

thoroughly describes his statistical methodology, allowing other researchers to adopt this mode of data analysis.

Overall, this volume is a welcome addition to the growing literature on Great Basin rock art, as rock art papers presented at conferences far too rarely find their way into print. Unfortunately, it is weakened by numerous poorly reproduced figures. Better copy-editing would also have enhanced the book's readability—the large number of typos, spelling errors, misnumbered and missing figures, and grammatical errors become rather tiresome. Regardless of these problems, each paper offers important analysis for specialists and others who are interested in learning more about this interesting and ubiquitous archaeological resource of the desert west.

REFERENCES

- Bettinger, Robert L., and Martin A. Baumhoff
1982 The Numic Spread: Great Basin Cultures in Competition. *American Antiquity* 47(3): 485-503.
- Casjens, Laurel
1972 The Ruby Valley Site Survey Data Summary. Report on file at the Nevada State Museum, Carson City.
- Heizer, Robert F., and Martin A. Baumhoff
1962 Prehistoric Rock Art of Nevada and Eastern California. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Schaafsma, Polly
1986 Rock Art. In: *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. 11, Great Basin, Warren L. d'Azevedo, ed., pp. 215-226. Washington: Smithsonian Institution.
- Whitley, David S.
1994 By the Hunter, For the Gatherer: Art, Social Relations and Subsistence Change in the Prehistoric Great Basin. *World Archaeology* 25(3):356-373.
- Woody, Alanah
1997 Layer by Layer: A Multigenerational Analysis of the Massacre Lake Rock Art Site. University of Nevada, Reno, Department of Anthropology Technical Report 97-1.
- Julian Steward and the Great Basin: The Making of an Anthropologist.* Richard O. Clemmer, L. Daniel Myers, and Mary Elizabeth Ruden, eds. University of Utah Press, 1999, 288 pp. bibliography, index, \$45.00 (hard cover), \$19.95 (paper).

Reviewed by:

WARREN L. D'AZEVEDO

Department of Anthropology, University of Nevada, Reno, 89557.

The collection of essays contained in this remarkable book will be read with avid interest by all who seek a fuller understanding of the career of Julian H. Steward, his complex scholarly legacy and, in this instance, his pioneering contributions to the knowledge of the many groups of aboriginal peoples whose descendants continue to inhabit a vast region of the Intermontane West. Moreover, the reader will find in these pages discussions of the major disclaimers provoked by Steward's theoretical constructs, his data and interpretations, and the lingering effect of defining a distinctive sociocultural area containing, in his view, some of the simplest forms of human society on an evolutionary level.

In their carefully considered and balanced introduction to the volume, Richard Clemmer and Daniel Myers affirm the extraordinary productivity of Steward's scholarship, his seminal role as citizen, anthropologist, mentor and, in particular, as *the* "Great Basinist." They conclude their introductory review with the following statement on behalf of the anthropologists, historians, linguists, and political scientists whose papers from the "Steward Retrospective" symposium of the 1996 Great Basin Anthropological Conference provide the chapters of this book:

The history of anthropological theory—and of social-scientific theory in general—is as much a history of how the wind blows at particular times in particular disciplines and how national and global political and economic events condition and contextualize "social science as usual" and paradigm



shifts as it is a history of how individuals generating grand ideas and the accumulation of data come to influence and constitute an academic discipline. We hope that this first effort to evaluate the early work of one of the dolmens of American anthropology will encourage other broad evaluations not only of Steward, but of other theorists as well (p. xxii).

A somewhat less holistic commentary by Daniel Gelo of the University of Texas, San Antonio, which graces a flap of the book jacket, offers the averment that its content "exhibits postmodern sensitivity to questions of authenticity and authority but doesn't throw the baby out with the bathwater."

Twenty-eight years after Julian Steward's death, a score of latter-day colleagues present almost as many varied appraisals of his life and legacy. This has produced a book of greater impact and significance than its title might imply. In fact, if one reads it through, one is left with the disquieting impression of having been inadvertently confronted by a critical juncture in the discipline itself.

