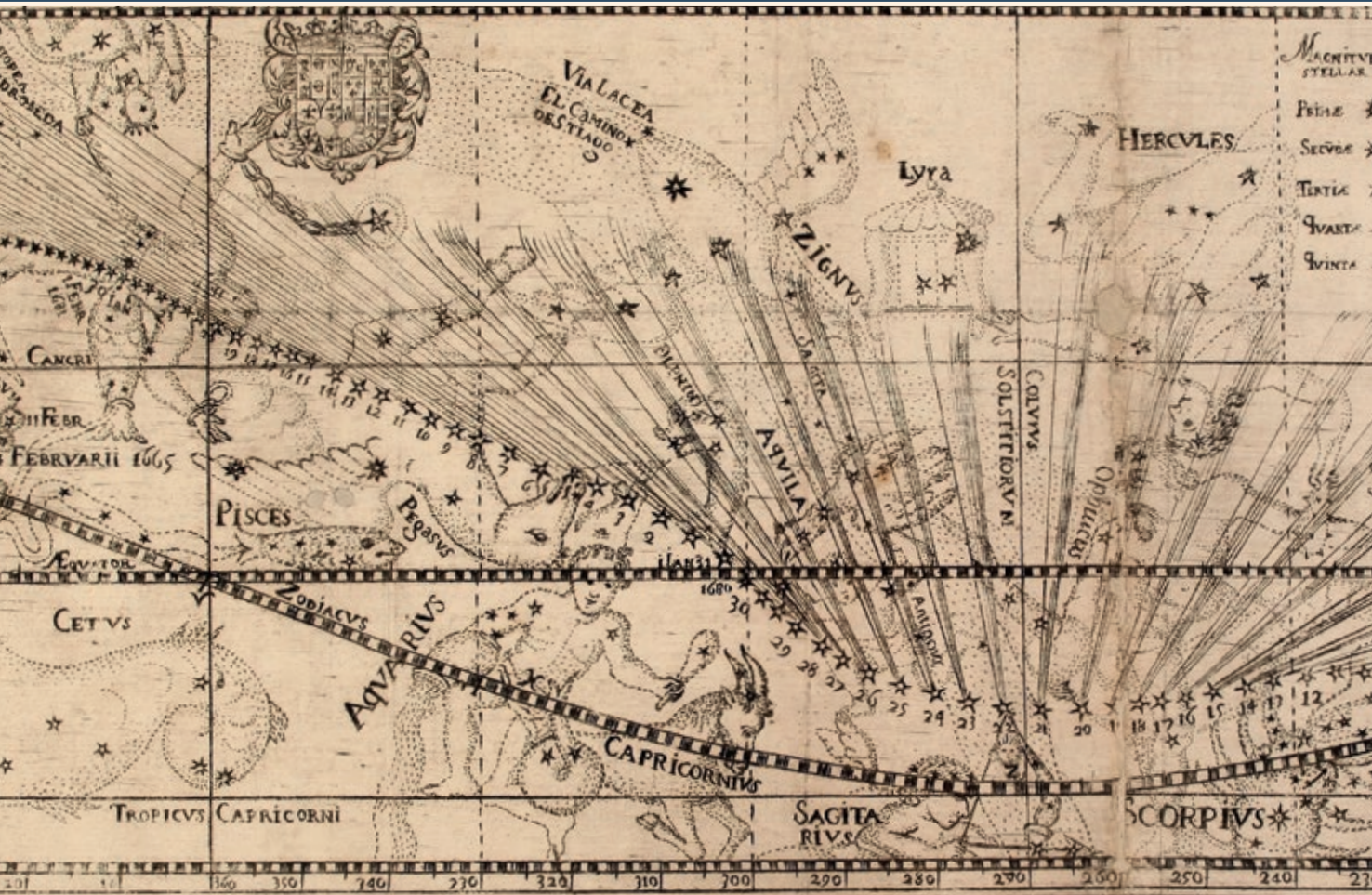


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Front cover Eusebio Kino, detail from 'Delineacion y dibujo de las constelaciones y partes del cielo por donde discurrio el grandioso cometa que el Año de 1680 por los Meses de Noviembre y Diciembre el de 1681...', Mexico, 1681. Courtesy John Carter Library.

# NORTH ATLANTIC VISION

## *The depiction of Inuit people on William Parker's eighteenth-century chart of Newfoundland*

Daphne Joynes

In 2012 IMCoS published my article ‘The Path to Promotion: An eighteenth-century chart of Newfoundland’.<sup>1</sup> In it I discussed a previously unpublished 1771 manuscript chart prepared by the then Lieutenant William Parker RN (1742–1802) (Fig. 1).<sup>2</sup> I maintained that the young naval officer’s chart was his means of securing promotion to the command of a vessel in Newfoundland waters. It was in effect Parker’s *curriculum vitae*, providing proof to the Admiralty of his detailed knowledge of the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador acquired when he was assistant surveyor to James Cook, charting those perilous waters in the 1760s.<sup>3</sup>

In this article I will be concentrating on the significance of the chart’s central cartouche and Parker’s depiction of the Inuit people he encountered on the coasts of Labrador and northern Newfoundland. I will be suggesting that this depiction reflected contemporary Royal Naval political concerns about the native peoples in the territory of Labrador and Newfoundland. These concerns may well have contained an element of ‘paternalism’, and certainly reflected successive Newfoundland Governors’ realisation that the welfare of native peoples in their territory was directly linked with matters of strategic security.

