

***A History and Ethnography of the Beothuk.* Ingeborg Marshall.  
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## REVIEW ARTICLE

*A History and Ethnography of the Beothuk.* Ingeborg Marshall. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996.

CHARLES A. MARTIJN

AT THE TIME of first recorded contact with Europeans, around A.D. 1497, the Beothuk were the principal native group inhabiting Newfoundland. However, other First Nations also exploited faunal and natural resources in certain parts of this island, a subject which will be touched on again below.<sup>1</sup>

The Beothuk are surrounded by an aura of tragedy and mystery — tragedy, because they became extinct at the beginning of the 19th century under appalling circumstances, and — mystery, because despite the passage of five centuries so little is known about them except for the last few decades of their existence.

Until now, the standard reference work on the Beothuk has been James P. Howley's *The Beothuks or Red Indians*, which came out in 1915. It is basically a vast compilation of primary archival and published texts, gathered by the author over a period of forty years. These include exploration narratives, government documents, private papers, oral tradition accounts, correspondence, newspaper articles, Beothuk vocabularies, and an exceptional set of ethnographic drawings and sketch-maps by a Beothuk woman, Shanawdithit, who died in captivity at St. John's on June 6th, 1829. A large part of this information had previously been assembled by William E. Cormack, a well-known Newfoundland entrepreneur and explorer.

Howley hesitated a long time before publishing, partly because he realized that additional material could still be found, but also because he regarded his holdings as a "chaotic mass of material" and considered them insufficient "to write an

accurate history of the aborigines of this island". He ended up arranging the available documents in chronological order, and completing them with a brief index and less than two pages of bibliography. Although the editorial content was restricted to a running commentary, his remarks are often apt and reveal an incisive mind.

Eighty years ago, the noted anthropologist Frank G. Speck (1917:280) ended his review of Howley's book with the statement, "whether or not the hope of learning more of the culture of the supposedly extinct tribe is ever realized there is a grave doubt if Mr. Howley's monograph will ever be superseded". If Speck were alive today, he would no doubt be delighted to concede that such a task has now been achieved with distinction.

Ingeborg Marshall's *A History and Ethnography of the Beothuk* constitutes an impressive scholarly attempt at bringing together all extant information about the Beothuk, subjecting it to a thorough evaluation and presenting it in a "systematic and focussed manner" (9). On and off, for some twenty years, the author devoted herself to the task of painstakingly examining archival, library and museum holdings in both Europe and North America for any relevant material. As well, unpublished manuscripts and artifact collections in private hands were sought out. She also made a point of visiting all known Beothuk campsites and burial places, and has profited from new revelations and insights provided by Beothuk archaeology over the past few decades. In short, every conceivable avenue of inquiry was investigated in order to put together a comprehensive data bank (5-6, 249).

Marshall herself cautions, however, that the end result has many shortcomings and limitations (7-8, 249-250). Indeed, the record is astonishingly incomplete. With two or three minor exceptions, descriptive accounts of any substance are lacking for the period A.D. 1500-1768. Sustained trade relationships with European fishermen and settlers never developed, since from very early on the Beothuk adopted a policy of face-to-face avoidance. They applied themselves instead to scavenging goods from the installations of fishermen and settlers, which led to continual hostile retaliation and instances of murderous slaughter. Moreover, no missionaries were ever sent out to proselytize this native group (133). In 1613, there is a passing reference to a European who was said to have spent five years with them, and learned their language, but no other such instances are known (33). The author also points out that, "much of the available information was recorded by Englishmen rather than obtained from the Beothuk themselves, so that the Beothuk voice is nearly absent from the record" (249). Indeed, not until 1819 was a Beothuk vocabulary taken down which revealed that the word Beothuk happened to be the name which these people applied to themselves (434).

Although a moderate amount of data is available on certain aspects of Beothuk material culture, practically the only information we possess about their intellectual culture comes from Shanawdithit. She learned some English and was closely questioned on a number of occasions by William E. Cormack, who had developed

an interest in ensuring the survival of the Beothuk. Shanawdithit made several drawings for him, illustrating objects of Beothuk material culture and items of nourishment, as well as a series of sketch maps depicting historical episodes which took place between 1810 and 1823, including an encounter with the Buchan expedition sent into the interior to establish contact with the Beothuk. Unfortunately, by the time Shanawdithit died in 1829, the Beothuk had ceased to be a viable cultural entity and became extinct.

In essence then, this volume does not constitute a standard history and ethnography. What the author has done instead is to take a great many historical shreds and ethnographical patches and to fashion these into a splendid cultural quilt, restricted in size, but rich in colours and distinctive patterns. While not everyone will agree with the overall design, no one can contest its bold originality. Readers would be well advised, however, to hang on to their Howley for its primary documentary content. While on the one hand Marshall has significantly added to the Beothuk data record and immeasurably improved our understanding of this material by presenting it in an organized manner, on the other hand, for obvious reasons of space, most of the original documents themselves, unlike in Howley's case, have not been reprinted in her volume, and only her interpretations are provided.<sup>2</sup> We are therefore faced with the choice of either accepting Marshall's exegesis at face value in every instance, or else undertaking the laborious task of verifying each original reference in libraries or archival centres. Only specialists are likely to attempt this, since the average reader will lack the time and expertise to do so. And yet, as we shall see further on, the effort is definitely needed, a case in point being the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq.

Marshall's publication is an abundantly illustrated and handsomely bound volume of encyclopaedic proportions, numbering 640 pages. Unfortunately, the black and white photographs are not printed on high contrast paper, no doubt due to cost factors, and thus tend to be blurry. The maps are well selected and of excellent quality. In several instances they have been reduced in size, which makes some details indistinct, particularly so in the case of Shanawdithit's sketch maps.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the latter are reproduced in their original red and black colours, thereby recapturing an authentic haunting quality.

Inevitably, for a volume of this scope, certain textual deficiencies have gone undetected. Hopefully, it will be possible to correct these minor matters in a subsequent edition. Typographical and factual errors are rare,<sup>4</sup> but a number of name misspellings occur, mostly in the bibliography.<sup>5</sup> A few references cited in the notes do not correspond with their bibliographical counterparts.<sup>6</sup> Throughout the entire text, feet and metric measurements are used interchangeably, and this lack of standardization is especially apparent on artifact plates.<sup>7</sup> The imposing 38 pages long bibliography, while not exhaustive, ranks among the strong points of this monograph. However, it stops in 1992,<sup>8</sup> and as a result lacks a number of later pertinent contributions, notably an authoritative treatise on Beothuk prehistory by

Pastore (1992).<sup>9</sup> For the most part too, it pays scant attention to the Beothuk as a literary theme in contemporary fiction and poetry. A series of instructive lists, appendices,<sup>10</sup> tables, graphs, sketches and 121 pages of indispensable endnotes complete the presentation. The index is suitably detailed, except in regard to contemporary scholars involved in Beothuk studies.<sup>11</sup>

A meticulous worker, Marshall writes clearly and elegantly,<sup>12</sup> which is a boon to readers faced with the task of absorbing such massive quantities of data while maintaining an interest in the narrative. In a gracious "Acknowledgements" section the author lists an impressive number of scholars and institutions on both sides of the Atlantic who have been of assistance during her lengthy project. A concise and lucid "Introduction" follows in which she sets out her research objectives and methodology, as well as indicating some self-imposed limitations. The reader is informed that "a certain amount of commentary and interpretation is included in the text, but there is much room for further analysis. However, since the aim of this study was to bring together and present as much basic data as could be gathered, such elaborations are left to future studies" (8-9). What is more, "analysis of cultural dynamics and theoretical discussions are considered to be beyond the scope of this work" (9).<sup>13</sup>

The main portion of the monograph has been subdivided into two sections, Part I being entitled "History". Although one normally would have expected it to commence with a chapter on prehistory, discussion of this subject is restricted to a few paragraphs, with a fuller account serving as the opening chapter of Part II, "Ethnography". No explanation is offered for this choice, although it may stem from a desire to emphasize the material culture aspect of archaeological collections.

