

## INTRODUCTION:

# SCHOLARSHIP AND LEGACY OF THE “BERING STRAIT UNIVERSE”

Owen K. Mason

Geoarch Alaska, P.O. Box 91554, Anchorage, AK 99509, [geoarch@ptialaska.net](mailto:geoarch@ptialaska.net)

Igor Krupnik

Arctic Studies Center, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20013-7012. [krupniki@si.edu](mailto:krupniki@si.edu)

Yvon Csonka

Ilisimatusarfik University of Greenland, P.O. Box 279, Nuuk, DK 3900, Greenland. [yvcs@ilisimatusarfik.gl](mailto:yvcs@ilisimatusarfik.gl)

Two peninsulae project reciprocal images across Bering Strait, forming two symmetrical portals of Beringia. On the west, Chukotka issues from northeast Asia; on the east, Seward Peninsula, a mountainous appendage of the Brooks Range, divides Kotzebue from Norton Sound. The sheer narrowness of the strait that disconnects the two peninsulae, the two continents, Eurasia and North America, the Old World and the New World, keeps them barely 90 km apart, with the two rocky Diomed Islands splitting that short stretch of water further in the middle. On a clear day, the Siberian and North American mainland shores, as well as the rocky Diomed, King, and Fairway islands in between can be easily seen from both East and West. When traveling by boat or, these days, by plane one can easily visualize the Bering Strait “narrows” as one big insular lake—which was probably very close to the feeling shared by its residents on both sides over centuries and generations. In fact, the whole area adjacent to the Bering Straits “narrows”—from Nome, St. Lawrence Island, and Ungaziq (Cape Chaplin) to the south and up to Kotzebue or even Point Hope (Tikigaq) and Cape Serdtse-Kamen to the north—may be seen as one large “insular” basin at the junction of Northeast Asia and North America.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the proximity, the visibility, and the age-old connections among the people of the Bering Strait “basin,” the political exigencies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century led to nearly fifty years of complete cultural separation. That separation, introduced as one of the byproducts of the Cold War (1946-1990), had ripped Native communities and families asunder (Schweitzer 1997; Schweitzer and Golovko 1996) and led scientists on both sides of the divide to work in isolation on common problems. The Bering Strait region lies at the terminus of two large imperial endeavors, the Russian and the American, being far removed from the power centers of either. In a similar way, the Bering Strait was/is also far removed from the main arenas of both the Old and the New World history. That marginal position relative to the central issues in the studies of the Old and New World archaeology and cultural history (like the origins of ancient states, plant and animal domestication, creation of the “world system,” trans-oceanic contacts, etc.) created and nurtured a peculiar community of the Bering Strait science enthusiasts. Since the time of Diamond Jenness (1928), Henry Collins (1937), Sergei Rudenko (1947/1961), Helge Larsen and Froelich Rainey (1948), this community was captivated in seeking

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<sup>1</sup>Linda Ellanna (1983) was the first to use the term “insular” while referring to the residents of the Bering Strait (though to the southern portion of this area only).

the “other side” and “across the strait,” in its search for keys to and explanations of locally studied phenomena. Also, from its very beginning, Bering Strait scholarship was keen on combining the methods and approaches of archaeology, ethnology, linguistics, museum research, and art history. The frequently phrased axiom is that the Bering Strait region functioned as a “Crossroads of Continents,” especially during the later periods of its prehistory (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988). However, in large measure, Bering Strait always remained in its cultural milieu at the tail of Asia.

