

company interested in establishing a plantation at an isolated and comparatively infertile atoll? True, Niuoku is the largest of the chain of islets (motu) that surround the spacious lagoon of Nukulaelae, but we are told little about it otherwise.

Perhaps these issues pale beside the longstanding symbolic importance of Niuoku in local discourse. By providing Tuvaluan and English texts, *Te Tala o Niuoku* undoubtedly fulfils its role of reflecting back to the community their concerns, while allowing a wider audience to assess conflicting views of an important aspect of colonial history. This is not 'indigenous history' in the strictest sense, but it does attempt an interesting blend of local and foreign interpretations.

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Tungaru Traditions: Writings on the Atoll Culture of the Gilbert Islands. By A.F. Grimble, edited by H.E. Maude. Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1990. 382 pp. Australian price: \$44.95.

SIR ARTHUR GRIMBLE'S best-known works are undoubtedly the two books of essays, *A Pattern of Islands* and *Return to the Islands*, which were published in 1952 and 1957 shortly before his death. Based largely on BBC radio scripts, these are urbane, elegant tales of Gilbertese life and society — not always strictly accurate, and imbued with stereotyped views; as Maude points out in his brief introduction, 'factual content is subordinated to literary effect'.

Grimble was, however, also a serious though strictly amateur student of anthropology and during his earlier years as an administrator in the old Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony he had unparalleled opportunities to gather information from a generation of elders who had not yet rejected traditional ways. Some of this was published in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* and other scholarly journals in the years between 1920 and 1934. Nevertheless, whether through inattention or inclination, Grimble remained largely untouched by the influences of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown, whose works were transforming anthropological theory and practice during those years. He remained a devotee of Haddon and Rivers — and, incidentally, an admirer of Percy Smith's work.

At his death, Grimble's unpublished notes and papers came into the custody of Harry Maude, by then established in the newly-formed Department of Pacific History at Canberra. Under Maude's care the 'Grimble Papers' have long been available to research students. In publishing a selection from them here Maude expresses the hope that they might make Grimble's very solid achievements more widely known, and the information more readily available to the Gilbertese.

The book is divided into three parts. Part I is a miscellany of field notes on aspects of 'traditional culture'. This is perhaps a treasure trove for specialists who can place the notes in wider contexts. But it is also a rather bewildering array of diverse and unrelated scraps of information, responsible for most of the more arcane entries in the book's excellent index — ranging from 'Adoption, of cats' through 'Invisibility' to 'Vaginal tickler'. Part 2 is much sterner stuff, made up of a good essay on 'Clan and Totem' and three others on aspects of the *maneaba*, or meeting house, which is such an important focus of Gilbertese life. True to the Rivers and Percy Smith mode of interpretation, Grimble was preoccupied

with explaining variations in terms of aboriginal substratum overlain by a complex series of migrations ('swarms', he calls them) of later peoples who all 'merged' to varying degrees with one another. This is rubbish of course, but the essays also contain a wealth of detailed, very reliable information for those who might wish to interpret it all differently.

Part 3 consists of four essays, two of which are concerned with questions about the historical veracity of Gilbertese genealogy and oral tradition. As Maude points out, 'ethnohistorians of today might have reached some different conclusions', but the issues which Grimble raises are continuing ones, and there is much to be learned from his considerations of them. Also included is a brief history of the island of Abemama written by a Gilbertese author, which was acquired by Grimble (and presumably translated by him) about the time of the First World War. The final chapter is a gem — an official memorandum, not part of the 'Grimble Papers', written in defence of Gilbertese dancing in reply to missionary allegations of indecency and licentiousness. It is a brilliant, informative study of the meaning and significance of dancing to the Gilbertese, as well as a devastating chastisement of missionary Protestantism. There are not many such documents in Pacific archives, and we must all be grateful to Maude for including it here.

Maude has a brief (7 page) editorial essay on 'Grimble as an Anthropologist' and another note on the 'Grimble Papers' themselves. This book apparently contains all of them except for the extensive collection of Gilbertese myths and legends which are to be published separately. There are two excellent bibliographies, one of Grimble's works and the other on the Gilberts in general.

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Te Manihera — The Life and Times of the Pioneer Missionary Robert Maunsell. By Helen Garrett, Reed, Auckland, 1991. 306pp. NZ price: \$29.95.

ROBERT MAUNSELL (1810-1894) was one of New Zealand's most influential early missionaries. An Irish Protestant, he came to New Zealand in 1835 with the Church Missionary Society, where he devoted fifty-nine years of his life to teaching and preaching Christianity among the Maori. Like Samuel Marsden, Maunsell was eager to convert the 'poor benighted heathen', and to extend the imperial arm of civilized Europe to the antipodes. At a time when religion went hand in hand with trade and literacy, Maunsell's vision 'to prepare the young for rising with the tide of civilization and improvement now sweeping over New Zealand' (p.173) was typical of this colonizing crusade.

Maunsell first worked with Samuel Marsden, Henry Williams and William Colenso in the Bay of Islands before advancing further south into the Manukau and the Waikato. Here he established three mission stations and became an accomplished student of the Maori language. Maunsell had a good relationship with the Maori people, who knew and respected him as 'Te Manihera'. Among his achievements were his translation of the Old Testament into Maori, the publication of the popular *Grammar of the New Zealand Language*,¹ and his successful development of boarding schools for Maori children. He

1 Robert Maunsell, *Grammar of the New Zealand Language*, 1842.