

Unravelling the Franklin mystery. Inuit testimony.

David C. Woodman. 2015. Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press. 420 p, illustrated, softcover. ISBN 978-0773545410. CAN\$ 32.95.

doi: [10.1017/S0032247415001023](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247415001023)

In his biography of Leopold McClintock, David Murray writes: 'the Franklin myth endures and will continue to draw people to the Arctic in search of a final answer. Indeed the phenomenon of the Franklin search has taken on a life of its own. First begun in the 1840s, it continues to this day' (Murray, 2004: 152). The interest in Franklin has led to this edition.

The central thrust is a challenge to what the author labels the 'standard' reconstruction of events after the ships were beset in the ice. Woodman's reconstruction is a 'scenario which allowed use of all the native recollections' and his analysis with physical evidence and discrepancies leads to 'significant conclusions as to the fate of the beleaguered sailors'. He suggests historians (which?) have generally dismissed Inuit testimony. His analysis indicates 'all Inuit stories concerning white men should have a discoverable factual basis' (page 6). He admits difficulties with the testimony as to places with similar names or names given by 'white men'. The form of analysis based on a rereading oral evidence collected from Rae to Rasmussen, especially that of Hall, is that of an inquiry, with evidence presented, cross-examined, and concluded in *The verdict*.

The book briefly traces earlier contacts between the Inuit and the Europeans – Parry, Ross, Back, and Anderson and Dease. This is followed by a sketch of major nineteenth-century searches (in the vicinity of King William Island little of which was known to Franklin). Finally, as groundwork, Woodman introduces the concept of native testimony including issue of their view of the past, purpose of stories, motive and reliability of witnesses, and difficulties of searchers with language and communication. Then the author does a detailed examination, in short chapters, of evidence including physical evidence accumulated by non-Inuit. He looks at early stories of meetings, wrecks, even massacres and tries to match these with encounters or incidents before the last Franklin expedition-issues such as Ross's ships, time spent, and identification of 'Aglooka', 'Toolooa', 'Doktook', and 'Eshemuta'.

Discussions are tied into examination of native testimony. Questions examined include whether the number of bodies recalled by witnesses matched those the searchers found and where the reported boats may have been located. Discrepancies on the state of the boats or bodies around create difficulties in piecing together the retreat. One issue is matching place names Europeans/Canadians use to those of the Inuit. Was 'Shartoo' (the flat one) the same as Cape Barclay of Rae? There are several places called this. Similarly, where was 'Omanek' (the heart-shaped one)? In the 1920s, understanding the language better, the Danish-Greenlander Rasmussen visited a location distinct from Starvation Cove, cited by Schwatka as the last place of the retreating crew. Names in Inuktitut were transcribed by interviewers according to European phonetics.

Woodman methodically works through important Inuktitut evidence. A significant event was the meeting of hunters and Europeans at 'Teekeenu'. Hall's informants indicated two came

forward, both clearly starving, and were given some seal meat. However the number varied. Woodman speculates on who they were, given names Hall recorded. He ascribes the location to Washington Bay and tries to reconcile various versions of the meeting including how long the Europeans stayed. The next year Inuit found remains nearby. Similarly 'Nuvertaro' where bodies were found was identified with Richardson Point, to the west of Starvation Cove. To his credit Woodman includes a glossary of Inuktitut place names and meanings.

Consistently Woodman tries to make sense of some inconsistencies such as in the state of health or physical description of the Europeans. A feature is a discussion on factors leading to death, in which he downplays the theory of mercury poisoning, at one point he cites evidence to suggest scurvy. Another consideration was the number of bodies in various locations – 30 Rae was told, were those at Starvation Cove? There was a question of boats' locations and bodies there, graves and cairns reported. In some cases the evidence was hearsay. Throughout Woodman refers to relics found or obtained by the Inuit including watches and cutlery.

There is an intriguing analysis of a drawing made by an Inuk for the master of the whaler *The Chieftain*. Consisting of four ships, a line between, one on its side, it led to speculation whether it referred to the earlier Ross expedition or Franklin. Intertwined was the report of a ship sinking, a story similar to the Franklin expedition. Another fascinating description was of a boat holding air: speculation was that it could be an inflatable Halkett boat which the expedition and others had. Additionally, the author discusses the remains ascribed to Harry Peglar, but using the description of the dress on the remains and crew records, Woodman suggests it was Thomas Armitage, carrying papers of his friend. The author disputes the 'standard' version by suggesting the expedition first went into Poctes Bay, the northern entrance to what later is realised Rae Strait, and wintered there as a safe haven. Similarly he questions when a single retreat began. In his analysis of the retreat, Woodman notes that after the abandonment of 1848, the ships were remanned and natives probably visited the ships the next year. He also suggests the ships sailed south, not an unmanned ship drifting. His version of the meeting at Washington Bay occurred later.

Throughout the analysis there are many speculation points. In discussing testimony of one regarding boats at Erebus Bay, he suggests 'the same boat' was probably found later at Douglas Bay and incorporated into another tradition (page 192). With regard to the abandonment, 'perhaps' they took one or more of the ships' boats and 'they may have abandoned one on a nearby island' (page 261). On stories of wrecked ships, he concluded the ships were 'likely' located north of Cape Crozier when they visited (page 224). In light of the recent dispute about John Rae as the discoverer of the last link in the Northwest Passage, it is interesting to read Lt. Graham Gore 'probably completed the survey of the Northwest Passage during the summer of 1847' (photographs).

