

even doubted that the expedition was anything more than a publicity stunt: 'As far as I can see, our whole trip was futile and in vain. We are merely tools for the Admiral's ambitions' (page 109).

As eloquent as Stuart Paine the writer was, the reader will also value the additions and explications of the editor, Merlyn Paine, his daughter. She contributes footnotes that link her father's diary with other accounts, including *Discovery*, and provides historical context for the entries. In addition, the footnotes explain many details of training dogs, preparations for fieldwork, navigating, and traveling on the ice. Another contribution of the editor is an appendix that contains selections from *The Barrier Bull*, a newspaper that Paine began during the expedition and of which only a few copies, for the members of the expedition itself, were printed. Noteworthy, too, is that the book contains many photographs from the personal collection of Stuart Paine, which have never been previously published.

After the expedition, Paine never returned to Antarctica. Like many polar adventurers, life's ordinary responsibilities — marriage, a family, service in World War II, running a business — took priority. Finally, cancer ended his life in 1960, at the age of 50. Nevertheless, Antarctica left a deep impression on him. In the final chapter of the book, the editor added words from an essay that Paine wrote after returning from Antarctica: 'Let me go back to . . . where I contributed to the knowledge of the earth, where my work is of lasting value to science, to the only place where I enjoyed complete happiness and inward contentment. Even should I never do this, still I shall live, happy to a certain extent that I had done my part, as small as it was, to further the knowledge of mankind' (page 278). (Raimund E. Goerler, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH 43210, USA.)

SOCIAL LIFE IN NORTHWEST ALASKA: THE STRUCTURE OF INUPIAQ ESKIMO NATIONS.

Ernest S. Burch, Jr. 2006. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press. 478 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 978-1-88963-78-5. \$US65.00.

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This volume is the third and last volume in a trilogy devoted to the ethnohistory of the Inupiaq nations of northwestern Alaska. Like the other two volumes (Burch 1998; 2005), this is a rich, expertly referenced, overview of 'early-contact' Inupiaq nations (1800–1848) based on primarily English-language published and archival records and the author's own interviews during a lifetime of fieldwork in the region. It is a fundamental resource on these people and this region.

The theme of this volume, social life, refers to a functionalist framework that is used to organise the author's ethnological material. The framework is immediately visible in the table of contents, which is divided into separate chapters on roles, solidarity, economy, politics,

and a concluding chapter on 'the integration process.' Burch often references two books by sociologist Marion Levy, Jr. when describing his approach. Fortunately this Parsonian scheme is applied lightly to the material, and it is still possible to read agency, intuition, and innovation into Burch's descriptions of subsistence practice and kinship. The author's intention, as he states clearly at the outset of the book, is to provide a sort of user's instruction manual to Inupiaq nations (as if they were a machine), which describes how all the various component parts fit together and relate to one another.

The book is designed to work at a number of levels. The author takes great pains to make the bilateral kinship society of Inupiaqs clear to US-based students reading the text. The chapter on 'solidarity' gently describes the fundamental terms of kinship analysis and explains the implications of conjugal and regional forms of solidarity for individuals living in this social system. The chapters also contribute to known controversies in the ethnographic literature. Thus, the same chapter of solidarity also speaks to the way that complex kinship forms are represented in local architecture and therefore interprets texts by explorers or archaeologists who may have counted one structure where the author argues that a composite structure existed. Thus what might otherwise be a crude systemic link between a conjugal family and a 'nation' is mediated by rich ethnographies of forms of partnership, vernacular architecture, and the design of settlements illustrating how kinship was an integral part of social life. The illustrations of various types of kinship relationships, or household forms, are richly documented unobtrusively with endnotes to the published literature.

It is noteworthy that the book also strives to represent the intellectual discipline of Inupiat oral history by referencing, where possible, the exact person who provided an observation about Inupiat society, even if that person was paraphrased by an author of a specific publication. Thus this book gives a clearer impression of Inupiaqs speaking for themselves rather than a representation of texts on Inupiaqs.

One should mention that some English-language terms — such as nation — are used loosely in this book, as in Burch's other work. Burch uses 'nation' to represent the dense form of kinship solidarity experienced by regional Inupiaq groups almost to spite sociological theorists who usually would look for nationhood among large groups of people. I agree wholeheartedly that it is necessary to find a literary device to indicate to readers that social life in demographically small settings is nonetheless tangible and real. However, the term 'nation' is almost always used to represent a type of solidarity that ironically arises when people do not know each other, which is certainly not the case in this study. It is likely that Inupiaq experience a form of anonymous national solidarity when one considers their cosmology of how souls move through time, but that type of cosmological argument is not discussed in this book.

