



## Anthropology, History and Cultural Change

Review Author[s]:  
Alan MacFarlane

*Man*, New Series, Volume 10, Issue 3 (Sep., 1975), 492-493.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0025-1496%28197509%292%3A10%3A3%3C492%3AAHACC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-P>

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

*Man* is published by Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland. Please contact the publisher for further permissions regarding the use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/journals/rai.html>.

---

*Man*

©1975 Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland

JSTOR and the JSTOR logo are trademarks of JSTOR, and are Registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. For more information on JSTOR contact [jstor-info@umich.edu](mailto:jstor-info@umich.edu).

©2003 JSTOR

black Rhodesian in Zambia, connects with Mitchell's in bringing out the emergent properties of ethnicity in political and domestic contexts.

The editor's introduction is the one read at the opening of the conference. The reader will regret that Professor Cohen was unable to use this opportunity to reply to his colleagues, reflect upon the discussions, and give us a more complete presentation of the issues. Fortunately, however, S. R. Charsley's concluding paper brings together several of the main themes. He was invited to report on ethnicity in a rural part of Bunyoro as a 'control case' throwing into relief aspects of urban ethnicity, but what he has to say about the formation of ethnic groups goes far beyond that. He contends that in *The Kalela dance* Mitchell compared the outward-facing aspect of urban tribalism and the internal aspect of rural tribalism. Ethnicity always has both outwards and inwards facing aspects (which are not quite the same as the structural/cultural, political/primordial). In his field material Charsley has cases of ethnic group formation without the sharing of a common culture, and cases that cannot be explained simply in terms of the sharing of interests.

What may appear to be a simple phenomenon turns out to be very complex and it would be premature to expect a satisfactory synthesis. With Bruner, I believe that it will not be possible to make sense of the micro data unless we 'raise our sights and deal with the larger system', but that is the direction in which many of the contributors are turning. They have given us a volume that is as good as any in the series.

MICHAEL BANTON

*University of Bristol*

FRIEDL, JOHN & NOEL J. CHRISMAN. *City ways: a selective reader in urban anthropology*; foreword by J. Clyde Mitchell. xii, 458 pp., bibliogr. New York: Thomas T. Crowell, 1975. \$6.75

Yet another 'urban anthropology' reader. This one consists of twenty essays arranged in six parts devoted to the 'Unit of analysis', 'Scope and method', 'Categories of urban dwellers', 'Specialized communities', 'Urban adjustment', and 'The culture of poverty'. Aside from the editors' opening chapter and comments on each part, all the papers have been published elsewhere, mostly in journals, though some appeared originally in yet other collections. There are annotated suggestions for further reading with each part, and a comprehensive bibliography at the end. However, as in so many recent collections, there is no index. This inevitably detracts from any value a volume such as this might have.

But what is its value? There is little point in assessing the individual contributions which have appeared previously. Their quality varies as in any collection—though the overall standard is impressive. What are the virtues of the volume as a whole? It is, of course, useful to have certain pieces in a handy form, though some, e.g. the papers by Wirth and Gans, have been anthologised before. Equally such a collection draws attention to work which the reader might otherwise have missed, especially that outside his main area of interest. One welcomes, therefore, the range of material presented. Welcome, too, is the fact that many of the papers are quite recent, though more venerable pieces such as Wirth's are also included. The volume may also serve, as the editors intend, as a teaching resource—but no teacher will find all the articles equally useful or wish to be constrained by the editors' selections. Indeed few of the papers are of such general significance that they would inevitably constitute the core reading for any course. Beyond these considerations is the claim that the volume makes a 'coherent statement about the content and practice of urban anthropology'. Unfortunately it fails to achieve this ambitious goal, and one questions whether a collection of essays originally prepared with very diverse ends and audiences in view could ever provide the material for such a statement. The editors also state that 'the theme of continuity of tradition with adaptive change underlies the articles selected for this volume'. Fair enough, if the theme were pursued systematically and we were given some assessment of the state of knowledge. This is not the case. In fact, as the Preface suggests, the editors had several different ends in mind, and what started as a modest enterprise inspired by the needs of teaching acquired more grandiose and ultimately conflicting aims. Finally, the basic premise for the volume—that 'urban anthropology' constitutes a distinct field of inquiry—is hardly questioned. The sceptic wishing to be convinced of that will not find the answer here.

