physical anthropological information from Asia, the Americas, and Europe. A methodological flaw in the archeological viewpoint is its failure to recognize that similarity is relative and that at least three groups must be compared in order to measure degrees of similarity or relationship. As is most evident, the dendrogram supports the Asian-origin hypothesis, not the European model. That is, the dentition of the peoples of the Greater Beringian Realm and all other Native Americans are far more similar to those of other Asians than those of many Europeans.

Furthermore, the dendrogram suggests that the people of the Greater Beringian Realm were a substantially distinct genetic cohort or population system, probably best viewed taxonomically as a local race. Not only was this population system isolated by geographic distance, but also by sufficient time to allow its distinctiveness to evolve out of the average genetic background of northeastern Asia. If we set the dental evolutionary clock for the divergence of all major world populations at 100,000 years ago, beginning with a single anatomically modern human population in Africa, allow time for expansion into Europe where these modern folk (Cro-Magnon) appear about 40,000 years ago, and in Australasia (Australian Aboriginals) about the same time, then the first branchpoint in the cladogram of figure 6-1 may have occurred about 50,000 years ago, perhaps in India or Southeast Asia. If this is so, then the antiquity of the population in the Greater Beringian Realm would be on the order of 10,000 years, a minimal estimate based on the ratio of branch lengths in the dendrogram. This, of course, assumes a similar rate of dental microevolution in all populations (Turner 1986). With respect to rate, it is noteworthy that the dentitions from the greater Beringian Realm are quite similar, given the stark environmental differences ranging from polar desert through various expressions of tundra and boreal forest, to rain forests that

these populations inhabited. If there is one common environmental element, it is the heavy economic dependency on fish.

What sort of independent evidence is there for the existence of a human population system in the Greater Beringian realm? As just mentioned, selection by common environmental factors cannot be called on to explain the dental similarities from the Amur to Greenland. But, culturally and synchronically, such a system seems to have existed. Culture elements such as raven tales, various art styles, the use of wood-shavings for religious symbols, slat armor, bear ceremonial, and other subjective features widely if discontinuously shared from the Amur region north to and across Bering Strait, out into the Aleutians, across Canada to the eastern Eskimos, and all down the Northwest Coast, are numerous (Boas 1948). These are well displayed in the "Crossroads" exhibition. Similarity of culture elements in the North Pacific has long been recognized, beginning with Veniaminov's (1984) splendid comparisons. Subsequently, the Jesup North Pacific expedition assembled a vast amount of documentation supportive of some form of North Pacific culture area or interaction sphere.

Linguistically, a community of sorts can be circumscribed. Within the smallest sphere, North American-situated Aleut-Eskimo languages seem to join across the Bering Strait with Siberian Chuckchi in some features (Greenberg 1987). Chuckchi, in turn, has a close genetic connection with Koryak, spoken in northern Kamchatka (Boas 1948). Expanding out to the second perimeter, Koryak may be related to other so-called Paleo-Asiatic languages. On the North American side, the nearest (geographically speaking) linguistic community to that of Aleut-Eskimo is the Na-Dene group that forms a separate phylum or family, unlinkable to Aleut-Eskimo, Macro-Indian, or any Siberian language or cluster of languages. Obviously, this suggests that a lot of language evolution has occurred since the early ancestral language(s) was spoken in late Pleistocene north China or Mongolia. The unrelated Paleo-Asiatic languages may each represent a remnant family with only a single surviving language. Until such time when linguists discover how to classify the relationships between language families, the hypothesis of a greater Beringian population system is more dependent on other lines of evidence. However, Boas (1948:354) considered that the Paleo-Asiatic languages and those of western America suggested the existence of a very old "district."

The diachronic archeological evidence for an ancient population system

in the Greater Beringian Realm is especially supportive. So far, northeastern Siberia appears to have had only one major late Pleistocene culture, the so-called Diuktai culture. Its distribution extends from the Lena to the Amur-Mongolia region, with a strong probability of having a north China-Mongolia origin. Diuktai has an American counterpart, called Paleo-Arctic or Denali, dating back about 10,000 years in Alaska (Dumond 1980). Paleo-Arctic people could well have been ancestral to most modern Na-Dene speakers (Turner 1985). A separate but related archeologically recognizable sphere occurs in the Hokkaido-Amur region, dated to about 15,000 years ago in Hokkaido. This center has the same kinds of artifacts as the earliest known Aleutian occupation—unifacial blades, cores, and burins—dated 8,000 years old, from Anangula Island (Laughlin 1963).

Additional details can be read from the cladogram. These are important, but not essential to the thesis of this discussion, which is that there is statistically sound dental anthropological support for the concept of an ancient and distinct population in northeast Siberia, which spread quickly to northern North America before or shortly after the end of the last Ice Age. The cultural similarities seen in Northwest Coast Indians, Aleut, Eskimo, all northeast Siberians, and even Amurians are seemingly the result of a common biocultural origin, as well as environmental selection for numerous cultural similarities.

In conclusion, multivariate and clustering statistics of Eurasian and American dental variation suggest that the native peoples of northeast Asia and northwest North America are members of a distinct and ancient population system, one whose origin was certainly not in Europe, but most likely in northern China and Mongolia. This population system and areal distribution defines a human biogeographic area I call the Greater Beringian Realm. This geogenetic entity lends support to the concept of a North Pacific culture area or interaction sphere.

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PART 2. *Symbol and Object: Complexity in
North Pacific Cultures*

7. *The Bleeding Coat: The Art of North Pacific Ritual Clothing*

VALÉRIE CHAUSSONNET AND
BERNADETTE DRISCOLL

ONLY RARELY IS CLOTHING PERCEIVED as art in Western cultures and conceptual categories. Beautiful garments, such as those displayed in the exhibition "Crossroads of Continents," are usually deemed fine pieces of craftsmanship. In the North Pacific, however, the production of clothing is taken as seriously as the creation of sacred art.¹ This statement applies not only to the ritual category of Koryak funeral coats (figure 7-1), for example, but to clothing in general throughout the North Pacific region. That is to say, the making of everyday dress, as well as ceremonial garments, rests on artistic and religious foundations comparable to those that motivate the work of native North Pacific carvers and mask makers. In this chapter we focus mainly (although not exclusively) on ritual and ceremonial clothing, not because only they carry the symbols and meanings we are interested in, but because their symbolism is more overt, as a consequence of their function.

Human beings feel vulnerable as individuals and as discrete social groups. Clothing, therefore, not only provides physical protection but also binds together the social unit and, on a metaphysical level, protects against dangerous spirits. Thus, North Pacific clothing expresses social, cosmological, and ideological concerns just as other forms of indigenous art do.



FIGURE 7-1. Koryak male funeral coat, AMNH 770-3600. (Photograph by Valérie Chaussonnet and Bernadette Driscoll, courtesy Department of Library Services, American Museum of Natural History)

In this case, the artists are women. Throughout the North Pacific region, clothing designers and seamstresses are primarily women.² Since they are women, and since clothing is made from animal skins over which animal spirits retain a right of control, seamstresses are subject to stringent rules and taboos in practicing their art. Eskimo women, for example, had to refrain from sewing at the start of the caribou hunting season (Spencer 1959:355); to pierce the caribou hide with a needle would offend the spirit of the caribou waiting to be captured. Similarly, the wife of an *umialiq* (whaling captain) could not sew during her husband's hunting expeditions for fear of jeopardizing the crew's success (Spencer 1959:344). Taboos against sewing at the start of, or during, a change in hunting seasons are especially well-documented across the Arctic.

This complex relationship with the animal world pervades all aspects of life in the North Pacific. In the mythology of the North Pacific region, hu-

mans and animals are able to transform themselves from one form to the other. A common feature of Koryak mythology, for example, is the intermarriage between humans and animal-named spirits (Jochelson 1908:115ff.). Among the Eskimos of the Bering Sea, the Creator/Transformer, Raven, lifts his beak to reveal himself as human (Nelson 1899:453). The mythology of the Athapaskans is also marked by a time in which "all the animals looked, talked, and behaved as men . . . those beings who are now animals seem to have pulled on their masks or skins permanently to assume the external appearances they have today" (McClellan 1975:71). Thus, throughout the North Pacific an intimate bond existed between humans and animals, and clothing made from the skins of animals—whether everyday, ceremonial, or ritual in function—provided the principal means of transformation.

ANIMAL FUR AS CLOTHING: NORTHEASTERN SIBERIANS AND NORTH ALASKAN ESKIMO

Dressing in animal skins established a primary, fundamental relationship between humans and animals. Among the Koryak and Chukchi of northeastern Siberia, both women and children dressed in one-piece combination suits.³ The desire to imitate the animal was especially evident in the design of children's clothing (figure 7-2). Made from the soft fur of a reindeer fawn, a child's combination suit, with its enclosed sleeves and attached boots, created a physical and metaphoric identification with the animal. The hood often retained antler buds or animal ears. Women's combination suits (*khomba* or *kerker*), although hoodless, were tailored in a similar manner; a metaphoric reference to the animal was also suggested by the design of the lower back, which imitates the lower back of the caribou.

Design motifs on Eskimo fur clothing also emphasized the close relationship between humans and animals. Reindeer fur coats worn by men and women had triangular-shaped gussets at the throat said to refer to the walrus, an animal respected for its size and formidable tusks. Chuna McIntyre, a Yupik Eskimo from southwestern Alaska, contends, however, that the gussets reflect a theme in Yupik mythology and symbolize streams of caribou fat dripping from the mouth of the Ancestral Father (personal communication, July 1988; see also chapter 19). Such alternative interpretations suggest that clothing design probably contains polysemic symbols and equivalent meanings.

JOINT MARKS, OCHRE, AND ALDER DYEING:
ATHAPASKAN CLOTHING

The design motifs in Athapaskan clothing are particularly difficult to interpret. Red ochre is used throughout the Athapaskan region to mark the clothing of men, women, and children.⁴ The potency of ochre is suggested by the actions involved in its excavation and use. Among the Ingalik, for example, ochre was collected exclusively by men—if a woman accompanied a man on the expedition, “the ochre would sink down into the earth so that one could not obtain it” (Osgood 1940:384). When collecting ochre from a natural deposit, the Kutchin left an offering of sinew or something of value at the site (Osgood 1936:93). Ochre itself served as a sign of wealth; like trade beads and dentalia, it had intrinsic commercial value.

Heavily drawn or smudged lines of ochre underlie the superimposed decoration of porcupine quillwork or beads on much of the Athapaskan clothing in museum collections.⁵ The presence of such lines along the seams and edges of the garment (neck, wrists, and hem) suggests the “bounding” of both the clothing and the individual for spiritual protection (J. Thompson, personal communication, July 1988). Some Athapaskan garments show a thin vertical line drawn down the center of the lower front (and often back) of the tunic. On a garment illustrated in the *Crossroads of Continents* catalogue (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:225, fig. 298 [MAE 620-40a]), this center line terminates in a trident motif suggesting a bird’s claw, perhaps a clan or personal signature, or referring to a helping spirit (see, e.g., Thompson 1987:152, fig. 137). On leggings, a vertical line of ochre sometimes joined horizontal bands encircling the knee and ankle. Mittens and gloves, too, were often marked with a thick ochre band around the wrist or with the bone structure of the hand (see Thompson 1987:152, fig. 136). This use of ochre as a joint or skeletal marking seems to parallel the magico-religious practice among Athapaskan groups of binding the knees, ankles, and other joints with babiche to “counteract ill omens” (McKenna 1959:165, 167). Such a protective function may also be indicated by the ochre line drawn across the upper back of many Athapaskan garments; hide tassels, feathers, and bead fringes often dangle from this line (Figure 7-3). In other cultures of the North Pacific area, amulets are attached to the back of clothing as if to protect the wearer from behind.

With the introduction of foreign trade materials, clothing decoration throughout the North Pacific region changed drastically. Because of the rich



FIGURE 7-2. Chukchi Children in "khonba" or "kerker," Omolon, 1980. (Photograph by Mikhail Abriutin)



FIGURE 7-3. Athapaskan garment with ochre marks (back)
NMNH 49135. (Photograph by Valérie Chaussonnet and Bernadette Driscoll)

bead trade carried on in the Alaskan interior during the late nineteenth century, for example, beadwork eventually displaced the exquisite quillwork decoration for which Athapaskan craftswomen were renowned. Dentalium shells obtained from Tlingit traders and colored glass beads purchased from Russian, American, and Hudson Bay Company traders assumed an economic value apparently not assigned to traditional quillwork.⁶ Beads were even circulated as currency among Athapaskans (Hardisty 1866:311). The heavily beaded tunics worn by Athapaskan men actually served as family treasure. Women were obliged to use their own beads to trade for skins with which to make the family clothing, while the beads decorating their husbands' tunics were preserved as family wealth (Hardisty 1872:14).

Many important questions regarding the history and symbolic content of Athapaskan clothing remain to be researched, although there is clearly a connection between blood and ochre. On a physiological level, blood is an essential substance uniting human beings and animals; thus, as a metaphor for blood, ochre joins together the human and animal realm. However, blood remains a profoundly ambivalent symbol incorporating references to *both* life and death. Because of its ambiguous (or perhaps intermediate) nature, menstruation, which represents neither birth nor death, is regarded as inherently powerful and dangerous. A key to the spiritual significance of ochre and its importance in the decoration of Athapaskan clothing may lie in women's clothing, particularly in articles associated with menstruation.⁷

CELESTIAL BODIES: KORYAK DANCE COATS

Chukchi and Koryak seamstresses used alder bark, which lends a rich reddish brown tone to scraped reindeer hide, to soften the skins and make them moisture resistant (Bogoras 1904-9:219; Jochelson 1908:629). It was used especially on the Koryak dance coat (figure 7-4). This coat had a highly conventional design, falling to about knee length with a flared skirt. The full sleeves, pulled in tight at the wrists, were edged with a band of grey fur. The large hood was trimmed with wolverine or black dog fur, and the chest bib was often decorated with white caribou fur arranged in geometric patterns. The hem was trimmed with an elaborately embroidered lower band (*opuvan*). Trade items, such as beads and metal objects that could produce sounds, increased the value of the coat (and hence the prestige of the wearer) but may also have been worn as protective amulets.⁸ Dressed in these richly decorated dance



FIGURE 7-4. Koryak dancing coat. AMNH 70-3310. (Photograph by Valérie Chaussonnet and Bernadette Driscoll, courtesy Department of Library Services, American Museum of Natural History)

coats, Koryak women greeted the whale as a welcomed visitor. Courting its spirit, they celebrated the hunters' catch by dancing along the shore (Jochelson 1908:69-70; Zhornitskaia 1983:92-93). This association of the dance coat with the greeting of the captured whale underscores the symbolic association between the color red and the shedding of blood.

On a close examination of one of the Koryak dance coats (MAE 3896-1, figure 7-5) in the "Crossroads" exhibition, however, we found curious repairs hidden under the chest bib of the coat that were accentuated (rather than camouflaged) with white reindeer hair embroidery.⁹ We also discovered repairs edged with tiny colored seedbeads on other Koryak dance coats in the collection of the American Museum of Natural History. The other "Crossroads" dance coat (AMNH 70-3892), which was purchased from a Koryak shaman, provides some clues to this curious form of clothing decoration.¹⁰

This coat (figure 7-6) has a richly patterned but seemingly random design created by bleached hide discs of varying diameter sewn onto the surface of the coat. A false belt embroidered with silk thread in earthy tones of green



FIGURE 7-5. Detail of Koryak dancing coat (MAE 3896-1), with repairs under the bib, front of coat. (Photograph by Valérie Chaussonnet and Bernadette Driscoll)

and ochre is sewn about the waist. Long tassels of alder-dyed seal pup fur used by the shaman to scatter the *kele*, or evil spirits, hang from the shoulders, the center front, and across the back of the garment.

In their ethnographies, Jochelson and Bogoras point out the importance of constellations and celestial bodies to both the Koryak and Chukchi. The Milky Way, for example, is commonly referred to as the Clay River by the Koryak and the Pebbly River by the Chukchi.¹¹ Celestial bodies are particularly important to shamans in northeastern Siberia. For the Yakut shaman, stars are the pathway to the upper worlds and are frequently depicted on shamans' clothing. In the Chukchi cosmology, the several worlds of the universe are joined by holes situated under the Polar Star, and "shamans and spirits going from one world to another slip through these holes" (Bogoras 1904-9:331). Thus, we decided to explore the decorative pattern on this coat as stars and constellations. At the suggestion of Tom Callen of the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, we assumed that the false belt with its earth-colored embroidery depicted the Clay River, thus affording a basic orientation to the pattern and the Koryak sky.¹²

The sketch in figure 7-7 illustrates the front of the shaman's coat with



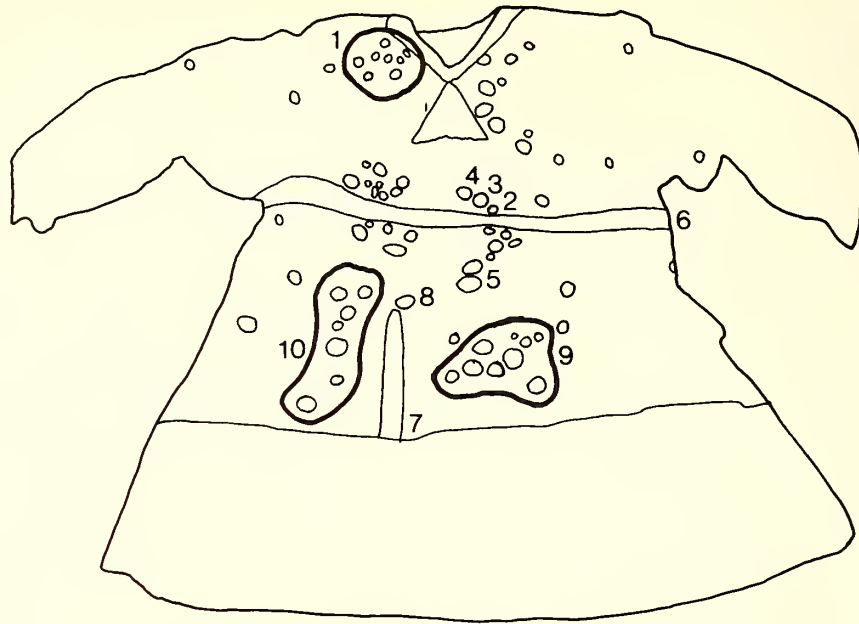
FIGURE 7-6. Koryak dancing coat, collected by Jochelson as a shaman's coat, AMNH 70-3892. (Photograph by National Museum of Natural History Staff, Smithsonian Institution)

tentative identifications of constellations in the Koryak summer and winter sky. On the right shoulder appears Orion, known in northeastern Siberia as the Hunter with the Crooked Back (Bogoras 1904-9:307-14). The pattern of numbers 2, 3, and 4, which shows one bright and two dimmer stars, and their close proximity to the Clay River suggest Aquila (Eagle).¹³ The large disc (number 5) below the Clay River would be Vega, the brightest star in the summer sky. The vertical band (number 7) at the lower edge of the parka could thus represent the winter Milky Way, which stands perpendicular to two horizons and crosses overhead, a brilliant band across the dark winter sky. On the right lies a loose cluster of stars (number 9) identified as the Pleiades but known in northeastern Siberia as six young women awaiting the return of their husbands (Bogoras 1904-9:308). On the back of the garment (figure 7-7), we see the continuation of the Clay River, perhaps a winter depiction, with Polaris directly below it, and to the right, a group of three stars that Bogoras identified in a drawing he collected as the Elks, known to us as Gemini, the Twins (1904-9:310, fig. 217). Significantly, these constellations—if that is indeed what they are—are oriented toward the wearer rather than the viewer and may thus provide the shaman with a star map for his celestial travels.

CLOTHING SYMBOLISM IN SHAMANISTIC DRESS AMONG THE YAKUT AND EVEN

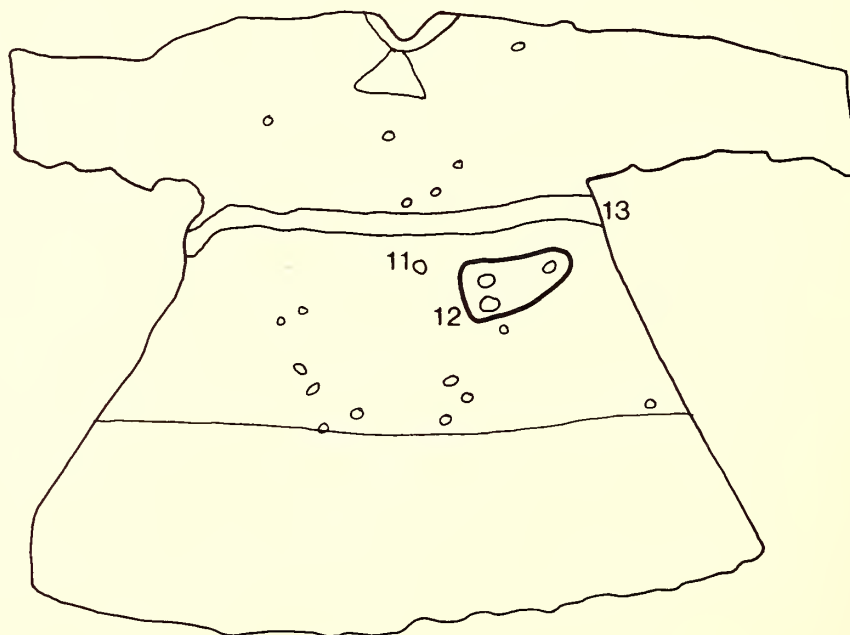
Shamanistic clothing forms a distinctive realm of ritual clothing design among the ethnic groups of northeastern Siberia. By virtue of its naturalistic

Front side of the White Star Parka



- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. Orion, the Hunter | 6. Summer Milky Way |
| 2. Tarazed (Aquila, the Eagle) | 7. Winter Milky Way |
| 3. Altair (Aquila, the Eagle) | 8. Sirius (Cainis Major, the Big Dog) |
| 4. Alshain (Aquila, the Eagle) | 9. Pleiades star cluster (Taurus, the Bull) |
| 5. Vega (Lyra, the Harp) | 10. Cassiopedia, the Queen |

Back Side of the White Star Parka



- 11. Polaris (Ursa Minor)
- 12. Gemini, the Twins
- 13. Winter Milky Way

FIGURE 7-7. Maps of the stars on coat in figure 7-6, after Tom Callen's identification and drawing. (Albert Einstein Planetarium, Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution; maps redrawn by Julie Perlmutter)



FIGURE 7-8. Back of Yakut shaman's coat with two metal disks, representing the shaman's two "suns." AMNH 70-8336. (Photograph by Valérie Chaussonnet and Bernadette Driscoll, courtesy Department of Library Services, American Museum of Natural History)

and symbolic references to helping spirits, the costume assists the shaman in his or her travels to the spirit world. A Yakut shaman's coat (figure 7-8) from the American Museum of Natural History illustrates the importance of celestial bodies in shamanistic ritual. The two metal discs on the back represent the sun and the moon (Jochelson 1926:180), which Siberian shamans took to be primary sources of good and evil; the open disc may also allude to the ice-hole through which a shaman travels to the Lower World (Jochelson 1926:177-78, 183).

The Even or Yukaghir shaman's costume featured in the "Crossroads" exhibition (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:241, fig. 326) is composed of several discrete parts: coat, apron, boots and leggings, hat, and gloves, each carrying protective symbols in the representations of animal and anthropomorphic helping spirits. The shaman's coat (AMNH 70-5620a) follows the open coat design worn by Even men and women. The open front divides the garment into right and left sides: on the left, anthropomorphic figures cut from alder bark-stained or ochre-stained hide represent the forms of deceased ancestors, helping spirits to the shaman (Jochelson 1926:191); on the right side, a verti-



FIGURE 7-9. Back of Yukaghir shaman's coat. AMNH 5620a. (Photograph by Valérie Chaussonnet and Bernadette Driscoll, courtesy Department of Library Services, American Museum of Natural History)

cal column of crosses appears to imitate the crosses on the sacred vestments of Russian Orthodox missionaries (Jochelson 1926: 191), or may represent birds or bird spirits. The back of the coat (figure 7-9) features a rich abundance of tassels made of alternating light and dark fur in the form of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic images. The broad band of richly embroidered skin stretching across the upper back protects the shaman in a manner recalling the ochre line and fringes marking the backs of Athapaskan tunics. An abstract zoomorphic figure with a vertebrae motif sewn over the center back of the garment covers the shaman's own vertebrae. The Even shaman's hat features metal antlers or short protrusions replicating antler buds; long fringes cover the eyes, emphasizing the shaman's need for concentration and separation from the mundane world (Prokofyeva 1963; Fienup-Riordan 1988). The pronounced right-left dichotomy in the decoration of the coat is carried through on the shaman's leggings and gloves. The leggings are marked at the knee with hide discs—one showing a cross, the other an anthropomorphic figure. In addition, the left glove is transformed into a bear's paw with tufts of hair imitating the claws of this powerful helping spirit.

ORNAMENT AS A PROTECTIVE STRUCTURE:
EVEN AND TLINGIT CLOTHING

The apron is a basic component of the everyday dress of Even men and women. Although each apron is unique in its appearance and decoration, its basic design follows a conventional pattern. The metal objects that decorate women's aprons provide protection against gastric afflictions and problems associated with fertility and childbirth (Jochelson 1926:174; 402-3). Thus, the decoration of the Even apron provides a clear example of the closely integrated functions of protection and ornamentation.

The apron is also a basic clothing item among other cultures of the North Pacific. Often painted with images of the shaman's helping spirits (*yek*), the apron served as the primary garment of Tlingit shamans in curing rituals (Emmons 1907). An unpainted shaman's apron from the Smithsonian collection (figure 7-10) is lightly smudged with ochre. Pendants carved from animal horn, bone, and ivory are attached to the soft hide fringes. The apron is cut with a pronounced curve in the lower front that recalls the design of



FIGURE 7-10. Plain Tlingit shaman's apron, smudged with ochre. NMNH 11384.
(Photograph by Valérie Chaussonnet and Bernadette Driscoll)



Tlingit slat armor. This similarity in design suggests that the shaman's garb, like the Tlingit warrior costume, serves a protective function.¹⁴

Shamans' clothing among the Tlingit carried both formal and pictorial references to helping spirits. For example, one shaman's hide mantle (figure 7-11) represents a whale in its cut as well as its painted decoration. Draped over the shoulders like a poncho, the front and back are separate yet joined units. The decoration of the cape suggests the double-entendre of Northwest Coast imagery; that is to say, the painted eyes transform the fin into a face.

Imagery depicting powerful animal spirits—such as the whale, shark, dogfish, or bear—appear on shamans' clothing, as well as warrior costume. Painted imagery is reiterated by natural or carved pendants, such as the teeth attached to the hide warrior's tunic in the Smithsonian collection (figure 7-



FIGURE 7-11a (left) and b (above). Tlingit poncho with bone disk ornaments. NMNH 73847. (Photograph by Valérie Chaussonnet and Bernadette Driscoll)

12). The influence of warrior costume on Tlingit ceremonial garb is particularly evident in the woven Chilkat tunic, a treasured possession of the Tlingit aristocracy. The cut, style, and decoration of the tunic parallels that of the warrior's armor. The tunic's woven motifs recall the painted decoration of the armor. Through the process of weaving, however, the decoration forms the very structure of the garment, created by the threads and hands of the weaver. Chilkat tunics and blankets were highly valued garments, worn and displayed at potlatches, dances, and important ceremonial events (Samuel 1982; Emmons 1907). They were used especially at chiefs' funerals to clothe and cover the body of the deceased, and thus to wrap the corpse in the ancestral lineage



FIGURE 7-12. Hide tunic of Tlingit warrior with bear teeth and deer hoofs. NMNH 60242. (Photograph by Valérie Chaussonnet and Bernadette Driscoll)

of the clan. The prestigious Chilkat blanket, displayed on the exterior wall of a chief's gravehouse, was allowed to decay, a memorial sacrificed to wind and rain, reminding one of the ephemeral nature of life itself.

PROTECTED INTO THE OTHER WORLD: KORYAK FUNERAL GARMENTS

Clothing played a pivotal role in the funerary rituals of the Koryak, whose most sumptuous garments were those sacrificed at the time of death (see figure 7-1). Funeral vestments constituted a sacred category of Koryak clothing. Sewn in secret, they remained unfinished until the moment of death; in fact, the discovery of a woman preparing a funeral garment was believed

to forewarn a death in the community (Jochelson 1908:108–9).

The design of the Koryak funeral coat carries implicit and explicit references to the animal realm. The hood, for example, is often marked with antlers and animal ears; and the back of the coat is designed with a short triangular tail not otherwise found on Koryak clothing.¹⁵ Made from the furs of white reindeer fawn, the funeral coat is trimmed with grey dog fur. This choice of material is symbolic and conveys practical and mystical associations: not only does the dog serve as a companion to man, but it acts as a channel of communication with the spirit world. Dogs are sacrificed to the spirits, and the dog itself is the guardian of the underground world, the world of the dead (Jochelson 1908:110).

The rich decoration of the Koryak funeral coat does not aim merely at impressing the viewer with its beauty and virtuosity. Rather, its design reflects an inherent structure or visual code.¹⁶ First and foremost, the pronounced use of scarlet yarn and alder-bark-dyed or ochre-dyed fur inserted in the seams lends a bleeding appearance to the garment. In the coat included in the “Crossroads” exhibition (AMNH 70-2888, see Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:251, fig. 341), the placement of red yarn suggests an anatomical dissection of the body. As Jochelson notes, the Koryak believed that death was caused by the intrusion of *kele* or evil spirits. Thus, upon a person’s death, a trained individual was called upon to dissect the corpse in order to ascertain the precise cause of death and to identify and extract the *kele* (1908:113). Such a dissection was carried out for the benefit of the deceased’s namesake, to protect the newborn infant from suffering the same affliction as the deceased. The vertical bar of colored silk embroidery thread lying over the midsection of the body symbolically marks the point of incision and the exit of spirit forces. The tail of the garment resembles that found on shamanistic costume designed as a metaphoric reference to the bird; its appearance on a funeral garment may symbolize the flight of the soul to the afterlife. Finally, the use of young reindeer fur in the construction of the funeral coat seems to allude to Koryak concerns with death and regeneration: the regeneration of the soul of the deceased in the body of a newborn infant; and the regeneration of reindeer herds through the beneficence of the deceased as ancestral spirit. The design of Koryak funeral clothing thus reiterates essential cosmological concerns, in particular the theme of regeneration and the precarious balance between life and death.

CONCLUSION

As the foregoing discussion suggests, clothing serves to empower the individual and the social group. The color red is the essential link between North Pacific clothing traditions. Perhaps as a reference to blood, a symbol of *both* life and death, red appears on Tlingit warrior and shamanistic clothing, as well as Athapaskan, Eskimo, Chukchi, Koryak, and Even clothing. Most explicitly, it marks the state of the body on Koryak funeral garments. Through the selection of material and the manipulation of decorative features, North Pacific clothing serves as link and communication with the cosmos, and, in shamanistic clothing, with the worlds beyond. Throughout the North Pacific region, clothing marks the celebration of life and renewal, as seen with the Chilkat blankets, the Koryak funeral coats, and the dancing coats worn by Koryak women to welcome the arrival of the whale. It is an integrative force that identifies and binds together members of a specific community and expresses shared natural and metaphysical concerns.

NOTES

1. We use the term "sacred" in the sense of Mircea Eliade to mean "equivalent to a *power*" and "saturated with *being*." As Eliade states, "The completely profane world, the wholly desacralized cosmos, is a recent discovery in the history of the human spirit."

2. Male shamans usually dictated the design of their costumes according to the instructions of their helping spirits.

3. One-piece combination suits were also worn by Inuit children across the Arctic and served as undergarments among certain Athapaskan groups.

4. In addition to its decorative and spiritual significance, red ochre mixed with grease was also applied to Athapaskan clothing in coastal areas as a means of softening and waterproofing the material (Thompson 1987:150, fig. 132; see also pp. 151–52).

5. The paint was a mixture of ochre, blood, and water. Only the blood of young men was used, for the blood of older men was thought to make the paste "stiff" (Osgood 1940:385).

6. McKennan (1959:127–28) suggests that dentalium only became important as a trade item in the Upper Tanana region after the arrival of Russian and English ships along the southern Alaska coast, which stimulated trade between the Chilkat on the coast and tribes in the interior.

7. In direct contrast to their eagerness in collecting ochre, Athapaskan men

avoided contact with alder bark, also used as a clothing dye. Shortly after cutting, alder exudes a red substance that was associated with menstrual blood.

8. A fragment of a metal burner from a trade lamp is attached to the back of the dancing coat illustrated in figure 7-4. The front is ornamented with an iron necklace and medal sewn on the stomach, apparently traded from the Even or the Yakut, and displayed as an Even female apron ornament. Bogoras (1904-9:256-58) describes Chukchi personal adornment and beads as amulets (see also Jochelson 1908:45, 603).

9. Insects ([warbles] flies) burrow beneath the skin of the animal to lay their eggs, often leaving holes in the flensed hide.

10. Sold to Jochelson as a shaman's coat, the ethnographer writes, "but [it] looks like an ordinary dancing-jacket used in the whale festival, except that it has some small tassels which have apparently been borrowed from Tungus [Evenk] shamans" (1908:48).

11. In a Chukchi drawing collected by Bogoras (1904-9:310), the Clay River (i.e., Milky Way) appears as a set of wavy, parallel lines crossing the sky.

12. We are deeply grateful to Tom Callen of the National Air and Space Museum Planetarium who introduced us to the northern sky of the Koryak and provided astronomical expertise.

13. The association of diameter with brightness is a common graphic convention in preparing star charts (T. Callen, personal communication, July 1988).

14. As de Laguna (1972:688) notes, hide and slat armor was sometimes found in the graves of Tlingit shamans.

15. A similar tail, however, is found on Siberian shamanistic clothing (see, for example, Prokofyeva 1963).

16. We are deeply grateful to the staff of the American Museum of Natural History, in particular, Dr. Laurel Kendall and Paul Beelitz, for their assistance during our research on the museum's beautiful collection of Koryak funeral and dance garments (July 1988).

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8. *Deciphering Aleut/Koniag Iconography*

LYDIA T. BLACK

OBJECTS SPEAK. I HAVE NOT COINED this phrase, and certainly the idea embodied in it is probably as old as humankind. It is no accident, as Victor Turner has pointed out, that this phrase was selected as the title for a Smithsonian Institution exhibition "Celebrations." But, as Turner rightly remarked:

Objects certainly "speak," that is, they directly communicate a message through visible and tangible qualities such as form, color, texture, size and so forth; but the "message" is greatly enhanced and expanded when the objects are recognized as being culturally specific symbols to be decoded and set in the proper celebratory context. (Turner 1982:15-16)

Not too long ago, I believed that the reconstruction of "the proper celebratory context," and, concomitantly, a full understanding of the iconography of the Aleut art, to be unattainable: "We cannot read the Aleut representations—sculpture and carving, painted designs and combinations of beings and objects, geometric patterns of basketry and gut-on-gut appliqué schemas—as symbols" (Black 1982:1).

At this point, I should clarify the sense in which I use the words "sym-

bol," "icon," "iconography," and "metaphor." My usage is affected by my understanding of the analyses of symbolic systems by such philosophers as Ernst Cassirer (1923–29, 1944) and Susanne K. Langer (1942, 1953), and the methodology I employ in my analysis is based on the numerous contributions of my fellow anthropologist, the late Victor Turner (1965, 1967, 1969, 1974, 1982, 1986). When I use the word "symbol," I am mindful of Langer's (1942:35) statements that behind symbols "lie the boldest, purest, coolest abstractions mankind has ever made" and that symbols represent not things but concepts, and that symbolic communication in any form "may be called symbolic transformation experience."

Langer also speaks of "life-symbols: the roots of sacrament," stating that we create images of things and processes conceived, and that we "attend to them only in their capacity of *meaning* things, being *images* of things—symbols whereby those things are conceived, remembered, considered, but not encountered" (1942:116–17, emphasis in original). This relates to what Turner called the "invisible" content of the symbol, "the set of mental images, concepts, and ideas denoted and connoted by the significant" (1982:17). Symbols, and especially metaphors, appeal simultaneously to the mind, the cognitive, logical aspect of our perceptions and conceptions and to the "poetic" aspect, to use Langer's phrase, or the emotional "gestalt" mode, to use Turner's phrase. "Metaphor" is taken to mean a complex symbol that, for the user, transforms reality (see Ricoeur 1977). And not only transforms, but transports. By this I mean that metaphors affect human perceptions in such a way that the reality is perceived as part of the dynamic universal cosmic order connoting what Langer also termed "sacra." I follow Turner in conceptualizing symbols as multivocal or polysemic, and Langer and Turner in stressing the dynamics of representational symbolism. Langer wrote:

Presentational symbolism has its own characteristic development. It grows from the momentary, single, static image presenting a single concept, to greater and greater units of successive images having references to each other; changing scenes, even visions of things in motion, by which we conceive the passage of events. That is to say, the first thing we do with images is to envisage a story; just as the first thing we do with words is to tell something, to make a statement. (1942:118)

Speaking of complex ("dominant" in Turner's usage) symbols—that is, symbols "that embody basic ideas of life and death, of man and the world"—

Langer states that such symbols “are naturally sacred” and affect both the intellect and emotions of the users: “The contemplation of sacra invites a certain intellectual excitement—intellectual because it centers in a mental activity—the excitement of *realizing* life and strength, manhood, contest, and death. The whole cycle of human emotions is touched by such a contemplation (1942:123, emphasis added). This position is clearly echoed by Turner, whose work was influenced by the relatively recent findings on the structure and function of the human brain:

Symbols are probably products, markers, and registers of behavior motivated by both cerebral hemispheres in conjunction with the autonomic nervous system, all triggered and fired into action by selective cultural stimuli, themselves a creation of centuries of cultural and ecological experience. As such they bear traces of their complex neurophysiological sources both in their “appearance” (how they impinge upon the senses) and in their semantics (the notions or conceptions the group using them holds about them, whether stereotyped or legitimately speculative). (Turner 1982:22)

The complex symbols, the metaphors, become, in Langer’s words, objects of indescribable value.

These general statements are directly applicable to the objects of indescribable value among the Aleuts of Alaska, the magnificent Aleut helmets, many of which are included in the “Crossroads of Continents” exhibition.

But to apprehend the fact that the Aleut helmet is a symbol, even a metaphor, is not enough. One wishes to know and understand the meaning, the inner content, of the symbol; one strives to roll back time and “feel” the effect that donning the hat may have had on the man who wore it. The question then is, how to go about discerning such meaning. It is here that the methodology suggested by Turner in his many contributions to the anthropology of symbolic forms helps us find a way. Like Langer, he knew that symbols operate within a symbolic field and the meaning that affected the users could be discerned by the investigator only if the entire field were examined. In my case, the symbolic field forced itself upon my attention first. In studying evidence for Aleut whaling prior to, or at the period of, historic contact, I became aware that the classic Aleut bentwood helmet, described by Ivanov in several publications (1930, 1954, 1963), may have been associated with whale hunting. Second, I found in the ethnographic literature hints that whaling was not equated with hunting sea mammals in general, but was apparently

considered much more akin to war; killing a whale seemed to be a transformational equivalent (in the Lévi-Straussian sense) of killing a human, an enemy. Once I arrived at this inference, I felt compelled to reexamine the iconography of the Aleut bentwood helmet. I use the term "iconography" in the sense it is used in semiotics, as the imagery selected to convey the meaning or identity of its figures, setting, objects often fixed by convention; and I use the term "icon" to mean the sign that signifies by virtue of sharing a property with what it represents (this definition follows that of C. W. Morris 1938, 1946), but I am also mindful of the fact that this Greek term connotes a dynamic. It incorporates the meaning "to occur," or "to come about," and the referent of this word is, in essence, a "becoming" (see *Oxford English Dictionary*).

Turner suggested that a symbolic field and its iconography may be understood by employing a threefold approach: by eliciting exegesis from lay and specialist participants in a culture (exegetical meaning); by observing how the symbol is used by the culture bearers (operational meaning, which focuses on what the people do and not on what they say about the symbol's use); and, finally, by determining the symbol's positional meaning, which is derived "from its [the symbol's] relationship to other symbols in a configuration, a Gestalt, having properties that cannot be derived from its parts or considered simply as their sum" (Turner 1982:17-21; see also 1967:33, 1967:48-58, and 1969:13-43). Note that Turner, like Langer, recognized the essential dynamic referent of complex symbolic forms. His position is made explicit in one formulation or another in all of his major theoretical publications and is specifically applied in his discussion of the operational meaning. He wrote: "We have to view them [symbols] in action, in movement, in becoming, as essentially involved in process" (1982:20).

How could I apply this method of analysis to my material, the Aleut bentwood helmets, traditionally called Aleut hunting hats in the literature? Native exegesis, by specialists or laymen, was unobtainable. The making of hats was a lost art (though currently there are attempts to revive it), and the associated lore has long since been forgotten. However, the mythology of a people is considered a good source of exegesis. It is also known that myths can, and do provide clues to the iconography of representational art. Although the available Aleut or Alutiiq (Kodiak Archipelago and Chugach) folklore does not contain any direct references to the bentwood helmets, it does indicate that a whaler had to undergo complex secret rituals in order to be sym-

bolically transformed into a killer whale. Furthermore, the designs on several wooden hunting visors collected from an area between Norton Sound and the Eastern Aleutian Islands suggest that killer whale imagery constituted part of the decorative graphics (Black 1982, 1983, 1991). This finding was more specific than Ivanov's (1930:485, 486, 487) suggestion that the helmets were an image of a generalized beast. The killer whale is, of course, a transformation of the wolf, and both are linked to the "thunderbird" figure, which is most often signified by the image of an eagle, or other soaring or deep-diving, often toothed, birds (Black, 1991).

The use of wooden headgear in Alaska, I found, was limited to the area of the Bering Sea littoral, from the vicinity of Bering Strait in the north to Bristol Bay in the south, and it also appeared in the Kodiak Archipelago, Prince William Sound, and in the eastern and possibly central Aleutian Islands (although in prehistory the area was probably more extensive). This distribution pattern roughly coincided with the distribution of Yup'ik and Alutiiq-speaking Eskimoan groups of the Chukchi Peninsula and Alaska and the Eastern Unangan (Aleuts). Moreover, these groups engaged in whaling of one type or another in historic times, or there was evidence for possible whaling activity in their area in prehistory; the people also may have moved into their historic habitat from regions where whaling was practiced at one time. Edmund Carpenter informed me that he had in his possession an Okvik male figurine wearing a visor and two miniature early Punuk figurines of men wearing "Aleut"-type helmets with a closed crown and exaggerated front, one of which was previously published (Fitzhugh 1984:35). On the basis of my examination of Eastern Aleut ivory and bone carving, I had already in 1982 postulated an affinity between the prehistoric art of the Eastern Aleutian Islands and Okvik and Early Punuk traditions of St. Lawrence Island and Chukchi Peninsula (Black 1982:3, 5-15); earlier, Ivanov argued in many publications that a close relationship and continuity existed between Old Bering Sea art and the art of historic Eskimo-Aleut groups (see specifically 1953:228-36).

Upon examining old ethnographic data, I found Bogoras's (1909:261) statements that in the native exegesis of the visor use he elicited from the Siberian Yup'ik in the beginning of the twentieth century, the wooden visor was considered a mask and only the owner/steersman of the whaleboat and the harpooner were permitted to use it. I made the working assumption that there was, indeed, a strong association between whaling and the use at sea of

wooden headgear. Confirming exegetical evidence was found in Siberian Yup'ik folklore, ably analyzed by M. A. Chlenov (1981:228–42), and in the Nunivak folklore reported by Curtis (1930). Note, too, that prehistoric images of men wearing the “classic” hats and visors have recently been recovered on Kodiak by Richard H. Jordan (1988:287, fig. 21, and 189, fig. 26i; see also, Black, 1991). At the time of European contact, Kodiak was, without question, the center of a whaling culture.

However, most of the Aleut helmets in museum collections are decorated with ivory carvings of birds, while the hats and visors from the Norton Sound area are decorated with so-called realistic carvings of birds' beaks, or, rather, heads with accented beaks. After examining archeologically recovered prehistoric carvings from Kodiak Island and early ethnographic reports by Russian observers, I concluded that the basic image referent had to be the eagle. Chlenov's (1981) careful analysis of the Siberian Yup'ik folklore also led him to suggest an association between images of the whale and the eagle, the whale being the prey or the adversary of the eagle. Alaskan Yup'ik folklore associates the eagle image with the mythical creature, which I call the thunderbird, in keeping with anthropological convention. My analysis of the folklore data on the thunderbird convinces me that the predominant meanings associated with this image dealt with power, specifically with the power to kill. Moreover, the power behind the image was conceptualized as the capacity to transcend domain boundaries: the boundary between the human, everyday world and the world of the transcendental, the world of the spirits; the world of the land and of the sea, of the sky and the submarine depth and the boundary of gender. Because the killer whale image is considered to be a transformation of the wolf, I concluded that it was a more specific expression than the thunderbird image, signifying the power to kill at sea, just as the wolf signifies the power to kill on land. The killer whale, however, was also the specific symbol of the capacity or ability to kill whales. Thunderbird imagery, on the other hand, suggested an ability to kill all sorts of creatures, including whales and humans. This ability is graphically illustrated on an Aleut hat in the “Crossroads of Continents” exhibition (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988: fig. 411; MAE 2868-40) and also appears in Yup'ik art (e.g., see Fitzhugh and Kaplan 1982:184–85).

Interestingly, in Chugach folklore preserved to this day, the appearance of killer whales near a village is thought to presage the death of an important man, usually a famous and successful hunter. The folklore and representation-

al data suggest that whaling was not considered an ordinary animal hunt but was conceived as a symbolic equivalent of a war act. Thus, it came as no surprise that a hat in the Berlin Museum für Völkerkunde (Berlin Museum for Ethnology), collected by an unknown German sea captain early in the nineteenth century, probably in the Kodiak archipelago, was listed as a “war hat.” In the Unangan (Aleut) language, whales are singled out linguistically as the *alan*, a separate category, distinct from all other creatures of land or sea. Unfortunately, the etymology of this term is unknown. If there was a whaling weapon among the Unangan, such a weapon was the war spear (see Veniaminov 1984 [1842]; Black 1987; Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:161, fig. 196).

Thus, my first conclusion focused on the symbols of predation and killing, the power to inflect death. But, as all analysts of symbolic systems are aware, the same symbol that signifies death may also signify life. Specific symbols of birth and of the unity of male and female principles as the source of life are often considered symbols of death. An examination of prehistoric human figurines from port Moller on the Alaska Peninsula and prehistoric ivory carving from Kodiak (figure 8-1) suggests that this is the case in birdhead imagery. According to Nunivak folklore, the beak, the instrument that kills, also stands for male procreative power; it is a phallic symbol. The link between death and creation and procreation symbolized in the mortal fight between the eagles and the whales was also noted by Chlenov (1981:235–36), who argued that the mythological treatment of the relationships between the whales, eagles, and humans (men and women and transvestites) ultimately refers to the Siberian Yup’ik understanding of the structure of the universe and the ongoing universal creative process. I, too, concluded that the symbolism of the birds’ heads, in addition to various specific meanings, incorporates this most general cosmic referent.

The birdhead sculptures decorating hats from Norton Sound and in the form of side plaques on “Aleut” hats, in addition to the beak, incorporate the image of the “eye.”¹ That the eye motif was an obligatory component of the painted decoration of the Aleut wooden headgear was pointed out as far back as 1790 (Merck 1937:1171; 1980:78). The eye may be represented realistically or abstractly, as a dot, circle-and-dot, or concentric circles. It is a complex symbol, incorporating the notion of vision and the created, and constantly self-creating universe. I discuss the image of vision first and then link it to the idea of a dynamic, re-creative universe.

As mentioned earlier, the Siberian Yup’ik thought of the visor as a mask.



FIGURE 8-1. A find from Akiok, Kodiak Island.
(Collection and photograph by Rick Kasprzak)

Ivanov (1930) also postulated that the hats were in reality masks. A mask serves simultaneously to disguise the everyday identity of the wearer and to transform his persona into something that he is not without the mask.² As Inuit folklore indicates, the mask—or its equivalent, the visor or the goggles—simultaneously conceals the wearer's eyes and extends or alters the wearer's "vision," by which I mean not the actual vision of the hunter, but the transcending vision that permits him to "see" beyond the normal limits of human sight and the human domain. The wearer's mask enables him to "see" the whales in the depths of the sea, and to "see" the outcome of the contest. Oosten (1982) relates this "clear vision" to mobility and fertility.

Ann Fienup-Riordan (1987, 1988) has shown that for the Alaskan Yup'ik this concept of "vision" is linked to mobility, and the "eye" that permits mere humans to partake of the transcending "vision" is related to the total created and continuously re-created, self-generating, universe. She has also clearly demonstrated that the notion of procreation, of the unity of male and



FIGURE 8-2. Okvik figure. University of Alaska-Fairbanks Museum #SE 72 821. (Photograph by Lydia Black)

female, form part of the “symbolic field.” The circle-and-dot, concentric circle and spurred circle-and-dot, and spurred concentric circle designs have this complex multilevel referent, or meaning. It is therefore not surprising that Ivanov interpreted the circle-and-dot and concentric circles motifs as an eye (1930:494–95, 497) and the world or the universe (1954), or that he emphasized the cosmic dimension in a later interpretation of these symbols, reading them as abstract representations of heavenly bodies, especially as that of the life-giving “female” sun (1963:217–23).

These considerations suggest that the complicated “spurred spirals” present in sculpted forms in the volutes (the side plaques) decorating the Aleut hats, as well as the painted decorations on the hat’s body, represent in stylized form birds’ heads, incorporating the symbols for the “eye” or the “universe” and the “beak” or phallus, the symbol of procreative capacity and power. Some geometric compositions featuring the circle-and-dot design may refer to female fertility, as in the case with female Okvik figurines (figure 8-2). The

same applies to so-called petaloid painted hat designs that *positionally* occur together with spurred spirals.³

The interconnectedness of all the elements that ultimately refer to the total understanding of the universe as perceived by the ancient population of the Bering Sea and their numerous descendants in early historic times is expressed in the composition of the painted designs and the sculpted decorations.⁴ The striking features of the hats in the "Crossroads" exhibition are first the figure and then the ground. The basic principles of the composition are then apparent: polyiconicity and interconnectedness. These two aesthetic principles are also clearly evident in the incised ivories of the Old Bering Sea, Okvik, and early Punuk traditions.

Thus the complex decorative motifs of the Aleut hats appear to be of ancient origin and to express the cardinal principles of the Aleut ancestral belief system. The decorative elements of the hat combine in a single statement a set of associations—from one of cosmic dimensions through an ever-more narrowing frame of reference to a personal and concrete one—of a bond between a kin group or an individual man and their/his own personal protector represented perhaps by realistic figurines of specific birds or animals.

Like all "dominant symbols," to use Turner's expression, the decorative motifs of these hats were grounded in the sensory world, on one hand, and in the abstract conceptual realm, on the other. This Janus-like grounding of complex symbols, of metaphors, is characteristic, perhaps universal, as Turner has observed. Thus, the Aleut hunting may have been a dominant, complex, iconic symbol, reality-transforming metaphor that transported the wearer outside structure, enabling him to transcend his human limitations, to experience the limitless capacities inherent in the world of the spirit and of the spirits (Turner 1969). Analysis of the iconography of the Aleut hunting hats also provides evidence that, despite linguistic differences, intergroup political boundaries, and differences in the physical makeup of local populations, along the Bering Sea littoral (from Chukotka to the Alaska Peninsula, extending to the Pacific, encompassing Prince William Sound, Kodiak Archipelago and the Eastern Aleutians) was the site of a common cultural sphere grounded in a belief system that originated in Asia and that was, in our area, at least 2,000 years old. Such analysis—by examining archeological, linguistic, folkloristic, and ethnographic data, and by paying strict attention to methodology—can greatly improve our understanding of ancient iconography.

