

BOOK REVIEWS

Klaus Toft, *The Navigators: Flinders v. Baudin. The Race between Matthew Flinders and Nicolas Baudin to discover the fabled passage through the middle of Australia*, Sydney, Duffy & Snellgrove, 2002, 354 pp., \$19.95. ISBN 1 876631 60 0.

It is uncommon for the producer of an historical documentary film to move from that task to the writing of a book on the same subject. But this is what Klaus Toft has done after producing *The Navigators* for the ABC, a film created to coincide with the bicentenary of the meeting of Flinders and Baudin at Encounter Bay in 1802. Since the author acknowledges that, until he began work on the documentary, he knew little about Flinders and nothing about Baudin, his achievement is considerable, because he has written a very readable, well-documented account of the "race" on which the two navigators embarked to chart the unknown coasts of the Australian continent.

The book is not based on original research, but Toft has studied carefully the primary source material as well as the important studies published recently on the two expeditions. His approach is one that comes naturally to a film producer: he focuses on the portrayal of the personalities of the two captains as they interact with those with whom or under whose instructions they had to work, not forgetting their brief contacts with each other. The narrative thus takes on a dramatic quality as each man vies with the other—albeit at a vast distance—to fulfil his mission of discovery. In doing so, Toft takes up again the story of the way both suffered injustice and neglect in their own time and are only now—especially in the case of Baudin—having the immense value of their work recognized.

The personal stories of the two navigators are placed in the general context of the scientific aspirations of those who sponsored their expeditions. And in looking at the injustices and hardships they had to endure, Toft shows that in both there were human frailties that, combined with unforeseen events, triggered their misfortunes. At the same time, the nefarious role played by the junior scientist Péron in undermining Baudin's reputation after his death is made very clear. It is also clear that the French names published on the French maps of the coasts first discovered by Flinders, which gave so much offence in England, were placed there by Péron and not by Baudin.

There are, however, some flaws in the book. A fair number of misprints have escaped the eye of the proof-reader, mostly the omission of short but essential words. More serious is the omission of *dis-* in *disobeyed* in a

quotation from Baudin's journal on p. 158 (Journal, pp. 393–394). A curious verbal confusion occurs in the use of "*As was his want*" (pp. 203, 268). The presentation of French names is sometimes quite wrong: Van Diemen's Land is frequently referred to as "*Terre de van Diemen*", whereas the French called it "*Terre de Diémen*"; *L'Institut National de France* is presented in some places as "*Le Institut*". The titles of books are not always accurate: the title of Jules Verne's book should read *Les Grands voyages et les grands voyageurs*, and Baudin's personal journal (as distinct from his *journal de mer* translated by Christine Cornell) is published by Jacqueline Bonnemains under the title *Mon Voyage aux terres australes* (p. 333).

Some confusion results from a failure to distinguish clearly between the brothers Henri and Louis de Freycinet, who were on the expedition in different ships. The confusion is not helped by Baudin, who, in his *journal de mer*, refers to each simply as "Mr Freycinet" or "Citizen Freycinet". On p. 213, Toft, after discussing Baudin's dealings with Henri (who was on his ship), states that Baudin had "entrusted the command of [...] the *Casuarina* to Freycinet": it is only two pages further on that we find that the commander of this new ship was Louis.

Despite these flaws, the book provides a good introduction to the lives and careers of these two great but inadequately acclaimed navigators.

Elliott Forsyth

University of Melbourne

Paul Brunton, ed., *Matthew Flinders: Personal Letters from an Extraordinary Life*, Sydney, Hordern House in association with the State Library of New South Wales, 2001, 262 pp., introduction, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index, \$138 plus \$15 postage (Hordern House, P.O. Box 225, Potts Point, NSW, 1335, or direct order from www.hordern.com). ISBN 1 875567 32 1.

This is a valuable collection of one hundred and ten largely personal letters written by the explorer Matthew Flinders from the age of twenty, in 1794, to his death in 1814. Most of the letters come from the Mitchell Library's rich holdings (including Flinders' own letter book), but there are nineteen from British repositories and one from a private collection in Australia. I was a little surprised not to find any of those held by the Carnegie Library in Mauritius, but this is a representative rather than a comprehensive collection of Flinders' twenty-year extant correspondence. Nor does this collection contain transcripts of letters written *to* Flinders. In any case, complete

symmetry would have been impossible, for Ann Flinders, after her husband's death, destroyed copies of her own letters.

