

## Reviews (Books)

*Tangata Whenua: An Illustrated History*. By Atholl Anderson, Judith Binney and Aroha Harris. Bridget Williams Books, Wellington, 2014. 543pp. NZ price: \$99.99. ISBN: 9781927131411.

One of the greatest joys of my role as review editor for the *New Zealand Journal of History* is the moment I get to unpack and glance through the latest books sent to me by publishers. I have been struck by how far we have come over the last half-decade in terms of production and presentation. The publications we receive are invariably aesthetically pleasing to handle and it is often hard to surrender them to eager reviewers. For the first time, however, a massive tome arrived on my desk that looked so stunning and made such an immediate emotional impact that I could not let go. The book, *Tangata Whenua: An Illustrated History*, is an absolute tour de force from beginning to end. It deserves all the accolades sent in its direction and represents a remarkable achievement on several different levels. As Atholl Anderson, Aroha Harris and Bridget Williams claim in their introduction, the volume will ‘sit comfortably in the long line of books on Māori’ (p.11). That is right and good, but *Tangata Whenua* goes much further than anything we have hitherto seen and gives us a comprehensive, authoritative and deeply moving account of Māori history across the *longue durée*. It is truly a landmark text, intended for a wide audience both here and abroad. The book is also a collaborative venture. Beyond the three main authors and editors, there exists a larger team of publishing staff, contributing writers, experts, researchers and readers, as well as supporters and sponsors within various iwi and institutions. The list of benefactors acknowledged at the start of *Tangata Whenua* reveals the strong backing enjoyed by the project from its inception and a belief in an overall vision, which is so brilliantly realized in publication.

First and foremost, this book is a ‘judiciously’ *illustrated* history (p.10), and this key aspect deserves more sustained attention than it has received in review. I am sure there will be many other readers who will be mesmerized by the compelling visual narrative presented here. My passion for our discipline – and the reason why I have devoted most of my adult life to its pursuit – has everything to do with the powerful combination of stories, material culture and photographs that I encountered from an early age. Put simply, things matter and the words we attach to them shape the ways that we understand and engage with the past. One of the outstanding strengths of this book is how well the images carry the history. The richness and range is extraordinary, from colour photographs of hugely significant objects such as a shell chisel found at Wairau Bar (Canterbury Museum / Te Rūnanga a Rangitāne o Wairau, p.35) to the affecting 1850s daguerreotype of Kararaina and Hera Barrett (Puke Aiki, A71.462, p.255), and from the splendid ‘fros’ of the Maori Volcanics Heta Gilbert and Gilbert Smith in London in 1969 (Mahora and the Maori Volcanics, p.396) to a single panel of Laurence Aberhart’s haunting 1999 work *The Prisoner’s Dream, Taranaki from Oeo Road*, which was gifted to the people of Parihaka (reproduced courtesy of the artist, p.297). The act of viewing the book’s images is going to be vastly different for those

whose own ancestors are pictured here or who can, for example, whakapapa back to signatories to the 1844 Deed for the Otago Purchase (p.229) and further still to treasures like the anchor stone from the waka *Tainui* (p.63). But the spirit of *Tangata Whenua* is such that few readers will be able to journey through these pages without emerging unchanged. Many of the images and stories stay with you. Aside from the portraits, I found myself drawn back (with equal measures of awe and horror) to the patu parāoa lifted from ‘a fallen comrade’ by Epiha Tokohihi, the younger brother of Rewi Maniapoto, at Kairau in 1861 (p.211); to Hongi Hika’s self-portrait carved from one of Samuel Marsden’s Parramatta fenceposts before his return to New Zealand in 1814 (p.176); and to the remarkably well-preserved kaitaka that Ruhia Porutu threw over two recently arrived migrants to save them from the wrath of Te Rira when he discovered that they had broken tapu by taking shelter in a Pipitea house that was still under construction in 1840 (now there’s a story!).

