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Select at random an issue of American Antiquity from the past 15 years. Chances are good that you will find at least one article or report in the table of contents that focuses on the archaeology of California. Recent research in the Golden State and adjacent regions has been highly influential in two main areas: the archaeology of prehistoric hunter-gatherers and innovative historic archaeology brought to bear on the past few centuries. One might argue that the specialists in the historic period of California have been truly at the forefront of general anthropological and archaeological theory, while those focused on precontact California have been relatively satisfied with a long-cherished and comfortable package of theory that leans heavily—as hunter-gatherer archaeology nearly always does—on cultural ecology and behavioral ecology. While some archaeologists grumble that they do not need any stinking theory for their job at hand, the truth is that every time we load up the field gear in the truck, sort through a tray of artifacts in the lab, write up that overdue report, or critique someone else’s work, we are using archaeological theory. As many have pointed out, everything we think or do with regard to archaeology is based on theoretical assumptions and models.

The point of this is to stress the importance of Orderly Anarchy: Sociopolitical Evolution in Aboriginal California, by Robert L. Bettinger. This work promises to be a catalyst for California archaeology and ethnography for decades to come. Most California archaeologists will find that whatever problems they are working on will fit squarely into what Bettinger writes about in this book. He brings together nearly all of the topics over which California specialists grapple under a single theoretical model, and this is perhaps unprecedented. In response, the journal California Archaeology hereby establishes its own new practice, its first book review forum. This format provides a more thorough consideration of the significance and impact of Bettinger’s book than would be
possible with a single review. Four reviewers, including three California specialists and one from the Northwest Coast, share their reactions to the book. Their comments, insights, praises, and critiques indicate that *Orderly Anarchy* is likely to spur on additional creative thinking and research among California specialists, and that much of this will be conducted within a context of explicit and diverse general anthropological and archaeological theory.

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As an undergraduate, I remember my amazement after delicately unfolding the worn, yellowed map in Samuel Barrett’s *The Ethno-Geography of the Pomo and Neighboring Indians* (1908) for the first time and marveling at the “Pomo Linguistic Stock” map. Old and modern camp sites and villages seem stacked on top of one another, all of which compete for space with carefully penned place names packed closely around Clear Lake, along the Sonoma coast, and at Ukiah and Santa Rosa. For decades, such maps offered important visual aids for demonstrating the cultural and linguistic diversity of Native California, and they continue to guide researchers connecting archaeological sites and collections to village sites and culture areas throughout California. Significant in its approach and broad scale of analysis, *Orderly Anarchy* probes the story behind the boundaries and place names plotted by Barrett, Alfred Kroeber, and others to explain how such complexity emerged.

In this book, Bettinger hypothesizes that “orderly anarchy” best describes the sociopolitical organization of late prehistoric hunter-gatherer populations in California. The core argument is that hierarchical sociopolitical institutions did not emerge throughout most of Native California. Instead, the introduction of the bow (~A.D. 450) encouraged intensified plant gathering and the privatization of food surpluses among small, bilaterally organized social groups with no formal authority that stressed household autonomy over cooperative resource defense.

Ten chapters carefully explore this “distinctively Californian evolutionary trajectory” (p. 1). In Chapter 1, readers are introduced to Joseph Jorgenson’s *Western North American Indians* (WNAI) coded database of cultural attributes, which Bettinger uses to generate comparable information on 66 California Indian groups. The absence of Southern Coast Chumash and San Francisco Bay groups from the WNAI database, Bettinger notes, are regrettable omissions, especially considering the voluminous archaeological research that continues to take place in these two regions. Chapters 2 through 4 address the paramount
introduction of bow and arrow technology in the Great Basin and, consequently, the intensification of plant resources and privatization of surplus food by smaller, more mobile, and economically independent hunter-gatherer groups.

