

Book Reviews

Journeys in a Small Canoe. The life and times of a Solomon Islander, Lloyd Maepeza Gina, eds Judith A Bennett with Khyla J Russell, Pandanus Books, ANU (in association with Institute of Pacific Studies, USP, Suva), Canberra, 2003. 329 pp., illus, glossary, index. ISBN 1-74076-032-8 (pb). AUD34.95 (GST incl); FJD43.00.

Footprints in the Tasimauri Sea: a biography of Dominiko Alebua, Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva, 2002. 121 pp., illus, glossary, index. ISBN 982-02-0336-8 (pb). USP region FJD16.00; elsewhere USD16.00 FJD16.00

For a country with such a rich history, there are still relatively few published biographies or autobiographies of Solomon Islanders. It is not that there are no stories of individual lives being told. We know this is going on all the time in the conversations and story telling that are an integral part of village and urban life. The problem is that very few of these stories are making their way into print and being shared more widely within and outside the Solomons. How pleasing it is then to see two new life histories being published: the autobiography of Maepeza Gina, one of Solomon Islands' more prominent civil servants between the 1960s and 1980s, and a biography of Dominiko Alebua, an outstanding local leader from the Guadalcanal Weather Coast, his story written by one of his grandsons.

The two men were from different parts of the Solomons, they were also born more than one generation apart, Alebua in 1905, Gina in 1935. When we set this against the rapidity of social change in that century there are striking contrasts in their experience of colonial rule and the opportunities it provided. Alebua had no education other than some rudimentary training as a catechist, little opportunity for expanding his life chances other than working for a number of years as a missionary for the Roman Catholic Mission. He soon settled down at home with

his ancestors on the Weather Coast and spent most of his life raising a family and working within his local community. As church teacher and District Headman, he provided much needed leadership at the district level, securing and strengthening local-level ties. In time, he became a much-respected *taovia*, expert on all the traditions of the area, and ultimately, a renowned feast-giver.

Gina, on the other hand, with the benefit of a successful father and newly provided opportunities for education abroad, pursued his career on a much wider stage. He trained in Fiji for eight years and subsequently secured a position in the old District Administration when it was totally dominated by expatriate officers. He was one of a small number of outstanding civil servants who, through their individual and collective endeavours, rode the wave of localisation set off during the late colonial period as it pushed through the last barriers to Solomon Island control of the political and bureaucratic hierarchy. By the time of Independence in 1978 he had reached the highest levels of the District Administration. This was then capped by ten years' service as the first Speaker of the National Parliament. In this role he played his part in strengthening the newly introduced parliamentary system, and helping to build Solomon Islands nationhood, nationally and internationally.

Being one of a small number of career civil servants in the years leading up to and immediately following Independence, Gina experienced and observed the tensions surrounding the steady integration of Solomon Islands. We can see in his story the roots of the recent conflict that engulfed the three largest provinces in the country, Guadalcanal, Western Solomons and Malaita. As early as the 1960s there were ongoing tensions brought on by the uneven involvement of these provinces in the country's growth and the contested distribution of benefits from that growth. There are early signs, in Gina's story, of the rivalry between heavily populated Malaita and the other resource rich provinces, with some of the ethnic stereotyping that accompanied that rivalry. Gina, who is from the Western Solomons, was dubbed the 'black DO' on some of his postings to other provinces. His observations on this and on the racism he found among colonial officials, and the entrenched disparities that pervaded British colonial administration, provide vivid

reminders of what Solomon Islanders went through during this vital period of their history.

Both of these stories would never have got into print without the direct involvement of supportive academics. Gina had the assistance of historian Judith Bennett and anthropologist, Khyla Russell. They took on the painstaking task of transforming his taped recollections into a finished manuscript. All praise to them for their efforts. They have done an excellent job in helping Gina to capture all the different aspects of his life and the full range of his achievements. In Dominiko Alebua's case, it is his grandson, Tarcisius Kabutaulaka, who has brought us his story, putting it together in the years immediately following Alebua's death. The story is richly informed by extensive historical research and Kabutaulaka's own experience of growing up on the Weather Coast, himself immersed in the landscape, traditions and social networks of that area.

The appearance of these works is a welcome reminder of the riches to be found in uncovering individual lives and setting those lives against broader historical changes. In combination these two stories span the whole of the twentieth century and they add immeasurably to our understanding of the changes that took place over that period. They take us from a period when local communities were still completely autonomous, untouched by colonialism, to the emergence of Solomon Islands as an independent nation state. While we can be grateful for these two stories let us hope there are more to come, and a much wider range; the stories of women as well as men, ordinary people as well as outstanding leaders. We owe it to Alebua and Gina to try to do that.

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Pacific Forest: A History of Resource Control and Contest in Solomon Islands, c. 1800–1997, by Judith A. Bennett, The White Horse Press, Cambridge, & Brill Academic Publishers, Leiden, 2000. ISBN 1-874267-43-X (hb) (White Horse Press), 90-04-11960-4 (Brill Academic Publishers); 528 pp, tables, maps, illustrations, index. £75.00.