Due to space limitations, this review will concentrate on certain ethnohistorical aspects of the "History" section. More specifically, it takes a critical look at Marshall's treatment of relations between the Beothuk and other native groups who frequented Newfoundland, and in particular, the Mi'kmaq.

## MI'KMAQ IN SOUTHERN NEWFOUNDLAND: 16TH AND 17TH CENTURIES

The "History" part begins with the statement that "at the time Newfoundland was discovered<sup>14</sup> [sic] by Europeans around AD 1500, the Beothuk are believed to have been the only permanent residents on the island" (14). This static insular image of the Beothuk does not fit archaeological evidence which suggests that during late prehistoric/early contact times some Beothuk bands and/or their immediate ancestors were accustomed to crossing the Strait of Belle-Isle and seasonally frequenting the Quebec Lower North Shore and the Labrador south coast.<sup>15</sup> The author also stresses that "to date... there is no evidence of persistent prehistoric residence in Newfoundland of Micmac or Montagnais", but allows for possible visits "now and then" to certain areas in Newfoundland "to exploit resources". However, no further discussion is devoted to explaining this presence in terms of the subsistence

economies of these two groups. The reader is left with the impression that it was more or less a question of random voyages, and that the Mi'kmaq and Montagnais were basically interlopers who could not claim any part of the island as home territory.<sup>16</sup>

Marshall's outlook in this instance is tinted by Eurocanadian concepts of land use which are predicated on "permanent occupation" and "sedentary settlement". These do not apply in a narrow sense to traditional aboriginal land exploitation practices within the Atlantic Provinces. Her recourse to this type of argumentation, blinkered by contemporary political boundaries, stands out as a basic flaw which resurfaces on different occasions throughout the book. In the case of the Mi'kmaq, their links with Southern Newfoundland must be understood in terms of a model which takes into consideration their migratory way of life. The climate not being very conducive for agricultural practices, they constituted a semi-sedentary population of hunters, fishermen and gatherers who were very knowledgeable about the ecological habitats of their land, and who moved about as required in their quest for game and other natural resources.<sup>17</sup> A variety of environmental and social pressures obliged the Mi'kmaq to make continual adjustments to their seasonal rounds. These factors included periodic fluctuations in the size of certain animal populations, due to natural causes or to overhunting; intervals of unfavourable snow conditions for capturing big game; occasional droughts and forest fires; variations in sea water temperature which affected the reliability of springtime fish runs; regional differences in the distribution and availability of food supplies; human population pressure; conflict with other groups; etc. Any such factor, or a combination of them, could result in hardship for a Mi'kmaq band if it led to a scarcity of sustenance over a given span of time.

During periods of severe stress a solution would be sought by enlarging the geographical space previously exploited under more favourable conditions. As such, the size of specific land areas used by Mi'kmaq bands underwent cycles of expansion and contraction. When faced with recurrent subsistence crises they would extend their hunting, fishing and gathering activities to adjoining geographical districts in order to supplement a variety of needs. Depending on circumstances, and on the political situation of the moment, this led them to exploit different parts of their traditional territorial domain on a seasonal, concurrent, rotational or else opportunistic basis. As well, there existed "joint use" territories utilized by allied groups and "buffer zones" between competing groups. It is from such a perspective that we should consider the question of the land use of Southern Newfoundland by the Mi'kmaq, starting perhaps already in prehistoric times.

Based on historical documentation, Martijn (1989) has proposed that the seafaring Eastern Mi'kmaq ranged over an island domain which included Cape Breton, the Magdalen islands, the St-Pierre & Miquelon archipelago, and Southern Newfoundland. They undertook these rounds of migrational movements on their own volition, and specifically for subsistence reasons. The fur trade undoubtedly

gave an added impulse to what was already an ancient pattern.<sup>18</sup> With respect to the Magdalen Islands, not only is a Mi'kmaq presence attested prehistorically, but it is of decided interest that the French king, on three separate occasions during the 18th century, formally recognized Mi'kmaq hunting and fishing rights there (Martijn 1996a). Documentary sources pertaining to the 17th century, including census reports, show that between 1603 and 1713 there were a series of marked fluctuations in the Mi'kmaq population size of Cape Breton Island (*ibid.*). It may be that these events reflect the kind of rotational exploitation pattern described above, with in each instance a certain number of Mi'kmaq families leaving Cape Breton to cross over to other parts of their island domain, including Southern Newfoundland. A tantalizing hint to this effect is provided by the declaration in 1642, of a Dutch merchant named Dirck Janz., stating that he had traded with an Amerindian who said that he was "King of the aforesaid Island of Cape Breton and several others" (NAC 1642:41).

Marshall draws attention to the difficulties encountered when one attempts to determine the cultural affiliation of native groups on the basis of scanty 16th century records (7, 14). The sources from which the information was originally obtained cannot always be determined, sufficiently detailed descriptions of aboriginal people and precise geographical indications are often lacking, and exact chronology may be missing. In the absence, thus far, of local archaeological evidence attributable to a late prehistoric Mi'kmaq or Montagnais presence, she favours the thesis that Newfoundland was an exclusive Beothuk domain at initial contact. As a result, Marshall tends to overlook or to dismiss various indications in early accounts which suggest a sixteenth century Mi'kmaq presence within the southern part of that island.

More clarification about the nature of such early documents, and the context in which they were produced, would have been helpful. As one scholar has put it, "despite being known as Britain's oldest colony, Newfoundland remained for three centuries following its discovery one of Britain's least known colonies" (Tompkins 1986:3). In the beginning, illiteracy and secrecy about fishing grounds did not favour the publication of extensive written observations. Not unexpectedly, business or official documents relating to the activities of the fishing fleets made only the barest references to native people, mostly remarks in connection with hostile encounters. Permanent European colonization did not take place until well into the 17th century, and was initially restricted to coastal zones, while no interior exploration took place prior to the 19th century. Indeed, with the exception of the St-Pierre & Miquelon Islands and the Placentia/St. Mary's Bay region, White settlement along the south coast was long retarded, and the area remains relatively sparsely populated even to this day. As such, much of the territory which served as a principal focus for Mi'kmaq subsistence activities in Newfoundland, inland as well as coastal, remained little known for several centuries (Martijn 1996a).

For the above reasons, Newfoundland lacks the lengthy reports on native populations produced elsewhere in the Northeast by explorers, traders, colonial administrations and religious orders. There has been a tendency, unfortunately, to interpret this scarcity of contact period data as signifying the absence of a Mi'kmaq presence on the island in early historic times. It is an assumption which should not be left unchallenged.

Faced with problems relating to the interpretation of early documents, attempts should nevertheless be made to construe inferences from the data by closely studying the context, by taking care to clearly articulate all assumptions, and by avoiding unwarranted conclusions. We must remain alert to newly perceived conjunctures between events, and open to reappraisals of available evidence. By following such procedures, it is possible to broaden our overall understanding of what took place, even in the absence of definite proof.

Marshall is not always rigorous in her use of criteria for judging whether a specific early document refers to the Beothuk, or to some other native group. Pierre Crignon, in 1529, distinguished between two native populations in Newfoundland. Those along the east coast all the way to the Strait of Belle Isle were "smaller, more humane, and friendlier". Those on the south coast, which was said to run for a distance of 100 leagues from Cape Race towards Cape Breton Island, were "a cruel and austere people, with whom it is impossible to deal or to converse. They are of large stature, ... and are marked by certain lines made by applying fire to their faces [either tattoos or charcoal designs]" (Hoffman 1963:13-14). In Marshall's estimation (19), these disparities, rather than denoting differences in cultural affiliation, could have been attributable to behavioural differences between two segments of the Beothuk population who had not experienced the same intensity of contact with Europeans. Elsewhere, on the contrary, she emphasizes overall similarities in Beothuk behaviour, such as always fleeing from Europeans (24).

