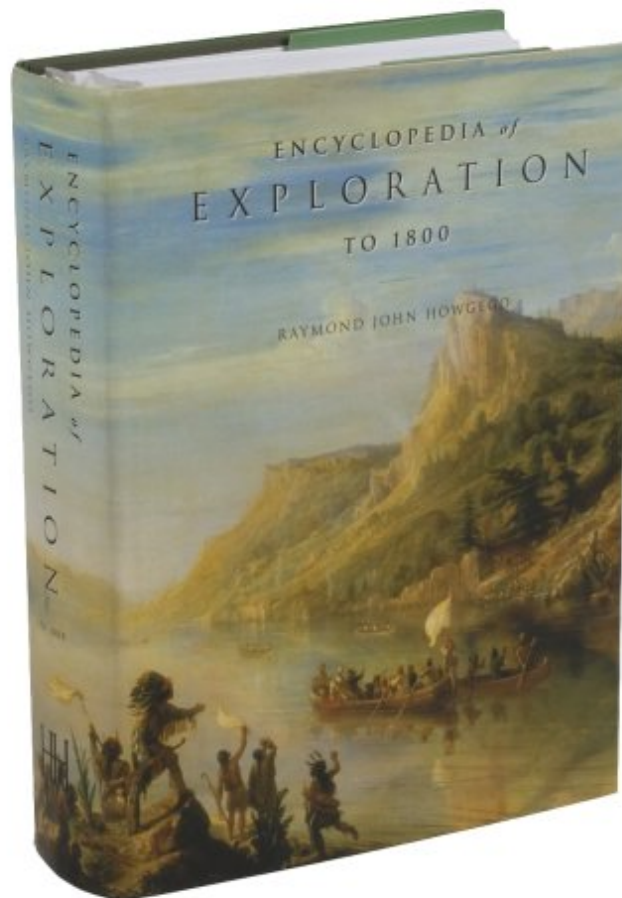


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Encyclopedia of Exploration to 1800: A Comprehensive Reference Guide to the History and Literature of Exploration, Travel, and Colonization from the E

Raymond John Howgego

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Raymond John Howgego : Encyclopedia of Exploration to 1800: A Comprehensive Reference Guide to the History and Literature of Exploration, Travel, and Colonization from the E before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Encyclopedia of Exploration to 1800: A Comprehensive Reference Guide to the History and Literature of Exploration, Travel, and Colonization from the E:

A comprehensive reference guide to the history and literature of exploration, travel and colonization from the earliest

times to the year 1800. The vast scope of the Encyclopedia of Exploration makes it a work unlike any other in its combination of historical, biographical and bibliographical data. It includes a catalogue of all known expeditions, voyages and travels, as well as biographical information on the travellers themselves, which places them in their historical context. The Encyclopedia of Exploration to 1800 is a massive undertaking resulting in a work that extends to 1.2 million words in almost 1200 pages. The 2327 major articles have generated index entries totalling more than 7500 names of persons or ships mentioned in the text. Within the text itself there are about 4000 cross-references between articles. Altogether nearly 20,000 bibliographical citations accompany the articles. A considerable quantity of information in this book is presented here for the first time in English.

Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, 2003 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 subtitle 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 Malaspinga (1789-94) is made even more useful by entries on eight of his officers and supernumeraries. In other words, 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 words, 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 -- by Professor Glyndwr Williams
The Book Collector, Autumn 2003
Article reproduced here with their kind permission by John Hemming
The Encyclopedia of Exploration to 1800 is one man's labour of love, the product of fifteen years of research and travels by someone enthralled by his task. Raymond Howgego is a British physics teacher, now in his late fifties, who in 1997 gave up his teaching career to work full-time on his passion to record every possible explorer. This first book is a prodigious achievement, the size of a telephone directory, 1168 pages containing 2327 articles on explorers (and a handful of shipwrecks and places, such as Taiwan, amid all the adventurers). It is quite extraordinary that one man, trained in a different discipline and with no previous publications to his name, has produced a splendid work of reference that would normally have been compiled by a host of specialist experts. We learn that the author is working on a sequel, to cover the period 1800 to 1850. Inevitably, with a task of this magnitude, there are flaws. The most serious is the lack of an index of places. The biographical entries are alphabetical and there are indices of persons and of ships, but not of the far-flung places they were trying to reach. There are no maps or illustrations. So a reader wishing to know the sequence of exploration of a region has to begin by knowing the names of its explorers. Once the reader has a lead, Mr Howgego helps him with admirable cross-referencing to other explorers. There are occasional bibliographies of regions, but most are not in the index so that you stumble across 'Prussian voyages to Alaska' under Chirikov, 'The Philippines' under Legazpi, 'Pennsylvania' under Penn, 'the Carolinas' under Hilton, and so forth, whereas 'Cossacks'