Paul Brunton has done a fine job, not only with his sensitive and erudite introduction, but also with his careful editing. A great deal of scholarship has gone into the collection and there are detailed notes for virtually every letter included, even to the extent of reproducing the text of erasures in the drafts of the letter book. Brunton, nevertheless, is fortunate to have had such a meticulous subject who took great trouble over his letters. Flinders' clear hand and his grammatical and orthographic precision must have eased the editorial task considerably. The stylistic elegance of the epistles also makes the collection a great pleasure to read. The warmth and sensitivity of Australia's first circumnavigator radiates from the pages of this collection. Occasionally his haughtiness, which had such fatal consequences for his relations with Governor Decaen in Mauritius, also reveals itself. Of anguish and despair, during his long separation from his wife, there is abundance. The desire for self-improvement is also clearly obvious. In December 1800 Flinders urged his future bride, Ann Chappelle, to "learn the French language". During his own six and a half year internment on Mauritius he would heed his own advice and become not only an accomplished French speaker, but also writer. Among the gems of this collection are the letters he wrote to his friends on the island. Translations are by Jacqueline Myers and follow the original French text of each letter. In December 1806 Flinders even wrote to his stepsister Hannah in French: "Ecrivez moi, donc, sans faire des excuses; parlez moi de vos occupations, de vos amusement, de vos pensées, de votre sœur, et de tous vos amis; et soyez assurée de l'interêt que je prenne à tous ce que vous concerne... Pour tenir votre Français en exercise en faites usage toujours quand votre plume me sera dedue...".

My only real regret, reading this marvellous collection, is that many of Flinders' letters to Charles Thomi Pitot de la Beaujardière (1779-1821) in Mauritius have not been included. The friendship Flinders formed with Pitot was one of the closest of his life. His biographical note (p. 252) also deserved more attention. Pitot was more than just a merchant. He was an important literary and political figure on the island (as Ralph Darling would later discover during the early years of British occupation). Brunton, however, is correct in his judgment that he was a "man of culture and learning". Although born in Mauritius, Pitot and his brother were sent to France to be educated. Indeed, he was entrusted to the care of his paternal cousin, father of the philosopher Lammenais. He was not imprisoned in the

Bastille as is asserted in Brunton's note. The Bastille was stormed and razed to the ground in 1789 when Pitot was only ten years old. But four years later, in 1793, he and his brother Edouard were briefly incarcerated for defending the proprietor of their lodgings who had been arrested for conspiracy. Furthermore, Pitot returned to Mauritius in 1797, not 1803.

As detailed as the notes are, names and bio-dates for many of the French and Mauritian correspondents or individuals mentioned in the letters could have been obtained and verified in French and Mauritian biographical dictionaries. Jacques Bergeret, "a frequent visitor to Flinders during his imprisonment", was born in 1771 and died in 1857. Madame Cove [sic], mentioned in a note on page 129, should have read Madame Couve de Murville. She was the wife of Jean-Baptiste Couve de Murville. They had a plantation called "Cascade" at Plaines Wilhelms. The full name of Captain Coutance, who visited Port Jackson in 1803 with a cargo from Mauritius, was Louis Charles Ruault Coutance (1763–1810) not "Renault" (p. 112). But ultimately these are minor oversights.

This is an impressive work which has been exquisitely designed and produced. There are numerous colour illustrations, not just of sketches and portraits, but also photographs of personal items such as the chess set Flinders was given in April 1810 and the memento box Ann Flinders made to keep lockets of hair and flowers from Matthew's grave. The signature reproduced on the bottom margin of the pages, the endpapers (which draw upon Toussaint Antoine de Chazal's haunting portrait of the explorer in Mauritius) and the burgundy ribbon, are all beautiful touches which synthesize the very best of traditional and contemporary book production. This is at once a seductive collector's item, an engaging read, and a valuable scholarly reference work.

Edward Duyker

University of Sydney

Max Cramer, *Treasures, Tragedies and Triumphs of the Batavia Coast: a True Story of Discovery and Adventure in the 20th Century*, 332 pp., softcover \$29.50, hardcover \$39.50 (plus \$5 postage, 1–4 copies), available from Max Cramer, 49 George Road, Geraldton, W.A. 6531, e-mail: max@modnet.com.au. ISBN 0 646 483 X.