In rejecting Crignon's account as evidence for a Mi'kmaq presence in Southern Newfoundland during the 16th century, Marshall refrains from addressing two things, the marked aggressiveness displayed and the facial decoration, both of these being Mi'kmaq characteristics remarked on in other contemporary accounts. The Portuguese, for example, tried to establish a settlement on Cape Breton around 1525, but Jean Alfonse reported in his 1559 routier that "the natives of the country put an end to the attempt, & killed all who came there" (Ganong 1964:365). Although Marshall states on two occasions (16, 338) that there is no mention in the literature of Beothuk facial markings or tattoos,<sup>19</sup> she fails to make any connection with the Mi'kmaq, and contents herself with the observation that it may have been practiced by the Beothuk prior to the 17th century.

A direct mention of a 16th century Mi'kmaq presence in Southern Newfoundland, with further confirmation of their fierce character, comes from another narrative by Jean Alfonse who wrote in his *Cosmographie*, completed in 1544, that:



The people of this coast [Gulf of Maine ?] and Cape Breton are evil persons, strong, great archers...and are a tall people. *And those from Cape Breton make war on those of Newfoundland when they go fishing* and never spare the life of any man [i.e. person] whom they capture, unless it happens to be a young child or a young girl. And they are so cruel that when they capture a man who is bearded [European ?], they cut off his limbs and carry them to their women and children in order to be avenged for this [affront ?]. (Musset 1904:503-504) [My free translation].

This early record<sup>20</sup> lends additional support to the thesis of an Eastern Mi'kmaq domain of islands exploited in accordance with a native subsistence strategy. It indicates that the Cape Breton Mi'kmaq, just like the Europeans incidentally, seem to have crossed over regularly to Southern Newfoundland in order to avail themselves of its marine resources. Which brings us to the question: why should the latter be allowed a legal claim to Newfoundland on this basis, but not the former? One wonders where Alfonse obtained his information for he himself does not appear to have been acquainted with the south coast (Ganong 1964:281, 288). It may have come from fishermen whom he met at St. John's Harbour in 1542, and who were familiar with the general area southwards from there, between Cape Race and St-Pierre & Miquelon. They could have witnessed or heard about such Mi'kmaq-Beothuk conflicts in that region, and may themselves on occasion have been embroiled with the Mi'kmaq.

Almost invariably, when there is some doubt about the identity of Newfoundland natives mentioned in early contact times, Marshall tends to see them as Beothuk. This is what she proposes in the case of a Dutch ship which, in 1606, "traded with the Indians" in St. Mary's Bay (39). And yet, judging from other data presented by her, they could equally as well have been Mi'kmaq. As early as 1602, unidentified native traders encountered on the coast of Maine, probably Mi'kmaq or Maliseet middlemen, "with a piece of Chalke described the Coast thereabouts, and could name Placentia of the New-found-land" (Quinn 1979, Vol. III:353; Bourque and Whitehead 1985). They had presumably visited it to exchange goods with fishermen in that general region, which encompassed St. Mary's Bay. What is more, in 1612, Father Biard wrote that the Mi'kmaq name for Newfoundland was Presentic, misunderstanding the fact that his informants actually meant the Placentia area (44).<sup>21</sup>

On occasion, the information contained in early records is not fully exploited by Marshall, and crucial details have been missed. She partially cites a 1661 report from Newfoundland to the effect that "some Canida Indians [usually believed to refer to Micmac] are coming from the Forts of Canida in french Shalloways with french fowling pieces all spared them by the French of Canida". She then comments that since the location was not given "the Indians could also have been Montagnais who came to the west coast, or Maliseet, or Abenaki" (467, n.16). In actual fact, the initial part of the sentence has been left out. The account states unequivocally that "...to that part of the land where the French forts are as Plasentsia, St. Peters & the rest, no Indians come but some Canida Indians from the forts of Canida...etc."

(Downing 1676:175). A 17th century letter provides additional confirmation that these were Mi'kmaq. Sent by a ship's chaplain, John Thomas, from Bay Bulls in 1680, it refers to the presence of several unnamed native "nations" in Newfoundland, including one group who are "now clothed, since they have some doings with New England men...and have got Guns amongst them alsoe" (Thomas 1680).<sup>22</sup>

Whereas Marshall often uses a comparative approach in her "Ethnography" section, this is much less evident in the "History" part. Had she done so more systematically, some of her historical interpretations, in particular those relating to the Mi'kmaq, would no doubt have been modified. Ethnohistorical research dealing with the Eastern and Western James Bay Cree has led to the discarding of several misconceptions about the extent to which First Nations were dependent on Euro-Canadian merchants and officials during the fur trade period.<sup>23</sup> Although a dearth of documentation on the 17th century Mi'kmaq in Southern Newfoundland does not allow for a comparable study, it is nevertheless possible to postulate certain parallels. Historical knowledge about native affairs in this region can be likened to flying across a landscape on an overcast day and only getting sudden, short glimpses of what lies below. Occasionally, however, such brief views are quite revealing. They tend to be at odds with the proposals put forward by Marshall. Her consistently narrow use of the term "Cape Breton Micmac" obscures many issues, detracts attention from the flexibility and adaptive skills of the Mi'kmaq, and ignores aboriginal patterns of subsistence activity. Stripped of their native context, complex episodes are summarized by her in single sentences and become encapsulated in preconceptions.

Marshall conceives of the Mi'kmaq as being highly dependent on the French, more or less trundling behind them in Newfoundland during the second half of the 17th century. We are told that "in the wake of the French, Micmac from Cape Breton Island, who may already have been visiting Newfoundland for the purpose of hunting and trapping, relocated to southern Newfoundland" (3).<sup>24</sup> She sees this as being concomitant with the building of a French fort at Placentia in 1662, and as a connection which "enabled Micmac to get a firmer footing on the island and to make territorial advances in the wake of Anglo-French conflicts" (44).<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, "Micmac families soon settled in the neighbourhood of the French fort" [*ibid.*].<sup>26</sup> Mi'kmaq mercenaries are said to have been brought in from the mainland and to have played an important role in d'Iberville's winter campaign of 1695-1696, while "during the war of the Spanish Succession (1702-1713), Cape Breton Micmac again joined forces with the French in their attacks on the English; better equipped for winter travel than the French, they penetrated through inaccessible countryside..." [*ibid.*].<sup>27</sup> Also, "in 1705, twenty-five Micmac families arrived in Placentia with the intention of establishing themselves in Newfoundland with French assistance" (45),<sup>28</sup> and "as the war progressed, the French realized that they could not control the Micmac and began to urge their departure; however, there is

no evidence that Micmac complied" (*Ibid.*).<sup>29</sup> All of these enumerated views stand in need of rectification.

Marshall's belief that the Mi'kmaq were completely dependent on the French leads her to the following logical conclusion:

After the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) the French were forced to leave their fort in Placentia; the Micmac, who resided in Placentia and Fortune Bays, also abandoned this part of the coast. William Taverner, who surveyed the population and resources of the Newfoundland south coast [1715], thought that the Micmac no longer came there because the departure of the French had deprived them of their trading partners, who supplied them with provisions and guns they were now forced to obtain in Quebec [p.45].

Not unexpectedly, Taverner turned out to be wrong. On December 17th, 1720, the English governor at Placentia reported that:

there was two open boats full of Indians seen from St. Peters [Saint-Pierre] but supposed<sup>30</sup> to be only a party a hunting from the Main [Nova Scotia] etc. for they have done no damage" (CSPCS 1933:216-217).

There would have been no pressing reason for the Mi'kmaq to abandon their hunting and trapping territories in Southern Newfoundland at that time, although they were bound to avoid localities such as Placentia or Saint-Pierre where there was an English military presence. They had most of the south coast and large stretches of the interior to themselves, and whenever necessary could still obtain essential European goods and provisions from small French settlements and seasonal fishing vessels along the south and west coasts,<sup>31</sup> or by crossing over to Cape Breton Island. It certainly was not necessary to travel all the way to Quebec City for these.

