

Reviews

FRANZ BOAS AMONG THE INUIT OF BAFFIN ISLAND, 1883–1884: JOURNALS AND LETTERS. Ludger Müller-Wille (Editor). William Barr (Translator). 1998. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press. 298 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-8020-4150-7. \$Can50.00.

Travel diaries and personal journals were an established genre in European Arctic literature for more than 400 years. In fact, this has been a universally human venue of understanding the distant lands and unknown people since time immemorial. Despite the internet, modern TV with world-travel programs, and mass tourism, this genre still remains intriguing reading today, although its audience is now much smaller and is professionally much more compartmentalised. A travelling diary of 100 years ago is presently a scientific ‘resource’ rather than a true saga of adventure or a guidebook to the new lands for the lay, non-initiated public. It is also a research playground for the now burgeoning field of ‘intellectual history of science’ and of anthropology, in particular, due to its specific fixation on self-reflection, personal field experiences, and research methodologies. Beyond the usual academic terms, we are always anxious to read about someone else’s Arctic endurance, as well as one’s story of achievements and losses in the field.

Franz Boas among the Inuit offers an exciting and rewarding reading for both scholars of ethnohistory of the Canadian Arctic Inuit and students of ‘intellectual history’ of anthropology. The book can be named a ‘classic’ in modern publication of travelling journals, preserved as 120-year-old personal notes, diaries, and letters. The task was indeed tremendous, as Boas had left huge amounts of the various versions of his journals, letters, and other written notes from his trip to Baffin Island, totalling some 200,000 words. These were all carefully checked and processed for the present volume by its compiler and editor, Ludger Müller-Wille. The list of different sources used for the present edition (pages 18–23) also includes several historical photographs, maps, and prints, as well as the diary of Boas’ servant, Wilhelm Weike.

However, this meticulous work of months (if not years) of sifting through the various unpublished records left by Boas in his native German is nowhere to be displayed explicitly. The text is skilfully organised as a single chronological journal, with Boas’ various journals and letters ‘glued’ into one common narrative as they were once written in the field. This is indeed a ‘skilful arrangement and sensitive editing’ as Valerie Pinsky, the great-granddaughter of Boas and an anthropologist herself, puts it in her delightful short foreword to the volume. Such an editorial strategy makes the reading both easy and exciting. One should also consider the extended introduction

by Müller-Wille (with a review of Boas’ preparation, trip, and research methods in the field), glossary of the English and Inuktitut words, references, index, and appendices in order to give the compiler the full credit he deserves.

Another tremendous advantage of *Franz Boas among the Inuit* is that our virtual journey to the follow-up of Boas’ fieldwork of 1883–1884 is accomplished under a very experienced guide. Müller-Wille’s own detailed study of Inuit place-names in the Canadian Arctic (including the area once surveyed by Boas) provides a special touch to the sequence of daily entries on Boas’ trip. Every single Inuit place-name and personal name listed in the diaries — and there are hundreds of them — is painstakingly re-spelled, according to the writing norms of modern Inuktitut, as are several Eskimo words that peppered Boas’ journals. Every prominent feature of local landscape referred to by Boas is also commented upon and explained. Among the few historical photographs that illustrate the volume, two pictures are worth mentioning — one made by Boas in 1883 and another taken by Müller-Wille from the same viewpoint in 1984. This creates a very solid sense of reality; it also becomes an earmark of the compiler’s professionalism and his dedication to this laborious endeavour.

However, beyond being a truly classical piece of the genre, this modern publication of Boas’ Arctic journals has a special meaning and a peculiar biography of its own. It is explained on the first pages of the introduction (pages 5–6). The 1998 Canadian edition is a translation (skilfully done by William Barr) of an earlier German version published in Berlin in 1994. The German edition of Boas’ diaries was produced deliberately to predate the English one, although — as Müller-Wille acknowledges — this meant that the range of its influence would be more limited. By publishing the journals first in their original German, Boas’ mother tongue, the editor confronted the tradition of downplaying (if not completely ignoring) Boas’ spiritual legacy in German anthropology and Arctic scholarship. This is indeed a strong modern response to the injustice done to Boas because of his Jewish origin and his lifelong liberal stand, a recognition once denied, due to ‘the blind, racist mind-set in German professional and especially ethnological circles during the Third Reich’ and even after 1945 (pages 5–6). Now the much larger English-reading audience, which is hardly familiar with the German portion of the struggle for Boas’ legacy, may recognise his specific German contribution to Arctic scholarship and the study of the Inuit people.

