

culture. Most puzzling of all, is that Robert Louis Stevenson is placed in the History section in a chapter headed "Trade and Labour" under the subheading "German Commercial Interests," rather than under the more obvious subheading "European Writers on the Pacific Islands" in an earlier chapter.

Tucked inside the back cover is a CD-ROM. This is a logical complement to the book, although it simply duplicates the entire volume, photographed page by page, without taking advantage of the unique, potentially more interactive, format that a CD-ROM offers.

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*On the Road of the Winds: An Archaeological History of the Pacific Islands before European Contact*, by Patrick Vinton Kirch. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000. ISBN 0-520-22347-0; xxii + 424 pages, tables, figures, maps, photographs, notes, references, index. US\$45.

During the last three decades, Pacific archaeology has come of age. Comprising a handful of specialists in the late 1960s, these days the discipline has risen to several hundred professionals, opening new fields, publishing new research, and prompting new ideas at a rapid rate. One of the most energetic personalities over the years has certainly been Patrick V Kirch. Born in Hawai'i, Kirch had the opportunity very early in his career to work in the field on various remote Pacific

islands, mostly in Polynesia but also in different archipelagoes of island Melanesia. More important, he is well known as one of the most prolific writers in the discipline, publishing site reports as well as theoretical analyses. With his long involvement in the fields of archaeology and cultural evolution in Oceania, he was the specialist most able to put together a new synthesis on the early history of the region, to replace Peter Bellwood's famous but now out-of-date monograph, *Man's Conquest of the Pacific*.

*On the Road of the Winds* is divided into nine chapters after a general introduction. The first two chapters set the scene in terms of scientific interest in the Oceanic past and the environmental diversity of this vast region. The chronological chapters start with a short synthesis on the data recovered about Pleistocene-early Holocene occupations in the northwestern part of Melanesia, starting over forty thousand years ago. The Lapita expansion chapter, dating from the second half of the second millennium BC, is followed by three chapters on post-Lapita sequences in Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. These chapters form the core of the book, with general chronologies proposed for the major archipelagoes. The final chapter presents a more focused discussion on Polynesian chiefdoms, before a balanced synthesis entitled "Big Structures and Large Processes in Oceanic Prehistory."

Kirch is known to be a strong advocate of cross-disciplinary studies, relating archaeological reconstructions to linguistic, anthropological, and biological data. In the introduction, he acknowledges that "while primarily a

work of *history*, this book also seeks an anthropologically grounded explanation for—and understanding of—the synchronic cultural, linguistic, and human biological variation exhibited throughout the modern Oceanic world” (6). The chronologies proposed, though, are not only based on archaeological studies, but use related fields to attempt a more complete reconstruction of past societies and their evolution. The variety and amount of scientific data compiled to reconstruct the Oceanic past is thereby expanded massively; the reference list of over fifty pages leads the author to confess that “only a few committed scholars and students can possibly take the time to read and digest for themselves all the relevant articles, chapters, monographs, and books underpinning a work such as this” (10).

Written in a very clear style, well illustrated, covering the whole region (except Australia), the book should be easily accessible to scholars and professionals working outside the narrow archaeological sphere. It will certainly help to disseminate knowledge about Pacific prehistory among other disciplines studying the contemporary evolution of Oceanic populations. Although some chapters are shorter presentations of more complete monographs written by Kirch, his “grand synthesis” book (10) is also a mine of information for archaeologists, bringing together in a logical way scientific data otherwise dispersed and often poorly published. For example, the chapter entitled the “Sea of Little Lands,” on Micronesia, offers for the first time an accessible summary of the data on that vast region.

Other parts are more limited; for

example, one might regret the brevity of the chapter on the Pleistocene–early Holocene phase (which makes up about nine-tenths of the prehistoric chronology in Near Oceania), or the few pages presenting the prehistoric sequences in Western Polynesia. The last chapter, on Eastern Polynesia, also stands out as the only one where the chronological presentation is replaced by a more complex construction mixing theory and focused examples. It would perhaps have made a publication on its own, although the topic will probably attract cultural anthropologists and prompt nonarchaeologists working in related fields to address questions of cultural transformations in the *longue durée* (3).

Kirch is a convincing writer, and the chronologies presented in the core of the book might appear to the non-specialist reader as widely accepted conclusions, especially on topics still highly debated like the rate of Lapita expansion into Remote Oceania or the first settlement of Eastern Polynesia. As in his preceding monographs, the author predominantly uses data from his own sites and studies to construct the proposed historical evolution. But importantly, in this more general book intended for a wider audience, the reader can find in the footnotes short summaries of conclusions proposed by other archaeologists disagreeing with Kirch, with the relevant references. This makes *On the Road of the Winds* an honest and scientifically balanced synthesis of the state of knowledge on Oceania’s prehistory on the eve of the third millennium. The jacket flap is correct in stating that “this book will become the essential reference on the prehistory of the Pacific Islands,” at

least during the next decade. It is to be recommended as first reading to all those wishing to acquire a sound knowledge of the pre-European history of the peoples of Oceania.

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*The People Trade: Pacific Island Laborers and New Caledonia, 1865–1930*, by Dorothy Shineberg. Pacific Islands Monograph Series 16. Honolulu: Center for Pacific Islands Studies and University of Hawai'i Press, 1999. ISBN 0-8248-2101-7; xxiii + 309 pages, tables, figures, photos, maps, appendix, notes, references, index. US\$45.

In 1967 Dorothy Shineberg's *They Came for Sandalwood: A Study of the Sandalwood Trade in the South Pacific, 1830–1865* marked one of the earliest academic publications in Pacific labor history. It became a foundational text on Pacific labor and more generally within Pacific historiography. Over thirty years later, Shineberg has again significantly contributed to the advance of Pacific labor history with this richly detailed study of Oceanian migrant laborers in New Caledonia between 1865 and 1930. Very little has been published on the labor history of the French territories in the Pacific. Shineberg's research fills a large part of this gap and indeed the serious lack of scholarly publications in English on the French territories in the Pacific.

This book is a shining example of excellent historical research and writing. *The People Trade* is a clear, schol-

arly, and meticulous narrative but not given to sweeping theoretical analysis or accusatory condemnation of past actors. Shineberg still overwhelmingly presents a grim and damning assessment of the labor trade and the exploitation of workers in colonial society. She is careful not to apportion blame to any nationality. Here is a glimpse of how nineteenth-century practices foreshadowed the present-day transnationalization of shipping in the Pacific. Unscrupulous shipping and labor operators evaded national legal jurisdiction by flying foreign flags. The labor trade was transnational and flourished during a period of national rivalry between Britain and France. Although several examples of worker "agency" can be found throughout the book, Shineberg's focus tends to be on the constraints workers faced, and in great detail she discusses the disparities between state regulation and employer rule, evidenced with both brute violence and the alarming extent to which workers were cheated of their wages. Before reading chapter 12, titled "Perpetual Theft," I assumed the content would be about worker theft or resistance, but instead it lays out the crimes committed by employers.

To the extent that it is possible with archival evidence, Shineberg provides some sense of the real people behind the labor trade statistics. As she urges, scholars must build on her groundwork and explore (as has been undertaken in other Pacific contexts) the social history of migrant laborers in New Caledonia through the oral histories of participants and their descendants. The book provides a valuable foundation for this work, particularly through the discussion of women and