In 1963, Max Cramer was one of the divers who discovered the location of the Dutch East Indiaman *Batavia* which foundered on Morning Reef, off

Geraldton, in 1629. He was also involved in excavations on the Abrolhos Islands which uncovered the remains of some of the 125 company loyalists (men, women and children) who were castaway and sadistically butchered by mutineers. For some forty years the *Batavia* has been a part of Max Cramer's life. He is passionate about the wreck and its historical significance. He even owns a rare 1656 edition of the *Ongeluckige Voyagie van't Schip Batavia*, which tells the *Batavia's* tragic story.

In *Treasures, Tragedies and Triumphs of the Batavia Coast*, Cramer recounts the discovery of the wreck, but also many other events in his rich and varied life. He has mainly worked in the building industry, but diving has been a parallel vocation. He has dived on many wrecks and done a great deal of salvage work. The sea has given Cramer many other interests too, including fishing and shell collecting. He is passionate about his native Geraldton and its natural and historical treasures. While he clearly recognizes the need for professional maritime archaeology (and is a long-serving member of the local museum board), he rightly resents the fact that precious artifacts from the locality have been taken to far-off Fremantle for display. He is also justifiably bitter at the lack of courtesy shown by metropolitan museum officials who did not even invite him and his co-discoverers to the opening of the *Batavia* Gallery in December 1991! One of the final chapters of these engaging memoirs deals with Cramer's 1998 expedition with Philippe Godard which led to the discovery of a silver Louis XV coin (dated 1766) deposited on Dirk Hartog Island by the French explorer Saint-Allouarn in 1772.

These are wide-ranging, unpretentious memoirs, which record valuable details of Western Australian marine archaeology, but also of coastal and island life in general. The book contains numerous colour and black and white photographs, including images of the rough stone walls of the fort built in 1629 by the stalwart Wiebe Haijes on West Wallabi Island (Australia's oldest European building). This, too, has French-Australian historical significance because among the defenders were eight French soldiers.

Edward Duyker

University of Sydney

Hendrik Kolenberg assisted by Patricia James, *Lloyd Rees in Europe: Selected Drawings from his Sketchbooks in the Gallery's Collection*, Sydney, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2002, illustrations, notes, bibliography, \$40. ISBN 0734763271.

Since 1995, Lloyd Rees's son Alan and daughter-in-law Jancis Rees have donated nineteen of the artist's remarkable sketchbooks to the Art Gallery of New South Wales. These sketchbooks contain some 700 drawings, many of which were selected for exhibition at the Gallery between 9 February and 28 April 2002. In this exquisitely produced book, published to accompany the exhibition, Hendrik Kolenberg, assisted by Patricia James, has provided readers with a unique study of Lloyd Rees's European sketchbooks and reproduced many of the sketches he made in Italy, Spain, Greece, Malta and, of course, France.

Lloyd Rees (1895–1988) first visited Europe in 1923 on a travelling art scholarship. Alas, his first Paris sketchbook was lost on a London bus! In his introduction, Kolenberg convincingly asserts that when Rees returned in 1953, his "rediscovery of Paris [. . .] was therefore doubly significant to him. He again dwelt lovingly on the city's distinctive features, its architecture, streets and parks, and captured the splendour and vivacity of Paris in the closely observed drawings in the last half of his 'Navigating Officer's Note Book'". Rees and his wife Marjorie stayed in a hotel in the Rue de Bellechasse, close to the Musée d'Orsay, and Kolenberg has retraced his sketching on the Ile de la Cité, including Notre Dame, Square René-Viviani, Rue Saint-Julien-le-Pauvre, Rue Galande, Square du Vert-Galant and the Pont Neuf. In March 1953 Rees also visited Chartres in the company of the Australian journalist Roland Pullen, then living in Rue de Fürstemberg in Paris (where Delacroix once resided). On his return to France in 1959 and 1966, Rees was yet again inspired by Chartres and by Paris. During both visits to the French capital he stayed in the same hotel, in the Place Dauphine (overlooking the statue of Henri IV), and produced some very fine sketches.

Aside from a rich selection of sketches from various parts of Europe, this book provides valuable insights into the genesis of one of Rees's greatest later paintings: "A Tribute to France" (1968–1969). Kolenberg observes:

Rees's sketchbook drawings for *A tribute to France* are from St. Nazaire in Béziers. Clearly visible from this vantage point is an old water mill on the River Orb, Moulin Cordier, an important part of the painting's composition, though amplified by Rees in keeping with his romantic and imaginative inclinations. He and Marjorie spent five days in Béziers and while there also sought out the expatriate Australian painter Fred Jessup, who still lives at nearby Servian.

