TALES OF THE NORTH PACIFIC

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ABSTRACT

I present a series of "just maybe so" stories in six sets or interludes, in the referents of many of which William Workman has had some hand. Connections between any or all of them may be subject to argument; all of them—of course—are told from a vantage point on the northern Alaska Peninsula. These interludes include: (1) Of Anangula Times; (2) Of AST Times (episode 1); (3) Of Ocean Bay Times; (4) Of AST Times (episodes 2 and onward); (5) Of Kachemak Times; and (6) Of Koniag Times.

KEYWORDS: Alaska Peninsula archaeology, Aleutian Islands archaeology, Kodiak Island archaeology

INTRODUCTION

From Prince William Sound westward (Fig. 1), the northwest coast of the Pacific Ocean is home to open-water maritime peoples of related language stocks and superficially similar material cultures. In the past those people have sometimes been lumped as one. But by now they should be recognized as having a history much more complicated than superficial views might suggest—a history complicated enough to inspire the creation of some number and variety of narratives, not necessarily accurate, not necessarily mutually uncontradictory, but always nominally explanatory. These are "just so" stories—or what with a certain scientific skepticism I prefer to call "just maybe so" stories. I give some examples.

OF ANANGULA TIMES

The Anangula Blade site, located on an islet off the coast of the larger Umnak Island, was discovered in 1938 by William Laughlin and a companion, both members of Aleš Hrdlička's crew visiting the Chaluka midden nearby on the main island. Fourteen years later Laughlin revisited the site and collected artifacts from blowouts—blades, scrapers, and cores (Laughlin and Marsh 1954). It was in 1962 that one of Laughlin's college crews trenched the Blade site and located the buried occupation layer that was radiocarbon aged at around 8,000 ^{14}C yrs BP (Laughlin 1963; McCartney and Turner 1966). Through the influence of the geologist Robert Black it was then argued that the late-glacial sea level, tens of meters lower than modern levels, had exposed the Bering Platform to a point where it had been possible for ancestral Anangula people to reach the site by tramping across dry land (Black and Laughlin 1964)—an idea that Laughlin would maintain and elaborate, together with arguments presuming to connect the people of the 8,000 ^{14}C yrs BP Blade site with those represented at 4,000 ^{14}C yrs BP Chaluka across a gap of thousands of years (e.g., Laughlin 1967, 1980; Laughlin and Aigner 1975).

In 1974, however, the geologist Black reversed himself and concluded that when the Blade site was occupied the local sea level was several meters higher than it is now. Further, he concluded that a major volcanic ash deposit immediately overlying the Blade site showed that an eruption had caused the site to be abandoned (Black 1974).

By the mid-1980s apparently related blade sites were recorded from the Unalaska Bay region of northernmost Unalaska Island (Veltre et al. 1984). Two of them on small Hog Island have been excavated, dated at about 8,000 ^{14}C yrs BP ago, and, like a third related site, lie 20 m or more above modern high tide and significantly higher than later

