

Book reviews

Brian Russell Roberts & Michelle Ann Stephens (eds) (2017) *Archipelagic American studies*, Durham and London, Duke University Press. 520pp, ISBN: 978-0-8223-6346-0. US\$30.95.

Relational and archipelagic turns are now well established in island studies. However, Brian Russell Roberts and Michelle Ann Stephens's edited collection *Archipelagic American studies* adds something missing: an outstanding volume covering the archipelagic Americas. This book will become seminal for two key reasons at least: (1) it comprehensively demonstrates the Americas are archipelagic; and (2) it pushes relational thinking further than to date, suggesting we are now straining at some older concepts and verging on new theoretical frameworks. In doing so, *Archipelagic American studies* both speaks back to American studies and cultural studies, and develops useful theoretical concerns for island studies scholars, and others invested in wider relational and archipelagic turns.

The book's main aim is to decontinentalise the Americas (mainly USA, but also Canada) and foreground their archipelagic nature. Taken as a whole, the book admirably achieves this goal and reveals the interrelations of America as a contingent and elastic space of continents, waterways, and uncounted islands in both hemispheres that spans the planet. Introducing the archipelagic approach, Roberts and Stephens show a deep concern for:

how the narrative of continental America (which has been a geographical story central to US historiography and self-conception) has so completely eclipsed the narrative of what we are terming "the archipelagic Americas," or the temporally shifting and spatially splayed set of islands, island chains, and island-ocean-continent relations which have exceeded US-Americanism and have been affiliated with and indeed constitutive of competing notions of the Americas since at least 1492.

Infusing American Studies with archipelagic debates, the range of contributions importantly takes analysis way beyond the more usual concerns for the imperial connections of the United States in Puerto Rico, the Marshall Islands, and Northern Mariana Islands, so that the various book chapters include such geographical relations as Guam, the Caribbean, Oceania, Hawaii, the Mediterranean, New Zealand, and Canada, but also transpacific voyages and garbage patches. Taken together, the chapters give a sense of the stretch, folds, and reach of movements and relations that define the Americas. We are firmly left with the impression that the Americas are "a set of spaces that has been persistently intertwined with, constituted by, and grounded in the archipelagic."

Structurally, the book is broken into seven parts and an afterword. These includes: Part I 'Theories and Methods for an Archipelagic American Studies'; Part II 'Archipelagic Mappings and Meta-Geographies'; Part III 'Empires and Archipelagoes'; Part IV 'Islands of Resistance'; Part V 'Ecologies of Relation'; Part VI 'Insular Imaginaries'; and Part VII 'Migrating Identities, Moving Borders'. In a reflective afterword, 'Archipelagic Accretions', Paul Giles summarises the tone of archipelagic debates:

the archipelagic tends to involve an excess of significations, a disruption of stable entities, the overwhelming of static land masses by multidirectional flows of oceanic space. If postcolonialism focused on the power structures, and transnationalism on power exchanges of one kind or another, then the archipelagic imaginary might be said to involve a more fluid system, one that disrupts solid foundations and reinscribes them as ontologically evanescent.

Readers of *Island Studies Journal* in particular will note just how much the book engages with relational and archipelagic turns in island studies. Given the disorientations of the Anthropocene and the consequences for island studies, I was also drawn to Roberts and Stephens' 'anti-explorer method'. This argues against Euclidian geometry and the explorer who confidently traces linear lines across the globe, and instead employs fractal geometry, exposing how island

and archipelagic frames of analysis can become

infinite in their smallness and in their unending capacity for reaching ever greater levels of resolution: the bay, when examined within a closer frame, is shown to contain many subbays, and each subbay, when examined within a still closer frame, contains many sub-subbays, and the sub-subbays further resolve into sub-subsubbays in an infinite regress of recursively smaller analytic frames.

Thinking islands as ‘hyperobjective space’ in this way further aligns with Edouard Glissant, where “‘each island is an opening,’ an opening onto other islands, figuring the individual island (any individual island) as a participant within a world genre of islands, which, in their insular interlinkings, emerge as a planet-spanning archipelagic assemblage.” Thus, while invoking well-trodden Deleuzian themes, Roberts and Stephens push into newly disorientating scalar depths and dimensions of island and archipelagic thinking as well. Many other chapters also give the sense that, whilst the archipelagic turn has gone so far, new and exciting developments are still very much to be made, as we increasingly foreground the various elemental, social, cultural, and political forces of archipelagic relations.

