

LUTZ, Hartmut (ed.), 2005 *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab: Text and Context*, Translated by Hartmut Lutz and students from the University of Greifswald, Germany, Ottawa, University of Ottawa Press, 100 pages.

Peter C. Evans

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[See table of contents](#)

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les sciences sociales. Laugrand montre clairement que la réception du christianisme par les Inuit a été le résultat d'un long processus dynamique, complexe et multidimensionnel.

D'un point de vue plus général, l'auteur permet par son analyse une compréhension de deux dynamiques fondamentales de la culture, soit sa formation et sa transformation constante par l'entremise des acteurs et l'action filtrante des schèmes culturels. Cette facette du travail de Laugrand en fait une référence essentielle pour ceux et celles qui s'intéressent à la rencontre des cultures.

Nathalie Ouellette
Direction des services archéologiques
Direction générale des lieux historiques nationaux
Parcs Canada
25 rue Eddy, 5ième étage, station 23 (25-5-Y)
Gatineau (Québec) K1A 0M5
Canada
Nathalie.Ouellette@pc.gc.ca

LUTZ, Hartmut (ed.)

2005 *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab: Text and Context*, Translated by Hartmut Lutz and students from the University of Greifswald, Germany, Ottawa, University of Ottawa Press, 100 pages.

In 1880, eight Inuit from Northern Labrador perished of smallpox while touring Europe in one of the then-popular *Volkerschauen*, or ethnic shows—cultural circuses where Europeans could marvel at the existence, appearance, and skills of other peoples. Their story, marked as it is by “economic greed and exploitation, by ignorance and prejudice, by scholarly and popular curiosity, and by callousness and racism” (Lutz 2005: xxvi), might have been lost to obscurity, were it not for the literary accomplishments of one of the adult males, Abraham, a 35-year-old Christian Inuk and member of the Moravian congregation at Hebron, Labrador. Abraham left behind a diary of his travels and several letters, which survive in a German translation done by one of the missionaries at Hebron (the Inuktitut originals have vanished). Abraham’s diary is significant for a number of reasons, but chiefly, as Thode-Arora (2002) pointed out recently, because it is the only extant account of a European ethnic show by one of the “ethnic” participants, and because, as Lutz says in this new work, it is the first known autobiographical text by an Inuk.

It is fortunate that the diary exists at all. After the deaths of the Inuit, the show’s impresario sent several parcels of possessions back to Hebron—among which, presumably, was Abraham’s diary. In Hebron, the diary was translated into German and copied by missionary Brother Kretschmer. Thereafter it was forgotten, until J. Garth Taylor and Helga Taylor rediscovered the German copy in the Moravian archives in Bethlehem Pennsylvania, and duly published an article on it in *Canadian Geographic* (Taylor 1981). In 1991 and 2002, another scholar published an excellent

article on the diary, in which he contextualized it with a contemporaneous diary kept by Jacobsen (Thode-Arora 2002).

The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab: Text and Context, began as a classroom project between Lutz and his students at the University of Greifswald. Lutz, his students, and his contributors have given us a much needed and finely shaded translation of Abraham's fascinating diary and a textured account of the tragedy of the Inuit in Europe. As the deck in the title promises, furthermore, this is not just the text, but also the context for its full appreciation.

Lutz's *Diary* is made up of a series of texts meant to surround, contextualize, and enrich our appreciation of Abraham's diary. There are at least 15 different elements, from foreword to multiple appendices; these include several letters written by Abraham to a Moravian missionary, diaries and annual reports kept by the Moravian Church, contemporaneous press reports, and a racist scientific article written by Dr. Rudolf Virchow. As Lutz points out, these were all available in German and his students took great pleasure in their discovery and rendering into English. The book is dedicated to "The Inuit People of Labrador," and royalties go to the Marg and Howard Adams Scholarship. As Lutz explains:

Our empathy with the human suffering of these eight visitors to our country only 125 years ago was the primary motivational force for my students and myself to translate Abraham's diary, and to try to make it available to a non-German reading public in Canada, especially hoping that there might be descendants of Terrianiak's and Abraham's extended families, who might be interested to read the diary. We were also motivated by the historical, geographic, and cultural contexts and legacies, which connect us to both the Inuit visitors and their missionaries and 'masters' (p. 72).

