

'prehistory' is expunged (a now common concession to Maori sensitivity) and, for that matter, a book where all the substantive contributions are by New Zealand-trained scholars.

O'Regan argues that only people living Maori culture can appreciate all dimensions of Maori history. One illustration he uses is less than convincing. The identity he feels in travelling in the Pacific and finding Maori echoes in artefacts, names, language, and behaviour is not unique to Maori. With knowledge, that experience is real and available to Pakeha, and Dr Wilson's book will help more New Zealanders to achieve at least this degree of biculturalism and identification with their country.

R.G. LAW

Auckland

Extracts from the journals of the ships Recherche, Espérance and Coquille 1793 and 1824. Early eyewitness accounts of Maori life: 3 and 4. Translated and transcribed by Isabel Ollivier. Alexander Turnbull Library Endowment Trust, with Indosuez New Zealand Limited, Wellington, 1986. 219pp. NZ price: \$44.

THIS VOLUME brings together journals from two separate French voyages to the Pacific, one well known to historians, the other obscure. The visit of the *Coquille* to the Bay of Islands in 1824 under Louis Isidore Duperrey has been well documented in print, most recently by Andrew Sharp (*Duperrey's Visit to NZ in 1824*, Wellington, 1971). Not surprisingly, Bruni d'Entrecasteaux's fleeting visit in the ships *Recherche* and *Espérance* in 1793 has had less attention. The two visits were quite different in nature. The *Coquille* stayed for two weeks; the *Recherche's* encounter with the Maori lasted no more than an hour. Passing the west coast of Cape Maria van Diemen, d'Entrecasteaux made no attempt to land or make contact with the local people. When several canoes of Maori approached he allowed them to come alongside, but did not let the Maori board the ship, remarking 'the natives of these islands have been visited so often, their customs and their manners are so well known and described, that there would be nothing to be gained from seeing them at close quarters'. His lack of interest in the local inhabitants is a reminder that ethnography was by no means the prime objective of these voyages. D'Entrecasteaux was concerned simply to carry out his orders, which were to explore the Cape and check its position. The fierce reputation of the Maori may also have put the French off, though if so their fears were quickly allayed. One officer, Raoul, commented that the 'good and gentle manner towards us [of the Maori] soon effaced all notions of the savage, leaving us with practical men'.

The practical men learned quickly. By the time of the *Coquille's* visit 31 years later, ship visits had become a primary source of wealth for the Bay of Islands Maori, exploited with enthusiasm and a clear sense of purpose. Maori confidence in their ability to control their interaction with the Europeans is a striking feature of these reports. Jacquinet, ensign on the *Coquille*, noted that the Protestant missionaries in the Bay 'do not seem to lead a very happy life and are forced to keep a constant eye on the natives who go into their house with the sole hope of stealing something'. Where the *Recherche* had found the Maori remarkably honest in trade, the crew of the *Coquille* complained of Maori stealing, lying, and untrustworthiness. The diffidence of the traders with the *Recherche* had given way to impatience to acquire the goods, especially the muskets, of European commerce.

The coin of such trade was very often sex. The journals from the *Coquille* provide one of the most vivid descriptions on record of the great industry of Maori prostitution.

Women, some girls as young as 9 or 10 if we are to trust the judgement of the officers, swarmed over the ship for the two weeks it lay at anchor, to the mixed delight and moral disgust of the officers and crew. The women's complete lack of self-consciousness contrasts forcibly with the embarrassment and amazement of the French. As Jacquinot put it, 'Priapus seems to be a god in these parts, to go by the homages addressed to him'. Jacquinot preserved enough detachment to note that the women sent aboard were usually slaves captured in war and put to work by their owners. One reason for this, according to the ship's surgeon Lesson, was that the Maori were well aware of the spread of syphilis, and attempted as far as they could to prevent liaisons between free women and Europeans. Openly contemptuous of the slave prostitutes, free and high-born women were nevertheless not averse to discreet commerce themselves. The sexual double standard was not a European invention.

Lesson's medical journal — made available here for the first time — provides some fascinating glimpses of the health of the Maori, noted at first hand from his visits to local pa. For the rest, however, many of the accounts from the *Coquille* are representative of the wide-eyed European (male) fascination with warfare and cannibalism that fills so much of the nineteenth-century accounts of culture contact. Much — typified by Lesson's description of Hongi as a 'stupid and ferocious savage' — is entirely superficial. As Anne Salmond points out in her foreword, this is one of the major dangers of this kind of 'documentary' history: much that seems objective and immediate is no more than a mix of quick impressions and received ideas, overlain with the eager opinions of the local missionaries. The brevity of their stay, bad weather, and inability to communicate with the Maori prevented the French from learning much at all at first hand, while already voluminous secondary sources had created well-formed expectations in French minds before they arrived. When the *Recherche* sailed from Brest in 1791 it carried a library of more than 250 volumes, including a comprehensive collection of works on voyages to the Pacific and Indian Oceans, helpfully listed here by Ollivier.