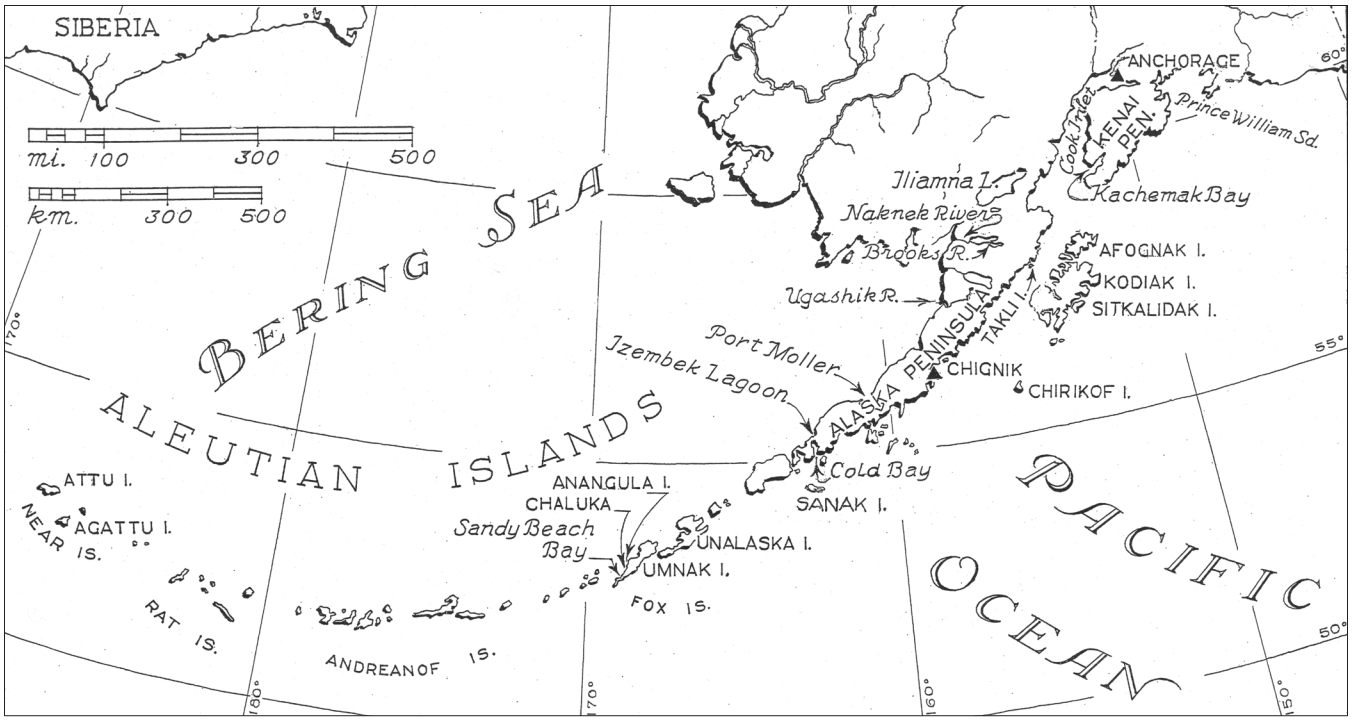

Figure 1. The North Pacific region, with major locations mentioned in the text.

sites in the vicinity—implying that sea level was indeed higher at the time of occupation. Furthermore, all were found to lie beneath volcanic material of a pyroclastic flow from nearby Makushin Volcano, which would have ended occupation of the sites with a fiery bang, or at least with a very heated hint to the people to go away fast (Dumond and Knecht 2001; Knecht and Davis 2001).

Where would the Anangula-related people have come from if water was high? Presumably by boat from the tip of the Alaska Peninsula, although sites that might be related to the Blade site have thus far been found only higher up the same peninsula (e.g., Dumond 1981:103–110; Henn 1978:61–65, 75–78). And where would those people have gone? Where indeed? All one can say is that the only related sites excavated so far have shown no sign that they waited around anywhere nearby.

OF AST TIMES (EPISODE 1)

In 1960, the first scant traces of people of the Arctic Small Tool (AST) tradition were discovered in the Naknek River region of the Alaska Peninsula and labeled the Brooks River Gravels phase (Dumond 1971, 1981:120–131). As more and better traces were recovered over the next few years, including square semisubterranean houses, I decided that people like those of the Anangula Blade site must have been ancestral not only to later Aleuts but also to the microblade-making Arctic Small Tool people and what I then presumed to be their Eskimo descendants. With the Anangula site and Small Tool sites closest together near the Alaska Peninsula, it seemed to me in my simplicity that intermediate relatives between the two should have lived there as well. In a paper written at the beginning of 1964, I predicted that on the Alaska Peninsula "site-unit similarities which serve to unite the Aleut and Eskimo areas will be found at a time preceding 4000 BC" (Dumond 1965:1251).

That is, these would be people descended from Anangula and ancestral to those responsible for the Chaluka midden on one hand and for the Brooks River Gravels phase of the AST tradition on the other. That was my own maybe-so story of the time, and as that paper awaited publication, I waited for an Alaska Peninsula complex 6,000 radiocarbon years old.

