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Résumé de l'article

En 1769, un décret du gouvernement britannique permit aux frères Moraves de s'installer au Labrador. Les missionnaires posèrent des bornes de pierre autour de leur terre l'année suivante (environ 405 km^2), et établirent leur première station missionnaire (Nain) sur la côte du Labrador, en 1771. Les récits de ces frères concernant leurs expériences avec les Inuit dans les carnets de Nain incluent, outre les questions religieuses, les bulletins météorologiques et de voyage, ainsi que les descriptions des terrains de chasse des Inuit et des techniques de chasse de la faune régionale. Cet article porte sur les descriptions que l'on retrouve dans leurs carnets, des deux principales espèces de proies : le phoque et le caribou. Il rend compte également des variations saisonnières et de la disponibilité de ces animaux au cours des premières années de la mission ; les données ont été recueillies pour les années 1771 à 1778. Plusieurs indices contenus dans les carnets moraves, bien qu'ils n'aient pas étés reconnus comme tels par les missionnaires, indiquent des interactions et des transformations entre êtres humains et non-humains (animaux, esprits). Ces indications corroborent la transgression spirituelle des limites de catégories en tant que caractéristique essentielle des méthodes de chasse traditionnelles.

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Labrador Inuit on the Hunt: Seasonal Patterns, Techniques, and Animals as They Appear in the Early Moravian Diaries

Thea Olsthoorn[i]

ABSTRACT

In 1769 an Order in Council from the British government enabled the Moravians to settle in Labrador. The missionaries laid the boundary stones for their land (ca. 405 km^2) in the next year, and established their first mission station (Nain) on the Labrador coast in 1771. The brethren's accounts of their experiences with the Inuit in the Nain diaries include, besides religious issues, weather and travel reports and descriptions of Inuit hunting grounds and hunting techniques for the fauna of the region. This article focuses on their diary depictions of the two main prey species: the seal and the caribou. Consideration is also given to seasonal variation and availability of these animals during the early years of the mission; data were collected for the years 1771 through 1778. Several clues in the Moravian diaries, which went unrecognized by the missionaries, point to interactions and transformations between human and nonhuman beings (animals, spirits). These indications corroborate the spiritual transgression of category boundaries as an essential feature of traditional hunting methods.

KEYWORDS
Moravians, Inuit, Labrador, hunting, animals

RÉSUMÉ

Les Inuit du Labrador à la chasse : Modèles saisonniers, techniques et animaux tels qu'ils apparaissent dans les carnets anciens des frères Moraves

En 1769, un décret du gouvernement britannique permit aux frères Moraves de s'installer au Labrador. Les missionnaires posèrent des bornes de pierre autour de leur terre l'année suivante (environ 405 km^2), et établirent leur première station missionnaire (Nain) sur la côte du Labrador, en 1771. Les récits de ces frères concernant leurs expériences avec les Inuit dans les carnets de Nain incluent, outre les questions religieuses, les bulletins météorologiques et de voyage, ainsi que les descriptions des terrains de chasse des Inuit et des techniques de chasse de la faune régionale. Cet article porte sur les descriptions que l'on retrouve dans leurs carnets, des deux principales espèces de proies : le phoque et le caribou. Il rend compte également des variations saisonnières et de la disponibilité de ces animaux au cours des premières années de la mission ; les données ont été recueillies pour les années 1771 à 1778. Plusieurs indices contenus dans les carnets moraves, bien qu'ils n'aient pas étés

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reconnus comme tels par les missionnaires, indiquent des interactions et des transformations entre êtres humains et non-humains (animaux, esprits). Ces indications corroborent la transgression spirituelle des limites de catégories en tant que caractéristique essentielle des méthodes de chasse traditionnelles.

MOTS-CLÉS
Moraves, Inuit, Labrador, chasse, animaux

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This article is based on the records of the Moravians or United Brethren (Unitas Fratrum), whose roots stretch back to the so-called Bohemian Brethren, who in turn originated from the moderate branch of the Hussites—followers of the early Czech reformer Jan Hus (c. 1369–1415). Prosecution resulting from the Counter Reformation forced many Bohemian Brethren to flee their home country. In 1721 a group of these refugees sought shelter on the estate of Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700–1760) in Berthelsdorf, Saxony. Zinzendorf, a Lutheran with a pietistic educational background, became the spiritual leader of the renewed Moravian Church, and the town of Herrnhut—German for "under the Lord's protection"—was built close to his estate. Early Moravians were not educated ministers but ordinary laypeople, mostly craftsmen. The first missionaries were dispatched to Danish territories (St. Thomas in 1732 and Greenland in 1733). In 1749 the British Parliament passed an act that recognized the United Brethren as "an ancient Protestant Episcopal Church" and allowed them "to settle in his Majesty's colonies in America" (Podmore 2000, 57–58). After a failed missionary attempt in Labrador in 1752 with a number of casualties (Rollmann 2009), Moravians established their first mission station, Nain, on the coast of Labrador in 1771. Moravian church leaders instructed their missionaries in the mission fields to keep a detailed account of their experiences with the "heathen" and everything else they did. Consequently, Moravian archival sources include a wide variety of records.

Moravian manuscripts were predominantly written in the old German script. The Labrador collection at the Unity Archives in Herrnhut comprises materials such as language studies, translations of Moravian religious texts, educational resources, travel accounts and daily weather reports, maps, drawings, nature studies, mission station and personal diaries, extracts of conference minutes, memoirs, church registers, lists of missionaries' requests and questions, and letters from missionaries and Inuit. As the diaries of the missionaries were read in the other Moravian mission fields as well, Moravians constituted an early worldwide communication network (Peucker 2009, 157–58).

Of all Christian denominations, Moravian brethren were the first missionaries after Hans Egede to settle among Inuit, viz. in Greenland and Labrador. This historical fact makes their testimonies valuable in their own right.

Three Moravians who were involved in the establishment of Nain had long-term previous experience as missionaries in Greenland. Jens Haven (1724–1796), Christian Drachardt (1711–1778), and Johann Schneider (1713–1785) were able to communicate with Labrador Inuit in Greenlandic, which was not all that different from the Labrador dialect. At least to a certain extent, they were also familiar with Inuit worldview and traditions.

In traditional Inuit society, the boundaries between humans and nonhuman beings (animals and spirits) were flexible. They were maintained by ritual rules. Since animals were supposed to have an immortal soul like human beings and Inuit depended on animals for their survival, relations between humans and animals were conditioned by rules of respect. Boas and Rasmussen called these rules "taboos." Violation of the rules would lead to retaliation; observance was believed to establish a balance. Whereas on the one hand, ritual rules preserved the distinction between the three categories, on the other hand, humans, animals, and spirits could surpass the boundaries in a shamanic environment (setting), interacting with each other or even transforming into the other category (see Laugrand and Oosten 2016, 15).

