

ARCHEOLOGY OF THE FROBISHER VOYAGES. Edited by WILLIAM W. FITZHUGH and JACQUELINE S. OLIN. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993. xv + 271 p., maps, figs., tables, bib., glossary, index. Hardbound. US\$45.00.

Martin Frobisher is usually remembered for what he failed to accomplish during his three voyages to Baffin Island between 1576 and 1578. On his first voyage, his attempt to discover the Northwest Passage was unsuccessful, and the "gold" mining enterprise that was to be the focus of his subsequent two voyages was a complete and costly failure for all involved. What is overlooked, however, is that Frobisher left behind the remains of the first European mining venture in North America and the site of the first planned English colony in the New World. *Archeology of the Frobisher Voyages* reports on recent work conducted by an international and multidisciplinary team of scientists investigating the archaeological, ethnographic and historical accounts of one of the earliest and most interesting voyages of exploration and discovery in the New World.

The volume consists of 14 papers grouped into four sections that deal with the history of the Frobisher expeditions, the 19th-century discovery of the Frobisher sites and the results of recent field and archival research.

Section one consists of four papers that provide the historical background of the project. In chapter 1, William Fitzhugh and Dosia Laeyendecker set the stage with a brief historical sketch of the Frobisher voyages, followed by a discussion by Donald Hogarth of the personnel enlisted for the expeditions. The chapter concludes with a review by Fitzhugh of Charles Francis Hall's 19th-century discoveries on Kodlunarn Island (Hall, 1865) and a more critical commentary on subsequent investigations of the island prior to the Smithsonian Institution's renewed interest in the site, leading to brief reconnaissance visits there in 1981 and 1990 (followed by extensive regional site surveys and excavations in 1991 and 1992). Here the message is clear: whereas Frobisher's activities have been the subject of thorough examination by historians, the material records of the voyages to Baffin Island have never received a level of archaeological attention commensurate with their historical significance. Indeed, in the nearly 30 years that have elapsed since the National Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada designated Kodlunarn Island as being of national historic importance, the Frobisher expeditions have failed to attract more than passing interest from archaeologists. That being said, it is equally apparent that the initial catalyst for the development of the ambitious program of research reported upon in this volume was not an overriding concern with the fact that Kodlunarn Island had fallen into "a limbo of benign neglect" (p. 21). Instead, it appears to have been motivated by an anomalously early radiocarbon date on an iron bloom collected by Hall, suggesting the possibility of a Norse occupation of the site.

In chapter 2, Susan Rowley examines Hall's documentation of Inuit oral traditions concerning the Frobisher voyages. For the past several years, Rowley has devoted considerable effort to the study of Hall's unpublished diaries, and she

provides an interesting analysis of the degree of correspondence between Inuit oral accounts, their interpretation by Hall and the archaeological records of Kodlunarn Island and neighbouring Frobisher sites. There is explicit recognition of discrepancies between the data sets and of the fact that some events described in Inuit accounts are unlikely to be verified empirically. Nevertheless, the interpretation that the Inuit oral testimony documented by Hall refers to the Frobisher voyages is persuasive and supported by the available evidence. I was less convinced, however, by the assertion that the information obtained by Hall relates to the "first contact the Inuit had with Europeans" (p. 40). Historical accounts of the Frobisher voyages suggest that the Inuit met by Frobisher behaved in a manner suggestive of previous encounters with Europeans, some of which might have involved trade (e.g., Stefansson and McCaskill, 1938). A useful dimension of future oral history research would be to see if any information about contact with Europeans prior to Frobisher has been preserved in Inuit oral traditions.