OF OCEAN BAY TIMES

The first site of what would be known as the Ocean Bay tradition was found in 1963 in a roadcut near Ocean Bay on Sitkalidak Island of the Kodiak group, by a party led by Donald W. Clark with William B. Workman as a member. Their collection represented two components: The lower

included heavy stemmed and stemless bifaces of chipped stone, a formed stone lamp, and a very few pieces of polished slate, and was called Ocean Bay I. The upper had a higher proportion of polished slate knives and lance blades, generally sawed to shape, and became Ocean Bay II. When the first published description appeared, the radiocarbon age for Ocean Bay I was given as about 5,500 years, for Ocean Bay II roughly 3,900 (D. W. Clark 1966).

In 1964, a collection morphologically similar to Ocean Bay I was blundered onto by an Oregon survey party on Takli Island, immediately off the Pacific coast of the Alaska Peninsula, and within the next year two similar sites were found not far away, yielding what we called the Takli Alder phase, with ^{14}C ages of about 5,600 and 5,800 years, all from strata stained very red with ochre (G. H. Clark 1977:28). When related sites on Afognak Island were excavated by D. W. Clark and Workman in the early 1970s it became clear that there was also something of a blade industry in the Ocean Bay I culture (D. W. Clark 1979)—a finding that like the red ochre-covered floors has been amply confirmed since that time in a number of Kodiak-area sites by a number of investigators. These have produced radiocarbon ages in excess of 6,500 years (summarized in Steffian et al. 2002). In one case a single age in excess of 7,000 radiocarbon years was obtained in relation to what the investigator called a maritime vestige of the otherwise terrestrial Paleoarctic tradition of mainland Alaska (Jordan 1992), although the attribution is rejected by a number of archaeologists who interpret the collection as a poorly dated representative of early Ocean Bay (Steffian et al. 2002:4, with references). But this gets ahead of the rest of this story.

Back to the Takli site: First of all, the nearly six-thousand-year-old Alder phase collection was nothing like one might imagine for the common ancestor of Chaluka on one hand, and the delicate little tools of the Arctic Small Tool tradition on the other. Second, as the heavy basalt tools were spread out in the lab, the late Albert Spaulding, then at the University of Oregon, volunteered that they looked a lot like the assemblage from Krugloi Point on Agattu Island in the far western Aleutians, which he had recently published (Spaulding 1962). In 1967 I borrowed the Krugloi Point collection and saw that similarities with the Takli Alder collection rested not only in a mutually high proportion of heavy flaked bipoints but also in elongated points with weakly developed tangs or stems, and in a series of smaller points with long stems that had triangular cross sections and beveled butts. This set of similarities appeared despite the fact that the Krugloi Point assemblage was dated no earlier than about 2,600 radiocarbon years ago, and so must be some 3,000 ^{14}C years younger than the Takli Alder sample. Nevertheless, my new story was that there must have been a common early culture from Kodiak to Agattu, only later intruded upon in the Alaska Peninsula region by AST people from the north.

The next year I read a paper in an international meeting in which I hypothesized that about 6,000 radiocarbon years ago the culture represented by the Takli Alder phase of the Pacific coast of the Alaska Peninsula and by the Ocean Bay I collection of Sitkalidak Island existed throughout most of the Pacific Eskimo area and the Aleutian Islands; this was an occupation of ancestral Aleuts. (Dumond 1971:Appendix, 45)

I'm sure it won't surprise any reader to hear that this maybe-so story aroused some skepticism (e.g., McCartney 1971). Not long afterward, however, research in the eastern Aleutians added other elements for discussion.

In 1972, the sites at Sandy Beach and Idaliuk Bays near the southwestern tip of Umnak were discovered and tested, together providing radiocarbon ages ranging from about 5,400 to 4,200 years. Although the collections are described as being without blades, the excavator took pains to argue a connection closer to the Anangula Blade site than to the Chaluka midden, but culturally intermediate between the two (Aigner 1983a, 1983b). Then in 1974 Laughlin hosted a party of Russian archaeologists to work with his crew at the Blade site itself. The combined party also trenched the nearby Anangula Village site, where they produced some blades as well as bifacially retouched artifacts and radiocarbon samples with determinations ranging in age from about 5,900 to 4,500 radiocarbon years. This was characterized by Laughlin as a "transitional" occupation between the Blade site and the Chaluka midden (Laughlin 1975); unfortunately, the collection remains unpublished in detail.

