

EDWARD DUYKER, OR THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF INDEPENDENT SCHOLARSHIP

WALLACE KIRSOP

Although bibliographers and book-trade historians are aware of how much they owe in this country to people pursuing and publishing research outside their normal professional fields, it is not always recognized that other subjects have been extensively cultivated by supposed amateurs. Thus we can salute the work done throughout the twentieth century by Sir John Ferguson, Edmund Morris Miller, Sir Edward Ford and Ian McLaren, but we are perhaps less mindful of contributions to the study of early exploration done in similar circumstances. Fortunately, that is changing. The tribute to the late Frank Horner in the last number of *Explorations* is a case in point. It is high time to record what we owe to our faithful collaborator Edward Duyker.

In some ways the path of independent scholars, now so numerous in all parts of the country, has become a little easier. Universities can no longer afford to employ most of the gifted people they train in research. However, the funding arrangements set up by the bureaucracy mentioned in the previous article encourage the adjunction to teaching departments of honorary associates whose publications earn much-needed money as part of the so-called "research quantum". The benefits for the persons concerned lie in contacts with scholarly colleagues and, more particularly, in access to space, to computing facilities and to library privileges. The University of Sydney has had the good sense to be hospitable to our fellow-worker on *Explorations*' Editorial Committee.

The immediate occasion of the present note is the fact that Edward Duyker's *Citizen Labillardière: a Naturalist's Life in Revolution and Exploration (1755-1834)* (Melbourne, The Miegunyah Press, 2003) was awarded the New South Wales Premier's General History Prize of \$15,000 for 2004. As one can learn from consulting La Trobe University's website on alumni (<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/alumni/agora/book1.html>), this is by no means the first time the work of our colleague has been recognized and distinguished. None the less, it is another step along a road marked by civil honours conferred by the Australian and French governments and by support in various forms for the growing corpus of historical writing he has to his credit. Indeed, when one remembers that he is to reach his fiftieth birthday in the month of issue of this number of *Explorations*, the extent of his

achievement is all the more striking. Our readers are referred to the La Trobe site for a fuller account of an adventurous scholarly life.

For the moment it is enough to note that Edward Duyker's career began in academic political science, then moved to family history and Australia's Mauritian connection, before turning resolutely in the 1990s to European exploration in the South Seas. He has given particular attention to some of the French navigators and scientists, so that we already have substantial monographs on Marion Dufresne and Labillardière, with a François Péron in prospect. *Explorations* has been remiss in not publishing critical notices of these works, but this deficiency will be made good in the next year or so. A *succès d'estime* is fine, but authors want to be read and to know that they have stimulated discussion and further research. We shall not spare Edward Duyker this ultimate accolade.

Monash University