Although the main aim of *Archipelagic American Studies* is certainly to problematize post-war American exceptionalism through introducing archipelagic thinking to American and cultural studies, which it achieves extremely well, this volume also offers many conceptual nuggets for island scholars too. I strongly recommend *Archipelagic American Studies* to readers of this journal.

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Carlos Mondragón (2014) *Un entramado de islas: persona, medio ambiente y cambio climático en el Pacífico occidental*, México, El Colegio de México. 469pp, ISBN: 978-6074626902 US\$22.95/e-Book US\$13.00

Carlos Mondragón’s timely and comprehensive eco-anthropological study of the Torres Islands—*Un entramado de islas* or *An interweaving of islands*—addresses in absorbing detail the links between personhood, citizenship, and climate change in this group of seven islands in Torba, the northernmost province of Vanuatu. The remote Torres Islands, located southeast of the Solomon Islands, captured the world’s attention in December of 2005, when the United Nations identified the residents of the village of Lataw as Earth’s first climate refugees. Forced to move upland to escape rising waters believed to be the result of sea level changes caused by global warming, the population of the Torres Islands entered the popular imagination as a highly vulnerable group living on the frontlines of climate change; possessors, perhaps, of indigenous knowledge about resilience in the face of environmental changes that could/should be included in discussions about the development of relevant policies and actions to combat global warming. Their defenselessness against the forces of climate change once again captured the world’s imagination in early March 2016, after the publication of this book, when the nation of Vanuatu experienced one of the worst national disasters in its history as Cyclone Pam brought record winds, rain, and storm surges to the archipelago, a catastrophe seen as a harbinger of worse things to come as global warming increases the strength and frequency of major storms. In countless reports—and especially through photographs—in the international press, Torres islanders were portrayed as the indigenous face of the Anthropocene.

The 2005 crisis and its aftermath are at the heart of Mondragón’s painstakingly detailed examination of both the specificities of the environmental risks faced by the population of the Torres Islands and the complex cultural framework (the *entramado* of the title) through which local responses are defined and articulated. Central to his argument is the complexity of the islands’ relationship

to the sea rising around it. Despite the focus on human-caused climate change in international discussions of Vanuatu and the Torres Islands, the sea-level rise in the archipelago is not solely the result of human activities well beyond their shores. The scientific consensus is that sea level rise in the Torres Islands is due to a combination of climate change and island subsidence (or sinking) caused by the archipelago's location on the border of the Pacific Tectonic Plate.

It is against this complexity that Mondragón sets his “multinaturalist environmental anthropological” study of the principles around which the inhabitants of the Torres Islands have constructed the relationships between humans and the surrounding environment. Richly multidisciplinary, although anchored in carefully deployed anthropological methodology, the book brings to life the intricate connections between humans, the nature they see themselves as an integral part of, and the accelerating changes brought to their world from both ‘modernity’ and a changing climate. It presents the cultural framework of the Torres Islands as an intricate web of spirituality, language, community-focused geographical awareness, and the social links and rituals of the production of *kava*, a traditional and ritualistically-produced drink made from the root of a local species of pepper. Mondragón explores this geographical and cultural *entramado*, or network of connections, through his focus on the reformulation of the pan-Oceanic concepts of *mena* (the creative-destructive power of the person and the cosmos), *rispek* (the principle that guides social relations as well as the ways in which land can be cultivated, especially in the production of *kava*), and geographical identity. Throughout his discussion, Mondragón defines the environment as “a potentially multiform—terrestrial, maritime, climatic and even spiritual—space-time organized around unstable associations (since they’re always in a state of emergence) of people, things and places.” This definition captures the Torres Islanders’ understanding of landscape and nature as highly dynamic systems that have demanded constant adaptation and flexibility. Small-scale societies living in “ecologies rich in natural resources” like that of the Torres Islands, belonging to “states facing serious poverty, institutional underdevelopment and corruption,” Mondragón argues, have much to contribute to our understanding of how societies develop resilience.

