WILEY

The Expedition of H. R. H. the Duke of the Abruzzi to the Karakoram Himalayas:
Discussion

Author(s): Yates Thompson, Godwin Austen, Francis Younghusband, Martin Conway, T. G. Longstaff, Dr. Stein and Filippo de Filippi

Source: *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Jan., 1911), pp. 25-30

Published by: geographicalj

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1777576>

Accessed: 27-06-2016 08:38 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at

<http://about.jstor.org/terms>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Wiley, The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Geographical Journal*

rocks, of which north wall Teram Kangri forms a part. According to Dr. Longstaff and Dr. Neve, the chains formed by sedimentary rocks may even be considered as a separate system which constitutes a northern Karakoram range corresponding to the second Hindu Kush range.

The specimens of plants brought back by the expedition are now being studied, and go to confirm the resemblance which has already been recorded between this flora and the mountain flora of the other great Asiatic ranges, and of the chief European ranges, including the Alps.

The Expedition are unanimous in their high praise of the Baltis, whom they found docile, willing, easy to persuade, extraordinarily sober and always good-humoured. Thirty-five of them lived with us upon the Baltoro, of whom fifteen were our constant companions in the high camps. They even went up to the Chogolisa saddle. They acquired a perfect knowledge of the use of the rope on the high glaciers, which were full of crevasses and covered with dangerous snow, and they possess all the necessary qualities to become first-rate Alpine porters in a few seasons.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Yates Thompson), before the paper, alluding to the circumstance that the lecturer was an Italian, and that the Italian Ambassador was present, remarked that all people were perhaps not aware how much geography owed to Italy. It was, however, an Italian who first discovered the whole of Central and Eastern Asia; it was an Italian, Christopher Columbus, who discovered America; and now we had an Italian gentleman who, in the cause of geographical science, had penetrated to the most remote regions of Asia—regions which Cæsar never knew—and who would doubtless give us an excellent account of what he had seen.

Mr. YATES THOMPSON (Chairman), after the paper: We have all been greatly delighted with the lecture of Dr. Filippi, and we only wish that the Duke had been here who commanded this expedition, and who is a Duke, for his energy, his industry, and his vigour, who might almost meet the requirements of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. What is most remarkable about this lecture and this region is, that we have here the last explorer of it, and we have also the first, Colonel Godwin Austen, whose name is connected ever since the year 1861 with this remarkable, this terrific region, and I hope he will let us hear his view of the achievement of the most recent explorer of the regions he first visited.

Colonel GODWIN AUSTEN: The first diagram we saw on the screen gave the route of His Royal Highness the Duke of the Abruzzi from Rawalpindi to the Baltoro glacier on the Karakoram range. It gives me the opportunity, which is fitting, to bring to your notice the names of two officers who, as far back as the early fifties, were associated in mapping that part of India. Those officers were Captain D. G. Robinson and Captain T. G. Montgomerie, of the Bengal Engineers; they organized the survey parties, and we owe all the geography to them. The work that was done near Rawalpindi, in the Sind Sagor Doab lying between the Jhelum and the Indus, was a fine piece of surveying work from the excellence of its topography. The work that was done by Captain Montgomerie

was the region from the plains of the Punjab up to the main range of the Himalayas. That survey is perhaps one of the most accurate, as far as its triangulation goes, as any that was ever done, and particularly for the very lofty peaks on which observations were taken. The most rigorous observations were taken close up to the main range which we have seen depicted this evening. As the triangulation and topography advanced from the plains into Kashmir and on beyond, the great ambition which we had was to reach the snowy peaks which we had seen looming far away for several years. They were fixed so accurately that when the plane-table work had to be done, it was comparatively easy to do it. A great work is before some future surveyor in carrying the survey further to the north. A fine attempt was made by Dr. Longstaff in proceeding up the Salto glacier, and the work that has been done by the Duke of the Abruzzi is of a similar nature. It is a great pleasure to me, who took part in the survey operations, to find that surveyors are penetrating into a portion that we were unable to reach, and that there is every possibility of their proceeding on beyond the range of the Himalayas and mapping a great deal of the country, of which at present we know very little. There are many points in the address we have had this evening that would form a lecture alone, and it is almost impossible to touch upon questions of geology; but I was struck with one point, in two or three of the diagrams which we have seen thrown upon the screen. The summit of K_2 appears to me to be of a more recent rock than that of the base, and it is not at all unlikely that the summit may prove to be of stratified rocks, while the base is of granite, which the Duke has recorded. It is very interesting to find the allusion to the limestone and stratified rocks which occur at the head of the Baltoro glacier—it leads us to connect that portion of the range with what was observed by Dr. Longstaff to the east, and what I have seen myself on the Changcheumo and Pankong lake still further to the eastward. I think that the work that was performed by the Duke of the Abruzzi and those with him in remaining upon the Chogolisa plateau for ten days was a most extraordinary feat, and every credit is due to them for the exposure that they underwent on it.

SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND: I think we must all admire both the great energy, daring, and skill, with which His Royal Highness the Duke of the Abruzzi led this expedition, and the thoroughness of the scientific work. But as geographers I think we must all admire, quite as much as the thoroughness, his reserve. I dare say you noticed on the right hand corner of the map a great blank space; although His Royal Highness had seen peaks there, he had seen enough of these mountains to know that you cannot trust a mountain a yard further than you can see it. Upon every side it presents a different aspect. Some twenty-four years ago, when I stood before this Society and described my journey across these mountains, which I first saw from the northern side—the side directly opposite to that from which His Royal Highness's expedition has been working—I said that this great range on the northern side looked to me as if it was made up of a series like one hundred Matterhorns in a row. It was an exaggeration; still, I think after you have seen these magnificent photographs, which I think we must all admit are the finest series of mountain photographs which have ever been presented to us, you will agree that if I was wrong in saying that there was one hundred Matterhorns, at any rate, that was the best means I could possibly employ of producing upon your minds, without these beautiful photographs, an impression of the grandeur of the mountain region. After seeing those photographs, you will be able to realize what my feelings were, when, without any Alpine guides, without any Alpine appliances, without tents

even, I had to find my way right through those mountains into India. But, fortunately for me, I had to get across the very easiest point, and not like His Royal Highness, aspire to climb the very highest peak.

Dr. de Filippi and Colonel Godwin Austen have dwelt upon the importance of prolonging the explorations which have been already undertaken by His Royal Highness and Dr. Longstaff, and filling up that extremely interesting and important gap which lies beyond what has already been done, between that and the valley of the Oprang river. When we discussed these points together, previous to his Royal Highness proceeding to these parts, I was fully under the impression that when he reached the watershed, at what we then thought would be Windy gap, which I dare say you noticed at the extreme right of the map, the party would then look down into the Oprang river. But I think, probably from the geographical point of view, the most important result which has come from this expedition is the fact that between there is another valley and another high range; it would be of interest to explore the northern slopes of this magnificent mountain, Teram Kangri, discovered by Dr. Longstaff, and which in all likelihood will prove to be even higher than the height he attributes to it at present, 27,000 feet. I think that is the chief piece of exploration to be done in the region, and much as I admire Italian enterprise, I hope English enterprise won't be behind in carrying it out. We all owe a deep debt of gratitude to his Royal Highness for permitting Dr. de Filippi to give us this lecture, and to show us those splendid photographs, which have been taken with infinite care by Vittoria Sella; and I should like to thank Dr. de Filippi, and to express my admiration for the excellent way in which he has lectured to us, in what is to him a foreign language.

Sir MARTIN CONWAY: I think one of the most revealing photographs that was shown upon the screen to-night was the first photograph—of the map. It would be difficult to find a piece of the world anywhere that would show you such an extremely intricate tangle of mountains as that portion of the map shows. There is, I think, no part of the world where mountains throng together, and finally uplift themselves into so astounding a group of super-eminent peaks, as do the mountains that surround this knot-point of the ranges of Asia. The mountains that surround the head of the Baltoro glacier—I think you will admit, after seeing, as you have, the wonderful photographs of them shown to-night—yield to none that any of us have ever seen, in precipitance, in boldness of form, in loftiness, and in the way in which they are grouped together. They are beyond question the finest mountain group in the world. When I went up that region, now eighteen years ago, it was with the hope that we should find there a high mountain that we could climb, and I cannot describe to you how, as day after day passed and we got further and further into the heart of these mountains, the feeling of hopelessness overwhelmed us—hopelessness of ever finding anything we could climb at all. Because in the case of most of these mountains it is not merely impossible to reach the summit, it is difficult even to commence the ascent from the bottom. There are no peaks I have ever seen that are more inaccessible than the bulk of the peaks that surround the Baltoro glacier, regarded even from the most expert rock-climber's point of view. If anything is to be done in climbing in such a district as this, it is necessary that the climbing party should be exceedingly well equipped, exceedingly well organized, and exceedingly well supported by a large body of porters. To organize an expedition which shall be able to carry into the front line—what I may call the “fighting line”—a sufficient body of expert mountaineers, to organize an expedition of that kind,