The resulting compendium contains a cache of reexamined assessments of Julian Steward as a man and scientist, and also of the "Great Basin" as a variously defined "culture area." The tone of ardent revelation, of long-incubated disclaimers, and of new discoveries and insights, permeates to such a measure that some readers are sure to recollect how some 60 years ago, when anthropology was on the brink of an equally acute transition, this region figured predominately in the emerging disputations as an anomaly. It caused Kroeber (1939:49) to throw up his hands in quiet exasperation and declare that "California has generally been reckoned a distinct area ever since American culture began to be classified geographically; but the Great Basin has been bandied about."

The contributions to this book range in approach and tenor somewhat wider than might be anticipated from the editorial introduction. They span topics from insightful biographical probing,

to generous or provisory acclaim, to outright censure of the man and his work. The reader will find much that provides a richer understanding of a major figure in American anthropology, places him in specific social and historical perspective, and offers penetrating criticism of his data and theories in the light of more recent knowledge—including inevitably some rehash of old issues spiced with hyperbole.

An intriguing biographical sketch by Kerns (Chapter 1) opens the collection, proposing that the primary source of Julian Steward's theory of cultural ecology was not his fieldwork among the Northern Paiute and Shoshone, but the years he spent as a youth at a college preparatory school for boys in Deep Springs, California. It is here, Kerns suggests, that he had the experience of "learning the land," which left a deep-rooted impression that influenced his later interests and choice of career. Basing her view on intensive archival research and interviews, Kerns offers compelling insights into the formative years of an influential scholar.

The fact that Steward was, in his early years, as much an archaeologist as an ethnologist is discussed by Janetski (Chapter 2), who points out that he initiated the archaeological research program at the University of Utah from 1930 to 1933. His fieldwork and emphasis on ecology in the publication of *Basin-Plateau Aboriginal Sociopolitical Groups* (Steward 1938) had a crucial impact on the Desert Culture concept developed by Jesse Jennings, which became the most enduring model of Great Basin prehistory in its combination of archaeological and ethnographic data. Despite continuing contention and reassessment, Janetski (p. 34) holds that "Steward's legacy remains and will continue to influence the way archaeology is done in Utah for the foreseeable future."

Arkush (Chapter 3) takes issue with Steward's assertion that pronghorn antelope drives by Numic peoples so depleted the herds that hunting was restricted for years until they were replen-

ished. Arkush attributes this to a "historic bias," which led Steward to mistake conditions created by postcontact Euroamerican immigration with precontact conditions where recent evidence indicates a continuing abundance of herds. However, Arkush maintains that Steward was an amazingly productive researcher who amassed a great deal of information concerning Great Basin native peoples, and that it was among the best that could be produced under those early circumstances. We now have access to new information for assessing the reliability of previous research and can "begin to distance ourselves from the historically biased interpretations that have unduly influenced our view of prehistory" (p. 52).

Fowler et al. (Chapter 4) evaluate Steward's work among the Panamint or Timbisha Shoshone. Each of the authors has had extensive involvement with these peoples as ethnographer or consultant with regard to tribal concerns. While noting specific aspects of his work that do not hold up against more recent research (e.g., inadequate linguistic competence, a tendency to view current data as representative of precontact conditions, misconstrual of seasonal migration patterns), they nevertheless agree that Steward's material remains "the most valuable detailed data on the Timbisha homeland, and there will be few more to match them" (p. 59).

Steward's obdurate though often revised view of culture change engages Clemmer (Chapter 10), who believes that a major "gap" in Steward's work is the discrepancy between his theory and a body of work to which he could have applied it, a disparity that allowed him to profess the ultimate assimilation of the Western Shoshone into the dominant American society. Clemmer (p. 163) gives Steward credit for recognizing the contradictions in concepts he had once embraced, noting that "as successors to Steward's legacy of Great Basin research, we are perhaps just now realizing in our critiques and appraisals what Steward realized long ago about theory and meth-

odology: neither should be taken for granted or left unquestioned."

In a similar vein, Patterson and Laura-Perri-cellini (Chapter 14) see Steward's concept of culture change as a "one way street" eventually steamrolling any traditional society (p. 230). The authors also make cogent examination of the growing importance of area studies from the 1930s to the 1950s while Steward worked as a federal technocrat and researcher. With the subsequent decline of this approach, he seems to have undergone a virtual abandonment of his research on North American native peoples that had so profoundly affected the orientation of anthropology and archaeology, especially in the Great Basin where it all began.