Finally, excavations in 1996 and 1997 on Amaknak Island in Unalaska Bay dated the early levels of a site at small Margaret Bay to between about 5,500 and 4,000 radiocarbon years ago. The levels produced a series of blades and microblades, with cores; large and small leaf-shaped and bipointed implements, some with what appear to be weakly defined tangs; lanceolate points, some with relatively long and well-defined stems; and other items (Knecht et al. 2001).

In short, although some of these collections have thus far been described only sketchily, and while the need for

a careful and definitive comparison is obvious, it still seems fair to say that all of them are superficially more like Ocean Bay I than like the Anangula Blade collection. So it becomes less risky to suggest that these sites of intermediate age did bear some significant relationship to the roughly contemporary early Ocean Bay tradition; further, that the distinctive "western Aleutian phase" of the Near Islands, which was defined by McCartney (1971) and which rests in part on Spaulding's Krugloi Point collection from Agattu, does indeed represent a later survival of similar material culture.

But an important question remains: Did this intermediate culture descend within the Aleutians from the Anangula Blade–related manifestations? Or, given that all of the Anangula Blade–related sites so far excavated came to an end with volcanic events, might this intermediate culture represent new arrivals from north Pacific areas to the east? There are links here that are still missing. The next maybe-so version of the story could have it either way.

So much for Ocean Bay I. The spread of Ocean Bay II was more restricted geographically. Between 4,500 and 3,500 ^{14}C BP, affiliated sites are characterized by certain chipped stone artifacts, but especially by long, slender bayonet-like points of polished slate and by ochre-covered floors as in Ocean Bay I. Related regions now include Kachemak Bay in outer Cook Inlet—known from work by Workman and his colleagues (Workman 1998). Other relatives include not-yet-published sites along the Pacific coast of the Alaska Peninsula itself (Jeanne M. Schaaf 2004, personal communication; see also age determinations in Crowell and Mann 1996) and sites in two interior regions of the northern Alaska Peninsula where caribou hunting was an activity (Dumond 1981:116–119; Reger 2004). There are a few telltale bayonet fragments from the Takli site in what is called the Birch phase—which overlies material from the Ocean Bay I–related Alder phase (G. H. Clark 1977:32–47). Farther southwest, the Old Islander assemblage from Chirikof Island, analyzed long ago by Workman, may be a peripheral member of the family (Workman 1966:291; 1969:746–749), as may some recently reported material from Sanak Island south of the tip of the Alaska Peninsula (Maschner 2006). Beyond this, the slate-polishing practice of Ocean Bay II apparently did not spread into the Aleutians, nor is it known to appear in major sites of the more southwestern portions of the Alaska Peninsula itself (e.g., Maschner 1999).

OF AST TIMES (EPISODE 2 AND ONWARD)

Ten years after AST remains were documented in the Naknek region at Brooks River, Oregon crews working farther southwest in the upper drainage of the Ugashik River excavated part of a square semisubterranean house floor that yielded distinctive AST artifacts and radiocarbon ages of about 3,600 and 3,900 years (Henn 1978:41–45). In 1994, to the northeast at the present village of Igiugig on the Kvichak River a short distance below its head at the southwest rim of Iliamna Lake, archaeologists of the Alaska Office of History and Archaeology cleared part of a semisubterranean house similar to those at Brooks River and Ugashik Lakes, with a radiocarbon age of about 3,300 years (Holmes and McMahan 1996). These sites located both north and south of Brooks River amply confirm the presence of houses of the AST period located on salmon migration streams on the northern Alaska Peninsula.

But there is a new twist: in 1981 Workman and his collaborators discovered an AST campsite beneath a Kachemak tradition site on upper Kachemak Bay, an occupation dated at about 4,000 and 4,200 radiocarbon years ago (Workman and Zollars 2002). Artifacts are essentially identical to those of the Brooks River Gravels phase, despite the somewhat earlier date at Kachemak Bay. That is, it appears that AST people arrived in the south by 4,000 ^{14}C yrs BP, and before 3,500 ^{14}C yrs BP had adapted to the salmon resource so important in the region in later periods (Dumond 2005a). And the influence of these evident immigrants may have extended farther.

