

Haerenga takes up the story of Māori voyages from Ranginui, who was captured by early French explorers in 1769 and died three months later off the coast of Chile, to King Tāwhiao and his party who travelled to London in 1884 in order to petition the Queen over Treaty breaches. This volume contains six main chapters, the first four of which predate official British colonization. It is principally organized around short biographical accounts of individuals who travelled for a variety of reasons: after being duplicitously kidnapped, for employment, to see the world, or on trade or diplomatic missions. The structure of this book, with its emphasis on named people, is perhaps its greatest weakness. Most of the travels have been already reasonably well covered by New Zealand historians, and although most of the subjects get at least a few pages each, in telling the stories minimal room is left for a deeper analysis of Māori mobility. While the structure works best for the very early contact period when those named were most likely all the Māori travellers of their period, O'Malley has restricted himself to a number of better-known travel accounts for the later periods. There is thus little discussion of women such as the girls at Marsden's Parramatta school, the large number of working-class Māori sailors, such as the five Te Arawa whom Hoani Hīpango met in London, or those who settled overseas, such as the small but thriving Māori community at The Rocks in Sydney. The book also ignores Southern Ngāi Tahu (who had extensive contact with Pākehā prior to the Treaty) with significant voyagers such as Taiaroa and Tūhawaiki travelling to Sydney in the late 1830s to sell land and acquire goods.

Despite its faults, the book has two features to recommend it. O'Malley has assembled in one volume a number of notable accounts of Māori travellers, and where he has the information to hand, he reproduces what they thought of their destinations and their experiences, thus ensuring an indigenous perspective on these journeys.

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Dumont d'Urville, Explorer and Polymath. By Edward Duyker. Otago University Press, Dunedin, 2014. 664pp. NZ price: \$70.00. ISBN: 9781877578700.

Dumont d'Urville, or, to give him his full name, Jules-Sébastien-César Dumont d'Urville, was a nineteenth-century French naval explorer who has been neglected in New Zealand and Australia. The author of this recent biography, Edward Duyker, complains that d'Urville is missing from *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand* (1966), *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* (1991–) and the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (1966–) (p.14). By contrast, the French government remembers him well. The French Antarctic base bears d'Urville's name, and the authors of two English biographies on d'Urville — Duyker and John Dunmore — have been awarded ranks in the *Ordre des Palmes Académiques*. d'Urville's contemporaries might have been surprised to see such official recognition; to them he was best known as the author of a popular and often reprinted work on exploration: *Voyage Pittoresque autour du monde* (1834–1835).

Though he was gifted at self-publicity, d'Urville was not particularly important in the history of nineteenth-century exploration. He was not accompanied on his

voyages by a civilian French scientist of equal ability to a Charles Darwin and a T.H. Huxley. The absence of a distinguished scientist on d'Urville's voyages did not point to some national scientific failure; on the contrary, France was pre-eminent in most areas of science and could have easily staffed any number of ships with gifted scientists. The problem lay with French naval policy, which held that the presence of civilians on a naval ship would weaken discipline and cause disruption during a voyage. From this it followed that a French scientific explorer was a professional naval officer with a keen amateur interest in one or more sciences. In d'Urville's case, this meant that he was first and foremost an officer and secondly a botanist. He was more impressive in the former role — though as a naval commander his success at gaining independent commands mostly rested upon his ability at importuning senior officers and government ministers. As a scientist, d'Urville did not fare so well. His forte was as a plant collector with occasional forays into entomology and geology, but, since the regions he visited were islands and coastal areas that had often been visited by previous explorers, he discovered little that was unknown to science.

Dumont d'Urville was even better at making enemies than he was at importuning superiors; thus he excited the antipathy of the astronomer Francois Arago, who hit upon a cruel truth about d'Urville's identity when he mused that it was difficult to determine to what species the latter belonged: the naval officers said d'Urville was botanist while the botanists said he was a naval officer. Underneath the quip was the insinuation that d'Urville failed at both roles. To take this as two questions of speciation, how did he compare to other French naval explorers of the period and how did he rank as a French natural scientist? Was he a good specimen of either type? The answer to these questions is that he did not rank very well. He was a paradigmatic example of neither a mid-nineteenth-century French naval explorer nor of a scientist.

Edward Duyker hints at d'Urville's lacklustre naval career when recounting his meeting with another French naval captain, Malo-Bernard Duhaut-Cilly, while anchored at Valparaiso. Duyker dwells upon the fact that Duhaut-Cilly was a battle-hardened veteran of naval engagements in both the Atlantic and the Indian Oceans, yet had been promoted later than d'Urville, who lacked battle experience. It appears unlikely that d'Urville felt embarrassed about his lack of combat because he was too obsessed with fostering his own career to be discomfited by the thought that a rival officer had more merit. This points to one of his flaws: his self-focus was extreme. While others might have relished that the French navy took part in the battle of Navarino (which freed the Greeks from their Turkish overlords), d'Urville made unflattering comments about the French intervention on the side of the Greeks. He was annoyed that, as a consequence of its focus upon Greek independence, the press had ignored the first voyage of his ship the *Astrolabe* (1826–1829).

By contemporary standards, striving for Greek independence was more heroic than cruising the Pacific Ocean, and d'Urville's failure to respect his fellow officer who had seen action reveals a pettiness of character. This leads to the question: did d'Urville have the 'right stuff' to be an admirable naval commander? He was not tested in battle so he compared badly to contemporary naval explorers such as Louis de Freycinet, Abel Aubert Dupetit-Thouars and Louis Edouard Bouët-Willamez. Unlike his bellicose compatriots, d'Urville shuddered when he saw stores of naval munitions such as grapeshot. Then, too, d'Urville seems less impressive than Auguste-Nicolas Valliant, who had to climb to command without the advantage of the kind of family patronage which had aided d'Urville at the beginning of his career. If one was

searching for a naval officer who typified the new imperial success of France after the July Revolution then one would ignore d'Urville in favour of one of his competitors such as Depetit-Thouars or Bouët-Willamez.

