its director. Gifford’s professional and systematic approach to archaeological research was an inspiration to later archaeologists working in the Pacific, and his work laid an important framework for later studies. Not only were the materials meticulously described and bagged, but soil samples were also taken for micromorphological analysis. Gifford had experts in their fields examine the shells and bone. A monograph written by Gifford and Shutler was published describing these excavations and analyses in 1956. The standards they set in publishing their results in such a short time span should be heeded by archaeologists today!

The second part of this volume is written by Christophe Sand, also an archaeologist, and head of the New Caledonian Museum. This section is an account of the expedition through the eyes of the participants. Sand provides details about the expedition little seen in published literature. Sand meticulously brings together various accounts of the expedition through correspondence, field notes, and paraphernalia such as receipts and airline tickets. The list of sources is included at the end of the volume. The chapters by Sand also provide a social history of New Caledonia in the early 1950s. The images provided by the photographs bring the expedition to life. The image of the main street and monument from Koné (figure 7.2) looks like it could have been taken yesterday. The insights into the views of both Gifford and Shutler are thought-provoking. I particularly enjoyed reading the extracts from Shutler’s notebooks, where he recorded his disagreements with Gifford on topics such as excavation techniques and screen sizes.

This book is beautifully produced and will appeal to a number of audiences. For the general public it fits into the “coffee-table” genre; for the archaeologist it is a valuable historical document behind one of the most important archaeological excavations undertaken this century. A definite book for the library.

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Conference papers are often unruly creatures that are notoriously difficult to harness and corral into edited collections of conference proceedings. As Brij V Lal notes in the preface, the millennial conference of the Pacific History Association in Canberra in June 2000 was even more eclectic than usual, as suggested by its expansive title, “Bursting Boundaries: Places, Persons, Gender and Disciplines.” Therefore Lal and fellow editor Peter Hempenstall had to be selective, and they chose to focus on works they considered reflective and autobiographical. Why? Hempenstall suggests that the uncertainty and turmoil of civil war on Guadalcanal and the overthrow of another elected government in Fiji, which preceded the conference, were echoed by the
breakdown of former certainties of affiliation within Pacific history and beyond to its subject matter. Such instability prompted the editors to dedicate the volume “to mark a moment of recognition and personal re-examination by individuals, about the boundaries that have dominated their scholarly lives” (2). The writings of both editors have increasingly moved in this direction over the last decade. They are both comfortable with the genre and are skilful practitioners of it. It is perhaps natural that they should gravitate toward this theme in such troubled and uncertain times. While the volume presents only a narrow vision of the intellectual ferment that characterized the conference, it is still a valuable addition to Pacific historiography. However, the best papers, delivered by Bill Gammage and Vicki Lukere, were excluded by this proscription.

The collection opens with Donald Denoon’s “How Not to Write Biography,” a typically understated title that masks one of the best essays in the collection. In recounting his attempts to write a biography of Ulli Beier (an academic who comfortably spanned the divide between expatriates and locals in Papua New Guinea in his drive to nurture local artistic flair, long repressed by colonial structures), Denoon reveals as much about himself, and the times and places he discusses, as he does about Beier. Denoon writes beautifully and can conjure up a world in a sentence. Take his description of university life in Ibadan, for example: “Sometimes the city broke in—police killed a student; cholera lapped the ivory tower; Wole Soyinka imported controversy to the stage—but rarely did academics break out. Rumour had it that someone called Beier had ‘gone bush,’ maybe even ‘gone native’” (9). Denoon notes the particular difficulty of separating man from myth and otherwise distancing himself from his subject. Then Hank Nelson reflects on his long association with Port Moresby as a lecturer, researcher, and commentator from 1966 until 2000. He explores how memories always inform analysis of the present and demonstrates how past and present become blurred by recalling day-to-day incidents like new roads disrupting his old mental maps of driving routes. Other personal recollections illuminate bigger themes and give a human face to times and events.

Hempenstall’s chapter reviews the history and methodology of biography in the Pacific. He argues for the need to reach across cultures into the personal worlds of Islanders to write effective Pacific biography. While the extensiveness of Munro’s accompanying bibliography of Pacific biography will surprise many, it also shows that most biography continues to be written by Europeans—indeed, Lal is the only non-European contributor to this volume. Perhaps we must ask not only how to encourage Islanders to write their life stories, but also why it is not a more common form of expression for them. Hempenstall argues against Alan Ward’s comment that this type of history is a rather self-indulgent sideshow by asserting that the increasing number of reflective autobiographical submissions to journals such as Conversations indicates its increasing popularity (5).

