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Mi'kmaq Hieroglyphic Prayers: Readings in North America's First Indigenous Script. Edited and translated by David L. Schmidt and Murdena Marshall.

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tual framework leaves us theoretically undernourished. A combined etic-emic model guiding Narduzzi's approach to the data might have developed a more parsimonious explanatory model, without subsuming cultural issues. The fusion of etic-emic approaches provides more accurate and comprehensive interpretations of the stress-coping processes that are mediated by cultural factors. Narduzzi's book offers an important point of departure for future research on elderly Indian mental health stress-coping processes.

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**Mi'kmaq Hieroglyphic Prayers: Readings in North America's First Indigenous Script.** Edited and translated by David L. Schmidt and Murdena Marshall. Halifax, Nova Scotia: Nimbus Publishing, 1995. 182 pages. \$16.95 (Canadian) paper.

From the back cover of this book we learn that David L. Schmidt teaches in "the Department of Culture and Heritage at the University College of Cape Breton" and that Murdena Marshall is a "designated Prayer Leader to the 'Santewi Mawio'mi' (Grand Council) of the Mi'kmaq First Nation" and an "associate professor of Mi'kmaq Studies at the University College of Cape Breton." Their introduction (pp. 1-16) is devoted primarily to "A Brief History of the Hieroglyphs," a revised version of Schmidt's 1993 publication, "The Micmac Hieroglyphs: A Reassessment" (*Papers of the Twenty-Fourth Algonquian Conference*, ed. William Cowan, pp. 346-63).

The Micmac call their hieroglyphs "*komqwejwi'kasikl*, literally 'sucker fish writings'—the sucker fish (*komqwej*) being a riverine bottom feeder that, in its quest for food, leaves a muddy filigree" (p. 2). The hieroglyphic script seems to have evolved from an indigenous tradition of pictographic writing attested by seventeenth-century French missionaries (p. 4). The script was standardized in 1677 by Father Le Clercq, who disseminated it on the Gaspé Peninsula among Micmac people wishing to learn to pray. The glyphs were written with charcoal on birchbark. By 1678, this literacy had spread to Restigouche, in northern New Brunswick (pp. 6-7). By the close of the century, it had reached Nova Scotia. In the mid-eighteenth century Father Pierre Maillard "organized

a cadre of literate specialists, the *nujialasutma'tijik* (literally, 'those who pray'), to serve as lay catechists under the leadership of prayer chiefs" (p. 10). The latter were trained "to provide religious instruction, administer baptisms and marriages, and officiate at funerals" (p. 11). For seventy years after Maillard's death in 1762, the Micmac were denied access to priests by the British and were forced to rely on prayer chiefs with hieroglyphic manuscripts (p. 12). Nineteenth-century Protestant efforts to lure the Micmac away from Catholicism were a dismal failure; Father Christian Kauder was able to collect enough tattered hieroglyphic manuscripts to have *Buch das gut*, a book of liturgical hieroglyphic texts, printed in Vienna in 1866. Because most of the printed copies were lost at sea, few ever reached the Micmac; but Father Pacifique published another edition in 1921. Schmidt's and Marshall's book reproduces the Pacifique texts but with the addition of transliterations and English translations.

Hieroglyphic literacy declined in the twentieth century, most rapidly perhaps in the 1940s and 1950s, when the Canadian national government "forced hundreds of Mi'kmaq people to abandon their homes and resettle . . .," and parents

were compelled to send their children to church-run residential schools. Both policies disarrayed the kin-based learning networks through which traditional knowledge, including how to write and read the hieroglyphs, had been successfully transmitted for generations. (p. 15)

The introduction contains some information that was absent from Schmidt's 1993 publication, notably an account of the annual pilgrimage to the spring on Poulette's Mountain. This pilgrimage has been made by Cape Breton Micmac people just after midnight on every Good Friday since 1905, when an apparition of St. Anne appeared there. The pilgrims return to Eskasoni with "bottles of frigid holy water from the spring" to be shared with those unable to climb the icy trail; the water is used in the ensuing year for medicinal purposes. This custom may have analogues among other Wabanaki groups. Passamaquoddy people, I know, traditionally gather very early in the morning in nuclear family groups at the several brooks associated with their respective hunting territories. Fasting, they wade into the icy water, pray, express forgiveness and contrition, and bring back holy water, which is seldom seen by any priest, but is used as medicine in the following

year. The Cape Breton pilgrimage conforms to what may have been a widespread Wabanaki pattern, except that it exerts a centripetal, rather than a centrifugal social force and except that it is followed by a public reading of "The Passion of Our Lord" from a hieroglyphic text.

