

## BOOK REVIEWS SECTION

**Rebecca Adler-Nissen and Ulrik Pram Gad (eds.) (2013). *European integration and postcolonial sovereignty games: The EU Overseas Countries and Territories*. Abingdon: Routledge. xxx+252pp, ISBN-13: 978-0-415-65727-3 (hbk) £80. ISBN: 13:978-0-203-07684-2 (ebk).**

The thrust to independence for the remaining colonies slowly ground to a halt in the last part of the Twentieth century. In consequence there now remain a good number of mostly island territories for which sovereign independence is no longer seen as an option. Twenty five of these have a unique relationship with the European Union (EU) defined by the term 'Overseas Countries and Territories' (OCT), eleven of which are British, six French, six Dutch and one Danish. Under the terms of the Overseas Association Decision (OAD) adopted in 2001, the OCT have a special and unique relationship with the EU which provides them with preferential trading arrangements and very modest levels of development assistance, among other benefits. The OAD is now under consideration for revision as of the end of 2013. It and the OCT relationship with the EU is little known in the EU and little discussed in the OCT or within the EU member states to which they are associated. It has equally been ignored by the academic community. This book by Adler-Nissen and Gad is the first comprehensive comparative study of the OCT relationship with a particular focus on the triangular relationship linking together the OCT at one corner, the European Commission at another and the member states to which the OCT are linked at the third. It seeks to set out, via theoretical considerations and a number of case studies, the nature of the relationship and come to conclusions on the meaning of sovereignty as exemplified by the practice of the OCT and the EU.

The book is essentially in two parts. The first five chapters and the Conclusion deal with general and theoretical issues discussing sovereignty, the nature of the EU, the experience of micropolities and the character of the relationship between the OCTs and the Commission. The second part consists largely of case studies of the experiences of British, French, Dutch and Danish OCTs with their respective metropolises and with the EU, framed within some consideration of the wider picture of British and French decolonization policy in particular. The case studies discuss questions of sovereignty and how the relationship with the EU is reflected in current policies and mediated through the relationship each OCT has with its respective metropolitan member state. The picture that emerges is, not surprisingly, highly differentiated and context dependent.

The introduction by Gad and Adler-Nissen focuses on sovereignty and the concept of 'sovereignty games' through which they seek to order the book. A sovereignty game exploits the ambivalent nature of sovereignty in the modern world, seeing sovereignty not as a condition you either 'have' or 'do not have', but rather as one which you may sometimes have and exercise in certain functional areas even if you are not technically sovereign i.e. are not formally recognized as a sovereign state. In their different ways, both the OCTs and the EU play sovereignty games, even though they are not legally 'sovereign'. As such, one can conceptualize OCTs as 'nation state like polities' which deploy sovereignty games to promote their various interests both with the EU and with their respective metropolises. The purpose of the book is to identify and analyse such games.

The other ‘non-sovereign’ player of ‘sovereignty games’ is the EU. In his chapter, MacAmhlaigh identifies the EU as a ‘late sovereign’ entity which challenges existing notions of sovereignty through the promotion of integration processes which increasingly shape the nature of policy within its member states. The EU also embodies an increasing measure of ‘institutional autonomy’ which allows it to formulate and execute policies in its own right. ‘Late sovereignty’ does not eclipse traditional sovereignty, what he terms ‘high sovereignty’, but instead complements it and introduces the possibility of the EU interacting with other ‘autonomous’ entities like the OCTs to play extensive sovereignty games: “OCTS can therefore play late sovereignty games as non-sovereign state actors, making claims to functional autonomy rather than territorial exclusivity” (p. 47). The terms of the OAD is a particularly good example of ‘functional arrangements’ amenable to sovereignty games, which also has an explicit legal base in Articles 198 and 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Lisbon Treaty).

The type of functional arrangement open to such games is extensively set out and commented upon in the chapter by Baldacchino. This provides an excellent summary of much of his work in recent years examining micropolities and in particular sub-national island jurisdictions (SNIJs) – (his term for non-sovereign territories) – under which all of the OCTs can be grouped. The more economically successful of these follow and promote what Baldacchino describes as a PROFIT model of development. This involves micropolities (SNIJs) ‘nurturing specific, local, jurisdictional powers’ (p. 62) in areas such as migration and citizenship, resource management, overseas engagement, finance, and transportation to tap wealth beyond the metropole to deliver high levels of economic growth. This stands in direct contrast to the other model known as MIRAB which seeks mainly/only to exploit the metropolitan connection for economic assistance and as such leaves the micropolity ultimately dependent upon it. The PROFIT model does not demand sovereignty; rather, it requires a metropole that is willing to allow the SNIJ to develop an ‘arms’ length’ relationship with it without relinquishing the benefits the continuing relationship with the metropole can bring, both tangible and intangible. The best description of such an arrangement is ‘sovereignty association’: “a remarkable pattern of mutual accommodation and convenience between large (often metropolitan) states and their offshore islands” (p. 67) from which both can gain advantage and in which it is in the interests of neither party to push the islands into sovereign independence. It is essentially a contextual and contingent ‘association’ and therefore under constant negotiation between the metropole and SNIJ, but for the moment it remains the best option for such polities.