In chapter 3, Wilcomb Washburn outlines the history of the expeditions and then recounts the bizarre fate of the Frobisher relics donated by Hall to the Smithsonian Institution and the Royal Geographical Society in London. Both collections were treated in a less than careful fashion, with most specimens being either lost or discarded. The "Smithsonian" bloom (i.e., the one donated by Hall), which has played a pivotal role in the development of the present research program, was "rediscovered" by Washburn in 1964, its whereabouts in the Smithsonian having last been pinpointed in 1950. Section one concludes with Jacqueline Olin's synopsis (chapter 4) of the history of research on the Smithsonian bloom. Here she introduces the reader to the many technical challenges encountered (and overcome) in attempting to obtain a radiocarbon date for the artifact and the stimulus for new field studies that the resulting 12th- and 13th-century dates provided (see below).

Section two consists of four papers that summarize the results of field surveys and excavations. In chapter 5, Fitzhugh reports on the investigations conducted on Kodlunarn Island and neighbouring locales in 1981, 1990 and 1991. Detailed feature descriptions and illustrations are provided for the Kodlunarn Island site, followed by a summary of the artifacts and samples (wood, charcoal, etc.) collected for analysis. In chapter 6, Fitzhugh provides an overview of "off-island" surveys and excavations conducted in 1990 and 1991. In this regard, the research teams are to be congratulated for the amount of work accomplished during a comparatively short time. Approximately 75 sites have been identified, effectively doubling the existing inventory for the Frobisher Bay region. Sites representing all major arctic cultural groups have been found, but much of the archaeological record of the earliest occupation periods (Pre-Dorset through to Early Dorset, circa 1800 B.C. to A.D. 500) has apparently been destroyed through submergence and erosion processes. In fact, the field studies indicate that erosion poses a serious threat to much of the region's archaeological record. Late Dorset (circa A.D. 1000) components are better represented, and although well documented elsewhere in Frobisher Bay, early Neoeskimo

(Thule) sites (*circa* A.D. 1000-1300) appear to be rare in the outer Frobisher Bay region. Excavation results indicate that most of the Neoeskimo sites date from the Late Thule and Historic Inuit periods (*circa* A.D. 1400-1900). The artifact assemblages contain a variety of contact materials, including Elizabethan period artifacts, and analysis of these collections can be expected to make valuable contributions to our understanding of the nature and extent of contact between Frobisher's men and local Inuit groups, as well as the impacts of the encounters, if any, on Inuit cultural development. In this regard, my main "criticism" of this section is the omission of papers by Lynda Gullason and Anne Henshaw, who together directed excavations at the Kuyait, Kamaiyuk and Kussegeerarkjuan Neoeskimo sites. Given that the study of European-Inuit contact is described as a major component of the research program and that Gullason and Henshaw are the only project members to have completed extensive excavations, I was disappointed by the absence of a discussion of their research aims and methods and the preliminary results of their field studies.

The section concludes with a discussion by Hogarth (chapter 7) of three of the Frobisher mining sites (Kodlunarn Island, Newland Island and Countess of Sussex) and a report by Reginald Auger (chapter 8) on a sample of the ceramic materials (crucible, cupel, earthenware, brick and tile fragments) recovered from Kodlunarn Island in 1990.

Section three of the volume is reserved for what is arguably the biggest mystery to emerge from the investigations thus far: the radiocarbon age estimates obtained for the iron blooms recovered from Kodlunarn Island consistently predate the Frobisher voyages, in some cases by several centuries. In the face of the compelling archaeological, ethnographic and historical evidence that all link the site with Martin Frobisher, the carbon dates for the blooms raise many intriguing questions. For example, if accurate, do the dates imply that someone other than Frobisher (Vikings?) brought them to the site? If so, why were the artifacts discarded on the island? Or could the pre-Frobisher dates be the result of local smelting using driftwood (i.e., older) charcoal? But Frobisher was supplied with tons of English charcoal, so under what circumstances would this have been necessary?