Workman and Zollars (2002) have discussed sites in the Kodiak Archipelago in which the presence of AST-related artifacts has been claimed; Steffian and Saltonstall (2005) subject these and other sites to intensive scrutiny and conclude that the very few Kodiak Archipelago tools of truly acceptable AST type have all been recovered from within Kodiak-type components at sites otherwise yielding only elements of the known Kodiak sequence. They argue that these artifacts should be viewed as the result of some sort of limited exchange between societies that otherwise maintained their social distance. "Tools but not tool kits," are their words (Steffian and Saltonstall 2005).

Still farther to the west, AST affinities have recently been claimed for certain levels at the village site at Port Moller, for the Russell Creek site on the banks of Cold Bay (Maschner and Jordan 2001), and for upper levels at the Margaret Bay site at Unalaska Bay (Davis and Knecht 2005; Knecht et al. 2001)—all dating between 3,500 and

3,000 radiocarbon years ago, and all indicating subsistence bases more maritime than is the case with Alaskan AST sites in general. Objections to an out-and-out identification with the AST tradition have been entered by Workman and Zollars (2002) and by Dumond (2001), based both on tool types and on subsistence evidence, while accepting that these sites may reflect some more nearly arm's-length contact with the AST people who arrived on or near the Pacific coast by 4,000 radiocarbon years ago. With regard to the dating—between 4,000 and 3,000 radiocarbon years ago—two environmental issues call for attention.

Presumably it was the shift from the Holocene Hypsithermal to the colder early Neoglacial period after 5000 BP that brought the ice-edge fauna preserved in the lower levels of the Margaret Bay site (Davis 2001)—this on the presumption that the edge of winter sea ice suddenly lay immediately at Unalaska itself. The present ice edge does not push below the Pribilof Islands, three degrees of latitude and about 400 km north of Unalaska. Such a southward shift would have occurred sometime before 4000 ^{14}C yrs BP, about the time AST people apparently first arrived at Kachemak Bay, and a very few centuries before the time for which excavators at Margaret Bay have asserted AST relationships. Was it increasing cold that led AST people farther southward than they are known to have been before? A new maybe-so story might be designed to say so.

Also, the period between 4,000 and 3,000 radiocarbon years ago was one of catastrophic volcanism around the midsection of the Alaska Peninsula, northeast of Port Moller. The major caldera-forming eruption of Aniakchak Volcano has been dated at slightly more than 3400 ^{14}C yrs BP, that of Veniaminof Volcano at 3700 ^{14}C BP, with the eruptions of both of them ejecting surface pyroclastic materials sufficient to reach both the Bering Sea coast and the Pacific shore (Miller and Smith 1987). The two possible fringe AST components just mentioned for the Alaska Peninsula—Port Moller and Russell Creek—are southwest of the volcanic zone. Did the volcanic events induce movements southwestward into the eastern Aleutians and to Margaret Bay? It makes for a good maybe-so story.

OF KACHEMAK TIMES

Following de Laguna's periodization of the collections she recovered in the early 1930s from Kachemak Bay (de Laguna 1934), and some generally similar material excavated by Hrdlička from his Uyak site on Kodiak Island (Heizer 1956), Clark formalized the Kachemak Tradition of the North Pacific region (D. W. Clark 1966, 1975). He specifically recognized changes occurring within an overall similar material culture over a substantial period of time. Although Kachemak artifacts were largely of polished slate, they departed from the modes of the preceding Ocean Bay II phase of the Kodiak region in the abandonment of long bayonet points based on parallel-sided blanks produced by sawing, by the adoption of the polished slate ulu, and by the appearance of lip ornaments and other elements, including the movement toward large and decorated oil-burning lamps of stone.

As a result, and because of sampling deficiencies, there was uncertainty regarding Kachemak parentage, which was satisfied only when closer analysis of Early Kachemak collections and additional excavations identified a transition. The linear relationship between Ocean Bay II and the succeeding Kachemak phases thus became more of a certainty (D. W. Clark 1997; Steffian and Saltonstall 2005). The date of this transition now stands at about 3,500 ^{14}C yrs BP or a century or so earlier, with the stages of early and late Kachemak enduring until around 800 or 900 ^{14}C yrs BP.

