

even directly on the fact that probably a larger number of distinct dialects are spoken in the north than elsewhere. The argument for the northern provenience of the Athabaskan tribes is clinched by a further linguistic fact, namely that the Athabaskan dialects form one of the three major divisions of the Nadene stock, the other two being Haida and Tlingit. The fact that the latter are spoken in the northwest coast area so emphatically locates the historical centre of gravity of the stock in the north that it becomes completely impossible to think of the Athabaskan tribes as having spread north from California or the southwest.¹

The value of the criterion of linguistic differentiation for a reconstruction of the relative ages of tribal movements, to a considerable extent also of the direction of such movements, has doubtless been made evident. If, as may sometimes happen, the linguistic evidence seems to run counter to other evidence or to a prevailing theory, it should not be lightly discarded as irrelevant to historical problems. While it may be forced to yield in the face of powerful testimony pointing to contrary conclusions, its claims always deserve serious consideration. Had the historical significance of linguistic differentiation been more generally appreciated, I doubt if the theory, for example, of the distribution of Eskimo tribes from the west coast of Hudson bay as a centre would have received quite such ready acceptance. I do not wish expressly to oppose this theory, but merely to point out that it does not well agree with the linguistic evidence. The Eskimo linguistic stock is sharply divided into two dialectic groups, Eskimo proper and Aleut. Inasmuch as Aleut is confined to Alaska and as a considerable number of distinct Eskimo dialects are spoken in Alaska besides, it seems very probable to

¹ There is also specific linguistic evidence in both the Pacific and southern dialectic groups of Athabaskan tending to show that Athabaskan is intrusive in those areas. In another paper I have attempted to demonstrate that the Hokan languages (Shasta-Achomawi, Chimariko, Karok, Pomo, Yana, Esselen, Yuman, Seri, Chontal, probably also Chumash and Salinan) are related to the Coahuiltecan languages of the western Gulf coast (Coahuilteco, Comecrudo, Cotoname, Tonkawa, Karankawa, possibly also Atakapa); if this is correct, the Athabaskan tribes now separating Yuman from Karankawa and Tonkawa could hardly be other than intrusive. Similarly, in northern California, the territory lying between that of the Pomo and that of the linguistically related Shasta, Chimariko, and Karok is largely occupied by Athabaskan tribes. Finally, in Oregon, Coos and Lower Umpqua are cut off from the remotely related Takelma (the evidence for this I expect to produce in a future paper) by Athabaskan dialects.