Judith Bennett's *Pacific Forest* provides an elaborate history of the use and contest for control of Solomon Islands forest. Bennett introduces it as 'a view of Solomon Islands forest history' that contributes to the sub-discipline of environmental history, focusing on three levels: 'the natural environment of the past, particularly forest environment; the interaction between the human productive technology and that environment; and human perceptions and beliefs about the forest and its use over time' (1). A handsome production, *Pacific Forest* is a lengthy book: between its hard covers are collected more than 500 glossy-paper pages comprising sixteen chapters, appendix, notes, bibliography and index, and 92 pictures and illustrations that help bring the text to life.

The book demonstrates the transformation of Solomon Islands forest by centuries of human activities revolving around domesticated animals, subsistence food production, plantations and timber extraction to meet domestic and international demands. The survey covers from early human settlement to the late 1990s, but the prime focus is on the period 1800–1997, important for Solomon Islands because of the rapid technological, social and political transformation wrought by extensive interactions with Europeans consequent upon trading contacts, formal colonisation, independence, and subsequent postcolonial development.

Ambitious in its conception, the book is a major contribution to our understanding of the relationships between the development of natural resources and a country's political dynamics. In a stimulating and informative account, and with her characteristic care for detail as well as the big picture, Bennett narrates how the exploitation of forest resources affects not only the natural environment, but also government policies and political outcomes. Examining the relationships between (and within) the different groups interested in the forest—customary

landowners, the national government, provincial governments, foreign companies, donor governments and non-government organisations (NGOs)—the narrative explores the interplay between local ownership of forest¹ and global capital and timber demands. These issues are not unique to Solomon Islands; Colin Filer's book (1998) on logging in neighbouring Papua New Guinea highlights similar issues.

An initial overview relates the basic Solomon Islands forest types to rainforests in other parts of the wider region and discusses the effects of natural phenomena such as tropical cyclones on the archipelago's forest composition. The first, probably hunter-gatherer, human settlers, who arrived in the islands possibly 28,000 years ago, had relatively less impact on the forests than the much later 'gardeners, keepers of pigs and chicken and introducers of the small, tasty rat, *Rattus exulans*', arriving around 3,000 years ago (19). As Bennett points out, the early settlers, dependent on the forests for survival, were in turn influenced by the forest environment in the production and sustenance of their culture. Even today, not only does the forest sustain their livelihood, but the islands' inhabitants also identify with it in cultural and religious ways that the metropolitan world scarcely comprehends.

The human impact on Solomon Islands forests intensified from the 1800s, mainly because Europeans employed their superior technology to clear forests and establish estates. 'The European settlers who came to the Solomon Islands were much more interested in the potential of the land than the forest,' notes Bennett (36). By 1900 about 1,000 acres of virgin forest had been cleared to make way for coconut plantations; by the beginning of the Great Depression in 1929, about 63,000 acres, or almost 95 square miles of land, had been converted into plantations by the effort not only of individual plantation owners, but also of churches and such companies as the Pacific Islands Company, Levers and Burns Philp. Nor were Europeans the only ones clearing forests. On a much smaller scale, Solomon Islanders, having acquired metal tools through trade with Europeans or during their labour recruitment stints in Queensland and Fiji, enjoyed easier clearance for subsistence farming, and later some of them established their own coconut plantations.

The settlers were aware of the value of timber, but companies like Burns Philp and Levers were discouraged by the production costs and the fierce competition from timber producers in Australia from venturing into timber production in a big way. Despite this, by 1910 there were attempts by individuals, groups and churches to export logs and to mill timber, mostly for local consumption. The Vanikoro Kauri Timber Company was established in 1923 with the objective of supplying the Australian market with kauri timber (*Agathis macrophylla*). After struggling for years to survive poor management, difficulties of communication and transport, unhealthy environment, high production costs, the Great Depression and Australia's imposition of tariff on imported logs, the company eventually went into liquidation and wound up in 1941.

World War II provides the focus of the sixth chapter, which looks at how the fighting affected the forest, and the impact of the war on timber supply and demand. The allied forces engaged in the Solomons war arena produced timber for military demands, and later for civilian use. Military timber men recognised the worth of many Solomon Islands timbers, and by the end of the war a few ex-servicemen returned to the islands and were engaged in timber production.

The book turns naturally to the relationships between domestic needs and international markets. The 1950s and 1960s expansion of the economies of the industrialised countries, especially Japan, the United States and those in Western Europe, led to an increase in the demand for tropical hardwood. A small island country could not aspire to be a major producer of timber; nevertheless, the British Protectorate government, seeing it as an opportunity for domestic economic productivity that would lead to self-sufficiency, encouraged individuals and companies to cut Solomon Islands timber for export.

Rising local demand also contributed to the rise in timber production. As Bennett states, '[t]he demand for timber as the war ended was for export, but as the administration, a few commercial interests, and the missions re-established, they all needed buildings. Imported milled timber was expensive and scarce. Although nowhere as great, there was also a demand among some Solomon Islanders for milled timber'

(142). The Protectorate government needed timber for the postwar rebuilding of infrastructure, the more so with the destruction of the old capital, Tulagi, and the decision to relocate the administrative headquarters to Honiara on north Guadalcanal.

In response to the increasing demand for timber and the growing numbers of those interested in its production, the Protectorate administration set about institutional and regulatory development. In 1949 a Forestry Department was established, and in the late fifties and sixties, laws were introduced to create a Forest Estate, implying perpetual or long-term dedication of land for commercial forest use. A Forests Ordinance was introduced in 1960. Chapter eight traces administration attempts in the 1960s to acquire land and be more actively involved in the forestry industry, as dependence on it for revenue and income generation increased. The next chapter looks more closely at the establishment of administrative systems and forestry regulations.