Lloyd Rees in Europe also covers Rees's visit to Europe in 1973, after he returned to London for the opening of an exhibition of his work at the Grafton Gallery. He and Marjorie once again travelled to Italy and France and spent time in San Gimignano, Chartres and Vézelay. Inevitably Rees distilled his experiences on paper. Every sketch reproduced, the quotations from Rees's notes and the photographs of the artist at work (including a striking image of Rees at his easel on the Grand Canal in Venice in 1953), make this book a sheer delight to behold and savour.

Edward Duyker

University of Sydney

Georges Rigondet, *François Péron, 1775–1810, et l'expédition du Commandant Nicolas Baudin: Les Français à la découverte de l'Australie*, Charroux, Editions des Cahiers Bourbonnais, 2002, 319 pp., appendices, bibliography, Euros 25, plus postage. ISBN 2 85370 175 1.

François Péron, naturalist on Nicolas-Thomas Baudin's expedition to Australian waters (1801–1803), has had a bad press of late. Yes, he wrote the official account of the expedition and in that account made few worthy references to its commander. A landsman, born in the very centre of France, he was prone to ill-qualified and unfair pronouncements on navigational matters. Ironically, this landsman would achieve an important place in the history of marine biology and make many other valuable contributions to the natural sciences. With the aid of the artist Charles-Alexandre Lesueur (1778–1846), Péron was responsible for gathering some 100,000 zoological specimens during the voyage—at the time the most comprehensive Australian natural history collection ever made. Soon after, kangaroos, emus and black swans graced the grounds of the Empress Joséphine's Château de Malmaison.

Péron was also a pioneer oceanographer and one of the first to use the term "anthropologist". During his landfalls in Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania and New South Wales, he made priceless observations of the Aboriginal communities he encountered. Aside from his scientific research, Péron undertook systematic (but unofficial) espionage in Port Jackson and ultimately drafted a lengthy secret memorandum for General Decaen, Governor of Mauritius, entitled *Mémoire sur les établissements anglais à la Nouvelle Hollande*. In this report he advocated a French conquest of the young British colony with the aid of rebellious Irish convicts. Thus

Péron has an unusual place in the history of Australia: the conflicting passions of the French Revolution, the Enlightenment and the Napoleonic Wars are very much mirrored in his life.

This account of Péron's life, by urologist Dr Georges Rigondet, is not a product of pure scholarship. In his preface Rigondet informs his readers: "Je n'ai pas cherché à réaliser une biographie exhaustive mais plutôt à privilégier une approche romancée et tenter d'en rendre la lecture plus attrayante en introduisant une certaine part de fiction, tout en restant au plus près de la vraisemblance". In employing the techniques of a novelist, his work contains passages of invented dialogue and even some invented characters such as the German sisters "Gretta" and "Hilda" who tend the ailing Péron during his military service in the Rhineland in 1794. In a footnote Rigondet admits to having romanticized this episode, but tells us that his "Kyner" family (farming a small holding tending a few cows, sheep and horses) is "parfaitement authentique" (p. 62). Unfortunately one cannot find such a family of farmers in the records of the village of Dudenhofen near Speyer in the late eighteenth century. However, Fritz Klotz's work, *Ortsgeschichte der Gemeinde Dudenhofen/Pfalz* (1964), does record a local miller named Kinnscherf who may very well have been the "Kyner" alluded to in nineteenth-century accounts of Péron's life.

François Péron remains a controversial figure because of his treatment of Baudin in the official account of the expedition. While Georges Rigondet's assessment of Péron's attitude to Baudin on his deathbed in Mauritius may be wishful thinking, it nevertheless deserves consideration:

Péron est partagé dans ses sentiments. Combien de fois n'a-t-il pas critiqué "notre chef" pour ses décisions incompréhensibles, pour ses volte-faces [sic] imprévisibles, pour son injustice, son sarcasme permanent. A plusieurs reprises, sans le secours de jeunes officiers amis, il l'aurait peut-être abandonné sur des terres hostiles. Par contre, il lui est arrivé d'admirer son sang-froid dans des situations difficiles qui mettaient le navire en péril. Il lui sait gré d'avoir de son propre chef embauché comme dessinateur son très cher ami Lesueur qu'il n'aurait pas connu sans lui. Tous les deux étaient parfois impressionnés par l'importance de ses connaissances d'autodidacte. Contre vents et marées, contre l'incompréhension de tous, il a su conduire à bien jusqu'au bout sans flancher la mission qui lui avait été confiée alors qu'il était rongé tout vivant par une maladie implacable, lui Péron, a eu tout loisir d'observer son stoïcisme, devant la mort...

