

on the region is shown both in pre-history and by tracing early exploration. We learn about Reichert, Padre De Agostini and even as recent explorers as Ferrari and Fonrouge. The origin of many of the names of the area is given. Patagonian legends are recorded. The last third of the book is devoted to a complete history of Patagonian climbing. Just about *all* climbs well into 1987 with references as to where further information is available have been accurately recorded with meticulous care. Maps show the location of peaks and glaciers. Topos and route sketches give details.

To many the book will appeal because of its sheer beauty. The photographs were mostly taken by Gino Buscaini, but both historic and scenic pictures by others are included. The color photographs are reproduced with striking accuracy. Gino Buscaini is a skilled artist as well, and his drawings enhance the volume. This is a book I recommend heartily to anyone who loves the mountains.

ADAMS CARTER

El enigma de los santuarios indígenas de alta montaña. Antonio Beorchia Nigris. Universidad Nacional de San Juan, San Juan, Argentina, 1987. 414 pages, 211 black & white photos, 74 maps, tables and diagrams.

Risking being accused of gross exaggeration, I will start by declaring that this is one of the most important mountaineering books of the century. For one reason: it will force chroniclers to move the standard "Chapter One" in the history of world alpinism to a second place and have it preceded by another, which will have to be drawn from this work. And the impact of this book may not even stop there. Hopefully it will also force historians of our sport to delve into whatever records can be found to identify other peoples in other mountain lands who, like Beorchia's Incas, went to the summits before Mont Blanc was won.

This work is indeed the fifth bulletin, now issued in book format, by the Centro de Investigaciones Arqueológicas de Alta (high) Montaña, based at San Juan, Argentina, of which Beorchia is the president. It is a record of the pre-Columbian ascents in the Andes, carried out by the Incas and their subjects from around 1400 to near 1800 and mostly for religious purposes. It is divided into two major parts. The first surveys in alphabetical order a total of 113 peaks from 4700 to 6739 meters. Full description and evaluation of findings, together with information about modern climbs, are given. The second part is a photographic collection that illustrates such findings and the mountains where they occurred. The last 25 pages are devoted to conclusions about the incredible mountaineering activity of the ancient Andeans. Incidentally, it will please many to learn that Beorchia regards American anthropologist-climber Johan Reinhard as one of the great collaborators he was fortunate to have in his enterprises and studies.

The old concept that mountaineering was born in 1786 will have to be set aside. World alpinism, as we have known it, is now more than 200 years old and deserves better researched chronicles. Beorchia, even if only dealing with

the Andes, with this remarkable work has pointed to the obligation that lies ahead: dig out records of ancient mountaineering wherever it may have occurred (Atlas? Central America? Rocky Mountains? Persia? Simyen?) and rewrite the history of climbing. It is a debt that we owe to the unknown highlanders that preceded us in the high places. It is available from CIADAM, República de Libano 2621, 5423 San Juan, Argentina.

EVELIO ECHEVARRÍA

Mountain People. Michael Tobias, editor. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1986. 219 pages, black-and-white and color photographs, maps. \$29.95.

For the past several years I have been looking forward to the Christmas season. Just about that time I have been receiving, annually, an offensive book to review for the *American Alpine Journal*. Into the gloom that usually descends onto the Holidays, there has, until this year, arrived from the club, a carefully wrapped festive package containing that year's bad book. It had become sort of a tradition and I had gotten to depend on it.

This year, the usual package arrived but, *mirabile dictu*, it turned out to contain an incredibly good book. Not only is *Mountain People* a good book, but I think especially interesting for the readers of this journal, a very important one. It consists of 24 essays, one written by Michael Tobias, who edited the collection, about the status of mountain people all over the world. There is nothing sterile or academic about these essays. They are an extraordinarily moving testimony to the fact that the mountain communities of the world are disappearing—or at least altering beyond recognition—like melting snow. Furthermore, we, the mountain-traveling readers of this journal, bear much of the responsibility for this. It is all too easy, as we trek through Nepal or Ladakh, or even the Alps, to lose sight of the local mountain people as people and to think of them at best as another aspect of the scenery.

It is all too easy as we trek through Nepal or Ladakh, or even the Alps, to lose sight of the local mountain people, as people, and to think of them, at best, as another aspect of the scenery. I will never forget, a few years after the tunnel under Mont Blanc opened, watching the annual parade, which takes place on August 15, of the Chamonix guides to the local cemetery where a service is held for any of the guides who has died that year. The guides are dressed folklorically and parade in a small knot, a hundred, or so, through the center of town. I watched that year as the tourists in cars honked at the parade, since it was impeding their route to the tunnel. The guides looked as if they didn't belong there.

Some of the essays in this book are unforgettable. I do not think it is possible to think of the Nepalese hill people in quite the same way having once read Broughton Coburn's magnificent essay entitled "Gurung Shepherds of the Nepal Himalaya." The shepherds are the social outcasts of the community.