
A USELESS DISCOVERY? AUSTRALIA AND ITS PEOPLE IN THE EYES OF OTHERS FROM TASMAN TO COOK¹

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Abstract: Australia and its people were 'discovered' for the rest of the world between 1606 and about 1650. Was anyone interested over the next century or so? Was this 'discovery' of any use to anyone? The answers to these questions were largely determined by the economic patterns of the time, especially the demands of trade with Europe and China. Some political and scientific issues were also relevant. Various uses were proposed and some realized. To understand these matters correctly, however, we need to free ourselves from the blinkers of the racial, imperial and modernist ideas of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and to re-imagine how these matters looked in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Australia began with a bad press. Four hundred years ago, the gossip around the Indies was that the Dutch East India Company's little workhorse vessel, *Duyfken*, looking to see what lay beyond the riches of the islands where the spices grew, had coasted along southern New Guinea and what we now know as the western shore of Cape York Peninsula, but the Company's servants had found 'no good to be done there.' Hopes of a reputed 'great store of Gold' had been disappointed and 'in sending their men on shoare to intreate of Trade, there were nine of them killed by the Heathens, which are man-eaters.' We hear later that at least one of these deaths was on the Australian coast.¹

In 2006 it was proper that we commemorated the four-hundredth anniversary of the 'discovery' by Janszoon and Roossengin on the *Duyfken* of Australia and its people.² In my view, there is neither convincing record nor likelihood of earlier deliberate long distance contact by others, though no doubt there has been a steady light 'rain' of castaways from close at hand through the millennia from first settlement. 'Discovery', though, is not my theme in this paper.³ It is enough to observe that by the 1650s most of the Australian coast was charted reliably enough for the navigational standards of the day.

This was no secret knowledge. At just this time, Amsterdam was building its new town hall. An eager visitor to its inauguration on 29 July 1655, leaving the Dam Square through the arches supporting van Campen's shockingly new Baroque façade and climbing the stairs past the dread tribunal from which the death sentence was to be proclaimed, would have come to the magnificent Great Hall or Citizens' Chamber — de Burgerzaal. One step on to the inlaid marble floor with its maps of the two hemispheres, drawn up according to the latest information, and the foot falls on van Diemen's Land, charted just over a decade earlier by Tasman.⁴ Nothing in the seventeenth century could have been more public than the Australian coastline.

Nor was the knowledge kept in Europe. In mid-1644, Sultan Mahmud (also known as Karaeng Pattingalloang), ruler of the small state of Tallo' near Makassar in the middle of the Indonesian archipelago, put in an order with the Dutch Company for various geographical requirements: a world-map, an atlas, two telescopes, a big lens, twelve glass prisms, some iron rods and, most remarkably, two monstrous globes. Any accompanying text could be in Spanish, Portuguese or

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Latin. Some items were supplied directly from Batavia, but the world-map and atlas did not arrive from the Netherlands until 1648. Only one globe seems to have been made, and at well over a metre in diameter that was a very special and very expensive job. It finally reached Makassar in 1651, three years before its owner died. The world-map and the globe were supplied by the firm of Blaeu in Amsterdam and, although the actual objects themselves do not survive, it is clear that they showed the Australian coast as known after Tasman's discoveries of 1642–3 and 1644.⁵

On the map drawn up in 1674 by Ferdinand Verbiest, a Belgian Jesuit at the court of the Kangxi emperor in Beijing, the outline of the Australian coast and many of the names are recognisably Dutch.⁶ By the 1650s, Australia was well and truly on the map for anyone who cared to look.

