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Pacific Histories: ocean, land, people

Adrian Muckle[a], Colin Newbury[b], Tony Ballantyne[c], Rob Borofsky[d], David Armitage[e] & Alison Bashford[f]
[a] Victoria University of Wellington
[b] Oxford University
[c] University of Otago
[d] Hawai'i Pacific University
[e] Harvard University
[f] University of Cambridge
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REVIEW FORUM

Pacific Histories

Pacific Histories: ocean, land, people. Edited by David Armitage and Alison Bashford. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. xiv + 371 pp., maps, illus., figs, tables, index. ISBN 978-1-137-00165-8 (hbk). £65.00. ISBN 978-1-137-00163-4 (pbk). £18.99.

Introducing the review forum on Nicholas Thomas's *Islanders: the Pacific in the age of empire* in 2012, Doug Munro observed a turn from scarcity to abundance in general histories of the Pacific.[1] One of the latest offerings, *Pacific Histories: ocean, land, people*, is billed as the 'first comprehensive account to place the Pacific Islands, the Pacific Rim and the Pacific Ocean into the perspective of world history'. It follows on the heels of Matt Matsuda's 2012 *Pacific Worlds: a history of seas, people, and cultures* – noted by its *Journal of Pacific History* (JPH) reviewer for its connection of Pacific Islands and Asian histories[2] – as well as David Igler's 2013 *The Great Ocean: Pacific worlds from Captain Cook to the gold rush* – noted for drawing on Matsuda's 'methodology of local/regional/global connection' and for its own focus on an eastern, American Pacific.[3] Outside the pages of JPH, readers will have noted the developing concern to bring Pacific history into dialogue with the 'Atlantic world' and with transnational/global/world history, as exemplified in essays by Katrina Gulliver[4] and Damon Salesa.[5] For helping to critically expand the dialogue concerning different models and perspectives, and different ways of focussing or practising Pacific histories, I thank all three reviewers and both editors, on behalf of JPH, for their thought-provoking contributions.

ADRIAN MUCKLE
Victoria University of Wellington
adrian.muckle@vuw.ac.nz

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Surfing the Waves in Pacific Historiography

This ambitious compilation of essays by distinguished academics is a product of international exchanges at Harvard University and imaginative thinking on the part of its editors. The

[1] Doug Munro, 'Introduction', review of Nicholas Thomas, *Islanders: the Pacific in the age of empire* (New Haven and London 2010), *Journal of Pacific History*, 47:3 (2012), 421.
[2] See Clive Moore, review of Matt K. Matsuda, *Pacific Worlds: a history of seas, peoples, and cultures* (Melbourne 2012), *Journal of Pacific History*, 48:2 (2013), 227–28.
[3] See Jane Samson, review of David Igler, *The Great Ocean: Pacific worlds from Captain Cook to the gold rush* (New York 2013), *Journal of Pacific History*, 49:3 (2014), 361–62.
[4] Katrina Gulliver, 'Finding the Pacific world', *Journal of World History*, 22:1 (2011), 83–100.
[5] Damon Salesa, 'The world from Oceania', in Douglas Northrop (ed.), *A Companion to World History* (Chichester, UK 2012), 392–404.

purpose of the book is to locate Pacific history within world history and to estimate its influence on the broader subject – possibly, the editors hint, through its example of a further 'thalassic' study to match the Atlantic or the Mediterranean (pp. 6–7). Otherwise we are left with fragmentation of regional studies (p. 10). It is hardly accurate, however, to blame historiographical fragmentation on three academic institutions – the University of California, the University of Hawai'i and the Australian National University. The UH Press has produced many monographs dealing with non-Hawaiian subject matter, and the ANU's *Journal of Pacific History* is open to all regional topics. Many other presses have published Pacific histories.

The basic template, however, has been the story of cultural encounters, including interisland encounters (Tongans in Fiji). A cultural unity for the South Pacific region, recognised some time ago by the French geographer Doumenge, also needs to be taken into account, along with the unities of precolonial and colonial economic history and missionary evangelism (much of it by Islanders).[6] The impact of World War II – a catalytic factor in speeding up decolonisation and post-war American influence, and that of its allies, Australia and New Zealand – and postcolonial regional institutions such as the Pacific Forum and its fisheries agency have also been unifying factors.

