

QAYAQ. KAYAKS OF ALASKA AND SIBERIA. By DAVID W. ZIMMERLY. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2000. 2nd ed. 103 p., map, b&w illus., glossary, bib., index. Softbound. US\$16.95.

Among the items I have heard Inuit identify as icons of their culture, three are perhaps most frequently mentioned: *inuksuk* (an arrangement of boulders often used as a landmark or to direct caribou toward waiting hunters), the *amauti* (a woman's parka that incorporates an *amaut*, or baby carrier), and the *qayaq* (kayak). The first two items are still widely used in the North, but are seldom found elsewhere. Kayaks, on the other hand, are seen more frequently today in warm waters than they are in the Arctic. With the seemingly infinite number of styles and variety of space-age materials that today's paddlers can choose from, we risk failing to appreciate that the traditional wood, sinew, and skin kayaks used by Inuit in earlier days represent a high-water mark in creating watercraft suited to local needs, using preindustrial technologies and the limited materials at hand in the Arctic.

Qayaq. Kayaks of Alaska and Siberia is a well-written, abundantly illustrated, and easy-to-read source of information on traditional kayaks from a broad area of the Arctic. The first edition, published in 1986 to accompany an exhibit by the same name organized by the Alaska State Museum, has been out of print for several years. This second edition is sure to be welcomed by the growing number of kayak fans, and in particular by those who have developed a fascination with the origins of one of the few methods of water transportation that a person quite literally wears. For the second edition of his book, David Zimmerly, one of the foremost experts on traditional kayaks, has added a chapter on the type of kayak once used by people at the mouth of the Mackenzie River. This is a logical addendum because of the close historical and cultural connections of the people who today call themselves Inuvialuit to the Inupiat of Alaska.

Qayaq begins with a brief introduction to traditional kayak design and concludes with a glossary of technical terms used throughout the book. In between are concise, yet informative, descriptions of kayaks from seven regions (for some regions, several designs are described). For each type of kayak, Zimmerly provides construction details, describes accessories (such as paddles) and hunting techniques, and shows how form often follows function. The illustrations are well chosen to enhance the text, although the line drawings showing construction details are reduced too much to be legible. Zimmerly would have done his readers a favour by informing them that most of these drawings can be seen more legibly on his Web site (<http://www.arctickayaks.com>).

In the preface to the 2000 edition, Zimmerly states that many interesting museum specimens, including the Mackenzie kayak type, have yet to be replicated. Happily, this is not the case. In 1994, the Inuvialuit Social Development Program began a program in the Beaufort Sea–Mackenzie

Delta region to rediscover traditional kayak-building skills and to replicate kayaks as part of school-based cultural activities. Similar cultural revitalization projects involving kayak-making are taking place in many parts of the Arctic. Those involved in these projects often bring together information made available through publications by Zimmerly and other students of Arctic kayaks and the traditional knowledge provided by elders who have firsthand experience with the craft. At the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, we have developed a school program on traditional kayaks that includes viewing examples in our galleries, assembling large-scale, prefabricated kayak frames, handling hunting tools associated with kayaks, and reading excerpts from *Qayaq. Kayaks of Alaska and Siberia*. This is a testament to the fact that the book is informative to readers at a variety of comprehension levels, and to our continuing fascination with the ingenuity involved in the construction of this most elegant type of watercraft.

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FINAL REPORT OF THE INUIT BOWHEAD KNOWLEDGE STUDY, NUNAVUT, CANADA. By KEITH HAY, DAVID AGLUKARK, DAVID IGUTSAQ, JOANNIE IKKIDLUAK and MEEKA MIKE. Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada X0A 0H0, 2000. In English and Inuktitut. 90 p., 19 b&w photographs, 7 maps, 7 app. Coil Bound. Price not given.

The study reported in this book was mandated under the terms of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (1993) to document Inuit knowledge of bowhead whales in the Nunavut Settlement Area. It fully meets its objective, providing a thorough and documented synthesis of local Inuit knowledge on the bowhead whale in Nunavut. The material was collected during 257 semidirective interviews, tape-recorded in 18 different communities in Nunavut in 1995 and 1996. Small workshops followed in eight communities in 1996 and 1997. Overall, the authors have done a commendable job of gathering and presenting a huge volume of useful information on the bowhead whale in Nunavut.

