

on information that has been dredged up by diligent researchers and published in some readily accessible form. At the other end of the scale are the dredgers themselves, usually students who are writing theses for advanced degrees or university professors for whom research and publication are an integral part of their job. Schokkenbroek is one of the dredgers, perhaps the ultimate dredger, judging from the impressive diversity of archival material he has consulted. His bibliography includes dozens of manuscript record groups and documents from eight archives (national, provincial, municipal, and foreign), including crew lists, shipboard journals, notarial documents, minutes of council meetings, and so on, as well as newspapers and even museum artefacts.

After an introductory chapter on Arctic whaling and sealing before 1800, Schokkenbroek discusses the system of incentives used in the Netherlands (and elsewhere) to stimulate whaling. In chapter 3, he describes the brief period of Dutch whaling in the 'South Seas' (a mere six voyages over a span of 22 years). In Chapter 4, he returns to the Arctic, describing the whaling and sealing activities of 10 companies in six ports between 1815 and 1885. He provides an extraordinary amount of detail, both in the text and in eight accompanying tables that list the ships, rigs, captains, dates of voyages, destinations, and catches (insofar as data are available). The last three chapters in the book are arranged topically. I found it a relief to depart from the meticulous port-by-port, company-by-company parade of facts, and set sail on a more generalized discussion of ships and men (chapter 5), products and their buyers (chapter 6), and profitability (chapter 7).

The book contains a dozen illustrations. There are two gorgeous colour reproductions of seventeenth century Arctic whaling scenes painted by Dutch artists. Most of the other illustrations relate to the nineteenth century and are sepia or black and white. There are only two maps, both modern but based on historical sources. The first shows the whaling and sealing grounds between Greenland and Spitsbergen (based on one captain's journals in the 1830s). It would have been helpful to show the area between Greenland and Baffin Island as well; the Davis Strait whaling ground, which had been dominated by Dutch ships in the eighteenth century, was still attracting whalers from Harlingen and Rotterdam during the 1820s. The second map shows the routes taken by three ships to the 'South Seas.' One of these ships circumnavigated the globe by way of the Cape of Good Hope, Australia and New Zealand, the Sea of Okhotsk, and Cape Horn. The fact that at least one ship involved in 'South Seas' whaling also exploited a whaling ground off Siberia does not appear to have excited any comment by the author.

University theses rarely make for easy reading, and this one is no exception. The text is so saturated with details that it is difficult to discern general trends. Its 48 tables and 366 footnotes will probably overwhelm the general reader, and if they do not quite succeed in inducing a coma, the 49 pages of tabular appendices should finish the job. *Trying-out* is certainly not what I would call 'a

good read,' but it will surely be a very useful reference book for scholars interested in the Dutch ports, ships, and crews of the period. (W. Gillies Ross, Bishop's University, Sherbrooke, Quebec J1M 0C8, Canada.)

MINA BENSON HUBBARD, A WOMAN'S WAY THROUGH UNKNOWN LABRADOR. Sherrill Grace (editor). 2008. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press. Illustrated soft cover ISBN PRICE??? doi:10.1017/S0032247409008298

Mina Benson Hubbard was the wife of Leonidas Hubbard, who died of starvation while trekking through Labrador in October 1903. Two years later, Mina set out on her own expedition, intending to complete her husband's work and survey the area. She was accompanied by George Elson, one of the two survivors from her husband's party, and three local guides. Leonidas Hubbard had been a professional writer and his widow published this account of her own journey partly in memory of him. Her expedition was entirely successful and she was able to do what she set out to do in the allocated time, with the allocated resources and without any need to describe unanticipated suffering or hardship, which may be one of the less obvious reasons why this book has been excluded from various canons for most of the last century.

As her editor points out, Mina Benson Hubbard is not a polished writer, and descriptions of landscape tend to be factual or dependent on romantic cliché. Because the journey seems relatively uneventful, and because the author is not given to drama, *A woman's way* has a subtle momentum related principally to the narrator's changing subjectivity. There is no obvious 'plot.' It is the insight into the dynamics of the expedition which is initially fascinating here, particularly where Hubbard explores or exploits the issues of gender and race which are the inevitable heart of all critical approaches to "'womens" travel writing.' There are moments of orthodoxy, in which Hubbard bemoans the limits imposed by long skirts and a sense of propriety. The sight of a fish eagle's nest, 'some sixty feet or more above the ground...was one of the very many things on this trip that made me wish I were a man. I could have had a closer look at the nest; I think I could have taken a photograph of it too' (page 66). This follows close on her assertion that the loss of the pump for her air-bed 'seemed quite a serious matter to me, knowing as I did from past experience that I cannot sleep on the ground long without growing very tired, when I lose my nerve and am afraid to do anything' (page 54). There are surprisingly few instances of Hubbard either protesting against the limitations of early twentieth century American femininities or insisting on the special privileges and comforts legitimated by those limitations. Instead, what emerges in *A woman's way* is a more subtle and surprising understanding of gender on ice.

