

ANIMAL RIGHTS, HUMAN RIGHTS: ECOLOGY, ECONOMY AND IDEOLOGY IN THE CANADIAN ARCTIC. By GEORGE WENZEL. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991. 206 p. Hardbound, Cdn\$55.00; softbound, Cdn\$18.95.

This important book is a scholarly examination of the impact of the animal rights movement upon the culture and economy of the Canadian Inuit. The author is well qualified to tackle this complex issue. George Wenzel, a professor at McGill University, is a well-known geographer and anthropologist, who has worked for 22 years, on an annual basis, with the Clyde Inuit of Baffin Island. He has an intimate understanding of the Inuit culture and an equal appreciation of the animal rights movement and its negative impacts upon the Inuit. This work can be considered as first-class "advocacy anthropology."

Wenzel explains how the Inuit culture has evolved from archaeological times to the present. He shows how the Inuit have been affected by contact with Euro-Canadians, and yet how they have retained their distinctiveness. Communal sharing, particularly the sharing of meat, has always been the essence of the Inuit culture, and in the Eastern Canadian Arctic the ringed seal has provided the bulk of this shared meat. Despite the impacts of the fur trade, the arrival of modern Western technology, and the government's settlement program, the Inuit have been able to retain the importance of sharing in their culture.

Prior to the 1950s, when the Inuit lived a nomadic lifestyle, they lived in small communal groups that survived by sharing the harvest of the hunters. When there was too little game the Inuit moved to other areas where game was sufficient to sustain them. When the federal government moved these scattered groups into the present-day settlements, the concentrated and sedentary Inuit were no longer able to find sufficient game to sustain their numbers. The Inuit, however, soon overcame this problem by adopting the snowmobile, which permitted them to travel faster and farther and to spread their harvesting activities over a much broader area. In the Eastern Arctic the increased expenses incurred by hunting with snowmobiles were offset by the sale of seal skins, which were the major sources of cash in most of the communities. Therefore, meat continued to be brought into the communities by the hunters and shared by everyone.

When the animal rights movement attacked the commercial harvest of harp seals in the 1960s, their unintended victims were the Inuit and not the commercial sealers. This was because the pelts of the young harp seals, taken by the commercial sealers, have luxurious fur, which was easily dyed and sold on the market as something other than seal. The skins of the adult ringed seals harvested by the Inuit, however, could not be dyed and therefore were easily avoided by the reactionary market.

More recently the Inuit became the direct targets of the animal rights groups. These groups argue that the Inuit are no longer traditional subsistence hunters because they use modern equipment and because they sell the by-products of the hunt. Since the animal rights movement pressed the European Economic Community to ban seal products in 1983, the Inuit lost their major market for seal skins and their means to subsidize their hunting activities. This has drastically reduced the flow of wild meat into the communities. Now their communal sharing, and hence their culture, is in jeopardy of being destroyed.

I have only minor criticisms of this book. First, Wenzel's verbose style at times is distracting to the reader. Second, Wenzel fails to emphasize the cultural importance of seal skin clothing, particularly seal skin boots, to the Inuit.

This book makes a disturbing comment on the environmental movement. It shows how a group of well-meaning people in the dominant society through misunderstanding and ignorance can inflict destruction on a minority. I strongly recommend this book to anyone interested in the North or the Inuit, as well as to any environmentalist.

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THE GREENLAND MUMMIES. Edited by JENS PEDER HART HANSEN, JØRGEN MELDGAARD and JØRGEN NORDQVIST. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991. (First published simultaneously by Christian Ejlers Forlag, Copenhagen, and the Greenland Museum, Nuuk, in Danish and in Greenlandic, 1985.) 187 p., maps, illus., index, bib. Hardbound. Cdn\$39.95.

Five hundred years ago a young Greenlandic Inuit mother was buried with her infant and young child in a grave that already contained two older women. Close by was the grave of three other women. The bodies were clad in their own "beautiful" clothing and wrapped in furs. Because of the intense cold and relative dryness of the graves, the bodies, rather than decomposing, mummified. The mummies, discovered in 1972, represented a remarkable opportunity to study the Greenland Inuit of half a millennium ago. That opportunity has been ably fulfilled by experts from Greenland and Denmark (47 contributors). The results of their studies are elegantly presented in *The Greenland Mummies*, edited by Jens Peder Hart Hansen, Jørgen Meldgaard and Jørgen Nordqvist.

The reader's attention is immediately caught by the striking coloured photographs of the mummies, notably the cover photograph of the infant and the "centerfolds" of two of the women on p. 28-29 and 92-93. This, however, is no mere book of photographs — it is an intelligent and scholarly study of ancient Inuit and of their relationship to their environment and to other peoples.

In the first three chapters the authors discuss the discovery of the graves and the mummies by two Greenlandic brothers, Hans and Jokum Gronvold; the Norse settlement of Greenland and possible reasons for its extinction (perhaps because, rather than adapting to harsh Greenland climate, "... the prime concern of the [Norse] inhabitants was to cling to tradition and in all ways maintain their identity"); the origin and migration of the Inuit from the west coast of Alaska to Greenland; and Inuit beliefs about life, death and the after-life. The remaining chapters include detailed scientific reports regarding the radiologic and pathologic examination of the mummies, radiocarbon dating, the teeth, tissue typing, causes of death, the skin tattoos (including impressive infrared photographs), the clothing, and studies varying from determination of heavy metal levels to scanning electron microscopic examination of a mummified head louse.

The radiologic studies of the mummies were extensive and of particular value since they caused no damage. A major abnormality discovered (in mummy II/8, an older woman in the second grave) was "... extensive destruction of bone, including part of the base of the skull," from which the authors inferred, appropriately, that the woman died of a malignant tumor destroying the base of the skull. Few other malignant tumors have been so convincingly demonstrated in mummies.

We particularly enjoyed Chapter 6, "The Clothing." The authors describe and amply illustrate the preparation, construction and stylistic features of Inuit clothing, including such unexpected fashion detail as an elaborate decorative pattern on the seat of a pair of short seal-skin trousers. Most of the clothing photographed, however, appears not to be from the mummies.

The photographs, both black and white and the less numerous colour, are of high quality. We were less impressed by some of the maps. A map of the whole western shore of Greenland with place names and indicating the exact location of the find would be of value. The use of contemporary woodcuts, paintings (e.g., the painting of the lovely "Maria of Frederikshaab" by Mathias Blumenthal) and drawings illustrates the scholarly and painstaking approach of the authors. This book is a necessary addition to the library of anyone who is interested in arctic history, archaeology and anthropology, as well as to those who are interested in health and disease in our predecessors. It is probably of interest to most readers of *Arctic*.

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