

# Map lovers' delight

## NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN THOROUGHLY EXPLORED

*Historical Atlas of the North Pacific Ocean* by Derek Hayes; Douglas & McIntyre; 224 pps.; \$75.

BY DAVID A. BROWN

Two years ago, Derek Hayes brought forth a historical atlas of our neighbourhood, the Pacific Northwest. To the reviewer, a lifelong cartophile (not in the dictionary, but it sounds right) with an equal love of history, it was richly rewarding to both mind and eye.

Now Hayes has expanded his horizon to the full reach of the North Pacific Ocean for his latest atlas, which draws on archived charts and accounts originating in Asia as well as from more familiar characters in Northwest waters, such as Cook, Vancouver, Drake, Perez, Malaspina, La Perouse and Chirikov.

While his first volume was devoted to reproducing and placing in context the charts, drawings and maps of explorers, surveyors and even natives, on both land and sea, the latest atlas adds the dimension of scientific discovery, a graphic history of how the ocean bottom was first mapped, how the courses of winds and currents and water temperatures were first plotted and accurately planted on charts of this vast sea we on the West Coast share.

The *Historical Atlas of the North Pacific Ocean* was commissioned by the North Pacific Marine Science Organization, which goes under the acronym PICES, a decade-old international and inter-governmental organization whose members include Canada, Russia, the United States, Japan, Korea and China.

The first annual meeting of the organization was held in Victoria in 1992.

There is, of course, an unavoidable overlap in coverage of sea-borne explorations in Hayes's two volumes.

Yet, amazingly, there are few duplications in maps.

Hayes has ferreted mostly fresh entries in his tireless pursuit of archives, libraries and museums from Europe, Canada, the U.S. and Japan. Where old ground is revisited, the corresponding descriptives have been rewritten or re-edited, sometimes with new information.

For example, the maps carrying the name Jesso, Eso or Lesso are described in the earlier atlas as mythical lands showing up on maps at the start of the 18th century.

In this new volume, the Jesso mystery is sorted out as a "confusion with Hokkaido, the northernmost large island of Japan."

Then there is the Drake controversy. Hayes, in his newest work, sees no clear evidence Drake sailed farther north than 48 degrees, just short of the latitude of the mouth of Juan de Fuca Strait, despite ambiguities in the over-inscribed latitude figures in a document called "The Anonymous Narrative," ostensibly the earliest written account of Drake's voyage; an account found in the British Library.

The suggestion Drake might have reached as far north as the mouth of the Stikine in the Alaska panhandle, with the

details suppressed or altered to insure secrecy from enemies under Elizabethan-era edict, was made by former B.C. cabinet minister and Victoria redeveloper Sam Bawlf, following his own detailed research in articles appearing a year ago.

Without naming Bawlf, Hayes states that an analysis of the infamous written "48" revealed "it had been altered from 50, being changed to 53 along the way.

Unstated, however, was the fact that alteration had been made before the ink

dried, making later deliberate change unlikely.

Hayes also contends the explanation for extraordinarily cold temperatures reported by Drake might have been that the voyage was made during a particularly cold climatic period, as born out by tree-ring evidence, rather than

Drake's ship being much further north than his records indicated.

Why would Drake, asks Hayes, "or his chaplain, who was responsible for the book, make a point of complaining about the cold if it showed they were farther north than they were allowed to say, unless they were trying to circumvent the edict in some roundabout way?"

The fun with old maps is the imagination of some cartographers, who devise, without evidence of any kind, impressively huge lands, inland seas, rivers that inexplicably cross mountain ranges, Northwest Passages, and islands, so many islands, that never existed.

There, on map following map from the 16th to 18th centuries, are the eldorado land of Quivara in mid-continent North America and the hopeful but elusive Strait of Anian, leading from the Pacific to the Atlantic through Canada.

A "virtual massacre" of doubtful Pacific islands resulted from a purge of primary Admiralty charts as late as 1875, Hayes notes. "With a single stroke of a pen no less than 123 islands were removed, including, hilariously, three that were real and had to be restored later!"

Among the 285 maps in this atlas, the jacket points out, are the first sonar map of the Pacific, "artistic physiographic diagrams depicting undersea topography in three dimensions," maps illustrating the theory of plate tectonics and maps plotting the risk of tsunamis.

Hayes' descriptives accompanying his maps betray his enthusiasm for what they tell us, the often artful way they do the job, and his appreciation of the clever dodging when they are on unsure ground.

For ocean scientist, for history buff, for map-lover, Hayes's second atlas is a worthy stand-alone volume, or even a companion to the first.

Geographer Hayes is not only a map-hound. He is the author of the illustrated biography *First Crossing: Alexander Mackenzie, His Expedition Across North America, and the Opening of the Continent*. He is also working on a historical atlas of Canada.

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