NOTES

1. I am indebted to Dr. Jarich Oosten, Rijksuniversitet Leiden, Netherlands, who in a letter (1987) to me remarked that in my preliminary analysis I emphasized symbolism of predation without giving equal attention to the symbols of life and “vision” (discussed below).

2. The simultaneous multifunctionality of the mask as a device that conceals and preserves the human identity of the wearer and also transforms the personal into a being able to cross domain boundary may be better understood through Elsie Mather’s exegesis of the Yup’ik festival Qaariitaq, a preparatory activity to the Bladder Festival, in the course of which elaborate multiple disguises come into play: “Covering the face, closing the eyes and body, and shutting the eyes were all effective means of maintaining the boundary between the worlds of the living and the dead. The boundary was permeable in both directions” (Morrow 1982: 122). Thus, the lack of vision symbolizes a boundary. This exegesis must be read in conjunction with the work of Ann Fienup-Riordan (discussed below) on the mask as “the eye of the dance.” The point here is that the “eye” (which stands for vision) permits the crossing of boundaries, while the mask protects the human essence of the wearer from harm.

3. Old Bering Sea decorative motifs on ivory where “petaloid” shapes combined with circle-and-dot motif form a beaklike figure and “positionally” may be interpreted as phallic and fertility symbols appear in Fitzhugh and Crowell (1988:122, figs. 137, 138). See also design elements shown in the same work on p. 123, fig. 140.

4. Ivanov was most emphatic in stressing the interconnectedness of Aleut and Alutiiq historic art and the art of prehistoric Old Bering Sea culture. See Ivanov (1963:178, 184–85, 216–17, 229–38, and fig. 152).

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9. *Qasqiluteng: Feasting and Ceremonialism among the Traditional Koniag of Kodiak Island, Alaska*

RICHARD H. JORDAN

THIS CHAPTER COMBINES ETHNOHISTORICAL observations from the early European contact period with archeological data from recent excavations in order to illuminate the pre-contact sociopolitical organization and ceremonial activities of the Koniag, the Native people of Kodiak Island. The “art objects” recovered from these excavations are placed in a reconstructed cultural historical context. These objects clearly do not have a utilitarian function and are therefore interpreted to have been used within the context of feasting, ceremonial, and ritual activities. The native term for these activities is *Qasqiluteng*, which means “they are holding a feast.”¹ These feasts played a major role in Koniag life before Russian occupation of the island drastically altered traditional native culture. That occupation began in 1784, when Grigorii Shelikhov (1981) established the first permanent European colony in Alaska along the western shore of Three Saints Bay on Kodiak Island.

Since all of the artifacts discussed in this chapter date to the centuries just preceding Russian contact, relevant ethnographic and historic accounts have been used to interpret the archeological record.² Primary attention was given to selected late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century observations from Kodiak. The single available ethnographic report by Birket-Smith

(1953) on the closely related Chugach of Prince William Sound was also examined, in addition to traditional ethnographic accounts of Alaska native cultures that describe certain features found throughout the North Pacific and Bering Sea regions. Such features are not adequately treated in early sources from Kodiak, but are assumed to have been present. These various sources form the basis for the "direct historical approach" (Steward 1942) I use to interpret the cultural context of the prehistoric objects excavated on western Kodiak Island, specifically from the KAR-1 site in Karluk Lagoon.

ETHNOHISTORIC RECONSTRUCTION OF KONIAG SOCIOPOLITICAL ORGANIZATION

The Koniag, and closely related groups, occupied a vast territory from Prince William Sound, the outer Kenai Peninsula, the Kodiak Archipelago, to at least the eastern coast of the Alaska Peninsula. Kodiak, however, was clearly the most populous region (figure 9-1). The size of the population at the time of Russian contact is somewhat uncertain, although a figure of 8,000–10,000 is an acceptable estimate. If accurate, this would mean that the Kodiak Archipelago was once one of the most densely settled regions in Arctic and Subarctic North America, including the Northwest Coast.

People lived in sod-house villages that varied greatly in size and were strategically located to exploit cod and shellfish throughout the winter and salmon during the summer (Lisianski 1968 [1814]:173, 195; Bolotov in Black 1977:85; Davydov 1977:155, 175, 232). Sea mammal hunting also played a vital role in the subsistence economy of many villages (Merck 1980:105). Some of the larger villages may have been occupied throughout the year. Archeological data indicate that Koniag villages were arranged in a long, linear pattern nearly identical in both layout and the organization of activities to that of Northwest Coast villages (Knecht and Jordan 1985). Subsistence pursuits took place near the shore; social, political, ceremonial, and everyday life took place in the central strip of structures, while the dead tended to be buried behind the village.

Historical records indicate that the Koniag had ranked or stratified societies. According to these early accounts, the Koniag sociopolitical organization was identical to that of the eastern Aleuts and the Tlingit. That is, it consisted of chiefs (and an associated chiefly elite), commoners, and slaves

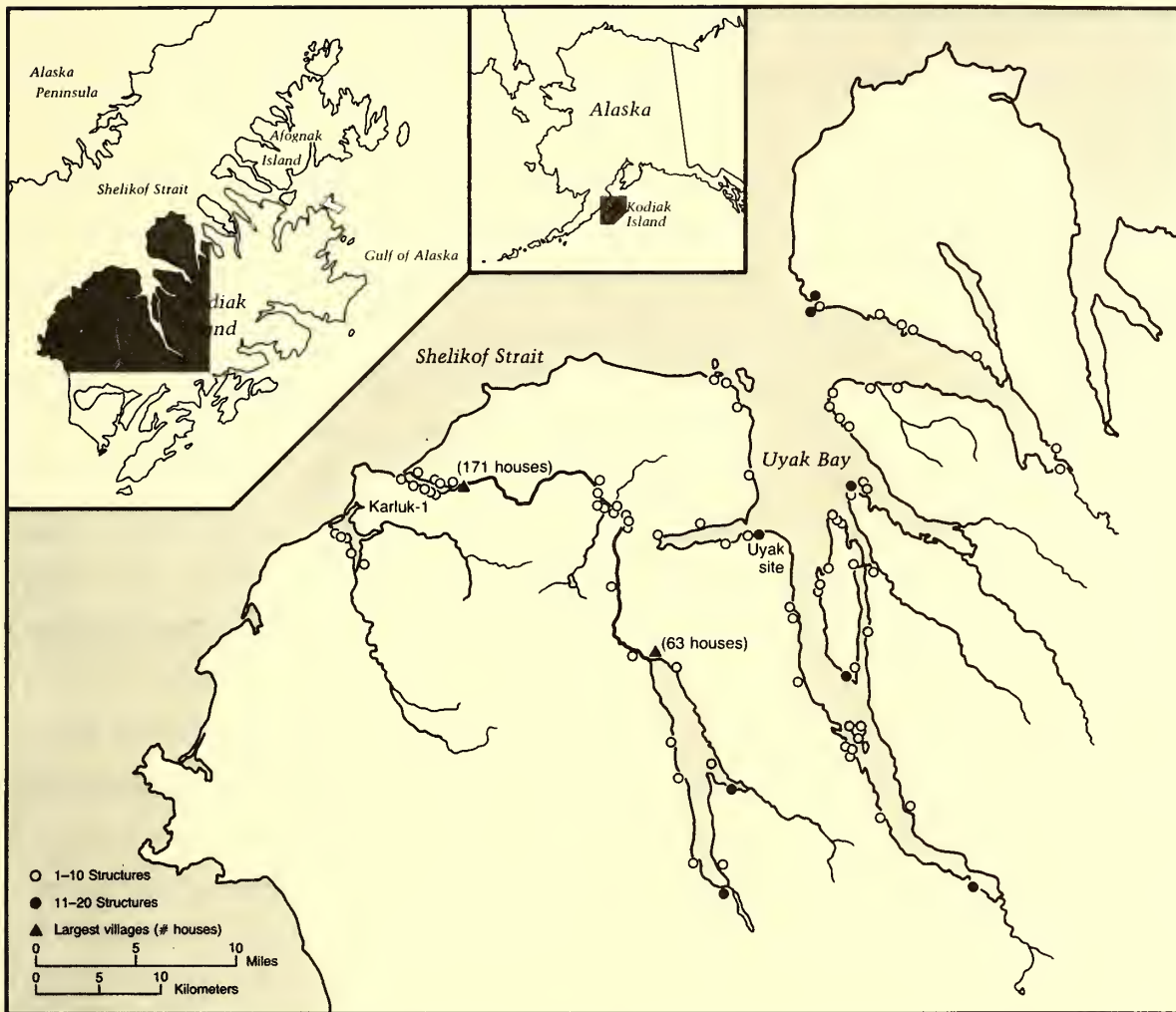


FIGURE 9-1. Prehistoric Koniag Villages on Northwestern Kodiak Island, Alaska.

(*kalga* [Davydov 1977:190]). Even though Shelikhov appointed *toions* to implement his policies, the Koniag already had their own traditional chiefs, who were called *Anayugak* (Gideon in Black 1977:91). Traditional chiefs held authority over a single village or a cluster of villages, named after a local geographic area (Davydov 1976:190). Each of these villages or village clusters maintained their own political independence and sovereignty, as well as their own military forces.

In addition to these horizontal social and political divisions, the Koniag probably had some form of lineage organization. Unfortunately, the exact nature of their social organization is not discussed in sufficient detail in early historical accounts to draw definitive conclusions. Despite the paucity of hard evidence, the widespread distribution of lineage organization across the North

Pacific and the Bering Sea region (de Laguna 1979; Townsend 1979; Hughes 1984a, 1984b; Lantis 1984a, 1984b) suggests that it was probably present on Kodiak.

Household composition can be reconstructed in part on the basis of early observations. Kinsmen lived in multiple-roomed houses, each containing extended families or several nuclear families (Merck 1980:100). Both polygyny and polyandry were practiced and the number of spouses depended on both wealth and rank (Lisianski 1968 [1814]:198; Bolotov in Black 1977:85; Davydov 1977:166; Merck 1980:108). Individuals occupying these multiple-roomed households were probably ranked. Each household had a headman and descending orders of rank based on age, sex, and internal social relations, as can be inferred from early sources (Lisianski 1968 [1814]:182). Note that household ranking was also present in both eastern Aleut and Tlingit societies.

If this sociopolitical reconstruction is correct, village chiefs also functioned as household and lineage heads. The chiefly office was inherited, although the exact lines of succession are not clearly described in early sources. If more than one heir was eligible or the heir apparent was found wanting, elders designated a successor, always a close relative of the chief (Gideon in Black 1977:91). The chief was the "owner" of the *qasqi*, or ceremonial house, and was a man of material wealth who owned many slaves. He was well-known both as a warrior and good family man, one of sound character who distributed good advice and was accorded respect and obedience by village members. He apparently presided over public meetings of the council of elders and sat in the most important place during feasts and ceremonies. He could also be the leader of war parties, formed political alliances with other villages leaders, and had a great deal of influence over social and economic affairs within the village. Although power relations were not absolute, he wielded considerable authority within the community (Bolotov in Black 1977:84–85; Davydov 1977: 173, 190; Gideon in Black 1977:91; Merck 1980:109).

Other important people within Koniag villages included shamans (*kabahulik* [Merck 1980:107]), influential individuals—most likely elders—who formed the decision-making council within the villages (Bolotov in Black 1977:84), healers and midwives (the latter women), and whale hunters. Male transvestites (*akbnuchiki* [Davydov 1977:166]), deliberately raised as members of the opposite sex by their parents, also played important roles in ceremonial

life and were valued members of society. Certain young women could also be raised as males and were allowed to attend specific ceremonial occasions otherwise denied to females.

At the other end of the social scale were slaves. They had no social status, power, or wealth. They were obtained from other societies as war captives, or through barter and negotiation. Aleuts, Peninsula Eskimos, Tanaina, Chugach, and possibly Tlingit were present in Koniag villages, since these were the groups with which the Koniag routinely conducted long-distance warfare. Other Koniag were also present as slaves in the villages of their enemies. Slaves were occasionally mistreated, but for the main part they led lives of drudgery. Although they may have occasionally married other Koniag, as slaves, they did not control their own destinies. They could be given as gifts, bought and sold, and left to heirs. Slaves could also be killed and buried when chiefs or their relatives died (Lisianski 1968 [1814]:200; Bolotov in Black 1977:85, 86; Davydov 1977:162, 163, 188, 190; Gideon in Black 1977:92; Billings in Merck 1980:206; Merck 1980: 108, 109).

ETHNOHISTORIC RECONSTRUCTION OF KONIAG CEREMONIAL LIFE

The feasting and ceremonial rounds of the Koniag can be classified into two types, depending on when and why they were given. Occasional feasts and ceremonies could be held by a newlywed male if he was from a wealthy family (Gideon in Black 1977:95), when a successor was chosen by the chief (Gideon in Black 1977:91), in preparation for conducting war (Gideon in Black 1977:92), to appease evil spirits (Bolotov in Black 1977:86; Davydov 1977:180), to honor the dead, and, among the Chugach (Birket-Smith 1953:110), and so quite likely the Koniag, for important "first events," for example, when a boy conducted his first successful hunt or when a new kayak or umiak was completed.

The second type, the regularly scheduled feasts and ceremonies, were initiated every fall, either in November (Billings in Merck 1980:206) or more likely December (Lisianski 1968 [1814]:209; Davydov 1977:183), and lasted until all the food in the village was consumed, sometime in January (Davydov 1977:173; Gideon in Black 1977:93). Billings (in Merck 1980:206) notes that they lasted all winter. A December and January feasting and ceremonial

round can probably be considered typical. The songs, dances, oratory, and food and gift exchanges that formed the core of these activities were conducted to bring the village luck in hunting (Davydov 1977:107), to honor heroic ancestors who performed great deeds in war or the hunt (Davydov 1977:108, 156, 180), and to divine future events (Lisianski 1968 [1814]:208; Davydov 1977:170; Gideon in Black 1977:99; Merck 1980:107).

Obviously such lengthy and formal ceremonies required much elaborate preparation. In the early fall, gifts were manufactured, and food was prepared and stored. Ceremonial costumes and regalia were made, and the *qasqi* was cleaned and renovated. The entire village assisted the chief in these efforts. A preparatory feast was then held, accompanied by dancing and gift giving from which women were excluded (Gideon in Black 1977:93; Davydov 1977:183–84). The host, a high-ranking individual or chief, then called together the villagers, who were seated by rank, while he took the place of honor near the entrance. Special ceremonial dishes were placed in the center of the *qasqi*, and songs were sung in praise of the host's kinsmen who had spent such a long time preparing and accumulating food and gifts. The host announced the guests who would be attending and checked on the details of what gifts were to be distributed. He appointed messengers to deliver the invitations to members of other villages, meanwhile consulting with the shamans who be attending to the details of the upcoming ceremonies. Finally, he distributed gifts to the elders, who were to provide the oratory, and ceremonial dishes to everyone according to rank (Gideon in Black 1977:93).

When the guests from the other villages arrived, the formal proceedings began. The guests would be treated with great respect. For example, upon arrival they would be dragged ashore in their boats, hoisted aloft, and carried in their boats to the *qasqi*. Food was immediately exchanged and formal (and no doubt ranked) seating assignments would be made. The entire village, including women and children, attended. Dancing ensued, first by men and later by women. The dancers were accompanied by the beating of drums and shaking of rattles. Flowery oratory would be delivered and pageants of the hunts and ancestral heroic deeds would be enacted. Shamans foretold future events. People were elaborately painted, bird feathers and down were stuck in their hair with grease and red ochre, and masks and costumes donned when appropriate. Food and gifts were distributed, of course. These ceremonies often lasted all night and various performances repeated day after day. When they were over, the guests would leave weighed down by additional gifts of food, any food of-

ferred but not consumed in the feasts, and by many gifts. If these ceremonies and feasts were lavish and properly conducted, the host and his relatives would gain enormous prestige. Other villages would subsequently be required to host feasts and gift-giving ceremonies, even if it took two to three years to reciprocate. Otherwise, the guests would lose status and prestige.³

This annual Koniag feasting and ceremonial round seems to be identical in structure, and probably in function, to the Northwest Coast Indian potlatch. While details and emphases may have differed somewhat, there is little doubt that the Koniag potlatch was a central integrating feature of social life on the island, both through time and space. It also provided a mechanism for enhancing prestige, reinforced the status of the chiefly elite, and imparted cultural or symbolic meaning and identity to the participants. Moreover, the Koniag potlatch must have played a strong role in the partial integration of the island's powerful villages or village clusters. This was probably accomplished through the culturally constituted requirement that individual villages were to hold reciprocal events after a period of years. The alliances, obligations, and other relationships engendered by the potlatch served to dilute the potential hostilities that probably existed among highly competitive, politically sovereign, and militarily powerful villages.

ARCHEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this section we move from a synchronic reconstruction of Koniag sociopolitical organization and ceremonial life at the time of European contact to an examination of the prehistoric record revealed through archeological investigations. The Kodiak Archeological Project has included both excavation and survey work every year from 1983 to 1988 and has been geographically focused on the Karluk River and Lake system and on the Uyak Bay region. This research has built on the solid cultural historic framework established by Donald Clark (1966, 1970, 1974a, 1974b, 1979), whose research and publications must be taken into account in any interpretation of Kodiak's prehistory.

Objects that relate to the feasting and ceremonial rounds summarized above have been recovered from a single site, KAR-1 at New Karluk. This site is located on the southwestern shore of Karluk Lagoon adjacent to the modern outlet of the Karluk River, one of the most productive salmon rivers

TABLE 9-1. Radiocarbon and Recalibrated Dates from the KAR-1 Site in Karluk Lagoon, Kodiak Island, Alaska

Provenience	Depth Below Surface (cm)	Radiocarbon Date B.P.	Radiocarbon Date A.D.	Recalibrated Date A.D.
Housefloor 1A	74	545 + 70	1405 + 70	1405 ^a
Housefloor 6	176	290 + 60	1660 + 60	1639
Housefloor 8	261	480 + 80	1470 + 80	1431
Housefloor 9	300	630 + 50	1320 + 50	1384 ^b 1371 1304
Housefloor 10	393	740 + 80	1210 + 80	1270
Basal Midden	418	780 + 60	1170 + 60	1259

a. This date is considered too old and in conflict with the five stratigraphically ordered dates from the lower layers. The percolation of heating oil, used during the twentieth century at the site, into the uppermost prehistoric layers is the suspected source of contamination. It was sporadically visible during excavation.

b. There are three intersects in the recalibration curve for this radiocarbon date. Any of them may be correct.

in the world (Bean 1890) (figure 9-2). The site is water-saturated and contains materials in a fine state of preservation (Jordan and Knecht 1988). The cultural deposit measures about 125 meters long, 15 to 20 meters wide, and about 4.2 meters deep. It is composed of an overlapping series of collapsed sod houses and midden dumps. To date, about 240 square meters have been excavated, 72 to the full 4-meter depth, the others to between 2 and 3 meters. As many as 10 superimposed housefloors have been completely or partly excavated. About 12,000 artifacts have been recovered. The lowest 3.7 meters of the site span the period from A.D. 1250 to Russian contact. Evidence for post-contact native history is confined to the upper 0.5 meter. Information on radiocarbon dates, all of which have been run on wood or bark samples, and on their recalibration to calendric time (Stuiver and Reimer 1986) is presented in table 9-1.

Objects associated with feasting, ritual, and ceremonial activities were found in quantity in housefloor 8 and above. The earliest evidence for the ful-



FIGURE 9-2. Panoramic view of Karluk Lagoon. The KAR-1 site is located along the shores on the lagoon just below the right end of the airstrip. (Courtesy National Geographic Society)

ly developed Koniag potlatch is thus estimated to date to the first half of the fifteenth century A.D. These feasting and ceremonial objects appear rather abruptly and are associated with the earliest evidence for multiple-room Koniag houses, and, inferentially, lineage organization. Many of these objects are probably related to the feasting and ceremonial activities outlined above; others still defy precise interpretation.

Utensils, probably related to feasting, occur rarely, but are very carefully made. Examples include two spoons made of wood and antler (figure 9-3a). The antler spoon is decorated with what is probably a bear paw and perhaps a "spirit" hole somewhat akin to Bering Sea Eskimo Tunghat hands (Fitzhugh and Kaplan 1982:203, fig. 251). The wooden spoon has a zoomorphic head with a thickened tongue. Bentwood bowls, used to serve food, are constructed in a fashion similar to Bering Sea forms (Fitzhugh and Kaplan 1982:120-21, figs. 125, 127) (figure 9-3b). Food dishes or grease bowls are very similar to Northwest Coast Indian forms (Kaplan and Barsness 1986:180, fig. 191) (figure 9-3c).

The instruments used to accompany dances include hooped rattles identical to ethnographic specimens. Rim fragments have also been recovered.



FIGURE 9-3. (a) above: Wooden and antler spoons. (Courtesy Richard Veazey, University of Alaska Fairbanks) (b) left: Bentwood bowl. (Courtesy Richard A. Cooke III) (c) below: Grease bowl. (Courtesy Richard Veazey, University of Alaska Fairbanks)

Miniature masks are relatively common and were probably lashed to the tips of drum handles (figure 9-4a). Similar ethnographic specimens are present in the collections of the National Museum of Finland (Varjola 1988, title page) and are illustrated in Lisianski's 1812 collection of maps and plates. A number of the faces on these miniature masks are identical to the full-sized specimens collected in the 1880s by Alphonse Pinart (Lot-Falck 1957). This similarity indicates strong cultural continuity from the early fifteenth to the nineteenth century A.D.

Several handles and other carvings in the round were most likely used in ceremonial activities. They usually depict birds, often puffins. Birds play an important role in the Koniag mythologies published by Lantis (1938) and Golder (1903, 1909; see also chapter 8). In addition, local oral traditions emphasize their role as protector spirits for hunters. Carvings of sea mammals are very rare—only two seals have been recovered (figure 9-4b). A unique specimen, recovered from the site a number of years ago by a local Karluk resident, Ronnie Lind, further emphasizes the important role of birds. It is a handle-like object depicting the transformation of a human figure into a bird (figure 9-5a).



FIGURE 9-4a. Miniature masks. (Photograph by National Museum of Natural History staff, Smithsonian Institution)

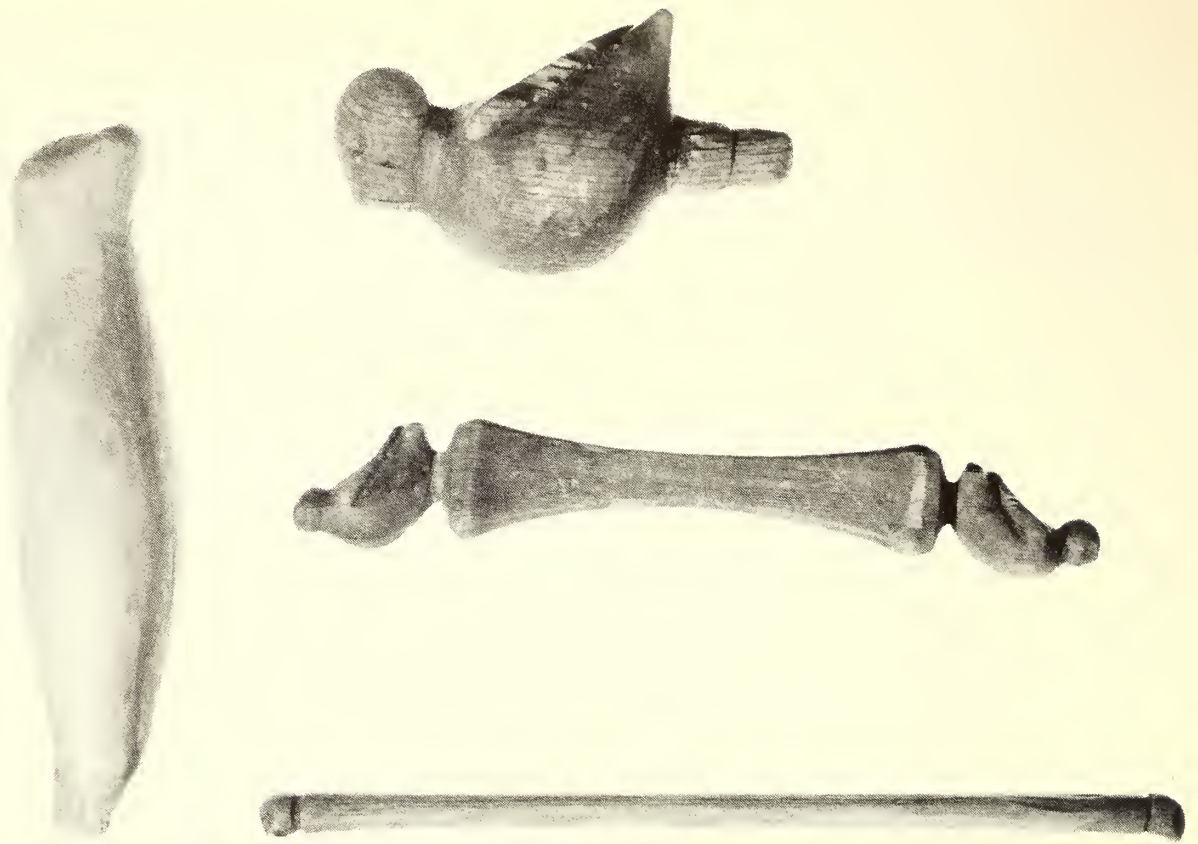


FIGURE 9-4b. Carvings of birds and a seal. (Courtesy Richard Veazey, University of Alaska Fairbanks)

Miniature human heads, many wearing representations of bentwood hunting visors and hats, have been found in some number (see Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:105) (figure 9-5b). The bases of these figures were inserted into the cockpits of miniature kayaks. They could have functioned either as toys or objects imbued with sympathetic magic to be used in ceremonies related to hunting success. One with a seal decoy helmet (figure 9-5b, lower right) is a perfect rendition of full-sized ethnographic specimens (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:164, fig. 200).

Anthropomorphic figures have highly individualized faces, often displaying medial or lateral labrets. These labrets create prognathic distortions such that the human face resembles a bird (figure 9-6). Their torsos are featureless and faint traces of paint, representing a V-shaped collar, are still visible on at least one specimen. The precise meaning and function of these figures is not known.

Human faces are found in a number of styles and emotional states. One

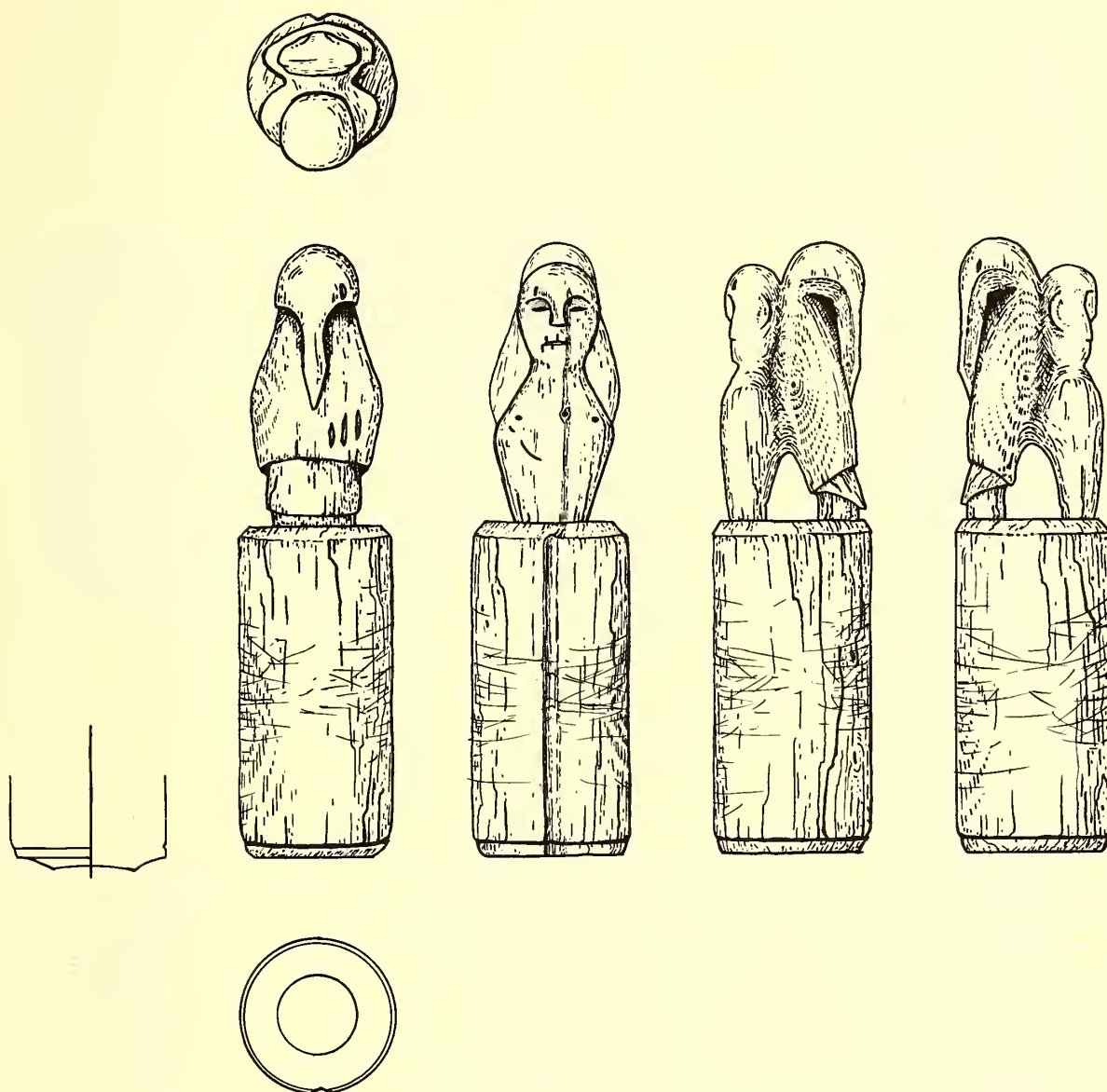


FIGURE 9-5a. Human/bird transformation figure. (Drawn by Julie Perlmutter, Smithsonian Institution)

seems to be a happy individual carved onto the surface of a gambling disc, while a second represents an individual with a rather fierce expression. A third example has two faces stacked atop one another (figure 9-7a). Again, the precise meaning and function of these pieces are unknown.

Three complete hand-sized masks have been recovered. One has a tragic expression and what appears to be a raven's beak and a distorted human face on the top (figure 9-7b). Another has a pointed head and a sad expression (figure 9-7c). Their expressions, in particular, suggest that both may have func-



FIGURE 9-5b. Miniature human heads with bentwood hats and one with a seal decoy helmet. (Courtesy Richard Veazey, University of Alaska Fairbanks)

tioned in the context of the mortuary rituals referred to repeatedly in historical sources. A third has bulging eyes and a distorted face that projects forward and is vaguely similar to East Greenland masks from Angmassalik, although no direct historical connection is implied (figure 9-8a).

Koniag masks collected by Europeans were lavishly painted and had three-quarter encircling hoops to which bangles and feathers were attached



FIGURE 9-6. Anthropomorphic figures. (Courtesy Richard A. Cooke III)



FIGURE 9-7a. Carvings of human faces. (Courtesy Richard Veazey, University of Alaska Fairbanks)

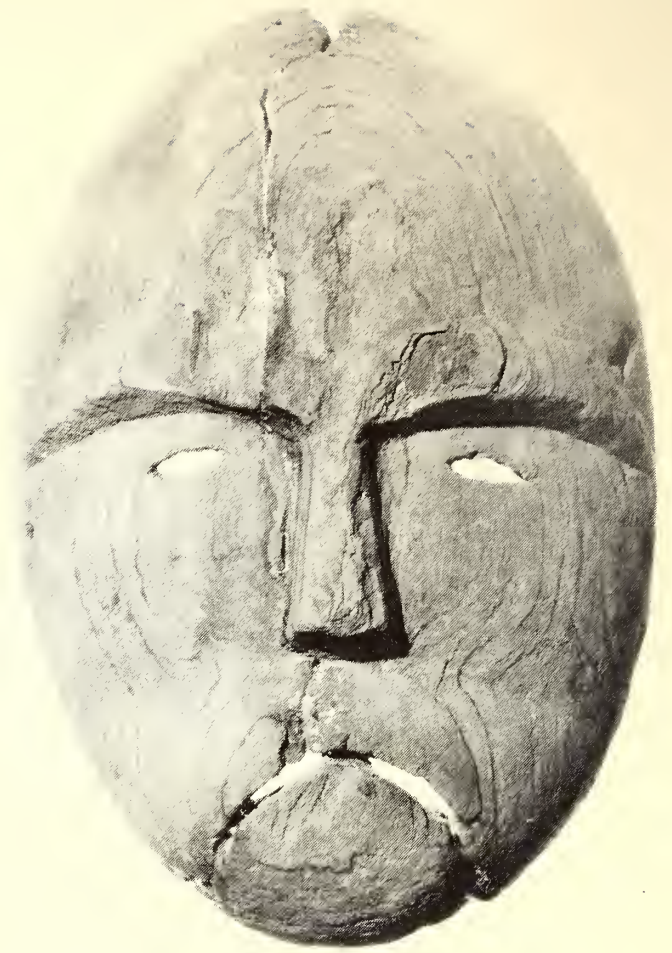


FIGURE 9-7b and 9-7c. (b) left: Hand-sized mask. (Courtesy Richard Veazey, University of Alaska Fairbanks) (c) right: Human Mask. (Courtesy Richard Veazey, University of Alaska Fairbanks).



FIGURE 9-8a. Hand-sized mask. (Courtesy Richard A. Cooke III)



FIGURE 9-8b. Bird mask.
(Courtesy National Geographic Society)

(Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:50 [fig. 50], 88 [fig. 96], 270 [fig. 368]). More than 100 of these mask bangles have been recovered at KAR-1. Their forms depict paddles or feathers, crescents, shields, humans, and squares (figure 9-9a). They are often painted with red and black geometric designs.

Two complete full-sized masks have been excavated. One represents a human face, which has a downturned mouth reminiscent of Bering Sea representations of seals and women (Fitzhugh and Kaplan 1982) (figure 9-8a). The other is in the form of a short-beaked bird, perhaps an owl (figure 9-8b). Both of these specimens may once have been painted, but centuries of staining by humic acids in the soil have removed any visible evidence. Their encircling hoops and associated bangles and feathers have become detached as well.

Other anthropomorphic figures are miniature statues, depicting virile men or pregnant women (figure 9-9b). One particularly dramatic specimen has been informally termed the Karluk Madonna (figure 9-10a, b). This fig-



FIGURE 9-9a. Mask bangles. (Courtesy Richard Veazey, University of Alaska Fairbanks)



FIGURE 9-9b. Virile man and pregnant women. (Courtesy Richard Veazey, University of Alaska Fairbanks)



FIGURE 9-10a and 9-10b. Karluk Madonna. (Photograph National Museum of Natural History staff, Smithsonian Institution)

ure, recovered from a midden, has a carefully carved expressionless face; inset human hair; a rotund, ample body with anatomically correct features; and hands splayed across the back, perhaps to support her additional weight or perhaps to relieve back discomfort in the process of giving birth. Whatever the precise interpretation, Koniag people apparently devoted attention in ceremony and ritual to female fertility and male virility in the hope, no doubt, of producing many offspring.

This assemblage has two particularly striking features. Primary attention is obviously paid to the portrayal of humans and secondarily to birds. Birds were probably considered helping spirits, who oversaw the well-being of hunters. Renditions of predator or prey spirit animals, so common in the hunting magic of Yup'ik and Inupiaq people farther north, do not seem to be an overriding concern for the Koniag. Rather, most attention seems to be paid to social continuity and social relations, since there is such a strong emphasis

on the human form. In addition, there is a surprising variety of human emotions depicted on a number of specimens.

Second, although individual pieces resemble specimens from other North Pacific and Bering Sea cultures, the overwhelming impression is that they comprise part of an artistic, ceremonial, and mythological tradition that can basically be classified as North Pacific Yup'ik. These archeological specimens thus add to the extant ethnographic inventory from the North Pacific now dispersed in museums across the globe. Once these specimens become better documented and presented in a unified format, they will lead, no doubt, to a new appreciation of this distinctive Alaska native tradition.

SUMMARY

The available data indicate that new forms of feasting and ceremonial activities emerged among the Koniag sometime just after A.D. 1400. These activities shared many structural and functional features with the potlatching rounds of the Northwest Coast Indians. The archeological record also suggests that the emergence of these ceremonial activities was coeval with other social and economic changes. For example, multiple roomed houses and, inferentially, lineage organization, also appeared at this time. The great variation in the size of individual structures also indicates that some housed larger, and presumably more influential, families, while others were inhabited by those of lower rank. In addition, extremely large villages emerged after A.D. 1400. For example, two prehistoric villages, KAR-22/46 and KAR-65, each extend for more than 1.5 kilometers and contain 171 and 63 structures, respectively. There is a direct relationship between the location of these large and powerful population centers and such highly productive resource areas as the Karluk River. Resident village members no doubt exercised control over these resources. The appearance of such large variations in both household and settlement size suggests the concomitant emergence of social ranking, both within and among villages. That is, the largest villages appear to have not only controlled major resources, but must have been able to dominate smaller villages through the use or threat of military force. Similarly, the largest families or related familial clusters within villages must have wielded considerable influence over other residents and probably controlled critical resources.

Labrets are one item of material culture, in particular, that suggest the



FIGURE 9-11. Labrets. (Photograph National Museum of Natural History staff, Smithsonian Institution)

presence of ranking after A.D. 1400. These cheek and lip plugs were used to display social information throughout Alaska, although their precise meaning has not been recorded for Kodiak or other regions. In the absence of written documentation, the patterning of labret styles and their raw materials provide an important line of evidence from archeological sites. Koniags generally favored wood labrets, either large oval lateral forms or much thinner medial forms. Their mode of display is clearly recorded on the excavated anthropomorphic figures and occasionally on ethnographic masks housed in museums. More than 200 of these rather standardized Koniag labrets have been excavated at KAR-1. A much smaller number of labrets are made of such exotic materials as marble, limestone, slate, jet, antler, ivory, and fossil ivory. They are invariably smaller than the wooden specimens and are each rendered in unique styles (figure 9-11). These individually styled labrets, made from non-local raw materials, may well be derived from the war captives and slaves described in historic accounts. If this interpretation is correct, it provides yet another line of evidence to suggest that prehistoric Koniag society was indeed ranked.

Evidence for the emergence of lineages, ranking, and intensive feasting and ceremonial rounds all appear at approximately the same time on Kodiak. On one hand, Koniag potlatches must have played a central role in at least the partial integration of potentially hostile and certainly competitive villages, each of which was capable of launching military campaigns. On the other, they must also have been a means for reinforcing status among the chiefly elite through the accrual of prestige. The emergence of these intensive feasting and ceremonial rounds must have had other consequences as well. Because of the large investment of labor in the harvesting and storage of food, as well as in the production of gifts and ceremonial paraphernalia, slavery and the capturing of hostages through long-distance warfare was certainly one solution to these new demands. At the individual village level, there must also have been a change from subsistence to surplus economies. Thus, the potlatching system emerged as one component of other fundamental and far-reaching social and economic changes that transformed Koniag culture just after A.D. 1400.

NOTES

1. The Alutiiq term *Qasqiluteng* and its English translation have been kindly supplied by Jeff Leer of the Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks. This term is derived from the root word *qasqi*, which is glossed as the place where ceremonial activities take place. On Kodiak, at least, this was not necessarily a completely separate structure, insofar as both archeological and ethnohistoric data suggest that feasting and ceremonial activities took place within structures that also functioned as domiciles. Nevertheless, separate feasting and ceremonial structures certainly existed as well. There are no historical or archeological data to suggest that the Koniag *qasqi* ever served as a men's house, as it did in Central Yup'ik Eskimo societies.

2. The best general description of traditional Koniag culture has been published by Clark (1984), but his discussion of sociopolitical organization and ceremonial life is very brief.

3. At least some of these ceremonial activities were witnessed and described by European observers. The most extensive description is provided by Davydov (1977: 107-11), who attended three different events on December 8, 18, and 30 in 1802. A brief description is also provided by Gideon (in Black 1977:93, 94). He notes, however, in his manuscript written sometime between 1804 and 1807, that he saw only three ceremonial houses on Kodiak Island (Gideon in Black 1977:91). Shelikhov

(1981:55), Merck (1980:100, 101), Billings (in Merck 1980:206, 207), Lisianski (1968 [1814]:209, 210), and Sauer (in Hrdlicka 1944:63, 74) also provide comments on ceremonial activities. Mallery (1886:196, fig. 111a) illustrates a line drawing of a Koniag "shaman's lodge" that was produced and interpreted by a Mr. Naumoff, a Kodiak native, in 1882.

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This chapter is dedicated to the memory of our first friend and patient mentor from Karluk, Lawrence Panamaroff. He has enriched our lives immeasurably.

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10. *Eskimo Masks from Kodiak Island
in the Collections of the Peter the
Great Museum of Anthropology and
Ethnography, St. Petersburg*

ROZA G. LIAPUNOVA

THE NATIVE PEOPLE OF KODIAK ISLAND and of that part of the Alaska Peninsula on Shelikhov Strait from Cape Kupreanof to the Cook Inlet are known as Koniag Eskimo. The Koniag are the largest of the three groups of Pacific Eskimo, the two other groups being the Chugach Eskimo of Prince William Sound and the Eskimo of the southern Kenai Peninsula. In pre-contact times the Koniag numbered some seven to eight thousand people (Khlebnikov 1979:24; Clark 1984:203).

Until recently (see Jordan, Black, and Crowell, this volume), studies devoted to the traditional culture of the Kodiak Islanders and of the Koniag as a whole gave little attention to its spiritual aspects. As a result, important information is yet to be gleaned from the ethnographic materials, including museum specimens, collected during the Russian America period (mid-eighteenth to early nineteenth century). Among the latter there is a unique collection of festival masks and other objects at the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (MAE). Almost all these artifacts were acquired for the museum in the 1840s by I. G. Voznesenskii when he was collecting natural history specimens for the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences (Gil'zen 1916; Stepanova 1944; Lipshits 1950; Liapunova 1967; Alekseev 1977).

The collection contains accessories of a Kodiak festival known as the "six-act mystery," as well as a few masks, drums, and rattles not related to the mystery play but used in other Kodiak festivities. This present collection has not been described in full before, although some brief references to it and photographs of several masks have appeared in the literature. As a matter of fact, all the Kodiak masks have been illustrated, but without detailed descriptions.¹ The main goal of the present discussion is to describe the masks, and in addition to characterize some other ceremonial accessories from the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography. The first step, however, will be to determine from the literature which kinds of masks were utilized during which performances by the Kodiak Islanders, and then identify them in the MAE collections.

One of the most valuable sources of information about the Kodiak festivities is the documentation by I. G. Voznesenskii of the use of accoutrements during the six-act mystery. He also provided a list of their names and local terms, and his diaries contain a description of the opening part of one of the Kodiak festivals. Unfortunately, the description ends abruptly at the "third dance." Both documents are cited below. In addition, some Russian sources report observations about Kodiak ceremonial festivities made in the early years of contact between the Kodiak Islanders and the Russian newcomers. More detailed information about them can be found in G. I. Davydov's record of his 1802 voyage to America (Davydov 1810-1812: pts. 1 & 2). Further information is offered by the reports of Hieromonk Gedeon (1805-7), and C. H. Merck, a participant of the Northeastern Geographical Expedition of I. I. Billings and G. A. Sarychev (1785-1795) (Anonymous 1900; Black 1977; Merck 1980; Titova 1978).

Older sources refer to the ceremonial and festival performances of the Koniag as *igrishche* or *igrushki* (play, games), but indicate they were devoted to various themes: hunting rituals, the memory of the dead (ancestors), their planned or accomplished military campaigns, or changes of chiefs. They were staged on various life cycle occasions (funerals, coming-of-age ceremonies, marriages, etc.) and were followed by potlatches that helped establish inter-group exchanges and trade relations.

Festival ceremonies of the Koniag have, on the whole, much in common with those of Alaska Peninsula Eskimo groups: they reflect religious ideas, mythology, and historical legends and at the same time display artistic creativity. The ceremonies were organized and conducted by *kasiats*, that is, by

wise men, shamans who were custodians of the traditions and were composers of songs, performances, and dances. The festivals usually began in November and December and continued until people ran short of food and could no longer entertain guests. At the core of many performances were magical rites and rituals meant to secure hunting success—hence the need to influence the spirits.

The animistic religion of the Eskimo and Aleut is well known; but at the same time people believed that some central power permeated all nature. For some, this power was incarnated in a powerful but rather indefinite Earth Spirit. In the case of the Kodiak Islanders, it was probably the Spirit of the Sky. The power of this spirit was manifested in various natural phenomena and calamities and was believed to be very dangerous for people who did not know how to handle it properly. In their everyday life, however, all Eskimo groups paid most attention to their master spirits, the primary ones being the “sea mistress,” who controlled the sea mammals, and the spirits of animals, birds, and the like. In addition, they recognized various categories of spirits. The principal means to influence a spirit was to reincarnate oneself into it through a ritual dance using its own form, that is, by dancing in a mask or any other symbolic outfit made by a shaman according to his vision of the fantastic image of the particular spirit. Members of the secret men’s society took part in the performances in the images of powerful and frightful ancestors.

Davydov (1810–1812:pt. 2:96–97) described the Kodiak festivals as follows:

The superstition of the Koniag was the primary reason for the performance of their *igrishches*, which begin usually in December. They open with some mysterious celebrations which cannot be attended by women and children. They take a wisp of straw and everybody smokes it with *shishkuk* [field incense?] after which the wisp is set on fire and the hunters then ask the spirits for a successful hunting season. This ceremony finished, the men come out of the *kazhim* and the inhabitants of a settlement, young and old, set fire to their splinters and run with loud cries in the field and around their houses. After this the performances begin, to which everybody is admitted, and these continue as long as the Koniag have enough food to treat their guests. . . . The *kazhim* in which the festivities are usually held belongs to all the settlement. When the festival shows finish, the *kazhim* is broken down and the people break down the masks into pieces, cut the hoods [masks] and destroy everything that served to decorate the performers, and

throw everything away into the woods. Sometimes upon the completion of a show they arranged in their *kazhim*, the best dress is cut into pieces and presented piece-by-piece to the guests to thank them for the honor they showed by their visit.

Davydov (1810–1812:pt. 2:90) continued:

I could never find out whether the Koniag have the notion of God; it is known only that they are extremely afraid of devils but do not make any sacrifices to them. During their festival performances, they depict how the devils are tempting people or harm them. After the completion of such performances, the women are afraid even to look at those who had enacted the evil spirits.

Davydov provided a detailed description of the festival performance he attended in Pavlovsk Harbour on the evening of December 8, 1802 (1810–1812:pt. 1:202–5):

Two people with drums were sitting at a big lighted lamp in the centre of a chamber. . . . The drums were not equal and the bigger one was held by the performer who represented the chief. On both sides of the lamp stood two maids in *kamleikas* [waterproof gutskin parka] and most foppishly decorated, i.e., they had a long bone piercing their nasal cartilage, beads in their lower lips and ears, and their heads were strewn with eagle down. Next to them stood two men with rattles in one hand and canoe paddles in the other [as seen from the following text, they represented hunters' analogues to those kept at the MAE 571-1a,b and MAE 571-2b]. The rattles consisted of round rings onto which were hung a great many bills of birds called simply *toporks*, known in natural history as sea parrots. . . . The paddles were decorated with depictions of fish and sea or amphibious animals. These two men were painted with red pencil and their heads and backs were covered with eagle down. Instead of caps they were wearing a kind of spiked helmet made of bent twigs, one of which ran to the men's mouths like a horse's bit [in the description of the following festival a similar headdress is called a mask, i.e., it is a "hunter's mask" analogous to MAE 571-1a,b and 571-2a,b]. The faces of those Americans were almost completely covered with various feathers and evergreen oak fern. The ones with drums wore feathered hats. Suspended to the ceiling above the place of the performance were several arrows set crosswise and fastened to these there were first a *baidarka*, then stuffed skins representing different animals, and at last some hunting tools and stuffed

seals which are used by the Americans for hunting seals. A man sitting on a bench at the side was rocking all of this with the help of a specially fastened string in time with the voice. That man was also one of the actors, as he also was clad in a *kamleika*. . . . The one representing the chief together with the other sitting at the lamp were striking their drums with sticks; the hunters with small paddles [i.e., the paddles were not real but special ceremonial ones] played their rattles in time [with the music] as directed by the chief. If the drum beat grew more frequent everybody would suddenly cry, for some of the viewers joined in the singing. The maids all the time held their *kamleikas* with both hands and rocked slightly from side to side. The chief incessantly screamed out something like: "Here is the shore, let's pull in to it! Animals will come to the one who has not killed anything yet . . .," etc. When he was saying: "Here are the animals!" everybody started shouting in different voices trying to imitate the voices of various animals, blew their specially made whistles, and in a word, a great hubbub arose. When the performance occasionally stopped for a few minutes the hunters rocked and played their rattles in time with each other. . . . There was also a stone with reddish spots there that represented the coffin of one of their prominent men to whose memory the next show after that described was dedicated; but I could not wait for that one.

On December 30, 1802, Davydov saw a similar performance in a settlement on Lesnoi (Forest) Island at Pavlovsk Harbour. In describing it he specified some detail and provided an explanation of the origin of the performance (1810-1812:pt. 1:208-10):

Here too, two men were sitting at a lamp with drums, and two more were standing with small paddles and rattles on both sides, with red bands painted all over their bodies and with sticks in their mouths. The mask [again, "hunters' masks" analogous to MAE 571-1a,b and 571-2a,b] was made of bent twigs so that all of the man's face was seen through them, the face being painted white and red. Hanging above the lamp from crossbeams fastened crosswise in a quadrangle were arrows, canoes, decoys and some other instruments, and all of these were rocked by one man as before. But here at the four corners of the crossbeams four more people, one of each corner, sat on suspended boards; like the former two they wore masks and their bodies were painted with different stripes. These were also rocked. . . . As described by a *toien* the reason behind the arrangement for this [performance] was as follows: for five years an islander, who had been formerly reputed as a good hunter, could not kill a single beast. Utterly frustrated, he became a recluse

and lived in the mountains. One night, on the top of a hill, he had a dream, and having come down after that to this settlement he arranged this performance exactly as he saw it in his dream. Since then his hunting was invariably successful; therefore even today the islanders enact this performance in hopes for having a successful hunt.

A show similar to these two was recorded by Voznesenskii in his diary in 1842 (see below). In these shows we see a typical example of the hunters' performances, which depict successful hunting occasions to be repeated in real life.

The show that followed after a brief interval employed masks that, in Davydov's description, closely resemble some of those collected by Voznesenskii (see below MAE 571-8, the woodcock mask; MAE 571-9, the mask of a lover; MAE 571-10, a feathered ring from the "six-act mystery"; and also the mask MAE 571-11] (Davydov 1810-1812:pt. 1:211-12).