with its quantity of coolies, its huge organization, and then to lead that expedition to the highest point that has ever been reached by man, is indeed a great achievement. That was the achievement of the Duke of the Abruzzi. I have no doubt that in the future another expedition, not only one other, but many others, will go up this same Baltoro glacier, and will attempt again either the Bride peak or the Golden Throne, or possibly one or two more which may conceivably be climbable among these mountains; but I cannot believe that any expedition will be better led, better organized, or more successfully brought back. The Balti coolies, upon whom ultimately the success of the expedition depends, are very docile men, but they require much care and a great deal of attention, or they would be very easily lost. I think that the fact that this expedition has returned after employing some three hundred of these men, taking them right into the very fastness of the mountains, and bringing them safely back, is one we should take note of. It would be easy to talk at great length about this district, but I will confine myself now merely to expressing my hearty congratulations alike to the leader of the expedition and to his followers, and our thanks to Dr. Filippi for the extremely interesting manner in which he has described the journey to us to-night.

Dr. T. G. LONGSTAFF: I have not myself been on the Baltoro glacier, although last summer I was, Asiatically speaking, fairly close to my friend Dr. de Filippi; I was then on the glaciers further to the south and east. If I attempted to take up the many interesting points that are raised in Dr. de Filippi's paper, I am afraid the hall would be empty before I was half through. I should like, however, to draw attention to one thing, about which, with characteristic modesty, very little has been said, and that is, that Broad peak has been for the first time measured, and turns out to be over 27,000 feet. Now, 27,000 feet is a peculiarly interesting orographical number. You have the twin peaks of Kanchenjunga, 28,000 and 27,000; you have Everest and its companion peak, Makalu, 29,000 and 27,000, and now we have K_2 and Broad peak, 28,000 and 27,000. Those are the only three groups in the world that are definitely known to attain such an extraordinary altitude. There are no others besides those five mountains, with the possible exception of Teram Kangri, whose height cannot as yet be definitely accepted; so that really this addition of a fifth peak is a very important one indeed. With regard to the excellent survey of Lieut. Marchese Negrotto, it was carried out by Paganini's photogrammetric method, of which you hear very little in this country; I do not quite know why. The method was started in 1849 by Colonel Laussedat, in France, and since then it has been steadily improved. It was introduced into Canada by Dr. Deville, and has been exclusively used by Wheeler and Drewry and other eminent Canadian surveyors in the Rocky mountains. It is an extremely accurate method of survey, and I do not think there is any other which is so suited to a mountain country. Mountaineers must have listened to this lecture and seen these photographs—the most beautiful photographs Sella has ever produced—with a certain amount of regret; all the mountaineers I have met who have much experience practically give up hopes of being able to do any very high climbs in the Karakoram. There does not appear to me to be the slightest chance of success. I have no doubt expeditions will continue to attempt K_2 . I was myself asked last January to join a man to go out to K_2 . He assured me it was perfectly easy, so I suggested that he had better do it himself. I was of course exceedingly interested when Sella came to develop his photographs, to hear from him he had found Teram Kangri, a big peak to the south-east which I had seen and measured in the same year,

because there is some doubt about my measurements, and all the summer I have been wondering whether the peak really does exist; so it is a matter of great gratification to me to see it in that panorama. Sella took it on June 22. I crossed the Salto pass with Neve and Slingsby on June 15, and, I think, made my first measurement of Teram Kangri on the 17th, so I just managed to get it in by five days. At any rate, I think we may be certain that a very high mountain does exist in the position I indicated.

About that final climb of the Duke's. Dr. de Filippi, and his companions also, have such a rare habit of modesty, that I do not know whether you quite realise what a very remarkable feat that final climb of the Duke's was. The bare idea of camping at over 21,000 feet for ten days is perfectly horrible to anybody who has ever done anything like it. It is appalling to think of; and then at the end of that time, having got to 24,600 feet, to wait for two hours for the weather to clear and make the last 500 feet of corniced snow-ridge possible. To go on was merely to court the disasters that have made the Lyskamm so notorious in the Alps; it is a danger that no sane mountaineer would dream of encountering. It is exceedingly hard lines, when complete success was almost in his grasp, that he was not able to complete the ascent. Naval officers are admittedly very accurate observers; the altitudes were deduced by mercurial barometer, checked at Leh, Srinagar, Skardu, and Gilgit; also they had their own base station at Rdokass. So this ascent to 24,600 feet is absolutely certain and definite beyond all doubt, and is much the highest ascent that has ever been made, or that any one else has ever claimed to have made.