The semidirective interviews and follow-up workshops were structured around two main topic areas: the population ecology of bowheads (trends in abundance, distribution, and migration; changes in group size; occurrence of calves; ecology; and behaviour) and the cultural and traditional importance of bowhead whales to Inuit. The book also covers two other topics: the history of whaling and the future harvesting of bowhead whales.

Details about the method of data collection and analysis are clear, concise, and easy to follow. Appendices provide

details on the time and location of interviews and workshops, definition of seasons, details of the questionnaire that was used, interviewer checklists, consent forms, and workshop agendas. A preliminary glossary of Inuktitut words relating to bowheads, whaling, and related topics has been prepared, but it is not included in the book, as it awaits verification by Inuit elders.

The task of obtaining, synthesizing, and providing a written report of local ecological and historical knowledge is a formidable one. Local knowledge exists largely in oral tradition, and its transformation to the written word requires special care to maintain accuracy, intent, and context. This study succeeded in making this transition.

The main topic areas are divided into a wide range of subtopics. Under those divisions, responses are presented according to geographical areas, which in turn correspond to the two tentative management stocks recognized for bowhead whales in Nunavut (Maiers et al., 1999). Each subtopic begins with a summary paragraph that conveys the “take-home” message for that topic. This is followed by a more detailed treatment that includes both synthesis and direct quotations. The quotes are carefully cross-referenced to the original interviews, and references are provided for the scientific literature that is cited. The authors’ system of cross-referencing to the “Source Book of Quotations” (NWMB, 2000) is particularly useful. While this supporting document can be obtained only by special request to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB), the fact remains that readers have the opportunity to access the original words of the informant—for further detail, for interpretation, and for context. Finally, each subtopic also includes a sizeable selection of quotes inserted directly into the text. This combination of summary, synthesis, and direct quotation brings the reader close to the material quickly and effectively.

The appendices, maps, and photographs are helpful. Appendix VII provides the index to the quotations, organized by topic, and indicates the number of informants that contributed to a given subtopic. Maps (43 × 56 cm) depict the bowhead distribution and migration information provided by informants according to the six Inuit seasons. Included in a back pocket of the report, the maps are easy to read and interpret. The small (7 × 10 cm) black-and-white photographs help readers to visualize the meeting and interview process. As well, the photos depict long-gone commercial whaling days, more recent subsistence hunting of the bowhead at Pangnirtung, and, of course, some pleasing shots of the bowhead whale itself.

Collectively, the responses of the informants provide management information on a range of issues and themes. For example, informants stated that the frequency of sighting bowhead whales is higher today than it was in the 1950s and 1960s. More frequent sightings, increased bowhead group sizes, and observations of cows with calves are thought to indicate that recovery of the bowhead stock is underway. Commercial whaling ceased in 1920.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) has already made good use of this book and its maps, integrating the

local knowledge with the available scientific record to assess the status of the Hudson Bay-Foxe Basin bowhead whale stock (DFO, 1999). Without this study, the Inuit knowledge would not be readily available and would be more difficult to bring to the stock assessment table, and it would be more difficult for the assessors to cite, scrutinize, and carefully consider the full range of knowledge of the bowhead.

This work makes three important contributions. First, it provides Inuit knowledge about the bowhead whale in Nunavut that previously existed only in unwritten format—memories and experiences of a range of hunters and families from 18 communities in Nunavut. Huge geographical distances separate the communities and people of Nunavut. The book brings the information together, makes it publicly available and therefore more easily accessible, and at the same time, preserves it in the written record for future initiatives and generations.

Second, the book provides an excellent practical example of how to capture oral history and ecological information so that it becomes part of the permanent written record for use by others and future generations. The current practice is to give traditional knowledge and scientific knowledge “equal footing”: to consider them as “two ways of knowing” ecological information (Fehr and Hurst, 1996). The great challenge with this process is to collect, synthesize, and present the traditional knowledge in a meaningful and accurate way. Scientists, managers, and students have a growing need to access and use knowledge held by local hunters and fishermen. This study, which was sponsored and endorsed by an Inuit organization, serves as an excellent template for other studies to address this need.

Finally, the book records important information about bowhead whaling in the 20th century that could have been lost eventually because it did not appear in the written archival records. The study revealed 12 bowhead whale hunts (8 landed whales) between 1919 and 1975 and thus contributed to the historical record of Inuit bowhead whaling activities since the early 1900s.