The mid-1960s to the mid-1980s was a particularly important period in forestry industry history. First, in this period the shift from logging on government-owned or government-leased land, to customary land began. The resultant rapid increase in log production² created growing concern about its sustainability. Secondly, prior to the 1980s most of the companies involved in logging were registered in or had their sources of capital from Australia and Britain, but a shift, evident by the 1980s, meant that by the nineties most of the companies involved in logging were registered in or owned by nationals of Korea, Malaysia and Japan. Thirdly, because of the shift into customary land, Solomon Islanders became partners in the logging industry. With revealing understatement, Bennett points out: '[a]s logging moved from government to customary land in the early 1980s, the 1977 Amendment to the Forest and Timbers Act coupled with Melanesian patterns of reciprocity proved vulnerable to the loggers' extractive regimes and business methods' (209). Chapters ten to thirteen are devoted to detailed discussion of these problematic developments.

For me, the involvement of landowners in the forestry industry is intriguing because it illustrates the interplay between global capital and demands, and local communities. Although Solomon Islanders reacted

to large-scale logging in different ways, their experiences provide an important insight into how local communities react to global business forces. It is, however, not only the customary landowners who were sucked into the logging network. Logging interests also influenced governments and government officials, and a sorry story of involvement of government officials and allegations of corruption is told here. In particular, the reputation of former Prime Minister, the late Solomon Mamaloni, as 'a friend of loggers' is well documented in this book. Logging companies indeed influence government policies and political outcomes in what can best be euphemised as 'interesting' ways, as chapter thirteen bears witness in its discussion of the final two decades of the twentieth century. The competition for control of and access to the forest often also leads to social discontent within landowning groups, and between different logging companies. This is vividly illustrated in the tale of a string of murder, arson and bribery incidents involving Solomon Islanders and Asian logging company owners, a case that was never resolved because the only witness died in a plane crash on his way to court (ch. 14:302–04).

The final two chapters of the book discuss the state of the forestry industry in the late 1990s and the role of the government in the industry, outlining the differing opinions both within the country and internationally, especially regarding the unsustainable logging.

The story of Solomon Islands forest is fascinating and complicated, but this book provides a solid foundation for understanding it. Bennett provides an invaluable addition to works on Solomon Islands forest, among them the book by Edvard Hviding and Tim Bayliss-Smith (2000).

I find this book to be interesting and informative, not only because of the story it tells, but also because of the extensive research and care that obviously went into putting it together. In an area that rouses strong and often judgemental passions, Bennett remains remarkably dispassionate. Further, she writes eloquently and sympathetically, captivating the reader. These qualities are trademarks of Bennett's works, including her classic general history of Solomon Islands (1987). I recommend *Pacific Forest* to anyone interested in environmental

history, and in the politics of natural resource development. It is also a book I would strongly recommend as a text for courses on natural resource development, despite the drawback of its the rather prohibitive price tag.

A lot of things have happened in the Solomon Islands forest industry since this book was published, including the uncontrolled harvesting due to the breakdown of regulatory institutions because of the civil unrest from 1999 to 2003; and the success of widespread opposition led by logging companies in preventing a new forestry bill from being presented to parliament.

There is one thing, though, that I would have wanted to see more of: an examination of landowning groups and how their internal dynamic influences the way in which they interact with other stakeholders in forest development. That, however, could well be the subject of another book. Whoever takes on that challenge should be encouraged by Bennett's words: 'For most historians, including this one, the past of Solomons is elusive enough; the future is for others to make their own' (378).

Notes

¹ 'Customary landowners' own nearly 90% of land in Solomon Islands. These traditional landowners, not the state, own a huge percentage of commercially accessible forest, creating interesting dynamics in terms of foreign company and state's access to forests.

² The shift into customary land has meant that more land area, and hence more forests, became available for logging.

References

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The Island of Lost Maps: A True Story of Cartographic Crime, Miles Harvey, Random House, New York City, 2000. ISBN 0-7679-0826-0 (pbk) (first published in hardback), 405 pp.

The long and fascinating history of the art and science of making maps begins with simple, even crude, depictions invented for convenience and practicality. The first known map, a small clay tablet portraying an estate, was made late in the 3rd millennium BC by the Sumerians. Early maps, scholars tell us, outlined real estate plots, or prescribed construction specifications. For use in taxation, the Egyptians made maps in the 14th century BC showing boundaries of property; such a record was necessitated by the annual flooding of the Nile River, which obliterated property markers. In the Pacific Islands, on the other hand, the ancient people made maps of the ocean wave patterns, prevailing winds and tides. Made with thin bamboo strips, or sticks, tied together with coconut fibre string, rather than as clay tablets, these 'stick charts' indicated individual islands by small shells similarly affixed. By such aids, island mariners could navigate over great ocean distances. No one

knows of Pacific Islanders making maps of individual islands; these they simply carried in their heads.