Mondragón’s argument is built through the accumulation of layers of understanding of the ways in which *mena*, *rispek*, and the relationship to the land expressed through the production of *kava* articulate an ecological adaptation to a constantly changing environment. He returns constantly to key ideas whose significance is underscored through a process of re-contextualization or re-plotting (a secondary connotation of *entramado* revolves around *trama*, plot). His continuous re-plotting of the narrative of the local population’s relationship to their environment eloquently encapsulates the cultural foundation of their environmental resilience.

In Mondragón’s study we have the most systematic study of how the narrative of Anthropocentric vulnerability imposed from abroad on small isolated populations like those of the Torres Islands fails to account for complex and sustaining foundational narratives that underpin their own particular brand of resilience. His peeling through the layers of these foundational narratives in the company of a remarkable community of individuals rooted in traditions yet open to the dynamics of a changing environment makes this a remarkable book.

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Stephen Graham (2016) *Vertical: the city from satellites to bunkers*, London, Verso. 402pp, ISBN: 978-1-78168-793-2. US\$29.95.

Vertical: the city from satellites to bunkers is a significant book, drawing on Steve Graham’s extensive expertise in analysing the verticalised city to offer a sobering assessment of how the air above and earth below our urban spaces are being differently inhabited and secured. Its fifteen chapters are split into two unequal sections; the first ten covering spaces above ground level, the remaining five focusing

on spaces below the surface. In the introduction, Graham outlines that the book's aim is to challenge what he and others have condemned as the horizontal primacy of human geography. This, in Graham's view, has occurred most explicitly in the sub-disciplines of geopolitics and urban geographies that have until very recently focused on territory and cities respectively as flat, horizontal entities. Taking forward arguments he began in earlier work, as well as those by Eyal Weizman, Stuart Elden, and others, Graham argues that it is vital that we not simply acknowledge the verticality of our contemporary world but seek to analyse the specificities of this three-dimensionality. He further invites readers to recognise and question the language of verticality that he contends has been taken for granted in academic and popular culture: the head, the super, and the north are always superior to the bottom, the sub, and the south. These aims are illustrated through reference to examples including discussion of the creation of artificial islands in Dubai, upon which the world's tallest skyscrapers are built, and the need to stack infrastructures and facilities in Hong Kong where the limited land space had led to innovative architecture and engineering.

The first four chapters focus on technologies that have become synonymous with aerial power and its projection: the satellite, the bomber, the drone, and the helicopter. In each of these chapters, Graham focuses on a small number of key examples, drawing on a range of contemporary social science literature to consider and analyse how these technologies shape and are shaped by the vertical axis of state power projection, predominantly in urban environments. These examples range from the employment of drones to 'secure' parts of US cities, to the use of helicopters to enable class-based mobility and time-space compression in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The city, which acts as a backdrop to most of the examples discussed in the first four chapters, is brought into focus in the five chapters that follow. These consider urban verticalities, sites, and spaces in which the urban environment has been built upwards. The examples considered in these chapters range in scale from the elevator and skytrain, through skyscrapers and favelas, to urban verticalised housing more generally. These chapters offer detailed and critical accounts of how urban life is being redefined by the ability or requirement to think and build upwards. Issues of class and mobility are central to Graham's analysis here. For instance, he juxtaposes archipelagos of elevated living for urban wealthy elites with the slums of global south cities which grow precariously up hillsides and on top of previous dwellings of the urban poor. Chapter 10 is the last of the 'above' chapters and draws back from the tangibilities of the aircraft and the built environment discussed in the previous chapters to argue persuasively that the air itself has become politicised. Graham achieves this via a sprint through examples ranging from urban heat islands and air pollution through air conditioning to weaponising the weather and the air itself. In this chapter, Graham asks us to consider the vital role the air plays in human life and to reflect on how contemporary, stratified, urbanised life can influence the quality of that experience.

