

INUIT AND WHALERS ON BAFFIN ISLAND THROUGH GERMAN EYES: WILHELM WEIKE'S ARCTIC JOURNAL AND LETTERS (1883–84). By LUDGER MÜLLER-WILLE and BERND GIESEKING; Translated by WILLIAM BARR. Montreal, Quebec: Baraka Books, 2011. ISBN 978-1-926824-11-6. 284 p., maps, b&w illus., bib., index. Softbound. Cdn\$29.95.

In recent years, the work of Franz Boas, previously available only in German, has been made available to English-language readers through the published work of Ludger Müller-Wille (1998) and Douglas Cole (1983, 1999). Now the writings of another German observer of the Arctic have been translated and published in English.

Wilhelm Weike, Boas's assistant and servant, has long fascinated Arctic researchers and scholars, but his work remained doubly inaccessible to English readers, for his journal and letters remained (as a copy only, the original having long ago been lost) in the archives of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia until 2008, when they were published in German in a book edited by the same editors of the present English-language volume.

Franz Boas's Arctic experience is well known. Born to a Jewish family in Minden, Germany in 1858, he visited the Arctic only once, wintering in Cumberland Sound in 1883–84. During that expedition, he morphed from a budding geographer with an interest in the Inuit into an early cultural anthropologist. His career in the field he largely shaped lasted until his death in 1942. That single expedition to southeastern Baffin Island resulted in the publication in 1888 of an anthropological classic, *The Central Eskimo*.

Boas needed an assistant on his expedition, someone to perform domestic duties and free the scientist's time for his important work. His choice of Wilhelm Weike was fortuitous. Weike had been a servant to the Boas family, so the scientist knew him well and trusted him. Weike was reliable and literate, and his warm-heartedness provided a counter to Boas's businesslike approach to science. But Boas wanted more than that. In Weike, he wanted another set of eyes and ears. From Weike's observations, he would later be able to cull and distill perspectives on the events of the year to augment his own descriptions and analyses. To that end, Boas instructed his assistant to keep a detailed journal describing his daily work, experiences, and observations.

The document that resulted is unique. It is the account of a sensitive, perceptive man living, for almost a year, in not one, but two cultures that were alien to him. On the one hand, he interacted almost daily with Inuit whose lives were being irrevocably altered by contact with Europeans and Americans, but who nonetheless struggled to maintain their traditional culture and spoke a language (Inuktitut) or a pidgin (English-Inuktitut) unintelligible at first to the young German. On the other hand, the Scottish and American whalers with whom he and Boas lived, although white, lived a hard-scrabble existence unlike the urban life to which Weike had been accustomed in Europe. For good measure, during the year that Weike was there, the

American crews also included two German speakers, African-Americans, and an Italian.

Weike's journal was never intended for publication. Rather, it would be a parallel journal to Boas's personal and scientific writings. Boas would use it, and did, for his own purposes.

Anthropologist Ludger Müller-Wille and comedian, playwright, and actor Bernd Giesecking have succeeded admirably in bringing Weike's descriptions of Inuit and whaler life in the 1880s first to a German-language audience and now, with this translation, to an English-language audience worldwide. Weike's contributions, as they note, are now "fully documented and thus have received fair acknowledgment" (p. 227).

The book begins with a short preface and an introduction. The next 188 pages are devoted to Weike's journal, interspersed with his letters home. Part 2, entitled "Wilhelm Weike (1859–1917) – Life in Germany and on Baffin Island," places Weike's life and writings in context, both historically and in relation to Boas and his work. Subsections particularly informative to Arctic scholars and general readers alike deal with the people, both Inuit and Qallunaat, that Weike met in Cumberland Sound and aspects of their daily lives. They include a most informative discussion of the languages spoken in the sound. A brief section near the end poses the question, "And who was Wilhelm Weike?"

As always, William Barr has provided an excellent and readable translation. The fluid prose results from Barr's vast knowledge of Arctic exploration and his experience in translating the German of the time into English.

I have few quibbles with anything except minor details in the editors' discussions. On page 235, the singular of the word for non-Inuit is given as "qallunaq." It is, in fact, "qallunaaq," with a long "a" in the final syllable—and vowel length is significant in Inuktitut. I dispute the common assertion, made on the same page, that "qallunaaq" (the plural form) means "people... with large eyebrows," although there is no published material (yet) on what its derivation really is. I would translate "Inuktitut" (p. 234) as "in the manner of an Inuk," rather than "what and how I speak."

