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Review by Professor Glyndwr Williams

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Encyclopedia of Exploration to 1800: A comprehensive reference guide to the history and literature of exploration, travel and colonisation from the earliest times to the year 1800 by Raymond John Howgego: Sydney: Hordern House, 2003. Pp. xv + 1168. Aus \$295.00/£105.00 (hardback), ISBN 1-875567-36-4.

At a time when encyclopedias, bibliographies and other reference books are invariably the work of teams of scholars, Raymond Howgego's Encyclopedia of Exploration is a remarkable single-handed effort. As its sub-title suggests, it is both an encyclopedia and a bibliography, and in some articles the section on sources equals in length the descriptive entry. Of the 2.327 main articles, most are bibliographical, although some deal with events, organisations and places – for example, the Conquest of Mexico, East India Companies, Franciscan Missionaries, Taiwan. The biographical articles are mostly of European explorers, some familiar, many not, but there is a good representation of names from outside Europe, especially from China and the Arab world. So those intrigued by recent claims about the supposedly worldwide discoveries of Chinese expeditions in 1420s will find a more realistic summary of Chinese maritime exploration in the early fifteenth century under the entry for Zheng He. The vast number of biographical entries enables the encyclopedia to include many relatively minor figures whose details are difficult to find without consulting a large number of reference works, some of them out-of-date and unreliable. In similar fashion, major expeditions covered here involve more than simply an entry on the 'lead' explorer. The article on James Cook has cross-references to entries on no fewer than 15 of the officers, crew members and supernumeraries who sailed with him. The excellent article on the voyage of Alejandro Malaspina (1789-94) I made even more useful by entries on eight of his officers and supernumeraries end, this information on less well-known members of exploring expeditions may be one of the most valuable features of the work.

The longer articles and bibliographies are split chronologically. That on Francis Drake, for example, is divided into five sections dealing with his early years in West African and Caribbean waters, raids in the Caribbean and across and across the Panama Isthmus, the circumnavigation of 1577-80, the massive expedition to the Caribbean in 1585-6, and his final voyage of 1585-6. As can be seen from this, Howgego's entries aim to give a rounded account of the careers of men who may –as in Drake's case -only a limited amount of time engaged in exploration. In other ways, exploration is conceived in rather narrow, almost old-fashioned, terms, perhaps an inevitable consequence of the sheer scale of the work. So the entry on James Cook gives details of his three Pacific voyages: courses sailed, dates of sightings of land, and so on. There is however, little effort to assess Cook's explorations in total, and hardly a reference to the

ethnographic significance of his voyages. Amid all the listing of the islands, capes and bays seen by Cook on his first voyage there is no reference to his six-week stay at the Endeavour River, which afforded the longest contact yet by Europeans with Australian Aborigines. Surprisingly, there is no separate article on Johann Reinhold Forster, the naturalist and philosopher who sailed with Cook on his second voyage, and whose observations on the indigenous societies encountered were a major contribution to Europe's knowledge of Polynesia. Although information about him is given in the article on his son, George, who also sailed on the voyage, there is no indication of the importance of the two books that father and son wrote on return from the voyage. And the sentences on Cook's death at Kealakekua Bay on his third voyage – 'relationships with the natives deteriorated ... a scuffle ensued.. Cook received a blow from behind' contain no hint of the debate among scholars as to whether an assumption by Hawaiians that Cook was the god Lono played a part in his death. In fairness to the author who would no doubt reply that he cannot mention everything, the biographical lists accompanying these articles contain most of the significant titles both for the writings of the Forsters and for the Lono controversy. In general the bibliographies are impressively up-to-date, even to the inclusion of a work published in 2002. The arrangement of the bibliographies, containing almost 20,000 items is clear and sensible: first the primary sources, helpfully listed in order of perceived importance; and then the secondary works, organised alphabetically by author.

By and large, and perhaps wisely, Howgego does not often take sides in the many disputes that mark his subject area. He is usually content to indicate where differences exist, and to leave it at that. So, 'there are many conflicting theories and opinions about what actually happened during the voyage' of John Cabot in 1479, while as far as Sebastian Cabot's voyage of 1508-09 is concerned, 'the precise route is clouded by conflicting accounts'. He seems reluctant to name those involved in such controversies: it is a question of 'some scholars' following one line, and 'others' a different one, with the reader being left to guess which authors in the bibliography hold which opinions. At times this minimalist approach is taken to extremes. The entry on the voyage of Leif Eriksson from Greenland to North America in 1001 gives no indication of the contentious nature of the Vinland issue, and unwary readers might be puzzled by the length of its bibliography, containing items with such unexplained titles as 'The strange case of the Vinland map'. Similarly, the bibliography attached to Drake's voyage round the world in 1577-80 include several books and articles on the vexed question (at least for Californians) of the identity of Drake's landing place, but the text simply notes that Drake 'ran south to Drake Bay (in 38°N) where he made friendly contact with the Indians and envisaged a future British settlement there to be called New Albion'. On the other hand, the bibliography contains details of Samuel Bawlf's recent and controversial work on Drake's voyage along the northwest coast of America, with a brief but useful note that Bawlf 'contends that Drake secretly explored much further than is generally imagined.