The two began beating their drums in time with the song which was sung by the viewers; and then a man appeared in body paint, wearing a mask to which a semicircular arrangement of small painted wood pieces with eagle feathers, added for decoration, were attached. The man appeared with his back to the audience and for a long time perched on his knees with his face away from the viewers. He played his rattles quietly and harmoniously and gradually turned around, bit by bit. Then suddenly he sprang up, his rattle grew louder and he shuddered, and thereafter was never still, incessantly changing his position. Having danced for about an hour he went out, and in his place two men appeared wearing masks similar to the previous one, with a woman between them with a semicircular array around her head. These also appeared first with their backs to the audience, remained for some time on their knees before they too turned to the spectators and began moving their bodies in various ways, coordinating their movements very skillfully with the sound of the rattles. These were replaced by a man in a mask with a semicircular array around it who held rattles in his hands. He came in like the others, back facing the audience, and danced better than they; and that was the end of the performance. I could not find out the reason for that performance, and did not for the life of me expect such harmony in the movements and dances of savages.

On December 18, 1802, Davydov attended one more performance at Pavlovsk Harbour that was devoted to evil spirits (1810-1812:pt. 1:205-8):

First, five men came in one after another, all in different masks, some of which were edged with fern [the latter were probably also “hunters’ masks”]. They were blowing pipes suspended by strings running through the holes of their nose cartilage, and they wriggled each in their own way. One of them was painted with a red marker; another with charcoal; two others wore parkas; and the fifth was clad in a *kamleika*, with rattles in his hands. The naked ones and the one in the *kamleika* had on them something made of bird skins hanging down to their knees. Sitting at the lamp were two Americans clad in common clothes with no decoration. I could not guess the meaning of that performance. The interpreter said they were devils who deceived people; however, he himself was not in the know, for the traditions of these performances and, especially, of those related to the idea about spirits are known to or claimed to be known only by . . . *kasiats*, i.e., only by the wise men who invent them, interpret the origins of the inhabitants of Kodiak and neighbouring islands, speak about devils, etc. . . . When the devils finished their wriggling and left, the men began driving out the women and children. . . . When they were all gone a man representing an evil spirit appeared, clad in a *kamleika* with an extra mask and rattles in his hands. He shouted and ran from one place to another in time with a song sung by all the viewers, and he alone played the drums. Everything was finished then. . . . About the reason why the women were sent out I’ve learned from the Russians the following: when a performance about spirits ends the women take them for real devils and look for a place to hide because the spirits run everywhere and pinch everybody they meet. In former times they even pricked people with small knives which they wrapped specially with grass, leaving only the tip exposed so as not to make deep wounds.

Similar performances featuring “devils,” enacted by members of the secret men’s societies, also took place among the Aleut, whose women and children remained uninitiated in the secrets of such performances and believed that their settlements were visited by evil spirits. This ritual probably had the same meaning as the performance concerned with successful hunts. It reflects the ancient notion that security and well-being would follow after a settlement had been visited by spirits, or after “contact” with the ancestors; but women and uninitiated children were kept away from such contacts, as also noted in the ritual practice of other peoples at the same stage of ideological development.

One more description of the Kodiak festival performance is found in the

notes of Hieromonk Gedeon, who stayed on Kodiak Island from 1805 to 1807 (Anonymous 1900:208–10):

Their *igrushkas* usually occur in late autumn and early winter, when people have stored up enough food, and are held for different circumstances and occasions: to make or improve an acquaintance or friendship, the latter being valued highly; on occasions of marriage; for expressing gratitude; as a matter of habit; or to show others that one was rich and had provisions and other things. The performances are arranged in a *kazhim* but if such is not available they can be held in an Aleutian [in those years the Kodiak natives were often called Kodiak Aleut] anteroom or in the larger room where everyone sleeps. They all come together, men, women, girls, and young. Within the *kazhim*, men sit on the benches and women under the benches on the floor, each under her husband. The old men strike their drums and begin songs to honor their forefathers and fathers, reminding that they had *baidaras*, and that they had sea otters, etc. Everybody follows them in the singing, while men in smart caps and patterned hoods made specially for such occasions dance singly, now jumping, now squatting, and now bending to every side, and sway in time to the rattles they hold in their hands; with their movements they depict how they hunt different beasts and animals; how, for example, a whaler spears a whale with his arrow and how he evades it, or how a sea otter is pursued, etc. After that, having taken off their hoods, they put on various strange masks and dance in them again with the rattles singly or in pairs. Women and girls always dance alone, without men; they stand grandly together in a straight line close to each other and then squat slightly and almost imperceptibly straighten up again in the same manner, or would start bending to the right and to the left. When beginning their dance they first stretch forward their left arms with fingers bent and keep them so while the singing continues without words; when those who are playing drums and singing songs in honor of their dead mention the name and death of their relative, they suddenly, all together, turn their palms over to the earth. In other dances merry old people try different tricks to make people laugh, because, according to their custom, the father of the husband whose daughter or wife smiles even a little bit during the dance is obliged to pay a fine in the favor of the old and the poor. . . . Such entertainment continued all through the night, almost until dawn. Upon the completion the host presents parkas, amber, and *suklias* [dentalium shells], or gives other riches to the invited guests as well as the owner of the *kazhim*, the talker and whomever else he chooses.

Here, again, we see a hunting festival performance and a funeral.

We also find some details about the Kodiak festivals in C. H. Merck's descriptions (Titova 1978:70-71):

Their men's dances are a wild frenzy—*Pilchkalaktutt*—as also among the Kenai. For the dances the Kodiak Islanders smear their faces with white paint on top of their eyes and black paint below, or else, with white from the forehead down to the nose and below with red; some wore masks (*bajut*) similar to those of the Aleuts. Their small hats they decorate with four circular rows of wetted white fluff and one bit of fluff placed on the top. Sometimes they also use bits of fluff to decorate their loose flowing hair. Some wear a swaying feather on each side standing obliquely backwards. They dance mostly naked with loin clothes only. Their fur parkas are either worn thrown over one shoulder or fastened around the hips; some people prefer wearing their parkas rolled up and roll their sleeves up above the elbows. One jumped mostly straight up, turning at the same time; he kept one of his hands on his waist or stretched it out a bit holding his fur parka, and in the other hand he held a knife which he waved first to one side and then to the other, and also over his shoulder. Others held rattles made of auk beaks (*kaelchnait*), one in each hand or bunches of feathers instead. When dancing they usually bend forward and thrust their breast out, legs apart, often with bent knees. They approach each other while jumping forward and aside and turning their heads up and down, with their arms stretched forward a little. The hands with rattles work rapidly—one forward, the other backward, or, suddenly, both away to the sides, and the same with the feathers which they hold as if taking aim at something. The others playing drums and singing to the glory of their relatives. A drum is called by them, *Ttschaujak*, and its stick, *Mumuk*.

These dances are followed by the dances of women, *ujuungut*. When the men were dancing the women just sang slowly and the men moved their drums in time with them, their singing reminiscent of cries of rejoicing. Now, the women stood in a single line and first joined their hands, or each had her arm thrust under the arm of her neighbour, turning palms outward while the upper arms remained pressed to the body, after that they jumped with arms pressed to their sides one after another as they stood, and then bent straight down, after which they bowed forward, each putting her hand on her waist.

Here, again, we seem to see rituals devoted to funerals and successful hunting. As the descriptions of the early witnesses of these ceremonies indi-

cate, such performances repeated approximately the same plots. The scenarios did not coincide exactly, of course; there was a certain variability, but the same kinds of acts in a similar sequence were repeated from one festival to another: hunting shows, funeral repasts, and various ritual ceremonies of the men's secret society connected with the cult of ancestors.

In 1842 I. G. Voznesenskii recorded some performances on Kodiak Island similar to the ones described above. The following lines are from his diary (unfortunately, the record stops suddenly at the "third dance") (Archives, a; Liapunova 1967:29):

Music: (during the Aleut Kodiak festivities) whistling is now piercing and now weak and dying; drums are played loudly, lightly, etc. Singing is done in a drawling manner mostly with the words "ee-ia-a," and they shout "ee-ar-ee" (as shrill as oxen when their throats are cut). Before every dance they burn and smoke field incense (valerian). The one who rocks the arrows, sits on a shelf made specially for him just over the door, he is painted with red graphite [*sic*] and wears a new kamleika with various gear such as small bags and mica patches on his breast. Drum players and whistlers are on the opposite side. Those who play the drums are also the first singers. There were two of them; in the beginning they were sitting on a piece of seal-skin on the ground in front of the oil lamp, and at the end of the performance on the bench surrounding the inside of the *barabara* [dwelling].

1st dance. In the centre of the *barabara* an oil lamp is burning; on its sides there are two *laftaks* [sea lion skins], with two dancers on them; each dancer has rattles in his right hand and a stick in the left around which they are turning in circles both in opposite directions. The dancers are completely naked. Their heads are decorated with feathers, and *masks* [underlined by Voznesenskii], looking like knightly visors, are ornamented with sea kale soaked in fat. On their arms they wear something like wings consisting of a bunch of white feathers [as we see, the dancers have "hunter's masks" and some accessories from the first act of the "six-act mystery"]. First they walk in two directions to the accompaniment of the solo tune and drum beat; then they come face-to-face and make incessant arm movements, waving the rattles to the right and left. One [dancer] bends to the ground while the other straightens up and throws his head back. These very comical bows are repeated several times. And, at last, they whirl and begin running around the oil lamp, each trying not to be slower on his feet than the other, i.e., he is the good lad who does not feel dizzy or tired. The viewers applaud him with shouts, and that's the end. Within the circle lies a stone the dancers

stumble over sometimes while running in a circle. The dance continues for three quarters of an hour [note that a similar stone was mentioned in Davydov's description of a show].

2nd dance. They begin singing in an even drone. The drum strokes are light and rare. The stage is empty. Suddenly whistlers with rattles jump down from the swings in which they had been sitting under the roof in the four corners of the *barabara*. They are as naked as the former and have the same head decorations [i.e., "hunters' masks"]. Having spent a few minutes sitting still, they suddenly rise to their feet, play their rattles in time with the voices and the drum, and then, having marked time, they go into a circle, frequently bending and straightening as if bowing to each other, and taking a quick step back. Now four people are dancing (first they walk and then start running until tired), clad like the former ones. This dance is accompanied by the women singing in a rather nice droning tone and low voices. At last the circle grows larger and the slow measured walk turns into brisk running, everybody begins pushing each other trying to knock an opponent down so as to win an upper hand and gain the loud approval of the audience. Depending on how soon the dancers tire, this dance continues for half an hour or more.

3rd dance. A lone dancer crawls out from under the leather covered corner at the left side of the entrance to the *barabara*. The back of his body is covered with a bird parka and the front with a *kamleika*. On his head he wears a cap of huge height and a mask. Music. Low and even singing. . . .

The "first dance" (in which they "rock the arrows" and the dancers wear "hunters' masks") is particularly like the first "show" Davydov saw on December 8, 1802, in Pavlovsk Harbour, which was devoted to successful hunting. The description of the dance also mentions a stone, which Davydov says "represents the coffin of a prominent person of theirs in whose honour the performance that followed was arranged." Thus, one of the subsequent "acts" was probably devoted to the memory of ancestors. The "second dance," judging by the same "hunter's masks" of its dancers, was probably a hunter's performance, too.

Consider now the artifacts of the "six-act mystery" play as they are listed by I. G. Voznesenskii. The list reads as follows (Archives, b):

1) 1st act. Masks portraying a hunter (2),² called *atmal'chik*. Note: two more of these have been sent, and are now in the Aglemut *baidarka* (listed separately).

- 2) beaks of familiar birds which are put on the mouths of the six naked boys who open the first act (6), *chukbet*.
- 3) 2nd act. Mask representing a sick person (1), *kangil'git*.
- 4) 3rd act. Mask (the one which is the highest with a small face) representing a jovial fellow (1), *kingum-shva*.
- 5) 4th act. Mask depicting a noseless man playing an invalid (1), *sh-agnialyk*.
- 6) 5th act. Mask representing a woodcock (1), *nakonali*.
- 7) 6th act and the last. Mask depicting a graceful lover (1), *bakbagilykbvivak*.
- 8) Applied to this mask at the back of the head is a radial array of eagle feathers (1).
- 9) Six bandages of feathers fixed to the left arm of every character in the 1st act (6), *kamuatet*.
- 10) Aleutian rattles for all the shows (2), *kal'khnayamyt*.

All the items mentioned in this list are registered at the MAE as collection no. 571, together with other artifacts collected by I. G. Voznesenskii, although it may accidentally include some items from other collections. The items of interest are described below and compared with Voznesenskii's list.

Registered under MAE 571-1a,b and 571-2a,b are four original kinds of masks (*atmal'chik*) for the first act of the "mystery" play (in Voznesenskii's list all are included under no. 1 and are called hunters' masks; only two masks are present, but there is a note that two more of this kind have been sent).

Very similar masks were described by Davydov: "a kind of spiked helmet made of bent twigs, one of which ran into the mouth . . . like a horse bit. The faces . . . were almost completely covered with various feathers and evergreen oak fern" and "The masks were made of bent twigs so that almost all of the man's face was seen through them." Compare Voznesenskii's description: "Their heads are decorated with feathers, and masks looking like a knight's visor are ornamented with sea kale soaked in fat." Our masks now do not have any fern leaves or pieces of sea kale remaining on them. However, these have probably been replaced with some light red-painted intestine strips that are loosely suspended on the twigs in front of the face.

These masks have an unusual appearance, which is possibly why some have assumed they are headdresses. In the exhibition "The Aboriginal Population of North America" at the MAE in St. Petersburg, one of these masks (no. 571-1b; see figure 10-1) was once mounted as a ceremonial headdress on a mannequin depicting a dancing Eskimo, but to do so the preparators had to



FIGURE 10-1. Mask, MAE 571-1b.

break the mouthpiece, described by Davydov as something “like a horse bit,” although it may have been broken earlier. Today the mask has been remounted properly. This mask was erroneously identified as a headdress both by B. A. Lipshits (1955) and A. D. Avdeev (1957).

All four of these masks are almost identical, so I shall describe one of them (no. 571-1b) while pointing out the specific details of the others. The

framework of the mask is an oval ring (ranging from 23 to 30 centimeters in diameter) made of a straw plait wrapped in black cloth. This frames the face. Running transversely in the lower part of this oval ring is a wooden toothgrip the dancer used to hold the mask in place. In all the masks, these sticks are wider and flatter in the center and have teeth marks on them. Fixed to the oval ring are other straw plaits that are wrapped in reddish intestine strips and stand out in semicircles in front of the face. To make the semicircles, they first prepared one big oval ring (from an intestine-wrapped plait of straw); then they connected the ends of the long axis (thus forming the front part of the mask), and the ends of the shorter axis were fixed to the oval ring that framed the face. The plaits found in front of the face were decorated with small shovel-shaped pieces of wood (some 3 x 2 centimeters) and red-painted intestine ribbons (some 2 centimeters wide and 35 centimeters long). The upper part of the face-framing ring has a wooden rim with sockets. Six baleen rods (10–12 centimeters long) with wooden circles (about 8 centimeters in diameter) were inserted into these sockets radially. The circles are painted red with two parallel white bands going almost through the center in front, and two similar black bands in back. (Masks MAE 571-a and 571-2a [figure 10-2] and 571-2b have the same circular arrangement, but these have a small square cut in the center with two parallel white stripes issuing from its corners.) Inserted into the rim are five long baleen rods (from 70 to 90 centimeters long) with bunches of feathers fixed along their length and at the ends. Mask 571-2a has three baleen rods with feathers, while masks 571-2b and 571-1a have only one baleen rod, without feathers. The symbolism of these masks is difficult to interpret although we may guess they were dedicated to the sun, the sea elements, and to hunting camouflage.

No. 571-3a-f (Vozn. no. 2). Six attachments covering the mouth of each participant (*chykhet*). These beak-like attachments are approximately triangular-shaped pieces of leather (maximum length, 16 centimeters; width, 6 centimeters) with some white stripes painted against a black background. A feather is attached to the ends of each. These are used for the first act of the “mystery” play.

No. 571-4 (Vozn. no. 3; figure 10-3). Mask of a sick man, *kangil'git*, for the second act of the “mystery” play. Made of one piece of wood. The face is elongated and oval in shape, with a straight flat nose and a visor [hat] jutting over the forehead, and with a double mouth in the form of oblique downward cuts; below the cuts there are some oval projections (labrets?). Wide brown



FIGURE 10-2. Mask,
MAE 571-2a.

eyebrows are set above narrow obliquely cut eyes. The visor and the lower part of the face are painted dark red, with transverse green bands (2 centimeters wide) going across the mask under its eyes and over the nose. The rest of the face is painted white, the paint having flaked off in places. The mask is 35 centimeters high and 17 centimeters wide.

No. 571-5a-e (Vozn. no. 9). Six bands from the left arm of each participant, called *kamuatet*, in the first act of the "mystery" play. They consist of a straw ring about 5 centimeters in diameter with four baleen sticks (10 centimeters long), feathered at the ends, inserted into it.

No. 571-6 (Vozn. no. 4; figure 10-4). Mask of a jovial or happy fellow, *kingum-shva*, for the third act of the "mystery" play. This mask is a tall, board-like shape with a small face depicted at the bottom. A small nose is formed from the continuation of the bulging forehead. Under the slits for the eyes



FIGURE 10-3. Mask, MAE 571-4.



FIGURE 10-4. Mask,
MAE 571-6.



FIGURE 10-5. Mask, MAE 571-7.

there is a black band (3 centimeters wide); the mouth is absent, and the lower part of the face looks as if it has been cut off and is painted red from below. The rest of the face is white. Above the face rises a black board rounded at the top with three longitudinal white lines and three rows of white circles on them. The entire mask is framed with two wood hoops; the hoop closest to the mask is wrapped with black cloth, and fixed to the other are some big white feathers and small black feather-shaped wood boards about 20 centimeters long. The mask is 124 centimeters high, its face is 28 centimeters high and 12-15 centimeters wide.

No. 571-7 (Vozn. no 5; figure 10-5). Mask of a noseless invalid (*shaguialyk*) for the fourth act of the "mystery" play. It is carved from one piece of wood in the form of an elongated oval with a slightly concave surface in which small slits for the eyes and mouth have been cut; no fantastic details. The upper part of the mask, except its nose, is black; the lower part and the

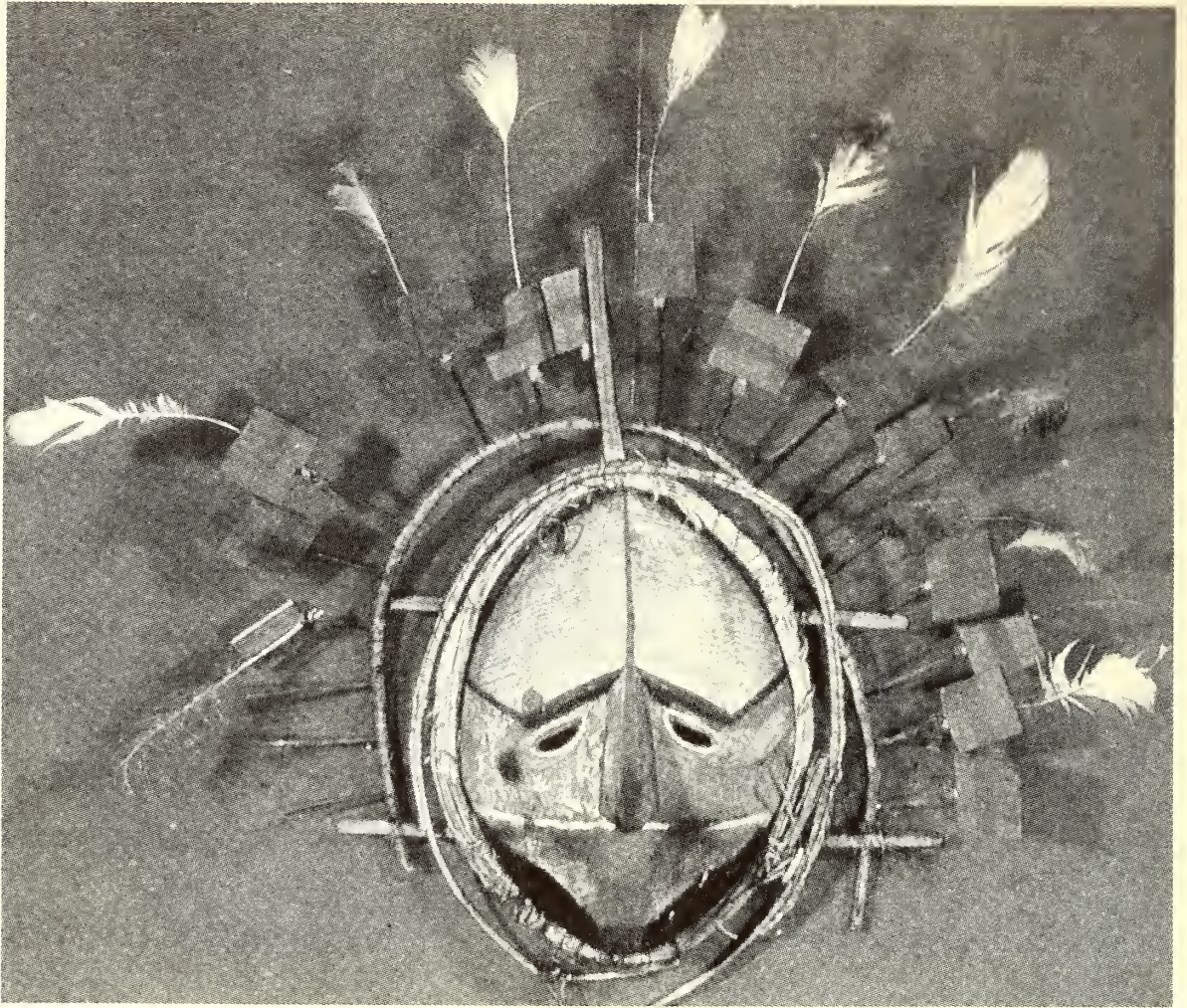


FIGURE 10-6. Mask, MAE 571-8.

nose are dark red. The mask is 35 centimeters high and 19 centimeters wide.

No. 571-8 (Vozn. no. 6; figure 10-6). Mask of an anthropomorphic woodcock (*nakonali*) for the fifth act of the "mystery" play. It has an egg-shaped face with obliquely cut eye slits (their outer corners are higher), eyebrows with downward corners, and a mouth indicated by two slits cut at an angle parallel to a sharp chin. A small red groove widening to the bottom goes from the top of the forehead to the tip of the nose. The forehead is white, the eyebrows are black and red, the eye slits are framed with red and white bands; the cheeks and the nose are green, and the lower part of the face, which is painted red, is separated from the rest with a white horizontal band. Both mouth openings are smeared with fat. The mask is framed with a yellow straw plait and a wooden rim to which are fixed radial baleen sticks with small rec-



FIGURE 10-7. Mask, MAE 571-9.

tangular wooden boards (about 5 x 5 centimeters, with a horizontal red band at the center), and also feathers. The mask is approximately 30 centimeters high (without the framing feathers) and some 25 centimeters wide.

No. 571-9 (Vozn. no.7; figure 10-7). Mask of a lover (*bakhagilykhvivak*) for the sixth act of the "mystery" play. It is an oval face of chiseled wood, with a small mouth and big obliquely fixed wood pegs (labrets) approximately 6 centimeters long. Its prominent forehead and cheeks are covered with white paint on which red circles are drawn. Red lines are also painted at the top of the forehead, in the shape of horns. The eyeholes are white; the eyebrows, the nose, and the horizontal band in the center of the face are black. The chin with the pegs is red. The mask is framed by a rim sewn over with black cloth. Above it there is another wooden rim, with radially set wooden circles. These measure 5 centimeters in diameter, and their lower half is painted red. They are set on baleen sticks (approximately 10 centimeters long), together with small feathers. In addition, fastened to this mask is a radially shaped circle of



FIGURE 10-8. Mask, MAE 571-11.

feathers, catalogued as no. 571-10 (see below). Without its framing elements, the mask is 30 centimeters high and 25 centimeters wide.

MAE 571-10 (Vozn. no. 8). A radially shaped array of large white eagle feathers. The array might have been used either as an addition to the lover's mask (571-9, described above), in which case it was fastened to the back of the dancer's head, or separately. It consists of a bow-shaped wooden stick with

drilled holes in which are inserted four black feathers, stems up, onto which big white feathers have been hafted.

The latter two masks and the array of eagle feathers and the next two masks (MAE 571-11 and -12; see figure 10-8) are very much reminiscent, as we have already noted, of the accessories of the second "show" seen by Davydov on December 30, 1802.

The masks MAE 571-11 and MAE 571-12 were not included by Voznesenskii in the list of items belonging to the "six-act mystery" play and were sent by him separately. The list that accompanied these items reads: "The letter A is a Kodiak mask called by the aboriginals *taliu-liakbkhia*, 1 piece; letter B is a Kodiak mask of a different kind, local name unknown. Both masks are beautifully painted and arranged in the Aleutian taste." A penciled "A" in Voznesenskii's handwriting appears on mask MAE 571-11, and "B" on mask MAE 571-12. The same list reads further: "with no letter mark, a huge mask (the first from top) of the Indians living on the banks of the Kwikpak [Yukon] River. 1 piece is from the sub Arctic countries of the North-West of America." We have reason to assign this definition to mask MAE 571-12 (for its description, see below), which was earlier considered to be a Kodiak mask (Avdeev 1957; Anonymous 1959d).

MAE 571-11 (figure 10-8). Anthropomorphic mask. Its local name is *talyiliakbkhia*. Its face is oval in form; the forehead is painted white with red painted circles; in the center of the forehead and at the tip of the nose there is a red line flanked with black ones. At the level of the eyes (small slits) there is a black band flanked with white and red bands. The upper part of the cheeks is painted in the same manner as the forehead and is separated from the lower part of the face with a green band. The lower part of the face is painted red with white circles. Instead of the mouth (or, one might say, instead of the chin) the mask has a carved cone, the end of which is painted black and is framed with a white band. There is a slit under the chin. A feather and a hanging tassel of fringed intestine pieces are inserted under the nose (with its nostrils cut through). The mask is framed by a wooden hoop wrapped with a piece of fur and by another hoop made of baleen, to which are fastened small rectangular wooden plates (5 x 3 centimeters) with horizontally drawn double red lines and one black line. Some low fluffy feathers are inserted in front of the wooden plates. The mask is 30 centimeters high and 22 centimeters wide. It is interesting to note that an almost identical depiction of this mask is seen

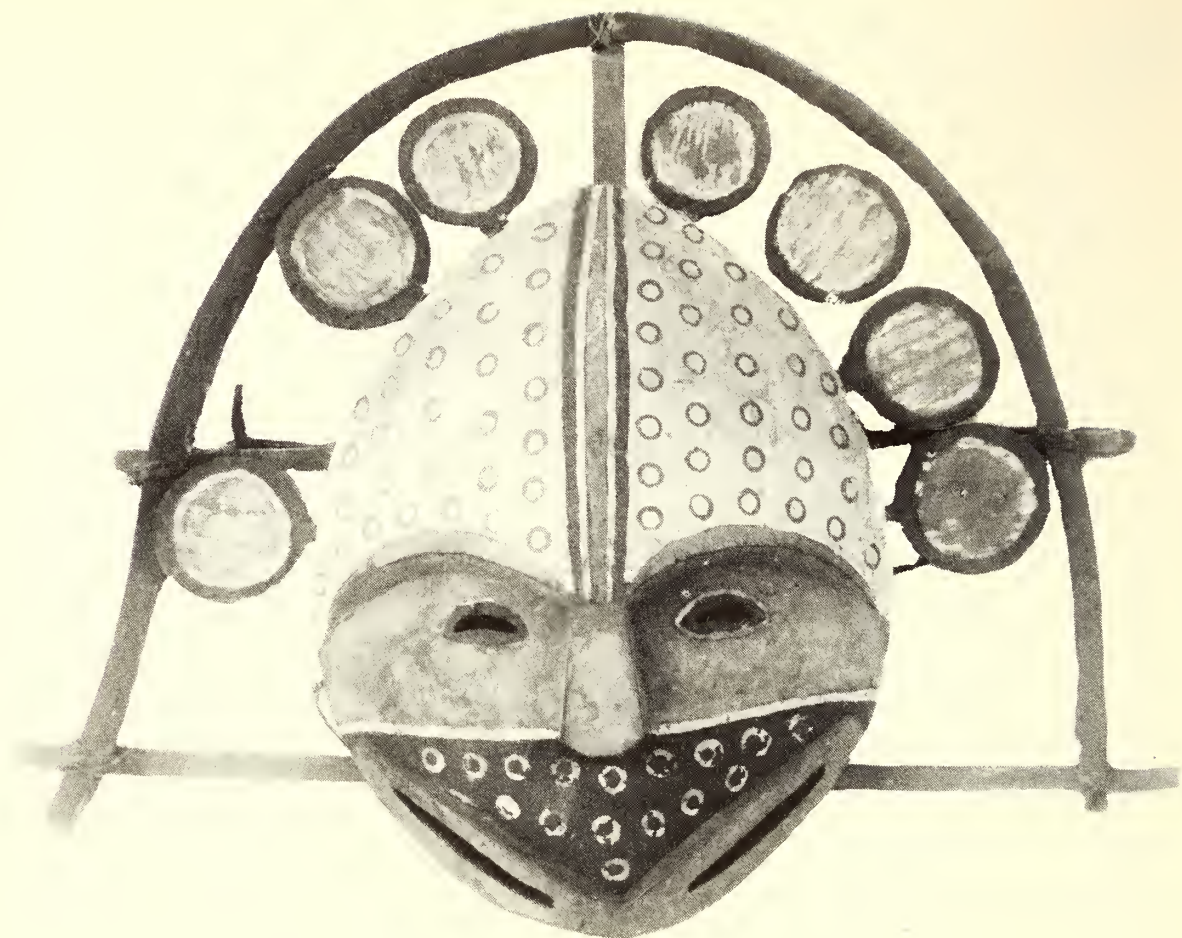


FIGURE 10-9. Mask, MAE 571-12.

on the upper part of the drum MAE 571-25. These are possibly depictions of one and the same spirit made by one craftsman-shaman.

No. 571-12 (figure 10-9). Anthropomorphic mask with an egg-shaped face (its sharper end is up). The forehead occupies almost half of the face and is painted white with some red circles in the field. A vertical black band flanked with red ones is drawn through the center of the forehead. The area around the eyes, the top part of the cheeks, and the nose are green. The small eyeholes are encircled by one red and one white band; the arched eyebrows are black. The lower part of the face is triangular in shape and colored red with white circular lines. The upper and lower parts of the face are separated by a white band. The lower part of the face is beveled (as in mask 571-8) and is painted black with a slit cut at each side (a double mouth). The edges of the upper part of the mask have 10 pegged wooden circles (formerly there were more of them) painted bluish-green and edged with a red and white band.

This peculiar halo is surrounded with a bow-shaped red stick fixed to two cross pieces. The entire height of the mask is 37 centimeters, width 48 centimeters.

Thus, all the Kodiak masks of the MAE, except for its "hunter's mask," are anthropomorphic depictions of spirits stylized in the typically Kodiak manner. All the masks were fastened in front of the dancers' faces.

Mask 571-13 (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:306, fig. 437), which had been earlier published as a Kodiak piece, is similar to the masks of the kind belonging to the Eskimo of the Lower Yukon. That it belongs to this particular Eskimo group is confirmed by the document from the archives of I. G. Voznesenskii cited above (although he called the inhabitants of this river Indians). This mask is a large circle of irregular form (49 x 52 centimeters) with a human face depicted in the center (32 centimeters high and 27 centimeters wide) and natural teeth of some animal in its mouth. Its forehead and nose are blue, and its chin and the face's edging are red. The two rows of circular lines crossing the white cheeks are also red. The mask's surface around the face is covered with white paint and is ornamented with red circles. Inserted along the perimeter of the mask (except for its bottom) is an alternating arrangement of large white and black feathers.

The accessories of the "six-act mystery" play and the Kodiak festival in general also include the drums and rattles registered in this collection.

No. 571-25 (figure 10-10); 571-26b (figure 10-11), 571-26a (figure 10-12); 571-26b (figure 10-13); and 571-23 (figure 10-14). Four bladder-skin drums (45, 47, 48, and 46 centimeters in diameter, respectively) with wooden handles, at the top of which are carved and painted anthropomorphic depictions of faces similar to the masks described above, and similar to the Kodiak masks in general. Voznesenskii supplied the Kodiak name for the drum—*chavyiak* (Anonymous 1900e). 571-25c,d are drum beaters.

No. 571-21a,b, -22, and -24 a,b. Five rattles consisting of one, two, or three wooden hoops with cross-piece handles. Suspended from the hoops are numerous puffins beaks. The outer diameters are about 20 centimeters.

As mentioned earlier, ceremonial "hooded" headgear and "sewn caps" are also available in the MAE collections. These hoods or round caps are made from feathered bird skins or from the skins of sea mammals. They are of different heights and their "tongues" stick up. Along the rims and on the "tongues" are strips of skin from the throat of sea lions, embroidered with white reindeer hair and dyed plant fiber appliqué. Later these appliqués were



FIGURE 10-10. Drum handle,
MAE 571-25.



FIGURE 10-11. Drum handle,
MAE 571-26b.



FIGURE 10-12. Drum handle,
MAE 571-26a.



FIGURE 10-13. Drum handle,
MAE 571-26b.



FIGURE 10-14. Drum handle,
MAE 571-23.

made with colored wool, cotton, and silk thread. These headdresses are very similar to the published Aleut ceremonial hats, and as indicated by the materials we draw upon, they can be traced back to the ancient ceremonial duck-shaped headdresses.

The MAE collections of items from the Kodiak “festival shows,” together with Voznesenskii’s list of accessories for one of the performances and its description in his diary, in addition to the information in the literature, help to broaden our understanding of the winter ceremonial festivals of the Kodiak islanders. Their “six-act mystery” play and other festival shows with opening dances of hunters with painted faces and bodies, and with original masks, clearly indicate that the main purpose of these ceremonies was to secure success in the coming hunting season. The “shows” included funeral ceremonies connected with the cult of ancestors. Also related to the cult of ancestors were

the performances depicting "evil spirits" by the members of men's secret societies. The same idea of intimidating the uninitiated existed also in Aleut ritual practices, as revealed by Veniaminov's (1840) description of a separate performance—"devils appear." Furthermore, the "shows" had the air of theatrical performances, with their original accessories and versatile repertoire, which included mythological, historical, and everyday-life themes meant not only to pass on tradition but also to entertain.

Another characteristic of the "festival shows" of the Kodiak Islanders is the institution of the potlatch and various forms of exchange (between tribes, between settlements, and between individuals), as well as the beginning of trade; they also reflect some elements of social differentiation in Koniag society.

The materials on the Kodiak festivals discussed here are a valuable additional source of information on the spiritual culture of the Kodiak Islanders. In the wider perspective of festivals of Eskimo and Aleut groups in general, they also provide further insight into religious ideas, ideology, mythology, social organization, and the arts of the Eskimo people.

NOTES

1. The masks are illustrated in Lipshits (1955:fig.4), Avdeev (1957:373, table 1, fig.1, and 1957:311, table 20, fig.1-3), Anonymous (1959a:129), Ray and Blaker (1967:pt. 2: plates 5-7, 9), and Ray (1981:112-13) as follows: MAE 571-1b in Lipshits and Avdeev; MAE 571-4 in Lipshits, Anonymous, Ray and Blaker, and Ray; MAE 561-6 in Lipshits and Ray and Blaker; MAE 571-7 in Lipshits and Ray and Blaker; MAE 571-8 in Lipshits, Ray and Blaker, Ray, and Anonymous; MAE 571-9 and 10 in Lipshits, Avdeev, and Ray; MAE 571-11 in Anonymous; MAE 571-12 in Avdeev and Anonymous; MAE 571-13 in Avdeev, and Anonymous.

2. The number of items is indicated in parentheses. The local terms in the list are underlined by Voznesenskii.

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11. *Traditional Choreographic Art of Northeastern Siberia*

MARIIA IA. ZHORNITSKAIA

THE TRADITIONAL SINGING AND DANCE art of the Eskimo, Chukchi, Koryak, Itelmen, and other peoples living in the vast territory of Northeastern Siberia represents a wealth of choreographic traditions built up over many centuries. This chapter examines the dance stocks of these groups, the structure and plastic forms of individual dances, and the distinctive features of these ethnic traditions. The discussion is based on personal observations on the existing forms of traditional choreography, folklore data, written and linguistic sources, and archeological materials such as sculpture and petroglyphs.

The folk choreographic art of the Siberian natives is syncretic in character, combining words, plastic movements, and music. The performance of certain dances, songs, and pantomimes was usually part of the ritual festivals connected with the economic activities and the worldview of these people, and was frequently magical in character.

Today, ritual dances are rarely observed, although many of them still survive in people's memory. In earlier times these ritual dances were as widespread as entertainment dances, which were performed not only during ritual festivals but also during times of leisure, when the inhabitants of camping sites gathered in their *iarangas* or in their *chums* (tents).

The dances of the peoples studied were accompanied by human voices producing melodies, songs, and separate cries, which often imitated the sounds of reindeer, bears, ravens, and other birds. They were also accompanied by folk instruments such as drums, whirling boards, and flutes. The dance melodies had a rather narrow range (just a few tones) and simple rhythmic structure— $2/4$, $4/4$, $5/4$. The dances can be classified simply as men's, women's, and mixed dances, and as solo, paired, and group dances.

A number of the traditional dances performed by the Asiatic Eskimo, Chukchi, and Koryak imitated various tasks and activities, as well as phenomena observed in everyday life and in the natural environment. The dances also imitated those animals and birds that played an important economic role in the people's lives—the walrus, seal, reindeer, bear, gull, raven, duck, and others. The following discussion concentrates mainly on the traditional choreography of the Asiatic Eskimo (e.g., figure 11-1).

ASIATIC ESKIMO DANCE

The Whale festival was one of the more important celebrations for the Asiatic Eskimo. During this festival women performed "sitting dances" within the *iarangas* and imitated the catching of a whale and carving up of its body. Anyone could participate. I have recorded the movements of five sitting dances and their five respective melodies performed by the Eskimo from Naukan. These dances form one story, and all have a $2/4$ musical meter. The first dance was called "canoe launching," the second "canoe paddling," the third "sail raising," the fourth "looking for a whale," and the fifth "harpooning a whale." While dancing, the performers used expressive plastic movements of arms, hands, and trunk, and skillfully imitated these actions. In Sireniki, I recorded an original dance created for this same festival in which women dancers held pieces of reindeer neck skin, which seemed to have some magical meaning.

The Whale festival continued for nearly a month and included many dances, all of which were connected in some way with sea mammal hunting. The festival ended in a solemn ceremony of farewell to the whale. On that day a special dance was performed by the men of the whaleboat that had harpooned it. In the past this dance was performed masked, but no Asiatic Eskimo masks have survived.

Information on Eskimo masks is available in the work of Waldemar Bo-



FIGURE II-1. Dance by Eskimo Tnaukvutagin. (Photograph by S. N. Ivanov)

goras (1939:70), although he himself never witnessed the use of masks at festivals. S. A. Arutiunov and D. A. Sergeev found a wooden mask during their excavation of the 2,000-year-old Ekven burial site (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988: fig. 146, p. 126; Arutiunov and Sergeev 1975:172). Some idea of how these Asiatic Eskimo masks were used can be gained from artifacts and data collected among the other Eskimo groups. According to Margaret Lantis, the Alaskan Eskimos danced in beautifully made wooden masks that reached down to their shoulders and depicted marine animals (Lantis 1947:49; see also Nelson 1899). The masks and labrets of the Aleuts and American Eskimo are described by W. H. Dall (1884:73–151).

The Eskimo performed ritual dances at other important festivals as well, particularly at the *Kymygtak* (fur high boots) festival described by I. K. Voblov (1952), and at the Festival of “Walrus Heads,” which Waldemar Bogoras (1939:99) first described and which I recorded in 1973 (Zhornitskaia 1983:25). Similar hunting festivals and dances were also widespread among the American Eskimos (see, e.g., Voznesenskii, MAE Collection Notes; Lantis 1947:58; Nelson 1899; and R. Liapunova, this volume).



FIGURE II-2. "Raven" dance performed by Eskimo Imotak, from Sireniki. (Photograph by A. Maslov)

Sometimes the Asiatic Eskimo performed ritual dances at minor festivals. In 1973, when I was visiting the village of Uelen, I was told about a ritual dance the purpose of which was to celebrate and offer thanks for a successful fur animal hunt. At the same time, it was meant to stimulate gift exchange, which formerly played an important part in the life of the Asiatic Eskimo (Bogoras 1939:95; Rubtsova 1954:225).

An analysis of the ritual dances of the Asiatic Eskimo shows that all were performed to appease the spirits of nature or the spirits of killed animals. Such thanksgiving rituals and dances were an organic and therefore probably an archaic part of festival ceremonies. The leading performers of all ritual dances were elderly people, mostly women. In the course of time, the ritual dances gradually lost their magical meaning; some were forgotten, and others continued to be performed for their entertainment value. Some of the entertainment dances of the Asiatic Eskimo were devoted to certain themes and had strict formal structures and a fixed order of successive movements, which were accompanied by known or improvised "free songs." Dances for entertainment were frequently performed at festive occasions to which people from neighboring settlements were invited. Each group of guests provided its own per-



FIGURE 11-3. "Flensing of the whale" dance performed by Eskimo Nanuleek and Ankanaun. (Photograph by A. Maslov)

formers to compete for the best dance or song. Among the nonritual dances performed exclusively by men were those called "walrus hunting," "gull takes wing," "gull's flight against the wind," "duck hunting," "raven dance" (figure 11-2), "bear hunting," "collecting eggs," among others.

The initial position in men's dances is as follows: feet are set at the width of one's shoulders, with the trunk upright. The movements are sharp and precise. While dancing, men squat low and shift their body weight from one leg to the other, turning their heads sharply; their trunks and arms (with hands stretched out or fisted) assume different positions. The change from one position to another is accented with cries of "opa" and "oo," while the performers beat time with their heels. The trunk is kept straight in part because Eskimo men must maintain rigid trunk and leg positions while traveling and hunting in their kayaks and whaleboats at sea.

Women's entertainment dances remain widespread to the present day, and imitate activities from everyday life such as "gathering edible grass and roots," "stocking fat," or "whale butchering." Although women take virtually no part in flensing and cutting the whale, they imitate this act accurately in their dances (figure 11-3). Women's dances imitating the habits of birds and animals are very popular.

The basic stance in women's dances is feet together and body upright. The dances are performed almost on one spot. Female performers employ springing movements in the knees and smooth movements of their arms, and

they keep their hands straight and fingers closed. Restraint and modesty, in particular, are characteristic of Eskimo women's dances. It is considered improper for women to show power or sensuality or to make sharp movements. To avoid showing their naked palms, they wear gloves or hide their hands in their sleeves.

Like the men, Eskimo women perform their dances sitting or standing on one spot, a characteristic that may derive from the ancient tradition of performing dances within the confines of the Eskimo *iarangas*. All traditional dances consist of a short prelude of light drum beating accompanied by a drawling cry "ai-iai," and are divided into two main parts. The first part is performed at a slow tempo, while the second part repeats the same movements, but at a faster pace, with more expression, and with the body held lower. These Eskimo dances are lineally structured, with arm movements that emphasize precision and a sculptural form. Most Eskimo dances have a set musical score and choreography. The creators and first performers of these dances were men, who then taught them to other people. Popular dances spread rapidly from group to group, but kept the name of the creator, for example, "gull's flight against the wind" by Nutetein, or "white bear and hunter" by Tukhelian.

The Asiatic Eskimo usually dance in special clothing. For ritual dances within the *iarangas*, women would put on light knee-length trousers made of some finely cured, black-painted sealskin. The trouser hems were decorated with white and red stripes. The breast was sometimes covered with a piece of finely dressed reindeer skin, but more often was left naked. Some beads were worn over the shoulders and on the breast, and the arms were decorated with bracelets. Braids were adorned with metallic pendants and button-like decorations made of whale or walrus bone; earrings were also popular. Usually, the dancers also wore high summer fur boots made of white suede embroidered with colored strings and reindeer neck hair. Dance headgear consisted of rings of finely dressed reindeer skin, worn like a diadem, embroidered and painted red with a white gull feather fixed to both sides. When dancing in the open, women usually wore their ceremonial clothing, while men donned closely fitting trousers and short fur boots. Both men and women wore gloves made of dark fine reindeer skin, which gave more expression to the plastic pattern of the dances, based mostly on arm and hand movements. These gloves were specially cut to allow the hands to move freely during the dances.

Faces were commonly painted with graphite. Women drew one vertical

line on their chin, while men made two lines on their cheeks, one of which ran horizontally from the lips, and the other vertically, down the cheek.

Our data on various Eskimo groups indicate that the traditional ritual dances of the Asiatic Eskimo are part of a wide range of imitative dances covering northern Chukotka and Alaska, the Aleutian Islands, and a considerable part of North America.

CHUKCHI DANCE

Not long ago, the Chukchi people comprised two economic and cultural types—the nomadic reindeer-breeders, and the sedentary sea mammal hunters of maritime regions. Dances of these two Chukchi groups show marked differences.

The leading festival celebrated by the Reindeer Chukchi coincided with the return of the reindeer herds from summer pasturing and with the autumn slaughter. With dances, songs, and other acts, the Reindeer Chukchi tried to influence the spirits believed to be responsible for the well-being of Chukchi families and their reindeer herds. A special part of this festival was a thanksgiving dance featuring the cult of fire. The performers danced with drums in their hands; both the Chukchi and Eskimo people thought of the drum as the voice of the hearth. The ritual dance known as “banishment of evil spirits” was improvised by each female performer in her own way. A dance connected with the scaring away of the evil spirits was the “dance with grimaces” (*rul'tynt-gnyk*, “to screw up one’s face into a grimace”). The female dance *vivreliet* (trembling knee), which I recorded several times, is also performed at this time.

The Festival of Horns was of somewhat less importance. In the past, according to surviving fragments, this festival included a symbolic pantomime accompanied by dances intended to enlarge the reindeer herds.

The ritual dances of Reindeer Chukchi that still survive are extremely archaic. Many appear to have been based on noises, such as hand clapping or stamping of the feet, which Chukchi believed frightened evil spirits away. These ritual dances often included erotic movements.

From their Eskimo neighbors, the Maritime Chukchi borrowed the ceremonials, rituals, and sitting dances that were performed at the Whale festival (figure 11-4). However, these Chukchi dances did not follow a single story line, but rather imitated work activities and the surrounding environment, as



FIGURE II-4. Chukchi "seated dance," performed by a female Maritime Chukchi, Chukchi Autonomous Area. (Photograph by S. N. Ivanov)

in *tanytkon tyrkyl'en* (reindeer bullfight), *upekechit* (looking out for reindeer), *tanytkon korakychavych'yn* (reindeer running), *ketchanrun* (crane, ptarmigan, raven), *enanvat* (skin dressing), and others.

Unlike the ritual dances, which have completely disappeared from their everyday life, the entertainment dances of the Reindeer and Maritime Chukchi have not only survived, but continue to develop. The most widespread dance among the Chukchi is called *pich'einen* (throat singing). This performance includes throat singing and other cries. In these, as in other Chukchi dances, the movements are smooth and flowing.

KORYAK DANCE

For centuries, the Koryak have been divided into two groups—the Maritime Koryak who call themselves *Nymylan*, and the Tundra or Reindeer Koryak, called *Chavchuven* (Dolgikh 1960:554). Ritual dances were performed by the Maritime Koryak until the early twentieth century. One of the most ancient ritual dances was related to beluga hunting. In it, the Koryak ceremoniously "welcomed" the whale. Women danced in costumes consisting of special trousers and footwear, and cane masks. They took "sacrificial branches" and



FIGURE 11-5. Koryak traditional dance *meavvetyñ*, Koryak Autonomous Area.
(Photograph by S. N. Ivanov)

fire-brands from their hearths and came to the shore where they kindled a fire and danced around it (Jochelson 1905:1, 1908:70). These dances expressed gratitude to the spirits for a successful hunting season.

Another ritual dance with a different meaning was related to seal hunting. I have recorded several variations of this dance. During the Koryak festivals revolving around sea mammal hunting, women and girls were finely dressed and in their dance imitated the seal's movements (Gurvich 1962). Ritual dances of the pantomime type were performed by the Maritime Koryak to celebrate a young hunter's first killing of a wolf, bear, or other large animal.

Dances of the Reindeer Koryak are almost exclusively related to their main activity, reindeer herding, and have much in common with the dances of the Reindeer Chukchi. One of the Koryak entertainment dances that have survived is the popular *mlavytyn* (dance), which is danced by everybody—women, men, and children alike (figure 11-5). A few of the other Koryak entertainment dances are *toporok* (puffin), "humpback," "sea gull," and "ptarmigan." In the past, the Koryak also had personal dances and accompanying songs.

All the Koryak dances are improvisations that have no fixed figures or specific movements. In contrast to the Chukchi and Eskimo dances, those of

the Koryak feature greater mobility of the head, shoulders, arms, and hips; more pronounced dancing steps and jumps; and a temperamental aspect.

ITELMEN DANCE

The materials made available to me by old Itelmen informants lead me to believe that, even in the early twentieth century, Itelmen dances were expressions of thanksgiving for the success of the sea mammal hunt. According to Zh. Lesseps (1801-2:9), a common dance of the Itelmen in the late eighteenth century was the bear dance pantomime.

Although the Itelmen borrowed dance styles from the Russians and the Koryak early in the seventeenth century, they had previously performed their own dances, which involved grimaces and kneeling postures. Our elderly Itelmen informants told us that at evening parties they used to dance the *chizhik*, *kamarinskaya*, polka, waltz, and others, all borrowed from the Russians. Among the Itelmen of today, dances called "yellow sand" and *bakai* (bear) are popular. These dances include such steps as half-steps, triple steps, turns and jumps easily identifiable as Russian dance movements, as well as movements characteristic of the original Koryak dances, such as springy leg movements, hip vibrations, and head, shoulder, and arm movements. The style of Itelmen dance performances, however, has a character of its own.

The traditional dances of the Northeastern Siberian natives can be traced far back in time. These dances all display common traits in their plastic arrangement and composition. As a rule, these dances were performed on springy knees while squatting, and with expressive movements of the arms and hands. At the same time, each group had its own particular dance traditions. Today, the choreographic art of the Eskimo, Chukchi, Koryak, and Itelmen is characterized by a close intertwining of traditional folk dance motifs, amateur art, and professional performances.

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12. *Koniag Eskimo Poisoned-Dart Whaling*

ARON CROWELL

THE KODIAK ISLAND ARCHIPELAGO¹ IS located in the Gulf of Alaska, on the edge of the continental shelf and just north of the Aleutian Trench (see figure 1-1). The aboriginal inhabitants of this island group are the Koniag, who numbered 8,000–9,000 at the time of first contact by Russian sea otter hunters in the mid-eighteenth century (Clark 1987). The Koniag are Alutiiq-speaking Pacific Eskimos, a group that also includes the Chugach of Prince William Sound. The mountainous interior of Kodiak Island offers little game, and the Koniag traditionally relied almost exclusively on salmon and coastal resources (Clark 1984a). This chapter examines an important component of the Kodiak Island's aboriginal maritime economy—poisoned-dart whaling—as a hunting system and as a social enterprise.

In this form of whaling, carried out from a one- or two-man kayak, whales were struck with a poisoned dart and not recovered until several days later, when found drifting or washed up on shore. In its technological, economic, social, and conceptual dimensions, this practice was very different from the open-boat harpoon whaling traditions of northeastern Siberia, northern Alaska, and the Northwest Coast of North America. Kayak whaling required neither the communal effort and resources marshaled in large-boat

whaling nor the economic and political leadership demanded of whaling captains in these traditions. Koniag whalers were elite specialists, organized as a secretive cult, who seem to have stood at a remove from chiefly power. They also differed from other whalers in their spiritual concepts. Among the Koniag, whaling magic was hidden, dangerous, and polluting. Its aim was to control and conquer whales, whereas the Inupiat goal was to attract whales through attention to cleanliness and spiritual harmony between the animals and the entire community.

