

and Swellengrebel are indicative of the *mentalité* and discursive practices of eighteenth-century elites who were part of the global world of the V.O.C.

The main line of battle set out by Schutte in his introduction, and central to the correspondence and documentation, is that between colonists and Company. Cloete's correspondence with Swellengrebel and other Company officials deals with his sense of injustice as a colonist and farmer at the high-handed treatment and fraudulent conduct of the Company in the extraction of a significant amount of wine produced on *Groot Constantia*. Although Cloete was one of the very wealthiest farmers at the Cape, his argument with the Company encapsulates the primary fissure in Cape colonial society between the desires of colonists for free trade and the Company's insistence on its rights to advantageous trading relationships with those it considered its subjects. Cloete's ability to go to battle with the Company for a better deal was testament to his elite place within Cape colonial society, but the political and economic issues raised within these documents have far broader significance for the eighteenth-century world of the V.O.C. at a time when its authority and legitimacy was being challenged by a well-established settler society at the Cape. Obviously, one of the main themes of the book is that of the workings of the farm *Groot Constantia* itself. The primary sources contain a wealth of information regarding management and accounting procedures, daily life on the farm, the production of wine, as well as the central role of slaves in the economy and social life of the Cape. This book is in many respects a 'companion volume' to Schutte's Van Riebeeck Society publication *Briefwisseling van Henrik Swellengrebel Jr oor Kaapse Sake 1778-1792* (1982-1983). Many of the letters contained in the later publication are matched by letters contained in the first. Although they have been published twelve years apart, they should be read in tandem. It is therefore somewhat surprising that a number of the documents are reproduced verbatim in both volumes. Nevertheless, Schutte's contribution to the understanding of colonial society at the V.O.C. Cape and of the debunking of the '*Groot Constantia Syndrome*' will be applauded by historians.

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AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, AND THE PACIFIC

Edward Duyker, *Citizen Labillardière. A Naturalist's Life in Revolution and Exploration (1755-1834)*. Melbourne: The Miegunyah Press, 2003. xx + 383 pp. ISBN 0-522-85010-3.

Edward Duyker is an independent historian and honorary associate of the Department of French studies at the University of Sydney. To write *Citizen Labillardière*, he not only visited Tasmania and Western Australia, but also went to New Zealand, New Caledonia, Indonesia, Mauritius, France, England, Sweden, Switzerland, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, South Africa, and the United States. Grants from the Australia Council and the New South Wales Government supported his many travels. His book is a detailed biography that focuses on the most important years in the long career of a naturalist named Jacques-Julien Houtou de Labillardière (1755-1834).

Born in 1755 in a bourgeois family of Alençon, Normandy, Labillardière first studied natural history at the city's Collège Royal. He then attended the medical schools of the universities of Montpellier and Reims, defended a thesis on the benefits of breastfeeding, and moved to Paris in 1779. In the Jardin du Roi (now the Musée National d'Histoire Naturelle), Labillardière enjoyed the company of former medical students who had devoted themselves to the natural sciences. In July 1783, he

undertook his first journey abroad when he went to London in order to meet botanists like James Edward Smith and study their collections of 'exotic plants'. He later travelled to Dauphiné and Savoy. He sailed to Corsica, Crete, Cyprus, Syria, and Lebanon in 1787 and 1788, at a time when the Ottoman Empire did not welcome naturalists. He collected nevertheless about 1,000 specimens, and described some of them in his *Icones Plantarum Syriae Rariorum* (1791-1812).

Duyker's research on the French scholar's itineraries and publications is largely informed by Labillardière's *Relation du Voyage à la Recherche de La Pérouse* (1800). Chapters 6 to 15 of *Citizen Labillardière* describe the work done in the natural sciences by the scientists attached to that expedition. In 1791 the French National Assembly dispatched two ships to search for the missing explorer Jean François de Galaup, Comte de La Pérouse (1741-1788), from whom nothing had been heard since 1788. Labillardière served under d'Entrecasteaux on the *Recherche*. The rescue expedition left for Tenerife and the Cape; it then circumnavigated Australia and New Guinea twice before it reached Java. It carefully surveyed Tasmania, New Caledonia, the many islands between the Solomon Islands and New Guinea, and the coast of Southern Australia. Botanising was made difficult by the animosity the haughty navy officers felt for the scientists. Lack of cooperation, bad weather, limited food and water supplies, and the difficult terrain never prevented a stubborn Labillardière from collecting 'an abundant harvest of objects of natural history of different genera'. Scurvy forced the expedition to reprovision in the Dutch Indies. Disputes with officers turned ugly in Java: the scientists were jailed, their collections were confiscated, and the expedition disintegrated. The Dutch East India Company officials of Batavia eventually allowed Labillardière to travel to Ile-de-France (today La Réunion). The naturalist managed to evade the British patrols and returned to Paris in 1796.

During the series of wars between France and the United Kingdom, Labillardière remained loyal to the friends at the Royal Society with whom he exchanged books and specimens. Duyker's book ends shortly after 1800, when Labillardière was elected to the botanical section of the prestigious Institut National in Paris. Published in the following years, his *Novae Hollandiae Plantarum Specimen* (1804-1806) was called 'the first general flora of Australia'. The botanist's steadfast republicanism explains the title that Duyker selected for his biography. Despite his official position Labillardière never tried to please royalists or Bonapartists. He chose to work on his *Sertum Autro-Caledonicum* (1824-1825) rather than pay attention to the consequences of the Battle of Waterloo. Labillardière died at the age of seventy-nine in 1834, three years after Charles Darwin sailed from Devonport on the *Beagle*. Unlike his British counterpart, the French naturalist never claimed being a theoretician on the evolution of species. Collecting, cataloguing, naming, and describing were his responsibilities as a field botanist. He was nevertheless a remarkable observer of native plants and peoples.

Citizen Labillardière is an engaging and well-researched book. Edward Duyker examines scrupulously all the materials he could find in France on the botanist, be they in municipal archives or the Archives Nationales. Duyker's glossaries, maps, and extensive notes gently help the reader to find his/her way on Van Diemen's Land. His bibliography is exhaustive and includes a large number of sources in French. It is doubtful whether *Citizen Labillardière* will greatly contribute to current debates in the history of the natural sciences, but its author never stated that such was his ambition. Duyker has instead successfully depicted the life of a demanding scholar for whom science took priority over war, rank, and privileges.

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