The final chapter in this section by Hannibal, Holst, Gad and Adler-Nissen explores the direct connection of the OCTs with the EU. This is something on which next-to-nothing has appeared in academic print (this reviewer is, to the best of his knowledge, the only other person to have published academic work on this relationship) and as such it is a welcome study. It begins with an echo of the PROFIT/MIRAB distinction set out above by stating that the EU wants a “late sovereign pooling of resources and responsibilities” with the OCT (akin to PROFIT) while the OCT “insist on the continuation of an asymmetrical dependency relation” (analogous to MIRAB) (p. 78), demonstrating that the distinction of PROFIT and MIRAB is essentially an ‘ideal type’ and that in the real world matters are more complex. Nevertheless, the differences of approach between the two do encourage the playing of sovereignty games by the OCT and the EU and is exemplified in this chapter largely by a focus on the work of the Overseas Countries and Territories Association (OCTA), created by the OCTs in 2001 to

develop their relationship with Brussels, and the promotion of a Green Paper by the European Commission in 2008 to frame the successor to the 2001 OAD. The creation of OCTA as the principal point of contact between the OCTs and the Commission on a formal annual basis has helped to develop and institutionalize the OCT presence in Brussels and has provided a forum for policy dialogue. In itself this is a considerable advance to a relationship which was, prior to this date, almost exclusively carried out via the respective metropole. Similarly, the promotion of the Green Paper and the establishment of an OCT Task Force by the Commission has given the OCTs a greater prominence in Brussels than hitherto. However, this should be seen as complementary to the metropolitan-OCT relationship which, Hannibal et al. argue, is by far the most important to all the OCTs, not a substitute for it. In the triangular relationship explored in this chapter, the OCT-EU leg is the weakest and the OCT-metropole the strongest.

The second part provides case studies of the OCTs. The first element comprises three chapters on the British OCTs. The opening one by Palan explores the importance of the finance industry to SNIJs. In it, he makes the case that the development of SNIJs as offshore financial platforms was primarily the work of the City of London in the interests primarily of British financial circles seeking to escape financial regulation through the promotion of the 'eurodollar' market. It is a convincing argument for SNIJs like the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man; but, in the case of the Caribbean OCTs there is an important North American dimension which also has to be considered and which makes their case slightly different. Indeed, in the chapter that follows by Vlcek on the Cayman Islands, Vlcek insists that the creation and development of the Caymans as an offshore financial centre was largely the work of Canadian and US banking interests and that some Cayman Islands financial entities and some government officials see the City of London as a competitor. This raises interesting questions about whose interests are promoted in such centres. Both Palan and Vlcek discuss the case of the EU Savings Tax Directive (2001) which sought to tax interest paid on foreign savings accounts held by EU citizens. The Cayman Islands government claimed they had not been consulted about it and were disadvantaged by the Directive, and appealed to the European Court of Justice. The ECJ eventually ruled that it was a matter between the Cayman Islands government and the British government, not directly between the EU and the Cayman Islands. As such it reinforces the conclusions, drawn earlier by Hannibal et al., on the importance and strength of the OCT-metropole connection rather than the one between the Commission and the OCT. In such an arrangement, whose interests are served best is difficult to detect, except to acknowledge that it is precisely the ambiguity in the relationship which attracts offshore capital the most, and that this does not necessarily serve the best interests of resident Cayman Islanders, British citizens or taxpayers in the EU.

The other British OCT considered is the British Virgin Islands (BVI). Its offshore financial sector is directed more toward business incorporation rather than banking, a distinction which Maurer claims the BV islanders are keen to make and which they argue make it 'cleaner' and more 'transparent' than offshore elsewhere. He also notes that the BVI "appears as a set of overlapping, never-quite meshing jurisdictions, each experienced by different people differently, for different purposes, according to different temporalities and different purposes" (p. 143); this makes the determination of any fixed polity practically impossible. This is a truly existential situation in which there are so many games being played by so many different entities that neither rules nor hierarchies of players apply (see MacAmhlaigh above), rendering governance as it is usually conceptualized as practically meaningless. It is also a highly fluid and dynamic situation encapsulated by the observation by

Maurer that, whereas the BVI was once linked most closely to European and North American offshore capital, it is now increasingly linked to Asian and South American capital. Where does the EU and Britain fit in here, particularly in respect of so-called ‘contingent liability’ which the British government claims it has to guard against in its overseas territories to ensure that it is not held liable for damages for any policy a British OCT implements? Does it justify a less generous ‘arm’s length’ approach than many OCTs would want?

A very different set of circumstances appear in the section considering the three French OCTs. Finance is not an issue. Instead the main question is a traditional political one: the extent of self-government within an OCT as set out by sovereign independence (separatists); autonomy via association (autonomists); or integration with France as an overseas department (assimilationists). The first two options are identified by Poirine as the key divide between the local political parties in French Polynesia. These influence and shape their very different attitudes to the EU and ensure that they seek to use the EU connection for their own purposes. The separatists favour closer links to the EU as a tool for decolonization which will increase their room for manoeuvre with France; while the autonomists want to keep their autonomy without ceding any substantial powers to France or controls to the EU. In both cases, they want direct links to the Commission in the hope of gaining substantial assistance and possibly even the adoption of the euro as the currency. The prospects for the latter are very limited and the former strictly circumscribed given that the costs involved are high. It is also not at all clear what benefits the EU gains from French Polynesia distinct from those of France itself.

In New Caledonia, the situation as described by Brown is different again. The major ethnic division in the country between local Kanaks and settlers from France has divided opinion on self-determination and led to past conflict. The Noumea Accord, which governs the settlement of these differences in a referendum to be held between 2014-18, envisages “a gradual and irreversible transfer of powers” (p. 171) from France to New Caledonia. This anticipates an eventual independence following the referendum. In the meantime, France and the New Caledonian government are developing closer relations with the other countries of the South Pacific region. Where this leaves the EU is once again unclear. The local Member of the European Parliament, M. Ponga, talks of New Caledonia spreading European values in the region but the local electorate are largely indifferent to the EU, with only 22% voting in the 2009 European Parliament elections. Another statistic cited by Brown indicates that the transfers from France to New Caledonia are 300 times those of the EU, in absolute terms. It is therefore difficult to understand why the political elites in New Caledonia appear to have the relatively high level of interest in the EU that Brown claims they have unless it is essentially the same as in French Polynesia i.e. an attempt to use the EU within the local political discourse as an element in their future negotiations with France.