Who to include and not among the biographical entries is a matter of authorial judgement. Here an understandable decision has been taken to omit most of those who may be termed associate members of the explorers' club – sponsors and backers, geographers and cartographers. So there are no entries on Michael Lok and Arthur Dobbs, Mercator and Ortelius, Guillaume Delisle and Philippe Buache. Exceptions seem to be made for those who combined activity behind the scenes with voyaging; presumably this accounts for the inclusion of the eighteenth hydrographers D'Apres de Manneville and Alexander Dalrymple. More contentious perhaps, given the trends of recent scholarship, is the omission of some of the indigenous guides and companions who have as much right to be considered explorers as some who appear here with slightly dubious credentials (Anne Bonny and Edward Teach, for example). Tupaia, the Raiatean who came on board the Endeavour on Cook's first voyage and acted as pilot, guide and mapmaker, is perhaps the most obvious example. He both aided the course of European exploration in water familiar to him, and explored with Cook lands and people unknown to either of them. At the same time, on the other side of the world, Samuel Hearne's overland trek from Hudson Bay to the shore of the Arctic Ocean was made possible only by the knowledge and experience of his Chipewyan companions. This is explained in the entry on Hearne, but one would have thought there is enough information about the Chipewyan 'captain', Mattonabee, to justify an entry under his own name. The same might be said of an earlier Chipewyan, Thanadelthur, 'the slave woman' of the English accounts, whose tenacity in guiding William Stuart many hundreds of miles west from York Factory, Hudson Bay, is described here, but in the context of an entry on Stuart.

The value of any reference work depends upon its accuracy, and in those sections that fall within the reviewer's range on knowledge there are a few errors and omissions. The crew members of Commodore Anson's squadron on his circumnavigation of 1740-44 are given as 961 on one page, but on the next we learn that 1,300 men died of illness. In fact the number setting sail with Anson was about 1,900. It is wrong to say that before sailing with Cook in 1768 Joseph Banks 'fitted out' the Endeavour 'at his own expense'. An important point that is missed about the voyage of Semen Dezhnev around East Cape (Mys Dezhneva) in 1648 is that knowledge of the voyage was lost, or largely so, in the following decades; and this has a bearing on Vitas Bering's voyages. The article on the fur trader Anthony Henday and his wanderings from Hudson Bay across the northern plains towards the Rocky Mountains in the mid-eighteenth century is inadequate, and (for once) relies on outdated sources. John Meares's role in the Nootka Sound dispute is covered, but without mention of his controversial speculations about the geography of the northwest coast of America. Richard Pickersgill could hardly have been sent on a summer voyage to Baffin Bay in 1776 with orders to 'keep an eye open' for Captain Cook, since Cook's ship did not sail from Plymouth for the Pacific in search of the western entrance of the Northwest Passage until after Pickersgill departure. The longish article on George Vancouver and his voyage of 1791-95 to the northwest coast of America explains that he was 'to undertake a hydrographic survey of the region'. This

leaves out the diplomatic negotiations he was to undertake at Nootka, and – more central to the subject-matter of this work – ignores the fact that a compelling reason for his survey was to establish in definitive fashion whether or not there was a Northwest Passage in temperate latitudes. This recital of a few major quibbles is intended less as a criticism than as a pointing out of the obvious – that in dealing with so many different persons, subjects and regions even an editor as omnivorous and conscientious as his one is bound to slip up occasionally. For users of the Encyclopedia, this problem has been taken care of by the setting up of a website which make available any corrections and additions.

It is the first fate of the generalist to be attacked by nit-picking specialist; but Raymond Howgego can be proud of the fact that he has produced a work that will be enormously valuable to specialists and non-specialists alike. His Encyclopedia of Exploration should be on the shelves of all those who are interested in the subject, a first port of call for those seeking information about individual discoverers or guidance to the mass of related scholarship. It remains to be said that Hordern House has done a magnificent job on the production side; high-quality paper, legible print, a stout binding – and all a price that by today's standards is more than reasonable.

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