This book will be relevant and appealing to students, resource managers, and scientists involved in bowhead whale research; to scholars and practitioners involved or interested in the process of obtaining, processing, and documenting local ecological knowledge; and to present-day whale hunters and historians of whale hunting. This work makes a significant contribution on all of these fronts.

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SAQQAQ: AN INUIT HUNTING COMMUNITY IN THE MODERN WORLD. By JENS DAHL. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000. ISBN 0-8020-8237-8. 277 p., maps, bib., index. Softbound. Cdn\$24.95; £16.00 in Europe.

This long-awaited book by Jens Dahl is a comprehensive and thorough description of one specific hunting community in Greenland, as observed during several anthropological field trips over a period of 16 years. Dahl sets out to describe the hunting mode of production in Saqqaq, in the Disko Bay area of West Greenland, and argues that we must dismantle the dichotomy between “traditional” and “modern” in order to understand the contemporary situation of Greenlandic villages (*nunaqarfii*).

Small villages in Greenland, whose inhabitants have livelihoods based on hunting and fishing, have long been seen by various Greenlandic politicians, intellectuals, writers, and poets, as well as by anthropologists, as places where “real” and “true” Greenlandic culture can still be found. This image has been framed against the background of the rapid social, cultural, and economic changes that have occurred in Greenland over the last 50 years. In Greenland, debates about identity have often centred on the relationship between village and town: the stability and traditional nature of the former are contrasted with the flux and modernity of the latter. Yet many villages have relatively recent histories. As Dahl demonstrates rather successfully, the image of a traditional, unchanging hunting culture is at odds with reality. Saqqaq and other Greenlandic communities have developed and survived through colonial and post-colonial settings—and continue to survive now, during a period of Home Rule and a reassessment of what self-determination means for Greenland—by combining both formal and informal economic activities. Thus, subsistence is not (if indeed it has ever been) a self-sufficient mode of production. Rather, blending as it does hunting, fishing, wage earning, and transfer payments, it is more accurately seen as a way of life. The hunting way of life, its relationship with wider Greenlandic political and economic processes, and the identity it gives the Saqqarmiut are central to Dahl’s account.

In various chapters, Dahl considers beluga hunting, fishing, seal hunting, the relationship between persons and the environment, and ideologies of sharing, before placing the hunting way of life in a wider context of Greenlandic Home Rule policies of nation building, and discussing how customary rules and regulations governing resource use interact with, give way to, conflict with, and are threatened by state management. A process of nation building, with its associated policies and cohesive political discourses of *Greenlandisation*, places emphasis on a homogenous Greenlandic culture and identity. Central to Dahl’s argument is that this nation-building project involves the construction of a new Greenlandic community that is rooted in a national territory, with laws, rules, procedures, and ordinances increasingly worked out and defined at the national level. As Dahl argues, this new Greenlandic community is an imagined community, which has created and continues to create symbols, traditions, and forms of knowledge that subvert and replace local traditions and knowledge.

Dahl’s analysis shows precisely how the Greenlandic nation-building project also involves the homogenization of the environment and a nationalization of resources. New meanings are given to the environment that transcend the personal and subjective. Local hunting and fishing grounds have become Greenlandic territory, and the environment, with its fishing stocks and untapped oil and mineral wealth, is seen as something to develop in the national interest of a self-governing Greenland. This case study from Saqqaq shows how local coastal communities throughout Greenland are encroached upon and impacted by transformations in resource management regimes and Home Rule government regulations of hunting and fishing that conflict with local customary practices and knowledge systems. Dahl’s study contributes to other work on nation building, which indicates that in this process the locality becomes national territory, and its new status is legitimated by the same Home Rule legislation that is transforming hunting and fishing. Communities are experiencing pressures on their local resource bases—pressures that are threatening to redefine the ways in which people relate to their local environments.

The scholarship is sound, and the book has a good structure. Dahl also does well to carry off what might have been problematic: an ethnographic portrait of Saqqaq as observed by him during 1980–81 (the period from which most of his material comes), but one that is also informed by subsequent visits during the 1980s and 1990s. Thus the reader is presented with a description and analysis of the changes that have affected the hunting way of life in Saqqaq during the first and most crucial years of Home Rule in Greenland—a period which Dahl describes (drawing on the work of Benedict Anderson) as being characterized by the construction of an imagined Greenlandic national community.

Few anthropological studies of Greenlandic communities have been published over the last few years, and