



## **Progress Report on the Work of the Project**

◆One of the main goals of the Baudin Legacy project is the transcription and translation of the journals of the expedition, and to make them available on our SETIS hosted website. This is a huge task, not just because of the number of journals involved, but also because the original handwritten manuscripts are often difficult to read with considerable differences in the style of writing and level of language skills of the individual members of the expedition. Although the participants themselves are doing some of this work, a small team has been assembled to assist with the task. Our transcribers are Carine Challandes and Jessica Rubino, based in Sydney, and Dany Bréelle and Adele Walker, based in Adelaide. Translation of the journals is being carried out by Malcolm Leader in Canberra and Bill Land in Sydney, and Adele Walker in Adelaide. The Project is on track to have all the transcriptions and translations completed by the end of 2007. During next year it is envisaged that the journals will gradually become available on the website.

The website address is:

<http://setis.library.usyd.edu.au/baudin/index.html>

◆Nicole Starbuck was awarded a Postgraduate scholarship through the Baudin Legacy Project, and commenced work on her thesis at the beginning of this year, based at the University of Adelaide, and under shared supervision between Adelaide and Sydney. Her thesis will examine the stay of the Baudin Expedition in Port Jackson, April to November 1802. She will show how the Frenchmen's experiences in the colony influenced the expedition's balance of scientific and political interests. Drawing together studies of various elements of the

event and presenting an analysis of contemporary records, the thesis will explore the dichotomy of science and politics through central elements of the sojourn: cross-cultural relationships and perspectives, on-board relations, work and leisure activities; and scientific, political and social observations. While focusing on these areas, the thesis will also discuss the significance of this event in the context of the 'Republic of Learning', the European contest to claim rights over Australia and the Baudin Expedition's scientific legacy in colonial New South Wales.

### **Conference Papers and Public Lectures 2006**

◆On 22 June, Jean Fornasiero, Peter Monteath and John West-Sooby delivered the prestigious Brock Lecture, organised annually by the Royal Geographical Society of South Australia. Entitled “Old Quarrels and New Approaches: Nicolas Baudin and Matthew Flinders”, the talk focused on the value, in historiographical terms, of returning to the primary source materials in order to give back their voices to the participants in these two great voyages. It was also argued that it is time to move on from the paradigm of rivalry according to which there had to be a loser and a winner, and the merits of one voyage could only be highlighted by denigrating the achievements of the other. On the contrary, it was suggested in this lecture that the encounters between Baudin and Flinders and any rivalry that may have ensued actually led to a renewal of their efforts and an enhancement of the outcomes of their respective expeditions.

◆Margaret Sankey delivered the inaugural Frank Horner Memorial Lecture on the History of French Exploration in the Pacific, on July 10, at the XIVth Annual Conference of the Australian Society of French Studies, held at the University of Adelaide. Frank Horner died in 2004, and this lecture honours his legacy. His detailed research on the Baudin expedition, published in 1987, *The French Reconnaissance. Baudin in Australia 1801-1803*, is widely accepted as the 'bible' for Baudin scholars. Margaret Sankey's lecture was entitled

“Writing and Rewriting the Baudin Expedition to the Southern Hemisphere (1800-1804)”.

◆ The University of Palermo in Sicily hosted an International Conference on Travel Writing, *Borders and Crossings VI*, from the 7-9 September. Margaret Sankey continued her exploration of the writings of the Baudin expedition in her paper, *The Baudin Expedition to the Southern Hemisphere (1800-1804) An Anatomy of the Sea Journal in the Scientific Age*.

◆ Jean Fornasiero presented the plenary session of the 32nd Annual Nineteenth-Century French Studies Colloquium. The theme of the colloquium, which was held at Indiana University, Bloomington, 19-21 October, was “Discoveries, Inventions and Rediscoveries”. In her plenary presentation, entitled *The Science of Discovery: Nicolas Baudin v François Péron*, she examined the rivalry between the commander and his zoologist for scientific authority over the expedition and its discoveries, arguing that it was time to move on from the notion of personal rivalry when dealing with this issue, and to view the struggle in terms of competing scientific paradigms and institutional rivalries of the early nineteenth century.

