

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDSCHOOL

2008



Avataq Cultural Institute

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON DRAYTON ISLAND AND ITS AREA, NEAR INUKJUAQ - SUMMER 2008

by Elsa Cencig

This summer a second season of the field school in archaeology at Inukjuak continued. The project, which is part of Avataq's involvement in the International Polar Year (IPY), was initiated by Daniel Gendron and carried out by Pierre M. Desrosiers since 2007.

The team, lead by Pierre M. Desrosiers and assisted by Elsa Cencig, was composed of Nally Weetaluktuk and Andrew Epoo, also Avataq staff. Local people involved included Simeonie (hunter-guide) and Ailie Nalukturuk (cook), Joanie Elijassiapik (hunter-guide), Allie Nalukturuk (hunter-guide) and Andy Nalukturuk (assistant hunter-guide). 14 students did 5 weeks of training in excavation methods, including surveying, technical drawing and recovery of artifacts.



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INSTITUT CULTUREL AVATAQ
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These students are: Moses Idlout, Megan Kasudluak, Natalie Echalook, Allie Acullak, Bobby Elijassiapik, Tonya Moreau, Alec Epoo, Sarah Iqalluk, Eva Nowra, Minnie-Pamela Inukpuk, Paulu Palliser, Matiusi Kasudluak, Bobby Angnatuk and Monica Echalook.

Anne-Marie Lemieux (Centre d'Études Nordiques - Université Laval) also came on the field: she's comparing the geomorphological, archaeological and palaeoecological data to study the evolution of housing in the region, as well as including traditional knowledge by conducting interviews with local elders. Najat Bhiry (Centre d'Études Nordique - Université Laval) and Dominique Marguerie (Laboratoire Archéo-Sciences - Université de Rennes) were also involved respectively as a geomorphologist and a wood specialist.



During the first week, the teenagers had a short introduction to archaeology at the school as well as a visit at the museum. Afterwards, we set up the camp... which required many trips between Inukjuak and Kittuqajjaq (Drayton Island).





By the second week the excavation is started!

Everybody has to learn how to work like an archaeologist...



First rules: digging square by square, very carefully, AND do not move the artefacts



When the bucket is full, we go sieving, to recover all the tiny artefacts.



A plan of the square and its artefacts is drawn with a grid when the decap is done.



After we take the elevation of every artefact in the square, and we collect them one by one.

We identify every artefact by numbers written on a tag.

"Who wants to hold the scale?"

"Who's gonna read the elevations?"

- Me! Me! Me!



Digging up the past



"Who said working is not fun!?!?"

"Hey Elsa, is it a Microblade?"

THE TEAM...



Megan Kasudluak



Bobby Elijassiapik



Natalie Echalook



Moses "Mogy" Idlout



Tonya Moreau



Alec Epoo

"Elsaaaaa, Look! Look what i found!"



Sarah Iqalluk



Allie Aculiak



Eva Nowra

" Where is the agiak?"



Paulu Palliser



Matusi Kasudluak



Bobby Angnatuk

" what time is it?"



Minnie-Pamela Inukpuk



Monica Echalook



Andy Nalukturuk

Simeonie, Alicie and Allie Nalukturuk



Joanie Elijassiapik with his son Pita

Joanie and Noah



AVATAQ TEAM:

**Pierre Desrosiers
Andrew Epoo
Elsa Cencig
Nally Weetaluktuk**



A group of specialists also joined the crew on the field for a week: Dominique Marguerie, Najat Bhiry and Anne-Marie Lemieux.



They gave the teenagers a chance to learn more about geomorphology (land formation and surface processing) with Najat and Anne-Marie, and about dendrochronology (datations from tree rings) with Dominique.

