

For me, the greatest limitation is the lack of information and analysis concerning the epilog [sic], which is a statement of faith by Alice Jacob. Since her conversion to fundamentalist Christianity is an important aspect of her life history, it deserves the same scrutiny as the more traditional material. However, she gives us only a very rough indication of when this event occurred. Preston should have provided more background concerning Jacob's conversion and how it should be interpreted given contemporary sociocultural conditions in James Bay. While Christian love and forgiveness are positive values which, Preston argues, Alice Jacobs has added to more traditional Cree values, there are indications that at least some of the traditional values are antithetical to those of her new faith. For example, much of the testimony focuses on dependence upon God/Jesus and one's inability to be socially responsible without God's help; this appears to contradict the Cree value of self-reliance. Also, as a traditional Cree, Alice was a competent member of the social group; as a Christian, God helped her "even though [she] was a woman." On the whole, though, the book is useful and will make a positive contribution to Cree ethnography.

### **Prehistoric Hunter-Gatherers: The Emergence of Cultural Complexity**

T. Douglas Price and James A. Brown, eds.

Studies in Archaeology.

New York: Academic Press, 1985. xviii + 450 pp. \$63.00(cloth).

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Anthropological literature on recent and past foraging societies has increased substantially, with improved analytical and theoretical sophistication. Researchers have approached this theme and its aspects from different perspectives. The focus is now shifting towards sequence and development, with a growing participation by archaeologists.

This volume owes its existence to the editorial initiative of two specialists: T.D. Price, with expertise in north European Mesolithic; and J.A. Brown, in North American Midwest prehistory. It emerges from a lively and well attended session of the XIth ICAES Conference in Vancouver (1983). It provides the latest on the state of the art but also highlights new developments in archaeology: (1) current directions in method and theory; (2) the appropriateness of the prehistory of foraging for testing new disciplinary advances; (3) major debates stimulated by ethnoarchaeological researches; (4) the increasing and independent contribution by archaeologists to anthropological theory building, reflecting greater interest in sociocultural phenomena's diachronic dimension.

The volume, unlike most conference proceedings, maintains thematic unity and a structured framework, as well as high standards in the individual contributions. Each paper examines how and why complexity arose among some late Pleistocene and Holocene foraging groups. Complexity covers themes such as subsistence intensification, origins of sedentary residence and social inequality. The main thesis is that the transformation happened before and independently of the Neolithic "revolution." A foraging/food-production dichotomy, furthermore, would obscure

processes of change operating on different variables, by overlooking heterogeneity within and overlap between these subsistence systems and by assuming a rigid linkage between them and other aspects of culture. Food production merely illustrates a further degree of food-procurement intensification. Current thinking rules out as redundant neo-evolutionary typologies and the simple, static, egalitarian hunter-gatherer stereotype.

Contributions identify trends towards complexity through population increase, sedentary or nucleated settlements, intensified subsistence, exchange networks, ceremonialism, social ranking, ostentatious burials, architectural elaboration and art. Causes may involve environmental change, population pressure or social systems dynamics. Many contributors favor the latter. Environment is not a sufficient condition. Population, embedded in these changes, is not a prime mover.

The format includes a theoretical section, followed by regional case studies in North America and the Old World, ending with a terse evaluation. The papers by Bender and by Marquardt could fit in the regional sections. All the case studies (with the exceptions of one from the Levant and another from Australia), confine themselves to temperate, boreal or arctic zones of North America or Europe. This may reflect uneven participation by experts, rather than editorial decisions. Several contributions from North America and Australia benefit from independent ethnohistorical researches. Each explores theoretical topics first, in the conviction that theory and data are interdependent.

