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The Danish North-East Greenland Expedition: Discussion

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Source: *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Jan., 1909), pp. 61-65

Published by: geographicalj

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1777752>

Accessed: 21-06-2016 16:52 UTC

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The concluding words of Brönlund's report were: "I perished in 79° N. lat., under the hardships of the return journey over the inland ice in November. I reached this place under a waning moon, and cannot go on because of my frozen feet and the darkness. The bodies of the others are in the middle of the fjord. Hagen died on November 15, Mylius Erichsen some ten days later."

The PRESIDENT (before the paper): We must all feel grateful to Lieut. Trolle for coming from Denmark in order to describe to us the results of the Danish expedition, which lasted two years, during which the little-known fjords and coast of North-East Greenland were explored. At the same time, we must all feel sad that his leader, Mylius Erichsen, is not here to tell his own story. As Lieut. Trolle will tell us, he, and two of his companions, perished whilst they were endeavouring to carry out the work for which they were sent to Greenland. It was not the first expedition which Mylius Erichsen had organized. Six years ago he arranged an admirable expedition to Western Greenland, and many excellent results were obtained, especially in connection with the language, the folk-lore, and the general ethnology of the Eskimo. I am glad to say that these results have been published in English by one of the members of that expedition, Mr. Rasmussen. The expedition about which we are to hear to-night was thoroughly well organized, it having scientific experts in various branches of science. The portion of the coast which this expedition covered links up that coast which was explored many years ago by Sir Lewis Beaumont, and later by Captain Peary with the furthest point on the coast of the east of Greenland then known. This is the gap which has been filled up by the expedition on which Lieut. Trolle served, and I am quite sure that when we have heard his story, we shall be convinced that the expedition in which he took part is one which has added much to our scientific knowledge of Greenland. I will do no more than call upon Lieut. Trolle to deliver his lecture.

The PRESIDENT (after the paper): I must first of all call on M. de Bille, who has been Minister here representing the Danish sovereign for eighteen years, and who is just retiring from that honourable position. He is a well-known figure at these meetings, and we hope we may hear him here often again.

M. DE BILLE: You have rightly observed that I have not that same particular qualification to speak to the Geographical Society as I have had the privilege to do on former occasions; but I have one inalienable qualification left me, and that is that of being a Dane, and it is as a Dane that I venture to offer to the Geographical Society my country's thanks for the honour you do it in listening to the tale of one of our brave sons, Lieut. Trolle, when he tells us the story of his recent Arctic expedition, which I think is quite worthy of your attention. The young lieutenant of the *Danmark* has related to you the objects and the achievements of the Mylius Erichsen expedition, and in good sailor fashion he has not dwelt so much upon their hardships and their dangers as upon the achievements and the story, as it were, of their daily life. To all that, of course, I have nothing to add; but what I desire to submit to you is, that these young men, those who gave their lives and those who came back safely, have not only rendered a service to geographical science, but they have amply proved that their generation in our country is not lacking that enthusiasm, that manly spirit, that power of endurance, and that strength of will which should secure to them the sympathy and the respect of Englishmen, and should allow them to take their place amongst the explorers of much greater nations than ours. Denmark has no small record in the history of

the exploration of Greenland, and the Mylius Erichsen expedition has added to it information of considerable importance. Now Lieut. Trolle is here to hear the verdict of the Royal Geographical Society. The stimulating influence of the Geographical Society and their support is perhaps the greatest benefit they have in their power to bestow; the most invaluable benefit, I take it, and if Lieut. Trolle can take it home with him to his comrades, then I am sure that they will rate it as high as the honours their king and their countrymen have bestowed upon him.

Sir CLEMENTS MARKHAM: We have heard from Lieut. Trolle the story of a great piece of geographical work, one of the few Arctic problems that remained to be solved—the completion of the circuit of Greenland. I am particularly interested because in 1877 I did all I could to induce our Council to undertake this very work, I regret to say unsuccessfully. Since then this country has taken a back seat in Arctic exploration. It was not always so. Scoresby discovered 350 miles of that coast of East Greenland; Clavering, going there for another purpose, also did valuable work; but the Danes have persevered, and by that perseverance and thoroughness, and by the continuity of their work, they have done far more than any other country on that difficult piece of coast, East Greenland. The first separate volume that we ever published in this Society was a translation of the admirable work of Captain Graab, and since his time we have read the journeys on the east coast by Holm, Ryder and others, and we have seen how thoroughly they worked; how all the scientific investigations have been carried out in geology and biology, and especially ethnology, and the study of that very remarkable people on the east coast who, I believe, came from the north. Only last October I was listening, at Vienna, to a most interesting paper, by Mr. Thalbitger, on the folk-lore of the East Greenlanders. Having so thoroughly worked out the southern half of East Greenland, the Danes turned to the far more difficult work of exploring the northern side of the east coast of Greenland. It was the aspiration of Mylius Erichsen to complete the discovery of the coast from Point Bismarck to Peary's discoveries. I had not the pleasure of his personal acquaintance, but I corresponded with him a good deal. I knew well what an excellent piece of work he had done on the west side of Greenland; I knew also that he was an accomplished man of letters; his stories and tales of Jutland are well known, and will live. He wrote to me a long letter from his summer retreat on the west coast of Jutland, full of enthusiasm and patriotism, but still thoroughly practical, and he sketched out a plan which entirely coincided with my ideas. I was delighted to find that at last we had found an explorer who had all the qualifications for doing the work. It is a great calamity that we have lost him. He was a great geographer and explorer. He did not die until he had gained the victory, until he had done the work he went out to do, and he died in the midst of his discoveries. There can be no more noble, no more glorious death. I think the meeting will join very heartily with me in congratulating Lieut. Trolle and his gallant companions on the way, the thorough way, in which they carried on and completed the labours of their lamented chief.

