

Dolphin, which was incorporated into a powerful *maro 'ura* (red feather girdle) from the *marae* Taputapuata (Salmond 2009:85), or the portrait of Captain Cook often used to summon his *mana* during important rituals (e.g., Salmond 2011:158-159). Furthermore, just as Europeans were trading for Tahitian objects with the hopes of making a profit by selling to wealthy gentlemen looking to augment their collections, Tobin, one of the officers on the *Providence*, noted that there were Tahitians with their own “cabinets of curiosities”, notably Pomare II, eventual paramount of the island, likely also accumulating western objects in order to appropriate their power (Salmond 2011:373).

Finally, these two books are remarkable as histories of European exploration and discovery in that they do not focus exclusively, or even primarily on Europeans. Polynesians are recognized as equal participants in cross-cultural interactions, rather than as passive observers or victims as is typical of much colonial historiography. Naturally, the books are about Europeans such as Wallis, Bougainville, Banks, Cook, Boenechea, and Bligh, but they are also about the Tahitians Tu, 'Itia, Teri'irere, Vehiatua, and Pomare. From the first moments of contact, Tahitians and Europeans formed friendships (most powerfully in the *taio* bond, which involved a partial merging of identities), some of which were sustained over decades, especially with Bligh (“Parai”) and Cook (“Tute”) who visited the islands repeatedly. Friendship is a crucial, but underexplored aspect of culture contact, and Salmond has contributed a useful account of the ways that this type of bond has shaped world history. More typically emphasized in the history of colonialism in the Pacific are the sexual and sometimes romantic encounters between European sailors and Polynesian women. Salmond provides a sensitive but realistic account of these entanglements and how they shaped the way each culture viewed the other (especially in the European view of Tahiti as an earthly paradise), even making a convincing argument that the *Bounty* mutiny was largely motivated by the romantic attachments that the sailors serving under Bligh formed during their stay in Tahiti. Overall, the strength of Salmond's approach to historical anthropology, in top form in both *Aphrodite's Island* and *Bligh*, lies in her ethnographic sensitivity to both Polynesians and Europeans, in interpreting the ways that people's cultural perspectives, practices, and traditions shaped the history of these dramatic and often world-changing encounters.

Richards, Rhys. *The Austral Islands: History, Art and Art History*.



Porirua: Paremata Press, 2012. 236 pp, 145 illustrations (30 in color). ISBN: 978-0-473188-86-3. NZD\$50 (softcover). To order, email mrhys@paradise.net.nz.

Review by Jennifer M. Huebert,
University of Auckland

This is a nicely illustrated volume on the art and history of the Austral Islands. Many of the artifacts featured within are in museum and private collections across the UK and USA, and most were collected by foreign visitors during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The items reviewed in this volume include wooden paddles, *tapa* cloth, wooden drums, various ivory and other wood carvings, and mixed-media objects including several headdresses.

The book is divided into three sections. The first part, which accounts for about half of the book, consists of observations made by early foreign visitors to the Austral Islands. These visits began with Captain Cook, who first approached Rurutu in 1769. Though he did not land, Joseph Banks noted the islanders' intricately carved weapons and canoes, colorfully decorated *tapa* cloth capes, and feather headdresses. It was not until the *Bounty* mutineers came to Tubuai in 1789 that any sustained interaction with the Austral Islanders occurred, and so the first extended description of the islanders was recorded in the journal of James Morrison (1935). After 1800, visits by foreigners steadily increased; first by whaling ships needing provisions and merchants looking for sandalwood, and then by missionaries who spent time on the islands of Ra'ivavae, Rurutu and Tubuai. These early visitors to Tubuai provided detailed accounts of the daily life and customs of the islanders, and numerous passages quoted in the book are from their journals. The isolated southern island in this archipelago, Rapa, was visited occasionally, and those contacts are summarized. Throughout these first chapters on island history, the author highlights relevant descriptions of artifacts seen and collected by early foreign visitors. The first section concludes with author's commentary on the challenges of studying objects well out of their cultural context, a particular challenge in locations such as this where many traditional arts were not widely practiced by the late 19th century.

