

Michael E. Hoare, ed., *The Resolution Journal of Johann Reinhold Forster, 1772-1775*. London: Hakluyt Society, 1982. Pp. xvii, 831.

Four slim volumes of the journal of Johann Reinhold Forster, beautifully produced and published by the Hakluyt Society, now add to the important original material from the second Pacific voyage of Captain James Cook. The editor, Michael E. Hoare, has written a persuasive introductory essay that does much to reestablish the scholarly reputation of Forster. Hoare's work is also a fine example of the editor's art at its best.

Two aspects of this work stand out most significantly. The first is the discovery and publication of a previously unknown journal of one of the

principals of Cook's voyage. Forster, a naturalist, brought both intelligence and scientific expertise to his observations. His identifications of plant and animal life were thorough and excellent, and his collection of samples was comprehensive and systematically organized. But Forster was also a linguist, anthropologist, and philosopher. He was called by a contemporary "the first polyhistor" of their century. Thus, his descriptions of the cultures of many islands in Polynesia and newly discovered islands of Melanesia are penetrating, objective, and extensive.

This fact directs attention to a second important aspect of the present volumes: the restoration of Forster's reputation. Forster and his young son George, who also sailed on the voyage as an assistant to his father, have suffered from a negative image almost from the moment the *Resolution* returned to England. The father was particularly identified as a difficult, contentious, and disagreeable person. Even recently, Cook biographer and editor, J. C. Beaglehole, has written in the second volume of Cook's journal, "Let us admit at once . . . the virtues of Forester. . . . Yet there is nothing that can make him other than one of the Admiralty's vast mistakes."

The qualities of personality--even Dr. Hoare has titled his Forster biography *Tactless Philosopher*--have apparently obscured his brilliance as a scientist. Today modern interpreters take him first as creative thinker and second as unpleasant traveling companion, and the reader must agree. Here is a remarkable observer who wrote about the religion, language, artifacts, dance, and agriculture of several Polynesian societies. He was sensitive to these cultures, asking for their native names of things and places and then pausing to write an intelligent, comparative discourse. His discussion of society in the New Hebrides is noted for its comprehension and depth.

In sum, this is a valuable and exciting addition to one's library: to Cook lore, to scholarly information about the Pacific, and to good reading on fascinating topics.

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