

Book and Media Reviews

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field of representational issues with care and common sense.

The Lihir Destiny is highly accessible. Although topics like mortuary ceremonialism and environmental policy are often subject to technical, unwelcoming prose, Bainton writes extremely clearly and even the more idiosyncratic aspects of the book are easy to follow. Indeed, one of the remarkable things about the volume is just how wide Bainton's expertise is across a variety of topics. Best of all, PDF and e-book copies of *The Lihir Destiny* are available via open access and free for download from the ANU E Press, which is quickly becoming the premier scholarly publisher in Australia. While some may wonder about the production values of an open-access press, *The Lihir Destiny* has been well edited and produced to high professional standards; the many color illustrations of the paper books are clear and high quality; and the metadata and text of the digital versions are well formed and can be easily annotated or copied in any standard PDF or e-book application. Overall, Lihir has finally gotten the ethnography it deserves. Bainton's book can be read by a wide audience in a number of disciplines and will be of interest to anyone concerned with mining, religious movements, or the Pacific. Anyone interested in these topics should download the volume today and have a look.

ALEX GOLUB

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Villagers and the City: Melanesian Experiences of Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, edited by Michael Goddard. Wantage, UK: Sean Kingston Publishing, 2010. ISBN 978-0-9556400-6-3; 177 pages, photographs, tables, notes, bibliography, and index. Cloth, US\$99.99.

Building on forty years of anthropological research associated with Port Moresby, Michael Goddard, editor of *Villagers and the City*, has gained a reputation for providing rich insights into the experiences of Papua New Guineans as they carve out their lives in the settlements of that city. For those with an interest in the evolution of Melanesian cities in the postcolonial era and how cultural diversity is expressed in the behavior of residents as well as in the city's urban form and structure, this publication is an important contribution to that body of work.

The six articles in this collection tell how Papua New Guineans experience life in and around the bustling city of Port Moresby, the largest urban area in the Pacific region. The chapters focus on aspects of urban life that are generally out of sight of most non-Melanesians who venture there. The contributors, from the fields of anthropology, ethnomusicology, and human ecology, supplement their stories of urban life with insights on the societies from which rural migrants come and with which those migrants continue to retain strong kin and ethnic connections. The result is a set of contrasting stories linked by the detailed perspectives and views of non-Melanesians, who paint a picture of the dynamic, vibrant, yet challenging cultural melt-

ing pot that defines contemporary urban life in Port Moresby.

The text is structured around four crosscutting themes: the history of Port Moresby since its beginnings in the late 1800s, the socioeconomic strategies of residents and the cultural drivers that shape these strategies, gender relations in the context of the motivations and problems of marriage, and the intricacies that define the identity of Port Moresby's music scene. Beginning with an overview of the evolution of Port Moresby since colonial times, chapter 1, by Michael Goddard, looks at the plight of the Motu-Koita, the traditional owners of the land on which Port Moresby has developed. Goddard discusses the responses of the Motu-Koita to losing their traditional lands to the growing urban area, and their subsequent marginalization in the context of retaining their identity in a city of newcomers. Chapter 2, by Deborah Van Heekeren, concerns the experiences of the Vula'a community, whose lands lie some 110 kilometers east of Port Moresby. Van Heekeren explores the villagers' views, perceptions, and ways of dealing with the dilemmas of development in everyday life in the village and in Port Moresby.

Chapter 3, by Masahiro Umezaki, looks at the strategies used by the Huli migrant settlers from the Southern Highlands Province as they adapt to the economic demands of life in Port Moresby. This chapter and chapter 4, by Keith Barber, reveal a complex economic reality in which the formal and informal sectors are intertwined and cultural factors play a strong part in influencing participation in economic activity. The authors strongly chal-

lenge popular media discourses that depict villagers as poor, unemployed, and destined to a life of crime and corruption. Barber's chapter builds on such messages by examining urban households and their sources of livelihood while reviewing issues associated with village identity and what it means in Port Moresby.

Chapter 5 provides a fascinating study of marriage in settlement communities. Here Goddard focuses on the significance and economic imperatives of marriage among low-income earners. Local village court transcripts on domestic disputes provide insights into the attitudes and expectations of marriage held by members of this group.

Chapter 6, by Denis Crowdy, assesses the urban music scene in Port Moresby, including the working lives of musicians and the sociocultural aspects that define a vibrant and active indigenous music industry.

The diversity of chapter content and varying perspectives contained therein provide rich and fascinating insights into Melanesian experiences of living and surviving in Port Moresby through the lenses of the non-Melanesian authors. Importantly, Goddard's first chapter places these varying stories within the broader context of understanding the evolution of Port Moresby since colonial times, including the influences of expatriate foreigners and Papua New Guineans themselves. Understanding these layers of history and how they coalesce is essential to understanding the dynamic environment that characterizes urban living in contemporary Port Moresby.

It is hard to find anything to criticize about this work. Goddard and

the other contributing authors write in a nontechnical and informative style, and for those with some familiarity with Melanesian towns and cities, the work demonstrates the challenges of conceptualizing the depth and breadth of what urban sociality really means in a specific Melanesian setting. Two shortcomings, however, can be identified. First, Goddard goes straight into the detail of the Port Moresby setting, without attempting to put the anthropological significance of this work into its wider context. Why is Port Moresby significant in the wider Melanesian setting, and for that matter, why is it so different from the other social and ethnological subgroupings of the Pacific region, Micronesia and Polynesia? Also, reader familiarity with the subregion is assumed, as there is limited discussion on the term *Melanesia* that defines the identity of this important work. Second, while this collection of insightful studies treats four overarching themes, its utility would have been strengthened by a concluding chapter

that addresses the basic question of how these chapters collectively add new knowledge. While the settlers may be a specific Melanesian group adapting to and forging their unique brand of Melanesian urbanism, wider public issues also connect the enclaves where settlers live, such as governance, processes of decision making, and the distribution of public resources. These development issues affect the urban quality of life in Port Moresby and cannot be divorced from the content of the articles as presented.

In the context of the overall value of this book, these shortcomings are minor. For those with an interest and passion in understanding the workings of Melanesian towns and cities, whether in the social sciences or built environment, this book is an essential acquisition as a general reader or introductory academic text.

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