

occupations, the high degree of self-regard that characterizes the US military leads it to believe that it is invariably righteous *and* justified in whatever it does (“Honour Bound to Defend Freedom,” reads the sign at the entry to the Guantanamo base). As this path-breaking work amply demonstrates, however, there is, finally, nothing new under the sun.

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**TATAU: A History of Sāmoan Tattooing.** *By Sean Mallon and Sébastien Galliot.* Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2018. 327 pp. (Maps, B&W photos, coloured photos, illustrations.) US\$80.00, cloth. ISBN 978-0-8248-7849-8.

This book is a homage to tatau, honouring its deep socio-political significance and central mediating role in Sāmoan culture, past and present. As much as this is a social anthropological account, however, it is also a paean to tatau as a high art form, to the tufuga ta tatau who create these remarkably beautiful marks on the skin as well as the contemporary artists who wear and celebrate them. Indeed, many of the images reproduced in the book have adorned the walls of art galleries in and beyond Oceania.

Authors Sean Mallon and Sébastien Galliot organize the five chapters chronologically, each examining a different time frame in the 3000 years of Samoan tatau: the ancient traces of tatau, European encounters and observations (1722–1900), persistence and change (1900–2000), tatau as a ritual institution (2000–2010) and tatau and its globalization (2000–2017). It is not a linear approach, however, as the authors foreground an Indigenous narrative in which people, encounters, and events continually interact with ancestors, oral traditions, and dynamic kinship formations. The text is ethnographically rich, highlighting an empathetic engagement with interlockers, both authors having conducted extensive field research in Sāmoa, the home of Sean’s grandfather. It is also an inclusive text, incorporating the writings and reflections of Indigenous scholars and artists such as Maualaivao Albert Wendt, who notes that the male tautau, the pe’a, is named after the flying fox, and that tatau and malu (female tatau) are expressive of the Samoan concept of vā: the space that relates, holding separate entities and things holistically together, giving context and meaning (154). Selina Tusitala Marsh writes of her diasporic relationship with malu, and the understanding that “tatau is believed by many to be a gateway through which to learn more about one’s culture—after the fact, not before” (285).

The book is dense in tatau detail—drawing from material culture, historical, and ethnographic evidence—interwoven with a number of critical themes: Indigenous cultural continuity; the tension between local and global; ceremony and ritual; genealogy and extended kinship systems and the art of tatau. As a marker of Indigenous continuity, tatau has outlasted missionization

and a colonial encounter heavily implicated in cultural erasure, suggesting the embeddedness of tatau in Sāmoan ways of life and its ability to transcend diasporic fractures. That tatau's cultural value, for instance, intensified after independence in 1962, is suggestive of a cultural florescence rather than a revival. The tension between globalization, cultural appropriation, and loss, on one side, and cultural integrity, authenticity, and tradition, on the other, is put into play throughout the book. It is apparent, for example, in Sāmoan discomfort over the perceived commercialization of tatau, where money rather than the exchange of customary goods is used to compensate services, and the tattooing of non-Sāmoans, particularly pālagai (Europeans). The response of Su'a Sulu'ape Paulo II, whose family is one of the two tufuga ta tatau titleholders, is one which legitimizes these changes within Samoan tradition, reasserts his authority over the *suafa tā pe'a* (tattooing) title, and recognizes the pragmatic requirement for cash in his migrant home in South Auckland (147). It is also apparent in the use of traditional hand-tapping tools, or *masini* (machines) and *lama* made from candlenut soot or Indian ink (157). The authors' analysis suggests that the opposition of global and local, tradition and innovation, authenticity and inauthenticity provide false dichotomies. Tatau now circulates on global cultural flows, and it has "transformed to continue to meet the changing needs of Sāmoan people" (299); indeed, from the 1990s, "the most active instigators of change were Sāmoans seeking to be tattooed" (146).

At the same time as tatau has been globalized, Sāmoans have actively sought to protect certain sociocultural and artistic features, and in this they have been relatively successful. For instance, while *taulima*, the tattooed armband, is ubiquitous, appearing on flash art in tattoo studios worldwide, homogenized as a Polynesian or neotribal style, the *pe'a* and *malu* are shielded from this market, their markings retaining distinctive ceremonial rites of passage and extended family significance. And while there has been a proliferation of tattooists adorning Sāmoan and non-Sāmoan skin with tatau, value is attached to *fa'aasāmoa* modes of transferring knowledge and those with the genealogical links to educate and practice (193). Indeed, the negotiation of these spheres is linked to the traditional art of *'aiga* (extended family) politicking. That the global tattooing community is to some extent cognizant of and compliant with these hierarchies is, arguably, suggestive of "Sāmoanization."

This book is an in-depth anthropological and technical account of tatau through the ages. It is also, crucially, an Indigenous upending. Sean Mallon's observation at the 2001 international tattoo convention in 'Upolu in 2001, destabilizes the colonial gaze: "Samoans in attendance were standing at the periphery of the event and staring at the tattooed Europeans ... in a complete turnaround, tatau—a familiar sight for Sāmoans—had become on European skin an almost foreign and exotic 'curiosity'" (247). A similarly effective mobilization of tatau is illustrated in photographer Greg Semu's

“The Last Cannibal Supper”; the artist, adorned with tatau and surrounded by twelve disciples, openly mocks the tradition of positioning tribal people as ethnographic spectacle.

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**THE MELANESIAN WORLD.** *The Routledge Worlds. Edited by Eric Hirsch and Will Rollason.* London; New York: Routledge [Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business], 2019. xviii, 577 pp. (Tables, figures, maps, B&W photos, illustration.) US\$250.00, cloth. ISBN 978-1-138-69371-5.

In the topography of Melanesian studies, this latest addition to the Routledge “Worlds” series is a significant waypoint, an occasion to take stock of the current configuration of the field, and—at least for the historically minded—a moment in which to reflect on how that field has evolved. The editors, London-based anthropologists Eric Hirsch and Will Rollason, have managed to assemble 34 chapters from 39 authors (no mean feat in itself), which together cover a considerable spread of the available topics. The resulting collection is encyclopaedic, in the good sense of the term, and available online as individual chapters, which secures its future as an invaluable teaching resource.

The Melanesian world is first and foremost a Melanesian-ist world, defined by those who make Melanesia their object of study. Its boundaries are famously but productively elastic, reflecting the very different agendas to which the region has been recruited. The editors opt here to work within the borders of the contemporary polities of Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu, with New Caledonia, West Papua, and the Torres Strait Islands thrown in; Fiji is excluded, as are the Papuan-speaking enclaves of eastern Indonesia. Who then are the Melanesianists of this collection? Overwhelmingly anthropologists (29), it would seem, with geographers (4) and scholars from other disciplines in supporting roles; and almost all anglophone. While this might be taken to reflect the personal interests and networks of the editors, I suspect it is also an accurate reflection of the contemporary Melanesianist constituency; Melanesia as a frame for analysis simply has less resonance now for historians, ecologists, and archaeologists. Compare the spread of disciplines in what is perhaps the precursor to this volume, the 1982 collection *Melanesia: Beyond Diversity* edited by Ron May and Hank Nelson (Canberra: Australian National University)—with 8 anthropologists, 11 historians, 7 linguists, 12 geographers and demographers, 5 archaeologists, and 6 political scientists—and note the almost four decades that have elapsed since, underscoring the need for a new overview. Finally, none of the authors in the present volume, to the best of my knowledge, identifies as Melanesian, which is an enduring and unfortunate limitation of the field.