R. D. GRILLO

*University of Sussex*

HODGEN, MARGARET T. *Anthropology, history and cultural change* (Viking Fd Publ. Anthropol. 52). viii, 108 pp., maps, bibliogr. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press for the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, 1974. \$4.50 (paper)

Margaret Hodgen is a well-known authority on the early history of anthropology and an expert on technological innovations in the past. She is therefore well qualified to discuss the difficult problem of the interrelation

between the disciplines of anthropology and history. Her argument in this work may be summarised in an over-simplified way as follows. Anthropology is 'usually considered a natural science, descriptive, morphological and classificatory' (p. 2). This is a view she shares. Those anthropologists such as Evans-Pritchard and Kroeber who think to the contrary are wrong, partly because they have not 'felt it necessary to deal in depth with the essential nature of dated historical inquiry' (p. 26). We should prefer the views of the discipline put forward by Dr James Prichard in 1839 and E. B. Tylor in 1871 (pp. 2-3). While anthropology is a 'science', traditional history, as expounded by its practitioners, is an art. It consists of narrative descriptions of 'unique' events. It is not, for example, susceptible to that tool of all genuine sciences, mathematics. The authoress is convinced, however, that the two disciplines should converge. This means either that the scientific pretensions of anthropology must be dropped, or a new kind of history, different from that practised by historians, must be created. So far there has been little success in the attempts to unify the disciplines. Those anthropologists who have used historical data have altered anthropology into an art, rather than turned history into a science. We are told that none of the 'ethnohistorians' has 'found reason to fault the procedures of their colleagues in departments of history or to question the assumption of the uniqueness and unclassifiability of events. . . . Although scientists by allegiance and tradition, they have accepted without comment the lineal, literary form imparted to the recovery of the human past by the practising historiographer. . . .' (p. 22). In contrast, Margaret Hodgen hopes to develop a new and 'scientific' history, namely one based on the taxonomic methods of naturalists, and thereby to show that 'history . . . is a far broader subject than that envisioned by narrative and literary historians' (p. 41). The first three chapters revolve around this discussion. They are based on a number of recent books and articles on the philosophy of history and anthropology and discuss in some detail the status and methods of the two disciplines.

The next two chapters show the method in action. The approach is outlined as follows: 'first, the acquirement of an appropriate and inclusive collection of more than one category of dated cultural changes or innovations, secondly, the separation within each category of differences or similarities, and, thirdly, in the presence of similarities of event-marked innovations in hand, the search for common antecedents or conditions' (p. 42). The two innovations selected for demonstration purposes are the introduction of early Christian

churches in the years A.D. 1 to 400 and the establishment of printing presses between 1450-1500. These two phenomena are examined in detail with the aid of maps and tables. Although there is too little discussion of the accuracy of the sources used for the studies, it seems likely that for those particularly interested in early Christian churches or printing presses, the discussion would be of considerable interest. The conclusions emerging from the application of this new 'scientific' approach can only be indicated very briefly here. We are told that 'these earliest Christian congregations . . . were not the outcome of some 'natural' principle of cultural 'growth' or evolution, operating in unsolvable mystery on the institutions of the local religions. They were demonstrably hard-won consequences of the personal effort of wandering, migrating, sometimes namable initiators' (p. 80, original emphasis). We are furthermore informed that 'Neither the printing presses nor Christianity appeared spontaneously out of a prior technology or religious system without the active intercession of active innovators, alien individuals, or small disaffected human groupings' (p. 82). Such conclusions would rejoice the heart of any 'traditional' historian. Indeed, except for the presence of more maps than one might normally expect, as well as the rather eccentric conjunction of the two phenomena selected, the account would not surprise ordinary historians in the slightest. Without the discussion in the first three chapters, they would find it difficult to detect in what way the analysis was any more 'scientific' than that carried out by any modern cultural or economic historian. Once again the sands of the past have engulfed the stream of rigorous methodological intentions.

ALAN MACFARLANE

*University of Cambridge*

BERNARDI, BERNARDO. *Uomo, cultura, società: introduzione agli studi etno-antropologici*. 420 pp., illus., tables, bibliogr. Milano: Franco-Angeli, 1974. L7,000

Anthropology in Italy is an amalgam of physical, archaeological, material-cultural, cultural, structural and linguistic knowledge none of which seem to be taught in the same course or the same institution. Still it grows, and Professor Bernardi has produced a text book which could be used by most students wherever they find themselves. The first part covers nature and culture, the nature of man, cultural dynamics and research methods. The second covers schools and theories, the third *etnemi sociali*—social ethnemes which are: kinship, politics, economics, and religion-magic.