Following a concept of ideal free distribution, in Chapters 5 through 8 the author shifts focus from the Great Basin to plant intensification west of the Sierra Nevada. The role of private property, bride-price and shifting marriage arrangements, and shell money are also discussed as key factors that curbed the formation of sociopolitical hierarchies in California. In Chapters 9 through 10, Bettinger tests his hypothesis and discusses the results.

This review focuses on two issues. First, Chapter 2 raises important points about “evolutionary landscapes” and teaching hunter-gatherer anthropology. An enduring legacy of cultural evolutionary theory routinely diminishes the significance of hunter-gatherers on a progressive trajectory of human development from hunting and gathering to agriculture and finally to civilization. “That we are still wrestling with the neoevolutionary model after nearly three decades of revision and critique,” Elizabeth Arkush (2012:570) observed, “speaks to the seemingly unshakable hold it has on our imagination.” Positioning California as an ideal context to more fully consider the evolutionary achievements of late prehistoric North American hunter-gatherers as equal to those of North American agriculturalists, Bettinger challenges complacent, textbook views of North American hunter-gatherers and outmoded social evolutionary models.

The second issue relates to the long-term trajectory of orderly anarchy in California. As an archaeologist specializing in the colonial time period in California, this reviewer would like to have seen more discussion of how the orderly anarchy concept could be extended to more recent indigenous-colonial interactions. Returning to Barrett’s map, due south of the crowded Pomo homelands is a Coast Miwok landscape consisting of a few scattered “old village sites.” This disparity—a reflection of missionization and anthropological bias—begs the question: how did late prehistoric orderly anarchies fare at contact? Could Coast Miwok places like Cottomkotca, Echa-tamal, and Olompali represent a continuation of the “stubborn independence” (p. 59) of small economically autonomous groups? More to the point, Bettinger’s view of “horizontal” innovations in sociopolitical organization (pp. 236-237) seems to complement the interpretation that some native people may have entered missions to improve their social standing. Perhaps this explains the book’s dedication to Ishi—for his persistence, independence, and savvy during one of the darkest chapters in California Indian history.

Similarly, Bettinger’s discussion of shell money in California, the “double coincidence of wants” (p. 187), and the emergence of third-party trade raises
questions about how these autonomy-encouraging developments articulated with later colonial impacts. Considering the production and circulation of clam and *Olivella* beads among tribes in late prehistory, how does the introduction of glass beads affect this picture (if at all), and to what extent might Spanish missions or other colonial settlements represent third parties for tribelets seeking to prolong their autonomy? Orderly anarchy may still be “alive and well and all around us” (p. 241), yet what happened in the time between now and the late prehistoric?

In all, *Orderly Anarchy* is a significant accomplishment that will no doubt find an audience among hunter-gatherer specialists within and outside of California. Many readers, especially students of archaeology, will appreciate the book’s glossary, explanatory sidebars, and the application of evolutionary theory to evaluate California’s anarchic past. As this reviewer also sought to demonstrate, *Orderly Anarchy* raises questions relevant to other places and time periods beyond just late prehistoric California, and the book may appeal to historical archaeologists and ethnohistorians tracking long-term social and political developments among Native Californian groups contending with European contact and colonization.

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Some might be surprised that the author of this soon-to-be seminal text dedicates it to Ishi, the California Indian who, until he walked alone out of the Lassen foothills in 1911, lived a traditional, indigenous lifeway and ended up working until his death in 1916 at the Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology at U.C. Berkeley. They shouldn’t be, because this book is about real people who, like Ishi and his family, lived in a diverse, productive environment but also within the limits of technology, social boundaries, marriage proscriptions, descent rules, and the upheavals brought about by the vagaries of history.
That anthropology is about real people should, of course, come as no surprise but is a detail often lost in the phases, horizons, and periods of California prehistorians, the optimal foraging models of its evolutionary ecologists, and even the polemics of its activist anthropologists.

