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Jacob Le Maire (incl. facsimile reprint of English translation by Alexander Dalrymple; intro. Edward Duyker). *Mirror of the Australian Navigation*. Amsterdam, 1622; facsimile reprint, "Australian Maritime Series" No. 5; Potts Point, NSW, Australia: Hordern House [www.hordern.com], 1999. 32 + 72 + 64 pp., maps. AUS \$248 (+ postage), cloth; ISBN 1-875567-25-9.

After the Spaniards took Antwerp in 1585, Isaac Le Maire, like many fellow Flemish merchants, moved to the rising Dutch Republic. There he continued his mercantile business. The Dutch seaborne empire owed much to him and his compatriots, who formed the backbone of many successful enterprises. With his fabulous wealth Le Maire could afford to invest 97,000 guilders in the new United Dutch India Company (VOC), founded on 20 March 1602. Yet from the very outset, Le Maire had a difficult relationship with the Company, whose monopolistic policies he abhorred. In March 1608 he therefore met Pierre Jeannin, French ambassador in The Hague, to discuss the possibility of establishing a French East India Company. A year later an agreement was reached that led in May 1609 to an abortive attempt to find a navigable northeasterly route to Asia. That same year Le Maire clashed openly with the directors of the VOC, who accused him of organised speculation "à la baisse," based on VOC shares not actually in the possession of Le Maire and his fellow conspirators. The States General supported the view of the Company, with the result that trading in "blanco" shares became illegal.

This in brief explains much about the background of the founding of the "Australian Company" in 1614 by Le Maire and some of the wealthy citizens of the city of Hoorn. Trade with the mythic "Terra Australis" may well have been simply an excuse for opening up a new route to the Pacific via the most southern route around America. Besides, the reports about the initial encounters of the sailors of Duyfken with Australian aborigines in 1606 had not been at all positive. Nevertheless, the possibility of eventual success could not be ruled out entirely. There is certainly evidence that Le Maire believed this. In a dispute with the shipper of Eendracht, Willem Schouten, Le Maire's son Jacob advocated a route that, had it been followed, might have touched the east coast of Australia. However, Schouten was able to win the ship's council to his way of thinking, with the result that Eendracht followed a route which took it past New Guinea (Irian Jaya) along the northern coast.

Isaac Le Maire's objective had been to break the monopoly of the Dutch India Company. Based on the charter granted to the VOC by the States General, other Dutch enterprises were barred from using routes to the Indies via the Cape of Good Hope or the Straits of Magellan. Le Maire's goal was therefore to find an even more southerly route, and in this respect he was successful. On 24 January 1616, half a year after his departure from the roadstead of Texel, his son Jacob discovered the route that his father desired. Upon safely reaching the waters of the Pacific, the ship's council on 12 February officially named this passage the Lemaire Strait. Six months later, in September 1616, Eendracht arrived at Ternate, then the strategic base of the VOC in the Moluccas, and in late October Jacob Le Maire arrived at the roadstead of Jacarta. He and his officers were immediately

summoned before Jan Pietersz Coen and the Dutch India Councillors, and their ship and its cargo were confiscated. The sailors were given a choice: they could either enter into the service of the VOC, or be sent back to the Dutch Republic. Jacob Le Maire and Willem Schouten were given no such option, and were obliged to return on Amsterdam. All had been in vain.

One may wonder at the considerations that led to the publication of this facsimile edition of Le Maire's account of that ill-fated voyage. The expected arrival of the beautiful Dutch replica of the East Indiaman *Batavia* to the Olympic City of Sydney may have provided the excuse for yet another publication linking the "discovery" of Australia with the history of the Dutch VOC. The introduction by Edward Duyker clearly places the expedition of the two ships, *Eendracht* and *Hoorn* (which burned during maintenance on the shores of South America), within the context of early European contacts with "Terra Australis" - failed missions included. Yet this aspect could have been elaborated, especially with regards to the motives and hopes of Isaac Le Maire in connection with the opening up of trade with Australia.

The eighteenth-century editor of travel journals, Alexander Dalrymple, was known for his interest in the geographical secrets of Australia. This, however, does not in itself justify the reprint of his limited edition of the journey of *Eendracht*. It is interesting that Dalrymple combined for the first time texts by both Schouten and Le Maire. The full context is missing, since Dalrymple focussed on the leg after the passage of Lemaire Strait. The story in this reprint ends in June 1616, long before the ships reached New Guinea and the familiar waters of the Moluccas. Had the editor meant to introduce to (Australian) readers the place of Isaac Le Maire in the history of Australia by elucidating the discussion between Jacob Le Maire and shipper Willem Schouten about the route to be followed, he might better have reprinted the relevant parts of both journals. The latter was published in Dutch in 1618, followed by an English translation only one year later. This journal could have been combined with the same chapters of Jacob Le Maire's *Spiegel*, edited by his father Isaac in 1622, and could as well have been nicely accompanied by a selected reprint of the translation of the 1906 Hakluyt Society edition. Instead, the general reader of this latest edition cannot fully appreciate the interesting parts reprinted from Alexander Dalrymple's 1770 edition. Alas, only a limited number of people will be able to read the beautiful Dutch reprint. Most buyers will therefore miss the fascinating remarks and descriptions. Of all those I only mention the typical Dutch observation about the wild grapes Le Maire saw in Sierra Leone: "If only the grapes were cultivated in an orderly fashion, what a beautiful wine one would get" (folio 9, 2 September 1615).