## BEOTHUK RELATIONS WITH OTHER NATIVE GROUPS IN NEWFOUNDLAND

Marshall devotes an extensive discussion to Beothuk relations with their aboriginal neighbours in Newfoundland (42-60, 154-159). She underlines the difficulties encountered in trying to sort out the identity of various native bands encountered by Basque and French fishermen in the Strait of Belle-Isle (55-56). Some of these, apparently Montagnais, were employed as helpers in the whale (and cod ?) industries, while others, apparently the Inuit and the Beothuk, showed themselves more belligerent. In a pioneer study, Selma Barkham (1980) drew attention to a Basque narrative which enumerated three specific groups: the "esquimaos" [Inuit] who were hostile, while the "montanese" [inland Montagnais ?] and "canaleses" [people of the canal or strait] maintained a friendlier relationship.<sup>32</sup>

In reviewing Beothuk-Inuit contacts, considerable emphasis is placed on a single aspect, namely mutual hostility (54-55, 422-423).<sup>33</sup> In fact, her "Chronology of Major Events" contains the laconic notation "1560s-1700s: Conflict between

Beothuk and Inuit" (250).<sup>34</sup> The inherent bias of this approach needs to be balanced by a broader historical treatment of the Inuit presence in Northern Newfoundland, and by extension the Strait of Belle-Isle and Southern Labrador. Much has been published already about Inuit activities within those last two regions, but the time may be ripe for a new synthesis, making fuller use of the archival and archaeological data accumulated over the past two decades. After all, native people did not live by war alone.

The author accords her most detailed treatment to the question of Beothuk-Mi'kmaq relations,<sup>35</sup> relying primarily on native oral tradition from both sides, as well as on Eurocanadian accounts.<sup>36</sup> She attempts to place these tales in a chronological sequence leading back to the last decades of the 17th century (45-51, 154-159, 423). According to this interpretation, the relationship between the two groups was initially friendly in the Bay St. George region on the west coast, until the murder of two Beothuks around 1720 led to bitter hostility. Thereafter, "following the Beothuk's repeated defeats in which many of them lost their lives, the Micmac appear to have become the traditional foes of all Beothuk and enmity between the two groups became entrenched" (51). She concludes that the acquisition of firearms by the Mi'kmaq eventually gave them the upper hand.

Occasional clashes between the Beothuk and the Mi'kmaq are bound to have taken place, but whether on the scale proposed by the author is more problematical.<sup>37</sup> Given the small size of both native populations involved,<sup>38</sup> and the fact that Beothuk bands do not appear to have acted in unison for the purpose of offensive action (423), one wonders whether the descriptive terms employed by her really fit the circumstances: "battle" (50), "fierce fighters", "superiority in warfare", "beaten into retreat", and "their enmity was implacable and deadly"<sup>39</sup> (423). A veritable war room atmosphere hangs over p.50, with what is practically a war map on p.52 showing progressive "territorial gain", as Marshall enumerates a long list of places along the west and south coasts, where English naval officers reported the presence of Mi'kmaq families during the course of the 18th century.<sup>40</sup>

That an expansion of Mi'kmaq hunting and trapping territories took place in Newfoundland during the second half of the 18th century and the early decades of the 19th century is incontestable.<sup>41</sup> However, other factors, independent of hostile encroachment by the Mi'kmaq, are likely to have played a contributing role. Beothuk population decline accelerated due to attested decimation by English settlers, as well as to disease (443-444). In addition, a decrease in access to coastal areas could have meant a growing inability to adapt to animal population fluctuations within their shrinking territorial base, with a consequent impact on social cohesion and general health conditions (69). Abandonment of certain southern hunting areas by a diminishing Beothuk population would have facilitated a gradual northward movement by the Mi'kmaq without this invariably being accompanied by violent overtones. However, one has the impression that many White commentators during that era, patently ignorant of native lifestyles, embellished their

statements, and vied with each other in employing hyperbolic expressions when referring to Beothuk-Mi'kmaq relations.<sup>42</sup> A more rigorous study should be undertaken of English prejudices and ethnocentric dispositions towards native people in Eastern Canada throughout that period, in order to permit a better balanced appreciation of their true worth.

One disappointment here is Marshall's reluctance to lay to rest the bizarre story, apparently first circulated by John Peyton Jr. (Howley 1915:25), that the Mi'kmaq had been offered bounties for Beothuk scalps by French officials.<sup>43</sup> It is a claim without logical rhyme or historical reason (48-49).<sup>44</sup>

Another surprise is her sometimes uncritical acceptance of accusations levelled against the Mi'kmaq in respect to other matters. She paraphrases a report written by an English naval officer, William Parker, in 1810, as describing "the Micmac's wasteful slaughter of birds for feathers and the destruction of excessive numbers of caribou, often taken out of season and left to rot" (501, n.8). Among other things, Captain Parker wrote that no seabirds were seen on the Penguin Islands [south coast], and that from information collected it appeared that the Canadian Indians [i.e. Mi'kmaq] had been greatly instrumental in annihilating them (NAC 1810). It ought to be kept in mind that Eurocanadians had also been involved in the avifaunal exploitation of those islands. Captain William Taverner noted in 1714 that "the Penguin islands are in the Summer time covered with the fowle of that name...the French from Placentia did yearly goe to those Islands, load Boats of 20 Tunnes with their eggs, which they sold at Placentia" (Cuff 1995:15). A later observer, Cormack (1928:111), who passed by there in 1822, commented simply that "penguins were once numerous at this coast, their breeding place having been the Penguin Islands... They have been extirpated by man, none having been seen for some years past". He also drew attention to the fact that the coastline east of Cape Ray, as far as Ramea, was known as "American Newfoundland, or that division of the coast on which the Americans have the right of fishing and of drying their fish" (*Ibid.*, 102, 135, n.25). During the early 1800s, these American fishermen, together with others from Nova Scotia and Newfoundland itself, were notorious for destroying nesting colonies of birds by the wholesale amassing of eggs. They were active throughout the Gulf of St. Lawrence region, including the Quebec North Shore, and local people referred to them as "egggers" (Lepage 1996:235-236, 613, notes 8-9). One wonders from whom Captain Walker obtained his information regarding the Penguin Islands, and whether the depredations committed there had not been the work of local or American fishermen rather than the Mi'kmaq.<sup>45</sup>

Throughout her volume, Marshall makes abundant use of native oral traditions pertaining to Beothuk-Mi'kmaq relations. Their utility could be amplified, however, by breaking down the contents into constituent elements so as to register the entire spectrum of attitudes, values, social gestures, messages and historical components embedded in them. These could be further compared with elements from

other oral traditions relating to strife between native groups in the Northeast, such as the Mi'kmaq-Mohawk, Cree-Iroquois, Cree-Inuit and Montagnais-Inuit story cycles, in order to detect similarities and divergences, and to arrive at a more discriminating perception of collaborative, and not just conflictual, behaviour during contact situations between native groups in Newfoundland.

## A REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT

Better than anyone else before her, Marshall traces the storyline of the Beothuk/European encounter. It is a masterly narrative exposition. What remained in Howley a mountainous jumble of every kind of data imaginable, has been deftly classed by her into different types of historical building material, and then shaped into an explanatory framework of intricate structure and imposing proportions. The subjects touched on are extremely varied, while their treatment constantly renews and sustains the reader's interest. Students of Newfoundland history will be spending a lot of time fincombing these pages and reviewing the conclusions. Certain themes and questions receive substantial consideration: the factors that operated against and effectively prevented a regular local fur trade;<sup>46</sup> the expansion of European settlement; the nature of the competition for coastal resources; the long term failure to control persisting persecution;<sup>47</sup> the missed opportunities for establishing contact; the kind of measures employed at the end when endeavouring to improve relationships; the treatment of Beothuk captives; and ultimate extinction.

