

of the two or three most important primary descriptions of the initial contact period on the Northwest Coast. In its present "retroactive" form it mainly provides collaboration for the long-published and well known accounts of Cook, Jewett, Mozino, and others.

Perhaps the greatest source of interest in the Walker account is in the insight it gives its readers to the thoughts and reasoning of a scholarly and sensitive man of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, wrestling with questions of cultural relativism and the impact of European contact on native cultures. For instance, he laments one occasion when they forced a terrified inhabitant of Nootka on board ship to face punishment for a minor theft, saying that "...we lost a fine opportunity for establishing a character for moderation and humanity" (p.65). Later he describes the European custom of taking possession of a new land in the name of the king as "...no less ridiculous than unjust." (p.130). Walker's observational abilities and interpretive acuity, if reliably reflected in the final manuscript, were also exceptional. In two instances he comments on the presence of shell heaps as evidence of native occupation of an area — probably the first historical reference to Northwest Coast shell midden sites — and his excavation of a recent Chugach burial in Prince William Sound included observations on the layering of the grave fill. This may well be the earliest example of "archaeology" on the Northwest Coast, but the negative reaction that disturbance of the burial site caused among the native inhabitants would be no less today. Finally, Walker's speculation that the Chugach and the "Esquimaux" were culturally related, if true to his 1786 journal, would probably be one of the earliest suggestions of relationships between the people of the Gulf of Alaska and those of the High Arctic.

In sum, despite some concern about the primacy of portions of Walker's data and interpretations, his account is still a valuable contribution to the growing file of publications pertaining to the early maritime fur trade period on the Northwest Coast. Fisher and Bumstead should be commended for their scholarship in locating the manuscript and for bringing it to public light. The volume is well presented and organized and remarkably free of obvious errors in proofreading. Considering today's book prices it is a good buy for historian, anthropologist, and layman alike.

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ARCTIC BREAKTHROUGH: FRANKLIN'S EXPEDITIONS, 1819-47. By PAUL NANTON. Toronto and Vancouver: Clarke Irwin and Company, 1981. 262 p. Paperback. Can\$9.95.

Close on 150 years after his death, both public and scholarly interest in Sir John Franklin seem undiminished, and may even increase with the bicentenary of his birth in 1986. Literature about him continues in an unabated stream, while he is widely commemorated afresh in the naming of places, colleges, and institutions. For example, Calgary (though it never came remotely within the orbit of his discoveries) recently named a junior high school and a shopping mall in his honour. Further, with the encouragement of the Scott Polar Research Institute and The Arctic Institute of North America, a project is now underway to edit all the journals and letters relating to the four Franklin Arctic expeditions.

Franklin's continued popularity is due in part to the lasting fascination and lingering mystery of his tragic final expedition (1845-48) and its many terrible ironies. It also derives from the renewal of arctic exploration (albeit intermittent, and for different reasons), and from concerted attempts to provide an adequate history of the Canadian north and its peoples partly as an assertion of Canadian identity.

The work under review, Paul Nanton's *Arctic Breakthrough*, is a testimony both to Franklin's renewed popularity and to the success of its author, since it is a paperback reprint of the 1970 hardcover edition. The paperback has a smaller format, though this has not made the seven black and white illustrations from the land expeditions and the facsimile of the last message from the final expedition any worse than the insufficiently clear set in the first edition. A foreword by Joseph B. MacInnis has been added and the useful bibliography updated to include such works as Roderick Owen's *The Fate of Franklin* (1978).

The bulk of Franklin scholarship seems to have been mainly concerned with the fate of the last expedition — a subject of diminishing returns, though sustained by the hope that journals may come to light in an overlooked cairn, or that the hull of one of the ships may be located, raised from the depths, and found to reveal a crucial secret. By refreshing contrast, Nanton devotes only a small fraction of space to the last expedition, totally shunning the attendant conjecture, and focuses mainly on the two somewhat neglected land expeditions which Franklin led in the 1820s. However, to give a sense of perspective and continuity, Nanton sensibly includes a brief summary of Franklin's early adventures at sea under Nelson and Captain Flinders, his period as governor of Tasmania, and salient features of his private life. There is also an Appendix containing recent evaluations of Franklin's achievements, one of them adverse, since, inevitably, no explorer can escape at least the occasional mud pie thrown by fashionably iconoclastic critics, though in this case Franklin is left with only a faint smear on his countenance.

Nanton's general approach is more that of a sympathetic chronicler and alert copy editor than of an interpretative historian. He derives his text almost exclusively from Franklin's own published account of his land expeditions, quoting from them at length verbatim, paraphrasing, or simply summarizing, all with little or no comment. On the whole, the narrative is quite well stitched together, though it is hard not to feel that Nanton could well have improved some of the climaxes by direct quotation rather than summary, even if Franklin's prose is seldom fully equal to the occasion.

Franklin shows through very clearly in the narrative, much as he does in his unpublished letters and journals. His style seems a combination of Robinson Crusoe's and Lemuel Gulliver's. Like Crusoe, he is devoted to a wealth of accurate detail combined with God-fearing wonderment and gratitude, and an overpowering belief in the superiority of the white man, in particular, an Englishman; like Gulliver, his strong sense of modesty and integrity alternates with a naive pomposity which sometimes makes him unwittingly almost a figure of satire to the modern reader. Also apparent are Franklin's unflinching care for his men, his willingness to share privation equally with them, and the fact that, while lacking the flair and imagination of a Nelson, he had the same ability to command undying loyalty and affection. With Indians, Eskimos, and *voyageurs*, Franklin can scarcely be regarded as enlightened, but by the standards of his day he was remarkably understanding, and readier to learn in this respect than most of his peers and subordinates.

One of the special pleasures of reading the narratives of the land expeditions is to see a then virtually unknown country through the fresh eyes of explorers: in particular, to feel with them the staggering impact of the first glimpse of the Rockies or of the Arctic Sea. The actual discoveries and charting of the Northwest coastline, though remarkable in themselves for the period, seem secondary in interest to the description of the native peoples, for example, the Copper Indians and the Dog-Rib Indians, with the engaging character sketches that emerge of Chief Akaitcho and his brother, of the Indian princess "Green-stockings" (who, we learn from other sources, caused a heated rivalry between Back and Hood), to say nothing of the two Eskimo guides, nicknamed Augustus and Junius. Especially compelling are the gruelling descriptions of protracted starvation, with only loathsome "tripe de roche" for main sustenance, and the resulting dark tale of murder and cannibalism perpetrated by a *voyageur*, who had to be summarily executed by Richardson in self-defence. All in all, the two land expeditions, even if of limited success, were a remarkable achievement in context, and are crammed with invaluable by-products, particularly for the anthropologist and social historian.

Though the narratives are fairly easy to follow, Nanton's work has several drawbacks. As a chronicle it suffers from occasional injudicious selection and abridgement, and we are often made to rush and saunter alternately, when a uniformly brisk pace would be preferable. The almost complete lack of commentary leaves us with an imperfect understanding of some of the leading characters (for example, Richardson, Back, and Hood) or deprives us of guidance in assessing cause and effect and relative achievement. In addition, little attempt seems to have been made to include hitherto unpublished material, of which a great abundance is to be found, especially in the Scott Polar Research Institute.

It is perhaps for this reason that Franklin's first expedition to the Arctic, under Buchan in 1818, is completely but unjustifiably neglected. A minor blemish on the book is that the index is too selective to include even the lovely "Green-stockings". These reservations aside, Nanton's work does a great service in keeping Franklin before the general public and providing a good sense of an unusual and often gripping narrative of arctic exploration.

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