Ronaasen et al. (Chapter 12) present a penetrating analysis of the extent to which historic events and political concerns conditioned the formation and uses of anthropological theory during the claims case years. The dissension between Omer Stewart and Julian Steward is brought to bear in this essay as a graphic illustration of how directly the latter was influenced by federal legislative concerns while serving as an expert witness. The authors conclude that "Despite Stewart's and Steward's demurrings to the contrary, there can be no doubt that Steward's theory of culture change, theory of cultural ecology, and concept of 'levels of sociocultural integration' were honed in contexts that were as much political as they were scholarly" (p. 202).

Rusco (Chapter 7), a political scientist with long-standing interests in legislation affecting western Native Americans, addresses Steward's conflicting roles as scholar, administrative consultant, and person during a significant phase of his career. Noting that Steward was appraised by his contemporaries as one of the most important anthropologists working in the United States during the first two-thirds of the twentieth century, Rusco points out that despite his explicit rejection of racism and the notion of superior/inferior peoples, he nonetheless held personal views

common among many leading intellectuals of his time “that were at best ethnocentric and at the worst racist” (p. 107). This puzzles Rusco, who accepts that anthropology was the first academic discipline in the United States to reject white racist explanations for the differences between Euroamerican and non-Western societies.

Interestingly enough, the issue of racism, as such, does not emerge in the papers of those from whom it might be most expected. It came as no real surprise for this reader to find that three of the most suasive of the adverse commentaries in this collection were written from a Native American perspective. These emphatically renascent voices are concerned more with the humanity of representation and its consequences than with ethnographic detail or schema.

Though not Native American, Kehoe’s (Chapter 11) brief but penetrating cry “Where Were Wovoka and Wuzzie George?” rises unexpectedly from among the chapters with the charge that Steward’s monograph *Basin-Plateau Aboriginal Sociopolitical Groups* is “bloodless ethnography” (p. 165) reflecting a “scientific mode” (p. 167) in which real people are irrelevant, and “clarifies the tension in anthropology between respect for observed data and a proclivity to construct schemata that inevitably reflect Western cultural assumptions” (p. 166). She concludes that “Steward was on to something,” but that he “could not leap over the coffee-filled moat around his study to walk as a fellow human with Wovoka and Wuzzie George” (p. 169).

In a similar vein, Crum (Chapter 8), a major scholar of Shoshone and Great Basin culture and history, faults Steward for producing the potent “gastric vision” of the Shoshonean peoples, low on a neo-evolutionary scale of existence, and whose arts and crafts were among the poorest in America. Crum finds it curiously significant that the anthropological community has for so many years regarded Steward as one of the most influential scholars of modern times. Despite some effective challenges, this biased view of the Sho-

shone people continues to pervade the literature, providing a scientific endorsement of this false image to the public. The demeaning notion of Shoshone cultural impoverishment has helped to condition the general neglect of the richly endowed legacy of music, dance, craft, and lore, much of it remaining still to be seen and heard by all who care to see and hear. One can understand why Crum avers that his objective “is to further erode Julian Steward’s vision of the Great Basin” (p. 119).

Historian Ned Blackhawk (Chapter 13) makes a cogent analysis of the precepts underlying anthropological research and theory in the twentieth century, working principles given impressive systematization and authority through the work of Julian Steward. In his opinion, it is imperative to deal with Steward’s more problematic assumptions directly in order to restore a constructive use of his basic data, for although conceptually troubling in context, they provide a wealth of ethnographic, historic, and cultural information.

Blackhawk cautions, however, that such textual critique alone is not enough to disclose the more inclusive “imperial and colonial” contexts of Steward’s representations, or the actual relations of power between Indians and non-Indians over centuries of confrontation: “By portraying Great Basin Indian societies in such a timeless and simplistic fashion, Steward’s texts implicitly help legitimize the dispossession and impoverishment of the Native peoples in the region” and “gave intellectual justification in the 1930s for attempts to deny federal recognition and treaty rights to different Western Shoshone peoples in Nevada” (pp. 204-205).

