mother communities. It is thus not expected that all clan or house designs would have been transferred to areas to the east if not all the houses went, and also one would expect these houses to develop and diversify their own motifs as well. Can we assume that motif transmission is by house-clan-family transmission, and diversification is within respective families? Chiu’s work on this is breaking new ground, including one motif interpreted as leaving New Guinea and migrating to Tonga. Here there is an emphasis on ownership of motifs by corporate groups. Note that if we go beyond just dentate designs and bring in production data as well (i.e., highly mobile groups) then we have powerful tools for future work in unravelling the past.

The last chapter is by Barbara Mills. Mills was brought into the workshop by Chiu to discuss her successful research into Social Network Analysis with GIS based in the Southwest US. Many of her ideas are important and will add food for thought.

This book is a polished product written by leading archaeologists working in the Pacific. It is beautifully produced with excellent illustrations. The editors should be congratulated.

References


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Ngāti Pūkenga have a wealth of stirring whakataukī `proverbs’ in their oral storehouse, yet it is the literal meaning of the word pūkenga that seems most fitting here. To be skilled, to be well versed in, a repository of knowledge and expertise, all aptly describe the career and contributions of pre-eminent scholar and worthy descendant of Pūkenga, M.P.K. Sorrenson. Ko te Whenua te Utu—Land is the Price assembles thirteen of Sorrenson’s influential essays on Māori history, land and politics published between 1956 and 2011. A complete works this is not. Missing are his essays on Africa written for academic and activist audiences (the same could be said of his Māori material), his publication on the Polynesian Society and his extended discussions from Na To Hoa Aroha. A compendium of his African essays might provide a lively companion to this volume.

The collection is bookended by two additional chapters: a good humoured introduction provides some context of the author and the essays, and offers insights into
the development of History as a discipline at the University of Auckland and Oxford from the grand imperial narratives of the 1950s through to the self-effacing bicultural narratives Sorrenson would come to fashion. An epilogue sketches in those themes not covered in the essays but vital to an appreciation of Māori history, details the growing body of research published in the wake of Sorrenson’s own work and sounds out a warning of what we can expect in the future, if past experience is anything to go by.

The essays are ordered chronologically rather than by date of publication, so as to provide some semblance of the progression of Māori history from Hawaiki to the present day. Does it work as an extended discussion? Not always: there is much that is repeated. It reads more coherently as a two part collection, covering Sorrenson’s earlier work on Māori land, Māori-Pākehā relations, racial theory and politics and his later research informed by his involvement in the Waitangi Tribunal from 1985 onward.

While these essays appear in previous publications, there is merit in their collection. A number are long out-of-print, and difficult to access in the digital era, and their publication provides new generations access to essays that remain relevant today. Sorrenson’s work has proved influential, not just in revising but indeed at times in redirecting the course of New Zealand history. “The whence of the Māori” pre-empted the critical methods of deconstruction, and enjoyed a second life as an early exemplary instance of local literary criticism. “Maori representation in Parliament” informed the electoral reforms of the 1990s, and “Land purchase methods and their effect on Maori population” has provided the research basis for many a treaty claim. In re-reading these essays, one is struck by their continued relevance. The opening sections of “Giving better effect to the Treaty” could have been written last week, though it was first delivered in 1989. “The Waitangi Tribunal and the resolution of Maori grievances”, first delivered in 1994, calmly traces out the issues Māori have subsequently campaigned on for the past 20 years. “Treaties in British colonial policy” provides an antidote to some of the ill-informed nationalism championed by Māori and Pākehā alike in recent years, and may well appear in my course readers this year, a quarter century after its publication. Sadly, some of these essays need to be re-read: their lessons remain unlearnt.

Moreover the collection allows us a space to reflect on the contribution and development of one of New Zealand’s foremost scholars. Critically reviewing old articles seems as respectful and useful as running a spell check over the Magna Carta. A more useful process may be to discuss some of the themes that emerge when the essays are read as a body of work.

Sorrenson’s work serves as a critical appraisal of intellectual thought in New Zealand. He has questioned depictions of New Zealand as an intellectual backwater, yet spent much of his early career teasing out the knots of 19th-century inquiry pursued by over-eager amateurs. His earlier works profess an admiration for the “cool and detached scientific inquiry” of early voyagers and the patient unravelling of colonial myths undertaken by university-trained scholars of the 20th century. We see in his later work a sense of gratification for the intellectual ferment of the “treaty industry”, and an appreciation for the worthy research of his peers.

Sorrenson’s work has been greatly enhanced by his forays into African, British, Asian, Pacific, Australian and North American history, demonstrating the fruits of
international context, but also the follies of applying foreign models to local realities (see, for example, “Colonial rule and local response”).

Perhaps the most important theme arising from Sorrenson’s work is the shifting position of Māori in the narrative. In his earlier work, still touched by imperial imperatives, Māori loom in the shadows as unpredictable figures, ever-ready to complicate and contradict European expectations. His later works are, by comparison, dual-stranded bicultural narratives, in which Māori and Pākehā understandings of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the Treaty of Waitangi and the divergent histories that stem from these two documents sit side by side, rubbing up against and colliding with one another. This collection allows us to reflect on the gradual shift of Māori from the margins of society over the past 60 years, and the role Sorrenson himself played in making this so.

Sorrenson concludes of his career “History is forever and historians are always remaking it... Others can refashion mine”. I turn to the language of whatu kākahu to respond. Sorrenson has taken up the muddled muka of the 19th century, laboriously applying the miro process to the dual-strands of our history, and has recast te aho tāhuhu, the all-important first weave, providing future scholars a firm foundation from which to weave the kaupapa. Kotahi ano te kōhao o te ngira e kuhuna ai te miro mā te miro whero me te miro pango. I muri nei kia mau ki te ture ki te whakapono ki te aroha. Hei aha te aha! Hei aha te aha!
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