

THESIS AND DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

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This issue includes three dissertation abstracts from Kentucky, New York, and United Kingdom universities. Anichtchenko's dissertation uses archaeological and ethnographic data to explore skin boats and their role in arctic indigenous mobility. Colligan's dissertation examines Thule people's use of iron through archaeological data. In the last dissertation, Howell researches healthy aging in Anchorage using biological and sociocultural data. Contact Monty Rogers to submit an abstract of a recently completed thesis or dissertation that deals with topics of interest to *AJA* readers.

OPEN PASSAGE: ETHNO-ARCHAEOLOGY OF SKIN BOATS AND INDIGENEOUS MARITIME MOBILITY OF NORTH-AMERICAN ARCTIC

Evguenia V. Anichtchenko

PhD dissertation, 2016, Faculty of Humanities, Centre for Maritime Archaeology, University of Southampton
Online at <https://eprints.soton.ac.uk/411811/>

ABSTRACT

This thesis is an examination of prehistoric maritime mobility in the Arctic regions of North America through the ethno-archaeological analysis of skin boats. Covering over 100,000 km of coastline, the skin boat traditions of the Arctic and Subarctic zones are arguably among the most expansive watercraft technologies in the world, dating back at least 10,000 years. Despite the considerable material record generated by this geographically and chronologically extended use, and the potential this record contains for understanding Arctic maritime mobility, skin boat datasets are rarely considered in scholarly discussions on prehistoric exchanges and population movement. This study aims at closing this gap by focusing on the skin boat record as a key dataset for assessing the scale, nature, and significance of maritime mobility in the North American Arctic. The analysis of particular regional trends and cross-regional patterns is based on review of three case studies. Moving west to east, this review starts in the Bering Strait region with a particular focus on the Kukulik site on St. Lawrence Island. Maritime mobility in the Chukchi Sea region is assessed through the archaeological assembly

of the Birnirk site near Point Barrow, Alaska. The third case study is focused on the Qariaraqyuk site on Somerset Island, extending the geography of the research to the central Canadian Arctic. Individual boat parts and the information they provide for reconstructing complete watercraft are analyzed along with the boat fragment frequency and spatial distribution. This provides understanding of the statistical and social makeup of seafaring in Arctic North America, of the logistics of maritime mobility, of the larger scale cross-regional and chronological patterns of skin boat design and use, and, ultimately, of the role of seafaring in constructing cultural landscapes of the prehistoric Arctic.

THULE IRON USE IN THE PRE-CONTACT ARCTIC

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PhD dissertation, 2017, Department of Anthropology, City University of New York
Online at https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds/2342/

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the use of iron by the Thule people, a Neoeskimo culture that lived in the North American Arctic between approximately 1000 AD and 1400–1500 AD. The study takes a pan-Arctic perspective to bring together research that has usually been done on a more limited geographical scale. This viewpoint shows the Thule culture from a view that corresponds to their world.

The study focuses on (1) revisions in the accepted chronology of the Thule and how these have affected the explanations for the Thule Migration from Alaska to Greenland; (2) new understandings about the iron that was available to the Thule; (3) new insights into the quantity of iron that would have been available to the Thule; and (4) new evidence for how trade was conducted and how iron was traded by the Thule.

The methodology includes extensive references to published literature, an experiment using cut mark analysis to find a new proxy for iron, and spatial analysis using GIS based on data from government-maintained archaeological databases. The literature review includes research since McCartney's last work on iron in 1991. The methodology for the cut mark analysis enabled stone and metal manufacturing marks to be distinguished but it faced unanticipated problems in application to analyzing museum artifacts: many had no incised lines to examine while others had been conserved using material that obscured the lines. The GIS visualizations were more useful in raising new research questions than in definitively answering old ones; nonetheless, the visualizations were an effective way to grasp overall patterns in the data.

The conclusions of the study are: (1) the Thule Migration was not sparked by knowledge of, or rumors of, iron or commercial opportunities to the east (as Robert McGhee proposed); the Thule would not have known about the Greenlandic iron prior to their arrival in the Central or even Eastern Arctic; (2) the Cape York meteorite fall zone was the site of extensive iron working by both the Late Dorset and the Thule; (3) copper and rodent teeth were often available alternatives to iron for cutting antler and ivory and are frequently present in Thule assemblages; (4) the Thule trade network enabled and was maintained by an extensive communication network, evidence for which can be seen in widespread stylistic similarities of tools shown in illustrations in the thesis itself and in Appendix 2.

HEALTHY AGING IN THE NORTH: SOCIOCULTURAL INFLUENCES ON DIET AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AMONG OLDER ADULTS IN ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

Britteny Howell

PhD dissertation, 2017, Department of Anthropology,
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online at https://uknowledge.uky.edu/anthro_etds/24/

ABSTRACT

Increasing rates of overweight, obesity, and related cardiovascular diseases among older adults in the United States present unique public health challenges. Cross-cultural research has shown marked variation in health across the world's elder populations because aging is a biological process rooted in sociocultural context. The sociocultural environment contributes to complex negotiations of food and physical activity patterns for older adults. It is well established in the literature that urban residents report low levels of physical activity and have easy access to fast food outlets, which tend to be concentrated in lower-income neighborhoods. I utilize a biocultural framework, integrating nutritional anthropology with healthy aging perspectives to recognize the role of the social determinants of health throughout the lifespan. This anthropological study integrates qualitative and quantitative methods to answer the following research question: What is the relationship between the sociocultural factors that shape diet, physical activity, and nutritional status among Alaskan elders in Anchorage? The results indicate that diet and physical activity practices in this sample do not meet national recommendations and that diet differs adversely from national reference samples. Statistical analyses indicate that the media and friends positively influenced older adults to increase their energy expenditure. Family influences increased fruit consumption, while participation in cultural and social events increased intake of fats and sweets. Cultural identity was an important factor for Alaska Native participants' dietary selections. Social supports increased access to healthy foods and safe physical activities. This research suggests that trying to reach older adults with diverse needs through a variety of channels, including the media, social networks, and social events, can help alleviate some of the barriers to healthy diet and exercise patterns. These data indicate a need for culturally responsive programs that maintain relationships with family members and make connections between elders with similar healthy aging goals in order to improve diet and physical activity practices.