In Chapter VII, the expedition is halted by prolonged rain. The men climb the hills surrounding the camp to see what lies ahead, 'and I wanted to go too. Job, however assured me that it would be impossible as the hill was

altogether too steep and slippery. . . It seemed such an ignominious sort of thing too, to be an explorer and have one of my party tell me I could not do something he had already done.' So a few days later, Hubbard takes her chance while the men are making a portage and goes climbing alone. Glimpsing the guides sitting at the riverside drinking tea below her, Hubbard signals her presence by firing her revolver but then sets off down the other side of the mountain, pursued by her employees. The shouting and dismay with which they follow her eventually persuade Hubbard to give herself up, but she and we rapidly learn that this chase is not simply a dramatisation of women's rebellion against domesticity and dependence. The men are white, shaking, in tears, and Elson tells Hubbard, "I was thinking about how you would feel when you knew you were lost. . . And what would we do if you got lost or fell in that rapid? Just think what could we do? How could any of us go back without you? We can't ever let you go any place alone after this" (page 92).

So the drama on the mountainside is not just about Mina Benson Hubbard's vulnerability, but about that of her guides. She is hostage to their rules about what she may and may not do, even though she employs them, but they are hostage to the same limitations. None of them can go home without her; if anything happens to her, their only future is as exiles and fugitives. The white, female, middle-class explorer may not be the one who suffers most from the limitations imposed upon her.

The ensuing stories of teasing, joking and a kind of domestic harmony are changed by Hubbard's gradual recognition of her own powers and responsibilities in relation to the other members of her team. Her narrative is likeable and engaging, and would be accessible and interesting to a general readership, but for scholars of identity politics and exploration history this book will be particularly important.

Sherrill Grace's editing is meticulous and scholarly, providing a serious and respectful context for a narrative which, when it has been read at all in the last hundred years, has been seen as a 'charming' or perhaps disingenuous account of a pretty widow's journey of recovery. The textual apparatus and specialist tones of some of the introduction contrast with Grace's obvious identification with her subject and the stated hope that this edition will bring Mina Benson Hubbard's work to a wide audience, but for serious readers this is a fine and significant work. (Sarah Moss, School of English, University of Kent at Canterbury, Canterbury, Kent CT2 7NZ.)

DOG DAYS ON ICE: ANTARCTIC EXPLORATION IN A GOLDEN ERA. Peter Noble. 2008. Cheltenham: Reardon Publishing. 231 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 1-873877-89-7. Available in UK bookstores or direct from the author (peter@kingsburysquare.org.uk) (postage inclusive): UK £14.99; mainland Europe £16.00; rest of the world £18.00 (air mail) or £15.00 (surface mail). doi:10.1017/S0032247409008304

In this charming little book Peter Noble, who served at the Halley Bay station between January 1967 and January 1969, recalls his experiences during 'the golden age of exploratory expeditions undertaken by the British Antarctic Survey.' The title captures the contents nicely: it is a very personal story of dogs, comradeship, and the challenges and rewards of life in a unique part of the world at a unique point in time. Lively accounts of events and affectionate descriptions of colleagues (both human and canine) are accompanied by plenty of often-cheeky poetry and eighteen excellent colour plates.

The evocative term 'golden age' falls easily upon all manner of experiences that become grander with the passing of time. But there is something specific in Noble's characterisation of the period that evokes a particular moment. For Noble, who served as a general assistant, it was a privilege to be a 'Fid' (the term survived the change from Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey to British Antarctic Survey in 1963) at a time when dog travel had not completely given way to tractors and Skidoos. The bond between man and dog was necessary for effective travel in a dangerous environment, but, as Noble's touching recollections make clear, the dogs were also sources of companionship and characters in their own right. It is revealing that the carefully compiled appendices to the book include a register of the dogs that served at Halley (including names, place and year of birth, tenure at the base, and date and mode of death) as well as a comprehensive list of field expeditions undertaken between 1957 and 1972. Noble writes also of the spirit of ingenuity that permeated life at Halley. Rigging improvised lighting and heating systems, constructing bunks and dog pens, even turning an abandoned former base into a workshop, all these tasks were accomplished by resourceful use of the materials at hand.

Above all, Antarctica was still a theatre for travel into areas that were often poorly known. Noble's feelings toward the scientists who remained station-bound and missed the experience of field travel tend toward sympathy rather than envy. Reconnaissance, route-breaking and surveying remained important activities. Crevasses appear in the text with disturbing frequency. Capable of claiming tractors as well as dogs and sledges, they remind the reader that the innovations in travel technology and expertise during the twentieth century could not eliminate all dangers. In fact, the culminating event in the narrative, a six-man expedition to the Shackleton Range in the 1968–69 season, under Noble's leadership, took place despite the initial reservations of the BAS leadership back in Britain. When Noble imagines BAS Director Sir Vivian Fuchs considering the request from Halley to conduct the overland trip to the Shackleton Range, he sees the elder statesman acceding to the restless desire of the young Fids to put the practical expertise they had acquired to good use.

This leads on to an important point. Millions of words have been written on other periods of Antarctic history, most notably the 'heroic age' associated with Amundsen, Scott, Shackleton and others. The fiftieth anniversaries