

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and
Social Sciences

Great Plains Studies, Center for

February 1994

Review of *The Palliser Triangle: A Region in Space and Time* by R. W. Barendregt, M. C. Wilson, and F. J. Jankunis

Alex Paul

University of Regina, Saskatchewan

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsresearch>



Part of the [Other International and Area Studies Commons](#)

Paul, Alex, "Review of *The Palliser Triangle: A Region in Space and Time* by R. W. Barendregt, M. C. Wilson, and F. J. Jankunis" (1994). *Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and Social Sciences*. 171.
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsresearch/171>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Plains Studies, Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and Social Sciences by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

The Palliser Triangle: A Region in Space and Time. ed. R. W. Barendregt, M. C. Wilson, and F. J. Jankunis. Lethbridge, Alberta: The University of Lethbridge, 1993. 281 pp. Illustrations and bibliography.

The main title of this book might suggest to the reader that it is a work of broad scope on the subhumid to semiarid part of the Canadian prairies often called the Palliser Triangle. The second subtitle, A Festschrift Honoring Dr. Archibald MacSween Stalker, is closer to what the book really does. Indeed, not all of the chapters are about the Palliser Triangle.

Stalker is a celebrated glacial geologist/glacial geomorphologist who has made significant contributions to the understanding of the landforms of central and southern Alberta. Like myself, those who have an interest in this topic, or for that matter in glaciation in general, will find the book fascinating.

The Palliser Triangle comes in five parts. Part I has four chapters which introduce the reader to Dr. Stalker and the Triangle, while three chapters in Part II concern the Foothills Erratics Train, moraine plateaux, and megablocks, three topics on which Stalker has done pathfinding research. The seven chapters in Part III and IV cover a diverse array of subjects from soil formation to radiocarbon dating to dogs on the plains. As usual in a festschrift, they differ in depth of analysis but all are interesting and three or four are excellent. According to the editors (p. 4), all deal with aspects of interdisciplinary work which complements or was inspired by Stalker's pioneering efforts. Part V is a valuable but not entirely complete or error-free bibliography of the quaternary geology of Alberta.

It is apparent from this review of the book's contents that the topical balance is strongly weighted towards glacial geology and paleoenvironmental studies. The geographical coverage is strongly in favor of the Alberta side of

the Palliser Triangle. Despite the main title of the book, many of the essays largely or completely ignore the Saskatchewan side. This is done either implicitly or even explicitly as in Brierly and Hiley's chapter on 'the soil resource and associated agricultural land use in the Palliser Triangle' which was clearly intended by its writers to deal only with the Alberta side. This focus is not surprising since the book was compiled in Lethbridge, Alberta, but the editors should have chosen a more appropriate main title.

They should have done more editing in some other places too. This is particularly true of the references, where a number of annoying typographical errors are very easily identified by anyone familiar with the regional literature. In the final analysis, however, the editors have done a fine job of setting Stalker's work in its philosophical and regional contexts, of balancing anecdote and scientific research, and of conveying some sense of the beauty of the southwestern Canadian plains/prairies.

The book also contains a generous sprinkling of useful diagrams, maps, and photographs, crucial in many cases to an appreciation of the arguments presented. I commend the decision to include all these.

In sum, I am happy to have *The Palliser Triangle* on my bookshelf and to recommend it to others, especially to those with an interest in the natural landscapes of the glaciated northern Great Plains on both sides of the Forty-ninth Parallel. **Alex Paul**, *Department of Geography, University of Regina, Saskatchewan*.