

ongoing research on the above mentioned ‘emerging research questions.’

The advisory role of the National Research Council comes particularly to the fore in the fourth chapter of the report, *Meeting the challenges*. This chapter seems to target policy-makers and funding institutions as it provides the rationale for sustainable interagency and international collaboration in order to generate balanced and accessible circum-Arctic knowledge. As a significant contributor to this knowledge the authors consider traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) in order to be better prepared for the unknowns of Arctic research. Unfortunately, the authors fail to adequately address the social and political dimension of TEK and merely note that ‘this information source has not been fully utilized’ (page 127). Here, this seemingly natural science-based report could have further emphasised the need for ‘decolonising methodologies’ (Tuhiwai Smith 1999) in natural sciences in order to avoid western-dominated power relations in Arctic community-based research (see for example Procter 2005). Indeed, also the claim that ‘[n]atural and social scientific study can provide an objective basis’ (page 165) does not correspond to anthropological and legal research in which ‘objectivity’ has been an issue of a wider body of literature (in anthropology, see for example Thapan 1998; in law, see for example Husa and Van Hoecke 2013).

As mentioned earlier, it is impossible for me to evaluate the urgency and acuteness of the natural sciences-based questions of this report. But with regard to the social and legal sciences, *The Arctic in the anthropocene* could not convince. So, judging from a social and legal vantage point, while providing very important basic information, those having been engaged in Arctic research for a while will not find groundbreaking new knowledge or inspiration, both with regard to the ‘hows’ of conducting research and the presented

research results themselves. It is thus to conclude that the importance of this report lies in its advisory position for funding-providers and policy makers. Also (under)graduate students may find stimulation for conducting their own research. The significance of the report to tackle ‘emerging research questions’ in a wider Arctic epistemic context however remains doubtful. The report can be accessed online for free here: [https://download.nap.edu/login.php?record\\_id=18726&page=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.nap.edu%2Fdownload.php%3Frecord\\_id%3D18726](https://download.nap.edu/login.php?record_id=18726&page=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.nap.edu%2Fdownload.php%3Frecord_id%3D18726). (Nikolas Sellheim, Faculty of Law, University of Lapland, PO Box 122, 96101 Rovaniemi, Finland ([nikolas.sellheim@ulapland.fi](mailto:nikolas.sellheim@ulapland.fi))).

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## HOOSH: ROAST PENGUIN, SCURVY DAY, AND OTHER STORIES OF ANTARCTIC CUISINE.

Jason C. Anthony. 2012. Lincoln, NE and London: University of Nebraska Press. 286 p, illustrated, softcover. ISBN 978-0-8032-2666-1. US\$ 26.95.

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Jason C. Anthony’s book is a welcome addition to a comparatively small field. Although food is often the subject of intense interest in expedition narratives, few authors (with some exceptions, including Tom Griffiths’ *Slicing the silence* (Griffiths 2007)) have examined Antarctic cuisine in depth. Whereas biochemist Robert E. Feeney’s *Polar journeys* (Feeney 1997) took a more scientific approach to the subject, replete with nutritional tables, Anthony offers a potted history of Antarctica from the perspective of the dining table. His account is heavily informed by his own time working in the Antarctic between 1994 and 2004: indeed, the book’s intention is, in part, to ‘give voice to [the] neglected majority’ of support workers, often ignored or obscured in the accounts of ‘explorers, journalists, historians, and scientists’ (page xv).

As its title implies, *Hoosh* takes a great interest in the privations and unconventional menus of Heroic Age cuisine. Its first four chapters provide a valuable cook’s eye view of the period, from Louis Michotte’s ‘boardlike’ (page 19) pastries on *Belgica*

to the hastily boiled concoctions gulped down by Shackleton and his companions aboard *James Caird*. Anthony’s rendering of the era’s expeditions is commendably ecumenical, dwelling on lesser-known explorers (he is particularly taken with the unconventional Rozo, chef to Charcot’s French Antarctic Expedition) as well as the iconic quartet of Amundsen, Mawson, Shackleton and Scott. This section is frequently fascinating, studded with facts and anecdotes that help to give a fuller flavour of Antarctic life a century ago: anyone wondering what Scott means when he talks about a seal *galantine* will find their curiosity satisfied here. However, Anthony’s flippant approach to the Heroic Age (‘eccentric men gambling with their lives for often rarified [sic] goals’ (page 40)), will irk some. Although quick to praise Amundsen (‘the most professional and shrewd of polar explorers’ (page 83)) and Shackleton, the book follows Roland Huntford’s lead on Scott: in the same paragraph as Shackleton leads ‘a remarkably stoic attempt to reach the South Pole’, Scott’s Southern journey on the *Discovery* expedition is described as ‘an abortive sledging trip across the Ross Ice Shelf’ (page 5).