The second part of *Vertical* focuses on the spaces beneath ground level with five chapters that take us progressively deeper underground, from the basements and cellars of our cities to the deep mining operations literally excavating new spaces within our planet. Graham links these chapters through a focus on two key ideas. The first of these is that civilian mobility, wealth and class affect access to and use of spaces below the surface. Graham contrasts wealthy Londoners building luxury basement spaces for fun and entertainment with marginalised people who find safety in underground clubs or subsist in sewers in the urban sprawls of the global south. The second idea is that the subterranean has become a space of military power projection and its resistance, especially in relation to the use of bunkers and tunnels. Graham draws attention to the 'arms race' that pits advanced weapons development against those tasked with excavating ever deeper and more impenetrable subterranean complexes for government and military use.

Vertical is certainly an expansive and fascinating read. For those of us with interests in island studies, it offers two specific points of interest. Firstly, Graham draws upon a significant number of examples that relate specifically to islands, especially in his second set of chapters on the urban environment. These include the terraforming projects that have reclaimed and created new land, often by connecting islands to their mainland to provide new spaces for development. Secondly, Graham repeatedly refers to the idea of the archipelago in his discussions of how verticalised urban spaces connect. This engagement

with a very topical island studies idea in the context of this book's wider focus on the urban is significant, offering us further ways to think through the utility of the concept of the archipelago. Indeed, I suggest that Graham's book encourages us to look at islands through a more three-dimensional lens, to recognise that, like cities, they often face spatial constraints that might be challenged by being aware that the built environment exists in three dimensions, both above and below the earth's surface.

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Christopher Fleet, Margaret Wilkes, & Charles W.J. Withers (2016) *Scotland: mapping the islands*, Edinburgh, Birlinn. 256pp, ISBN: 978-1-78027-351-8. US\$43.

This book builds on the success of the authors' previous work *Scotland: mapping the nation* (2011), this time combining a wealth of spectacular maps with the stories of Scotland's islands. Fleet, Wilkes, and Withers—all acknowledged experts in the history of cartography—set out to explore how “in a very profound sense, Scotland's islands have been powerfully shaped—on paper and in the imagination—by being produced in map form.” In other words, this book is the authors' attempt to bring Scotland's islands from the margins of the map to the centre of attention.

The book is presented in eight themed and richly illustrated chapters, framed by a detailed introduction and a guide to sources and further reading. Into this structure, the authors thoughtfully weave general and particular histories, as well as posing more philosophical questions such as: how do you map an island where the coastline changes with the tide? or, who has the authority to name places or features? The maps themselves range from the earliest manuscript maps to the latest in digital cartography to an example of ‘cowtopography’ whereby Inner Hebridean islands are depicted on a milk carton on the flanks of a dairy cow.

The introduction usefully provides historical and intellectual background to maps-as-artefacts. It also concerns the very act of mapping, such as the motivations of the mapmaker and decisions about what to include or omit. Maps are, after all, powerful tools that can bring about intended and unintended consequences. For readers without a background in the history of cartography, this is an impressively solid overview given the restrictions of space.

The themed chapters range from ‘Peopling’ and ‘Naming’ through ‘Navigating’ and ‘Defending’ to the way offshore and freshwater islands have been practically used, seen, or imagined throughout history. The first of these chapters is ambitious, covering almost ten thousand years of human history despite the “inconvenient truth” that “knowledge in map form of Scottish islands' peopling and un-peopling over the millennia—their ‘deeper’ history and geography—is largely a product of only the last 150 years or so.” Notwithstanding these limitations, the treatment feels comprehensive and compelling, drawing on examples as diverse as the Skye potato famine of 1846 to the impact of offshore banking and the oil industry on modern island communities.

Some light relief is provided in Chapter 3 on ‘Naming’ Scotland's islands and places with a cautionary tale from the Isle of Bute. Here, the local council put up a sign greeting ferry passengers with the Gaelic words ‘Fàilte gu Baile Bhòid,’ ‘Welcome to the beauty of [the town of] Bute’. However, the omission of a grave accent instead changed the meaning to ‘Welcome to Penis Island’. Names clearly matter, and they can play an important and contested part in shaping (or even erasing) spatial identities, particularly when language or dialect is thrown into the mix. The central case study exploring the Ordnance Survey's work in the islands forcefully underscores the power relations at play in the naming of the land, reminding us that maps are repositories of memory and authority.