◆ Jean Fornasiero presented a keynote address to the National Conference of the Australian Association of Lyceum Clubs on October 16 at the Adelaide Convention Centre. In her talk, entitled “Jules Verne and the Future of Australia: the cases of Nicolas Baudin and the State of South Australia”, she argued that Verne’s reputation as a soothsayer has been questioned in recent research. Verne’s flawed portrayal of the Baudin expedition and the inaccurate views of the fledgling colony of South Australia that he presented in his ‘Australian’ novels bring further evidence to support this point of view.

◆ Nicole Starbuck will be presenting some of the preliminary findings of her thesis in a paper to be delivered at the Indian and Pacific Crossings Conference, sponsored by Edith Cowan University and the Western Australian Museum, to be held in Fremantle in December 2006. Her paper is entitled “Our

French Guests': the Baudin Expedition in colonial Sydney, 1802".

### **Publications**

◆ *Encountering Terra Australis: the Australian Voyages of Nicolas Baudin and Matthew Flinders, 1800-1803* (Wakefield Press, 2004), by Jean Fornasiero, Peter Monteath and John West-Sooby.

◆ Margaret Sankey has published an article entitled "French Representations of Sydney at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century: the Subversion of Modernism", in a special section of *Literature & Aesthetics, The Journal of the Sydney Society of Literature and Aesthetics* (Volume 15, Number 2, December 2005, pp. 101-108). At the time of the Baudin Expedition's stay in Port Jackson, from April to November 1802, the town was just 12 years old. She discusses the expedition's fascination for this antipodean English colony, expressed in the journals and particularly in the official account written by François Péron, in the light of the modernist scientific ideology which shaped the way in which the town of Sydney and its inhabitants were described. The Baudin Expedition's descriptions of Sydney in the early nineteenth century represent, a shift in "anthropological" focus, a progression from the scientific enterprise to the colonial enterprise, both modern in their focus, but with the latter ultimately subverting the former.

◆ Jean Fornasiero, Peter Monteath and John West-Sooby examine the cartographic achievements of Nicolas Baudin and Matthew Flinders on Australia's southern coast in their article entitled: "Hydrographic Reputations: Matthew Flinders, Nicolas Baudin and Australia's 'Unknown Coast'", published in *The Hydrographic Journal*, no. 121, July 2006, pp. 17-23. The article also considers their hydrographic practices more generally, showing that there are many more similarities than is commonly acknowledged.

◆ Michel Jangoux, *L'Expédition du capitaine Baudin aux terres australes: les observations zoologiques de François Péron*

*pendant la première campagne (1801-1802)*. Published by the Muséum du Havre in March 2005, this is Michel Jangoux's transcript (and notes) of two unpublished manuscripts by Péron, the first of which details his zoological observations during the Expedition's voyage from Timor to Tasmania. The second manuscript may have accompanied the part of the collection taken back to France on board the *Naturaliste*. The first manuscript, according to Michel Jangoux, provides further evidence of Péron's lack of scrupulousness when it came to furthering his own reputation at the expense of Baudin. Péron makes several changes to the manuscript which include crossing out all signs of subordination and respect to Baudin. The most suspect, is the attribution of the capture of some specimens to himself or Lesueur which were in fact collected by his colleague, the zoologist Maugé.