In the western world, the Greeks had already, as early as the 8th century BC, established a reputation as accomplished sailors and colonisers; by the early 6th century BC Greece was the leading centre of geographical knowledge because of its many military and sailing expeditions. The first book on geography—describing a circular, flat earth, surrounded by ocean waters—appeared at the end of the 6th century BC. In the 3rd century BC the famous scholar and mathematician, Eratosthenes of Cyrene, calculated the earth's circumference with remarkable accuracy. He and his contemporary, Hipparchus, laid the foundations for scientific cartography by developing a system of longitude and latitude. These cartographic efforts were global in focus.

Between the 15th and 17th centuries AD, great advances in map-making went hand in hand with important discoveries by European explorers such as John Cabot, Christopher Columbus and Ferdinand Magellan.¹ The invention of the printing press and the perfection of copperplate engraving, concurrent with this exploration, allowed for the printing and distribution of less-expensive maps rendered in fine detail.

In short, efforts in map-making developed from the making of small, localised depictions that were quite practical in nature, to large, global efforts designed to produce better understanding of the size, location and identity of the world. Artistic ability and craft were important in such efforts, but skill and understanding in mathematics were also required. As more European exploration and colonisation took place, the role of mapmakers increased in importance, and their maps were often the objects of theft that could, and sometimes did, change the course of history.

Scholars think that the Portuguese cartographer Jorge Reinel, after getting into trouble in Lisbon in the early 1500s and fleeing to Spain (p.146), made the first map of the world. This argument is bolstered by a report, made in 1519 by Lisbon's ambassador to Seville, informing the Portuguese king that Reinel had made a map specifically to help Ferdinand Magellan prepare for his voyage. Reinel's father, the prominent mapmaker Pedro Reinel, had gone to Seville to bring his wayward son

home. But, according to the ambassador, the elder Reinel was also seen adding details to the Spanish map. In any case, it is clear that Magellan benefited from cartographic secrets stolen from the Portuguese (p.147). Such maps and charts were always confidential and secret, and vigorously protected because they were often stolen.² It is known that Magellan departed his native Portugal for Spain in 1517, taking with him classified information that a navigable strait might exist at the extreme southern end of South America. A first-hand account of Magellan's journey, written by his Italian chronicler Antonio Pigafetta, suggests that without access to such intelligence, he might never have located the famous strait that now bears his name. Historians are still unsure exactly which maps and charts Magellan had seen, let alone whether they could have provided him much useful information. This is not to say, of course, that any map could have guided his ships through the unexplored strait that lay ahead, a maze of narrow passages and small islands blasted by variable strong winds. Magellan's skills as a navigator should not be underestimated. Still, without the illicit information he procured from Lisbon, the first circumnavigation of the globe might not have been attempted or completed (p.148).

The thievery of the early competing navigators who stole or captured maps and charts from others in their quest for wealth and power is well known. Lloyd A Brown talks about Woodes Rogers, the British pirate who visited Guam more than once during his escapades (p.149):³

In the sixteenth century genuine Spanish charts of any part of the Americas were real maritime prizes, rated as highly by the French and English as the gold bullion which might be in the ships' strong rooms. One such priceless haul was made by the English freebooter, adventurer, and scoundrel, Woodes Rogers. While cruising on behalf of some merchants of Bristol along the coast of Peru and Chile he captured some charts which were so 'hot' that they were immediately engraved in London and published by the printer John Senex. (p.150)

In another celebrated case, a group of English pirates led by Bartholomew Sharp captured the Spanish ship *Rosario* off the Ecuadorian coast in 1681. On board they found a 'great book full of sea charts and maps, containing a very accurate and exact description of all the ports, soundings, creeks, rivers, capes, and coasts belonging to the South Sea, and all of the navigations usually performed by the Spaniards in that ocean'. A Spanish mariner tried to cast his chart book into the sea, but one of the pirates stopped him. 'The Spaniards cried when I got the book,' Sharp later wrote laconically (p.150).

Perhaps no one person was more hated by the Spanish during the period of exploration than the man they called 'master thief of the unknown world'. In his fabled round-the-world voyage of 1577 to 1580—during which time he might have stopped in Micronesia at Guam or Palau—Francis Drake helped to shatter Spain's hold on the Americas, coming back to England with some forty tons of gold and silver bullion from Spanish ships and outposts. Nor were those his only spoils. On 20 March 1579, while storming a small enemy vessel off Costa Rica, his men captured two large navigators' maps of the Pacific, and a collection of charts detailing Spain's China route. A Portuguese pilot Drake was then holding captive later testified that the English buccaneer 'prized these greatly and rejoiced over them'. Drake had good reason to be pleased. Many historians believe that he had not left England with firm plans to circle the world. But now, with Spanish ships searching for him up and down the Pacific coast of South America, he was in no position to head back through the Strait of Magellan. The charts of the Pacific were 'exactly what he required'.⁴ 'Drake's smooth passage from the American coast to the East Indies (today Indonesia),' added the historian John Hampden, 'was not due solely to his genius for navigation; he had the captured Spanish charts' (p.149).

Miles Harvey begins his interesting non-fiction novel with the disclosure of three map thieves. Of most interest to Pacific-philes was a Dutch navigator and trader who, in the late 1500s, went to Lisbon, Portugal, for the purpose of stealing ocean charts and maps of the Portuguese empire.⁵ A consideration of the map-stealing temper of the times gives the reader a feel for how vital the maps were in the saga of early European discovery of the 'new world' and navigation around it.