Comments on the contributions follow: (1) Price and Brown discuss comprehensively conditions, consequences and causes relating to complexity (the term is preferred to others describing cumulative phenomena), ending with a flow chart and a plea for more rigorous theorizing on causality. Cohen outlines clearly his minority position on population pressure as a catalyst for transforming egalitarian society. Marquardt surveys critically theoretical models and advocates a synthesis of natural scientific and historical materialist approaches. His contribution remains that section's most polished. Bender's preliminary findings on her comparison of eastern North America's Archaic to Woodland and Britanny's Mesolithic to Neolithic with respect to movements toward complexity tend to subordinate subsistence strategies to expanding requirements of social systems; (2) Sheehan shows how sedentary hierarchic whaling communities emerged through gradual techno-economic specialization in Northwestern Alaska. The classic Pacific Northwest region (Ames; Hayden and Eldridge) illustrates similar developments. "Gateway trade communities" emerge even in the interior. Brown's Midwest paper distinguishes between positive ("pull") and stress ("push") environmental influences; (3) all three Upper Palaeolithic papers implement directions away from narrow preoccupations with stratigraphy and typology. The last glacial central Russian plain's (Sofer) and Southwestern France's (Mellars) semi-sedentary communities document two-phased tendencies (with brief interruptions) towards greater settlement nucleation and subsistence intensification. The regionally integrated communities of the late glacial phase in the Desna/Dniepr area may exemplify a degree of social hierarchy unparalleled in the Palaeolithic, expressed through everyday existence (instead of through mortuary display, as before). Both regions' "pull" situations, with rich terrestrial animal biomasses, refute A. Testart's notion (*Les Chasseurs-cueilleurs* [Société d'Ethnographie, 1982]) that only plant collection or aquatic resource exploitation allow a comparable level of complexity. Mellars deals with the notion that salmon

dependence, which may have prevailed, closer to the then lower and subsequently submerged Atlantic seaboard area accounted for settlement density. Herbivore herd aggregations in the sheltered Russian river valleys, during the colder months, probably made intensive food-storage less crucial than Sofer believes. Conkey's hypothesis that Palaeolithic art functioned as a ritual medium for social structure should be assessed in the light of McGhee's study of Eskimo art tradition, in *Current Anthropology* 1976 17(2). Portable art distribution clusters around a few Magdalenian sites; (4) the North European Mesolithic (Woodman; Price) suffers from sampling bias (inundated early coastal sites). The Maglemosian is represented essentially by summer dispersal settlements, despite their rich contents. The scarcity of plant food remains (invalidating D. Clarke's prediction) may coincide with latitudinal gradients and non-preservation of leafy plants. The Levant (Henry) record documents intensification and social inequality during the Natufian. Gazelle exploitation involved communal drives and mass slaughter, rather than herd following. Indications of long-distance hunting (p. 376) may nevertheless point to the latter interpretation. Australian prehistory (Lourandos) is no longer an environmentally constrained, static succession. The last millennia witnessed the emergence of complex gerontocratic societies, regionally integrated through ceremonial and matrimonial exchanges, a development paralleled, with varying intensity, in Melanesia and Tasmania. This social model could inspire European Upper Palaeolithic research.

The volume illustrates current directions through exploratory case studies, rather than a mature turning point. Including relevant areas such as the Siberian "Neolithic," the Jomon tradition of Japan or the final and epi-Palaeolithic in the Maghreb would improve representativity. The epistemological positions, underlying approaches described by Gould as "adaptationist" and "transformationalist," correspond with the mechanistic logico-positivism of the New Archaeology and the marxist-influenced philosophical realism (e.g., Bender), the latter with a social factor primacy, rather than with the economic priority of the mode of production model. Several issues remain unresolved: (1) showing that subsistence intensification means more than insuring against imponderables (Gould, p. 431); (2) conflicting implications about sedentism, outlined in the last section; (3) broadening and refining complexity studies, beyond the concept of hierarchy (Conkey, p. 319; Price, pp. 359-360). The African Late Stone Age record offers tantalizing prospects for research into such questions.

### **Islands of History**

Marshall Sahlins

Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1985. xix + 180 pp. \$22.50 (cloth), n.p. (paper).

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Professor Sahlins' book is a collection of five essays presented to learned society meetings in Paris, Washington D.C., Adelaide, Liverpool, and Helsinki. Sahlins examines the historic meetings of Polynesians, specifically Hawaiians, Maoris, and Fijians, with Europeans, especially James Cook in Hawaii, in terms of their histori-