In the third case study, that of Mayotte in the Indian Ocean, self-determination is settled. As of 2011 it became an overseas department of France. Mayotte also envisages a change in 2014 from OCT status to that of an outermost region (OR) of the EU similar to the other French departments. Muller establishes that the reasoning behind this is the fears of the inhabitants of Mayotte that they will be ‘swallowed’ by the now independent Comoros Islands of which they were once a part. Poverty may very well follow. Integration is therefore the solution: “France’s game of turning 200,000 Muslim-Africans into Franco-European citizens meets little resistance, because of greatest importance for the Mahorans is being First, not Third, World” (p. 192). In like manner, OR status would upgrade substantially the economic benefits Mayotte gets from the EU and further underpin its security in the region. In this case,

like those of French Polynesia and New Caledonia, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the EU is being used rather than the other way round, and that it is a tale of the tail wagging the proverbial dog! It also helps that policy is in accord with French interests in each case, strengthening the OCT games with the Commission and putting them on a firmer foundation than would otherwise be the case.

The questions of integration and autonomy also structure the chapter by Oostindie on the Dutch Caribbean. As of October 10, 2010, the Netherlands Antilles dissolved into five separate polities, three of which were to integrate with the Netherlands as ‘*sui generis*’, municipal bodies and two of which were to become autonomous countries within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, following the earlier example of Aruba. Each has OCT status. In the past, this status applied only to the Netherlands Antilles and to Aruba and it has not meant that much to either. Oostindie notes that, in the islands, the dominant image of the EU is one of “excessive regulations, potentially increased intervention, and less autonomy” (p. 210). The islands of the Netherlands Antilles therefore showed no real interest in OR status when it was suggested to them by the Dutch government in the mid-2000s and exercise caution today, seen in the fact that any decision on future status with the EU was explicitly postponed for five years from 2010. As such, the main value of the EU has become as a part of the all-important relationship with the Netherlands. As Oostindie sums it: “if sovereignty games are played ... they take the form of a strategic consensus to ensure continued European support in addition to the more vital postcolonial link (with the Hague) ... If the EU can be employed to secure that aim, fine. If not, then there is no need to engage the EU” (p. 214).

The final case study considers the EU’s relation with Greenland. It is unlike any of the others. Greenland takes the EU very seriously and in recent years the EU has upgraded the importance of Greenland in the development of its ‘foreign policy’. Greenland maintains a permanent diplomatic mission to the Commission and works relatively closely with the Danish government in securing its objectives. At the same time, and as the occasion demands (such as fisheries or mining), it also guards its autonomy, which is set to increase in the near future. The OCT-Commission leg of the triangle of relations is therefore much stronger than is the case for the other OCTs and the sovereignty games which it plays more proximate to diplomatic games between sovereign states. It is difficult not to conclude that it gets more out of the EU than the other OCTs because it takes the EU seriously and is taken seriously by it, although what the other OCTs can learn from Greenland other than reflecting on its adroit diplomacy is more open to question.

It is so because in so many ways each OCT is different and each views the EU differently. This was a conclusion, reached by the Commission in its 2008 Green Paper and it is a conclusion reached by Adler-Nissen and Gad in this book: “the image of Europe is different on each overseas island” (p. 237) and “The OCTs, in their corner of the triangular relation to their metropolises and to the EU, find themselves in very different positions on a number of dimensions....The EU is not one thing, but many different things, depending on the local context in which it seeks to play - or is used - as an imperial authority” (p. 238). They also claim that “the imperial metropole makes a difference” (p. 238). In sum, context is everything and everywhere that is different. That said, all the OCT play ‘sovereignty games’, but then so do many others. The value of the book therefore rests not on its conclusions but in its survey of the subject matter. It is the only academic text to do so and as such a necessary starting point for any future review of EU-OCT relations. It is unlikely that a book on this subject would ever have appeared had it not been Denmark’s turn to take the EU Presidency

when it was being researched; in the end, we must be thankful to the Danish academics who seized the opportunity thus presented to produce an innovative and very welcome study.

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**Steven Roger Fischer (2012). *Islands: From Atlantis to Zanzibar*. London, UK: Reaktion Books, hbk, 336pp. ISBN: 978-1-78023-032-0. £22.**

It is pretty much guaranteed that any book that references “A-Z” in its title will cut a wide swath. Indeed, given the scope of *Islands: From Atlantis to Zanzibar*, with chapters devoted to the geology, biology, human settlement, industry, politics, literature, visual arts, and psychology of islands – encompassing the entire globe from prehistory to present day – the book could just as easily have been called *A short history of the world as seen through islands*. If the author was aiming for sheer breadth, *Islands* does not disappoint. But even with his stated purpose to capture “the recurrent constants” among islands, it is pretty much guaranteed that with over a million islands in the world, each with what he calls its own “noteworthy narrative,” a 336-page book is just an introduction.

A former Director of Auckland’s Institute of Polynesian Languages & Literatures, New Zealand author Steven Roger Fischer has written books with similarly sweeping subject matter: *A history of language* (1999), *A history of writing* (2001), *A history of reading* (2003). Interspersed with those, he has penned several more about Pacific islands; particularly Rapanui/ Easter Island, for which he is known for successfully deciphering its Rongorongo script. No wonder, then, that the select bibliography includes mostly books whose subject matter is the Pacific.

