A History Of Polar Exploration

David Mountfield

Arctic exploration is the physical exploration of the Arctic region of the Earth. It refers to the historical period during which mankind has explored the region north of the Arctic Circle. Historical records suggest that humankind have explored the northern extremes since 325 BC, when the ancient Greek sailor Pytheas reached a frozen sea while attempting to find a source of the metal tin. Dangerous oceans and poor weather conditions often fetter explorers attempting to reach polar regions and both polar achievements ended with a degree of controversy that one cannot believe a century later. The Amundson - Scott tragedy was that Scott was planning his trip to the South Pole in 1907-1909, knowing his apparent rival (Ernest Shackleton) was back from getting closer to the pole (97 miles) than any man before him. That decision has been called one of the bravest sacrifices in the history of exploration. Returning to England, Shackleton was acclaimed by most people a hero, although Scott and his supporters felt he gained an unfair advantage by using Scott's base of operations. Scott now prepared for his next Polar Expedition, which left England in 1910. This was the one that ended in 1912.