

KRUPNIK, Igor and Lars KRUTAK, 2002 *Akuzilleput Igaqullghet Our Words Put to Paper. Sourcebook in St. Lawrence Island Yupik Heritage and History*, compiled and edited by Igor Krupnik, Willis Walunga (Kepelgu) and Vera Metcalf (Qaakaghleq), Washington, Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of Natural History, Arctic Studies Center, 460 pages.

Steven A. Jacobson

Volume 28, numéro 2, 2004

Espaces-Lieux-Noms
Spaces-Places-Names

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/013210ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/013210ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Association Inuksiitiit Katimajit Inc.
Centre interuniversitaire d'études et de recherches autochtones (CIÉRA)

ISSN

0701-1008 (imprimé)
1708-5268 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Jacobson, S. A. (2004). Compte rendu de [KRUPNIK, Igor and Lars KRUTAK, 2002 *Akuzilleput Igaqullghet Our Words Put to Paper. Sourcebook in St. Lawrence Island Yupik Heritage and History*, compiled and edited by Igor Krupnik, Willis Walunga (Kepelgu) and Vera Metcalf (Qaakaghleq), Washington, Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of Natural History, Arctic Studies Center, 460 pages.] *Études/Inuit/Studies*, 28(2), 231–233. <https://doi.org/10.7202/013210ar>

KRUPNIK, Igor and Lars KRUTAK

2002 *Akuzilleput Igaqullghet Our Words Put to Paper. Sourcebook in St. Lawrence Island Yupik Heritage and History*, compiled and edited by Igor Krupnik, Willis Walunga (Kepelgu) and Vera Metcalf (Qaakaghllleq), Washington, Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of Natural History, Arctic Studies Center, 460 pages.

The 1000 or more Yupik people of St. Lawrence Island are unique among Eskimo—east of Alaska read "Inuit"—in a number of ways. While politically part of Alaska, and thus of the United States, St. Lawrence Island is essentially an offshore island of Asian Russia separated from the Asian mainland by one quarter the span of ocean that separates it from the Alaskan mainland. For this reason the St. Lawrence Islander Yupik are not nearly as close biologically or culturally to the Central Yup'ik (or to the Inupiaq) of Alaska as they are to the 1000 or more Yupik people of the Chukotkan Peninsula, who share a common language and culture with the St. Lawrence Islanders, except in-so-far as there have been cultural effects on both sides from the differing political, social and economic systems of the US and Russia in the last 100 years or so (a fact which in itself would provide material for much study—though not the subject of the book being reviewed). St. Lawrence Island and Chukotkan Peninsula Yupik (collectively termed "Siberian Yupik" in Alaska) have strong historic ties with the adjoining Chukchi of the Asian side, a fact reflected in the Siberian Yupik language, and are in fact the only Eskimo (Inuit) group that has borrowed culturally or linguistically to any extent from another indigenous group.

Given all these fascinating features of the Island's people, it is not surprising that anthropologists and non-professional observers have over the last century—and longer—created a wealth of documentation, written and photographic, of the St. Lawrence Island Yupik. The book *Akuzilleput Igaqullghet Our Words Put to Paper*, (subtitled *Sourcebook in St. Lawrence Island Yupik Heritage and History*), was compiled by Igor Krupnik (formerly of Moscow where he specialized in Chukotkan Peninsula Yupik ethnology) and Lars Krutak, anthropologists at the Smithsonian, and edited by Krupnik, Willis Walunga (Kepelgu) and Vera Metcalf (Qaakaghllleq), the later two themselves St. Lawrence Island Yupik. It undertakes, very successfully, the task of "combining historical documents with present-day elders' stories [...] bridging old documents with memories and knowledge shared among the community members" (p. 340).

The first four parts of the book present census lists going back to 1900, notebook entries, diary sections, reports, etc. of teachers, doctors, earlier anthropologists, and other non-Yupik observers, plus some accounts by Yupik people written down in decades past by themselves and others, all dealing with such topics as pre-Christian festivals and practices, birth and death rituals, social structure (including the "clan" system, found in no group of Eskimos other than the Siberian Yupik), famines and epidemics, whale hunting, reindeer herding, and school attendance. Quite a few high quality photographs, especially portraits of individual Yupik, and a number of drawings are included. As pointed out in the introduction (p. 18), the problem was not one of finding enough material to fill the volume, but rather selecting what to include

from the truly vast amount of available material. A very strong point of the presentation, and one which makes it most meaningful to the present and future of the St. Lawrence Island (and Chukotkan Peninsula) Yupik, is that, whenever possible, every individual mentioned through English names, nicknames, or Yupik names spelled haphazardly, or pictured in photographs, is identified by his or her Yupik name written in the modern accurate orthography of the language. This identification was done by Walunga and other elders together with Metcalf and other younger Yupik writers as Christopher Koonooka. The present-day Yupik know their ancestry quite well through the 100 years covered by the book, and Yupik names are "recycled," so, as Vera Metcalf states, "this book represents not only the return of these stories, pictures, and details to us; it also returned our responsibility as guardians of our past and its lessons back to us" (p. 11).