Admiral Sir LEWIS BEAUMONT: I have listened to the lecture with very great interest, because it was my good fortune many years ago to take part in Captain (now Sir George) Nares's expedition which explored a portion of Greenland on the western side, and very near Peary channel. It was the last English expedition to that part of the Arctic Regions, and it was distinguished as being the last in which man-hauled sledges were used; and I make that observation because from that time the use of dog-hauled sledges has enabled Arctic explorers to do far more distant work. Our expedition was succeeded by an American expedition, under the command of Major (now General) Greely, and one of his officers, Captain Lockwood,

by the use of dogs, succeeded in passing the point which we had been able to reach by 100 miles. Many years afterwards, he was followed by another American officer, Peary, who is the most persistent Arctic explorer there is, and who is still at work. He has been going to the Arctic Regions for about twelve years, and he passed Lockwood's furthest, and arrived at Cape Bridgeman. And so the western side of Greenland was finally mapped, and it remained for the Danish expedition, the story of which you have heard, to complete the whole by joining Cape Bismarck to Cape Bridgeman. I think a more interesting sketch of an expedition could not have been given than was given us to-night, and that in words which left so much to be understood, which showed the innate modesty of those who had taken part in it, which gave us to understand what innumerable and immense difficulties they had to surmount, and how completely and thoroughly they had done their work. What I was struck with in the description was that the physical nature of the two sides of Greenland are somewhat different. It appears as if there was less snow remaining in summer on the east side than on the west side. The part of Greenland that I saw was never free from snow in the height of summer, but it became extremely soft and wet, and made travelling extremely difficult. Apparently that is not so on the other side, as the lecturer said and showed us by one of the photographs. There were fields of grass and flowers, and much snow had melted away, so that it appears that travelling in the summer was quite impossible, whereas I came back from my furthest in June, and had a long journey in July, and finally had to cross the straits and get to Discovery harbour in August; and that was done with snow still on nearly every part of the shore. Then I notice also what I think is a very good plan—the plan which has been followed by most expeditions which are not English—that the crew was smaller than with us; the staff of the scientific workers and enthusiasts then can be greater, and therefore the work that is done is also greater and, I say, better. You can easily understand that the crew, many of them excellent men, are not inspired and stimulated to do their special work as thoroughly and in the same way as an officer who is a volunteer, or a scientist would be sure to do. I remember the conspicuous zeal and ability with which the few scientific members of our expedition worked; and I dare say those of you who have read Captain Scott's narrative of the National Antarctic Expedition will remember how the scientists in the Antarctic laboured incessantly. I think it was a good plan, and shows careful thought, to take a very small crew, and for most of the expedition to be formed of officers and scientists. I want you also, if you will, to join with me in paying a tribute of admiration to Lieut. Trolle for the splendid way in which he seems to have navigated the ship. He being the naval officer, evidently had charge of the ship, and after the very sad death of the commander of the expedition, became the leader. Everybody who has read a description of Arctic navigation, knows the immense difficulties of it; the constant anxiety and the responsibility which lies upon the navigator. Therefore, from the point of view of his having been navigator throughout, and the chief of the expedition for the last part of it, I desire, as a naval officer and an Arctic explorer of an older generation, to give him my tribute of admiration for the very fine work which was done in his expedition, and for the extremely modest and interesting way in which he has given the story of it.

Colonel FEILDEN: After the admirable tributes given to Lieut. Trolle for his most interesting address, I have very little to add. I must say that I feel it would have been inappropriate if any other nation but Danes had achieved this last great and final success of making the circuit and joining in with the discoveries on the north of Greenland. It almost seems to have been overlooked by the meeting that the great island continent of Greenland is a possession of