Although D. W. Clark (1997) suggests the tradition appeared earliest in the Kodiak group of islands, it is well represented on the western Kenai Peninsula, where Workman (2002) has confirmed its presence at Kachemak Bay from near its beginning until at least the middle first millennium AD. Related elements are reported by Reger (1998) in a more inland Kachemak version farther north in Cook Inlet. Certain aspects of it are at least tentatively recognized in Prince William Sound (Yarborough and Yarborough 1998; cf. de Laguna 1956).

Nevertheless, the long Kachemak period is one of considerable diversity on the north Pacific. Thus, on the Alaska Peninsula coast the bulk of the Birch phase collection from Takli Island, in part related to Ocean Bay II, is thought to date from about the time of the beginning of the Kachemak period. Correspondingly, although the Kachemak introduction of labrets and ulus is represented in the Takli Birch phase, there are in addition some apparent hangovers from Ocean Bay I in the form of flaked points as well as in a comparable shape in polished slate artifacts. In the same Birch phase there is a scattering of AST-like points, and not long after 1,900 BP there is increasing evidence on the Pacific coast of the Alaska Peninsula for contact across the mountains with people of the Norton tradition, who a few centuries earlier had appeared on the fringe of the southern

Bering Sea from the north. By 1,600 ^{14}C yrs BP the telltale artifacts of the Takli Cottonwood phase included pottery of Norton type, and thereafter artifactual evidence of cross-peninsula contact steadily increased (e.g., G. H. Clark 1977; Dumond 1971, 2003).

On Chirikof Island, a far outlier of the Kodiak group, the situation of increasing Norton influence was paralleled by the appearance of the Anchorage complex (Workman 1969:723–724, 739–743), and although scraps of apparent Norton pottery are known from the southwestern end of the Alaska Peninsula itself, the influence there was evidently much less. Rather, in that lower Peninsula area following the 3,500 BP appearance of collections that may at least somewhat reflect the AST presence south of the Bering Sea—as at the Russell Creek site—there was a stabilization in what Maschner has called the Early Izembek phase, with the development in the last millennium BC of the large site on Morzhovoi Bay called Adamagan. This involved essentially no appearance of polished slate in what was evidently a vital center devoted especially to sea mammal harvest. Thereafter on the southwestern peninsula, although patterns of settlement shifted, major reliance on chipped stone endured through the first millennium AD, a pattern that also appears to be represented at the Hot Springs site at Port Moller (e.g., Maschner 2004).

Meanwhile, around the eastern Aleutian island of Unalaska, the Margaret Bay phase, with some indication of parallels in artifacts with Russell Creek, was followed by the Amaknak phase (Knecht and Davis 2001, 2004), with a continued rarity of polished slate artifacts. A notable feature of the earlier phase carried into the later was the stone-lined semisubterranean house. This element was evidently shared with Umnak Island at the time of the beginning of the Chaluka midden deposit (Aigner 1978). Unfortunately, it is not clear that the Chaluka artifact assemblage associated with such houses has been adequately presented, with the more detailed descriptions confined to work only of the earlier years of excavation (Aigner 1966; Denniston 1966). This Chaluka material relates to what McCartney (1984:124) characterized as the Aleutian tradition, the assemblage consisting of biface implements made from flakes, tanged and untanged knives and scrapers, with some ground adze blades and a few ulu blades—the latter an introduction to the eastern Aleutians from the east, apparently in the first century AD (Holland 2001).

Although the Chaluka midden material has been estimated to date from about 4,000 ^{14}C yrs BP or even before, comparisons with the Margaret Bay and Amaknak phase materials of the Margaret Bay and Unalaska Bridge sites of Unalaska brings the suggestion that at least the bulk of the Chaluka material postdates 3,000 BP (Dumond 2001). In addition, it must be noted that such faunal collections as have been reported from Umnak, reportedly prehistoric but not clearly dated (e.g., Denniston 1974), include no identified Neoglacial period ice-edge fauna such as that found at both Margaret Bay and the slightly later Unalaska Bridge site (Crockford et al. 2004; Davis 2001).

Finally, I leave Kachemak times with the observation that 3,500 BP was a time that saw significant cultural modifications in the Kodiak region with the switch from Ocean Bay II to early Kachemak, on the Alaska Peninsula with the riverside adaptation of AST folk in a number of sites, and with the changes on the eastern Aleutians involved in the Margaret Bay phase. Clearly, melting pots were being stirred. And as was mentioned earlier this very time was one of massive volcanic eruptions on the lower Alaska Peninsula that must have impelled human movements. All together, there is an implicit invitation here for more just-maybe-so stories—which may now be left to the readers' imaginations.

