



***The Voyagers – Remarkable European Explorations of New Zealand* by Paul Moon. Auckland: Penguin Group NZ (2014). RRP: \$40. Pb, 251pp. ISBN: 9780143570554. Reviewed by Bronwen Jones.**

In *The Voyagers*, historian **Paul Moon** provides a sampling of observations by soldiers, sailors, travellers, settlers, missionaries, artists and officials who explored most-often uncharted areas of New Zealand in the first half of the 1800s.

Throughout are fascinating descriptions of native men and women, and their villages and lifestyles, as well as insights on attitudes and customs. But some voyagers' descriptions are so cursory one wishes they had put a woman on the job.

Naturally, observations are made through the eyes of men of their time, and are tinted according to occupations, purposes and personalities. Sometimes, Dr Moon feels the need to add an explanatory comment when a quote can stand by itself. For example, “‘It was indeed a strange sight to see this savage, who on a battlefield would no doubt have faced death without flinching, so crushed by grief that he abandoned himself to sorrow and whined ... like a sulky child who cannot get his own way.’ This was another aspect of Maori culture that was unfamiliar to the Frenchmen.” (Jules Dumont d’Urville, p 38).

Though the North Island is well covered, the South Island gets little attention. Sub-Protector of Aborigines Edward Shortland, d’Urville and Charles Heaphy do provide some insights. Shortland observes that South Island Maori were of one tribe though not very numerous, and that “They have, for many years, been on terms of friendly intercourse with Europeans, and have acquired a greater knowledge of the English tongue than any of the other tribes” (p 207).

A map to trace each journey would have been helpful but perhaps difficult to draw up.

Dr Moon has achieved an absorbing read that makes these historic records accessible to a broad audience.