difficulties and promising developments as Solomon Islanders become incorporated into the commercial economy and more sophisticated about nation-state politics. Conservationists, foresters, ethnographers, and a wide variety of Melanesianists will appreciate these detailed discussions of large-scale changes in local terms. Both analyses provide excellent models for the kind of work needed to grasp the cultural meanings and politics of environmental issues.

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The Pacific Islands: An Encyclopedia, edited by Brij V Lal and Kate Fortune. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000. ISBN 0–8248–2265–X; xxxvi + 664 pages, illustrations, glossary, indexes, CD-ROM. US$115.

Hefty to hold, and visually striking to behold, this contemporary encyclopedia is valuable in terms of the wealth of current, detailed information it contains, yet also somewhat awkward in its organization. In spite of the slight difficulty in maneuvering through the pages, *The Pacific Islands: An Encyclopedia* would be a useful reference guide in the bookcase of anyone interested in the Pacific Islands.

As stated in the first paragraph of the preface, "This volume is the latest, and assuredly not the last, attempt to understand the remarkable world of the Pacific islands in all its variety and complexity through a range of perspectives contributed by scholars across the world. It brings together discrete or scattered information on the major aspects of Pacific island life, including the physical environment, peoples, history, politics, economy, society and culture" (xv). This mammoth project was a decade in the making and one can easily understand why. The sheer logistics of pulling together a volume of such weight, with some two hundred contributors, and including maps, several hundred photographs, cross-listings, a glossary, and more, is mind-boggling. This was an ambitious undertaking and is a remarkable accomplishment. In general, the information is comprehensive and current. The contributors, who represent a variety of perspectives, in most cases write with profound professional knowledge and stylistic finesse.

Before one even opens the cover, it is clear that this is not a typical encyclopedia. The attempt to be exhaustive and up-to-date is palpable. The mix of bright, colorful images on the glossy dust jacket sets the tone. There are pictures of the painted face of a Huli dancer in her feather headdress and shell necklaces, a man from New Caledonia squatting in front of his bountiful catch of tuna with rubber boots and plastic items in the background, an aerial vista of a "typical atoll" in Tonga, a detail of a floral appliqué quilt from the Cook Islands, and the bright orange, lacy pattern of a yellow hydrocoral *Distichopora* species. In other words, between these covers one will find everything from the traditional to the contemporary, the natural to the hand-crafted, and perspectives that illustrate distant outlines and close-up detail.

Once one opens the cover, the array of information is astonishing. One can

learn about everything from international law in the Pacific Ocean to *Perfect Beat* magazine, from land alienation in New Caledonia to the Guano Act of the United States, from ocean trenches to ocean anchovies, and from nuclear testing to domestic violence. In addition, there is a section in which thirty-seven island groups are profiled with standard information on such things as size, population, official languages, literacy rates, currency, constitutional status, principal export earnings, and so forth. There are also valuable color pictures of flags of the Pacific Islands.

Of particular interest are extensive lists of individuals about whom substantial biographical details and professional accomplishments are supplied. This includes, for example, 51 Pacific Island writers, 35 European writers on the Pacific Islands, 24 missionaries to the region, 22 Pacific Island athletes, and 60 political figures. A minor confusion, however, is the inconsistency with which these lists are organized. While the Pacific Island writers, European writers, and missionaries are listed alphabetically within their appropriate sections, the athletes and political figures are listed chronologically according to their dates of birth. Yet, without knowing the year of someone's birth (a detail one might, in fact, be searching for in the encyclopedia), it is difficult to locate anyone.

The editors very consciously addressed the quandary that, by writing an encyclopedia, they chose an old-fashioned genre (albeit with CD-ROM attached) in today's contemporary world. Painfully aware of this conundrum, they listened to advice from the editorial board and decided to eschew the customary encyclopedic approach of an authoritative and alphabetically organized comprehensive compendium of "hard, factual information." Instead, they chose an approach that reflects today's fluid, flexible, and contested world. They wanted the volume to allow room for debate, and to acknowledge that knowledge itself is tentative, partial, and subjective. This conscious dismissal of one format in favor of a new one, however, produces its own dilemmas. The new format underscores the irony of thinking that knowledge rearranged is somehow more accurate or appropriate.

After all, 600-plus pages of tightly packed information need to be organized somehow. Thus, instead of taking the alphabetical approach, the editors decided to group information into categories that promise to provide more context. The chosen categories are: Physical Environment, Peoples, History, Politics, Economy, Society, and Culture. One can imagine the months of agonizing that must have gone into the decisions about how to cut up the pie. Unfortunately, these categories are still problematic and there are many details that startle. For example, the Sepik River falls under "Volcanic Activity" in the Physical Environment section. Certain trading voyages (*kula* and *hiri,* for example) are placed in the History section, whereas "Voyaging" is in the Peoples section. Margaret Mead can be found under "European Visitors: First Contacts" in the History section. And the section on Culture deals primarily with art, literature, and performance, itself a somewhat limited definition of

culture. Most puzzling of all, is that Robert Louis Stevenson is placed in the History section in a chapter headed "Trade and Labour" under the subheading "German Commercial Interests," rather than under the more obvious subheading "European Writers on the Pacific Islands" in an earlier chapter.

Tucked inside the back cover is a CD-ROM. This is a logical complement to the book, although it simply duplicates the entire volume, photographed page by page, without taking advantage of the unique, potentially more interactive, format that a CD-ROM offers.

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On the Road of the Winds: An Archaeological History of the Pacific Islands before European Contact, by Patrick Vinton Kirch. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000. ISBN 0–520–22347–0; xxii + 424 pages, tables, figures, maps, photographs, notes, references, index. US$45.

During the last three decades, Pacific archaeology has come of age. Comprising a handful of specialists in the late 1960s, these days the discipline has risen to several hundred professionals, opening new fields, publishing new research, and prompting new ideas at a rapid rate. One of the most energetic personalities over the years has certainly been Patrick V Kirch. Born in Hawai'i, Kirch had the opportunity very early in his career to work in the field on various remote Pacific islands, mostly in Polynesia but also in different archipelagoes of island Melanesia. More important, he is well known as one of the most prolific writers in the discipline, publishing site reports as well as theoretical analyses. With his long involvement in the fields of archaeology and cultural evolution in Oceania, he was the specialist most able to put together a new synthesis on the early history of the region, to replace Peter Bellwood's famous but now out-of-date monograph, *Man's Conquest of the Pacific.*

On the Road of the Winds is divided into nine chapters after a general introduction. The first two chapters set the scene in terms of scientific interest in the Oceanic past and the environmental diversity of this vast region. The chronological chapters start with a short synthesis on the data recovered about Pleistocene–early Holocene occupations in the northwestern part of Melanesia, starting over forty thousand years ago. The Lapita expansion chapter, dating from the second half of the second millennium BC, is followed by three chapters on post-Lapita sequences in Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. These chapters form the core of the book, with general chronologies proposed for the major archipelagoes. The final chapter presents a more focused discussion on Polynesian chiefdoms, before a balanced synthesis entitled "Big Structures and Large Processes in Oceanic Prehistory."

Kirch is known to be a strong advocate of cross-disciplinary studies, relating archaeological reconstructions to linguistic, anthropological, and biological data. In the introduction, he acknowledges that "while primarily a