The four authors who set about determining suitable periodisation for Pacific Rim countries and the island clusters in part I ('Periodising the Pacific') have kept to what they understand best. Damon Salesa examines time as measured by genealogical spans in the core subregion of Tonga, Samoa and Fiji. Like Doumenge, he also employs the term 'civilisation' for settlements with Lapita pottery technology, without evidence of the basic connotation of the term. Much of the rest is straight chronology of Indigenous reckoning of time through lineage descent, without noting how such oral record could be foreshortened by dropping inconvenient 'ancestors' from a contested record. A more original idea lies in his analysis of Indigenous 'seas' – interisland and beyond – as illustrated by Tupaia's 'map' of islands on rough bearings from Tahiti, recorded by Cook in 1770 and better consulted from that source than the illegible illustration provided (p. 70). Joyce E. Chaplin covers conventional European cartographical knowledge from the 16th century, though nothing is said of the vital development of Harrison's chronometer that made Cook's quest for detail possible. In the third period – Pacific empire – Nicholas Thomas follows the chronology of Island commerce, evangelism, indentured labour and formal annexations and protectorates. The subimperialism of Australian colonies and New Zealand is not mentioned. Most items of trade and hunter-gathering are accounted for (with the exception of preserved Māori heads and New Zealand flax). The key to conversions lay in literacy, taught by missionaries (or evangelical Tongans in the case of Fiji), plus, I would add, codes of laws that augmented the power of new rulers like Pomare, Taufa'ahau (Tupou I) and the early Kamehameha lineage. By contrast, Akira Iriye concentrates on the rim countries, covering World War II and the 'transnational' exchanges of goods, people, scientific discoveries and much else that began to make an impact on the Pacific region's participation in world trade from the 1980s, when China joined with the major traders in the USA, Canada, Australia and Japan.

That theme of Pacific participation in world trade is central to part II ('Connections'), prefaced by Ryan Tucker Jones's thoughtful chapter on the physical and human impact on the marine environment through tsunamis, violent storms and exploitation of energy sources. Many Pacific peoples took care to control overexploitation in symbiotic relationships with marine and other species. (It might have been noticed that some did not – notably the Māori who wiped out New Zealand's flightless moa.) The two following chapters concentrate on orthodox macroeconomic indicators of integration at the rim, human settlement through migration, and use of technological advances in transport and telecommunications. A very lucid piece by Adam McKeown surveys migrations from the Southeast Asian rim lands and the secondary movement of Austronesian speakers between island groups with more advanced technologies to the farthest reaches of Malay and

[6] François Doumenge, *L'homme dans le Pacifique Sud* (Paris 1966), 116–17.

Malayo-Polynesian seafaring by the second century CE. These pioneers were followed by other examples of early economic integration through European and Asian trade from the mid-18th century but dwarfed in comparison by Chinese and Japanese migrations in South-east Asia, Manchuria, Korea and Taiwan. The analysis underlines the difference in scale between rim countries and southern settlements and their contribution to economic growth through Japanese trade flows, dominant by the 1930s. Kaoru Sugihara's contribution is essentially a continuation of the macroeconomic theme with an explanation of the reasons for trade liberalisation from the 1980s making it possible to treat the northern rim countries as 'a single economic unit', without excluding wider exchanges with Europe. His tables of GDP estimates 1820–2008 establish differences in scale between Pacific zone countries, the impact of the 1930s depression and the Pacific War, and the rapid advance to 2010, when zone countries accounted for just over half of world GDP. He has a worry, which I share, over how inclusive these indicators are for the central Pacific Islands and, indeed, Pacific Latin American states (pp. 166, 187–88). Demographic weakness and low export values have made 'dependency' a fact of life despite improvements in the economies of Papua New Guinea, Fiji and New Caledonia over the period 1928–2010.

In part III ('Knowledges'), Bronwen Douglas makes good use of anthropology within the zone of the Pacific Islands and the East Indies to estimate how cultural religious beliefs enabled people to interact with each other and the spirit world. Islamic teachers, Spanish priests and British missionaries made their impact to establish intraregional monopolies, aided by Indigenous converts and (more ambiguously) by imperial intervention. Understanding this phase is assisted by detailed examples from Tahiti; considerable Indigenisation of this knowledge occurred everywhere, not least in the autonomous Pacific Islands churches. From 1946 those churches have had a remarkable political influence, sometimes in the direction of moderation in Bougainville and the Solomons (and I would add, sometimes reinforcing intolerance towards Indian Hindus in Fiji). In dealing with the spread of legal knowledge, Lisa Ford concentrates on transoceanic legal claims to a Spanish and Portuguese carve-up, soon eroded by Dutch and British actions leading to formal occupation from 1790. But treaties with Indigenous 'sovereignties' could be ignored in the case of Aborigines, Californian Indians or the Alaskan Inuit, and applied where a case for governments in the Islands could be made. A bigger problem for colonial powers was controlling their own subjects through naval jurisdiction or consular courts (until changes in foreign jurisdiction acts, which Ford omits). The major theme since 1946 has been multiple claims to oceanic space, so that nearly all the South Pacific falls within the exclusive economic zones of Pacific Islands states without the capacity to police those areas or to exploit their resources. Sujit Sivasundaram surveys scientific knowledge very unevenly. Admittedly the Pacific has been a great testing ground for scientific theory, but the story is reduced to 'an episodic history of thinking about nature' (p. 238). This amounts to little more than translated Indigenous texts touching on genealogical origins, European artistic and graphic conceptualisations, argument about coral reef formation, and nothing at all on the abundant collections of fauna and flora, plus the occasional living specimen such as Omai.