What did the outside world make of Australia and its people over the century or so following the 1650s?⁷ Two issues of method need to be mentioned at the outset. Firstly, we are concerned with views of the continent and its people from outside, not with the reality as known to those with long experience here. What did people who were not here, or who were brief visitors, bring to their conception of both the known and potential aspects of the land? This looking from the outside is not as simple as it sounds; our natural inclination is to privilege what we know the reality to be whether in respect of the land or the people. We know that Australia is distinctive in many ways, but Europeans of the period placed their observations in the context of their knowledge of the Americas, Africa, Asia and the Pacific.⁸

The second issue of method is the need to assess ideas and actions in the context of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The danger of mis-perception is not so much with the attitudes of the present, but rather with the all-too-familiar views of writers and settlers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Around 1800, there was a profound shift in European ideas about other lands and other peoples. The earlier comparative approach was replaced by an interest in ranking, which led in due course to the concepts of racial hierarchies in the nineteenth century and scientific racism in the twentieth.⁹

Tasman's discoveries put paid to various earlier ideas. Thus, in the resolution of the Governor-General and Council of the Dutch Company relating to the grand project of exploration under Tasman's command, the object of discovery is 'the apparent rich Southern and Easternlands'.¹⁰ In the memoir of François Jacobszoon Visscher, which was the theoretical justification for the project, the mention of the 'islands of Salomon' and 'all the totally unknown provinces of Beach' ties back to Ptolemy, Marco Polo and the cartography of the sixteenth century. On Mercator's map of 1569, Beach was 'provincia aurea' — the golden province.¹¹ Perhaps the same thinking lay behind the rumour of the 'great store of Gold' which the *Duyfken* had been sent to find. Such fancies were harder to entertain after 1644. Tasman, the first to circumnavigate Australia, separated the 'known Southland',¹² including the south coast of the newly-discovered van Diemen's Land, from any great world-balancing southern continent. Whatever possibilities could still, until Cook's second voyage, be imagined in the South Pacific, at least Australia was not part of them.

Tasman also confirmed the nature of the Australian coast and its inhabitants. Although his instructions did not discount the possibility of his finding the civilisation and wealth of a second Peru or Mexico, this was always seen as rather unlikely; he was told that 'it is apparent, the Southlands are peopled with very rough wild people.'¹³ In the event, no people at all were seen in van Diemen's Land, and the signs of human presence did indeed suggest roughness. Apart from timber, some greens and water for provisioning the ships, the only commodity of possible value found was a 'fine Gum which is dripping from the trees, and has an Odour of Gommalacca.'¹⁴ In northern Australia, on the voyage of 1644, Tasman and his companions 'found nothing profitable, but only poor naked beach-runners, without rice, or any noteworthy fruits, very poor, and in many places evil natured people.'¹⁵ Even if the authorities in Batavia still hoped for 'but

one rich silver and gold mine' from 'so large a land ... in various climes',¹⁶ the lure of a golden province had lost its immediate appeal. Australia looked like a useless discovery.

Knowledge in itself does, of course, have its rewards and one pragmatic reason for good charts of the Australian coast, especially the western coast, was the danger of shipwreck on the speedy course across the southern Indian Ocean before turning north for Java. Dirck Hartog's visit of 1616 was followed by many more as Dutch ships were instructed to sight the coast before turning north. The four known wrecks were not many out of more than 4700 outward voyages by Company vessels over roughly two hundred years. In fact, most wrecks took place much closer to home, around the British Isles.¹⁷ In the comings and goings to the Australian coast occasioned by 'our' four wrecks, perhaps we should also include the search for the missing *Ridderschap van Holland* which was the motive which triggered de Vlamingh's voyage of 1696–7.

The de Vlamingh scientific expedition — and it may properly be called that — to the west coast between the Swan River and North West Cape was also driven by the scientific curiosity of Nicolaes Witsen, to say nothing of Witsen's very considerable political and financial clout. True, there were no discoveries of potential riches for the Company, but reading Witsen's own summary of what had been found,¹⁸ one is struck by the accuracy and range of the observations made.

De Vlamingh's visit was framed by the two visits of William Dampier to the entrance to King Sound in 1688 and to the Pilbara coast in 1699. On the first, when Dampier was merely a crew member on the *Cygnets* under Captain Read, the intention was little more than to supply the vessel, though the second was a full-blown scientific expedition. While the explicit destination of this second voyage was 'New Holland', which should remind us that the continent was hardly forgotten — and still less after the publishing success of Dampier's accounts of both voyages — the actual content of the books allows us to place his account of Australia within the context of many other observations from all around the world. Both Dampier and Witsen are concerned to make comparisons.