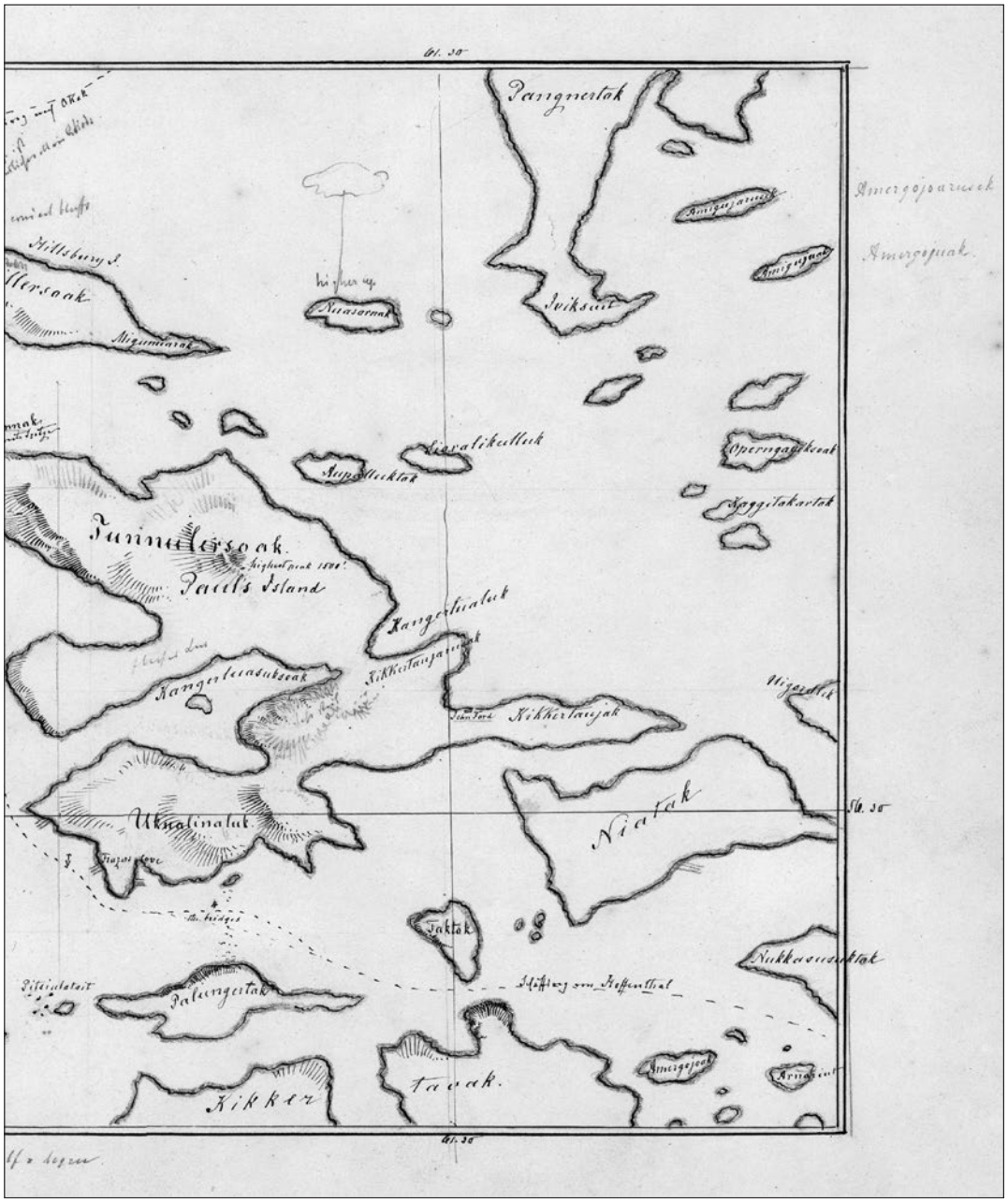
This article examines Inuit hunting techniques and seasonal variation of the main prey animals in the Nain area from the time of arrival of the first Moravian missionaries in 1771 through 1778. Certain aspects of the interaction between the different categories emerge in the article, and I will discuss them in the conclusion. Quotations in the text were gleaned from the entries in the corresponding Nain diaries[1] and additional documents. The English translations of the excerpts are mine.

Social infrastructure and annual subsistence cycle

In the eighteenth century, Labrador Inuit lived in large communal winter houses. These houses had multiple sleeping platforms to accommodate related families. A typical family group consisted of a polygynous senior male as head of the household with his family and his polygynous sons with their families. An average of twenty people would stay in one house. This social infrastructure and Inuit's extensive kinship ties favoured and facilitated the sharing of resources. The presence of Europeans in southern Labrador and in the Strait of Belle Isle prompted successful hunters and influential shamans to take on an additional leading role as entrepreneur. Some of them covered large distances with their boats along the coast to trade baleen and whale oil for European products, which they took back north. Others acted as regional middlemen who accumulated the baleen and supplied the whale oil for the long-distance trade. Still others were

1. Unity Archives Herrnhut (hereafter UAH), R.15.K.b.4.a, Nain Diaries (hereafter ND) 1771–1781.

Map of Nain and Surroundings. L.T. Reichel. Moravian Archives Herrnhut: TS.Mp.113.7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Kangeliuasubsuak
Kikkertaujak
Ukualinaluk
Niatak
Jaktak
Nukkasuaktak
Paliungertak
Tacak.
Kikkertaujak

intermediaries such as negotiators and translators (Kaplan and Woollett 2000, 352, 356). The shamans and brothers Tuglauvina[2] and Segullia,[3] mentioned below, owned wooden boats and were active in the baleen (and oil) trade. After the establishment of the Moravians in Labrador, trading opportunities for European-made goods also became available at the Nain mission station.

Labrador coastal waters were frozen over for about six to seven months of the year (Kleivan 1966, 50; Treude 1979, 76). Inuit divided the seasons in accordance with the appearance of game and climatic conditions (Hawkes 1916, 28). John Garth Taylor (1974, 51–58) distinguishes the following seasons for the Labrador coast:

- autumn: mid-October to mid-December
- early winter: mid-December to March
- late winter: March and April
- spring: May and June
- early summer: July to mid-August
- late summer: mid-August to mid-October.