The first of the 'Identities' contributions in part IV is an incisive analysis by James Belich of the confusion between cultural identity and the inferred characteristics of stereotyping physiological features, leading him into a useful distinction between racial ideology and racial theory. The first derives in Pacific history from Spanish settlers, though it may have been preceded by Chinese and Japanese hierarchies of peoples, with unreformable barbarians at the bottom. The second is a misunderstanding of Darwin's natural selection, within (not between) groups, that fitted European observation of Indigenous population decline in the 19th century. Both constructs spawned further stereotypes, with 'noble Savages' at one end of the scale and fears of 'yellow peril' at the other. Fortunately settlers were saved from endless *métissage* and regression to the Indigenous norm by white, female endogamy. By 1900, settlers were in the majority around much of the Pacific littoral (p. 273). His conclusion

is that racism enabled settlers to prolong their identity and links to their ancestors in filiopietistic histories from behind legal walls erected against non-white immigration.

Patricia O'Brien explains the culturally constructed identities of gender, on the part of their female help-mates (p. 282). I found the vignettes of her case histories – Trugernanna, the last surviving Tasmanian Aboriginal woman; Ka'ahumanu, the powerful wife of Kamehameha I; (less certainly) Queen Pomare; and the Women's Mau in Western Samoa – compelling examples of political effectiveness.

For political 'identities', Robert Aldrich provides a succinct and comprehensive summary of constitutional formats arising from older totalitarian and patrimonial legacies within the northern and Southeast Asian quadrants of the rim and from colonial rule within the Pacific Islands and Australasian sections. His first conclusion is that the main characteristic of the Pacific zone has been disunity, and his focus is on the 'institutions and ideologies inside politics' (p. 306). The democratic outcomes of many of the colonial constitutional formats compete with other models adopted by China, Vietnam and Cambodia. The model adopted by Australasia, the USA and Canada was not followed with certainty by warring Latin American states torn between intolerant liberals and conservatives. Some island states such as Fiji are still undecided, and a remnant of French possessions face choices between economically dependent 'independence' and imperial supervision. The author's second conclusion is that the underlying theme of this disparate political experimentation in the 20th century has been syncretism between Western-style institutions and precolonial cultures.

It is left to Matt K. Matsuda, in an afterword, 'Pacific cross-currents', to answer the questions posed by the editors in their introduction. He finds that the contributors' exposition of themes demonstrates regional diversity and shared commonalities for rim and oceanic states. Differences in emphasis are contained in this binary opposition. But Matsuda would seem to accept the Pacific zone – rim and islands – as another example of the new 'thalassology' in world history, with important differences from the Atlantic or Indian oceans, and certainly on a grander scale than the Mediterranean. Whatever the critical verdict, I predict this rather over-compressed volume will become required reading for senior and graduate classes and for all those intent on grasping the historiography of an endlessly fascinating zone of human migrations.

COLIN NEWBURY
Oxford University
colin.newbury@linacre.ox.ac.uk

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Perspectival Histories

The aim of this edited collection is not just to draw together a body of top-quality research on the Pacific but also to stake a clear claim for the usefulness and significance of the 'Pacific world' as an analytical unit. *Pacific Histories* reflects Alison Bashford and David Armitage's hope that the 'Pacific world' can be consolidated as a unified research field and gain a new coherence that will enable it to become an integral element of 'world history' and 'global history' at the tertiary level. By bringing together scholars of the 'Pacific island histories' and those who work within 'Pacific Rim' or 'Asia-Pacific' framings, the editors hope that this volume 'marks a step-change towards the creation of integrated and dialogic pan-Pacific histories' (p. 7).

With its line-up of established scholars, *Pacific Histories* certainly furnishes plenty of material that will be useful in classrooms, and Armitage and Bashford work hard to push their larger analytical agenda. At a fundamental level, however, the volume dramatises rather than resolves some of the fundamental problems that arise from a desire to fashion a

'Pacific world' that is comparable to the 'Indian Ocean' or, more particularly, the 'Atlantic world'. Armitage, of course, has played a key role in theorising the 'Atlantic world' and has been an influential champion of the value of that analytical frame, a frame that has not only become an integral component in how we think and write about world history but that has significantly reshaped the historiography of a range of nations around and in the Atlantic. At times, the weight of Atlantic paradigms intrudes here, especially in the introduction, where it seems to function implicitly as a normative template against which the Pacific is assessed. After noting that the Pacific does not neatly echo or parallel Atlantic histories because it lacks an integrated narrative (such as the way in which the passage from dispossession and slavery to democracy shapes some influential Atlantic work), the editors suggest that the apparently fragmented and disconnected nature of the Pacific has largely been the product of a divided and divisive academic terrain (p. 9). By linking diverse kinds of work, the editors hope that their volume will accelerate the production of new kinds of Pacific histories that are only 'gradually coalescing' (p. 11) into an integrated whole.

