

not as lengthy or detailed as Thompson's (1990) analysis of Atlla's 1990 story collection, it does not need to be, in part because one can also draw on Thompson's work. It will be particularly useful to readers unfamiliar with Dena cultural beliefs and values, because it helps explain many of the references and behavior in the stories.

The final chapter, "Raven and Traveler," addresses these two important story cycles outlining the events that take place in various versions and discussing what the differences may mean. For the Raven cycle, de Laguna draws on both her own experience and Ann Chowning's (1962) work to show how the Dena versions of these important northern stories relate to those told by the Tlingit and other northwest coast groups, the Eskimo, and some Siberian groups. In all three of these chapters, de Laguna draws on the stories recorded by Jette and Chapman, and especially those told by Catherine Atlla, to provide a very useful comparative analysis of all the published Dena stories from Alaska's central interior. A useful and appropriate list of sources and an index round out this volume.

My one reservation about the commentary section relates to comments in the chapter on "Myths and Characters." In this section, de Laguna repeats Chapman's (1914:3) observation that the Dena of Anvik "have no history, in the proper sense of the term" and makes a similar comment about the shallow time-depth of Native "history" among the Ahtna. I think several factors can influence what non-Native researchers learn about Native history. These include prohibitions against relating certain kinds of cultural and historical information to outsiders, cultural differences in the concept of "history," and very significant individual differences in "historical" knowledge. Sometimes such information is carried by relatively few individuals, and it is likely that death due to disease has influenced the transmission of such information in this area over the past 200 years. Thus, at least for the Deg Hi'tan (Ingalik) and the Koyukuk River Koyukon, among whom I have worked and have some first-hand knowledge, I would be reluctant to make this generalization.

Although I must admit to bias because of my long-standing interest in the region and its people, I found this book a thoroughly enjoyable and very valuable contribution to the literature on Athabaskans, particularly their oral literature. De Laguna's long Alaskan experience and extensive comparative knowledge are evident in both the richness and the strength she brings to this work. The writing is solid and clear, and the text, for all practical purposes, is free from errors. In keeping with the high quality of its contents, this book is beautifully designed, right down to its gold and red endpapers.

This review has emphasized the scholarly aspects of this book, but one should not neglect its entertainment value. The stories themselves can continue to delight young and old alike from almost any culture. They are accompanied and enhanced by striking, attractive block print style black-and-white illustrations by Juneau artist Dale DeArmond, whose work is well-known to Alaskans. Although a part of me wished a Dena artist could have been found to illustrate this particular book, the artistic and imaginative quality of

DeArmond's work is undeniable. De Laguna and DeArmond have agreed to donate 20% of the book's royalties to the Doyon Foundation, a Native organization based in Fairbanks that provides scholarships for Athabaskan young people and promotes the preservation of Dena heritage.

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ANCIENT PEOPLE OF THE ARCTIC. By ROBERT MCGHEE. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press in association with the Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1996. xii + 244 p., maps, b&w illus. and colour plates, note on sources, index. Hardbound. Cdn\$35.95.

In this book, archaeologist Robert McGhee recounts the story of the first humans to live in the Canadian Arctic. These people, known today as Palaeo-Eskimos, entered that region from the west some 4000 years ago. They developed a remarkable way of life, which allowed them to survive in a truly daunting environment for some 3000 years. McGhee draws upon the results of over 70 years of archaeological research to present a vivid picture of that way of life, the dramatic changes it went through, and the reasons for its

demise. He tells the story in a way that, while remaining faithful to the scholarly research that underlies the information, will be comprehensible and engaging to readers with little or no background knowledge of the Arctic or of archaeology. McGhee describes some of the archaeological finds—the actual stones and bones that archaeologists study. He also gives them a human face by presenting short, imagined vignettes illustrating the lives of the people who left behind those sites and artifacts.

The organization of the book is broadly chronological, following the development of Palaeo-Eskimo cultures from their origins over 4000 years ago to their disappearance less than 1000 years ago. However, within that overall chronological framework, the book is organized thematically. In the first chapter, “A People of the Imagination,” McGhee sets the scene by establishing that the Palaeo-Eskimo ways of life must have been very different from those followed by Inuit living in the North American Arctic at the time when Europeans arrived. Because their lifeways appear to have differed so much, the rich body of ethnographic data available from those early Inuit-European encounters ends up being of limited use when trying to understand the lives of the Palaeo-Eskimos. With the elimination of straightforward ethnographic analogy, one of the most common tools of the archaeologist, McGhee contends that we must fall back on imagination, always firmly grounded in the archaeological data, to learn about the Palaeo-Eskimos. This first chapter thus sets the stage for the blend of archaeological data and speculative reconstruction woven throughout the remainder of the work.

