



Historical Dictionary of the Discovery and Exploration of the Pacific Islands (Historical Dictionaries of Discovery and Exploration)

Max Quanchi, John Robson

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The South Seas, as this region used to be called, conjured up images of adventure, belles and savages, romance and fabulous fortunes, but the long voyages of discovery and exploration of the vast Pacific Ocean were really an exercise in amazing logistics, navigation, hard grit, shipwreck and pure luck. The motivations were scientific and geographic, but at the same time nationalistic and materialistic.

A series on global exploration and discovery would not be complete without this book by Quanchi and Robson. It is ambitious and informative and includes the familiar names of Laperouse, Bougainville, Cook and Dampier, as well as the intriguing stories of the Bounty Mutiny, scurvy, and the mysterious Northwest Passage, Terra Australis Ignota and Davis Land. There are entries on first contacts, ships, navigational instruments, mapping, and botany. The scene is carefully set in the introduction, the chronology spans several centuries, and the extensive bibliography offers a guide to further reading. There are more than just dry facts in this book. It has a whiff of salt air, the clash of empires, cross-cultural beach encounters and personal adventure.

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