

the 'who-is-who' of political, legal and IR Arctic research: Klaus Dodds, E. Carina H. Keskitalo, Timo Koivurova, P. Whitney Lackenbauer, Mark Nuttall, Donald R. Rothwell or David L. VanderZwaag – just to name a few. All in all, 42 authors have in 29 chapters contributed to this volume, making it, just by its sheer size, a unique and important collection of Arctic research. And moreover, it constitutes an updated and timely version of Geir Hønneland's endeavour to capture *The politics of the Arctic* between 1985 and 2012 with already published international articles in the book with the same title (Hønneland 2013).

It appears to this author that, on a very general level, a handbook provides a guide of some kind to a topic, a machine or any other context. In this sense it is surprising that the book does not contain an introduction. The editors merely open up the concentrated expertise with a 1 ½ page *Preface* in which they explain the book's scope as tracing 'the changes from 'the age of the Arctic' to 'the scramble for the Arctic', and beyond' (page xiii). Any other explanation that make this handbook more of a practical guide to Arctic politics is, unfortunately, absent. Be this as it may, this editorial shortcoming is quickly made up for by the thought-provoking, short and yet poignant articles that follow. Four major parts thus constitute the sub-headings under which the articles are arranged: geopolitics and strategic resources; law of the sea; Arctic institutions and specific fields of cooperation; and national approaches to the Arctic.

And to this reviewer it seems as if the multifaceted character of this volume rises particularly to the surface when leaving aside the 'political' aspects of the chapters' contents. Of course, given the title of this book, this would seem as a *non sequitur*, but while of course the political (as well as legal and IR) dimensions of the book constitute the core foundation, it is the variety of discourses on, about and with the Arctic which play a significant role here. Best exemplified is this in Bankes' and Withsitt's chapter on *Arctic marine mammals in international environmental law and trade law* which approaches the marine mammal hunt through a legal lens by analysing multilateral environmental instruments (MEIs) affecting the hunt in the north. While admitting that their analysis would have to include more than the five MEIs presented, this chapter shows the discursive as well as normative differences in dealing with human-marine mammal interaction in the Arctic. Indeed, politics are reflected in the dealings with the issue. But it is the political decisions which, in turn, are shaped by conservationist or preservationist value systems that impact the way and the degree to which Arctic populations are able to, and do, hunt marine mammals.

Similarly, Lee-Ann Broadhead addresses *Canadian sovereignty versus northern security: the case for updating our mental map of the Arctic*. In other words, Broadhead challenges the snug discourse on state sovereignty in Canada and proposes a new paradigm with the discursive approach towards Arctic sovereignty, along historical Inuit and thus transboundary

settlement of the north, as a tool to mitigate the challenges posed by anthropogenic climate change. In times of increasing nationalism and ever more rising idea(s) of one nation and one culture, Broadhead's counter-discursive chapter appears refreshing, especially when taking into account the medial discourse on the Arctic and natural resources. Of course, one might argue that within scientific circles her approach is neither necessarily new nor overly progressive, once more underlining the need for a broader distribution of the contents of a book like the present. However, with a price of almost 190£, which amounts to almost 270€ or 290 US\$, this appears very doubtful.

Be that as it may, this is, of course, a general problem of scientific volumes such as the present and will not be further discussed at this point. For the critical Arctic scholar the *Handbook of the politics of the Arctic* is indeed almost a goldmine as he or she will find new approaches to topics that have been part of the overall discourses on the Arctic for a long time. This time, they are revisited, reframed and put in a new light. Although the book does not contain *only* new information and even some very basic information on Arctic governance in general, which the trained Arctic scholar might easily skip, the broad variety of the themes that are covered, the challenging topics and somewhat provocative chapters – *How we learned to stop worrying about China's Arctic ambitions: understanding China's admission to the Arctic Council, 2004–2013* by Matthew Willis and Duncan Depledge for instance – make this book truly enjoyable in an academic, intellectual as well as discursive way.

Of course, with 29 chapters on more than 600 pages this book is exceptionally long and does not serve as evening literature nor is it suitable to be read through in one piece. Instead, the 'goldmine'-metaphor can be applied again: from now on, this book will serve as a valuable point of reference whenever this reviewer needs a new and rare perspective on a particular Arctic issue. In this sense, the absence of an introduction and a conclusion appear reasonable. With this in mind, however, the title could be considered slightly misleading and it would have appeared more justifiable to entitle the book *The politics of the Arctic, Volume 2* or something similar. But these are semantics. In terms of content, the wide variety of topics and angles covered make the *Handbook* a necessary and valuable contribution to any well-arranged Arctic library. (Nikolas Sellheim, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER, UK ([nps31@cam.ac.uk](mailto:nps31@cam.ac.uk))).