As a student of island studies, I found myself looking for “recurrent constants” that might add to the island studies discourse. Chapter 1, “... of Stone and Sand,” gives an overview of types of islands, describing their different geologic formations during “morning in geologic time.” Chapter 2, “... of Ferns and Feathers,” details the huge variety of flora and fauna that can be found on islands, providing examples of gigantism and dwarfism, endemism and extinctions, the effects of insular isolation and why ecological diversity matters. In Chapter 3, “... of First Footprints,” what stands out are “water connects,” “islands exist to be exploited,” and “man has been the chief island-slayer.” Chapter 4, “... of Tin and Tans,” describes the importance of islands in the development of the world’s economy, from spices to scotch, guano to pearls, piracy to prostitution, tourism to philately: “a veritable archipelago [that] has materialized over the millennia.” Chapter 5, “... of First Nations,” is about exploration, colonialism, and power relations; the observation that islands typically do not have statehood results in one of the book’s great understatements: “This commonly causes resentment towards ruling mainland governments that typically neither understand island life nor appreciate island needs.” Chapters 6 and 7, “... of Moons and Sixpence” and “... of Palettes and Pipes,” are about island literature, art and music: “For island art is the quintessence of island man,” and “And of course the Beatles, Islanders all.” Chapter 8, “... of the Mind,” is about the psychological effects of islands; for islanders who seek out islands then leave, it’s about locus; for those who stay on an island, it’s focus. Finally, in Chapter 9, “The

Last Isle,” I found the constants: “each island grows into a cultural limb of the nearest, or politically or financially dominant, body”; “Islands generally do not breed historical personages”; “Humankind has always transformed islands”; “Islands provide microcosms of all the world’s environments”... The list goes on, ending with, “We shall all go, but islands will endure” – more generalizations gleaned from a book replete with generalizations.

While reading, I found myself wishing for hotlinks – if not in every sentence, then at least every paragraph – first to find out if the material was accurate, and next to get more of the story. I frequently checked endnotes, only to discover that the material came from primarily secondary sources, with the exception of a handful of articles in *New Scientist* (from 2010 and 2011). There appears to be an inordinately heavy reliance on Louise B. Young’s *Islands: Portraits of miniature worlds* (1999) and books edited by Robert E. Stevenson and Frank H. Talbot, *Oceans and islands* (1991) and *Islands* (1994). I was disappointed to see that very few of the books referenced were by scholars who have made islands a focus of study – for example, Baldacchino or Royle, Lowenthal or Hay – nor does he reference any of the very fine up-to-date island studies research articles published in academic journals such as *Island Studies Journal*, *Shima*, *INSULA*, special island issues of *World Development*, or even one from his corner of the globe: probably the longest-running island studies scholarly journal, *The Contemporary Pacific*. He devotes a short section to island organizations, mentioning the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Pacific Islands Forum, Small Island Development States (SIDS), the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), Islands First, and (to his credit) the Institute of Island Studies; but absent are other obvious ones, including the International Small Island Studies Association (ISISA) and Small Islands Culture Research Initiative (SICRI), which host conferences bringing together hundreds of experts in island studies from around the world on a regular basis.

Because of my own research (specifically, North Atlantic islands and Tasmania), I’ll mention a few glaring gaps. For instance, when talking about island cultural festivals, he does not include Tasmania’s international biennial festival, *Ten Days on the Island*, devoted specifically to island cultures, located just one island over from his. When discussing islands that have been bridged, he omits Prince Edward Island’s 13-kilometre-long Confederation Bridge, the world’s longest bridge over ice-covered waters. When referring to abandoned islands, he does not mention the resettlement of several small islands off Newfoundland, a story integral to that island’s narrative. When talking about military occupations of islands in the Second World War, he mentions tiny Herm Island but leaves out Guernsey.

Yet, rather than say this book does a disservice to the islands discourse by largely ignoring extant fine islands scholarship, I’ll focus on what *Islands* does: to provide a springboard for more in-depth research and writing about islands, from the distinctive perspective of islands and islanders themselves. And even though the resilience of islands and islanders depends on their interconnectedness – symbolized in the abundance of small world and small island stories – this is a reminder that we must continue to transcend our water boundaries, and get beyond the reputation for insularity that gives islands a bad rap. That means finding the author’s e-mail address and inviting Fischer to an island studies conference.

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There are very few comprehensive texts relating to islands, so Stephen Roger Fischer's *Islands from Atlantis to Zanzibar* appears at first sight as a welcome addition to the burgeoning literature of island studies. Its remit is ambitious: Fischer packs information into this 336 page book. Nine chapters offer a conceptual framing of island worlds, encompassing the material and the imagined. He starts from the geological history of islands, but rapidly moves on to address their biology, history, politics, economic development, and various cultural forms, drawing the threads together in a final chapter where the island earth finally succumbs to entropy. The volume is completed by a quite extensive list of footnotes, a short bibliography, and a brief index. Sadly, there are very few illustrations, and no colour at all, apart from the title page. All in all though, this is an impressive package and certainly one of the most comprehensive treatments since Stephen Royle's (2001) *A Geography of Islands*.

So, why are most readers likely to be disappointed?

First, because of the ways material is organized. Large chapters meander through every conceivable theme, but the organizing argument focuses upon a descriptive historical narrative. In so doing Fischer draws on a rich variety of examples, instead of focusing upon processes, regional differences, or contested ways of understanding the grand sweep of history. A sustained narrative is quite hard to discern and the volume is difficult to navigate or dip into. Where would you find information about politics for example? The index is much too brief to help, and chapter titles confuse the reader. They are slogans that render the mystery all the harder to discern. What on earth is 'of Moons and Sixpence' about, for example?

