

1911), when he told Amundsen that he regarded him as unfit to lead, is recorded with little evident emotion (but with a certain amount of self-justification). I assume that Amundsen realised that the fleshlessness of his narrative style would be considered a defect in a popular book; in any case, in *The South Pole* he took pains to provide his companions with more personality than they are given in the diaries.

One of the incidents of particular interest to me is the *Slakterei*, or Butcher's Shop (21 November 1911), when, according to plan, Amundsen had his men kill more than half of their dogs. They had needed all their animals to ascend the Transantarctic Mountains; that task accomplished, they required only as many dogs as would be needed to get to the pole and back to Framheim. The meat taken off the sacrificed dogs would then be used to feed the surviving animals as well as the men. Judging from the passages devoted to this day in *The South Pole*, amounting to several pages, I assumed that Amundsen's diary entry would also contain ruminations on the necessity of it all, some additional justification for the slaughter. Here is his full account: 'It has been a really strenuous day, mostly for the dogs. But they have also, 24 of our best comrades, been given the best reward: death. On arriving at 8pm, they were shot and their intestines removed. They will be skinned tomorrow.' The harshness, or, alternatively, the matter-of-factness, of these sentences are jarring, and Amundsen doubtless felt he had to embellish in his book the account of the slaughter to show that he had at least felt *something*. And perhaps he did; but on the ice there was no room for philosophising or unnecessary emotional expenditure.

The publication of Amundsen's South Pole diaries is part of an ambitious project, under the general editorship of the Fram Museum's director, Geir Kløver, to issue in translation the available diaries of all of the major Norwegian polar explorers of the 19th and early 20th centuries (some in parallel Norwegian and English editions). Amundsen's *Belgica* diary has already

been published in this series. In the next year or so, the museum will publish translations of the Antarctic diaries of Amundsen's companions Hjalmar Johansen, Olav Bjaaland, Oscar Wisting, Jorgen Stubberud, and Sverre Hassel, together with those of Thorvald Nilsen and Ludvik Hansen who served on *Fram* but were not part of the shore party. It is a splendid thing that these sources will now become readily accessible to a much wider readership than in the past.

Amundsen's personality in English language sources is usually cast as cold and remote, driven by his need to win. Some of Amundsen's companions, especially Sverre Hassel, had much to say about him, both good and bad, and perhaps we can look forward to having a more rounded view of the man in future. But just in case you thought Amundsen's affect was so unrelievedly flat that he could not express joy in simple pleasures, turn to the entry for 21 July 1911. It was still midwinter, but with enough light for Amundsen to go to a nearby food cache to bring back some fresh supplies for Framheim's table. It is touching, in a way, to read how this closed, hard man could expound for several paragraphs upon how tasty, how marvelous, how truly fine, were the jams, vegetables, cheeses, chocolates, cigars and so on and on: 'Yum yum, how good they are!' The same thing can be said for the volumes that have appeared so far in the Fram Museum series, which bodes well for the rest. (Ross D.E. MacPhee, Department of Mammalogy, American Museum of Natural History, New York NY 10024, USA.)

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RACE TO THE END: AMUNDSEN, SCOTT AND THE ATTAINMENT OF THE SOUTH POLE. Ross D.E. MacPhee. 2010. New York, London: Sterling Innovation (American Museum of Natural History, in association with the Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge). x + 245p., illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 978-1-4027-7029-6. US\$27.95, C\$35.95.
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More has been written about Robert Falcon Scott's last expedition of 1910–1913 than about any other Antarctic expedition, with the South Pole expedition of Roald Amundsen in 1910–1912 not far behind. With so many published, noteworthy analyses of these two momentous and contemporaneous expeditions, particularly those of Roland Huntford (1979), Tor Bomann-Larsen (1995), Susan Solomon (2001), Ranulph Fiennes (2003), Max Jones (2003), David Crane (2005), and Stephanie Barczewski (2007), one may rationally query whether we really need another book, especially so soon. Dr. Ross MacPhee has shown us that there is always room for another when the book is done as well as his is.