What Bettinger (soon to be emeritus professor at the University of California, Davis, where he, full disclosure, was my graduate adviser) shows in this book is how the local, individual behaviors of real people—who had to feed themselves and their families, marry, have children, and negotiate the rules of their social groups—led to the development of the region’s unique tribelet sociopolitical organization, which was characterized by the absence of comprehensive, cohesive, and coercive leadership yet still provided the framework within which the high population densities of aboriginal California subsisted, interacted, traded, and thrived. He does so by integrating California culture history, ethnographic information, and sophisticated evolutionary and ecological theory to explain the development of California’s tribelet system (the “orderly anarchy” of the title). The result is a nuanced anthropological synthesis explaining how history, technology, and social norms conspired to bring about California’s distinctive, decentralized, and captivatingly original aboriginal sociopolitical system.

Bettinger tackles this task in 10 succinct, clearly written chapters. The first two orient the reader to California, its ethnographic datasets, the definition of orderly anarchy, and the evolutionary and ecological theories needed to make sense of the rest of the book. Chapters 3 through 5 cover the archaeology of the Owens Valley region (where Bettinger did much of his work), the relationship of subsistence to social organization (he draws heavily on Julian Steward and G. P. Murdock), and the archaeological evidence for subsistence intensification via the adoption of the bow and arrow and of acorn gathering, storage, and processing west of the Sierra crest. Chapters 6 and 7 link subsistence intensification to the evolution of California’s social organization by arguing that intensification entailed privatization of what had previously been communal resources like acorns, the privatized storage of which was paid for, in a social sense, by the meat shared by successful individual bow hunters. This empowered the locus of privatized production: the household. Privatization, in turn, had cascade-like effects on marriage patterns (increasing household labor demands encouraged sororal polygyny), post-marital residence rules (it freed up many restrictions, which decreased the power of lineages), and political organization (it diffused the locus of power, preventing potential leaders from asserting any long-term group control).
Chapter 8 explores the role that shell bead money played in this system by arguing that a medium of exchange accessible to all leveled the playing field in economic transactions, which further decentralized economic power. The last two chapters synthesize this trajectory in broad evolutionary context. Critically, Bettinger posits that the lynchpin of aboriginal California's cultural evolution was ultimately neither technological nor environmental; it was cultural. Without supplanting the sharing behaviors (albeit through the adoption of a new technology, the bow and arrow) that are so common in hunter-gatherer societies with the notion of private property, a social construct, the evolution of California's orderly anarchy would surely have failed on the evolutionary landscape of competing adaptations.

The preceding synopsis is pretty dense and alludes to the type of audience this book is geared towards: academics and their students with an interest in California, the Great Basin, and anthropological theory. I imagine some of it might be a little hard to grasp without at least an introductory understanding of California and Great Basin prehistory, basic anthropological concepts (especially those relating to kinship), culture transmission theory, and evolutionary ecology. That said, over the course of his career, Bettinger's gotten really good at distilling difficult-to-grasp concepts into lucid, unpretentious prose that I think, with a little work on the part of the reader, should open up the audience of this book to just about anyone interested in California's past, especially its CRM and avocational archaeological communities. It should certainly be required reading in California ethnography and archaeology courses, where the issues it raises are sure to be argued over for a very long time. In this context, Bettinger has really thrown down the gauntlet. Like Julian Steward before him, he's laid out a series of testable hypotheses that should drive the future of the region's most significant anthropological and archaeological research. In essence, what Bettinger is saying after four decades as one of the most serious thinkers about the prehistory of the West is: this is what I think; prove me wrong. Fools rush in.

That said, this book elicited some questions from me as I am sure it will from other readers. First, there is the problem of the term anarchy. The term is a loaded one, colored by everything from the Russian Revolution to President McKinley's assassination to the Sex Pistols. Bettinger doesn't spend a lot of time dragging the reader through the arduous history and theory behind his albeit correct use of the term (the apparent paradox of the book's title is entirely apt). But I think that by now the term is so permeated with other associations that Bettinger could have spent a little more time deconstructing the thinking behind the terminology. That said, I think this conundrum points more
towards a larger problem: that we still need to rethink how to classify and
describe nonwestern, preindustrial societies, anarchic or otherwise.