### Reference

Hønneland, G (editor). 2013. *The politics of the Arctic*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

**The greatest show in the Arctic. The American exploration of Franz Josef Land, 1898–1905.** P.J. Capelotti, 2016. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. 634 p, illustrated, hardcover. ISBN 978-0-8661-5222-6. \$35.00. doi: [10.1017/S003224741600053X](https://doi.org/10.1017/S003224741600053X)

P.J. Capelotti's latest book seems a natural outgrowth and culmination of interests that have occupied him for a number of

years, as reflected in his previous books and papers on related subjects listed in the 'works cited' section. Therefore, Capelotti (Professor of Anthropology at Pennsylvania State University, Abington campus) is eminently qualified to write this thorough study of the three American expeditions that attempted to reach the North Pole from the remote islands above Arctic Russia. He does not disappoint.

Although its promotional material makes a tenuous analogy between the events of these three expeditions and a three-ring

circus, the book itself does not. Other than a bevy of trained animals and the farcical actions of some of the participants, the similarities are actually few. Perhaps a more appropriate title would have been 'Amateurs in the Arctic'.

The work begins with a neatly done resume of Arctic exploration, with emphasis on American expeditions, the discovery of Franz Josef Land, and brief accounts of the attempts to explore it and subsequently use it as a base to reach the North Pole, a goal which grew into an international race for national prestige, fame and wealth between the years 1891–1909. It then settles in to relate in detail the three expeditions led successively by Walter Wellman, Evelyn Briggs Baldwin and Anthony Fiala, which aimed to gain that prestige for the United States and the rest for themselves.

Before launching into the first of these, The Wellman Polar Expedition of 1898–99, Capelotti gives us a detailed portrait of its affable leader. A newspaper correspondent by trade, he was commissioned by the organizers of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1892–93 to build a monument at the exact landing spot of Columbus four centuries before. Wellman carried out that task with enthusiasm, and after a thorough study of Columbus's logs and investigation on the ground in the Bahamas, settled on Watlings Island. Capelotti also examines Wellman's connections with the wealthy robber barons of America's 'gilded age' and political figures whom he covered regularly on his beat for the *Chicago Times-Herald* in Washington, D.C., that led to this commission and subsequently to the funding of his first two attempts to reach the North Pole.

The first of these came in 1894 from Spitsbergen and came to naught, except it practically bankrupted Wellman, who had sunk much of his personal funds into it. Despite this, Wellman thoroughly enjoyed the notoriety he gained by his failed attempt, and that determined him to try again when he could organise an expedition with enough resources to have a possible chance of success. It also convinced him not to make his next try from Spitsbergen. Instead he shifted his focus to Franz Josef Land. Between his first modest attempt and his next, the pace of the race for the pole had picked up considerably in the public's interest with the sensational 1896 chance meeting by Fridtjof Nansen, who had been given up for dead, with Frederick Jackson, after Nansen's overwintering there. But Nansen had only reached a new 'Farthest North', not the pole itself, so the way to fame remained open. After years of effort, Wellman found funding for the first of the expeditions that are the main focus of this book.

Capelotti records the events of Wellman's expedition using original sources, such as Wellman's personal correspondence with his brother, his subsequent account published in 1911 as part of his book, *The aerial age*, and writings by some of the expeditions' participants, including those of the strong Norwegian contingent recruited by Wellman. Second in command was an enigmatic character named Evelyn Briggs Baldwin, a government meteorologist who had served that function on Robert Peary's Second Greenland Expedition of 1894–95. The resultant feud that developed between its leader and Baldwin, as well as other members of that expedition, whom Peary insinuated were unsuited to their roles or worse, and had to be sent home prematurely, rankled Baldwin and made him determined to return to the Arctic to prove his merits. However, of all the dismissed Peary party, Baldwin probably best fit the description.

Unfortunately, Wellman chose Baldwin precisely for his previous polar experience and realised too late that Peary's evaluation of Baldwin, at least, was valid. Wellman delegated

the establishment of a forward base above the 81<sup>st</sup> parallel to Baldwin and the large Norwegian contingent he had employed, while he sat and played whist at his headquarters at Cape Tegetthoff with the other Americans. In this task Baldwin's party took all summer to move supplies a mere 40 miles north by sled and two inadequate boats. But Baldwin did little of the work himself and assumed a superior attitude towards the Norwegians who did, who, in turn, thoroughly despised him as a result. Baldwin's decision to leave two of the men at the forward outpost for the winter and return to the relative comfort of Wellman's hut resulted in the death of one of them for lack of medical aid. His compatriot, fearing the corpse would otherwise be eaten by bears, had no choice but to sleep with it in their two man bag until relief arrived in the spring. When Wellman learned of Baldwin's imperious bungling over the summer, he summarily cut him from the polar party. Wellman's 'American' expedition would attempt the pole with Norwegians as his only companions.

