

and the wool trade also serve to remind us of the central importance of economic history.

The book contains several appendices, eighteen tables, various maps, and a full bibliography. Most of his primary sources relate to the pastoral industry in New South Wales before 1840, and it is here that some of his original material is most impressive. The rest of the book is organized in terms of his argument and is less thoroughly based on primary sources. There can be little doubt, however, that the main thrust of this book, and of 'developmental' historiography, is of great importance not only in understanding Australian history but New Zealand's as well. McMichael's book ought to be read by anybody who teaches either subject.

ERIK OLSEN

Otago University

Matanitū : The Struggle for Power in early Fiji. By David Routledge. University of the South Pacific, Suva, 1985. U.S. price: \$20.00 hard cover; \$9.00 paperback.

MATANITŪ is the latest of a number of recent publications on the history of Fiji. Its essential concern is with the hundred or so years from the late 18th century (just prior to the earliest widespread contact with Europeans) through to 1874 when an unconditional offer of cession from the Fijian chiefs saw the establishment of a British Crown Colony.

In the first third of the book, the focus is on developments within the Fijian polity, especially the emergence of *matanitū*, or large chiefly confederations, from which the book takes its name. While Routledge's major concentration here is on Fijian politics, this necessarily involves a consideration of European involvement in Fijian politics, the growth of trade, the impact of firearms, and the general implications of a small but nonetheless significant European presence. But the author concentrates on the fortunes of Bau, which eventually triumphed and had its pre-eminence legitimated by colonial rule; Rewa, Bau's main rival on Vitilevu; and Lau, which was the conduit for the growing Tongan influence throughout the first three-quarters of the 19th century. He also makes extensive use of Shelley Sayes's pioneering work using oral history from Cakaudrove; this adds to the discussion an additional dimension which is missing from other sections based heavily on the more conventional 19th century accounts, both published and in manuscript.

Having given the conventional description of 'traditional' Fijian society, tracing the hierarchy of political units up to the *vanua*, or federation, Routledge asserts: 'Towards the end of the eighteenth century, a new order of federation developed, as powerful chiefs increased still further the sphere of their influence by conquest and the formalization of tributary or even less dignified relationships for the conquered. *Matanitū*, as these 'confederations' were called, were flexible and fragile alliances, requiring to be held together by main force.' (p. 28)

While there is no doubt that the first half of the 19th century was a period of great turmoil, the case for a new scale of confederation has been asserted rather than proved and the author has thus missed the opportunity to probe deeply into one of the major issues facing historians of culture contact in the Pacific Islands. He shows how marriage alliances and *vasu* relationships (under which a man could claim assistance from his mother's family, especially her brothers) were exploited by ambitious chiefs, but this was not new. In the treatment of the 1850s and 1860s, Routledge spends a great deal of time discussing developments

affecting and affected by European settlers, but he dismisses as 'superficial' any appearance of European inspiration for political developments (p. 213). Yet he offers no alternative explanation. The implication that the political expansionism represented by the emergence of *matanitū* was unprecedented but in some way merely evolutionary is hardly satisfactory. The basic question is all but ignored: *why*, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, was the hegemonic expansion which he describes able to exceed the 'traditional' limits, whatever they might have been?

Routledge sees 'the battle of Kaba' of 1855 as the climax of the Bau-Rewa wars, and as a crucial turning point for Fiji. From this time until 1874, he says, Fijians, Tongans and Europeans were locked in a struggle for political dominance. Thus, the competition between Cakobau and Ma'afu, their allies and rivals, is overlain with an account of the interests and policies of the powers, the machinations of consuls, the greed of planters; there is discussion of race relations, economic development and, in less detail, the problems of land and labour. Most of *Matanitū* covers the 1860s and early 1870s, a field of Fiji's history that has been tilled frequently by historians, and little that is new has shown through the surface on this occasion.

There are problems with presentation as well as content. In the text, distances are in miles, on the maps they are in kilometres. Items by Clunie, Horn, Palmer, Pritchard, Scarr and Waterhouse appear in the References but not the Bibliography. There is inconsistency in the citation of works within the References, and between General and Contemporary Sources in the Bibliography. There are errors in citation — for example Sayes's 'Cakaudrove: Ideology and Reality...' appears as 'Idea and Reality...' in the Bibliography. Numerous individuals (for example the missionary Langham, and some of Cakobau's Ministers) appear in the text but not in the Index. And the Index itself is littered with misplaced entries. The clearest symbol of editorial deficiency is the missing macron from *Matanitū* on the title page itself.

Matanitū must be found wanting, not merely for these shortcomings in its presentation but because of the missed opportunities in its subject matter.

BARRIE MacDONALD

Massey University