

Book and Media Reviews

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undertones of the industry's workings, especially in the political power amassed by leaders of the industry, the most salient example being the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893. In the end, the book's lack of engagement with broader historically bound questions is secondary to the work's stated intent, which is to offer an analysis and presentation of the industry's technological progression from the nineteenth century to the present, examining the role of this advancement in relation to the industry's evolution.

Overall, Jones and Osgood contribute a detailed account that recounts the scientific and technological progression of the Hawaiian sugar industry at a depth otherwise not easily accessible by scholars outside of scientific disciplines. As such, the book fills a niche of scholarship seeking to historicize science, simultaneously inviting new questions that interrogate the role of technology in the hands of major historical players. With the Hawaiian Commercial and Sugar Company announcing at the beginning of 2016 their intention to halt sugar operations, the history of the industry in Hawai'i has come to an end. In light of this, *From King Cane to the Last Sugar Mill* holds immense value in its longitudinal recounting and examination of the technological workings of an industry that played a tremendous role in shaping contemporary Hawai'i.

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Southern Cook Islands Customary Law, History and Society: Akapapa'anga, Kōrero Tupuna, e te Ākono'anga Ture 'Enua o te Pā 'Enua Tonga o te Kūki 'Airani, by Ron Crocombe and Ross Holmes, 2014. Three volumes, in English and Cook Islands Māori. Auckland: Ross Holmes; Rarotonga: The Cook Islands Library and Museum Society Incorporated. ISBN vol 1 978-0-9441068-0-3, vol 2 978-0-9441068-1-0, vol 3 978-0-9441068-2-7; 1,182 pages, illustrations, facsimiles, figures, glossary, bibliography. Cloth, NZ\$150.00.

Resulting from a posthumous collaboration, as explained in Marjorie Crocombe's preface, the three massive volumes of *Southern Cook Islands Customary Law, History and Society* synthesize Ron Crocombe's prior publications on Cook Islands culture and society as recontextualized and expanded on by Ross Holmes. A barrister and solicitor whose practice includes the High Courts of New Zealand and the Cook Islands Privy Council, Holmes provides commentary on archival materials and perspectives not available to Crocombe at the time of his groundbreaking work on land tenure and law in the Cook Islands in the 1960s. Holmes also provides the framing device across the volumes: the need to document and support the legal standing of Cook Islands cultural practice and social organization as "custom." Somewhere along the way the project appears to have been transformed by the possibility that if custom has substance in law, then every historically attested ethnographic or social fact may be relevant

to legal standings, arguments, and outcomes. The topically far-ranging result is a fascinating, if sometimes quixotic, view of the Cook Islands.

The work portrays the structural tension between a history of judicial disinterest in Cook Islands *tika'anga* (traditional culture and social customs) by the New Zealand administration and its courts, notably the Land Court, and the legitimization of the authority of “custom” and especially of *‘ākonono‘anga ture ‘enua* (customary law) as established in the Cook Islands Constitution, particularly in article 66A(3). In a prefatory comment on the dust jacket, Holmes explains, “The Cook Islands Courts have from the commencement of the Court system in 1902 down to the present time made determinations on customary law in the absence of sufficient evidence as to what customary law was.” Covering a wide variety of topical domains with details running from everyday minutiae to the cosmological in pre-European and post-European contexts, this work attempts to address those lacunae.

Drawn sometimes from Crocombe’s published scholarship, sometimes from Holmes’s work, and, as a rule, carefully attributed, the cascade of sections across twenty-six chapters and more than a thousand pages reminds me of a remark attributed to naturalist John Muir, “When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.” This will hardly surprise anthropologists and other social scientists. The authors’ dogged pursuit of the foundations of “custom” would be of material use for engaging with Cook

Islands or Eastern Polynesian culture history and social organization and for considering the range of issues material to discussions of property law, culture, and society in Oceania or farther afield.

The first volume, *Pre-European Southern Cook Islands Customary Law, History and Society*, begins with illuminating discussions of the need for a resource on Southern Cook Islands customary law, cultural rights, and attorneys’ “obligations to inform the Court of relevant Māori custom” (21). The second volume, *Pre-European Southern Cook Islands Māori Society*, takes on social stratification and social organization in the Southern Cook Islands’ historical contexts. The final volume, *The Impact of Europeans upon Southern Cook Islands Māori Society, Customary Law and Land Tenure Law 1595–1888*, follows the story into the early-contemporary period and the twentieth-century administration of the Cook Islands. Throughout all three volumes, the theme of suppression of custom—from the London Missionary Society (LMS) mission period through the period of administration by New Zealand, with particular weight given to the role of the NZ educational system—is counterpoised with evidence of the endurance of precontact and nineteenth-century indigenous culture and society, notwithstanding a familiar regional pattern of changing evaluations of the importance of culture and tradition among Cook Islanders across generations.