Finally, the "Ethnography" section of her monograph can be compared to a multilevel storehouse, some sectors of which are crammed with intriguing material culture objects of every description, while regretfully, due to calamitous circumstances of which everyone is aware, other sectors, particularly the ones assigned to cultural intangibles, contain mainly empty shelves. As a measure of compensation, however, sizeable areas are devoted to archaeology (254-271),<sup>48</sup> demographics (272-284), subsistence economies (294-310), and language (428-437). Northeastern anthropologists will be trooping through it and coming back for many return visits. Their reactions are bound to enrich the existing literature dealing with Beothuk culture.

As the author herself acknowledges, there is much room for further analysis and elaboration. She has started the process by breaking new interpretative ground. Certain opinions and deductions put forward in this volume will expose her to the slings and arrows of dissenting colleagues. What matters most, however, is that Beothuk research has been infused with a fresh dynamic. On this point, the verdict will be unanimous in her favour.

Ingeborg Marshall's magnum opus on the Newfoundland Beothuk constitutes an outstanding contribution to native studies in North America. That she has been able to convert such a fragmentary record into such a monumental composition is

a tribute to her tenacity as an investigator and to her quality as a scholar. We are fortunate indeed to have been bequeathed this remarkable achievement.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Mi'kmaq may already have been present in Southern Newfoundland from a very early date on, engaging in seasonal activities or even as a small semi-permanent population. Historically, and perhaps prehistorically as well, Montagnais bands made seasonal excursions to the west coast of Newfoundland. Starting in the second half of the 16th century, Labrador Inuit parties developed a pattern of crossing over to Northern Newfoundland each summer.

<sup>2</sup>However, Marshall does provide many quotes, some of them extensive excerpts, and reproduces at least one document in its entirety (Appendix 1, 235-237). It is to be hoped that her Beothuk data base will eventually be deposited with a research centre, thereby permitting interested persons to consult this voluminous source material at leisure.

<sup>3</sup>In at least one instance, the author has felt obliged to provide a complete transcript of the information inscribed on Shanawdithit's sketch #1 (498-499, n.37). The map on 255 could have been improved by providing different symbols to distinguish between Amerindian and Palaeo-Eskimo sites.

<sup>4</sup>Ones that were spotted are: "Author refers" (5, par.4, line 14); "latest archaeological data" (8, par.2, line 5); "Europeans" (8, par.3, line 2); "postdate" (19, par.4, line 8); "esquimaos" (56, par.2, line 1). "The Penguin Islands are..." (460, note 31). "pêche française" in the title of *La Morandière* (606). In addition to this, Plate 9.1 "Painting of Beothuk and English trading" on p.xxiii is out of place. On 252, Shanawdithit's mother is said to have been killed in 1818, but in 1823 reappears alive [stepmother?]. In note 44, on 461, the author fails to cite Quinn's caveat about salmon fishing in the Bay of Chaleur presumably referring to the Mi'kmaq, and not to the Beothuk.

<sup>5</sup>Keyward Manuels and Edward Tompkins (xviii); Gaspar Corte-Real (15, 626); Verrazzano (17, 640); De Laet (473, 601); the signature on the original document is John Mathews (582); MG 1...série C 11 A (585); Andrews, C.W. n.d. (588); Dennis Bartels (589); Le Blant, Robert and René Beaudry (590); the name of the author who wrote (1965) "James Cook Surveyor of Newfoundland" is missing (593); John J. Honigmann (599); "Medieval Norse" in the title of Robert McGhee (1984a) on 603; there is no Jolliot in the name Charles de La Morandière (606); "préhistoire récente" in the title of Jean-Yves Pinal (1989) on p.609; André Thevet (614); José Mailhot (604); Elizabeth Tooker (1978) is mistakenly conflated with Edward Tompkins on 615; James V. Wright (619); "Giovanni da Verrazzano" in the title of Wroth 1970 (619).

<sup>6</sup>Quinn I,152, doc.121 (459, n.9); Gatchet 1890 (561); Martijn 1981 (570, n.14).

<sup>7</sup>Some plates have a scale [20.1a, 20.4], others do not [20.2, 20.5]. Individual objects on plates are not always numbered. The measurements of mamateek habitations are thrice given in meters and once in feet (356). On one occasion, feet measurements are exceptionally converted into metric (351, par.5). On 375, par.2, sizes of Beothuk snowshoes appear twice in feet, and once in metric measurement. The size of the mythological emblem staves on Cormack's illustration is given in feet (386, fig.24.1), but in the text this has been metrically lengthened. (385, par.5).

<sup>8</sup>With the exceptions of Bakker and Drapeau (1994); and Penney (1994) listed in her bibliography.

<sup>9</sup>Worthy of note are two major contributions to Beothuk archaeology research by Pastore (1992; 1993), and an article by Pope (1993) dealing with aspects of Beothuk scavenging. Other items of interest include Carson (1830) on Beothuk physical characteristics; Hewson (1968) on Beothuk and Algonkian linguistic links; Hewson (1981a) on Beothuk-Mi'kmaq relations; Jackson and Penney (1993), the first history of the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq, containing references to their relationship with the Beothuk; Kirwin (1992) on Beothuk names; Lester (1798), which may be a reference to clashes with Beothuk at Fogo and Tilting Harbour; Rousseau (1962) who provides a minor reference to the Beothuk, dating to 1819; Sparke (1995) and Vollmar (1981) who discuss Shanawdithit's maps; two contributions by Speck (1911; 1917); Such (1978) for an archaeological overview addressed to the general public; Thoms (1967) who wrote an extensive article for *The Book of Newfoundland*; and a research aid by the National Archives of Canada (1992) entitled *Manuscripts and Government Records in the United Kingdom and Ireland Relating to Canada*. Marshall refers to the 18th century "memoirs of the Raudots, father and son, which were written in 1720" (53, 111). She relies on summaries in a publication by La Morandière (1962, I:21-22). These letter reports, composed during 1707-1710, are actually by the son, Antoine-Denis Raudot, and have been published by Rochemonteix (1904), who mistakenly attributed them to Father Antoine Silvy (Horton 1969:554). The original Raudot dispatches, designated by the title "Mémoires sur le Canada attribuées à M. Raudot", are to be found in the Archives des Colonies, France, serie C-11-A, correspondance générale, Canada, Vol.122, Paris.

<sup>10</sup>Among these appendices are useful biographical sketches of eleven prominent White informants (238-246), one other person of mixed Beothuk/Mi'kmaq parentage (245), and a Beothuk namefile (447-450). These cover the 17th to the 19th century. It would also have been useful if brief notices had been added on certain 16th century personages, such as Jean Alfonse, Gaspar Corte-Real, Pierre Crignon, Johannes De Laet, Edward Hayes, Jehan Mallart, André Thevet, and Giovanni da Verrazzano, together with a succinct evaluation of their historical contributions: the reliability of their data, and the manner in which it was compiled. Recent scholarly contributions can facilitate this task, as in the case of Schlesinger and Stabler (1986) and Lestringant (1994) on Thevet. Marshall states categorically that Corte-Real "passed through the Strait of Belle Isle from south to north", but does not provide a source (15). She has Verrazzano trading with the Mi'kmaq of Cape Breton (17), although scholars generally believe that it was with the Penobscot. She refers to Jehan Mallart as a Dutchman (20), and depicts him cruising "along Newfoundland's coast between 1545 and 1547" (332). However, HARRISSE (1968:222-223) describes him as a French poet, writer and apparently a bookseller, who lived from 1540 to 1552 in Paris, and whose name is also spelled Mallard or Maillard. His value as a primary source is questionable. He appears to have borrowed many of his details about the Northeast from Jean Alfonse, including the name "Tabyos" for the Beothuk, and published it in the form of a rhymed verse. Marshall relies on Quinn (1981:33) for a translation of Mallart's phrase "ainsy quung chien ilz vivent en la sorte". In what may have been a rough translation draft which inadvertently found its way into print, Quinn interprets it as meaning that the natives of Newfoundland had dogs, whereas the sense is more or less that these people lived like a dog does, i.e. eating raw meat. On p.473, note 98, Marshall points out correctly that De Laet, a real Dutchman in this case, but who also never set foot in Eastern Canada, amalgamated the