Second, Bettinger is sure to be criticized for using Owens Valley as a proxy
for California more generally. I don’t have a huge problem with this, however, as
prior to the diversion of Owens River water to Los Angeles, the valley was much
more environmentally productive and there is no doubt that Owens Valley
population densities and sociopolitical organization were more on par with
those of California proper than with the Great Basin. Third, as Bettinger
admits early on in the book, he doesn’t know what to do about the Chumash
whose archaeology, for better or worse, guides so much of our understanding
of California prehistory. Perhaps the Chumash really are as unique as their
language now appears to be. Until we know more about the San Francisco
Bay Area and San Joaquin Valley, however, I have my doubts.

Lastly, Bettinger’s explanation for the very late adoption of the bow and
arrow along the coast hinges on the limited efficacy of bow hunting in coastal
and estuarine environments. Perhaps, but there is a 500-year lag (or more)
between the adoption of the bow inland versus the coast for a technology
that is ultimately not only a great hunting tool but is also a very effective
weapon. Given this, I wonder if proscriptions similar to those working against
privatization were also at play.

Questions aside, this book represents the synthesis of a career’s worth of
thinking by one of the most insightful anthropological minds working in our
region today. It is serious stuff but eminently understandable to those willing
to put in the time to read through it carefully and consider its many important
and counterintuitive implications. It belongs on bookshelves next to the most
important works by Alfred Kroeber, Robert Heizer, Victor Golla, Jeanne
Arnold, and Michael Moratto. In short, this is anthropology of the highest
sort and sure to play a fundamental role in California archaeology and anthro-
pology for many generations to come.

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Since initiation of anthropological study of native California in the late 1800s,
much has been made of the uniqueness of the state’s ethnolinguistic diversity.
Likewise, the unusually large indigenous population prior to European coloniza-
tion and exceptional sociopolitical organization in numerous, small, self-
identifying, autonomous groups have been remarked upon by scholars for
more than a century. In fact, these qualities have prompted some of the most
interesting and innovative work in the region by anthropologists, archaeologists, historical linguists, and historical demographers up to the present day. In this intellectual context, the ambitious explanation for the origin and development of this sociopolitical landscape proposed by Robert L. Bettinger in *Orderly Anarchy: Sociopolitical Evolution in Aboriginal California* is not only necessary, but long overdue. Moreover, Bettinger’s provocative model should be of interest to scholars of hunter-gatherer societies well beyond California and the American West, since what appears singular in the contemporary landscape of hunter-gatherer studies may have been commonplace in various regions around the world prior to European colonialism.

Briefly, Bettinger contends that the shift from the atlatl and dart to the bow and arrow ca. A.D. 450 permitted men to hunt successfully alone, thereby allowing them to share game only with kin. In order to avoid the demands of other individuals unable or unwilling to acquire meat for themselves (“freeloaders”), however, the “natural tendency” (p. 47) of this shift was for kin to reside together in small, more isolated, and less mobile residential groups. Such residential stability, in turn, prompted more intensive use of vegetal resources, the “natural result” (p. 49) of which was population growth. Bettinger argues that such population growth once again raised the specter of freeloading—this time for plant foods rather than meat—as groups were more densely settled on the land. Further intensification to support groups under such circumstances was only possible if stores of “back-loaded” plant resources were understood to be private property and were thus protected from freeloaders. The autonomy of kin groups afforded by this strategy worked against the formation of hierarchical, formal authority, and instead favored “orderly anarchy.”

Even if one can look past the rhetoric of “natural” outcomes and assumptions of optimal behavior that are often counter to the author’s nod to an historically contingent, social basis of individual decision-making, Bettinger’s tour-de-force in *Orderly Anarchy* still runs the risk of so captivating the reader that the anthropological and archaeological data upon which the argument rests may be accepted without sufficient thought and critique. Readers less familiar with the specifics of California ethnography may be especially prone to uncritical adoption, but all archaeologists may be tempted to take the thesis as fact rather than—as Bettinger himself urges—a model to be tested. In fact, one might go so far as to suggest that even testing the model is premature, given several major issues that prompt concern about, or perhaps even outright rejection of, his thesis.