The progress of archaeology within the Bering Strait region resembles a hare and tortoise parable: Western archaeologists arrived early and set forth several impressive data sets and reports. For the first generation of research and researchers (from the 1920s to the 1950s), the postulates and observations of Collins, Larsen and Rainey, as well as of Diamond Jenness, Otto Geist, Louis Giddings, and others dominated discourse. Even the first archaeological and ethnological museum collections from Chukotka were obtained by non-Russians: Adolf Nordenskiöld and Knud Rasmussen (in 1878 and 1924, respectively); or by the Russians who worked under western scientific ventures (Waldemar Bogoras on the Jesup North Pacific Expedition in 1901). Not until after World War II, starting with Sergei Rudenko in 1945, and particularly during the middle and late 1950s, did Russian archaeologists establish their own impressive tradition of excavations, prehistoric cultural analysis, and monumental museum collections, through the efforts of Maxim Levin, Nikolai Dikov, Dorian Sergeev and Sergei Arutyunov. Because the stage of the Bering Strait history was already set in approximate terms with regard to dates, chronologies, and cultural sequences established by Western archaeologists, the Russians attempted to transform the field into a “two-way” or, at least, a “two-track” venture. By the 1960s, and particularly since the 1970s, it fell upon Western archaeologists to follow the work of their Russian colleagues, to start learning Russian, or at least to arrange for translation of the major Russian publications. The trend continues to this day, thanks in many ways to the impressive Russian archaeology translation program run by the *Shared Beringian Heritage Program* in the Alaska office of the National Park Service, and to the prodigious efforts of people like Peter Richter, Richard Bland, Don Dumond, Robert Ackerman, Roger Powers, Allen McCartney, William Fitzhugh, Daniel Odess, Ted Goebel, and some of their predecessors, like Chester Chard, Henry Michael, David Hopkins, and Hans-Georg Bandi, to popularize the work of Russian archaeologists among their Western colleagues.

The present issue of the *ALASKA JOURNAL OF ANTHROPOLOGY* (AJA), that we named “The Bering Strait Universe: Cultures, Languages, and History,” continues this cross-cultural tradition in many ways. Firstly, we gather papers in archaeology, prehistoric art, linguistics, and ethno-cultural studies, reflecting a wide spectrum of views. Secondly, all of its contributors are either bilingual (at least, partly) or have worked with data and materials from *both* Alaska and Siberia, or even have conducted their research on both sides of Bering Strait. Thirdly, this special issue is dedicated to the contribution to the Bering Strait studies by our distinguished colleague, Dr. Mikhail (Misha) Bronshtein from the State Museum of Oriental Arts (SMOA) in Moscow, Russia (*Gosudarstvennyi Muzei iskusstva narodov Vostoka – GMINV*, literally, Museum of Arts of the Oriental Peoples<sup>2</sup>) (Fig. 1). In his scholarship, Bronshtein exemplifies



Fig. 1: Mikhail Bronshtein at Ekven. Kirill Dneprovsky, photographer, 1991.

the best of the integrative tradition of the Bering Strait studies by combining archaeology, prehistoric and modern art, museum and collection analyses, as well as outreach to

<sup>2</sup>The Russian name of the Museum, which literally means Museum of Arts of the Oriental Peoples, is somewhat misleading to an American reader, as it holds collections from China and Japan, but also from India, Central Asia, the Near East, and even Siberia. We use the more common museum’s name, State Museum of Oriental Art (SMOA), throughout this collection.

the local Native communities. Misha also serves as a “one-man personal bridge” among the many contributors to this volume and among dozens of his colleagues and friends in Russia and in the West.