In attempting to solve this mystery, the authors search for clues through technical analyses of various attributes of the blooms (e.g., composition, size, weight), as well as associated wood, charcoal and metal fragments. Chapter 9 presents the results of Laeyendecker's study of wood and charcoal remains found in direct association with the blooms. The majority of the samples were found to be of European origin (e.g., oak, maple, beech), and at least some of the radiocarbon dates they produced fall within the time period of the Frobisher voyages. Setting aside the issues of the origin and function of the blooms, Laeyendecker argues that their recovery context supports the hypothesis that they were brought to the site by Frobisher.

In chapter 10, Garman Harbottle, Richard Cresswell and Raymond Stoenner detail the procedures used to carbon date the blooms and assess potential sources of error. They hypothesize that the available data favour the explanation that the blooms are of Norse origin and were present on

Kodlunarn Island prior to Frobisher's arrival. A similar interpretation is arrived at by Henry Ungalik (chapter 11), who conducted metallurgical analyses of the blooms, slag and associated materials.

Michael Wayman and Robert Ehrenreich report in chapter 12 on the analyses conducted on other iron objects (arrowhead and wedge) recovered from Kodlunarn Island. Unfortunately, their results were inconclusive insofar as the possible age and source of the metal are concerned. The section concludes with Ehrenreich's review (chapter 13) of metallurgical, historical and archaeological evidence that suggest a further possibility: the blooms were brought to Kodlunarn Island by Frobisher, but not as a source of iron stock. Instead, they may have been used as "dollies" or weights used by carpenters in the repair of ships.

As a group, I consider these papers to be the most interesting of the volume. All of the hypotheses are obviously tentative, but they are developed on the basis of detailed and carefully constructed arguments. It will be interesting to see which, if any, of the theories will be supported as additional data are collected and analyzed.

In the final section, Fitzhugh briefly recaps three of the many issues addressed through the research. The first concerns the identity of Kodlunarn Island as the scene of Frobisher's base of operations. I thought it curious that this question would be raised at the end of the volume, if at all. While the recent work has produced a far more complete and detailed understanding of the site, confirmation of Kodlunarn Island as Frobisher's base camp is never introduced as a major question to be resolved (the bloom dates notwithstanding).

The remaining issues discussed concern the loss of five of Frobisher's men in 1576 and the conflicting interpretations of the iron blooms. Although certainly interesting in its own right, it is not entirely clear why the loss of five sailors is a "considerable problem for future research" (p. 231), except to the extent that this event may be confused in Inuit oral traditions with a different group of men lost in 1578 and have some bearing on the blooms recovered from Kodlunarn Island (i.e., the possibility that they were manufactured or reworked by the abandoned sailors). Concerning the many issues surrounding the age and origin of the blooms, a recent suggestion by Ivor Noël Hume might prove to be an important breakthrough. He suggests (p. 236) that they could be the items listed in the Frobisher inventory records as "yronstones of Russia," an attribution that might help to explain their physical attributes and, perhaps, the pre-Frobisher carbon dates.

Overall the volume is well produced, with only minor flaws detected in the text and figures. The illustrations are of good quality and several of the papers are enhanced by the use of reproductions of figures and maps from Hall's and other early publications. In terms of organization and content, some of the papers might have been placed in different sections, and there is some duplication that could have been avoided (e.g., separate discussions of the Kodlunarn Island ceramics by Fitzhugh and Auger could have been combined). The quality of the papers is also somewhat uneven, perhaps inevitably, given that they range between expanded site

reports and technical discussions of artifact analyses. It is also noteworthy that approximately half of the papers (and virtually all of the analyses) deal directly or indirectly with the iron blooms. This will appeal to those with an interest in archaeometry or archaeometallurgy, but the fact that other analyses are either not completed or presented limits the usefulness of the book for some readers.

Minor criticisms aside, *Archeology of the Frobisher Voyages* succeeds in providing for the reader a framework for the project and in defining problem areas and avenues for future research. That the papers raise more questions than they answer should not be considered a deficiency but simply a reflection of the fact that the book is intended to be a progress report rather than a definitive account. For an interim report, however, the book is overpriced.