Part two of this book consists of 21 pages of color plates illustrating the elaborately carved tall wooden

drums and canoe paddles that the Austral Islands are noted for. It also showcases carved objects of ivory, feather headdresses, the well-known A'a carved wooden figure, and samples of patterned *tapa* cloth.

Part three is a collection of art history essays. The section begins with chapters on carved wooden paddles, *tapa* cloth and carved wooden drums. Over 500 paddles were personally examined by the author, and some nice examples are presented here along with illustrations of the various motifs found on these intricately carved objects. The islanders' prolific production of very fine, colored *tapa* cloth was noted by many early visitors, though today only a few specimens remain. Each of the *tapa* cloths (sometimes only small fragments) available for study are described and illustrated. There is also a brief chapter on the tall wooden drums of the Australs. Many of these ornately carved objects are pictured throughout the volume, and they have been classified and described here with the assistance of a specialist. The renowned figure A'a, a carving profusely decorated with other tiny figures, is also given a chapter in which Hooper's (2006) work and historical accounts of the object's removal from Rurutu are summarized. Finally, this section includes brief chapters on the similarities between some Austral and Cook Island artifacts, a comparison of the Kaitaia lintel and the Austral Island-style canoe sterns, and a passage about the large stone adzes that have been found in archaic sites in East Polynesia and New Zealand.

This self-published work brings together some original research and a number of papers that the author has previously published or presented. Photographs and illustrations are used liberally throughout the book, and they are well-indexed. A minor criticism is that some of the artifact inventories could have been relegated to an appendix rather than occurring as lengthy tables within the chapters. Also, some of the journal passages that are quoted – while interesting reading – are at times very lengthy and should have been summarized. A larger criticism is that while this is an impressive collection of facts and photographs, discussions are uneven. Also, the last few chapters are not well developed and seem somewhat out of place, and the book lacks a concluding chapter or synthesis. Finally, the reader should note that some of the artifacts pictured in this volume are only tentatively attributed to the Australs.

Overall, this is one of very few works to focus solely on the traditional arts of the Austral Islands. The book should have broad appeal due to its many vivid illustrations, and it is a useful introduction to the history of one of the lesser-known Polynesian archipelagos. The author hopes it will enable Austral Islanders to understand more about their own pre-colonial heritage, and this book shows us that their artistic traditions are certainly something to be proud of.

References

- Hooper, S. 2006. *Pacific Encounters Art & Divinity in Polynesia, 1760-1860*. Wellington: Te Papa Press.
Morrison, J. 1935. *The journal of James Morrison, boatswain's mate of the Bounty*. London: The Golden Cockerel Press.

Grant Peterkin, James. *A Companion to Easter Island: A Concise Guide to the History, Culture and Individual Archaeological Sites of Rapa Nui*.



Self-published, 2010. 170 pp.
ISBN: 978-9-563326-41-3
(softcover). US\$33.99; Kindle
edition US\$9.99. Available
from www.amazon.com.

Review by Susie Stephen,
Cameras for Culture

Apparent from the opening pages of this book is the inherent Rapa Nui knowledge that the author possesses. There cannot be many people in this world who have spent as much time on the island, studied linguistics, and worked as a guide to the same degree as Grant Peterkin, which makes for reassuring reading.

By giving a brief history and chronology of the island's formation at the start of the book, the reader is immediately introduced to the complexity of Polynesia. Within the first paragraph of the introduction, Grant Peterkin refreshingly talks about the Rapanui story as one ultimately of survival. It brings to mind Isabel Allende's 'The House of Spirits', in which survival is seen as a miracle.

The author is careful to bring to the reader's attention the natural bias of some of the early European accounts about the island, and is also clear to state that the early accounts may not have seen all there was to see on the island, stating on p. 18 that "... The moai that they saw were apparently still standing." On p. 20, an interesting point is made about the toppling of the statues, and by comparing the action to a contemporary reference (i.e., the Iraq War), a modern day scenario provides a graspable parallel.

First mention of the birdman competition does not arrive until p. 21, a topic which I personally think could have been mentioned earlier in the book. Including the birdman era in the timeline could help visitors to place it within the context of the island's history, but to different readers this may not be important.

Grant Peterkin sensitively takes on the subject of 'The Cutting Down of the Trees'. In just two short