

exploration of the far south. A reader will perhaps not finish the book knowing everything he wants to know about Wild, but he should be more informed than previously.

This book is obtainable by direct mail from that excellent publisher of polar books, Caedmon of Whitby (128 Uppang Lane, Whitby, North Yorkshire YO21 3JJ, United Kingdom), for £25.50 plus £3.00 packing and postage. (Beau Riffenburgh, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

ANTARCTIC ENVIRONMENTS AND RESOURCES: A GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVE.

James D. Hansom and John E. Gordon. 1998. Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman. xiv + 402 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-582-08127-0. \$21.99.

In their introduction, James D. Hansom and John E. Gordon proclaim the need for a 'new' geography of Antarctica. My first reaction to this assertion was that Antarctic geography is still hardly out of diapers, so why is it that we already need a new one? Aristotle may have postulated in the sixth century BC the existence of a large southern continent, but it was not until the late eighteenth century that humans began to look for it, and only in 1820 that Bellingshausen first sighted it. The first major scientific expeditions of the 'heroic era' were launched only 100 years ago; year-round scientific observations on Antarctica did not begin until 1944 when Britain established a base at Port Lockroy. Furthermore, we had to wait until even more recently before cartographers had a complete map of the frozen continent, and even today we know little about the continent that lies below its shroud of ice. No, Antarctic geography is *young*.

Even so, the authors make a persuasive case for writing a geography that integrates the legacies of past exploration and exploitation with today's burgeoning growth of scientific knowledge and the environmental agenda that currently permeates all aspects of human activity in the Antarctic. In the brief span of time since man's first contact with Antarctica, we have decimated the whale stocks, over-exploited several fish stocks, and nearly exterminated several species of seals. Some 10,000 tourists now visit Antarctica every year. Major scientific discoveries have placed the Antarctic at the center of key global climate processes. Yet Antarctica is still widely regarded as *Terra Australis Incognita*, described as 'a pole apart,' and depicted as an unrecognizable white mass at the bottom of world maps if it is shown at all. Standing at the door to the twenty-first century, popular notions of Antarctica as a remote, icy wilderness need updating to reflect current scientific understanding of the Antarctic region as a central component of the engine that drives critical global processes.

Hansom and Gordon divide their geography into three parts. Part I describes the nature, functioning, and spatial patterns of the major physical systems and the ways they

interact and influence the region's natural systems. Comprising fully half the text, this part lays the essential scientific foundation necessary to understand Antarctic environments and resources. While comprehensive in scope and uncompromising in detail, this scientific review constructively links Antarctica to the larger world in which we live through two different perspectives. The first perspective is outward-looking, examining the ways in which the geography of Antarctica's physical systems have global significance in terms of climate, heat balance, oceanic circulation, and marine nutrient cycling. The second is inward-looking, considering the potential for global phenomena such as climate change to alter the physical and biological systems of the Antarctic.

For a continent lacking traditional human settlements, writing a human geography of Antarctica might at first seem odd. Yet Antarctic resources and environments have provided the stimulus for a wide range of human activities in the region. The authors turn our attention to the human element in Part II, with chapters on Antarctic exploration, exploitation, science, and politics, and the effects of these and other human activities on Antarctic environments. Taking a historical perspective, this section examines the changing (yet remarkably similar) motives for human interest in the Antarctic, from early exploring expeditions, whaling, and sealing, to their modern counterparts of national scientific programs, tourist adventures, and marine-resource exploitation. And geopolitics remains as active today as it was yesterday, although science is now the vehicle of choice for maintaining a strategic presence on the continent, as well as for staking a claim to any future benefits from mineral or other resources that might be found.

Part III looks at past and future environmental management of the Antarctic, focusing on the various conventions, protocols, and actors within the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS). Compared with environmental management in other parts of the globe, the Antarctic Treaty Parties have been relatively foresighted in creating management regimes for seals, living marine resources, and minerals. Adoption of the Protocol on Environmental Protection has further reinforced conservation and environmental management, placing it at the core of the ATS along with peace and science. Even so, the ATS faces challenges. The explosion of Antarctic tourism is one concern. Some tour operators are from non-Treaty states and thus not legally bound to abide by its precepts. This underscores the difficulties of effectively implementing environmental management regimes in the Antarctic.

Antarctic environments and resources integrates an impressive range of geographic disciplines relevant to the Antarctic. Indeed, a stated aim of the authors was to provide, in one book, a comprehensive reference text on the key issues related to Antarctic environments and resource management. What they have in fact produced is a veritable Antarctic bibliography, boasting a 49-page reference list with some 1500 entries. Furthermore, it is packed

to bursting with informative and useful figures, maps, graphs, and tables of excellent quality.