The editors also give short shrift to recent arguments – forcefully articulated by Damon Salesa and Teresia Teaiwa – that raise questions about the easy assimilation of the Pacific into the paradigms of Atlanticists and that challenge the neglect of Oceania's histories by world historians.[7] To counter such critiques, the editors suggest that work on the history of 'Oceania' was precociously global or transnational and 'might be seen as an original model, if a generally unacknowledged one, for the new thalassology itself' (p. 7). This analytical move smooths over deep intellectual and cultural divides and, in so doing, is in danger of assimilating distinctive traditions of work in Australasia and the Island Pacific into essentially European (and subsequently Euro-American) intellectual traditions, especially the post-Braudelian embrace of oceanic units such as the 'Atlantic world'. Why seek legitimacy for particular ways of writing about the islands of the Pacific or the Pacific region more generally by referring back to those genealogies of scholarship that have exhibited very little interest in the Pacific, and why assimilate Pacific historical writing into a European or Mediterranean frame such as the 'new thalassology'?

At an analytical level, the editors cannot resolve the fundamental tension between different framings of the Pacific that thread through the volume. This is most obvious in the gap between the vision of the Pacific that has strong purchase in Australasia and in many of the islands of the southern Pacific, which sees the 'Pacific' as essentially being Oceania or Oceania with the addition of Australasia. In this framing, the eastern littoral communities of Asia and the western littoral of the Americas are not readily identified as belonging to the 'Pacific' but are rather seen as imperial centres; as distant; as foreign sources of capital, technology and cultural flows; as the home of human communities that are fundamentally different from Pacific Islanders or Pasifika peoples. The other framing has more purchase in North America: it imagines a 'Pacific world' that is composed of the western part of the Americas and the eastern parts of Asia, linked together by networks that span the Pacific Ocean. This kind of approach shapes popular and long-lived texts used in North America, such as Mark Borthwick's *Pacific Century: the emergence of modern Pacific Asia* (and Alex Gibney's accompanying PBS series), where the islands of the Pacific only intrude briefly in the story of Asian–American relations as a theatre for war.[8]

The essays that make up *Pacific Histories* tend to lean towards one of these framings: for different reasons and in different ways, the essays by Salesa, Thomas and Douglas prioritise the Island Pacific, while the essays by Iriye, McKeown and Sugihara are strongest on Asia's

[7] Teresia K. Teaiwa, 'On analogies: rethinking the Pacific in a global context', *Contemporary Pacific*, 18 (2006), 71–88; Damon Salesa, 'Opposite footers: afterword', in Kate Fullagar (ed.), *Atlantic World in the Antipodes: effects and transformations since the eighteenth century* (Newcastle upon Tyne 2012), 285–302; Salesa, 'The world from Oceania'.

[8] Mark Borthwick, *Pacific Century: the emergence of modern Pacific Asia* (3rd edn, Boulder, CO 2007).

trans-Pacific connections. Some contributions work hard to balance the rim and the islands: Robert Aldrich does this well, as do Sujit Sivasundaram, Matt Matsuda and James Belich, although Belich is ultimately more confident when dealing with the materials on the 'Anglo-world' and Polynesia, which he knows best.[9]

In their introduction, the editors identify three divergent historiographical traditions that arose from different centres and that have been particularly influential in shaping work on the Pacific: the University of California and the *Pacific Historical Review*, the Australian National University and the *Journal of Pacific History*, and the University of Hawai'i and the Pacific Islands Monograph Series. Unfortunately they do not fully sketch the diverse range of work that might be considered 'Pacific history' today. They do note the significance of work on settler colonialism and usefully argue that the Pacific has been 'a vital site for the development and practice – even the normalisation – of postcolonial history' (p. 13). But because they do not really engage with the diffuse body of critical work produced from a range of disciplinary, scholarly and political locations, the editors fail to offer a robust positioning of this volume against the very large body of research that has been produced within the last two decades. This allows pressing political and cultural questions about the role of the historian; the shape, meaning and occlusions of different types of archives and methodological traditions; and the very nature of history itself to be sidestepped.

Only Damon Salesa's essay on 'The Pacific in Indigenous time' deals with these questions head-on. Salesa takes seriously the ways in which the peoples of the Pacific Islands made sense of their worlds, and offers us a forceful reminder that the history of Oceania prior to the arrival of Europeans was replete with movement, trade, cross-cultural contact and political struggle. Pacific world*s* were not only animated by Europeans, and Europeans were never the sole catalysts of encounter and connection.