*Hoosh* loses some of its impetus in its middle chapters, as Anthony concedes: ‘[t]he history of Antarctic food loses some of its drama after the heroic age’ (page 94). Nevertheless, his account of the expeditions and endeavours from Byrd to Fiennes and Stroud is entertainingly told, tracing the continent’s shift from wilderness to workplace. Although Phillip Law, head of

Australia's International Geophysical Year programme, could still insinuate in the 1950s that those who refused to eat seal's brain were 'sissies', the IGY marked the beginning of 'the era of Antarctic *employment*' (page 139, original emphasis). Military rations were replaced with the institutionalised, industrialised food of the cafeteria.

'I first arrived in Antarctica in Winfly of 1994' (page 165). So begins Anthony's examination of far southern cuisine in the modern era, which draws heavily on his own experiences while stationed at McMurdo and in field camps across the continent. He paints a lively portrait of contemporary Antarctic pursuits in all their strangeness and banality, from drinking crystallising red wine encamped on the Odell glacier to negotiating the 'high-school' (page 180) gossip of the McMurdo dining hall. These recollections are accompanied by informative explanations of the people and logistical systems that keep Antarctic stations supplied with four meals a day: an absorbing profile of Sally Ayotte, executive chef of the US Antarctic Program from 1996 to 2008, gives an idea of the many challenges, from low boiling points to the scarcity of fresh ingredients, that Antarctica presents to its cooks. The result is an enlightening depiction of polar life, full of good stories and salted with forthright commentary on the running of the US Antarctic Program: Anthony is a former roommate of Nicholas Johnson, and *Hoosh* shares the disdain of *Big dead place* (Johnson 2005) for the corporate 'ruling class' in charge of McMurdo (page 273).

However, the more combative moments in these chapters point to an uncertainty across the book as a whole. At times, it is unclear whether *Hoosh* is a work of history or travelogue, and to what extent Anthony's position is one of detachment or participation. Although self-conscious to the point of ennui about 'typical Antarctic narrative' (page 166) he is less willing to interrogate his own assumptions: the reader is confidently told that Nicholas Johnson's *Symmes Antarctic Intelligencer*, a satirical newspaper that Anthony helped to distribute, 'was popular because it was clever and because it addressed what mattered' to McMurdo residents (page 182). Of course, Anthony's familiarity with his modern-day subjects (many of whom are thanked in the *Acknowledgements*) makes it difficult for him to scrutinise them with a truly objective eye, but this results in divided loyalties. Many of the book's quotations go unattributed in the endnotes, but Anthony finds space to credit the authors of entries for 'a 2000–2001 Antarctic ice-cream flavour-naming contest' (page 273). Such inconsistency is surprising in a book published by a university press, as is the lack of an index.

In spite of its unevenness, *Hoosh* will please and interest many readers: although Anthony admits that the book is 'a work of synthesis' (page 251), he has assembled a fine smorgasbord of Antarctic culinary tales. The final chapter, contrasting the austere fare of the Russian base at Vostok with the riotous banquets served up at the French-Italian facility Concordia, is

an example of the book at its best: perceptive and hearty, keen to savour the essence of life at both stations. Anthony writes with verve, relishing the spicy, messy details of polar food and its aftermath. He notes that '[Charles] Swithinbank is one of a rare few willing to mention a classic Antarctic problem: stalagmites of feces' (page 268). His prose is enthusiastic and irreverent, prone to stylistic flourishes that are sometimes overegged, such as 'the soul of the kitchen leaves only a faint trace in the mouth of history' (page 17), but often evocative: a scientific party is strikingly described 'scouring the fields of ice for crumbs of space' (page 211).

Anthony provides morsels of historical context throughout *Hoosh*, noting for example that 1954 saw the invention of the TV dinner and the third International Polar Year (page 123), but specialists will be unsatisfied with some aspects of his account of polar cuisine's development. As Carl Thompson has noted (Thompson 2004) canned food came to prominence in the naval Arctic expeditions of the early nineteenth century, rather than emerging, as *Hoosh* has it on page 41, at London's Great Exhibition of 1851. Anthony likewise implies that the expeditions of the 'mechanical age' of the late 1920s and 1930s were the first to carry products from commercial food suppliers in return for sponsorship (pages 94–95), a questionable position in sight of Herbert Ponting's photographs of *Terra Nova* explorers sitting atop crates of Heinz baked beans. Nevertheless, this engaging book is a useful gastronomic contribution to the cultural turn in Antarctic studies. Anthony's collation of high-latitude menus offers ample opportunity for further investigation, particularly into the social and cultural factors that affected, and continue to affect, what Antarcticans consume. *Hoosh* contains intriguing material, for instance, on the implications of polar cooking for gender roles. While Thomas Orde-Lees, storekeeper on the *Endurance* expedition, complained that 'no housewife ever had more to do than we have in making a little go a long way' (page 9), it is reported that many veterans of the Concordia base divorce shortly after returning to civilisation, with home cooking unable to measure up to the delights on offer in the far south (page 246). (Philip Sidney, Penuhurst Place, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 8DG [pwesidney@gmail.com](mailto:pwesidney@gmail.com))

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