A second problem stems from the style of writing. Fischer likes the epigram. Chapter 1 starts with a Latin quote, and the author frequently resorts to an all-encompassing form of words, that rounds off a series of linked examples, whilst also conveying how clever he is. Refreshingly different at first, this style rapidly palls, and soon begins to irritate. Anecdotes about particular islands, and events on islands, are the main devices for weaving multiple narratives together. In small doses, these are fascinating and reveal the encyclopaedic knowledge of the subject matter, implied in the title. This light style is complemented by the separation of references off into a series of footnotes at the end of the volume, so the text flows quite well. Anecdotes signal accessibility, but the often portentous summaries, and sometimes tedious enumeration of arcane detail, suggest a much more academic treatment. The general reader is likely to be put off. So, overall, the pitch is confused. The historian's emphasis on factual detail might usefully have been married to a much more focused argument, in which knowledge is deployed for a particular purpose, instead of trying to offer an all-knowing and comprehensive treatment. Or alternatively, the book might have deliberately been pitched at a general audience. As it stands, both are likely to be dissatisfied.

We really don't get very much sense of why or how the author has compiled the book in this way. His background as a linguist, historian and island dweller is highlighted in the blurb, but acknowledgements are too brief to help us to situate the ideas. We don't find out which sources are most influential in creating this reading of island worlds. Fischer's background is rather outside the mainstream of island studies, he barely cites from *Shima* or *Island Studies Journal*, and fails to draw on very much of the critical work informing contemporary island studies. Had he been more carefully anchored into the work of Godfrey Baldacchino, for example, then perhaps a less ambitious, more interesting and more partial work would have emerged. In my view, a more reflexive treatment could only have improved the book, and a personal argument would have both added weight to the arguments, and made the book more interesting to read.

A third reason for disappointment stems from the scope of the volume. The heart sinks at the title. By focusing upon instances, and jumping from case to case, little systematic attention comes to be paid to the bigger themes that inform island studies. There is no systematic treatment of isolation, or size, or governance, and location never seems to matter: the book includes not a single map. It is as if the spatial turn in the social sciences and humanities never really happened. There is a desperate need for mapping, to help the reader place the anecdotes. Without a sense of geography, the reader gets lost in the endless examples.

A final reason for disappointment is because of the way the book is presented. This is not a very well designed or thought through project. Very few illustrations adorn its pages, and they are low quality black and white images, often peripheral to the main concerns of the book. The layout of text and page design makes it hard to read. It is hard to follow up references because the index is much too short. The bibliography is selective and focuses upon books, not journal articles. The overall impression is of a rather boring project.

So: what will the students on my Islands course make of this volume? It is certainly a rich source of examples, shoehorned into broad thematic chapters, and its scope relates nicely to many of the empirical intended learning outcomes of the course. However, I fear the organizational, stylistic and presentational issues highlighted above will seriously limit the potential of the book, and that *Islands from Atlantis to Zanzibar* will compare rather unfavourably to more critical contemporary studies of islands, to regional historical accounts, or to truly encyclopaedic factual treatments of islands.

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**Nicoletta Brazzelli (ed.) (2012). *Isole. Coordinate geografiche e immaginazione letteraria* [Islands: Geographic coordinates and literary imagination]. Milan: Mimesis. 123pp, pbk. ISBN: 978-8857510-04-0. €12.00.**

Nicoletta Brazzelli teaches English Culture at the University of Milan, Italy. This little book, written in Italian, is composed of a series of papers presented during two interdisciplinary study days, held April 14-15, 2010, at the University of Milan, involving scholars in the fields of Italian, Greek and English literature, Anglo-American culture, and geography. Their contributions revolve around the geographic, material, environmental, but also cultural and literary peculiarities of islands.

In her introduction, the editor maintains that “an island is a geographical notion whose meaning emerges from a complex human and social construction.” In this regard, authors are briefly mentioned (with some inevitable temporal jumps and some perhaps more avoidable logical leaps) in the field of philosophy (such as Thomas More and Francis Bacon), scientists (such as Charles Darwin) and especially writers of fiction, from Daniel Defoe to postcolonial literatures in English (V.S. Naipaul, Michael Ondaatje, Abdulrazak Gurnah) and including science fiction, in which the status of the island is metaphorically applied to the planets. The importance of contemporary “island studies” – and of this Journal – as well as the need for

interdisciplinary studies, are also emphasized; although, strangely, in the list of the disciplines mentioned, sociology is not included.

The volume is not divided into parts. However, a semblance of a distribution of its contributions can be noticed, since the first two essays are devoted to geographical aspects of the study of islands, while the remaining ones focus on literary matters.

In particular, the first essay, by Guglielmo Scaramellini, presents the notions of insularity and isolation in the construction of contemporary geography, based on his analysis of the works of pioneering authors such as Giovanni Marinelli, Friedrich Ratzel and Jean Brunhes. He suggests that all these authors have evolved the concept of ‘the island’ from a strictly geographical and physical notion to a ‘human condition’ linked to social representations, historical events, and decisions related to the organization of space.

The second contribution, by Giuseppe Rocca, occupies more than a quarter of the volume. It is a detailed review of the studies of human geography on small Italian islands from the late nineteenth century to the present, with a particular emphasis on tourism-related issues. In his conclusions, Rocca emphasizes the harmful effects of stereotypes on small islands, which are produced and diffused by today’s tourism advertising at the mass level, and the risks associated with the excessive pressures tourism creates on local resources (as in the case of agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture).

The third essay, by Fabrizio Conca, starts the series of contributions on literature and is dedicated to ‘the island’ in the Greek novel, from its origins to the twelfth century, beginning with the *Odyssey*, through the works of Achilles Tatius, Chariton, Xenophon Hephaestus, Longo Sophist, and Nicetas Eugenianus.

The next contribution, by Carlo Pagetti, focuses on a discourse analysis of the language used by Charles Darwin in his reports of his exploration of the Galápagos Islands, contained in his *Journal of Researches 1832-1836*. In particular, the author tries to grasp the signs of Darwin’s mental and intellectual changes in the face of the challenges of new knowledge in his errors and expressions of uncertainty, as well as in the adverbs and adjectives he uses, and even in the linguistic games and jokes he makes.