The implicit tendency of much of this volume to privilege European perspectives and the centrality of Europe is in part a product of a chronological framing that focuses on the post-1800 period. Within such an analytical context, Europe becomes the hook to lace the Pacific into world history. A broader temporal and cultural vision that was more open to the plurality of Pacific world*s* and countenanced the richness, complexity and diversity of the region prior to 1520 would, at a minimum, have offered perspectives that could have been usefully read alongside the arguments developed by scholars interested in Africa or Southeast Asia in the global past. Perhaps, more fundamentally, a more serious reckoning with the deeper pasts of the region may have called into question some of the interpretative framings and assumptions of world histories derived from elsewhere.[10]

Ultimately, broad synoptic accounts of the 'Pacific world' such as this struggle to offer perspectival histories that communicate the particularities of place; works that reconstruct networks or that follow the traces of mobile people or things are often much better at achieving that end.[11] With the exception of essays by Thomas and Salesa, this is not the volume to go to for a sense of how the Pacific might have seemed from any location, whether that was Pohnpei or Port Moresby, or Canton or Vancouver, Hanga Roa or Dunedin. And the absence of particular places and regions is notable and has real consequences because it means that significant bodies of scholarship are not engaged with. Most notably, the junctions between Pacific and Southeast Asia are, unfortunately, left unexplored. As the diverse writings of Campbell

[9] That balance is also a feature of Matt Matsuda's ability to bring the histories of the Asian and American littorals into dialogue with the islands of the Pacific in his *Pacific Worlds*.

[10] For discussions of the significance and weight of precolonial histories, social formation and cultural patterns more generally, see Tony Ballantyne, *Between Colonialism and Diaspora: Sikh cultural formations in an imperial world* (Durham, NC 2006), especially ch. 2; Tony Ballantyne, 'Religion, difference, and the limits of British imperial history', *Victorian Studies*, 47:3 (2005), 427–55.

[11] For a useful discussion of this methodological point, see Miles Ogborn, 'Atlantic geographies', *Social and Cultural Geography*, 6:3 (2005), 379–85.

Macknight, James Francis Warren and Regina Ganter demonstrate, the complex maritime circuits that operated in that region unsettle the temporal and spatial sensibilities of Eurocentric accounts of the broader Pacific and offer a key way into the real connections between the peoples of Asia and those Indigenous peoples of Australasia and the Pacific.[12]

That kind of work does remind us of the real value in exploring the intersections between different economic networks and cultural worlds, and it suggests the value in thinking about a plurality of Pacific world*s*. But that does not necessitate the production of histories of regional integration that seek to seamlessly assimilate the particularities of various Pacific world*s* into the larger narratives of world history. Ultimately the real value of this collection is that it lays bare the tensions between the different approaches to the region when it is very broadly conceived: thinking through those intellectual, cultural and political fault-lines will be useful for students and scholars alike.

TONY BALLANTYNE
University of Otago
tony.ballantyne@otago.ac.nz

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Making History in the Pacific

Pacific Histories provides much food for thought. Exploring the book's explicit and implicit themes, and drawing on Armitage's and Bashford's broader perspectives as a context for this effort, I find plenty to ponder. Questions arise about how we might (or should) write history, who should be involved in that process, and as publications pile up, what we are producing and to what value. In their bold attempt to refashion Pacific history, we encounter the standard questions: What is gained by this new reframing? What is lost? Let me offer five reflections.

First, the editors and authors should be praised for their intellectual boldness. The volume organises its connections and interactions across the region in new and interesting ways. It is not the standard chronology. It is more thoughtful and provocative. We read about 'Periodising the Pacific', 'Connections', 'Knowledges' and 'Identities' as ways to emphasise varied connections and interactions across the region. But if history-making involves ordering diverse time and space events into coherent patterns that allow us to gain new understandings, we need ask where these coherences are? They do not seem well developed in the book.

Take an example: part II ('Connections') offers accounts of energy flows across the Pacific. If from 'the 1750s through the 1910s, the Pacific was transformed into the world's larder' (p. 130), as Ryan Tucker Jones writes, it would be valuable to know how this was calculated and, more importantly, what the impact was on Pacific and world history. We are left guessing. Chapters 7 ('Movement') and 8 ('The economy since 1800'), by Adam McKeown and Kaoru Sugihara, respectively, provide abundant detail about rim-to-rim interactions, but we do not know how these interactions developed the rims nor what impact they had

[12] James Francis Warren, *The Sulu Zone, 1768–1898: the dynamics of external trade, slavery, and ethnicity in the transformation of a Southeast Asian maritime state* (Singapore 2007); C.C. Macknight, *The Voyage to Marege': Macassan trepangers in northern Australia* (Carlton, VIC 1976); Campbell Macknight, 'The view from Marege': Australian knowledge of Makassar and the impact of the trepang industry across two centuries', *Aboriginal History*, 35 (2011), 121–43; Regina Ganter, *Mixed Relations: Asian/Aboriginal contact in north Australia* (Crawley, WA 2006); Regina Ganter, 'Turning the map upside down', *History Compass*, 4:1 (2006), 26–35.

on the Islanders living between the rims. What seems to give coherence to these latter chapters is the standard historical chronology, not a new set of orderings.

Part I ('Periodising the Pacific') constitutes a variation on this theme. The four chapters, while structured as chronologies of the region, strive for broader themes. But I am puzzled as to what these are. Take Nicholas Thomas's statement 'that the transformation of the Pacific is like the tattoo. We all know that tattoos are at once permanent and skin deep' (p. 94). It is termed 'an unserious suggestion', and we are left with the statement 'What we don't know is whether "skin deep" means merely superficial, or in fact profound' (p. 94). It is an intriguing idea (see pp. 17–18). But it is never developed as a theme for interpreting 'what empire has meant in the Pacific' (p. 94).