John Spurway’s essay on Ma’afu
is valuable as one of the few focused on a Pacific Islander and on someone who lived in an era different from that of the contributors. Much of Spurway’s attention is devoted to problems of source availability, although ultimately he succeeds in producing a very good biography of this important historical figure, demonstrating the potential for applying this approach to other times and cultures. The next essay, by Lal, returns to the present with an immediacy born out of being thrust into the limelight as a post–Fiji coup academic commentator and member of the Fiji Constitutional Review Commission. He demonstrates how history was appropriated and manipulated by various factions in the maelstrom of contemporary politics and how he found it impossible to be “objective” as democratic principles were trampled into the ground. Surely, few academics would argue otherwise.

David Chappell skillfully explores Greg Dening’s proposition that representations of the past are representations of the present when he examines how Kanak leaders from the 1970s have had to adjust to changing circumstances in the 1990s—a process he sees mirrored in his own life in many ways. More than any other contributor, Chappell demonstrates how intergenerational changes in circumstances alter our lives and perspectives, and he wonders what meaning or relevance his “quasi-narcissistic” historical reflection will have for the next generation (96–97). Munro features again, this time with a typically precise and thorough review of the life of J W Davidson. It is a thoughtful reflection on the man and the myth surrounding him, including an interesting comparison of the similarities between Davidson and his first biographical subject, Peter Dillon. Two essays follow on the difficulties of entanglement for those who build up long-standing connections with indigenous groups. Here we get an insight into how personal history fits into indigenous forms of expression. Clive Moore relates how he is constantly torn between the need to be academically impartial and the fierce loyalty and protectiveness he feels toward his adopted kin group on Malaita. Rod Lacey discusses his discomfort on seeing how his published record of Enga traditions was incorporated into this evolving corpus of knowledge to become part of their sense of identity. Yet both Lacey and Moore conclude it is better to record local knowledge than to risk losing it altogether.

The collection ends with three reflections on missionary history. All stress the need for a more subtle and nuanced reading of missionary lives. David Hanlon makes fascinating connections between the civilizing mission of nineteenth-century missionaries and the economic agenda of postwar development specialists. Christine Weir explores the vexing question Vicki Lukere posed to the participants regarding whether one can write about the sacred without violating it. Weir also notes that we can never hope to understand missionaries unless we investigate the intellectual and social worlds they inhabited. She produces an interesting typology of the various methodologies used to investigate missionaries. Andrew Thornley concludes with a reflection on cross-cultural translation, wondering whether historical
texts are really being incorporated into Pacific Islander cultures. He also poses the dilemma raised earlier in this review about what historians should do when Islander worldviews clash with their own professional views and agendas as historians.

This is a valuable volume, containing a variety of approaches to biography, personal reflection, and history. The contributors are knowledgeable and often display great flair and insights. But the collection is also frustrating in that it often reads more like a conversation between a generation of friends remembering the good old days than a work designed to appeal and offer guidance to other generations to follow. Despite acknowledging that new lines are being drawn based on new boundaries (4), few new voices speak here. There is even a hint of smugness in the assertion, “The founding figures of the field of Pacific history as it developed in the southwest Pacific are, quite uniquely, all present together in this volume, as subjects or authors” (5). Several of my more senior colleagues might disagree with this assessment. This volume tends to be exclusive rather than inclusive and looks back to the days of comfort rather than forward to the challenges that lie ahead. In so doing, it may inadvertently have narrowed its appeal. This would be unfortunate, as it is precisely in times of academic and political uncertainty that the considerable collective wisdom of these contributors is most needed.

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Exploration & Exchange brings together twenty-eight extracts from selected European or American authors writing about their encounters in the Pacific Ocean. The book is organized thematically and chronologically into three sections: the first contains explorer and adventurer narratives written between 1680 and 1783; the second comprises texts by beachcomber and missionary authors from the 1790s to the 1850s; the third concerns the writings of literary travelers from the 1860s to the 1890s. Each section begins with an introduction contextualizing the extracts and defining particular terms, such as the Pacific coinage “beachcomber.” In addition, each extract is introduced by one of the three editors, who provides biographical, textual, and historical information about the author and his or her works and discusses the selected narrative, noting particularly the ways individual authors describe their subject matter.