

hearings is of great value. For the emergent Māori historian, this section highlights the value of the processes used by the Court to survey and map the land, the Native Land Court Minutes and the evidence provided at hearings to establish ownership. These provide a rich source of hapū history. Whaanga has included minutes that give a depth of history, place names, hapū claims to land ownership, whakapapa, whakataukī and mōteatea. Individualizing land title forced changes in Māori land tenure. Incorporations were established to manage the land assets. Whaanga provides social and economic histories of three landholdings and incorporations — Whakaki, Anewa and Te Whakaari. This section concludes with a history of Māori opposition to the sale of land and the government response of land confiscation. The actions of Te Kooti and his fight for Māori autonomy are given particular focus in this history.

In the final section, Mana Tangata, Whaanga brings the history of Ngai Tahu Matawhaiti to the present day. She provides a history of important landmarks and taonga of the people of Iwitea. The history begins with the prophet Te Matenga and the message of hope for the people of Iwitea. Important to this history are the 12 tōtara tapu that lie on Korito beach. Whaanga tells the story of the seven hills, Ngā Tāhora Tokowhitu, and the war canoe Te Toki a Tapiri, a significant taonga to Ngai Tahu Matawhaiti.

Whaanga concludes with contemporary issues affecting the mana whenua of Ngai Tahu Matawhaiti, particularly the Crown Minerals Act 1991 and the extracting of gas and oil reserves. This issue has given rise to a new generation of Ngai Tahu Matawhaiti descendants returning to their kāinga tūturu, their homeland, to defend the mana whenua of their land.

The name of the book, *A Carved Cloak for Tahu*, originated from discussion of Iwitea kaumātua in the 1980s about carvings for the meeting house Te Poho o Tahu. The kaumātua Te Hore Epanaia Whaanga stated that it was 'time the old chief had a cloak'. Whaanga's book will help to maintain the tribal traditions that are represented in that cloak that adorns the old chief Tahu. It is a celebration of the ancestors of Ngai Tahu Matawhaiti, the history of the land and the people.

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Serge Tchekézoff. *'First Contacts' in Polynesia: The Samoan Case, 1722–1848: Western Misunderstandings about Sexuality and Divinity*. Christchurch and Canberra, The Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies and the Journal of Pacific History. 2004. viii, 222 pp. NZ price: \$30.00. ISBN 0-9585-8632-2.

MARGARET MEAD'S BOOK *Coming of Age in Samoa* was rightly celebrated for its argument that the emotional dimensions of adolescence were socially determined, and as an exposition of anthropological cultural relativism it was standard fare for anthropology students for half a century. It did not become controversial until Derek Freeman launched a sustained attack on it, not for its relativism, but for having been wrong about its portrayal of Samoan sexual behaviour. An argument has raged since about anthropological method, research ethics and the truth about Samoan sexuality.

Serge Tchekézoff contributed to this debate and changed its direction, contending that the whole affair was based on a miscomprehension of pre-European contact Polynesian sexuality. The present book brings to a culmination an argument that has been partly enunciated in several papers over almost a decade and constitutes a major step forward in the understanding of Polynesian social and intellectual life, and in the process of early culture contact.

The argument is presented in two parts: the first goes through the 'first contact' sources

for Samoa in detail in order to reconstruct Samoan sexual behaviour in pre-European times. Since first contact in the eighteenth century, most popular and anthropological representations of Samoa have promulgated the 'free love' impression, and particularly the view that every unmarried girl was the mistress of her own affairs, and that most engaged in a series of casual sexual liaisons. Mead's research in the 1920s seemed to confirm this despite almost a century of Christian mission influence. Freeman's research some decades later contradicted it. This implied an unlikely oscillating trajectory of behaviour and the only control study possible was to try to establish the early contact period baseline.

By close textual reading combined with his own ethnological fieldwork Tcherkézoff has shown that the free-love hypothesis is wrong. While the early visitors themselves believed that Samoan behaviour was promiscuous, their incidental and incomprehending observations are sufficient to allow a reconstruction of what they did not understand, and what lay behind the infrequent sexual encounters between Samoan women and foreign sailors. Whatever might have happened during the whaling boom when large numbers of American ships visited Samoan bays (and Tcherkézoff does not go into that), the exploration period did not foster the evolution of large-scale prostitution as happened in Hawaii and Tahiti.

The argument is a fairly complex one, but Tcherkézoff has shown that early sexual relations conformed to what is known about traditional high-status marriages. In other words, the parents or guardians put young women — virgins — through an orthodox ceremony culminating in copulation. Their motivation for doing so was the belief that Europeans were manifestations of gods, and the marriage was intended to capture and renew the divine essence in which all chiefs (one might almost say all Samoans to a greater or lesser degree) shared.

