

two buttressing footnotes and references). At the other extreme is Humphreys' mini-monograph, on the role and character of witnesses in Classical Athens, which consumes one-third of the entire volume (66 pages with hundreds of intra text references, plus 101 footnotes and a five-page bibliography)!

Captured Heritage: The Scramble for Northwest Coast Artifacts

Douglas Cole

Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1985. xiii + 373 pp. \$24.95 (cloth)

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Canadians visiting museums on this continent and abroad must often wonder how Northwest Coast native artifacts found their way from British Columbia into collections as far distant as New York, Berlin and Leningrad. Historian Douglas Cole has scoured the records of 25 museums, collector's papers and museum monographs to uncover a story of intense rivalry among museums for possession of aboriginal material.

The heyday of organized anthropological collecting on the Northwest Coast, by men commissioned by museums, began in 1875 and continued with compelling urgency for 50 years. "The scramble for skulls and skeletons, for poles and paddles, for baskets and bowls, for masks and mummies, was pursued sometimes with respect, occasionally with rapacity, often with avarice. By the time it ended there was more Kwakiutl material in Milwaukee than in Mamalillikulla . . . and New York City probably housed more British Columbia material than British Columbia herself" (p. 286).

Cole's narrative begins with James G. Swan, whose 1875-76 expedition for the United States Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia was the first major collecting to be commissioned on the Northwest Coast. The encroaching activities of French and German collectors prompted others to compete. Director Adolf Bastian of the Royal Ethnology Museum in Berlin had proclaimed the urgent need for museums to salvage what could still be saved of Northwest Coast material culture for the sake of ethnological science. In 1881, Bastian sent J. Adrian Jacobsen to the British Columbia coast to collect what amounted to at least 2400 pieces. The race against time became a race among North American institutions as well. Museums in Washington, New York and Chicago extended their rivalries into the field, and were later joined by Canadian museums. Cole chronicles the sometimes fair, sometimes foul collecting methods of George Emmons, Franz Boas, Charles Newcombe and others, including the native collectors George Hunt and Louis Shotridge. Each lamented the impending destruction of native tribes, but also feared that the other collectors might beat him there.

In the final two chapters of the book, Cole draws together the themes and patterns that emerge from his narrative. He does not attempt to mask the truth that "on the coast the impact of western culture was simultaneous with the collector's work and in great measure assisted it" (p. 295). While recognizing the inequalities of the trading relationship and the dearth of traditional objects now in native hands, Cole takes a firm though debatable stand in his conclusion: museums are now the

“partial legatees” of Northwest Coast culture, and to them we owe the preservation of artifacts that would otherwise “have been lost, dispersed, or decayed” (p. 311).

Douglas Cole has filled a large gap in Northwest Coast scholarship with his meticulously-researched, provocative account connecting the history of collecting with the development of museums. His work is of particular importance for anthropologists studying the process by which native material culture has been recontextualized and redefined. As part of this process, native people today are reclaiming the objects made and used by their ancestors in a new affirmation of their distinctive cultural identity. The “captured heritage” of the Northwest Coast continues to grow in significance for natives and non-natives alike.