In the following discussion, ethnohistoric, archeological, and biological data are used to study Koniag whaling in the framework of other North Pacific traditions (see chapter 8).

ENVIRONMENT, SOCIAL COMPLEXITY, AND WHALING

Environmentally influenced coast-interior and north-south gradients of social complexity are evident among aboriginal societies of the greater North Pacific culture area—which here includes northeastern Siberia from the lower Amur River to the Chukchi Peninsula, all of Alaska, and the Northwest Coast of North America. Sea mammals and caribou or reindeer (obtained directly or through exchange) were generally more important than fish for northern maritime groups (Chukchi, Koryak, Asiatic and Alaskan Eskimos). Population densities around the shores of the northern Bering and Chukchi seas were comparatively low and social organization more fluid, egalitarian, and small-scale than in the south; clan organization was absent (except among the Asiatic Eskimo) and status differentiation was based on sex, age, and economic standing rather than ascription.

Populations occupying the ice-free subarctic coasts of the Pacific—including the lower Amur River cultures, Ainu, Itelmen, Aleut, Pacific Eskimo, and Northwest Coast groups—exploited a broad and abundant maritime subsistence base consisting of fish (especially salmon), sea mammals (including fur seal, sea lion, sea otter and other species not available farther north), shellfish, and birds. The prehistoric development of complex social formations in this favored environment is thought to have begun in the mid-Holocene, with the establishment of salmon runs and shellfish beds, followed by sedentary settlement along the coast, population growth, territorial circumscription, and the emergence of hierarchical, lineage-based political systems that provided political solutions to the organizational problems of obtaining, storing, re-

distributing, and exchanging resources in intensive “collector” economies (Donald and Mitchell 1975; Fladmark 1975; Schalk 1979; Townsend 1980; Yesner 1980; Ames 1981, 1985; Price and Brown 1985; Ackerman 1988).

Koniag culture becomes archeologically definable on Kodiak Island by about A.D. 1100, and its development up until mid-eighteenth-century Russian contact is marked by growth in its population, house size, ceremonialism, external contacts, warfare, and the elaboration of personal adornment—all considered probable correlates of increasing social complexity (Jordan and Knecht 1988). The Koniag phase culminates a long sequence of maritime cultures on Kodiak and the southern Alaskan coast that date back to at least 7000 B.P. (Clark 1984b). The recent discovery of a pre-Ocean Bay phase on Kodiak may push this basal date back several thousand years (P. Hausler and R. Knecht, personal communication).

The aboriginal pursuit of the great whales was practiced at both the northern and southern limits of the congruent environmental and socioeconomic clines discussed above.² Whaling was often an important element of subsistence strategy in the sea mammal-focused economies of the north, particularly along the coasts of northern Alaska, parts of the Chukchi Peninsula, and St. Lawrence Island. Unusually large coastal villages based on specialized whale-walrus economies became established over the period A.D. 800–1400 in locations where bowhead and gray whales were predictably available on an annual basis (Sheehan 1985; Krupnik 1984).

In southern North Pacific maritime economies, including that of the Koniag, resources were more diverse, and salmon were usually the main focus of subsistence efforts. Whale meat and fat seem to have been complementary rather than primary elements of the diet in all but a few limited locales (note that whaling was not practiced at all along the northern Northwest Coast). Leadership in these southern societies was ascribed rather than achieved through leadership in hunting (although Nootka and Makah chiefs also led whale hunts), and was associated with managerial functions relating to the procurement and ceremonial redistribution of many types of food in addition to whale products.

NORTH PACIFIC WHALING METHODS

Communal whaling was practiced by northern Alaskan and Siberian groups, as well as by the Nootka, Makah, and neighboring cultures of the southern

Northwest Coast. The hunters worked from fleets or pairs of large open boats and employed toggling harpoons, float gear, and lances to kill and secure whales. Communal hunting, in addition to poisoned-dart whaling, may also have been practiced by groups in the Aleutians (Black 1987) and by the Chugach of Prince William Sound (Birket-Smith 1953). Some specific technical and ritual parallels have been noted between communal whaling traditions in these discontinuous and widely separated regions (Lantis 1938; Duff 1965), and arguments have been advanced for a historical connection between them (Duff 1965), as well as for independent centers of origin (Dewhurst 1982).

Poisoned-dart whaling extended from the eastern Aleutians to the Pacific Eskimo territories of Kodiak Island and Prince William Sound. This method may have been culturally linked to Asian traditions of hunting with poison, including whaling with aconite-poisoned projectiles by the Itelmen and Ainu (Heizer 1943; Bisset 1976). Black (1987) has argued, however, for an independent prehistoric origin of this method in the Kodiak Island region, pointing out the absence of any evidence for aboriginal whaling across the western and central Aleutian Island chain (the route of transfer proposed by Heizer), and the apparently very late appearance (protohistoric or post-Russian contact) of poisoned-dart whaling in the eastern Aleutians.

This complex culture-historical problem will not be addressed further in this chapter, except to note that I agree with Black's conclusion that poisoned-dart whaling was of prehistoric antiquity on Kodiak Island. It was possibly as old, or older than, the Ocean Bay II phase (2500–1800 B.C.), which is the period in which slate bayonets that may have served the same function as ethnographic Koniag whaling points first appear in the archeological record (Clark 1979:221). Whale bones in middens date even earlier, to the Takli Alder phase on the Alaska Peninsula (Clark 1977). No toggling harpoon heads large enough for whaling are known from any sites in the Pacific Eskimo or Aleut regions.

WHALE SPECIES AND DISTRIBUTIONS IN THE GULF OF ALASKA

The high biological productivity of waters in the Gulf of Alaska and elsewhere on the subarctic shelf is due in part to winter turbulence and density inversion, which bring bottom nutrients into the upper water column (Ackerman 1988). In the spring, the water column becomes stable and the amount

of light increases, with the result that phytoplankton, zooplankton, and invertebrate populations are able to expand rapidly. These invertebrates include animals important in the diet of baleen whales: copepods, euphausiids, and squid. Herring and capelin (which are also eaten by baleen whales), toothed cetaceans, and other sea mammals concentrate in shallow coastal waters and bays during the warm months to feed and spawn (Scientific Applications 1979, 1980a, 1980b).

This abundance of food draws the migratory great whales (blue, fin, sei, humpback, gray, right, and sperm) from their low-latitude breeding grounds to northern waters, where they spend the summer feeding and building up fat reserves. These species are all found in the Gulf of Alaska during the summer (Fiscus et al. 1976; Rice and Wolman 1983). Census data indicate that summer populations of whales are currently much higher along Kodiak's eastern coast, where the continental shelf drops off into the Aleutian Trench, than in Shelikof Strait on the west side of the island group. Most gray whales are transitory, passing through between March and June on their way to primary summering areas in the Bering and Chukchi Seas, and between October and January on their return migration. The well-defined coastal migration route followed by the gray whales takes them along the east side of the Kodiak archipelago and through Unimak Pass at the eastern end of the Aleutian Island chain (Hessing 1983; Braham 1984). Bowheads remain close to the southern edge of the Bering Sea ice pack in winter and follow it north into the Chukchi and Beaufort seas in spring; they do not enter the Gulf of Alaska. Table 12-1 lists size ranges (newborn to maximum adult length), diet, and seasonal presence of the seven baleen whale species that regularly occur in the Gulf of Alaska³.

The various toothed cetaceans found in the Gulf of Alaska are all year-round residents; these include killer and beluga whales (the latter primarily in Cook Inlet), Pacific white-sided dolphins, harbor porpoises, and Dall porpoises. The sperm whale, the largest of the toothed whales, was not hunted at all, while the smaller toothed cetaceans were hunted without the use of poison.

KONIAG WHALING

The following description of Koniag whaling is based on published sources dating from the early Russian contact period to the late nineteenth century. Merck (1980) and Sauer (1802) were on Kodiak Island in 1790, Davydov in

TABLE 12-1. Baleen Whales in the Gulf of Alaska

Name	Size ^a (meters)	Estimated North Pacific Population		Diet ^c	Seasonality/ Distribution ^d
		pre-1850 ^b	5,000		
Blue (<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>)	7-26	5,000		Euphausiids (surface-photoc zone)	Spring-fall, primarily offshore shelf waters
Fin (<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>)	6-24	44,000		Euphausiids, fish copepods, occasional squid (surface-photoc zone)	Spring-fall, shelf waters and bays
Sei	4.5-18.6	42,000		Primarily copepods; euphausiids, occasional fish and squid (surface-photoc zone)	Spring-fall, shelf waters
Minke	2.4-9.2	No data		Primarily fish; also euphausiids, copepods, and pteropods (surface-photoc zone)	
Humpback (<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>)	4.5-16	15,000		Euphausiids, fish, (surface-photoc zone)	Spring-fall, shelf waters and bays
Gray (<i>Eschrichtius robustus</i>)	4.9-14.1	15,000		Primarily amphipods (benthic zone)	Large numbers present during spring and fall migrations along coast; little feeding.
Northern Right (<i>Eubalaena glacialis</i>)	4.5-17	No data		Copepods, euphausiids (surface-photoc zone)	Spring-fall, shelf waters

a. Size range indicates newborn to maximum size for adults in northern hemisphere. Data from Leatherwood and Reeves 1983).

b. Rice and Wolman (1983:table 1).

c. Gaskin (1982); Scientific Applications, Inc. (1979, 1980a, 1980b).

d. Scientific Applications, Inc. (1979, 1980a, 1980b); Rice and Wolman (1983); Fiscus et al. (1976).

1802–3 (1977), Gideon in 1804–7 (Black 1977), Lisiansky in 1804–5 (1968), Holmberg in 1851 (1985), and Pinart in 1871–72 (1875). Veniaminov, on Unalaska Island during 1826–34 (1984), discusses Aleut poisoned-dart whaling. Other references on Aleutian whaling are Sarychev (1969) and Langsdorff (1968); see Black (1987) for an extensive bibliography. Comparative data on Chugach whaling are drawn from Birket-Smith (1953).

The limitations of this data base are obvious, and future work must systematically incorporate Russian and American archival sources, as well as the rich and largely untapped oral traditions of present-day Kodiak Islanders. The following account must therefore be regarded as provisional and subject to critical reevaluation.

Poisoned-dart whaling was practiced on Kodiak during the summer months when feeding whales moved from the open sea into the relative confinement of bays and fiords.⁴ The surfaced whale was silently approached in a one- or two-man kayak, and struck with a dart propelled from a throwing board. Koniag whale darts were tipped with narrow blades of ground slate 20–30 centimeters long, held in either a bone socketpiece or fixed in a wooden foreshaft designed to detach from the dart upon impact; in either case, the dart remained embedded in the whale.⁵ An “owner’s mark” inscribed on the blade identified the whaler who had cast the weapon.

The strike was aimed at one of the flippers or, as a second choice, the tail (Langsdorff 1968:45; Davydov 1977:223; Gideon in Black 1977:102). The immediate reaction of the whale was a violent thrashing that could endanger the hunting boat; it then either dove or swam away.

The pharmacologically active ingredient of the poison that coated the dart head was an extract from the root of the monkshood plant (*Aconitum* spp.). Compounded with the aconite were magical poisons, most notably fat extracted from corpses (Davydov 1977:223; Lisiansky 1968:174). From his analysis of the pharmacology and circum-Pacific distribution of the use of *Aconitum*, Bisset concludes that the small quantity of poison that could have been carried on the head of a whaling dart would have been insufficient to kill a whale outright. It could have caused paralysis of one flipper, however, so that the whale would have been unable to keep upright and would have eventually drowned. A tail strike could have caused a similar loss of control and interfered with the animal’s ability to surface for breathing. Most accounts mention that two to three days would elapse before a struck whale would be found washed up on a beach or floating on the surface, its body buoyed by decomposition gases.

Magical efforts were made to control the movements of the whale, both before and after striking it with a dart. According to one report, an intestinal pouch filled with the "fat drawn from a dead male child" would be dragged by a shaman in a kayak across the mouth of Kizhuyak Bay behind entering whales, confining them in the bay where they could be attacked (Hrdlicka 1944:126). A "poison" made of human fat was similarly deployed by the Chugach to prevent wounded whales from escaping into open waters (Birket-Smith 1953:33). After striking his prey, an Aleut whaler would withdraw to a special hut for three days, where he fasted and mimicked the sounds of the dying animal in order to hasten its death and prevent its escape (Veniaminov 1984:224).

Pacific Eskimo whalers stole bodies or possibly even killed (see Birket-Smith 1953:34) to obtain corpses for use in preparing whale dart poison and hunting talismans and in the performance of pre- and post-hunt whaling rites (Davydov 1977:223). The corpses were mummified and curated in secret caves, and offerings brought to them there. Necrotic hunting magic was dangerous as well as powerful; some Aleut whalers were supposed to have died horrible, premature deaths from rotting (Veniaminov 1984:223), and Davydov mentions a Koniag belief that the rotting of preserved bodies caused the death of the whaler (1977:233). The numerous parallels between the practices of Koniag whalers and Nootka whale ritualists, in both instances involving the use of human corpses and the substitution of magical control for physical control of whales, merit further investigation (see Lantis 1938).

WHALE SPECIES HUNTED

Analyses of fauna from Koniag archeological sites (Clark 1974) have not included species identifications for the large whale bones that are often present, although several small cetaceans (porpoises, beluga, Stejneger's beaked whale) were identified at the Uyak site (Heizer 1956). Thus it would not be possible on this basis to distinguish captured from naturally occurring drift whales. Historic observations are more helpful, but not conclusive. For the eastern Aleutians, Veniaminov (1984:358) specifies hunting of the humpback,⁶ and Merck's detailed description of a whale darted off Unalaska in June 1790 (1980:73) refers unmistakably to a young female fin whale.⁷ Holmberg (1985:47) states that only one species of whale—a balaenopterid—was hunted

off Kodiak Island. The genus *Balaenoptera* includes the blue, fin, sei, and minke whale. Holmberg indicates that whales were hunted when they entered bays to feed, behavior that is characteristic of fin and minke whales (as well as humpbacks); blues and seis tend to remain offshore (see table 12-1). The quoted maximum length for "old whales" (six fathoms, or 18.2 meters) would seem to rule out the minke whale; and the blow, described as a "tremendous font," matches the unusually high, vertical spout exhaled by the fin whale. Pinart (1875:5) lists the humpback, fin, killer whale, and "blackfish" (*Glabrocephalus scammonii*—pilot whale?) as species hunted by the Aleut and Pacific Eskimo, but does not specify whether all were taken with poisoned darts.

Fin and humpback whales exhibit a behavior called "side-feeding" (Gaskin 1982), which may explain in part why poisoned-dart whalers pursued these species. In this method of surface feeding, the whale repeatedly rolls onto one side and turns in a tight circle, trapping swarms of euphausiids (krill) or schools of fish inside its wake and then cutting across the concentration with its mouth open. One flipper projects vertically above the surface of the water during this maneuver, whereas in normal surface swimming whales expose only their upper backs. With the whale in this position, a hunter would have found it easier to place a dart in the critical flipper region.

SIZE OF WHALES AND RECOVERY RATES

Although full-grown fin and humpback whales represent very large quantities of meat and blubber, ethnohistoric data indicate that whalers selectively hunted immature animals, thereby considerably reducing the yield of the hunt. Koniag hunting of yearling whales is specified by Gideon (Black 1977:102); and of "very young whales" by Holmberg (1985:47). Veniaminov (1984:277) states that whales killed on Unalaska were generally small enough so that a whole animal could be loaded into a single baidarka (umiak). To judge by the size range of fin and humpback whales (table 12-1), it seems likely that the whales taken by Koniag, Aleut, and Chugach whalers would rarely have exceeded 8 to 9 meters in length. The level of aconite toxicity in relation to body size may have been a factor influencing the selection of relatively small animals.

Several authors provide figures on the number of whales struck and overall recovery rates. Veniaminov (1984:277) states that of the 30–60 whales

wounded each year off Unalaska and Akun Islands, only 10–33 were recovered, and Kittlitz (1858, translated and quoted in Heizer 1943:430) estimated that only 1 in 10 whales struck by Aleut hunters was found. Wrangell (1839, in Heizer 1943:438) provides the most specific data. During 1831, 43 out of 118 whales wounded off Kodiak Island were found on shore, for a recovery rate of 36 percent.

It is interesting to compare this figure to Jewitt's (1976) data on Nootka harpoon whaling, discussed in Arima (1988). Jewitt records 18 whales struck and 5 recovered, for a Nootka success rate of 28 percent. Some escaped whales would probably have been recouped as drifters. Like the Koniag, Nootka whalers put owner's marks on their harpoon heads to establish claims to escaped whales that later died and drifted ashore.

If a whale drifted a long distance, there was the risk of spoilage or beaching in the territory of an alien village, which might claim a large portion of the kill (Kittlitz 1858, in Heizer 1943:431). As Kotzebue (1821 in Heizer 1943:431) explains:

To the district, in which such a treasure comes ashore, one part of its is apportioned, and the inhabitants are permitted to eat upon the spot as much of it as they are able, which accordingly takes place uninterruptedly, for 24 hours. Often the owner (i.e. he who killed the whale) and the people eating the whale fall into a fierce altercation, because these had not thought to set aside for him the tidbits.

Similarly, native residents of Three Saints Bay on the southeastern part of Kodiak Island frequently utilized beached whales killed along the distant northeastern shore of the island and carried down by the current (Khlebnikov 1979:43).⁸

The existence of well-defined village territories and of the beach salvage rights of village chiefs are well documented for the Aleutians (Lantis 1970) and all along the Northwest Coast. Birket-Smith (1953:95) notes that hunting territories controlled by the different Chugach "tribes" within Prince William Sound specifically included rights to local whales. Similar political divisions and associated territorial claims may be strongly suspected for the Koniag.

In order to avoid the obligation of sharing their kills with neighboring groups, whalers probably attempted to locate whales while they were still floating and then called on members of their own village to tow them back

home for butchering (Langsdorff 1968:45). Only in such cases, and presumably when a whale was found on a beach within his home territory, did the whaler effect a complete recovery of his kill.

WHALING AND THE KONIAG SUBSISTENCE ECONOMY

It would be very useful to be able to quantify the contribution of whale products in relation to other items in the Koniag diet, but this is difficult to do on the basis of the historic accounts or on current archeological data. The relative proportions of shellfish and fish, sea mammal, and bird bones at old Koniag village sites vary widely (Clark 1974; Amorosi 1987), as a result of local and seasonal variations in subsistence efforts. Direct calculations of whale consumption on the basis of bones found in settlement middens would be misguided, since most bones would have been left on distant shores where the animals were butchered. Gideon (Black 1977:91), however, provides an inkling of the importance of whale through a list of the stored belongings marking a wealthy "Aleut" (Koniag). Besides clothing, skins, tools, and items of personal adornment it included "plenty of whale meat" and two sea lion bladders of whale oil, along with baskets of berries and roots preserved in oil, a sea lion bladder filled with caviar, and 10 large bundles each of salmon, halibut, and cod. Whale meat and blubber were among the most prized "delicacies" of the Koniag, according to Davydov (1977:175), although he states that salmon was the staple food. It seems safe to conclude that whale was a highly valued addition to an eclectic diet (and possibly an elite food), rather than a central staple, as was the case among northern whaling groups. Veniaminov (1984:277) notes that even in villages where large numbers of whales were taken, the Aleut never had sufficient stores of whale meat and blubber to last through the winter.

The generalized seasonal exploitation pattern of the Koniag as reconstructed from historic accounts (Davydov 1977; Holmberg 1985; Merck 1980; Sauer 1802) provides further insight into the place of whaling in the Koniag subsistence economy. As is evident from figure 12-1, subsistence activities are concentrated in the spring and summer. Spring and summer saw the partial dispersal of the human population from large winter villages to numerous smaller hunting and fishing stations or to large settlements along major salmon rivers (Clark 1987; Jordan and Knecht 1988; Crowell 1986).

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
FUR SEAL		■	■	■	3,4							
HARBOR SEAL				■	■	■	■	3,4				
SEA LION				■	■	■	■	3,4				
PORPOISE						■	■	3				
SEA OTTER				■	■	■	2,3,4					
WHALES					■	■	■	1,2,3,4				
SALMON					■	■	■	■	■	■	3,4	
BIRDS		EGGS	■	■	4	■	■	3 YOUNG BIRDS				
PLANT FOODS					■	■	■	■				
SHELLFISH	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

SEASONAL RESOURCE USE
KONIAG ESKIMO (CIRCA 1800)

1. Davydov, 1977: 224,175
2. Holmberg, 1985: 50,48
3. Merk, 1980: 105-106
4. Sauer, 1802: 178

FIGURE 12-1. Seasonal Resource Use, Koniag Eskimo (ca. 1800).

Good areas for hunting sea mammals, including whales, were in the middle and outer parts of the bay, while the best salmon fishing was at the heads of bays or inland along river courses.

Whaling therefore conflicted seasonally and spatially with other urgent subsistence activities, although the most critical period for stockpiling large quantities of smoked and dried salmon occurred after the whaling season, during late August through October. As a specialist activity with low manpower requirements, kayak whaling may possibly have been a solution to the subsistence scheduling conflicts of the busy summer season. On the other hand, kayak whaling was necessarily linked to late spring and summer feeding patterns that brought whales into enclosed bays; it would have been minimally effective during the early spring period of offshore migration. However, both northern bowhead and gray whaling, as well as Northwest Coast gray whaling, were primarily early spring activities that were directed at migrating whales and preceded the diverse subsistence activities of summer.⁹

WHALING AND KONIAG SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

In terms of equipment, strategy, and manpower requirements, poisoned-dart whaling from kayaks could hardly have been more different from the open-boat harpoon whaling traditions that bracketed it to the north and south. A very different adaptation to whale ecology and behavior is also evident. The method was suited to enclosed bay locales rather than to ice leads or the open sea, to feeding rather than migrating whales, and to late spring and summer rather than early spring hunting. Fin and humpback whales were targeted, rather than grays and bowheads. Factors affecting the net productivity of kayak whaling have already been reviewed above, including the relatively small yields from the immature whales that were hunted, and the frequent loss of wounded animals. These factors, combined with the diversity of alternative subsistence resources available in southern Alaska, help explain why whale products are less important in the Koniag economy than in coastal north Alaska. The principal question of concern in the following sections, however, is how the ecological, technological, and economic aspects of kayak and large-boat methods were factored into the social organization of whaling.

Inupiat

Sheehan (1985) has estimated that North Alaskan Inupiat villages, located on points of land where northward migrating bowheads pass close to shore through spring ice leads, averaged a take of 12 to 20 bowhead whales a year. Most of these whales were taken during the spring hunt at the ice leads, although a few were obtained in the fall in open water. Sheehan's quantitative analysis indicates that whale meat and blubber alone could have nearly met annual subsistence needs, although the diet was in fact supplemented by walrus, seal, fish, caribou, and birds. The coordinated group effort and substantial accumulation of physical capital required by umiak hunting was managed by the *umialiq*, or whaling captain (Rainey 1947; Spencer 1959; Burch 1980). The position of *umialiq* was not a matter of birthright, but was an achieved leadership status requiring the politically negotiated economic support of a bilateral kindred (the "family group") and the loyalty of a whaling crew. The *umialiq*'s leadership role extended into matters of war, and to a certain degree, to the direction of other subsistence pursuits. In the summer phase of the

Inupiat seasonal round, however, small family groups were widely dispersed and operated independently.

Although Sheehan argues that Inupiat society should be classified as complex on the basis of the economic inequalities between *umialiqs* and their close kin, ordinary families, and poor families (lacking a hunter), it is important to bear in mind, as Cassell (1987) has emphasized, that the *umialiq's* authority was consensually validated within a basically egalitarian structure and social ethic. It also depended upon continued success at getting whales, and thereby catching enough frozen meat and blubber to support crew members and their families throughout the year. At the same time, the successful *umialiq's* control of stored whale products gave him superior access to trade goods and enabled him to further enhance his prestige by hosting intervillage Messenger Feasts. He thus acted as a classic "rich man" at the apex of a redistributive economy.

Inupiat whaling was supported by religious practices that included individual magical control (shamanistic ritual and personal songs and whaling charms), but it also placed significant emphasis on practices and ceremonies that were concerned with spiritual harmony between whales and the community as a whole and that featured the *umialiq* and his wife in a central role. The cleaning and preparation of whaling gear, behavioral proscriptions, greeting ceremonies for the slain whale, and whaling feasts and celebrations involved virtually the whole community and were infused with the idea of pleasing the whale spirits.

Nootka

Whaling by Nootkan groups inhabiting the west coast of Vancouver Island (Drucker 1951; Arima 1983) represents the integration of open-boat harpoon whaling¹⁰ into a more diverse subsistence economy¹¹ and into a hierarchical, lineage-based social organization. Whereas whaling leadership among the Inupiat was an achieved position that depended on certain conditions, Nootka whaling chiefs had a right to their position as one of the many prerogatives of ascribed elite status. Chiefs (*ha'wil*) were the heads of "houses"—large coresidential lineage groups—that cooperated throughout the year to exploit resources at specific locations owned by the chiefs: salmon streams, herring coves, halibut banks, hunting areas, berry grounds, and beaches where drift whales might come ashore. As was generally true for Northwest Coast

economies (Drucker 1983), household heads directed the seasonal settlement shifts and coordinated the group effort required to efficiently harvest, process, and store these rich but spatially and temporally “patchy” resources. Stored food products, especially dried salmon, sea mammal oil, and berries, entered into the complex cycle of ceremonial redistribution through feasts and potlatches hosted by the chiefs.

Nootka chiefs and *umialiqs* shared similar roles as leaders of communal whaling expeditions and as central figures in the productive and redistributive systems of their respective societies. Salient points of contrast include the inherited basis of the Nootka chief’s rank, privileges, and authority, and his managerial responsibility for a more diverse range of economic tasks.

Nootka chiefs played leading roles in public whaling ceremonies, such as the display of the “saddle” cut from the whale’s back, and practiced a variety of purification rites directed toward spiritual preparation for whaling. Significant for their parallels with Koniag practices were various uses of human remains to obtain power over whales (Lantis 1938). Some chiefly “whale ritualists” did not engage in actual whaling, but built whale shrines (see Boas 1930; Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:171, fig. 217) and performed ceremonies with stolen human corpses to magically bring drift whales ashore.

Koniag

The strongly hierarchical, lineage-based organization of Pacific Eskimo societies paralleled that of other southern Alaskan and Northwest Coast groups. Koniag society was ranked within its free class and stratified between free and slave classes (Lantis 1970; Black 1977; Townsend 1980). The highest political position was that of the chief, or *anayugak*, who managed political affairs, directed subsistence activities, and led in time of war. His authority minimally extended over a single village (Black 1977:91), but in some cases several (see Birket-Smith 1953:92 for the Chugach). As among the Nootka, the office of chief was inherited but maintained by controlling wealth (in the form of stored food and valuables) and by sponsoring elaborate and competitive feasts that enhanced the prestige of the leader and cemented the loyalty of subordinate kinsmen.

There is no question that Koniag whalers were accorded great respect and were numbered among the elite (see, e.g., Lisiansky 1968:209). In contrast to Inupiat and Nootka society, however, the Koniag do not appear to

have associated whaling leadership with political eminence to any great extent. That is to say, there is no indication in the sources consulted that Koniag *anayugaks* were whalers. This lack of congruence between whaling and chiefly office has been documented for neighboring groups that also practiced poisoned-dart whaling. Chugach whalers operated under the direction of village chiefs (Birket-Smith 1953:92), and Aleut "law" assigned a portion of a whaler's kill to his *toion* (chief) (Langsdorff 1968:45). Aleut and Pacific Eskimo whaling was, moreover, an inherited, closed, and highly secretive occupation that was passed from father to son within certain lineages (Lisiansky 1968; Lantis 1970) that were probably distinct from the lines of chiefly succession.¹²

Poisoned-dart whaling thus seems to have entailed a rather different set of social relations than those tied in with large-boat harpoon systems. Present available information suggests that Pacific Eskimo and Aleut whalers were specialist producers in complex societies, rather than chiefs at the apex of redistributive economic flows. Why this difference exists can be explained in part by the contrasting relations of production in systems that use kayaks as opposed to large-crewed boats. Such systems differ on several levels: small versus large investments in the labor and material used to construct and outfit the boat; individual effort and hunting skill versus a division of labor among specialists (steersman, paddler, harpooner, captain); individual autonomy versus a necessary subordination to the authority of the captain. Earlier, I suggested that the leadership of Inupiat and Nootka whaling crews was linked with social relationships existing outside the context of the hunt. *Umialiqs* and Nootka chiefs both enjoyed high status, exercised authority over other domains (other subsistence pursuits, warfare), and played apical, prestige-enhancing roles in trade and the accumulation and redistribution of foodstuffs. In the Inupiat case, political centrality in this broader social domain was achieved and maintained through success in whaling, a success that was essential to the prosperity or even survival of the community. The Nootka chief's high status rested on a broader and more structurally permanent foundation—his inherited usufruct rights to a wide range of productive resources, as well as his ascribed authority over a subordinate kin group. Whaling was one of these inherited rights, and the chief's command over resources and manpower enabled him to carry it out. Success at whaling enhanced his prestige, but was not central to it—with the possible exception of situations in which whales superseded salmon as the critical resource.

The organizational contrasts between kayak and crewed-boat whaling are best drawn by comparing the Koniag and Nootka whaling complexes, because many of the significant parameters in these two cases can be accepted as equivalent; environmental setting, economy, and social organization. Although a slightly different set of whale species was pursued, the productivity of whaling was similar for the two groups, and whale products were similarly incorporated into the diet as prized but usually secondary foods. Kayak whaling, however, did not entail any of the organizational requirements of open-boat whaling. The kayak whaler, unlike the Nootka chief (or the Inupiat *umi-aliq*), did not need to lead, or feed, a crew. He did not have to be linked to a supporting kin group as a general manager and redistributor of resources.

The technology that enabled a single hunter to kill a whale thus permitted whaling to emerge as an individualistic specialty, disaggregated from the functional role of chieftainship. This specialization and separation was not a necessary consequence of whaling from kayaks, although it seems to have in fact obtained among the Koniag, as well as among the Chugach and Aleut. In these kayak whaling groups, headmen performed executive roles in directing complexly organized, Northwest Coast-type economies. As far as whaling itself was concerned, however, they merely appropriated portions of captured whales rather than becoming directly involved in the hunt. The seasonal conflict of whaling with other, perhaps more pressing chiefly duties (the salmon harvest, war, and trade expeditions) might have been a contributing factor to the exercise of this organizational option. The Inupiat link between whaling and political power was also absent; Koniag whalers did not produce and control society's most crucial food resource and so did not automatically assume a central place in the political economy.

The separation of whalers as a specialist caste may have had more to do with the cultural construction of whaling as an enterprise requiring extraordinary spiritual powers, that were at the same time contaminating and dangerous; the whaler was not a chief, but rather a type of shaman. In Alutiiq, whalers were called *anwarculi*, "shamans who hunt whales."¹³ Wearing bentwood hunting hats to transform themselves into predatory killer whales, they engaged in magical combat with their prey (see chapter 8), which suggests a parallel with widespread beliefs about otherworldly battles between shamans and spirits.

In support of this interpretation, there is evidence that poisoned-dart whaling bestowed a special spiritual status on its practitioners and distanced

them to some degree from "normal" society. The elaborate and secretive ritual whaling complex involving the theft, preservation, and magical use of human corpses has already been discussed. Perhaps because of these practices, or the fear of their supernatural power, Aleut and Koniag whalers were regarded as beings more like evil spirits than humans, who lived in separate villages "hidden in distant bays, or lost in the minds of the forest" (Pinart 1875:7). Koniag whalers and everything they touched were "unclean," at least for the duration of the whaling season (Lisiansky 1968:174).

To conclude, it appears that both material factors (ecological, technological, economic) and culture history must be incorporated into an explanation of the social organization of whaling on Kodiak Island (and more generally, among the Pacific Eskimo and Aleut). The former allowed whaling to develop as a specialized occupation within a structurally complex hunting and gathering society. The particular role and status of the Koniag whaler were culturally defined, however, through the belief system and ritual complex (probably related historically to the Northwest Coast) that surrounded whales and whaling. Future ethnohistoric and archeological work on Kodiak Island is planned, with the goal of expanding on the interpretations and hypotheses offered in this chapter.

NOTES

1. Hereafter, Kodiak Island

2. The hunting of large whales was not practiced or was less significant along the midlatitude coasts of the Bering Sea. On the Alaskan side, beluga were the only whales hunted in the shallow shelf waters of Bristol Bay, Kuskokwim Bay, and Norton Sound (Nelson 1983), although gray whales migrate biannually through Bristol Bay and past Nunivak Island (Braham 1984). On the Siberian side, whaling was practiced on the northern shores of the Okhotsk Sea, and along the Bering Sea coast northward from Anadyr Gulf, but not along the eastern or western coasts of the Kamchatka Peninsula (Krupnik 1984). Aboriginal whaling off the southern tip of Kamchatka (Itelmen), the Kurile Islands (Ainu), and Japan are discussed in Heizer (1943) and Bisset (1976). Unless otherwise noted, the term "whaling" here refers to the hunting of baleen whales (predominantly the gray, bowhead, fin, and humpback) rather than toothed whales and porpoises. The latter were usually dart hunted from kayaks (without the use of poison), or netted.

3. Size ranges are for the northern hemisphere, and combine data from both sexes. For migratory whales it should be noted that all animals in Alaskan waters would have been at least three months old, so that the very lowest ends of the size ranges (newborns) are not applicable.

4. Birket-Smith's informant Makari, however, specified "all seasons, but especially in winter" for Chugach poisoned-dart whaling in Prince William Sound; species not identified (1953:33).

5. Two complete Chugach examples of this type (142 and 154 centimeters long, and fletched with split feathers) and a number of dart heads are described by Birket-Smith (1941:138). A shorter (finger-length), tanged variety of Chugach slate blade is also mentioned (Birket-Smith 1953:33).

6. Named by informants as "Alimax"; alamax given as Eastern Aleut for "humpback whale" in Black (1987:42).

7. In addition to a detailed physical description of the whale, the name "Mangidak" was recorded; mangidax given as "fin whale" in Eastern Aleut (Black 1987:43).

8. Prevailing surface currents flow along both inner and outer sides of the Kodiak archipelago in a southwesterly direction (Scientific Applications 1980a).

9. Humpbacks were available to Nootka whalers throughout the summer and were presumably hunted then. Arima (1988) also notes the presence of humpbacks during the winter in Barkley Sound and Alberni Canal (Vancouver Island), where they concentrated to feed on herring.

10. The most significant differences between Nootka and Inupiat whaling were the species hunted (mostly gray and humpback whales rather than bowheads) and hunting conditions (always open-water as opposed to primarily ice-lead hunting). Harpoon heads, floats, and boats (canoes rather than skin-covered umiaks) were fabricated differently but were functionally equivalent.

11. There has been some disagreement over the dietary significance of whales for the Nootka. Drucker believed that the prestige value of whaling outweighed its economic significance for most central and northern Nootkan local groups, pointing out the diversity of other resources and the central place of salmon as a dietary staple. He mentions, however, that whales were the most important subsistence resource for at least two villages that lacked good salmon streams (1951:49). Swan's observations of the Makah (1870), recent reconsiderations of the ethnohistoric data for the Nootka (Arima 1988), and the analysis of whale bones from the late prehistoric Ozette site near Cape Flattery (Huelsbeck 1988) indicate that whaling may have been of primary economic importance in localized areas of the southern Northwest Coast.

12. Chugach whalers were not restricted to certain lineages, according to Birket-Smith's (1953:34) information from the 1930s.

13. The Alutiiq term *anwarculi* is attested in the field notes of William J. Fisher,

who collected Koniag objects (including slate whaling points) for the Smithsonian Institution from ca. 1880 to 1890. Gloss provided by Jeff Leer, Alaska Native Language Center.

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13. *Watercraft in the North Pacific: A Comparative View*

JEAN-LOUP ROUSSELOT

AT THE TIME OF THE ARRIVAL OF Europeans in the 1700s, the coastal North Pacific region supported a number of successful maritime and riverine cultures that exhibited refined and varied adaptations to diverse climatic and geographical conditions. Native craftsmanship in boatbuilding and skill at sea greatly impressed the European mariners, and since that time much has been written on native navigation. The first drawing of an umiak frame was published in the late eighteenth century (La Pérouse 1798:Atlas), but it was not until the mid-1960s that Adney and Chappelle's (1964) classic work appeared. Current research has been stimulated by today's interest in pre-industrial ways of life, as exemplified by two German exhibitions on worldwide native navigation (Koch 1984; Spranz 1984). Among the more recent publications is a well-illustrated history of Indian watercraft (Roberts 1983). Other recent works on Eskimo boats include a catalogue of the skin boats of eastern Siberia and Alaska (Zimmerly 1986), a history of Aleutian and Pacific Eskimo kayaks (Dyson 1986), a study of the construction of a Yukon-Kuskokwim kayak (Zimmerly 1979), a study of kayak use and equipment (Rousselot 1983), and a pioneering, well-documented book on western umiaks (Braund 1988).

Native maritime technology has a long history, as demonstrated by

some archeological finds. Preserved ivory kayak models belonging to the Old Bering Sea Culture dating to the start of the Christian era have been found in eastern Siberia (Arutiunov and Fitzhugh 1988:121). The cockpit, bow, and stern are similar to those found on Chukchi kayaks of the turn of this century.

In this chapter, I discuss the three most important types of boats in their cultural context: the wooden boats of Siberia and the dugouts of the Northwest Coast Indians, the skin boats of eastern Siberia and Alaska, and the bark canoes of the Athapaskans and southeast Siberia.

WOODEN BOATS

Yukaghir

Two Siberian groups, the Yukaghir and the Koryak, used the widest range of wooden watercraft. The Yukaghir lived in Northeastern Siberia along the southern tributaries of the Kolyma River. The Yukaghir economy depended heavily on the seasonal migration of wild reindeer, which were killed in large numbers from canoes at water crossings. Before contact with the Russians, the Yukaghir used rafts, dugouts, and board canoes.

The Yukaghir raft was a triangular-shaped craft made of logs fastened with willow lashings; it was propelled by one or two pairs of oars.

The Yukaghir dugout, used for net fishing and hunting birds and reindeer, was made of a carved poplar trunk. The length of the dugout canoe is about 6 meters, and the width about 65 centimeters. It was so thin that the boat weighed no more than 30 kilograms and thus could easily be carried on the shoulders from one river to another. The canoeist used a double paddle with blades shaped like a poplar leaf. In shallow water the dugout was propelled (punted) with two poles. Travel in such a dugout, as Jochelson noted, was quite awkward:

If there is a passenger he sits with outstretched legs, his face turned to the stern and his back against the back of the canoeist. To keep the balance the people in the canoe have to sit without moving, otherwise the canoe would capsize. The canoeist moves only the arms in paddling. (Jochelson 1926:375)

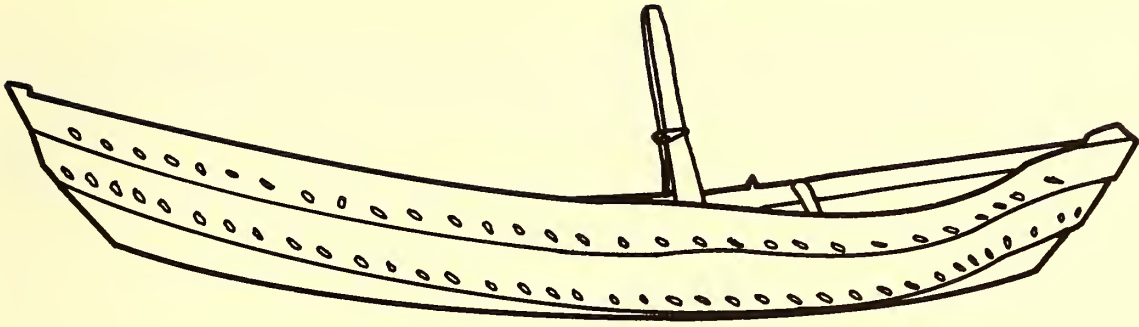


FIGURE 13-1. Yukaghir wooden boat (length = 5 to 6 meters); after Jochelson (1926: 377). (Illustration by Petra Thalmeier)

A third craft, the board canoe (figure 13-1), was a traditional watercraft of the Yukaghir. Its superstructure was made of thin lapped boards sewn together with sinew lashings, attached to a dugout bottom. No iron fittings were employed. The seams were treated with larch-gum and caulked with moss. This type of boat was more stable than the dugout, since its bottom was flat. The ribs were fastened to the upper boards with sinew and wooden pegs, and there were oarlocks for paddles.

Travelling upstream the boats are towed by long ropes made of willows. A team of dogs is used for that purpose if the bank is favorable, i.e., if it has no bushes, trees or projecting boulders that would catch the rope. If the bank is not straight and low men had to help the dogs or do the towing themselves. (Jochelson 1926:377)

The board canoe was used in the same way as the dugout. It is thought to have developed as an adaptation of Russian boats.

Koryak

Poplar and aspen dugouts like those employed by the Yukaghir were also used in northern Kamchatka. The hull of these boats was so thin that they were as light as skin canoes. The Koryak dugout was propelled with a double-bladed paddle, but in shallow and rapid rivers it was punted with two poles. It was normally a river boat, but in some areas it was used to hunt seals in bays, as the Kamchadal do. Another type of dugout, used exclusively on rivers, was a two-seater about 12 meters long that was narrow, heavy, and roughly made. It was propelled by two persons using poles. Catamarans (figure 13-2) were

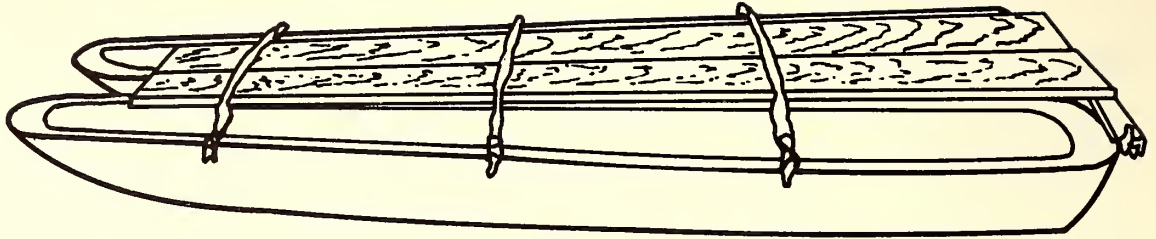


FIGURE 13-2. Koryak dugout catamaran (length = 5 to 6 meters); after Jochelson (1908:541). (Illustration by Petra Thalmeier)

sometimes constructed by lashing two dugouts together to ferry cargos and men across a river: “A double boat of this kind is very convenient for freighting, and is quite safe. Whenever the Koryak fish in the river, above their village, they descend with their families and their catch in such crafts when the fishing is over” (Jochelson 1908:541).

Northwest Coast and Seagoing Dugouts

Dugouts were used in other areas as well. The Coast Salish, the Coast Yurok, and the Athapaskans used a round-bottomed dugout primarily in riverine navigation. This was exceptionally maneuverable even in swift currents. Such craft were better suited for river travel than for the deep sea.

The Northwest Coast Indians constructed large dugouts. They did not make long journeys over the open sea, but they cruised the coast on voyages of several hundred miles. When the “first Spanish and English explorers reached the Northwest Coast there were at least a dozen different dugout canoe types in use, varying with special conditions and tribal preferences” (Holm 1987: 143; see also Holm 1988:157, and chapter 14). In the north, a type called the “head canoe” was supplanted early in the nineteenth century by the “classic northern canoe” (Holm 1987). Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Kwakiutl, and Bella Coola used a type of canoe with a high projecting bow and stern and a rounded hull. Elaborate designs were painted on the bow. The Haida (Queen Charlotte Islands) dugouts, made out of red cedar, could be more than 17 meters long. The Salish (Puget Sound) constructed a small low-sided variant of the Haida type. They also had a river canoe—usually called the “shovelnose” because of its blunt, pointed ends—that had a round bottom and narrow, straight lines. The large dugouts could carry a quantity of cargo and warriors.

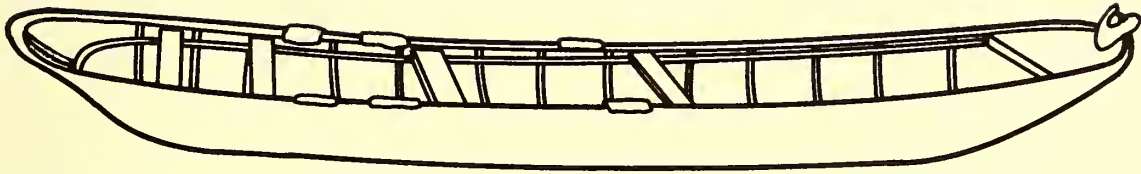


FIGURE 13-3. Koryak umiak (length = 10 meters); after Levin and Potapov (1961: 128). (Illustration by Petra Thalmeier)

Kwakiutl and Haida raided their neighbors in their huge war canoes. Haida canoe makers in particular were highly regarded for their craftsmanship, and the mainland groups often sought to buy Haida-built craft. The Nootka were also renowned canoe makers. Their vessels were traded to the Salish, to the Lower Columbia, and to the central Oregon coast groups. "The graceful and practical lines of the Nootka canoe made it one of the finest seagoing vessels built in North America" (Drucker 1955:73).

SKIN BOATS

Open Skin Boats

The Koryak built a large open skin boat, called *baidara* in Russian. Being constructed like an Eskimo umiak, with a wooden frame lashed with thong and covered with seal or walrus hide, it possessed great strength and elasticity. But the Koryak skin boat was distinguished from others by several original features (figure 13-3). It was very wide in proportion to its length, and it had a rounded prow and stern, whereas the Chukchi and Eskimo umiak gunwale rails converged. The rails were joined to the keelson by a heavy T-shaped board. The keel was made of a single timber bent upward in the direction of the prow, like a sled runner, and it terminated in a fork that functioned as a line guide for holding the harpoon line. The bottom of the skin boat was flat and was formed of cross-bars fastened to the keel by thongs and two lateral stringers. The sides of the boat were formed by ribs that connected the curved chine pieces with the gunwales. The wooden frame was further strengthened by rails running longitudinally, stem to stern, between the gunwales and the chines. A large boat measured 9 meters in length and 2.5 meters in its maxi-

mum width between the gunwales, which was not in the middle, but nearer to the stern. There were usually 8 or 10 oarsmen, either men or women. Thwarts were situated aft, and freight was placed in the middle of the craft.

On the coast of Bering Sea, Koryak *baidara* (open skin boats, or umiaks) were covered with walrus hide, and in other areas with the skin of bearded seal. In fashioning the cover, the Koryak first split the walrus skin to make it lighter and more manageable, then soaked it in water and stretched it over the wooden frame. Holes were cut through the edges of the skin that lapped over the gunwales, and the hide was tightened around the gunwale and lashed to the upper stringer. Then the boat was turned upside-down and dried so that the contracting cover pressed the wooden frame tightly together. Finally, the seams were filled with fat, and the whole cover was greased with seal-oil.

The Koryak *baidara* was propelled with long, round, bladed oars that were held in place with rope loops attached to the rails. A wooden guard over the gunwale protected the skin from the friction of the oars. Such gunwale protectors were made of bone among the Eskimo. The Koryak used a rectangular sail made of dressed reindeer skins attached to a tripod mast.

The Koryak skin boat can carry fairly heavy loads. . . . [I]n two boats . . . we carried about two thousand pounds of cargo, and our party consisted of twenty-five members. . . . In addition, each boat carried eight dogs in harness, which lay in the stern. Notwithstanding this heavy load, the boats were not more than half in the water. (Jochelson 1908:538)

The Koryak did not undertake long voyages and rarely sailed away from the shore. When they crossed a large bay, they did it in calm weather only. In times of stormy or foggy weather the men did not venture out for fear of tearing the skin cover on rocks.

Chukchi and Alaskan Eskimo Umiaks

The large skin boats (umiak) used by the Chukchi are very similar in shape and in construction to those of the Alaskan Eskimo, probably because the Chukchi learned skin boat construction techniques from Eskimo peoples. Both groups were in close contact, and boats and boat parts have been items of trade around and across Bering Strait since ancient times (Bogoras 1904-9:126; Braund 1988:83). Chukchi and Eskimo boatbuilders covered their umiaks with walrus hide. Their umiaks averaged 8-11 meters long and 1.5-2.5 meters wide at the top. Most carried between six and eight paddlers,

while the smallest could carry only a couple of men and were used for short trips within range of the village, for example, to check fish and seal nets.

The skin cover had to be dried out between trips or it would become water-logged and would stretched loose from the frame. In winter it was unfastened and stored away to keep it from being eaten by dogs. In the spring when the cover was put back on the frame, holes were repaired and the cover received two or three coats of oil. To prevent warping of the frame, the boat had several sets of special lashings that could be lengthened or shortened connecting the gunwales with the keelson.

In former times boats were propelled by paddles, and a large paddle was used for steering. In the late nineteenth century, long narrow oars were used along with the paddles. These were either patterned after American whaleboat oars or were bought from the whalers. The Chukchi umiak had a mast stepped on the keelson. In former times, the sail was large and square and made of reindeer skin, gut, or grass mats. This sail was gradually superseded by a triangular canvas sail copied after that of the whalers. Still, with the wind aft, the square sail was much more effective.

In rough weather two large inflated seal-skin floats were fastened on either side of the umiak to improve its buoyancy. In addition, the sides of many boats were provided with flaps of skin or canvas, which in rainy weather were used to cover the cargo and in rough weather were raised above the gunwale and braced by supports to deflect spray. Bogoras describes an interesting technique for beach landings in stormy conditions, aided by men who held the boat parallel to the shore with lines: "By pulling the ropes tight, the men on the shore make the water side of the boat stand up high against the breaking surf, and the first incoming wave catches the boat—crew, cargo, and all—and casts it ashore" (Bogoras 1904-9:130).

Umiaks were used in Alaska primarily for transportation, but in North Alaska they were also used for whaling and walrus hunting. Another type of large open skin boat was made for temporary use in the interior of Alaska. The Athapaskan moose-hide boat (Adney and Chapelle 1964:219) was an open skin boat made and used in the spring to transport hunting parties and their catch. The frame was roughly made of poles, and its joints were lashed without mortising. The cover consisted of as many as ten moose hides sewn together. These boats, about 10 meters long, were safer than canoes for rough use in the spring ice, but the skin quickly became waterlogged. After only a single voyage, the boat was broken up and discarded, except for the hides, which were used for many other purposes.

