

Book Reviews

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF EXPLORATION 1850 TO 1940: CONTINENTAL EXPLORATION. Raymond John Howgego. 2008. Sydney: Hordern House. xii + 1047 p, hard cover. ISBN 978-1-875567-42-3. \$Aus295.00. doi:10.1017/S0032247408007821

A good number of years ago, this reviewer put forward a proposal through the African Studies Centre at Cambridge to write an encyclopaedia covering in detail all the major exploring expeditions venturing into Africa. My model was to be the classic *The exploration of northern Canada 500 to 1920: a chronology*, by Alan Cooke and Clive Holland (1978). In the event, the proposal went nowhere, but, as it turned out, it really did not matter, because *Encyclopedia of exploration 1850 to 1940: continental exploration*, when joined together with the earlier volumes of Raymond John Howgego's remarkable series, has achieved the task better than I imagine I — or, in fact, anyone else — probably could have.

This is the fourth and final volume of what truly is a *magnum opus*. And it would be remarkable if anyone with serious interests in the history of exploration were not familiar with the previous volumes of this work (Howgego 2003, 2004, 2006), which, uniquely in my view, serve equally well as an introduction for the general reader and a meticulous recounting of the specifics and minutiae for the specialist. All three were mentioned in a previous review of the third volume in this journal (Riffenburgh 2007).

Although in a sense a continuation of the first two volumes, which covered the periods up to 1800 and then 1800–1850, respectively, this is more of a counterpart to the third volume, which dealt with the exploration of the world's oceans, islands, and polar regions from 1850 to 1940. This volume, as its subtitle indicates, covers the exploration of, and travel in, the continental areas. This does not mean that there is not a great deal here for the readers of *Polar Record*, however. Expeditions to Arctic and sub-Arctic Canada, Alaska, and Siberia are all included, as are those to Tierra del Fuego.

The organisation of this volume is like that of the previous three installments of *Encyclopedia of exploration*. The entries are listed alphabetically by leaders of expeditions rather than by the expeditions themselves, meaning that if an explorer led more than one major expedition, they form separate entries under his name. Other significant members of expeditions are given brief biographies at the end of the appropriate expedition account, rather than individual entries. Each entry is

followed by a bibliography, and these tend to be divided into two sections. The first lists original diaries, logs, and other papers, as well as primary narratives; the second is a selection of biographies and other works that provide useful background. Some of these bibliographies are remarkable research efforts on their own, such as the ones about the African explorer David Livingstone, which total four and a half pages of small type in a quarto format book.

This volume also has entries about specific regions, although not nearly as many as did the third volume. Thus, articles such as 'Alaska: inland exploration, 1860–1900' and 'Alaska: coastal surveys, 1854–1900' provide a great deal of both historical and bibliographical information about 'minor' expeditions and explorers that might otherwise not have been incorporated in the book due to their relative significance (or lack thereof) and the stringent inclusion criteria required for such a work. Other important parts of the book are the introduction, which explains the organisation, content, and sources; the index of individuals mentioned in the entries, and the index of the regional entries. It is also a significant benefit that, with all four books having been completed, a series of indices covering all four volumes and allowing searches by specific regions of the world or particular periods of time are being prepared. These are available to download free from the internet, to obtain from the publisher, or to be searched online.

For nearly three decades, the publications of Clive Holland (Cooke and Holland 1978; Holland 1994) set the standard for reference works about the Arctic. Howgego's volumes have been the only works to match that standard as relates to the polar regions — and they offer vastly more for those with interests wider than the Arctic and Antarctic. Although this volume is perhaps not as heavy in polar content as the previous three, it gives important coverage to the sub-Arctic and even surpasses Holland (1994) in some respects, as its time period extends 25 years more recently and it has additional content about certain regions, such as Labrador, where not only Albert Low, but Wilfred Grenfell, Zacharie Lacasse, and Leonida Hubbard have entries.