OF KONIAG TIMES

As with the Kachemak tradition, the later Koniag phase—the latest prehistoric material culture of the Kodiak Island group—was identified and then more fully defined by D. W. Clark (1966, 1974) as the culmination of the prehistoric Kodiak sequence, beginning somewhere around 800–900 ^{14}C yrs BP. In comparison with the preceding late Kachemak phase, the changes on the Kodiak Archipelago were significant. In William Workman's words,

> Almost all late Kachemak tradition traits were modified at least on the stylistic level or lost in a few centuries. The elaborate burial ceremonialism complex disappeared, as did decorated stone lamps and the high standards of late Kachemak tradition craftsmanship. The personal adornment complex was profoundly modified, large multi-roomed houses replaced the small single room models and population and village size increased. New traits such as the vapor sweat bath . . . , ceramics, incised slate tablets and the large grooved splitting adze heads came into vogue over part of the archipelago and there were basic changes in projectile point styles, fishing equipment and most other domains of the technology. (Workman 2002:338)

The genesis of this transformation has been under some dispute, with archaeologists specializing on the immediate Kodiak vicinity insisting that continuing population density and the persistence of many (but somewhat abstract) material traits indicate that the origin of the phase was virtually entirely in situ. D. W. Clark (1974) has been almost unique in conceiving some elements of the change as introductions from outside—from both the Alaska mainland and the Northwest Coast—although even he admits fewer such influences than some others of us prefer (D. W. Clark 1992).

This was another time of substantial changes more broadly. Kachemak Bay, an integral part of the Kachemak tradition sphere, was apparently abandoned (Workman 2002; Workman and Workman 1988). The Bering Sea slope of the northern Alaska Peninsula, which had been home to three sequential phases of the Bering Sea–oriented Norton tradition, experienced some revolutionary changes in material culture, consisting especially of a series of introductions evidently from the north. These involved a dramatically increased reliance on polished slate rather than chipped stone implements, including base-faceted slate insert tips for harpoons and arrows and an especially characteristic slate lance blade with marked medial ridge; sharply different pottery vessel forms and paste; oil-burning lamps of clay replacing Norton lamps of stone; the sunken or "cold-trap" entrance tunnel leading to the semisubterranean dwellings; and the heavy "splitting adze" blade of stone (often considered southern in origin, but with only ambiguous evidence concerning any actual source) (e.g., Dumond 1988).

These were characteristic of the Brooks River Camp phase of the Naknek River drainage region, the best sampled of the northern Alaska Peninsula drainage systems, where it is dated between about 850 and 600 BP. By 800 BP a phase identical in material culture to the Camp phase (the Kukak Mound phase) appeared on the Pacific coast of the peninsula (G. H. Clark 1977; Dumond 1971), only a short distance across Shelikof Strait from the Kodiak Island group. It was at about the same time that comparable and diagnostic artifacts—including thick gravel-tempered pottery, slate dart points with pronounced medial ridge, and base-faceted slate endblades for arrows or harpoons—appeared on Kodiak, marking what has been defined as a phase transitional between the late Kachemak tradition and the succeeding Koniag archaeological phase (Jordan and Knecht 1988).

It was with this latter manifestation that there appeared together all of the characteristics listed in the quotation from Workman (2002) above. Other characteristics of the succeeding historic Koniag or Alutiiq that also hark northward involve ceremonial aspects detailed long ago by Margaret Lantis (1947), which include the customary use of the Eskimo-style men's or community house known in southern Alaska as the *kashim* or *kazhim*. They also include the evident linguistic relationship of the Koniag or Alutiiq language to Eskimoan languages around the Bering Sea and farther north and east (Leer 1991; Woodbury 1984), and certain local origin stories that reflect an arrival from the north of at least some of the later inhabitants of Kodiak (D. W. Clark 1974:180; Desson 1995). These combine to suggest to some of us an influx of a significant number of people from the Bering Sea region. Of the material elements, the pottery in particular is found in greatest frequency in far southwestern Kodiak Island (e.g., D. W. Clark 1956), the area in which relatively little archaeological research has been conducted. Indeed, this led me earlier to run the risk of suggesting a possible immigration route to that area from the Ugashik River region of the Alaska Peninsula (Dumond 1991:Fig. 2.7).

