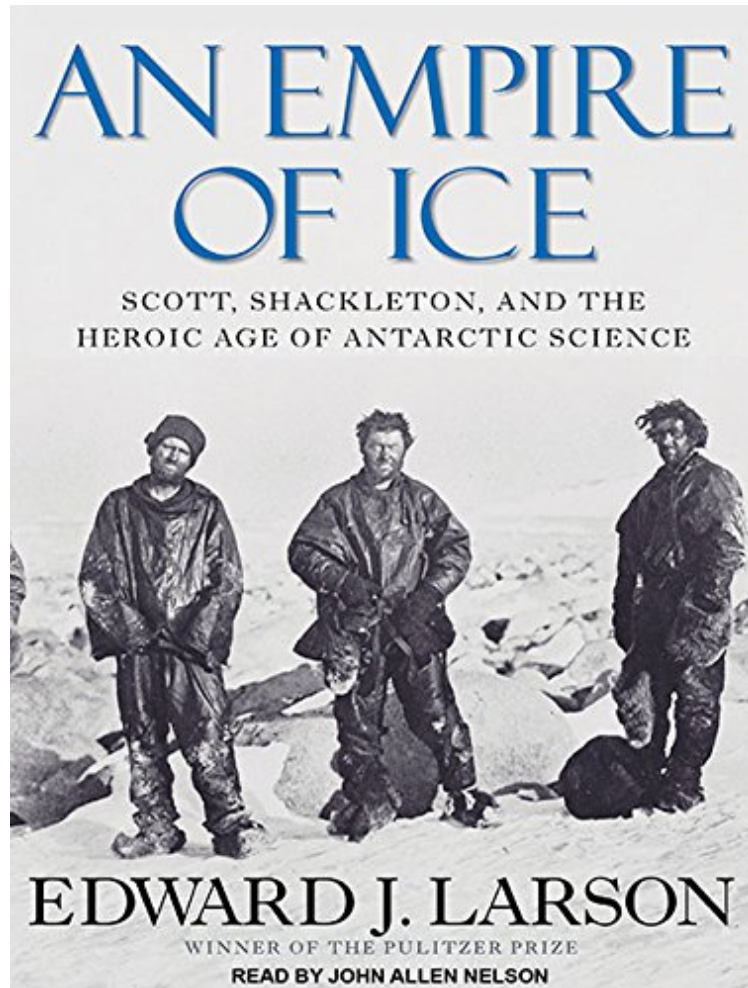


An Empire of Ice: Scott, Shackleton, and the Heroic Age of Antarctic Science

Edward J. Larson

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Edward J. Larson : An Empire of Ice: Scott, Shackleton, and the Heroic Age of Antarctic Science before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised An Empire of Ice: Scott, Shackleton, and the Heroic Age of Antarctic Science:

9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Not Quite What I Expected By A reader from California I have always been fascinated by Antarctica, and was lucky enough to be able to visit there for three weeks some years ago, so I was looking forward to reading this book. When I first read the reviews and blurbs, I thought the book was going to be an exploration of the leadership skills and styles of men like Scott and Shackleton. There was some of that, but

mostly the book is an account of the scientific discoveries, told in excruciating detail. Overall, their discoveries were interesting, but for me, reading 300 pages worth of the composition of icebergs vs. glaciers vs. ice caps vs. ice sheets, plus the difference between sandstone, basalt and other rocks, is a bit too much. My eyes started to glaze over. The other problem, and this is not really Larson's fault, is that all the expeditions started to run together in my mind. They all had a hard time sledging, faced horrible weather conditions and ran out of food. It was difficult to tell them apart. I did not get a good sense of what the leaders did or did not do to impact the success or failure of each trip. My recommendation is to read a book on Shackleton's Endurance mission, or his own book "South". Those will provide fascinating details about how the men survived, Shackleton's leadership style, etc., and are so much better than this book in invoking what these men endured from a personal standpoint. Unless you are a glaciologist or geologist, you will find this book very slow going, and in some cases, deadly dull. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Dense and poorly mapped. By Tim1965 If you are looking for a work which depicts the great, tragic journeys of Scott, Shackleton, and Amundsen to find the South Pole -- look somewhere else. If you want a work which depicts, in minute detail, every single expedition made to the Antarctic by Scott, Shackleton, and others -- you will find it here. The problem is that the book contains exceptionally poor maps, and disturbingly few of those. Images, too, are almost lacking. Readers not intimately familiar with the Antarctic will find themselves quickly lost. While the writing is passable and the level of factual detail extremely good, Larson's primary failing is in his ability to craft an interesting narrative. The prose is so dry that even someone very excited about the subject matter will find him or herself struggling to get through it. It makes it difficult to tell tragedy from success, and tedium from excitement. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An amazing story by an amazing author! By Roger Dean An amazing story, made even more so by the talent of the author. I had the pleasure of meeting him on a recent cruise to Antarctica, and that was what persuaded me to download the book (while on the ship). I am so glad that I did.

Published to coincide with the centenary of the first expeditions to reach the South Pole, *An Empire of Ice* presents a fascinating new take on Antarctic exploration. Retold with added information, it's the first book to place the famed voyages of Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen, his British rivals Robert Scott and Ernest Shackleton, and others in a larger scientific, social, and geopolitical context. Efficient, well prepared, and focused solely on the goal of getting to his destination and back, Amundsen has earned his place in history as the first to reach the South Pole. Scott, meanwhile, has been reduced in the public mind to a dashing incompetent who stands for little more than relentless perseverance in the face of inevitable defeat. *An Empire of Ice* offers a new perspective on the Antarctic expeditions of the early twentieth century by looking at the British efforts for what they actually were: massive scientific enterprises in which reaching the South Pole was but a spectacular sideshow. By focusing on the larger purpose, Edward Larson deepens our appreciation of the explorers' achievements, shares little-known stories, and shows what the Heroic Age of Antarctic discovery was really about.

"Larson succeeds in [his] approach to the popular subject of polar exploration by wrapping the science in plenty of dangerous drama to keep readers engaged." ---Booklist About the Author Edward J. Larson is a professor of history and law at Pepperdine University and the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate Over Science and Religion* and several other books.