There are striking similarities between the activities and accounts of the English and the Dutch on these visits. Thus both described and collected specimens of plants and animals far beyond any possible trading interest; both experienced and noted the torment of the flies; neither expedition was much impressed with the land itself, though de Vlamingh rather liked Rottneest Island and the Swan valley, and the climate may have been a little kinder then than now; but above all, both have left detailed descriptions of the local inhabitants, insofar as they could form judgments from limited observations and interaction. Both draw the comparison with the Hottentots or Khoisan of the Cape of Good Hope.

The famous declaration by Dampier, or his editor, that 'the inhabitants of this Country are the miserablest People in the World' is often misunderstood. Read in the context of the whole passage and in the light of his attempts to get the people to assist in various ways, the sense of 'miserablest' here is that of lack of possessions of various kinds. Even if he can go on to say that 'setting aside their Humane Shape, they differ little from Brutes,' Dampier has no doubt of their humanity.¹⁹ It is exactly this point which Cook takes up some sixty years later with his equally famous 'far more happier than we Europeans ...' reflections.²⁰ All this is a very long way from the racist attitudes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

There is a direct link between Dampier's activities and the expedition sent by the Dutch Company in 1705 to the north coast — just to check up.²¹ The summary report and excellent chart, which is all that remains of the documentation from this more or less disastrous undertaking, show that the Dutch spent over three months off Melville Island and the Cobourg Peninsula and had intensive contact with, presumably, Tiwi and Iwaidja people.²² Again, we should note the use of comparison and the assumption of common, though not necessarily well-intentioned, humanity in

the descriptions: 'their language ... *seems to resemble* in some respects that of Malabar; ... The colour and stature of these men *appears ... to resemble* most that of the Indians of the east ... The women are tall and slim, with very large mouth and small eyes; the [hair] of both sexes is curly, *like that* of the Papuan islanders, ... The nature of these tribes is foul and treacherous ... Eight islanders attacked and wounded two sailors, with the hope of seizing upon their clothes, and that after having conversed with these men for weeks, eaten and drunk with them, visited them on board, and being allowed to examine everything to their great admiration, after having received presents, and also on their part regaled our people with fish and crabs.'²³ In some ways this was little advance on Tasman, though founded on much greater contact.

Who should turn up in Batavia just three weeks after the report of the 1705 voyage was drawn up, but some crewmen from Dampier's later disastrous attempt to break into the area of Dutch monopoly from the east.²⁴ We can sense some of the Dutch obsession with their trade, and especially the old policy of total monopoly in the spice trade, in the secret report drawn up in response to this intrusion. After reviewing the situation in detail across the whole spice-producing, or possibly spice-producing, area of the Moluccas and eastern parts of the archipelago, the report concludes: 'not the least difficulty can be expected from New Holland, for the people there seem still wilder than those of New Guinea. They have shown not the least signs of acknowledging a King, but live miserably in the same way as those in New Guinea are said to. For corn and commerce, whether in valuables, spices, minerals, gold or silver, seem wholly unknown among that race.'²⁵

This negativity was resoundingly confirmed a few years later in the response to the ideas of Jean Pierre Purry. This is an interesting story which is still not entirely clear, despite some recent attention.²⁶ Purry was Swiss in origin, born in 1675. In 1713, approaching middle age, he signed on with the Dutch East India Company as a corporal in the military, though he seems to have had a church position — and some good connections — when he reached Batavia. On 20 May 1717 he presented to the Governor-General a scheme for placing a small colony of settlement in, roughly, the vicinity of the Eyre Peninsula in South Australia. Given the latitude at which, as Purry demonstrated with a wealth of evidence, one was likely to find 'the best countries on the earth',²⁷ there were two possible advantages for the Company: a source of European style food, including wine, and potential mineral wealth or other tradeable items.

What is striking about Purry's arguments, which are long and detailed, is the insistence on comparison with other situations. Southern Australia is placed into a world-wide frame of reference with, it must be granted, considerable prescience in relation to its eventual agricultural and mineral resources. Purry also deals with the people of the land who, 'although coarse and very ignorant, do not fail to be, just as we are, members of human society'.²⁸ For him, Aborigines were eminently teachable and capable of enjoying the benefits of civilisation.

