negotiate US Antarctic policy. In that sense, the list of interview questions reproduced at the end of this account gives little sense of how particular individuals, such as Tucker Scully, conceptualised or contested the authors' interpretations of 'national interest' or 'global concerns.' At times, therefore, the account and footnote material appear a little too seamless. In most accounts of the international politics of Antarctica, there is a tendency to draw upon certain key figures and their expertise without much consideration being given as to how different accounts or explanations may be ignored on account of particular sources and contacts. At the very least, it would have been interesting to contemplate whether 'outside' observers consider America to be the leading diplomatic and scientific player in Antarctica.

My deepest reservation about *Eagle over the ice* concerns some of the banal claims made about the importance of the US in Antarctica. The declaration on page 1 that the US is the 'chief architect of law and policy for the Antarctic' may be reasonable given its key role in staging events such as the 1959 Antarctic Conference in Washington, DC, and its domination (along with other northern hemispheric nations such as the United Kingdom and the former Soviet Union) of Antarctic Treaty Consultative Party Meetings, but this is also the country that tried to bully (in a diplomatic sense) southern hemispheric countries in the 1950s to accept a degree of nuclear testing in the Antarctic. Article V of the Antarctic Treaty later banned all forms of nuclear testing in the Antarctic region, leaving a number of southern hemispheric nations acutely concerned at the American deployment of a small nuclear reactor at McMurdo in the 1960s and 1970s. Moreover, the United States remains the largest industrial polluter in the world, in spite of its concerns through the years for protecting the environment of Antarctica. These general points may seem unfair given that this account is centred on the achievements and execution of US Antarctic policy. However, it is not unreasonable to think that a more critical evaluation of America in Antarctica would have been possible if a wider range of sources on environmental politics, north–south relations, and global politics were used. To this end, it is strange that, for a book published in 1997, most of the academic and interview-based material seems to date from before or during 1992.

The final observation to be offered on *Eagle over the ice* is that this book is perhaps a missed opportunity in the sense that it is ultimately a very conventional narrative of American polar policy since the 1960s. A concept such as 'national interest' deserves more critical scrutiny in a period when many scholars are discussing globalisation, trans-national capitalism, and the rise of supra-national relationships. Notions of the 'national' have become increasingly blurred as state authority has been constrained or, in some cases, even compromised by trans-national forces such as the global financial system. The international politics of Antarctica have not been isolated from these globalising trends, as states have had not only to forge new relationships with other organisations such as NGOs, but also to handle new trans-boundary information networks. What exactly is 'American' in the context of American national interests in Antarctica, and has it changed through the years? Are there other voices and/or institutions that purport to represent American national interests in a different fashion? Furthermore, there are a large number of books that deal with the international politics of Antarctica in isolation from mainstream world politics. It could be argued that one of the key challenges for humanities and social science scholars interested in the Antarctic is to demonstrate how this particular geographical region can be used to contest and/or challenge dominant realist or institutionalist-based approaches to foreign policy and national interests. (Klaus J. Dodds, Department of Geography, Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, Surrey TW20 0EX.)

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THE DUKE OF THE ABRUZZI: AN EXPLORER'S LIFE. Mirella Tenderini and Michael Shandrick. 1997. Seattle: The Mountaineers; London: Bâton Wicks Publications. 188 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 1-898573-18-2. £17.99.

Luigi Amedeo di Savoia-Aosta, the Duke of the Abruzzi, was one of the great climbers — or, perhaps more accurately, one of the great organisers of mountaineering expeditions — of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1897, he led a party that was the first to make an ascent of Mount St Elias, long thought to be the highest peak in North America. In 1906, he organised and led an expedition that explored the mysterious Mountains of the Moon, the Ruwenzori Range of central Africa. And three years later, despite not reaching the summit of the then-unconquered K2, he established a new altitude record of 24,600 ft, his party climbing higher than any other people ever had.

The Duke also had one memorable entry into the world of polar exploration. In 1899–1900 he sponsored and led an attempt on the North Pole, using Franz Josef Land as his base. 1899 was an exceptionally ice-free year, and his ship *Stella Polare* was able, with only slight hindrance, to sail to Teplitz Bay at Rudolf Island. During that winter, Abruzzi had to have the ends of his fingers amputated from his severely frostbitten left hand, and he therefore turned the leadership of the polar party over to Umberto Cagni, his second-in-command and long-time partner in adventure. In March 1900, Cagni set out with a party of 10 men and 102 dogs to try to reach the Pole. The final of his three detachments pushed on until 24 April, when the members reached 86° 34', a new farthest north, breaking the mark

established by Fridtjof Nansen. Sadly, one of the detachments of three men never returned, giving a tragic end to an otherwise successful expedition.