On page 247, in a discussion on language, the editors remark, on the mixture of English and Inuktitut used in the sound, that "Boas and Weike also participated in this pidgin and extended it to German by germanizing Inuit words—for example 'ankuten,' which referred to the invocations of the shamans..." Perhaps some acknowledgement should have been made that the word *angakkuq* (shaman) had earlier been anglicized as a verb by Charles Francis Hall and already formed part of the pidgin in use in Baffin Island. Hall wrote in 1864, "The duties of the angeko... consist in ankooting for success in whaling, walrusing, sealing, and in hunting certain animals" (Hall, 1864, Vol. 2:319).

The whaler James Mutch is described on page 253 as a "strict teetotaller," but Inuit in Cumberland Sound, who personally remembered Mutch from the summer voyages he still made in his old age, often told me in the 1970s that the whaler enjoyed a daily shot of rum.

On page 267, in commenting on the unfortunate experience of Abraham Ulrikab and his Labrador countrymen in Europe, the editors refer to Abraham's journal (2005), written "in Inuktitut and intended for his relatives and for the missionaries...." It should be noted that the Inuktitut original has not survived, and it is uncertain whether the intended Labrador Inuit audience ever saw it. The journal is known today only through a German translation of that now-lost original and an English translation of that German version.

The book is well illustrated and includes relevant maps. It is attractively produced and bound. This book will be used by Arctic scholars as the only book in English to detail the life of Wilhelm Weike, and moreover, as a book that places in the forefront his common-man's observations and perspectives on the year that shaped Boas's career. But it will also be an enjoyable read for the layman and for students at the high school level and above.

And who was Wilhelm Weike? In the editors' words, he was "cook and baker, laundryman and cleaner, joiner and carpenter, bullet-pourer and gun-cleaner, smith, tailor, oarsman, dog-team driver, hunter and even nurse and scientific assistant" (p. 247). Moreover, he was "a very precise and careful observer" (p. 241), tasked with keeping a journal of the occurrences of an extraordinary year in the Arctic, and a man who carried out his duties with enthusiasm, warmth, and humour. He added to our knowledge of a critical period in the history of Nunavut.

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Kenn Harper
Box 670
Iqaluit, Nunavut
X0A 0H0
kennh@sympatico.ca

FROM FAR AND WIDE: A COMPLETE HISTORY OF CANADA'S ARCTIC SOVEREIGNTY. By PETER PIGOTT. Toronto, Ontario: Dundurn Press, 2011. ISBN 978-1-55488-987-7. 312 p., map, b&w illus., notes, bib., index. Hardbound. Cdn\$35.00.

In *From Far and Wide* Peter Pigott charts the history of Canada's Arctic sovereignty from the time of the earliest British explorers to the present day. It is one of a number of Arctic histories released over the past few years as the increasing importance of the region continues to generate excitement and interest amongst both academic and popular audiences. While this interest has certainly been beneficial overall, a potential pitfall lies in publishing work simply because it covers a popular subject.

The first error in *From Far and Wide* is in the title itself, which claims that the book is a complete history of Canada's Arctic sovereignty. In fact, nothing could be farther from the truth. This monograph is filled with factual and interpretational errors, shockingly lax scholarship, and severe omissions. When all is considered, *From Far and Wide* must be judged to be the worst historical study of Canada's Arctic sovereignty ever produced. This is certainly a very heavy criticism, but this reviewer does not make it lightly.

Perhaps the most revealing shortcoming of this work is the research and source material upon which it rests. Mr. Pigott states that in writing this book he has drawn heavily upon the works of Peter C. Newman, Farley Mowat, Robert Service, Jack London, and Pierre Berton (p. 13). This list is not simply illustrative, but essentially exhaustive. Almost nowhere in his bibliography or sparse footnoting are found the major works by any of the authors widely considered to be experts in the history of Arctic sovereignty. No work by Grant is used or cited in discussing the early Cold War defence projects, nothing by Perras for the Aleutian campaigns, or Lackenbauer when discussing the Rangers, or Elliot-Meisel for the Northwest Passage, or Cavell and Noakes for the 1920s and 1930s. Rob Huebert's work is absent in the section on the Polar Sea and Franklyn Griffiths is not used at all, while Ken Coates and William Morrison receive only one citation on the subject of the Yukon.

This dearth is representative of *From Far and Wide*'s shockingly poor footnoting and citation. The work gives no references for direct quotations and no attributions for ideas that are clearly lifted from other works; sections on the DEW line, for instance (p. 230), are lifted right from Western Electric's, *The DEW Line Story*. The bibliography is filled largely with sources such as magazines and newspapers and is shorter and weaker than what would be expected from a 20-page student paper.

The writing itself would have benefited from additional proofreading as spelling and grammar mistakes creep into each chapter. Some mistakes are new words, such as "equamity" (p. 30); other mistakes are simply careless, such as saying that Dawson was the most populous city east of Winnipeg (p. 88).