

Book and Media Reviews

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Māori and Pacific peoples that are enacted through public policy and community arts and between community groups. Festivals are also a vehicle for redefining relations between Aotearoa and the region as new urban Pacific identities are influenced by the multidirectional flows of people, goods, and information. All of this contributes to a fine-grained description of how the festival enacts a work of “territorialization,” creating pride in belonging to Pacific New Zealand, as evidenced, for example, in an older performer describing the festival as “part of the [migrant] dream,” in stark contrast to the 1970s when “our people were getting bagged and put down, called coconuts and losers” (178).

Much of *The Pacific Festivals of Aotearoa New Zealand* covers the layers of dialogue between communities and government policy and reveals the amount of hard work and unpaid labor that goes into the organization of community festivals. Understanding these historical configurations is particularly relevant given poor attendance at the latest Pasifika Festival, held in March 2015, where Pacific community groups criticized the hypocrisy of government funding cuts for the event while the Auckland City Council appeared to expect Pacific peoples to be the city’s “performing monkeys” or “pretty face,” as noted in an article by Fa’anana Efeso Collins in the July 2015 issue of *Islands Business*. The book is relevant to anthropology, Pacific studies, and festival studies as well as to ethnomusicology and tourism studies. It will also appeal to an audience interested in negotiations

of migrant identity in settler-colonial societies.

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The Things We Value: Culture and History in Solomon Islands, edited by Ben Burt and Lissant Bolton. Canon Pyon, UK: Sean Kingston Publishing, 2014. ISBN 978-1-90774-21-8; 149 pages, photographs, endnotes, references, contributors, index. Cloth, US\$135.00.

The Things We Value: Culture and History in Solomon Islands derives from a Melanesian art project sponsored by the British Museum and the University of Cambridge Museum for Archaeology and Anthropology and funded by the British Arts and Humanities Research Council, 2005–2010. The first object of note for this book is its cover. The photograph on the cover conveys an immediate message. A young woman wearing beautiful shell ornaments holds up a camera through which she is obviously focusing on the reader of the book. The bright red color of the camera emphasizes its presence. The camera lens is no longer the colonial lens through which so many outsiders have viewed Solomon Islanders. That perspective has been reversed—a major objective of the book and of the conference that preceded it.

The title indicates the book’s focus: how and why things are valued by Solomon Islanders within their individual social contexts. These are the subjects explored by authors of the introduction and twelve chapters

that make up the book. Four authors are Solomon Islanders; the others are largely anthropologists and archaeologists who have spent considerable time in Solomon Islands.

Solomon Islands is a “culturally diverse country of people speaking over seventy languages who live on six large islands and innumerable small ones” (1). Thus begins the introduction written by volume editors Ben Burt and Lissant Bolton. The introduction, titled “Solomon Islands Artefact Traditions and Their Historical Transformations,” succinctly yet thoroughly surveys aspects of the islands through consideration of exchange, agency, heirlooms and treasures, and their various transformations. Attention is drawn immediately to notions of value and the ways in which artifacts are valued by individuals within specific social groups, a context that often is minimal or lacking for many objects in museum collections. Illustrations for the introduction reference the past as well as the present, bringing both together as did the conference from which this volume stemmed. The introduction fittingly frames the chapters that follow.

Chapters are as diverse as their organization. The reader moves from chapter 1, Salome Samou’s “Santa Cruz Feather-Money”—Santa Cruz representing the southernmost islands in the Solomons group—and transitions directly to chapter 2, Rhys Richards’s “Kesa and Other Shell Valuables from Choiseul,” an island located far to the north in Western Province. Archaeological valuables from other islands in the Western Province, a subject that one might presume to be dealt with initially (since

the subject is archaeology) appear in chapter 3, “Shell Valuables and History in Roviana and Vella Lavella” by Peter J Sheppard and Richard Walter. This organizational device moves the reader back and forth from north to south, with layovers, so to speak, in the center (ie, the island of Malaita) in a process that, in effect, serves to unite the islands in nonlinear fashion. Any Western linear preconceptions about the presentation of early or ancient subjects first and contemporary art last are also not followed here.

This organization of material serves to focus on each and every person and his or her family or national valuables in a manner that frees them from predictable organizational categories; all subjects belong to the Solomon Islands nation. In this review I want to consider certain chapters and the insights that they convey to outsiders regardless of any predictable positioning within the body of the text.

In chapter 6, “Clan Valuables of Guadalcanal,” Jackson Gege begins by saying, “Every clan in Guadalcanal has ties to a piece of land that forms their origin and identity” (63). Most of his article is devoted to clan types—small clans (*kakau*) of people descended from the same ancestors in the female line and large clans (*laqili*) who are descended from the male line. Clan identity for an individual is then explicated along with associated clan origin stories. Gege gives a very personal account of his own clan identity and concludes with a brief description of shell money. Among its usages were exchanges within rituals of land transfer (*chupu*), which unite a family with its clan and associated land. It is patently clear that for Gege

and his people, the “things we value” are not restricted to material artifacts but are, most importantly, land, his clans (Kologaugau and Mataniko), ritual, and the shell money, which constitutes just one element that binds them together.

