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## Review of *The Origins of Native Americans: Evidence from Anthropological Genetics* by Michael H. Crawford

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**The Origins of Native Americans: Evidence from Anthropological Genetics.** Michael H. Crawford. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998. xv+308 pp. Figures, tables, notes, references. \$64.95 cloth (ISBN 0-521-59280-1).

Since the presentation of the tripartite model of Native American languages, genes, and cultures by Joseph H. Greenberg and others (1986), there have been few attempts to synthesize anthropological genetic data from New World populations to evaluate various models of the peopling of the Americas. Although offering no new theoretical paradigm to explain the observed patterns of biological diversity in the New World, *The Origins of Native Americans* presents a thorough review of the current genetic data from Siberian and Native American populations. Rather than taking an explicitly historical view of these anthropological genetic studies, the book instead examines the peopling of the New World through five main analytical perspectives, including the genetic variation, demography, population structure, morphological variation, and health and disease of populations past and present, and explores their relevance for understanding Native American origins. The post-contact hybridization of Native American groups with people of European and African descent and the implications of this historical trend for attempts to reconstruct population histories are also reviewed in considerable detail. In addition, author Michael Crawford raises important concerns about the biocultural factors that have shaped the biological variation among Native Americans, issues sometimes overlooked in discussions

of the “waves” of migration into the Americas that occurred some 15,000-30,000 years ago.

The book has two other features that contribute to its distinct view of Native American origins. First, Crawford has used many of the quantitative methods for analyzing morphological and genetic variation in human populations discussed in the text during the more than twenty years he has been involved in studies of human biological variation. In addition, he has used the populations he has conducted field research among as case studies, including aboriginal Siberians, St. Lawrence and Alaskan Eskimos, Mexican Tlaxcaltecs, and Black Caribs of St. Vincent and the Caribbean. This strategy gives the book an on-the-ground anthropological perspective on patterns of genetic variation in Siberian and Native American groups sometimes lacking in similar works dealing with these issues; it also accords the analyses of these patterns a strong North and Central American focus.

While providing a good overview of the current understanding of Native American origins, the volume does have a few minor shortcomings. Given the emphasis on the author’s own research into these questions, for example, its coverage of the most recent molecular studies of mitochondrial DNA, Y-chromosome, and microsatellite loci for Native American and Siberian populations is not comprehensive. This is unfortunate since many of the same populations have also been analyzed for nuclear genetic and morphological variation, and the new molecular data could have been compared with those from classical anthropological genetic studies in interesting ways. The book also assumes a certain familiarity with the genetic methods and statistics used in these analyses, but this should not prevent the general reader from grasping the main points of each section or chapter. And overall, *The Origins of Native Americans* is an engaging and thoughtful account of the population history of aboriginal groups from Siberia and the Americas based on anthropological genetic data. **Theodore G. Schurr**, *Department of Genetics, Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research, San Antonio, Texas*.