This raises the controversial issue of whether, in Samoan and other Polynesian eyes, Europeans were gods. The idea has an interesting history and the controversy stems from misunderstandings of the Polynesian concept of the divine. The emerging orthodoxy, most vigorously put forward by Marshal Sahlins, is that the difference between gods and men was not a manichaeian opposition but a continuum. Moreover, anything strange, not just white people, was a demonstration or expression of divinity or a thing through which the gods represented themselves. The strangeness, novelty and whiteness of the Europeans fitted with Polynesian concepts of gods representing themselves in different forms without denying that they (Europeans) were also human. In Polynesian myth and mythical time this kind of thing was common.

As if not satisfied that the argument had been made sufficiently, the book has a second part. In this, three aspects of early contact are examined in the light of knowledge about Polynesian culture and symbolic representations. These are matters that were either disregarded or have been misunderstood by most earlier scholars. Suffusing this part of the book is the central question: what did cross-cultural sex mean to eighteenth-century Polynesians? Three chapters deal respectively with the question of perceived European divinity, of the uses and symbolic meanings and rituals concerning cloth, and finally an analysis of the nomenclature used for Europeans and its meaning. The conclusions drawn from all three cases are mutually supportive and suggest that throughout Polynesia, not just in Samoa, free love was neither licit nor practised, that early exposure of female nakedness had nothing to do with sexual allurements, and that early sexual contacts were explicitly intended for impregnation in order to capture a renewed measure of divinity for the progeny of chiefs.

I will not bore readers with the conventional list of quibbles, reservations or minor slips: every reader will notice his/her own and if they affect specific statements they do not invalidate the interpretation. Tcherkézoff's argument is well marshalled, his evidence is convincing, his logic compelling. I think he has proven his case. A number of books

in recent times have proclaimed the goal of matching anthropological insights with historical questions and giving the inside view of the European encounter. This one at least is true to that aspiration.

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The Manipulation of Custom: From Uprising to Intervention in the Solomon Islands. By Jon Fraenkel. Victoria University Press, Wellington, 2004. 262 pp. NZ price: \$34.95. ISBN 0-86473-487-5.

JON FRAENKEL'S *THE MANIPULATION OF CUSTOM: From Uprising to Intervention in the Solomon Islands* is an in-depth overview of the Solomon Islands' 'ethnic tension crisis' (as it is still widely termed within the Solomons), from its ostensible beginning in 1998 with the eviction of some 25,000 Malaitans from north Guadalcanal by the militant Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army, through the Townsville Peace Agreement in October 2000 between the GRA/Isatabu Freedom Movement and the Malaita Eagle Force, through the first year of the July 2003 intervention of the Australian-led multinational Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI), which continues today. The perspective is largely that of political science, concentrating on the interaction of government, militant groups, civil society, Melanesian 'custom' and international players, particularly Australia and Taiwan.

As one who lived through the last nine years in the Solomons, I would say that Fraenkel's argument and perspective are basically correct. I see little to fault. In a brisk narrative, he produces a fairly full account of the increasing corruption of Solomon Islands political life in which insatiable greed has come to replace public service and honesty, especially among elected politicians. It is not a happy story. To some extent, even the invitation to RAMSI to rescue the Solomons from its state of lawlessness and terminal corruption had motives of self-interest.

Fraenkel has no simplistic explanations. He refuses either to affirm the conflict as entirely 'ethnic' (an explanation largely favoured by the international media) or to deny the ethnic element in favour of an entirely economic analysis (an explanation favoured by some commentators on the political left). Nor does he buy the current view of certain Australian policy planners that the Solomons never had any effective government, whether in the protectorate or independence era, and that the current morass is just more of the same, only worse. Quite correctly, he points out that Solomon Islanders have always taken their government seriously, indigenizing it and shaping it to meet local needs. He is ambivalent about (if not mildly hostile to) RAMSI, noting 'the oxymoronic policy of intervention to enable self-government' (p.173). And as the title of the book indicates, he correctly points out that *kastom* is not some sort of pure cultural given, set against government or militant demands, but something constantly being redefined (indeed, in this case, manipulated) by them.

This is a good frame upon which to hang further research. I would simply emphasize that there is still very much more research to be done, particularly outside the public record, upon which this book depends a bit too much. Inevitably, as this research is done, a much more detailed analysis will emerge and the frame itself will change. Reading the book, I frequently felt, 'Something is missing here — what is written is correct, but there is still more'. In the end, analysis also has to go beyond politics to issues of culture and religion.

At times Fraenkel seems not to want to take his argument to its logical conclusion. For example, the Solomons' political situation *is* complex and murky, with very