In Chapters 2 and 3, McGhee outlines both the various theories advanced by scholars over the years to explain the origin of the Eskimos and the archaeological excavations that resulted in the discovery of the various Palaeo-Eskimo cultures in Canada, Alaska, and Greenland. He devotes most of Chapter 4, “The People of the Muskox Way,” to describing and reconstructing the lifeways of the Independence I people, the first occupants of the High Arctic. After reading this chapter, readers will understand why McGhee felt compelled to use the term “bizarre” (p. 11) to describe the impossibly meagre way of life of the early Palaeo-Eskimos. The theme of Chapter 5, “The Great Exploration,” is the process by which the Palaeo-Eskimos colonized the Arctic. Therefore, McGhee starts by taking us further back in time to the arrival in Alaska from Siberia of the ancestors of the Palaeo-Eskimos. He follows their movements into the Canadian Arctic and Greenland, describing the changes in the land and in the animals that they would have encountered as they expanded their territory eastward.

Chapters 6 and 7 explore why and how the lifeways of the Independence I and Pre-Dorset Palaeo-Eskimos altered in response to changing climate to produce the long-lived and successful Dorset culture, described in Chapter 8. The following chapter, “Lost Visions,” is a thoughtful discussion of perhaps the most evocative aspect of the archaeological record left behind by the Palaeo-Eskimos, especially by the Dorset people: the “art” objects that they produced. McGhee documents the changing attitudes of archaeologists to these

often entrancing miniature carvings and then presents a coherent and plausible interpretation of how they may have functioned in Palaeo-Eskimo societies.

The final chapters, “Encounters and Isolation” and “The End of the Dorset World,” both deal with the Palaeo-Eskimos’ interactions with other peoples. These included different Eskimo cultures in Alaska, Indian groups, and the Norse who arrived in Greenland, Labrador, and Newfoundland a thousand years ago. However, the most significant encounter, which coincided with warming climatic conditions that were already putting stress on the Dorset way of life, was with the Thule Inuit following their arrival from Alaska. In vignettes, McGhee reconstructs the kinds of tentative encounters that may have taken place between people of the two cultures before the Dorset retreated to marginal areas of the Arctic and ultimately disappeared. McGhee grounds his reconstruction of the nature of contacts between the cultures in some finds from his own excavations at the Brooman Point site on Bathurst Island. On p. 218, he points to the wonderful preservation there of a Dorset basket (Plate 16) and harpoon head lashings as proof that the Thule moved into that site and (inadvertently) buried these items no more than a year or so after the Dorset had abandoned the location. This is indeed impressive preservation, but on p. 206 he describes finding another Dorset site on Dundas Island where willow bedding material had been preserved for over a thousand years simply by being covered by an unusually persistent snowbank!

The weaknesses of this work are all minor. I found the partly thematic rather than strictly chronological organization of the work mildly disconcerting on occasion. For example, a muskox hunt by a group of Independence I hunters is described in Chapter 4, and then Chapter 5 describes migrating Palaeo-Eskimos encountering for the very first time an unknown species of animal that turns out to be the muskox. In the latter chapter, McGhee’s writing contains vivid descriptions of the landscapes encountered by the Palaeo-Eskimos as they filled the Arctic and of the impressions that these new lands must have made upon them; there are many photographs accompanying these descriptions and elsewhere in the book, but their reproduction in black and white unfortunately means that they can only hint at the visual impact of those landscapes. The book contains sixteen colour plates of artifacts, but it’s a shame that more of the photographs could not have been reproduced in colour. Finally, neither Bathurst Island nor the Brooman Point site located there is shown on any of the ten maps, despite the evident importance of Brooman Point in McGhee’s account of possible contact there between Dorset Palaeo-Eskimos and Thule Inuit (p. 213–229).

This work occupies a niche that archaeologists are just beginning to learn how to fill: that of making the results of scholarly archaeological research truly accessible to the general public. Students of archaeology will also benefit from the thoughtful way that McGhee has managed to impart a human face to the peoples he describes, and the ways in which he has managed to weave together archaeological data and ethnographic analogies drawn from the entire northern circumpolar

region. I would recommend this book to anyone with an interest in the archaeology or the peoples of the North.

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**WILD RIVERS, WILD LANDS.** By KEN MADSEN. Whitehorse, Yukon: Lost Moose, the Yukon Publishers, 1996. Henderson Book Series No. 24, published in association with the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Toronto, Ontario. 112 p., 5 maps, colour illustrations. Softbound. Cdn\$29.95.