The three co-authors of this Introduction have been long fascinated by the various aspects of Bering Strait cultural history; still, we share different stories of our personal knowledge of, and our relationship with Misha Bronshtein and his scholarship. Krupnik first met Bronshtein at the Moscow Institute of Ethnography in the early 1980s, at the very beginning of Misha’s career in the study of Bering Strait ancient art and prehistory. The relationship, always friendly, was a venue for mutual intellectual and professional enrichment that stemmed from the common ties to, and shared mentoring by, the previous generation of Russian Bering Strait specialists, such as Sergei Arutyunov,<sup>3</sup> Valery Alexeev (Alekseev), Dorian Sergeev, Vladilen Leontiev, Nikolai Dikov, Igor Lavrov, Tamara Mitlianskaia, and others. Csonka was first put in touch with Bronshtein by mail via their respective mentors and old friends, Sergei Arutyunov and Hans-Georg Bandi. The relationship started in 1992 soon expanded into a second-generation friendship and partnership that was greatly strengthened by several years of joint fieldwork and excavations at the Ekven site in Chukotka, on the Russian side of Bering Strait. Csonka became a field partner and a close friend to Bronshtein in the early 1990s, mainly in a series of joint international expeditions led by Misha and later by Kirill Dneprovsky. Finally, Mason first met Misha in Alaska in 2002 only, at a conference of the Alaska Anthropological Association. Still, despite the lack of prior communication and a language barrier, Misha’s voice emerged as uncannily familiar. The area near Cape Dezhnev, where Bronshtein did most of his field archaeology during the late 1980s and 1990s, served as a maelstrom, a veritable magnet that pulled just about everyone along the shores of Bering Strait toward it. According to Mason and Gerlach (1995), Cape Dezhnev was the pivot of the western Arctic and the keystone to deciphering many issues in Alaskan prehistory that was geographically attached to Northeast Asia. Thus, our personal histories, very much like those of other contributors to this issue, reflect the multi-faceted impact of Bronshtein’s scholarship and his broad personal connections.

Since the mid 1980s, working mostly from intuition in his painstaking study of the prehistoric ivory ornamentation styles from Chukotka in various Russian museums (see Aru-

tyunov, *this issue*), Bronshtein developed his trademark vision of the ancient Bering Strait as that of a dynamic system of interacting polities, communicating within a common idiom of art and cosmology. Bronshtein’s first seminal Russian paper of 1986 (translated and edited for the first time in this issue) introduced a model of the Bering Strait cultural “universe” of the 1st millennium AD uncannily reminiscent of that independently realized by Gerlach and Mason (1992) and Mason (1998), who used a very different approach and relied mostly on Alaskan archaeological records. To Gerlach and Mason (1992) and their readers, discovering Bronshtein was a *déjà vu* of a parallel universe. Nonetheless, Bronshtein’s approach dwells on the commonalities of Bering Strait prehistory from stylistic observations and only rarely considers chronological evidence of synchronicity. While emphasizing common motifs and ignoring chronology, it is possible to posit, as Bronshtein (1986) does, that close links (even personal ties) existed between the people that produced the Okvik culture on St. Lawrence Island and Northeastern Chukotka, the Kurigitavik culture known from near Cape Prince of Wales, and the Old Bering Sea (OBS), Birnirk and Punuk former inhabitants of Ekven.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, when <sup>14</sup>C ages were obtained the chronological garments do not always fit so tightly: Okvik on the Hillside site near Gambell were subsequently dated between AD 200 and 500 (Dumond 1998) while the Kurigitavik culture, clearly a Thule variant (cf. Yamaura 1984) is possibly no younger than AD 900 (Harritt 2004), whereas the Birnirk and Punuk remains in the Ekven settlement are so far dated to the interval AD 600-1600, with a transitional period during which these remains sometimes appear side by side (for details see Moulin and Csonka 2002). Of course, considering the gaps in the record from Wales, it remains thoroughly possible that an Okvik presence is yet to be discovered around Wales, through further excavations or even from objects retrieved by local diggers from the ancient mounds.

Since his earliest publications, Bronshtein has espoused the broad cross-cultural view of 1<sup>st</sup> millennium prehistory of the Bering Strait region termed the “contemporaneity model” by Gerlach and Mason (1992). This construct stands in clear opposition to the classic “descent” or *pseudo* Biblical or genealogical model, i.e. the Okvik culture *begat* OBS, which *begat* Birnirk, which *begat* Thule, etc. One reason that Okvik served Rainey and Collins (and many a scholar after them) as a foil for the Bering Strait *Ur*-culture is its comparative rarity—known only from a few localities on St. Lawrence Island and near Cape Dezhnev. Nevertheless, later advances

<sup>3</sup>The transliteration of the Russian names is always a challenge to the editors, since many Western publications have various versions of name spelling for the same person. We use “Sergei Arutyunov” (rather than “Arutiunov” in the Library of Congress’ system) as the most commonly used English transliteration, and also “Mikhail Bronshtein” rather than Anglicized “Michael Bronstein” throughout this issue.