By the time he presented his chart to the Earl of Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty, in 1771, William Parker had been based in Newfoundland waters for six years. From 1764 he was Master’s Mate and Assistant Surveyor to James Cook aboard the schooner *Grenville*. From 1767 to 1770 he was 1st Lieutenant aboard *Niger* and then *Aldborough*; both vessels were assigned to the Royal Navy’s Newfoundland squadron.

Commodore Thomas Graves, the then naval Governor was dissatisfied with the accuracy of earlier English and French charts of Newfoundland, and in

1763 initiated a survey of the territory. He urged the Admiralty to commission a comprehensive survey of the island by a skilled surveyor and, impressed by James Cook’s cartographic work in the Gulf of St Lawrence, he recommended him as the best man for the job.<sup>4</sup> In that first season of surveying Cook’s orders were to begin by charting the small island of St Pierre just off the south coast of Newfoundland (which, along with the island of Miquelon, was about to be returned to the French under a provision of the Treaty of Paris); then to survey harbours and bays of the Northern Peninsula where the French were permitted to fish, and the Labrador coast which was now under British control.

The meticulous survey work led by Cook was consistent with British determination to assert sovereignty over those parts of Newfoundland and Labrador which the government in London had virtually ignored until then.<sup>5</sup> But in order for Cook to carry out this crucial work it became obvious at the end of his first surveying season that he would require an assistant who was also an experienced seaman. In 1764 Commodore Hugh Palliser replaced Thomas Graves as Governor of Newfoundland, and wrote to the Admiralty about the urgent need for an assistant surveyor:<sup>6</sup> ‘[he] should be a seaman with some knowledge of surveying and drawing, and be a mate of the vessel, paid as master’s mate ... I apprehend the best assistant the surveyor can have is such a person .... and I flatter myself that their Lordships will think that such a person, who has been brought up in the Navy, is better intitled [*sic*] to encouragem’t [*sic*] than any young man that is meerly [*sic*] a draftsman, no seaman, and without knowledge of either land or sea surveying’.<sup>7</sup> The young man who fulfilled Palliser’s requirements – who had indeed ‘been brought up in the Navy’,<sup>8</sup> had experience of surveying and drawing and knowledge of the coasts that were to be surveyed – was William Parker. Palliser was to play an important part in Parker’s early naval career. He was in effect the young man’s

Fig. 1 William Parker, ‘A Chart of the Island of Newfoundland with part of the Coast of Labradore including the Island of St Paul and Cape North’, 1771. 79 x 69 cm. The National Archives UK, ADM 352/54.

patron at this key time and subsequently at the time of Parker's request for promotion (accompanied by the presentation of his manuscript chart) in 1771.

Throughout these surveying years Cook and his crew overwintered in England, and in May 1764 he sailed back to Newfoundland to prepare for his second surveying season. William Parker arrived in St John's with the new Governor Palliser on 3 July aboard *Guernsey*. He transferred immediately to *Grenville*, the schooner which Governor Graves had previously assigned to Cook to use for the surveying work. The next day they sailed out of St John's and 'stood to the northward'<sup>9</sup> to continue the survey where Cook had left off the previous season.

When Palliser took command as Governor he was faced with a politically complicated situation. Under the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Seven Years' War between Britain and France in 1763, the French were granted the islands of St Pierre and Miquelon in compensation for the loss of Cape Breton. They were also permitted to fish in season on what was known as The French/Treaty Shore of Newfoundland, between Cape Bonavista on the Atlantic coast and Point Riche on the Straits of Belle Isle facing Labrador. By this time there were significant numbers of British settlers and fishermen in Newfoundland, but the French claimed sole right to fish on the French Shore during the season. The British countered that this right was concurrent and that fishermen from both countries could use the Shore which was, after all, now British territory.<sup>10</sup> Inevitably there were regular reports of French fishing infringements, conflict between French and English fishing fleets and between fishermen and settlers. It was the responsibility of the Governor to resolve these conflicts, and accurate charting of the territory from Labrador in the north to the islands of St Pierre and Miquelon to the south of the island of Newfoundland became even more urgent. This was the work which Cook and his assistant surveyor William Parker were to carry out together over the next three seasons.<sup>11</sup>

