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BOOK REVIEW

The Antarctic. Janice Meadows, William Mills and H. G. R. King (compilers). **World Bibliographical Series**, volume 171. *Clio Press*; Oxford, England; Santa Barbara, California; Denver, Colorado. 1994. XXVI + 383 pp., one map. No price given.

The dynamic development of polar exploration and investigation in the Southern Hemisphere during the second half of our century resulted in an „information explosion“, providing us with a rich bibliography on Antarctica. The volume under review is not only a welcome addition to the growing literature on that subject, but first and foremost a useful guide to its increasing complexity. That aim serves among other the lucid classification scheme of the reviewed volume which is divided into distinct sections presenting publications on such specific Antarctic topics as its geography, flora and fauna, the Southern Ocean, the development of Antarctic science, policy, history, bibliographies, international relations and geopolitics, conservation and environmental management, economic resources and development, logistics, expedition planning, survival, medicine, psychology and living in the Antarctic, its arts, libraries, museums, archives, research, periodicals, series, bibliographies and last but not least the sub-Antarctic and other islands, treated individually and arranged in alphabetical order.

The volumes in the *Clio Press World Bibliographical Series*, one of which is the book under review, are intended to meet the needs of a variety of readers with the emphasis on the general reader or the specialist wishing an introduction to other areas of interest. In the volume on the Antarctic, three highly competent compilers „have sought also to satisfy the prospective traveller, the armchair geographer, the Antarctic bibliophile and the librarian developing an Antarctic collection“ (p. XIX). This bibliographical volume provides us with an annotated listing of books, atlases, journal articles, conference papers, serial titles and bibliographies. It may be viewed as a companion to *The Arctic*, which appeared in 1989 as volume 99 in the series and had a similar classification scheme, with due regard to the notable similarities and differences of the two opposite polar regions. The compilation under review contains a considerable number of bibliographical items referring to both polar regions and Arctic analogies.

Let me take now a closer look at the contents of the reviewed volume and try to answer, how far does it respond to the expectations of its readers and to what degree does it fulfill the promises made by its authors in the Introduction (pp. XIII – XXIV).

The first section, entitled „The Antarctic region in general“, contains 224 annotated bibliographical items and lists the type of publications that describe all aspects of the Antarctic and cover such areas like geography, flora and fauna and the Southern Ocean. They provide a wide range of scientific subjects, which emphasize the importance of Antarctica as a gigantic research laboratory and experimental range. The presented there publications which cover the period from 1928 till 1993, are mainly in English (including translations from other languages), but few appear also in other original languages, like French, German and Spanish – two items each, as well as Norwegian and Russian – one item each.

Particularly wide is the next section, containing 256 bibliographical items, published between 1777 and 1993 and covering the general and detailed historical accounts. That extensive literature

embraces reports of individual voyages and expeditions arranged chronologically to enable the reader to follow the progress of exploration through the ages. This section concludes with biographical publications featuring mainly explorers arranged alphabetically by author. The historical section contains seven original publications in French (4), Norwegian (2) and German (1).

The next section on „International Relations and Geopolitics” contains 91 exclusively English entries published between 1958 and 1993. It lists books and documents that cover the history of political interest in the Antarctic region, the sovereignty claims made and disputed, the application of international law, the negotiation of the Antarctic Treaty and the development of its legal system (ATS), including numerous international organisations. The sub-sections on „The Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty” and „Environmental movement and the United Nations” which are closing this section, break down the adopted arrangement of this bibliography and blur the borderline with the next section on „Conservation and Environmental Management”. This section contains only 35 bibliographical items published in the years 1978 – 1993 and devoted to practical application of environmental concern, including material on legislation, as well as pollution and waste management. That following section on „Economic Resources and Development”, containing 83 entries published during the period 1969 – 1993, lists material on each of the several commodities including marine and mineral resources, icebergs and tourism.

The section on „Science and Policy”, containing 52 bibliographical entries published between 1953 and 1993, addresses the formulation of national and international policies on Antarctic research. It includes among other information on national and international scientific institutions and research programmes. The bizarre selection methods applied by the compilers were strikingly displayed in the sub-section on „Scientific Programmes” (items 713 – 728) where out of more than 30 nations involved in Antarctic research, were chosen only: China, Uruguay, the German Democratic Republic, USSR, USA, United Kingdom, Italy, Korea and Australia, leaving out a considerable number of countries with outstanding polar research achievements.