During the winter, Inuit from the Labrador Nuneingoak region lived in their winter houses in the isles. They caught seals close to the sea where, because of the salty water, the ice was thinner than in the vicinity of Nain (ND [travel report Brasen, Beck, Lister, Turner] January 4, 1774). They would bring any spare blubber they had on their sleds to Nain to trade with missionary Theobald Frech (1740–1792) for European products. The first three months of the year, however, were often a period of hunger because of food scarcity (ND January 4, 1774, February 7, 1775). If Inuit were hungry and there was still caribou meat inland in the cache, they would retrieve it and bring it home (ND April 8, 1775, February 5, 1776, February 15, 1776). The transport of a heavy load of meat was easier in the winter on sleds than in the summer (Kleivan 1966, 53). Sometimes a drift whale helped Inuit overcome this difficult time. To survive they would also collect mussels and eat seaweed; the women picked berries.[4] March and April were the months for cod fishing in Pangnertok and Ikkerasarsuk. While most men went looking for breathing holes at the ice edge (*sinaa*), their wives were fishing. Missionary Christoph Brasen (1738–1774), who was also a surgeon, attributed the skin rash that Inuit developed at this time of the year to their

2. Alternative spelling in Moravian manuscripts: Tugluina.

3. Alternative spellings in Moravian manuscripts: Segulia[k], Sek[k]ul[l]ia[k] or Sikkulliak.

4. The Nain diaries mention Inuit women picking berries on November 16–17, 1771, and March 31, 1772. On February 9, 1772, the snow on the hills and in the valleys was too high to pick (black)berries. The diary entry of February 22, 1773, notes that there are many areas inland where berries grow that foxes and raven feed on. These may have been crowberries, which stay on the plant through winter.

monotonous diet of fish (ND April 6, 1772). From mid- to late April Inuit began to pitch their tents in Nain, and spring sealing continued until the end of May when Inuit rarely caught seals on the ice anymore (ND May 30, 1773). As there were no whales in the area surrounding Nain, Nuneingoak Inuit were not whalers, but with European products stored in Nain within their reach, they were active as middlemen in the baleen trade. Many Inuit from the Nain region travelled to the North, where most of the whales were harpooned during their autumn migration. Some of them even decided to winter in Kivalek or beyond for better trade opportunities. They exchanged the European products that they had acquired in Nain for baleen, and upon their return they traded the baleen at the mission station for more European goods such as hatchets, knives, pearls, and horse-hair blankets (ND May 27, 1772). Inuit whalers and traders from Kivalek and Arvertok arrived with baleen (and blubber, sometimes also whalebone) in Nain, too.[5] In many cases, the baleen served as a down payment for a new boat, to be built by the missionaries. The baleen was transported on sleds until the ice had broken and boats could be used. The desire for European goods was so strong that Inuit still came to Nain to sell baleen and spare blubber when the trip by sled was already very dangerous because of the melting ice (ND June 6, 1772). As soon as the ice had broken, the men would get into their kayaks and look for eggs of eider ducks between the isles (ND March 1, 1774). Usually towards the end of June or early in July, the sea would be open enough to allow the use of European boats and *umiat*. In the summer, Inuit moved around a lot because prey animals were numerous and they could find food everywhere. In the course of July, more and more Inuit pitched their tents at the brethren's land, where they were joined by their countrymen from Kivalek and Arvertok. This was the time for celebration and ritual play as a prelude to the caribou hunt in August. From about mid-August, hardly any Inuit stayed in Nain. Families would be on the caribou hunt inland or they were fishing for cod at the northern corner of Nain Bay (ND September 13, 1775, August 3, 1777, August 7, 1778) or for trout[6] in the Anaktalik fjord (ND July 6, 1772). In October they gradually began to return from the caribou hunt to Nain, before moving into their winter houses in the isles at the end of the month. After the last boats with families, tents, and luggage had left Unity Harbour (Nain Bay) for the wintering places, Inuit were not able to visit the missionaries for a while. Ships would not freeze in the ice before mid-November (ND November 1, 1772), but the ice would stick to their

5. Generally, baleen was traded with the missionaries from mid-February to mid-August, after which the brethren cleaned the baleen and bound it together for transportation to Europe on the mission ship.

6. The missionaries call the species "salmon" ("Lachs") in the diaries, but Kleivan (1966, 48n1) suspects that it must be "trout." (It may also have been Arctic char.) His general impression (based on the mission reports) is that, at the time, salmon were as rare in Nain as they are today.

kayaks and cause them to capsize and drown (ND November 22, 1772). The ice was not land-fast and strong enough to carry Inuit's sleds until mid- or late December. In the winter of 1772–73 the ice was not strong enough until the beginning of January.

Table 1. Seasonal movements in the Nain region, 1772–1778

Nain	1772	1773	1774	1775	1776	1777	1778
First kayak arrives	June 19	June 21	June 25	July 7	July 5	June 30	June 16
First boat arrives	June 21	June 21	July 11	July 9	July 5	June 30	June 24
Last boat leaves to winter place	Nov. 6	Nov. 2	Nov. 21	Nov. 4	Nov. 12	Nov. 8	Oct. 23
First sled of winter arrives	Jan. 5, 1773	Dec. 5	Dec. 24	Dec. 23	Dec. 15[1]	Nov. 26	Dec. 19

1. Three days earlier, Christian Lister rode the brethren's sled to Satorsoak for a visit.

The owners (procurers) of land and sea animals

On June 22, 1773, four Moravian brethren—Johann Schneider, James Rhodes, Christian Lister, and Ludwig Morhard—sailed in their boat into the Nuneingoak fjord, which is the fjord nearest to Nain, to hunt caribou inland. They had taken along the old Inuit widow Attuguna, who used to live at their mission station during the winter, where she worked for them as a seamstress. The missionaries were also in the company of a number of Inuit, who were entering the fjord in their *umiak* simultaneously. On this trip Attuguna confided her beliefs about the owners of animals to the brethren:

> Among other things Attuguna told us that Inuit believe that an old woman resides inland. She rules over the land creatures, especially the caribou.[7] She sends the animals to the Inuit, whenever they need them. That is why the Inuit cry out to the old woman, when they do not see any animals: "Kait, kait,"* which means, "Come, come, we are hungry." Just as the Greenlanders, these Inuit do not bring offerings, which are common among other gentiles; they only complain and express their current need. Brother Schneider asked Attuguna whether the woman inland lived there alone. She replied, "No, many are with her, going on the hunt." This story explains the

7. In their diaries the brethren call the caribou "reindeer" ("Rennthier"). I use "caribou" in the translations for clarity.

> aforementioned answer given to Brother Schneider by another Inuk[8] a while ago, when Schneider asked him where in his opinion his soul would go after leaving his body. He answered that his soul [the souls?] should go inland on the caribou hunt. So, the many that live inland with the woman must be, according to the Inuit's imagination, the souls of the deceased. [Then Brother Schneider asked Attuguna] whether the old woman has a name. [Attuguna:] "Yes! She is called Supperguksoak." [Next he asked her] if she has a husband. [Attuguna:] "Yes!" [Brother Schneider asked] what his name is. [Attuguna:] "He is called Torngarsuk and lives on the water; he rules over all the creatures in the water." It is him, who gives to the Inuit whales, seals etc. When there is a famine in winter or a lack of seals in spring, presumably at the time before the seals spread over the waters and make their breathing holes in the ice, they scream horribly and call out to Torngarsuk for seals in the same way they call out to the old woman: "Kait, kait, kaisitse."
>
> *Note: They do not say as the Greenlanders do: "Kacheit, kacheitsitse," but they say, "Kait, kaisitse" (ND July 2, 1773).