The pioneering work of surveyors John Adair and Murdoch Mackenzie is addressed in Chapter 4, ‘Navigating’, but perhaps just as pertinent is the authors' focus on the impact of personality on the history of mapping the islands, from Alexander Dalrymple's perfectionism that hindered the production and use of hydrographic charts of the Scottish islands to the Anglo-French bickering that prevented the

definitive ‘fixing’ of Shetland in 1817. Similarly, human relations are mapped in Chapter 5, ‘Defending’, which takes the reader through migrations, invasions, and the fear of hostilities, and the imprints these have made on maps of the islands. William Roy’s Military Survey (1747–55), so influential for the mapping and control of Scotland, largely excluded the Scottish islands as they were unlikely sites of military action, a powerful reminder that every map is made with a motive. Chapters 6 and 7, ‘Improving’ and ‘Exploiting’, interrogate how mapping the land and seas has played a vital role both in knowing what is there—and how to use it for maximum gain. Here, the authors cleverly juxtapose the (locally infamous) case study of the proposed and abandoned Harris ‘Superquarry’ with John Knox’s *A Commercial Map of Scotland* (1782), which was his attempt to address the appalling poverty and ‘human misery’ in the highlands and islands, and a poignant reminder that improving and exploiting are not necessarily the enslaving weapons of heartless capitalism.

The final chapters, ‘Picturing’ and ‘Escaping’, explore the ways the islands have been positioned in the cultural imagination. Arguably the most thoughtful part of the book, these chapters take the reader through the spiritual journeys of the ancient Celtic Christian monks to the final journey of Bonnie Prince Charlie as he flees through the islands en route to France after the disastrous Battle of Culloden, and consider the emotional journeys contemporary visitors take as we travel to and from the islands for rest, recuperation, reinvigoration, or retreat. The creative power of islands is seen through the work of composers and poets, writers and musicians, but, importantly, the destructive power of humans flocking to these ‘other-worlds’ is also acknowledged. Here, though, is perhaps the biggest frustration with the work: that the emotional push-and-pull of the Scottish islands that holds the key to their enduring fascination—and presumably underlies the publication of this book—is allocated little more than four pages of text in the final chapter, in contrast to around eighteen pages of maps.

Although it might leave the reader hungry for more substance on our complex relationships with islands, this book will more than satisfy those searching for a cartographic feast. Beautifully produced with some 160 full colour and superbly annotated plates, it offers the novelty of being the first book to take maps of Scotland’s islands as a central focus, and sets a high standard for future works.

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R.M. Christofides (2016) *Othello’s secret: the Cyprus problem*, London, Bloomsbury. 123pp, ISBN: 978-1-4742-1297-7. US\$22.95.

Although published as part of a Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare series called ‘Shakespeare NOW’, *Othello’s secret: the Cyprus problem* is as much about Cyprus as it is about Shakespeare’s *Othello*. In this short study, R.M. Christofides explores the intersections between *Othello* and Cyprus’s conflicted history through the lens of his own personal family history and his deep long-term relationship with Shakespeare’s play. As Christofides is at pains to point out, four of *Othello*’s five acts are set in Cyprus, yet Shakespeare scholars have paid the island setting scant attention. This book seeks to redress that oversight, while also demonstrating the many ways in which Shakespeare’s tragedy can illumine the island’s political struggles, both past and present. For Christofides, *Othello*’s inner turmoil and sense of a divided self, figured in his self-slaughter of the Turk within, stands as an allegory of Cyprus’s own divisions and current partition.

Christofides understands the power of the anecdote and uses personal family stories—most notably the story of his father’s involvement with EOKA (the National Organization of Cypriot Fighters) and subsequent detainment and torture by British occupying forces in the 1950s—as a hook to draw us into his meditations on *Othello* and its prescient depiction of the Cyprus problem. Family stories are threaded through the whole course of the book, creating a strong sense of the

interconnectedness of personal and political histories. They also make this an accessible work, of potential interest to a general readership as well as those with an investment in Shakespeare Studies.

The book is loosely structured around Shakespeare's play. Its 'Prologue' establishes the author's personal connection to the topic, highlights the gap in current scholarship on the *Othello*-Cyprus connection and introduces the book's aims, then subsequent chapters correspond to the five acts of *Othello*. This structure facilitates consideration of a range of issues connecting place and play. 'Act One', for example, focuses on the references to property, theft, and war that Shakespeare's first audiences would have understood through their awareness of the Ottoman invasion of Cyprus of 1570; and 'Act Two' points to the mythological connection between Cyprus and Aphrodite and suggests that this informs the stage picture of Desdemona's arrival on the island by sea.