In the end, the author suggests that someone might stumble upon buried records or even the ship with valuable evidence and when discovered 'it will instantly render all speculative books, this one included, obsolete' (page 324). His attempt, like its predecessors, cannot claim to have reached any incontrovertible conclusion. One of the author's strengths is that as a mariner

he has an understanding of the sea and its behaviour. Though the text is accompanied by a number of maps of specific locations of the search areas, it would have been useful to have a map or facsimile of the knowledge of the islands, including King William Island at the time of Franklin's departure, as presumably this would have guided him.

Except for the new preface, the text, footnotes, appendices and bibliography are the same as the 1991 original. This preface indicates searches since then, including the author's, and underlines the discovery of *The Erebus* in 2014 as a tribute to the testimony of the Inuit. His emphasis in the book, on the importance of that testimony, leads to the view 'the history

of the exploration of Canada's Arctic is not solely a narrative of European voyages, but of the Inuit people who interacted with them' (page xxiii). (Robert MacDonald, Arctic Institute of North America, University of Calgary, 2500 University Drive NW, Calgary AB T2N 1N4 (rjmacdon@ucalgary.ca)).

Reference

Murray, D. 2004. *The Arctic fox: Francis Leopold McClintock, Discoverer of the fate of Franklin*, Toronto: The Dundurn Group.

ANTARCTICA IN INTERNATIONAL LAW. Ben Saul and Tim Stephens (editors). 2015. Oxford: Hart Publishing. lxxii + 1062 p, softcover. ISBN 978-1-84946-731-5. £50.00.

doi:[10.1017/S0032247415001035](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247415001035)

A heavy book reached me a few weeks ago. A book which is a massive volume, both with regard to its page numbers and its content. And it holds the simple title *Antarctica in international law*, no subtitle or anything else that would add more colour to it. But there is no need as the title is self-explanatory. Because this is a compendium of primary legal materials concerning Antarctica that trace the evolution of Antarctic as a legal space from its inception through the Antarctic Treaty in 1959, via the emergence of the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS), the Antarctic Consultative Meetings (ATCM) from 1963 up to 2013, the establishment of the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat in 2003 as well different measures adopted under the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). But bear in mind that this book has more than 1,000 pages! The materials don't stop there. Instead, reports and resolutions under the United Nations concerning Antarctica, the 'Question of Antarctica', are presented, followed by international and domestic judicial proceedings, materials submitted under the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) with regard to Antarctic territorial claims and lastly bilateral agreements regarding Antarctic cooperation.

The trained expert in Antarctic law may quickly notice that, albeit its impressive appearance, the book does not contain *all* Antarctic legal materials, but the diversity of these, the long duration of Antarctic legal developments and the associated sheer number of materials would create indeed an encyclopaedia of several thousand pages. But as the editors of this volume clarify in the *Introduction*, it was not their intention (nor was it possible) to compile every single legal text, but instead to 'provide governments, researchers, and students with an accessible and up-to-date compendium of the treaties, decisions, resolutions, recommendations, conservation measures, guidelines and other documents that are of central relevance to contemporary Antarctic governance' (page lxix). This, however, occurs with the focus on multilateral, international law, and purposefully excludes national legal and

policy texts regarding sovereignty claims in Antarctica as well as international law *also* applicable in the Antarctic, such as international law pertaining to the law of the sea, biodiversity or human rights, to name a few.

In order to better be able to contextualise the provided materials, the editors have included an extensive table of key events for the evolution of the Antarctic legal and political space since Lozier's sighting of the sub-Antarctic Bouvet Island in 1739 up until the year 2013. Moreover, the brief *Introduction* explains the key issues surrounding Antarctica, its geography and ecology, territorial claims and the ATS with its different facets.

Apart from these, the reader will find only uncommented primary legal materials the compilation of which is further explained in the *Introduction*. And it is for this reviewer rather difficult to write a critical review of this book without having to delve into examining the legal texts themselves. The outcome would be a multi-year-encompassing legal analysis of the Antarctic legal space, probably yielding several volumes the size of the present. It can only be hoped that the readers of *Polar Record* do not expect this to happen.

In this reviewer's opinion, however, a volume like the present is long overdue as it enables easy access to Antarctic law. The claim of 'easy access' rests on the inclusion of a detailed *Index* at the end of the book and at the same time a well-structured table of contents, significantly simplifying the tracing and ultimately finding of specific elements and contexts of Antarctic governance. And here lies probably the most important asset of this volume: making Antarctic law accessible without having to search through the extensive databases of the United Nations or the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat, of which especially the latter can indeed be quite tiresome when looking for specific materials.

Since the book does not contain any analyses of the legal materials, the reader should turn elsewhere for critical discussions regarding the ATS' evolution, application, compliance etc. *Antarctica in international law* is thus not a book to *learn about* the Antarctic legal space, but to *work with* it. This leaves this reviewer with only one conclusion: when working with Antarctic law, Saul's and Stephen's compendium should be close by. Simply because it makes life so much easier! (Nikolas Sellheim, Faculty of Law, University of Lapland, PO Box 122, 96101 Rovaniemi, Finland (nikolas.sellheim@ulapland.fi)).