Ian Cameron, *Lost Paradise: The Exploration of the Pacific.* Topsfield, Massachusetts: Salem House Publishers, 1987. Pp. 248, numerous plates, appendixes, bibliography, index. US$24.95 cloth.

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Ian Cameron appears to belong to a class of "professional-amateur" historians--writers whose profession is producing narrative histories, but whose approach is more or less amateur. Their books are usually well illustrated (this one is splendid in that respect) and written in a lively, engaging style (this again applies), but while they usually give a list of sources, sometimes sketchy enough to betray ignorance (this is not the case here), the texts themselves are not specifically documented. There is nothing wrong in all this; I have never disdained drawing from books sometimes much more naive than Cameron's. Theirs is indeed a laudable pursuit if it stimulates some readers to go further. All depends on the degree of conscientiousness; and while Cameron is conscientious, he sometimes has sad lapses, or else his editor has let him down.

This is certainly so in the extraordinary map that illustrates "The Forming of the Pacific" (p. 21), seen correctly as a function of continental drift and plate tectonics. This is a tricky geomorphological topic, and Cameron naturally enough seems a little out of his depth; but only carelessness can account for a map showing the Kuril trench south of Java and the Sundan where the Kuril should be, the Tongan along the Aleutians, and, to crown all, the Puerto Rico trench off New Zealand: drifting indeed! Fortunately this shocker stands alone, but minor carelessnesses and false emphases are strewn through the book.

This is followed by two chapters on the people of the Pacific (or rather Polynesia) and on "Vikings of the Sunrise." These are quite good introductions, if inclined to take too rosy a view of Islands life and to lean too heavily on Alan Moorehead's *Fatal Impact;* no account is taken of recent criticisms of his view by Islands historians. Cameron strives to strike a balance between the extreme views of Andrew Sharp and David Lewis on indigenous voyaging, though he does not reckon with the psychological factor that, until the Societies were reached, all experience would suggest that good high islands might lie just over the horizon to world's end. But the heart of the book is in the succeeding five chapters on European exploration, and here Cameron's strengths and weaknesses are well displayed.

His main strength is a gift for narrative, the sine qua non of similar writers, and he avoids Eurocentrism, though that is not so singular a virtue now as it once was. He tells a good story with a fine sense of tension, best shown perhaps in his accounts of d'Urville and Bering. But--and this is a besetting sin of amateur historians--while he handles a specific episode well enough, he seems to lose his grip when it comes to the geopolitical setting and the rationale of the voyages.

Explorers just appear out of the blue, and sometimes vanish into it. Thus Arellano makes the first west-to-east crossing from the Philippines, but we are given no hint whatsoever of how Spaniards happened to be there (p. 79). There is nary a mention of Urdaneta's far more significant role in setting up the all-important Manila-Acapulco route. Narrative skills are all very well, but we need *some* analysis if the narrative is to be intelligible on more than a superficial level. Cameron does indeed discuss some topics at length, such as the Noble Savage, and makes some shrewd points, though he is rather too eager to give that hypothetical creature the benefit of the doubt.

Here and there in these chapters I have a sense of déjà vu, but the borrowings are not excessive and, as Cameron refers to me handsomely in his bibliography, I am not complaining. It is, however, amusing that his remarks on buccaneer literature (pp. 112-113), clearly derived from my *Monopolists and Freebooters* (at pp. 156-158), are prefaced by the words "a spate of best-selling derivatives." Subtle acknowledgment, or Freudian slip?

There are also some startling omissions and disproportions. Cameron does justice to Quiros (pp. 80-81), but were it not for three short lines in appendix 1 ("Principal Voyages"), the reader would be quite unaware of Mendaña's exploration of the Solomons in 1568. Cooks second voyage, to judge from Cameron's account (pp. 125-126), was all but confined to the Antarctic. On Cameron's scale Byron certainly, Wallis and Carteret possibly, deserve no more than the passing references they get. But La Pérouse after all explored the one corner of the Pacific, in the northwest, that Cook had left, and this is omitted from the two short lines given him in appendix 1; and d'Entrecasteaux's voyage in search of his fate is not mentioned even there. (There is one text reference to La Pérouse, but merely in passing [p. 174]). Almost five pages are devoted to Darwin (pp. 132-136, 145), but there is no mention at all of his most influential coral-reef theory. Against these inexcusable omissions, Cameron must be credited with paying more than usual attention to Chirikov and Wilkes.

After sins of omission, sins of commission. Samuel Johnson wrote truly that no large work was ever free of "a few wild blunders, and risible absurdities," and I have never allowed a few factual errors to detract from my appreciation of a lively and stimulating book. But *Lost Paradise* is not a large work, and the mistakes, while hardly risible, are not few and some are not trivial. It is not trivial, for instance, that a complete misapprehension of the geopolitical background should lead Cameron to say that Magellan's voyage "had dealt so crippling a blow at the Portuguese oriental empire" (p. 78). Le Maire's route around

Cape Horn in 1616 did *not* "soon become one of the great arteries of the world" (p. 96), despite the brief episode of the Malouin traders in the War of the Spanish Succession.

Per contra, it is no "indication of the lack of liaison between the nations of Europe" that Bougainville took the tortuous course through Magellan's Straits 150 years after Le Maire (p. 147); the Horn route was well known, but the last two who had tried it, Anson and Pizarro, had had horrific passages, and this is an indication of liaison, not the reverse. Then we are told that "by the end of the eighteenth century, whales and seals in the northern hemisphere had been hunted to near-extinction" (p. 159), but later we have a graphic description of whaling and sealing in the North Pacific "towards the end of the [nineteenth] century" (pp. 200-201). The account of Cook's death conveys the impression that in the scuffle a chief was accidentally shot (p. 132). Cameron has confused this incident with one in another part of Kealakekua Bay, and all the evidence is that Cook deliberately shot and killed a warrior; not, in the circumstances, that this could be called murder, any more than Cook's own slaying could. One could go on, but it would be tedious.

There is a place, and an important place, not to be sneered at by academics, for books like *Lost Paradise;* they can stimulate curiosity, but on the whole I think that Cameron does not quite make the grade. He writes in good faith and with some verve; if now and then he seems a little tired, who wouldn't be in traversing such a vast field? The resources of the Royal Geographical Society were open to him, and he might have written something like Beaglehole's classic, but more comprehensive (Beaglehole stops with Cook), less Eurocentric, and more in keeping with modern values. Cameron goes some way towards this and there are admirable passages in his book, but too many disproportions, false emphases, and plain errors to be wholly satisfying. *Lost Paradise* is a good read, but by and large better as a tale than as real history.