

**DEAD RECKONING: THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE.** By KEN McGOOGAN. Toronto, Ontario: HarperCollins, 2017. ISBN 978-1-44344-126-1. 438 p., b&w illus., selected references, index, end maps and maps in text. Hardbound. Cdn\$33.99.

The primary focus of McGoogan's latest book is the contribution, in almost every case absolutely critical, made by Indigenous people to the search for the Northwest Passage or for the missing Franklin expedition. This is the "untold story" mentioned in the subtitle. A partial list of the individuals who are featured includes Matonnabee, who guided Samuel Hearne in his epic overland journey to the mouth of the Coppermine in 1771; Akaitcho, who guided and later rescued Franklin during his first overland expedition in 1820–21; Ooligbuck, who either guided or interpreted for Franklin on his second overland expedition of 1825–27, for Dease and Simpson on their expedition of 1837–39, and for John Rae's first expedition of 1846–47; his son William Ooligbuck, who also accompanied Rae in 1846–47 and again on his last Arctic expedition in 1853–54; and an amazing Inuit couple, Ebierbing (more correctly Ipiirvik) and Tookoolito (more correctly Taqulittuk), who contributed greatly to Charles Hall's expeditions—to Baffin Island in 1860–62 and to Repulse Bay, Igloodik, and King William Island in 1864–69, and finally, although this is not relevant to McGoogan's focus in this book, to Hall's North Pole attempt on board *Polaris* in 1871–73.

McGoogan also includes as being Métis Chief Factor Peter Warren Dease, son of an Irishman, Dr. John Dease, and Jane French, probably a Mohawk from Kahnawake, who along with Thomas Simpson, explored the mainland coast from Franklin's Return Reef west to Point Barrow in 1837, and from Franklin's Point Turnagain east to Boothia Peninsula in 1838–39. Surprisingly, in light of Dease's inclusion, McGoogan makes no mention of William Kennedy, born at Cumberland House (now in Saskatchewan) the son of Chief Factor Alexander Kennedy and Aggathas Margaret Bear, and thus also Métis. In 1851, along with Lieutenant-de-vaissseau Joseph René Bellot of the French Navy, on an expedition sponsored by Lady Franklin, he partly searched the coasts of Somerset and Prince of Wales Islands and, importantly, discovered Bellot Strait, an important component of one variant of the Northwest Passage.

In focusing the spotlight on the Indigenous guides and interpreters, without whom the better-known Caucasian explorers would not have achieved their goals, and in

many cases might well have died, McGoogan has made an invaluable contribution to the story of the search for the Passage and for the Franklin expedition. On its own, however, this topic would have made for a rather slim volume, and one wonders whether this is the reason that he decided (perhaps at an editor's suggestion) to expand it to produce a more comprehensive history of the search for the Passage, and for Franklin, which would help to place the main focus of the book in context. Given the constraints of space, however, one has to admire McGoogan's temerity in tackling this vast topic in a volume mainly devoted to a special aspect. Inevitably, he has had to be extremely selective as to the information that he includes. With reference to the exploration of Hudson Bay, in the hope that it might lead to the Passage, there is no mention of Thomas Button (1612–13); Luke Foxe (1631); Thomas James (1631–32); Christopher Middleton and William Moor (1741–42), who discovered Wager Bay and Repulse Bay; Francis Smith and William Moor (1746–47), who discovered Chesterfield Inlet; and George Lyon (1824). Many of the leaders of important expeditions in search of Franklin are covered in just a few lines, and at least two are not mentioned at all. Thus there is no mention of Charles Forsyth's expedition in *Prince Albert* in 1850, significant in that Forsyth brought the first news of the finds at Beechey Island back to England. Nor is there any mention of Captain Erasmus Ommanney, who in the spring of 1851 mounted an impressive sledging campaign, starting from Cape Walker, the northeastern tip of Russell Island, off the north coast of Prince of Wales Island, the location from which Franklin had been ordered to head south. Ommanney's campaign is important in that he and his subordinates decided that Peel Sound and McClintock Channel were choked with multiyear ice (Barr, 2016:481) and that Franklin could not have travelled south by either route. In the case of the former route, of course, this assessment was incorrect. But as a result, the focus of the Admiralty's massive operation under Belcher in 1852–54 was directed north of Parry Channel and not south, to where Franklin's ships had indeed penetrated via Peel Sound to near King William Island.

McGoogan does not make his problem of adequately covering the searches for the Passage and for Franklin any easier by devoting considerable space to two irrelevant topics in Chapters 30 and 31. The first is the sad story of Minik, the Inughuk whom Peary took south, along with other members of his family, and then abandoned. The second is that of Knud Rasmussen and all his various Thule expeditions, irrelevant except for the stories he recorded from Inuit about the fate of the Franklin expedition during the Fifth Thule expedition. The space devoted to these topics would have allowed more comprehensive coverage of the searches for the Passage and for the Franklin expedition.

Unfortunately McGoogan's text contains a troubling number of factual inaccuracies. On page 32 he states that the Royal charter of the Hudson's Bay Company specifies that it should search for the Northwest Passage. The only reference to the Northwest Passage in the charter is in the

opening paragraph, and it refers to one of the aims of the expedition by Radisson and des Groseilliers in 1668–69, the success of which led directly to the founding of the Hudson’s Bay Company. There is no other reference to the Northwest Passage in the charter. McGoogan’s “error” supports his claim that, as an employee of the Hudson’s Bay Company, John Rae was searching for the Northwest Passage on his first and last expeditions rather than simply mapping the coastline. On page 269, McGoogan states that John Rae described the ice in Rae Strait as “young ice.” Rae’s actual words are “rough ice” (Rich, 1953:281), which could be ice of any age, including multiyear ice. By substituting “young ice,” McGoogan implies that the strait might be navigable in some years, which would help to support his argument that Rae had discovered the final link in the Northwest Passage.

An example of a less important error is the statement (p. 172) that the estate of Sir James Clark Ross, which he had purchased in 1845, lies southeast of London. In fact it lies northwest of London, at the village of Aston-Abbots, near Aylesbury. Ross and his wife are buried in the churchyard, and a stained-glass window in the church honors his memory and his achievements. Here McGoogan is repeating an error he committed in his earlier book, *Lady Franklin’s Revenge* (McGoogan, 2005:269).

To recapitulate, McGoogan is to be warmly commended for his focus on the Indigenous people who contributed to the searches for the Northwest Passage and for the missing Franklin expedition. But any reader who, on the basis of the ambiguous subtitle, is expecting a reliable, reasonably complete account of the search for the Northwest Passage, will be sadly disappointed. I would recommend, instead, Glyndwr Williams’ excellent work, *Arctic Labyrinth* (2009).

## REFERENCES

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