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THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF  
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# THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDERS

edited by

DONALD DENOON

with

STEWART FIRTH, JOCELYN LINNEKIN,  
MALAMA MELEISEA and KAREN NERO



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## ABBREVIATIONS

Angau	Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit
BRA	Bougainville Revolutionary Army
CEP	Centre d'Expérimentation du Pacifique (Pacific Experimentation Centre, French Polynesia)
CNMI	Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
CRA	Conzinc Riotinto Australia
CSR	Colonial Sugar Refining Company, <i>later</i> Corporation (Australia)
DHPG	Deutsche Handels- und Plantagen-Gesellschaft
FLNKS	Front de Libération Nationale Kanake et Socialiste (New Caledonia)
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia
LMS	London Missionary Society
NFP	National Federation Party (Fijian political party)
OPM	Organisasi Papua Merdeka (Free Papua Movement, Irian Jaya)
PNGDF	Papua New Guinea Defence Force
RDPT	Rassemblement Démocratique des Populations Tahitiennes (Tahitian political party)
SVT	Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei (Fijian political party)
UNCLOS III	United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea, 1982
UTD	Union Tahitienne Démocratique (Tahitian political party)

## CONVERSIONS

### Length

1 inch = 25.4 mm

1 foot = 30.5 cm

1 yard = 0.91 m

1 mile = 1.61 km

### Mass

1 ounce = 28.3 g

1 pound = 454 g

1 ton = 1.02 t

### Area

1 acre = 0.405 ha

### Volume

1 gallon = 4.55 L

### Currency

Sums of money are in United States dollars and pounds sterling unless otherwise specified.

## PREFACE

Since *The Cambridge Modern History*, edited by Lord Acton, appeared in sixteen volumes between 1902 and 1912, multi-volume Cambridge Histories, planned and edited by historians of established reputation, with individual chapters written by leading specialists in their fields, have set the highest standards of collaborative international scholarship. The original *Modern History* has now been replaced by the fourteen-volume *New Cambridge Modern History*, and has been joined by histories of Islam, Japan, Literary Criticism, Iran, Judaism, South-East Asia, Arabic literature and Africa among others.

This history is conceived as a source of information and interpretations, for readers who seek an introduction to the experiences of the people of this vast and ill-defined region. We seek to provide clear and reliable first words, not to lay down the last word. After each chapter we suggest sources for readers who wish to pursue a topic in depth.

The book addresses the question of insularity, since continental people often imagine that island life must be insular and introspective. That intuition is reinforced if we assume that the terms Melanesia, Polynesia, Micronesia and Aboriginal Australia refer to bounded populations rather than clusters of cultural features. We show how Islanders overcame their geographical isolation, and we have designed the chapters to highlight linkages. Our geographic limits are elastic, sometimes including Aboriginal Australians in northern and eastern Australia. Similarly we include Maori, and Irianese in western New Guinea. We follow island migrants to New Zealand, Australia and North America; and we include settled immigrant communities in Fiji and New Caledonia, and in Hawai'i until the archipelago was incorporated into the United States. Wherever possible we organise our narratives by topic, at the expense of geographic and even chronological neatness.

The first chapter reveals the assumptions and approaches which inform our writing, and in chapter 2 we display several different traditions and styles of portraying Islanders' pasts. Once the outlines of settlement are established, we consider how people elaborated techniques of production and devised methods of exchange, before trying to grasp their perceptions of the Europeans who sailed across their horizons. These encounters challenged Islanders' sense of themselves, and introduced economic and political opportunities and threats, reviewed in chapter 5. Ambitious Islanders, inspired or provoked by explorers, traders and missionaries, embarked on the transformation of political structures, with effects which are discussed in chapter 6; while chapter 7 considers changes in production, and the population loss which accompanied these new linkages. As power relations shifted in favour

of Europeans, colonial governments replaced the informal imperial arrangements of the nineteenth century. In the eyes of colonial officials, diverse peoples all became 'natives', with similar and limited abilities. The invention of the 'native' is treated in chapter 8, together with an account of the programs and the limitations of colonial authority.

