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Edited by Cris Shore, David V. Williams
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THE SHAPESHIFTING CROWN

The Crown stands at the heart of the New Zealand, British, Australian and Canadian constitutions as the ultimate source of legal authority and embodiment of state power. A familiar icon of the Westminster model of government, it is also an enigma. Even constitutional experts struggle to define its attributes and boundaries: who or what is the Crown and how is it embodied? Is it the Queen, the state, the government, a corporation sole or aggregate, a relic of feudal England, a metaphor or a mask for the operation of executive power? How are its powers exercised? How have the Crowns of different Commonwealth countries developed? *The Shapeshifting Crown* combines legal and anthropological perspectives to provide novel insights into the Crown's changing nature and its multiple, ambiguous and contradictory meanings. It sheds new light onto the development of the state in postcolonial societies and constitutional monarchy as a cultural system.

CRIS SHORE is Professor of Anthropology at Auckland University and Guest Professor of Public Management at Stockholm University's Centre for Organisational Research (2018–19). He has taught at Perugia University (1986), Oxford Brookes University (1987–90), Goldsmiths College (1990–2003) and Auckland University where he was also Head of Department and founding Director of the Europe Institute. His research specialisms include political anthropology, organisations, higher education, the anthropology of policy, corruption and Europe. He is author/co-editor of 140 articles and 14 books, including *Building Europe: The Cultural Politics of European Integration* (2000); *Corruption: Anthropological Perspectives* (2005); *Policy Worlds: Anthropology and the Analysis of Contemporary Power* (2011); *Up Close and Personal: Peripheral Perspectives and the Production of Anthropological Knowledge* (2013) and *Death of the Public University? Uncertain Futures for Higher Education in the Knowledge Economy* (2017). He has held visiting appointments at the universities of Harvard, Bristol, Aarhus, Sussex, University College London, Malta and the European University Institute in Florence. In 2017 he was awarded the Royal Society of New Zealand's Mason Durie medal for contributions to the social sciences.

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(Tanzania) and then the University of Auckland since 1972. He has been an independent researcher and barrister specialising in research relevant to Treaty of Waitangi claims by indigenous Maori concerning historic acts or omissions of the Crown. He has authored five books, including *Te Kooti tango whenua: The Native Land Court 1864–1909* (1999) and *A Simple Nullity? The Wi Parata Case in New Zealand Law and History* (2011). Additional publications include 18 book chapters, 37 refereed journal articles and 10 major technical reports submitted to the Waitangi Tribunal. He has held visiting appointments at Exeter College, St John's College and Corpus Christi College in the University of Oxford, and at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. He was elected an honorary fellow of the American Society for Legal History in 2017 and a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand in 2018.

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THE SHAPESHIFTING CROWN

Locating the State in Postcolonial New Zealand,
Australia, Canada and the UK

Edited by

CRIS SHORE

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Cover Image ‘Heritage’ by Barry Ross Smith, 2008. The image depicts Queen Elizabeth with imagined moko. The roman numerals identify the date [6 February 1840] when the Treaty of Waitangi between Queen Victoria and Maori was first signed [Moko is a permanent facial marking for Maori women of high status. This one is similar in style to those done according to traditional Maori protocols].

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Books always owe a debt of gratitude to people far beyond those whose names appear in the table of contents. This book began its journey in 2012 with a pilot study that set out to map the Crown's multiple meanings in New Zealand and analyse the different ways in which that term is understood and used by political elites and state actors today. What we learned from that first foray into the world of constitutional monarchy was just how fluid, ambiguous, contested and yet symbolically potent the concept of the Crown can be. This led us to probe further into the nature of the Crown, the different space that it occupies in the constitutional orders of other postcolonial societies, and the legal, political and cultural ramifications of its ambiguity and shapeshifting character. The result was an anthropological study spanning four years (2013–17) and involving over 220 in-depth and face-to-face interviews with civil servants, politicians, government ministers, legal experts, academics, indigenous rights activists and Crown officials across four countries.

We would like to thank the Royal Society of New Zealand (RSNZ) Marsden Fund without whose generous financial support and encouragement our study would not have been possible. We also wish to acknowledge the University of Auckland's *Te Wharekura* research initiative, which funded the pilot study, 'The Crown in New Zealand: Legal, symbolic and demotic perspectives on an essentially contested concept'. This was a good example of how seed funding for cross-disciplinary research, in this case anthropology and law, can produce innovative partnerships that push disciplinary research and conceptual boundaries in interesting new directions.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Crown as an anthropological concept as well as an historical and contemporary set of institutions and practices and the way these developed in each of the four realms covered in our story.

Finally, we should also acknowledge a debt of gratitude to the Crown itself: that mysterious, arcane, multifaceted, shapeshifting and yet curiously contemporary entity which has provided us with such a rich and interesting object of study. As Carol Duffy wrote in her poem to mark the 60th anniversary of the Queen's coronation, 'Time-gifted, the crown is old light, journeying from skulls of kings to living Queen ... Not lightly worn'.

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