

The American Neptune

Review by Barry Gough, Wilfred Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario.

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Sailor, cartographer, visionary, and imperial "fixer," the amazing Scot, Alexander Dalrymple, bestrode the geographical world of the late eighteenth century like a colossus. His impact on the European world of scientific inquiry was extensive, and his enthusiasm for British discoveries in the South Pacific was equally remarkable, for it was he who would have hoped to command the barque Endeavour on that famous first voyage of James Cook to the Society Islands with the purpose of observing the Transit of Venus. The father of the Hydrographic Office, Dalrymple was also an assiduous student of history—and the voyages and reports of his predecessors. This work is a reprinting of the 1767 London edition. It is Number Three in the Australian Maritime Series, and represents a fruitful partnership between a superb publisher and an energetic museum. Dr. Kevin Fewster, Director of the Australian National Maritime Museum, is determined to better establish Dalrymple's rightful place in Australian maritime history. He succeeds admirably. Dr. Andrew Cook, Dalrymple authority, provides a learned treatise on Dalrymple which is likely to be unsurpassed as a model introduction to this useful, handsome book.

BARRY GOUGH

Wilfrid Laurier University

Waterloo, Ontario