We were fortunate to have many people visit us, including elders from Inukjuak:

Lucy Weetaluktuk

and

Adamie Niviaxie



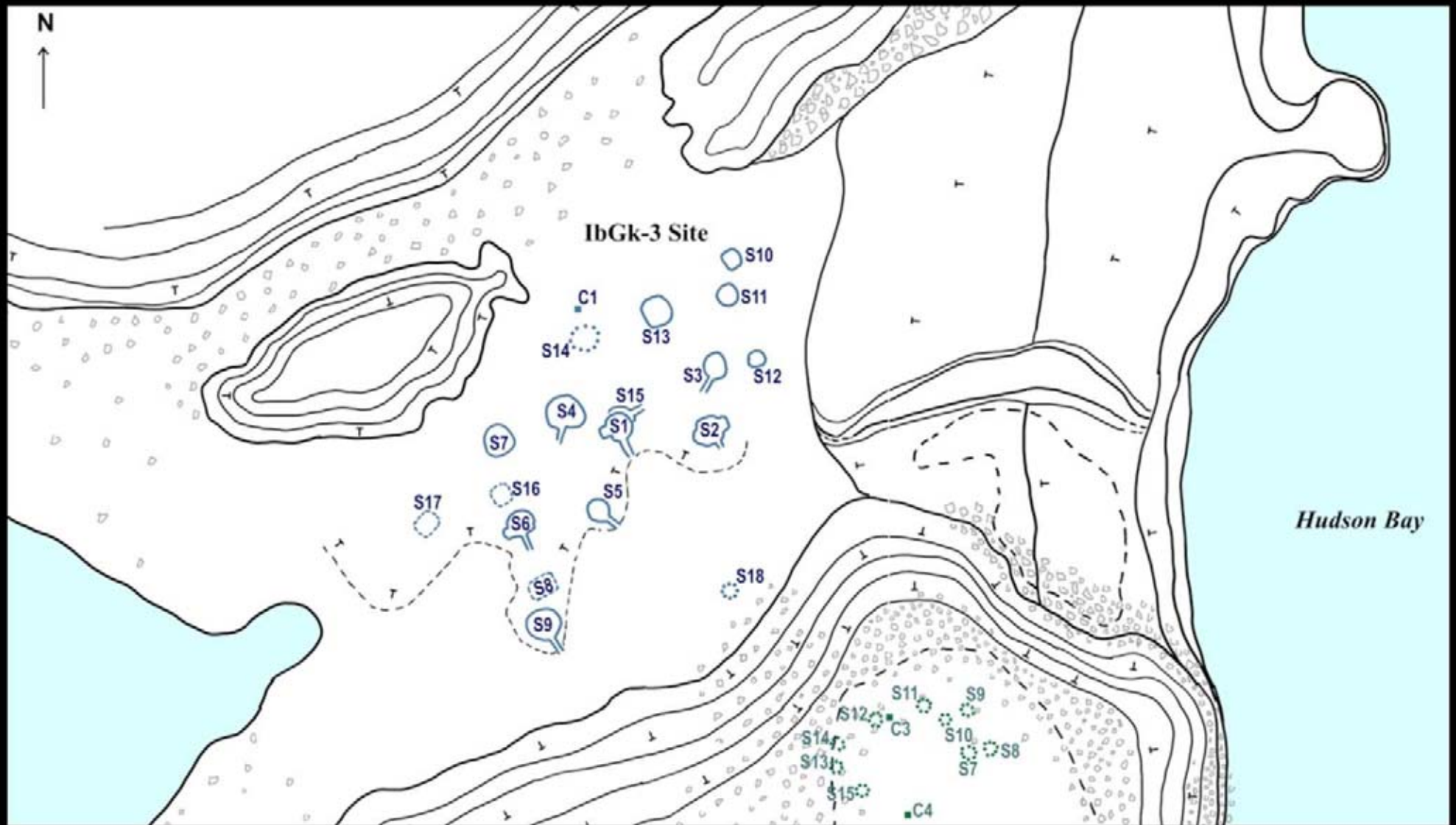
Lucy Weetaluktuk says she remembers Inuit used to find and trade artefacts for tea. She now thinks it was a bad idea to sell Inuit culture. She also remembers that her son Daniel (the first inuk archaeologist) use to tell her that it's important not to disturb archaeological sites in order for archaeologists to study our ancestors.

