

L. C. ROOKMAAKER. *The zoological exploration of southern Africa 1650–1790*. A. A. Balkema, Rotterdam: 1989. Pp xii, 368; illustrated. Price \$59.50, Hfl 185. ISBN 90-6191-867-7.

Doctoral dissertations tend to disappear into the dusty cellars of university libraries if not, nowadays, on to microfiches or computer discs. The thesis of Dr Rookmaaker has been produced as a comprehensively illustrated, handsomely printed quarto-sized volume that deserves shelf-space in every reading room of natural history and Africana. As the Dutch have largely given up on their own language as a medium of scientific communication even on their own campuses, Rookmaaker's English-language text should enjoy an international readership.

The early zoological exploration of the Cape of Good Hope was, of course, an international experience. Rookmaaker has focused on the discoveries of seven naturalists active in southern-most Africa from ca 1770 to 1790: two Britons, two Swedes, a Dutchman, a German and a Frenchman. Animals were obviously "discovered" at the Cape during earlier voyages; Rookmaaker has admirably reviewed in Part 1 of his book what beasts were discovered, when and by whom, before his seven "heroes" first set foot in Cape Town.

Over 160 illustrations show how Europeans depicted the fauna of the Cape through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and what any stuffed specimens that have survived in museums look like today. Maps indicate the distribution of big game, now largely extinct, in the Cape Province until 1790. Part 3 is a species-by-species account of mammals and birds of the Cape, the Europeans that first knew of them and early references to them.

Rookmaaker has apparently travelled widely checking archive and library sources so his *Zoological Exploration* is an exploration of a mine of unpublished manuscripts and letters as well as published books and articles. The bibliography, a list of various vernacular terms, and a comprehensive index complete what is not only a unique reference work but also an enlightening read and fascinating gallery.

H. REICHENBACH

H. LOW. *Sarawak. Notes during a residence in that country with H. H. The Rajah Brooke*. (Facsimile of original 1848 edition with an introduction by R. H. W. Reece). Oxford University Press, Singapore: 1988. Pp xlii, [2], xxiv, 416; illustrated. Price: £24. ISBN 0-19-588864-2.

Sarawak was favourably received when published in London during January 1848, and indeed it was a remarkable work, considering the author's limited formal education. From the time he had left England in 1844, until early 1846, Hugh Low had kept a detailed journal and *Sarawak; its inhabitants and productions* was based on this and on information that he had gleaned mainly from Rajah Brooke and Thomas Williamson. It was dedicated to Rajah Brooke and no doubt acted as a useful advertisement for much-needed British investment in Borneo. Sir William Hooker extracted the botanical sections and printed them elsewhere that same year. Hugh Low was an acute observer of the people of Borneo and their way of life, and while *Sarawak* is fascinating in its own right and it is most gratifying to see it reprinted, to my mind, it is the extremely detailed introduction and modern references supplied by Dr Reece that make this edition of outstanding merit. From one who has a specialist interest in certain plants of Borneo, has climbed Low's Peak (4,101m, the highest point of Mount Kinabalu) and who has yet to find *Nepenthes lowii*, Low has always seemed an elusive figure. One is given tantalising glimpses throughout the literature of the time, but nowhere does a real portrait of the man himself emerge. Only now, thanks to Reece, in his vivid and fascinating account, does the real Hugh Low appear at last.

S. ANDREWS

F. B. HORNER, *The French reconnaissance. Baudin in Australia 1801–1803*. Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Victoria: 1987. Pp xviii, 461; illustrated. Price: Aus\$47.95. ISBN 0-522-84339-5.

Although the sub-title of this book is "Baudin in Australia 1801–1803", it deals with far more in that it includes the earlier naval career of Nicholas-Thomas Baudin and culminates in an account of the results of his expedition and subsequent events.

Baudin's expedition sailed from Le Havre on 19 October 1800; *Geographie* (with himself as Commandant) and *Naturaliste* (commanded by J. F. E. Hamelin) were bound for Australia with strict instructions from the French Naval Ministry that all investigations "must aim at the advancement of science".

Apart from officers and crew, there was on board a large scientific party—22 in all—probably the greatest number for any expedition of that period, including astronomers, geographers, mineralogists, botanists, zoologists, artists and gardeners. As with so many similar eighteenth century expeditions differences of opinion arose between seafarers and scientists. Any captain, whilst at anchor, must continually be on guard for storms that might endanger his ship and all on board, whereas a scientist cannot always see why he should not be allowed longer on shore and does not easily accept the necessity for naval discipline. To complicate matters there was partisanship amongst younger officers and scientists for the Revolution, while some of the older officers had been trained under the former regime. Disputes and bickerings were rife causing some on both sides to leave the expedition when unable to stand the strain any longer.