

unclear. It is one that Tom Brooking has thrown into clearer perspective by putting ideas at the centre of a biography of a political leader frequently and erroneously praised for his lack of them.

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Outcasts of the Gods? The Struggle over Slavery in Māori New Zealand. By Hazel Petrie. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2015. 406pp. \$45.00. ISBN: 9781869408305.

Nine years after the release of Hazel Petrie's *Chiefs of Industry*, which has become the standard text on Māori entrepreneurial activity in the early colonial period, her *Outcasts of the Gods* has been published. This is a comprehensively researched work addressing an important aspect of Māori society. Most of the book deals with the early colonial period, but there is also insightful analysis of the pre-contact era.

One of the accomplishments of this book is the way in which Petrie navigates through traditional and colonial sources – created both by Māori and Pākehā – with careful attention to the cultural contexts from which these sources emerged. This task is made all the more intricate by the numerous and shifting definitions of slavery employed by various groups over the period under review. As Petrie concedes, 'inconsistencies in vocabulary or the way in which words were applied ... [have] a major part to play in confounding the evidence' (p.324).

Despite these challenges, Petrie offers an informed and balanced overview of the broad nature of slavery in Māori society. In the course of the book, she demonstrates both that the notion of a slave in English is too general to apply to a variety of categories of captives in traditional and early colonial Māori society, and that it tends to conjure images of African-American slavery, which is misleading in the New Zealand context. The work draws mainly on sources either written or transcribed by Europeans, but Petrie succeeds in extracting insights from their core, while leaving the husk of colonial-era Pākehā prejudices behind.

Partly because this is relatively little-explored territory, there are comparatively few historiographical issues to contend with. This leaves Petrie free to examine the incidents, nature, extent and conceptions of Māori 'slavery' in considerable detail. Part of this examination extends to an exploration of the bearing that traditional Māori cultural and religious values had on the practice of slavery. This sometimes throws up some counter-intuitive results, such as the reasonably common practices of slaves being free to return to their home community, of marriages between slaves and free people, and of some slaves preferring to remain in the communities of their captors even when there was no longer any compulsion to do so.

There are very occasional shortcomings in *Outcasts of the Gods*. Petrie's description, for example, of early nineteenth-century New Zealand as 'an abnormal

period in history' (p.6) presumes that there is a 'normal' period against which other eras can be measured. Likewise, as slavery, and particularly perceptions of the term, are at the heart of the book, it would have been worthwhile for Petrie to survey in slightly more detail the considerable recent historiography on the British abolitionist movement, and how some of these themes might be transposed to the New Zealand experience. Also, Heke's rebellion against the Crown is conflated with a general Northern Māori feeling of being betrayed by the British (p.293). However, the conflict was more nuanced, with many more Ngāpuhi fighting for the Crown against Heke.

More generally, some portions of the book are light on theoretical context. For example, the critical role of unequal exchange in the economic relationship between New South Wales and New Zealand from the early 1820s could have been examined more closely, especially because of the effect it had on the demand for labour in some Māori communities at that time (something which Belich has touched on). Paul Baran, Andre Gunder Frank, Fernando Cardoso and Immanuel Wallerstein have all contributed to the debate over how racism and exploitation became organizing principles of colonial economies, and their perspectives could have offered some insights into the changes in the nature of Māori slavery in the colonial era. In a similar vein, the modernization processes that affected traditional and colonial economies, which have been given considerable attention in the works of Neil Smelser and Walt Rostow, could have extended the conceptual framework for some of the material in this work.

These minor issues aside, Petrie deserves praise for such a thorough study of this important aspect of Māori history. The publisher deserves recognition for this work too, particularly for the generous quantity of colour pictures. Sometimes illustrated sections of history books are treated like a rushed afterthought, but here, careful attention has been paid to the selection of images, many of which (as far as I know) have not previously been published.

One of the great achievements of *Outcasts of the Gods* is the important contribution it makes to the broader understanding of some of the social dynamics of New Zealand's precolonial and colonial periods. Through this close study of Māori slavery, many otherwise little-known aspects of the way Māori society functioned in these eras are illuminated.

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At the Margin of Empire: John Webster and Hokianga, 1841–1900. By Jennifer Ashton. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2015. 270pp. NZ price: \$50.00. ISBN: 9781869408251.

New Zealand historians have tackled some difficult topics over the last three decades, completing incisive studies and analysis of events like The Treaty of Waitangi; the