

fortnight being allowed for each; and a thesis of 10–20 000 words on a subject chosen by the candidate, generally related to his own area of special expertise. Among the subjects chosen have been topics in medicine and psychology, economics, sociology, history, geology, zoology, and glaciology.

Applicants should have a first degree from a university, although other evidence of fitness to take the course may also be accepted. Application should be made to the Board of Graduate Studies, University of Cambridge, Mill Lane, Cambridge CB2 1RZ.

MONTHLY TEMPERATURE SUMMARY FOR BRITISH ANTARCTIC SURVEY STATIONS

[Information supplied by David Limbert, British Antarctic Survey, Cambridge.]

Station	Air Temperature (°C)														
	Grytviken (88903)			Signy Island (88925)			Faraday (88952)			Rothera (89062)			Halley (89022)		
Year/Month 1979	Mean ¹	Extreme Max	Extreme Min	Mean ²	Extreme Max	Extreme Min	Mean ¹	Extreme Max	Extreme Min	Mean ²	Extreme Max	Extreme Min	Mean ¹	Extreme Max	Extreme Min
January	5.9	18.4	-0.4	1.1	8.5	-2.2	0.1	10.4	-7.9	0.8	6.8	-5.7	-3.4	1.2	-15.2
February	5.6	15.8	-0.5	1.6	8.8	-2.7	0.1	7.4	-5.8	-0.4	3.7	-7.1	-10.3	0.3	-26.6
March	6.3	20.4	-2.4	0.8	9.4	-5.2	-0.5	5.6	-5.1	-0.5	6.0	-7.4	-18.9	-4.2	-40.0
April	3.7	15.6	-2.7	-0.5	7.0	-7.6	-2.0	4.3	-9.9	-3.5	3.6	-14.8	-17.2	-4.3	-36.1
May	-0.7	7.4	-7.1	-7.4	4.8	-22.7	-7.4	3.2	-19.7	-10.0	0.7	-20.8	-26.3	-9.3	-41.4

¹ Mean of reports at 00, 03, 06, 09, 12, 15, 18 and 21 GMT.

² Mean of reports at 00, 06, 12, 18 GMT.

REVIEW

SCOTT AND HUNTFORD

[Review by Gordon Robin* of Roland Huntford's *Scott and Amundsen*. London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1979, xx, 665 p, illus. Hardcover £13.95.]

As Director of the Scott Polar Research Institute, I find this book is both an embarrassment and a disappointment. The embarrassment was expected, as I knew well that the author's views on Scott were harsher than my own. However, the disappointment was unexpected, since in this Institute we have seen the meticulous care with which the author has checked his references and has sought out new sources of evidence. Our archive collection has indeed benefitted from important new material that he has unearthed.

Unfortunately the end product is not a careful summing up of evidence that helps us to understand the relative merits and failings of two men, Scott and Amundsen. It is an account by an admirer of Amundsen who appears to have a paranoid dislike of Scott and has set out to find all possible evidence in support of his views. Alternatively, and more charitably, the book could be described as a case for the prosecution, the charge being that Scott was an incompetent leader who brought disaster on his party. Only in this way could we excuse the author for his failure to give more than a brief reference to Scott's scientific leadership that had a notable influence on the development of Antarctic research. Similarly, Scott's outstanding ability as a writer and his wonderful letters before his death are presented primarily as an explanation of a successful cover-up of inefficient operations, rather than as messages that inspired not only the British nation, but

* Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge CB2 1ER.

others as well. In contrast, Huntford's sympathetic treatment of Amundsen helps the reader to understand many aspects of this enigmatic man—his strong character, his determination to make his name as a polar explorer, his financial troubles and his deception of the public, of his crew and even Nansen over his intention to take the *Fram* expedition to the South Pole.

The core of the book lies in the last 18 chapters which describe alternately the progress of the two expeditions to the South Pole. The story is too well known to need outlining in this review. It is the previously unpublished material and background evidence that is significant. The first 17 chapters describe the personal histories of the two men against their national background—Scott in relation to that of a 'fading' imperialist power and Amundsen as a member of a nation that became independent during the height of his career. The book outlines at reasonable length the earlier expeditions of the two men—Amundsen as mate on the *Belgica*, then as leader of his very successful first voyage through the North–West Passage, and Scott on the *Discovery* expedition 1901–04. Throughout these chapters the author loses no opportunity to pick up any small point that supports his thesis of Scott's unsuitability as a leader. Also in later chapters he repeatedly states that Scott's jealousy of Shackleton led him into erroneous decisions.

Huntford is not alone in heaping blame on Scott for preferring ponies to dogs. While we now appreciate that this was a mistake, surely historians and biographers should remember that Shackleton completed a superb journey based on pony transport and man hauling that almost reached the South Pole in 1909. This achievement was receiving wide acclaim during the last 18 months before Scott's departure, and it is not surprising that it influenced his planning.