Part Two treats the Pacific region since World War II. Chapter 9 outlines the Pacific War which swept across the region like a four-year cyclone, and explores its ideological and political consequences. Once peace was restored, Western powers used some islands to test nuclear weapons. Chapter 10 examines these episodes and their political fallout. Chapters 11 and 12 review the legacy of the colonial era, which has closed in most of the islands but which has altered the political, economic, cultural and ideological conditions in diffuse ways. We close by asking to what extent the islanders' experience has been that of isolation or insularity, and to what extent these were inventions of scholars and administrators.

Writing this book required constant balancing. Our desire to hedge our general statements is balanced against the readers' need for clarity. In an ideal history, indigenous scholars would determine the structure and dominate the writing of the text. One consequence of the region's recent history is that few Islanders enjoy the facilities for this task. Rather than wait another generation, we rely on our own largely expatriate experiences of teaching, research and island living, and ensure that the voices of Island participants and scholars are present in the narratives. In some ways these voices subvert our own arguments. The same is true when we try to encompass the often distinctive experience of women, without segregating them in separate chapters.

Ideally, we would give weight to each part of the region, in rough proportion to its population. In practice, we rely on published scholarship which is highly uneven, and is largely the work of outsiders. The literature about native Hawaiians, New Zealand Maori, Samoans and Tongans is highly developed and includes substantial contributions by island intellectuals. At the other extreme, books on Irian Jaya are distressingly scarce, and almost entirely the work of outsiders. Similar problems of uneven source material arise in balancing the immense anthropological literature and the more limited work on linguistics and literature, against the later arrival of economists, geographers, historians and political scientists. To compound the problem, each discipline approaches the region differently. Archaeologists articulate the most powerful sense of the region as an integrated entity. It may be that their emphasis on material evidence enables them to transcend boundaries marked by cultural complexes. By contrast, the work of anthropologists, political scientists and linguists is usually specific to one or a few neighbouring communities. Only international relations commentators, analysing modern regional organisations such as the South Pacific Commission and the South Pacific Forum, are thoroughly regional in their canvas. Between 'pre-history' and the 1970s, scholarship often obscures the linkages and common experiences of the region.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful to Gerard Ward and Elizabeth Kingdon for allowing us to quote from *Land, Custom and Practice in the South Pacific*; to Andrew Strathern for permission to reproduce text from *Ongka: A Self-account by a New Guinea Big-man*; to Anne Salmond for quotations from *Two Worlds: First Meetings between Maori and Europeans*; to Epeli Hau'ofa for extracts from 'Our Sea of Islands', in *A New Oceania*; and to Greg Denning for quotations from *Mr Bligh's Bad Language*. Chicago University Press generously allowed us to quote extracts from Richard Parmentier's *The Sacred Remains*; and the University of Hawai'i Press did the same for sections of Martha Beckwith's edition of *The Kumulipo* and Joel Bonnemaïson's *The Tree and the Canoe*; the Gunter Narr Verlag also allowed us to reproduce sections from Stephen Wurm's *Papuan Languages of Oceania*, and the University of Stanford Press was equally helpful in respect of text from Schieffelin and Crittenden, *Like People You See in a Dream*. An earlier version of Vilsoni Hereniko's 'Pacific Cultural Identities' (in chapter 12) was published by the University of Hawai'i Press in Kerry Howe, Bob Kiste and Brij Lal (eds), *Tides of History*: we are obliged to the editors for permission to publish this revised version.

Winifred Mumford prepared the maps and illustrations with characteristic care and flair; and Janet Mackenzie's exemplary editing removed many errors and ambiguities. We also acknowledge the help of the many students who contributed towards this book, discussing draft chapters in formal classes and in innumerable informal conversations.