get their own entry. Because this huge book was compiled by one man over many years, the quality of bibliographies (one after each entry) varies considerably: some are incomplete and dated, others (such as Malaspina) up-to-date and excellent. The author makes a valiant effort to go back in time - the earliest explorer I noticed was the Egyptian King Sahura's expedition to Punt in 2450 BC, and Abraham (but not Moses) gets an entry as do some ancient Greeks and Romans. He also includes a good selection of Arab, Chinese and Viking explorers, although you need to know modern Chinese spelling-reform to find the great fifteenth-century admiral under Z for Zheng He. For the period under review, the majority of explorers are Spanish and Portuguese. This causes problems with missing accents, particularly because most names are in capital letters and the printers were maddeningly unable or unwilling to put accents (even tildes) onto any of these. I like Mr Howgego's practice of giving separate entries for each phase of the greater explorers' careers. Thus Captain Cook gets four masterly chapters, for his Canadian charting and then for each voyage. The style of the book is matter-of-fact, with few quotations or flights of fancy; and the lengths of entries generally correspond well to the importance of each subject. It is often hard to separate exploration from conquest. In the case of Peru, the author correctly gives more weight to Pizarro's or Soto's discoveries than to their roles in the conquest - and the latter are often skewed or inaccurate. There is also difficulty in deciding whether chroniclers were also explorers. Again in Peru, I think that Howgego is too generous to Garcilaso de la Vega, crediting him with travelling 'throughout the Inca empire and collecting every available scrap of information' even though he left the country aged nineteen and did not start his history of it until he was over sixty; but there are at least short entries for far more accurate traveller/writers Cieza de Leon, Acosta and Cobo. Among the many Portuguese in the Encyclopedia, I was glad that he included the flow -- by John Hemming

About the Author Raymond Howgego is an independent researcher, scholar and traveller, who has been researching the history of exploration for much of his adult life. His travels have followed in the footsteps of the explorers to most parts of the world - Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia, India, West Africa, South America, the Cape Verde Islands, Uganda and Ethiopia; and more recently overland from China to Tibet and across the length and breadth of Australia. His numerous excursions in search of local sources of information have afforded the opportunity to add to a lifetime's accumulation of travel literature. He has recently been appointed to the Council of the Hakluyt Society. Brian Turner noted in a recent article on the Encyclopedia that 'The soft-spoken physicist turned travel-scholar speaks and speed-reads every European language (except Basque and Finnish) plus Arabic, and has translated into English many travel narratives himself. Howgego is also a great serial traveller; he has stood at the same spot as Speke at the source of the Nile, sailed through the Straits of Magellan, and followed the tracks of the Conquistadors through Bolivia. In 1994 Howgego and his companions were the first Europeans to cross the Torugart Pass from Kyrgyzstan into China since the Russian Revolution. Minutes after his jeep had crossed an unstable section of Pakistan's precipitous Karakoram Highway, the road collapsed into the Indus. Ray has also voyaged down most of the world's great rivers, including the Niger in flood, when neither bank was visible. His favourite destination? 'Kashgar is my centre of the universe', And favourite country? 'Iran'; 'Zoroastrian monasteries of central Iran fascinate me and the Islamic architecture of Esfahan is heart-stoppingly beautiful'.