Although the average reader may start with the feeling that praise of Scott has been overdone in the past and some reassessment is due, the constant mention on page after page of small points that the author interprets to Scott's detriment as a leader sooner or later makes one realize that this is not a reassessment. Although the book is cloaked with copious academic notes and references it is, in so far as Scott is concerned, another 'debunking' book typical of this age. This may be a profitable line for an author, and indeed Huntford places his bank manager high on his list of acknowledgements, so why then, with the more open approach of these times does one feel this book is wrong? Primarily, one loses faith in the judgement of the author on the major issues. What evidence is there that 'it was Scott who had set out to be a heroic example. Amundsen merely wanted to be first at the Pole'? The element of bitterness in Amundsen at his lack of recognition from his fellow countrymen in the latter part of his life does not support the author's view, while Scott's clear aim to do well in his naval career seems to be a guiding motive to his actions and behaviour. Can one seriously accept that 'Scott had been so consistently inept as to almost suggest the workings of a death wish', or that 'they had dragged those forty pounds of rocks to show themselves martyrs to science'? The author's interpretation becomes more objectionable over the last few days of Scott's life. How could the author have the knowledge to justify this picture: 'poor Oates, indeed. He sat there in the tent, Scott staring at him, with the unspoken expectation of the supreme sacrifice'?

Indeed, the apparently meticulous documentation shows partiality in selection of source material in order to present Scott in an unfavourable light. If an unfavourable quotation is not available, the author disparages Scott by 'reading between the lines' or if this is not possible, he uses his imagination to construct the thoughts of Scott and his men. One needs to watch the notes at the end of the book carefully to check on the validity or otherwise of each statement.

The reticence of Scott Keltie, Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society, to disclose information to Scott on Shackleton's plans to mount an expedition in 1907, even though he probably wrote of this for *The Times*, leads Huntford to say of him: 'in the struggle between the journalist and the official, the journalist was bound to win'. By substituting 'biographer' for 'official', we aptly describe one aspect of this book. I refer to Huntford's determination to make the book readable, to embellish it with ideas unsupported by evidence, and to liven it up here and there with other journalistic devices.

The book has some similarity of approach with *Kappløpet* by Kåre Holt, published in 1974, around the time Huntford was starting his book, and published in English in 1976 as *The race*. This was described on its dustjacket as a 'documentary novel' based on the race to the South Pole of Amundsen and Scott. In contrast to Huntford's book, Scott is presented as the hero and Amundsen as the villain of the piece. Its publication distressed many Norwegians with strong

interests in polar activities and polar literature. *Scott and Amundsen* will likewise upset many readers, not only in Britain but abroad. This is a pity as it contains much material that is new and useful. Given the same sympathetic understanding of Scott against the background of his day and his career, as the author showed with Amundsen, the book could have made a valuable contribution to our understanding of that era of polar exploration and research.

This reviewer is also out of sympathy with the author's interpretation of the background events and values. To describe the British Empire of 1868–1912 as in decline, and Scott as symbolic of this decline seems unreal. Similarly the author's values are revealed by his description of his heroes—Amundsen, Bjaaland and Oates—as nature's (or natural) aristocrats, while Scott is damned as middle class, and a mere dog driver is described as a mulish Russian peasant.

The book is out of step with the present international spirit of Antarctic research which is based on realistic mutual appreciation between expeditions. It is a spirit that is wider than national pride in the early Antarctic expeditions. The achievements of the US naval expeditions under Wilkes, for example, are more widely acknowledged in Europe for their contribution to mapping and research than was the case two decades ago.

For a balanced view of the merits of some Antarctic leaders of Scott's time, we can turn to Sir Raymond Priestley, who served both Shackleton and Scott and very briefly met Amundsen in mid-career. In his presidential address to the British Association in 1956 he says: 'I believe a colleague hit the nail when he wrote: "as a scientific leader give me Scott; for swift and efficient polar travel, Amundsen; but when things are hopeless and there seems no way out, get down on your knees and pray for Shackleton."'

Perhaps by debunking Scott, Huntford has given him the ultimate accolade. Such treatment in these days seems to be reserved for our greatest national figures.

THE CIRCUMPOLAR NORTH

[Review by Trevor Lloyd* of *The circumpolar north* by Terence Armstrong, George Rogers and Graham Rowley. London, Methuen and Company Ltd, 1978, xix, 303 p, illus. Hardcover £13.00, soft cover £5.95.]

With the current wealth of information on northern polar regions, the authors of *The circumpolar north* made the wise decision to restrict themselves to 'political and economic affairs with some environmental background'. Designed 'for everyone with a more than superficial interest in the northern regions of our planet', the book is primarily aimed at the student of northern affairs. The introduction delimits the area treated, underlines its importance and then provides a concise and well-written description of the geographical background. Two chapters at the end of the book also review the circumpolar areas as a whole concentrating on 'international conflict and co-operation', and 'world affairs'. The body of the book is divided into five regional chapters which deal with 'Northern USSR: the north in a socialist economy'; 'Canada: the slow retreat of "the north" '; 'Alaska: the evolution of a northern polity'; and 'The north of the Old World: lands of the northeast Atlantic'. There are in addition reference sections and statistical appendices of particular value to student readers. Of the 22 maps, those which depict the circumpolar north as a whole or the larger regions have suffered considerably from reduction, but others, for example, the detailed map of recent oil and gas fields and pipelines in the west Siberian plain, are invaluable. Good maps and recent statistics are of course essential, and the preparation of an atlas and statistical handbook of the circumpolar north as a companion to the present volume, may be worth consideration.

There are 37 tables printed within the text and many of them might better have appeared as appendices, where up-dating of statistical data or later editions would have been simpler.

Although the subject matter of the regional chapters follows the same general plan, the authors have not been confined to a single rigid scheme. Because of this, they have been free to emphasize special features of each region. The chapter on the northern USSR will be used to indicate the

* Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies, 130 Albert, Suite 1208, Ottawa, Canada K1P 5G4.