Access to 'I was there' accounts does not therefore make the historian's task of sifting out a 'truth' from the sources any easier — it simply increases the data-base, and multiplies the pitfalls. It is a pity then to have to repeat earlier criticism of the hands-off editorial policy of this series. Ollivier's decision to stick to transcription and to leave evaluation of the sources to others invites readers to take at face value accounts which are frequently highly prejudiced, inaccurate, and second-hand. Lesson admits that one story, of Hongi eating the left eye of a corpse 'out of desire for vengeance, but also . . . from the idea that it would increase his glory', originated with 'Mr Marsden' (in fact from the *Missionary Register* of 1822), then adds the comment that others in the Bay have assured him that the story is false and 'that the same goes for most of the facts he [Marsden] recorded'. That didn't stop Lesson, however, from including this story, along with a good deal more of Marsden's views, in a version of his journal he later refined for publication. The Ollivier volume represents a step backward from Sharp's collection, whose notes alert readers at least to the most obvious examples of such historical piggy-backing. Ollivier, in contrast, gives the reader no help at all in using the collection: no notes, no explanations of obscure terms or geographic names, no index, and no maps.

Furthermore, where Sharp's collection was avowedly selective, Ollivier's gives the impression of being more comprehensive than is actually the case. It certainly does not live up to Salmond's stated intention to bring together 'all the surviving documents' from each voyage; nor is it consistent in its selections. By limiting her choice from the *Coquille* to manuscript sources, Ollivier ignores some published sources of major interest, such as the summaries of the voyage written by d'Urville and Duperrey. In contrast, from the voyage of the *Recherche* she includes extracts from two published accounts. Nothing from the *Espérance* is included at all. The few notes on bibliographic sources that Ollivier

provides in turn give only limited answers to the questions of what is available and where. An appendix lists the manuscript sources from the *Coquille*, but without cross-referencing them to the extracts which are included in this volume, or clearly indicating what material has been left out. Nowhere is it explained, for example, why the manuscript account of Poret de Blosseville in Ollivier is significantly different from the same author's account in Sharp.

Ollivier's transcription and translation, however, are excellent, with an impressive control of the many nautical terms used in the journals. The only obvious errors are minor ('tout pour attendre' should presumably read 'tant pour attendre' [p.42]; a 'baguete' (sic) is a 'mallet', not a 'wand' [p.120]). However, a couple of other instances illustrate how subtle decisions of translation can lead to significant changes of meaning. In a description of the *Recherche's* encounter with a group of Maori canoes (p.25), for example, Ollivier translates 'il en est venue une autre' as 'another (canoe) came' instead of 'another left (the ship)' — resulting in a total of five canoes rather than the four that were actually present. Similar ambiguity is apparent in d'Auribeau's comment (p.32) that the stature of the Maori was comparable to that of the Europeans, and that 'elle diffère très peu entre eux'. Ollivier's translation, 'they differ very little in that' implies that the Maori were generally of a similar height to the Pakeha. It seems more probable, however, that the phrase was intended as 'their height differs very little among themselves', i.e. that the Maori were generally of uniform height.

Despite a good deal of interesting material, the minimal editing and rather confusing format of this collection do not make it either as easy to use or as pleasurable to read as it could have been. It is also unfortunate that the quality of one of the essays appended to the documents, a discussion by Anthony Murray-Oliver of the drawings and engravings from Duperrey's voyage, is seriously below that of the rest of the volume. His piece, describing the complex relationships between the works of the artists Chazal, Lejeune, and Tardieu, is so loosely and cryptically written that his meaning is frequently obscure. Comparisons between representations of the various artists (e.g. pp.200, 214) are hard to follow without illustrations of all the works discussed, while the failure to translate captions to some of the pictures will not be appreciated by non-linguists. By contrast, the essay by Ollivier and R.D.J. Collins on the art which emerged from the voyage of d'Entrecasteaux is clear, interesting, and persuasively argued, a model of its kind.

PHILIP TURNER

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Fragmens du Dernier Voyage de la Pérouse. Edited and translated by J.Dunmore. National Library of Australia, Canberra, 1987. 2 vols, 101pp., limited edition. Australian price: \$85.

FRAGMENTES, published in France in 1797, purports to put into print a notebook stolen from the ill-fated *Astrolabe*, one of the two ships which, in 1785-1788, voyaged via Cape Horn to the South Pacific under the command of Jean-François Galaup de la Pérouse. The notebook, containing an account especially of the society the crews discovered in the idyllic south seas and its flora and fauna, habitations, and tools, was described in the preface which introduced its appearance in print as having been stolen by an English sailor whilst the two ships were in Botany Bay. Both ships were subsequently lost on Vanikoro, but La Pérouse had taken the precaution of having his letters and journals forwarded