

following the welcome arrival of *Morning*, a party was held on board *Discovery* to celebrate the safe return of Scott, Wilson, and Shackleton from the far south. All three had suffered terribly from exposure and scurvy, Wilson and Shackleton being confined to their cabins. All had ravenous appetites. At dinner only Scott felt able to take his place at table, gorging himself on quantities of food and from time to time surreptitiously stealing into his colleagues' cabins with fresh supplies. After everyone had finally retired to their bunks, Dooley reports being awakened by Scott rousing Shackleton with the words: 'I say, Shackleton, how would you fancy some sardines on toast?' Was their relationship as strained as some would like to imagine?

In 1904, *Discovery* was visited a second time by *Morning*, which was attended by *Terra Nova*, and, with the aid of nature and guncotton, was released from her prison of ice. Following the expedition's triumphant return to England, Dooley bade farewell to his comrades and in 1905 emigrated to New Zealand, settling down as a captain of coastal and passenger ships. He continued to write, publishing a collection of his short stories under the title *In the wake* (1936) and *The songs of the Morning* (1943). He died in 1956. Bluntisham Press and its editor, D.W.H. Walton, are to be congratulated on a welcome addition, well-bound in a facsimile of the original boards, to their growing list of out-of-print polar titles. (H.G.R. King, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

RECKONING WITH THE DEAD: THE LARSEN BAY REPATRIATION AND THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION. T.L. Bray and T.W. Killion (Editors). 1994. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press. xiv + 194 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 1-56098-365-5. £23.25; US\$35.95.

Larsen Bay is situated on Kodiak Island, adjacent to the Alaska Peninsula, and therefore close to the presumed route of entry of humans to North America. During the early 1930s, the native cemetery at Larsen Bay was excavated by Dr Ales Hrdlicka, curator at the Smithsonian Institution. In 1987, the Larsen Bay Tribal Council made a formal request for the return of all materials excavated by Hrdlicka and deposited in the Smithsonian Museum. At that time, Smithsonian policy only acknowledged rights of lineal descendants to burial remains (Donald J. Ortner's contribution to the volume traces the history of this policy), yet many of the Larsen Bay burials were more than 1000 years old. Few established administrative procedures existed in the Smithsonian through which a response could be co-ordinated. The Institution's initial reply was to argue that the community had given its assent to the excavations at the time, and that its present interests could not take precedence over 'the benefit to all people' of retaining the skeletons and grave goods in the Smithsonian.

During the course of negotiations about their return two crucial laws were passed, the 1989 National Museum of the American Indian Act and the 1990 Native American

Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. The first requires that material be returned if the 'tribe of origin' can be identified; the second requires demonstration of 'cultural linkage' between those whose remains are at issue and those demanding their return. Lynne Goldstein argues that, since the Larsen Bay Council requested return of the material before the passage of the two Acts, its repatriation does not set a legal precedent. Nonetheless, the later stages of negotiation were conducted in the knowledge that the new laws demanded a change of museum policy, since they would ultimately require the return of up to 25% of the Smithsonian's collections. The Larsen Bay petition led to new procedures for identifying and deaccessioning grave goods held by the Institution, and the establishment of a Repatriation Review Committee.

Although biological and cultural research is needed to resolve the questions of genetic and cultural continuity, such research will have both scholarly and pragmatic implications when it is conducted in such a context. Culture itself, as Tamara Bray and Lauryn Grant point out, ceases to be purely a technical term of anthropology and acquires a legal standing, as became the case with the terms 'local descent group' and 'traditional owner' in the Northern Territory of Australia after passage of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act of 1976 (see Layton 1985).

Hrdlicka's principal method was to collect and measure human skulls. He was insensitive to the feelings of living peoples. In keeping with the ethos of nineteenth-century colonisers, he assumed native peoples would either die out or become assimilated. He took it for granted that they had been severed from their pre-colonial past, which had become 'prehistory.'

At the time it received the Larsen Bay Council's resolution, the Smithsonian had already gained experience of returning cultural material, through its negotiations with the Zuni (Merrill and others 1993). Even though the decision to return Hrdlicka's collection was eventually taken by the Secretary of the Smithsonian without reference to experts' research findings, both the community and the Smithsonian commissioned outside experts to collect and evaluate evidence for the extent of biological and cultural affiliations between the living people of Larsen Bay and those who had been buried there. Tamara Bray and Thomas Killion's volume presents the results of the research carried out by archaeologists and biological anthropologists for both sides, showing them to be essentially in agreement. It draws conclusions from the processes that led to the collection's return, and reviews Hrdlicka's contribution to the development of biological anthropology in the United States.

