THE RUSSIANS AND AUSTRALIA

VOLUME ONE OF
Russia and the South Pacific
1696 - 1840

Glynn Barratt
Known for his pioneering work on Russia’s early exploits in Australia and the Pacific, historian Glynn Barratt again breaks new ground in presenting the first comprehensive study of Russian naval, social, mercantile, and scientific enterprise in New South Wales between 1807 and 1835.

Through Tsar Peter the Great’s Dutch contacts, Russia was early aware of the existence of “New Holland” and a number of unsuccessful attempts were made to reach what is now Australia. Following a description of these efforts, Barratt focuses on the seventeen visits that Russian ships made to Australian ports on voyages from the Baltic carrying supplies of the settlements in Kamchatka and Alaska.

As a result of the goodwill generated by the Anglo-Russian alliance against Napoleonic France, relations between the British colonists and the Russian seamen were extremely cordial. While visiting Australia, Russian naval officers pursued a range of scientific activities, including botany, zoology, ethnography, and mineralogy, and collected specimens and artefacts. They also studied the British penal system and filled journals with detailed observations.

Available in Russian archives and museums and examined there by Barratt, the journals and collections which until now have largely remained unexplored by historians reveal the high level of skill and education of these early visitors to Australia. The author’s notes on the archival sources as well as his detailed bibliography and references will be invaluable information for others studying this period of Russian history and represent a significant contribution to the field of Slavic studies.

The first volume of a series entitled *Russia and the South Pacific, 1696–1840*, this book is particularly timely in view of Russian expansion in the southwest Pacific since 1978, for it corrects the common misconception that Russia is a newcomer to the Pacific Basin.

1 Russia in Pacific Waters, 1715–1825: A Survey of the Origins of Russia’s Naval Presence in the North and South Pacific by Glynn Barratt

2 Distant Dominion: Britain and the Northwest Coast of North America, 1579–1809 by Barry M. Gough

3 Russian Shadows on the British Northwest Coast of North America, 1810–1890 by Glynn Barratt

4 Gunboat Frontier: British Maritime Authority and Northwest Coast Indians, 1846–1890 by Barry M. Gough

5 The Russians and Australia, Volume 1 of Russia and the South Pacific, 1696–1840 by Glynn Barratt
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