How MacPhee came to his interest in polar history, became curator of the 'Race to the end of the Earth' exhibition at

the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in New York City, and author of the present volume deserves comment. MacPhee, born in 1949 in Edinburgh, Scotland, spent his formative years in western Canada. As a college undergraduate, he planned to become a professional historian concentrating on the exploration and colonisation of Africa. However, he had many other interests and while in graduate school realized that African history did not interest him as much as physical anthropology. He received his doctorate in this field in 1977 at the University of Alberta and taught for several years at Canadian universities. He then joined the faculty in the Department of Anatomy at Duke University Medical Center, Durham, North Carolina, where he became associate professor in 1986, teaching human gross anatomy and conducting paleontological research in Madagascar. Two years later, he joined the staff of the AMNH, as curator of mammals, at which he has resided professionally ever since. In the past two decades he has continued to study mammalian evolution, with forays into paleobiogeography, ancient DNA, Siberian permafrost mummies, and Pleistocene extinctions.

MacPhee came to Antarctic history when he was appointed co-curator of the AMNH's 1999 *Endurance* exhibition, proposed and organised by Caroline Alexander. The AMNH's policy is to have a resident curator when a show

is advised by an outside curator, as Alexander was. Because MacPhee was then working in the Arctic, he became by default the AMNH's high latitude go-to person and was chosen to work with Alexander. (The *Endurance* exhibition was, and remains, the most successful traveling show the AMNH has ever produced, and is still on the road 11 years after its opening in 1999. Alexander's book, *The 'Endurance': Shackleton's legendary Antarctic expedition*, originally published in 1998 by Alfred A. Knopf in association with the AMNH, has sold many hundred thousand copies.) As a result of that exhibition, MacPhee became taken with Antarctic history and has been studying polar exploration ever since. Since 2007, he has conducted field work on islands off the Antarctic Peninsula searching for late Cretaceous/early Cainozoic mammals (from roughly 80 million up to 40 million years ago). Thus, as fate might have it, MacPhee's interests in ancient vertebrates and south polar history dovetailed in bringing him to 'the last place on Earth'.

In 2008, the AMNH administration proposed to MacPhee that he develop a new polar exhibition that emphasised heroic age exploration and science. MacPhee selected the race for the South Pole between Scott and Amundsen, now at its centennial, because its story, a complex intermingling of triumph and tragedy, remains to this day, and probably will always remain, so emotionally powerful. It is almost a mockery of common sense that men would have risked their lives merely to close the 97 nautical mile gap to the pole left by Ernest Shackleton's party on 9 January 1909. Both Scott and Amundsen knew that no geographical or biological discovery of note remained within that last little piece; they also knew the perils would be great to get there and cross it. However, men and women as we are, someone had to stand at that singular point where on a given day the sun whirls around a constant inclination to the horizon, where all the meridians meet, and where every direction is north. Scott and Amundsen were only the most visible of those who wanted to be there first.

MacPhee had felt for a long time that the AMNH and its curatorial staff were missing opportunities by not regularly issuing catalogues or accompanying volumes connected with their traveling exhibitions. Alexander's *The 'Endurance'* was certainly a case in point as to how successful an accompanying book could be. When MacPhee took on the show, he asked that he be given the time, budget, and resources for this purpose. This book is the result. The typescript was actually in the publisher's hands before the AMNH administration had settled on a final title for the exhibition, or even the date of its opening. *The End*, representing the South Pole, was going to be too obscure for museum visitors, thus ... *of the Earth* was added for the show's title.

Race to the end of the Earth became a collaboration with the Scott Polar Research Institute (SPRI) in Cambridge and the Frammuseet and Nasjonalbiblioteket in Oslo. MacPhee first visited SPRI in 2004 when his wife, Clare Flemming, then archivist of the Explorers Club, received a grant to visit the SPRI collections. The two met keeper and librarian Heather Lane as well as director Julian Dowdeswell; both were very helpful a few years later when MacPhee returned with AMNH photographer Craig Chesek to select and photograph artifacts for the show and the book. In Oslo, Geir Kløver, director of the Frammuseet, and Anne Melgård, curator of manuscripts at Nasjonalbiblioteket, went out of their way to show MacPhee their collections and arrange loans and photography. The exhibition opened at the AMNH on 29 May 2010 and runs

there to 3 January 2011. It then travels to the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria. On display are numerous eye popping artifacts, with interactive exhibits, dioramas, and life like reconstructions of such memorable scenes as Scott's den, 'The Tenements' in the Cape Evans hut, an 'underground' workshop adjacent to Framheim, and the tent at Polheim.

