J. Grattan, R. Torrence (eds): *Living under the shadow—the cultural impacts of volcanic eruptions*

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Grant Heiken

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Since the early 1990s IAVCEI has evolved from a professional organization made up mostly of geologists and geophysicists to one composed of a broad diversity of professionals. One key group that has been woven into the IAVCEI canvas is comprised of archeologists, anthropologists and sociologists. A human dimension, so important to natural hazard mitigation, is now an important focus within the field of volcanology. The human dimension of volcanic hazards is the focus of this book. The contributors of the thirteen chapters presented their work at the World Archeological Congress held in Washington, D. C. in 2003. These case studies were selected for publication to help us understand how human societies have coped with volcanic eruptions. The book was assembled in part to counter much of the sensationalist writing found in popular accounts and, in some cases, the professional literature. The utility of traditions and oral histories are shown in this book to be useful in educating the public at risk about the frequency and type of volcanic activity in their region. Oral histories are especially powerful if combined with field studies and modeling of volcanic history for risk assessment. Another message here is that people can be extremely resilient and should not always be considered to be victims. Most, but not all, of the chapters are well researched and

written. The quality of writing and illustrations varies a lot from chapter to chapter. However, I learned a lot from most chapters. For me, the most comprehensive and interesting work was “Volcanic Oral Traditions in Hazard Assessment and Mitigation,” by Shane Cronin and Kathy Cashman. On the other hand, I also enjoyed chapters on religious responses to volcanic eruptions, major changes in the Middle to Upper Paleolithic ‘transition’ related to the Campanian Ignimbrite, and coping strategies in response to catastrophic eruptions in El Salvador. I had to look up the term “theodicy” but it was worth the effort for the chapter on religion and volcanic activity. You may need to break out the dictionaries for some of the chapters; the archeologists and anthropologists will need explanations of geologic jargon and vice versa. However, in most chapters jargon is well defined. The multidisciplinary nature of most IAVCEI meetings is now matter-of-fact. Gone are the days of pushback against the “soft sciences.” The organizers and editors for “Living Under the Shadow” are to be commended for taking volcanology into the realm of the World Archeological Congress. The book is an excellent contribution to volcanology and archeology/anthropology. If I had run across this book at a meeting I would have flashed my credit card and taken it home.

Editorial responsibility: J. Stix

G. Heiken (✉)
331 Windantide Place,
Freeland, WA 98249-9683, USA
e-mail: heiken@whidbey.com