writings of others when compiling his history of the New World. This is important to emphasize because, on past occasions, some authors have used him as a primary source. Richard Whitbourne represents another approach. He consolidated odds and ends of ethnographical data, some perhaps gathered by himself, and attributed to a single Newfoundland population various traits observed among different native groups on the island and in the Strait of Belle-Isle, notably what appears to have been the ownership, by Inuit, of wolf-like husky dogs (Cell 1982:192; Howley 1915:21). Edward Hayes is quoted as saying in 1583 that "in the south parts [of Newfoundland] we found no inhabitants which by all likelihood have abandoned those coasts, the same being so much frequented by Christians" (23). However, Marshall neglects to cite a revealing segment of his testimony to the effect that "the distance between Cape Race and Cape Briton (sic) is 87 leagues. In which Navigation we spent 8 days, having many times the wind indifferent good: yet could we never attain sight of any land all that time, seeing as we were hindred by the current" (Quinn 1979, Vol.IV:36).

<sup>11</sup>For instance, it contains only one reference to Ralph Pastore, a noted student of Beothuk prehistory, and this in connection with Beothuk demographics rather than archaeology. Almost an entire page of the bibliography is devoted to the works of Gerald Penney, which also figure prominently in table 16.1 (265-271). However, his name is altogether missing from the index, even though he was the one who first identified the Little Passage complex, now generally considered to be directly ancestral to the Beothuk.

<sup>12</sup>An occasional odd juxtaposition of words occurs: "Oral traditions of violent interaction between Beothuk and English settlers that formerly flourished in the northern bays..." (4, par.3). Caribou are not normally classified as fur-bearing animals, they have hides [p.3] Elsewhere, she states that "the Beothuk were the direct cultural and *genetic* descendants of the Little Passage Indians", without citing the evidence in support of such a genetic link (13).

<sup>13</sup>Notwithstanding this disclaimer, however, the author later on proposes several models of prehistoric and historic Beothuk subsistence economy (303-310).

<sup>14</sup>It would have been more appropriate to place the word "discovered" in quotation marks. Here as elsewhere, Marshall does not put into practice a decision announced earlier on, to the effect that "quotation marks and other devices have been used to remind the reader of the ethnocentricity inherent in accounts by the English..." (8). For example, on that same page she cites the fact that "the Beothuk's appropriation of settlers' tools or gear has consistently been labelled pilfering or stealing; yet to the Beothuk it may have been a courageous act of retaliation". Despite this cautionary remark, we are told without further ado on 153 that "the Beothuk in turn continued to thief".

<sup>15</sup>Pastore (1989); Pintal (in press); Robbins (1989).

<sup>16</sup>One might argue equally well, *reductio ad absurdum*, that the coastal zone of Newfoundland did not really form part of the Beothuk core homeland since the latter only made trips to it seasonally, spending the remainder of the year inland (or vice versa). Marshall seems unwilling to concede this point, for she suggests that "...hostilities appear to have begun in the area of St. George's Bay, presumably between the Beothuk *who lived there* and the Micmac *who came there to hunt*" (47; emphasis added). The implication here seems to be that the Beothuk, instead of hunting seasonally at that location, just like the Mi'kmaq did, were living there permanently. This is most unlikely in view of what we know about Northern Algonquian settlement patterns, and contradicts what Marshall herself reveals in her book

about the Beothuk way of existence (294-310). In essence, the author argues that the Mi'kmaq were visitors (supposedly coming from across the Cabot Strait, although this is merely an assumption on her part) while the Beothuk, obviously also seasonal visitors to St. George's Bay, are nevertheless designated "owners" of the land because they lived elsewhere in Newfoundland for the remainder of the year. This represents the imposition of an Eurocentric insular outlook on native subsistence practices.

<sup>17</sup>For recent overviews of Mi'kmaq society, see Prins (1996) and Wicken (1994).

<sup>18</sup>Around 1755, on Cape Breton Island, some Mi'kmaq said to Father Pierre Maillard after being pressured by him to become more sedentary: "Why should it be disapproved of that we leave these lands to go and overwinter in other places where we cannot fail to find abundant things on which to subsist, and where our earnings from fur trapping will be well beyond that which we need to pay our debts?" (Maillard 1863:366) [My free translation]. The missionary mentioned voyages to Newfoundland as an example of such seasonal movements.

<sup>19</sup>Despite this fact, tattoos are only mentioned in the index under the heading of "Beothuk, physical appearance" (623). The use of tattooing and facial decoration among Northeastern Algonquians, and specifically the Mi'kmaq, is summarized by Flannery (1939:50-52).

<sup>20</sup>Although Marshall cites this quotation twice (49, 423), she questions its significance with the offhand statement that there are no "reliable European documents of Micmac visits to Newfoundland during the sixteenth century" (42).

<sup>21</sup>Marshall ends up conceding somewhat reluctantly that "several scholars are of the opinion that, while none of this circumstantial evidence is convincing, taken as a whole it suggests Micmac familiarity with Newfoundland and its resources based on visits before the 1600s" (44).

<sup>22</sup>I'm indebted to Professor Peter Pope of Memorial University, St. John's, for drawing this document to my attention.

<sup>23</sup>For two pioneer studies on the Cree, see Ray and Freeman (1978), and Francis and Morantz (1983). For recent studies relating to the Mi'kmaq, see Paul (1993); Prins (1996); Whitehead (1991); and Wicken (1994).

<sup>24</sup>This implies that there was no "permanent" Mi'kmaq population in Southern Newfoundland at that time. However, in line with specific exploitation practices, some Mi'kmaq families may have crossed back and forth regularly from Cape Breton, while other families may have engaged in more prolonged stays. Newfoundland Mi'kmaq oral traditions speak of the "Sayewedjikik" or "Ancients", who were the predecessors and relatives of later Mi'kmaq arrivals (Speck 1922:123).

<sup>25</sup>Marshall does not submit any data indicating that during this period the Mi'kmaq increased their territorial holdings at the expense of the English in the eastern part of Newfoundland.

<sup>26</sup>There is no particular evidence to show that the establishment of a French fort at Placentia in 1662 led to a growing influx of Cape Breton Mi'kmaq. More than likely, the traditional pattern of varied movement between different parts of the Eastern Mi'kmaq island domain was maintained. The 1687 French census of Southern Newfoundland only lists one nuclear native family (3 persons) living in Placentia itself, without indication as to their precise occupation (Thibodeau 1962:205). The proceedings of a court-martial in 1695 suggest that a certain number of Mi'kmaq families were leading an essentially autonomous

existence on the island. In July of that year, two young Frenchmen sought “secluded shelter” for 40 days with an extended Mi’kmaq family “near Placentia”. It may have been a plan to go into hiding prior to attempting desertion by boarding some ship returning to Europe, a common occurrence in those days. The Mi’kmaq group was composed of one married older woman, two unmarried grownup sons, four younger children, and one married daughter, Magdelaine, with her three small children. The woman’s husband and the daughter’s spouse were absent, presumably away on a lengthy hunting trip. After the eldest son, Daniel Turbis, had left “to search for provisions”, everyone else crossed over in a shallop to an island to search for game. Upon arrival, the second son, Claude, set off by himself to go hunting. The two Frenchmen then proceeded to slaughter the remaining members of this native family with pistols and axes, perhaps in order to take possession of their small boat. The badly wounded daughter was thrown overboard holding one baby in her arms, but managed to escape with it by swimming to land. Together with her surviving brothers, she later testified against the murderers who were condemned to death (ANC 1695).