In front of our camp, on the mainland, there was also a team of geologists from McGill University and Boulder Colorado. They were studying...



THE OLDEST ROCKS IN THE WORLD!!! 4.2 billions years old.

We visited them and Jonathan O'Neil, the leader of the project, explained to us the geology of these very old rocks.



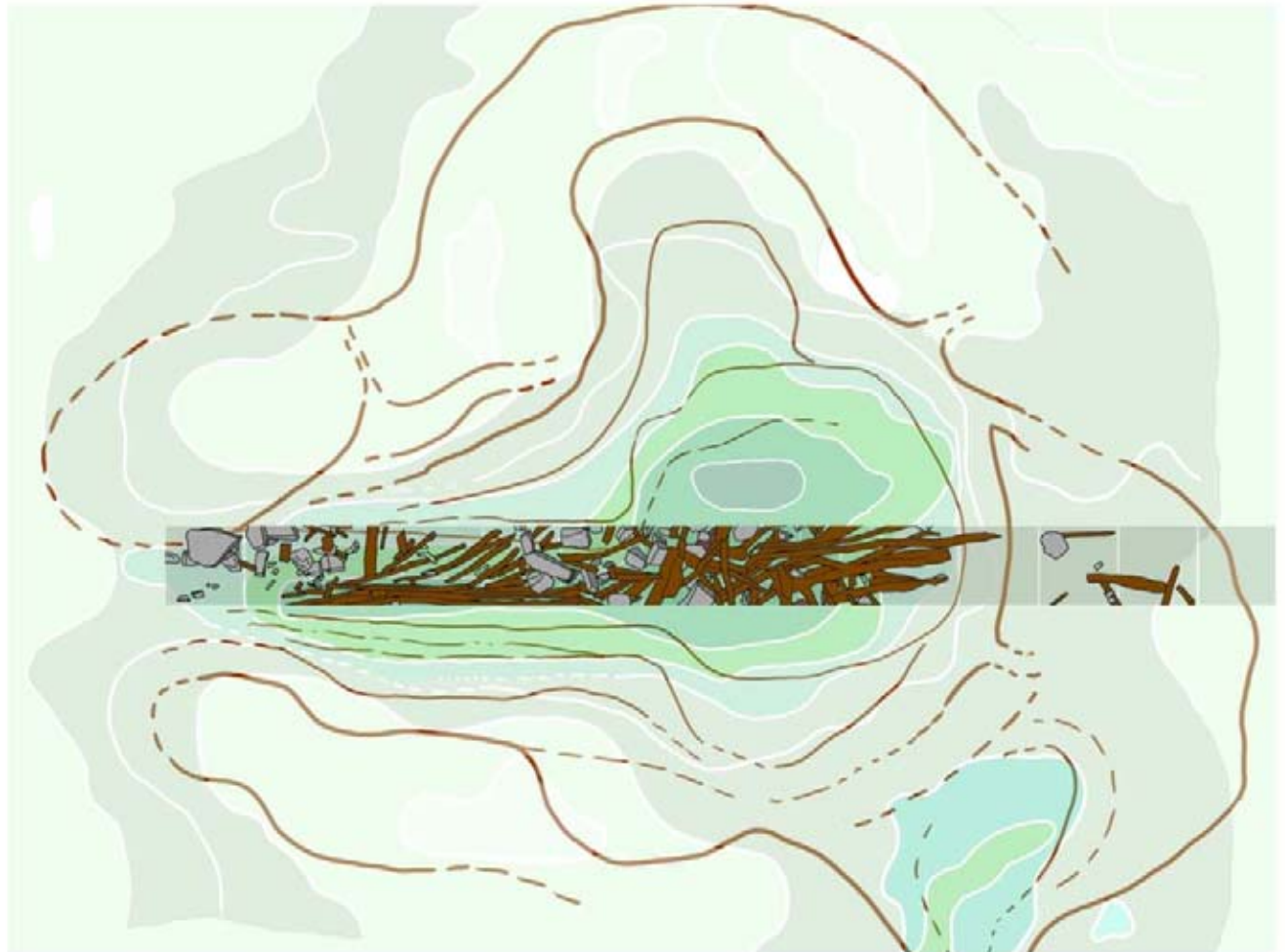
- But... What about the site we were working on?