Some important information is conspicuously absent from the introduction of *Mi'kmaq Hieroglyphic Prayers*. It lacks the "Linguistic Overview," a preliminary analysis of the patterns governing the encoding and decoding of speech into, and out of, hieroglyphic script, which was a valuable component of the 1993 publication.

The research for Schmidt's and Marshall's book was initiated, the editors say, to discover whether the Micmac hieroglyphs "comprise a true writing system that represents speech" or simply a mnemonic device to aid in the recitation of prayers (pp. 3-4). Ives Goddard and William W. Fitzhugh were as unequivocal as they were succinct when they stated,

The Micmac [hieroglyphic] writing system is a purely mnemonic system used to aid in the reciting of Christian prayers; it cannot be used to write new messages ("A Statement concerning America B.C.," *Man in the Northeast* 17:167 [Spring 1979]).

Schmidt has argued (1993: 345-55) that the fact that hieroglyphs are now used primarily, if not exclusively, as aids to recitation does not constitute proof that they cannot be used to enable the writing and reading of new and unmemorized information. There are several indications that the hieroglyphic script may have been used at different times in the past to write and read new messages. Schmidt reproduced a note written on birchbark in hieroglyphic script collected by Frank Speck in 1917 (1993: 359). Two of the glyphs used appear to be improvised; the others are glyphs used in Kauder's 1866 edition. Another indication, given by Schmidt and Marshall (p. 14), is the fact that the late Barney Francis of Big Cove, N.B., said, "Mi'kmaq soldiers frequently exchanged hieroglyphic notes in the theater of battle as a security measure" (p. 14).

In their introduction Schmidt and Marshall make some "preliminary observations" on "the script's principles of linguistic representation" (p. 4); but these fail to include many of the useful insights in the 1993 article. They say,

Hieroglyphic texts are composed of individual symbols (called *glyphs*) written horizontally from left to right. Each glyph represents a word in the Mi'kmaq language. Glyphs, in turn, are composed of one or more discrete *graphemes* that signify the morphemes. . . . (p. 4)

Two glyphs on page 71, both of which are transcribed as *ne'sipuna'nek* and translated as "three years," are completely different in form. There are also glyphs with identical forms but radically different transliterations and translations. One such glyph is transliterated as *elasumeski'k* and translated as "they had faith" on page 49, but as *elasumul* "I honor You" on page 65. The same glyph is transliterated as *alasukmamk* "to pray" on page 122, and as *alasukmaq* "the prayer" on page 134. Clearly there is no one-to-one correspondence between glyphs and words; this does not, of course, foreclose the possibility that the hieroglyphic script can be used to communicate unrehearsed messages.

Most of the book (159 pages) is devoted to hieroglyphic texts reproduced from Pacifique. The twenty-seven texts are presented with interlinear alphabetic transliterations in the Smith-Francis orthography (for which no reference is given) and literal English translations. Each text is followed by a free English translation. The editors make no attempt to analyze the writing system.

Schmidt and Marshall have provided us with a truly beautiful collection of the Micmac hieroglyphic liturgical texts which, for over three hundred years, have sustained and exemplified Micmac faith, Micmac values, Micmac identity, and the Micmac language. They added transliterations and translations, but wisely withheld any analysis. Detailed analysis would be out of place here; we can hope for an analysis in some future publication.

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**Native American Affairs and the Department of Defense.** By Donald Mitchell and David Rubenson. Santa Monica, California: Rand National Defense Research Institute, 1996. 74 pages. \$15.00 paper.

In April 1994, a historic event took place on the south lawn of the White House. President Clinton and members of his cabinet met with the leaders of American Indian tribes. All of the president's cabinet except the secretary of state were in attendance, as were Mrs. Clinton and Vice President and Mrs. Gore. Representing the Indian nations were more than three hundred Indian leaders of federally recognized American Indian tribes. It was a historical first! Never before in this nation's history had such a meeting taken place.