A further contribution – very interesting, clear and well-constructed – is that of the editor of the volume, Nicoletta Brazzelli, which focuses on the *topos* of the treasure island and its connection with visions of empire. The author first dwells upon Robert Louis Stevenson’s novel *Treasure Island*. The novel follows in the wake of imperial and colonial fiction of the nineteenth century, linked to the cult of heroic masculinity and the drive for capitalistic profit, for which the island is the place of conquest and appropriation par excellence. In this context, *Treasure Island* is the story of the initiation of the protagonist, Jim, into adult life and into the social models dominant in his era. At the same time, Stevenson also inserts some elements critical of these models, portraying in a negative light the fierce conflicts these models cause between human beings and the sense of dissatisfaction such conflicts generate in people. Joseph Conrad’s novel *An Outcast of the Islands*, centered (as are some of his other works) on the failure and inadequacy of European colonization, is also examined. Brazzelli points out that, in both authors, “the islands of the colonial imagination conceal treasures that cannot be (fully) conquered” (p. 101).

The penultimate essay is by Mario Maffi. It provides a short overview of islands in American history and culture: from islands in literature (Melville, Hemingway) to those of the first imperial endeavours (Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Philippines, Hawai’i), including inner

or “liminal” islands that play specific roles and functions - such as reclusion and immigrant control – including Roosevelt, Alcatraz, Ellis and Angel.

The book concludes with an essay by William Spaggiari on the theme of the “unfound island” (utopian, hidden, unattainable, paradisiacal) in Western literature, with specific reference to Luis de Camões and Guido Gozzano.

On the whole, the volume is a useful introduction to some issues related to island studies that will mainly interest students and research specialists. Unfortunately some of the contributions, especially those on literary subjects, are not clearly presented, and sometimes do not meet some of the minimum requirements of a scholarly text, in the sense that the subject of the study is not well defined; the theses, hypotheses or objectives are not formulated; and conclusions are not supplied. Nevertheless, the book provides valuable information and food for thought, as well as suggestions for future insights and new research paths.

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**Giovanna Iacovazzi (2012). *Un bruit pieux. Bandas, musique et fête dans un village maltais (Żabbar)*, Malta, Fondation de Malte, 352pp. ISBN: 978-99957-024-5-8. [A pious noise: Music, bands and feast in a village in Malta (Żabbar)], 39 photographs, 3 maps, CD. Published under the auspices of the Société Française d'ethnomusicologie. €25.00.**

A lot of good can be said about this book. First of all, because it deals with brass bands. The topic has not yet received the scholarly attention it deserves although, it has to be acknowledged, the literature in this area has been growing over the last several years. Unfortunately what publications exist are often of local interest and ineffectively distributed. The reason is, brass bands have been a topic of marginal interest to music historians, ethnomusicologists or popular music scholars who have not been attracted by a tradition practising transcriptions (scholars usually go for the original) or original pieces in a ‘retro’ style that goes from the late Romantic to the mildly modern. It is also interesting to observe how, whereas high-brow events portray music as an end in itself, brass bands provide functional music, and it is their functional role that has made it possible for them to mix genres: operas and operettas, celebrated symphonic pieces, Broadway musicals, pop and traditional tunes of all kinds. In other words, to music historians, ethnomusicologists and popular music scholars, the brass band repertoire hardly represents the real McCoy.

Brass bands, nonetheless, deserve attention. That is because, while performing their function (that of accompanying military ceremonies, public celebrations, and country fairs), they considerably contribute to the dissemination of musical literacy, and music education more generally. In fact, their musicians, part-timers and amateurs as they usually are, need to be trained, and the best members of the band often organize into a school of music that will train younger people who will replace the old-timers as they retire. That is how, in Southern Europe, band clubs even made up for the absence of music education in public schools. In the past, when conservatories and private music schools were few, and only located in major cities, brass bands even provided the breeding ground from where future wind-instrument musicians came to symphony orchestras.

Iacovazzi effectively describes the multiple, simultaneous social functions brass bands fulfil in Malta. She also maintains that, in this small Mediterranean nation, they are a more essential element of social fabric than in most other places.

The book specifically focuses on Żabbar, a village in the South-East of Malta (the major island of the archipelago), where two bands (the *Maria Mater Gratiae* [Our Lady of Graces] and the *San Mikiel* [St Michael]) have been competing with one another since they were established in 1883. Iacovazzi explains how important their role is and how their visibility reaches its climax every year, on the first Sunday following September 8<sup>th</sup>, with the celebration of the feast of the Virgin Mary in the village. She further stresses how their role is not merely decorative or complementary, but rather essential as practically every family in Żabbar has some of its members who are in some way or another involved with and implicated in the lives and activities of the two musical groups. In other words, the two bands in Żabbar seem to be points of intersection where fundamental social relationships in the village come to meet and intersect. That is why, by lifting a famous expression from Marcel Mauss, Iacovazzi maintains that the bands constitute a “total social fact” (*un fait social total*), and she extensively explains why. The most visible functions of the two brass bands are the religious and the political, because bands in Malta are either named after the Virgin Mary or a patron saint, but also make no mystery of their affiliation to a political party. Then comes their educational role, as they support and foster musical training, and also, not to be overlooked, through their club, they provide occasions for social interaction (a band club, or *kazin*, is a place where people habitually meet in their spare time, quite aside from music-making). In fact, such clubs run a bar and/or a restaurant where musicians meet, along with their family members and friends. (Here, it would have been interesting to know something about their social extraction and, as they all are amateurs, what their main occupation is.) Iacovazzi goes on to explain what different layers of identity brass bands publicly perform, from the local to the national, and how they contribute in defining space, and its perception, in the course of public events.

