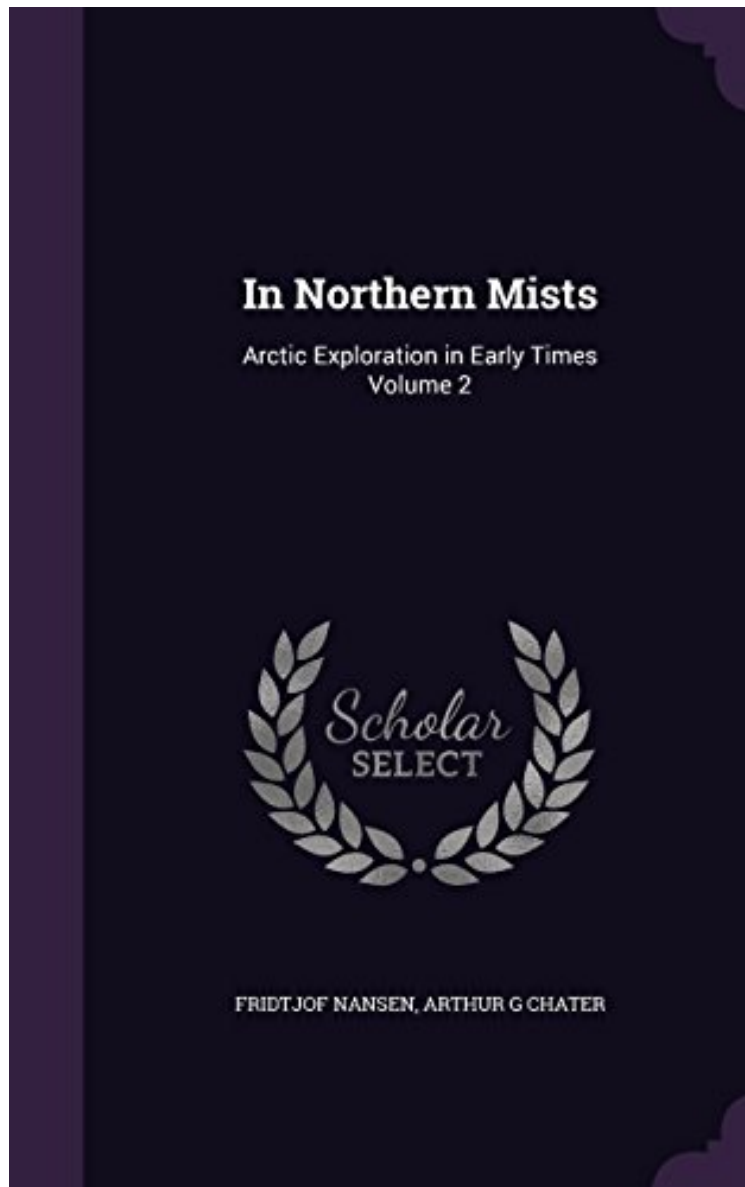


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In Northern Mists: Arctic Exploration in Early Times Volume 2

Dr Fridtjof Nansen, Arthur G Chater
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Northwest --and Northeast-- Passage to the riches of the East and the paradisaical Thule or Hypoborea of ancient legend. It covers from Alexander the Great (4th century BC) through the Viking expeditions of the 11th to 14th centuries. It is not exactly a brisk read: Nansen stops to examine each relevant bit of research as of the end of the 19th century and weigh the evidence. As an noted polar explorer himself, he tends to be skeptical of the ancient and medieval lore about discovering the New World. Some of his doubts go a bit too far, in my opinion, but he does lay out a methodical survey of the literature and details his disagreements, and the few points of agreement, with each author. Not exactly a few days' read, the two volumes are a good reference to be sampled a few chapters at a sitting. Of course scholarship on the Arctic has moved on in the century since this book was published, but it is a comprehensive review of the evidence up to that time. When Nansen challenges some sightings or landings he finds doubtful, he always backs up his suspicions with research. His own experience in exploring the frozen north is invaluable as well.

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About the Author Fridtjof Nansen made early contributions to neuron doctrine and was the discoverer of "dead water." He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1922 for his work as a high commissioner of the League of Nations.