

Preface

The Pacific century, we are often told, is upon us, or will be by the end of the next decade. Within the space of one generation, we have seen a rapid shift in the world's economic center of gravity from the Atlantic to the Asia-Pacific region, with vast potential political and military consequences. With this shift is emerging a new sense of shared experience among nations bordering the Pacific rim, quickened by the dynamics of modern economic production, resource management, and international trade. The role of Japan in the world economy has already become one of the most significant factors of our time. But today the newly industrializing countries of South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Malaysia are also of rising importance, already supplying over half the Third World's total exports. Their dynamism will set dramatic challenges to those concerned with the destiny of the Pacific. So too will new developments in ocean-floor survey, minerals and fisheries, and the politics of nuclear testing.

While the factors underlying these developments are demonstrably political and economic, there are also important cultural dimensions. With a sense of "Pacific destiny" has come a sense of partnership and a new recognition of the importance of improving Pan-Pacific communication. The last decade has seen many attempts to encourage a more Pacific view of the art, literature, anthropology, and ethnology of the region. The enormity of the task is sufficient to explain the slow progress so far achieved in finding common cause among cultures that are neighbors in ways

almost too complex to imagine. Yet, certain factors have united the region. And among these has been the history of European exploration, acquisition, and science. Long after Asian voyagers first traversed the ocean, and migrations formed island communities, European interests came to stay. In this process, the Pacific became, by the late eighteenth century, the scene of some of the most important work in European science.

The impact of the Pacific on the modern European mind has filled countless volumes of romance and scholarship. But despite the effects of two world wars, the influence of European (and its offspring, American) science on the Pacific is still largely unexplored. Historians of science await a literary *Endeavour* to survey the world and report on those sciences that sailed with the "expansion of Europe," beyond the Tasman and around the Horn, from the Bering Straits to the Beagle Channel, from the China Sea to the Antarctic ice fields.

This ambitious task awaits collective enterprise. We offer in this volume a collection of essays arising from a symposium on Western science in the Pacific, held at the XVIIth International Congress of History of Science at Berkeley, California, in August 1985. At a time when our profession is still predominantly Eurocentric in its traditions, it does us no harm to look at the "new" Pacific. There we find the material and intellectual products of both European enterprise and native sagacity, sometimes juxtaposed, occasionally interacting, and inevitably fascinating.

In every sense, the symposium—like this book—was Western in focus; the natural knowledge possessed by Pacific peoples remains a subject for symposia yet to come. To encourage this expanding program, a "Pacific Circle" of interested scholars has been formed, and a newsletter is now issued from the History Department of the University of Hawaii.

In the organization of the Berkeley symposium and the later compilation of this book, we have accumulated many debts. We must particularly acknowledge the assistance of Bruce Wheaton of the University of California, Berkeley, Judith Diment of the British Museum (Natural History, London), and David Stoddart in Cambridge; and the cooperation of several symposium participants who were unable to contribute essays—including Michele Aldrich, Rod Home, Alan Leviton, Peter Lingwood, Beth Newland, Elaine Shaughnessy, Garry Tee, and Masao Watanabe. We would also

like to record our thanks to Karen Rehbock in Honolulu; and to Ruth Bennett, Diane O'Donovan, Jeanette Neeson, and Melanie Oppenheimer in Sydney. Sailing in unfamiliar currents is usually hazardous, and during a period that has seen the America's Cup return from Australia to America, we are particularly glad to report cordial teamwork from both American and Australian crews.

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