

asset; most are monochrome and appear throughout the text with a section of colour plates emphasising specific themes.

Earlier accounts of New Zealand's Antarctic involvement include the accounts by Adrian Hayter published in 1968 (*The year of the quiet sun*) and Warren Herrick in 1997 (*A year on ice*), general histories by Les Quartermain in 1967 and 1971 (*South to the pole*, and *New Zealand and the Antarctic*), Trevor Hatherton in 2001 (*Antarctica: the Ross Sea region*) and various other works (including several by David Harrowfield). These, with many others, are listed in the 70 bibliographical references. This volume provides an efficient 50th anniversary companion which consolidates the previous writings. Of necessity, considering the time New Zealand has been active in Ross Sea regions, the amount of exploration and research conducted, and practical size of the book, some subjects are covered in summary only. The number of persons listed in the acknowledgements, however, indicates a very broad degree of general inquiry.

It is also significant that, during the past few years, Australian, Norwegian, and several other histories of national Antarctic operations have been published, and others, such as the history of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research, are in preparation. Thus this one makes another important contribution to the history of the remotest continent. (R.K. Headland, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER)

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TRYING-OUT: AN ANATOMY OF DUTCH WHALING AND SEALING IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, 1815–1885. Joost C.A. Schokkenbroek. 2008. Amsterdam: Aksant. 366 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 978-90-5260-283-7. €29.90.
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The title *Trying-out* refers, of course, to the process of rendering oil out of animal blubber by the application of heat. The oil, mainly from whales but to some extent from seals and other animals, was a vital product in the pre-petroleum era. It provided light for homes, workplaces and streets, and was used in various industrial operations. Whaling was international in character and nearly global in extent. The whale of greatest importance to whalers from the Netherlands, Great Britain, and

other European nations before the World War I was the Greenland or polar whale (*Balaena mysticetus*), a circumpolar species pursued as early as 1600 in the icy waters near Spitsbergen, and hunted later in Davis Strait, Hudson Bay, and finally the Bering Strait region. The magnitude of the whale hunt was enormous. In the peak year of 1721, Dutch ports alone sent 258 ships, twice as many as in the Spanish armada, into Arctic waters.

The author, now a curator of material culture at the National Maritime Museum in Amsterdam, has produced a valuable addition to the literature of historic Dutch maritime enterprise. He noticed that whereas Dutch whaling and sealing were well documented for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (traditional whaling, mainly in Arctic seas), and for the twentieth century (modern whaling, mainly in Antarctic waters), the nineteenth century was inadequately represented in the literature. He resolved to fill this gap in the historical record, 'to push ahead research...focusing attention on the very nature of the expeditions,' including 'the scope, quality, and profitability of these industries' (page 23). The result of his intensive research was a doctoral thesis he submitted to the University of Leiden, now published in book form.

In general, graduate theses are read, or at least skimmed, by members of the candidate's examining board, and then banished to some dusty library shelf where they sink into oblivion. In the Netherlands, however, doctoral theses are often published, so the results of original research are disseminated rather than buried, a practice that could usefully be adopted by universities in other countries. This particular thesis has been published in English, a decided advantage for readers outside the Netherlands. The archival sources, of course, are almost all in Dutch, as are all but a few of the nearly 200 published works cited.

After 1721, the industry declined and by 1800 it was almost dead. Many readers will be surprised to learn that the Dutch carried out any whaling at all after 1800. The author admits that it was 'a mere shadow of former Dutch whaling activities' and this is certainly true. He records 26 Arctic whaling and sealing voyages in 1802 and 1803, and 113 between 1815 and 1885, making a total of 139 in the century. Compare this to 17,000 or more Dutch voyages during the hundred-year period 1669–1769 (reported by the English whaling master William Scoresby junior). In the single year of 1721 there were nearly twice as many voyages as during the entire nineteenth century. If the level of whaling effort was so low after 1800 (one might ask) is such an intensive study of the nineteenth century justified? The author believes that it is: the decline of the industry requires explanation; the role of companies and individuals needs elaboration; markets should be discussed; and the nation's brief period of whaling in the 'South Seas' calls for attention.

There are, of course, various levels of historical writing, depending on the target audience and the extent to which an author has examined and used primary sources. Popular writers depend largely, often entirely,

on information that has been dredged up by diligent researchers and published in some readily accessible form. At the other end of the scale are the dredgers themselves, usually students who are writing theses for advanced degrees or university professors for whom research and publication are an integral part of their job. Schokkenbroek is one of the dredgers, perhaps the ultimate dredger, judging from the impressive diversity of archival material he has consulted. His bibliography includes dozens of manuscript record groups and documents from eight archives (national, provincial, municipal, and foreign), including crew lists, shipboard journals, notarial documents, minutes of council meetings, and so on, as well as newspapers and even museum artefacts.