The literary-critical work of the book is grounded in a secure familiarity with the play's sources and early modern intertexts as well as *Othello* scholarship, and along the way it delivers several interesting local insights into the play. At times, however, the attempt to establish Cyprus's centrality to *Othello* does lead to overstatement that strains the argument. Christofides himself notes, for example, that "not once in the entire play do we hear any mention of Aphrodite or her more common Roman guise, Venus," and goes on to argue later that this omission was a tactical move on Shakespeare's part, confirming our belief in Desdemona's chastity. Nevertheless, several pages of the book still pursue the task of establishing that Venus haunts the backdrop of the play. If we consider that Venus *is* mentioned in at least thirteen other Shakespeare plays, then the emphasis on the Aphrodite connection loses some of its sway.

Christofides decries the tendency for *Othello* criticism to occlude Cyprus, and for the most part his attempt to rectify this omission seems warranted. I did feel conscious, however, of a lurking contradiction between the book's use of personal memoir and its overall project to establish the centrality of Cyprus to Shakespeare's *Othello*. The book succeeds admirably in establishing the meaningfulness of the Cyprus-*Othello* connection for its author and perhaps, too, for others of Cypriot descent, but I also wonder whether it is not the very personal nature of this connection that has obscured it for other critics. Do we need to have a heightened personal awareness of the Cyprus problem to appreciate its importance to the play? The creative leaps in this book across centuries and between personal and political histories suggested to me that many of the correlations it points to between Cyprus and *Othello* could as easily be extended to other island locations. A production of *Othello* set in my own home island, Tasmania (a place unknown to Shakespeare), might find similar layers of meaning in the play, drawing on its particular history of invasion, rape, and incarceration; fears of miscegenation; island licentiousness; and so on. In performance *Othello* has been reimagined in many different geographical and cultural settings. Some consideration of this complex performance history might also shed light on the reasons why Cyprus has fallen between the cracks in critical accounts of the play.

The intensely personal nature of this volume's exploration of connections between place and play makes it an engaging work to read and provides an interesting new perspective on *Othello*. The Shakespeare NOW series focuses on Shakespeare's relevance today, producing works that aim to pose provocative questions and connect general readers with scholarly thinking. *Othello's secret* fulfils this brief and I think, on the whole, demonstrates the value of this approach to the business of literary analysis. Most strikingly, it provides vivid testimony to the way Shakespeare's words can worm their way into a scholar's psyche, producing intriguing, Shakespeare-inflected readings of personal and political events, and highlighting strange connections between the real and the imagined, then and now.

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Stephen Levine (Ed.) (2016) *Pacific ways: government and politics in the Pacific islands*, Second Edition, Wellington, Victoria University Press. 416 pp, ISBN: 978-1776560684. US\$29.99.

The nations of the Pacific region must contend with a number of crucial political issues, but they also have a remarkable array of different styles and formats of governance that attempt to manage them. Stephen Levine's edited volume focuses on both the issues and the political structures of each country in the Pacific. This second edition of the book is a comprehensive collection of essays that each focus on one of the political units of the region. One of the strengths of this collection is the inclusion of almost all the political entities in the Pacific realm. From Australia to Pitcairn, and from Guam to Papua New Guinea, each chapter aims to cover the basic political issues and government structures in a comparable way, regardless of a nation's size or current political status. The book covers 27 distinct political units in the Pacific and also includes an introduction from the editor and a conclusion by Jon Fraenkel. As with any edited volume the styles of each chapter differ, but they all cover some basic aspects of each island group. Each chapter introduces the basic history of a place's early settlement, explains how the places were shaped by European contact, and considers the impact of processes of colonization and decolonization. As the book's title suggests, however, the central focus of each chapter is on contemporary government structures, political parties, and current political issues.