- Well, the site, IbGk-3, is located on a nice valley. It was first occupied by Palaeoeskimos during a period possibly more than 2500 years ago.

About 2 000 years later, the site was re-occupied by Inuit who built qarmait (semi-subterrean winter houses) with tunnel entrances. We were excavating one of these houses (structure 1).

We discovered some wood that had been used to build the roof of the dwelling, which is rarely preserved in archaeological sites in Nunavik.

Work was also done in front of the house where we uncovered part of the midden, composed mainly of animal bones.





We also discovered soapstone fragments, arrowheads, microblades, a knife, a piece of leather, and many many many flakes!



Sorting the sieving



" Is it a flake?"

" Yes it is!"



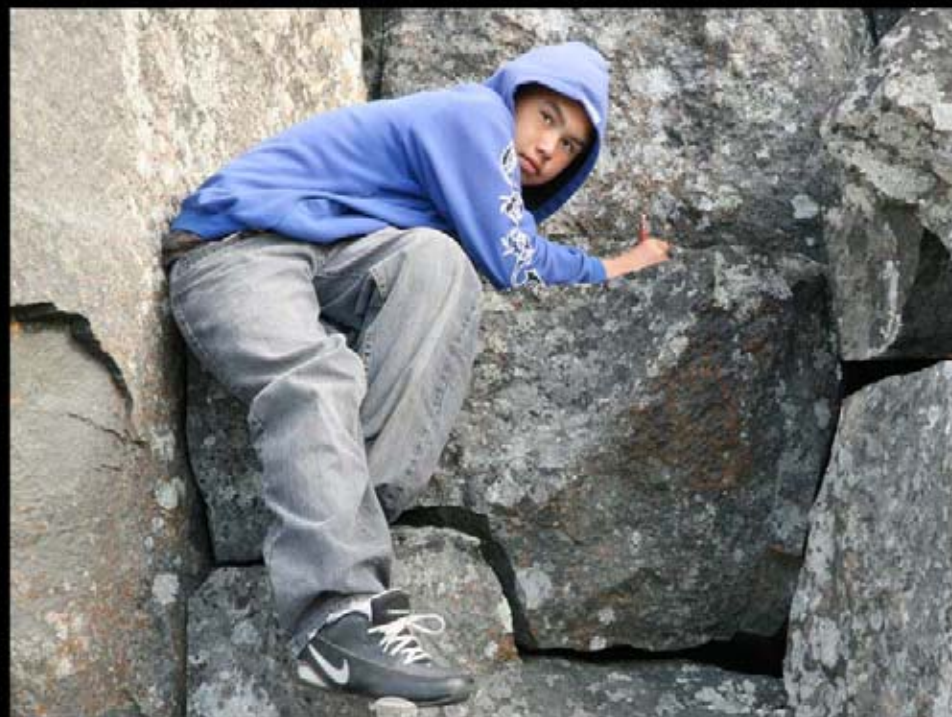
Life on the camp is VERY fun!





During the weekend, while everybody is home, the archaeologists are surveying the other islands in the area.

An extra week of work was also done on Nappartulik (Patterson Island), in front of Inukjuak.



Adrian Burke (archaeometry - Université de Montréal) joined the little team which surveyed the siltstone quarry.

Finally, an exhibit of the most interesting finds was done at the Pukik Cultural Committee's qamaq, to give the chance to the inukjuammiut to see those artefacts.



Nakurmik everybody!