

PREFACE

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Those of us living and working along the seacoasts are increasingly recognizing that maritime cultures are most often quite specialized and qualitatively different from interior cultures. Some authors have identified distinctive subsistence-related features, others, demographic or socio-political attributes or even dialectical features. We are only beginning to appreciate the nature and complexity of maritime cultures and their dynamics of change, but it seems clear that societies living at the land/sea interface warrant special examination. The papers in this volume do not deal directly with questions of definition for most authors would accept the uniqueness of "life at the edge"; rather, these papers consider the evolution of cultural complexity in two maritime settings -- the Northeast and the Northwest Coasts.

The areal coverage focuses on the Northeast Coast -- Labrador, Newfoundland, the Maritimes and the state of Maine -- and the Northwest Coast--southeast Alaska, British Columbia and Washington. These coastal zones have enough general similarities to warrant comparative examination of the cultures that developed there. In particular, both coastal zones were glacially formed and are adjacent to temperate (or subpolar) oceans with high primary productivity of the surface waters leading to large fisheries (Gross 1977). There are of course, major differences, particularly the presence of the Coast Range in the west which produces a fjord-type coastline as well as increased precipitation and a corresponding rain forest vegetation. Again, the marine life of the North Pacific is considered to be more varied and abundant than that of the North Atlantic, a consequence of the Pacific's longer history as a temperate ocean (Bodsworth 1970:101).

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Given such obvious macro-environmental differences and the historical independence of the two areas, it is reasonable to seek only the most general similarities in form and process, those things that reoccur as a consequence of a maritime way of life. In some of these papers there are efforts to specify recurrent processes or necessary boundary conditions for the development of cultural complexity, but there is no consensus as to the potential of nomothetic generalizations for those two areas. These papers reflect disagreements about the classification of cultures and, not surprisingly, conflicting explanatory models, but the conflicts are not fundamental theoretical cleavages. We can appreciate the progress represented by these papers if we examine their historical context.

Economic, political and ecological developments in recent years have brought about a renewed interest in the seacoasts and the continental shelf. The adoption of a 200 mile territorial marine limit, the search for offshore oil, gas and minerals and a concern about pollution and declining fish stocks have forced affected countries to accelerate their studies of the coastal zones and instigate resource management programs. Unfortunately the baseline research has usually been conducted through government institutes and with little reference to archaeology. In this regard, it is significant that it was not until 1981 that a formal symposium involving oceanographers and archaeologists appeared on the program for the Society of American Archaeology (Oceanography and Prehistoric Archaeology, S.A.A. meetings, April 1981) -- a long overdue event. However, as cultural resource management work increases, archaeologists are becoming increasingly aware of maritime conservation issues (Whitlam 1981) and some basic inventory studies have been accomplished on parts of the continental shelf (Dincauze 1979). In addition, traditional fieldwork done for a variety of purposes has greatly increased the data base on both coasts (e.g., Shimabuku 1980; Fladmark 1981).

Following consolidation of the theoretical advances made under the "new" archaeology of the 1960s and 1970s, university and museum based researchers in proximity to the coasts began belated theoretical studies on the origin and nature of maritime cultures. Interests here was not centered on the historical origins of particular patterns or cultures, but with the recurrent features and processes characteristic of maritime societies. A pioneer effort in this regard was *Prehistoric Maritime Adaptations of the Circumpolar Zone* (1975) edited by William Fitzhugh. The papers, however, concentrated on synchronic events (adaptations) in northern or subpolar environments with little or no coverage of the Northeast and Northwest coasts. In 1979, David Yesner chaired a comparative symposium at the SAA/CAA meetings (*Coast to Coast: Comparative*

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Maritime Adaptations) which again was synchronic in perspective and focused on New England and the American Northwest. More recently, Yesner (1980a) had proposed a definitional model which attempts to identify what it is that maritime hunters and gatherers have in common. These initial comparative and interdisciplinary studies of coastal societies suggest that maritime archaeology is destined to be a growth area within the discipline and that at present, we are in much the same pioneering position as an earlier group of archaeologists who set out to study the domestication of plants and animals and the origins of settled village life.