I have assigned the remaining chapters of the book to a whimsical category of “totalizing critique” in that Steward’s work in the Great Basin is dealt with—not always unambiguously—as detrimental to our understanding of the people, their history and culture. Myers (Chapter 9) proposes a “new paradigm” as a corrective to the influence of Steward’s monumental *Basin-Plateau Ab-*

original Sociopolitical Groups. In this work, Great Basin societies were considered to be almost entirely explicable in terms of a limiting cultural ecology model and a speculative evolutionary theory. According to Myers (p. 138-139), "Such a reified concept of culture does little, if anything, to advance a theory antiquated by its own methodology . . . the Great Basin culture area is not so easily defined."

In contravention, Myers (p. 129) avows "a more parsimonious 'cognitive' approach . . . By defining culture as 'a system of thought and knowledge' and the Great Basin as a *research area*, I suggest that a 'symbolic-structural' perspective be applied to Great Basin studies." This approach, together with "the notion of the Great Basin as a 'research area' rather than a 'culture area' will allow us to move beyond Steward's 'gastric metaphor' " (p. 142). Although Myers comes close to tossing the baby out with the bathwater, he chooses in the end to turn it over gently with a pat on the bottom. One would like to think that we are on to something here, and look forward to published examples of application.

Far less inclined to conciliation, Walker (Chapter 5) gives short shrift to culture area proponents. More excisionist than revisionist, however, he opines that widespread use of Steward's Shoshone model has probably discouraged critical and ethnographic evaluation, in part because it satisfies the need for a "simplest of all cultures" in neo-evolutionist theory. Moreover, Steward's subsistence model is too impoverished and its kinship, economic, and political components too simplified to account for the relative affluence and complexity of various northern Numic groups. In a final note, he makes brief summary of his underlying theme: "The very brief ethnographic research by Julian Steward among northern Numic groups must be viewed only as ethnographic reconnaissance, rather than the sustained, long-term ethnographic research typical of Omer Stewart or Sven Liljeblad" (p. 73). Regardless of whether one thinks that such contrasts

are constructive or equitable, the nagging question remains before us: What now?

A ready and confident answer to this formidable query is proposed by Goss in the following chapter (Chapter 6). Goss (pp. 83-84) warns that "Everything has to be taken apart and redone from the perspective of The People," adding that "Only if we take it all apart and put it back together can we begin to have an 'inside' view of the present dynamic and, possibly, help with the future dynamic options. The key now is to get past our own false models and listen to The People. . . . The People have understood anthropologists much better than anthropologists have understood The People."

As an ethnolinguist, Goss is justifiably concerned with Steward's outright rejection of exclusive use of native nomenclature for the identity and distribution of Great Basin groups. He makes a strong case for a long overdue reassessment of the terminology which has been generally adopted and which derives essentially from colonial Spanish, Anglo-American, and other outsiders' corruptions of what the people call themselves. However, Goss exerts little effort to advance the task by proposing practicable measures for improvement or remodeling. Rather, he chooses to divert attention from his useful analysis of customary nomenclature by disparagement of an entire era of intensive research including, one would remind him, that latter period in which he too participated as a serious and less vociferous contributor.

Reading this book has been a rewarding experience, as it will be for many others over the coming years. *Julian Steward and the Great Basin: The Making of an Anthropologist* is all that its title promises. It provides a wide array of appraisal concerning the man, his works, and his extraordinary part in shaping current presumptions and emerging conceptions of the Intermontane West during a fertile period of anthropological research and theory. With few exceptions, the contributions to this book are insightful and

informative efforts. Equally valuable, however, is the opportunity to peruse, in one place, the varied viewpoints and approaches of nearly a score of individuals from anthropology and related disciplines who rank among the leading scholars of Great Basin history and culture. In these respects alone, the book is a landmark. It should be obvious by now that this reviewer is convinced that here is a book well worth the reading.

REFERENCES

- Kroeber, A. L.
1939 Cultural and Natural Areas of Native North America. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 38(1).
- Steward, Julian H.
1938 Basin-Plateau Aboriginal Sociopolitical Groups. Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 120.