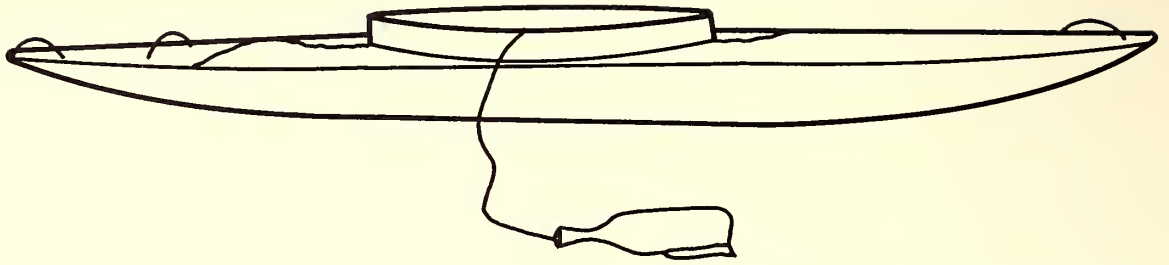


FIGURE 13-4. Koryak kayak (length = 2.70 meters); after Jochelson (1908: 539). (Illustration by Petra Thalmeier)

Decked Skin Boats

The Koryak built small skin-covered boats (figure 13-4) of the kayak type, but with a number of different features. They were shorter, and their rounded cockpits occupied the entire width and were not covered with the boat skin. Such a "floating" cockpit coaming was known from the Eastern and Central Eskimo (Western Eskimo and Chukchi kayaks had a fixed coaming that was an integral part of the Koryak framework). Bow and stern were of the same shape, so that the craft was symmetrical, a trait also common among Eastern Arctic kayaks. The two gunwales provided the main strength for the framework. The V-shaped bottom was made by mortising ribs into the gunwales and the keelson. Because it was short and had a convex ("rocker-bottomed") keelson, this boat was highly maneuverable but unstable; however, rock ballast was used to correct this problem. Two bearded seal skins (sometimes without the hair being removed) were used for the cover. Double-bladed paddles, like those of the Eskimo, were used with these kayaks, along with small oars (about 41 centimeters) attached with lines to the cockpit. These were used in pairs, when the hunter approached his prey."The progress of the kayak in calm weather is extremely fast; but its use is not without danger, as it is easily upset by wind or waves, and it is necessary to balance it carefully while paddling. In stormy weather the Koryak did not venture upon the sea in kayaks" (Jochelson 1908:540).

A special kayak was used in rivers for hunting reindeer at crossing places. Such a Chukchi vessel (figure 13-5) from the late nineteenth century is kept in Munich (Mus. Nr. 99-120). The frame of this kayak is similar to the common Eskimo form but the craftsmanship is more crude and unsophisticated,

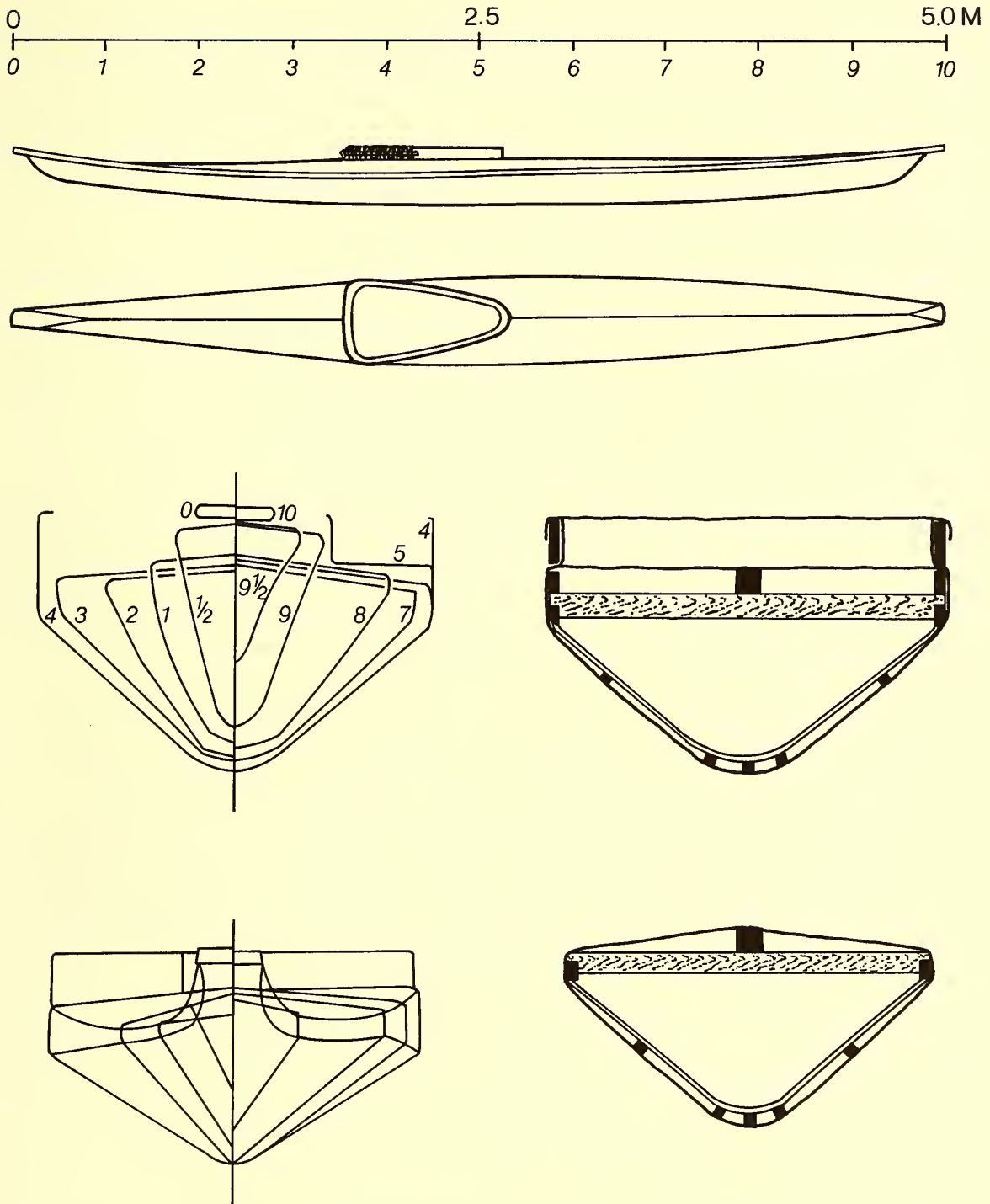


FIGURE 13-5. Chukchi kayak (length = 5 meters; beam = 47 centimeters; depth = 24 centimeters; weight = 14 kilograms); after Rousselot (1983: 144, 336, 384, 417).
 a. Afterview, foreview. b. Afterbody, forebody. c. Transversal section through manhole.
 d. Transversal section through forebody. (Illustration by Petra Thalmeier)

as can be seen from the irregular shape and construction of its gunwale, stringers, and ribs. The gunwale and the coaming are made of heavy boards, while the ribs and stringers are made of thin twigs. The hull has a V-shaped bottom, which gives it great directional stability (Rousselot 1983:144-56). The cover of reindeer skin instead of seal skin meant the boat was proportionally lighter when it was dry, and thus preferable to the wooden canoes of the Yukaghir. Its drawback was that the deerskin was highly porous and quickly became water-logged and heavy, which made the craft unmanageable until it was dried. The high triangular cockpit was left open to give the kayaker more freedom, for there was no need to make it watertight for use on a river. The double paddle was similar to that of the Yukaghir, with blades shaped like a poplar leaf. Often an iron spear point was attached at one end for spearing reindeer while paddling. In shallow water two poles were used for propulsion.

In the fall, when the caribou or reindeer headed south into wooded country, they were hunted at the river and lake crossings. Bogoras said the Chukchi hunters would wait downstream and

when the animals are not far from the middle of the river . . . men in canoes approach the herd and stab the reindeer with spears. . . . The killing is done with incredible rapidity, a man being able to kill as many as a hundred animals in one hour. The wound is inflicted on the lower part of the body, and the wounded animals immediately turn on the side and are carried away by the stream. . . . Old men, women and children, row in boats farther down the river, and intercept the game. (Bogoras 1904-9:134)

The distribution of the kayak was quite sporadic along the Asiatic shore, but was continuous along the American Arctic coast. Here kayaks exhibit a great variety of designs (figure 13-6), there being at least 28 types known ethnographically. They differed in size, weight, and in the shape of their bows and sterns, as well as in their internal construction. The distinctive shape of the stem, especially of the bow, is often sufficient to indicate the boat's ethnic and geographic origin.

While kayaks in Siberia and in northern Alaska were used mainly for short coastal and riverine trips, Alaskan kayaks built south of the Bering Strait were almost perfectly seaworthy (figure 13-7) and were suitable for pelagic hunting. Nonetheless, a reasonable paddler avoided unnecessary risks and would not set out when the weather was foggy or stormy. All these kayaks had some common traits, such as horizontal cockpit coamings and

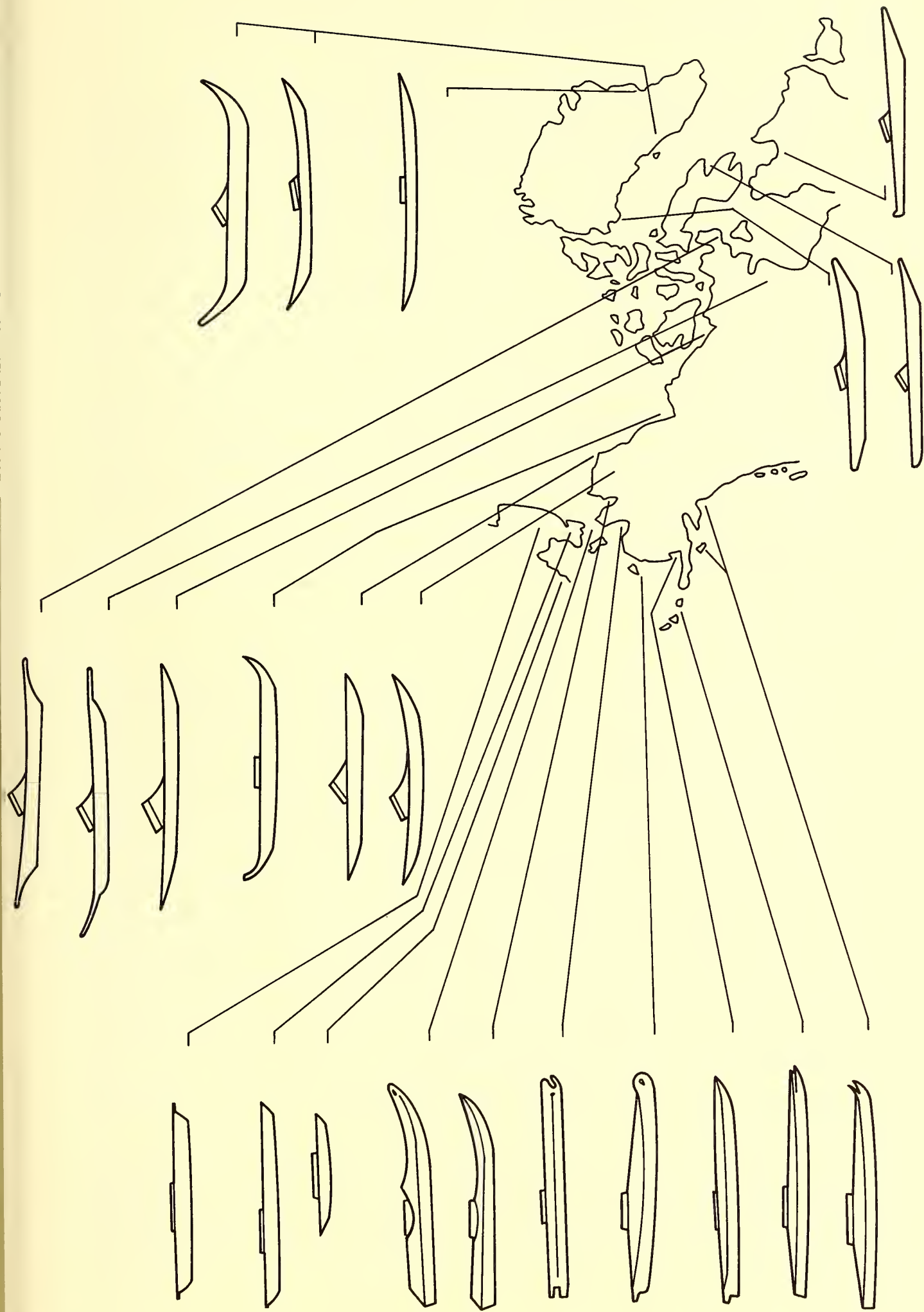


FIGURE 13-6. Distribution of kayak types; after Rousselot (1983: 319). (Illustration by Petra Thalmeier)

differing bow and stern forms. However, north of Bering Strait the side view of the kayak is virtually symmetrical, with bow and stern shapes being practically identical.

A new, well-oiled kayak made of sea mammal skins could remain in the water for a week or longer. After this, it had to be dried and oiled. A hunter in his kayak had to be ready to take different types of game, especially in the Aleutians and Pacific Alaska, and so he kept many different tools and weapons stowed on the deck and in the hull of his craft. Kayaks were used primarily for hunting seals and moulting birds. In addition, Aleuts and Koniags hunted whales from one- or two-man *baidarkas*, using spears poisoned with aconite. In early spring, before breakup, hunters north of the ice-free Aleutian waters dragged their kayaks to open water on small sleds built for the purpose. When open leads had to be crossed, the sled was carried on the kayak deck; it was also used to retrieve seals killed on the ice pans.

Kayaks were among the fastest of human-propelled vessels.

Bark Canoes

Three basic types of bark canoes can be distinguished around the North Pacific rim. The rivers and lakes of the area inhabited by the Athapaskans were both sources of food and travel routes. Athapaskans made bark canoes with a few widely spaced frame members, carefully joined to provide a rigid frame that was wholly independent of the covering material, which only added strength and form. Light and slim birchbark hunting canoes (the so-called kayak-form canoes) were designed to carry only one or two men (VanStone 1987:7). Hunting canoes were as much as 6 meters long; they were extremely slender, flat-bottomed, and had comparable proportions to kayaks. A bark deck for sheltering weapons and gear covered several feet at the bow of most Alaskan canoes. These boats were so slender that they could not carry much cargo. "While these bark canoes had some superficial resemblance in general proportions to the Eskimo kayaks . . . they did not . . . have the same hull form as the seagoing [Alaskan] kayaks" (Adney and Chapelle 1964:154).

The second type, the traveling canoe, which was 7 to 8 meters long, was wider and could transport a whole family and its outfit. This canoe lacked the deck-piece and was used primarily by women when moving camp or gathering food.

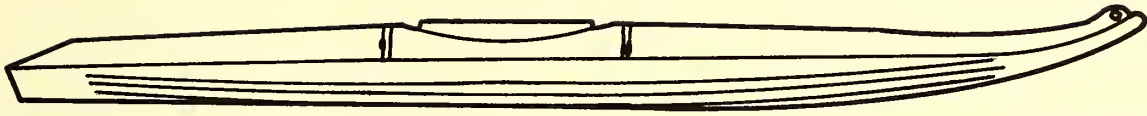


FIGURE 13-7. King Island kayak (length = 4.68 meters); after Adney and Chapelle (1964: 198). (Illustration by Petra Thalmeier)

Finally, the Nanai (Gold) and the Yakuts of southeastern Siberia and the Kutenai and the Salish of southern British Columbia and northern Washington used a bark canoe with reversed ends—called the “sturgeon-nose” canoe—on lakes and rivers (Adney and Chapelle 1964:168). The hull of the craft was made of a single large tube of bark, a construction method that differs sharply from the Athapaskan canoe, which was covered with a number of pieces of bark sewn together.

CONCLUSION

The watercraft of the inhabitants of the North Pacific are of particular interest since they are an essential means of locomotion for these maritime- and riverine-oriented societies. The remarkably efficient marine technology of these highly successful cultures earned great admiration from the early explorers, who were surprised to discover such sophisticated skills among peoples living in environments that ranged from wet temperate coasts to icy arctic seas. These groups proved their capacity to adapt to various ecosystems and developed complex technologies to cope with the different situations occurring within a yearly cycle. Indians, Eskimos, and eastern Siberian groups shared activities such as fishing, hunting, and whaling (sometimes) and also had to be able to transport persons and household and trading goods. Every group developed its own unique, effective responses to fill these needs.

Throughout this area, a boat can be identified by traits characteristic for a given tribe, although these traits cannot be said to reflect an inherited design and construction technique, for tradition provided only general guidelines and allowed a latitude of variations without disrupting ethnic cultural patterns. The craftsman adjusted the customary forms to personal taste, incli-

nation, and need; he was also affected by his own experience, the materials he had at hand, fashion, outside influences, and new ideas. An example of such change in continuity can be seen in the Aleutian kayak bow: the horizontal bifid bow of the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Aleutian kayak (Choris 1820–22:viii) became obsolete soon after it was first seen, replaced thereafter by a strongly arched bow. Umiak construction changed from the flat-bottomed to the round-bottomed model (Adney and Chapelle 1964:181; Braund 1988:81). The three-hatch *baidarka* with a seat in the middle for the foreigner or trader (an elongated two-hatch *baidarka*) was an adaptation to a new social situation (Zimmerly 1986:22).

Near ethnic boundaries, vessels have certain common traits, such as the decking on the kayak and on the bark hunting canoe of the Athapaskans. Also, some Eskimos boats were adopted by Indians, and, conversely, Eskimos living close to Indian territory sometimes used dugouts or bark canoes (Adney and Chapelle 1964:154). Such transitional situations resulted from intertribal exchange and may also reflect local adaptation to unfamiliar environments.

Very few regional differences can be explained by environmental constraints alone, since tradition always dictated the design of things to a certain extent, without necessarily having a rational basis. Nevertheless, design was somewhat governed by the materials locally available for these watercraft and by the waters in which they were used. The technique of building dugouts developed in a area of dense forest and huge trees; the most impressive boats were large seagoing craft used for whaling and war parties. Inland, where birch grows, bark canoes were in use; here, where they combined a response to the turbulent river currents and the numerous portages between the rivers, boats had to be highly maneuverable and light. The polar regions also called for responses suited to the environment. There, boat covers were made from the large water-resistant skins of the omnipresent sea mammals since bark was not available in large quantity. Note, however, that the most sophisticated kayaks originated from southern Alaska, where wood is abundant. Light weight was an important consideration for Eskimo hunters, but a skin boat—even when dry—is not always as light as a bark or even a dugout canoe for its rude wooden skeleton could be very heavy, as in the case of Central Arctic kayaks. Above all, the arctic hunter needed a craft that combined speed and maneuverability, which were vital in hunting, with the space and buoyancy that would allow him to carry his game back to shore.

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14. *Canoes of the Northwest Coast*

BILL HOLM

THE ART OF DUGOUT CANOEMAKING reached a high state of development on the Northwest Coast of America, with more than a dozen distinctly different types of canoes known during the historic period (figure 14-1). Some of these were confined to specific areas of the region, while others had a wide distribution. All were designed with an eye to sea conditions, type of use, and available building materials, and all were successful in filling the needs for transportation and utilization of the marine resources of the Northwest Coast.

Some canoe types (the West Coast, or Nootkan, canoe, with its vertical stern and distinctive upswept, animal-like prow; the shovelnose river canoe; and the low, graceful Coast Salish models, which may have been the ancestors of the high-prowed northern canoe of the nineteenth century) were seldom seen on the northern coast. A few West Coast canoes made their way to this area (de Laguna 1972:pl. 74) in the late nineteenth century, however, when Nootka hunters employed to harpoon fur seals in the Bering Sea brought little sealing canoes northward aboard commercial sealing schooners.

The classic northern canoe, familiar to us from early photographs, models, and full-size specimens in museums, was a graceful craft with upswept

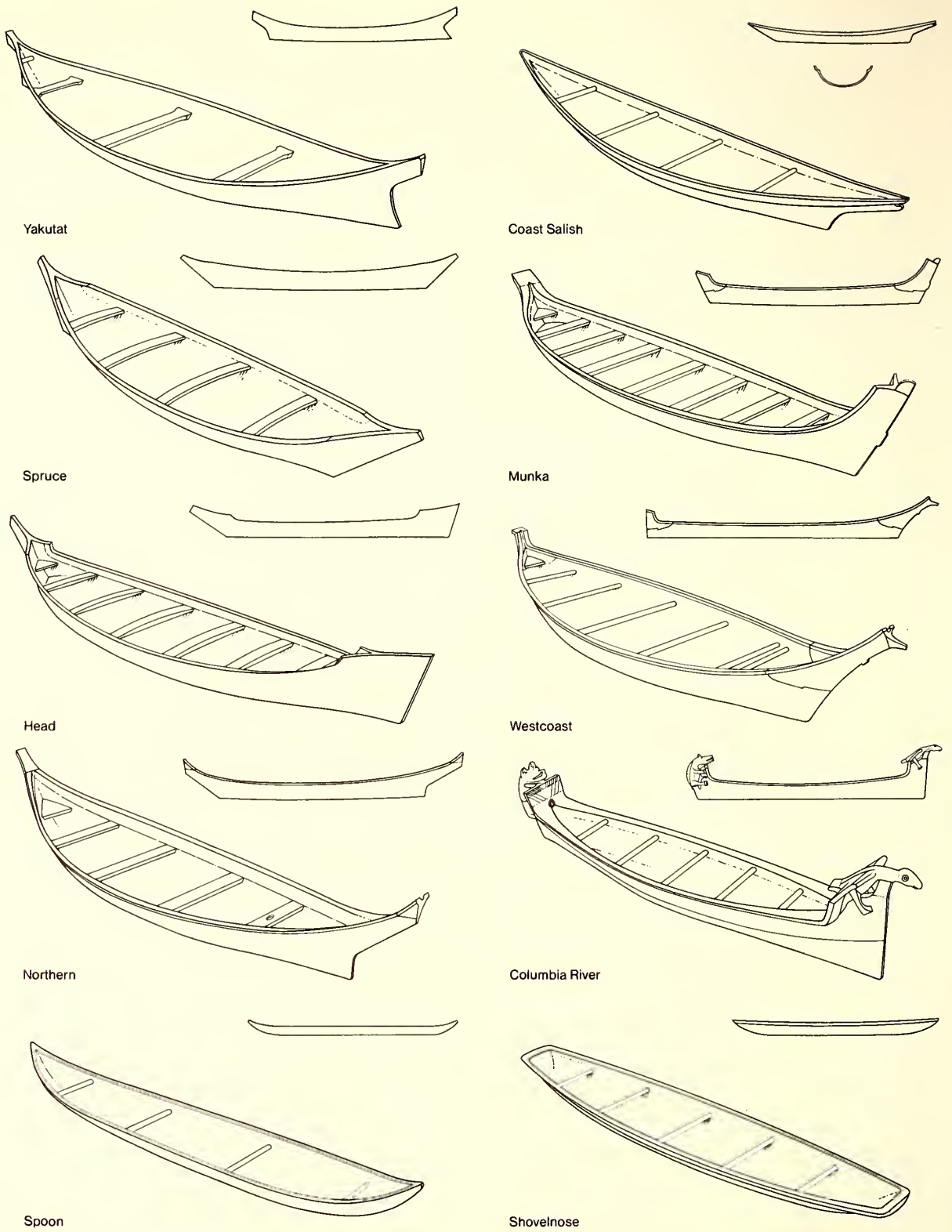


FIGURE 14-1. Northwest Coast canoes. (Drawing by Bill Holm and Karen Ackoff; reprinted with permission from *The Handbook of North American Indians*)

and overhanging bow and stern, elegant sheer, and a distinctive square cutwater under the bow. It was made in sizes ranging from tiny one- or two-person boats to great seagoing canoes said to be as long as 21 meters (70 feet), with a beam of 3 meters (10 feet). These classic northern canoes had rounded bottoms and flaring sides with a slight lip at the gunwales that extended all the way to the upraised ends and that lifted the canoe in the waves, turning the water and spray outward. They were excellent sea boats and were probably perfected by the Queen Charlotte Haida, who carried on a brisk trade in canoes during the historic period and probably before. Their islands were home to the gigantic red cedar, which is ideal for canoes, but lacked other materials and certain food resources, which the Haida obtained through trade with the Tsimshian on the mainland and the Tlingit to the north. Characteristic of the larger traveling canoes of this general type were their wide, protruding gunwale bands and blocky bow and stern pieces finishing the ends.

Gunwales flaring all the way to the ends and an open groove between them at the bow—a resting place for the harpoon—were characteristics of southern canoes, which were apparently moving northward into the Queen Charlottes and Southeastern Alaska at the beginning of the historic period (Holm 1987:145, 153). None of the drawings by late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Europeans on the northern coast illustrate canoes of this type. What the early explorers saw were canoes of several other forms, but all with thin, projecting fins at each end and without the flaring gunwales. The most spectacular of these early historic period canoes had a large, roughly rectangular fin extending from the bow and a similarly large but tapered fin at the stern. Because of its distinctive, flat bow fin, this vessel was commonly known as the “head” canoe (Durham 1960:56–57; Drucker 1950:253; Holm 1987:147–55). Just aft of the convergence of the sides of the hull at the bow, the gunwale line dropped sharply. Near the stern, it rose abruptly again. This distinctive profile and the large, decorated fins are seen in many models and in drawings in early ships’ journals. Since no full-size examples of the head canoe survived even into the age of photography, these models and drawings are the only record we have of this important canoe type of the early contact period. To judge by this meager record, the head canoe was made in many sizes, but most seem to have been moderately large, and those used by the Tlingit were, according to native tradition, traded from the Haida.

A small to moderately large canoe was made of spruce to the north of the

range of the western red cedar (de Laguna 1972:337; Holm 1987:146). This "Sitka canoe" (or "spruce canoe," as its Tlingit name is translated) had the typically northern feature of thin fins extending from bow and stern, but both were slanted, somewhat like the stern of the head canoe, although they were less exaggerated in size. Subtle breaks in the line of spruce canoe gunwales near the bow and stern recall the dramatic drop in the sheer of the head canoe, emphasizing the relationship between the two canoe types. Spruce canoes appear in the drawings of early explorers and continued in use into the twentieth century. A few early illustrations show canoes that share the characteristics of head canoes and spruce canoes combined (Henry 1984:144, pl. 12).

Closely related to the spruce canoe in form, but differing from it in material and in some subtle features, was the cottonwood canoe typical of Kluckwan and other river villages (de Laguna 1972:336-37). Cottonwood canoes also have unflared gunwales and extending flat fins. Of all Northwest Coast canoes, Tlingit cottonwood canoes exemplify the technique of steaming and spreading to produce a vessel wider than the log from which it was carved. Before spreading, the gunwales of cottonwood canoes nearly touched each other at the center and were rolled outward after steaming to form the wide, open hull. Such extreme spreading caused the radical changes in shape that made it difficult for the makers to achieve the perfection of form seen in spruce canoes of the same design.

Although it never appears in the early drawings, the little Yakutat hunting canoe, with its striking ramlike bow projection, may have been present but unnoticed at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was only used by the Yakutat, the northwesternmost Tlingit people, and their Eyak neighbors to the west (Durham 1960:46; de Laguna 1972:337-38). Not surprisingly, it had the northern characteristics of little or no gunwale flare, but the shape of the bow and stern fins was unlike that of any other canoe. At the stern, the fin was sharply cut away, superficially resembling the square cutwater at the bow of the classic northern canoe. At the bow, a sharp, triangular fin thrust forward under the projecting prow. Apparently it was used to break and turn away the thin ice that could quickly wear through the fragile yellow cedar or spruce hull. These canoes were always small, just large enough for a hunter and his steersman. They were used primarily in hunting seal and sea otter. Traveling, especially in the open Gulf of Alaska, was accomplished in the larger, imported head canoes, or later in the classic northern pattern with its high, flared bow and stern.

Many models depict yet another unusual canoe type, decorated with distinctly northern painted designs. However, there are no drawings of it from the early nineteenth century in the northern area (Durham 1960:58–63; Holm 1987:145). Perhaps it, too, was diffusing northward in the historic period. The Kwakiutl referred to it as “munka” and considered it a war canoe. Its abruptly raised, extremely wide bow piece was said to act as a shield in war. The flaring sides, upstanding snout, and projecting “uvula” echo similar if more subtle features of the West Coast canoe, as does the form of the raised stern block. No munkas survived past the middle of the nineteenth century, so again we have only models and drawings to document its form.

All of these canoes were typically propelled by single-bladed paddles with transverse or “crutch” grips and rather short shafts (in relation to the length of the blades). Details of their design differed from place to place along the coast, and also depended on their specific uses. Canoes used in rivers were commonly driven by poling. Everywhere on the coast, they were sailed before the wind using sails of matting or thin planks. After European sailors introduced their techniques along with fore-and-aft sails of canvas in the late eighteenth century, Indians successfully sailed their keelless canoes on points up to a beam reach, or close to a right angle to the wind. Thereafter most canoes of any size were equipped to step masts. Later in the contact period, many canoes were fitted with rowlocks and oars, and in the twentieth century, with gasoline, usually outboard, engines.

Early in the twentieth century canoemaking ceased, except for the construction of long, narrow racing canoes and occasional cottonwood canoes and some dugout skiffs and fishing boats. Planked boats were stronger and could be fairly easily built using sawn lumber, which was becoming increasingly available. Once the gasoline engine took over from the paddle, fewer and fewer canoes could be seen in the channels and on the beaches of Southeastern Alaska. But in the later years of the century a renewed interest in traditional lifeways has inspired the carving of dugout canoes again. A number of classic northern-type canoes have been built in Alaska and elsewhere on the coast since midcentury, and in the summer of 1987 a spruce canoe was made in Glacier Bay. The revival is continuing and by the end of the century there may be many more plying the waters of the Northwest Coast.

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15. *Social Structure of the Peoples of Northeastern Asia*

VLADIMIR I. VASIL'EV

THE DISTINCTIVE SOCIAL STRUCTURES OF the peoples of Northeastern Asia and the lack of clear signs of a clan system, or of rudiments that would indicate its existence in the past, present an interesting topic of study for ethnographers of the Chukchi, Koryak, Eskimo, and Itelmen.

CHUKCHI

One of the best experts on the Chukchi was Waldemar Bogoras, who wrote extensively on their economy, family life, and culture. Field observations over the course of several years led Bogoras to conclude that the Chukchi lacked a clan system at the end of the nineteenth century but that such a system was just, in fact, developing:

Only in recent years have I concluded that a whole series of facts concerning Chukchi family and marriage life, as well as other elements of their social organization, can be understood and explained only as vestiges and relics of an earlier stage of primitive communist society, either preceding clan order,

or relating to the period of the formation of the clan order.¹ (Bogoras 1934:15)

Another authority of Paleoasiatic ethnography, Lev Sternberg (1933), holds just the opposite view—namely, that the Chukchi in former times had a clan structure but had stopped practicing exogamy and dropped the clan (rod) system.

Recent work on the Chukchi, by I. S. Vdovin, lends support to Bogoras's argument by pointing to the existence of such social institutions as blood feuds, levirate, sororate, and a few others. Initially, Vdovin (1948:61) also suggested that matriarchy was the rule among the Chukchi ancestors who first arrived in the North. With the mastering of new economic activities—wild reindeer hunting and later reindeer breeding—the economic foundation of matriarchy was undermined, and the leading social cell in Chukchi society was gradually filled by the family, which began to form along patriarchal lines. In later works, however, Vdovin (1965) abstained from applying the term “matriarchy” to the history of Chukchi society.

The Chukchi custom of establishing spouse-sharing alliances should be ascribed to the archaic phenomenon of group marriage. Some married couples, generally from different nomadic camps, concluded voluntary agreements on the variable fulfillment of conjugal rights in relation to their wives. According to Bogoras (1934:136–37):

Each “wife-sharer” takes home another man's wife, lives with her several months, and then returns her to her husband. It happens that he keeps her for a longer period of time, or even forever. In our times, spouse-sharing custom is followed by almost every Chukchi family. A family which does not enter into such a union has no friends, well-wishers, or protectors in case of need. Members of the group marriage stand closer to one another than even relatives related along the male line.

In relation to the kinship system of the Chukchi, Bogoras (1934:91, 136) notes, “The paternal line to a significant degree predominates over the maternal.”

In the eighteenth century and even earlier, according to Vdovin, the patriarchal family *raiyr"yn* (“home fulfillment”) was the basic social and economic unit of the Chukchi. More complex social alliances emerged not only because of the economic life of the Chukchi, but because of their relations with

neighboring ethnic groups and the Russian administration. These social units, which included several patriarchal families, generally connected by kinship ties, constituted the settlement group among the Maritime Chukchi, and the nomadic camp among the Reindeer Chukchi (Vdovin 1965:81, 87).

At the beginning of the eighteenth century one could already observe the establishment of an embryo of military democracy among the Chukchi. Leaders of the military democracy were the heads of patriarchal families engaged in continuous raids on their neighbors, the Koryak, Yukaghir, and Alaskan Eskimo. Only in the last decade of the eighteenth century did the military campaigns of the Chukchi gradually cease as a result of a combination of events: economic improvements from incorporation of the Chukchi Peninsula into the Russian state; territorial isolation of nuclear families following disintegration of the patriarchal commune; and increased trade between the Reindeer and Maritime Chukchi and their neighbors after the establishment of the Aniu and Gizhiginsk fairs. In Far Northeastern Asia, a relatively solid and durable peace then became established.

KORYAK

The social structure of the Koryak was in many ways similar to that of the Chukchi. From the seventeenth through the first half of the nineteenth centuries the patriarchal commune, which united the relatives of three generations (father, son, grandson) along the father's genealogical line, was the basic productive and social cell of the Maritime Koryak. All members of the commune lived in a semisubterranean house, but each nuclear family usually had its own sleeping platform. The commune had a *baidara* (skin boat), but for wild reindeer hunting or whaling, the men of the family collective joined with members of the other family communes in the settlement. The settlement itself represented a higher form of social organization. In addition to hunting together, its inhabitants united for military raids or for defense. As a rule, all families of the settlement were connected by kinship ties or marriage.

Like the Chukchi, the Koryak practiced such customs as levirate, sororate, polygamy, and paying for a wife by working in the household of the future father-in-law. The existence of these social institutions led Sternberg (1933) to conclude that the Koryak practiced clan exogamy in the past. Antropova (1957:131-38) supported the hypothesis of the existence and then

subsequent disappearance of kin exogamous collectives among the Koryak. The evidence she noted was cited in the works of K. Bauerman (1934) and S. N. Stebnitskii (1938:92). In his analysis of the family kinship terms of the Aliutor Koryak, Stebnitskii found archaic words tracing back, in his opinion, to the epoch in which matriarchy existed.

ESKIMO

Traces of a clan system are quite clear in the social relations of the Asiatic Eskimo until recent times. Menovshchikov, the well-known linguist-eskimologist, detected kin collectives with patriarchal reckoning among the Eskimo of Chaplino, Naukan, and Sireniki. These data were expanded upon and confirmed by another leading eskimologist and archeologist, D. A. Sergeev. As Menovshchikov produced additional evidence of patriarchy among the Eskimo (1962:29-33), Sergeev discovered characteristics reflecting patrilocal exogamous gens organization (1962). Later investigation provided no further confirmation of exogamy among the Eskimo. According to Chlenov (1973:11), the basic social unit of the Asiatic Eskimo as late as the end of the nineteenth century was the endogamous patrilineal commune, which in a later work Krupnik and Chlenov (1979:20) characterized in a more streamlined fashion as the patrilineal kin collective of the clan type.

ITELMEN

The social structure of the Itelmen is known mainly from its description in the works of the participants in the Second Kamchatka Expedition of 1733-43, organized by S. P. Krasheninnikov and G. V. Steller. As far as one can judge from their essays, at that time no exogamous clan collective, neither with matriarchal nor patriarchal calculations of kinship, was manifest among the Itelmen. Steller's observation concerning the settlement of a husband after marriage in the home of his wife's father is probably nothing more than a form of payment in work for marriage, a custom found among many peoples of the world, including those in Northern Siberia. Payment in work for marriage does not signify the existence of matriarchy and a matrilineal form of marriage among Itelmen in the late eighteenth century, but merely individual

vestiges of this type of social organization, to which payment in work for marriage should be ascribed. To identify it with the kinship unit of the inhabitants of the Itelmen forts, as Antropova (1957:140) tried to do, is incorrect. The social basis of such settlements in the period being examined was more likely a family commune of a patriarchal type, and matriarchy can only be spoken of as a vestigial phenomenon.

REINDEER BREEDERS AND MARITIME HUNTERS

Throughout Northeastern Asia, the period between the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth was one in which neighbor-communal relationships began to play a determinant role in the economic and social life of the local ethnic groups. This economic and social process affected all categories of native inhabitants of the region, from reindeer breeders roaming with their herds in the tundra to coastal hunters of sea mammals who settled in villages on the coasts of the Bering Sea and Bering Strait.

The patriarchal family was the primary social basis of the reindeer-breeding nomadic camp of the Chukchi and Koryak. The head of such a nomadic camp among the Chukchi was called the *ermech'yn*, "athlete-elder-official." The composition of the nomadic camp was not stable and sometimes changed in the course of a year. Its social structure also varied. Some nomadic camps consisted of families with few reindeer, who united their herds for joint pasture. In other cases, the families with few reindeer roamed with large reindeer breeders who, to all intents and purposes, acted as shepherds for the latter's herds. For their work as shepherds, the "helpers" (as they were still called) received from the well-to-do reindeer breeders not only reindeer meat but also live calves at the end of the year. The offspring of these calves became their property. Having accumulated a sufficient number of reindeer (100 or more), the worker customarily separated from his former "boss" and began to live independently. Bogoras cites cases in which the "helpers" themselves became owners of significant herds.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, there were some Chukchi who owned thousands of reindeer. Especially large herds pastured in the western Chuktoka area, in upper Omolon, and in the Chaunsk and Indigirka tundras. The observations made about the Reindeer Koryak give an analogous picture of property stratification. There, too, a group of herd owners with sev-

eral thousand reindeer appeared, who used their propertyless kin and neighbors for shepherding.

The nomadic camps were quite stable. These neighboring communes not only roamed along the same defined routes, but also fulfilled a series of social functions, deciding on organizational questions and carrying out festival ceremonies together. According to Bogoras (1934:153):

Among the Reindeer Chukchi, who live in little nomadic camps widely dispersed in the tundra, the nearest nomadic camp represents the only group of people with whom constant intercourse is possible. . . . In the case of some misfortune, the inhabitants of the neighboring nomadic camp would always give help, all the more so, that they for the most part are relatives, or in any case good friends of the victim. Neighboring nomadic camps, when changing pasture, usually follow the same path and thus for a long time preserve their neighboring status. They gather together all furs and hides, and give them to one person to take them for sale to a very distant region. They also gather together for sacrifices and games.

Among the Maritime Chukchi, Koryak, and Asiatic Eskimo, the *baidara artel* (skin-boat team) was the most important economic unit, constituted for and during the entire season of sea mammal hunting. The members of the *baidara artel* hunted together and divided the catch into equal parts. As in the case of the Reindeer Chukchi, the head of the *artel* was generally the eldest of the able-bodied members of the patriarchal family and was known as the *mver-mech'yn*, "boating official," who was, at the same time, the owner of the *baidara*. Characteristically, the members of the *baidara artel* usually lived in one part of the settlement and jointly observed various ceremonial activities connected with the beginning or the ending of the hunting season (Gurvich 1970:415).

The maritime settlement played an organizational role in the productive life of its inhabitants during the time of collective hunting for whales and walrus (Vdovin 1948:197). According to Bogoras (1934:154), the settlement fulfilled not only economic but also social functions, being a neighbor-territorial commune, based "not on family kinship, but on the principle of territorial cohabitation." The role of the head of the settlement was usually filled by the owner of the "main house," which belonged to the family of the founder of the village: "A family, living for many years in one place, has many advan-

tages over others. Complete knowledge of the nearby locales permits it to get out easily by one means or another from various difficulties, even in the most unsuccessful economic year (Gurvich 1970:415). The house of the family that headed the settlement was usually distinguished by the fact that it was situated in front of the other residential buildings, "that is on the right side of a line of houses which here are all turned with their entrances to the sea." However, Bogoras goes on to say that in many Chukchi settlements, "even in the very biggest, there is no main house. In these settlements, all inhabitants are found in an equal position, and houses are dispersed without any order."

On the whole, there are some differences in the evaluations of the various types of neighbor-territorial associations among the peoples and ethnographic groups of Northeast Asia at the turn of this century. Bogoras, for example, considered the nomadic camp of the Reindeer Chukchi and the settlement of the Maritime Chukchi to be the basic social units in this period. Vdovin agreed with Bogoras concerning the Reindeer Chukchi, but cited the *baidara artel* as the basic social cell among the Maritime Chukchi. He even proposed to use the terms "*baidara* commune" and "nomadic camp commune" to describe the Maritime and the Reindeer Chukchi communities, respectively. In any case, the Chukotkan reindeer breeding nomadic camps (and analogous associations of Reindeer Koryak) undoubtedly lacked firmness and continuity, unlike the *baidara artel*, which represented quite a stable social unit.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the importance of the sea hunting industry in Kamchatka and Chukotka increased greatly. The sea hunting fleet was fitted out with American whaleboats, and harpoon guns and firearms were introduced. In these circumstances, the owner of the *baidara* became a significant social figure. He personally disposed of the whalebone, walrus tusks, and hides, although sea mammal meat, as before, was still equally divided among all members of the *artel*. At this time also, the neighborhood commune of the sea hunters lost its former social-economic unity. In parallel with the skin-boat owners and the trade intermediaries, who carried out the traveling trade for a firm or for individual successful entrepreneurs, there emerged a significant strata of propertyless hunters who depended on their wealthy kin and neighbors. Consequently, in the first decade of the twentieth century, property stratification became a characteristic feature of the social life of the Chukchi, Koryak, and Asian Eskimo in the tundra and along the ocean coasts.

NOTES

1. All the quotations from Bogoras (1934) are translated from the Russian text.

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16. *Traditional Culture of the Peoples of the Russian Pacific Coast*

CHUNER M. TAKSAMI

THE PACIFIC COAST REGION OF THE FORMER Soviet Union, now Russia again, is a huge territory extending 4.5 thousand kilometers from north to south and covering more than 3.1 million square miles. This region encompasses the Chukotka, Kamchatka, Amur, and Primorie (Amur maritime region) areas and Sakhalin and Kurile islands. The territory abounds in large lakes and rivers; in some places it has a kilometer of river for each kilometer of territory. Nearly 300 fish species inhabit these waters and the surrounding seas, which are also rich in sea mammals such as seal, walrus, sea-otter, sea-lion, dolphin, and whale, along with crabs, edible mollusks, sea-cabbage, and other useful plants. The richness of the local marine fauna and flora has long since left its distinct imprint on the economic life of the area's population, which includes the Aleut, Ainu, Itelmen, Nivkhi, Nanai, Oroch, Orok, Ulchi, Negidal, Maritime Chukchi and Koryak, Eskimo, Udege, and Maritime Even. Fish was the basic food for many of these peoples, and fishing was therefore their main economic pursuit. In addition, sea mammal hunting was of great importance in the lives of the Eskimo, Aleut, Maritime Koryak, Nivkhi, Ainu, and others.

These economic pursuits led to the establishment of a permanent popu-

lation in which each of the various groups developed a distinctive culture adapted to their specific ecological situation. However, these different cultures have many common elements, which can be attributed to both long-standing ethnocultural contacts and formative processes that were taking place in similar ecological conditions. This chapter is about those common elements, particularly those in the area of spiritual culture.

Soviet scholars, including myself, who have dealt with the culture of fishermen and sea mammal hunters, find that one of its most striking features is its settlement pattern, which survives to the present day. Since ancient times, the population engaging in coastal fishing and sea mammal hunting has resided in the areas that have fed them. Their residence pattern included both permanent winter and summer settlements and was shaped by the natural and climatic conditions and the requirements of their complex economy. As a rule, summer settlements were found in places where people fished salmon and hunted seals. People moved from winter to summer settlements when they changed from fishing to hunting seasons. Only a few groups did not have permanent settlements. Tungus-speakers, for example, had to move continuously with their reindeer, and each time they moved they had to rebuild their tent camps and racks for drying and jerking fish. In the summer fishing areas, people were scattered in small groups to avoid depleting the stock of fish. With their detailed knowledge of the land and its resources, these people observed native principles of ecological conservation. Through trial and error, they accumulated the knowledge and experience they needed to maintain an ecological balance. The economic, social, and cultural development of traditional communities depended directly on the health of the surrounding biosphere. These factors led the inhabitants of these regions to become protective of nature.

Indeed, the traditional worldview of aboriginal people actively promoted the concept of protecting nature. In the view of the Nivkhi people, for example, their surroundings are a big house. People are expected to show respect for clan property—the fishing and hunting grounds of one's own clan or tribe—and to observe the principle of inviolability of the property of their neighbors. Wherever a hunter or a fisherman found himself he was obliged to show the same respect and care for any living, thinking, acting being as he would show to man. This basic idea of universal respect for nature is reflected in the mythology and folklore of the aboriginal population. The ethnic groups we have studied have many myths and oral traditions relating to the protection of nature.

These cultures also share some dwelling designs, means of transportation, clothing, hunting and fishing tools, the practice of preserving fish, and artistic activities. What struck me first was that the Nivkhi, Eskimo, and Aleuts used a toggling harpoon, but the Eskimo people made harpoons of walrus ivory, while the Nivkhi used primarily bone. Similar types of harpoon heads and bone fishing hooks were widespread among almost all of these peoples. In addition, the peoples of the Amur River area and Kamchatka commonly hunted seals with walrus hide nets and wooden hammers.

There are many similarities in the style of fishing nets, tackle, hooks, and weir. All along the sea coast, nets set with long poles were used to catch salmon. Boats made of boards, birchbark, and skins were also widespread. In addition, similar methods were used to preserve fish products, notably drying *iukola* (which provided dried fish jerky), the tradition of storing fat in seal stomachs, and methods of butchering sea mammals. Many peoples along the coast also had similar dietary practices, such as the eating of raw fish.

Dog-breeding played an important role in the complex economies of fishermen and sea-mammal hunters. Judging from the available data, this is an ancient occupation, as indicated by historical documents of the first century A.D. which describe the Lower Amur's population as the "people of the dog kingdom." The written sources of the seventeenth century say the Nivkhi people "have in their *uluses* [settlements] from 500 to 1000 [dogs]." Their centuries-old experience in dog-breeding enabled some peoples to elaborate this complicated technology as well as dog transportation itself. People everywhere stored fish for dog food by drying fish skeletons with the heads on and souring the fish in pits.

The spiritual culture of fishermen and sea mammal hunters and their worldview were closely linked to water, and many of them knew the myth about the "master" and "mistress" of the sea. According to traditional beliefs, oceans, lakes, and seas harbor a wholesome life system structured in the same way as the world of men. According to folklore, the "marine masters" reside in a big house found on the sea bottom that is also the home of seals, walrus-*es*, fish, and other forms of marine life. In the myths of some peoples, for example, those in the Amur river area, the master and mistress of the water, or grey-haired old men alone, are common, whereas most Eskimo myths have a female deity. The master or mistress is usually a wise grey-haired person with a long beard or long hair. But in sculptured depictions they appear in miscellaneous forms, more often than not as animals. For example, the Nivkhi's *tol yz*, "master of water" (*tol chnai*), collected from the Nivkhi people of the Amur

estuary (Chomy village), is a wooden figure with a seal's head wrapped in a piece of seal skin. Another *tol yz* is made of wood in the shape of two seals. That figure was acquired from the Sakhalin Nivkhi (Kiakrvo village).

Since they believed that the world of water was alive, the ancient fishermen and sea mammal hunters elaborated a number of complex ceremonies to appease water with sacrifices. To maintain good relations with the master or mistress of the water local inhabitants made special sacrifices in spring and autumn. When hunting or fishing, they "fed" the master of water by throwing pieces of meat, berries, or roots into the water. In addition, Itelmen, Aleut, Koryak, Ainu, Nivkhi and Orok carried hare amulets to protect themselves from the attack of "sea devils." Itelmen even wore hare-skin fur coats for this purpose. Myths about the master and mistress of water are as widespread in the Pacific North as the myth that depicts the master of water as a killer whale. In their worship of this animal, people made numerous wooden images.

To prepare for the hunt, the Nivkhi people put some fresh shavings of *inau* wood, and some *saran* [??], *ramson* [garlic], nuts, and dried berries into the bows of their boats. When encountering a killer whale, Nivkhi people would say "*ekt pryd*" (they come to beg) and would immediately throw the *inau* and food into the water, believing that the killer whale would then disappear.

A similar tradition was found among the Eskimo, Koryak, Oroch, Orok, and other peoples. According to Nivkhi elders, killer whales often took long trips and did not have enough fire or food. Thus they would come to people for help, and hunters would throw fire and food into the water for them. To express gratitude for this treatment, killer whales would kill other whales, bring big pieces of whale fat to the boats, and throw seals they killed onto shore.

The sea mammal hunters believed that seals could understand human speech and think as people do, and for this reason they did not like to see seals swim close to shore, where they could spy on the people there, listen to their conversations, and pass everything they heard on to other marine animals. This is why hunters were so secretive in preparing their hunting tools and tried not to speak about their hunting plans. Even when actually hunting they spoke to each other in code words. In the past, special hunting rituals and customs were observed both by the hunters themselves and those who remained home. For example, people were not allowed to sweep floors, to sew, or to comb their hair when men were hunting.

Sacrificial vessels with zoomorphic depictions representing birds (loon), fish, and marine animals provide further insight into these beliefs. Some vessels are decorated with paired depictions of animals and fish. The sacrificial dishes used by the Eskimo, Itelmen, and Aleutian peoples were made of wood and bone, and those shaped like a fish or a loon resembled the artifacts of the peoples from the Amur River area.

The folklore of the northern peoples residing along the Pacific coast contains a wealth of information on the fauna and flora of seas, rivers, and lakes. Many folklore texts provide excellent descriptions of the appearance and habits of various animals and fish. A number of peoples have similar narratives, including such nature tales as "Crafty Sable," "Bear and Chipmunk," "Greedy Wood-Grouse," "Why Does the Partridge Have Red Eyelids?" "Crab and Polar Fox Chase," "Legend about Killer-Whale," and "Ivici Plaice." Some of these tales are indigenous to the group whereas others represent borrowings made through long ethnocultural contacts. It is possible that many of the cultural parallels mentioned here have analogues in neighboring territories, a subject that merits further investigation.

17. *Beads at the Crossroads of Continents*

PETER FRANCIS, JR.

BEADS ARE THE UNIVERSAL PERSONAL adornment, the oldest and most widespread form of art. In use since the beginning of the modern human race, they are found among all peoples. The trade in beads and bead materials is ancient. Small, portable, durable, and often highly valued, they have always been part of the cargo of explorers and wandering merchants.

Although relatively isolated, the Alaskans and Siberians were as fond of beads as anyone. Before contact with Europeans, their beads were made of soft stones, bone, ivory and other teeth, shell, and amber. After contact, beads came into the region from many quarters: Venice (Italy), Bohemia (now part of Czechoslovakia), China, and perhaps Central Asia or Russia.

