

ANCIENT CULTURES, BOUNTIFUL SEAS: THE STORY OF PORT AU CHOIX. By M.A.P. RENOUF. St. John's: Historic Sites Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1999. ISBN 0-919735-05-3. 64 p., illus., maps, bib., glossary. Softbound. Cdn\$19.95.

Ancient Cultures: Bountiful Seas is a popular essay on the archaeology of Port au Choix, a community located on Newfoundland's Great Northern Peninsula. The Historic Sites Association of Newfoundland and Labrador produced the book, and anyone planning a trek to explore Newfoundland and Labrador's past will want to bring along a copy. The focus of the work is the prehistory of the various sites discovered around Port au Choix, whose past represents a microcosm of Newfoundland and Labrador's human history. M.A.P. Renouf worked in Port au Choix as a student during the 1970s, completing graduate work on the Maritime Archaic culture in Labrador. She came back to familiar ground in 1984 to start a research program, in cooperation with Parks Canada, the Newfoundland Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, and Memorial University of Newfoundland. Since it was first reported in 1915, Port au Choix has been the object of numerous research projects, and it continues to be the training ground for many graduate and undergraduate students. Thus a book on this important site is also an account of the history of archaeology in Newfoundland.

Renouf's goal is to share with us 4500 years of human history in Port au Choix, which was seemingly in constant exchange with the outside world. She succeeds in giving the essential within 60 pages by covering the human occupations, which range from the Maritime Archaic Indians to the coming of European fishermen to the west coast of Newfoundland. After introducing the actors related to the discovery of the site and those who worked there at various periods, Renouf acquaints us with the natural environment, the food resources available, and the harvesting techniques that people developed through the years for their exploitation. The parallels she draws between the subsistence and economy of current foragers and those of past hunting and gathering societies illustrate what makes anthropology a fascinating field of enquiry. Her exposé of how people used animal parts and traded in raw materials makes you want to read more on those topics. The remaining sections of the book concentrate on the cultural chronology of Port au Choix and how archaeology has contributed to our understanding of the various periods. The Maritime Archaic and the Palaeoeskimo cultures receive the best treatment—they are also the richest components discovered at the site. The ancestors of the Beothuks and European settlers are mentioned, but only briefly.

The strong point of the book is that it gives to a lay public a sense of the cultural chronology without dealing too much with the intricate details relevant to specialists. Emphasis is put on cultural change through time, and for the specialist, an interesting relation is put forward between archaeological data and archaeological thought.

That approach counts the most when Renouf uses data from archaic burials and the housing used by Palaeoeskimos. Thus, her use of a data set such as that gained from the study of skeletal remains to document marriage customs among Maritime Archaic Indians is a fascinating example of the working of palaeoanthropology. Her account of the discovery in House 55 is a humbling experience for the professional archaeologist, a lesson in field methods for the student, and the most fascinating description I have ever read on Palaeoeskimo housing. A useful glossary is also provided on specific terms.

The book is richly illustrated; its design and content make it a very attractive buy. I have already loaned my copy to a student who visited the area a few months ago, and she truly enjoyed it. Students of archaeology as well as nonspecialists will prize those 64 pages of interesting reading, and I recommend the book without any hesitation.

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REMEMBERING THE YEARS OF MY LIFE: JOURNEYS OF A LABRADOR INUIT HUNTER. Recounted by PAULUS MAGGO. Edited, with an Introduction, by CAROL BRICE-BENNETT. St. John's: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1999. 184 p., maps, b&w illus., bib. Softbound. Cdn\$19.95.

Remembering the Years of My Life is a life history commissioned as part of the research carried out for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. It is oral history translated from Inuktitut (by Martin Jararuse, Wilson Jararuse, and the late Sam Metcalfe) and edited—with an introductory essay—by Carol Brice-Bennett, to form a cohesive account of Paulus Maggo's life and the context in which he lived.

This is a small, packed gem of a book. It is of value to anyone who is interested in history, oral history, Native studies, anthropology, or biography. As a lawyer, I have referred to it as a source of information on Labrador Inuit customary law and traditional approaches to dispute resolution. But beyond these "learned" interests, this is, simply, the life story of an admirable, gentle, man that will inform and give pleasure to any reader interested in biography, history, or the Inuit of Labrador.

I first met Paulus Maggo in Happy Valley, in the winter of 1977. He was returning to Nain after participating in hearings of the Standing Committee of the House of Commons on Indian Affairs and Northern Development to