<sup>27</sup>The idea that the French brought in Mi’kmaq mercenaries to Newfoundland probably had its origin in a brief 1694 episode when forty-five Cape Breton Mi’kmaq warriors joined crewmembers of two French vessels on a sea patrol to the island. Some years later, however, when D’Iberville reached Placentia on September 12th, 1696, he only carried three Amerindians on board with him. It has been suggested that these were Cape Breton Mi’kmaq, but at least one of them was an Abenaki chief called Nescambout (Martijn 1989:219). If additional Mi’kmaq accompanied him during his campaign against the English, they must have been recruited locally. Those Mi’kmaq from Cape Breton Island who fought beside the French during the subsequent Spanish War of Succession had come over with their families on their own free will, and were only enrolled after their arrival, together perhaps with local relatives. Generally speaking, the Mi’kmaq were on familiar ground in Newfoundland, and not just better equipped for the woods than the French. Many of them must have known the island from firsthand experience, having lived and hunted there previously. Some had undoubtedly been born there. It was a land which their ancestors had frequented over the course of many centuries. According to De Subercase, the French governor of Placentia, who used them as guides to reach Bay Bulls, they assured him that “they knew the route perfectly well” (NAC 1705).

<sup>28</sup>The Mi’kmaq families who came to Newfoundland from Cape Breton Island in 1705-1706 were engaged in a traditional pattern of rotational migration. Their leaders explained that they had left Cape Breton because of an ecological emergency. Moose and other animals had become scarce and they wanted to give this region time to be repopulated. In short, they had crossed over on their own volition, in accordance with established Mi’kmaq practices, and not at the urging of the French authorities (Martijn 1989:220). Close to sixty Mi’kmaq families were accounted for in southeastern Newfoundland during the period 1706-1708. They appear to have used a network of seasonal base camps, one of them on Saint-Pierre, and others around Fortune Bay and Baie des Experts [Bay d’Espoir ?] in Newfoundland itself. From there they hunted and trapped, and also undertook raids against the English (Martijn 1996a). Occasional visits were paid to the French in order to obtain certain goods, mainly in the form of customary gifts, or else by bartering furs. For the rest, the Mi’kmaq were self sufficient and led their own separate existence on the land. It might be added that French officials were not preoccupied with, or were perhaps simply unaware of, the different factors which triggered such Mi’kmaq migration movements. They evalu-

ated this native population primarily in terms of warriors and guns that it could contribute to war efforts.

<sup>29</sup>Marshall is mistaken on this point. A certain number of these families did return to the mainland in 1708, possibly because sufficient time had elapsed for faunal regeneration to take place on Cape Breton Island. However, the specific reasons are not indicated. In a letter dated December 20th of that year, Father Antoine Gaulin wrote to De Subercase, the Governor of Acadia, that he had held discussions with a group of Mi'kmaq "who came for the most part from Newfoundland". He tried to convince them to settle at the east coast locality of Chedaboctou in Nova Scotia, but they were reluctant to do so, saying that it was too distant from their hunting grounds and that the English were too close. They finally moved to the St. Mary River, twenty leagues to the west of Canso (NAC 1708).

<sup>30</sup>The use of the term "suppos'd" should be underscored. It is unlikely that 18th century English military and naval officers had any detailed understanding of native subsistence activities in Newfoundland.

<sup>31</sup>Janzen (1987:183) has drawn attention to "the existence after 1720 of French inhabitants at several locations on the South Coast, from Grole westward to Cape Ray and beyond to Codroy Island". This situation lasted until 1744 when "the outbreak of hostilities between France and England... forced the settlements there to be abandoned" (*ibid.*, p.194). It included a floating population of seasonal fishermen. See also Magord (1995).

<sup>32</sup>The "canaleses" may have been a more coastal-oriented Montagnais group, which spent a larger part of the year in the Strait of Belle-Isle as compared with shorter seasonal visits by inland groups from the Quebec-Labrador peninsula. Another possibility is that this was a primarily coastland-adapted Little Passage population which ranged both sides of the Strait during the early contact period (Jean-Yves Pinal, pers. comm. 1997). This leaves open the question of a distinctive later Beothuk presence. Elsewhere, due to a misunderstanding, Marshall attributes to the present reviewer the opinion that "the Indians described by Cartier [on the Quebec Lower North Shore in 1534] would have been Iroquois" (18). What Martijn (1990a:56, 58) pointed out is that Jacques Cartier returned to France, in 1534, through the Strait of Belle-Isle, and came back by that same route in 1535. Two St. Lawrence Iroquoian captives, kidnapped by him at Gaspé, were on board during those two voyages and must have observed that a large number of ships congregated each summer within this strait. Upon their return to Stadacona they are likely to have informed their companions of this fact. As a result, for a number of years thereafter, Stadaconans appear to have made seasonal trips to the Strait of Belle-Isle in order to barter there with European fishermen. This relatively short-lived practice seems to have come to an end when these Iroquoians disappeared from the lower St. Lawrence Valley around 1580.

<sup>33</sup>Among other things, Marshall draws attention to an intriguing claim by John Cartwright, in 1768, that the Inuit confronted the Beothuk mostly at sea, using the maneuvering capacity of their kayaks (but probably not umiaks) to advantage (422).

<sup>34</sup>In the same vein, Chapter 11 is entitled "Micmac and Montagnais versus Beothuk: The Final Phase" (154).

<sup>35</sup>Much of this data was previously published in the form of a revisionist article (Marshall 1988), whose conclusions have been strongly contested by Wetzel (1995:246-283).

<sup>36</sup>The reliability of these documents is often difficult to assess, and occasionally even suspect. The collecting of such native accounts was beset by communications problems,

with unilingual Eurocanadians merely paraphrasing the information they struggled to understand. Cormack wrote that when Shanawdithit arrived in St. John's in 1828, "she spoke so little English that those only who were accustomed to her gibberish, could understand her" (202). None of the stories by aboriginal speakers were recorded in their original language, and with one exception these informants are not identified by name. It is also quite evident that people like John Cartwright, John Peyton Jr., William E. Cormack, Bishop John Inglis, and various English naval officers interpolated personal preconceptions into their accounts, with the image of the "bloodthirsty savage" being freely promulgated. Marshall does not always distance herself enough from such procedures to be seen as impartial. For example, she attributes to Tom June, a Beothuk captive, the observation found in Cartwright that there existed between Mi'kmaq and Beothuk "so mortal an enmity that they never meet but bloody combat ensues" (47). Not everyone will agree with her on this point after checking the original text. She likewise accepts at face value Bishop Inglis's claim that this enmity "has been implacable and of the deadliest character for about 150 years" [*ibid.*]. Elsewhere, however, she feels obliged to reject another, equally extreme, declaration by Inglis in 1827, to the effect that the "Esquimeaux...shoot at the Boeothick as they shoot at the Deer". According to Marshall, "since Inuit no longer came far enough south to interact with Beothuk, Inglis was obviously misinformed" (55). One wonders whether he might not have been misinformed on both counts.

<sup>37</sup>Friction between Mi'kmaq and Montagnais in Newfoundland, relating to competition for fur resources, was reported as late as 1882 (Martijn 1990b:238-239).

<sup>38</sup>No demographic statistics are available, but based on early 19th century figures it is unlikely that the Mi'kmaq men, women and children in Newfoundland would have numbered more than two hundred persons at that time. As for the Beothuk, Marshall cautions that any population size estimations are "fraught with uncertainty", but notes that a figure of 500 persons is commonly suggested today (283-284). Individual Beothuk bands may have numbered between 30-55 persons (283).

