

duction which is accompanied by small archival photographs of installations/displays before and after renovation.

The bulk of the catalog text was written by Norman Hurst of the Hurst Gallery, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Hurst divides his text into six sections: Sculpture and Image, Weapons and Warfare, Tattoo and Ornament, Trade and Exchange, Barkcloth, and Technology. Each section is illustrated by full or half-page color plates. A catalog of sixty-five artifacts follows the text; in the catalog, each artifact is illustrated by a postage-stamp-sized colored photograph. Polynesian and Fijian artifacts predominate in this collection. Also included, however, are bowls and weapons from Belau and Kiribati in Micronesia, two lime spatulas from the Massim region of New Guinea, and a single canoe prow figurehead from the Solomon Islands.

According to the Introduction, the artifacts came to the museum from two principal sources: the Providence Franklin Society and the Jenks Museum of Brown University. Pertinent and detailed information regarding their intended functions appears in the catalog. Many, if not most of the artifacts would appear to have considerable age and are excellent examples of their type. It is definitely a collection worth seeing. Barring a trip to Rhode Island, this catalog makes acquaintance with the collection possible. Among the artifacts in the collection, certain ones perhaps deserve particular notice. Readers of *Rapa Nui Journal* should note that three images from Rapanui, a crouching figure (E3198), a very fine *moai kavakava* (E3098) and a *moko* (E1910) are featured on the front and back covers of the catalog. The crouching figure and *moko* have been estimated to be of late eighteenth or early nineteenth century date, and the *moai kavakava* to be of early nineteenth century derivation. Its donor, a Captain W. P. Salisbury, was "master of the China trade vessel *Hanover* from 1833 to 1838". He apparently never actually went to Rapa Nui so must have obtained the figure somewhere else on his voyages.

The collection contains several pieces of barkcloth. Particularly noteworthy, to this writer, are two barkcloth shawls or cloaks (*ahu fara*) from Tahiti. One (E3517) is dated "circa 1790s" and the other (E3282) "circa 1800-1910". A very fine Hawaiian *lei niho palaoa* (E2278), a necklace comprised of a sperm whale tooth suspended from coils of braided human hair (*lauhoho*) which contained the genealogical mana and presence of an ancestor represents one of the more significant artifacts in the collection.

Without doubt, the most distinctive artifact from this collection (and I use the word "from" deliberately) is a Hawaiian image (*ki'i lka'au*) which formerly supported weapons. The image (E2733) had been donated to the museum by Daniel Tillinghast Aborn, born to New England parents in Hawai'i in 1790. He apparently visited New England several times and donated several artifacts to the Providence Franklin Society, one of the two sources of artifacts in the Pacific collection of the Museum of Natural History.

This rare Hawaiian image played an important and controversial role during its tenure at the museum. Attempts to sell it in order to finance restoration of the Pacific Hall were aborted by Hawaiian organizations, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and Hui Malama I Na Kupuna 'O Hawaii who, with the aid of officials representing NAGPRA (The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act), were able to secure the return of

this image to Hawai'i. A generous financial gift from the Hawaiian societies to the museum made possible the restoration and exhibition of other artifacts in the Pacific Collection. The catalog (pp. 12-13) gives a succinct account of two years of negotiations, debates, and litigation regarding this image, but an even fuller report is contained in a recently-published article by Angela J. Neller, "From Utilitarian to Sacred: The Transformation of a Traditional Hawaiian Object", in *Pacific Art: Persistence, Change, and Meaning*, University of Hawaii Press, 2002: pp. 126-138.

Probably because of its role, large color photographs of front and reverse views of this Hawaiian image frame the text of this museum catalog. One wonders why the image retains its museum number in this catalog, published in 2002 after the return of the image to Hawai'i in 1998. Partly because of the manner in which this catalog features the Hawaiian image, the image and its role at the museum, but also because of the superb Pacific collection, the catalog *Circle of the Sea, Creations from Oceania* will remain as one of significance among catalogs of Pacific collections.



A History of the Pacific Islands

Steven Roger Fischer, 2002

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Review by Joan Seaver Kurze

The 20,000 Pacific Islands have already been well recorded by the likes of Thor Heyerdahl, Douglas Oliver, Peter Bellwood, Roger Greene, Patrick Kirch and others. Why another book on the subject now? Steven Fischer answers this question in the Preface and Introduction to his *History of the Pacific Islands*.

The University of Exeter asked Fischer to write this book as an addition to their Palgrave Essential Histories. It will be, "very useful in a range of undergraduate courses", states the University of Auckland's Hugh Laracy. So, to fulfill a mission thought by some scholars to be overly vast and complex a subject for one volume, Fischer produced 304 pages of text, seven maps, and a strong "Selected Further Reading" section of standard Pacific sources that includes the most recent available literature.

To Fischer, Pacific Islanders are not the "eternally passive victims" described by Oliver nor are they "eternally active agents". Instead he prefers a more recent analysis -- one that speaks of 'Islander Agency' and how Islanders responded to the invaders as "doers and receivers". Fischer sets out to analyze, in a chronological fashion, how new environments affected "sociocultural systems" that Pacific Islanders had constructed for themselves way before the "western invasion". In other words, he wants to explore, the "interplay between event (history) and structure (culture)."

