Polar Exploration

This series includes accounts, by eye-witnesses and contemporaries, of early expeditions to the Arctic and the Antarctic. Huge resources were invested in such endeavours, particularly the search for the North-West Passage, which, if successful, promised enormous strategic and commercial rewards. Cartographers and scientists travelled with many of the expeditions, and their work made important contributions to earth sciences, climatology, botany and zoology. They also brought back anthropological information about the indigenous peoples of the Arctic region and the southern fringes of the American continent. The series further includes dramatic and poignant accounts of the harsh realities of working in extreme conditions and utter isolation in bygone centuries.

My Life as an Explorer

Prior to his disappearance in the Arctic during an airborne rescue mission, the Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen (1872–1928) had reflected in writing on his extraordinary career. First published in 1927 and reissued here in the English translation of that year, his autobiography discusses in straightforward style the numerous difficulties of his many expeditions, ranging from problems of finance and planning through to dealing with life-threatening danger and inevitable controversy. Generously acknowledging an ‘old gentleman in Grimsby’ for providing materials that helped him plan the first navigation of the North-West Passage, Amundsen credits painstaking preparation as the cornerstone of his success, especially in the conquest of the South Pole. His fuller accounts of these two expeditions are also reissued in the Cambridge Library Collection. Frank and focused like its author, the present work will reveal to readers the outlook and approach of a remarkable figure in the history of polar exploration.
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MY LIFE AS AN EXPLORER
Books by Roald Amundsen

My Life as an Explorer
The North-East Passage
The North-West Passage
The South Pole
The *Gjoa*, 72 feet long and 11 feet wide and of shallow draft, used by Amundsen in his discovery of the Northwest Passage and now on view at the Golden Gate Park in San Francisco.
ROALD AMUNDESEN —
MY LIFE AS AN EXPLORER

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1927
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