INTRODUCTION

Explore five centuries of journeys across the globe, scientific discoveries, the expansion of European colonialism, new trade routes, and conflict over territories.

OVERVIEW

This impressive multi-archive collection focuses on European, maritime exploration from the earliest voyages of Vasco da Gama and Christopher Columbus, through the age of discovery, the search for the 'New World', the establishment of European settlements on every continent, to the eventual discovery of the Northwest and Northeast Passages, and the race for the Poles.

Bringing together material from twelve archives from around the world, this collection includes documents relating to major events in European maritime history from the voyages of James Cook to the search for John Franklin's doomed mission to the Northwest Passage. It contains a host of additional features for teaching, such as an interactive map which presents an in-depth visualisation of over 50 of these influential voyages.

“This remarkable collection provides the documentary base to interpret some of the major movements of the age of exploration. The variety of the sources made available opens perspectives that should challenge students and bring the period to life. It is a collection that promotes both historical analysis and imagination.”

Emeritus Professor John Gascoigne
University of New South Wales
**Highlights**

- Captain Cook's secret instructions, ships' logs and journals from three voyages of James Cook, written by various crew members and Cook himself which relate to early British Pacific exploration and the search for Terra Australis.

- Detailed accounts of John Franklin's first two attempts to find the Northwest Passage as well as several documents related to his lost expedition and subsequent rescue attempts.

- De varietate fortunae liber IV, an important account from around 1500 of the travels of Nicolò de Conti, who travelled in the East for more than twenty-five years.

- Sino-Spanish Codex (Boxer Codex) – this beautifully illustrated document describes countries and peoples bordering the China Sea – especially Japan, China and the Philippines – and is an important piece on early encounters.

- Documents relating to figures such as Francis Drake, Walter Raleigh and Martin Frobisher which highlight a fascinating period of early British exploration and forays into privateering and piracy.

- Le Livre des merveilles by Marco Polo including the illuminations of Maître d’Egerton – this illuminated manuscript compendium dates from c.1410-1412 and is comprised of geographical works and accounts of travels in Asia and Africa.

- Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks – President of the Royal Society, well-respected botanist and proponent of the British colonisation of Australia.

- South – Sir Ernest Shackleton's Glorious Epic of the Antarctic (1919): this silent film includes footage from Shackleton's Endurance expedition which is considered the last major expedition of Antarctic Exploration.

**Material Types**

- Diaries, journals and ships' logbooks
- Printed and manuscript books
- Correspondence, notes and ephemera
- Scientific papers, surveys, reports and government documents
- Publicity and newspaper clippings
- Maps and charts
- Artwork, photographs and objects
- Film footage and audio

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The interactive map feature plots over 50 voyages.
Age of Exploration tells the story of European maritime exploration from c.1420-1920 and focuses primarily on western European explorers—British, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch in particular—and their sea-faring voyages to locate ‘new lands’, trade routes, establish colonies and settlements, and advance their scientific knowledge over a five-hundred-year period.

Key Themes

- Expedition Planning, Financing & Sponsorship
- Ships & Provisions
- New Commodities & Trade
- New Territories
- Ports, Forts & Entrepôts
- Competition
- Life at Sea
- Indigenous Peoples and Early Encounters
- Navigation, Scientific Observations & Instruments
- Personal and Family Life

Source Archives

- Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand
- American Philosophical Society
- Bibliothèque nationale de France
- British Film Institute
- British Library
- Glenbow
- James Ford Bell Library, University of Minnesota
- Lilly Library, Indiana University
- Massachusetts Historical Society
- The Explorers Club
- The National Archives, UK
- The Newberry Library

The publisher is grateful to the source archives for the reproduction of images used in this flyer.


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