The methodology adopted for the study of the beads found at the "crossroads of the continents" is essentially the same as that used by the Center for Bead Research for beads in an archeological assemblage. It consists of gathering information from historical, ethnohistorical, archeological, and other sources, and combining this with data derived from studying a particular bead assemblage. These data are used to answer questions about the origin of the beads, how they arrived at the site, their use, and their final disposal. In-

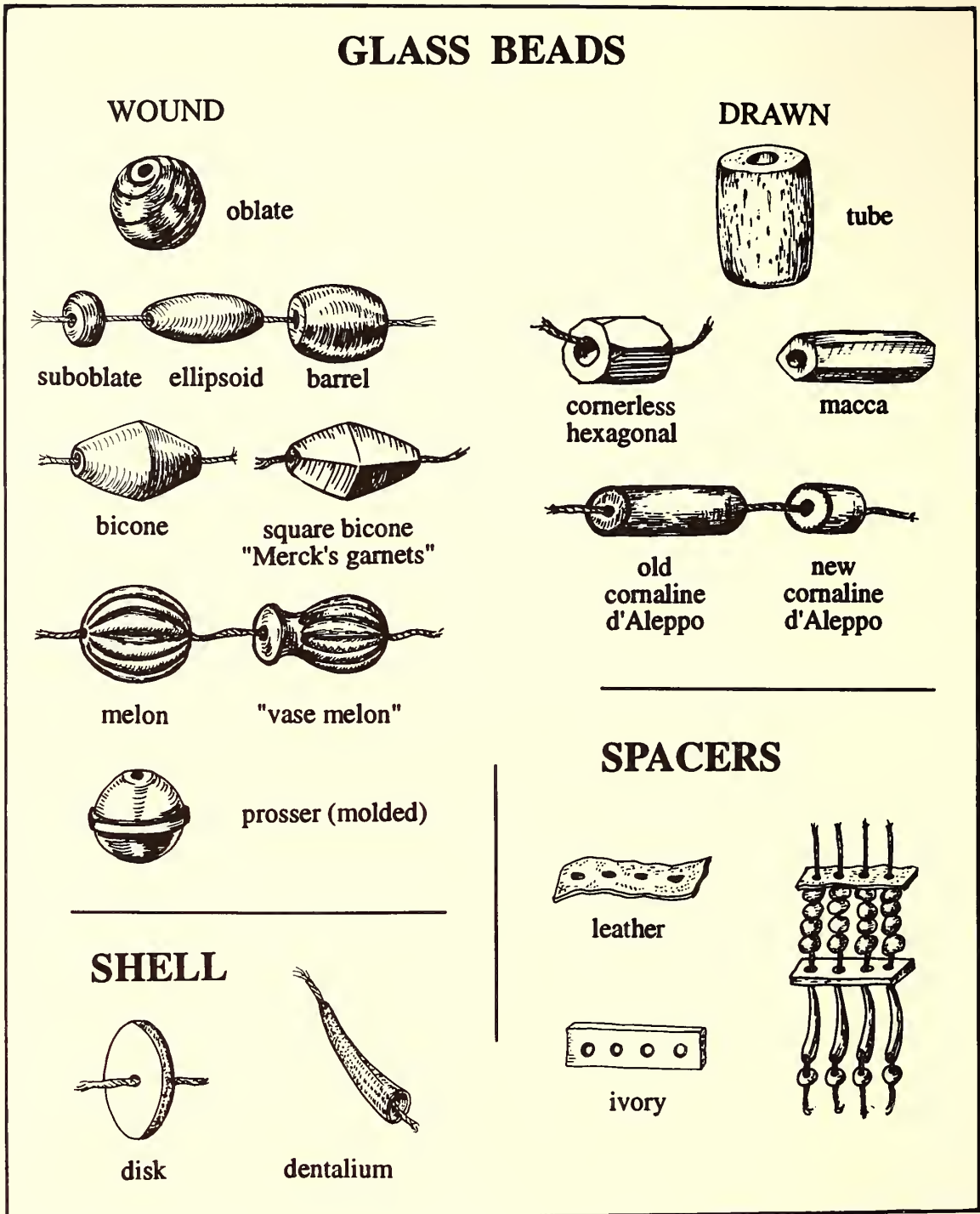


FIGURE 17-1. Bead types in the "Crossroads of Continents" collection. (Artwork by Marcia Bakry, Smithsonian Institution)

formation from a number of related sites gathered in this way can be used to understand the role beads played in past societies.

This is the first time such a method has been applied to ethnographic material. The material referred to in this chapter comes from the "Crossroads of Continents" exhibition and from an earlier study of beads excavated from Reese Bay, Unalaska Island, by Jean S. Aigner of the University of Alaska, Fairbanks (Francis 1987a).

THE ORIGIN OF THE BEADS

The beads under discussion can first be classified according to their composition. The overwhelming number of beads in the exhibition are made of glass (figure 17-1). Since there is no evidence of glass beadmaking in either Alaska or Siberia, we may assume they were all imported. This chapter concentrates mainly on these beads, but many were also made from other materials and were probably of local manufacture.

Most of the nonglass beads are made of organic materials, while others consist of imported objects not originally intended to be used as beads. In addition, there is a brass pendant (CXR fig. 338, AMNH 70-3594) and a plastic bead that is apparently an early amber imitation (CXR fig. 260, MAE 6750-16a).¹

The most common organic material is tooth. The Bering Sea Eskimo belt with 363 caribou front teeth is one of the outstanding items in the exhibition (CXR fig. 296, NMNH 358255). Dall sheep teeth are found on a headband from Point Barrow (CXR fig. 213, NMNH 209841). Ivory was used for spacers (multiply perforated beads used to hold strands apart) in items from the Bering Sea Eskimo (CXR fig. 283, NMNH 16204) and in small carved birds and men on Aleut hunting visors (CXR fig. 411, MAE 2868-40; CXR fig. 204, MAE 2868-82).

Shell is the next most common organic material. Dentalium shells decorate a blue hunting visor from Kodiak (CXR fig. 406, NMNH 74720). Dentalium had long been imported from further south along the coast. G. I. Davydov (1977:149) reported their use in Alaska at the beginning of the last century, while Alexander Rowand (ca. 1841) noted that the shell was much prized at New Archangel and was used as the first labret after piercing the lip (Rowand n.d.:6). Small cubical beads cut from a nacreous shell (and a few

substitutes of translucent stone) are strung on an Aleut hunting visor (CXR fig. 411, MAE 2868-40).

There are also two sets of unidentified beads of a black material. A Kodiak truncated hat features barrel beads of what may be wood (CXR fig. 202, NMNH 90444), and some disc beads on a pair of gloves from the Even of Siberia are possibly jet (CXR fig. 300, AMNH 70-5601H).

Three objects that were not manufactured as beads but that the Siberians adapted to that purpose are cartridge butts, used as pendants on a pair of earrings by the Chukchi (woman) (CXR fig. 36, AMNH 70-7267a,b); navy buttons on a Chukchi necklace from Mariinsky Post (CXR fig. 325, AMNH 70-7435); and some ribbed or segmented brass tubes with one end enlarged on an Even pouch from Markovo (CXR fig. 34, AMNH 70-56). These are all brass objects and may be assumed to have been Russian made. The use of flotsam and jetsam from industrial (or even pre-industrial) Europe as ornaments by other peoples is well attested. Several such examples were cited by early European explorers in America (Francis 1986a), and several modern examples have been recorded in the pages of *National Geographic* in the past two decades (Francis 1987b).

ORIGIN OF THE GLASS BEADS

Glass beads have long been made throughout the world. Some centers (in the Middle East and West Africa) produced beads only for local consumption, whereas others (in Europe and Asia) had an active trade in beads and were potential sources for those in the "Crossroads of Continents" exhibition.

Although India has been a major glass beadmaker for millennia (Francis 1982), no beads of Indian origin have been identified in the collection. We do know, however, that Indian glass beads were used late in the Russian trade in Alaska. "Indian glass beads" as well as "glass beads" were among the articles sold by the Russian American Company from its Sitka headquarters when it sold out to Hutchinson and Hurth of San Francisco in 1867 (Oswalt 1980: 154).

China, the other great glass beadmaker of Asia, has been exporting glass beads nearly as long as India (Francis 1986b), although at one time this was disputed (Van der Sleen 1967:99). There has also been some debate about whether Chinese beads ever went to Alaska, with de Laguna (1956:62), Chu

and Chu (1973:138), Liu (1975:14), and Ross (1975:3-4) taking the affirmative and Woodward (1967:14-19), Sorensen (1971:15), and Jenkins (1975:6) the negative.

Three accounts of two events during Vitus Bering's 1741 voyage indicate that Chinese glass beads were indeed introduced into Alaska more than two centuries ago. Sofron Khitrov and Sven Waxel (Golder 1922:99, 272), both recorded that when Khitrov and G. W. Steller landed at Kayak Island, they found a hut that had been hastily abandoned from which they took a basket, a shovel, and a stone with some copper stains on it. Later, at Bering's insistence, Khitrov returned and left "16½ arshins of green material, 2 iron knives, 20 Chinese strings of beads, 2 iron pipes for smoking Chinese tobacco, called 'shar'" (Golder 1922:99). The log book, apparently written by Kharlam Yushin, of Bering's ship, the *St. Peter*, records that Bering ordered presents to be handed down to men in a *baidara* (open boat) near the ship. These consisted of "4½ arshins of red cloth, 2 mirrors, 3 strings of Chinese beads, small bells" (Golder 1922:147).

The Russians bought beads from China and were eager to do so. According to William Coxe's (1780:241) account of trade at the Siberian-Mongolian post of Kiakhta (Maimatschin to the Chinese), the Russians were allowed to import a few products without duty, including "glass beads, corals."

Later traders, such as the American Fur Company, bought beads for Alaska and the Northwest Coast from Canton (Porter 1931:461, 539; see also Woodward 1967:18-19). The fact that explorers to the region were unfamiliar with the trade beads suggests that the beads were not of European origin. As Captain Cook described them,

They were in possession of iron and a few sky blue beads such as have been before mentioned. These they seemed to value very much, and I had some difficulty to purchase two or three to satisfy my self [*sic*] whether they were glass or made of some substance they might have amongst themselves. (Beaglehole 1967:365)

The bead most certainly of Chinese origin was highly valued all along the American Northwest Coast and in Siberia. It was usually light blue and opaque, although its color might vary. These blue beads, James King (Captain Cook's companion) wrote, were "the most certain proofs" that the peoples of this region had "a frequent supply of articles belonging to civiliz'd Nations . . . ; these of which they set a very great value, have not the good shape of

English beads, but are manufactured by some nation ruder in this art than ourselves, they are about the size of a large current berry & intended to be (but are not) round" (Beaglehole 1967:1418).

It is not clear precisely how the beads were made beyond the fact that winding was used—a technique in which a bit of hot glass is twirled up an iron rod or mandrel. The beads appear to have no traces of a perforation deposit (Francis 1983). Small "peaks" on the end are similar to those on Chinese glass beads made by dripping hot glass onto a bamboo rod (Chu and Chu 1973), but such "peaks" are also present on beads made in a furnace or by the lamp-winding technique (personal observation and experimentation).

De Laguna (1947:138, 1956:60–62, 211) has named this blue bead the "Cook type," because Cook saw them at Prince William Sound before the Russians arrived. They have been excavated from early Russian contact sites in Alaska, including Reese Bay (Francis 1987a:4–5), Three Saints Bay Colony (Clark 1985:114, 120), and Pedro Bay (Townsend and Townsend 1961:48–49). These are the beads demanded by the natives at Unalaska (King in Beaglehole 1967:1424), Prince William Sound (Cook in Beaglehole 1967:346), Kodiak (Sauer 1802:177), in the Columbia River Basin (Lewis 1814:84), and by the Yakutat Tlingit (de Laguna 1972:445). They were one of the few trade items carried by the *promyshleniki* (Bancroft 1886:205, n.6).

In the "Crossroads" collection, the bead is found on two artifacts gathered in the 1840s, on three collected between 1897 and 1902, and one in the 1920s. Two of the four later examples have beads that have clearly been reused, and this bead is given a place of honor on the object, most notably as the two rows of beads on the caribou teeth belt (CXR fig. 296, NMNH 358255).

Taking second place to these blue beads was a very similar opaque white bead. These white beads are less frequent in excavations and appear to have been valued less (Francis 1987a:4–5, 11). Only three in the exhibition were collected in the period 1897 to 1902.

Several other wound beads may also be Chinese, judging from their appearance and the fact that they do not occur at other North American sites. They include large (up to 1.5 centimeters in diameter) translucent blue oblates and elliptical beads, similar beads in amber-colored glass, and smaller blue oblates made in a series of four and later cut apart into singles and doublets. These were collected in the 1840s through the 1920s. On material collected in the late 1800s, however, Chinese-type beads occur only on Siberian

objects, many of which come from areas near China. These include various colored beads on a pouch from Kamchatka (CXR fig. 423, AMNH 70-1951) and unusual melon and vase-melon beads on a Koryak hairband (CXR fig. 299, AMNH 70-3590)

Most of the beads in the exhibition are not Chinese but European in origin. Many European countries have had glass bead industries for the past few hundred years, but they have been insignificant except for those of Venice, Italy, and Jablonec, Bohemia.

The Russians have made glass beads as well. The polymath M. V. Lomonosov (1711–65) set up a bead factory at Ust' Ruditskii in 1753. Despite high hopes and ample equipment, it stopped bead production within a couple of years and began making mosaic tiles (Menshutkin 1952:96–99). In the 1880s beads were being made around Moscow. Although they were said to have been locally consumed, the output for 1881—162,000 pounds (73,636 kilograms)—suggests at least some sales outside the immediate vicinity (Anonymous 1885). The beads on a Chukchi necklace collected in 1902 (CXR fig. 325, AMNH 70-7435) were made in series and later cut apart, a method used in Bukhara (Uzbekistan) before 1917 (Francis 1979a: 7–9).

The main source for the beads in the “Crossroads” collection was probably Venice. Most of these beads were made by the drawing method in which a tube of glass is pulled or drawn out and then cut into small segments, which are heated to round them off. The most common product of this technique is the small (2–4 millimeters in diameter) monochrome drawn “seed” bead, the foundation of the Venetian industry. These beads are found on a great many pieces in the exhibition, as well as in the earliest Russian contact sites that have been excavated.

Another Venetian drawn bead is a long, black hexagonal tube, known as a “macca” bead in the trade. The process for making this type was invented by Lorenzo Graziati in 1860 (Carroll 1917:20). Another group of Venetian beads, called “cornaline d'Allepo,” have a core of one color of glass and a red exterior. The earliest of these have translucent green (and less often blue, brown, or clear) cores with opaque brownish red exteriors, sometimes coated with a thin clear layer. By about 1830 gold was used to make the outer coat translucent red and the inner layer was usually opaque white. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the translucent red was being colored with selenium (Francis 1988:26).

The other great European beadmaker was Bohemia. Its most popular product in Alaska and Siberia was a drawn bead of hexagonal section that had its 12 corners ground down. These cornerless hexagonals come in two styles: a large (about 1 centimeter in diameter) monochrome with roughly cut ends and a smaller type with a white inner layer and nicely finished ends (Francis 1988:39-40).

Two ornaments, a button clasp on a Chukchi bracelet (CXR fig. 325, AMNH 70-7455) and a blue bead on a necklace from Nunivak (CXR fig. 324, NMNH 340331), were made by the process named after the Prosser brothers, who invented a technique for making small glass objects through the application of pressure. The method, introduced in the 1840s, has been used in several European countries, but Bohemia is usually considered to have been the major producer (Francis 1988:49).

A final Bohemian bead is on a pair of Bering Sea Eskimo earrings (CXR fig. 299, NMNH 340332). It is a translucent red cornerless pentagonal mold-ed bead with the flash (the extra material squeezed out at a seam) poorly ground off. Molding, often combined with grinding, was a Bohemian specialty.

IMPORTATION AND TRADE

Beads came to the North Pacific region by many means, some of which can be documented historically. The Russians dominated trade on the Siberian side, where many individuals and companies competed against each other for trade (Gibson 1987:39). The records of these enterprises have not even begun to be explored for information on the bead trade. The Russians also opened the bead trade on the Alaska side, and beads entering the trade from 1741 until about 1810 were probably handled by them.

At first, beads and other goods were brought overland through Siberia. Later, round-the-world voyages leaving from St. Petersburg supplemented the overland trade. Both routes were long and arduous, and travel along them was expensive. Much of the overland route depended on trade with China at Kiakhta, on the Russian-Mongolian border, where the Russians exchanged furs for Chinese products, including beads. At times, the Chinese arbitrarily closed the border, most notably between 1785 and 1792. In this period, G. I. Shelikhov, the founder of the Russian American Company, laid plans to do business directly with Macau, a Portuguese enclave in southern China near

Hong Kong, but this does not seem to have borne fruit (Okun' 1951:34; Tikhmenev 1979:20).

Alternatives were necessary. Soon after the establishment of the Russian American Company in 1799, the governor of the Alaskan colony, A. A. Baranov, privately contracted with Yankee (mostly Bostonian) skippers to supply the colony. They brought Chinese and European goods and took Alaskan furs to sell in China. The first ship was scheduled to arrive in Sitka in 1807, but was shipwrecked before it finished its voyage (Khlebnikov 1973:61-64). After that, such contacts were frequent.

More official contacts began in 1810 when J. J. Astor's American Fur Company was allowed to trade with Alaska (Khlebnikov 1973:77-78). In 1839 the Hudson's Bay Company was allowed to enter the trade (Gibson 1976:157, 201). These contacts became increasingly important. Between 1797 and 1820 the sale of furs to China via American ships amounted to 22.3 percent of the total trade through Kiakhta (computed from Tikhmenev 1978:153, 163). From 1867, of course, trade was almost entirely in American hands.

These multiple sources for Alaskan trade beads have led to some confusion. Much of the bead literature concerning Alaska (Jenkins 1972, 1975; Morgan 1973; Mille 1975) has been based on private collections. One common point of confusion is that many collectors call the cornerless hexagonal bead "the Russian bead." These beads are certainly not Russian made, and the evidence from the material in this exhibition suggests that the Russians rarely even handled them. Of the 12 occurrences in this exhibition, only 2 are from Siberia, both from the early twentieth century. Although Woodward said these beads were part of the stock of the Russian American Company in Sitka (1967), the list of goods sold to Hutchinson and Hurth in 1867 included only "glass beads" and "Indian glass beads" (Oswalt 1980:154). Neither phrase seems to describe these beads, believed to have been called "cut beads" when the American Fur Company sold them for the rather steep price of 37½¢ per dozen (Good 1983:165).

NAMES OF THE BEADS

The Russian literature uses primarily two words for beads. One is *bisery* (singular *biser*), which means "bead" in Russian and was used mostly for small drawn beads. The other is *korol'ki* (singular *korolek*), derived from the word for

coral (*korall*) and used mostly for larger beads (see Ramsay 1981:110).

Three other words are also used for beads: pearl, enamel, and garnet. The first is widely used for bead in many languages (such as German and French), although on one occasion Davydov applied it to dentalium shell (1977:149). "Enamel" was once commonly employed as a synonym for glass.

The term "garnet" was frequently used by Carl Merck, a scion of the pharmaceutical family and a member of the Billings expedition of the early 1790s. He sometimes qualified the term and spoke of "melted garnets" or "glass garnets." Although he used the words "bead" and "coral" as well, he appears to have distinguished between all three terms: "The favored items for which they bartered their own merchandise were blue, and more seldom white glass garnets. Less eagerly they sought corals of the same color. They well knew how to select corals of equal value" (Merck 1980:123). Beads made of natural garnets are translucent, whereas corals are not; moreover, garnets are often faceted. No faceted translucent glass beads are found at the early Russian contact sites (Francis 1987a), but beads of this description are found in the "Crossroads of Continents" exhibition. They are made of translucent red or blue glass and have been wound and then paddled into crude square bicones. Only the white (probably clear) garnets mentioned by Merck are not in the collection. Similar beads were only rarely found at American sites from 1700 to 1890 (Brain 1979:111, type WIIA7).

THE MECHANICS OF THE BEAD TRADE

A recent survey of the early exploration literature in the Americas has revealed that beads were transferred from the Europeans to the natives by several means. In the earliest contacts, beads were among the gifts used to make friends and get around the timidity of the natives. Later, gifts were given only as marks of esteem, and bartering became very common, with beads becoming a quasi currency (Francis 1986a:33-36).

A similar pattern can be seen in the Alaskan context. Vitus Bering must have anticipated considerable use for beads. When S. Glotov and J. Malevinskoy retrieved the remains of the *St. Peter* from Bering Island 20 years after the ship's fatal wreck, they found "several thousand beads" (Coxe 1780:107). Like the explorers who left beads in an abandoned hut on Kayak Island in 1741, Jan Ribault left beads by an abandoned campfire along the South Car-

olina coast in 1582, “for to hang them at their ears and neck(s), and to give them to their wives and children” (Hakluyt 1582:G2 verso). The passing down of beads to natives in watercraft who would not board the European ships recalls schemes along the Maine coast in 1607 described by John Davis (Burrage 1906:402–3; see also Francis 1986a:34).

By the time the Cook expedition reached Alaska, trading was already well established, and the natives sought beads, tobacco, knives, and pieces of iron. Samwell at Cook Inlet recorded getting “Darts and other Things,” King at Unalaska mentioned “fresh & dried berriesk” and Clerke at English Bay said, “for a few Beads we might purchase of the Natives almost any Quantity of dried fish we please, either Salmon or Halibut” (Beaglehole 1967:1121, 1337, 1442). Nor were foodstuffs the only thing for sale. Edger remarked that at English Bay some men went to a nearby bay where “the Women are pleasingly fair & kind in all respects, granting you favours very freely for a hand of Tobacco or a half a Dozen Beads” (Beaglehole 1967:1351).

The Cook expedition also found an internal network of trade among the natives. The English reached Prince William Sound before the Russians, but the popular light blue wound beads were already there, no doubt as a result of regional exchange.

Various motives lay behind the trade between Europeans and natives. The 1788 voyage of S. G. Izmailov and D. I. Bocharov bartered beads for fur, a boy to serve as an interpreter, and an old anchor (Shelikhov 1981:84, 96, 102); on the other side, the beads were sought by a man who wanted some for his wife (Beaglehole 1967:85).

The natives were better traders than the English: “yet our men make very bad bargains, which is certainly owing to their own faults in spoiling the market . . . for the Natives have Phlegm enough to keep up the price of their goods, & we are endued with little patience” (King in Beaglehole 1967:1442). The Russians were better traders and sometimes keen observers. Father Ivan Veniaminov described trade on Unalaska between 1824 and 1834. The seller chose a young man to go to another native or a visitor and offer goods for exchange. The youth would return with the proffered swap, but might have to make another trip or so before a bargain was reached. Although he might be known, the name of the man initiating the trade was never mentioned (Veniaminov 1984:212).

It seems as though the natives set the demand for goods, at least after trading had been established. Glotov and Malevinsky at Kodiak Island in

1763 noted, "[The natives] did not set the least value upon goods of various kinds, such as shirts, linen, and nankeen, but demanded glass beads of different colours, for which they exchanged their skins with pleasure" (Coxe 1780:113-14).

In time, demands changed. Very early, the natives looked for pieces of iron that could be worked into knives (Beaglehole 1967:346). Firearms were quickly appreciated, but the Russians would not trade them. The Americans and British did not mind, however, and thereby gained an advantage over the Russians, much to the annoyance of Baranov (Khlebnikov 1973:28-29). After Bering introduced tobacco, it, too, came into demand. At Unalaska, tobacco was preferred to "all other things" (King in Beaglehole 1967:1442), and on the Billings expedition it was "an article of the greatest necessity among them" (Sarychev 1806:38). Another addictive substance that also became popular was alcohol. By 1861 the historian P. A. Tikhmenev (1978:438) would say about Nunivak and Univak: "They buy only manufactured goods that are strictly necessary for home use. They also buy beads, but their favorite barter is for firearms and alcohol." Even popular taste changed. Tikhmenev (1978:425) said of Bristol Bay: "Beads, formerly much used, are bartered now only in small quantities and only red, black, and white ones of large size."

THE USES OF THE BEADS

The uses of beads are legion. They most commonly adorn the human body but are also used to decorate other objects. Moreover, they serve many other functions in the sociotechnic and idio technic realms of behavior.

Even the uses of beads for personal decoration may stem from many motives. Beads may indicate social status, may mark important life stages, or may be treated like amulets, talismans, or social markers.

For the most part, information on these secondary uses is unfortunately lost to us. Although many early explorers of the North Pacific described the application of beads in detail, none attempted to discover what the various beads meant to the natives. With the passage of time and only the beaded objects left, it is now difficult to say what particular beads or combinations of them may have meant. That there were patterns of use is clear from the esteem accorded certain beads (such as the light opaque blue bead discussed ear-

lier) and from the recurring color combinations, particularly the blue, white, and black combination so common with the small seed beads. This combination was especially popular in Siberia. The exhibition features 11 Siberian objects decorated entirely or largely with it. It is particularly prominent on objects such as the shaman's hat.

Beads were available to decorate nearly any class of objects. One of the most important was clothing—including men's hunting visors and other caps, belts, coats, jackets, aprons, boots (such as the pair meant for a burial [CXR fig. 341, AMNH 70-2887a,b]), gloves, and fur caps.

Beads were also used in jewelry, especially earrings, but also labrets, bracelets, head bands, braids, and hat ornaments. Beads in necklaces were rare on the Alaska side, at least. The literature shows that they were never worn by the Aleut (Francis 1987a), except on Kodiak (Merck 1980:103; Sauer 1802:pl. vi). No necklaces in the exhibition were collected before 1901.

In addition, beads decorated objects used for the hunt, such as seal scratchers, lures, fishing boards, and quivers (e.g., CXR fig. 67, FM 14937). Reindeer saddles and saddlebags were decorated with beads. Household objects included wooden boxes, mostly used by the men for their tobacco, pipes, bowls, and pouches. For children, beads decorated cradles and dolls. For ritual or ceremonial purposes, women's and men's dance masks were decorated with beads, and the exceptional beaded dance headdress (CXR fig. 48, NMNH 90453) must have been made for some special ceremony as well. In the realm of the supernatural, the shaman's hat (CXR fig. 333, AMNH 70-387) and the Sun Worm charm (CXR fig. 338, AMNH 70-3594) both have a variety of beads, but the charm bundle has only two beads, one a plastic imitation of amber and the other a Bohemian molded glass bead.

Beads could be socially valuable. Sarychev (1806:39) recounted that Billings had given a woman on Unalaska a large amount of tobacco and beads because she had been most helpful. Upon their return the next year (1791), the expedition learned "that she had become an object of universal envy among her female country-women, and was esteemed the richest of all inhabitants." Billings described a beaded ornament considered precious:

In their ears they have various perforations, in which they wear a multitude of bead decorations: two or three rows of such beads under the ears. They obtain these decorations from the land of Aliaska (the Peninsula), and it is

considered so precious that formerly they used to sell for such a pair of earrings a girl or a woman in eternal slavery. (Titova 1980:201).

The prestige of certain beads, which reflected upon their owners, is evident from several pieces in the exhibition. The most striking single piece is the belt of caribou front teeth from the Bering Sea Eskimo (CXR fig. 296, NMNH 358255). Only one type of bead, the opaque wound blue bead, was worthy of being put on this belt, which attests to the killing of 363 adult animals. The importance of this piece has long been recognized. When Evans bought it from Ye Olde Curiosity Shop run by J. E. Stanley in Seattle in 1938, it had two tags, apparently written by Stanley, which say: (1) "Very fine war trophy of the hunt. Wampum belt. It took 363 caribou to make this belt." And (2) "Very finest we have ever had in 20 years. Has old rare blue wampum trading beads. \$125." The beads are not wampum, which were shell beads in circulation in the Northeast, nor is this a wampum belt, but its importance was understood, even if its meaning was somewhat confused.

The importance of beads can also be seen in their recycling. The opaque blue wound bead, which was probably out of circulation by the early nineteenth century, is found on pieces collected as late as the 1920s. In several cases, it has clearly been given a place of honor on the piece (CXR fig. 325, AMNH 70-6620; CXR fig. 296, NMNH 358255). This process is even more evident in the small drawn seed beads.

The seed beads on the earliest collected objects are similar to those found in excavations of early Russian contact sites. They are irregular in diameter and length. The blues vary greatly in both hue and diaphanity. The whites are nearly all cased with a clear layer of glass, a bead type popular in America from about 1600 to 1890 (Brain 1979:105).

Later beads are much more uniform; their diameters and lengths are quite regular. The blue beads are a strong, opaque blue, and the whites are no longer cased in clear glass. This uniformity can be attributed to two inventions in Venice in 1867. Carlo Romiti and Viovanni Sola improved the automatic tube-cutting machine invented in 1822 by Captain Long (Morazzoni et al. 1953:53-54; Gasparetto 1958:198, n. 48); and Guissepe Zecchin and Agostino Ceresa built a mechanical sorter made of sieves of different sizes (Gasparetto 1958:198). At the same time, glassmakers had been able to improve the quality and uniformity of their colors (Francis 1988:20-21).

When older seed beads were reused, they were usually kept separate

from the newer beads. On the Even apron (CXR fig. 270, AMNH 70-5601F), the top one of two beaded panels was cut from another garment and sewed on. On an Even pouch (CXR fig. 34, AMNH 70-5623c), the older white beads are all at the bottom, while on a Bering Sea Eskimo pipe (CXR fig. 315, NMNH 176304), the older beads are all near the bowl. It may be argued that reusing a perfectly good beaded panel saves time and energy and that mixing older with newer beads would disturb the uniformity of the latter. From what we know of Siberian and Alaskan traditions, however, it is safe to assume that these are examples of the conservation of old objects and their reuse in an honored position.

Beads that may have been accidentally broken in half were also reused. Most large beads attached to objects without being sewn appear to be broken; this is clearly the case with a throwing board (CXR fig. 193, MAE 593-67), two labrets (CXR fig. 283, NMNH 37663 and NMNH 38800), and probably a tobacco box (CXR fig. 321, MAE 956-65a). The conservation of even broken beads shows that Siberians and Alaskans had high regard for beads.

THE FINAL TRANSFER OF THE BEADS

The term "transfer" is used here to refer to the act by which beads leave the systemic or living context to enter the archeological or ethnographic contexts. With respect to beads in archeological assemblages, we try to determine whether they were transferred through purposeful disposition, disposal, loss, or abandonment. These categories do not apply to ethnographic collections, in which it is known when, where, by whom, and from whom a given object was obtained.

One question that may be explored in regard to ethnographic collections is how long a given bead may have been in circulation. This may be estimated by noting the time between the first known production of a certain bead and the first ethnographically collected example of it. Several factors may affect the length of this period, including how long it took for a given new bead to be introduced into the Alaskan-Siberian trade and the conservatism of the natives. At present, we have no way of separating the relative effects of these factors. Indeed, inquiry along these lines is new, and our remarks here are to be considered preliminary.

However, if we look at the earliest known date for certain beads or bead-

TABLE 17-1. Time Lags between the Earliest Manufacturing Dates and Earliest Collecting Dates of Beads in the Crossroads of Continent Exhibition

Bead Type	Earliest Date	First Collected	Lag (in years)
1. Mandrel pressed	1820	1901	81
2. Cornerless hexagonals	1819	1884	65
3. New cornaline d'Allepo	1830	1884	54
4. Prosser beads	1840	1901	61
5. Macca beads	1860	1884	24
6. New seed beads	1867	1884	17
7. Selenium red glass	1880(?)	1884	4

making processes and compare it to the first date at which they were collected in the North Pacific region, we may estimate the length of time the bead was in circulation (table 17-1). Seven bead types may be used in this analysis because of their known dates of introduction into the worldwide bead market:

1. Beads with conical holes and slightly broken entrances around the smaller aperture, sometimes called "mandrel pressed" beads. They were made in Bohemia (Francis 1988:38-39). Earliest date, 1820; first collected, 1901; time lag, 81 years.
2. Cornerless hexagonals, made by drawing hexagonal tubes and grinding off the 12 corners, mostly Bohemian. First known, before 1820; first collected, 1884; time lag, about 65 years.
3. Translucent red on opaque white cornaline d'Allepo beads, Venetian in origin (Francis 1988:26). First known, 1830; first collected, 1884; time lag, 54 years.
4. Prosser beads, made by the process patented by Richard and Thomas Prosser in the United Kingdom and the United States in 1840 and 1841, respectively, and improved by Jean-Felix Bapterosses over the next few decades (Francis 1988:49). First known, 1840; first collected, 1901; time lag, 61 years.

5. Macca beads, drawn beads with hexagonal sections, invented in Venice by Lorenzo Graziati (Carroll 1917:20). First known, 1860; first collected 1884; time lag, 24 years.
6. Blue and white seed beads of uniform size and color. First known, about 1867; first collected, 1884; time lag, 17 years.
7. Selenium was first widely used to make translucent red glass in place of gold in Venice (Francis 1988:26). First used about 1880; first collected, 1884; time lag, 4 years.

The average time lag in these cases is 43.5 years, which seems a significant amount of time. Note, however, that there is a considerable difference in the time lags between the first four cases and the last three.

Beads made before 1840 took on average 65 years to first enter ethnographic collections, while those made after 1860 took only 15 years. This considerable difference calls for some explanation. Better transportation, perhaps linked to the purchase of Alaska by the United States, may account for some of this difference. As we have already seen, however, by 1860 there was a marked change in the demands for beads by the natives, who no longer held beads in such high esteem as before and no longer demanded the traditionally favored beads. Thus, the demands of an increasingly disintegrating native society must have played an important role in this change.

CONCLUSION

As already mentioned, the study of a single collection or assemblage of beads rarely answers all of the questions we may have concerning beads. However, a particularly interesting question that the "Crossroads of Continents" exhibition made it possible to investigate concerns the dynamics of the bead trade between two alien cultures (Europe and Siberia–Alaska). Whereas evidence of the bead trade in the early years of European penetration into the Americas (Francis 1986a) is haphazard and scattered, the Alaska–Siberia region provides almost a "laboratory" situation in which to pursue this question. This region was one of the last to be explored by Europeans, and by then literacy was much more widespread in Europe than it had been in the days of Columbus. One need only compare the evidence available from the Cook or Billings ex-

pedition with that available from Drake, de Soto, or Cortez to see the difference. Moreover, the region, controlled by two of the world's most powerful nations, has been treated to significant archeological, ethnographic, and historical studies.

The beads in the region indicate that the pattern of trade was similar to that seen in the rest of the Americas. The first explorer, Vitus Bering, was well stocked with beads, as was Columbus 250 years before, having had experience in the West African trade. Early contacts included beads given away as tokens of friendship, and instances in which beads were left in an abandoned hut and handed down into boats recall scenes along the Atlantic coasts much earlier. Increasingly, beads were used for simple barter and later assumed the role of a quasi currency. As older beads became scarce or devalued, the Europeans introduced new types.

While the broad outlines of the bead trade were similar in all parts of America, the details differed significantly. Although the early explorers in much of the Americas treated beads in a condescending manner, calling them "toys," "trifles," and even "trash," the Russians, with centuries of trading experience behind them, were more practical-minded. On the other hand, the Russians, like their counterparts elsewhere, did not introduce especially fine or expensive beads; there has not, for example, been a single example of a chevron bead found in any of the material considered here.

The attitudes of the natives can only be discerned from the artifacts and the Russians' secondhand reporting to guide us. That glass beads were highly prized is clear; they quickly replaced those made of traditional natural materials. The high rate of broken beads, compared with lost or abandoned ones, suggests the heavy curating of valued articles. Their high value is also attested by the formation of internal bead networks run by the natives themselves. Such networks also grew up elsewhere: Merriwether Lewis discussed them in the Columbia River Valley and they are known in Africa. But no known cases of such internal trade networks are as extensive or reported as early as the one Cook found along the Alaskan coast.

Another point to note is that beads suffered a steady and rather steep fall from grace in the lives of the natives. When beads first reached the region, they became extremely valuable—a few strands of what were probably seed beads made into a pair of earrings was enough to buy a woman on Unalaska. Although this ornament was devalued by the 1780s, the large gift of beads from Billings to a native woman made her very wealthy. Members of both the

Cook and Billings expeditions made liberal use of beads for bartering, but they also found an increasing demand for iron, tobacco, and later for alcohol and arms.

By the 1860s, the historian Tikhmenev noted less demand for beads, but at the same time a demand for a greater variety of beads. From this period on, we see a much greater range of beads in use among the artifacts gathered in the "Crossroads of Continents" exhibition.

The changes in bead styles and their acceptance is a significant phenomenon. Many factors must have been involved, beginning with changes in the people supplying beads. From 1740 to 1810, the trade in the region was a Russian monopoly. From 1811 to 1839, Americans shared in the trade, and from 1839 to 1867, the British joined in as well. After 1867, Americans dominated in Alaska, while Russians continued to control the trade in Siberia. When supply begins to exceed demand for the traditional (often the first-introduced) beads, suppliers often try to introduce new beads to renew demand. This appears to have been the role of the popular cornerless hexagonals, which were introduced to the area late in Russian times or early in the American period.

Although changes in the supply side must not be ignored, changes in the attitudes of the customers were also important. As long as the Eskimo, Aleut, and Siberians remained conservative in their outlook, their selection of traditional beads was not likely to change, nor did it. But a century of contact with the often harsh white man, the increased addiction to alcohol and tobacco, and the loss of their freedom and land naturally took their toll.

The decline in traditional native culture is a well-documented fact. The hypothesis I wish to introduce here is that this decline may be reflected in the bead assemblage. Disdain for traditional beads and a greater willingness to use new and novel beads results in a greater variety of beads and a much shorter time lag between the introduction of a new type and its acceptance.

NOTES

1. "CXR" refers to the catalogue, *Crossroads of Continents: Cultures of Siberia and Alaska* (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988). It is followed by the museum catalogue number: NMNH = National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution; MAE = Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, St. Petersburg; AMNH = American Museum of Natural History, New York; and FM = Field Museum, Chicago.

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PART 3. *Interactions: Trade, War,
and Peace*

18. *Interethnic Ties in Far Northeastern Siberia*

IL'IA S. GURVICH

TRADITIONAL INTERETHNIC RELATIONS provide important clues to the character of linguistic and ethnic contacts in Far Northeastern Asia before that area became part of the Russian state. At the time of the first Russian contact, Chukotka, Kamchatka, and the adjacent Okhotsk coast and Yakutia were a vast territory populated by diverse ethnic communities. According to a map of the distribution of ethnic groups, tribes, and peoples of Siberia in the seventeenth century prepared by B. O. Dolgikh (1960), a prominent specialist on Siberia, the continental area from the lower Lena river to the Anadyr Basin was occupied by Yukaghir tribes; the inner part of Chukotka by Reindeer Chukchi; the Arctic and Pacific coasts of Chukotka by Maritime and Reindeer Chukchi and Asiatic Eskimo; the inner areas of the northern and middle parts of Kamchatka by Reindeer Koryak; the eastern and western coasts of Kamchatka and the Okhotsk sea coast up to Okhotsk city by Maritime Koryak; and the continental areas adjoining them by Lamuts (now called Even). The population of the Northeast was distinctive not only linguistically but also in its method of subsistence, material and spiritual culture, and way of life.

It was probably long before the arrival of the first Russians that the basic economic-cultural types had taken shape in this territory. Sedentary popula-

tions of the Chukchi, Bering, and Okhotsk sea coasts—that is, the Reindeer Chukchi, Koryak, and Eskimo—had learned to subsist on walrus, seals, and whales; nomadic Chukchi and Koryak reindeer-breeders relied on their domesticated reindeer; and the Yukaghir hunters and fishermen hunted wild reindeer as they moved from forest to tundra and fished. In fact, each ethnic community was adapted to a specific ecological niche that enabled it to survive in the harsh environment of northeastern Siberia (Krupnik 1988:183–91).

We may wonder then how different forms of intertribal and interethnic communication developed and how ties between these ethnic communities became established under those conditions. Further, what factors caused groups to move beyond the boundaries of their ecological niches? This problem is central to our understanding of the character of the ancient ethnic processes and relationships, not only at the margins of Asia but also in the northwestern regions of North America. The ethnographical literature, especially the recently published documents of the geographical expeditions to northeastern Asia in the first half of the eighteenth century, throw some light on these questions (Anonymous 1978; Lindenau 1983).

Documents from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as well as more recent records indicate that four forms of interethnic relationships were established in the area: (1) economy-oriented expeditions into the territories of neighbors, (2) traditional and semiregular exchanges with neighbors, (3) mute exchange and fairs, and (4) military expeditions, internecine disputes, and slavery.

ECONOMY-ORIENTED EXPEDITIONS

To overcome the narrowness of mastered ecological niches, people often hunted, fished, and organized other economy-oriented expeditions into the territories of their neighbors. Because of the climatic conditions, the inhabitants of each of the northeastern ecological niches and ethnographical regions frequently experienced shortages of some types of food and materials that forced them to travel beyond the boundaries of their habitat from time to time.

The coastal inhabitants of Northeastern Asia occasionally undertook expeditions to procure wood and hunt reindeer at water crossings. Nomadic

people, in their turn, frequently came to the coast to hunt sea mammals. However, these expeditions took part of the population away from important activities, particularly its strong young people, who were needed to protect the party from the owners of the land they planned to enter. According to one of the members of the Second Kamchatka Expedition, Ia. I. Lindenau, the Chukchi Sea Chukchi planned their expeditions carefully and traveled far to the south:

And in summertime they go some 50 miles or more by water from the very Nose [Cape Dezhnev] to the mouth of the Anadyr River and further for fishing and reindeer hunting. Every *baidara* (walrus-skin boat) holds 15 to 20 people or more, and they go in such crowds so as not to let others hunt or fish." (Lindenau 1983:163)

In 1660 a member of the Russian military, Kurbat Ivanov, observed the result of such hunting parties. In one of the settlements near Crest (Cross) Bay, his cossacks found 2,000 grey geese cached in one storage hut, and nearly 100 Russian pounds of reindeer flesh in another (Anonymous 1952:269–70).¹

In the course of these expeditions, participants came into contact with neighbors speaking different languages and became acquainted with their different conditions of life. Such hunting or fishing experiences or military encounters inevitably led to economic and cultural borrowing. Memories of expeditions of this type are still retained by some of the native population of Chukotka and Kamchatka. Expeditions to procure wood for sleds, walrus-skin canoe frames, and *iarangas* (skin tents) continued until recently—at least until the 1930s, when the *kolkhozes* (collective farms) were organized in the region. According to the stories I have collected among the Chaun Chukchi, when these expeditions returned safely to their settlements, thanksgiving celebrations were arranged and the wood collected was smeared with the blood of sacrificed reindeer to incorporate it in the families' property.

These hunting parties are reflected in the remarkable ancient Chukotka petroglyphs and rock paintings at Pegtymel River, which are thought to date to the middle of the first millennium A.D. and later (Dikov 1971 and chapter 5 of this volume). Scenes with people hunting reindeer at water crossings from kayaks and walrus-skin canoes, reindeer braying and dancing, running human figures, marine pinnipeds, and other forms of life are depicted on the rocks.

TRADITIONAL SEMIREGULAR EXCHANGES
WITH NEIGHBORS

At times, sedentary coastal-dwellers and nomadic northeastern Siberians remedied shortages of food and materials through trade and exchange. As Waldemar Bogoraz noted, exchange relations between Reindeer Chukchi and sedentary Maritime Chukchi and Eskimo had developed long before the arrival of the Russians (Bogoraz 1934:79). Many documents describe such exchanges for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For instance, one Cossack who had been imprisoned by the Reindeer Chukchi wrote in his report: "The Reindeer Chukchi acquire their seal and sea-mammals from the Chukchi residing at the sea" (Anonymous 1936:182). Natural exchanges between the Reindeer and Maritime Chukchi, and between the Reindeer and Maritime Koryak took place until the 1930s.

More details about exchanges between Coastal and Reindeer Chukchi are found in the writings of C. H. Merck, a participant of the Billings expedition:

Although the Reindeer Chukchi provide sedentary (Maritime) Chukchi with the latter's supply of reindeer meat slaughtered especially for them, it is, properly speaking, not an exchange but rather a kind of compensation at their own discretion. This is possibly because Reindeer Chukchi always maintain economic relations with those sedentary Chukchi from whom they receive year after year everything they need and whom therefore they call "Aivan"—our people. (Titova 1978:98)

Participants of the Second Kamchatka Expedition reported finding relatively regular exchange relations in the mid-eighteenth century between sedentary Okhotsk Koryak and Even (called Lamut then) and between nomadic Reindeer Koryak and Russians. The Even and Russians supplied copper pots, knives, bows and arrows, and sewing needles to the coastal inhabitants in exchange for whale fins, cod liver oil, blubber oil, seal flesh, and seal-skin belts. The sedentary Koryak also needed reindeer skins, fur coats, and wood for making sleds.

It is interesting that the Koryak perceived this trade as gift exchange. In the words of Lindenau (1983), "in trading, they do not part at once but a year later." Exchange was usually accompanied by a guest reception. The Reindeer Chukchi who came to the Maritime Chukchi for walrus meat were treated as

guests, and the same was true of the coastal people who came to the reindeer camps to obtain venison and reindeer skins. Even so, the nomadic reindeer-breeders considered themselves superior to the sedentary people. Merck observed: "Reindeer-breeders do not marry the daughters of sedentary people because they consider them unworthy of themselves. However, this does not prevent Reindeer Chukchi from sleeping with the wives of the sedentary people, and their own wives do not look askance at them for that" (Titova 1978:131).

MUTE EXCHANGE AND FAIRS

Inhabitants of Chukotka, Kamchatka, and Alaska also took part in intertribal trade, that is, exchanges of valuable materials and artifacts held at certain traditionally known places. Thus, during the military expedition of 1731 to Chukotka, for example, the Cossacks were shown a "Yukaghir trading place" near the mouth of the Anadyr Pinch, that is, a place where Yukaghir carried out exchanges with Chukchi and Eskimo people (Anonymous 1936:159).

Bogoras learned that in earlier times in Naukan and Uelen, fairs were held outside some settlements on the seashore and reported that "both sides came to the place of bargaining fully armed and offered their goods to each other on the points of their spears" (Bogoraz 1934:79). A diary of travels to Chukotka in 1791 by Sotnik (Lieutenant of Cossacks) Kobelev provides a detailed description of these interethnic exchanges based on personal observations. Some Maritime Chukchi offered Kobelev a chance to take part in a military trade expedition to the King Island. Having spotted the approaching walrus-skin umiaks, the islanders put on their armor and met the newcomers holding spears and bows with arrows on the bow strings in readiness. The newcomers, some of them also armed, spread out their goods, and the islanders exchanged their marten parkas and fox, wolf, wolverine, otter, and reindeer skins for iron spears, knives, axes, copper pots, and large and small beads brought to them from Alaska. On the whole, however, gift exchanges of skins and meat took place in a friendly atmosphere through visits and guest receptions, whereas the so-called mute exchange was a kind of trade with payments in kind between armed, ethnically different groups of people. Valuable goods were brought to marketing places and then passed from hand to hand until they reached those groups that needed them.

MILITARY EXPEDITIONS, INTERNECINE DISPUTES,
AND SLAVERY

Hunting expeditions, travel beyond the boundaries of one's own ethnic territory, changes of hunting or fishing grounds when resources became depleted, and misunderstandings between neighboring groups frequently led to military collisions. This aspect of life of the population of Northeastern Siberia is well documented by the Russian materials of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Chukchi are first mentioned in 1641-42 when they, together with the Yukaghir, offered resistance to *yasak* (tax) collectors on the Alazeia river: "And we, your servants, were met on the Alazeia river by many Alazeian people, princelings Nevgocha and Mundita. And together with them, Your Majesty, there were Chukchi men from the tundra with their clans and ulus people," wrote Ivan Erastov and Fiodor Chukichev (Anonymous 1951:134-35).

In the 1670s the peaceful relations between the Alazeian Yukaghir and the Chukchi changed to enmity. In 1678-79 the tax-paying Alazeian Yukaghir complained to the governor general of Yakutia that the bellicose Chukchi, who did not pay taxes, killed many of their people, took their wives and children prisoners, and robbed them of their reindeer (Anonymous 1936:239). Blood feuds seem to have played an important role in seventeenth-century Northeastern Siberia. Military raids provoked retaliatory blows and caused a shifting and shuffling of the population. Fearing the dangers of raids, some groups were obliged to seek the protection of their neighbors or the Russian military.

Since the Chukchi and Asiatic Eskimo frequently had to defend themselves against the predatory raids of the Aleut and the American Eskimo, military arts were well developed in Northeastern Siberia. As a text from the early eighteenth century described it, "There is no peace between them, i.e., the Eskimo and Chukchi of the Chukchi Sea coast, and the islanders [meant here are inhabitants of Alaska] often fight each other" (Anonymous 1936: 157). When threatened by military invasions, the Chukotka and Kamchatka people organized large military detachments, which, according to the Cossacks' reports, numbered in the hundreds. These figures are probably exaggerated, but it is known that in cases of danger the forces of the reindeer-breeders and sedentary people were united against the expeditions of the Russian military.

The volunteer corps of these ethnic peoples were brave enough to go into

combat against well-armed detachments of the Russian military. In 1730, for example, the Chukchi people defeated a military expedition headed by Cossack Afanasii Shestakov on its way to Kamchatka (Sgibnev 1869:63–65).

During the eighteenth century, hostility between the Chukchi and Koryak increased significantly, and the Chukchi stepped up their raids against the Maritime and, more especially, the nomadic Reindeer Koryak. Between 1730 and 1740 military Chukchi groups began making regular visits to Northern Kamchatka. The character of such raids can be assessed by the complaints of the Koryak. In 1741 the tax-paying Koryak reported to the Cossacks that they had been attacked by Chukchi Sea Chukchi on the Talovka River and had lost 12 men, their women and children were captured, and they lost five of their reindeer herds. In retaliation, a detachment of 60 Koryak with accompanying Cossacks launched a raid on the Chukotka, but by that time the captives had managed to escape from the Chukchi on their own (Anonymous 1936). For half a century the Koryak, especially the northern groups, had to defend themselves against the repeated raids of the Chukchi. According to Russian authorities, during that period the Chukchi captured some 240,000 reindeer from the Koryak (Vdovin 1965:61–71). It should be noted that many lives were lost in those raids. Afraid of revenge, the raiders would try to exterminate all the men and capture the children and women. Among the defeated, it was not only the warriors who were lost; women often stabbed their children and then committed suicide.

Billings's records of the Geographical Expedition show that the coastal Chukchi undertook devastating military expeditions against the Alaskans to take them into captivity and to obtain valuable furs. In the eighteenth century the Chukchi exchanged furs for Russian goods such as copper pots, axes, and knives, and the same opportunity was attractive to the inhabitants of Alaska who, if the desired items could not be obtained through an exchange, organized their own expeditions to Chukotka and were no less cruel to its inhabitants. The hostile relations between the Chukchi and Asiatic Eskimo, on the one hand, and between the Chukchi and the inhabitants of Alaska, on the other, took a senseless toll of human lives. In 1790, for example, some Alaskans killed all the Chukchi men in three umiaks stranded by a storm. Fearing revenge, those Alaskans were obliged to leave their settlements afterward (Titova 1978:121).

These military collisions and intermittent periods of peaceful relations had considerable ethnic consequences: groups were dislocated, many had to

adopt new forms of economy, some became acquainted with different kinds of tools, and there was undoubtedly an ethnic mixing of the population.

According to Merck, one of the aims of the expeditions organized by the Maritime Chukchi to Alaska was to capture slaves. The Reindeer Chukchi obtained American women (probably, Eskimo women) from the sedentary coastal Chukchi for the price of 10–12 female reindeer, the price for children being even lower. “They use the women for permanent work, beat them a bit, and provide them with worn clothes” (Titova 1978: 121).

These data are confirmed by the Russian military officer P. Popov, who in 1711 visited the Coast Chukchi and saw there “some ten” Chukchi captives with “labrets” (i.e., Eskimo) (Anonymous 1936:156).

Kuznetskii, who was kept prisoner by the Chukchi, met in one of the coastal settlements “two women and one man who told him among other things that they had been taken by those Chukchi prisoners from the Big Land [Alaska]” (Anonymous, 1936:182). The Coast Chukchi often married captive American women. Married female captives were frequently used as intermediaries in barter, and some of them probably served as interpreters.

There were also some ransom rules, as Kuznetskii reported:

They, the Yukaghir, came to ransom their wives and children. Those Yukaghir were received by Chukchi honestly with no offense at all, and those Yukaghir ransomed their wives and children from the Chukchi by giving tobacco, copper pots, axes, knives, spears, bows, arrows, and big beads, and ransomed all in all nine male and female people. In return the Chukchi presented these Yukaghir with reindeer parkas, white fur of your reindeer, white reindeer leg skins, marten parkas, and red foxes. (Anonymous, 1936:183)

In fact, the act of ransom turned into an exchange of gifts and reconciliation.

