

Gidding: 'We shall not cease from exploration And the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started And know the place for the first time.' Sara Wheeler uses the Antarctic as an exploration of her inner self. In numerous places she reveals that the search is really for order from chaos, understanding from confusion, peace from strife in her own mental landscape. God and her own brand of Catholicism keep breaking through. I have no doubt she did find the communities interesting, viewing the groups and their social structures like a visiting anthropologist. In many places she strikes the perceptive note that only an outsider could find, and is clearly incredulous on learning how some scientists actually enjoy what seem to be onerous and difficult tasks. She gropes to understand these strange people and craves acceptance and inclusion in this strange world of beards and beakers. I am not sure that even Antarctica allowed her to come full circle in her exploration, but her experiences living out on the sea ice with Lucia de Leiris were clearly of great importance to her.

The book is a good read, and will amuse and interest many people who know little of Antarctica, its many nationalities or its history. Let all beware, however, that it is only a snapshot of a complex mixture of cultures and people — and many other visitors have seen things differently. (D.W.H. Walton, British Antarctic Survey, High Cross, Madingley Road, Cambridge CB3 0ET.)

LES ARMATEURS DU RÊVE/THE SHIPOWNERS OF THE DREAM. Patrick M. Arnaud and Jean Beurois. 1996. Marseille: Mme F. Jambois. 116 p, illustrated, soft cover.

This is a most welcome work excellently summarising an important, but hitherto somewhat neglected, part of Antarctic history. While the history of whaling and sealing is comparatively well known in South Georgia, the South Shetland Islands, and South Orkney Islands, the industry on Iles Kerguelen was largely unknown. The period covered by this book, 1893–1939, is a major and coherent epoch of Kerguelen's history.

The Kerguelen story is rather different from that of whaling elsewhere because of the continuous involvement of the brothers Henry and René Bossière. During the latter part of the last century, they became interested in the island and, at first, contemplated a pastoral industry similar to that of the Falkland Islands, which they had visited. Like comparable attempts on Campbell Island, Auckland Islands, and even South Georgia, this was never successful — local conditions and isolation tipped the balance against it. The success of whaling elsewhere in the Antarctic led to the establishment of a station on Kerguelen in 1908. The

industry was essentially a Norwegian monopoly and conflict between the French authorities and whalers developed. Whaling, in any event, was not as profitable as anticipated; thus, sealing later became dominant and exploited the reasonably abundant elephant seals. Kerguelen had been a major site for early sealers and, like South Georgia, a modern industry was able to develop utilising the shore station of the whalers.

For some years the pastoralists continued a difficult existence. They became virtually isolated for the duration of the First World War, and were eventually relieved only after its conclusion. The Bossière brothers tried several other enterprises that involved Ile Saint-Paul and Ile Amsterdam. These resulted in indifferent results and eventual tragedy. Their techniques were not efficient, but some ideas were advanced; today the lobster industry they began operates profitably around these islands.

The authors have produced a very worthwhile book; the account (in French and English) is comprehensive and reproduces a good selection of original documents (most being from the Centre des Archives d'Outre-Mer) that would otherwise be very difficult to obtain. The illustrations are also to be complimented — much picture research must have been involved. The many companies forming and dissolving are complicated to follow in the text, but a chronological table is provided that elucidates this effectively. Literary references, especially the Bossière bibliography, are comprehensive.

The work is undoubtedly essential for the study of the economic history of the Southern Ocean, especially whaling and sealing. The political aspects and French influence in the south Indian Ocean are directly involved with the industries. French sealing and whaling in the Antarctic has previously been poorly recorded, although that during the previous century is now well documented by Thierry du Pasquier (1982); this account of a later period is most opportune. The cover illustration indicates the present state of an abandoned whaling station on Kerguelen, which resembles those on Deception Island and South Georgia. Measures of protection are in force for whaling stations on both these islands and the latter now has a whaling museum. Perhaps this work will encourage something similar on Iles Kerguelen. There is some fascinating industrial archaeology involved. I congratulate the authors on producing a book I have long desired.

The book is available from the publisher, Mme F. Jambois (12 rue Montplaisir, 13007 Marseille, France) and from Mr J.L. Boglio (PO Box 72, Currumbin, Queensland 4223, Australia). (R.K. Headland, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)