

only secondarily on sectarian issues. The haphazard, often off-hand and ill-informed if well-intentioned impositions and benefits of colonial rule under Britain and New Zealand are recounted, together with the later developments — especially large-scale migration to New Zealand, gradual and limited self-government, and so back to modern Tokelau.

This structure might be seen as experimental, but it works. The approach is clearly explained at the outset; the linkages forward and back in time, and from one atoll to the other, and to the outside, are clear. Despite external influences, the borrowings and adaptations (Christianity, the Samoan *aumaga*, and even Kilikit, for example), the strength of tradition and the Tokelauan way of seeing and being is confidently stated by the authors and their informants. The focus is on being Tokelauan in Tokelau; little is said about being Tokelauan in New Zealand or on the anthropological debates of recent years that have informed, but do not intrude into, what is presented here.

*Tokelau* has a contemporary focus and significance, although based on an ethnographic present of the early 1970s when the authors' research was most concentrated. It moves easily between being an account for those who wish to study Tokelau in a formal sense and being one for those who would try to understand its history and the nature of its society without the necessity for a formal academic framework. The text is lightly but sufficiently documented, with substantial notes and bibliography appended. The prose is relaxed, with the authors taking the time to provide examples, present alternatives, explore ideas, and ponder the relative values of conflicting interpretations. With assistance from Creative New Zealand, the book has been handsomely produced and well illustrated. The format allows a generosity and quality of presentation that is unusual in modern academic publishing — the photographs and side-bar illustrations have been well-selected, and the captions used to enhance the text.

*Tokelau* demonstrates the mutual benefit of close co-operation between researchers and subjects, the possibilities that lie within constructive partnerships in the writing of island, tribal or local histories, and the mechanisms by which small communities can be used to illustrate wider themes while their identity is, at the same time, protected against absorption into the concerns of larger political entities. Huntsman and Hooper have sought to 'capture' Tokelau in a way that will have meaning for its people and to present it sympathetically, but with a degree of detachment, to a wider audience. This is no easy task but they have succeeded beyond reasonable expectation; at the end, their 'ethnographic history' is just that — and the often debated boundaries between history and anthropology seem irrelevant.

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*Visions and Realities: France in the Pacific 1695–1995.* By John Dunmore. Heritage Press, Waikanae, 1997. 320 pp. NZ price: \$29.95. ISBN 0-908708-41-6.

*THE FRENCH PACIFIC* is ill-provided for in English-language sources. John Dunmore's unassuming book goes a long way towards making good this deficiency. *Visions and Realities* will be a useful addition to university libraries, undergraduate reading lists, and the personal libraries of those whose interests fall anywhere between casual and specialized.

As the title implies, Dunmore attempts to be comprehensive, and in spanning three centuries of French contact, the emphasis is on continuity. The book begins with a prologue on early modern conceptualizations of the world, and the penultimate chapter discusses the vision of the Pacific in French literature and culture. The bulk of the book follows a sensible, chronological framework, beginning with incidental maritime ventures into the Pacific as early as the seventeenth century, through commercially and strategically motivated voyages in the eighteenth century, culminating with the great scientific voyages of the eighteenth century, of which the greatest was the uncompleted voyage of La Pérouse. The systematic and less well-known expeditions of the nineteenth century are also covered, overlapping with early missionary efforts by French subjects and the pre-colonial political interventions largely occasioned thereby.

Exploration is Dunmore's forte, and he has published extensively on this subject elsewhere. This expertise spills over into the present book, and takes up a disproportionate part of it. The imbalance is not altogether unwelcome, because the substantial scientific contributions, to say nothing of the extraordinary human achievements of endurance and pertinacity, and the humane tradition of French explorers, appear to be generally underrated in books in English. So is the continuity of early French interest in the Pacific.

In his treatment of missions and colonialism, Dunmore stands apart from the conventional hostility which characterizes much writing about the French in the Pacific. The basic story of how France came to have Pacific possessions is well told, and placed deftly into the context of global and French politics and changing historical circumstances. Relatively less is said about the development of colonial policy and about colonial politics, economic development and social change. These matters are covered less comprehensively than the specialist might desire, and generally without criticism. Dunmore appreciates the difficulties faced by administrators remote from the sources of their authority, and sees no point in moralizing about what they did and what they failed to do. More important to this account is the vision of the more clear-sighted administrators and what they managed to accomplish in terms of that vision. Consequently, Dunmore presents a stronger case than usual in appreciation of the French achievement in developing its Pacific territories and their populations before World War II.