As the principal investigator, Fitzhugh is to be commended for assembling teams of specialists who bring a wealth of expertise to the project. The research completed thus far has been successful on many fronts and has generated numerous testable hypotheses for future investigations. This book will appeal to a wide audience of professionals and laypersons alike, and I recommend it to anyone interested in arctic anthropology or the history of European exploration in the New World.

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BUSH LAND PEOPLE. By TERRY GARVIN. Calgary: The Arctic Institute of North America, 1992. 186 p., maps, colour plates, glossary. Hardbound, Cdn\$40.00; softbound, Cdn\$30.00.

This visually appealing book is an Arctic Institute best seller. It is printed on high quality paper and filled with Terry Garvin's coloured photographs, shot in the communities where Garvin worked in various jobs from the 1950s through the 1980s. Intended to supplement the grades 7-9 social studies curriculum, it contains a text about what Garvin calls the "bush culture" and presents a picture of northern aboriginal (Native) culture, history, and lifeways, especially in the 1950s and later. The text is placed on the pages to the left, faced on the right by the photos, an effective format. The book is also being marketed to the public as a reader-friendly, general-interest publication about northern Canada.

Such books, if well written, appeal to both the scholar and the general reader. Academic works are typically unnecessarily dense and often obscure — heavy going even

for the trained specialist and virtually inaccessible to others. The problem with books written by people without scholarly training is that while they may be readable, they are often plagued by fuzzy concepts, incorrect information, unfortunate interpretations, and sometimes even bad writing (to which scholars are not immune, but in theory the referee system is supposed to prevent such problems). However, the public wants to read about such topics as Indians and the fur trade, accounting for the success of works such as Peter Newman's highly successful, but criticized, series about the Hudson's Bay Company.

Clearly, this book is accessible. This review will consider how northern Native life is represented and the accuracy of this representation.

Bush Land People is of special interest because the author is typical of the non-Native "outsider" who works in northern communities, often for many years, and becomes familiar with local people and customs. Such individuals often have a wealth of information that they rarely share with others, unless they write narratives about their experiences in the North, a recognized genre of northern writing.

The book is a very personal work, indeed an act of love for Garvin, but there is little in the book to explain how or why. It does not contain his memoirs, nor does he frame the narrative he has constructed by any description of his own experiences. For instance, one can infer from dates in some of the photo captions that in the mid-1950s he was in Fort Rae, but he does not explain what he was doing there. Similarly, he has a long-term and close relationship with Katy Sanderson and some of her relatives, who appear in many of his photographs, but we do not know how this came about or what he did with them. While it contains a curious mixing of Garvin's voice and various Native voices, the text is rendered as an authoritative text about the North, rather than one man's recollection of things he saw and stories he heard.

The book is divided into chapters loosely organized around themes. Two chapters focus on persons, "Granny Powder" and her daughter Katy Sanderson, a well-known resident of Fort McMurray. There are chapters on bush life, bush foods, caribou hunting, transportation, communities, arts and crafts, and the future of a bush-based way of life.

The book is strongest when Garvin recounts stories he has heard. For instance, he describes how Katy Sanderson shot a moose along the edge of the Athabasca River and recovered the meat, and he explains how her husband, George, managed to hunt and trap on crutches after losing a leg in a hunting accident. Similarly, his descriptions of scenes he obviously has witnessed firsthand, such as the Dogrib caribou hunt, are rich and immediate, especially when juxtaposed with his photos. They convey strong images to the reader.

Many of the photos are historically important. For instance, in Fort Chipewyan, Archie Cardinal was known as a skilled boat builder in the old style; the book contains one photo of his board skiff (p. 197), a second of Archie fishing from the skiff (p. 112), and a third of Archie helping his neighbour build a skiff (p. 110-111; the man in the photo with Archie is Daniel Marcel, not Desjarlais Marcel).

Garvin's text is weak in two major areas. First, it betrays a poor understanding of the structural divisions among