

## BOOK REVIEW

Review of *LASHIPA: History of Large Scale Resource Exploitation in Polar Areas*, edited by Louwrens Hacquebord (2012). Groningen: Barkhuis. 172 pp. ISBN 978-9-491-43108-1.

This collection of papers reflects the results of two separate but related research projects: the International Polar Year (IPY) project History of Large Scale Resource Exploitation in Polar Areas (LASHIPA) and a European Science Foundation Collaborative Research (EUROCORES) 2006–10 BOREAS project entitled Colony, Empire, Environment: a Comparative International History of Twentieth Century Arctic Science (CEE). The collected papers were given at a workshop in St. Petersburg, Russia, in November 2009, where most of the participants were doctoral students gathered to offer the results of their research for the first time.

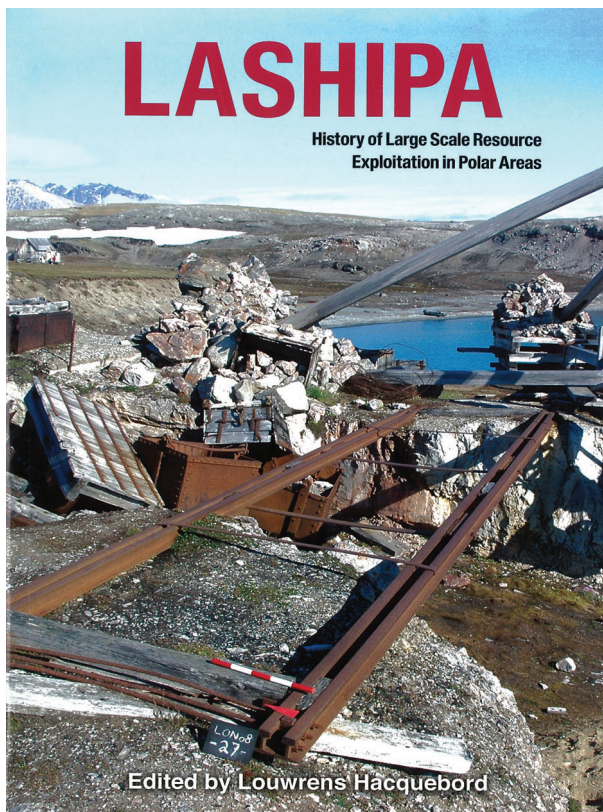
The LASHIPA project, largely concentrated in doctoral work at the University of Groningen, has been in the field in Svalbard since 2004, conducting industrial archaeology surveys and excavations at mining and whaling sites. This work was extended to archival research in Russia and further field surveys in the South Atlantic and on the Antarctic Peninsula. The project has acted as an incubator for young researchers in the historical and archaeological studies, exposing early career scholars to polar fieldwork and providing them with a variety of fora in which to deliver their results.

LASHIPA's primary area of operations in Svalbard leads this volume to focus heavily on the history and archaeology of resource extraction there, including commendable efforts by Alexei Kraikovski to draw out that history from marginally accessible archival sources. Chapters on the history of Pomor activities (Kraikovski et al.), Dutch whaling operations (de Haas), and American (DePasqual) and Soviet (Portsel) mining operations predominate.

Importantly, the workshop began to lay a foundation for broader and deeper examinations of these narrow historically particular themes. It is no surprise to find some of the best work here done by long-established scholars in the field. A particularly fine example of these is a chapter by Dag Avango and Anders Houltz that delves into the importance of surrounding narratives in attempting to explain why so many engaged in resource

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exploitation in areas like Svalbard. This contextual surround, one that owes so much to the history of polar exploration and the myth of the explorer—especially the polar explorer—is an area awaiting comprehensive study. It is one—and perhaps the main—area where a nexus can be constructed between political and historical narratives, archaeological fieldwork and cultural resource management studies.

The volume's editor, Louwrens Hacquebord, expertly summarizes 400 years of geopolitical calculations of resource exploitation in the "Atlantic Arctic" region, in a chapter that would ideally have served as an introduction to the entire volume. Here, the close ties between the explorer and the merchant and industrialist across the centuries are made plain. A concluding chapter by Urban Wråkberg makes it clear that these networks must be reimagined by current social science researchers within the context of increasingly fragmented university structures and the fractured nature of polar social science research and the minimal funding for research stations where such work can be carried out in the field.

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In a warming global environment that has placed the Arctic at the forefront of national and international policy considerations, such research expertise cannot merely be summoned at a moment's notice by these same national and international bureaucracies in search of policy recommendations. A concluding thought of the workshop that is also well-taken is the need to

expand LASHIPA's initial geographic focus on Svalbard into other areas of the Arctic. The work done by the project in forging international research ties, especially in Russia, as reflected in this volume, should provide the impetus for a long-awaited expansion of social science research in the circum-Barents Sea area.