Hrdlicka emerges as an unlikeable person, racist, sexist, dismissive of native peoples, and known to contemporaries living at Larsen Bay as 'Hard Liquor,' although the reader is reminded that his attitudes were well within the norm for his time and culture. While they were poorly conducted by the standards of the 1990s, Hrdlicka's excavations revealed a longer and more complex prehistory of the area than had been previously thought. He concluded

that it had been settled by two unrelated populations, one of which had replaced the other, and that the Larsen Bay site had been abandoned before colonial contact drew people back. Hrdlicka's conclusions were initially used by the Smithsonian as an argument against returning all of the collection, especially skeletal material from the earlier phase of settlement. Hrdlicka had, moreover, interpreted post-mortem treatment of skulls during the earlier period as evidence for cannibalism, inviting the inference that they had not been treated with reverence at the time of interment.

New research prompted by the demand for the return of the collection indicated that there probably was some continuity between Hrdlicka's two populations. The remains in the upper layers were found to be more closely linked to living coastal Inuit, although it was possible the lower layers had been left by people ancestral to the native people of the Northwest Coast. Cannibalism and warfare are considered too narrow as explanations to account for all practices evidenced. The defleshing of bones at or soon after death is reinterpreted as a mortuary ritual. James Simon and Amy Steffian conclude that there is less evidence for violent injury or death than previously thought, but suggest that population growth may have placed pressure on subsistence resources, leading to territoriality and conflict. Several contributors point out that native Americans value the results of anthropological and archaeological research, but resent the apparent arrogance evidenced by delays in responding to their requests and the questioning of their status vis-à-vis their ancestors. Pardoe has made the same point with regard to native Australians (Pardoe 1991).

Native voices are provided by Henry Sockbeson of the Penobscot Indian Nation, the attorney representing the Larsen Bay Tribal Council in its negotiations with the Smithsonian, and by Gordon Pullar, an anthropologist and former president of the Kodiak Area Native Association. Pullar explains why the community sought reburial and describes the reburial ceremony. He critically examines the scientific arguments against return of the excavated material and shows that Hrdlicka was well aware that some of the skeletons he excavated were those of relatives of living people. Both Sockbeson and Pullar regret the adversarial atmosphere that prevented negotiating alternatives to reburial. Sockbeson points out that research will never establish with certainty the movement of people in the past, or continuities with the present, and that the law merely requires examination of evidence available at the time of a request for the return of skeletal material or grave goods. This is a valuable and detailed case study that does much to clarify the issues raised by the return of such material as well as advancing knowledge of the history of the area during the last 3500 years. (Robert Layton, Department of Anthropology, University of Durham, 43 Old Elvet, Durham DH1 3HN.)

References

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- ARCTIC AND ANTARCTIC: THE WILL AND THE WAY OF JOHN RIDDOCH RYMILL.** John Bécher-vaize. 1995. Bluntisham: Bluntisham Books. x + 230 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 1-871999-07-3. £14.00; \$US22.00.
- John Rymill is portrayed in this book as a reserved, dyslexic person who 'spoke little and wrote less.' He was more adept with a dog-whip or a stock-whip than with a pen, and was not given to self-advertisement or glamourization of his exploits. Today his name is barely known to people outside a circle of polar specialists. Yet his great achievement was to organize and lead the British Graham Land Expedition (BGLE) of 1934–1937, which apart from the Discovery Investigations ranks as the most productive British polar enterprise between the wars. The BGLE wrote Rymill's name in bold letters in the annals of Antarctic exploration, but the expedition received little publicity at the time because its field despatches were exclusive to *The Times*, which was not popular reading; because it suffered 'no deaths, tragedies, or shocking privations to interest the sensation-seeking public'; and because it returned quietly to the United Kingdom as war clouds were gathering on the horizon. It is proper and long overdue that Rymill's name should become known to a wider circle through the publication of this biography.
- Rymill was a scion of two land-owning families that settled in South Australia in the mid-nineteenth century. His father died when he was a small child, and he was brought up on Old Penola Station by his strong-willed, staunchly Anglophile mother. After schooling in Australia, he first appeared on the English scene in 1923, for his mother kept an address in London, where she enjoyed a busy social life. Rymill was now able to pursue his childhood ambition of becoming a polar explorer. Standing 6 ft 5 in, of magnificent physique and impressive bearing, he readily made valuable contacts at the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) and in Cambridge, and trained himself in most aspects of polar exploration, including cooking and flying. (He qualified as a pilot in 1928.) He also took part in an ethnological expedition to northern Canada in 1929.
- Those who especially fostered Rymill's ambitions were Edward Reeves at the RGS, and Louis Clarke and Frank Debenham in Cambridge, but the young Gino Watkins set the course of Rymill's polar career by inviting him to join his British Arctic Air Route Expedition (BAARE), 1930–1931. Though men of very different background, both Watkins and Rymill were imbued with the desire to see 'beyond that last blue mountain barred