

Dease Lake, Dease Arm, Dease Strait, and two rivers, one flowing into the Liard in northern British Columbia, and the other flowing into Great Bear Lake in the Northwest Territories. Barr states: “One should not underestimate the contribution made by Dease’s steadiness, tact and experience” and his ability to get “the most out of the voyageurs.... It was one thing for Dease modestly to admit his own limitations, and quite another for Simpson to slander a competent, reliable veteran...Dease’s journal...reveals him to be a competent organizer, a perceptive observer, and a careful diarist, and in general gives the lie to Simpson’s jaundiced and self-promoting comments” (p. 295, 297).

The Dease-Simpson journeys cost only a minimal £1000. Their success triggered the knighthood of Governor George Simpson, in appreciation of Dease and Thomas Simpson’s “successful exertions in furtherance of Arctic Discovery” (p. 292). Thus, though Dease modestly declined his offer of knighthood, Governor Simpson was somewhat vicariously but amply rewarded for his support of the expeditions.

For any Arctic exploration collection, this book is a must.

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**THE ARCTIC VOYAGES OF MARTIN FROBISHER: AN ELIZABETHAN ADVENTURE.** By ROBERT MCGHEE. Montreal: Canadian Museum of Civilization/McGill-Queen’s, 2001. 210 p., maps, b&w & colour illus., bib., index. Hardbound. Cdn\$49.95.

*The Arctic Voyages of Martin Frobisher: An Elizabethan Adventure* represents the culmination of Robert McGhee’s ten years of personal involvement with the Frobisher story, as an archeologist and interpreter for the Canadian Museum of Civilization. The book fits nicely into the McGill-Queen’s Native and Northern Series, dealing with both the early exploration of the North and the inauguration of the often contentious British-Inuit relationship.

The basic history of Frobisher’s explorations in Canada had been documented in a number of previous works, many of which McGhee has included in his excellent list of sources and selected readings. The purpose of this book is not to tell a new story, but to provide an accessible and appealing version of the Frobisher voyages, interpret the historical and cultural settings in which they occurred, and draw out their historical ramifications. Through his engaging writing style and judicious use of primary sources and archeological evidence, McGhee admirably meets these objectives.

The book begins with an introduction to the main players behind Frobisher’s voyages, including John Dee, scientist and “navigation expert”; Michael Lok, merchant and financial backer; and Sir Humphrey Gilbert, whose

early writings on the Northwest Passage proved influential. A short description of Frobisher’s background as privateer and explorer sets the stage for in-depth discussions of each of his three voyages to Arctic North America between 1576 and 1578. Details on the preparations for each voyage include itemized lists of supplies taken and the means used to obtain financial backing. McGhee weaves a lively narrative, including discoveries and missteps, events at sea, and interactions with the native Inuit population. The 1578 voyage receives special attention because of its massive failure as a mining venture and its eventual place in the British claim on the northern regions. A final section on archeological fieldwork at Frobisher-related sites in the North, many of which McGhee personally worked at, makes an interesting and informative addition.

McGhee’s ability to interpret actions and events in their cultural and temporal situations constitutes a major strength of the work. Frobisher’s error in assuming the bay named for him to be a passage to Asia is more understandable in light of the firm European belief in the existence of a Northwest Passage and the difficult climactic conditions he faced. The two later Frobisher expeditions mined tons of useless black rock, convinced (mistakenly, or by fraudulent evidence) of its richness in gold, and maintained these convictions even in the face of mounting contrary evidence. Instead of simply blaming greed and venality for the mining fiasco, McGhee attempts to understand the time and situation. As he explains, the 16th-century European belief that unexplored regions of the New World held vast, untold riches had predisposed the group to assume that great mineral deposits awaited discovery. McGhee further endeavors to demonstrate how the personal interests and social positions of the individuals involved led the affair to take on a life of its own. In doing this, he draws an analogy to the recent Bre-X scandal in Canada, showing how present-day individuals acted in similar situations. The analogy, although unusual, effectively provides contemporary cultural relevance. One must question the staying power of the reference, however, as the Bre-X affair quickly fades from collective memory.

