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The Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of Northern Eurasia

Reading Line: A groundbreaking study of early boats from Scandinavia to Siberia and to China, Mongolia and Japan

Harri Luukkanen and William W. Fitzhugh

TARGET CONSUMER: Ideal for anthropologists, historians, and geographers.

A detailed history of the craftsmanship, functions, and cultural implications of the bark and skin boats created by the indigenous peoples of early Northern Eurasia.

The Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of Northern Eurasia is a detailed history and description of bark and skin boat traditions of the native peoples of Scandinavia and northern Russia. The history of northern peoples and cultures is inextricably linked to the technology of water transport. This is particularly true in northern Eurasia, where lakes and rivers can connect when overland summer travel is restricted by thick forests or bogs. For thousands of years, native peoples in this region used a variety of bark and skin boats for fishing and hunting, visiting, trading, making war, and migrating in search of new lands.

The Eurasian peoples, responding to their geography, climate, and environment, learned to construct—and perfect—small watercraft made from dug-out logs or the bark of birch, aspen, larch, and other trees, each variety crafted for its special use and environmental conditions. The text describes the design, construction, and uses of skin and bark boats for thirty-five traditional cultures ranging from northern Scandinavia to the Russian Far East, from the Bering Strait to northern China, and from South Siberia to the Arctic Ocean. Regional chapters use evidence from archaeology, historical illustrations and maps, and extensive documentation from ethnography and historical literature to reveal how differences in cultural traditions, historical relationships, climate, and geography have influenced the development and spread of watercraft before the introduction of modern planked boats.

This definitive volume is richly illustrated with historical photographs and drawings, first-person explorer accounts from the 16th-19th centuries, and information on traditional bark and skin preparation, wood-bending, and other construction techniques. The Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of Northern Eurasia presents a first-ever continental overview of northern Eurasian boating traditions that serves as a long-awaited companion to Charles Adney's and Howard Chapelle's classic, *The Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of North America* (1964).

- The only book to explore the boat and canoe traditions of this region.
- Richly illustrated with photographs and drawings, this book also includes primary sources from the 1500s-1800s.
- Groundbreaking research from obscure regional sources

Author Bio: HARRI LUUKKANEN is a research economist and expert of techno-economic studies, and a life-long paddler. He has published two novels and written or edited a dozen nonfiction books, including some on canoes and their history. Luukkanen lives with his wife and twin sons in Helsinki, Finland. WILLIAM W. FITZHUGH, also a northern boating expert, is the director of the Arctic Studies Center and curator in the Department of Anthropology at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History.

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