These are the strong points of the book, a work that gives balanced attention to both historical and ethnographic dimensions. The village of Żabbar makes a representative case study of the more general Maltese situation, where villages often have two band clubs, or even three, as is the case of Żebbuġ. Even in Malta, however, at least one non-typical case exists: the Società Filarmonica Nazionale “La Valette”. This is by no means the oldest (founded in 1874 whereas, for example, the first band club in Żebbuġ goes back to 1851). But the Società Filarmonica Nazionale, because it represents the capital city, enjoyed more international contacts than any other, and had guest conductors of high renown, like Alessandro Vessella (the Italian equivalent of the American John Philip Sousa), and composers Riccardo Zandonai and Ottorino Respighi. In fact, in relation to both the Italian and British influence on the Maltese brass band traditions (which Iacovazzi discusses in Chapter 1), it would have been a motif of added interest to have more information about their repertoire. Have there been important changes in instrumentation practice over the years? What is the proportion of arrangements made in the ‘Italian style’, versus those made in the ‘British’? What is the proportion of original compositions in relation to transcriptions? All that would help comparison with other traditions. Brass bands exist everywhere and, to mention only one example familiar to this writer, in the Swiss-Italian canton of Ticino, most villages have their own brass band too, and they also have political connections. Attached to the band there usually is a school of music as well. It is the religious connotation that is missing in the Swiss

case. One finds brass bands everywhere in nearby Mediterranean islands (such as Sicily, Crete and Cyprus). Thus, one wonders, how similar or different from Malta are they in these respects, and whether Malta is such a very special case as Iacovazzi maintains.

The definitely least satisfying chapter of the book is the final one, in which few musical examples are analyzed. The problem I have with it is that the analytical tools that are deployed (an incredible variety of them exist) are like the net of a fisher: more or less effective, depending on the kind of fish one wishes to catch. In this analytical chapter, it is not clear what kind of fish the author is after. In the first section, Iacovazzi offers a description of features that are already quite visible on the musical score. In the second section, a few sound-spectrum images are presented. But one remains at a loss as to what these features and images are supposed to mean. Saying that they express the high volume of the music and its 'verve' (or, in Maltese, *briju*) is not enough to justify the employment of computer technology. However, to comfort Iacovazzi, I can add that the analysis, of any music, is a very demanding endeavour in which even music theorists often fail to produce meaningful data. Luckily, however, this book stands on its own quite well, without chapter 6.

The book is on the whole indeed interesting; it is one of a kind, and one that certainly needs to be read by anyone undertaking further scholarly work on brass band traditions anywhere. Since French is not a widely practised language in Malta, an English translation of this book would certainly be welcome and appreciated by the Maltese. It would be fascinating for them to realize what a "thick description" (so philosopher Carl Gustav Hempel would have called it) scholars can give of a music tradition they usually take for granted, and simply represents for them a natural way of life.

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**François Taglioni (ed.) (2011). *Insularité et développement durable*. [Insularity and sustainable development] Marseilles, France: Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD), pbk, 551pp. ISBN: 978-2-7099-1709-4 (Chapter abstracts available also in English).**

**Marie-Antoinette Maupertuis (ed.) (2010). *La Corse et le développement durable* [Corsica and sustainable development]. Ajaccio, France: Albania, pbk, 350pp. ISBN: 978-2-84698-352-5. €23.00.**

**Lorraine Guay (2011). *Le Québec des îles* [The islands of Quebec]. Montreal QC, Canada: Presses de l'Université Laval, pbk, 192pp. ISBN: 978-2-7637-9230-9. Can\$26.50.**

Scholarship on sustainable development has taken the world by storm in recent years; and islands have once again gained centre stage, this time as living laboratories where the dynamics of sustainable development policies, however defined, can be observed and assessed in presumably more manageable settings. Considerable work is being done to analyse how small

islands are coping with climate change, what adaptation and/or mitigation strategies are in place, and what prospects of development can be realistically envisaged.

This contemporary trend is not restricted to literature and scholarship undertaken in the English language. These three books all provide interesting and timely accounts and analyses of different sets of islands from different parts of the world. Written from a primarily geographical perspective, the various authors and editors involved in these contributions share a concern for questioning what kind of development should these islands wish for: especially when they are faced not just with the already major challenges associated with climate change (shore erosion, more violent storms, less reliable rainfall, sea level rise ...) but also with population loss, lower levels of public funding, less international aid, acute tourism pressure, offshore finance under international scrutiny, and a resident population that will largely refuse to be short-changed and cheated from the materialist trappings of 21<sup>st</sup> century 'quality of life'.

For readers interested in insights gleaned from development strategies underway in a variety of islands, *Insularité et développement durable* presents a very useful collection. Taglioni, a university professor on Réunion, Indian Ocean/France, skilfully weaves together a fine set of papers, organized under four key themes: the socio-cultural, the environmental, the economic and the political. This book emphasizes the return of the conceptualization of the 'island as laboratory', connecting with a rich tradition in French (and English) literature that includes contemporaries like Louis Brigand, Louis Marrou and Anne Meistersheim.

Apart from the sheer scope of this collection – 550 pages, put together by no less than 46 different scholars – the narrative reminds us of some particular aspects of the French tradition of island studies that is somewhat different from the English tradition most readers of *Island Studies Journal* would be more familiar with. There is, first, a strong technical bent in many of the chapters, with a preference for a quantitative assessment of island related criteria. One good example is the 'typology' of '12 families' of United Nations member states, and how island states feature within this 'family tree', if organized by size, population, purchasing power and environmental vulnerability. Second, is a concern with islands that are, or were, part of the French sphere of influence: parts of the French state (Corsica, Mayotte); former French colonies, now members of *La francophonie* (Dominica, Madagascar); and areas with a strong influence of French culture (Jersey, Mauritius). For those interested in expanding awareness and appreciation of island affairs, suitable information about sustainable development initiatives among some islands may only be available in French, as in a volume like this. Third, is a critical approach to neo-liberal, market-driven recipes of island development.