Significantly, there were also reports of violent clashes between indigenous people and European fishermen. These conflicts raised strategic concerns: Palliser after all would have been aware of the military use made by the British and French of native auxiliaries during the Seven Years' War. The reports also gave rise to a more general concern for the welfare of the Inuit people, who inhabited the shores of Labrador and who crossed to the Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland for seasonal hunting. The mysterious Beothuk people of the island's

interior, about whom very little was known, were also the subject of concern to Governor Palliser (in 1768 he despatched an expedition to the interior to try to make contact with them). Furthermore, he had strategic and political concerns about France's former aboriginal allies, the Mi'kmaq, and was forced to take measures to restrict their presence in the region.<sup>12</sup>

Palliser, it seems, was horrified by the treatment of Inuit at the hands of Europeans,<sup>13</sup> and reported 'murthers [*sic*], robberies and other disorders committed on the Indian inhabitants on the coast of Labrador'<sup>14</sup> and consequent violent retaliation by the native peoples. Palliser made the first official attempts to establish friendly relations both with the Inuit people on the Labrador and northern Newfoundland coasts and with the Beothuk.<sup>15</sup> He determined to improve relations with the Inuit in particular by increasing the British seasonal trading presence and by enlisting the help of Moravian missionaries, who were keen to establish a permanent presence on the coast of Labrador.<sup>16</sup> The Moravians were a Protestant church based in northern Europe committed to the propagation of the Gospel around the world. An earlier Moravian mission to Labrador in 1752 had been unsuccessful largely because none of the missionaries at that time were able to speak the Inuit language. This prompted the Moravian Jens Haven, based at the Greenland Inuit mission and thus familiar with the Inuit language, to take the gospel from Greenland to Labrador.<sup>17</sup>

In early 1764 before he sailed for Newfoundland as the new Governor, Hugh Palliser had been introduced to Jens Haven in London so that they could discuss Haven's proposals for a Labrador mission.<sup>18</sup> There is debate among historians as to whether Palliser was adopting an 'over paternalistic' attitude to native peoples out of formal policy concerns, or out of personal, humanitarian instincts.<sup>19</sup> What is certain is that during his first summer in Newfoundland Palliser actively encouraged Haven to meet the people he called 'Esquimeaux' in the Northern Peninsula where Cook and Parker were surveying Quirpon Bay.

Parker was on board *Grenville* when the Moravian missionary arrived to solicit Cook's assistance in making contact with Inuit before going on to Labrador.<sup>20</sup> Haven says that Cook, who was still recovering from a near fatal accident,<sup>21</sup> received him 'very kindly',<sup>22</sup> and it is likely that Parker would have been involved in the discussions at this stage.

Palliser's own transcription of Haven's diary details the missionary's meeting with Inuit people in Quirpon



Fig. 2 Central cartouche on William Parker's chart of Newfoundland. The National Archives UK, ADM 352/54.

Bay, his time on board *Grenville* with Cook, and his subsequent visit to Labrador.<sup>23</sup> The success of Haven's mission that year depended entirely on the help given him by Palliser and Cook. Whilst on board *Grenville* Haven would have studied and discussed with Cook and Parker their latest charts of Labrador.<sup>24</sup>

Haven reported that the Inuit he encountered in Quirpon spoke the same language as the Greenlanders with whom he was familiar, and that they had received him in friendship during the reconnaissance made under the Governor's patronage.<sup>25</sup> Palliser advised that friendly relations with the Inuit should be encouraged, and lengthy negotiations with the Moravians over their mission settlement rights began in earnest. Official interest in Inuit welfare grew along with hopes of developing commercial links.

Jens Haven's successful meeting with the Inuit and Cook at Quirpon is of great interest.<sup>26</sup> It would have made a profound impression on Cook's young assistant William Parker, not least because Haven could speak to the Inuit in their own language as a consequence of his earlier half-decade in Greenland. Moreover, during Haven's time in Greenland the Moravian chronicler David Crantz had also been there preparing his history of the territory and an account of the Moravian church's work in Greenland.<sup>27</sup> Crantz's *History of Greenland*, with illustrated observations on the country, its people and

their way of life, was first published in German in 1765. Moravians in London hastened to use a newly printed English translation of the book in their lobbying efforts on behalf of the Labrador project.<sup>28</sup> In the last days of December 1766, just a few days ahead of publication, they hand-delivered copies of the *History* to many influential people: Lord Egmont the recent First Lord of the Admiralty was presented with a copy, as was Lord Dartmouth the future Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies,<sup>29</sup> and it is likely that Hugh Palliser would also have received a copy before it became generally available.<sup>30</sup> In 1767 the *Gentleman's Magazine* and *The Critical Review* both published long articles about *The History of Greenland*. The native people of the North Atlantic, their culture and way of life, were fast becoming a subject of fashionable interest in London society.<sup>31</sup>

Throughout his service with James Cook, William Parker would have been aware of successive Governors' developing policy towards Newfoundland's native peoples, and when he subsequently became 1st Lieutenant in *Niger* he would have been involved in its application as more Europeans settled in Newfoundland and as seasonal European fishing fleets increased in number. It was therefore appropriate that when he prepared his chart for presentation to the 'The Right Hon the Earl of Sandwich' in support of his request for advancement 'To command a brigg on Newfnd.