In 1980, the state of the art was such that it seemed appropriate to organize another bicoastal symposium to deal with the temperate/boreal climatic zones of Canada and the adjacent regions of the United States, hitherto untreated in a comparative way; and also to take a diachronic perspective and in so doing, move beyond the study of maritime adaptations. Participants were invited to contribute papers of a comparative and/or evolutionary nature dealing with theoretical and methodological issues common to the two coasts. Particular issues were to include comparison of cultural complexities between the two coasts and discussion of evolutionary developments (trajectories, rates of change, etc.) and the reasons behind these developments. The topic of cultural complexity on the Northeast and Northwest Coasts is of special interest at two time periods: 1) the ethnographic "present" where the Northwest Coast cultures are usually considered to be more complex than those of the Northeast Coast; and 2) the Late Archaic/pre-Marpole period where the Northeast Coast societies are, in some aspects of culture, more complex than their west coast counterparts.

Accordingly, at the 1981 meetings of the Canadian Archaeological Association, I chaired a symposium entitled *Cultural Complexity and Cultural Development on the Northeast and Northwest Coasts* with the following participants: R. Nash, R. Whitlam, K. Fladmark, R. Matson, D. Burley, D. Sutton, W. Fitzhugh, D. Keenlyside, K. Ames, D. Mitchell, V. Miller, P. Hobler, D. Sanger, A. Spiess/B. Bourque/S. Cox, D. Yesner and S. Campbell. Discussants were R. Carlson and D. Sanger.

The papers in this volume are revised versions of ones presented at the meetings and are organized according to related topics. The accompanying maps (Figs. 1, 2) illustrate the areas under consideration plus prominent sites and localities on each coast. The lead-off paper by Ronald J. Nash is a review of the frameworks which have structured archaeological investigations on the two coasts and an effort to provide a context for the papers which follow. These concerns are extended by Roy L. Carlson who

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reviews the goals, theory and methods which have guided archaeological work on the Northwest Coast. Two ethnographic papers follow which depart from traditional reconstructions of the historic Micmac and Tsimshian peoples. These two papers by Virginia P. Miller and Donald H. Mitchell should stimulate some re-evaluation of late prehistoric cultural complexity and they effectively narrow the cultural-evolutionary gap between peoples of the two coasts. In this regard it is interesting to note that William Fitzhugh's recent discoveries in Labrador have revealed new evidence for hitherto unsuspected complexity in social organization among late Maritime Archaic cultures of the Northeast.

One of the most parsimonious models is that proposed by Knut R. Fladmark who examines east and west coast developments with regard to coastal stabilization. Similarly, David R. Yesner stresses the need for controlling coastal geomorphology in seeking to explain economic changes, but his emphasis is on local variability and change rather than broad scale changes. Arthur Spiess, Bruce Bourque and Steven Cox summarize the economic and oceanographic changes at the Turner Farm site, before proceeding to a comparison of cultural complexity in Maine and the Northwest Coast. These three authors stress the large number of specific differences (especially social differences) between the culture patterns on the two coasts, whereas in the following paper, Robert Whitlam attempts to model the economic adaptations on both coasts using a single ecological model of considerable generality.

In the final group of papers, there is increased consideration of social complexity, i.e., the specialized or hierarchial arrangements of stratification and ranking. For R.G. Matson, such complexity can emerge where intensive exploitation of a resource is possible as is the case with the Pacific salmon. But, as Philip M. Hobler cautions, even settlement patterns are not dictated by the distribution of the Pacific salmon. Like R.G. Matson, David V. Burley compares the Micmac and the Coast Salish, but he places less emphasis on salmon specialization and argues for a regional ecological approach to understanding intensification and evolving complexity. However, in the concluding paper, Kenneth M. Ames continues development of a general model of ranked societies as stable systems, a model which could be applied to coastal or non-coastal forager societies.

This collection of papers should provide some significant theoretical advances in our understanding of the evolution of maritime cultures, not only for temperate North America, but for the study of coastal fishing societies everywhere. Some progress is apparent in specifying the nature of complexity in maritime

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cultures, the preconditions associated with such development, the methodologies needed for study and the processes which can lead to complex maritime cultures; and these advances result from a mixture of ethnographic, ecological and evolutionary approaches. A pessimist might complain that cultures on the two coasts do not have similar evolutionary trajectories and that these papers do not converge towards a unified middle range theory or even neat nomothetic propositions. However, the papers by Whitlam and Ames in particular are headed in this direction, and while there are some key variables (coastal stabilization, salmon), it is apparent that single variable models or single models will be insufficient for handling complex problems concerning the origin and functioning of the Northeast and Northwest Coast cultures. This is not a controversial observation and it is to be hoped that maritime archaeologists with their specialized data will play a leading role in the development of propositions of restricted scope which can be incorporated into middle range anthropological theory.

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