John K. Hiller (1967, 160) states that Inuit's accounts about their spirit world communicated to the brethren varied and that there is no consistent version applicable to the whole Labrador coast. Referring to Ernest W. Hawkes (1916, 126), Hiller points out that, for instance, the Sedna Legend—the leading belief among Inuit of Baffin Island—was also known in northern Labrador. Furthermore, again according to Hawkes (1916, 14n1, 108), Torngarsuk—the chief spirit of the Labrador Inuit—was thought to reside not on or in the water but on land in a mountain cave near Cape Chidley. The reference in the quotation from the diary to "the many" that live inland and go hunting with Supperguksoak evokes the notion of the mountain spirits.

Ijirait, mountain spirits, were very powerful helping spirits of *angakkuit* (shamans). Their identity is a complex one: in human form as caribou people, they share characteristics with the caribou, which they also hunt; they are able though to transform entirely into caribou. The souls (*atiit*) of deceased Inuit who preferred to stay on land joined the *ijirait* (caribou people) on the caribou hunt or they might even take on the shape of the caribou and become *ijirait* themselves (Rasmussen 1929, 113; Laugrand and Oosten 2016, 253, 257, 259). I will take up the notion of the *ijirait* in the concluding section.

8. Early Moravians often referred to the Labrador Inuit as "Eskimo(s)" to distinguish them from the Greenlanders. In the translations, the name "Eskimo(s)" is substituted by the current term "Inuit."

Hunting grounds and techniques in the Nain area

The total Inuit population in Nuneingoak—the area surrounding Nain, named after the nearest northern fjord—numbered about 250 in the first year of the mission (ND July 14, 1772). These Inuit did not consider Nain a good place for hunting (ND December 29, 1776, December 8, 1777). They hunted in the fjords and territories north and south of Nain, in the isles, and close to the sea during the winter. The second fjord north of Nain is called Tikkoatokkak. The fjord south of Nain carries the name Anaktalik.

Sealing

In the Nuneingoak fjord there was a big open space in the ice—360 by approximately 720 metres[9]—where the water did not freeze in winter and seals were said to be plentiful. Because of the open water, foxes, wolves, and other animals were always nearby, and in times of famine mussels and seaweed could be collected there at low tide. The whole hunting site[10] was two to three English miles (3.2 to 4.8 km) wide, but was only one English mile wide at the location of the opening. Inuit called this place Sarbak,[11] "the Current." On the eighteenth-century map it was marked as "King's Creek," located north of Akuliariktok, one German mile (7.5 km) north of Itiblerme, and at a distance of three German miles northwest from Nain station. There were always tents in Itiblerme in the summer, and Inuit sometimes also lived there in the winter (ND [Jens Haven] April 29, 1772, May 1, 1772).

The brethren's initial assumption that Inuit harvested the seals there from the open water proved to be wrong. They describe the hunting technique for the seal in Sarbak as follows:

> The Inuit have told us much about the opening or open water and we assumed that they caught the seals in the opening, but the brethren found this to be different, namely: Close to and around this open water the Inuit make little holes in the ice similar to the breathing holes the seals make themselves. After an Inuk has found such a hole or has made one himself, he sits down at a distance of 2–3 ells [1–1.5 m] on a stool with three legs, which are covered beneath with fox- or bearskin. Over his sealskin boots the Inuk wears another (double) pair of big shoes made of fox skin. These precautions are taken so that in case the hunter should move while he is waiting, his movement will not make any rattle or noise on the ice which would frighten the seal and cause it to go away. As soon as the seal surfaces

9. "200 Klafter breit und ungefähr dobbelt [*sic*] so lang." The German "Klafter" is approximately 1.8 metres.

10. Addition in the diary: "von außen und innen": outside and inside.

11. Alternative spellings in the Nain diaries: "Sarvak," "Sarchvak."

> in the breathing hole, the Inuk is always ready to strike and drives his harpoon into the animal. After he has fastened his harpoon and the harpoon head is stuck in the animal's body, he lets the seal slip under the ice again on the seal leather strip or rope attached to the harpoon for the animal to exhaust itself. Then he pulls the seal out through the hole if the hole is big enough; if not, he makes the breathing hole wider first. He kills the seal with a knife or whatever he has at hand. (ND May 1, 1772)

Although Inuit could have caught the seals in the open water, they searched for and made breathing holes in the adjacent ice sheet. Hunting seals at their breathing holes was called *mauliqpuq* hunting. As each seal makes several breathing holes to cover the territory needed for its nourishment, this technique was most successful as a cooperative activity (Laugrand and Oosten 2016, 283).

Generally, in addition to the hunter's expertise, opportunities for and success of the seal hunt depended largely upon weather and ice conditions. Newly formed thin ice—just thick enough to carry the weight of the hunter—was particularly favourable for the seal hunt at the breathing holes (ND February 23, 1776, December 10, 1777). Blizzards with severe cold and continuous snow (or rain) impeded the hunt. If the layer of snow on the ice was very thick (ND February 7, 1777, April 30, 1777), or if there was much (melting) water on the surface that could not flow off because there were no cracks in the ice (ND May 7, 1773 [Sarbak]), hunting had to be postponed. In the fjords, the combination of the sun that warms the ice from above and the strong currents underneath caused the ice to melt sooner than between the isles at the seaside, where it stayed much longer (ND June 24, 1776). After the breaking of the ice in June, the men paddled in their kayaks between the floes that drifted back and forth until the wind and the current finally pushed them away. On the open sea, the hunter would catch seals and birds with harpoons and darts, which he threw at them from his kayak with a casting-board[12] (Journal of the brethren Hill, Haven, Drachardt, Schloezer,[13] August 27, 1765).

While travelling from one place to another by sled, Inuit used a seal's intestine as a drinking water bottle. To prevent the water from freezing, they tied the intestine filled with melted snow around their body on the bare skin or they wrapped it in fur (ND [Jens Haven] February 22, 1773, [Sven Anderson] April 8, 1777).

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12. "mit einem kleinen Stück Holz": with a little piece of wood. In the *History of Greenland* Crantz mentions a casting-board [German: "Werfbrett"] at the butt end of the shaft of the harpoon dart, which is "two feet long, and notched on both sides to procure a firm hold for the thumb and forefinger" (1820, 1:136). With respect to hunting tools in Labrador, it says, "Besides the five darts of the Greenlanders they [the Labrador Inuit] have another which they call *ungak*,…used for striking birds" (2:293).