After reaching Baldwin's forward base in March 1899, Wellman set off. But only four days later he fractured a leg in a fall and next day had a foot mangled in a crack in the pack as it disintegrated around his camp. He had traveled less than 100 miles north of his winter quarters and never saw the polar sea. The rest of the expedition's time that year was spent tagging unknown capes and bays with the names of Wellman's benefactors and those of possible new ones to fund a future attempt. Its chief result was Baldwin's discovery of Graham Bell Land, the most easterly island in the archipelago.

Wellman had great communication skills and connections, but in the details Capelotti presents of Baldwin's life up to this point, there is little to encourage the belief that he had the organisational or field experience, let alone the leadership characteristics necessary to plan, execute and lead a successful trip to the pole. Nor does he answer the question of how such a man managed to convince William Ziegler to put unlimited funds at his disposal for such an attempt in 1901. Ziegler, a chemist who had made millions from his monopoly on baking powder and an ingredient of creme of tartar, was obviously a savvy businessman, but evidently a poor judge of character. Perhaps he was taken in by Baldwin's *Short biographical sketch*, which magnified his experience and mystically linked himself to Andrée's then unknown fate, or his fund raising tract, *The search for the North Pole*, that emphasised the immortality that would attach to the man who enabled the North Pole to be claimed for America, and William Ziegler sought to grab it. The way was still open; the Duke of Abruzzi had just beaten Nansen's record, but only by 20 nautical miles, and he had used Franz Josef Land as his base to do it.

For whatever reason, Ziegler gave Baldwin carte blanche, and he had little trouble spending Ziegler's money. He evolved an incredibly elaborate plan, including landing massive relief supplies on the east coast of Greenland and communicating via hydrogen balloons using special Swedish buoys that would be released en route, even though the apparatus necessary to make the gas could not be transported by sledge. Nor did he learn the lesson that he himself had harped on over and over on Wellman's expedition: that a practical steam launch was needed to navigate open water during the Arctic summer to efficiently move tons of supplies forward. He took one, but didn't bother to test it first, and no amount of coaxing could make it work once in the Arctic.

After arriving in Franz Josef Land, Baldwin's ship was held up for months by unfavorable ice conditions, but when the

way north finally opened, he dawdled unaccountably until it closed again, leaving him in a similar position to Wellman's expedition, unable to establish a base far enough north to attempt the pole in the spring. At this point Baldwin bizarrely decided to return with most of the expedition, leaving a small party to overwinter. He set off, but after the effects of a keg of whiskey wore off, thought the better of it and returned to his base camp a few days later.

Much of Capoletti's narrative of the Baldwin-Ziegler Expedition is made up of Baldwin's struggles to establish his forward base at the remains of the Italian camp on Teplitz Bay during the spring of 1902. Nevertheless, these came up a glacier-width shy of his goal. Once again Baldwin managed to alienate nearly everyone, most of all the Swedish captain of his ship, *America*, who got into a power struggle with him over who had ultimate authority.

Baldwin spent considerable time sending up his balloons with messages for 'relief' when the scheduled relief ship failed to appear, naming unnamed places, and visiting Nansen's overwintering site before *America* finally broke free. At the first telegraph station in Norway, the disgruntled Swedish captain assailed Baldwin's incompetent high-handedness. Ziegler sacked him and appointed Anthony Fiala, a pious ex-cavalryman who had been part of Baldwin's team, to continue the expedition in 1903, again with an open checkbook at his disposal.

The over-organised Fiala was much more successful in moving supplies to Teplitz Bay using *America* and in gathering up the scattered supplies Baldwin had left up and down his route there, but after a disagreement with his new captain, Fiala forbade the ship's removal from the unsheltered bay. It was subsequently crushed, to the great demoralisation of the expedition members. And when the time came for stepping off to the pole in the spring of 1904, Fiala suffered a case of figuratively cold feet to go with his actual ones; all of Ziegler's unlimited cash bought him less than a mile toward his vision of immortality.

