

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

protest the way in which Bill C-9, the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Native Claims Settlement Act*, purported to extinguish the rights of Aboriginal peoples who were not party to the James Bay Agreement. I met him again in a number of contexts—as a witness in a National Energy Board hearing, as an advisor and negotiator in Labrador Inuit attempts to settle their aboriginal claims in northeastern Quebec, and as an advisor and negotiator in overlapping land claim negotiations between the Labrador Inuit and the Innu Nation. I knew, from minutes of the meeting in 1973 at which the Labrador Inuit Association was formed, that Paulus Maggo was a founding father of the Association. As a result of these and other experiences, I viewed Paulus Maggo as a man who was at the centre of some of the most important contemporary political events of his people. I brought this view of Paulus Maggo to my reading of his story, *Remembering the Years of My Life*, and looked forward to his account of these and other events that are central to the recent history of the Labrador Inuit.

My preconceptions and expectations were wonderfully disappointed. Instead of an account of the political and social events of the twentieth century and one man's experiences in relation to them, I found the story of an unassuming man whose life was moulded by, and focused on, the vital forces and values of life on the land, of hunting, fishing, and providing for his family and community. Paulus Maggo's account of his life does not dwell on what he did as an elder to whom the Labrador Inuit turned when there was important business to be done. Rather, it reveals why they would turn to him. For example, he says that as chief of a sealing crew, following the example of the elders who had taught him, "I tried to show respect, to be trustworthy, and to be fair to one and all" (p. 109).

*Remembering the Years of my Life* is the personal history of a man who lived in a society where "people had to try to survive in any way they could, and we, the older generation, did that by providing for our family from morning to night" (p. 162). Despite this, Paulus Maggo conveys no sense of deprivation. Rather, there is a celebration of the nonmaterial values of respect, sharing, cooperation, and family and community that are central to Inuit tradition.

Born in 1910 south of the community of Makkovik, Mr. Maggo moved with his family north to Hopedale and then to Nain in 1921. He married Naeme Martin in 1930; their marriage ended with her death in 1998. Mr. Maggo was a hunter, a fisherman, and an elected community elder. He died in March 2000. His life story covers much of the twentieth century—a century of immense change for the Inuit of Labrador. He does not chronicle either the changes he witnessed and experienced or the forces that affected the lives of Inuit during his century. Yet he is keenly aware of, and concerned about, the circumstances of his community and his people, and understands them in human, cultural, and personal terms. So he observes: "Many young people don't speak or understand Inuktitut now and we are losing our language because it is being used less and less"

(p. 159). He does not merely lament this loss. He asserts that Inuit have a responsibility to speak Inuktitut with their families, and then says: "...but I am not preaching. I have tried, and I am using the language with my children and grandchildren to see if this would work, and it is working" (p. 160–161).

As the editor of this book, Carol Brice-Bennett recognizes that Mr Maggo's account contains little information about events beyond his direct experience and the Labrador Inuit community, and that people who are not members of that community or Mr. Maggo's generation will lack some of the context necessary to appreciating the larger historical, social, political, and economic environment that surrounded his life. To meet these needs, she has written a brief introductory essay that outlines a history of northern Labrador and incorporates the genealogies of Paulus and Naeme, based on meticulous research of the Moravian Church Books. She observes: "Paulus's and Naeme's genealogies reflect not only the history of Labrador Inuit relations with Moravian missionaries and other foreign agents, but also the persistence of Inuit culture despite numerous changes in Native society over the course of two centuries" (p. 47). This introduction is densely packed, extensively footnoted, and well written, and it contains the insights of someone who is clearly knowledgeable about, and in command of, her material.

The Labrador Inuit are highly literate. One first gets a glimpse of this in the preface, when Carol Brice-Bennett wonders about Paulus's reaction when reading the printed text of the manuscript. While the text received his approval, the orthography in which the Inuktitut translation had been prepared did not (p. 11). In his story, Paulus Maggo refers to his father's diary, which burned in a house fire in the 1940s, and to notebooks that his father kept, which Paulus regrets having lost (p. 61–62). In the final paragraph of his account, he laments that his eyes are not very good for reading, even when he is wearing his spectacles (p. 166). Despite this literacy, Labrador Inuit have not produced a written literature. This is not surprising, for they are a people whose traditions are oral and for whom publication is a rare and modern phenomenon. But as Inuktitut and the oral traditions of the Labrador Inuit weaken and recede, the few accounts of Labrador Inuit experience, traditions, and values that have been written and published by Inuit will become increasingly important to historians, social scientists, and scholars—and to the Inuit themselves. *Remembering the Years of My Life* is, in that sense, a vital contribution to the future of the Labrador Inuit.

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