



Book Review

KRZYSZTOF SIENICKI. 2016. *Captain Scott: Icy Deceits and Untold Realities*. xxxi + 776 pages, 164 figures and artwork, 1400 references, 39 tables and 2 schemes. Hardcover with color dust jacket. Open Academic Press Berlin–Warsaw. Price €86.27 £67.98 \$93.31. ISBN-13: 978-8394452001.

So much has been written about Captain Scott's expedition to the Antarctic that you may be forgiven for believing that nothing new could possibly be discovered about his ill-fated attempt to be the first man to reach the South Pole. The race to the Pole, the heartbreak of finishing second behind the Norwegian explorer Amundsen, the harrowing return journey, and, of course, the final act where Scott and his team perished only a few miles from base camp are events which have become synonymous with the bravery and sacrifice humans undergo in the name of exploration. Scott's exploits and ultimate failures have been analysed ever since news of his disastrous journey reached the public and authors since this time have done everything to raise the status of Scott from that of explorer to legend.

But what if our perceptions of Scott and his expedition are wrong? What if Scott's failure to reach the South Pole first and his teams' subsequent demise on Antarctica were a result of poor decision making, questionable ethics, and exaggerated reported weather conditions? Questions such as these may not sit comfortably with those who wish to view Scott as a martyr to the cause of British exploration and believe Scott's legendary status is beyond reproach, but science is not concerned with opinion.

In Krzysztof Sienicki's new book '*Captain Scott: Icy Deceits and Untold Realities*', every aspect of Captain Scott's journey to and from the South Pole is analysed using scientific techniques. With unprecedented analyses of weather data, diary entries from Scott and others, and the actions of everyone involved in the Pole attempt, the author builds a convincing argument for viewing the entire expedition as a series of poor decision making, data manipulation, and self-interest on the part of those involved in the epic journey. Until now no account of Scott's expedition has delved so deeply into the mindset of those within the expedition, the meteorological physics of the weather in Antarctica, or the moral and ethical decisions made by those unfortunate men a century

ago. As well as chapters containing extensive meteorological analyses, data, and photographs, the book intricately looks into the actions taken by the men at every step of the journey and questions whether those actions were the correct ones. One of the many highlights of the book is a chapter in which the author exposes other notable scientists and writers of Scott's expedition, who in the course of publishing their own books, felt the need to cherry pick certain data in order to keep Scott's legendary status alive.

With unparalleled weather data gathering, photographs and diagrams, and diary entry analyses, '*Captain Scott: Icy Deceits and Untold Realities*' is recommended reading for anyone seeking a truthful, unbiased account of one of the most important expeditions in human history.

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