All the names that a reader of *Polar Record* would expect to be in such a source are included, such as Frederick Schwatka and John Palliser for their expeditions throughout North America; Robert Kennicott, William Healey Dall, Edward Nelson, and Edward Henry Harriman in Alaska; John Moodie, Emil Petitot, and Keish (Skookum Jim) in the Yukon or the Northwest

Territories; and George Kennan in Siberia. But there are a lot more who are perhaps less known, such as John Murdoch, Annie Alexander and Andrew Bahr, who worked in Alaska, and Charles Lanauze and Francis French, who conducted expeditions to the Northwest Territories. Bringing all these figures, and more, to light is a significant achievement and a valuable addition to the polar literature.

As would be expected from Hordern House – a publisher that has long thrived on high quality – this book is a first-class production. As in the previous volumes, the editing and cross-referencing are thorough, the printing excellent, and the binding and dust jacket superior, even including the series' trademark three page ribbons.

Unfortunately, the book *does* suffer from one glaring weakness: there are no maps. On the one hand, this is totally understandable, because it most likely that it would be vastly more expensive to produce detailed maps of all of the regions of the Earth's continents than to put together the rest of the book in total. That said, with 950 major articles in the volume, and therefore thousands upon thousands of place-names, it is unfortunate that the reader has to turn to a detailed atlas to follow the routes of the expeditions.

As regards other criticisms of the book, I would really have to search hard to find any, and then they would simply prove to be niggles mentioned to show they could be found. This book is that good – and that valuable as a resource. (Beau Riffenburgh, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

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ARCTIC SPECTACLES: THE FROZEN NORTH IN VISUAL CULTURE, 1818–1875. Russell A. Potter. 2007. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press. x + 258 p, illustrated. ISBN 978-0-295-98679-1 (hard cover); ISBN 978-0-295-98680-7 (soft cover). £18.00.

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This is a disconcertingly uneven book, the strengths of which are discussions of visual representations by US Americans of the nineteenth century Arctic that the author has in his possession. More descriptive than analytical or theoretical, *Arctic spectacles* fails for whole chapters at a stretch firmly to contextualise its study within existing scholarship, but then provides good in-depth work on, for example, Kane and the US American presence in the Arctic in search of Franklin. Its discussions of US American representations are generally engaging, but the book spends too much time uncritically stitching these together with what existing sources have already provided.

Russell Potter's general approach concentrates on those expeditions for which panoramas were produced: Ross' second, Grinnell/De Haven/Kane's, Hall's, and Hayes', but at regular intervals he expands from panoramas into other forms of public spectacle — lectures, paintings, and plays. Entire chapters or sections focus on makers of the art, such as Dickens, Church, Landseer, and Bradford. Even with this narrow selection, one would expect the work of a scholar published by a university press to provide up-to-date historical contextualisation, but books such as *Overland to Starvation Cove* (1987), *The myth of the explorer* (1993), *No ordinary journey* (1993), *Victorian science and engineering portrayed in the Illustrated London News* (1993), *Arctic artist* (1994), 'Arctic wilderness and other mythologies' (1998), *Ghosts of Cape Sabine* (2000), *From Barrow to Boothia* (2002), *The last imaginary place* (2004), *Northern exposures* (2004), and *The coldest crucible* (2006) fail to find a place in the discussion, which, despite the subtitle's end-date, does takes its reader up to the present day. Neither the work of Samuel Gurney Cresswell, the superb watercolourist who sailed with M'Clure, nor that of Edward Augustus Inglefield are mentioned.

Regrettably, the author also appears unfamiliar with *Finding Franklin* (2005), the excellent if somewhat musically morbid documentary film by Peter Bate. Not a dramatisation, it spends an entire scene on Landseer's grisly painting, *Man proposes, God disposes* (1864), and, in interviewing Anne Keenleyside, evokes more about the painting than does Potter, although he mentions her and includes a fine colour reproduction of it. *Finding Franklin* also sharpens our understanding of the intimate relationship between Dickens and Jane Franklin, which Potter ignores as a catalyst for the novelist's alacrity in taking up the public case against the evidence of cannibalism by members of the lost expedition of 1845; and it pays particular attention to the intersection of the Franklin mystery with the Victorian fascination with mediums, a topic treated by Potter, who also relies on Gil Ross' essay in *Polar Record*.

Consultation of Ross' article is an exception; a thorough review of scholarship in periodicals like this one is also absent, so the reader receives an historical treatment of the topic that seems at times nearly random. It is also only occasionally fresh. Too often, where it is