Captured people served as informants about the life of their countries and communities, as can be seen from the “Interrogation of a Chukchi maid Itteni,” dated from 1763 (Anonymous 1936). She was from the “Big Land” (Alaska). During one of their raids, the “labretted” Chukchi had caught her and brought her to Chukotka, where she was in “somebody’s” service for two years, after which she was sold to a Reindeer Chukchi for two spears and two pieces of white fur of young reindeer. She lived there for one year, and then was brought to the Lower Anadyr River and was offered to Anadyra Shipunov for two copper pots. Itteni gave a good description of the life of the Alaskans

and of the way to her native settlement. Thus prisoners brought both Chukchi and Eskimo people a great deal of information about their neighbors' home life and customs.

CONCLUSION

Data on ethnic contacts at the time of the early arrival of the Russian military and fur traders in Northeastern Siberia allow us to extrapolate with some caution into the period before that area became part of the Russian state. The relatively narrow ecological niches that were mastered by people in the extreme Northeastern Asia served in themselves to intensify the ethnic processes there, as they forced their inhabitants to go beyond the boundaries of these natural areas from time to time and to come into contact with the populations exploiting the natural resources of the neighboring areas. The traditional natural exchange, in the forms of gifts and return presents at the level of the reindeer-breeders' camp and maritime settlements, was accompanied by guest receptions. These contacts not only facilitated the exchange of cultural wealth, but perhaps also helped groups overcome language and ethnic barriers.

Another form of contact known in the Northeast was barter, or the so-called mute exchanges between ethnic communities with different languages. These contacts were not always peaceful. Often they consisted of predatory raids and armed collisions resulting from blood feuds and various internecine disputes, and they led to the extermination of a considerable part of the male population and to the capture of women and children and their subsequent assimilation. These prisoners gradually became bilingual and served as intermediaries in tradition negotiations, and they undoubtedly introduced their own customs and cultural values into the life of the camps and settlements of their captors.

The various contacts, both peaceful and military, facilitated exchanges in cultural values and helped overcome the natural linguistic insulation of separate ethnic groups. As a result, there emerged some amorphous conglomerates of kindred cultures and economies, tribes, or ethnic groups that interacted one way or another across the ethnic borders. The Koryak, for example, broke up into a number of tribal and dialectal groups, who, although not recognizing their common ethnic ties, were easily identifiable from the outside by a number of common cultural traits. However, each group within that commu-

nity had its own dialectal and cultural-economic traits, its own sense of identity, and its own ethnonym or microethnonym. A special term has been suggested in the Soviet ethnographical literature to describe this formation: the meta-ethnolinguistic entity (Bromlei 1983:83). Ethnic and linguistic ties thus seem to have been an important factor in the ethnic development of the population in Northeastern Asia and in the adjacent areas on the eve of Russian contact.

NOTES

1. One Russian pound, or *pood*, was equal to 36 pounds, or 16.38 kilograms.

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19. *Eskimo War and Peace*

ANN FIENUP-RIORDAN

IN THE POPULAR LITERATURE OF THE twentieth century, Eskimos in general and Yup'ik Eskimos in particular have often been represented as never hostile, let alone warlike. This literature—like the stereotype that depicts the residents of the Arctic as living year-round in snow houses, subsisting on raw meat, and forever spoiling their children—emphasizes the nonviolent character of Eskimo social interaction and pays little attention to the violence and warfare that are a very real part of Eskimo history and tradition. Thus, a common perception is that the Yup'ik Eskimos of western Alaska carefully avoid direct confrontation and the expression of hostility in interpersonal relations. Nevertheless, homicide, the publicly condoned execution of dangerous individuals, and warfare appear to have been regular aspects of eighteenth-century intra- and intergroup relations. As has been suggested for the Central Eskimos (Eckert and Newmark 1980), as well as for the Eskimos of north Alaska and Siberia (Burch 1974), interpersonal tranquility was likely coupled with an extremely high homicide rate.

The American notion that Eskimos are “naturally” peaceful, in contrast to our warring selves, can be traced in part to the character of our encounters with them. Unlike our confrontations with American Indians, these encoun-

ters were generally peaceful from a nonnative's point of view. Although the initial encounters with Eskimos were often less than friendly, hostility and suspicion typically gave way to hospitality and trade. In western Alaska, Eskimos killed only a handful of nonnatives during the nineteenth century (Fienup-Riordan 1988b:20–31). Since nonnatives did not seek to dispossess them of their lands or livelihood through violent means, Eskimos did not react violently to them. Whereas the European–Indian encounter had provoked warfare and produced the image of a warlike red man, the nonnative encounter with Eskimos in Western Alaska brought an end to the violent interregional struggles that had characterized the region before the arrival of outsiders.

Initial contacts with Yup'ik Eskimos in the nineteenth century suggested that the inhabitants of western Alaska were a fairly docile people. At the same time, a handful of observers, including Zagoskin and Nelson, described the bloody wars that predated the arrival of the Russians (Michael 1967:218; Nelson 1899:264, 328). But because interpersonal relations between miners, trappers, traders, missionaries, and government personnel were by and large nonviolent, and because the Yup'ik Eskimos preferred not to argue or resist openly even when they opposed some action, reports on Eskimos tended to depict them as passive to the point of lethargy and to dismiss accounts of traditional warfare as fantastic mythology. People who were closely acquainted with them knew otherwise but did not always choose to advertise their knowledge. For example, the nineteenth-century Moravian missionary John Kilbuck recorded what are perhaps the most detailed ethnohistoric accounts of the bloody battles fought during the period of bow-and-arrow wars; however, he never published them. Instead he put them in a breadbox in a Kansas vault for safekeeping, while in his published accounts he emphasized the latent Christian character of his Eskimo converts.

As in the case of other hunting societies, the relatively small scale of Eskimo society may also have contributed to the tendency to underestimate or ignore the occurrence of warfare and violence. Whites who encountered nasty natives labeled them oddballs or evil shamans and dismissed their aggressive actions as exceptions to the rule of nonviolence. For example, Moravian missionaries attributed the killing of a native Moravian helper by his fellow villagers to an "epidemic of insanity" and the act of a madman. The helper's demise was more likely a socially sanctioned execution of an individual believed to be putting the community in jeopardy (Fienup-Riordan 1988a).

Farther north, on the Seward Peninsula, the government teacher and

missionary Harrison Thornton blamed the hostile response of his Inupiat parishioners on, among other things, alcohol abuse, writing in his diary that Eskimos are generous, peaceful, and friendly until they begin to drink whiskey. In fact, Thornton's own authoritative behavior probably elicited this negative response. Little suspecting that native hostility might represent a normal Eskimo aggressive reaction to his un-Eskimo mode of interaction, he paid for his ignorance with his life.

Today in Alaska, nonnatives all too often continue to consider violence in rural areas to be without precedent in traditional nonviolent Eskimo society and therefore conclude it was "introduced," a product of "culture contact." In response to the *Anchorage Daily News* series "The People in Peril" (1988) detailing the current epidemic of self-destructive violence of Eskimos in western Alaska, an Anchorage resident wrote: "Such a happy people! If we had their gift for peaceful living the world would be a better place. And to think of the violence and trouble we have introduced them to." Perhaps more significant, some Alaska Eskimos agree with this interpretation. At the 1988 annual meeting of the Yupiit nation, the Eskimo sovereignty group, Yup'ik elders were almost unanimous in denying that violence and warfare had ever existed in traditional Eskimo society. According to Willie Lomack of Akiachak:

This Yup'ik way
has always been a peaceful way
where no one ever fought with each other.
(Lomack 20 April 1988)¹

Kenneth Peter, also of Akiachak, added: "They never used to kill. . . . Recently, since white men arrived, killing has started. I suspect that they have learned to do that by watching television, or by smoking pot, or by drinking alcohol (Peter 4/20/1988:26-27). Statements such as these have been dismissed by some as "hyperbolic cant" (Hippler 1974:23). On the contrary, they represent a powerful current political attempt to depict Eskimo history and culture as distinct from, and superior to, its nonnative counterpart.

In the continental United States, the generalized image of the peaceful Eskimo was strongly influenced by descriptions of Canadian Inuit. Just as the Plains Indians became our Indian with a capital I, so the Central Eskimos became *the* Eskimo. In the ethnographic literature on the Central Eskimos there

repeatedly appears a native ideology of goodwill, peacefulness, cooperation, and equality (Eckert and Newmark 1980:193–94).

At the same time, others pointed out that in fact Canadian Inuit in general and the Central Eskimos in particular had a great propensity for lethal violence (Hoebel 1961:88–92; Balikci 1970). Rasmussen (1933:17) wrote that no less than 9 out of 15 men in one community had murdered one or more adults and concluded that every grown man had been involved in a killing in some way. Even so, these acts of violence were most often viewed as the “natural consequences” of a society constrained by a harsh environment and lacking formal mechanisms of social control. These “deficits” made erratic homicide inevitable. They also implied that Eskimos were unable to organize for formal warfare, an activity that was presumed to require a political sophistication that the Eskimos were presumed to lack.

Meanwhile, back in Alaska, MGM’s widely viewed film *The Eskimo* (produced in Teller in 1933) solidified the image of the smiling, nose-rubbing, gentle dwellers of the Arctic for a generation of American viewers. Where the Eskimo hero Mala did engage in murderous activity, it was in retaliation for the broken promises of a deceitful whaling captain. He killed in self-defense and because it was required for survival in a hostile environment. Like his Canadian predecessor, Nanook of the North, Mala was eulogized as the pre-eminent resourceful individual. Hence our fascination with him. His violence did not reflect an inner flaw, but rather what was required by the situation, which ironically was one of contact between a just native and an unjust white world. The native hero was not an Eskimo but a Western Everyman corrupted by civilization.

The same pernicious pacifism also invades the closing scenes of the 1974 film *White Dawn*. Throughout the film, the viewer is repeatedly assaulted with how uncivilized and violent the white whalers are in comparison with their Inuit hosts. In the end, they more than merit the execution they elicit. Instead of letting the whalers rest in peace, however, an Eskimo turns to his companions and queries, “We were not killers of men. What caused this sad thing to happen to us?” The filmmaker could not let the act speak the truth (that a violent life merited a violent end) but instead felt compelled to declare it an exception to the rule of nonviolence.

Twentieth-century anthropological theory has tended to obscure not only the relatively peaceful reception of nonnatives by Alaska Eskimos and our propensity to apply Canadian Eskimo characteristics to them, but also our un-

derstanding of violence (socially sanctioned and otherwise) in Alaska Eskimo society. Culture and personality theory of the 1930s and 1940s reinforced the tendency to extend observations on Eskimo interpersonal relations to characterize intergroup relations and Eskimo culture in general. On the one hand, interpersonal relations within Alaska Eskimo groups were indeed largely characterized by nonconfrontative, self-effacing behavior and restraint. The code for conduct prescribed carefully controlled thought and deed in order not to injure another's mind, let alone his body. The misrepresentation of traditional Eskimo intergroup relations as nonconfrontative has in part been brought about by the false extension of these rules of interpersonal deference to international relations. On the other hand, apparent nonaggression, even within the group, may be viewed as a matter of tactics rather than attributed to the absence of interpersonal hostility. An extreme example is the Yup'ik story of the young widow who showed no anger when her husband was killed, then seduced his murderer with smiles, only to crush him to death in her arms.

Anthropology in the 1960s further contributed to the stereotype of the peaceful Eskimo. As their long-haired students marched to end the war in Vietnam, anthropologists thought they could see in hunter-gatherers, including Eskimos, an originally peaceful humanity with generally low levels of violence (Lee and Devore 1968:9; Service 1966:60; Turnbull 1968:341). This characterization, along with a number of other generalizations, reflected the position that hunting societies represented the most elemental form of the human condition. Embers (1978:443) subsequently tabulated warfare data from a worldwide sample of hunter-gatherers and found that only 10 percent had no, or rare, warfare. He therefore concluded that hunter-gatherers could hardly be described as peaceful. In 1974 Burch dealt the death blow to the view of the nonviolent Eskimo in his detailed discussion of Inupiat warfare in north Alaska.

In the popular imagination, however, the stereotype remains. As a result, politically aggressive acts, such as the formation of the Yupiit Nation sovereignty movement along the Kuskokwim, and the distressingly high rates of interpersonal violence are almost universally understood as "corruptions" brought on by the onslaught of civilization and as inexplicable exceptions to the rule of nonviolence, rather than social phenomena firmly grounded in a politically aggressive and violent past.

Here the question of the derivation and implications of the peaceful Eskimo stereotype cannot be answered with reference to Alaska alone. We must

look to our European, Canadian, and Soviet colleagues, not just for details of Eskimo lethal violence in other parts of the Arctic, but for clues to whether the generalized American image of the peaceful Eskimo has a Canadian, European, or Soviet counterpart.

The point here is not to replace the picture of the peaceful Eskimo with the picture of a violent one. The point is to replace a false image with one that is more readily supported by the evidence and thereby to more fully understand Eskimo social and political action today. To understand Eskimo past and present we need to understand the people at war as well as at peace. As a first step in this direction, we can ask Yup'ik elders in western Alaska to orate the detailed *ganemciit*, or historical narratives, which provide an oral record of their past. This oratory, combined with ethnohistorical documentation, may not answer all our questions, but it can provide a beginning.

Oral and ethnohistoric accounts indicate that in the early 1800s as many as 15,000 people inhabited the coast of western Alaska, including the drainages of the Yukon, Kuskokwim, and Nushagak rivers. This population was organized into approximately 12 sociopolitical units, which Burch (1988:229) has aptly referred to as nations (see figure 19-1). Each of these 12 Yup'ik nations was characterized by a common language, subsistence cycle, and regular travel between villages, people "moving around like they were being poured" (Mary Worm 5/14/1988). Although tiny by contemporary standards, each nation viewed itself as socially and territorially distinct and was willing to wage war to remain so. Although interregional feasting, visiting, and trading served to express and create international goodwill between nations, violence and conflict regularly characterized interregional exchange prior to the arrival of the Russians.

Throughout western Alaska, a single story is repeatedly cited to account for the origin of warfare. This is an old story, and narrators typically locate the incident in a village in their region. According to tradition, two boys were playing with bone-tipped darts in the men's house. One of the boys aimed poorly and accidentally hit his companion in the eye, blinding him. The father of the offender told the father of the injured boy to go ahead and poke out one of the eyes of his son in retribution. However, the father whose son had been injured was so enraged that he poked out both of the offender's eyes, blinding him completely. The other father reacted by killing the first man's son. And so it went, the violence escalating and each man in the men's house joining sides until the entire village, and eventually the entire region, was at war.

Here the origin of war is associated with blindness, a disability with

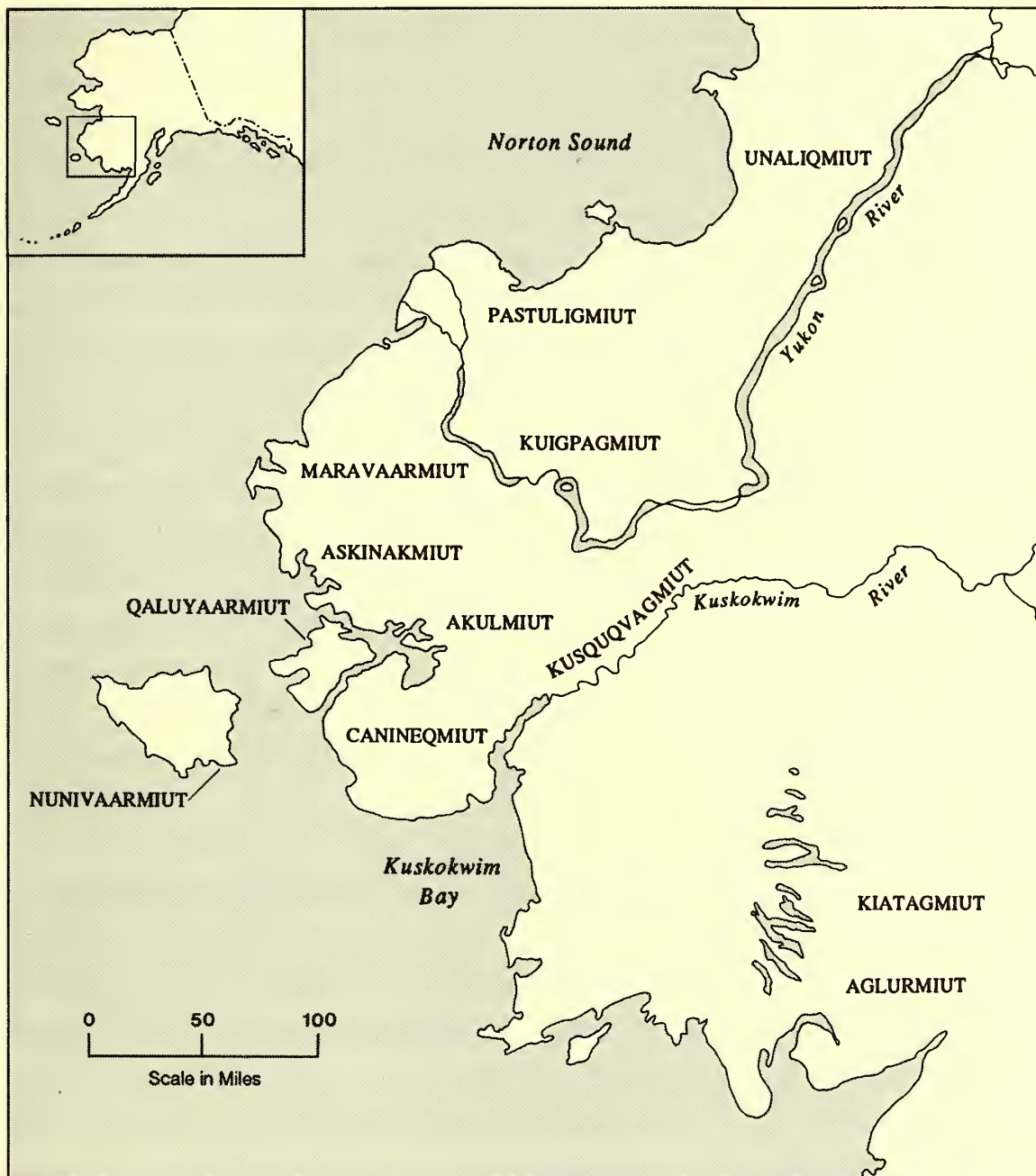


FIGURE 19-1. Regional groupings for the Yukon-Kuskokwim region, circa 1833. (Artwork by Julie Perlmutter)

devastating implications for a hunter. In fact, the opposition between restricted human vision and powerful supernatural sight was a critical element in Yup'ik cosmology, and elaborate rules circumscribed sight in the human world to empower strong supernatural vision (Fienup-Riordan 1987). Given this emphasis, it is hard to imagine any more appropriate beginning for the dramatic confrontations that would follow.

Although the time when the first wars were fought is unknown, ethno-historic and oral accounts agree that warfare had ceased by the 1830s. Vasilev described a bloody encounter between Kiatagmiut and Aglurmiut that occurred in 1816 (VanStone 1988:91). In 1818 Korsakovskii encountered the famous coastal warrior Apanuugpak (Black 1984:27; VanStone 1988:45), who, according to oral accounts, outlived warfare. By the time Zagoskin arrived in western Alaska in 1842, warfare was a thing of the past (Michael 1967:298), laid to rest by both the population decline attending the smallpox epidemic of 1838–39 and increased trading possibilities associated with the arrival of the Russians.

As in other parts of Beringia, warfare in western Alaska was strictly a male activity, and young boys were trained in the arts of war from their earliest years. All a young man's early training focused on making him agile, swift, and strong, traits he needed as both a warrior and a hunter. Boys generally worked hard—shoveling porches, clearing waterholes, filling and carrying water-buckets—strengthening their bodies while enhancing their spiritual power. Elders encouraged them to assume disagreeable jobs like emptying the urine bucket. They were instructed to rub their dirty hands over their stomachs to create a barrier to sickness and protect them from enemy arrows.

Food restrictions were another important part of the regime. To make him swift and light, a young man's intake of water and oil was carefully controlled. Likewise, he was never to eat the wings of ducks or geese or he would lack endurance when he tried to double-oar his kayak during raiding expeditions. Boys were also warned against eating the delicious membrane that encased a seal's internal organs, lest when he was fighting he be surrounded by fog and not be able to see.

Specialized skills required for warfare included the ability to dodge missiles and use a staff to deflect oncoming arrows. The agile warrior who could accomplish these feats was used as bait to spend the arrows of the opposing group. A special jump competition (*gecgaurluteng*) performed on the last day of the annual Bladder Festival on Nelson Island publicly displayed this skill along with other shows of strength, such as climbing a rope up to the central gut skylight (Billy Lincoln 4/1986).

Young men also practiced the art of speedy escape. Since war was often waged from kayaks, they would put their craft on wooden rollers by the bank of the river with the oars in readiness. Then they would run to the kayak, jump in, and be off in an instant (Mary Worm 5/14/1988; Eddie Alexie 3/1988:23).

Just as the training required to make a successful hunter was in many respects the same as that required to make a skilled warrior, the tools of the hunt were the tools of war. Yup'ik offensive weaponry (*anguyagcuutet*) was comparable to that used by the Eskimo warriors of north Alaska and Siberia, and included the bow and arrow, spear, knife, and club. Arrowheads used in battle were more highly fractured than arrowheads used in hunting so that they would shatter the enemy's body and leave a jagged wound. Their protective equipment was also distinctive. Coastal Yup'ik warriors used shields made of bearded seal skin when fighting from a kayak (Billy Lincoln 1/26/1987:4). Warriors also wore protective bent wood headgear, which by the end of a battle would be badly damaged by the nicking of arrows (Tim Agurtak 6/21/1984).

Neither plate armor (like that used prehistorically in the Bering Strait region) nor telescoping hide band armor (used by the Chukchi and Siberian Eskimos) was employed (VanStone 1983:3-4; Burch 1974:5). Rather, for easy movement the uniform of choice was a light rabbit skin or seal-gut parka, belted around the middle and sometimes concealing loosely constructed shell armor.

Last but not least, Yup'ik warriors, like their Inupiat counterparts, took care to ensure that they had good footgear before going to battle, for a lame warrior soon would likely be a dead one. A warrior's grass bootliners were the objects of special concern and would be hung on the wall of the men's house before a raid and elaborately entertained, as guests, to ensure success.

In the eighteenth century interregional relations in western Alaska were regularly punctuated with bloody encounters, usually in retaliation for a specific act or acts of aggression by the opposing group. Mounting a particular raid required having both a grievance and the force to back it up. Enmity was long-standing, and retaliation often was postponed until the aggrieved felt relatively sure of their chances of success.

The object of organizing a war party was not to acquire booty, extend territory, or defend boundaries, but to exterminate the enemy. There was no one time of year that was best suited to this end, and war parties were dispatched both on foot in winter and by kayak in summer. During periods of intense hostility between specific groups, warring factions sometimes exchanged hostages (*ilaliyak*, "the one making allies") to maintain periods of safe hunting. As long as such a "guest" was present, the host village would not attack.

Although the season of the year was not specified, the number and quality of warriors that could be mustered, both from within the region and from allied groups, was a critical factor in mounting a raid. Like the Inupiat, Yup'ik warriors were fully aware of the importance of outnumbering their enemy and would retreat if they found themselves outmanned.

The element of surprise was a third important factor. Raiding warriors traveled in a single line to avoid detection and exerted extreme care during their approach. If a fire was lit, it might be built on supports over a stream so that it could be doused at the slightest noise. To avoid being taken off guard, the home village maintained lookouts and runners to warn them of an approaching war party. In lowland areas, soil might be gathered to bring up the ground level of the village both for easy defense and to keep watch because, as one man said, "those people had no binoculars" (Tim Agurtak 7/17/1985).² These mounds were visible for over 10 miles and are said to have been impregnable (Kilbuck 1988:8). Tunnels between houses and multiple exits were also built to increase the chances of escape should the village be surrounded (Fienup-Riordan 1988b:48-49).

In Yup'ik as in Inupiat warfare, the ideal form of engagement was a surprise attack (Nelson 1899:327). The aggressors would approach stealthily, hoping to find their foes at home, where they could club them to death before they had a chance to rally a defense. Or they might find the unsuspecting villagers gathered in the men's house in celebration or asleep. The attacking warriors would then block the entrances, set fire to the structure, and either burn the occupants alive or kill them by smoke inhalation. These neat plans did not always succeed, as in the tale of the warriors who literally laughed their way to freedom. Finding themselves surrounded in the men's house, they were debating what to do when an old man among them fell off his bench head first into a bucket of urine. His companions laughed so loud that their clamor convinced the enemy that they must have a secret escape route, and the latter left at once fearing the tables would be turned.

Although ambush was the favored form of attack, direct confrontation of two armed groups did occur. A pitched battle was usually unintentional on the part of at least one of the warring parties. In the case of two antagonistic groups living close together on Nelson Island, a broken spear sent down the river was recognized as a sign of war, and both sides immediately prepared for battle.

Battles opened when opposing sides lined up, faced each other, and en-

gaged in ritualized taunting. The taunting consisted of verbal sallies accompanied by a stiff-legged sideways jumping movement intended to goad the enemy into wasting their arrows. As the lines of battle closed and more and more arrows found their mark, the war cries of successful bowmen filled the air. In some areas when a warrior shot an enemy, he would put his bow in his left hand and his spear in his right hand and jump up and call out his family war cry. A final hand-to-hand encounter brought the battle to a close with the survivors of the defeated party beating a rapid retreat.

A decorative reminder of one such successful escape is the strip of caribou skin Nelson Island women sometimes sew on the shoulders of fancy parkas. Known as the "vomit design," the skin commemorates the retreating warrior who had just eaten the rich back fat of a caribou before his pursuers commenced to chase him. As he ran, he turned first to one side and then the other, emptying his stomach of its rich contents and making his pursuers' path both slippery and treacherous.

Surrender was not an option for the losers, for captives were not taken, but a single survivor was left alive to tell the tale. Although mutilation did not always follow a battle, successful warriors sometimes severed the heads and genitals of the corpses. This mutilation might have been related to the Yup'ik belief that to finally kill an opponent, especially one with supernatural powers, the body must be severed at the joints. If the body was not dismembered, the spirit of the dead might successfully reanimate the corpse and the fight begin all over again.

Just as the remains of animals and fish were carefully disposed of after use, so were the bodies of fallen warriors. Along the coast below the mouth of the Kuskokwim, the successful combatant sometimes covered the body of his fallen enemy with rocks. If the dead were numerous, they might be gathered together and placed in a single large grave covered with logs or rocks when available. Alternately, all the bodies might be gathered and thrown into a lake, which is how the bones of sea mammals were disposed of.

The defeated warriors were not the only ones to die. All the young boys of a defeated village met the same fate, and in some cases the women and girls as well. The latter might be taken back to the village of the victors. Whether or not they were retained as slaves or wives, they were by all accounts guarded closely, kept indoors, and allowed to wear only grass insoles without boots to prevent their escape.

Following a battle, warriors tattooed their foreheads to commemorate

the number of enemies they had killed. Great warriors could be recognized by the row of small marks extending one beside the other over their eyebrows horizontally across their foreheads.

Like the Eskimos of north Alaska and Siberia, the Yup'ik fought intergroup wars. Yup'ik war parties made up of warriors representing one or more nations mounted surprise raids and took part in open battles against the warriors of other Yup'ik nations. Both Inupiat and Yup'ik warfare was intergroup rather than intragroup in character.

Although Yup'ik warfare resembled Inupiat warfare in its international character, hostilities as well as alliances between particular nations were apparently less transient than those described for north Alaska. According to Burch (1974:5), regional groups in northwest Alaska that might be allied one year could be fighting one another the next. In western Alaska, however, it appears that hostilities as well as alliances between particular nations ran over a longer period of time, at least for the century immediately preceding the termination of interregional warfare.

Before the Russians arrived, two long-standing conflicts organized relations between the 12 Yup'ik nations. Put simply by Billy Lincoln of Nelson Island: "The Yukon area people had Hooper Bay as their enemy. And the others, like Apanuugpak bunch had those who kept fleeing toward Dillingham for an enemy" (Billy Lincoln 8/1987:6). These "Yukon people" included the residents of three adjoining nations: Kuigpagmiut, Pastulirmiut, and Unalirmiut (see figure 19-1). These nations did not fight each other but instead joined in various configurations and waged intermittent warfare with the lower coastal nations (including the Maryarmiut, Askinaruit, Qaluyaarmiut, and Caninermiut), as well as the people of the middle Kuskokwim (Kusquqvagmiut) and the Big Lake region (Akulmiut). The lower coastal nations maintained a loose alliance in opposition to their Yukon adversaries. At the same time, I know of no accounts of raids or battles fought among these lower coastal groups or between the coastal nations and their tundra and riverine neighbors. Moreover, there is no indication that coastal and Yukon groups ever joined together in an alliance against a third party.

The second major long-standing conflict was that between a small but scrappy nation, the Aglurmiut, and the lower coastal and riverine nations, including the Qaluyaarmiut, Caninermiut, Kusquqvagmiut, and Kiatagmiut. Although the members of these latter groups did not regularly organize for coordinated raids against their common enemy, neither did they ever wage war against each other. Moreover, there is some evidence that the warlike Aglurmi-

ut originally migrated from the Yukon area after being defeated in an earlier Yukon or coastal encounter. Thus the history of Yup'ik warfare, roughly drawn, may have involved the long-standing opposition between two groups of allied nations, rather than a larger number of continually shifting alliances.

To bring the discussion back to the stereotype of the peaceful Eskimo, the failure to recognize the political alliances that were forged between Yup'ik nations during the period of bow-and-arrow wars has severely limited our ability to understand current political activity. In western Alaska today, Qaluyaarmiut, Caninermiut, Akulmiut, and Kusquqvagmiut are again joining forces in aggressive opposition to what they perceive as hostile acts by outside nations, in this case, the U.S. government and the state of Alaska. Their aggressive stance has surprised many observers, who view it as inexplicably "un-Eskimo." On the contrary, it seems to me directly related to—although by no means identical to, or completely explained by—the strong international political alliances of their past and is impossible to understand without referring to them.

Perhaps an appropriate note on which to close this discussion is a Yup'ik rendition of the end of wars. According to one Nelson Island account, two survivors approached their enemies seeking revenge after their village had been destroyed. As they drew closer in their kayaks, however, they broke the spears they had intended to kill with and instead used them to beat the sides of their skin boat like drums. In response, the women of the opposing village walked down to the shore to meet them and, standing in front of their men, began to dance. From that time forward, it is said, Yup'ik people never fought with bows and arrows but rather through the dance (Frances Usugan 7/1985). Anyone who has seen Yup'ik dancing knows that this is still the case. The recent exchange of dancers instead of warriors between Alaska and Siberia seems a fitting extension of this tradition. Whereas Eskimo have learned falsely from us that they had a peaceful past, we might learn truly from them the salutary value of a "festive occasion."

NOTES

1. Yup'ik narrative is referred to by orator and date. Full transcriptions and translations of the material are in the author's possession but are as yet unpublished.
2. Sighting game and periodic flooding were also the impetus for establishing settlements on high ground. Mounds were not always constructed for defense but were

just as often the result of natural processes, including long occupancy (Nelson 1899:249-327).

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20. *Aleut in the Kurile Islands:* 1820–1870

VALERII O. SHUBIN

THIS DISCUSSION IS DEVOTED TO A RELATIVELY unknown chapter in the nineteenth-century development of the Kurile Islands (Urup, Simushir, and Shumshu) that took place with the active participation of Koniag Eskimo of Kodiak Island and Aleut from the Aleutian Islands (both known in Russian terminology as “Aleut”). The information herein has been derived from materials in the archives of the Russian American Company in the U.S. National Archives in Washington (microcopies of which exist in the archives of Russian foreign policy in Moscow) and from results of the author’s archeological excavations on the above-mentioned islands in 1978–88.

The discussion focuses on the leading role of the Aleut in developing the natural (fur) resources of the Kurile Islands, the background leading up to their movement to the Kuriles, statistics concerning these movements, and the level of their material and spiritual culture development. As the following paragraphs point out, when traditional Koniag culture came under Russian and Ainu influence, it was transformed into a new ethnic community and a single Kurile culture.

HISTORICAL REVIEW

The earliest information concerning the appearance of the Aleuts on the Kurile Islands comes from 1774 and 1795. But they did not arrive en masse until the last stage of development of the archipelago by the Russian American Company in 1828–68. Although Russia had made numerous attempts to colonize the Kurile Islands during the eighteenth century, we cannot say whether those attempts were successful because the settlements that sprang up on Shumshu and Urup did not last long and failed to have an important influence on the dissemination of Russian culture in that region. The political opposition of Japan, severe climatic conditions, and the genocide of the natives, the Ainu, left the resource-rich Kurile Islands a deserted and underdeveloped territory until the mid-1820s.

That was when the Russian American Company, beset by difficulties, decided to try to develop the archipelago by instituting a sea otter hunt with the help of Aleut and Ainu.

We have direct evidence that the first group of hunters was sent to Urup Island in 1828 on board the brig *Baikal* under the command of midshipman A. K. Etolin. This group consisted of 49 Aleut men and women from Novo-Arkhangel'sk who came from Alitokskii, Ugakskii, Chiniatskii (Kodiak Island), Afognakskii (Afognak Island), Koshinginskii (Unalashka Island), and other settlements, together with 13 Russian manufacturers. Sysoi Slobodchikov, who earlier served in Ozerskii redout (fortress), was appointed Etolin's assistant.

On behalf of M. I. Chistiakov, chief governor of the colonies, K. T. Khlebnikov provided instructions for the Kurile detachment. Logs, bricks, boards and planks, cannons, various tools, and a food supply for two years were brought by the brig to build a settlement and a fortress. The Russians began to build barracks with stoves, windows, skylights and a separate room for the hunting captain. The Aleut were lodged in turf-covered huts built of boards. After settling, they began prospecting, and a successful sea otter hunt was held. In August 1828, Slobodchikov died suddenly, and Mylnikov assumed the duties of hunting captain (*baidarshchik*) for many years. During this time the Aleut were sent hunting to Urup Island, Black Brothers Islands, and Broughton Island. They hunted in double-oared *baidaras* (skin boats) using spears, nets, and clubs. When the sea otter season was over, the Aleut

fished, hunted sea lions, and shot sea birds to replenish their food supply. In winter they hunted foxes with the help of primitive traps.

In the spring of 1829 Mylnikov sowed wheat, barley, and vegetables. In the summer the brig *Chichagov*, under the command of lieutenant P. D. Lipinskiii, came to Urup, bringing 24 more Aleut and nine *baidaras*, and took away pelts.

In 1831 the Central Board of the Russian American Company decided to form the Kurile Department and to set up a central settlement in Shumshu Island. For this purpose the Okhotsk office sent 12 Russians and Aleut to Broughton Bay under the leadership of F. Startsev to build a trading station there. In the spring of 1832, Wrangel, the governor of the Russian colonies in America, sent to Shumshu a boat specifically built for the Kurile department, the *Unalashka*, which was under the command of Ensign D. I. Orlov. The ship brought P. Epifanov, the new chief of the Department, and a group of Aleut. Orlov and Epifanov were to determine if the harbor on Simushir was suitable for a central settlement or whether such a settlement should be transferred to Urup Island (this proved unnecessary). By that time, there were 60 Aleut men and seven Aleut women on the Kurile Islands. Beginning in 1833, Epifanov was ordered to train 20 men every year to replace those living on the islands. The Kodiak office was ordered to send the same number of hunters to the Kuriles. Preference was given to volunteers—young married Aleut (with wives but no infants), and debtors of the company, who were thereby given a chance to quickly pay off their debts to the company.

At the request of the Central Board, the Irkutsk church consulate attached the Kurile Island to the parish of the Akhtinsk Nikolaevsk church. In 1839 the Russian American Company concluded a treaty with the Hudson Bay Company for the delivery of goods; soon the island received large quantities of cheap clothes, footwear, decorations, tableware, weapons, and other materials.

Subsequently, the Aleut hunted not only at Urup, Simushir, and Severnii Chirpoi, but also on Shumshu, Paramushir, and Katoi islands. By the 1840s the population of sea otters was greatly reduced, and many Russians left the islands. But the Aleut stayed, surviving the calamities of the 1854–55 Crimean War as it affected the North Pacific, and remained on the island even after the Russian American Company had been liquidated.

At the time that the Aleuts and Koniag came to the Kuriles, they had already lived and worked alongside the Russians for about 60 years. During

this time their way of life changed considerably. Where they were once free independent people, they were now enslaved by the company. They quickly became acquainted with infectious diseases, acquired some bad habits from the Russians, and began to forget their native language and tribal gods. On the other hand, many of them appreciated the advantages they had gained in the way of the Russian cuisine, clothes, footwear, and other amenities.

ARCHEOLOGY

Published and archival sources contain no information about the material and spiritual culture of the Aleut population of the Kurile Islands and are therefore of only secondary significance for ethnographical research. For this reason, since 1978 the Sakhalin Regional Museum has been conducting archeological work on Russian American Company sites on Urup, Simushir, Severnii Chirpoi, and Shumshu. Kurilorossia, located in Aleutka Bay on Urup Island (figure 20-1), is one of the most explored settlements. Here workers have excavated almost 4,000 square meters of the cultural layer and have found more than 10,000 objects pertaining to both the material and spiritual culture of the aboriginal Ainu, as well as the Russian and Aleut inhabitants of the island. These finds consist of the following categories:

Dwellings and household constructions: surface and semisubterranean dwellings, including yurts, booths, *barabaras* (sod houses), a forge, a warehouse, butchering areas, stoves for baking bread, and hearths (figure 20-2 shows a pit dwelling).

Tools and instruments: remains of steel stock, firearms, arrowheads and spearheads, bone and metal harpoons, fragments of flintlock guns, bullets, caseshot, buckshot, corks from vessels for keeping powder, different kinds of knives, fishing hooks, metal hooks for hanging carcasses of killed animals, scrapers (made of stone, glass, or metal) for food processing, lead stamps with the Russian American Company monogram for sealing sacks with pelts, and carpenter's, fitter's and blacksmith's tools.

Boat parts: parts of sailing ships and *baidaras* (umiaks), ship nails, fragments of hull covering, elements of running and standing rigging,



FIGURE 20-1. Aleutka Bay, Urup Island. (Photograph by Shubin team)



FIGURE 20-2. Aleut pit dwelling on Urup Island. (Photograph by Shubin team)

fragments of *baidarka* (kayak) covers, rowlocks, rings and other materials.

Domestic wares: ceramics, faience and porcelain, glass and metal plates, and dishes produced both locally and abroad.

Domestic furnishings: details of dwelling and household interiors, objects of everyday life, windows and door partings, mica for windows, candlesticks, parts of oil-lamps, remains of barrels, trunks and chests for keeping provisions, spoons, forks, scissors, thimbles, and a whip.

Personal paraphernalia: the remains of clothes, footgear, buttons, needles, copper and silver rings, coins, a purse, and pipes.

The fact that these items were found both among the Russian and Aleutian population, reflects a highly eclectic material and spiritual culture (see figures 20-3, 20-4). This is also seen in the construction of Aleutian dwellings, which contained stoves, plank beds, flooring, firearms, Russian Orthodox crosses, and figures of the Koniag household deity.

Similar finds were made in a small excavation of a settlement in Broughton Bay on Simushir Island, where, as on Urup, excavations yielded masonry, hearths, metal instruments of production and tools, a coin, button, and an Orthodox cross. Beneath this stratigraphic layer were the remains of a neolithic culture with ropelike ornamented ceramics. Of special interest is an image of a woman's head made of soft stone.

In Peschanaia Bay off Severnii Chirpoi Island, we found 44 foundation pits of semisubterranean houses and assumed that at least some of them had been occupied by Aleut in the nineteenth century.

We made only a few finds when investigating Russian American Company settlements in Baikovo Bay and at Betobi Lake on Shumshu Island. Here most of the late cultural layer had been destroyed by previous digging.

These archeological finds establish the existence of an eclectic culture of sea hunters on the Kurile Islands that included elements of Russian, Aleut, and Ainu culture. The excavations confirm Roza G. Liapunova's view that the Russian American Company was striving to preserve traditional Aleut management, because it considered this the most efficient and reliable method of doing business. The material culture of these Aleut did not undergo drastic changes, and only a few innovations and improvements were adopted from Russian culture. The skin *baidarka* and its traditional hunting equipment

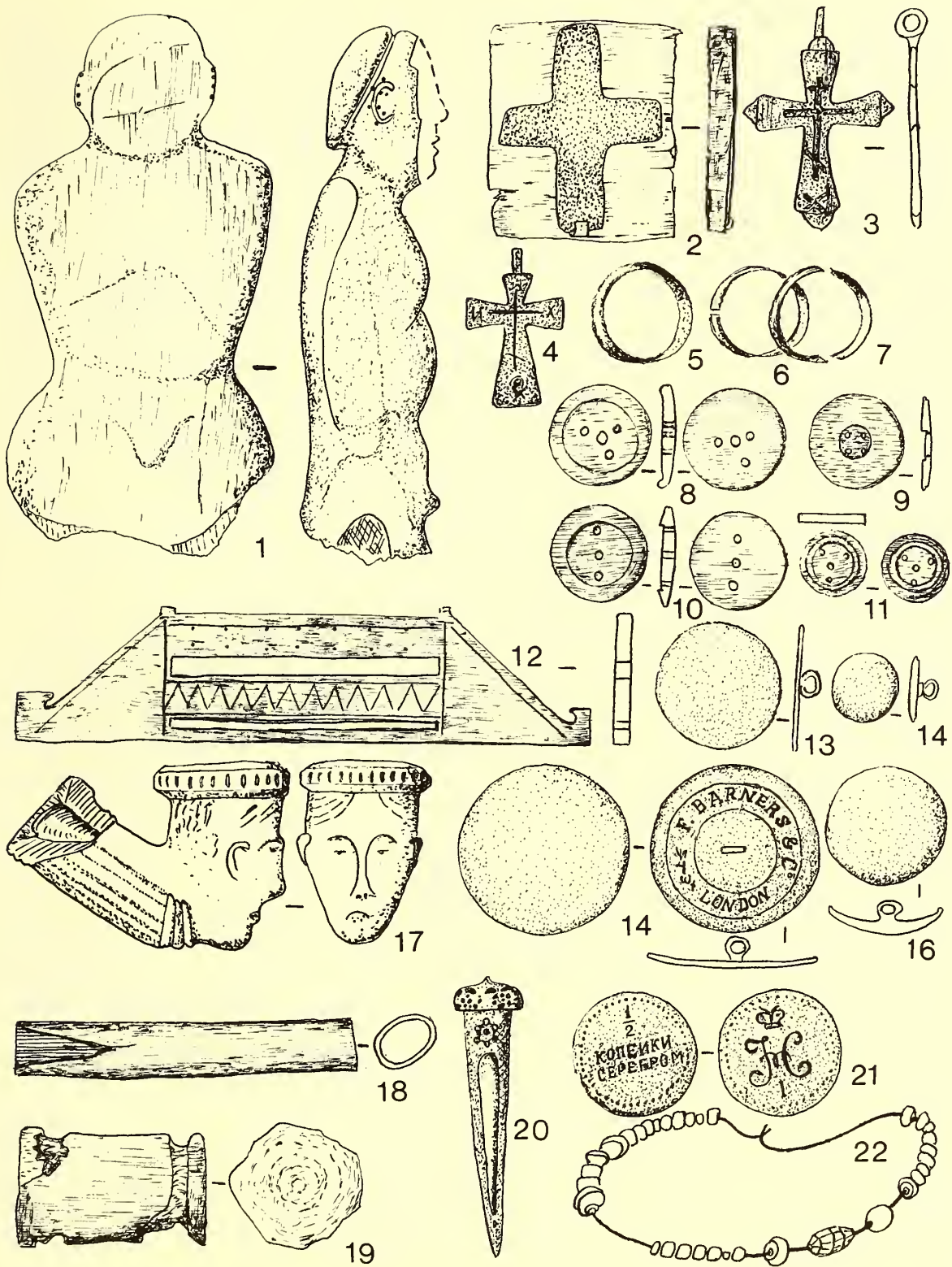


FIGURE 20-3. Archeological finds of eclectic style from the Aleut cultures of the Kurile Islands. 1. Figurine. 2-4. Crosses. 5-7. Rings. 8-16. Buttons. 17. Pipe bowl. 18. Bone artifact. 19, 20. Ornament. 21. Russian coin. 22. Beads. (Drawing by Shubin Laboratory staff, Sakhalin)

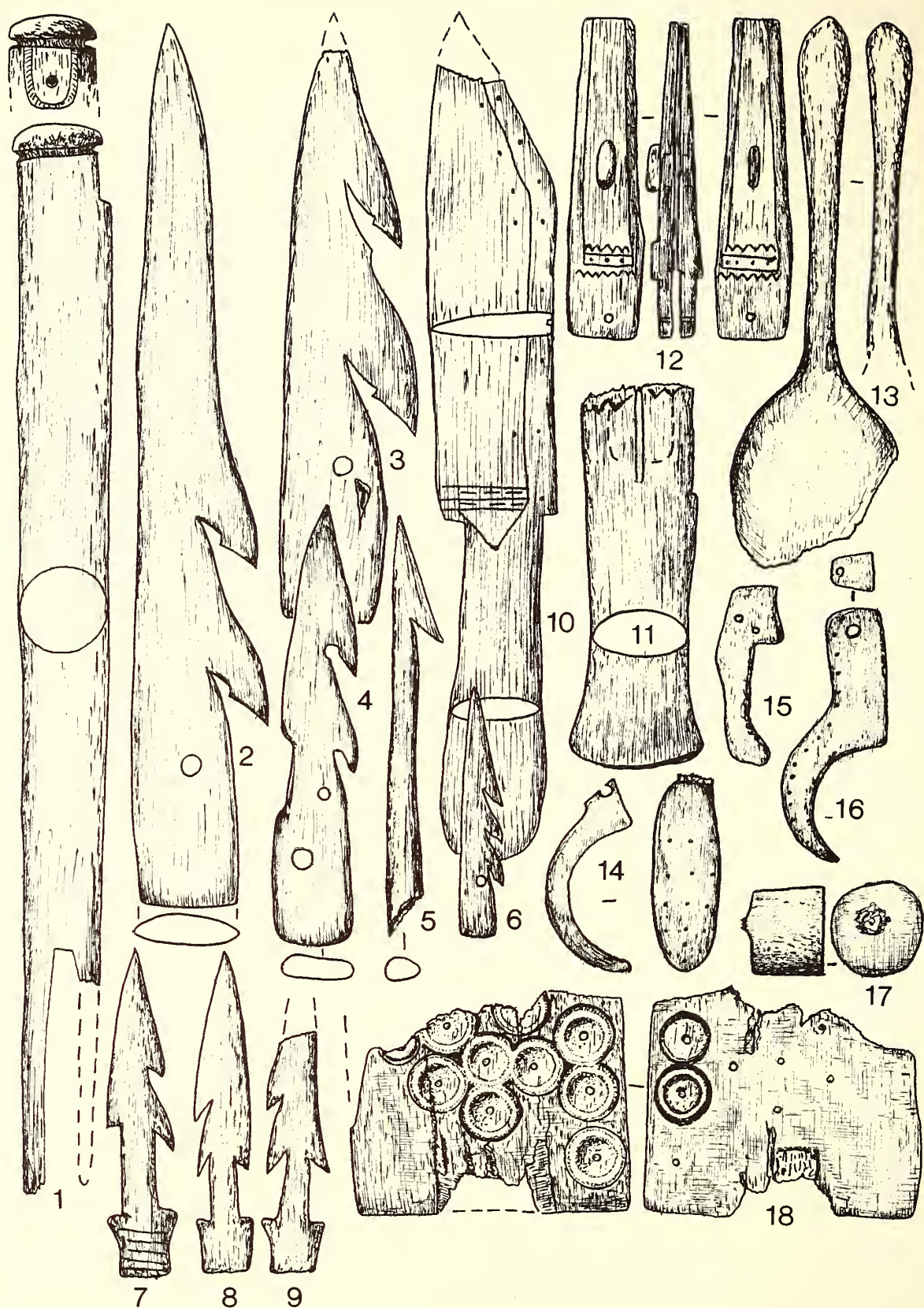


FIGURE 20-4. Artifacts of Aleut traditional culture, Urup Island. 1. Dart socket-piece. 2-9. Harpoon points. 10. Sheathed knife. 11, 12. Handles. 13. Spoon. 14-16. Finger rests. 17. Unknown. 18. Fragment of fire board. (Drawing by Shubin Laboratory staff, Sakhalin)

remained central to the economy. But under the influence of the Russians, the Aleut abandoned semisubterranean dwellings and added stoves, windows, and side entrances. Sometimes many-roomed houses and baths were built on the Kuriles and Kodiak Island. Unlike the population on the Aleutian Islands and on Kodiak, the Kurile Aleut probably began to buy clothes, footwear, and other everyday items made in Europe.

Other archeological finds included about a dozen Russian Orthodox pectoral crosses, whereas pagan cult objects were only rarely uncovered. We have only one figure of a Koniag god made of bone. This suggests that Christianity played an important role in the Kuriles, as is noted also in the archival and published sources.

In conclusion, between 1828 and 1877 there existed on the Kurile Islands a unique culture amalgamating elements of Russian, Aleut, Eskimo, and Ainu culture. By the mid-1870s the prerequisites for the formation of a new ethnic community and for the formation of a single Kurile culture had been achieved. But in 1875, by order of a St. Petersburg agreement, Russia turned the Kurile Islands over to Japan, an event that cut short their development and later resulted in the destruction of the population of the central and northern island of the archipelago.

21. *Recent Ethnic Processes among the Peoples of the Russian Pacific Coast*

ZOIA P. SOKOLOVA

THIS CHAPTER DEALS WITH ASPECTS OF the ethnic development of the peoples of the Pacific Coast of the former USSR (now a Russian state again)—namely, the Chukchi, Koryak, Eskimo, Itelmen, and Aleut. The information presented here is drawn from the All-Union Censuses of 1959, 1970, and 1979. These peoples live primarily in two autonomous areas (Okrug), the Chukchi Area in Magadan Province, and the Koryak Area in Kamchatka Province. Over 80 percent of the Chukchi and about 85 percent of the Eskimo population live in the Chukchi Autonomous Area, while about 72 percent of the Koryak, close to 9 percent of the Chukchi, and 73 percent of the Itelmen population live in the Koryak Autonomous Area. The Aleut live in the Kamchatka Province, 67 percent in areas of their traditional residence on the Commander Islands, and the rest on the Kamchatka Peninsula. Chukotka and Kamchatka are also populated by the Chuvantsi and Even peoples (table 21-1).

These peoples make up a total population in excess of 25,000. From 1959 to 1979, their total number increased by more than 22 percent, after declining 19 percent by 1959. The greatest increase was recorded among the Eskimo and Aleut. Although from 1897 to 1926 the Eskimo population decreased by 4.3

TABLE 21-1. Dynamics of the Population of the Peoples from the Northern Pacific Coast of the Former USSR

Group	1897	1926	Change (%)	1959	Change (%)	1970	Change (%)	1979	Change (%)
Chukchi	11,771	12,321	+4.7	11,727	-4.8	13,597	+15.9	14,000	+3.0
Koriak	7,335	7,434	+1.3	6,287	-15.4	7,487	+19.1	7,879	+5.2
Eskimo	1,307	1,251	-4.3	1,118	-10.6	1,308	+17.0	1,510	+15.4
Irelmen	2,805	4,207	+50.0	1,109	-73.6	1,301	+17.3	1,370	+5.3
Aleut	565	345	-39.0	421	+22.0	441	+4.8	546	+35.8
Total	23,783	25,558	+7.5	20,662	-19.0	24,134	+17.0	25,305	+4.85

Source: Results of the 1959, 1970, and 1979 All-Union Censuses (see Anonymous 1973, 1984). The data for 1897 and 1926 are from Terletskii (1932:62-63).

percent, and by 16.6 percent in 1959, it increased by 17 percent by 1970 and by 36.3 percent by 1979. Among the Aleut, a 39 percent decrease occurred in the period before 1926, whereas increases of 22 percent, 4.8 percent, and 35.8 percent were registered in 1959, 1970, and 1979, respectively.