The images and words that give *Tangata Whenua* its potent life force are woven together within a chronological framework. This is no easy task and the project team deserves the highest praise for providing a robust structure and clear signposting for readers. The book is divided into three parts. In the first section, entitled ‘Te Ao Tawhito: the Old World’, Atholl Anderson traverses the broad sweep of time from ancient South East Asian origins in the Holocene age to the eastward dispersals that led eventually to colonization of these islands and five more centuries of adaptation before the arrival of new peoples, technologies and materials. The value of material artefacts and oral traditions for historical detective work is superbly demonstrated here, nowhere more so than in the detailed treatment of whakapapa, history and migration in Chapter Two. The momentum built up during the opening six chapters is sustained throughout the second part of the book (‘Te Ao Hou: the New World’), which takes us from the interactions between Māori and missionaries in the early nineteenth century to the ongoing quest for mana motuhake in the wake of the First World War. Judith Binney’s prose (with Vincent O’Malley and Alan Ward) is electrifying and even-handed as she subjects one of the most troubling periods in tangata whenua history to critical scrutiny. The authors chart the land wars and their devastating consequences for Māori, the actions of the Crown, the emergence of indigenous prophets and religious movements, and the complexities of protest politics, resistance and reform. This is a hard act to follow, but Aroha Harris and Melissa Matutina Williams are equal to the task in their finely detailed treatment of ‘Te Ao Hurihuri: The Changing World’. They make use of a rich array of materials to provide deft analyses of the paths that led from ‘the shadows of war and influenza’ to the present day, drawing at times upon music, art, literature, television and film in creative ways. Twelve ‘Across Time’ mini-sequences are interspersed between the chapters of each of the three parts of the book. These are a real highlight and cover topics we might expect (‘Rugby’ and ‘Te Reo’) together with some very pleasant surprises in delicious cameos by Arini Loader (‘Portrait Photographs’), Robyn Anderson (‘Ngā Haki, Ngā Kara, Flags’) and the irrepressible Michael Stevens (‘Te Hopu Tītī ki Rakiura’). The appendices and endnotes at the end are encyclopedic in nature and add further value to this magnificent work.

*Tangata Whenua: An Illustrated History* is a precious gift that will win hearts and minds. By so doing, it promises to realize the fervent hope for respect and

understanding so eloquently expressed by Tipene O'Regan and Joe Williams at the start of the book. As Harris and Anderson say in their short postscript, '[t]he past, as ever, speaks, recalling the deeds and drive of tūpuna to the concerns of the present, and guiding the future'. It is a salutary lesson that this volume delivers like blues music from the barrel of a gun. The past really matters. 'It matters now. It will matter again, and again' (p.489).

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*Pacific Histories: Ocean, Land, People*. Edited by David Armitage and Alison Bashford. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2014. 392pp. UK price: £18.99. ISBN: 9781137001641.

This book is a collection of essays by a group of historians claiming to provide an alternative approach to Pacific historiography through weaving a range of contemporary issues that are historically intertwined into a unitary narrative. The issues are discussed with fervent intellectual passion and discipline, and are woven together in an ingenious way. While most books on Pacific history tend to be country focused, *Pacific Histories* provides a comprehensive analysis that spans both Pacific space and time, covering the rim countries and Oceania, from the ancient to the contemporary.

Pacific historiography is multilayered and complex, intriguing and boundless, in scope and life. At the outset, defining and imagining the 'boundary' and character of the Pacific world is a perpetually mind-boggling enterprise. The book does well to handle this task with enthusiastic and delicate proficiency. The Pacific is not a homogenous entity, which could easily be framed in a grand metanarrative, but a constellation of distinct spaces and identities, interlinked and woven together in a basket of time and space. Nor is it a defined 'place'. Rather it is a contested space, which can be imagined and reimagined in multiple ways. Again the book ambitiously embraces this view with almost religious zeal.

The book is divided into four parts. The first part provides a sweep of Pacific history including 'The Pacific in Indigenous Times' (Damon Salesa), 'The Pacific Before Empire: 1500–1800' (Joyce Chaplin), 'The Age of Empire in the Pacific' (Nicholas Thomas) and 'A Pacific Century' (Akira Iriye). Salesa provides an incisive and in-depth account of the interconnected Pacific indigenous world views and cosmologies in pre-European times and how these defined the trans-Oceanic identity and genealogies of Pacific peoples. The analysis is plausibly informative and provides critical insight into the social organizations, relationships and technologies that enabled Pacific peoples to sail across and settle in the largest ocean on planet earth. Chaplin examines the early encounters between Europeans and Pacific peoples, which transformed the identity and images of host societies in popular imagination. The demarcation of the Pacific peoples into superficially racial categories and the