

Reviews

Inuit Kinship and Naming Customs. Edited by PELAGIE OWLIJOOT and LOUISE FLAHERTY.
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The traditional roles of Inuit elders as name-givers and namesakes are the focus of Owljoot and Flaherty's compact and compelling compilation of *Inuit Kinship and Naming Customs*, published by Inhabit Media. The text, which comprises both English and Inuktitut versions, contains transcripts from interviews with Inuit elders from Arviat, Nunavut, who were invited to share their insights about Inuit naming practices in the Kivalliq Region. The elders were asked in particular about the custom of *tuq&urasiit* (pronounced *turk-thlo-row-seet*), an Inuit term of address that acknowledges kinship relationships and symbolizes respect and closeness within families.

According to the elders' responses, *tuq&urasiit* is a key aspect of Inuit naming practices, especially within the context of the naming of children. Traditionally, Inuit children are named after family elders and, in some cases, children carry the *tuq&urasiit* of their namesakes (13). In certain families, *tuq&urasiit* terms are used instead of given names. Elder Nancy Tasseor explains this practice as follows:

I *tuq&urag* my child named after my father *atchiaq*.... [A]s a family, we *tuq&urag* each other rather than using names. Some families call a child named after their mother *anaana* or a child named after their father as *ataata*.... when a sister or cousin gets married, we *tuq&urag* her husband our *aik*, and vice versa. We do not use their names, as it is impolite and shameful if we use our *aik*'s names; we should not even talk to them, as it is our custom to show respect. (23)

Knowledge pertaining to *tuq&urasiit* and other naming customs is passed along within communities and families by the elders, who function as both name-givers and name receivers in Inuit society. According to traditional practice, a child is typically named after one of their relatives, and it is the responsibility of the child's grandparents or other older family members to select a certain relative, either living or deceased, as the child's namesake. In this way, kinship relations within families are respected and reinforced. Elder Leo Sr Ahmak states:

[I]f our grandparents were alive, they knew who we were related to and they could tell us who we should name. So a woman who has just had a child should seek advice from an elder who knows. That's how naming should be done. (46)

In addition to addressing the practice of *tuq&urasiit*, the interviewees point out some other interesting facets of Inuit naming practices. It is noted, for instance, that elders can ask to be named in certain families, as explained by Matilda Sulurayok:

My late husband Sulurayok wanted to be named by someone he is related to in Coral Harbour.... [W]hen I was asked if they could name him I could not refuse, because they were related to Sulurayok on his mother's side. (51)

There are also cases where elders may prefer not to be named, even in their own families, because they want to be "left alone," so out of respect for their wishes, nobody will name them (53). The naming of children after deceased persons is also brought into focus. In general, this seems to be

an acceptable practice provided that the relatives of the deceased individual whose name is being bestowed are consulted and grant their permission. It is believed that the naming of a child after someone who has passed on helps to ease the pain of losing a loved one and gives the remaining family members a sense that the person who died is still present with them (14, 19, 24, 56).

Although knowledge concerning Inuit naming formalities and particularly the custom of *tuq&uraisiit* appears to be solidly intact in the minds of the elders who were interviewed, each of these elders expressed concern that changes in social structure and a marked linguistic shift away from the use of various Inuktitut dialects towards English has resulted in the decreased use of these time-honored traditions, to the point where many elders are no longer teaching these precepts to successive generations. Matilda Sulurayok succinctly addresses this issue in the following statement:

Today Inuit seem to have problems naming their children, because they are confused. Elders are not teaching their children these things, and we have abandoned our responsibility... I feel sorry for our young Inuit today because they have not been taught important issues and our traditions regarding naming children. It's obvious that they are not sure who to ask when they have a child. In the past we lived in camps, so it was not complicated like it is today. (34-35)

It appears, therefore, that *Inuit Kinship and Naming Customs* is a timely and extremely valuable publication. The manner in which Owljoot and Flaherty give voice to Inuit elders through the interviews emphasizes the crucial position of the elders as guardians of traditional wisdom and the importance of passing this knowledge on to future generations in order to preserve linguistic and cultural integrity in Inuit communities. The insights into Inuit naming customs that are afforded by this text clearly demonstrate that names and naming practices play powerful roles in maintaining and reinforcing cultural and social values and further indicate that changes in naming conventions reflect underlying linguistic, social, and cultural shifts. Researchers and others who are interested in delving into the naming traditions of indigenous peoples will find this book a worthwhile and fascinating resource. For Inuit readers, it is a call to action to ensure the continuance of their native language and culture in the face of inevitable changes in the social and linguistic order.

University of the Free State (Bloemfontein, South Africa)

CAROL LOMBARD

Bushman (San) Influence on Zulu Place Names. By PETER E. RAPER. Bloemfontein, South Africa: Acta Academica (Supplementum 2, 2012). 2013. Pp. 186. Available free of charge. ISSN 0587-2405.

Peter Raper is Professor Extraordinary in Linguistics and Research Associate in the Department of Linguistics and Language Practice at the University of the Free State in South Africa. He is also a long-term member of the American Name Society and has made significant contributions to this journal as well as to other journals (see, for example, *Names* 31 (Sept. 1983): 226-231; 35 (March 1987): 59-62; 56 (Dec. 2008): 221-230; 57 (March 2009): 3-16; 57 (Sept. 2009): 127-140; 58 (March 2010): 37-46). For decades he has been involved in toponymic studies, mostly of the placenames of South Africa but extending into the neighboring countries of Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Swaziland, and the South-African-surrounded nation of Lesotho. His long career in name study and his proficiency in English, Afrikaans, and several indigenous languages make him uniquely qualified to undertake the difficult study which is the topic of this book.

Although neither the title nor the introductory material makes it clear, the geographical area this book covers is the province of KwaZulu-Natal, along the Indian Ocean in eastern South Africa. (Originally Natal, the present name blends the old name with *Zulu* and the Zulu prefix *kwa*, which