Stephen Carrie Blumburg is a more modern map thief who piqued Harvey's curiosity. During a twenty-year period in the 1970s and 80s, Blumburg stole some 23,600 books and manuscripts from North American libraries, altogether worth some \$20 million. He never sold the materials he stole, but simply kept them for his own delight. In 1995, another library thief, Gilbert Bland Jr, stole from Johns Hopkins University a map from a 232-year old book. Harvey's fascination with the personalities of people who do such things led to the research that culminated in the present volume.

The Island of Lost Maps: A True Story of Cartographic Crime is a book that will appeal to geographers and historians, as well as cartographers. It describes the 'mappery trade', or the antique map business, and the activities of those who collect and sell old and rare maps throughout the world. The book consists of twelve chapters, an Epilogue, Acknowledgments, chapter notes and a convenient index. There are also historical maps of the 16th and 17th centuries, and several photographs and illustrations. The author combines a love of maps, and the human ideas surrounding the places actually mapped. Islands are in our minds as well as on cartographic depictions. Miles Harvey's book illustrates this remarkable concept.

Notes

¹ Columbus reached and named Hispaniola (in the Caribbean) in 1492. The earliest map showing the New World was drawn in 1500 by the Spanish explorer Juan de la Cosa; in 1507 Martin Waldseemüller prepared the first map on which the name America appeared.

² Another historical aspect of this drama is the global exploration of the Chinese, which is said to have pre-dated European exploration by centuries. As such Chinese claims become increasingly substantiated, so will contentions that early European maps might have had Chinese antecedents.

³ Lloyd A Brown, *The Story of Maps*, Dover Publications, 1980.

⁴ Alexander McKee, *The Queen's Corsair: Drake's Journey of Circumnavigation, 1577–1580*, Stein & Day, 1979.

⁵ Portugal's leadership in early European navigation explains its being the location of much of the intrigue around maps.

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Amelia Earhart's Shoes: Is the Mystery Solved? Thomas F King, Randall S Jacobson, Karen R Burns and Kenton Spading, updated edn, AltaMira Press, Walnut Creek CA, 2001. Bib references and index, 438 pp.
ISBN 0-7591-0130-2 (pb) USD19.95.

Amelia Earhart was the most famous aviatrix of her day, and also a fantastic, intelligent and sexy woman. In 1937 she attempted to circumnavigate the globe, roughly at the equator, flying from west to east, with her companion and navigator Fred Noonan. At Lae, New Guinea, her plane was serviced and bolstered with extra gas tanks for the long leg up and across the vast Pacific to tiny Howland Island. The US government had built an airstrip for her to land on at Howland, and had also supplied her with some state-of-the-art electronic directional-finding equipment that she was testing. Not far from Howland, she got lost and ran along a north–south line (337/157) in an effort to get oriented again. But she never did. Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan vanished forever.

An extensive, but fruitless, search of the area where it was thought she went down was undertaken. Besides American naval vessels and planes,

the British and the Japanese also participated. The latter's efforts, it was theorised, were taken up largely to prevent the Americans from searching in Japanese League of Nations mandated-waters, which had been closed by the Japanese authorities for years. Even before the search was abandoned after several weeks, rumours started that Amelia was on a top-secret spying mission that took her over the Truk Lagoon in order to photograph the large Japanese air and naval facilities there (39–40). While executing this mission, it was said, she and Noonan were lost and ostensibly found and captured by the Japanese, who incarcerated them first in the Marshall Islands and later at Saipan in the Marianas.

There are so many versions (42) of their fate that it can literally boggle the mind! Over the years, we've had stories of Amelia showing up on various Pacific islands, in Australia, and even in the United States with a new identity as one Irene Bolam living in New Jersey (373). The late Mrs Irene Bolam, prior to her death, publicly denied having anything to do with Amelia—other than a remarkable physical resemblance—and claimed that such assertions were preposterous. Still, the mystery persists.

Currently, one research group is combing the ocean floor over a wide area where it is suspected that her plane went down, in a very expensive effort to locate the wreckage. So great is the mystique surrounding Earhart and Noonan that even should the remains of the plane be discovered, there will undoubtedly be those who will not accept it and will make the accusation that any such discovery is fraudulent.

Enter The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery (TIGHAR). Pronounced 'tiger', founded and led by Rick Gillespie and Patricia Thrasher—Mr and Mrs. Having had some experience and success with airplane insurance investigations, the twosome got organised, gained membership, and most important, sponsorship from various private sources for their work and investigations. TIGHAR took up an investigation of the Earhart mystery after two things, in theory, were pointed out. (1) The north–south line on which AE/FN were running when last heard from would, if extended, have taken them within sight of Gardner Island in the Phoenix Group; and (2) calculations indicated that at the time the pair would have had sufficient fuel to carry them to that vicinity. TIGHAR took up this challenge because it was based on a scientific approach to the problem, one that could be reasonably demonstrated with maps and paper calculations; and also because the plethora of sinister and

fantastic theories about Japanese duplicity in the disappearance had no sound circumstantial or situational reasons to suggest an even remote plausibility. Moreover, TIGHAR group members could not be involved in their search, if they had ever been involved with, or subscribed to, the rampant and emotional speculation and activities involving alleged Japanese involvement. TIGHAR's contention was always: we are not looking for AE and FN, we are looking for their missing Lockheed Electra.