Such aspirations came to naught. In their official letter of 30 November 1717, the Governor-General and Council formally advised the Directors at home that 'we do not agree with the scheme of this man. There is no prospect of use or benefit to the Company in it, but rather very certain and heavy costs.'²⁹ That was that — though Purry blustered on in Amsterdam for a while, before going away to pester others. No doubt the Governor-General continued to enjoy his wine and other supplies from the Cape, as well as those brought all the way from Europe.

Great changes, however, were afoot, and the greatest of these for eighteenth century trade was the rise of China. The population growth and burgeoning economic power under the great Qing emperors affected the whole world system. China was drawing in resources from an expanding sphere of influence.

As a tiny instance of this, we read in the Dutch harbourmaster's report for the port of Makassar that on 22 January 1717, just when Purry was hatching his plans, 'there arrived from Buton, the captain Baba, a Malay, in his gonting of about 6 tons, with a crew of 8, and with our pass of 19 November last, bringing 190 Buton chests,³⁰ 2 slaves, 120 double mats, 1 picul of trepang and 2 piculs of dammar.' Two days later, another vessel brought in, among other things, 2 piculs of trepang.³¹ The remarkable potential of such sources, especially for Makassar, has now been splendidly realised in Gerrit Knaap and Heather Sutherland's study, *Monsoon Traders: ships, skippers and commodities in eighteenth-century Makassar*.³² Here we can see set out in great detail the changing pattern of trade. Among the many items is trepang, or sea slug, or sea cucumber, or bêche-de-mer. This began to be exported from Southeast Asia to China only at the beginning of the eighteenth century and, as Knaap and Sutherland remark, in the 1720s, 'the trepang trade in Makassar was still in its infancy.'³³ The volume picked up by mid-century and by the 1780s, over 7000 piculs or more than 400 tonnes were being exported, much of it directly to Amoy on the annual junk.³⁴

It is still not entirely clear when trepangers from Makassar or elsewhere feeding into that market extended their field of enterprise to the Australian coast. Clearly, based on the research of Knaap and Sutherland, this cannot be before the 1720s and it could even be somewhat later. The earliest explicit reference to trepang coming from Australia is from 1754 when the Dutch Governor-General and Council reported that the Australian coast was 'made now and then from Timor and Makassar, but produces so far [as] we know nothing but trepang ... and wax.'³⁵ There are a few other vague references in the second half of the eighteenth century and I have argued elsewhere that some of the vessels in, for example, the 1770-1 season lists for Makassar were probably bringing trepang from Australia.³⁶ Then in 1803, we have the irrefutable evidence from Flinders on the Arnhem Land coast and Baudin off the Kimberley coast of large numbers of trepanging vessels.³⁷

From the vantage point of eighteenth-century China, Batavia and Makassar could be seen as forward bases for the distribution of Chinese goods and the collection of various resources. One should not over-estimate the role of island Southeast Asia; there was much more to China's trade than that, to say nothing of the mighty internal economy. The point remains, however, that the Chinese search for resources did reach to the Australian coast through the activities of the Makassar-based trepangers. There were resources here of interest to the outside world.

This commercial relationship inevitably drew in the people of north Australia. Though our knowledge of Aboriginal involvement with these visitors comes almost entirely from the nineteenth century, it is reasonable to assume that some things had begun before then. The dominant language for communication was Makassar; there was some degree of Aboriginal assistance and exchange, though the exact understanding of what was happening probably varied between the parties, and as part of that co-operation, some Aborigines travelled back to Makassar and even beyond; as in many situations where men work in isolated or colonial circumstances, there were instances of sex and violence; and it is highly likely that the first great smallpox epidemic to afflict Aboriginal Australia began on the north coast in the 1780s.³⁸ There is not much here to surprise any student of European expansion in the eighteenth century or earlier. One thing missing, of course, was any suggestion of control through assumed sovereignty.