By 1926 the number of Chukchi had also decreased by 4.7 percent, whereas the Koryak population had grown by 1.3 percent, while the Itelmen increased by 50 percent. Between 1926 and 1959 all these groups decreased in number: the Chukchi by 4.8 percent, Koryak by 15.4 percent, and Itelmen by 73.6 percent. By 1970 their numbers increased almost evenly, by 15.4 percent, 19.1 percent, and 17.3 percent, respectively, while their growth between 1970 and 1979 was relatively insignificant (3.0 percent, 5.2 percent, and 5.3 percent, respectively).

On the whole, the growth rate among the population of this area between 1959 and 1970 was 1 percent higher, and, by 1979, 1.55 percent higher than among all the other peoples of the North (Gurvich 1987:101, table 1). The population decline recorded up to 1959 can be explained by a series of factors, including the hardship of the war years, poor medical services, and difficult life conditions. At the same time, the sharp drop registered for this period among the Itelmen (73.6 percent) can be explained by certain ethnic processes, in particular by russification.

By contrast, the 22 percent population growth of the Aleut can be explained by special policies adopted in the 1920s and the 1930s to revitalize this nearly extinct people. (In 1923 the population figure counted 364 less members than in 1897.) These policies included the development of agricultural activities, fishing, and sea mammal hunting (Liapunova 1987:197-99).

A marked population increase was also recorded after the adoption and implementation of the Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU and of the Council of Ministers of the USSR No. 300 of March 16, 1957 (Sokolova 1971:81-83). This resolution aimed at promoting the development of the traditional economy, housing, and medical assistance, and improving the life conditions of the peoples of the North. During the 20 years between 1959 and 1979, the Eskimo population increased 35 percent; the Aleut, 29.7 percent; the Koryak, 25 percent; the Itelmen 23.5 percent; and the Chukchi, 19 percent. However, after 1970 the rate of growth again fell (see table 21-1). Between 1959 and 1970, the total increase for the native population of the Russian Northeast was 17 percent, averaging 1.5 percent a year, while in the period from 1970 to 1979 the increase amounted to less than 5 percent, with

an annual growth rate of 0.5 percent. In 1979 only the Eskimo and the Aleut registered a high population growth, which was two times higher than in 1970 for the former and almost seven times higher for the latter. Meanwhile, the Chukchi, the Koryak, and Itelmen experienced a fivefold, fourfold, and more than threefold decrease, respectively. There are several reasons for this decline: first, a decreasing birth rate, coupled with a rather high mortality rate (Pika 1987:48–49); second, the assimilation of a part of the native population, as a result of mixed marriages with the newcomers, and in the case of the Eskimo, with the Chukchi as well (Gurvich and Fainberg 1964; Gurvich 1985:156; Simchenko and Lebedev 1985:158–74); and third, in the case of the Eskimo, changes in the system of marital and reproductive relations (Krupnik 1987:90, 103, 107).

If we compare the data on birth, mortality, and natural growth rates of these peoples with the average data for the country, we find that these trends are quite positive (Anonymous 1986). In 1986 only the Aleut had a birthrate lower than the country's average, while all the other peoples' birthrates were 1.5 to 2 times higher. Some mortality figures below the country's average were recorded in 1986 among the Eskimo, the Itelmen, and the Aleut, while among the other peoples these figures were the same, or a little above average. The natural growth rate for all the peoples of the Russian Northeast are therefore higher than the country's average, even two to three times higher in the case of the Chukchi, the Koryak, and the Eskimo.

The mixed-marriage trend has accelerated the process of ethnic mixing of the peoples of the Russian Northeast. These occur between Siberian natives of different groups, and between Siberian natives and newcomers, primarily Russians, Ukrainians, and Byelorussians. Lately, Tatar-Koryak, Tatar-Chukchi, Korean-Koryak, Chuvash-Chukchi, Jewish-Chukchi, and Bashkir-Eskimo families have emerged as well. There are also numerous Eskimo-Chukchi, Chukchi-Chuvan, Yukaghi-Kamchadal, Chukchi-Koryak, and Koryak-Itelmen families. According to the data of the late 1970s and early 1980s, in some villages and large settlements of both districts, the mixed families of that period ranged from 7 to 25 percent and 33 to 66 percent of all families, respectively (Gurvich 1985; Simchenko and Lebedev 1985).

Birthrates also declined in large part because the young male reindeer-breeders (up to 40–50 percent) are nomadic and remain single while the young women, who are brought up in the settlements' boarding schools, are not willing to live in the tundra. Another direct consequence of this is a growing number of single women. In the middle and late 1970s, however, the

traditional family structure appeared to be growing stronger among the Eskimo and some Chukchi and Koryak.¹ According to I. I. Krupnik, this was due to the fact that the generation born before 1930, although its reproductive years were over, had begun acting as “the bearers” of the traditional model of marital-family relations—which was characterized by monoethnic families involving all the marriageable age group, high birth rates, and stable family ties (Krupnik 1985:108).

The ethnic processes among the peoples of the Soviet Pacific Coast (growing rates of mixed marriages, assimilation with other peoples, and loss of the mother tongue and culture), intensified in the 1950s and 1960s and accelerated during the 1970s and 1980s. These processes were mainly a result of the migration of mixed populations from small traditional settlements, the influx of nonnatives to the Soviet Northeast, and movement of some Chukchi, Koryak, Eskimo, Itelmen, and Aleut families to cities and urban-type settlements. These trends are reflected in tables 21-2 and 21-3.

Table 21-2 shows a decrease in native population in the autonomous areas between 1959 and 1979. The decline averaged 10 percent over this period (the figure for all the peoples of the North being 6 percent), although in 1979 the two areas had more native Siberians than any of the other northern areas of the country (75.4 against 73.8 percent).

The urban population also increased, although at a lower rate than the

TABLE 21-2. Peoples of the Northern Pacific Coast Living in Autonomous Districts (percentage of their total population)

Group	1959	1970	±	1979	±
Chukchi	85.0	81.0	-4.0	80.6	-0.4
Koryak	81.0	78.7	-2.3	71.8	-6.9
Eskimo	95.0	87.8	-7.2	84.6	-3.2
Itelmen	81.0	74.5	-6.5	73.0	-1.5
Aleut ^a	—	77.0	—	67.0	-10.0
Average	85.5	79.8	-5.7	75.4	-4.4
Average for all “peoples of the North”	80.0	76.4	-3.6	73.8	-2.6

a. Aleut are counted in the region in which they traditionally live.

TABLE 21-3. Urban Population (percent)

Group	1959	1970	±	1979	±
Chukchi	8.0	17.6	+9.6	14.4	-3.2
Koryak	5.5	21.0	+15.5	28.2	+7.2
Eskimo	29.5	27.5	-2.0	22.0	-5.5
Itelmen	13.0	23.0	+10.0	28.8	+5.8
Aleut	17.0	22.5	+5.5	35.7	+13.2
Average	14.6	22.8	+8.2	25.8	+3.0
Average for all "peoples of the North"	10.0	17.5	+7.5	22.8	+5.3

urban population of any of the other peoples of the North. Between 1959 and 1979, this rate increased in the Northeast by 56.6 percent, and it more than doubled for the North as a whole. On the average, however, the share of urban population here was higher in 1979 (25.8 percent) than in the North as a whole (22.8 percent) (Collective Work 1988:table 8). The greatest increase in the urban population was recorded from 1959 to 1970 (8.2 percent), mainly among the Koryak, Itelmen, and Chukchi, and to a lesser extent among the Eskimo and Aleut. The urban Eskimo and Chukchi population is declining for reasons unknown, a finding that requires special investigation.

Table 21-4 shows the dynamics of how ethnic languages stop being mother tongues. On the whole, the rate of this loss among the peoples of the Russian Northeast was 10 percent higher than among the other peoples of the North between 1959 and 1970 (56-57 percent against 66.8 percent); between 1970 and 1979, it was 11.5 percent higher (50.2 percent against 61.7 percent). Aleut and Itelmen are most affected by this process: in 1979, among the former, only 17.8 percent indicated Aleut language as their mother tongue, and the Itelmen, 24.4 percent. Among the Chukchi, Koryak, and Eskimo peoples this index is three times higher: 78.2, 69.0, and 60.7 percent, respectively. At the same time, bilingualism (knowledge of a mother tongue and of the Russian language) has been spreading over a broad area (Collective Work 1987:chap. 5).

To summarize, the ethnic development of the peoples of the Pacific Coast of the former Soviet Union has involved very complex processes. The

TABLE 21-4. Conservation of Mother Tongue (percent)

Group	1959	1970	±	1979	±
Chukchi	87.5	82.6	-5.1	78.2	-4.4
Koryak	87.0	81.0	-6.0	69.0	-12.0
Eskimo	63.0	60.0	-3.0	60.7	+0.7
Itelmen	32.0	35.7	+3.7	24.4	-11.3
Aleut	16.0	21.8	+5.8	17.8	-4.0
Average	57.1	56.2	-0.9	50.2	-6.0
Average for all "peoples of the North"	66.8	66.3	-0.5	61.7	-4.8

main trends are an overall stabilizing of the population size, with some slowing down of the growth rate for the decade 1970-79; continued mixing of the native peoples among themselves and in combination with newcomers as a result of a growing number of mixed marriages and assimilation; the growth of the urban population and changes in its social and professional structure (Gurvich 1985); the loss of some traits of their ethnic culture as a result of the diminishing number of people involved in the traditional economy and the movement to larger settlements (Gurvich 1973, 1977; Krupnik 1987); and, last but not least, the spreading of bilingualism as well as the loss of the native mother tongues.

Many of these processes are more or less irreversible. Yet it would seem important and useful to implement measures to slow them down in order to retain as much as possible the distinctive features of these ethnic groups (ethnos), particularly their mother tongues and native cultures. Such a policy would require, first, a guarantee of support for traditional forms of economy, related patterns of settlement, and ways of life; second, adequate training for young people to enable them to become reindeer-breeders, fishermen, and hunters; third, school programs to meet the needs of traditional hunting and fishing economies, which would include instruction in mother tongues both at school and in other children's institutions and would require more teachers, methodological programs, and textbooks; and last, programs to develop native intellectual culture, such as art festivals, exhibitions of decorative and applied art, contests of knowledge of the mother tongue and native folklore, and others.

NOTES

1. From the 773 Chukchi families they surveyed, the researchers recorded 122 (15.8 percent) mono-parental families (Smichenko and Lebedev 1985:160, table 1).

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22. *Historical Background and Modern Trends in Native–Russian Bilingualism among Siberian Native Peoples*

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THE RECENT ETHNOLINGUISTIC PATTERN OF development in the former USSR has been marked by two interdependent trends: the greater use of native languages and the spreading of Russian as a language of interethnic communication. Both trends are inherent in the social structure of what used to be the USSR. Their history has been outlined in a number of philosophical, historical and ethno-sociological works (e.g., Guboglo 1984).

This chapter reviews the local manifestations of these trends among the minorities of Northern Siberia, or “small peoples of the North.” According to the 1979 census, there are 26 northern minorities, the largest one being the Nenets (29,900 persons), followed by the Evenk (27,300), then the Khanty (20,900), and the Chukchi (14,000). The smallest in number are the Nganasan (867 persons), the Aleut (546), and, last, the Negidal (504) (Anonymous 1984:72–73).

The history of the development of native languages and of the establishment of native–Russian bilingualism can be divided into two stages. The first stage began immediately after the October Revolution and the end of the Civil War. It was marked by efforts to awaken the political activity of the native population, to help them overcome their social and economic backwardness.

The traditional occupations of the "peoples of the North," from the Kola Peninsula to the Bering Strait, were fishing, trapping, wild reindeer hunting, reindeer breeding, and sea mammal hunting (whales, walrus, seals). A good number of groups were completely nomadic, the rest seminomadic, living in seasonal sedentary settlements at the fishing or hunting grounds. The literacy rate was 16.8 percent among the sedentary population and 1.9 percent among nomads, according to the authors' calculations, after Terletskii (1932:28).

Under these circumstances, the first task of the new government was to organize some elected bodies for self-administration. Therefore, a special government organization was created in 1924 within the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR. This was the Committee for the Advancement of the Peoples of the Northern Periphery of the RSFSR, known as the Committee of the North. Later, in 1929-30, autonomous areas (*okrug*) were formed within the provinces (*oblast'*) inhabited by the native populations, in keeping with Lenin's idea that oppression of ethnic groups could only be ended by creating autonomous areas (Lenin n.d.:148).

Local and Area Soviets (councils) facilitated the reconstruction of the hunting economy, and organized cooperative units among the native Siberian population, initially at the level of basic production teams and companionships. By 1934 there were 210 companionships and 221 basic teams in the North, and about 45 percent of the native population worked in cooperatives. By 1940 about 85 percent of the households were members of production teams and collective farms (Anonymous 1980:80, table 2; 87, table 4).

The everyday life of the Siberian natives also changed considerably. Everywhere in the taiga and the tundra new villages were built. They were the centers of the collective farms and bases of production, with new apartments for families of hunters and fishermen. In these new villages buildings were also erected for economic, administrative, and cultural purposes, with priority being given to schools, kindergartens, and workers' clubs. In 1930, there were 123 schools in the North, 62 of them with dormitories. In 1934 the number of native schools in the North exceeded 300, and they housed 11,000 children, or 60 percent of the total number of children of school age in the area (Uvachan 1971:171; Meliakov 1982:39). Considerable effort was made to reduce illiteracy among the adult population, and by 1937, 65 percent of the adults of the small peoples of the North were literate (Anonymous 1980:30, 108).

In the 1930s a great deal of effort went into providing northern lan-

guages with a suitable writing system. Alphabets were compiled for the 14 largest populations (Nenets, Evenk, Khanty, Mansi, Chukchi, Koryak, Even, and others), and textbooks were published for the primary school in these languages. Various centers also began publishing newspapers and broadcasting on the radio in the same languages.

In 1926, at the Leningrad Oriental Institute, the Faculty of the North was created, later reorganized into the Institute of the Peoples of the North. In the early 1930s, it was attended by 195 students from 19 Siberian nationalities. By 1939, there were about 1,200 students from the native cultures of the North in various colleges and universities (Anonymous 1980:29, 100).

Linguistically, the northern population, in the terminology of the Soviet ethno-sociologist M. N. Guboglo, was at that period generally monolingual and prebilingual; in other words, they could not speak Russian at all, or were able to speak it only with difficulty (Guboglo 1984:125). The form of Russian spoken at that time by most northern groups was rather different from the literary standard. It was a language deeply saturated with local and dialectal forms, archaic lexics, and full of adstratum idioms borrowed from various northern languages and dialects.

After World War II, the massive development of industry and a transportation network began in the North, especially in the 1960s and 1970s. This was due to the discovery of rich gas and oil fields and extensive mining in various parts of the Arctic region, and to the growth of timber and fishing enterprises. This expanded exploitation of natural resources drew migrants to the North, which in turn led to the rapid growth of modern cities. In many Arctic and Subarctic areas new urban-type villages were built, and in an astonishingly short time many of them grew into cities. All this was accompanied by the enhancement of primary industries aimed at establishing large government-owned reindeer-breeding and hunting collectives (the *soukhozes*).

This extensive industrial and farming development of Northern Siberia caused a massive flow north of ethnically heterogeneous immigrants from European Russia (Moscow, Leningrad, Bashkiria, Tataria, etc.) and from Southern Siberia. According to the 1970 Soviet census, there were representatives of 60 ethnic groups in the autonomous areas of Tiumen Province alone (Chemakin 1974:111, 115).

These economic and demographic changes in the North were accompanied by considerable reforms in the domain of culture and everyday life-style. Governmental decrees, issued in March and July 1957, provided for supple-

mentary measures "towards a complete elimination of illiteracy among the populations of the North, extension of the network of schools and dormitories for their children, and realization of a polytechnical education in the schools according to the needs of local economy" (Anonymous 1958:695).

The number of Siberian native children living in boarding schools, including the supply of food, clothing, and shoes—all entirely subsidized by the state—increased. Complete government support for students in dormitories was extended to all children of school age, irrespective of where their parents lived. All expenses for the transportation of children to the schools from the beginning of the school year and back home for vacations were also covered by government organizations (calculated after Anonymous 1973; 1984:10–11).

As a result of this complex of economical, demographic, and cultural measures, the linguistic situation in the North changed considerably. The 1960s and 1970s can be described as a new stage in the native–Russian bilingualism of the Siberian natives. The Union Census of 1970 shows that 42.6 percent of the native population considered Russian a second language. The basic form of bilingualism had become a complete bilingualism, that is, a relatively free command of Russian, or an incomplete bilingualism (certain difficulties accompanying a generally sufficient fluency in Russian). Monolingualism and prebilingualism were pushed to the second plan and could be observed mainly among the oldest generation.

At present the third stage of the native–Russian bilingualism can be observed in the North. It is connected with a continuous intensive growth of population of the autonomous districts due to immigration. By 1979 the population of the Khanty-Mansi Area was more than 570,000, compared with 271,000 in 1970. The Yamalo-Nenets Area had 158,800 people in 1979, compared with 80,000 in 1970. The corresponding numbers for the Nenets Area were 47,000 and 39,000, for the Taimyr Area 45,000 and 38,000, for the Koryak Area 35,000 and 31,000, and for the Chukchi Area 140,000 and 101,000, as calculated by the authors, after the 1970 and 1979 censuses (Anonymous 1973:68, 79, 92, 102, 123, 124; 1984:10, 11).

The flow of migrants affected not only the industrial regions and urbanized locations but also the village economy. At present the nonnatives constitute the majority of the population in all areas. There are very few large villages in the North where native families live isolated from the families of migrants. In all basic respects (housing, clothing, food, transportation), the

material culture of Siberian natives is becoming more and more similar to the material culture of Russians and other migrants to Arctic and Subarctic regions.

Mixed marriages between young men and women of Northern groups with Russian, Ukrainian, Tatar, and other immigrant groups have become common. The number of such marriages has grown considerably in the past decade or two. At present the working population among northern groups is composed basically of people who study in local schools with dormitories and who are able not only to speak, but also to think in Russian (they are post-bilingual, in M. N. Guboglo's terminology). According to the census of 1979, 54.0 percent of the persons in northern ethnic groups have full command of Russian, and 28.6 percent consider Russian their mother tongue (see Anonymous 1984:72). Among the Khanty, 52.8 percent of the people are fluent in Russian; among the Koryak, 60.7 percent; among Chukchi, 61.2 percent; among Nenets, 64.2 percent; among Nganassans, 71.3 percent; among Dolgans, 72.9 percent, and so on (Anonymous 1984:72-73).

The process by which the peoples of the North have adopted Russian as a spoken language is a spontaneous one and is closely connected with the changes in their way of life. We must agree with Siberian linguists N. R. and S. B. Yakushkin, who write (Iakushkin and Iakushkina 1984:121):

The speakers of languages with more restricted possibilities in the social communication . . . tend gradually and unconsciously to utilize more and more frequently that language from among several languages known to them, which is more appropriate for a communication in all spheres of human activity.

Today in the most remote parts of the tundra, one may occasionally meet people who do not understand Russian. In the largest villages, however, a shift to Russian monolingualism can be observed among the younger generations. But in the teams and working groups of reindeer-breeders, hunters, and fishermen, the native language is normally spoken. The reason behind this, as explained to us by the director of the local school in the Kolguev Island in the Arkhangel Province, F. N. Ardeev, who is a Nenets himself, is that the lexical base of the Nenets language is not sufficient for sophisticated communication about world politics or the achievements in modern science and technology. On the other hand, a command of the local language is indispensable for successful work in reindeer-breeding, hunting, or a fishing economy. Many terms

and notions, concerning peculiar and vitally important features of taiga ecology (such as details of landscape, snow cover, species of animals and plants and variations in their behavior) are completely absent in the Russian language. According to the well-known expert on the ethnic relations in the North, Dr. V. N. Uvachan (an Evenk himself), the Evenk language has a stock of "more than 20 various terms designating the color, sex, and age of the reindeer, and more than 12 terms describing the state of snow cover affecting successful hunting" (Uvachan 1977:28).

According to the 1979 census, 61.7 percent of the native population of the North still uses the native tongue. This index is 60.7 percent among Eskimo, 67.8 among Khanty, 69.0 percent among Koryak, and 78.2 percent among Chukchi. The highest level in the command of native language is observed among the Nenets (81.8 percent) and the Dolgan (90 percent) (authors' figures, after anonymous, 1984:72–73). According to the ethnosociologist L. M. Drobizheva, these and similar figures, along with the ethnic affiliation census, "reflect ethnic identity awareness, and represent its real indicators" (Drobizheva 1986:82–83).

At the present stage of the development of Native–Russian bilingualism in the North, it has become more and more important to maintain the linguistic continuity between the oldest and the youngest generations. This was underlined in the statement issued by the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Soviet of Ministers of the USSR in February 1980, entitled "Measures for Further Economic and Social Development in the Areas Inhabited by the Peoples of the North." This statement recommends that the government

continue linguistic studies and sociological studies on the problems of the development of writing in the languages of the peoples of the North . . . to ensure elaboration of school programs, and publication of textbooks and dictionaries for general schools, teachers' colleges and institutes, and of illustrative materials and methodological instructions for preschool institutions. (*Pravda*, 26 February 1980)

It is also important, as the well-known Chukchi author Iuri Rytkeu (1985) writes, "to activate teaching the native language in school in close connection with real life—the natural environment—so that the reindeer-breeder of the future may know the terminology of tundra economy to the same extent as his father and grandfather did."

At present, the taiga and tundra supply such valuable goods as furs of wild and farm-raised fur animals, reindeer meat, fish, and other things. No

one can better manage these important branches of economy—which today engage 30 to 40 percent of the total native population—than the native inhabitants themselves (Gurvich 1986:157).

Northern Siberia is a diverse land. It encompasses oil fields and hunting grounds, modern buildings and nomadic tents, kindergartens and schools, workers clubs and shops, and camps for temporary stops of transient reindeer-breeders. For successful hunting, fishing, and reindeer-breeding, the peoples of the North need to preserve the professional skills embodied in the experience of older generations, but this cannot be done without the command of the native language. The transmission of such traditions between the old and young generations is inextricably linked to the continuity of language.

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23. *Crossroads? A Twentieth-Century History of Contacts across the Bering Strait*

MICHAEL KRAUSS

THE SINGLE WORD “CROSSROADS?” FOLLOWED by a question mark effectively conveys the entire point of this chapter, given the proper tone of voice. The notion I wish to explore is the flow of traffic, as denoted by the English word “crossroads”—but lost in the Russian translation “styk”—the basic idea of a place busy with traffic back and forth, and the extent to which it applies to our century. During the periods covered by most of the “Crossroads” exhibition, the Bering Strait may indeed have been such a crossroads for indigenous peoples. Over the past two centuries, however, two great powers of European origin have increasingly dominated the area, although the density of its European population is still very low. These two superpowers met here, face-to-face, or rather back-to-back. It is such a low-pressure point that as arch-enemies during the cold war we practically ignored each other here. A brief history and update of these strange relations follows.¹

For the purposes of this discussion, I am referring primarily to the Bering Strait area and to St. Lawrence Island and facing Chukotka, in particular. I do not consider the Aleutian-Commander arc at all, for twentieth-century contact has been virtually nil there. A glance at a map (figure 23-1) of this area shows why the modern Eskimo language configuration makes the St.

Lawrence Island–Chukotkan connection more important than the Diomedede one. Note that four different Eskimo languages are spoken in this area—one of the Inupiaq branch and three of the Yupik. Originally, Alaskan Yupik was no doubt connected to Siberian Yupik through Seward Peninsula. Naukanski Siberian Yupik on East Cape is still linguistically intermediate between Alaskan Yupik and Chaplinski–St. Lawrence Island (or “Central”) Siberian Yupik. Old Sireniskii, now remembered by only two women of Sireniki in their 70s, was yet another language, a relic of probably the earliest wave of Yupik in Chukotka. In recent centuries, Inupiaq replaced Yupik on Seward Peninsula, thus breaking the American-Siberian Yupik chain and creating a major language barrier between Big Diomedede and Naukan.²

By far the closest kinship during this century has existed between St. Lawrence Island and the facing Chaplinski area of Chukotka, with virtually identical speech that can only be the result of steady and close communication. The population of St. Lawrence Island bottomed out at 274 at the turn of the century, but has now recovered and has moved past 1,000, which is more than the number of Chaplinski Eskimo on the Siberian side. Aboriginally, St. Lawrence Island was, of course, an appendage to Asia, but because it was included in Alaska at the 1867 purchase, it is now the major native Alaska–Siberian link.

The recent history of the area can be divided into three periods: 1900–24, the American period; 1924–48, positive Soviet-American relations; 1948–88, the cold war barrier.

Chukotka at the turn of the century, though nominally under tsarist rule, was in effect under American influence and control, particularly its commerce, whereas Seward Peninsula had a large gold-boom population. Chukotka had nothing of the kind. The nearest permanent Russian administrative outpost was at Anadyr, 400 miles to the southwest. Such government as there was literally conceded the area to American traders, many based in Nome, who may have numbered as many as 200. They sold cheap goods, especially liquor, to Eskimo and Chukchi for good furs and ivory, still a basic industry at Nome. Literature on both sides characterizes many of these traders as “predators” (*kbishchniki*). The “bad old days” of American Chukotka are not forgotten. It is interesting to note that in Alaska loanwords in the native languages are from Russian, whereas in Siberian Yupik such words are English: for example, Alaskan Yupik *miilaq* (soap), Siberian *suupa*; Alaskan *mukaaq* (flour), Siberian *evlawa*; Alaskan *kuluvak* (cow), Siberian *kaakw*; Alaskan *kuuskaq* (cat),



FIGURE 23-1. Native languages and population movements at the crossroads. (Maps by Marcia Bakry, Smithsonian Institution)

Siberian *kiti*; Alaskan *cass aq* (clock, watch), Siberian *kellaagek*, *waasek*; or Siberian *ivenruutek* (outboard motor) (from *Evinrude*); Siberian *keresma* (celebration) (from *Christmas*), which I once noted applied to the sixtieth anniversary of the October Revolution.

By 1924 a new period begins, with the full consolidation of Soviet control in Chukotka, seven years after the October Revolution. There was immediately some curtailment of international travel: for example, that year Knud Rasmussen's Thule expedition, having crossed the entire Eskimo Arctic, was

turned back at Naukan by local guards and permitted to stay only the night. Most important, however, local Eskimo visiting back and forth continued, apparently unimpeded. Between St. Lawrence Island and Chaplino it was a 24-hour row, best done in June—faster of course with outboard motor. On the Soviet side during this period, several more of the Eskimo villages were abandoned or moved to the main Eskimo villages of Chaplino and Sireniki; also, new Eskimo colonies were started at Uel'kal' and Wrangel Island. In the late 1920s, *artels* or collectives and schools were established in the main Eskimo communities; in 1928 the important *Kul'tbaza* (culture base) was built at Lavrentiya, as a center of acculturation for Chukchi and Eskimo; that was also the first permanent Russian settlement on the Chukchi Peninsula—280 years after the first Russian presence there (Simon Dezhnev reached East Cape in 1648). The city of Provideniya began to develop in the mid-1930s, near what had been the Eskimo village of Ureliki at Emma Harbor, with Mister Thomson's American trading post. Provideniya-Ureliki is now a substantial Russian port and city of 6,000 or more people, by far the largest in the area.

In 1938 the Soviet government "regularized" (recognized the legitimacy and at the same time regulated the nature of) these Eskimo visits in a memorandum of February 7 from the Soviet Embassy to the U.S. State Department. The memorandum looks good to us now, but at the time might have been a curtailment. It allowed U.S. Eskimo to visit Chukotka, without a passport. If they checked in with local Soviets or frontier guards for up to three months, they could move freely along the coast at the rate of up to 100 persons a year; the agreement permitted traditional trade, but not firearms, narcotics, liquor, printed matter, or objects of religious worship. These visits indeed continued in both directions and are still remembered by Eskimo on both sides, at both contact points.

During World War II good local relations were enjoyed at another level as well. Under the military Lend-Lease program, some 7,000 planes were flown from the United States to the USSR for the war effort, via Fairbanks, where the University of Alaska was converted to a billet for Soviet pilots to pick up the planes, fly them to Nome, thence to Uel'kal' and Anadyr, Provideniya-Ureliki being an alternate airstrip to Uel'kal'.

After the war, relations changed abruptly, here as elsewhere. The last St. Lawrence Island boat allowed to land at Chaplino apparently made the stop in 1946, and the last group of Little Diomeders to cross over to Big Diomede, that same year, was detained there for seven weeks. The last visits from the

USSR to the United States permitted by either side occurred in August 1947.

During the spring of 1948, at exactly the same time as the Berlin blockade and airlift were beginning, a State Department file shows considerable activity concerning the termination of these Eskimo visits. A memorandum from J. Edgar Hoover of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, for March 22, concludes that U.S. national security concerns should outweigh the interests of local Eskimo. Some argued for tighter supervision and restrictions on visits of Soviet Eskimo to St. Lawrence Island and Diomedes, for example, instead of total curtailment. This debate (June 16–17) was in any case futile in view of the exchange of the following terse notes, one sentence each:

The Embassy of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics presents its compliments to the Department of State and has the honor to communicate that the Soviet Government has taken a decision regarding the establishment of a general system of protection of the Soviet state boundary on the Chukotski Poluostrov [Chukchi Peninsula] and on the islands of Behring Strait, in which connection the procedural agreement regulating visits to the mainland of Siberia by American Eskimos, concluded by means of an exchange of the Embassy's memorandum of February 7, 1938 and the note of the Department of State of the United States of America of March 26, 1938, should be considered invalid as of May 29, 1948. [Initialed] A. P.

The reply was as follows:

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to His Excellency the Ambassador of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and, with reference to the Embassy's note No. 101 of May 29, 1948, has the honor to inform him that this Government takes note of the fact that the Soviet Government considers the agreement of March 26, 1938 regularizing the temporary visits to the Siberian mainland of American Eskimos residing on St. Lawrence and Little Diomedes Island invalid as of May 29, 1948.

This diplomacy in effect closed the frontier for exactly 40 years.

The first Soviet move to secure the separation was, understandably, the evacuation of Big Diomedes to Naukan, in the summer of 1948. Of the 20 or so persons still living there who were to be evacuated, only six (a single family) were Big Diomedes, the rest being Naukantsy who had moved out there, most of the Big Diomedes having already moved to Little Diomedes. Of these six, one may still be alive; she would be the only speaker of Inupiaq Eskimo now in the former USSR.

The next move came 10 years later, in 1958, when the two major Soviet Eskimo points most closely exposed to contact with Alaskan Eskimo were evacuated into fjords at some remove from such exposure. Naukan was “closed” and the population moved to three locations in St. Lawrence Bay: Lavrentiya, Pinakul’, and Nunyamo. (Pinakul’ was in turn closed in the 1960s, and Nunyamo in the 1970s.) The largest single group of Naukantsy now lives as a small minority among the Russian and Chukchi population of Lavrentiya. Although they have had no village of their own for over 30 years and number fewer than 400—a minority of a minority—the Naukantsy still maintain their identity as an articulate and creative people. As for Chaplino, it, too, was moved to New Chaplino in 1958, near the head of Tkachen Bay, a site connected by road to the city of Provideniya. Sireniki, the only other major Chaplinski-speaking community, remained in its traditional location, already less exposed to contact, the only one of the three not moved. (Note that Uelen, the largest Chukchi community on East Cape, also remains in its traditional location, perhaps because it lacks the ethnic ties.)

During the 40-year period of the cold war, there may have been some U.S.–Soviet Eskimo contact, but this certainly was rare and minimal, some cases perhaps engineered by intelligence services, shadowy and hardly documented. I do not know why the major evacuations were made in 1958 and not earlier or later. If there was any contact between 1948 and 1958, there certainly was less in 1958–88. After 1958, Soviet Eskimo were also subject to much more assimilatory pressure, all living in communities that were largely Russian and Chukchi. The generation under 25 years of age no longer speaks Eskimo. On this side the same is true of the Diomeders, but not of the St. Lawrence Islanders, almost all of whom still speak Yupik and can therefore easily communicate with Chaplinski-speakers on the other side, a point definitely downplayed in the Soviet literature, which has only emphasized that conditions for comparable indigenous populations were better on the Soviet side.

In the 1970s those on St. Lawrence Island and Diomedede became interested in resuming contact with Soviet kin. This move was related to the detente of the period, which afforded us contact with Soviet counterparts at the academic level, and to activity from the University of Alaska supporting the development of native language programs in the island schools. Certainly, this interest was shared by Soviet Eskimo, who also doubtless found the renewed international attention to the possibility of renewed contacts encouraging and

beneficial, among other things in the resumption of Eskimo language programs in their schools (though by then the children no longer knew the language there).

More specifically, in the early 1970s I initiated contacts with leading Soviet Eskimo language specialists; the academics E. Rubtsova, G. Menovshchikov, N. Emel'yanova, and writers (for example, V. Anal'kvasak), all now deceased; and by the mid-1970s with the new generation of academic specialists, the linguist Nikolai Vakhtin, and ethnographers Mikhail Chlenov and Igor Krupnik. In the period 1969–72 I had been involved in designing a roman alphabet orthography for St. Lawrence Island Yupik and in developing a bilingual education program and literature in the language for the island schools. This came during a period in which there was no use of the language allowed in the Soviet schools. Through Vakhtin, Krupnik, and Chlenov, we soon also developed a chain of communication and transmission of this literature between St. Lawrence Islanders and Soviet Eskimo. I was also able to obtain copies or microfilms of the considerable Soviet Eskimo school literature (of 1931–59) and to furnish copies of this to the island schools. In 1977 the first contacts by correspondence in Yupik began between island educational leaders and writers such as Vera Oovi Kaneshiro, Adelinda Womkon Badten, Jenny Alowa, and their Soviet counterparts, Lyudmila Aynganga and Zoya Nenlumkina. These indirect contacts helped build consciousness of each other's changing situation, continued existence, and desire to reestablish direct contact between the Eskimo of St. Lawrence Island and Chukotka.

I myself made trips to Leningrad in 1976 and Moscow-Leningrad in 1979 for these purposes. In 1979, at the home of Mikhail Chlenov, I had my first opportunity to meet a Soviet Eskimo, Ol'ga Mukha, and the chance to teach her to read her language in the St. Lawrence Island orthography, using as a text a volume we had published at the Alaska Native Language Center of accounts of St. Lawrence Islanders' traditional visits to Chukotka (*Pangehtellghet* 1976) and which, we understand, became popular reading material in Chukotka.

I continue to focus here on this Eskimo connection as a central issue in the much broader interest also developing for contacts across the "Ice Curtain" between Alaska and the Soviet Far East in general—both because of my own personal interest in it (indeed, that is why I am here today), and because I do believe that the human concern and sympathy for the right of these separated Eskimo communities to reestablish their ties played a powerful central

role in the success of the movement for reopening the crossroads.

In this connection, I had an interesting meeting in 1978 with Ambassador Anatolii Dobrynin in Washington. Dobrynin was interested in this issue, having himself visited Nome in 1975. I pointed out the strange situation that whereas the two Cold War arch enemies had large parts of their budget pointed at each other in the form of nuclear warheads over the Atlantic and Europe, right where the two superpowers actually met, we were not even sure exactly where the boundary was, and had only a few guards with binoculars and rifles. Why not then celebrate our peaceful neighborliness by allowing the Eskimo to visit back and forth again as in the past, by renewing in some form the agreement of 1938? Dobrynin agreed these visits would be good for both sides, but unfortunately, Soviet policy required that relations between our countries generally would have to improve before these visits would be permitted. He certainly was right.

Interest continued to intensify during the early 1980s, in spite of a period of poor U.S.-Soviet relations, which no doubt delayed the results.

In recent years, the development of contacts, at first very indirect, has rapidly escalated in extent and directness. In late 1985 I had an opportunity to meet with some Soviet Eskimo cultural leaders Lyudmila Aynganga (Chaplin-ski writer and educator) and Antonina Verbitskaya (Naukanski broadcaster), at the home of Mikhail Chlenov in Moscow. In May 1986, a Canadian Department of Indian Affairs delegation visited Sireniki. In July 1986 a Naukanski dance troupe performed at the Aasivik festival in Greenland: that fall an Alaskan group of performers under the leadership of Dixie Belcher, which included St. Lawrence Islanders, traveled to the USSR and met Soviet Eskimo students in Leningrad, the first direct St. Lawrence Islander-Chapliniki contact in many years, however roundabout geographically. In the spring of 1987 Governor Steve Cowper began a campaign to open broader contacts.

The first permitted crossing of the border was made in the summer of 1987 by a swimmer, the American Lynne Coxe, who swam from Little to Big Diomedes. She was accompanied by some Diomedes in a boat, who met Naukantsy who had come to Big Diomedes for the occasion. To converse, they had to speak through Citizens' Band radio back to Little Diomedes to engage as translator the one old man there who still understood Naukansi. Then in September 1987 the American marine research vessel *Surveyor* was allowed to cross the line to spend a day in port at Provideniya. About this time Nome businessman Jim Stimpfle intensified efforts to establish contact. In January

1988 Soviet spokesman Gennadi Gerasimov encouraged businessmen in Anchorage to continue the pressure for contacts.

The summer of 1988 finally saw major contacts directly across the frontier, exactly 40 years after that curt exchange of notes in 1948. At the Reagan-Gorbachev summit in May and June of 1988, Arctic science cooperation figured among the agreements. These included a remarkably explicit statement regarding native contact (Khabarovsk edition of *Pravda*, June 3, 1988): "They [Reagan and Gorbachev] expressed support for the expansion of contacts between native peoples of the Soviet North and of Alaska." This statement could hardly have been more explicit or come from a higher level. This was the result also of many long-term efforts by individuals and groups on both sides—Eskimo, academic, and political.

At the same time, stimulated perhaps by the expansion of a Japanese fishery in the North Pacific, the United States and Soviet Union stepped up negotiations for cooperation in this field and opened Provideniya (along with Beringovski north of Cape Navarin, and Korf, west of Alyutorski) to American vessels engaged in joint fishery, in exchange for the lifting of restrictions on American ports to Soviet vessels.

Perhaps the most dramatic event of all, at least for me, because I was on it, was the Nome-to-Provideniya Friendship Flight on June 13–14, 1988, of an Alaska Airlines jet with some 70 Americans on board, including Alaska's Senator Murkowski, Governor Cowper, other officials, 20 journalists, and 17 St. Lawrence Islanders. It was a beautiful and unforgettable day. The whole town of Provideniya was out cheering. Most emotional of all was the meeting of the St. Lawrence Islanders with the Soviet Eskimo who were in Provideniya: greeting each other for the first time in 40 years, in the language—it became dramatically clear to all—that was the only one common to both sides.

Nevertheless, the driving force of that event, at least from the American side, was commercial, not cultural or scientific interests. Alaska Airlines, Nome businessmen, and cruise ship lines are negotiating with Provideniya, Magadan Province, and Moscow officials to bring boats and planes with American tourists to Provideniya, especially as an added attraction for tourists to Nome, to benefit the economy on both sides. Eskimo, especially as dancers, are looked upon as an important cultural resource for this. One may hope that the Eskimo themselves may benefit, not only economically, but also socially, especially insofar as they may share in the opening of the frontier that has separated them for so long.

In July 1988 the successful search for a lost St. Lawrence Island hunting party went freely across the border and Soviet ships helped. In early August of 1988 there were two more major contacts. The schooner *Cyrano*, piloted by Mimi George and David Lewis, was permitted to bring 12 islanders from Gambell directly across to New Chaplino, for the first contact ever in that village, lasting five days. At the same time, a delegation of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC), consisting of three Greenlanders, three Canadians, and three Alaskans (two St. Lawrence Islanders and the mayor of Diomedes) traveled from Copenhagen to Moscow, met with officials there, and then flew to Anadyr and Provideniya, visited Sireniki for two days, and also made a brief stop at New Chaplino. The ICC group went home the long way, but with a commitment from Soviet officials to send Soviet Eskimo to the next triennial meeting of the conference, at Sisimiut, Greenland.

The latest major event was the return visit of 26 Soviet officials, press, Eskimo (including three Yupik speakers) and Chukchi, from Provideniya (by ship) to Nome and Anchorage on September 8–10, the first in this direction. Some participants report that as the ship crossed the dateline passengers clapped their hands, and someone said, "We broke the curtain."

Surely the joy is mutual, and, we may hope, not premature. Both sides, including the separated Eskimo community, have too long lived not at a crossroads but at the edge of the world. That crossroads is becoming real again. We should feel obligated to help keep it so.

EPILOGUE

So ended the original presentation of this account. Up to that point, which marked the opening of the "Crossroads" exhibition (along with the crossroads themselves), chronicling the steps and successes one by one was relatively easy. To continue the history of the past two-and-a-half years' dramatic increase in our relations is a far more complex and vast task, which I can only do here in a cursory way, for by late 1988 there was something to report for every month, by 1989 something for every week, and now there is something practically every day. Here are some of the highlights of these events:

October 1988: Soviet icebreakers help rescue famous whales caught in ice at Barrow. Governor Cowper sends delegation to establish business ties in Khabarovsk, Nakhodka, Vladivostok.

November 1988: Governor Kobets of Magadanskaya Oblast' and officials take boat (for the second time) to Nome, visit Anchorage and Juneau, with business proposals.

January 1989: Alaska Airlines applies for Nome-Provideniya route, soon to be changed to Anchorage-Magadan.

February 1989: First Aeroflot flight, Magadan-Anadyr'-Anchorage, bringing Dixie Belcher's musical Performers for Peace, including New Chaplino Eskimo dancers, for public performance at Anchorage Arts Center, and memorable private rehearsal at home of Jenny Alowa, of Soviet and St. Lawrence Islander Eskimo dancing together, as they had for the first time on stage at the Provideniya Dom Kul'tury on the occasion of the Friendship Flight, seven months before.

March 1989: Aeroflot brings Bering Bridge Expedition members to Anadyr', who then ski and dogsled from Anadyr' to Kotzebue (March 7–May 8). The return flight brings 100 Soviet passengers and cargo from Magadan for a business fair in Anchorage.

April 1989: As the Bering Bridge Expedition nears the Diomedes, Governors Cowper and Kobets in Nome and Diomedes—prevented by inclement weather from meeting personally—establish agreement on Bering Strait relations, including visa-free Eskimo travel, and rescue operations.

These patterns continued. By the summer of 1989, the local bush carrier Bering Air of Nome began frequent charter service between Nome and Provideniya. In July 1989 the schooner *Cyrano* with St. Lawrence Islanders began a stay of several months in villages on Chukotka. In September 1989 the Nome Elders conference included a large delegation of Chaplinski and Naukanski Eskimo who began planning with St. Lawrence Islanders for continuing cultural relations, at the same time that U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Edouard Shevardnadze signed agreements in Wyoming including the Alaska-Chukotka accord for visa-free Eskimo travel. And in October 1989 the ethnologist Anna Kertulla began a stay of sixteen months in the village of Sireniki.

Also in the fall of 1989, the crucial telephone link between Gambell on St. Lawrence Island and Provideniya was established, vastly facilitating com-

munications between Alaska and the entire Soviet Far East. Governor Cowper made an extensive tour of Chukotka and the Soviet Far East to establish firm relations at many levels. The University of Alaska also established a much-needed office of Soviet relations.

Today, Bering Air reports it has made about 350 flights between Nome and Provideniya, with at least 2,200 passengers, 60 percent Americans, no freight, and no official mail. About 15 of these flights have taken St. Lawrence Islanders from Gambell to Provideniya, and 3 or 4 have taken passengers from Kotzebue to Lavrentiya.

On the Anchorage-Magadan route, Northern Air Cargo and Alaska Airlines estimate there have been up to 65 flights carrying passengers and cargo—about 25 of these with cargo only—the rest have carried more than 3,500 passengers—about half American and half Soviet. I know of at least three flights that have gone on to Fairbanks. They bring passengers not only from the Soviet Far East, but also from places such as Yakutsk and Novosibirsk, and may become a major carrier of passengers from Moscow and St. Petersburg. Thus by August 1991 approximately 6,000 people had crossed the border more easily and over a broader expanse since Lynn Coxe first swam it in 1987.

In April 1991 two more notable events took place: the international Nome-Anadyr' dogsled race, probably to become a regular event (this race did indeed take place, but was stopped for four days at the border for visas!); and on April 13 Aeroflot carried more than 100 passengers from Anchorage to Petropavlovsk in Kamchatka for the first time, thus opening a new route. Aeroflot also began to reestablish another old connection over the Aleutian-Commander Island arc involving Alaska natives, as many of the passengers will be Unalaskans, including some Aleut, who will meet Commander Island Aleut in Petropavlovsk. The Russian America Company established Aleut on the Commander Islands, mostly from Atka and Attu, who have been cut off from each other for more than a century now, since the sale. Igor Krupnik and I met with a Commander Island Aleut leader in Leningrad in early 1990 about reestablishing contact. Moses Dirks of Atka spoke in Aleut over the Bering phone connection to one of the few remaining old Aleut speakers among the Aleut of the Commander Islands in August 1990, breaking over a century of silence. The Commander Island Aleut are eager to contact their American kin as the Eskimo have, and their reunion will also play a central role in the events now feverishly being planned for this summer and fall be-

tween the Aleut-Pribilofs, Commanders, and Kamchatka, to celebrate the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Bering's 1741 voyage.

At the writing of this account in August 1991, air traffic between Alaska and the Russian Far East is up to about 300 passengers a week for May-June and more than 700 per week are expected for June-September, so that by the end of the summer well over 10,000 passengers will have crossed the border. There has been charter traffic between Anchorage and Anadyr', Anchorage and Magadan, Anchorage and Provideniya, and Anchorage and Khabarovsk about five times a week (freight and passengers), but Aeroflot has now scheduled weekly service for Khabarovsk-Anchorage (-San Francisco). And, as of June 16, Alaska Airlines has been flying three times a week between Anchorage, Magadan, and Khabarovsk.

For all of this traffic, there is still no direct mail service (although provisions for mail contracts have been made for these flights), because international mail must still be funneled through Moscow.

Travel is still hampered by paperwork and the need for visas (except for Eskimo and Aleut), and the absence of consular facilities in Alaska and the Russian Far East, which there is talk of developing.

In addition to the expanding Eskimo (and Aleut relations), the tourism and business traffic, there is also significant movement of people as a result of the establishment of sister-city relations, now including Kotzebue-Lavrentiya, Shishmaref-Uelen, Nome-Provideniya, Gambell-New Chaplino, Savoonga-Sireniki, Fairbanks-Yakutsk, Bethel-Anadyr', Anchorage-Magadan, Kenai-Okha (Sakhalin), Unalaska-Petropavlovsk, Juneau-Vladivostok, which have each had at least one exchange of visiting delegations.

The Eskimo (and Aleut) connection has played a central role not only in the past history of Beringia but also in the present reopening of Russian-U.S. relations in the area.³ These relations now involve much of Alaska and the entire Russian Far East.

This movement is the beginning of a vast reorientation of Old World–New World relations for us. For 500 years now, since Columbus, these have centered across the Atlantic Ocean. Beringia has been known to imperial powers for precisely the last half of that period only. Named after the "Russian Columbus" (indeed, a minor Columbus!), Beringia has remained but a remote backwater for world empire. The events of 1866–67 made Beringia even more remote, as the first successful laying of the Atlantic cable put an end to plans to establish West-East telegraph connections via Alaska-Chukotka the

very year of the sale of Alaska to a new empire with which it was not even contiguous. The U.S.-Soviet Cold War, fought predominantly over the Atlantic and Europe, further defined this Beringian backwater as the frozen edge of the world—a world again become a flat surface, with Alaska at the opposite ends, though on a clear day visible from both sides, yet socially and politically forbidden monsters—for 40 years.

During these 40 years, Alaska and Chukotka became quite used to each being the remotest end of the world, and to the economic and cultural supply lines that oriented Alaska entirely southeastward to the “Lower 48” and Chukotka southwestward to the Soviet “mainland” (*materik*, in local Russian).

We seem almost to have forgotten the extreme artificiality of that situation from a long-term historical and geographical point of view. Suddenly this reopening of communication between two great empires, where they abut, has produced in a mere three years a virtual torrent of thousands of travelers, as I myself, amazed, am tempted to describe it. On further reflection, however, I think we are quite unprepared for the radical socioeconomic reorientation the reopening of the crossroads has in store for us. The thousands of this summer may be but a trickle in comparison with the patterns of communication that we shall see develop by the end of this century. Of course, much depends on the success of the economy of the Russian Federation, degrees of autonomy in the former Soviet Far East, and the quality and continued improvement of relations with U.S. Alaska, subjects that I leave to optimistic speculation and hope.

At the same time, I must insist that it is none too soon to warn of the severe danger to nature and society in the crossroads region that this opening of modern traffic will surely bring. The fragile ecosystem of the area must be protected from what could be rapid devastation. The idea of a Beringian international park has been in the air since about 1971 and certainly needs close consideration. The same increased threat now hangs over the future of the native societies of the region. Environmental harm, demographic and cultural pressure of growing American and Russian populations and industries, especially the pressure of overwhelming tourism, could easily be more damaging to the future of the remaining indigenous cultures and languages than a closed crossroads has been.

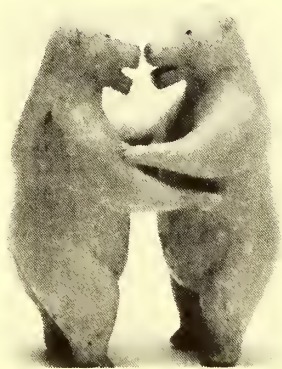
Can we reorient our thinking quickly enough to keep up with this radical change in our world? Are we prepared to live as wisely with an open crossroads as with a closed one?

NOTES

1. This account of the history of the Beringian crossroads during the twentieth century was first presented in September 1988 at the opening of the “Crossroads” exhibition in Washington, D.C. As it happened, that event symbolically marked a dramatic moment in the history of the crossroads itself—namely, the reopening of a real flow of traffic, the fall of an Ice Curtain without gates, more impenetrable than the Berlin Wall, which fell 14 months later. So much happened between the opening of the exhibition in 1988 and the April 1991 Anchorage openings of the crossroads that I consider it vital to append an update to the original account, which follows herewith, itself with minor changes and corrections.

2. Of course, this was routinely penetrated by bilingualism. Now, however, there is no one in the United States who can speak Naukanski, and virtually no one in Chukotka who can speak Inupiaq.

3. July 1991 saw an important further strengthening of this Eskimo contact in the resumption of traditional travel, by open boat, first in mid-month by Chukchi and Eskimo of the Northern area, in five boats from Uelen to Little Diomedes, thence to Shishmaref and Kotzebue; and at the end of the month by Sireniki Eskimo, in four boats, with some difficulty, to Gambell. The resumption of this independent travel, by their own means (instead of airplane) dangerously late in the season (safest in June), over seas that no one could remember navigating for more than 40 years, says much about the people’s will and the strength of their relationships.



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