13. UAH, R.15.K.a.5.2.b.

In June 1772 the brethren witnessed an Inuit tradition concerning the seal that they had not yet been aware off. The diary notes,

> During the last days we have noticed that [Inuit think that] if they sell all the blubber of a big seal, then the seals will go away and they will not be able to catch them anymore. Also, when they sell a whole seal, they may not sell its head along with it, which we have experienced today with both these men as they sold us three small seals without heads. They had kept the heads at a location inside the palisades where our dogs took them away during the night and ate them. When Seguliak and Tugluina drove away from here in spring they had drawn many bones of seal heads on a cord. Brother Jens Haven asked them what the meaning of that action was. "It is not good," they said, "that they stay on land. As they have come from the water, they should also return there. That is why we put them back into the water." (ND [Brasen] June 5, 1772)

Traditional Inuit believed the souls of animals to reincarnate continuously and were convinced that the prey animal would return to the hunter who had treated it with respect, observing all taboos associated with the catch and further handling. Selling all the blubber of a big seal would signify a lack of gratitude and respect towards the seal. In the above passage, the skull bones of the seals are returned to the sea—their place of origin—for the purpose of furthering and supporting the animals' rebirth (Boas 1901, 161; Laugrand and Oosten 2016, 279; see also Sonne 1982, 29).

The rituals connected with a boy's first seal catch ensured the establishment of a good relationship between the young hunter and his prey (Laugrand and Oosten 2016, 279). The captured seal was divided among the other hunters. Whereas in the South Baffin area the distribution included the skin (Boas 1907, 489; Laugrand and Oosten 2016, 297), this may have been different in Labrador. The diary notes that a young hunter who had caught his first seal the day before wore a collar of sealskin around his neck,[14] and a few small bones of seal flippers were attached to both sides of his *kappidek* (ND [Brasen] April 25, 1772).

Drachardt relates in his personal Nain diary that when Inuit had not caught any seals for several weeks, they would "baptize" the first seal they got. He watched Manuina's oldest wife pour fresh water on the seal from a little dish not one but three times in a row: first on its head, then on its breast, and finally on its belly, while saying "Thank you" every time (Drachardt's Nain Diary, 1771–1773,[15] February 7, 1772; Olsthoorn 2017, 169).

14. "ein Kranz von Seehund fell genäht um sein Kopf": a wreath of sealskin sewn around his head.

15. UAH, R.15.K.b.4.a. Hereafter DND.

The following seal species are mentioned in the Nain diaries of 1771 to 1778 (Table 2). Inconsistencies in the spelling of the names have been maintained.

Table 2. Seal species mentioned in the Nain diaries, 1771–1778

Greenlandic	Labrador Inuktitut	Date and place in Nain Diary
Phoca greenlandica (harp seal)		
Atarsoak (five years old)	Kajarolik [qairulik]	October 11, 1772 (Kernertok)
Aglektok (harp seal, three years old)	Atak (Kajarolingoak)/ Kayaroliksoaksuk	November 20, 1771 (Nain) March 22, 1773 (northern fjord)
Phoca hispida (ringed seal)		
Neitsek	Neitsek	April 12, 1772 December 27, 1773 (northern fjord) April 26, 1777 (north of Ikkerasa[rsu]k) April 30, 1777
Phoca vitulina (harbour seal)		
Kassigiak	Kasiiak (young)	June 3, 1772
	Kasiiak (young)	July 14, 1772
	Kassigiak (young)	June 26, 1773
	Kassigiak	July 5, 1776 (Tikkoatokkak)
	Kassigiaitsiak	July 3, 1777 (Nuneingoak)
	Kassigaitsiak	June 21, 1778 (northern territory)
	Kassigaitsiak (young, spotted)	June 24, 1778
	Kassigaitsiak	July 4, 1778
Kassigiarsoak (big harbour seal)	Kassigiarsoak	May 12, 1773
Iblaulik (seal with fetus)		May 12, 1773
Erignathus barbatus (bearded seal)		
Ugsuk		June 3, 1777 (close to the sea)

John Richardson (1851, 2:379–80) arranges the above seals according to size and some other characteristics with their Labrador Inuktitut names: Uksuk/ Oguk (largest kind), Kairolik (medium size), Netsek (small), Kassigiak (spotted), Iblau (unborn). The harbour seal, a freshwater seal, is found at the mouths of rivers and in inlets and bays. Harbour seals were much sought after for their beautiful spotted skin. Since the spots grew larger with age, the young ones were

particularly favoured. The pups of the harbour seal are born in June (Crantz 1820, 1:111–12;[16] Hawkes 1916, 30). The Moravian brethren, assessing that there were not nearly as many seals in Nuneingoak as there were in Greenland (ND May 19, 1777), note that the Labrador Inuit used the skin of the bearded seal (Ugsuk) for their soles, kayaks, belts, and skin boats (ND June 3, 1777) and the skin of the Kassigaitsiak (young harbour seals) for their everyday clothes (ND June 24, 1778). The missionaries showed examples of hides and clothing from Greenland to their seamstresses, but Labrador Inuit were not able to make such good and beautiful clothes as the Greenlanders (ND July 14, 1772).

Caribou hunting

Caribou were hunted the whole summer but most of all during their great migrations in the spring and autumn (Laugrand and Oosten 2016, 230). Towards spring they would come out of the inland and search for food near the salty water and in the isles (ND May 2, 1777). August and September, when the animal's pelt was of optimal quality (for clothing), were the high season of the hunt (Laugrand and Oosten 2016, 247). Around the beginning of August, Inuit from Kivalek, Nuneingoak, and Arvertok used to gather at Amitok near the mouth of the fjords north of Nain to prepare for the caribou hunt (ND July 30, 1772; J. Haven's Reconnaissance Journey 1770,[17] August 3, 1770). Labrador Inuit hunted caribou inland of the Nuneingoak, Tikkoatokkak, and Anaktalik fjords and, from time to time, on the isles. The Moravian brethren note that the best hunting ground for the caribou was said to be in the northern fjord (ND September 21, 1772). The former young *angakkuq* Kingminguse, who since baptism (ND February 19, 1776) is called by his Christian name "Petrus" in the Nain diaries, caught so many caribou in Nuneingoak in the autumn of 1775 that he decided to winter there in a snow hut, just as Tuglauvina had done in the previous year because, like Petrus, he could not carry his heavy load of caribou meat across the mountains (ND October 1, 1774). Petrus gives the following description of the hunting area in the Nuneingoak fjord, which is a three to four day's travel from Nain:

> Where he [Petrus] stood the land is flat, bare, and infertile; vegetation is low and berries grow only in the valleys. However, here and there are ponds and pastures where wild animals can graze. Besides the many caribou that are sometimes there, there are also many wolves, especially in winter, which hunt caribou; of these wolves our Petrus and Akbik have caught a considerable number in their pitfalls [German: "Gruben"] which were made for that purpose. Our Petrus continued that a few years ago he had been on the caribou hunt two day's travel further inland where they [Akbik and