The question of sovereignty is somewhat surprisingly unimportant before actual European settlement in 1788. There seem to be three occasions on which a claim was made. Tasman, who was on a very deliberate voyage of discovery, was ordered to take possession in the name of the sovereign power of the Dutch Republic of '[a]ll the mainland and islands which [you] shall discover, visit and land on'³⁹ as he duly did in van Diemen's Land following precisely the form laid down. Cook, also following instructions, claimed New South Wales for the British Crown on Possession Island in 1770 and de Saint-Allouarn tried for France on Dirk Hartog Island two years later.⁴⁰

This relative lack of interest in sovereignty is confirmed in various ways. Dampier, for instance, who was on a more or less official expedition in 1699 made no claim, and in Swift's wonderful parody, Lemuel Gulliver defends himself against a possible charge of failing to claim his discoveries for the British Crown with the admission that 'it never came once into my Thoughts.' His savage comments on the nature of colonisation remind us that there have always been critics of the process.⁴¹

A corollary of this disregard for sovereignty is the attitude to kidnapping two or three local people who could, after effective communication was established, provide information on their home and perhaps aid in further contact. The formal line on this was always that such people must be taken 'without violence or risk, and of their own free will' — to quote the instructions for the Dutch expedition of 1705⁴² and, to give the leaders of that expedition their due, they claim to have stuck strictly to instructions and brought no-one back.⁴³ Others were not so punctilious. Whatever the case, there is no reference to seeking the permission of any over-arching authority or ruler to whom the individuals may have owed allegiance.

This practice implies a respect for the individual, reflecting the eighteenth century view of a common humanity. It is too easy to ridicule the assumption of the time that such cultural go-betweens could help relations. True, it is unlikely that, for example, the three 'black convicts' taken on by de Vlamingh at the Cape — all from the Indonesian archipelago — could help much in the reality of Western Australia, despite the impressive total of fifteen languages which they could muster between them.⁴⁴ There were, however, successes or probably so; the trepangers may well have learned something from the Aborigines who travelled back to Makassar with them, and if Tupaia could help Cook only a little in eastern Australia, he was invaluable in New Zealand.⁴⁵ Still in the eighteenth century, we should not forget Governor Phillip's positive relations with Arabanoo, Bennelong and Colebe. Flinders and King respected Bungaree and benefited from his company, but by the late 1820s poor Bungaree was a figure of fun and, in 1839, it was the charity of the Franklins which rescued little Mathinna from Wybalenna. The world had changed.

If Europeans were not much interested in claiming sovereignty as such in distant parts of the globe, they were concerned with trade. In 1756, the year of the last Dutch voyage to the north coast — just to check once again there was 'no good to be done there' — Charles de Brosses was urging a French colony in New Britain since '[n]o better situation could be chosen as a future trading-station in these parts.'⁴⁶ Over the next half century, it is hard to distinguish between the claims of science, including discovery, and actual or potential commercial advantage in the motivation and conduct of numerous French and British expeditions. If Cook's first voyage was primarily scientific in intention, we should remember that the *Endeavour* off New Zealand in December 1769 passed within some thirty miles of Surville on *St Jean-Baptiste*. The intention of the French was primarily commercial.⁴⁷ Cook's third voyage opened up the fur trade from north-western America to Canton, while Marion Dufresne's expedition, which left such a valuable account of its visit to van Diemen's Land in 1772, had clear commercial expectations.⁴⁸

Without entering into the debate about the origins of the Botany Bay settlement, it is worth observing that the prime purpose of the small settlement proposed both by James Mario Matra and by Sir George Young in 1783 was commercial. They were looking to the trade of China 'hitherto extremely against us'⁴⁹ among a plethora of other ideas. Such was the demand for tea. In this context, the plans and projects of William Bolts fit perfectly. As Robert King has recently explained so well, there was almost the chance of a Swedish expedition of settlement to somewhere in south-western Australia in 1786. Bolts re-cycled many of Purry's ideas, but bound them into the trading world of the 1780s.⁵⁰

In the event, of course, it was the British plan of 1786 which was realised, the 'Heads of a plan for effectually disposing of convicts.'⁵¹ Australia's second modern industry, after trepang, was corrective

services. This involved not just a vessel or two establishing a small settlement as proposed by Purry and others over the years, but the First Fleet with eleven vessels and over a thousand settlers. The land, however, was not kind to these newcomers, as those who bolted to the bush soon found. Even in Tasmania, where things got rather out of hand in the first two decades of settlement, the bushrangers failed to establish a viable society beyond the bounds of respectability and were constrained to prey on the system they had fled.⁵² How different it had been in British North America where before 1776 convicted transportees had merged into a wider society without apparent trace.

