

Migrations and the Origin of the Woodland Culture

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To any anthropologist interested in the problems of the peopling of the New World a number of logical discrepancies become at once apparent when he peruses a distribution map of the varieties of man and compares it with one that gives the distribution of the different smaller cultural entities of the two continents. The one I would like to consider briefly concerns the correlation of the Sylvid morphophyle, that is, a certain physical taxonomic unit, with the Woodland culture in its temporal and spatial relationships.

The physical anthropologist in trying to solve the question of migrations of the twelve varieties of Indians that are commonly recognized, soon comes to the realization that he not only has to deal with migrations, but also with local evolution of varieties from the migrants. Especially is this the case when he attempts to identify the remains which the ancestors of the South American Indians must have left in North America. Nor has the archaeologist been of much help in this respect. All physical anthropologists and archaeologists agree that the New World was peopled by migrants who entered North America by way of Bering Strait and that the South American Indian groups are derived from North American ones. In other words, they came that way, but their remains have not been identified. We may well ask: Where are these remains? They must have left their dead as well as cultural material.

There are two reasons for the neglect to find answers to this question. One is the isolation of interest in North, Middle, and South America; few anthropologists think of their problems in terms of continental scope. The other is that most anthropologists, and especially the older ones, thought that the peopling of the New World occurred over a relatively short span of time and that it was carried out by one race—that of the American Indian.

Let us consider the last of these two aspects first. It only needs to be pointed out that the degree of differentiation into varieties has progressed as far among the American Indian as among the peoples of other continents. To realize this we just need look at the Andid of Peru, the primitive Fuegid of the southern tip of South America, the Prairid Indian of our plains, and the Eskimid of the arctic coast of Canada. In fact, there are no physical traits that would set off all the American Indians from all Mongoloids of Asia. A similar diversity exists in Asia where Paleomongoloids such as the Malays, Sinids such as the northern Chinese, Tungids like the Mongols, and Sibirids like the Yenisei Ostyaks differ as widely. For that reason we cannot accept an American Indian race. It is only a geographical term, and these aborigines merely form varieties of equal rank with those of Asia; they are all varieties of the Asiatic subspecies of *Homo sapiens* (*H. s. asiaticus*). Once we realize this our

problem becomes somewhat simpler for we can make an attempt to differentiate between the original migrants, whose remains we can expect to find along the route, and in their Asiatic homeland, as well as the specialized groups and hybrid varieties that developed in various regions of the New World.

The older migrants, predominantly dolichocranial varieties, which often have been pooled into a Paleoamerind morphophyle ranking somewhere between a variety and a subspecies, include the Fuegid, Lagid, Margid, and perhaps the Brasilid varieties. The more recent immigrants, sometimes called the Central Brachycephals, on the other hand, include such units as the Andid, Isthmid, and Centralid varieties. Of these the Andids and the Isthmids can be considered local specializations adapted to a mountain and tropical rain forest environment, respectively, while the Centralid variety tends to preserve the migrant type. Another morphophyle that has been suggested in contrast to the Paleoamerind is the Neoamerind. However, this taxonomic unit would not draw the distinction between the earlier Central Brachycephals, the later dolichocranial varieties, such as the Sylvid and Eskimid, and the last commer to the New World, the low-vaulted brachycranial Pacifid of the Canadian Northwest. To this list only the hybrid Pampid variety of Patagonia and the Gran Chaco, and the trihybrid Prairids of our plains need be added. Considering the associations these larger groupings have it would be best to abandon them and just retain the variety names. As a tentative migration sequence I would like to offer the following: Fuegid, Lagid, Margid, Centralid, Sylvid, Pacifid, and Eskimid. These would be the varieties whose remains we could expect to trace north and westward into Asia. The others are probably derived from them.

A parallel manner of reasoning can be followed in the field of archaeology. It is here highly suggestive that we find Folsom points from Alaska to northern Mexico, that we can trace shell heaps with a relatively uniform culture inland as well as along both the Atlantic and Pacific shores from British Columbia and Maine to Tierra del Fuego, that there are remarkable parallels in pottery types between our Southwest and northern Argentina.

In many instances it will be actually possible to follow the migration routes, that is, in those instances where there exists a definite correlation between cultural complexes and physical type in a number of sites. Two cases may be: the linking of the Basket-Makers of the Southwest with the Shell Mound people of the Tennessee Valley, and the San Francisco Bay shell heap people with a coastal group of Peru. At any rate, an examination of the remains, both physical and cultural, of the earlier populations of both continents is called for. Just as spectacular as these linkages is the distribution of certain types of Woodland pottery found from the Ohio Valley to central Manitoba, and then again in the Lake Baikal region of Siberia. Since the Woodland Pattern is to a large extent associated with the Sylvid variety of Indian, the physical data leads us to some speculations on the origin of this cultural grouping.

Within the last decade there have been published a number of papers which deal with the origin of the Woodland Pattern and possible Asiatic

connections. Essentially the eastern United States forms one culture area, in which important time differences manifest themselves. Besides a common background that links the different parts of the continent, a relatively unilinear development of culture has to be recognized for the Southeast. This development was probably twice influenced from Mexico and at least once more from Asia. The only explanation lies in repeated migrations associated with the diffusion of cultural traits from a number of outside centers. In the light of differences in physical types, and certain similarities in culture traits of widely separated regions, this has to be extended to the Woodland Pattern. Some of its origins are widespread and relatively old. Pottery with fiber and granular temper, basket impressions and cord and brush markings probably go back to at least the beginning of the Christian era. It also must be kept in mind that these are farflung traits, being distributed from Alaska to Brazil and from the Atlantic coast to New Mexico.

On the other hand, a relatively late Asiatic-Mississippi Valley connection cannot be denied when one examines the cultural remains of the Angara culture of the Lake Baikal region and the late Woodland remains of the Mississippi Valley. Pottery traits such as the dentate stamp, embossed rim, cross-hatched rim, lip indentation, cord-marking, conoidal base, and body shape are identical. Gouges and chisels, pestles, knives, chipped points, round and pear-shaped pendants, plummets, fish hooks, needles, awls of bone, arrow polishers of sandstone, and ochre-stained skeletons—all tell the same story, leaving little doubt that the late Woodland material is derived in part at least from the neolithic Angara culture which flourished about 2000 B. C. in Siberia. The fact that the Eastern Siouan, Hopewellian, Iroquois, and Algonkin physical type to a large extent differs from earlier also dolichocranial skeletal material is corroborative evidence for this contention.