There is a potential mismatch between cosmology and representation in other chapters. For example, the book

gives very good summaries of the subsistence strategies used by Inupiaq hunters for various types of animals ranging from a catalogue of birds to the elaborate social strategies used to retrieve a whale. All of these sections are engaging and informative, but one wonders if they are best represented as an 'economic process.' Fortunately, the same exacting descriptions of subsistence technique are allied later in the chapter to descriptions of ritual, distribution, and health. Indeed this 172-page chapter reads like a book in its own right.

One of the more unusual chapters is the last, entitled 'the integration process,' which brings together language, pedagogy, traditional games, and descriptions of ritual specialists to describe, in Levy's words, how 'individuals make a positive adjustment to their life situation.' This wide-ranging discussion of individual social intuition is an important counterweight to sociological functionalism. As it best represents Levy's critique of Parsonian sociology, here it provides the insight into Inupiaq society that brings economy and polity alive. Unfortunately, this chapter is quite short (50 pages). Much like classic ethnographies on 'mental culture,' the chapter provides a guide to various forms of ritual and entertainment that would otherwise not be immediately obvious from the objects held in museums. Ritual and taboo are described as the attempt by Inupiaqs to 'integrate' with uncertainty. Emotions and aesthetics are said to be as adaptations to a large amount of free time. Judging from the loving way that Burch himself describes skill and intuition in preceding chapters, one gets the impression he himself feels there might be more to these activities than mere entertainment, but for a definitive account we may have to wait for another volume.

The book ends abruptly with an epilogue that summarises the works of the main explorers and observers whose writings have been published in English. The intent of this short chapter is to help the reader evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each set of observers. From this it is evident that the bulk of the author's data comes from the latter half of the nineteenth century (the time of the integration of Russian America into the United States). I am aware of a substantial published and unpublished literature available only in Russian on this region for the earlier part of this century, which might strengthen the overview of this region. From the text it is clear that the author's own fieldwork has provided an important guide to his interpretation of the sources, and a summary of that fieldwork would have been appropriate here.

The book is well produced by the University of Alaska Press, with rich illustrations, an accurate index, and many maps (although in my copy maps 7 and 8 seem to have been typeset poorly).

This volume, and the two that proceed it, are a reliable and encyclopaedic guide to the English language published and unpublished literature on the region. The ethnography is organised with a transparent and unobtrusive functionalist scheme that makes it easy to find

material once one realises the way that Burch stretches these traditional systemic categories. (David G. Anderson, Department of Anthropology, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen AB24 3QY.)

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THE ANTARCTIC SUBGLACIAL LAKE VOSTOK: GLACIOLOGY, BIOLOGY AND PLANETOLOGY.

Igor A. Zotikov. 2006. Heidelberg and Chichester: Springer/Praxis Publishing. xviii + 139 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 3-540-42649-3. £77.00; US\$129.00; €99.95. doi:10.1017/S0032247407007255

I first met Igor Zotikov in Cambridge, England, during a 1999 meeting on Antarctic sub-glacial lakes. After spending several afternoons with him in working group sessions, it was clear that he possessed a wealth of information on the history of exploration at Vostok Station that had never been documented. Being located at the Pole of Inaccessibility, having the lowest documented temperature on Earth (-89.2°C), and being the site of one of the deepest ice cores on our planet have made Vostok Station the centre of much lore. Beyond these features, Vostok Station was serendipitously located over the largest sub-glacial lake yet discovered. At more than 14,000 km² in surface area, 800 m in depth, and with a volume of near 5400 km³, it is among the largest lakes on Earth. Despite these superlatives, the lake has yet to be sampled directly, owing to the logistics involved with penetrating the nearly 4 km of glacial ice that overlies it. Since the seminal publication that formalised the presence of a giant lake beneath the station by Kapitsa and others (1996), numerous myths have been circulated about strange life within the lake. A simple search of 'Lake Vostok' on the internet reveals sites with such titles as 'Does Lake Vostok Harbor the Fourth Life,' 'Raiders of the Lost Lake,' 'The Lost City of Atlantis,' and 'The Inner Guide to Mortality.' As drillers and scientists from the Russian Antarctic Expedition continue their efforts to penetrate the lake, these myths continue to escalate, along with a global concern for environmental and scientific stewardship. As convener of an international group of experts that has focused on promoting sub-glacial lake science (<http://scarsale.tamu.edu/>), I have been contacted by numerous scientists concerned about possible contamination of Lake Vostok and regarding proposals to maintain it as one of the last pristine bastions on our planet. Clearly, it is important that the history of this fascinating area be put forth for others to appreciate the hardships and dedication required to work