First, Bettinger’s argument relies extensively on two ethnographic cases that reflect his particular geographic expertise and that of his collaborators and
students—that is, Numic-speaking peoples of the Owens Valley of eastern California and Algonquin-speaking peoples of the northwest coast of California. However, as scholars of California ethnology are well aware—and Bettinger himself concedes—the native cultures of these two regions are the least “Californian” of any native peoples whose traditional territories were within the bounds of the current state. In fact, many ethnographers do not include the native people of either of these areas within the California culture area for this very reason. Peoples of the northwest coast are particularly distinct with respect to individual wealth and personal autonomy, while groups of eastern California did not enjoy the diversity and abundance of subsistence resources common in many other areas of the state and were nascent agriculturalists by the late 1800s. Moreover, people in both areas did not participate in the intergroup religious and ritual networks typical elsewhere in California. Thus, the choice of these cases presents a puzzling and, ultimately, unsatisfying and unfirm basis on which to construct an argument about the development of sociopolitical organization for the state as a whole.

Second, Bettinger has chosen to view social relations through a lens of competition and conflict—especially with respect to the sharing of subsistence resources—in keeping with his previous work in the Great Basin. To support this view, Bettinger cites ethnographic literature from various areas of the state noting such tensions, although one can easily find at least as many references in these same sources regarding altruism or, even more to the point, communal mores and social practices other than conflict that effectively precluded the emergence or persistence of negative behaviors within native groups. Thus, one might conclude that Bettinger’s perspective is rooted in a contemporary capitalist worldview rather than, in anthropologist Tim Ingold’s words, the “social relations of immediacy” of small-scale societies that define a very different form of social interaction. An alternative reading of local, regional, and cross-cultural ethnography recognizes intragroup cooperation and tolerance where Bettinger sees competition and the constant threat of freeloading.

California archaeologists must consider what it meant to live in a society of regular face-to-face interactions and extended familial ties by descent or marriage, and realize that the biological viability of small, autonomous native groups in California was likely dependent upon intermarriage with individuals from other groups. These factors likely significantly contributed to the sociopolitical landscape of the state. In addition, more caution may be prudent with respect to the use of ethnographic and ethnohistoric information on intra- and inter-group resource competition, food sharing, and intolerance of theft,
given potential cultural stresses wrought by Euroamerican settlement and con-
comitant environmental degradation.

Finally, one may question Bettinger’s basic premises regarding expectations
for food sharing. Specifically, cross-cultural ethnographic data suggest that,
regardless of the type of hunting technology and varying degrees of collective
effort required by such technologies, it is the size of the game procured that
largely dictates whether meat is shared. Likewise, the notion that formerly
“public” plant resources became “private” is also at odds with much local,
regional, and cross-cultural ethnography. Such data indicate that collected
vegetal resources were rarely seen by hunter-gatherers in California or elsewhere
as anything other than essentially “private” resources, since gathering of “back-
loaded” vegetal resources, in particular, requires no specialized skill or technol-
ogy. That is, most members of society were capable of acquiring—and even pro-
cessing—vegetal foods, so there was no expectation of, or tolerance for,
provisioning “freeloaders.” If sharing (or lack thereof) of either game or
vegetal foods followed such general patterns native in California, a significant
pillar of Bettinger’s thesis is undermined.

My reading of the archaeological evidence of California makes me less
inclined to look for a single catalyst, such as adoption of the bow and arrow,
for the complex sociopolitical landscape of aboriginal California. Where Bettin-
ger sees a single cause and unilinear sequence of consequences, another scholar
might see more contingency and complexity. For example, an alternate model
might also consider climate change, environmental manipulation (which is
much more prevalent in areas other than eastern and northwestern California),
and demographic factors (such waves of migration and cyclical or stochastic
changes in population size) rather than simply intrinsic population growth.
History and contingency are important even within hunter-gatherer societies
that are often viewed as timeless or, as Bettinger rightly critiques, as archetypal
of a unilinear evolutionary stage. Thus, any model may require more appreci-
ation for local histories—not in the sense of the culture history of the first
half of the last century, but with respect to process, practice, and event—so
we can understand exactly what it is we are modeling or explaining.