<sup>4</sup>One of us (IK) clearly remembers Bronshtein’s excitement in the mid-1980s when the plates with object photographs and drawings from Yamaura’s Kurigitavik article became first available in Russia. By that time, the distance “across the Bering Strait” (at least, in the scholarly studies) was not a barrier anymore.



in the radiocarbon dating of both Chukotkan and St. Lawrence Island ancient cemeteries have provided considerable confirmation for contemporaneity and synchronicity among local cultures (cf. Dumond 1998). Tracing descent remains a daunting task complicated by an over reliance on objects curated within mortuary contexts. The ambiguous context and remaining scarcity of  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates still hinders archaeological progress (cf. Blumer 2002; Mason 1998, 2006)—the issue that Bronshtein's approach so graciously leaves behind.

The legacy of Bronshtein's collaboration with European researchers in the 1990s is the considerable progress in dating Ekven, especially along the erosion front. Nearly 50  $^{14}\text{C}$  ages, most run by AMS method, that also measure  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values, establish the occupation sequence along the Ekven erosional front, with remarkable care to stratigraphic context (Moulin and Csonka 2002). The history of the nearby cemetery at Ekven remains problematical (cf. Dinesman et al. 1999), due to the dating of human bone without attention to the effects of a diet of walrus and other marine mammals with an old carbon signature. Finally, Russian archaeologists have begun to appreciate the need to account for old carbon effects (Khassanov and Savinetski 2006, expanding geographically on the work published by Dumond and Griffin 2002), but considerable additional dating will be required to definitively understand the history of the Ekven cemetery.

In his 1986 paper, Bronshtein also addressed the issue of the "old" Alaskan-Siberian artistic and cultural connections based upon resemblances between Ipiutak and Old Bering Sea (OBS) ornamentation that were also long ago noted by Larsen and Rainey (1948). Bronshtein ascribes a certain Siberian contribution to Ipiutak and argues for a discrete Ipiutak presence in Chukotka, although it seems more likely that the adoption or use of Ipiutak designs in ancient Siberian communities around Cape Dezhnev were due more to social contacts across the Bering Strait and not very likely to descent. Still, there are no Ipiutak houses or settlements known in Siberia, only several dozen objects recovered from graves—prized, apparently curated objects, offered to the dead. The assumption is that the objects were either crafted by Ipiutak artisans or by individuals familiar with their work. However, a genetic component cannot be ruled out, considering that several Ipiutak practices in Alaska suggest possible Yup'ik origins (the *qargi*, the use of labrets).<sup>5</sup> While nearly

all archaeologists would fantasize that Ekven and Uelen were the sieve for the transmission of Scytho-Siberian ideas to Alaska, evidence remains only circumstantial, at best.

Bronshtein also reveals his belief in a core and periphery model in the Bering Strait prehistory similar to that developed later by Mason and Gerlach (1995). One intriguing subtext to his argument is possibly based on a sampling error: Birnirk and Dorset peoples develop at distant and opposite margins, in isolation from the center. We have yet to find any earlier sites with linkages between the two cultures. However, the idea that the cause of Birnirk and Dorset originality is due to isolation seems well-founded (cf. Bronshtein 1986, *this issue*).

Since his early publications of the 1980s, Bronshtein argued for the existence of cultural "overlaps" or amalgams "along a continuum" not accounted for by traditional categories, as first noted by Ackerman (1962:34). This position had little resonance until the mid-1960s, when two ancient cemetery sites near Cape Dezhnev, Uelen and Ekven (Arutyunov and Sergeev 1969, 1975), revealed a considerable array of motifs that cross-cut the pioneering cultural categories developed by Collins (1937) based upon midden excavations and household debris.