<sup>39</sup>The author considers that "the Micmac who lived in Newfoundland as well as those who came to the island to hunt and trap were generally hostile towards the Beothuk" (155). She accords much emphasis to a declaration attributed to Shanawdithit by Cormack, regarding the existence of "an invariable religious principle laid down by her people to sacrifice to the munes [spirits of the dead ?] of the victims slain by the whites and Mik-maks any Boeothuic who had been in contact with them" (379). Interestingly enough, this practice does not seem to have been in force during the 18th century, as witness the case of Tom June, a Beothuk captive, who was allowed periodic visits to his native parents, and who even introduced them to his White employer (124). The author also stresses the fear which Shanawdithit had of the Mi'kmaq, because one of them, called Noel Boss, had allegedly wounded her with his gun on one occasion. Was this an isolated incident ? Noel Boss has been demonized as a Beothuk killer (Howley 1915:279; Hewson 1981b:228). Yet, Howley (1915:279) relates that a Mi'kmaq informant, Noel Mathews, spoke of Noel Boss as being well-disposed towards the Beothuk, and as having made friendly overtures to them on several occasions. Who are we to believe ? Hewson (1981b) provides a biographical sketch of Noel Boss. He was probably the Noel Bask, married to Marie Anne Peter, both identified as Amerindians, whose name is mentioned in the parish register of Miquelon on May 1st, 1825, at the baptism of their daughter Maly [i.e. Mary] Bask (Martijn 1996b:72).

<sup>40</sup>Marshall states that beginning in 1765, various Mi'kmaq families "returned to Cape Breton Island and elsewhere in Nova Scotia because, without permission, Micmac were not allowed to stay in Newfoundland beyond the month of October" (50). She refers here to an edict issued by Governor Hugh Palliser. In actual fact, the Mi'kmaq simply ignored this order, to the acute frustration of Palliser, who could not enforce it. Indeed, its legality was questioned by Governor Montague Wilmot of Nova Scotia (Balcom and Martijn n.d.).

<sup>41</sup>The Beothuk were caught in a vise between the English settlers to the north and the Mi'kmaq to the south. The Mi'kmaq expansion had itself been triggered by increasing pressures exerted on their hunting territories in Cape Breton, the Magdalen Islands and mainland Nova Scotia, as English colonization progressed.

<sup>42</sup>In 1792, George Cartwright spoke of "implacable enemies" (Howley 1915:48-49), which was echoed six years later by Captain Ambrose Crofton (154). Reporting in 1801, Captain H.F. Edgell qualified the Beothuk as being "persecuted" by the settlers, but "hunted" by the Mi'kmaq (154). Governor John Holloway claimed quite erroneously in 1809 that "the [Beothuk] Indians keep in the interior of the Island...from a Dread of the Micmacs who come over from Cape Breton" (495, n.73). The following year, Captain William Parker used the term "open war" (155), and so on, and so forth. Marshall tends to refrain from engaging in a critique of such sources. She describes Captain Hercules Robinson as having "patrolled the Newfoundland coast in 1820" [*ibid.*], leaving the impression that his reference that year to a Mi'kmaq "war of extermination" was based on firsthand observation. In actual fact, as we learn from Howley (1915:127), the only information he had on the Mi'kmaq came from memories retained of conversations held on board of his ship with the Rev. John Leigh from Harbour Grace, in Conception Bay! In passing, as late as 1882, the Rev. Frederic Lloyd could still enthral his readers with the statement that "a deadly feud has existed for a lengthened period between the Micmac and Mountaineer [Montagnais] tribes, arising from disputed rights of trapping in the North and West of the island" (Martijn 1990b:238).

<sup>43</sup>Budgel (1992) has pointed out how strongly this myth is now embedded in Newfoundland literature. Howley (1915:26) was the first one to cast doubt on these imprecise and confused details. Joseph Jukes, quoting John Peyton Jr., states that "the French offered a reward for the head of every Red Indian" (Howley 1915:26). Cormack says that "the Europeans (French)..., who we may suppose were not over scrupulous in dealing out equity in those days, offered a reward for the persons or heads of certain Red Indians" (Howley 1915:183). Marshall cites another account by Cormack in which he specified that the Beothuk had incurred "the displeasure of the French *fur-traders*" and that the Beothuk heads were to be brought "to the quarters of the French commandant at *Marasheen*" [p.48]. There is a Merasheen Island in the upper part of Placentia Bay (Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names 1968:143), but it does not appear that a French fort was ever located there (Cuff 1995:11-12). It is always possible, however, that the Mi'kmaq applied the name "Marasheen" to the general area of Placentia Bay. This detail requires further investigation.

<sup>44</sup>Not a single reference to such a decision is to be found in the French colonial archives, nor do these contain any record of a bounty ever being paid for a Beothuk scalp. Oddly enough, Marshall favours a date as late as 1720 for this supposed event (49), that is to say seven years *after* the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) when Newfoundland had been ceded to the English, and the French no longer maintained a garrison at Placentia. The only informal French presence on the island at that time was a small resident population scattered from

Codroy on the west coast to Grole on the south coast, in addition to yearly visits by French vessels in accordance with seasonal fishing rights (Janzen 1987; Magord 1995). The closest French government authorities were on Cape Breton Island (Rawlyk 1994), and at Brador on the Quebec Lower North Shore where François Martel de Brouague, commandant of the coast for the King, had a trading establishment (Niellon 1996). During the 1700s, Montagnais hunting parties were accustomed to overwinter in Newfoundland, and Brouague actually encouraged them to try and establish contact with the Beothuk in order to draw the latter into the fur trade (Martijn 1990b:232-233). From a commercial point of view then, putting a bounty on Beothuk scalps would not have made any sense for the French. The same held true from a political point of view. The Beothuk did not constitute a menace to the French and were not allied with the English against them. Indeed, in 1694, the French governor of Placentia, De Brouillan, reported "the discovery of Indians [i.e. Beothuk] who live in the southern part of Newfoundland [and are] people so unwarlike that the least number of Europeans causes them to flee, being only attached to hunting..." (NAC 1694). This particular encounter may have taken place somewhere in the upper reaches of Placentia Bay. Finally, the suggestion by Bishop John Inglis (47) that various incidents of scavenging and pilfering would have led French officials to "offer a reward for every Beothuk, dead or alive" seems patently absurd. Thoms (1967:232) cites supposed Beothuk attacks in the Petit Nord during the first half of the 17th century as a possible motive for French retaliation, but as Marshall indicates, we now know that most of these skirmishes involved the Inuit (51-53).

<sup>45</sup>According to Marshall herself (68), with respect to the Beothuk, "already in 1770 George Cartwright observed that 'the bird islands are so continuously robbed [by the settlers] that the poor Indians must now find it much more difficult than before to produce provisions for the summer and this difficulty will annually become greater'". Indeed, English settlers eventually became responsible for the extinction of the great auk on Funk Island. As far as accusations about slaughtering caribou are concerned, it should be pointed out that the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq did not lack defenders on other occasions. Commenting on such charges, a sportsman, Captain W.R. Kennedy (1881:15) wrote, "I feel confident that they are guiltless. The [caribou] and beaver supply them with food, and they could not exist without them; therefore it is their interest to protect them, killing merely what they require. Not so the white settlers, who openly boast of the number they slaughter in the winter time for the sake of their hides and horns". Likewise, Millais (1907:221) observed that, "on the whole the [Mi'kmaq] Indians are not wasteful in their methods... as every part of a deer [i.e. caribou] is used, and they never kill one unless it is for some special purpose". As always, there may have been exceptions to the rule, but no reasons exist for believing that the Mi'kmaq engaged in the indiscriminate killing of animals on a regular basis.

<sup>46</sup>Among other things, as a result of their general avoidance policy in regard to Europeans, the Beothuk were the only native group in Eastern Canada not to adopt the use of firearms (421).

<sup>47</sup>Marshall makes the innovative suggestion that certain Beothuk acts of filching or destroying Eurocanadian property may have been intended as feats of bravery to gain prestige (112).

<sup>48</sup>The archaeology chapter is a succinct survey which aims to situate the Beothuk within a framework of Newfoundland prehistory. Table 16.1 (265-271) provides a listing of archaeological sites with indications as to cultural affiliation and regional distribution. A second list, covering presumed Beothuk burials, will be found on 412-415. For an historical

overview of how Beothuk archaeology has developed in recent years, one must turn to Pastore (1993).

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