In light of the complexity of potentially intersecting and varying sequences
of causes and consequences, there are probably numerous and equally sound or
even more robust alternate models that might be proposed for sociopolitical
change in California. For example, substantial demographic shifts, such as
foreign intrusions and settlement aggregation or dispersal of indigenous
groups, occurred during the Medieval Climatic Anomaly, roughly coincident
with the adoption of the bow and arrow. In the aftermath of this demographic
reshuffling and the potential creation of a heterogeneous landscape of resource “islands” in the wake of extended drought, increasing manipulation of the environment—especially through the use of fire—may have allowed groups to increase productivity of at first loosely defined territories.

Not unlike agriculture elsewhere, this investment prompted true territoriality and perhaps population growth at a geographic scale at which resources could be both tended and, as necessary, defended (especially by the new bow and arrow technology). Defense of resources would have been facilitated by larger populations, potentially placing an imperative on reproduction and easing social restrictions that heretofore had served to limit total female fertility. At the same time, the small size of autonomous groups based on small territories necessitated cooperative rather than competitive interaction between neighboring groups for biological viability, with such relations fostered by intermarriage, communal ceremonies, and shared religious beliefs such as the Kuksu cult.

In fact, the most significant contribution of Orderly Anarchy may be that Bettinger has challenged California archaeologists to join him in “thinking big.” Thus, the book should be required reading for any serious scholar of the anthropology and archaeology of native California. As anthropologists have recognized for more than 100 years, the ancient sociopolitical landscape is fascinating and worthy of study. It merits the type of ambitious synthetic analysis that Bettinger has undertaken. Rather than representing a model to be accepted or even tested, however, I suggest that Orderly Anarchy has instead initiated an important conversation that should prompt researchers to propose alternatives to his model rather than simply accepting his thesis. Local, regional, and cross-cultural ethnography are certainly sufficient to suggest that further discussion is warranted.

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I congratulate Bettinger on a remarkable piece of scholarship. The things I like about his book include its large geographic scale as well as his shifting among scales. The geographic scope borders on the brash, which I appreciate. I was pleasantly surprised by its heavy reliance on Jorgensen’s vast data base for western Indian (Jorgensen 1980)—I sometimes feel like the only person who uses him—and was also surprised and disconcerted to see citations to Drucker’s 1950s trait element lists for the Northwest Coast (Drucker 1950). Northwest Coast archaeologists have spent some time recently worrying about its voluminous ethnographic record and how that can shape and distort perceptions of the past.
I am puzzled by the lack of engagement with anarchy theory, either in its classic formulations or more recent use (e.g., Angelbeck and Grier 2012).

I very much like his argument that social evolution among hunter-gatherers, or anyone for that matter, does not lead ineluctably to “complexity,” at least complexity marked by social hierarchies. In the Great Basin, at least, it produced so-called “generalized” hunter-gatherers, who, rather than being representatives of an ancestral condition, are as highly evolved as modern California. I also strongly agree with the emphasis on social arrangements—you can have the technology and resources but social organization is the key. For Bettinger’s argument, the key social arrangement is property. This is the book’s most important insight.

The purpose of this essay, as I see it, is to kick the tires of Bettinger’s argument in a preliminary sort of way. The particular tire I want to kick is his claims about the timing and effects of plant intensification in western North America.

Bettinger’s whole narrative is predicated on the idea that intensive hunting and gathering, marked by intensification of plant use—in this case pinyon and acorns—was a consequence of the introduction of the bow and arrow ca. A.D. 450. I would argue for the introduction of a vastly improved bow rather an entirely new technology (Ames et al. 2010), but we will leave that aside. I want to talk intensive hunting and gathering. I do not command the Great Basin and California data but can comment from the perspective of the Columbia Plateau and Northwest Coast.