This volume's major scholarly contribution is that it provides comprehensive, rich descriptions of each country's political system. This is valuable, of course, to readers interested in one particular country in the region, but it is also useful to students and researchers trying to grasp the larger political currents of the whole region as well as understand the nuanced political processes that differ from place to place across the Pacific. The book's contributors are specialists on the countries they are discussing, and it is quite apparent that all the authors have a wealth of knowledge about the political structures and issues in each place. Standout chapters include Frank Quimby's narrative on the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Robert Norton's on Fiji, but all of the chapters are well written and interesting. The book's overarching theme is encapsulated by Norton in a comment that applies to so many of the countries in the region: "As in all modern Pacific politics, the continuing challenge for political leaders in Fiji has been to devise viable adaptations of western models of political democracy suited to local conditions."

Structuring this book geographically by political unit is a strength in that it shows the specifics and peculiarities of each place, but it does lack the focus on more regional issues and trends that a thematic approach might give. There is not a strong overall view of how Pacific nations collaborate or use regional and transnational institutions and organizations to address climate change, fisheries regulation, regional economic development, seabed mining, the rising influence of China, the waning influence of the U.S., outmigration, and other hot topics in the Pacific. Still, when the book is read from cover to cover, there are enough details in the individual chapters for readers to put together some of the pieces of these larger regional issues and trends. Fraenkel's conclusion usefully puts the chapters into a larger perspective by discussing general patterns in Pacific Island governance, such as the apparent tendency for countries to go through relatively smooth 'honeymoon' periods after decolonization followed by more turbulent eras.

The editor's choice to give a chapter's worth of consideration to all the political units which could be considered Pacific entities—regardless of their official sovereign status or if they have been absorbed into larger political entities—is an important political act of representation that deserves applause. Chapters on West Papua and East Timor are important additions to this version of the text for that reason. The one glaring oversight to this ethic, however, is the exclusion of any chapter on Hawai'i. Why are the histories, cultures, and politics of West Papua, Rapa Nui, and French Polynesia worthy of chapters even if they are politically absorbed into larger countries, but those of Hawai'i are not? This is particularly interesting given that several of the contributors to this volume are based in Hawai'i. Perhaps its exclusion was not conscious, but even that would speak to the larger social erasure of the 'Pacifinness' of Hawai'i since the overthrow and U.S. annexation—an erasure a book like this could hopefully address in a future edition.

Overall, this book is a valuable resource for scholars, students, and general readers with an interest in the Pacific. Whether someone is interested in the region as a whole or just one of the Pacific countries, readers will find this collection informative and interesting. Instructors will also find this to be a useful book for giving students a thorough overview of the region's politics. In addition, this book can also be thought provoking to people outside the region. As the chapters detail, because the governments in the Pacific are largely the result of unique blends of indigenous and western colonial political processes and structures, there are many novel political formations and innovative procedures and policies. Whether it is Iati Iati's discussion of Samoa's quota system for ensuring more female members of parliament, Nic Maclellan's discussion of New Caledonia's long process of political transition under the Noumea Accord, or Norton's examination of Fiji's coups and representational reforms; readers will find lessons from this volume's illustrative discussions of Pacific Island politics that can speak to debates over politics and government both inside the region and out.

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William F. Keegan and Corinne L. Hofman (2017) *The Caribbean before Columbus*, Oxford, Oxford University Press. 332 pp, ISBN 9780190605254 (pbk). US\$41.95.

In this archaeological assessment of variety among islands, William F. Keegan and Corinne L. Hofman portray the diversity of Caribbean cultures and the past in the Caribbean, before Cristobal Colon (Christopher Columbus) intruded in 1492 and launched the Columbian exchange between the Old and New Worlds. A core aim of the book is to critique discourses that homogenize the islands of the Caribbean, such as tourism. Media coverage of the devastation wrought in 2017 by Hurricanes Irma, Jose, and Maria likewise underlines this book's timeliness and relevance.

Keegan and Hofman depict Caribbean archaeology as a kaleidoscope—dynamic, colourful, and ever changing—an approach that is potentially useful in all manner of studies about islands. Rather than the name West Indies, bestowed on the region by British colonialism, the authors favour the term Caribbean islands to refer to the six archipelagos. They argue that the history of this sea of islands makes more sense if maps of the Caribbean are drawn with the east at the top rather than the north. This reorientation reflects their aim of looking at the past differently. Why, for example, was Jamaica settled as recently as AD 500, when the oldest archaeological sites on Cuba, Hispaniola, and Puerto Rico date to the fifth millennium BC, and people travelled between the American mainland and other islands around 5000 years ago? The authors address such questions through a close reading of archaeological evidence, eschewing previous archaeological practice of relying on the views of Europeans who lived in the islands. Traditional practices in the discipline are problematic because they follow a continental model that does not fit island studies and island circumstances.