What coherent patterns might we seek? We might turn to various fruitful comparisons. For example, we might compare the eastward movement of the Lapita, Micronesian and Polynesian explorations with the western movement of the Europeans and earlier Chinese (such as Admiral Zheng He) explorations. What motivated these various explorations, what exchanges occurred during them, what effects did they have? Why did the Indigenous and the early Chinese explorations eventually stop, while the European explorations continue unabated up through today? Or how did the various forms of colonisation – British, French, Japanese, German and American – interact with various forms of Pacific Islands organisations (e.g. hierarchical vs. egalitarian)? Why were the Japanese more financially successful in Micronesia than either the Germans or the Americans? Both the Japanese and Americans dwelled on the rim; the Germans did not.

Second, *Pacific Histories* seeks to be inclusive, by which the editors mean bringing together 'the histories of the Pacific Islands, the Pacific Rim, and the Pacific Ocean' (back cover). (Like Matsuda's *Pacific Worlds: a history of seas, peoples, and cultures*, published two years earlier, it claims to be the first to do this.) How does one find inclusive themes in the region's diversity? Does inclusiveness mean geographical regions, topics and/or the people who live in the Pacific and who, a decade or two ago, were viewed as active agents in their own history-making? Is the region's 'new' Pacific history mostly rim-to-rim connections and interactions? If so, should we not learn about the results of these interactions on those living along the rim? The authors, particularly in part II, let us see these interactions better than they have been portrayed in times past. But what is their import? How did they shape historical developments in the 'rim' and the 'in' (i.e. Islands)?

Third, explicit in the volume's introduction, and implicit in various chapters, is a concern with structures of the *longue durée* – framed by the editors as 'the new thalassology' – 'the turn towards the waters of the world, the dwellers on their shores, and islands, and the modes of interactions across maritime spaces' (p. 6). Though not extensively developed, a structure of the *longue durée* certainly shapes the region's history and history-telling. We see the Pacific's vastness reshaped by the technological limitations of those travelling from one rim to the other. Until after World War II, crossing the Pacific usually meant stopping at islands along the way. Whether it was the earliest explorers in need of supplies because they lacked proper refrigeration or the American military hopping from island to island because their bombers could not fly great distances, islands and Islanders played a central role in taming the Pacific's vastness. This structure played out over centuries as the interaction of a vast ocean, technological limitations, island resources and Islanders who, in various ways, allowed travellers to overcome technological limitations while advancing their own interests along with those of the travellers. What gives this structure intellectual power for understanding the region is how the Europeans and Islanders, in their interactions, offer us deeper insights into both collectivities. We see a sense of this in chapter 11 ('Science') by Sujit Sivasundaram: 'the living Pacific becomes visible in its engagement with human travellers and inhabitants' (p. 238). We see it even clearer in chapter 12 ('Race'), by James Belich: 'All racial theories ordained roles for the "superior" as well as the "inferior"; they were as much about "Us" as about "Them"' (p. 268). Belich shows in his *The New Zealand Wars* a concrete case of how the British Empire's racial ideology shaped its success. Another structure of the *longue durée*

exists – a contrast between the wealth of the rims and the limited wealth of the islands in between. While Europeans initially portrayed those they met along the rims in noble terms, this soon changed as competition for the rim's wealth grew. With limited resources, Polynesians have retained their 'noble' image for over 200 years. Possessing valued resources makes a difference in how Europeans view you.

Fourth, Pacific history, especially in recent decades, has been mostly a domestic affair – limited to those dwelling in it or along its rim. But as the list of authors makes clear, here is *la crème de la crème* of elite Western university academics. It is as if Pacific history has gained a new status among the world's history-makers (see p. 7). What does this new status add to the region's history-making? What is clear is that Islander forms of history-making are mostly set aside. What we see is a provocative Western history-telling by a set of high-status academics with broader, more global perspectives. Who are these perspectives meaningful for: those in the Islands, those along the rims or those in 'seats of higher learning' far away?

Fifth, is history-telling cumulative as many Western historians claim? Do we improve our understanding of the past through time, or do we jump from trend to trend, focused on publishing that enhances careers (a variant of the historical creativity pervasive within the Pacific itself). Pacific history supposedly moved from imperial history (à la Moorehead, Morrell and Ward) to Island-centred history (à la Howe and, in more anthropological forms, Dening and Sahlins). Is the current more 'inclusive' history an improvement on Island-centred history? If so, how? Matsuda talks of the Pacific needing to be defined (p. 326). But it is more that *Pacific Histories* needs to define an overall focus that makes sense of the region's history and history-telling in new ways. What we are left with are lots of suggestive possibilities but few broad coherences that push beyond existing frameworks.

History and history-making should have meaning, themes that do not deny the disorder of life but provide orderings that allow us to make more sense of a range of events across time and space than we had before. What I am looking for is a history that makes sense of the interactions among the regions outlanders and Islanders, the rim and the in, among all who participated in the Pacific's pasts, that shows how these groups shaped and were reshaped by their interactions with each other. This history could tell us much about ourselves, and it could tell us much about those who, along with us, have been active participants in the region's history-making.

