

### A NEW ESKIMO GRAMMAR

[Review by Hugh Brody\* of Kenn Harper's *Some aspects of the grammar of the Eskimo dialects of Cumberland Peninsula and north Baffin Island*. Ottawa, National Museum of Man, Mercury Series (Ethnology Division Paper No 15), 1974, 94p. \$1.25]

Kenn Harper's title is unduly modest: the grammar may not be complete, but its scope is wide and each of the verb and noun forms included is comprehensively described. It would be an advanced Eskimo speaker indeed who knew a conjugation or declension not included in the book. The feature which distinguishes it from other grammars is the reliance that it places on tables; it looks in fact like the kind of primer with which generations of Latin-learners have been made to struggle. And like those primers, Harper's grammar is not for the 'teach yourself' enthusiast. Rather, it is a companion to the process of learning how the language is spoken from those who speak it. As such it is unsurpassed.

Harper uses the Standard New Orthography originally devised by Raymond Gagné, though he notes that he has adopted some of the modifications to that system contributed by Mick Mallon, who pioneered intensive teaching techniques for Eskimos at the Rankin Inlet school. Use of this orthography may seem a little confusing, for it relies on a limited range of letters. It is, however, as Harper argues in an excellent appendix, a great advance on any of its predecessors—and certainly easier to use than the Syllabic Orthography that Eskimos of much of the Canadian Arctic themselves use. Still, it should perhaps be mentioned that anyone who wishes to exchange letters with Eskimos will have to learn syllabics. The orthography of the grammar book may be good, but it is not the script that the people regard as their own.

Anyone interested in the Eskimo language and who has some knowledge of the language of linguistics can enjoy Harper's book, for he will discover there the wonderful consistency of Eskimo grammar (it is a language without exceptions to its rules) and the wide range of its verbal modes. The book's type-setters are to be congratulated for having made so few typographical errors. It is in every way a thoroughly good grammar.

\*Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge CB2 1ER.

### A MAJOR CARTOGRAPHIC ACHIEVEMENT

[Review by Peter F. Friend\* of the American Geographical Society's *Map of the Arctic region*. New York, American Geographical Society, 1975. \$12.00]

Anyone interested in polar regions will be delighted that this map has been published. With a scale of 1:5 million and an overall size of 1.53 m × 1.25 m it is just what many of us have needed for years. The map has been prepared by the Cartographic Division of the American Geographical Society, with support from the National Science Foundation, Exxon and Mobil Oil corporations, and BP Alaska Exploration Inc. It is the latest in a series of 1:5 million maps produced by the society and now covering all the major land areas of the world. The map area includes the whole of Alaska, Greenland and Iceland, Canada north of 60°, Norway, Sweden and Finland north of 64°, and the Soviet Union north of 70°. Because of its rectangular shape it extends considerably south of these latitudes in its corners. The map projection is stereographic and centred on the North Pole; although the scale is exactly 1:5 million along the latitude of 71° N, it must be adjusted by factors such as 0.98 at the latitude of 80°N, and 1.12 at the latitude of 47°N. The measurement of distances generally, great circle courses, and areas, is explained in an inset.

A small inset map shows that extensive land areas of the map have been 'revised in part' using Earth Resources Technology Satellite (ERTS-1) imagery, but there is no hint as to how significant these revisions are. Another inset quotes some hundred or so principal sources used in compiling the map. Various limits of permafrost, sea ice and trees are shown, and the sources quoted.

Much of the recent cartographic advance in the Arctic region has concerned the bathymetry of the seas. Bruce Heezen and Marie Tharp, of Columbia University, have prepared the bathymetric

\*Department of Geology, University of Cambridge, Cambridge CB2 3EQ.

information on this map, with the support of the Office of Naval Research. The relatively primitive state of much of their information is shown by the fact that many of the 40 or so references quoted as bathymetric sources are original research contributions, and some of them are very local in their coverage. Certain ridges in the Arctic and north Atlantic oceans are shown on the map as a stylized pattern of central axial valleys, offset regularly by faults, a portrayal based on the assumption that the geological evolution of these features is the same as that of certain ridges, more or less well known, in other oceans. It means that part of the map is less objective than the rest, and may mislead some users.

The size of the map makes it useful as a wall-map, at least for smaller rooms, but it is packed with information and needs close examination. Indeed many of the place names and numbers can only just be read without the use of a lens. An attractive shading in yellows and browns has been used between the topographic contours on land, and contrasts well with the blues of the sea floor. In the more mountainous terrain contours run into each other and the morphology may in places be completely confused, but examination with a lens does often clarify this. A wide range of conventional signs has been used to differentiate such features as political and administrative boundaries, the populations of towns, the locations of research and weather stations, railways, roads, airports and oil pipelines. The map is indeed a remarkable compilation.

## IN BRIEF

### TO ABSENT FRIENDS

A rather unnatural hush descended on the Scott Polar Research Institute in April this year, following the departure of the British Antarctic Survey's Glaciology Section to their new headquarters on the other side of Cambridge (see report on p 299).

The BAS glaciologists have been with us for nearly 10 years. Small groups of two or three worked at the Institute from 1967, and their numbers increased steadily after the creation of an official BAS Glaciology Section in 1971. By this year there were more than a dozen of them: a substantial and conspicuous proportion of our total complement. Although seldom here for long periods (their occupation taking them, naturally, far from Cambridge for much of the time) they were always prominent in both the working and social life of the Institute, and would cheerfully help out with most things, from profound technical problems to simple donkey work.

Now, sadly, they are just occasional visitors. The old, close relationship still survives, but change is already evident. A new element of rivalry was introduced this summer when the glaciologists took the field for the annual cricket match against SPRI, and surprised everyone not only by winning (for once) but also by taking it seriously.

### NANSEN DRIFT STATION PROJECT

In 1893 Fridtjof Nansen deliberately beset his ship, the *Fram*, in the ice of the northern Laptev Sea, intending to drift across the Arctic Ocean studying wind and currents. The famous 2 000-km drift that followed, ending in 1896 with the release of the *Fram* between Spitsbergen and Greenland, is well recorded in the annals of polar history.

Now, the Polar Research Board of the US National Research Council plans to emulate Nansen's feat, following a similar course, on an old *Wind*-class icebreaker. The research programme will, of course, be somewhat more extensive than Nansen's; proposed scientific activities include studies of plate tectonics, effects of high-energy solar particles on the earth's magnetosphere, and sea-ice-atmosphere interaction in the Eurasian Basin. It is expected that the project, labelled the Nansen Drift Station, will begin in late 1977 and last for two to three years.

The Polar Research Board has invited all interested scientists and scientific organizations to submit suggestions and comments on the project, which should be sent to: Polar Research Board, National Research Council, National Academy of Sciences, 2101 Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20418, USA.