I have only one critical remark about this otherwise impeccable academic and editorial undertaking. Boas’ journals and letters are extremely personal, and nine-tenths of their volume is, in fact, dedicated to Boas’

personal feelings, daily routine, stress and hardship of dog-sledge travelling, and to the endurance of a yearlong Arctic fieldwork. The mystery of his amazing professional productivity and of his contribution to Inuit anthropology is not part of the daily journal entries or the letters to his parents and his beloved fiancée, Marie Krackowizer. Rather, it is the magic of eventual transformation of the daily field routine into refined intellectual scholarship that entices one to the accounts of the minute details of Boas' professional endeavours — be it letters from the field, unpublished personal notes, or diaries.

In this regard, *Franz Boas among the Inuit* is clearly just part of a much bigger 'package' that preserves the full legacy of Boas' trip to the Canadian Arctic in 1883–84. It includes the three major scientific products of this trip — the German-language *Baffin-Land: Geographische Ergebnisse* (1885), *The central Eskimo* (1888), and *The Eskimo of the Baffin Land and Hudson Bay* (1901–1907). In fact, the fourth component of the same 'package' is a recently published monograph by Marc Stevenson, *Inuit, whalers, and cultural persistence* (1997), which tells the full story of the Cumberland Sound Inuit and re-evaluates Boas' Baffin Island data from a modern perspective. While the latter monograph was unavailable when the volume of Boas' diaries went to press, a more extensive use of the three former ones probably could have been made. While here and there the journal entries are peppered with brief notes like '[cf. Boas 1885: 70, 1886: 426],' I wish the text had more than these very laconic references. This probably would help to bring us closer to the charm of Boas' transformation from an educated novice on his initiation trip to the experienced field professional, later to become the father of American cultural anthropology.

This comment notwithstanding, *Franz Boas among the Inuit* is an insightful and stimulating reading. Through the lenses of Boas' daily writing, one can see the Inuit people and their land, the ways and means that helped them to endure their environment and to face the outside world. And one can certainly learn a great deal about Franz Boas as a person — a romantic and an intellectual (who read Immanuel Kant in an Eskimo tent); a hard worker and innovator; a character of discipline; and a loving family man. For these and many more reasons, this virtual journey along Boas' Baffin Island diaries is worth undertaking. (Igor Krupnik, Arctic Studies Center, Department of Anthropology, NMNH, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560, USA.)

References

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SIR JOSEPH DALTON HOOKER: TRAVELLER AND PLANT COLLECTOR. Ray Desmond. 1999. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Antique Collectors' Club, with the Royal Botanic Gardens. 286 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 1-85149-305-0. \$29.50.

Up until now, Joseph Dalton Hooker, the Victorian explorer, botanist, and director of Kew Gardens, has been a curiously neglected figure. While biographies of his close scientific friends T.H. Huxley and Charles Darwin stream from the presses, and biologists endlessly debate the finer points of the Darwinian revolution, Hooker seems to have been left behind in a weed-filled backwater. His role as a daring explorer in the early days of empire is mostly forgotten. His contributions to science and to the administrative structure of science, as in the Royal Society, the British Association, the India Office, and various government departments, are generally overlooked except perhaps by those systematic botanists who come across his name regularly in plant-classification schemes. Who remembers that Darwin once gratefully said that Hooker's letters were like a 'jam-pot' to him? And although Hooker's exceptional career at the forefront of Kew Gardens has long been noted, it is rarely explored in depth. During the middle years of the nineteenth century, with Hooker at the helm, Kew rose to the height of its influence by becoming an indispensable hub of the far-flung colonial botanic-garden system, encouraging the transportation and relocation of cash crops, testing new forestry concerns, and masterminding tea plantations, rubber stocks, sugar cane, and other economic plants, as well as advancing knowledge of local floras and sending specimens back to London. Born in 1817 and dying in 1911, he had a hand in nearly every scientific achievement of the Victorian era.

At last, here is a carefully researched and lively account of Hooker's activities, lavishly illustrated with his own sketches and wonderful coloured prints by Walter Fitch, the talented botanical artist who worked at Kew for Hooker and his father. As the title suggests, the book takes a particular interest in Hooker's geographical explorations and plant-collecting activities, and reproduces many unknown drawings from the archives. Ray Desmond's easy writing style and great knowledge of Kew Gardens turns it into a first-rate story.

Joseph Hooker was brought up in a thoroughly botanical environment and seemed never to wish for anything else. He was the younger son of William Jackson Hooker, professor of botany at Glasgow University, who was subsequently the first director of Kew. Educated at Glasgow, the younger Hooker graduated MD in 1839. Soon afterwards he leaped at the chance of a place as assistant surgeon and botanist on James Clark Ross' exploring expedition to Antarctica, on HMS *Erebus* and *Terror*, 1839–1843.

Although plants were clearly the first love in Hooker's life, ice came a close second. When travelling with Ross, he longed to see a penguin and follow the unsteady shelf of packice far into the Weddell Sea. The voyage was often