Was Australia really a useless discovery? Yes and no. In terms of the seventeenth and eighteenth century possibilities for Europeans, the Dutch probably did get it right; there was 'no good to be done there' for the Company, even if the trepangers did well. The successes of nineteenth and twentieth century Australia depended on quite changed economic, industrial and imperial realities. The labour of the convicts and later of disappointed gold-seekers transformed the land with imported technology, animals and crops. As we struggle today with the environmental and economic consequences of that transformation, it is worth remembering the original state of things. So too with ideas. Before the British settlement of 1788, and all that followed from that, the rest of the world did know of Australia and wonder what might be done here. Now we see new possibilities for Australia other than as a bit of Britain that has somehow floated south. Moreover, the red bauxite cliffs which the men on the *Duyfken* saw near Weipa, the barren Pilbara coast and still more the off-shore waters traversed by so many have proved far from useless as north-east Asia, and especially China, draws in vast quantities of resources.

This is, however, to focus on what others see here, like all the views discussed above. The real users of the land in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries — and long before — were those people who lived here then, and they found uses for it, and respect. Perhaps the great task for us today who live in Australia — however and whenever we got here — is to do the same; discover good uses for the land, and respect it.

NOTES

¹ The quotations from John Saris come from 'Observations of the said Captaine John Saris ... during his abode at Bantam, from October 1605 till Octob. 1609', in Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus; or, Purchas His Pilgrimes*, Fourth Booke, ch. 2 (MacLehose and Sons, Glasgow, 1905-7 edition, vol. 3, pp. 491-2).

² The name, Australia, is of course anachronistic in this context, but convenient.

³ The most reliable guide to the first record of each section of the Australian coast is still A. Sharp, *The Discovery of Australia*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1963. Michael Pearson, *Great Southern Land: the maritime exploration of Terra Australis*, Department of the Environment and Heritage, Canberra, 2005 provides an excellent table of relevant information, including the Antarctic discoveries (pp. 20-8), along with much helpful discussion and good illustrations.

⁴ G. Schilder, *Australia unveiled: the share of the Dutch navigators in the discovery of Australia*, Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, Amsterdam, 1976, pp. 196, 198, 374-7.

⁵ See the detailed demonstration of this in J. Keuning, 'Een reusachtige aardglobe van Joan Blaeu uit het midden der zeventiende eeuw', *Tijdschrift van het Koninklijk Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*, 2de series, deel 52, 1935, pp. 525-38.

⁶ The map is preserved in the National Library of Australia, Canberra. In itself, the map provides good evidence that there was no prior Chinese 'discovery'.

⁷ There is now a considerable literature on this question. Among sources not otherwise mentioned in this paper, there are useful accounts in D. J. Mulvaney, 'The Australian Aborigines 1606-1929: opinion and fieldwork', *Historical Studies — Australia and New Zealand*, vol. 8, 1958, pp. 131-57, 297-314 (and reprinted several times); G. Schilder, 'The Dutch conception of New Holland in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries', *The Globe*, 22, 1984, pp. 38-46; and J. Hardy and A. Frost (eds), *European voyaging towards Australia*, Occasional paper 8, Australian Academy of the Humanities, Canberra, 1990.

⁸ This point is made most clearly in W. Eisler and B. Smith, *Terra Australis: the furthest shore*, International Cultural Corporation of Australia, 2000. It is the failure to look from outside that leads to most delusions of early discovery. One can only imagine that the Dieppe maps have anything to do with Australia if one starts from knowing the outline

of the continent and then proceeds to 'massage' that outline to fit. If one starts by looking at the maps themselves, then there are much easier explanations for how they come to be as they are.