I personally believe the pendulum may have swung too far against Péron. While Baudin's achievements deserve to be recognized, so too do Péron's. I also believe that one must not forget the contemporary context of such voyages. It seems hard to believe now, but when the *Endeavour* returned to Britain, the press made sparse mention of James Cook and his extraordinary seamanship or cartographic achievements. An ignorant modern reader reading the London press reports could be forgiven for thinking Cook a mere chauffeur for the naturalists of the expedition.¹

The text of Georges Rigonet's *François Péron* is set in a large, well-spaced font and is embellished with numerous illustrations and maps. Alas there are several typographical errors among dates cited and a few inconsistent names: for example, île de Bruy (p. 202), île Brunie (p. 212) and, finally, île Bruny (p. 219), as well as *Casuarina* and *Casuérina*. But these, like his "Mauricius" (p. 309=Mauritius) and "Port Wertem" (p. 221=Western Port) are forgivable toponymic lapses and will hopefully be corrected in any future edition.

Rigonet's great strength is his familiarity with Péron's native Bourbonnais. Yet although he tells his story in an engaging manner, it remains an essentially uncritical account. The great paucity of personal correspondence available from Péron's short life (35 years) makes it difficult for the author to advance our knowledge of his inner soul and character. This paucity has presumably also driven his most recent biographer to romantic reconstruction and supposition. Furthermore, this book does not address the major theoretical issues associated with Péron's anthropological observations. While Rigonet does discuss Péron's gynaecological observations of South African Khoisanid women, he does not attempt to assess their significance for an understanding of the conceptualization of the intersecting categories of race and sex in the nineteenth century. In volume II of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Leslie Marchant and J. H. Reynolds rightly declare that Péron's ethnographic observations still need to be assessed. Such an assessment is beyond the parameters of this popular, partly-fictionalized biographical account.

Edward Duyker

University of Sydney

Note

1. See my review of this press coverage in *Nature's Argonaut. Daniel Solander 1733-1782: naturalist and voyager with Cook and Banks*, Carlton South, Vic., Miegunyah Press, 1998, pp. 220-221.

Amie Livingstone Stirling, *Amie: Memories of an Australian Childhood*, Melbourne, Black Inc., 2002, 274 pp., numerous illustrations in the text, cased, \$29.95. ISBN 1 86395 267 5.

An earlier edition of this book was published under the title *Memories of an Australian Childhood 1880–1900* by Schwartz in 1980. It is deftly summarized in Kay Walsh & Joy Hooton, *Australian Autobiographical Narratives: an Annotated Bibliography*, volume 2: 1850–1900 (Canberra, Australian Scholarly Editions Centre, ADFA, & National Library of Australia, 1998, p. 258). The essence of Amie Stirling's account of her first two decades was the contrast between a happy and free childhood in Omeo and San Remo with forward-thinking parents and the disruption and stress caused in adolescence and young adulthood by the death of her mother and the regime instituted by her father's second wife, Euphemia McKenzie, in their Melbourne homes. James Stirling (1852–1909) was a geologist and botanist (see the article—needing amplification—in H. J. Gibbney & Ann G. Smith, eds, *A Biographical Register 1788–1939. Notes from the name index of the Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Canberra, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 1987, 2 vols, II, p. 282), the elder brother of the singer Maggie Stirling (see the entry—also incomplete—in *A Biographical Register 1788–1939*, II, p. 283). The latter provided Amie's first refuge when she fled from her stepmother, and she subsequently helped her niece in Paris.

Whereas the 1980 edition deals with Amie's life after her arrival in London to join her father—who had been appointed "Mining Representative of the Colony of Victoria" (p. 159)—in a brief "Epilogue" (pp. 165–171), the volume under consideration devotes over 100 pages (pp. 165–270) to her time in Paris and, later, in Africa with her husband Ernest Harrison. The chapters on France are the justification for noticing the work in *Explorations*.

It is important to record how the text came into being. Amie's reminiscences were written down at the request of her son in Canada (where the Harrisons had moved in 1914) in the period before her death in 1945. Most of the material covered lay, therefore, forty or more years back in her past. After circulating in the family for a generation the memories were edited in 1980 by Amie's granddaughter Linda Harrison and by Robin Hall, who are also responsible for the 2002 augmented version. They admit to "performing a small amount of editorial work on her manuscript", notably through the correction of "syntax, grammar and punctuation" (p. 18). In addition illustrations and endnotes were furnished for the benefit of readers.

