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### **By Colin Steele (Australian National University)**

The literature of travel is a distinguished one with authors such as Sabin and Cox coming to mind, as well as catalogues from institutions such as the John Carter Brown Library and the National Maritime Museum. Now a new name, Howgego, needs to be added to the pantheon of travel bibliographers and Hordern House, already renowned for David Forbes' "**Hawaiian National Bibliography**", should be added to the ranks of eminent travel reference publishers.

British researcher Dr Raymond Howgego's huge volume of nearly 1200 pages covers travel expeditions from 1800 B.C. to 1800. A future volume will cover the period 1800 to 1850. Howgego says that his present volume sees 1800 as a significant watershed because by then "most of the temperate coastline of the world was known, apart from the southern coastline of Australia and a portion around Korea".

The volume took Howgego more than fifteen years of research in which he claims to have identified the achievements of "every traveller who in some way has contributed to the geographical knowledge of our planet". In the process Howgego has collected a vast array of historical, biographical and bibliographical data, a significant part of which is presented for the first time in English, for example, on the Swedish explorers of central Asia.

Within the volume there are 2327 major articles, 4000 cross-references, 20000 bibliographical citations and 7500 index entries for persons or ships. Howgego has included travellers whose accounts are not truly historical narratives as the line between fact and fiction in travel literature was often blurred in early descriptions. Howgego lists something in the order of 30,000 separate books and articles, with a main effort to list the primary source for each expedition. Where none exists, an attempt has been made to locate relevant manuscripts. The bibliographies themselves are comprehensive but not evaluative so often lesser critical works are included and the more authoritative works are not highlighted.

The **Encyclopedia** offers biographical sketches of a wide variety of explorers, organized alphabetically. This biographical approach is not without problems in terms of organization and access to such a huge volume of material. There is no easy way to find the explorers of a particular region. Thus, if you want to find the cumulative bibliography for the conquest of Mexico it is under Cortes, for Venezuela the reader has to be familiar with the name of Diego de Losada and for the Philippines, Miguel Lopez de Legazpi, which presumably few are? The book would perhaps have benefited from a more analytical approach in terms of geographical surveys and more flexible and extensive indexing.

Many prominent explorers started their careers travelling in the company of others, so to avoid repetition, the reader is referred to those earlier journeys by means of cross-references. For example, the first two voyages of Francis Drake were not under his command and are therefore mentioned with cross-references in the article for his third, which was. The two explorers/travellers, whom Howgego admits he admires the most, were Sir William Dampier (1651 – 1715) and the Arab traveller, Abu Ibn Batuta (1304 – 1368) who travelled 75,000 miles of the Islamic world in forty years.

Occasionally a traveller receives an entry solely because he (and it is almost totally a 'he') wrote a significant account of a particular region, or was instrumental in the success of a number of voyages. Also included are a small number of eminent geographers and collectors of travel narratives, such as Richard Hakluyt and Samuel Purchas. Without individuals such as Hakluyt and Purchas and their physical collecting, there would be no record remaining of some particular travels. Howgego's descriptions are often without evaluative comment – thus in this instance the reader would be not aware of Hakluyt's preeminence compared to Purchas in the acquisition and retention of the archival record.

This is the sort of volume that in due course would benefit greatly from an interactive web presence. Apart from libraries and the dedicated scholars, not many individuals would probably need total access to Howgego's body of knowledge. The ability to access particular geographical areas and/or centuries would be a decided advantage through a pay-by-slice approach. Maybe this is something that could be considered by Hordern House after the publication peaks of the print volume.

The author and publisher call in the text for errors and comments to be sent to them. There are some misprints, eg of "Maudesley" (p271) and "Rycault" (p835) but the proof reading is incredible given the complexity of detail in the text. It should be noted here that the author somewhat quixotically, has included one fictional article among the entries, which up to the time of writing this review had so far eluded detection. The author is offering a case of champagne to the first successful reader. Howgego admits that his intent here was "wanting to take the pee out of some so-called experts".

Howgego is in the tradition of the gentleman traveller in that he originally trained as a physicist and became interested in the topic through collecting travel books at an early age. There is no doubt that when his work is exposed to the detailed view of some area specialists that some minor facts and interpretations could be questioned but the totality of the whole is breathtaking. The **Encyclopedia of Exploration** is destined to become a standard work of reference for the history of world exploration, travel and colonization.