Today, most archaeologists would question whether grave goods are indeed the appropriate venue for distinguishing cultural practices and ethnicity.<sup>6</sup> Even in situations with strong documentary evidence, like Anglo-Saxon Britain or Frankish Germany, grave goods rarely produce unequivocal *ethnic* attributions (Constantinescu et al. 1975, Heather 1998). One can easily imagine multifarious motivations for early grave offerings. Nonetheless, two of the largest ancient cemeteries from Alaska, that from Ipiutak and from Kugusuguruk, record "pure" cultures, not admixtures. Artifacts notwithstanding, however, a morphologically diverse population (as revealed by craniometric traits) produced the Birnirk material at the very defense site of Kugusuguruk (Hollinger et al. 2004).

These and other arguments advanced by Bronshtein in the mid-1980s were put to a rigorous testing when the State Museum of Oriental Art's archaeological team returned to the Cape Dezhnev area in 1987 to restart the cemetery excavations at Ekven abandoned in 1974 (Arutyunov, *this*

<sup>5</sup>Interestingly enough, Utermohle (1988: 40-43) found that the characteristics of crania at Uelen and Ekven were very close to those of Birnirk people and to Inupiaq-speaking people generally, as opposed to other Eskaleuts. This may indicate that at least a part of the Uelen-Ekven population may have been biologically ancestral to Birnirk and, later, to the Thule people in Alaska. One may also wonder about what kind of language they spoke: Yupik or Inuit? Thus, the postulated "genetic component" between Ipiutak and Cape Dezhnev people, if there is one, may be quite different (Csonka 2003:129, n14).

<sup>6</sup>This was the rationale behind the International (Swiss-German-Danish-Canadian) project to start excavating the settlement abutting the cemetery at Ekven (see below). Because of the ties with museums, Russian excavators were historically attracted by large collections of beautifully ornamented ivory objects that were reliably recovered from graves and were easily curated in museum collections.

issue). Finally, Bronshtein had a chance to see and to excavate *in situ* the very same beautifully carved ancient ivories he had studied for months in the museum collections. His soul, mind, and energy were then fully consumed by several summer field seasons at the Ekven cemetery between 1987 and 2002 (Fig.2). He was also there to bear the brunt of the

colleagues were forced to cease grave excavations at Ekven for good, and the new, though short-lived era of international “expeditions” by the joint Russian-Canadian-Danish-German-Swiss team took shape. Müller-Beck<sup>7</sup> (*this issue*) tells the story of Bronshtein’s personal role in the development of those international expeditions to Ekven in 1995-1998.



Fig. 2: Excavation headquarters (field cabin) at Ekven. Left to right: Galina Dyachkova (Anadyr Regional Museum), Mikhail Bronshtein, and Marina Makarova (Anadyr Regional Museum). Kirill Dneprovsky, photographer, 1997.

mounting pressure from the local officials during the early 1990s, as they became increasingly aggressive in their efforts to disrupt the work of an expedition from the Moscow-based museum, under the pretext of “illegal ivory exports” from Chukotka. Native people from the nearby communities also started to speak up about the uneasiness they felt, because of the archaeologists excavating old graves and the fear of the consequences this disturbance of the spirits might unleash. At the end of the 1995 season, Bronshtein and his Russian

Bronshtein’s enthusiasm testified to his openness towards his foreign colleagues (Fig. 3)—whom any other archaeologist could have easily treated as potential competitors. He and his family also hosted many local friends from Chukotka when they had to come to Moscow. In the summertime, when the Bronshtein’s small Moscow apartment became too tiny for so many guests, their Spartan country-house or *dacha* was put to service as a make-shift hostel for his foreign colleagues on their way to the field. This history of truly unique part-

