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## ***A CHRONOLOGY OF ANTARCTIC EXPLORATION***

### **A SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES UNTIL THE INTERNATIONAL POLAR YEARS, 2007-09**

R. K. Headland, 2009

The International Polar Years, from 2007 to 2009, provide an appropriate time to conclude a compilation of the historical chronology of all Antarctic regions. This fortuitously coincides closely with the 50th anniversaries of the establishment of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research in 1958, and the adoption of the Antarctic Treaty in 1959. The work was prepared during 25 years at the Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, by the former archivist.

The regions covered are the far southern parts of the Earth in general and Antarctica in particular. They are principally the regions with which the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research is concerned and cover all areas under the ægis of the Antarctic Treaty as well as those defined by the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources.

The development of knowledge of these remote parts of the Earth is demonstrated historically; thus the early voyages which discovered the Cape of Good Hope and Cabo de Hornos are described, with those to several far southern temperate islands (Tristan da Cunha, the Falkland Islands, and the oceanic islands south of New Zealand), especially those voyages which are important in the early history of the regions farther south. For most of the subsequent period, after the early 1800s, the area covered is the Antarctic continent and adjacent islands, as well as the 19 peri-Antarctic islands (South Shetland Islands, South Orkney Islands, Shag Rocks, South Georgia, South Sandwich Islands, Bouvetøya, Gough Island, Prince Edward Islands, Iles Crozet, Iles Kerguelen, Iles Saint-Paul et Amsterdam, Heard Island, Macquarie Island, Balleny Islands, Scott Island, Auckland Islands, Campbell Island, and Peter I øy). Details of the peculiar, but fascinating, 19 'non-existent islands' are also included.

Voyages range from those directly engaged in exploration and research to accidental discoveries by early merchant vessels blown off course. Sealers, mainly during the 1800s, and whalers in the 1900s are included because their activities had such profound effects on Antarctic biota. The compilation contains 4865 entries from 700 BC to 2008. The majority of these are for expeditions or voyages and give dates, nationalities, leaders (or captains, etc), vessels, places visited, a concise description, and, where appropriate, a reference. For other events a date, details of persons, countries, and inventions, and a brief description are provided. Occasional entries depart from these forms, depending on their significance and the amount of information available.

The early entries consist mainly of explorations and voyages penetrating to far southern regions. The majority of the nineteenth-century expeditions were undertaken by sealers, who discovered many and visited nearly all the peri-Antarctic islands, and there are also records of several scientific expeditions. The period from about 1890 until the First World War includes the brief, but intense, expeditionary activity during the 'heroic age' of Antarctic exploration. The whaling industry also began in the period. Thence, until the Second World War, whaling was the major activity which is recorded with the discontinuous scientific

expeditions of various nationalities. The regular annual expeditions of several countries form the bulk of the entries for the period after 1945 and these are continued to the present. Information from this current period includes the opening and closing of stations, major traverses, brief details of scientific programmes, and a large variety of other events.

The related historical events included are concise details of inventions and discoveries which have been important in Antarctic exploration (for instance: aircraft, photography, preservation of food, the Primus stove, and the cause of scurvy); political events, treaties and wars affecting the region; the foundation of scientific institutes and initiation of publications concerned with Antarctica; and similar subjects.

Each entry is numbered and indexed by these numbers. The index contains approximately 50 000 entries including: names of persons and vessels (with dates in parentheses), place-names, names of institutes and publications, names of Antarctic stations, inventions, legislation, and other historical events. The index is comprehensive and occupies a substantial part of the text. References to published material are given for entries where this is appropriate and practicable. Much of the information is derived from a great variety of unpublished sources ranging from Antarctic Treaty and Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research reports, correspondence with Antarctic research organizations and specialists, inscriptions, plaques, and grave markers on peri-Antarctic islands, and many others.

The majority of entries for countries currently undertaking Antarctic expeditions has been checked by persons in the institutes involved, who have provided many additional details. The compiler is greatly indebted to these correspondents for assistance in having the list as complete and correct as practicable.

The work has a comprehensive introduction describing its development and structure. The geography of Antarctica and the peri-Antarctic islands is concisely described and followed by a synoptic account of the historical stages of the region. Exploitation of Antarctic resources (sealing, whaling, and fishing) is covered and illustrated graphically. A section includes details of current circumstances, particularly the diplomacy involved with territorial claims, the Antarctic Treaty System, and modern national operations. Maps and plates are included to show the development of knowledge of the far south, the locations of places mentioned in the text, and events of several selected expeditions.

Earlier versions of the compilation have appeared in *Polar Record* (1958) and were published by Cambridge University Press (1989). These have proved useful in a very wide range of disciplines, including: history, politics, geology, glaciology, botany, zoology, meteorology, several other sciences, as well as philately and similar pursuits. They have proven very helpful in cataloguing Antarctic literature.

The book is published in January 2009 by Bernard Quaritch Ltd, Lower John Street, Golden Square, London, United Kingdom, W1F 9AU (Telephone: + 44 (0) 20 7734 2983, Facsimile: 7437 0967, e-mail contact: <C.Scheybeler@quaritch.com>). It is a hardbound volume of 722 pages (including 40 plates, 27 maps, and 21 histograms). The ISBN is 978-0-9550852-8-4 and the price is £ 110 (plus local, sea, or air postage).

**Bob Headland**

*Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge,  
Lensfield Road, Cambridge, United Kingdom, CB2 1ER.  
RKH10@CAM.AC.UK*

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