ROB BOROFSKY
Hawai'i Pacific University
borofsky@publicanthropology.org

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Editors' Response

Pacific Histories: ocean, land, people was the product of many forces and the outcome of many conversations, conducted among historians from around the world with varied interests in the Pacific and its peoples. As editors, our ambition was to collect histories of all Pacifics – north and south, Indigenous and settler, maritime and terrestrial, Islander and rim-dwelling, human and non-human – within a single volume. We were not the first to notice that such a multivocal dialogue had never taken place before, nor were we the only ones to try to start that discussion: Matt Matsuda's heroic one-man survey of the 'translocal' histories of the many Pacifics had just preceded our efforts.[13] We were also hardly original in finding that histories written along an East Asian and North American axis usually proceed as if the Island Pacific was not at the heart of the region, or that Island histories can sometimes turn inwards in an

[13] Matsuda, *Pacific Worlds*.

effort to assert and retain their central status in the field. Our collaborative project was, however, the first to articulate these issues alongside some urgent problems: for instance, the insufficient integration of Latin America into scholarship on the Pacific and the equally obvious absence of the North Pacific from many Pacific histories, despite its great potential for incorporation into a 'sea of islands'.[14] Our aim, and that of the authors collected in the volume, was accordingly to negotiate between distinct and sometimes sequestered Pacific histories in order to encompass the region's geographic scope and the diversity of its inhabitants. That goal provided the rationale, and we hope it also guarantees the value, of *Pacific Histories*.

For 50 years, the *Journal of Pacific History* has been a crucible of innovation for histories of the Pacific: it is therefore a great privilege to have the journal host a review forum on the book, and it is equally a pleasure to respond to assessments by Colin Newbury, Tony Ballantyne and Rob Borofsky. The reviewers come from three rather different places in and outside the Pacific world: from a former imperial metropole, the South Pacific and the central Island Pacific (Oxford, Otago and Honolulu, respectively). They also span imperial history, Indigenous history and historical anthropology – a generous range of perspectives that complements the capacious span of *Pacific Histories* itself, even if they do not cover the North Pacific, the Asian Pacific or the environmental Pacific. Among them, Newbury, Ballantyne and Borofsky raise some fundamental questions, not just about the volume but about the field (or fields) of Pacific history.

Our reviewers have understood well the motivations behind *Pacific Histories* and judge it mostly on its own terms. The book was indeed intended 'to refashion Pacific history' (Borofsky), 'to stake a claim for the usefulness and significance of the "Pacific world" as an analytical unit' (Ballantyne) and 'to locate Pacific history within world history' (Newbury). The first aim was a collective one, willingly embraced by the volume's diverse contributors, who came variously from Islander history, the history of the Asia-Pacific, the history of empire, the history of oceans, and the fields represented among the thematic chapters on the histories of the environment, migration, the economy, religion, science, law, race, gender and politics. The second aim was more novel but has had other recent proponents among other historians of the eastern and northern Pacific, like Gregory Cushman and David Igler.[15] The third aim was perhaps the most radical, but it too was not unprecedented, at least among Pacific historians who have tried to see the world from the Pacific. It may be more challenging for those world historians who see the Pacific as the hole at the heart of their subject. *Pacific Histories* was designed not least to overcome this egregious blind spot.[16]

If the three reviews gathered here are representative, then *Pacific Histories* has already succeeded in forcing reflection on the meanings of Pacific history, both for those who made it and for those who study and teach it. It is unquestionable that 'different framings' of the Pacific exist, as Ballantyne notes, but those framings – whether as cultural encounters, the histories of rim lands or Islander 'forms of history-making' (Borofsky) – have often been incompatible with one another. Incompatibility has sometimes bred incomprehension and even resistance to what is perceived as assimilation or co-optation into alien narratives. Evidence of that resistance remains in Borofsky's intimation that Pacific Islands histories are set aside in the process of constructing the history of a Pacific world or the Pacific in world history. For Borofsky this can amount to a tenacious tendency to stand aside from a global conversation, even a kind of *ressentiment*. Newbury notes in this regard that Matt Matsuda 'would seem to accept the

[14] Edward Melillo, 'The first green revolution: debt peonage and the making of the nitrogen fertilizer trade, 1840–1930', *American Historical Review*, 117:4 (2012), 1028–60; Ryan Tucker Jones, 'Kelp highways, Siberian girls in Maui, and nuclear walruses: the North Pacific in a sea of islands', *Journal of Pacific History*, 49:4 (2014), 373–95.

[15] Gregory T. Cushman, *Guano and the Opening of the Pacific World: a global ecological history* (Cambridge 2013); Igler, *The Great Ocean*.

[16] Teaiwa, 'On analogies'; Salesa, 'The world from Oceania'.