<sup>7</sup>The partnership had been originally forged in 1992, after French archaeologist Patrick Plumet spent the summer season of 1991 excavating with the Russian team at Ekven. A joint French-Swiss-German “Committee for archaeological research in Chukotka” was established shortly after (see Bronshtein and Plumet 1995:6), and more western researchers from other countries soon joined the effort. The full-size international team descended at Ekven in 1995, when Russian archaeologists were having their last season at the cemetery. Having no previous experience in large-scale settlement excavation, the Russians reportedly suggested that the “international” team (Gullov, McGhee, Blumer, Müller-Beck, and others) start excavating ancient subterranean houses at the Ekven settlement on their own (see Fig.3). The Russians soon had to stop their work at the cemetery anyway, because of the local pressure; so, for the next three years joint excavations were conducted at the coastal dwelling site only. Also, the Swiss team worked independently on the erosion front, on test excavations, and on surveys in neighboring sites; and another Russian team from the Severtsov Institute of Ecology and Evolution worked separately in 1995 on animal bone sampling from the beach site and along a broad section of the nearby shore (Dinesman et al. 1999).





Fig. 3: International team at Ekven. Left to right: an unidentified German student from the University of Tübingen, Tobias Holzlehner (University of Tübingen), Reto Blumer (Switzerland), Mikhail Bronshtein, Yvon Csonka, Konstantin Dneprovsky (son of Kirill Dneprovsky), Hans-Jurgen Müller-Beck. Kirill Dneprovsky, photographer, 1997.

nership and deep personal friendship is but partly revealed in numerous publications that have been produced by the international team members over several years (see Blumer 1996, 1997; Blumer and Csonka 1998, Csonka, Moulin and Blumer 1999; Csonka 2003, 2006; Gulløv 2005).

The “secret” of Bronshtein’s many successes in human relations certainly resides in his absolute honesty, respect for, and keen interest in others. Every field season, the excavation team had to spend several days in local towns and rural communities it went through on its way to and from Ekven (Anadyr, Lavrentiya, Pinakul, Uelen), and in each of them it was clear that Bronshtein has many deeply rooted connections and friendships. At a time when in Western countries “collaborative” research was being widely promoted by every professional group dealing with Arctic anthropology, one has to realize that Bronshtein had been practicing it all along, in his perfectly natural way. This has been his personal style of research ethics, ever since his early sojourn in the North in the 1970s, as a young schoolteacher in the polar town of Dikson on the Taimyr Peninsula—still deep in Soviet times.

While at the excavation camp, Bronshtein never lost an occasion to host friends from neighboring settlements and reindeer herders’ camps and to give them a tour of Ekven. Transportation was extremely difficult to obtain, but the team once organized a visit from schoolchildren and their art teacher from the nearby Native town of Uelen. Of course, they were granted the most professional tour of the site and a lecture on the origins of ancient sea-mammal hunting cultures and on the treasures of ancient ivory carvings delivered by Bronshtein (Fig.4). Local young men, hunters and herders, came on foot and helped with excavation for a few days, or fished for the team. Several times, parties of local people, stranded with their open skin-boats of the *umiaq* type, that can only round precipitous Cape Dezhnev in sufficiently calm seas, filled the expedition’s small cabin. Bronshtein took it upon himself to make sure that they were welcomed and well fed, and he always listened with great interest as they shared their knowledge and stories.

But Misha’s interests are too wide-ranging to confine themselves to Ekven and to its ancient inhabitants. Every



Fig.4: Mikhail Bronshtein (second from left) gives a tour of the Ekven site to a group of Uelen high-school students led by their teacher in ivory carving, Valery Dolgoarshinnykh (at left). Photographer, Kirill Dneprovsky, 1997.

season, he used to spend several days in Uelen, the closest Native town that took an arduous 25-km walk through wet tundra, rivers, dense fog, and occasional grizzly bears. He respects, understands, and deeply appreciates the residents of this mixed Chukchi-Yupik community. His particular interest in contemporary art from Uelen, a community rightly reputed for the artistic gifts of an inordinate number of its members, and also for its once powerful shamans, is exemplified in his publications on today's ivory carvers and engravers of Uelen (cf. Bronshtein et al. 1997, Bronshtein et al. 2002). Although sharing some common themes, the contemporary Uelen carving and the early Neoeskimo art forms from the Cape Dezhnev region differ considerably. Yet, Bronshtein is able to understand and appreciate each in its own terms.