If d'Urville was unexciting as a naval officer, his scientific ventures were even less remarkable. French scientific disciplines, such as botany, were even more competitive than the navy. Paris was the centre of biological sciences in the early nineteenth century and French plant scientists were unrivalled. While the Germans and the English had stature in fields such as geology and astronomy, the life sciences were peculiarly French. In this context, d'Urville could only be a handmaiden — a collector of specimens that were to be described by others, but, even in this circumscribed role, his attainments were modest. Duyker meticulously records each aspect of d'Urville's botanical endeavours and the results are meagre. The explorer found few species that were rare or were absent from the collections of the Musée d'histoire naturelle, and he lacked the scientific imagination to theorize in a novel way about what little he did find.

Beginning with his first scientific paper in 1822, d'Urville failed to elicit an enthusiastic response. This unpromising beginning set the tone for his later scientific career. Typical of his work was the aid he gave the botanists Adolphe-Théodore Brongniart and Jean Baptiste Bory de Saint-Vincent in 1825 in preparing the botanical volumes from the voyage of the *Coquille*. To play the assistant was his usual role. It was not that he lacked contacts. D'Urville was acquainted with a number of scientific luminaries, including René Louiche Desfontaines, Jean-Baptiste Lamarck and Alexander von Humboldt, but moving among such people was not enough to propel him into scientific creativity. His scientific reputation always remained slight; it is noteworthy that when a committee of the Academie des Sciences reviewed the scientific prospects for the voyage of the *Astrolabe* and the *Zélé* in 1837, the only plant scientist on their committee, Charles François Brisseau de Mirbel, did not attempt to protect d'Urville's scientific reputation from the attacks by Arago and de Freycinet. In any event, there was little to defend. Dumont d'Urville was primarily a plant collector, and even in that role, he had limitations. During his last voyage in the *Astrolabe* his gout was so severe that he was often unable to survey much more than the foreshore next to the ship.

Arago's quip insinuated that d'Urville's reputation, both as a naval explorer and as a scientist, was overblown. Like many cruel jibes, it contained some truth: d'Urville's passionate desire for fame was not matched by his contemporary importance. Nonetheless, d'Urville's life is still of extraordinary interest. His overweening ambition and his jealousy of the success of others led him to keep meticulous records in journals, reports and letters. These, together with the journals and letters of fellow officers, provide exhaustive details about the lives and activities aboard naval expeditions during the early nineteenth century. Duyker has gone much further in his archival and historical work than any predecessor. Every minute detail of d'Urville's domestic and shipboard life has been unsparingly analysed. The explorer has been allowed little credit for his claim to have discovered the resting place of the ill-fated La Pérouse expedition. Duyker also allows d'Urville no obfuscation in the priority of discovery of new things whether these were tiny islands, submerged reefs or minute organisms. The forensic quality of Duyker's analysis is so inexorable that one must ask, is it possible for a biography to possess value despite each element of the subject's life disappearing in an acidic bath of scrutiny? Or, to put this another way, is Duyker's

book a success? The answer is affirmative: this work is a superb piece of scholarship, though this comes at the expense of biographical coherency.

This gets to the ultimate question, what manner of man was d'Urville? It is clear that he was austere and vain. He was also imperious — even by the standards of naval commanders. D'Urville's flaws are clear to Duyker who, after reflecting upon assessments made by subordinates, remarks that d'Urville's persona was cold, obstinate, selfish, vindictive, self-opinionated and lacking sincerity.

Seldom did d'Urville display qualities that could pass as virtues. He was without wisdom, generosity, truthfulness, modesty, forbearance and valour. He also lacked sympathy for indigenous peoples — a quality possessed by contemporary explorers such as von Humboldt or Robert Fitzroy. Unlike them, d'Urville possessed a full measure of nineteenth-century nationalistic and ethnocentric prejudice. For example, he saw the English and Dutch as officious, Greeks as half-savage, Portuguese priests as lax, Spanish governance as decayed, and aboriginal peoples as hideous in appearance, indolent, stupid, dirty, credulous and ungrateful. For a traveller, d'Urville was curiously lacking in sympathetic insights into other cultures. In fact, his collection of flaws is so extensive that it suggests a mystery. How could a man so weighed down with faults establish a career as a scientist or command a ship? The more difficulties Duyker uncovers, the more puzzling and blurred d'Urville's character becomes. This is not the fault of his biographer. Duyker is an excellent researcher and skilled at providing a useful political and naval context for each phase of his subject's life. Duyker is also excellent in describing how d'Urville created and popularized the ethnographic division between Melanesians, Polynesians, Micronesians and Australians. Despite his deficiencies as an ethnographer, d'Urville's (1838) division of the peoples of the Pacific is still widely used in the Anglo-Saxon world (p.307). It is ironic that d'Urville's lasting impact did not come from the botanical and entomological researches, which had engrossed most of his time and effort, but from his more casual ethnographic theorizing.

Duyker, whether writing about politics, science or ethnography, is not merely scholarly; he is impressive. Thanks to him we can now evaluate each aspect of d'Urville's life and career. The only question remaining to be answered is: will d'Urville's reputation ever recover from such a keen scrutiny? Probably not; there are few historical figures whose posthumous reputation could survive the caustic treatment Duyker metes out and d'Urville is not one of these. However, whether or not d'Urville's reputation as a great man survives, his comprehensively recorded life will ensure that he is remembered as an example of how a man without any great qualities could survive and even achieve some modest success in the French navy and in the French scientific establishment.

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