Enter next Thomas F King, principal author of the present volume. Dr King, a consulting professional archaeologist and formerly an historic preservation officer in Micronesia, early became a member of the TIGHAR group Earhart investigation, and joined with other expedition members to write this interesting book. The book is the result of several expeditions to Gardner Island, today known as Nikumaroro Island—sometimes just 'Niku' for short—to search vigorously and meticulously for physical evidence of the presence of Earhart's plane. The title, *Amelia Earhart's Shoes*, comes from the remnants found on the island of a shoe that is identical in size and brand to that which the aviatrix wore on her last flight.

One of the more abstruse developments was the reported discovery of human skeletal remains on the beach at Nikumaroro. It is a fairly long, but quite curious, story that begins with the establishment of the Gilbertese colony on Nikumaroro Island in 1938, more than a year after the AE/FN disappearance. British authorities determined to found a colony on Niku prior to World War II because (1) there was over-crowding in the Gilberts, and sufficient numbers of I-Kiribati volunteered to move; and (2) Pan American Airways was proposing a route from Honolulu to Australia that would pass in the vicinity of the island, and a colony might offer the opportunity for the construction of emergency or *en route* landing facilities. Hence, while making surveys, early settlers on Niku reported finding two human skeletons on the beach. Finally, after vigorous searching, British records revealed that the island governor at the time, Gerald Gallagher, had ordered these bones boxed-up and sent to Suva, Fiji. Despite exhaustive searches of many possible sites on Fiji, the bones have not yet been found.

Quite a bit of other physical evidence was also found, and many people who had some connections to Nikumaroro were interviewed. Forensic laboratories, including those of the FBI in Washington, became involved in the analyses of artifacts. Various metal parts and fixtures of airplanes were found and analysed,

and some could have come from an Electra similar to the one or the identical one that Earhart flew. However, as no serial numbers or other identifying marks have been found on these artifacts, no positive proof has been found or established that Amelia and Fred were ever actually there.

So, what are we to make of all this? First, the mystery of the disappearance of Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan has many facets to it and many legends about it. Secondly, it is bound to live on for a long time. Thirdly, this book by Dr King and the others is the most comprehensive treatment of its subject; for those who want to learn about Earhart's famous flight, it is the best thing currently available. Moreover, the book makes no claims based solely on speculation; everything reported is from actual experience and the recovery of physical evidence. Anyone who wants to study their mysterious final flight will have to read *Amelia Earhart's Shoes*.

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Mekim Nius: South Pacific Media, Politics and Education, David Robie, USP Book Centre (Fiji Islands), Suva, 2004. xii + 306 pp., tables, graphs, b & w photos, bibliographic references, index. ISBN 982 01 0584 6 (pb). FJD25.00. (Published in New Zealand by AUT Press and South Pacific Books Ltd. ISBN 1 877314 30 7. NZD49.95)

This book is the latest publication from David Robie, a New Zealand journalist and academic. Now an Associate Professor at the Auckland University of Technology's School of Communication Studies, Robie was formerly Journalism Coordinator at the University of the South Pacific and before that, headed the journalism programme at the

University of Papua New Guinea. He has already produced an impressive body of work on the media in the South Pacific: this book is based on his PhD dissertation and is an eclectic mix of media history and education, the tension between *real-politik* and the media, and personal memoir.

The book is divided into three parts. In the first section, Robie sets the scene with case studies and interviews covering a wide range of media-related activity and behaviour in the region. His observations include the problem of journalism ethics in Papua New Guinea, where rape victims and child victims of crime are not given the full protection from the media scrutiny, to the attempts by the Fiji Government in 2003 to introduce a Media Council of Fiji Bill, legislation that would, according to some critics, severely curtail the freedom of the press. In the second part of the book, Robie presents the first comprehensive history of the development of the three university-based journalism programmes in the Pacific, which are at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji, the University of Papua New Guinea in Port Moresby, and the Divine Word University in Madang, Papua New Guinea. The pervasive political influences and political events in each country provide the framework for the chapters on the individual programmes. Material found here on major political events offers a different perspective from that found in more mainstream political studies and will provide an excellent starting point for future researchers examining the coups and civil unrest in both countries. The book's final section provides a profile of the industry. Here, Robie reveals his empirical findings and draws conclusions about the future of university-based journalism programmes in the region.

From his opening reference to harsh criticism of the media by the then (1999) Fiji Prime Minister, Mahendra Chaudhry (2–3), Robie is a passionate advocate of the development for countries in the region of a pool of university-trained professional journalists. Yet his selection of case studies and interviews reveals a divergent range of opinion among all interested parties about where, exactly, the training of journalists should occur. The choices are between basic in-house or on-the-job training in a news organisation; vocational training in a polytechnic; or in a university, where a journalism programme is offered as an academic discipline requiring students to complete accredited

degree courses. Robie has no doubt that the discipline of journalism belongs in universities and, as part of his personal memoir, relates his battles with bureaucracies, governments, media organisations and donors to obtain the best facilities for his students and to maintain the highest of standards in his programmes.