It is this set of circumstances, including the distribution and internal relationships of the Eskimoan linguistic family and the social characteristics alluded to, that has led to arguments that despite incomplete assessments of Kodiak-area population densities through time, the evidence suggests an influx of Eskimoan-speaking people into Kodiak in significant number (e.g., Dumond 1971, 1988, 1991). Whatever the final resolution of these questions regarding Kodiak and Prince William Sound, scattered evidence seems to indicate an expansion of northward-oriented people along the Alaska Peninsula as far as the Chignik region (Dumond 1992), with at least one outlier appearing near the very tip of the peninsula—first reported by McCartney (1974; see also Maschner 2004)—and another on isolated Chirikof Island (Workman 1969:722, 732–739). And ongoing studies of ancient DNA as well as other aspects of burials at Chaluka on Umnak Island, and in caves on Ship Rock and Kagamil islands not far from Umnak, suggest the real possibility of a surge westward of some Aleutian-area populations at about the same time (Coltrain et al. 2006; Hayes 2002).

Although, as noted above, some polished slate implements were appearing in the Aleutian Islands by the end of the first millennium AD—evidently as borrowing either

from the Kodiak area or the southern Bering Sea—such influence as it represents was not strong enough to effect any major change in the ongoing Aleutian tradition of the islands and particularly in the somewhat variant form of Aleutian material culture found in the western Near Islands of the Aleutians. This apparent complex of local traditions continued through the time of the archaeological Koniag phase of Kodiak until the arrival of the Russians in the eighteenth century. Still, the similarity to one another of the three known Aleut dialects of the eastern, central, and western portions of the chain (Bergsland 1959; Woodbury 1984) appears comparable to similarities among the Inuit dialects extending from north Alaska to Greenland. These latter are concluded to be the result of a movement of people across the north not earlier than the beginning of the second millennium AD. Some such shift through the Aleutians at about the same time seems likely.

In the Kodiak region—the cultural center of the northern Gulf of Alaska—changes in the Late Koniag stage of culture brought a shift from single-room to multi-room houses with what must have been a related shift in family organization, evidence of an increased reliance on fish runs, and, of course, stylistic changes in numerous artifacts (e.g., Jordan and Knecht 1988; Knecht 1995)

Concurrent changes similar to those within the Koniag phase are observable on the Bering Sea slope of the northern Alaska Peninsula in what has been designated the Brooks River Bluffs phase (Bundy et al. 2005; Dumond 1981, 2003, 2005b; Harritt 1988). This accords with the evident linguistic and cultural closeness of Peninsula and Kodiak Island people at the time of the Russian arrival at the end of the eighteenth century. Indeed, evidence for widespread volcanism on the peninsula at about AD 1350 marks the end of the Brooks River Camp phase, precedes the construction of multi-room houses of the ensuing Bluffs phase, and has led to the conclusion that the peninsula was in fact repopulated from the Kodiak Island region after AD 1350 (Dumond 2003, 2005b).

Finally, to return to Kodiak, this second period of major cultural change—a century or so after AD 1000—apparently coincided with an earthquake felt in an area from the Copper River to the southern Kenai Peninsula through tectonic changes rivaling those of the great 1964 earthquake in the same region (e.g., Combellick 1993; Mann and Crowell 1996; Plafker et al. 1992:446–450). If there was no major tectonic upheaval on Kodiak, it was at least hit by a massive tsunami (Gilpin 1995:Ch. 2). Although thus far there is no certain evidence of a major human demographic impact in the Kodiak group, it would be remiss of any spinner of just-maybe-so tales to fail to point out that this transition period, which followed Kachemak times of regular and more gradual change, is reminiscent of that of the Ocean Bay-to-Kachemak transition. That is, it was an interval of obviously increased stirrings of people in the North Pacific region, punctuated by a major environmental perturbation.

So, again, the opportunities for new explanatory tales beckon all of us, whatever our favorites of the past may have been, to dream again—and of more than only one "just-maybe-so" story.

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