Tasty passages from Crocombe’s or Holmes’s pen are regularly served up, often brilliantly illustrated or sup-

ported by engagement with primary materials. The discussion of Southern Cook Islands tika‘anga as law notably includes attention to the origins, ritual aspects, breaches, and changing qualities of tika‘anga (248–301). The comparison of Australian, Canadian, New Zealand, and Cook Islands approaches to customary title and the establishment of title, as well as the discussions of different types of rights and of persons and collectives who can claim those rights (388–411), echoes and contributes to contemporary discussions of “legal pluralism” in the contemporary Pacific.

The cross-cutting engagement with nineteenth-century vernacular texts is particularly striking. The authors note, “A number of the manuscripts written by Cook Islands Māori are unpublished, some of these have been lost, some are privately owned, and most are not available to the public” (59). A fresh appraisal of texts from the Southern Cook Islands published in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* in the early twentieth century in conversation with extraordinary texts now coming into view reinvigorates an engagement with the past as well as their evidentiary value for contemporary concerns in the courts. For instance, a 25,000-word narrative bearing on Rarotongan genealogies and cultural histories attributed to Tamuera (Samuela) Te Rei casts back in time to thirteenth-century encounters and interactions in Tahiti that are suggested to undergird the “contemporary” foundations of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century customary practice with bearing on legal issues facing twenty-first-century courts.

Engagements with documents like

the Te Rei narrative and oral traditions recorded in more recent times—touching on issues ranging from migration, settlement, chiefly histories, family genealogies, agricultural practices, cosmological foundations, and relationships between conquest and land rights—amply evidence the kinds of disjunctions and dissonances between what Holmes describes as the received story of Cook Islands culture and society emphasized in school and the local courts, and the material history of cultural and social facts on the ground. Informed by a Hobsbawmian stance on the amenability of tradition to invention, Holmes generally works to avoid fraught scholarly debates about “tradition” or “invention.” Nevertheless, the volumes establish and track an argument that, until recently, the “customs” identified and implemented by the courts as foundational have often been outcomes of culture shifts and changes from the mission period or the introduction of European-rooted traditions (including the doctrine of primogeniture). Anyone interested in revisiting the invention of tradition will find a warehouse of grist for the mill here. Ultimately, an argument is made that during the LMS era some of the ariki (hereditary chiefs) of Rarotonga, and others, acquired substantial areas of land to which they had no customary legal entitlement, with implications all the way to the present.

Southern Cook Islands Customary Law, History and Society extends and re-illuminates Crocombe’s prior work. Holmes’s contributions are palpable. The authors’ underlying motivations and entanglements with legal contexts may not be paramount to all read-

ers but will offer those interested in land tenure, law, and legal pluralism in Oceania much to think on. The numerous exquisite and often breathtaking full-color photographs of Cook Islands material culture and historical contexts in combination with lengthy extracts from primary materials will serve as sources of inspiration to students and a stimulus to future Cook Islands scholarship. Regional libraries will wish to have copies. Profits from the volume will be donated to the Cook Islands Library and Museum Society, a privately funded and volunteer institution, which has worked to preserve and promote Cook Islands material culture since 1963.

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Greed and Grievance: Ex-Militants' Perspectives on the Conflict in Solomon Islands 1998–2003, by Matthew G Allen. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013. ISBN 978-0-8248-3854-6; 243 pages, maps, tables, illustrations, photographs, notes, appendixes. Cloth, US\$55.00.

Reading *Greed and Grievance: Ex-Militants' Perspectives on the Conflict in Solomon Islands 1998–2003* by Matthew G Allen reminded me of several things. First, it reminded me of the civil uprising since 1998; the militant rule and activities then in towns and rural villages; the various attempts to attain peace, particularly through the Townsville Peace Agreement in 2000 that resulted in the cessation of overt fighting; and people's reception

of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) in 2003. These observed behaviors and events persuaded me to learn more about the perceptions of ex-militants in the conflict. I also wondered what these ex-militants could relay to an expatriate scholar like Allen who is attempting to make sense of the country's social uprising. More important, I was also eager to learn from the book how this complex Melanesian conflict is perceived under the auspices of greed and grievance.

My very first impression was that the book is very well arranged, rendering the lines of arguments easy to follow. The book is divided into seven chapters with detailed assessments of historical developments and background information to assist readers who might have limited knowledge pertaining to the "tensions" specifically and to Solomon Islands more generally. The author skillfully weaves the overall and often contradictory accounts by members of the two former conflicting groups into a story of failed coexistence. According to his research, Guadalcanal ex-militants subscribed to the notion of Guadalcanal as the motherland that must be saved, while the Malaita ex-militants advocated for the security of other Solomon Islanders from the threat of Guadalcanal militants. The author capably knits these distinct and contrary positions into one national story under the title "Continuities and Symmetries."

The book captures very powerful personal stories by individuals who contributed physically during the conflict. The stories of events and emotions that led these individuals to