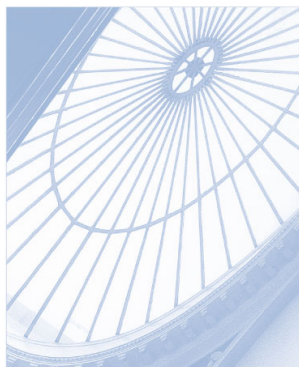


Zitierhinweis

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SÜNNE JUTERCZENKA, *Expeditionen ins Inselmeer: Zur Rezeption von Pazifikreisen im 18. Jahrhundert*, Frühneuzeit-Forschungen, 27 (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2024), 384 pp. ISBN 978 3 835 35684 9. €42.00

The expeditions of Louis-Antoine de Bougainville (1729–1811) and James Cook (1728–79) to the Pacific Ocean in the 1760s and 1770s initiated what historians have termed a ‘second age of discovery’. In stark contrast to European overseas ventures of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, late eighteenth-century exploration has frequently been heralded for its benign motives and its impressive scientific output. According to the standard narrative, these expeditions were guided by humane and capable sea captains, and they made major contributions to the natural and human sciences. Instead of violent conquest and brutal oppression, Bougainville’s, Cook’s, and their followers’ approach to non-European regions and cultures was supposedly shaped by Enlightenment principles of rationality, respect, and an abiding thirst for knowledge. While this narrative has been challenged by scholars who have emphasized the negative impact on native populations of encounters with Europeans, as well as the entanglements of exploration, racism, and colonialism, the ‘second age of discovery’ continues to be seen as a relatively bright episode in the history of European expansion.

While Sünne Juterczenka engages with these debates in her monograph, which was submitted as a habilitation to Berlin’s Humboldt University, her principal aim is different: by studying the evolution, structure, and functions of Enlightenment patterns of interpretation (*Deutungsmuster*), she seeks to elucidate how eighteenth-century voyages of ‘discovery’ were received and evaluated by scholars and the general public. According to Juterczenka, a close study of reception processes proves that contemporaries deliberately shaped the image of eighteenth-century voyages to the Pacific as major advances in human knowledge and science. In doing so, they contributed to the Enlightenment era’s image of itself as an age of progress, humanity, and cosmopolitanism. Her study, which focuses on Great Britain, France, and the Holy Roman Empire, incorporates a broad range of source materials that includes travelogues, biographical works, journal articles, newspapers, correspondence, auction and library catalogues, as well as images and material objects.

The book is divided into nine chapters. While the first chapter contextualizes and characterizes the 'second age of discovery' as a historiographical construct, chapter two offers a semantic analysis of the word 'discover' (*entdecken*). While eighteenth-century authors broke new ground by conceiving 'discovery' as a deliberate, collaborative, and transnational process, the word still carried older meanings of armed conquest, territorial expansion, and divine providence. By emphasizing scientific, economic, political, and military purposes, proponents of 'discovery' lobbied for state support. Chapter three deals with Enlightenment projects that aimed to write a history of 'discovery' from Columbus to Cook. Juterczenka shows that late eighteenth-century authors emphasized the contrast between their own age and the sixteenth-century Iberian conquests; instead, they drew a line of continuity from the seventeenth-century scientific revolution to their own endeavours, repeatedly evoking Francis Bacon's research agenda and highlighting the ideal of transnational cooperation. The fourth chapter explores the ways in which Enlightenment authors connected the idea of stages of human development with the concept of cultural hierarchies: as Pacific islanders and Australian natives appeared to represent a more 'primitive' stage of 'civilization', French, British, and German writers imagined voyages of 'discovery' as forays into the human past.

The following chapters take a closer look at the ways in which particular moments of exploration and cultural contact were received, interpreted, and imagined in eighteenth-century Europe. Chapter five shows how Bougainville's 'discovery' of Tahiti in 1768 was transformed into a transnational 'media event' that had a lasting impact on the European imagination. The next chapter explores how Joseph Banks used his status as a participant in Cook's first Pacific voyage to create a public persona and promote a wide range of further scientific projects. The commodification of Pacific exploration in different literary genres and its influence on practices of reading and consumption in various social strata is the subject of chapter seven, while chapter eight traces Cook's growing celebrity through newspaper announcements, biographical works, maps, and globes. The final chapter broadens the study's temporal framework by examining the impact of two events—the violent death of James Cook on Hawaii in 1779

and the disappearance of the La Pérouse expedition in 1788 – on the popular imagination of ‘discoverers’ from their own times to the present day.

While Sünne Juterczenka’s thoroughly researched, clearly organized, and well-written study is informative throughout, it is most impressive where it delves into little-used sources. Thus the sections on travel literature in princely and private libraries (pp. 210–19), on serial forms of publication for men, women, and children from different walks of life (pp. 220–41), and on the mapping of Cook’s voyages (pp. 260–75) are particularly insightful. In sum, this fine book is a valuable contribution to the cultural history of maritime voyages in the age of Enlightenment.

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