This issue of *AJA* was first discussed in Fairbanks at the 5<sup>th</sup> International Arctic Social Sciences Congress (ICASS-5) in 2004, when we received news from Moscow that Bronshtein was very sick and would probably be unable to continue his field research in the Bering Strait. Indeed, the 2002 season may be his last one in an archaeological camp. In the following years, the excavations at the Ekven site that

he worked so hard to re-establish in 1987 (see Arutyunov, *this issue*) were put on hold and the site was abandoned by archaeologists for the second time in thirty years. Bronshtein's colleagues from the SMOA field team have moved to another site, Paipelghak on the arctic coast of Chukotka (cf. Dneprovsky, *this issue*). It became quite obvious that the time has come for another broad review of the Bering Strait cultural prehistory, museum and language studies—on top of several recent collections on Bering Strait archaeology produced as compendias of recent archaeological data and surveys (i.e., Dumond and Bland 2002, 2006). Very quickly the idea of a joint international collection of papers as a tribute to Bronshtein's scholarship emerged. We are grateful to the *AJA* for providing a venue for such an international collection by colleagues and friends to Bronshtein from Russia, the US, Canada, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland.

This issue also combines the voices and the views of several generations of Bering Strait cultural specialists and, more broadly, of students in Arctic cultures and history. It includes contributions by those who were instrumental in setting Bronshtein's personal career as of a Bering Strait field

archaeologist and art historian (Arutyunov, Bandi); by his field partners in Ekven excavations during the 1990s and early 2000s (Csonka, Dneprovsky, Gullø, McGhee, Müller-Beck); by his peer archaeologists working in Alaska, Canada, and Greenland (Mason, Sutherland, Gullø); by his colleagues in museum studies, linguistics, arts, and modern history of Chukotka—both in Russia and the US (Chlenov, Krauss, Krupnik and Mikhailova, Lee); and by his younger followers, to whom Bronshtein is a respected mentor (Sukhorukova). We see this as a natural combination of generational strengths and also as a projection of Bronshtein's unique position in the Bering Strait and Arctic scholarly community.

We are grateful to several people who kindly offered their assistance to the preparation of this special issue of the journal. Tatyana Slobodina translated Bronshtein's Russian paper of 1986 into English that is reproduced as Appendix 1. Richard Bland (who translated Bronshtein and Sukhorukova), Aron Crowell, Don Dumond, Steven Jacobson, Ken Pratt, and Peter Schweitzer offered valuable advice and comments to papers published in this collection. Yvon Csonka and Kirill Dneprovsky shared their field photos of the Ekven camp life of the 1990s that are used as illustrations. The Smithsonian Institution's Arctic Studies Center in Washington, D.C. (Director, William Fitzhugh), Cerny Inuit Collection in Bern, Switzerland (Martha Cerny), and the Swiss-Lichtenstein Foundation for Archaeological Research Abroad (SLSA) generously offered financial support to the production of this collection.

Last but not least, whenever we needed communication to Misha, copies of his old papers, records, and computer files, his wife Lena and his son Ilya Bronshtein were always there to help. Finally, we all thank Misha Bronshtein for his heartfelt, patient, and humble approach to a venture that his colleagues have struggled over for two long years and that we finally succeeded to present as a symbol of our friendship and respect.

As this special issue goes to press, Bronshtein continues his work on ancient and modern art of the Bering Strait region, on various catalog and exhibit projects out of his apartment in Moscow. His list of publications keeps growing (cf. Appendix 2) and he is currently engaged in the preparation of three catalogs focused on the ancient ivory collections from the Bering Sea and on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the excavations by the State Museum of Oriental Art team at Ekven (1987–2007). It does not take faith, after a few days spent at the Ekven site, to realize that there is a certain magic and spiritual presence(s) in Ekven. Bronshtein was well aware of, and attuned to this feeling. Clearly, he “belongs” to Ekven, and in that sense we can affirm that the land of Ekven be-

longs to him. Just like in local Yupik and Chukchi tradition: each place has its owner.



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