Denmark, and that Denmark has achieved a success in that country which perhaps no other nation has ever done, and that is coming in contact with an inferior race and having kept that race exempt from the great misfortunes and evils which generally come from a lower race meeting a superior one. We all owe a debt of gratitude to Denmark for the lesson which she has taught us in dealing with an inferior race. I will not enter into the history of previous voyages, which has been done by Sir Clements Markham and Admiral Sir Lewis Beaumont, but I think I may safely say that no Arctic Expedition appears to have been so well organized to carry out scientific work since the days of Nordenskiöld in Spitsbergen, as that of the late Mylius Erichsen. Every branch of science seems to have been carried on by experts, and the little that we heard of these results from Lieut. Trolle must make us all anxious to hear further. Nothing struck me as more interesting than the remarks he made on the ethnology, and on the ancient range of the Eskimo. Forty years ago we did not even know the insularity of Greenland; we only gathered it by induction from the tides, and from the animal life on the east coast. Now Lieut. Trolle tells us that he has traced the Eskimo encampments up to Denmark fjord. I think there can be very little doubt that the course of the Greenlanders must have been round the north coast of Greenland, and that the track of the musk-oxen and the other animals was the same. But this opens up perhaps the most interesting question of all, in regard to the scientific nature of those discoveries. Whether animals and plants crept back to live in polar regions, from which all life was extinguished by the glacial epoch, or whether it is the remnant of the life which has outlived the glacial epoch, and still lingers on those shores. I feel quite sure that the botanical researches of the expedition will add greatly to our knowledge, because I expect it to be found that the flora of this portion is highly Scandinavian in its character, and that it must have passed across the pole from the north, and not from southward. It is curious the finding of those white wolves; I never heard of such animals before in Greenland as white wolves. I unite in thanking Lieut. Trolle for his most admirable and modest address.

Mr. BERNACCHI: I should like to ask Lieut. Trolle one question, and that is, what were the chief difficulties with regard to the motor car, presuming for the moment that the motor car had been more powerful, and the conditions of the surface more favourable?

The PRESIDENT: I am sure that we all wish to associate ourselves with what fell from Sir Clements Markham when speaking of his admiration for the courage of these explorers, and the heroism of those who lost their lives in following what they felt was their duty. Nothing could have been finer than this work, and nothing could have been simpler than the way it has been described to us to-night. We can realize clearly enough how intolerably disagreeable much of this work must be. We also realize clearly how very pleasant it is to listen to it here, and it is for that pleasure we thank Lieut. Trolle very sincerely. I am sure I may do that in the name of every one here to-night.

Lieut. TROLLE: I am very sorry that I am unable to express myself in English as well as I should like to do now, to tell you how deeply I am touched, and how much I should like to thank you for all the kind words that have been said to me and about my comrades on the expedition, and I should like to say that I am very proud to hear these flattering words about the Danish expedition from this Society, which is second to none in the world. Whenever you look on the chart, you will find everywhere the names of famous English explorers; and when I remember the distinguished names of Franklin, McClintock, M'Clure, of Nares, of Markham, or Beaumont, of Scott, and many others, I must say that I

am very proud, that now my name and those of my comrades may be included among these names, after having done some work in Arctic exploration. I only want to express my feelings of thankfulness and gratitude.

About the motor car. I do believe, when the surface is very hard, say on the inland ice, and you have a stronger motor car than we had, then it may very well act. The roughness of the ice is nothing, but on the snow the motor generally will be too heavy, and go through; on the inland ice where the surface is hard, I think a big motor car would be very useful.

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## DR. SVEN HEDIN'S JOURNEY IN CENTRAL ASIA, 1899-1902: SCIENTIFIC RESULTS.\*

By Major W. BROADFOOT.

THE larger part of this work, on a great scale, was briefly examined in June, 1906 (*Geographical Journal*, vol. 27, pp. 606-613). It consisted mainly of descriptions of journeys about the Takla Makan and of the country round Lob Nor, a shifting lake in which the drainage of a vast horseshoe of mountains is ultimately received and lost in the expanse of surrounding sand. There now remain for consideration vols. 3 and 4, in which the detail of journeys through North and East Tibet and Central and West Tibet are recorded; it is not proposed to examine these very closely, for they have presumably received sufficient attention in the reviews of the popular edition of 1903.† Still, a few notes on these volumes may be of service to future students.

A commencement is made by describing in minute detail—as, indeed, all Hedin's descriptions in this book are—his first trip in North-Eastern Tibet. Starting from Kára Koshan, which readers will remember is the present Lob Nor, he set forth to cross the Astin Tágh (the Altyn or Altin Tágh of our maps) and various other ranges, chief of which is the Arka Tagh, back by the west side of Kum Kul to Temerlik. The letterpress, practically a diary, can be followed on his route-maps, which are beautifully drawn and distinct. They begin for this part of the work at Plate 29, and the text is more or less a descriptive commentary on the map. Taken together and fitted into the R.G.S. map of Tibet, a student will acquire almost as much information about the country passed through and its surroundings as is possible without an actual visit. All sorts of information concerning it may be gathered; its configuration, its capabilities in the way of supply of forage and water, and the presence or absence of wild animal life are recorded. Thus in one place we find camels, yaks, antelopes, hares, and partridges; whilst in another, not necessarily very far distant, animal life down to insect

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\* 'The Scientific Results of a Journey in Central Asia, 1899-1902.' By Dr. Sven Hedin. Stockholm: Lithographic Institute of the General Staff of the Swedish Army; London: Dulau & Co.; Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus.

† 'Central Asia and Tibet.' By Sven Hedin. Hurst & Blackett.  
No. I.—JANUARY, 1909.]