Fischer's focus on the post-colonial positions of Pacific Islanders in his *History* differs from that of most other studies with their emphasis on prehistory and colonialism. In Fischer's closing chapter, *The 'New Pacific'*, he examines changes in Islanders' ethnicity as well as alterations in their economies. The effect colonialism had on the role of women also is discussed,

and Fischer concludes that, except for Melanesia, their status has risen in the past hundred years. A modern mobility among Pacific Islanders, he writes, has brought large numbers of them to live and work in New Zealand and the USA.

We already know most of the prehistoric material that Fischer presents. The Pacific's earliest immigrants left Sunda, the prehistoric Asian continent, reaching Sahul (ancient Australia) where, by 50,000 years ago, they had become the true Dreamtime ancestors of the Aboriginal Australians and Archaic Papuans (a map of ancient Sunda and Sahul would have been useful).

Fischer claims that, "The 'Pacific Islands' as a human habitat began in New Guinea and the Bismarck and Solomon Archipelagos" about 12,000 years ago as the seas began rising. Archaic Papuans stayed close to home in Near Oceania probably due to the lack of flora and fauna east of the Wallace Line that could not support their communities. When Southern Mongoloid Austronesians sailed onto the scene about 4500 years ago, they lived separately but amicably with the Papuans for a while and then, about 3000 years ago, began voyaging farther and farther into Remote Oceania. "Papuans (were) the first Islanders of Near Oceania, (and) Austronesians the first Islanders of Remote Oceania", writes Fischer.

We know the Austronesians trafficked in Lapita ware and other goods in Near Oceania, and Patrick Kirch has written about the "first Polynesian footfall" that began destroying the fragile ecological balance of Pacific islands. Now, Fischer tells us that in 1521 Magellan's arrival in Guam introduced three centuries of European colonialism. This event "created new Pacific identities...the new foreign atop the old indigenous... (leading to) the 'modern native' who was becoming the universally recognizable New Islander."

The main result of WWII, aside from crushing Japan, writes Fischer, was the "projection of US power throughout the region". Even though many Pacific Islanders fought along side of white colonialists during World War II, the status of Islanders remained the same when the fighting stopped. Fischer's ranking of European colonists in the Pacific is fearless. He gives the worst grades to the USA in Micronesia, France in the Central Pacific, Chile on Rapa Nui and Indonesia in Melanesia. However in parts of the post-war Pacific, indigenous leaders emerged who supported *regionalism* politically. Fischer defines regionalism as, "the division of an area into administrative regions having partial autonomy."

Mixed gene pools have produced a new type of Pacific Islander today who may claim ancestry in several different ethnic groups and who travels to other islands for sports and cultural events. Most impressive has been The Festival of Pacific Arts, a quadrennial event that since 1972 has taken place in Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Tahiti, Australia, the Cook Islands, Western Samoa and New Caledonia.

Pacific economies vary according to an Island's natural resources. Melanesia has minerals, but on those islands lacking natural resources service industries have become important. About 40% of money earned from tourism remains in the host country, but the negative social and environmental impacts on small islands are often enormous. Fischer tells us that the newest money-maker in the Pacific is the Casinos of the South Pacific based in the Cook Islands.

Fischer bases his hope for the future of Pacific Islanders on what he terms, a "Union of Pacific Islands". Of the two bodies that have "dominated" the governance of Pacific Islands since the end of WW II (the European influenced Secretariat of the Pacific and the indigenous South Pacific Forum), he backs the indigenous Forum as most productive for Islanders. However, he admits that it will be the super challenge of the 21st century to unify an area still struggling internally with economics and, in some places, still politically cursed by colonialism.

Fischer has written this book as a scientist and a linguist, so students may find words like "positivistic" a bit of a mouthful. His students in Pacific Island History 101 would do well to keep an OED nearby!

¹ PALGRAVE is the new global academic imprint of St. Martin's Press LLC Scholarly and Reference Division and Palgrave Publishers Ltd (formerly Macmillan Press, Ltd).

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

The *Journal* continues to be great, and the adjustment to only receiving it twice a year, which saddened me when first considered, is quite balanced by enjoying it twice as much every six months! I have not been to Rapa Nui for a long time it seems, but my interest and fascination continue at a high level. I hope to attend the next Conference on Easter Island in Chile. Ferren McIntyre is a great addition to your writers. In Albuquerque I was walking across the campus with this tall thin laid back guy in blue jeans, talking about many things (it was Ferren) and then somewhat to my surprise he was on the program about half an hour later. I find him very funny, sharp and provocative. He deals with such vital issues.....are we fishing out the ocean?

I think I have told you before, I have every issue from the very first one you sent me.

Hugh Brodie, Canada

[The following letter was received by Grant McCall who shared it with us. After we stopped laughing, we thought to share with our readers.]

At an early age I realized that there was something wrong with Autumn. I just couldn't stand it; school, falling leaves, depressing weather, biting cold, heavy clothes, no outdoor sports, no fun in the park . . . I thought that I could do very well without Autumn, Winter too. So, at an early age I determined that the day that I could afford it: I would fly over to the other side of the equator on the Autumn Equinox, and begin the first day of Spring. 'Brazil' was my imagined destination. Then, on March 20th or so in 'Brazil', when it was their first day of Autumn, I would fly back to the States and start the first day of Spring again. It seemed like a very wise plan.... So, the day finally arrived when I find that I've saved enough money for the '1st of Spring Expedition', saved enough money to live in 'Spring Forever'. At the time I realize this, I'm lying on the beach in Southern Spain, it's Sunday, and it's the 3rd of November, 2002. And now I must work out the details, will I go to Brazil? Where will I go on the other side of the equator?