16. Crantz (erroneously?) names Kassigiak "the pied seal," *Phocabicolor.*

17. UAH, R.15.K.a.5.5.

> Petrus] had seen countless caribou and had also caught many of them. Those caribou had been in general much fatter than the caribou on our land [the land around Nain mission station] and the area and pasture had been much more suitable for wild animals than our area as well. The streams that they had found did not take their course this way anymore, but in the other direction to the northwest, where they had seen high mountains covered with bushes in front of them. They had found no humans at all there though. From this information it appears clearly that the land between us and another [the next] bay cannot be very broad. (ND June 24, 1776)

On July 6, 1772, Brother Schneider, who had shot a caribou shortly before, already had the impression that caribou in Labrador were bigger than those in Greenland. The diary also notes that the missionaries found large areas inland, where the wood had been burnt down; they suspected that Inuit did this so that they could see the caribou better (ND July 2, 1773).

The above quoted passage proves that Labrador Inuit also used pitfalls, which were dug in the snow (see Laugrand and Oosten 2016, 231), but in 1777 baptized Philippus (Inuit name: Merkolik) explained to the missionaries that they were not able to catch the caribou until the animals went into the water (ND November 11, 1777). This suggests that the pitfalls were indeed only intended for catching wolves. The usual method for catching caribou was as follows:

> On September 28th our brethren returned from the northern fjord. Although they had spotted caribou and a black bear, they [the caribou] were so wild that the brethren could not get into shooting range. The reason why the animals are so very timid probably is that as soon as the Inuit see a caribou, they start screaming in order to frighten them into the water or the sea. Next, the Inuit men go after them in their kayaks and kill them in the water with their harpoons. (ND September 28, 1772)

There are several similar descriptions of this hunting technique in the Nain diaries. The purpose of hunting caribou in the water by chasing them around was that the animals should wear themselves out swimming (see ND July 2, 1773). The missionaries watched Pualo follow the caribou between the ice flows:

> June 13. Towards the evening two caribou appeared on the ice at the southern corner of our bay or harbour. As the ice had largely broken up during the last days and there were openings here and there, Pualo rowed in his kayak between the ice floes and followed the caribou. When the animals eventually took their course towards our land and Pualo came behind them with his kayak, he chased them, frightening them with his screams back and forth for so long that they became very tired from swimming and jumping continuously from one ice floe to another. At last

> Pualo came close enough to one of them to stab and kill it, while the other one reached land, ran off with an arrow in its behind and stayed alive. (ND June 13, 1774)

The aforementioned Petrus also informed the brethren that they applied fat (speck) on several locations of their body and rubbed it in before they went hunting to prevent the caribou from picking up their smell (ND July 31, 1776). Every time Inuit saw guns with the Moravians, they urged them to also equip them with guns for the caribou hunt (ND May 24, 1773). Whereas in the water they could use harpoons, in the winter and spring they had to shoot the caribou with a bow and arrow. For the shot to be effective, they would have to be at short range (Kleivan 1966, 53), but, as the brethren knew from their own experience, in the snow it was impossible to approach the caribou without making noise (ND March 4, 1778). The missionaries rejected Inuit's request, though, explaining that they had just enough rifles for their own use (ND May 24, 1773). They had been instructed by the Unity Elders not to introduce shotguns among Inuit and never to entrust them with their rifles on joint hunting expeditions (Instruction 1771,[18] Nr. 24; Rollmann 2011, 9).

The summer caribou hunt was preceded by a ritual play that seems to symbolize a connection between (success in) hunting and the (enhanced) fertility of the women. A full description of this ritual with quotations from the Nain diary was first published in 1986 by Taylor and Taylor in *Études Inuit Studies* (see also Laugrand and Oosten 2016, 217–18). During the ceremony, which went on for several days, shooting at targets—two caribou skins, each stretched out within a frame and attached to the top of a pole—alternated with the touch of young women's private parts by men other than their partners in order to stimulate the women's fertility. Brother Christian Drachardt (1711–1778) refers to this or a similar ritual in his personal Nain diary, where he addresses Inuit:

> When we remind you that you should not do this or that anymore, you are obedient. Therefore, I want to ask you to please stop treating the sick by applying witchcraft and also stop the addresses to your people here on the pastures as you do in summer, because then you invoke Torngak, yes you even worship him and after the speech the old and the young men go over to the young women and touch them beneath on their naked bodies. This is by no means permitted.…In summer, before you sailed off to the caribou hunt, I once went there myself and I heard how Sekuliak was singing and asking his Torngak to come. After that he held a long speech.…You should not think that you may not play games here on our land, because when you, as you do in summer, set up two panels on two long poles and shoot at the target with your bows,…that is permitted here on our land. (DND November 5, 1772)

18. UAH, R.15.K.a.7.c.

Drachardt connects the sexual aspect with the *angakkuq*'s speech, but he does not relate it to the shooting game. In his diary he states that he left the scene at the end of the speech when he heard Sekuliak praise and thank his Torngak; no exact date is given. Perhaps Drachardt refers to another occasion or he may have been informed of the further course of the ritual by Brother Christoph Brasen, who had witnessed the whole ceremony and penned the report down in the Nain station diary. Surely, as also indicated by Taylor and Taylor (1986), the event must have reminded Drachardt of a fertility ritual in 1770. On that occasion Drachardt and Stephan Jensen watched from a hill at Amitok how old Kingminguse—the greatest and most famous *angakkuq* of the region, who supposedly had the ability to make women fertile through his magic powers (ND November 12, 1771)—addressed nine women, all dressed up in their finest clothes with white gloves. After the *angakkuq*'s speech, each of these women, who had difficulty becoming pregnant, was kissed by nine men to stimulate fertility (Christian Drachardt, Reconnaissance Journey [1770],[19] August 2, 1770; Taylor and Taylor 1986, 234–35). In the above passage, Drachardt distinguishes the shooting game, which reflects Brasen's description quite well, from the other elements of the summer ceremony and emphasizes that shooting at a target with bow and arrows as a separate game is allowed on the brethren's land, whereas *angakkuit*'s speeches and sexually oriented behaviour are forbidden. There is a reference in the Nain diary that suggests that such feasts, involving both playing games and elements of a sexual nature, were also celebrated inland at the conclusion of the caribou hunt:

> How we feel about this and how much we regret that these people [Petrus and Paniunajok] go on the caribou hunt again, we cannot express. According to our information, usually really bad things happen there. When they have caught enough caribou, they eat all they can; then they start playing and it [the feast] commonly ends in sin. (ND July 30, 1778)

In their endeavours to keep Inuit within reach of the station for the purpose of instruction (Kleivan 1966, 27–28), the missionaries tried to convince their baptized Inuit and candidates for baptism to renounce the caribou hunt and look for food in the vicinity of Nain. They also suggested that Inuit should dry seal meat and fish, which would be stored for them at the station. Inuit objected, arguing that they could not give up the caribou hunt as they needed the caribou skins for their clothing and beds (ND May 30, 1776, July 23, 1777, March 13, 1778).

