

Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

KATHLEEN D. MORRISON AND LAURA L. JUNKER (Eds.), *Forager-Traders in South and Southeast Asia: Long Term Histories*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2002, xxi + 288 pp. Index. Cloth \$80.00 Paperback \$29.00 (U.S.).

The anthropology of native Subarctic North America shares much in common with that of the forager-traders of South and Southeast Asia. Subarctic archaeologists will sympathize with the low visibility, poor preservation conditions, and the plethora of undiagnostic tool assemblages that typify the archaeological record of South and South East Asian foragers. Subarctic ethnohistorians and ethnologists will identify with an anthropological record that documents foraging peoples' long-term economic relationships with non-foragers. And historians of subarctic scholarship will recognize some similar debates; for example, whether it was possible for full-time foragers to live in certain areas without access to trade goods. But in one respect subarctic anthropology is different—we have not generated enough books like the one under review here. Too often we have failed to harness and integrate the ethnological, archaeological, biocultural, and historical source materials with the scope and skill exemplified in this fine volume. Morrison and Junker crosscut sub-disciplinary boundaries and give us anthropological histories to which we should aspire.

The forager-traders of South and Southeast Asia have long been regulated to the margins of hunter-gatherer scholarship. Although featured in the influential "Man the Hunter" volume, the foragers of the region fit uneasily into the cultural-ecological paradigm that dominated at the conference that generated this volume and for a generation thereafter. It was a perspective that tended to view hunters and gatherers as isolated peoples who practiced an ancient and timeless adaptation. Since South and Southeast Asian forager-traders did not conform to this model, they were largely left out of the discussion (the Tasaday were the exception that proves the point). These people were better poised to contribute to the great revisionist debates of the 80s and 90s, and in some ways they did, through the somewhat extreme revisionist view that full-time foraging in tropical forests was impossible *without* interaction with outsiders and agriculturists. But in general, the fiercest revisionist battles were fought elsewhere, in places where cultural ecological interpretations had long dominated. Now, looking to move beyond these debates and to claim a theoretical niche that is better-suited for understanding the forager-traders

of this region, Morrison, Junker, and their collaborators have focused their efforts on producing long-term anthropologically-informed prehistories.

Forager-Traders in South and Southeast Asia is divided into ten individually authored chapters, each of which deals with various aspects of forager-trader prehistory, adaptation, and relationships with non-foraging peoples. Half of the volume focuses on the forager-traders of the Indian subcontinent and half on those of Southeast Asia. In the latter section, one chapter explores the relationship between Australian aborigines and Southeast Asian seafarers. Each section is prefaced with a comprehensive chapter that summarizes anthropological research and forager-trader prehistory in the respective region. These chapters, along with the introduction to the entire volume, provide excellent overviews and serve to focus the book. As a result, this is one of the tightest edited volumes I have read in some time.

The book's success is due to its broad scope and yet shared focus on understanding the prehistory of these little understood forager-traders. Although many of the authors are archaeologists, all aspire to writing broadly-informed anthropological histories. When relevant or possible, historic and ethnographic sources are generously employed to enrich, support, and challenge the archaeological record. This approach is most evident in Bowdler's chapter on trade between north Australian aborigines and the seafaring Macassans of Sulawesi, Morrison's on the South Asian pepper trade, Junker's on relations between forager-traders and agricultural-based chiefdoms in the Philippines, and Zagarell's on the cultural landscapes of the Nilgiri Hill region of Southern India. Gregory Possehl's chapter on trade relations between foragers and the Indus Valley Civilization draws less on historic documents (they are not available) but is nonetheless "historical." Such is also the case in the chapters written by John Lukacs and Alan Fix. These two chapters are rather unique in that each attempts to understand the prehistory of these foragers through the biological record. It is an approach that is rarely appreciated or utilized enough by anthropologists, and therefore it was refreshing to see their contributions included in this volume.

Edited volumes are always a bit specialized—with chapters reflecting the specific geographic, temporal, and methodological expertise of individual authors—and to some extent this is true for this volume. But the editors have done a fine job of resolving some of these problems by beginning each section with a comprehensive overview of the prehistory and ethnology of each respective region. Perhaps more importantly, Morrison provides an excellent introduction to the entire volume that sets the theoretical stage and serves to inform and situate the anthropological histories that follow. The result is a fine book that would be a welcome addition to any library, and is well suited for use in seminars on foraging peoples and anthropological history.

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