The unfortunate practice of importing exotic peoples from the edges of the colonial world for zoos and ethnic shows had been inaugurated by the impresario and menagerie owner Carl Hagenbeck a few years before the Labrador Inuit visited Europe. Hagenbeck's agent, a Norwegian recruiter named Johan Adrien Jacobsen, had brought a group of Greenlanders in 1877 for one of Hagenbeck's shows. The Inuit had returned to Greenland after much success before great audiences, and soon Hagenbeck was eager to mount another show.

Jacobsen set out in the spring of 1880 in his newly christened *Eisbar* (Polar Bear) to recruit Greenlanders for Hagenbeck. However, after repeated frustrations dealing with the Danish authorities, Jacobsen ended up cruising the Baffin and Labrador straits all summer looking for Inuit to recruit. He eventually found them on the northern coast of Labrador. The recruits consisted of two families, each slightly different in association and identity. One family was made up of non-Christian Inuit from the region North of Hebron, who traded with the HBC depot at Nachvak—Terrianiak, about 40, his wife Paingo, perhaps 50, and their teenage daughter Noggasuk. The other family consisted of Abraham, 35, his wife Ulrikab, 24, four-year-old daughter Sara and the infant Maria. Abraham's unmarried nephew, Tobias, 21, also signed on to travel to Europe. Lutz points out that Abraham's letters to Br. Elsner in Bremen contain his

motivations for joining Hagenbeck's ethnic show: Abraham was in debt at the trade store, he wanted to buy a net, and "he was curious to see Europe" (p. 70).

In many respects, Abraham was the quintessential Labrador Inuk of the 19th century, in the self-conscious manner in which he blended Inuit and Christian virtues, and traditional Inuit values and goals with European artisan skills and Christianizing zeal. As one newswriter in Frankfurt commented when the Inuit arrived at the Zoological Gardens to visit:

Abraham is 35 years old; he is the most intelligent of all of them [...]. At the same time he takes the task of an interpreter, is able to read and write, is also said to be musical and to try his hand at drawings, but with moving into the new dwelling and unpacking his possessions, the Northern whiz did not yet have the time and was not yet at leisure to show himself in all his variety (p. 49).

The recruitment and exhibition of both Christian and non-Christian Inuit together in the ethnic shows was an intentional portrayal, for purposes of moral play, of divisions in Labrador Inuit society, divisions that gathered around religion and trade and which were in part promoted by the missionaries. Ironically, for all the Christians' learning, European audiences were more interested in displays of traditional "Eskimo" skills: kayak paddling, seal killing, walking about in skin clothing, etc. Abraham exhibited all these, but spent his off time writing, praying with visiting Moravians, watching out for Catholics, and looking for good music. The same Frankfurt news writer commented that the non-Christian Inuit from the Nachvak area, Terrianiak, Paingo, and Noggasuk, were "[...] more interesting than the one named first [Abraham], in so far as culture has not smudged too much of their naturalness" (p. 51).

The diary portion offers a wonderful glimpse into Abraham's views on Europe and Europeans, the daily minutiae of their journeys, and especially, his feelings on religious practice. Although Lutz doesn't say much about the literary tradition in Labrador, it is an apparent fact of Labrador Inuit history that writing—what we would call transactional writing today—was modified and deployed by Inuit as a means of negotiating power and relations with authorities. Several events in the days covered by Abraham's diary show as much, for example:

7 Nov. Had sorrow again. Our companion, the unmarried Tobias, was beaten with a dog whip by our master, Jacobsen. Mr. Jacobsen was immediately furious because, as he said, Tobias never obeyed him and had got himself into trouble too often. He was nearly not taken and sent away. If Mr. Jacobsen does that twice I shall write to England as I am told. Afterwards, he was very friendly towards me so that I don't write. Even our two wives were immediately bought silk ribbons (p. 29).

The book's cover features a colour drawing of the Hebron mission church and dwelling house and the Christian Inuit done by Nunavut artist Alootook Ipellie. Historic photographs of the Inuit from several archival and private sources accompany the text. One of the lengthy appendices is a collection of photos by Hans Blohm of the Labrador Coast in the district of Hebron, as well as other Moravian sites of interest.