After retreating to Cape Flora to await the expedition relief ship, the party, though still well supplied, including a large quantity of alcohol, slid toward tribal factions and petty bickering, with Fiala's weak character unable to check the slide. Fiala, with a few of the more seriously committed men, made a remarkable journey in the dark of February 1905 to put him in position for another attempt at the pole, but only got about ten miles off shore before giving up.

The expedition's party, less one man who died of disease, was relieved by a ship commanded by Ziegler's secretary, William Champ. In the meantime Ziegler had died. When Champ learned the details of the bitter dissension within the party, he used more of Ziegler's money to buy its silence and finance Fiala's narrative, *Fighting the polar ice*, which put the best face possible on things, and a fairly decent book of its scientific and geographical achievements by men like Russell Williams Porter and Anton Vedoe, who were the outstanding characters in a story that otherwise was a tale of incompetence and futility.

Like Wellman's, Capoletti uses multiple expedition diaries and other primary sources to document the two Ziegler expeditions, as well as contemporary and subsequently published materials, building a richly detailed narrative from a variety of perspectives. In so doing he has contributed much that is original and unavailable in other secondary sources dealing with these expeditions, which up to now have been relegated to footnotes in comprehensive surveys of polar exploration. His

efforts represent an important, accessible source of information on the details of the three expeditions, and his notes form a guide to the available sources pertaining to them.

In telling their stories, Capoletti makes no effort to hide his low opinion of many of their characters. Given the history he records, this is probably justified, but when this is so clear on its face, authorial judgments are unnecessary, and refraining from them would have left the reader to form his own opinions of the reasons for the sometimes inexplicable choices the explorers made, which are by no means certain.

The text of the book is readable, but sometimes, as in the minute details of what Baldwin moved where during the spring and summer of 1902, it could become tedious for a reader more interested in the main thrust of the narrative. Curiously, some of these details are oddly inconsistent. For instance, the reader is told that '130 dogs managed to survive the winter', and at another, 150. The author seems over-solicitous of animal welfare, generally, lamenting not only each draft animal's demise, but also the 'slaughter' of the local wildlife to feed them, when these were planned and typical features of Arctic expeditions at the time. But perhaps the reader might anticipate this by the fact that the book is dedicated to the author's two Norwegian elkhounds.

Generally, Capoletti sticks to the facts, but occasionally indulges in unsupported speculation, such as an unrealistic theory of how Fiala might have obtained a farthest north by being landed by ship on the pack north of Franz Josef Land in the summer of 1903. Also, his speculation on the cause of the death of Sigurd Myhre on the last expedition possibly having been a murder is unconvincing.

The text itself could have done with a bit more tidying up by its editor. As to factual errors, there are some, though mostly slight and very trivial. But the frequent dropped or extraneous words some passages contain, while they do not usually impair the reader's understanding, raise a question as to the accuracy of the transcriptions from original documents and letters when these same types of errors occur within them. This makes it impossible to tell if they are faithful to the original or new errors introduced during the transcription.

Often a weakness of books about unfamiliar places is their maps. This book contains a number of maps, but there is no 'modern' map of the region that unifies the routes of all the expeditions upon it. In all cases but one, apparently, the maps are modern adaptations of original charts made by the explorers themselves that appeared in their published writings. As such, they are not consistent with one another in portraying the relative positions of the various islands and sometimes contain 'lands' and coasts that have since been shown not to exist or have been shifted significantly since these charts were made.

Finally, despite the high level of detail, this reviewer was sometimes wanting more. For instance, Wellman's specially designed 'copper sledges' are often mentioned, but their description is inadequate to visualise what they looked like, much less how they stored their loads in 'copper tubes', and there is no illustration of them, either. But even Wellman's 1911 retrospective account of his expeditions does no better. Otherwise, the illustrations are adequate and informative, the index is excellent, as are the notes, which sometimes add significant detail to the narrative's text.

The book ends with an appeal to preserve the archeological sites of the 'American supply trail' across the archipelago, littered with the aid of Ziegler's unlimited wealth, and a

helpfully curiosity-satisfying resume of the subsequent careers and fates of the major characters it contains.

None of the above qualifications, however, can diminish the importance of Capelotti's book as a significant contribution to the literature of polar exploration. And although the book's many new details do not change the general historical judgment

of these expeditions or the men who financed them, they amply illustrate the roots of each one's utter failure in achieving its goal, and the incompetence of the men who led them. It should not be overlooked by any scholar of the subject. (Robert M. Bryce, 12404 Linganore Ridge Drive, Monrovia, MD 21770, USA ([robertm.bryce@gmail.com](mailto:robertm.bryce@gmail.com))).