John Street writes that 'liberal democratic regimes place great store by their journalists. It is they, as reporters or interviewers, who provide the information upon which citizens rely; it is they who act out the rituals of accountability when cross-examining politicians' (2001: 145). Robie, working in a region where liberal democracy is something of a crushed flower, finds that the media's watchdog role takes on a special significance. Through his empirical research based on surveys and interviews, he reveals the dichotomy in the newsroom. While four out of five surveyed journalists in Fiji and Papua New Guinea regarded investigative journalism as 'a very important' measure of the media's commitment to its watchdog role, the reality was that many journalists were uncertain about the amount of support they could expect from their news organisations if they actually took on an investigative role (230–2). In 2001, 106 journalists responded to a survey he conducted. Many reported a range of obstacles that they faced in their investigative role, including concern about political pressure (9 per cent in Fiji, none in Papua New Guinea), concern about commercial pressure (16 per cent in Fiji and 8 per cent in Papua New Guinea) and insufficient resources, including staff, money and time (21 per cent in Fiji and 35 per cent in Papua New Guinea). The reader can be thankful that Robie does not report active discouragement by the news organisations, but disincentives such as those mentioned ensure that in-depth reporting rarely occurs and that journalists will be frustrated by their inability to fulfil such a fundamental aspect of their Fourth Estate role. Ultimately, democracy suffers as the public remains in ignorance of controversial issues and events in their communities.

A new phenomenon around the world is the changing gender balance in newsrooms. Robie's surveys show that Fiji and Papua New Guinea are not exempt from this trend and that the gender gap in the industry in both countries has narrowed almost to the point of equilibrium. By

2001, the percentage of women journalists in Papua New Guinea had reached 52, while in Fiji it was 49 (212). Robie touches only briefly on the implications of this major change when he quotes a Fiji *Daily Post* reporter as saying that ‘there are things male reporters can do and be accepted, but not female reporters’ (233). If women are facing significant obstacles in covering hard news stories because of their gender, how, if women come to dominate newsrooms, will this affect the media’s watchdog role? Will the presence of more women in journalism be used as an excuse to keep already low pay rates at a continuing meagre level? These questions are not answered in this book but perhaps Robie will address them in his next publication.

This richly illustrated paperback contains a useful list of acronyms combined with a glossary, lengthy notes, a detailed bibliography, a list of Pacific media contacts, and a comprehensive index. Minor quibbles include some lax editing, which has resulted in a number of typos, including the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, appearing as Alexander Downing. Also, the binding (at least of the Fiji edition) is of such inferior quality that the book disintegrated long before the conclusion of the first reading.

Mekim Nius will appeal to a wide variety of readers, including those interested in the history of the region’s media institutions and the on-going debate regarding the status of journalism in the academy. The South Pacific appears to be in danger of developing a plethora of media training providers, but in this book Robie is pleading for better-qualified—university-educated—journalists, who will have the knowledge, training and judgment to carry out the watchdog role of the Fourth Estate with efficiency and without bias in a troubled region of the world.

References

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Street, J. 2001, *Mass Media, Politics and Democracy*, Palgrave, Basingstoke.

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Tradition, Lotu and Militarism in Fiji, Winston Halapua, Fiji Institute of Applied Studies, Lautoka, Fiji, 2003. [x] + 227 pp., 21 cm, tables, figs, bibliography, index. ISBN 982-301-021-8 (pbk) FJ\$25.00 within Fiji.

Dr Halapua's thoughtful book, based on his PhD research, makes for absorbing reading. The author's long association, through the Anglican Church, with Fiji's plural society gives his story intimacy and relevance. Both general and specialist readers will find plenty of material on the contemporary history of the Republic of the Fiji Islands and Rotuma to interest them. Halapua provides a valuable record of the Republic's turbulent period between the two 1987 coups and the coup of 2000, focusing particularly on the links between the *vanua* (embodied in the *Bose Levu Vakaturaga* or Great Council of Chiefs), the *lotu* (most notably the Methodist Church) and the *bati* (the (formerly Royal) Fiji Military Forces).

In one form or another, Fijians belonged to class-conscious societies. Boundaries between the classes were neither fixed nor permanent. Early leaders were drawn from the categories of warriors, priests and specialists in crafts. There was always a leader in the making: depending on the fashion, one came in as another found his way out. Bent on ruling the seas, a class of warrior chiefs from Bau had asserted itself in the late

eighteenth century by first subduing Verata and then challenging Rewa for paramountcy.

Halapua's analysis is a penetrating reading, especially of how the past continues to manifest itself in the Republic's present. The opening chapter sets the scene with a political history, and articulates the author's viewpoint: 'that the relationship between the army and the chiefs represents an economic interest and an alliance of classes with the actors being a combination of military and political rulers . . . [E]thnicity was used only as part of the ideological aspect of this interest to sustain support of commoners and grass roots Fijians' (55). This is followed by discussion on the politicisation of the Fiji Military Forces, and the alliance between the military and the Fijian aristocracy. He emphasises the economic interests of the chiefly hierarchy and the invocation of 'traditional links, blood ties, culture, traditional religion, and myths' (60) for its maintenance. In the following three chapters, Halapua articulates the relationship within the context of *lotu* (mainly the Methodist Church), *vanua*, and *turagaism*, which, Halapua explains, embraces chiefs, the modern *bati* (now called *sotia*, soldiers) and the *lotu* (clergy) (113).