My principal complaint with this book is that, where it excels in authority, it lacks in eloquence. First, the flow of the text suffers from the authors' attempt to integrate the findings from such a vast quantity of source material. The result is choppy text that in places reads like a patchwork of extracts from articles in academic journals. Readability further suffers from an excessive use of scientific jargon. Familiarizing students with the *lingua franca* of various scientific disciplines is a valid goal; nevertheless, a glossary is much needed to make this text fully accessible to the broad audience it seeks to inform.

Despite these criticisms, *Antarctic environments and resources* is a valuable text for those requiring a comprehensive, yet concise, treatment of Antarctic science, history, politics, and environmental management. As such, it is especially appropriate for university students and professionals alike. If you are looking for an authoritative and balanced reference text on the Antarctic, and you want to buy only one book, then this is an excellent choice. (Steven G. Sawhill, Jesus College, Cambridge CB5 8BL.)

ICEMEN: A HISTORY OF THE ARCTIC AND ITS EXPLORERS. Mick Conefrey and Tim Jordan. 1999. Basingstoke and Oxford: Boxtree. 189 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-7522-1341-5. £6.99.

This book is the 'companion' to the BBC television series with the same name, which was broadcast in 1998. The 'book of the series' presents obvious problems to a reviewer. Should the review be based strictly upon the book itself, and of what it claims to be — in this case nothing less than 'A history of the Arctic and its explorers' — or an attempt to present material that will serve to embellish and enrich that shown in the programmes and that will not be comprehensible without having seen them?

In this case, the reviewer saw only one of the programmes, that based upon Salomon August Andrée, and so would be constrained to follow the former approach in the absence of any direct information set out in the book itself concerning the programmes. This is, in fact, the case. Beyond a remark in the acknowledgements concerning the countries in which the series was filmed and a comment in the postscript about an expedition that was setting out as filming started, there is no reference in the body of the work to the series at all, and therefore the reader should assume that the book is intended to stand on its own and should judge it strictly on its merits or lack thereof, exactly as if he had picked the book up in a shop and was not aware of the existence of the series.

The structure of the book is simple. There is an introduction followed by 10 chapters and the postscript. The first of the chapters relates to early British expeditions in the Canadian Arctic archipelago and concludes with the Franklin search. There are then two chapters on Robert E. Peary and Frederick Cook, one on Andrée, two on Roald Amundsen and Umberto Nobile, one on Gino Watkins and

Augustine Courtauld, one on the operations undertaken by the Germans and the allies in World War II, one on the Arctic in the Cold War, and a final one on the Canadian policy of Inuit relocation.

The deficiencies of this scheme are obvious. And what is one to make of 'A history of the Arctic and its explorers' without a single reference to, for example, Samuel Hearne, Thomas Simpson, Karl Weyprecht and Julius Payer, and George Washington de Long? There are three minor references to Fridtjof Nansen, but of these one is incorrect, claiming as it does that Nansen overwintered on the same island as Andrée's depot at Cape Flora. Moreover, the book is entirely one-sided. The 'history of the Arctic' is exclusively western, and, beyond mere one-line references, it appears that nothing happened on the Russian side at all. No Great Northern Expedition, no Bering, no Nordenskiöld and *Vega*, no Soviet ice stations, and nothing on the relations between the successive governments of Russia and the indigenous peoples of northern Siberia beyond a note that while the Inuit were 'subject to the same collectivisation policies that were active in the rest of the country...the government did try to protect many of the unique aspects of their culture' (page 179).

It is, of course, likely that even if the producers of the series had wished to include programmes relating to the Russian side of the Arctic, the logistical and financial difficulties of getting film groups to the relevant places could have deterred them, constrained, as they no doubt were, by a limited budget, and that, therefore, the series centred exclusively on the more accessible regions. This should have been made absolutely clear in the introduction, and the reader should at least have been informed concerning what was not included and why. This is more important in the case of non-specialist readers who might not be aware of how biased and limited the book is.

When one turns to the contents of the individual chapters themselves, it becomes apparent that the writers have done a workmanlike journalistic job. This is the reason why others who do workmanlike journalistic jobs have been so lavish in their praise for the book, as recorded in extracts from their reviews which are set out on the cover. However, polar specialists will learn little or nothing from the book, although they will find sweeping statements that may irritate, interesting vignettes that may amuse — for example, the comment by the late Alfred Stephenson that he always kept a spade inside the door, even in Wiltshire — and frequent 'facts' that, if not totally inaccurate, reveal the shallowness of the authors' understanding concerning the material about which they write. But, and this is this reviewer's but, because of the book's racy style, most will continue to the end and, having done so, will then put the book aside forever.

The writers have thoroughly contemporary attitudes to their subject. Sex intrudes frequently and no opportunity is missed to comment on miscegenation by explorers with Inuit women. Reference is made in the introduction to the taking by Peary of 'readers' wives' nude pictures of his Inuit lover: no doubt the authors assume that all readers of