

*Geophysics of Sea Ice*, for there is no alternative and it is an excellent and comprehensive publication. I have little doubt that it will sell well to libraries (and rich academics), but sadly I suspect that it will not sell to the students for which it was intended. (Vernon Squire, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, University of Otago, PO Box 56, Dunedin, New Zealand.)

### HELP IN LEARNING INUKTITUT

TUNUMIIT ORAASIAT: THE EAST GREENLANDIC INUIT LANGUAGE. Robbé, P. and Dorais, L.-J. 1986. Québec, Université Laval. Collection Nordicana 49. 265p, soft cover. ISBN 2-920197-49-5.

The purpose of this book, as stated in the introduction, is 'to put into the hands of all those wishing to learn the language of East Greenland, or are interested in the dialectology of Inuktitut, a linguistic tool which is easy to use'. It is intended to give 'a general description of grammatical forms and a basic list of affixes and words, as they are now in use on the East Coast of Greenland'. The book is divided into four sections: a series of tables outlining the main forms of East Greenlandic grammar; a list of about 300 frequently used postbases, with examples; a thematic dictionary of over 3,000 words; and an alphabetical index of East Greenlandic words. Translations are given in West Greenlandic (the official language of Greenland), Danish, English and French.

Herein lay the attraction for this reviewer, as perhaps for anyone else who 'collects' languages, but beware! The nuances conveyed by the translations can be tantalisingly different. Something that is 'not good enough' in Danish and French becomes 'despicable' in English (p 174). 'Er ved bevidsthed' surely means 'is conscious' (in a medical sense) in Danish, and hardly corresponds to 'knows all about it' (p 176). Which are right? The English is often very clumsy ('summer is more and more here' on p 32; 'one can hear it looks like people' on p 67), and even more misleading. A monoglot English-speaker may well be disconcerted by, for example, 'It is blown up' (p 126) where the context is wind, or 'is inclined' to describe something out of true. Surely Université Laval can do better than this. There are many typographical errors, particularly in the Danish. We may be justified in wondering whether such carelessness extends also to the East and West Greenlandic. The authors of a reference work of this kind, whatever disclaimers they make in the introduction ('Our book most probably contains many errors'), have a duty of care to their readership. The errors and inconsistencies in the translations would have been avoided by checking and correlating the information provided by the people acknowledged in the introduction. A corrected edition of the book would be welcome, for there is much to enjoy in this work for the insight it gives into the Inuit culture and way of life. (Rosemary Graham, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER)

### ANTARCTIC POLITICS

THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS OF ANTARCTICA. Beck, Peter J. 1986. Beckenham, Croom Helm. 332p, maps and diagrams, hard cover. ISBN 0-7099-3239-1. £27.95.

Peter Beck, a Reader in International History at Kingston Polytechnic, is a student and critic of the Antarctic Treaty System. For several years has kept readers of *Polar Record* and other journals informed on the Treaty and its manifestations; an article in this issue is an example. Long may he continue, for Treaty affair seldom make headlines, at least in the UK, and public relations is not a strong point with those who negotiate this

important public property on our behalf. In this book Beck introduces Antarctica, surveys it historically (especially in relation to exploration, sovereignty and the crucial International Geophysical Year 1957–58) and discusses current issues affecting the Treaty, including the controversial Minerals Regime and mooted alternatives for managing the continent. The final chapter discusses possible futures for Antarctica and the Treaty.

This is a useful primer on the Treaty, painstaking in its efforts to show the importance of the concept, the document, and the Treaty System that has grown out of it in the last 25 years. Neither polemical nor hysterical, bland nor unduly pessimistic, Beck supports the Treaty but points out its weaknesses as well as its strengths. He is concerned at the growing stresses, internal and external, that bear on it, including the minerals, fisheries and sovereignty issues, resentments in the United Nations, and the irrelevant but divisive question of continuing South African membership. His book is a well-catalogued storehouse of information about the Treaty, with a note of warning to any who feel that so enlightened an instrument must continue to prosper simply because it is right. (Bernard Stonehouse, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

### MÜLLER ON BERING'S VOYAGES

GERHARD FRIEDRICH MÜLLER. *BERING'S VOYAGES: THE REPORTS FROM RUSSIA*. Urness, C. (editor and translator). 1986. Fairbanks, University of Alaska Press (Rasmuson Library Historical Translation Series, III). 221p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-912006-22-6. US \$15.00.

It could be argued that Bering's voyages (1725–43) ushered in a new era in the history of maritime exploration. Preceding the great explorers of the 18th century—Cook, La Pérouse, Malaspina and Vancouver—Bering, or perhaps his master Peter the Great, set the pattern. But it happened to be Russia where the new ideas germinated and grew, and there were difficulties of communication: bureaucratic complications, secrecy, political overtones. So it was some time before anything like the full story got into circulation; indeed, one could say that it hasn't happened yet. The central contemporary figure in narrating it, participant as well as historian, was the German polymath G.F. Müller, one of the bright young men brought in by Peter to form his new Academy of Sciences. This book is his principal account.

The original was published in 1758 (already 15 years after the end of the expeditions, and 17 years after Bering's death), by the Academy, in German, under the title *Nachrichten von Seereisen ...* There were two English translations, in 1761 and 1764, but these were not complete. The object of Dr Urness in providing another is to fill the gaps, but also to bring out the way in which Müller used his contemporary sources. The edition has been well thought out and executed. The editor sets the scene in a background chapter, and then recounts Müller's public arguments with certain western writers on the subject of the voyages. The translation itself reads easily, and the annotation, while frequent, is not prolix. A modern bibliography is added. A number of 18th century maps are included to elucidate particular points, though many place-names, through inevitable reduction, are illegible.

This is a helpful, and very reasonably priced, addition to the still growing body of literature on Bering's expeditions. Dr Urness is to be congratulated on her command of a wide range of relevant material, and the Rasmuson Library on making the work available through its Historical Translation Series. (Terence Armstrong, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)