The book will appeal to students of Labrador history, or anyone with an interest in the development of Inuit literature. Lutz's passion for shepherding the project is apparent at every turn of the page. However, I have a few nagging complaints about the book. The editor's comments about a dispute he had with the struggling Labrador ethnographic institution, *Them Days* magazine and its founder, for starters, are out of place in an introduction. While that is a relatively small complaint, there is one significant flaw in *The Diary*: it lacks a book's organizing principle, and feels sometimes like a collection of texts printed back to back or side to side. The texts are interesting on their own terms, but their arrangement is distracting. This error makes it difficult to enjoy the individual elements on their own—Hans Blohm's fine photos for one, and the excellent translation of Abraham's diary for another. I could not escape the impression that the editorial vision of the book had managed to re-marginalize Abraham's voice. The decision to publish small bits of Abraham's diary over many more pages than is necessary, surrounded by other texts, makes it nearly impossible to follow the diary. It is fine for the reader to have to work hard to get maximum benefit out of the texts, but a different architecture would have made life much easier. This editorial problem manifests partly as an overabundance of font styles.

While the subtitle of the book, text and context, tells us what Lutz had in mind, under the "context" category there is a surprising absence—the diary of Mr. Jacobsen, which treats the same time period and events that Abraham's does. Thode-Arora contrasted both texts in a 1991 article (reprinted in 2002). Lutz refers in several places to the diary, but its absence from a book purporting to offer the text and context of Abraham's writing is mystifying to me. Despite the appearance of several major works of scholarship and publishing in the last few years, a lot remains to say about the 19th and early 20th century travels of Inuit in Europe. *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab* is a valuable contribution to that conversation. Ultimately, however, this is not the definitive work on Abraham and his companions, although it contains most of the elements to compose a better work.

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Peter C. Evans
Scott Polar Research Institute
Cambridge University
Lensfield Road
Cambridge CB2 1ER
UK
pce21@cam.ac.uk

McGHEE, Robert

2004 *The last imaginary place. A human history of the arctic world*, Gatineau,
Canadian Museum of Civilization et Key Porter Books, 296 pages.

Le livre de Robert McGhee s'adresse à un très large public intéressé par l'aspect romantique et aventurier de la conquête du Grand Nord plus qu'à sa préhistoire. L'approche est personnelle et l'auteur, qui a une longue expérience de l'archéologie dans l'Arctique, se projette dans son récit avec ses enthousiasmes, ses émotions et ses idées originales. Le style, fort vivant, transmet agréablement sa sensibilité et sa subjectivité en se référant abondamment à ses propres expériences de terrain, selon un parti pris courant en Amérique du Nord. Mais ce parti pris est absent de nombrilisme comme de fausse modestie.

Dans son court *Prelude* qui ouvre l'ouvrage, McGhee raconte les circonstances et les influences qui lui ont donné le goût et une perception personnelle de l'Arctique. Il explique que son histoire de la zone polaire ne vise pas au pittoresque et à l'exotique, mais au contraire à intégrer cette région dans le champ global de l'expansion de l'humanité. Le premier chapitre, de neuf pages seulement, retrace la mise en place du climat et de l'environnement arctiques dans la continuation du dernier «Âge de Glace» et celle des populations qui s'y trouvent jusqu'à maintenant. Ensuite, en une douzaine de pages qui s'appuient sur une documentation originale et bien choisie, il évoque l'Arctique mythique des Grecs et les représentations souvent fantasmatiques, parfois ésotériques, qui en ont découlé jusqu'au milieu du 20^e siècle. Cela le conduit, dans le troisième chapitre, à présenter en 22 pages les relations de l'homme au milieu arctique. Sans vraiment suivre une progression chronologique mais en s'appuyant sur ses expériences et celles de collègues, il explique l'environnement et les modes d'adaptation des hommes, leurs spécificités culturelles, leur mode de représentation du monde, le chamanisme, tout en esquissant, mais sans intention pédagogique, les grandes lignes de la préhistoire de l'Arctique depuis les grottes du Poisson Bleu jusqu'aux Inuit, en passant par les Prédorsétiens et les Dorsétiens. Les Inuit, auxquels il assimile implicitement les Thuléens, ne sont encore évoqués que par leurs récits concernant les Tuniit, terme synonyme de Dorsétien pour McGhee.

Le chapitre suivant consacre 28 pages à l'Arctique sibérien. L'histoire de l'exploration russe de la Sibérie s'y mêle avec les aventures personnelles de l'auteur et quelques esquisses du mode de vie des petits peuples autochtones, sans négliger les changements impliqués par la colonisation soviétique. De la Sibérie, nous passons à la saga de l'Atlantique Nord et aux colonies vikings du Groenland. Ce thème, cher à