◆ John West-Sooby and Jean Fornasiero examine the famous encounter between Nicolas Baudin and Matthew Flinders in the waters off the then uncharted southern coast of Australia, in "A Cordial Encounter? The Meeting of Matthew Flinders and Nicolas Baudin (8-9 April, 1802)", published in *French History and Civilization: Papers from the George Rudé Seminar* (Ian Coller, Helen Davies and Julie Kalmann (eds), volume 1, 2005, pp. 53-61). Their research reveals that the accepted version of the meeting, based largely on Flinders' account, has been idealised as a "triumph of international co-operation over the troubled geopolitics of the day", characterised by "courtesy and mutual respect". However, when the accounts of the three participants, Baudin, Flinders and Flinders' botanist, Robert Brown, are carefully examined, personal and national rivalries play a much larger role than previously acknowledged. Whilst not underestimating the significance of misunderstandings due to language difficulties in the encounter, Fornasiero and West-Sooby present a convincing argument that "Flinders may have represented the facts to his advantage", driven by his sense of personal rivalry, his treatment by the French in Mauritius, and the influence of his friendship with the Freycinet brothers, Louis and Henri, career naval officers whose antagonism to Baudin is well documented. Their

analysis of the personal dynamics of this intimate encounter between Baudin and Flinders has great significance for correcting the historical account of Baudin's achievements.

An electronic version of this article is to be found on the H-France website: [www.h-france.net/rude/2005conference/West-Sooby2.pdf](http://www.h-france.net/rude/2005conference/West-Sooby2.pdf)

### **Baudin in the News**

◆ The English translation of volume I of the 1824 edition of François Péron's and Louis de Freycinet's *Voyage de découvertes aux terres australes* by Christine Cornell, has just been published by The Friends of the State Library of South Australia. *Voyage of Discovery to the Southern Lands* complements her translation of volume II which was published by the Friends in 2003. Volume I covers the period from 1800 to 1802, and describes the voyage from France via the Ile de France, to Timor and then to Port Jackson.

For information about obtaining a copy, contact Helen Williams at The Friends of the State Library of South Australia: [friends@slsa.sa.gov.au](mailto:friends@slsa.sa.gov.au)

◆ A biography of François Péron has just been released. *François Péron. An Impetuous Life. Naturalist and Voyager* is written by the historian Edward Duyker and published by the Miegunyah Press in Melbourne.

◆ A French translation of Frank Horner's key study of the Baudin Expedition, *The French Reconnaissance. Baudin in Australia 1801-1803*, has been completed by Martine Marin. It is published by L'Harmattan, and entitled *La Reconnaissance française L'expédition Baudin en Australie (1801-1803)*.

◆ The Bicentenary of the Publication of Péron's Account of the Expedition will be celebrated in Le Havre, France, in 2007.

A specially acclimatised room is to be set up at the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle at Le Havre to house a permanent

exhibition of the original drawings of Charles-Alexandre Lesueur and Nicolas Petit. When completed, it is envisaged that every three months a different aspect of the work of these skilled artists will be presented.

The Museum and the University of Le Havre are also hosting a conference to coincide with the opening of the refurbished Lesueur room. More details on this conference to follow.

The Museum's website currently features a selection of Lesueur's drawings. Go to: <http://museum.ville-lehavre.fr/>, click on *Collection Lesueur* and then *Voyage aux Terres Australes*.

◆The life of Charles-Alexandre Lesueur is the subject of a three-volume biography by Ritsert Rinsma, a French teacher and academic. The first volume will be released in June 2007. Rinsma is also working on an innovative approach to telling Lesueur's life story. Along with Yves Boistelle and Hervé Chabannes, he is creating a graphic novel or *bande dessinée*, *Alex l'Explorateur* (Alex the Explorer). The first volume, which is based on the true adventures of Lesueur in the Pacific, is called *La Malédiction du Serpent* (The Curse of the Serpent) and is also due for release in June next year. For a sneak preview and the background story to the creation of this unique project, go to: [www.alex-explorer.com](http://www.alex-explorer.com). The site is in French and English, and contains some fascinating information on Lesueur's life, the near loss of the Lesueur collection during the bombing of Le Havre during World War II, and storyboards and drawings from *The Curse of the Serpent*.

For more information about the project, to submit a news item or to unsubscribe to this newsletter, contact Jennifer Genion on: [jennifer.genion@arts.usyd.edu.au](mailto:jennifer.genion@arts.usyd.edu.au)