There is much to whet the appetite, particularly on *vanua* political processes. In subsequent chapters, Halapua moves quickly to what have been some of the consequences of these processes for modern Fiji, which he achieves by an examination of both the rise of a Fijian middle class from within the civil service and the military, and the increasing poverty. Useful figures accompany a penetrating exposition of rising crime and corruption rates and moral decay. And in the final chapter, 'The eye of the hurricane', Halapua uses the analogy of a hurricane to direct readers to the root cause of the problem and the moral consequences.

The engagement of history in the tangled and complicated web of the present is always controversial and often messy. A few comments on the historical relations will suffice.

Halapua emphasises the 'exploitative nature' of the missionaries and colonial administrators (107). Two particular aspects are discussed. First, with reference to the administration, Halapua states that the initial establishment of the country's council of chiefs—by the first Colonial

Governor, Sir Arthur Gordon—undermined the independence and integrity of each clan (presumably he means the *mataqali*) and made the *vannua* subservient to the colonial administration. This statement could be taken in several ways. One is that Halapua misses the point that Cakobau, as early as 1858, had pleaded with the first British Consul to persuade the British Government to take over the running of Fiji (Cakobau himself was to prove totally inept in maintaining a modern form of central government, as events of the early 1870s bear witness). Only with great reluctance (largely occasioned by the mounting costs of running colonial possessions) did Britain, after further petitions, finally agree to annex Fiji. This caving in had a lot to do with persistent pressure on the mother country from British settlers in Australia and New Zealand who were fearful of non-British powers sailing about within their sphere of influence. Finally, it is in the nature of any colonial power to assume that the affairs of respective tribes and *vannua* should play second fiddle to its colonial administrator and administration while it invents some central body to govern the whole. One person who is often overlooked in Fiji's history is William Thomas Pritchard, Britain's first Consul, whose timely intervention checked Tongan aspirations embodied in Henele Ma'afu from almost certainly assuming control and subduing Cakobau. Gordon appears as the modern architect of Fiji, but Pritchard was the one who kept Tongans at bay and protected Fijian interests when Cakobau and others turned to him in their hour of need. Fijian aristocracy survived because of the separate Fijian administration set in place by Gordon, which gave chiefs powers enjoyed as never before—but at the price of entrenching in Fijians a mentality of subservience to their chiefs and *kai valagi*.

The second aspect, expressed in the statement that the 'pioneer missionaries exploited the idea of *lotu*' (107), seems to ignore the evidence of history that *lotu* and politics, like magnets, attract; but of necessity they turn and twist in order to sit together, even in non-aligned ways. Any successful ruler recognises the power of religion and uses it to legitimate his or her power. Likewise, a successful missionary recognises the necessity for the powerful, and that those who fail to reciprocate bear the consequences. The new *lotu* succeeded because the natives recognised

its potential as a means of achieving their own ends; the new messengers reciprocated with information and advice about new systems of power—education, economy, law and nationhood, in addition to accessing material goods. Gordon's legacy remains intact. The institutions that were formed before and after his arrival conformed to his basic intention—to guarantee the paramountcy of Fijians, meaning the chiefs. The strength of Halapua's book lies in the Fijian focus of its analysis, because it seems that the historical dilemma, and the root concern for anyone that calls Fiji home, stems from Gordon's insistence on the chiefs as the chosen protectorate. The main political and economic struggle is still between the chiefly and the not-so-chiefly Fijians.

In many ways, Fijians are entrapped within a dilemma of differences, and Halapua cites another historian to make this point. It seems, 'as Teresia Teaiwa argues,¹ there is no Fijian nation as people from each province and confederacy continue to give paramountcy to their provinces and traditional confederacies ahead of national paramountcy' (199). In other words, Fiji-Fijians have yet to attain maturity as citizens. Many choose to divide their time, commuting between the world of chiefly subjugation and the economic realities of the present world. The difficulty arises not from ignorance of constitutionality and citizenship, but from keeping to the faith that Gordon prescribed for them, a faith that seems increasingly at odds with contemporary aspirations for improved material and spiritual wealth.

There are some basic errors and typos, whose correction would improve a second edition. A particular example of the first that this reviewer discerned appears on p. 98. Halapua states: '[Ratu Naiqama] Lalabalavu's father was the *Tui Cakau* until he died in 1989, when Ratu Epli's father, Ratu Penaia Ganilau, became the *Tui Cakau*'. There are two errors of fact. Lalabalavu's father was Ratu Glanville Wellington and Tui Cakau. He died on 28 October 1999. Ratu Glanville Lalabalavu succeeded to the Tui Cakau title after Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau died in 1993.

Minor typos include: 'Fijians fear of *loosing* their . . .', which appears in a quotation on p. 100. Neither the lack of an apostrophe nor the

spelling is indicated as being an error occurring in the original, so it is possible that the quoting is achieved with total accuracy, though that spelling confusion is an error that is notorious at USP, where Halapua researched his book. Perhaps more serious is the fact that the original for the quotation cannot be checked, because of shoddy referencing: the source is cited as Singh: 1999: 13, yet the reference list contains no item for Singh, 1999. His supervisors ought to have scotched these minor matters. Nevertheless, the publishers are to be congratulated for producing a worthwhile and immensely readable contribution for anyone with an interest in Pacific studies.

Note

¹Teresia Teaiwa, 'An analysis of the current political crisis in Fiji', in *Coup: reflections on the political crisis in Fiji*, eds BV Lal & M Pretes, Pandanus Books, Canberra, 2001: 31–4, at 31.

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