The fifth part of the book, "Old Papers, Today's Elders: Matching Memories and Written Records," consists largely of history told by present day Yupik elders, recorded, transcribed, and translated in the past few years. In this section there are occasional references and correlations with descriptions of the same events or situations in the paper record from previous years, for example, the note concerning an earlier description of a devastating flood in Gambell now described anew (p. 408). There could have been more such cross-references, though perhaps their paucity is due to the authors' intention that "the printed text once again becomes one of many 'equal' participants in the *open* discussion" (p. 340) (*italics mine*). Certainly, St. Lawrence Island Yupik people would have no trouble correlating the people and events mentioned or described in two or more places in the book.

The only technical defect the reviewer noticed with this book is that p. 258 mentions illustrations made from Elliott's original sketches of 1875, saying that "eight are reproduced here." The eight are indeed included in the book, but not until p. 330. This is a very minor defect; the book seems quite free of typographic and similar errors. The volume is beautifully and meticulously crafted, the photos, technically excellent to start with, are beautifully printed, and complete directions are given concerning where to find more material if one wants to delve deeper into any of the sources from which the various selections have been made. This book will be invaluable for St. Lawrence Island Yupik people, for anthropologists and other scholars, and for that growing group of scholars who themselves are Yupik, as represented by the Walunga, Metcalf, Koonooka, and the other St. Lawrence Islanders who worked on this book.

Any reader of this book will wonder whether a similar book exists or could be made for the Yupik people of Chukotka, a book which would be as interesting and useful as this one is and which could be used in conjunction with it as a pair of sourcebooks for the Siberian Yupik of Lawrence Island and Chukotka taken as a whole. In fact such a book exists. It is *Pust' Govoryat Nashi Stariki, Chukotkam Yupigita Ungipamsugit, Rasskazy Aziatskikh Eskimosov-yupik, Zapisi 1975-1987gg.* (Let Our Elders Speak, Stories of the Yupik [Asiatic Eskimo] of Chukotka, Writings 1975-1987), compiled and written by Igor Krupnik, edited by Aynganga Lydmila (Yupik culture authority in Chukotka), published in 2000 by "Knowledge

Repatriation," Siberian-St. Lawrence Island Yupik Heritage Project, financed by the National Science Foundation. This book is in Russian, with Yupik words written in the Cyrillic orthography for the language that has been used in Chukotka for many decades now.

Akuzilleput Igaqullghet is written in a way so that it is quite readable for all, and is strongly recommended by this reviewer to anyone who has an interest in the St. Lawrence Islanders or more generally the Siberian Yupik in and of themselves, as the westernmost group of Eskimo (Inuit), as essentially the only indigenous people found in both America and Russia, or as the one group of Eskimo (Inuit) who have been deeply influenced by another indigenous people (the Chukchi). The book also will serve as a model of the relatively new style of ethnology whereby the group whose history and culture is being described actively participates in formulating the description of themselves.

Steven A. Jacobson
Alaska Native Language Center
University of Alaska Fairbanks
P.O. Box 757680
Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-7680
USA
ffsaj@uaf.edu

LEE, Molly and Gregory A. REINHARDT

2003 *Eskimo architecture: dwelling and structure in the early historic period*, Fairbanks, University of Alaska Press and University of Alaska Museum, 216 pages.

Ce très beau livre magnifiquement et abondamment illustré par des dessins et des photos se veut une introduction à l'architecture inuit du début de la période historique. Les auteurs y soutiennent le point de vue de Mauss (1906) selon lequel l'alternation saisonnière des habitations d'hiver et d'été caractérise mieux l'architecture des Inuit que le stéréotype de l'iglou de neige habituellement associé à ces derniers. Les quatre chapitres principaux couvrent les régions suivantes: 1) le Groenland, 2) l'Arctique central (incluant le Labrador), 3) le nord-ouest de l'Arctique et le détroit de Béring, et 4) le sud-ouest de l'Alaska, la mer de Béring, la Sibérie et le golfe de l'Alaska. On peut d'ailleurs se demander pourquoi les auteurs ont choisi de présenter ces régions d'est en ouest alors que les premières migrations de diverses populations inuit venaient de l'ouest. En commençant par l'architecture de l'Arctique occidental, le lecteur aurait mieux compris l'absence ou l'ajout d'éléments architecturaux dans l'Arctique central et au Groenland.

Malgré de nombreuses coquilles, une façon arbitraire de mettre en italiques certains mots en langue inuit et l'agaçante habitude d'ajouter un «s» à des ethnonymes