

Reviews

WHALEBONE ALLEY

[Review by Terence Armstrong* of S. A. Arutyunov and others, '*Kitovaya alleya*'. *Drevnosti ostrovov proлива Senyavina* ['Whalebone alley'. *Antiquities of the islands in Prolio Senyavina*], Moscow, Nauka, 1982, 176 p, illus, map.]

A large archaeological artefact has been discovered on the Soviet shore of Bering Strait. It is an alignment of whale skulls and jawbones, planted in the ground at the back of a beach on Ostrov Yttygran, an island near the settlement and port of Provideniya. Although some of the bones are displaced or have fallen over, the monument remains large and impressive, covering some hundreds of metres. The site was brought to the attention of scholars only in 1976, when a group of ethnographers led by M. A. Chlenov of the Institute of Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences [Institut Etnografii AN SSSR] lit upon it. It was revisited in 1977, 1979, and 1981 by groups which included specialists in history, social anthropology, ancient Eskimo culture, ecology, and linguistics. The result is a booklet describing the site and the present state of its study. Other remains in the vicinity are also described, and the relationship between 'whalebone alley' and both current and ancient Eskimo society is examined. The authors conclude that this remarkable site was a holy place of the Asiatic Eskimo in the late Punuk period (13th to 14th centuries).

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POLAR MANUSCRIPTS

[Review by H. G. R. King* of *Manuscripts in the Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge, England: a catalogue*, edited by Clive Holland. New York and London, Garland Press, Garland Publishing Inc, 1982, 815 p, US\$100.00]

In 1920, the year of its foundation, the Scott Polar Research Institute received from the Captain Scott Memorial Polar Research Trust sets of papers relating to the organization of the *Discovery* and *Terra Nova* expeditions. These documents, now the cornerstone of one of the world's most comprehensive polar archives, have been added to at regular intervals since that time. Additions have come occasionally by selective purchases at public auctions, more often by substantial bequests, such as the historical papers of the historian Hugh Robert Mill, or the Lefroy bequest with its wealth of material relating to Sir John and Lady Franklin. The collection now numbers over 1 400 accessions, although this figure can be misleading; some accessions represent a single letter or a diary, while others may include an entire expedition archive. For example the papers of the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition of 1957–58, consisting of many hundreds of separate documents, are through sheer necessity entered in the catalogue as 'ten filing drawers . . . not yet sorted or indexed'. Without resort to such expediences this catalogue might never have seen the light of day, and Clive Holland, the Institute's Curator of Manuscripts, is to be congratulated on the mammoth task of virtually rewriting many of the entries in the former sheaf catalogue, systematizing the form of entry throughout, and updating a great backlog of cataloguing.

The organization of the catalogue has been devised to meet the special needs of historians. Manuscripts are listed alphabetically by author, each author sequence being in itself a biographical index. Thus under 'SCOTT, Robert Falcon' appear not only his journals and correspondence but also letters addressed to him. Collections of papers relating to expeditions are found under the official name of each expedition, and there are entries under the names of ships for ships' logs and plans. Unpublished theses held by the Institute are also listed. The catalogue contains numerous entries, prefaced by an asterisk, for material found in outside collections. A listing of especial value to historians

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