The section on „Logistics, Expedition Planning and Survival”, contains 71 entries published between 1927 and 1993. They are dealing with modern logistics most frequently geared to the support of scientific investigation, as well as material on survival, clothing and first aid in polar conditions. Land, sea and air transport and communication including philately, were subdivided within this section.

The 10 publications presented in the section on „Medicine and Psychology” focus on the medical and psychological effects of the extremities of the polar environment and the isolation of its human settlements. Closely related to it are the contents of the subsequent sections on „Living in the Antarctic” (11 items), „The Arts” (45 items), „Libraries, Museums, Archives and Research Institutions” (8 items), „Periodicals and Series” (75 items) and „Bibliographies” (25 items) which present publications on such topics like Antarctic demographies illustrated by personal accounts of daily life in research camps and stations, on expeditions and tourist ships, literature, largely fiction, poems, paintings and drawings, photography and film.

The reviewed volume concludes with a general section on the history, geography, flora and fauna of „Sub-Antarctic and other islands”, each treated individually and arranged in alphabetical order from Antipodes to South Shetlands. The section ends with two items about non-existent islands, a non-uncommon phenomenon in the Southern Ocean.

Antarctic literature is full of acronyms due to preponderance of long names. Accordingly, the reviewed volume was furnished with a list of acronyms used. It concludes with a well arranged combined alphabetical index of authors, titles of publications and subjects, as well as a general map of the Antarctic region up to 40°S which round off that volume.

The compilers have practically limited their bibliographical choices to English language publications only, in particular those published in the United States, the United Kingdom and few Commonwealth countries. They have omitted almost totally, with very few exceptions, books and articles on Antarctica published in other countries, even such which appeared there in English. Thus, we welcome with a mixed feeling of unsatisfied need, the inclusion into the reviewed volume

of only two Polish publications (items 507 and 957, both in English), including a note on our journal. This seems rather unfortunate, taking into consideration that the Antarctic literature, also in English language, is in Poland quite extensive and was frequently referred in our journal, well known to the compilers. We fear that in case of other countries the situation might be similar. Unfortunately, not only the linguistic restraints, but also compilers' subjective liberty of choice and self-imposed limitations have caused that this impressive bibliography does neither fully nor adequately reflect the actual state of world literature on Antarctica. The authors also did not put precise temporal limits to their compilation, explaining only that they „have concentrated on recent, readily available material, but have also included the recognized classics, especially in the history of Antarctic exploration” (p. XX). That makes the depicted state of Antarctic literature even more distorted not only its geographical and spatial dimensions, but also in its temporal scope. Thus, the authors may want, not only to review the actual contents, but also to add to the next edition a number of new items, amending the present 1195 entries and widening the range of the reviewed bibliography.

Although the mentioned deficiencies depreciate considerably the value of the reviewed volume as a reliable source of information, its importance as a handy reference book remains unshaken. The reviewed volume may still serve as a useful guide for those who wish to acquaint themselves with the events and developments in the Antarctic polar region. They will find there the necessary guidance where to seek answers to most of the questions on that subject – reason enough to recommend this book. This collection is indeed „basic”, serving as an invaluable resource the reader, but useful also for the specialized users. Notwithstanding its referred shortcomings, this is a very topical, useful bibliographical volume encompassing a wide range of the area of interest. Its numerous topical sections cover a multi- and inter-disciplinary spectrum of Antarctic subjects. Particularly praiseworthy appear the concise, but substantial annotations designed to introduce to reader each of the bibliographical entries. Thus, in conclusion, the reviewed book can be given high assessment, taking into consideration the numerous technical difficulties and obstacles piling up in the process of seeking information and collecting the necessary material from countries dispersed all over the world.

Thus, the *Clio Press* and *World Bibliographical Series*, as well as the editors and compilers are to be highly commended and congratulated for undertaking the difficult task of collecting and publishing in a relatively short time such a rich information and material on Antarctica.

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