Evelyn Tetehu from Kia, Santa Isabel Island, describes the cluster of her family’s treasures (chapter 8). Treasures include a bakhia shell ornament, shell rings, a wooden barkcloth beater, a string bag (bubuzaghi), and a wooden carving (nguzunguzu) that once adorned a fishing canoe. Other objects such as net floats, a wooden mortar, and fishing floats also belong to the group of family treasures. All are illustrated in the text. Associated information about the origins of some of the objects as told to Tetehu further illuminate these family valuables. Recognition of family ownership provides a dimensional value that so many artifacts in museum collections lack.

Accounts of manufacturing processes for objects illuminate their value, as several articles in this book reveal. In chapter 1, Salome Samou carefully reconstructs the process of the manufacture of shell money in Santa Cruz. Samou is one of the authors who incorporate older accounts, in this case, those of anthropologist William Davenport, which she then expands on.

There are references in the literature to the production of shell money on Malaita, but none are as vivid as Pei-yi Guo’s account of “Bata, the Adaptable Shell Money of Langalanga, Malaita” (chapter 5). Detailed knowledge of the manufacturing process significantly augments the value of these beautiful objects, especially when photographs

of that process are included as they are here.

Local insights into the value of artifacts illuminate that value in a way that is so often lacking in collections. In “The Trade in Wood Carvings from Aorigi, Makira” (chapter 11), anthropologist Sandra Revolon explores local distinctions between two categories of Western customers for objects made available for sale: art dealers and tourists. A further local distinction is made among artifacts produced in this region between objects that can be used by everyone (puruu) and those that become taboo (apuna) through ritual use. Such a distinction is invisible to those who view objects in museums when such information is not provided.

David Akin’s “Regenerating Local Arts at the Kwaio Cultural Centre” (chapter 9) also involves the production of artifacts for sale. Akin helped to establish the Kwaio Cultural Centre in 1979. At that time people were still making some things for local use but there were other items that they had not made for a long time. Museum research undertaken by Kwaio people in order to learn about early artifacts facilitated the revival of artifact production. Results of this research are being housed in a Kwaio archive located at Kafurumu in the central Kwaio mountains. Here the massive amount of documents and digital photos from archives and museums will continue to benefit Kwaio artists. Akin’s chapter also devotes space to the issue of marketing these items, involving the often difficult issue of what sells and why. Stereotypical views of Solomon Islanders such as the possible “mystical symbolism”

invoked by artifacts that are valued by Kwaio people for their ornamental beauty are, in Akin's view, matters that unfortunately cannot be ignored. Akin, like Revolon, draws attention to the importance of who is doing the evaluating and under what circumstances.

This is a fascinating book that should be read thoroughly by anyone interested in art, material culture, or museum collections from any part of the Pacific, not just Solomon Islands. There is not room in this review to consider every chapter in detail, but all make major contributions about the complexity of valuing objects in this era. Peter Sheppard and Richard Walter manage to amass a wealth of data regarding shell artifacts and skull shrines on Roviana and Vella Lavella in a manner that not only brings previously published historical information up to date but also reveals the value of shell artifacts as projections of their users and wearers even if they lived in the past (chapter 3). Edvard Hviding's chapter 10, about contemporary production of canoes primarily in the Marovo Lagoon region of New Georgia island, will stand as the preeminent one on the subject for some time to come. In conclusion, all of the chapters have value not only for content but above all for the perspectives they offer—those of Solomon Islanders.

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The Black Pacific: Anti-Colonial Struggles and Oceanic Connections, by Robbie Shilliam. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015. ISBN cloth, 978-1-472-51923-8; paper, 978-1-472-53554-2; 251 pages, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$112.00; paper, US\$29.95.

There has not been much sustained discussion about connections among African and diasporic African peoples and Pacific Islanders. The most pronounced attention has gone to mobilizations of radical tactics and political styles associated with Black Power and Black Consciousness by Pacific activists across the region from the late 1960s through the early 1980s. In Aotearoa/New Zealand, where Robbie Shilliam sets *The Black Pacific: Anti-Colonial Struggles and Oceanic Connections*, adaptations of Africana thought by Pacific Islanders have been given a largely sociopolitical explanation: young urban Māori and immigrant Islander communities from former New Zealand colonies, displaced from the land and disaffected by the state, were temporarily drawn to compare their situations with those of urban African Americans and Black South Africans.

In *The Black Pacific*, Shilliam works within, around, beneath, and in “ways otherwise” (29) to this delimiting, period-bound narrative; in particular, he counters the tendency to compare Black and Indigenous peoples in terms of their situations vis-à-vis colonialism or neocolonial commodity culture rather than to reactivate “sideways” legacies of their connections to each other. The philosophical negation within Eurocentric