⁹ I gratefully acknowledge my debt to Diana Carroll who has explored this theme in the writing of William Marsden. See D. J. Carroll, 'William Marsden and his Malayo-Polynesian Legacy', PhD thesis, Australian National University, 2005.

¹⁰ A. Sharp, *The Voyages of Abel Janszoon Tasman*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1968, p. 21. This edition of material relating to Tasman is indispensable.

¹¹ Sharp, *Tasman*, p. 25.

¹² Sharp, *Tasman*, p. 25.

¹³ Sharp, *Tasman*, p. 36.

¹⁴ Sharp, *Tasman*, p. 110.

¹⁵ Sharp, *Tasman*, p. 316.

¹⁶ Sharp, *Tasman*, p. 317.

¹⁷ Most conveniently for this material, see J. R. Bruijn, 'Between Batavia and the Cape: shipping patterns of the Dutch East India Company', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 11, no. 2, 1980, pp. 251–65.

¹⁸ In his great compendium *Noord en Oost Tartarye* of 1705. This is conveniently found in English in G. Schilder (ed.), *Voyage to the Great South Land: Willem de Vlamingh 1696–1697*, Royal Australian Historical Society, Sydney, 1985, pp. 216–21, and in the original Dutch in G. Schilder (ed.), *De ontdekkingsreis van Willem Hesselsz. de Vlamingh in de jaren 1696–1697*, M. Nijhoff, 's-Gravenhage, 1976, deel 2, pp. 294–300.

¹⁹ W. Dampier, *A new voyage round the world*, Argonaut Press, London, 1927, p. 312 and many other editions.

²⁰ On the opinions of Cook and Banks, see G. Williams, '“Far more happier than we Europeans”: reactions to the Australian Aborigines on Cook's voyage', *Historical Studies*, vol. 19, 1981, pp. 499–512. As Williams explains, Cook and Banks were drawing on a long tradition of 'primitivist thought', though already in the late eighteenth century, the seeds of later attitudes were being laid by the 'four stages' theorists.

²¹ See W. Ph. Coolhaas (ed.), *Generale Missiven van Gouverneurs-Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie, Deel VI: 1698–1713*, Nijhoff, 's-Gravenhage, 1976, pp. 329–30.

²² The sources have long been available in English in R. H. Major, *Early Voyages to Terra Australis*, Hakluyt Society, London, 1859, pp. 165–73, and in J. E. Heeres, *The Part Borne by the Dutch in the Discovery of Australia 1606–1765*, Luzac, London, 1899, pp. 87–9. The Dutch text of the report may be found in a collection of historical pieces in *Bijdragen to de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch Indië*, nieuwe volgreeks deel 1 (deel 5 in full series), 1856, pp. 193–202. Another important source is P. A. Leupe, *De Reizen de Nederlanders naar het Zuidland of Nieuw-Holland, in the 17e en 18e eeuw*, Amsterdam, Hulst van Keulen, 1868.

²³ Major, *Early Voyages*, pp. 168–9. Major's translation needs to be checked against the original Dutch.

²⁴ Coolhaas, *Generale Missiven VI*, p. 346. See also *Realia* vol. 1, under 'Dampier' and 'Engelschen'.

²⁵ Translated from Coolhaas, *Generale Missiven VI*, p. 384.

²⁶ See especially, Arlin C. Migliazzo (ed.), *Lands of True and Certain Bounty: the geographical theories and colonization strategies of Jean Pierre Purry*, Susquehanna University Press, Selinsgrove/Associated University Presses, London 2002. There are also details in my unpublished lecture, 'Neither useful nor profitable: early eighteenth century ideas about Australia and its inhabitants', given at the National Library of Australia on 22 September, 1993.

²⁷ Migliazzo, *Lands*, p. 52.

²⁸ See Migliazzo, *Lands*, p. 74. I have revised the translation after consulting p. 72 of the French original and p. 100 of the Dutch.

