

McCARTNEY, Allen P. (ed.), 2003 *Indigenous Ways to the Present: Native Whaling in the Western Arctic*, Edmonton, Canadian Circumpolar Institute Press, Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press.

Kerrie Ann Shannon

Volume 31, Number 1-2, 2007

Tchoukotka
Chukotka

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/019742ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/019742ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

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

ISSN

0701-1008 (print)
1708-5268 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Shannon, K. A. (2007). Review of [McCARTNEY, Allen P. (ed.), 2003 *Indigenous Ways to the Present: Native Whaling in the Western Arctic*, Edmonton, Canadian Circumpolar Institute Press, Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press.] *Études/Inuit/Studies*, 31(1-2), 387–388. <https://doi.org/10.7202/019742ar>

McCARTNEY, Allen P. (ed.)

2003 *Indigenous Ways to the Present: Native Whaling in the Western Arctic*,
Edmonton, Canadian Circumpolar Institute Press, Salt Lake City,
University of Utah Press.

The collection of articles in the McCartney edited book, *Indigenous Ways to the Present*, focuses on mainly Yupik and Inupiat whaling practices in Alaska with some contributions including Russian data. The late Allen McCartney had a prolific career working the Arctic and this edited volume is one of his last contributions. The 15 articles in the collection cover broad theoretical and thematic topics. Specific articles focus on topics which range from climate change, to the historical significance of whaling, to population size of whales. The volume incorporates both archaeological data and contemporary whaling practices thereby including both past and present whaling traditions spanning over 2,000 years. McCartney and Harritt outline three themes in the collection: the importance of variation in whaling practices, a historical account of Yupik and Inupiat whaling, and issues relating to changing environmental conditions.

The individual articles are well researched and written. For the reader who specifically wants more detail on Inupiaq and Yupik whaling this book is an excellent resource. The collection provides a comprehensive overview of whaling in the Western Arctic. The contributors to the book have expertise from a variety of backgrounds such as anthropology, archaeology, indigenous knowledge and geological sciences. A benefit of placing these complementary articles with a specific focus on native whaling in one volume is that it provides a basis for the reader to make regional and temporal comparisons where both commonalities and differences in practices can be examined. Although the articles work well in a collection, each article can also be taken independently of the volume. Bodenhorn in her contribution exploring strategic decision making of fall whaling in Barrow is careful to explain the flexibility in indigenous practices. She uses case examples to demonstrate how decisions are made in response to changing conditions and highlights this flexibility. The sense of change as a continual process with respect to indigenous knowledge is also addressed by a Native voice in Herbert Anungazuk's contribution. Anungazuk reflects on the importance of whaling historically for Inupiat as well as comments on the current traditions. A focus on traditions as changing supports an important aspect of indigenous knowledge more generally. The multidisciplinary collection brings together articles that also illustrate the flexibility of indigenous knowledge to changing environmental conditions over time. This is a valuable approach to indigenous knowledge and could be replicated elsewhere.

An expanded introduction or conclusion would have greatly strengthened the volume. As this book takes a multidisciplinary approach, it requires an introduction which would draw connections across disciplinary boundaries. The two page introduction is insufficient to provide cohesiveness for this collection. Moreover, the connections between the various stages in time and the regional differences in whaling would have been stronger if they were specifically addressed by the editor and fellow contributors rather than left to the reader. Although this collection of articles

specifically addresses whaling in the Western Arctic, it can also be used as a role model for an approach to understanding indigenous knowledge more generally. The diverse collection of articles illustrates that if we want to understand more about whaling in the Western Arctic it is important to understand variety and flexibility as part of indigenous knowledge.

Kerrie Ann Shannon
Department of Anthropology
University of Alaska Fairbanks
Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-7720, USA
ffkas@uaf.edu

PLUMET, Patrick

2004 *Peuples du Grand Nord*, tome I: *Des mythes à la préhistoire*, Paris, Éditions Errance, 322 pages.

2004 *Peuples du Grand Nord*, tome II: *Vers l'«Esquimau»: Du mammouth à la baleine*, Paris, Éditions Errance, 288 pages.

Cet ouvrage va bien au-delà de ce qui constitue son fil directeur, «le cheminement de l'adaptation préhistorique de l'Humanité aux régions nordiques» (I: 9): le tour de force réalisé par Patrick Plumet, professeur honoraire au Département des sciences de la terre de l'Université du Québec à Montréal, consiste en ce qu'il parvient à concilier la présentation encyclopédique et synthétique de connaissances touchant à de nombreux domaines et disciplines scientifiques, et cela, sans du tout «perdre» ses lecteurs moins spécialisés. En effet, nous avons la chance que la voix d'une certaine raison, appuyée par les impératifs commerciaux de l'édition contemporaine, n'a pas fait dévier l'auteur de son intention de présenter une «version longue», avec toute sa richesse d'information. Ainsi, on dispose de plusieurs livres en un, entrelacés de telle manière que la clarté de l'exposé central n'en souffre nullement. Les illustrations, les encarts et les notes permettent un approfondissement des divers thèmes abordés, et les conclusions des cinq parties dont se compose l'ouvrage contribuent encore à clarifier le propos. Précieux à cet égard également, les trois index: choronymique et thématique, archéologique, et des noms de personnes, d'institutions, de divinités, de peuples et de bateaux.

Dans la première partie, l'auteur présente pratiquement tout ce qui est connu aujourd'hui à propos de l'histoire du développement des connaissances sur le Grand Nord, des mythes antiques à la genèse des savoirs de type scientifique. La deuxième partie met en scène l'environnement nordique et son évolution, et justifie pleinement, de concert avec l'attention portée à l'environnement dans les chapitres subséquents traitant de l'occupation humaine, que l'on qualifie l'ouvrage, avec Louis-Edmond Hamelin dans sa préface, de «bible du Quaternaire de part et d'autre de la coupure entre le Pléistocène et l'Holocène». L'auteur documente l'instabilité du milieu, et se demande dans quelle mesure la mémoire collective des humains préhistoriques a pu