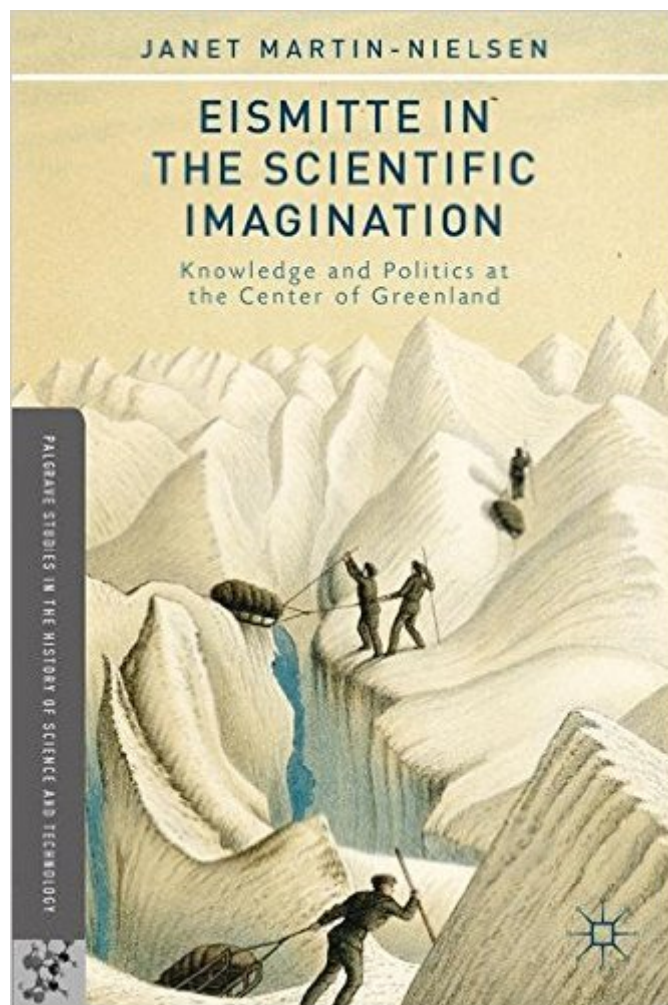


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Eismitte In The Scientific Imagination: Knowledge And Politics At The Center Of Greenland (Palgrave Studies In The History Of Science And Technology)



Synopsis

Since the 18th century, Greenland's geometric center, Eismitte, has been one of the most forbidding but scientifically rich locations in the Arctic. Tracing its history from European contact through the Cold War, this study shows how Eismitte was the setting for scientific knowledge production as well as diplomatic maneuvering.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Eismette means "middle ice" in German, and this book is about the quest to reach that middle point on the Greenland ice sheet and to learn the knowledge that might be gleaned about it. Janet Martin-Nielson has written a fine study of the four major efforts to reach that middle point. Although explorers had been enamored with this location for centuries, the first expedition to reach it was led by the German explorer, Alfred Wegener, who undertook an expedition there in 1930-1931. They came overland using dogs and sledges, established a makeshift camp, and wintered there while taking meteorological readings, ice samples, and other research. They ran out of supplies and Wegener died during the expedition but the harvest of data was very real. Wegener's was the last expedition of its type, all that came afterward used motorized vehicles and airplanes to support the effort. With the use of this technology, those efforts yielded massive amounts of scientific data, reduced the risks to members of the research teams, and allowed for the establishment of a near permanent station on the middle ice. The second expedition, under the leadership of Paul-Emile Victor, the French undertook the Expéditions Polaires Françaises between 1949 and 1953.

Using surplus World War II tractors designed for harsh climates the expedition pushed its way to the Eismitte, established one of the more impressive stations in the Arctic, and systematically collected scientific data for years. Resupplied by airdrops Victorâ€™s expedition reaped a treasure of data and reestablished a post-way France which still had designs on maintaining its empire as force to be reckoned with at the Poles.

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