

easiest along such trade routes. Hence, in evaluating geographical distribution of culture elements for ethnological reconstruction, it makes all the difference whether the tribes observed to have a certain feature in common lie along a well established trade route or not; further, whether or not they are in the habit of meeting periodically, or at least frequently, for exchange of goods and participation in common activities (ceremonies, amusements). Considerations of this sort will sometimes force us to correct radically impressions derived from a mere bird's-eye view of geographical distribution. The distance, for example, between the Copper Eskimo and, say, the Eskimo of the east coast of Labrador is, even in a straight line, more than ten times as great as that which separates the Yurok, of the west coast of California, from the Pomo to the south. Nevertheless, the cultures of the two Eskimo groups mentioned doubtless present many more points of similarity than those of the Yurok and Pomo. Does this prove that the culture traits peculiar to the Eskimo are as a body older than those respectively characteristic of the Yurok and Pomo, or, to put it somewhat differently and perhaps more legitimately, that the Eskimo are, culturally speaking, a much more conservative people than either the Yurok or Pomo? Whether such inferences are correct or not, they do not necessarily follow from the facts of geographical distribution. We must remember that the Eskimo are in the habit of covering immense distances by umiak and sleigh, furthermore that neighbouring Eskimo tribes often meet for trade purposes and that in this way objects and ideas (stories, songs, dances), may, with no great lapse of time, travel far from their home. On the other hand, the Pomo were not marine travelers and, like most central Californian tribes, only desultory river travellers, while the Yurok, though good canoemen, were certainly not in the habit of venturing far out at sea; moreover, inland communication between the Yurok and Pomo would be rendered difficult by the coast range of mountains. In short, the culturally "weighted" distance between the Yurok and Pomo may even turn out to be greater than that between the Copper Eskimo and the remote East Labrador natives. I believe that one of the pressing needs for a study of the larger problems of American culture history is a