19. UAH, R.15.K.a.5.6.

Seasonal patterns: The availability of seal and caribou from 1771 to 1778

As noted earlier, in the winter, seals were hunted near the sea (ice edge) and, with the arrival of spring, also in the fjords and inlets, especially in Sarbak (Sarvak). Since the possibility of hunting seals depended largely on weather and ice conditions, periods of hunger were common, especially during the winter months, and Inuit were used to them. However, in some years, the situation was particularly worrying. In 1773, March and April were so cold and the cold lasted for so long that Inuit could not catch seals on the ice as they had done the year before (ND April 30, 1773). When at last the ice started to melt, the meltwater in Sarbak reached up to the hunters' knees (ND May 7, 1773), so they were lucky to have found a drift whale. In the following winter (1773–74) Inuit in Satorsoak were hungry, but there were plenty of seals in Nukasusuktok (ND January 4, 1774). However, due to the persistent cold and the many blizzards in January and February, the situation worsened and soon Inuit in Aukpalluktok began to suffer from hunger as well (ND February 27–28, 1774, February 8, 1774). In 1775 Inuit in Aukpalluktok ate fox meat to alleviate their hunger (ND [Ludwig Beck] January 19, 1775). In February 1776 Inuit from Ikkerasarsuk told the brethren that they had caught many seals in autumn because the ice remained thin for a long time (ND February 23, 1776); in the spring seals in Sarbak were abundant as well (ND May 30, 1776). The winter of 1776–77, however, was marked by severe famine because of bad weather and high snow. The brethren helped the families who wintered in Nain and the many hungry visitors with a daily portion of cooked peas (ND January 12, 1777). Sleds left for the inland to retrieve cached caribou meat, which on arrival was eaten at once, even in a frozen state (ND February 22, 1777, March 6, 1777). The skin and blubber of a drift whale found by Sikkulliak and his brother Tuglauvina in December 1776 must have been consumed towards the end of February, because in March 1777 Inuit in Nukasusuktok—at least a hundred people—fed on seaweed, supplemented by mussels (ND [Christian Lister] March 6, 1777, ND February 22, 1777). In addition to the distress, there were still few codfish in Pangnertok towards the end of March (ND [Johann Schneider] March 20, 1777).[20] Seals appeared in the northern fjord (Nord-Revier) again in the third week of April (ND April 23, 1777). On the last day of that month, a sled sent by Sikkulliak to retrieve meat inland passed Nain with five whole caribou and two "big Neitsek seals," which the drivers had caught on the way. The diary notes that the missionaries could not remember a winter with so much snow since they had arrived in the country. Already from February the layer of snow had been so thick that in their yard they could walk

20. The isle Pangnertok has a large bay, like a half circle, which makes it a very good harbour for European boats. In this bay—and also near Ikkerasarsuk—Inuit (mainly women) caught many beautiful black cod ("schwarze Dorsche") in March and April. They caught them with fishing lines and usually with high tide (ND [Brasen] March 31, 1772).

across the palisades, which were over eight feet high (ND April 30, 1777). The weather conditions and circumstances in the next winter (1777–78) were not much different. Although Inuit were not yet suffering from hunger at the end of December (ND December 29, 1777), the famine started one month later. Inuit in Nain, from Satorsoak, Nukasusuktok, Ikkerasarsuk, Tunungajoarsuk, and Pangnertok, complained about hunger and illness and asked the brethren for help. Once more the missionaries note in the diary that they had not seen a winter with so much snow since their arrival in Labrador (ND March 16, 1778). The famine ended at the end of March when the cod appeared in Pangnertok (ND March 28, 1778) and seals were sighted basking on the ice at Sarbak, the polynya in the northern fjord (ND April 1, 1778).

Taboos also meant that their hunger could not be immediately satisfied, since the rules of respect towards the souls of prey animals demanded a four-day pause between hunting caribou and sealing (ND December 18–19, 1776). Moreover, as long as the women were still working on caribou skins for winter clothing, captured seals could not be brought home and were therefore buried in the snow (ND December 8, 1777). Vice versa, Inuit also attributed the cause of food scarcity to violation of taboo. On January 5, 1778, the brethren were informed that Tuglauvina had used his magic powers in Nukasusuktok because the female seals did not appear anymore. Kulliut—one of the candidates for baptism—had prepared a caribou hide during his previous visit in Nain, which at the time was forbidden. Visitors in Nain, who had seen this, had brought the news to Nukasusuktok, where Tuglauvina indicated that Kulliut's breach of taboo was responsible for the absence of the female seals.

The scarcity of seals during the first months of the year caused Inuit in the Nain region to be also dependent on the caribou for nourishment, whereas their countrymen in Hamilton Inlet (the Narrows) and Uivak (near Okak), who were able to harvest (ringed) seals throughout the winter, made little use of caribou (or other terrestrial animals) as a backup food supply (Woollett 2007, 82). Since the caribou hunt in early autumn kept Inuit away from the mission station for a long time, the missionaries were only informed of the developments afterwards, when the hunters returned to Nain and reported their experiences. 1772 seems to have been a rather bad year. The diary notes,

> October 4. In the afternoon several Inuit arrived in Nain; they had been hunting deep inside the northern fjord. On arrival they told us immediately that this year the caribou could see and hear extraordinary well and run very fast. On the 7th of October, the aforementioned captain Ketturnek [Kettornek] arrived with another family. They had not been able to catch any caribou either. (ND October 4 and 7, 1772)

A fortnight later, two boats arrived; these hunters also complained that they had caught only few caribou because the animals were very wild (ND October 21, 1772).

