

Chromolithograph map.

SHACKLETON’S ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION

British Antarctic Expedition 1907. Route and Surveys of the South Magnetic Polar Party 1908-09. From Triangulation and Taverses by Douglas Mawson B.Sc. B.E.

Author
MAWSON, Douglas

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[1909].

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William Heineman,

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London,

Physical description
Chromolithograph map.

Dimensions
540 by 380mm (21.25 by 15 inches).

Notes
Detailed map of Shackleton’s Expedition.

Map showing the route taken by the South Magnetic Pole Party in Shackleton’s British Antarctic Expedition. The route is time-dated over late 1908 to early 1909. The map also includes the routes of

the Erebus Party and the Western Party. Land relief is indicated by spot heights, hachures and contours.

Sir Douglas Mawson (1882-1958) was an Australian geologist and explorer. The Australian Dictionary of National Biography gives a detailed account of his time with Shackleton in Antarctica:

In November 1907 (Sir) Ernest Shackleton, leader of the British Antarctic Expedition, visited Adelaide on his way south. Mawson approached him with a view to making the round trip to Antarctica on the Nimrod. His idea was to see an existing continental ice-cap and to become acquainted with glaciation and its geological consequences. This interested him because in his South Australian studies he was 'face-to-face with a great accumulation of glacial sediments of Precambrian age, the greatest thing of the kind recorded anywhere in the world'. After consulting with David, who had agreed to join the expedition, Shackleton telegraphed: 'You are appointed Physicist for the duration of the expedition'. Mawson accepted, and so began his long association with the Antarctic.

Although he recognized that Shackleton's prime aim of reaching the South Pole was considered essential to financing the expedition, he would have liked more opportunity offered to the scientists. Nevertheless, the scientists' achievements proved to be considerable and Mawson had good opportunities for glaciological and geological investigations; he published significant accounts of his observations on the aurora and geomagnetism.

In March 1908 Mawson was one of the first party, led by David, to climb Mount Erebus. Next summer David (leader), A. F. Mackay and Mawson were the first to reach the vicinity of the South Magnetic Pole, manhauling their sledges 1260 miles (2028 km); Mawson was responsible for the magnetic observations and the excellent cartographic work. The return was difficult because of exhaustion and shortage of food. David, aged 50, suffered badly and at his request Mawson assumed leadership. The journey almost ended in disaster: having reached their main depot two days late and hearing a rocket distress signal fired from the Nimrod, Mawson, while rushing towards the ship, fell into a crevasse. Help from the ship was required for his rescue.

Shackleton's confidence in Mawson may be gauged from his instructions: should his own expedition to the South Pole not return in time, Mawson was to lead a search party. David said in public tribute: "Mawson was the real leader who was the soul of our expedition to the Magnetic Pole. We really have in him an Australian Nansen, of infinite resource, splendid physique, astonishing indifference to frost".

Bibliography

Provenance

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