The Duke was also something of a naval hero in Italy, where he was one of the members of the royal family most popular with the Italian public. And he had other royal connections as well: in an extraordinary move not atypical of the machinations of the royal heads of Europe in the late nineteenth century, his father was actually the King of Spain for three years, including when the Duke was born, before abdicating.

All of this, combined with the fact that no previous biography of the Duke of the Abruzzi had appeared in English, seemed to promise that this book could be not only a riveting read, but a major scholarly contribution. Unfortunately, however, this was not to be the case. Although the book is entertaining, it is clearly a popular work rather than a scholarly one. It is unsophisticated historically, showing little understanding of modern historiography; of the social, military, or imperial history of Italy or the rest of Europe; or of the mentality of the popular press or the public, both of which are referred to often.

Nor, indeed, does this book fulfil the basic expectations of academic research. The bibliography gives the game away in this regard: there are no personal papers, letters, or diaries mentioned. Although it is pointed out in the preface that apparently the Duke's diaries were destroyed in the final days of World War II, no one with scholarly pretensions would produce a biography based, according to the citations in the book, totally on secondary sources. Neither author is, in fact, an academic; both are mountaineers and journalists. And, not surprisingly, the most in-depth and well-covered parts of the book are about the Duke's various climbing expeditions and the other major figures in climbing history with whom he was associated, such as Vittorio Sella and Albert Frederick Mummery. But the authors' lack of academic background does not excuse the lack of scholarly aspects of the book: such outstanding biographers as Roland Huntford and Frank McLynn have shown that one does not have to be an academic to be scholarly.

Thus, one of the problems that surfaces is that, despite (or because of) their obvious admiration for the Duke, the authors regularly overstate their case in an attempt to strengthen their points; yet regular, and obvious, exaggeration only makes the reader question if the authors' interpretation is accurate and sincere. Furthermore, certainly in a book with the subtitle 'An explorer's life,' there should be shown a serious understanding of exploration in the nineteenth century. But frequently the references to or asides about aspects of exploration are not quite correct: Nansen's farthest north of 86° 14' was not less than three degrees farther north than William Edward Parry had reached in 1827 (82° 45') (page 50), although it *was* less than three degrees farther north than the record Nansen broke (83° 24'), set by Lieutenant James Lockwood and two others in May 1882. Furthermore, Nansen had not been carried to Greenland on *Jason* in 1893–96 (page 51); he was on his drift on *Fram* during that period. The publisher of *The New York Herald Tribune* did not send H.M. Stanley to find Livingstone (page 73); James Gordon Bennett, the owner of *The New York Herald* did, more than 50 years before *The Herald* merged with the *New York Tribune* in 1924. And the authors' understanding of the reasons for Nansen's success in Greenland (page 49) or of Stanley's Emin Pasha Relief Expedition (page 73) likewise show a limited understanding of the dynamics of those men and their expeditions.

All of this said, with little information about the Duke of the Abruzzi previously available in English, this book does give an introduction to a man who was a significant figure in mountaineering and exploration near the turn of the last century. Such an introduction is itself a valuable service. (Beau Riffenburgh, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

FORTY YEARS ON ICE: A LIFETIME OF EXPLORATION AND RESEARCH IN THE POLAR REGIONS. Charles Swithinbank. 1998. Lewes, Sussex: The Book Guild. x + 228 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 1-85776-261-4. £25.00.

The geography of high latitudes is perhaps not too hazy for readers of *Polar Record*, but for ordinary mortals, where the places are and what form they take are often rather vague. However, many polar place-names are memorials to brave explorers and spell great adventure, especially to the schoolboys brought up on Scott, Nelson, and Christmas pudding. Charles Swithinbank was such a lucky individual, so he revelled in work on the ice cover, in the north over the Arctic Ocean, and in the south over the Antarctic continent.

After learning to navigate with the Royal Navy, Swithinbank survived Oxford geography and immediately served two years polar apprenticeship in the east Antarctic with the Norwegian–British–Swedish Expedition supporting Valter Schytt and Gordon Robin, penetrating ice with a core drill and with deep seismic waves of dynamite charges. He tells little of these crowded years, and says even less, which is disappointing, albeit courteously tactful, on the foibles of men of five different nations working in a polar environment. He mentions, but is otherwise silent about, his year, a decade later, at a Russian base farther east. It was sensible to learn the language of one of the most powerful nations, and to see their working methods, as permitted in outline under the Antarctic Treaty, but it was also exceedingly difficult to achieve. Swithinbank simply tells us it was a bit of cheek! It was absolutely remarkable, requiring a friend to put him on someone's payroll, although he was to be away for 15 months with the Russians. That tells how able, how self-confident, is Charles Swithinbank. It shines through this book: a sine qua non of explorers.