From the publishers of *The ORIGINAL Lost Whole Moose Catalogue* and other titles including *Skookum's North: The "PAWS" Collection*, and *Law of the Yukon: A Pictorial History of the Mounted Police in the Yukon*, comes a new book that in similarly quirky and engaging northern style celebrates four watersheds in the great northwest. *Wild Rivers, Wild Lands*, a personal reflection by Whitehorse writer, photographer, and environmentalist Ken Madsen, sweeps readers into one paddler's perspective on the white water of wilderness preservation in the Alsek-Tatshenshini, Stikine, Peel, and Skagway watersheds.

At one level, this handsome, softcover book is a high-action kayak adventure tale. Madsen is a modern-day explorer and a great storyteller. And when his accessible prose is illustrated by his artfully wrought photographs, the arm-chair adventurer will be whisked about as close to wild water escapades as one can get without actually getting wet. Madsen's description of leading the first Canadian descent of Turnback Canyon on the Alsek River is particularly fetching (in a glad-I-wasn't-there sort of way). The author and his crew are trying to shoot this canyon, in which people have died, while a photographer from *National Geographic* hovers directly overhead. Madsen writes: "As I skirt a pair of holes, a blast of spray blinds me. My kayak stalls as it crests a breaking wave, then the helicopter hurricane lifts my bow and blows me upstream, back into the trough of the wave. I close my eyes and lean forward. I dig my paddle into the current and haul the kayak over the wave. When I pass under the chopper, I'm blown through the slot as explosively as a cork from a bottle of cheap champagne" (p. 23).

Skill aside, the machismo of these exploits is countered, happily, by accounts of paddling on less turbulent waters with family and friends. These human aspects of the book show quite clearly how one person's passion for adventure and love of the wild can be passed on to family and young companions by sheer force of example. Other Canadian children would be lucky to have a pair like Madsen and his partner Wendy Boothroyd to take them adventuring, to learn from experience the importance of family and the lasting lessons of living in nature. They are a potent example.

At another level, *Wild Rivers, Wild Lands* is a portrait of intense dedication to wilderness preservation derived from experience on the land, and a heartfelt request to join the Yukon Wildlands Project, an initiative to preserve these wilderness areas. Here, the passion of experience is not so attractive. In the introduction (p. 1), Madsen spits: "The Yukon government is killing wolves near here. Gunning them down from planes, trapping them, snaring them. Like European gentry, the politicians don't want to feed "their" caribou and moose to wild carnivores. Loggers are itching to clear-cut the forest we are walking through. On slopes above Kluane Lake, the scars from mineral exploration slash across alpine meadows. ...Wildness in the natural world is wholeness. Wildness doesn't need to be improved by development. It doesn't require our moral approval or legislative authority. Wildness is."

There are certainly other views on these matters, not represented in this book, which acknowledge the contradictions that colour the nexus of wilderness and development. Pretty picture books like this can tend to commodify and compartmentalize wilderness, and it's more than a little curious that this call for "an entirely new vision" is dressed up on apparently unrecycled paper with pages of gloss-coated photos. And, for a freelance writer/photographer who makes his living from wilderness reporting, Madsen runs the risk in writing this book of appearing to preserve a narrow self-interest in his drive to preserve these wild lands. This call to action would have been more credible had Madsen, however tangentially, been a little less condemnatory of people involved in development and acknowledged the industrial effects of his own consumption—for example, the inevitable damage to land, water, and air incurred through the construction of his kayaks and high-tech camping equipment.

But these are minor quibbles. Ken Madsen's passion and demonstrated environmental action—he was a central player in the establishment of the Tatshenshini-Alsek Wilderness Park—offset the contradictions. And, while the imagery in this book does have its share of sunsets and wild animals, bordering occasionally on cliché, the text, however naive or idealistic, is grounded in experience and is quite refreshing in its candour. Madsen calls, eventually, for balance as he enjoins others to act. He shows how the Yukon Wildlands Project is linked to the World Wildlife Fund's Endangered Spaces Campaign and, in pointing out that large carnivores need huge ranges and that wild creatures must be free to move to keep populations healthy, he calls for wild lands to be linked to "restore the ecological richness and native biodiversity throughout North America" (p. 109).

In the end, it is the emotion of firsthand experiences on the land that empowers this book. Madsen understands that the best way to learn to care about these rivers is to actually paddle them, but—failing that—he has made a credible stab at packaging the river experience in a way that just might move people to act, either by mounting their own expeditions or by writing a cheque to one of the conservation organizations listed at the back. This book is full of the sights and sounds of the great northwest, and what it lacks in inclusive