

Reviews

The Charts and Coastal Views of Captain Cook's Voyages: Volume Three: The Voyage of the Resolution and Discovery, 1776–1780. Chief Editor: Andrew David. The Hakluyt Society in Association with The Australian Academy of the Humanities, London, 1997. 319 pp. UK price: £210.00. ISBN 0-904180-55-7.

IT IS ALMOST 50 years since the Hakluyt Society launched its project to publish the edited manuscripts from Cook's three voyages. Forty-five years have passed since the publication of the Beaglehole edition of the *Endeavour* voyage. In the preface to that volume, the then President of the Society, Malcolm Letts, signalled the intention to produce four volumes. The first three were to be the texts of the journals from the voyages and the fourth was to be a collection of essays on various aspects of Cook's life and achievements, the scientific results of the voyages, a bibliography, and lists of charts, drawings and views. A portfolio of the principal charts was to accompany the set.

The project was never completed as planned, but in most respects it has surpassed the original conception. Beaglehole's journal texts were completed but the fourth volume of essays never materialized. Given the quite extraordinary body of literature produced on the voyages since 1955 that is probably no loss. On the other hand the biography of Cook by Beaglehole was not in the original plan, nor was the magnificent three-volume *The Art of Captain Cook's Voyages*, edited by Joppien and Smith. In another respect this enterprise went beyond the initial conception. In 1988 the Hakluyt Society published the first in a three-volume set of *The Charts and Coastal Views of Captain Cook's Voyages* edited by Andrew David. It was a formidable enterprise — a near equivalent to the editorial work of the journals — and the volume under review completes the set.

This remarkable folio work completes the ambitious enterprise begun half a century ago. It covers the third voyage of Cook which had as its principal goal the discovery of a Northwest passage from the Pacific coast of North America to Europe. The charts and views are those drawn both before and after Cook's death in Hawaii. Appropriately, William Bligh, one of the new generation of explorers, drew the last chart of the voyage in January 1780 on the return home. It is of the Con Son Island, formerly the Archipelago of Poulo Condore, off Vietnam. However this volume also tidies up a number of loose ends from the project as a whole. It includes some charts incorporating the tracks of all three voyages; a number of previously uncatalogued charts and drawings which have recently come to light; addenda and corrigenda from all three voyages; and a running journal by James King who commanded the *Discovery* after the death of Charles Clerke. This previously unpublished account was rediscovered by Andrew David himself in the bowels of the Hydrographic Office at Taunton. It is an elegant and useful account of the return voyage from Kamchatka to the Cape of Good Hope between August 1779 and April 1780.

The charts and coastal views of this voyage include Kerguelen, southern Tasmania, Queen Charlotte Sound, parts of the Cook Islands, Tonga, Tahiti, the Hawaiian Islands, the northwest coast of America and eastern Siberia including the Kamchatka Peninsula. Generally, little effort was put into charting lands previously visited, such as Queen

Charlotte Sound and Tahiti, a sign of confidence in the work of the first two voyages. With new lands it was a different story and even barren and uninhabited islands such as Kerguelen were subjected to thorough cartographic scrutiny.

The visual record provides extraordinary evidence of the tenacity and endurance of the surveyors. On the coast that was the primary object of their voyage the navigators encountered every obstacle. The Russian charts of Müller and Stählin were as fanciful and deceptive as the mythical accounts of the Greek pilot De Fuca and the inaccurate ones of the Spaniard De Fonte. The weather on the northwest coast of America alternated with mists and storms impeding accurate sightings and astronomical observations. Reefs and tidal movements threatened the ships and their boats. In spite of this the charts and views provide a remarkable record with few glaring errors. Determining the longitude of Nootka Sound offers an example of the persistence of Cook and his colleagues. Poor weather meant observations of lunar distances were difficult. However, by taking around 600 observations and averaging the results, they were able to achieve a longitude very close to modern values.

The charts and views reveal subtle changes in style from those of the previous voyages. There are more coastal views than on the first and second voyages and the relief is more detailed. They are often more decorative or 'artistic'. The volume also shows the emergence of new chart-making talent. Few of the charts are actually by Cook himself: they are mostly in the form of the larger consolidations. The new draughtsmen were Henry Roberts, Edward Riou, Thomas Edgar, George Vancouver and William Bligh. Above all, it is the last who emerged from this voyage as the most distinguished of Cook's disciples. An unknown warrant officer when he joined the *Resolution*, he produced many of the large-scale charts which provided the basis for copies by his fellows. Tragically, many of his original manuscript charts were left on the *Bounty* after the mutiny and were presumably burned with her. However the record which remains, with so much in this superbly edited and definitive work, provides a remarkable testimony to a generation of eighteenth-century discoverers.

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Science in the Service of Empire: Joseph Banks, the British State and the Uses of Science in the Age of Revolution. By John Gascoigne. Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1998. 247 pp. Aus. price: \$49.95. ISBN 0-521-55069-6.

SIR JOSEPH BANKS, botanical explorer, autocratic President of the Royal Society, friend of the King, de facto science advisor to the British government, and 'Father and Founder of the Australian Colonies', appears in this volume as, first of all, an improving landowner. Banks' colonial policies are explained as improving agriculture and the landed interest writ large on the imperial stage; his effectiveness in linking science and government is placed in the context of an oligarchical government by landowners.

Public service was the duty of a landed gentleman but, rather than the usual parliamentary service of his class, Banks chose to devote himself to 'the Scientific Service of the Public' (p.22). Perhaps, John Gascoigne suggests, if Banks had not become President of the Royal Society he would have been tempted by the rewards of parliamentary office, but from 1778 the presidency of the Royal Society gave him social status, and his distance from party politics meant that his advice could be seen