Pacific zone … as another example of the new "thalassology" in world history': Matsuda surely does, even though Newbury's 'would seem' indicates a reluctance to accept that notion. Ballantyne also wonders why the Pacific should be assimilated into the 'new thalassology'. To that, we and most of our contributors would answer that it is already there, for better or worse, and has been for some time.

The more troublesome question is why might some self-identified Pacific historians wish to leave it out? Are we not then left with what Newbury calls the 'fragmentation of regional studies'? In our introduction, we presumed and reprised the major line of scholarship that has defined Pacific history for generations and framed it with three locales – Canberra, Hawai'i and California (there are, of course, more, and others) – to set out the counterintuitive centres and peripheries that over time have structured the historiography of the Pacific. *Pace* Newbury, we did not 'blame' Canberra, Hawai'i and California for fomenting fragmentation. We tried instead to juxtapose three Pacific histories that have been quite different in geo-epistemological terms but substantially (if often unknowingly) congruent in their questions and concerns. This device, of course, precisely located Hawai'i as a geographic, intellectual and publishing centre that has for decades produced ground-breaking monographs in Pacific history. This was quite different from, say, a California-based Pacific that looked west and saw, for many years and almost exclusively, Japan as the other Pacific pole.

Pacific Histories attempts to transcend the hegemony of any one version of Pacific history drawn from the 20th century to encourage new models – plural and pluralistic – for the 21st century. If one were to assign blame for anything, it would be for failing at least to contemplate the benefits of dialogue and integration before asserting the integrity of any existing practice of history – Pacific or otherwise – over all the others. There is indeed 'value in thinking about a plurality of Pacific worlds', as Ballantyne notes. To this end, the book did not 'set aside' any one approach to Pacific history, as Borofsky charges of 'Islander forms of history-making', but it instead provided a forum for exchange among multiple approaches without privileging one over another. As editors, we can only plead guilty to having commissioned chapters from 'high-status academics with broader, more global perspectives', not for their status but precisely because of their ability successfully to integrate and appreciate distinct perspectives on the Pacific and its histories.

It may not have been clear to all three reviewers that the book was designed primarily for teaching, but it is worth reaffirming that point here. *Pacific Histories* is less a compendium of research – though it is based on much original work – than a handbook for possible approaches in classrooms within and beyond the Pacific. Students and teachers should decide which Pacific histories they find most meaningful. They could only do so if the volume represented the full range of possibilities as well as examples of new forms of integration with oceanic and global history. With this goal in mind, we might have hoped for more engagement among our reviewers with some of the provocative analytic turns in individual essays. For example, we could hardly agree with Newbury that Joyce Chaplin's painstaking essay on the relatively slow, happenstance character of European entry into the Pacific, based more on ignorance than knowledge, rehearses 'conventional European cartographical knowledge'. Nor would we endorse the view (also Newbury's) that Sujit Sivasundaram's subtle chapter 'surveys scientific knowledge very unevenly', when Sivasundaram himself so clearly describes the teleological, integrationist models of scientific knowledge against which he is arguing and provides so much original material from the Pacific for historians of science to ponder. And it seems churlish to argue, as Borofsky does, that the richly documented chapters by Adam McKeown (on migration) and Kaoru Sugihara (on the Pacific economy) affirm 'the standard historical chronology, not a new set of orderings', when both explicitly challenge 'standard' narratives based on 'Atlantic' models of migration and economic integration by their use of freshly calculated Pacific and especially Asian data on flows of people, goods and capital.

Such cavils aside, the success of the volume in provoking fundamental questions about the meaning and direction of Pacific history – 'how we might (or should) write

history, who should be involved in that process, and … what are we producing and to what value[?]', as Borofsky puts it – surely justifies the enterprise as a whole. No single volume covering one-third of the earth's surface, its peoples and its environment over the *longue durée* from the beginnings of human settlement to the near-present can be either comprehensive or convincing to all its readers.

What such a book can do is to stimulate Pacific historians to communicate with others, to ask why they write as they do (and for whom) and perhaps to reflect on novel opportunities for dialogue across subfields and within other historiographical frameworks. As Ballantyne notes, the book could not 'resolve the fundamental tension between different framings of the Pacific', but that was not our agenda. Synoptic histories should generate other perspectival histories;[17] histories written from particular places, or specific subject-positions, should in turn produce broader syntheses. We can all hope with Borofsky for 'a history that makes sense of the interactions among the region's outlanders and Islanders, the rim and the in, among all who participated in the Pacific's past' (not forgetting the non-human participants, of course). If *Pacific Histories* has brought the possibility of such a history – or, indeed, many such histories – closer, then our work, and especially that of our distinguished contributors, will have been well worthwhile.

DAVID ARMITAGE
Harvard University
armitage@fas.harvard.edu

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ALISON BASHFORD
University of Cambridge
acb90@cam.ac.uk

http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00223344.2015.1039807

[17] To take only one recent outstanding example, Katerina Martina Teaiwa, *Consuming Ocean Island: stories of people and phosphate from Banaba* (Bloomington 2015).