As someone with a deep interest in the Pacific world, I was surprised that scholars have paid scant attention to how people reached the Caribbean islands. This hiatus appears to result from a Eurocentric approach of taking Spanish sources as the starting point for asking who were the ancestors of the Taíno who greeted Columbus. There was no linear movement over time from island to island. The authors show how archaeological evidence does not support the theory that the first people island-hopped from south to north; on the contrary, first settlement was in the northern islands, and occurred, they suggest, through waves of migration from Central and South America. Once humans reached Hispaniola around 5000 BC, they surmise that people dispersed from there to Puerto Rico. There is no evidence of human settlement in the Bahamas before AD 700, and this was likely to have been from Cuba.

Through a series of case studies, Keegan and Hofman seek to show that 'Taíno' is an inappropriate label for the various islands' indigenous communities and reflects a misreading of

Spanish sources by historians. As archaeologists, the authors view pottery as more reliable evidence of the islands' past than documents. Indeed, their entire argument is organized around changes in pottery series. This emphasis on archaeological artefacts can be overwhelming for a non-specialist reader. From a historian's perspective, it seems logical that ceramics and pottery styles are as susceptible to misinterpretation by scholars—who are fallible human beings after all—as are Spanish chronicles. Based on findings from archaeological sites, the authors argue that Jamaica was unique in terms of the shapes of pottery vessels and their motifs, a conclusion that challenges interpretations based on reports of Spanish encounters with indigenous people and Columbus's own, sparse accounts. Yet the concluding chapter, 'Caribbean Encounters', draws on the surviving transcription of Columbus's *Diario* of 1492-93 to critique Columbus's use of the term *Caribes* to describe the indigenous inhabitants of the Bahamas, Cuba, and Hispaniola. Evidently this is because 'Carib' was a pejorative term that distinguished 'bad' from 'good' indigenes or Indians.

Where *The Caribbean before Columbus* therefore struggles is in the apparent acceptance of the name 'Taíno' as a classification in the concluding chapter, despite rejection of this term as inappropriate because of its glossing of uniformity rather than diversity, and despite the claim that there were no 'Taíno'. The book capitulates to the entrenched use of this classification in the literature, even while the authors object to the continued use of the descriptions 'Taíno' and 'Carib' in schools throughout the Caribbean. This tug of war with archaeological practice is confusing. Are we to accept the Spanish accounts after all?

The authors' critique of their discipline, on the other hand, offers insights for island studies in general. Their book's value to island studies lies in the avoidance of Eurocentrism and the quest for diversity. It also lies in the focus on small islands as well as on large islands, because small island settlements played pivotal roles in colonization, the use of resources, defence, access to larger islands, 'viewscape' or aspect, and rituals. Strikingly, small islands provided superior access to marine resources for fishing communities.

As an historian who teaches a class on 'The Making of the Modern World' that features Columbus and how the Spanish conquistadors used the islands of Hispaniola and Cuba as a springboard to the conquest of Mesoamerica, I was keen to read this book to learn about the Caribbean before Columbus. Much of the archaeological evidence was difficult to absorb. It was fascinating to learn, however, how little we know about the Caribbean's people before Columbus. Take demographic estimates of the population of Hispaniola at the time of Spanish conquest, which range from 60,000 to 14 million. Such extreme low and high counts render estimates of indigenous population decline from the 1490s guesstimates at best. As elsewhere, indigenous people were decimated through their encounter with Europeans, but in the islands of the Caribbean as in Tasmania, they were not driven to extinction.

Keegan and Hofman have written a book that will be most relevant in its detail to Archaeology as a discipline. Nonetheless, those with an interdisciplinary interest in our 'world of islands' will find how, before Europeans colonized the archipelagos of the Caribbean, the islands were already diverse. In deep time, small was preferred. Island dwellers still know that.

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