Dr. STEIN: It is a somewhat unexpected honour that I find myself called upon to speak after the eminent mountaineers who have given you their high appreciation of this wonderful expedition of His Royal Highness. But I cannot deny the fact that I have passed the Karakoram, both west and east, on scientific expeditions, and that long ago I had also the good fortune, on what I may call a mere holiday trip, to sight Mount Godwin Austen or K_2 . It was after my first year in India, after a Punjab "hot weather," during which one felt half roasted and half boiled by the heat of the plains, that I made up my mind to get as near as I could to the greenest spot on the Indian maps, green being the colour used in them for glaciers, and there is certainly no spot anywhere in the mountain regions of Asia where that colour occupies a larger space than about K_2 . It was a short holiday: I just managed to get near the foot of the Baltoro glacier and back again in time without exceeding my leave. But ever since, the vision I had of that wonderful mountain has been a cherished possession to me. I am not qualified, from such an acquaintance as I have got of Mount Godwin Austen, to speak about the physical conditions of that region. But certain points which Dr. de Filippi mentioned at the beginning of his paper encourage me to make a remark or two as to historical facts concerning it. We humans have a way of intruding into the mountain world, even where it is "horrible," as Dr. Longstaff has called it. Thus there is the broad fact that this Baltoro glacier has seen regular trade during centuries, and in periods which by no means go back to dim antiquity. We have the evidence of one of the most observant visitors the East has ever seen, Dr. François Bernier, who went to Kashmir during the reign of the Moghul Emperor Aurangzeb. He records how, the Ladak route being closed by war, the trade between Kashmir and Kashmir was carried on over that high Muztagh pass, which again centuries later Sir Francis Younghusband crossed twenty-four years ago as the first European. I also might mention that the important observation of Dr. de Filippi's regarding the racial origin of the Baltis is entirely confirmed by early

Chinese records, which tell us that Baltistan, known to them as Great Po-lu (Bolor), as well as Gilgit, were occupied by the Tibetans in the eighth century A.D. I have no doubt that the prevalence of Tibetan speech is largely due to that prolonged occupation.

A nearer past and nearer historical links must rise to our minds here. I think it a truly memorable occasion, when we have present here the first explorer of that great region, Colonel Godwin Austen, after whom the mountain was named, rightly as I believe, by a former President of this Society. Since his days many expeditions have gone up to the great peaks of the Himalayas; but I think that none of them has done more remarkable pioneering work than Sir Francis Younghusband when he came down with his guides, without a camp, over that glacier pass disused for centuries. It is also no ordinary occasion when we can hear Sir Martin Conway, who led the first large mountaineering expedition to these parts, and Dr. Longstaff, whose recent explorations have opened out a new region to us east of that great peak. We have here also the linking of the past with the future; because I have no doubt whatever that unexplored region to the east of Mount Godwin Austen will attract many an expedition yet to come. However, I believe that none of them could possibly exceed in daring, in leadership, and in organization, the one which Dr. de Filippi has described to us, and which H.R.H. the Duke of the Abruzzi led. I have had my humble experiences of work in mountains which are deserts too. I have been obliged to move large parties across high mountain regions where for forty or fifty days nothing in the way of food could be secured, and it is the practical knowledge of the difficulties involved which fills me with the highest admiration for the organization, care, and skill with which this prolonged exploration was carried out. We have received here, as it were, personal evidence of H.R.H.'s skill in organization. I am sure he could not have entrusted the task of acquainting us with the results to anybody more qualified than Dr. de Filippi. He told us at the beginning that he had no adventures to relate. He wisely allowed nature and the peaks which we saw before us to speak. No words on my part could possibly add to the appreciation which Cav. Sella's slides must have excited in all of you. I only wish to add my own personal gratitude for having been allowed to see Mount Godwin Austen again in such marvellous photographs, and my thorough admiration for the way in which the expedition's work was related.

DR. DE FILIPPI: I can make no reply to everybody who has so kindly spoken, except my thanks. I think the weighty authority of Colonel Godwin Austen, Sir Francis Younghusband, Sir Martin Conway, Dr. Longstaff, and Dr. Stein have contributed to convince you that although the chief aim of the expedition was mountaineering, still H.R.H. the Duke of the Abruzzi has given it every chance of doing whatever geographical and scientific work might prove possible. I beg you to accept my warmest thanks for the indulgence you have shown to so dry and technical a paper. It would please Sella to know how keenly appreciative you have shown yourselves of his work. I shall be proud to convey to H.R.H. the Duke of the Abruzzi the warmth of the reception which you have accorded to the narrative of his journey and your appreciation of his labours. I know I interpret his wishes correctly, in thanking you heartily on his behalf.