After an introductory chapter on Arctic whaling and sealing before 1800, Schokkenbroek discusses the system of incentives used in the Netherlands (and elsewhere) to stimulate whaling. In chapter 3, he describes the brief period of Dutch whaling in the 'South Seas' (a mere six voyages over a span of 22 years). In Chapter 4, he returns to the Arctic, describing the whaling and sealing activities of 10 companies in six ports between 1815 and 1885. He provides an extraordinary amount of detail, both in the text and in eight accompanying tables that list the ships, rigs, captains, dates of voyages, destinations, and catches (insofar as data are available). The last three chapters in the book are arranged topically. I found it a relief to depart from the meticulous port-by-port, company-by-company parade of facts, and set sail on a more generalized discussion of ships and men (chapter 5), products and their buyers (chapter 6), and profitability (chapter 7).

The book contains a dozen illustrations. There are two gorgeous colour reproductions of seventeenth century Arctic whaling scenes painted by Dutch artists. Most of the other illustrations relate to the nineteenth century and are sepia or black and white. There are only two maps, both modern but based on historical sources. The first shows the whaling and sealing grounds between Greenland and Spitsbergen (based on one captain's journals in the 1830s). It would have been helpful to show the area between Greenland and Baffin Island as well; the Davis Strait whaling ground, which had been dominated by Dutch ships in the eighteenth century, was still attracting whalers from Harlingen and Rotterdam during the 1820s. The second map shows the routes taken by three ships to the 'South Seas.' One of these ships circumnavigated the globe by way of the Cape of Good Hope, Australia and New Zealand, the Sea of Okhotsk, and Cape Horn. The fact that at least one ship involved in 'South Seas' whaling also exploited a whaling ground off Siberia does not appear to have excited any comment by the author.

University theses rarely make for easy reading, and this one is no exception. The text is so saturated with details that it is difficult to discern general trends. Its 48 tables and 366 footnotes will probably overwhelm the general reader, and if they do not quite succeed in inducing a coma, the 49 pages of tabular appendices should finish the job. *Trying-out* is certainly not what I would call 'a

good read,' but it will surely be a very useful reference book for scholars interested in the Dutch ports, ships, and crews of the period. (W. Gillies Ross, Bishop's University, Sherbrooke, Quebec J1M 0C8, Canada.)

MINA BENSON HUBBARD, A WOMAN'S WAY THROUGH UNKNOWN LABRADOR. Sherrill Grace (editor). 2008. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press. Illustrated soft cover ISBN PRICE??? doi:10.1017/S0032247409008298

Mina Benson Hubbard was the wife of Leonidas Hubbard, who died of starvation while trekking through Labrador in October 1903. Two years later, Mina set out on her own expedition, intending to complete her husband's work and survey the area. She was accompanied by George Elson, one of the two survivors from her husband's party, and three local guides. Leonidas Hubbard had been a professional writer and his widow published this account of her own journey partly in memory of him. Her expedition was entirely successful and she was able to do what she set out to do in the allocated time, with the allocated resources and without any need to describe unanticipated suffering or hardship, which may be one of the less obvious reasons why this book has been excluded from various canons for most of the last century.

As her editor points out, Mina Benson Hubbard is not a polished writer, and descriptions of landscape tend to be factual or dependent on romantic cliché. Because the journey seems relatively uneventful, and because the author is not given to drama, *A woman's way* has a subtle momentum related principally to the narrator's changing subjectivity. There is no obvious 'plot.' It is the insight into the dynamics of the expedition which is initially fascinating here, particularly where Hubbard explores or exploits the issues of gender and race which are the inevitable heart of all critical approaches to "'womens' travel writing.' There are moments of orthodoxy, in which Hubbard bemoans the limits imposed by long skirts and a sense of propriety. The sight of a fish eagle's nest, 'some sixty feet or more above the ground...was one of the very many things on this trip that made me wish I were a man. I could have had a closer look at the nest; I think I could have taken a photograph of it too' (page 66). This follows close on her assertion that the loss of the pump for her air-bed 'seemed quite a serious matter to me, knowing as I did from past experience that I cannot sleep on the ground long without growing very tired, when I lose my nerve and am afraid to do anything' (page 54). There are surprisingly few instances of Hubbard either protesting against the limitations of early twentieth century American femininities or insisting on the special privileges and comforts legitimated by those limitations. Instead, what emerges in *A woman's way* is a more subtle and surprising understanding of gender on ice.

In Chapter VII, the expedition is halted by prolonged rain. The men climb the hills surrounding the camp to see what lies ahead, 'and I wanted to go too. Job, however assured me that it would be impossible as the hill was