MacPhee's belief from the inception of the project was that he could make a contribution to the literature of these expeditions if his book did something new. That meant fine illustrations of artifacts and documents never before published (at least in an English-language book). Indeed, the first time MacPhee visited SPRI he was astounded by the precious artifacts from Scott's last camp on display. He had no idea that so much had been brought back. This even sparked an idea that a small exhibition entitled *Last things* might be presented in one of AMNH's small galleries, just to show the deeply significant objects that were with Scott and his companions as they waited out their ten or so remaining, forlorn days after 19 March 1912. That idea lay fallow until the opportunity to do *Race to the end* came along.

The book is replete with wonderfully reproduced images of people, charts, archival photographs, and modern photographs of ephemera and artifacts. Many are simply stunning and have never before been published or viewed by the general public. To this reviewer, among the most stirring are Scott's snow goggles, Amundsen's binoculars with the names of his expeditions engraved into the metal casing, a crampon used by Scott's party, a Primus stove, Apsley Cherry-Garrard's helmet and goggles, Amundsen's cable to Fridtjof Nansen notifying him of his success, and perhaps most of all, treasured items from Scott's last tent including silk fragments of the tent at Polheim and one of Amundsen's black flags carried by 'Bill' Wilson, Scott's diary turned to the page of his last entry, a lampwick Scott wrote by, Wilson's and 'Birdie' Bowers's canvas wallets, Wilson's copy of *The book of common prayer* with his deeply religious notes on the leaf facing the title, Bowers's sledging flag, and 'Titus' Oates's last letter to his mother. Especially thrilling is the letter with envelope Amundsen left at Polheim for Scott to deliver home to King Haakon VII. Amundsen knew he could trust Scott to deliver the very document that would prove Scott had lost the race. *Race to the end* joins a welcome, growing body of published works that have brought to light unique documents, artifacts, and other memorabilia of Antarctic historical interest: Herman J. Viola and Carolyn Margolis's *Magnificent voyagers: the U. S. Exploring Expedition, 1838–1842* (1985), Reader's Digest's *Antarctica: great stories from the frozen continent* (1985), Roland Huntford's *The Amundsen photographs* (1987), Jan Piggott's *Shackleton: the Antarctic and 'Endurance'* (2000), J.V. Skelton and D.M. Wilson's *'Discovery' illustrated* (2001), D.M. Wilson's *'Nimrod' illustrated* (2009), four fine books on Jean-Baptiste Charcot by Benoit Heimermann and Gerard Janichon (1991), Anne-Marie Vallin-Charcot (2005), Serge Kahn (2006), and Marie-Isabelle Merle des Isles (2010), and a number of splendidly illustrated 'polar sale' auction catalogues from Christie's, London, issued over the past decade.

Race to the end book production is superior. The unusual plastic slipcase is reminiscent of an eroded tabular iceberg; the book's cover bears John Dollman's 1913 painting, 'A very gallant gentleman', depicting the heart wrenching moment when Oates exited the tent into the blizzard. The interior design is quite attractive; photographs fade out into text, and a variety of fonts and text colours separate the main text from legends and

insets. The quality of the photographic reproductions is very high. Relics are posed artistically with care to lighting; good examples are Cherry's snow goggles resting across the title leaf of the one-volume edition of his book *The worst journey in the world* and a volume of Amundsen's *The South Pole* lying on a black flag. The text is laid out chronologically, chapters more or less alternating in their attention to one expedition or the other, with concluding notes, bibliography, and index.

As fine as the illustrations in MacPhee's book are, the text is also exceptionally pleasurable to read. MacPhee states in his preface that polar history is not his profession, but he clearly has the chops for it. The newcomer to south polar history and exhibition attendee will get far more than a merely cursory look at the two expeditions, while 'old penguins' will rejoice in a thoughtful, refreshing, and thankfully well balanced, first rate account that engages from the first sentence. MacPhee's narration of the principal events is everywhere interwoven with his insights and consummate use of language, for example 'Amundsen, the iron man who had planned for everything, had not imagined that Scott would eclipse him by dying in Antarctica in a way that would make the gods weep.' And there are plenty of sumptuous tidbits. We learn that owing to the fact Amundsen had to keep his South Pole plan secret until Madeira, he could not inform Scott earlier as he would have wished to give him fairer warning of a race. We are also told of unsavory sides to the lives of some of our heroes, for instance that Amundsen was emotionally secretive, could either embrace or estrange those close to him, that he evaded creditors; and we are reminded of character flaws in some of Scott's most central and revered men.