In 1773—the year of Paul Eugen Layritz's visitation[21]—the diary does not provide details about the stocks of caribou or the success of the harvest. It has already been mentioned that the caribou hunt in 1774 and 1775 was exceptionally fruitful, which brought some Inuit to the decision to stay inland for the winter. The diary notes that, besides the meat, a few caribou hides were also sold to the brethren (ND October 26, 1774). In the spring of 1775 the missionaries relate that, according to Inuit, the caribou appeared in herds in the region of Pangnertok and went from one isle to another (ND April 29, 1775). In the autumn of that year they arrived later than in 1774, but in large numbers (ND October 19, 1775). In 1776 there seem to have been less caribou than in the previous years. Inuit caught only few animals inland of the Tikkoatokkak and Nuneingoak fjords, but Pattiguk shot nine caribou on the southern isle Kikkeratavak, whose meat he cached there as a supply for the winter (ND September 15, 1776, October 25, 1776, October 15, 1776). During the famine in 1777, sleds from the Nain region and the Kivalek area—where the missionaries had established their second mission station, Okak, in 1776—retrieved caribou meat from the inland and brought it to Nain; part of it was subsequently delivered in Nukasusuktok where people were also hungry (February 25–26, 1777, March 7, 1777). In May the diary notes that quite a lot of caribou were sighted in the northern territory. From September 22 to October 2, Inuit, who were still staying in Nain with their families waiting for their new boat to be finished, caught a fair amount of caribou on Siorak (King's Point) and Pownall Island. When Tuglauvina and Kannigak returned from the hunt inland towards the end of the month, they could report that they had been very fortunate and caught a lot of caribou (ND October 23, 1777). The reason why they had stayed away for so long—the onset of winter was one month earlier than in other years (ND October 31, 1777) and the ice had done considerable damage to their boat—was that they had to dry the hides inland.

During the winter of 1777–78 sightings of caribou were made in Nain (ND December 24, 1777) and Pangnertok (ND [travel report Lister/Anderson] February 3, 1778); in March a herd of about forty animals was spotted on the ice near Kikkeratavak. The missionaries observed that this winter there were in general a lot of caribou in their area, which was rather unusual. They suspected that the high snow had caused the caribou to leave the inland (ND March 4, 1778). At the beginning of August Inuit from Arvertok were staying in the territory south of Nain (Pangnervik). A number of them planned to go hunting for caribou there, while other Inuit on Ikpiarsuk's boat (also from Arvertok) arrived in Nain on August 9 and left on the 16th to hunt beyond Siorak. The yield must have been large because, on their return at the end of the month, particularly Inuit from Arvertok were very wild, prepared one meal after another, and then started to play (ND August 30, 1778). When Sikkulliak returned from

21. Layritz's visitation tour lasted from July 25, 1773, until September 29, 1773.

the caribou hunt in the Nuneingoak fjord with several families at the end of the hunting season, they reported that they had caught only few caribou and they complained about hunger (ND October 22, 1778).

Conclusion

This article examined hunting grounds and hunting techniques for seal and caribou in the Nain region within the framework of Inuit's annual subsistence cycle. A survey of the data in the Nain diaries showed the variation in the seasonal availability of these animals during the first seven years after the establishment of the mission station. Because the seal was the main—and almost only—food resource for Inuit during the long Arctic winter, a lack of seals due to bad weather and/or unfavourable ice conditions would lead almost immediately to famine. The growing awareness that Nain was a mere gathering place for the Labrador Inuit and did not represent a suitable hunting location (Treude 1979, 77) induced the Moravians to establish additional mission stations in Kivalek (Okak, 1776) and Arvertok (Hopedale, 1782).

The missionaries' perspective on animals collided with Indigenous beliefs. According to the Christian doctrine, only humans, created in God's image, possess a soul; animals do not. Therefore, the brethren saw no cause for the strict separation of sea and land animals. They considered the rules of respect towards animals maintained by Inuit as superstition, and urged them to renounce their "pagan" rituals, while acquainting them with the laws of the Bible, the Ten Commandments.

Drachardt, who, according to his own testimony, had not seen the tradition in Greenland and misinterpreted its origin (i.e., giving fresh water to the thirsty soul of the captured seal), told Inuit that if they accepted Jesus as their Saviour they could not "baptize" the seals anymore; in his eyes it was syncretism (DND, February 18, 1772; Olsthoorn 2017, 173, 177).[22] In his instruction Drachardt repeatedly emphasized the difference between human beings and animals: "but surely you feel in your heart that you should not kill humans. Caribou, seals, and whales you may all kill, but with respect to humans God has said: 'Whoever sheds human blood, his blood shall also be shed'" (DND May 9, 1772).[23]

Since Christianity rules out the possibility of interactions and transformations between the species on the spiritual level, the missionaries did not understand

22. Since neither Boas (1901, 147–48; 1907, 489) nor Rasmussen (1929, 184) mentions the particular transformation of the ritual, it seems that Labrador Inuit had been introduced to Catholic baptism by the French, and perhaps the Moravians' influence prevented the practice from spreading further north (Olsthoorn 2017, 178).

23. Genesis 9:6 reads, "Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed" (The Holy Bible, New International Version® NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide).

why Inuit searched for breathing holes, or even made artificial ones, when it was possible to catch the seals in the open water. Aside from the social function of *mauliqpuq* hunting for Inuit (bringing hunters from nuclear families together), the breathing hole *(aglu)* represented a symbolic passage, connecting this world to the worlds below and above as different levels of reality. At the breathing holes Inuit had visions and communicated with nonhuman agents such as the souls of deceased relatives. Even the decision to convert to Christianity was sometimes made at a seal's blowhole (Laugrand and Oosten 2016, 283, 286–88). The cultural importance of the breathing hole thus explains why Inuit preferred to hunt seals at their breathing holes, while there was still ice. Since shamans did not only predict the presence of prey animals, but (males) also took part in the hunt, hunting procedures were marked by symbolic features.

A short description of the hybrid and versatile nature of the mountain spirits has been given above at the end of the section on the owners of land and sea animals. According to Rasmussen, the eyes and mouths of *ijirait* were not set horizontal, but lengthwise in their faces, making them blink sideways. This provided them, in contrast to caribou, with excellent eyesight. Only shamans were able to see mountain spirits; ordinary human beings heard their whistling, which frightened them. *Ijirait* were very strong and fast runners; they could outrun caribou and seize humans in order to also turn them into mountain spirits. The souls (*tarniit*) of deceased Inuit that had transformed into caribou should not be killed because the other *ijirait* would retaliate (Rasmussen 1929, 144, 204–05; Laugrand and Oosten 2016, 253–61).

When the old widow Attuguna told Brother Schneider that "many" accompanied Supperguksoak on the caribou hunt, she may have been referring to the souls of the deceased, the mountain spirits, and the hunters (human beings). The three categories could hunt together and continuously (ex)change their appearance. They should not be considered distinct entities because there is an overlap on the spiritual level: the souls of the deceased could take on the shape of caribou and become *ijirait* (mountain spirits); the *ijirait* could appear either as humans with caribou characteristics (caribou people) or as caribou; human beings could be seized and abducted by the *ijirait*, who would also turn them into mountain spirits. That is why *ijirait* were dangerous for ordinary people; besides, the risk of destroying a human soul in the shape of a caribou posed the threat of retaliation. Whereas the missionaries assumed that the screams of Inuit caused the caribou to be so wild and timid, the characteristics of the *ijirait* as specified in the diary entry of October 4, 1772—very fast runners with keen eyesight—may have scared the hunters off, making them apprehensive of spearing caribou.

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