Several people and institutions, in particular in Victoria, are thanked for their help.

The result is, in many ways, as Margaret Whitlam's "Foreword" to the new edition (pp. 9-10) and the extracts from press reviews on the dustjacket claim, "charming". The book is undoubtedly worth reading for pleasure and for insights into the attitudes of a child of nature let loose in Australian and French society at the turn of the twentieth century. The cast of characters is varied and colourful: schoolteachers, scientists, theosophists (from the second Mrs Stirling's milieu), musicians (encountered especially through Maggie Stirling's teacher, the great Mathilde Marchesi), actors and revolutionaries. None the less there are challenges in this very variety, and the work of the editors has to be judged in relation to it.

All but five of the notes concern the material already published in 1980. Some serious inaccuracies in Amie's account of her Australian years and of her voyage to England are pointed out, particularly with respect to names and dates. However, the "Introduction" (pp. 11-19) and the endnotes (pp. 271-274) combined hardly add up to an overwhelming commentary on the text, which is aimed at the general reader. We are spared the explanations of the obvious and of the familiar that occur too frequently nowadays in series like the Penguin Classics. On the other hand, obscure personages one would like to know better remain precisely that. The governess employed by the family some time after the arrival of the second Mrs Stirling is not identified beyond what Amie writes of her (pp. 130-131). Yet Miss Susan Young, then aged 65, was "obviously a great lady", daughter of a "British Ambassador in many European countries", familiar with "life in Paris, Vienna, Prague and Rome" and "a pupil of Liszt in her youth". Given the propensity of genteel exiles in the colonies to indulge in hyperbole, some documentary confirmation would be welcome. The economy of an edition of this kind hardly runs to exhaustive archival research, so the mystery is unlikely to be cleared up in the near future.

The relaxation of vigilance that occurs at the end of the earlier narrative (cf. "saling-boats" and "brown sales flapping", p. 164) continues into the Paris section, where there is virtually no effort either to situate the people mentioned. Forms like "Rue de Canmartion" (p. 168), "Folies Bergères" (p. 175), "Lians de Pougy" (p. 176), "Port de Vincennes" (p. 186), "ex-Empératrice Eugénie" (p. 187), "Boulevard Hanssmann" (p. 193), "*pension de facile*" (p. 207), "Ministry des Affaires Strangères" (p. 209), "*petite amis*" (p. 216), "*autre meours*" (p. 229) and "*port-cochère*" (pp. 235-236) show clearly that expert help was not sought. Chance and the

facility outsiders like Australians can have to move in sharply contrasting social milieux in France brought Amie into contact with people as diverse as Henri Bergson, Saint-Saëns and the Socialist Mme Sorgue. On the last-named the editors could have consulted the *Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier français* (volume XV, pp. 175–176) or even the printed catalogue of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, where two pamphlets of 1900 and 1901 are listed. Amie's story (pp. 206–210) of her encounter with the "terrorists" and of her subsequent interrogation at the Quai d'Orsay by Léon Bourgeois himself cries out for verification—by no means impossible since there were almost certainly police spies present at the meeting addressed by "citoyenne Sorgue"—in archival sources. Amie cannot have invented her acquaintance with Mme Sorgue, but many improbable details owe more than something to misapprehensions and to her "romantic" imagination. If Australian libraries were better provided with guides and directories of Paris, exploration of Amie's movements would be easier. John Milner's *The Studios of Paris: the Capital of Art in the Late Nineteenth Century* (New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 1988) at least allows us to grasp the background to the chapter on "Montmartre and the Montparnasse Art Colony" (pp. 211 sqq.), a world into which Amie ventured with her friend Agnes Goodsir, and to straighten out details of names and locations. In short there is scope for reworking this *vie en partie romancée*.

Should it be done? Should readers' illusions be shattered? It is a question of taste. The book is defensible as one based on emotional rather than literal truth: the free spirit triumphing over a wicked stepmother and the perils of cities at home and abroad. As the passage that ends the "Epilogue" (pp. 268–270) and the sections on Africa (pp. 241–265) demonstrate, Amie has a sense of vocation as a writer. Her memoirs are, after all, a contrivance, and this feeds the desire to rediscover it all through others' eyes.

Wallace Kirsop

Monash University