Another strength in the work is the author’s evenhandedness in dealing with individuals and their human interactions. McGhee neither vilifies nor lionizes Martin Frobisher. The explorer emerges as brave, impetuous, a man of action (if sometimes misguided), a man with a checkered past and a violent temper, who performed heroic feats when required. In relating the interactions between the British and the native Inuit, McGhee outlines the cultural assumptions and experiences that each group brought to the meetings. The Inuit, likely from past experience with Norse seamen and Basque fishermen, would not initially assume hostile intent and came to trade. Frobisher and his men, for their part, carried prevalent beliefs of the savagery of the “unexplored world” and staunch cultural beliefs in their own national and racial superiority. The meetings, initially friendly, turned hostile through misunderstandings and language barriers. While

not exonerating the British for the violence and kidnapping they perpetuated, the author makes the effort to interpret their actions through the lens of culture, an effort missing in too many histories.

The referencing of sources is the one minor weakness in the manuscript. McGhee draws heavily on primary sources throughout the work and consistently mentions where quotations come from, but he does not provide specific page numbers or any information on where others might locate these primary sources. This unfortunately means that historians and other social scientists will have difficulty building upon McGhee's work, making the book less a starting place for further research, and more an introductory reader on the topic. That said, the book is filled with useful illustrations, many of maps and archeological artifacts that would be difficult to find elsewhere. Route maps for each voyage are valuable additions, although the map for 1574 (p. 34) has a minor mistake, misidentifying Frobisher's vessel the *Michael* as the *Mathew* (John Cabot's ship from his 1497 explorations of eastern North America). Overall, the illustrations add immensely to the enjoyment of reading the book, making it an attractive package, and they will prove useful to other scholars working on Frobisher or the history of exploration in the North in general.

McGhee's book on the Frobisher voyages is well written, researched, and constructed. It is a good introduction to Frobisher and the exploration of Canada's northern regions for students of history and an outstanding quick reference for people more familiar with the topic area. The book's accessible style and interpretative nature will make it educational and enjoyable for any reader with a general interest in the history of northern exploration.

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FOLK ART IN GREENLAND THROUGHOUT A THOUSAND YEARS. Text by TINNA MØBJERG and JENS ROSING, drawings by JENS ROSING, photo essay by GÉRARD FRANCESCHI and ASGER JORN, assisted by ULRİK ROSS. Ten Thousand Years of Folk Art in the North Series. Cologne, Germany: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walthur König, 2002. 261 p., map, 181 b&w illus., index, bib. Hardbound. DM98.

This fascinating book explores art produced by the peoples of Greenland. It is divided into three components: a written essay, a photo essay and a catalogue. The photo essay, created by Asger Jorn and Gérard Franceschi, contains over 250 artworks representing Greenland through time

and across regions and cultures. The written essay by Tinna Møbjerg and Jens Rosing acts as an introduction to the photographs, placing many of the artworks into their cultural and spiritual context.

Asger Jorn, considered by many the greatest Danish artist of the period following World War II, was a founder of the expressionist movement COBRA (Copenhagen, Brussels, and Amsterdam) prominent in Europe after the war. This art group, and Jorn in particular, were inspired by art from northern European history, particularly the Viking period, and by art from non-industrialized countries. In the early 1960s, Jorn envisioned a grand series of 24 volumes covering 10 000 years of folk art in the North. With his friend, French photographer Gérard Franceschi, he traveled extensively throughout Europe selecting pieces for this work. Jorn died in 1973, before he was able to complete the project. He left his archival materials to the Silkeborg Museum (to which he had also donated his entire personal art collection). *Folk Art in Greenland Throughout a Thousand Years* is the third volume of this ambitious study published since his death.

This book, which exposes us to artworks as seen through the eyes of both Franceschi and Jorn, provides a fresh perspective on Greenlandic art. There is no sense of time or cultural context in the selection of the pieces: objects of great cosmological importance appear next to items created for the tourist market. Objects created over a thousand years ago by the Dorset culture people find themselves next to pieces newly carved by descendants of the subsequent Thule people. Franceschi's fabulous black-and-white photographs display the spirit of these pieces. Jorn selected the order of the photographs, transforming them into a collage that can perhaps best be viewed as another of his artworks.

Unfortunately, the book contains no information on the selection process. However, Rosing and Møbjerg located a note written by Jorn that concludes, "When Knud Rasmussen reproduces an Eskimo song from Greenland in his *Songs from the Igloo*, this sounds like a manifesto for Expressionistic art" (dust cover). This poem appears as an introduction to the photographs:

Once I lay me down  
once I am dead  
the vision I saw  
will impress another  
Another  
will get to see it  
The new generation  
will get to see it  
So I gasped for air  
So I gasped for breath  
strongly stirred as I was.  
(Anonymous poet from Ammassalik)

The photographs are presented as a single series with no divisions. However, I feel they can be divided into three