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Glaciers (2nd ed.), by Michael Hambrey & Jürg Alean, 2004. Cambridge University Press, Edinburgh Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 2RU, Great Britain; xii + 276 pages, 220 colour figures, hardbound, price GBP 35.99, US\$ 60.00. ISBN 0-521-82808-2.

Reading a book for review is, as a rule, interesting, but it is rarely a pleasant task. This book is, however, an exception to the rule. This conclusion is not truly surprising, because the first edition (1992) already was the winner of the yearly 'Outstanding Publication Award' of the Association of Earth Science Editors. This award is given to books that are well written, well edited, and well published. The second (revised and expanded) edition, with over 200 colour illustrations that are nearly all new, is - in my opinion - even more attractive than the edition that has won the award.

It is difficult to place this book in a specific category. It is highly informative, and covers almost all topics related to glaciers, clearly focusing on geology and geomorphology, but also paying attention to aspects such as flora and fauna, hazards and benefits of glaciers, transport on glaciers and tourism. It would therefore have been a textbook or a reference work if the authors had chosen to write such a type of book. They did not, however: they opted for a book that not only contains a wealth of information for both glacial specialists and earth scientists that only occasionally have to do with glaciers or their deposits, but that is also attractive reading for interested people without an earth-scientific education. This is illustrated by a statement of the authors (the well known Michael Hambrey from the University of Wales, and the somewhat less generally known Jürgen Alean from the Kantonsschule Zürcher Unterland in Bülach, Switzerland) in their Endnote: "... first and foremost we have tried to convey the beauty and fascination of glaciers, based on our personal experiences". They end the book with the remark: "... glaciers can only be fully appreciated by actually visiting them. If this book does nothing else, we hope that it will implant in the reader a desire to visit glaciers and glacial landscapes, and gain a deeper appreciation of this magnificent but vulnerable world of snow and ice".

The result is a book that has one disadvantage: starting to browse through it leads inevitably to reading, and starting to read it leads inevitably to loss of contact with the surroundings until the book is finished. Perhaps 'reading' is not the right word: the wonderful, sometimes fascinating photographs draw continuously the attention of the reader. I was myself particularly impressed by the photo on p. 20: "Glaciers that flow through narrow valleys and then reach an open plain spread out as broad lobes known as piedmont glaciers. These striking examples are located near Surprise Fjord in the southern part of Axel Heiberg Island, Canadian Arctic". I used quotation marks in the last sentence to indicate that this text is the caption of the photo; throughout the book the captions are equally informative.

The attractiveness of the book caused that I did hardly pay attention to one of the aspects that reviewers should look for: mistakes, omission, inaccuracies, etc. I found no typos, I think that hardly any topic was omitted (but I would have liked at least some information about glaciectonics; deformations within the ice itself are, however dealt with and beautifully illustrated), and I found no figures top-down or captions under the wrong figure. I dare not state that such mistakes are absent at all, however, because I may have overlooked them in my 'hunger' for more information. If there is a shortcoming, it is the type of paper used. It is of excellent quality, and it makes reading easy, even under the artificial light that dominates in most

offices) It is not optimum, however for the photographs. The beautiful pictures would, in my opinion, have gained much by another choice of paper type. And the photographs deserve so, indeed.

Having worked in glacial sediments for over 30 years myself, I found no truly new aspects in the book. On the other hand, so much detail is provided about numerous aspects that I have the feeling that my insight has deepened. This may also be due to the well thought over structure of the book, which may be considered to be composed of five parts. The first part (Chapters 1-9) provides some kind of global overview of the glaciers' characteristics, their behaviour, the landscape they form by both erosion and deposition, the sediments that they leave behind, and the reasons for advance and retreat. This is followed by a part (Chapters 8-10) in which Antarctica, being the continent that contains over 90% of all ice on Earth, is dealt with. A third part (Chapters 11-14) provides insight into the impact that glaciers have on the biosphere. Part 4 consists of one chapter, in which the present-day glaciers are put in the context of time. The last part consists also of only one chapter (16), being a brief review of future prospects, including a discussion on the possible present-day greenhouse effects, the possible consequences of it, and the conclusion that a new ice age will come in due time.

The book ends with a 14-page glossary (which will particularly be helpful for readers that lack a geological education), a selected bibliography (only 3 pages, indicating that this book should not be considered as a scientific work but rather as an invitation to find out more about glaciers), a 4-page location index (very useful if one schedules to visit some glacially interesting sites), and a 4-page subject index.

Each library in an institute where earth sciences are taught or where earth-scientific research is carried out, should buy the book. And all those individuals who want to have a book about glaciers that is both informative and so attractive that it will frequently be taken from the shelf just to enjoy the browsing, have an excellent opportunity now. I cannot imagine that anybody will regret.

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