Measuring intensification, including plant intensification, can be difficult. One means, of course, is the appearance and proliferation of ground stone tools for food processing. Another is what Alston Thoms calls “hot rock cookery,” the increasing presence of various cooking features and thermally altered rock (TAR). Thoms (2008, 2009) connects this to “landscape intensification,” which is squeezing all of the energy one can from the landscape. All of this can be linked to Bob’s concept of “processors”—processors are intensive hunter-gatherers.

Intensive hunter-gatherers are present on the Columbia Plateau perhaps as early as 6,000 cal B.P. but certainly by 5,000 B.P. Their settlements contain pithouses, plentiful and sometimes very heavy ground stone and lots of TAR. Hunting—with bow and arrow, or atlatl if you prefer—emphasized artiodactyls but small game, like rabbits, were also taken. At about the same time, in northeastern Washington, which is about the only place with good data, there is a marked increase in the number of earth ovens, used to bake the nutritious bulbs of camas (Camassia quamash). These are intensive
hunter-gatherers. The population consequences are less clear—there is either a boom and bust, or the beginnings of sustained growth. However, the pattern may go away around 4,000 B.P. (Ames 2012). When intensive hunting and gathering is again visible in the record around 3,500 B.P., it is marked by evidence for exploitation of roots, land mammal hunting, salmon fishing, and storage. This basic economic structure is sustained until the arrival of Euroamericans, after which populations clearly grow, peaking around 800 years ago (Prentiss et al. 2005).

On the coast, not generally famous for plant use, there is significant evidence for plant intensification (see Deur and Turner 2005). At the Katzie site, about 80 km up the Fraser River from Vancouver BC, an early component dating to ca. 5,300-4,800 cal B.P. produced some 12 tons of TAR in association with three houses. More spectacular, however, is a large *wapato* (*Sagittaria latifolia*) garden complete with an artificial gravel lining and snapped digging stick tips, dating to ca. 3,700-3,500 cal B.P. (KDC Archaeology 2010). Given its elaborate nature, this is probably not the first or only such garden in the region. Some have suggested it is a one-off but that is highly improbable. There is also expanding evidence on the coast for extensive and intensive management of intertidal zones through fish weirs, clam gardens, and so forth. These have not been well dated, although weirs extend back beyond 4,000 cal B.P. Using the Dart Arrow Index, a very recent study by Rorabaugh and Fulkerson (2015) puts the introduction of the bow and arrow in this region at ca. 2,500 B.P. in the most conservative reading of their data.

So, intensive hunting and gathering is considerably older in some parts of western North America than Bettinger suggests and apparently not associated with a major technological change. More important however is the book’s related argument that successful intensification requires property—the social entity doing the intensification needs to own its produce. This reverses the more usual syllogism that intensification leads to property; for Bettinger, property encourages intensification. Where does property come from? Gintis (2007) argued that property arises from what he called “incumbency.” To oversimplify a complex argument; the antecedents of private property are widely spread in the natural world in the form of territorial incumbency. Grier (2014) recently suggested for the southern Northwest Coast that property evolves from incumbency as a consequence of the sort of environmental management visible in such things as clam gardens and the Katzie garden. On the Plateau ethnographically, ownership of root plots, dip netting locations, and the like came from use and improvement. All of this leads me to wonder whether the apparent failure of the early
processors on the Plateau was a failure, in part, to firmly establish a system of property rights. Finding evidence for property is challenging, a challenge that work like Bettinger’s and Grier’s makes clear we need to take up.

My point here is not that Bettinger may be right or wrong about some things, or about many things. At some level, that is all quite irrelevant to our enterprise. To adapt a phrase of Levi-Strauss, Bettinger’s book is very good to think with. As a scholar, you can’t ask for much more than that.

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