The role of the French territories during World War II is discussed mainly in terms of the dilemma over contested authority between Vichy-ists and Gaullists, with the American occupation as a secondary theme. In introducing the post-war reforms, Dunmore rightly stresses the continuity with pre-war policies rather than playing up the direct influence of the war as a watershed. This interpretation likewise goes against the grain of much Pacific historiography. The post-war period, with its acceleration of economic development, social change, and political contests, is dealt with briefly, but clearly and expertly. Dunmore concludes by placing French colonialism in the long context of human history, which is, after all, the record of one colonizing process after another. For all the commonly recited evils of colonialism, most of the better-known newcomers to the Pacific were high-minded people whose idealism and generosity have not only driven the process of modernization but have done much to ameliorate its effects. Overall, he argues, '[France's] achievements far outweigh the occasional lapses and errors.'

Dunmore's book is welcome, and not just because it challenges much of the received outlook on the French Pacific. His revisionist perspective is overdue and merits attention, and this it is sure to receive because of the accessibility of his presentation. The book is unpretentious: it is relatively short (about 120,000 words) considering its scope; it is written clearly and with a light touch, burdened neither with pedantry nor convoluted. It is largely based on secondary sources, but Dunmore has used them intelligently, going beyond merely paraphrasing them. The book has neither footnotes nor a consolidated bibliography, but there is a bibliographic essay for each chapter, which will be particularly

useful for those wanting access to the literature in French. The book is intended to be a brief, synoptic introduction to its subject, a summary of present knowledge. That in itself is a fairly bold enterprise, and one in which I think the author has been conspicuously successful.

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*An Eye for Country: The Life and Work of Leslie Adkin.* By Anthony Dreaver. Victoria University Press, Wellington, 1997. 288pp. NZ price: \$49.95. ISBN 0-86473-319-4.

'PROF COTTON got up to annihilate me but found he had to agree with much of my thesis . . . Fyfe kindly congratulated me on what he called a very good effort — the highest praise from him. So 36 years later it seems that I have vindicated my thesis' (p.207). Leslie Adkin confided this personal triumph to his diary in May 1947. While revealing something of the bitter debate which often raged in local scientific circles, this statement also provides a valuable insight into the rich and varied life of one of our little-known intellectual forebears. In *An Eye for Country*, Wellington teacher and historian Anthony Dreaver recounts in fascinating detail the life and times of Leslie Adkin, geologist, photographer, anthropologist, archaeologist, historian, tramp, husband, father, and meticulous field-worker.

Adkin was in many ways the epitome of the 'amateur scholar' — one of the unacknowledged players in our intellectual history. Although largely self-taught and mainly active outside professional and academic institutions, he made important contributions in the fields of New Zealand geology, anthropology and local history. Adkin was born in Wellington in 1888 and lived most of his 76 years in the Horowhenua region. He contributed four books and over 50 published papers to New Zealand science. A critical student of nature, he glossed over nothing and all details were subject to his close scrutiny. Adkin seems, however, to have had difficulty accommodating himself to the increasing professionalization of the scientific disciplines. He remained a lone wolf, who resented the authority endowed by a university qualification. While he was respected in geological circles, Adkin's contribution to archaeology was more equivocal. Dreaver notes, for instance, that his death did not even rate a mention in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, a publication that Adkin had long supported. Adkin was no latter-day Elsdon Best: his relations with Maori existed on a very formal and impersonal level. He seems to have had little interest in the contemporary situation of Maori and had no qualms about appropriating tribal knowledge to form a theory of cultural succession; as Dreaver notes, 'the "tradition" Adkin professed to protect was that of Smith and Best, rather than of the Maori people who were its heirs' (p.254). He was first and foremost a scientist, empathizing with the landscape rather than its inhabitants. Adkin's photography, however, reveals a more personal side. While he found much of his inspiration in the environs of the Horowhenua region, Adkin's photographs are of people, not just landscapes. Surprisingly engaging, they are often humorous and at times curiously personal. A keen tramp, he also mapped large tracts of the Tararua Ranges.

*An Eye for Country* provides a personalized perspective on the colonization of the New Zealand landscape, through the processes of redefining, examining and exploring its terrain. Dreaver's portrayal of Adkin recalls Kerry Howe's biography of Tregear, where