

Attached to Diplomacy:

French and German Explorers and the Birth of the Science Attaché Before the First World War

An InsSciDE Case Study

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The figure of the scientist attached to a diplomatic mission appeared before the First World War, not after the Second as is commonly thought. Although such attachments were few in number and confined to a narrow circle, they shed light on a major historical feature of scientific diplomacy pertinent right up to the present day: the will and ability of scientists to mobilize diplomats. In a climate of competition, scientists indeed "politicized" the stakes underlying their research voyages abroad, in order to obtain the official recognition and immunity conferred by the status of diplomatic attaché. In the decades preceding the First World War, the rivalry between France and Germany proved to be fertile ground for both field research and the production of science attachés.

Keywords:

Archaeology, geography, ethnology, diplomatic mission, scientific mission, commerce, nationalism

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