MacPhee praises Amundsen for his experience, expertise, and detailed preparedness while acknowledging his single mindedness to arrive at the South Pole first. His approach to Scott is necessarily more complex. While he lodges many criticisms, he is just as quick to recognise Scott's strengths. MacPhee never stoops to Huntford style, anti-Scott, *ad hominem* abuse, nor does he whitewash Scott as Fiennes does. MacPhee fairly points out Scott's personality flaws such as his tendency to snap decisions and ill considered opinions, that only to Wilson could he open up without feeling diminished, that he could express self-conflicting interpretations of a situation instead of acknowledging circumstances at face value, and

more. In an especially condemning statement, MacPhee writes that the winter journey to Cape Crozier was 'a prequel to the southern journey . . . with similar elements of unpreparedness and amateurism,' and that only the lucky survival of the participants permitted the episode to become the 'epitome of British courage and endurance.' But he also finds much to praise in Scott's genuine duty to country and promotion of science, and the self-discipline with which he conducted himself in his last days.

MacPhee does well in developing the characters of the principal expedition participants. He has a good grasp of the significance of the demise of Scott's party. He understands that explorers willing to go far afield at such risk were not likely to be conventional members of society and were therefore more likely to have their unsavory, or at least unconventional, sides that should be accepted as part of the whole. And he is aware that Antarctic heroes are likely to be perceived differently from one time or generation to another.

No book can be entirely free from error, but MacPhee's comes very close. In a couple of mistakes, the kind that mortify authors and copy editors all too late, Llewellyn Longstaff is given as Longstreet, and Lyttelton is once given as Lytteltown. Wilson's pulmonary affliction was not certainly tuberculosis (Williams 2008). We read again Huntford's misinterpretation of Amundsen's *Belgica* diary that he blamed himself for Carl Wiencke's death. And finally, while Ernest Shackleton is routinely considered to have had extramarital affairs, there is no proof of the fact.

Race to the end is highly recommended for its balanced, concise, and comprehensive treatment and for its superior illustrations and production. (How the book can be sold so inexpensively is a mystery.) MacPhee provides as close a perfect retelling of the two fabled expeditions as one could possibly hope for, and his book should inspire anew even the most veteran of those knowledgeable about the Scott and Amundsen stories. (Michael H. Rosove, Department of Medicine, University of California at Los Angeles, 100 UCLA Medical Plaza, Suite 550, Los Angeles, CA 90095, USA.)

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THE LONGEST WINTER: SCOTT'S OTHER HEROES. Meredith Hooper. 2010. London: John Murray. xxv + 358 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 978-0-7195-9580-6. £20.00.
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There was a time that Meredith Hooper was perhaps best known as an award-winning author of children's books, both fiction and non-fiction. In more recent years, however, she has concentrated her efforts on aspects of Antarctic wildlife, history, and environment, and has turned progressively towards well-researched books for an adult readership with a knowledgeable background regarding the Antarctic. The best known of her recent works was her study of climate change and its impact upon the Adélie penguin population in the vicinity of the United States research base at Palmer Station, off the Antarctic Peninsula (Hooper 2007).

Hooper's latest effort has turned to the history of the 'Heroic Age' of Antarctic exploration, with a tale of the remarkable adventures and accomplishments of the Northern Party on Robert Falcon Scott's last expedition. It is appropriate, with the many events and publications around the world celebrating the centenary of Scott's *Terra Nova* Expedition (1910–1913), that one of them concentrates on this frequently overlooked or under-emphasised part of the expedition. Not only were the scientific investigations carried out by the men of the Northern Party highly significant, but the six members of the party established a record of remarkable endurance in living through what was almost certainly the most horrific winter ever spent by men in the Antarctic.

The story of the Northern Party actually began with its incarnation as the 'Eastern Party,' the group that Scott intended to have landed at King Edward VII Land on the far side of the Great Ice Barrier in order to conduct scientific investigations and geographical exploration in that little-known region. But