²⁹ Translated from VOC1887, ff.558v, 559r. For the archival records of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), see M. A. P. Meilink-Roelofs, R. Raben en H. Spijkerman (eds), *De archieven van de Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie/The Archives of the Dutch East India Company (1602–1795)*, Sdu Uitgeverij Koninginnegracht, 's-Gravenhage, 1992. See also the summary of the report in W. Ph. Coolhaas (ed.), *Generale Missiven van Gouverneurs-Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie, Deel VII: 1713–1725*, Nijhoff, 's-Gravenhage, 1979, p. 323.

³⁰ It is not clear what 'Buton chests' were.

³¹ These data are drawn from the report in VOC1894, f.85.

³² KITLV Press, Leiden, 2004.

³³ Knaap and Sutherland, *Monsoon Traders*, p. 101.

³⁴ Knaap and Sutherland, *Monsoon Traders*, pp. 99, 145–9, 246.

³⁵ C. C. Macknight, *The Voyage to Marege': Macassan Trepangers in Northern Australia*, Carlton, 1976, p. 95. This reference seems to have been first noticed in 1868 by Leupe, *De Reizen de Nederlanders naar het Zuidland*, pp. 206–7.

³⁶ Macknight, *Voyage to Marege'*, pp. 95–6; C. C. Macknight, 'Macassans and the Aboriginal past', *Archaeology in Oceania*, 21, 1986, p. 70.

³⁷ Macknight, *Voyage to Marege'*, p. 27. I now believe that the evidence suggests that trepanning along the Arnhem Land coast only began in about 1780, that is, somewhat later than along the Kimberley coast. See C. Macknight, 'Harvesting the memory: open beaches in Makassar and Arnhem Land', in Peter Veth, Margo Neale and Peter Sutton

(eds), *Strangers on the Shore: Early Coastal Contacts With Australia*, forthcoming.

³⁸ J. Campbell, *Invisible invaders: smallpox and other diseases in Aboriginal Australia 1780–1880*, MUP, Carlton South, 2002.

³⁹ Sharp, *Tasman*, p. 39. These instructions to Tasman repeat much of the material, including that relating to claiming sovereignty, of the 1622 instructions for an expedition to the west coast which did not eventuate; see Heeres, *Part Borne*, pp. 18–21. It is worth noting that the plate erected by the Carstensz expedition in the following year, like the two plates erected on Dirk Hartog Island, merely records the Dutch presence and not a claimed sovereignty. See Heeres, *Part Borne*, p. 38 and P. Playford, *Voyage of discovery to Terra Australis by Willem de Vlamingh in 1696–97*, Western Australian Museum, Perth, 1998, pp. 51–60.

⁴⁰ Pearson, *Great Southern Land*, pp. 73–4.

⁴¹ J. Swift, *Gullivers Travels*, 1726. The relevant passage occurs a page or two before the end of the work.

⁴² Heeres, *Part Borne*, p. 88.

⁴³ Major, *Early Voyages*, p. 170.

⁴⁴ Schilder, *Voyage*, p. 203.

⁴⁵ J. C. Beaglehole, *The life of Captain James Cook*, A. & C. Black, London, 1974, pp. 199, 229.

⁴⁶ Conveniently found in G. Mackaness, *Some Proposals for Establishing Colonies in the South Seas*, Australian Historical Monographs, Sydney, 1943, p. 23. A decade later, John Callander plagiarised the idea and urged a British equivalent. Mackaness, *Some Proposals*, pp. 35–8.

⁴⁷ J. Dunmore, *The Expedition of the St Jean-Baptiste to the Pacific 1769–1770*, Hakluyt Society, London, 1981, pp. 21–2, 42.

⁴⁸ Pearson, *Great Southern Land*, pp. 72–3.

⁴⁹ Mackaness, *Some Proposals*, p. 42.

⁵⁰ Robert J. King, 'Gustaf III's Australian colony', *The Great Circle*, vol. 27, no. 2 (2005), pp. 3–20. See also B. M. Gough, 'William Bolts and the Austrian attempt to establish an eastern empire', in Hardy and Frost, *European voyaging*, pp. 73–80.

⁵¹ Mackaness, *Some Proposals*, p. 52.

⁵² J. Boyce, 'Journeying home: a new look at the British invasion of Van Diemen's Land: 1803–1823', *Island*, 66, Autumn 1996, pp. 38–63.

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