A chapter on Corsica by Jean-Marie Furt and Marie-Antoinette Maupertuis compares the island to the Balearic archipelago, suggesting reasons for the contrast in the unfolding of their respective tourism industries. The authors conclude that, in both these Mediterranean territories, the social sustainability of tourism operations has been largely neglected.

This may explain why the concept of a "socio-eco-system" (p. 10) drives the analysis of the second volume, edited by the same Maupertuis. With a deliberate focus on Corsica, the French island that is 'nearby yet far away', *La Corse et le développement durable* brings together material collected during a seminar organized in 2009 on the same theme by the local cell of the *Centre nationale pour la recherche scientifique* (CNRS) at the Università di Corsica Pasqual Paoli, itself part of the LISA university consortium (*Laboratoire interuniversitaire des systèmes atmosphériques*). This work has a strong social science bent, and is organized in three sections, looking at history and the long-term (a keen French methodological pursuit); the boon and bane of tourism; and the institutions and tools required for a better (read, socially and

environmentally healthy) quality of life, respectively. The volume is as close as one can get to a complete and multi-disciplinary understanding of the development challenges now facing this island, with a narrative that shifts from the fatalism of structured dependency to the optimism of being small but great.

It seems that the current dynamics of demography are working in favour of islands close to metropolitan regions; more remote islands continue to see their populations dwindle. This is one clear observation (p. 142) that emerges from a close reading of the third book, *Le Québec des îles*. Navigating down the St Lawrence basin, from the islands in Lake Ontario, through bustling Montreal (built on a series of some 300 islands), and then out eastward to the island reserve of Anticosti and the climate change threatened Magdalene islands, Lorraine Guay takes us on a tour of some 3,000 islands and islets, noting their history of settlement, changing ownership, economic expansion/ contraction, strategic involvement in warfare, and more recent population trends. This is a very rich, even if largely descriptive, economic geography of the region, accompanied by many interesting photographs, list of key episodes and details of supplementary websites. This is a more popular version, and a fine companion volume, to Guay's earlier work, *À la découverte des Îles du Saint-Laurent*. Like France, Canada is (also) a nation of islands, and its islands are key to its national imaginary, even if recently somewhat overshadowed by the natural resource-rich province of Alberta, home base of current Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Both countries have to come to grips with what to do with such places caught, as Guay argues (p. 169), between tradition and modernity, and needing to decide whether their best bet for a sustainable future is to go with the flow, modernize and minimize their sense of islandness (have it eliminated by a bridge?); or to stick rigidly to an often reinvented rustic and folksy way of life that may attract lifestyle and urban refugees to come and settle. Hard choices.

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**Lee Jolliffe (ed.) (2013). *Sugar heritage and tourism in transition*. Bristol, UK: Channel View Publications, Tourism and Cultural Change Series. 235pp. ISBN-13: 978-1-84541-387- (hbk) US\$149.95; ISBN-13:978-1-84541-386-6 (pbk) US\$49.95.**

The week before I received the copy of this book to review, I was driving along Toronto's Waterfront, a site of 25 or more years of re-development that continues today. It is an area of mixed uses: high-rise condominium towers, retail shops, restaurants and bars, theatres, recreation complexes, a new community college, a heritage industrial district, the early construction of housing for the 2015 Pan-American Games and sugar tourism: the Redpath Sugar Museum (which is briefly mentioned in the book) and Sugar Beach. The former is housed in a huge sugar warehouse and refining plant built in the late 1950s (with a dock large enough to handle the cargo of an ocean freighter) by a company that dates back to 1854. The latter is an urban beach park opened in 2010 by the City of Toronto on a quay adjacent to the sugar factory. Water-contact recreation in Lake Ontario is not permitted here as Toronto Harbour is a working harbour, but the whimsical white sand, umbrellas, chairs, and

amphitheatre provide a public space for relaxation, leisure, and social activities and a grandstand seat to watch a freighter unload sugar.

I had looked forward to reviewing this book because I have, on several occasions, participated in sugar heritage and tourism: Morgan Lewis Windmill, Sunbury Plantation House and Saint Nicholas Abbey in Barbados; Sugar Mill Museum in Dominica; Betty's Hope in Antigua; Soufrière Estate House in St. Lucia; Annaberg Plantation Ruins, St. John, US Virgin Islands; Kualoa Sugar Mill Ruins in Oahu, Hawai'i; and driving through the vast cane-fields of Queensland, Australia. I had, however, never really thought how widespread the sugar industry has been and how deeply it was embedded in the heritage of so many people and places. The 13 chapters of Jolliffe's edited book add to the list: many other Caribbean locations, India, Australia, Brazil, Taiwan, New Zealand, England (through end uses of sugar in candy and confectionery), and numerous museums. Even more important, however, is that the book goes beyond sites of tourism and focuses on the heritage with both positive and negative aspects of the sugar industry.

In the introductory chapter, entitled 'Connecting Sugar Heritage and Tourism', Jolliffe defines sugar heritage as:

... the heritage related to the history and culture, cultivation, production of sugar derived from sugarcane. This is a rich and varied heritage that derives from a long and contested history, not often discussed and recognized, as the colonial quest for sugar propelled the transatlantic slave trade leaving a legacy of disputed heritage that is only now beginning to be rediscovered by the descendants of both the colonizers and the enslaved.

The hope is that open discussions of this excluded past, as contained in this book, 'can lead to insights as to the origins of cultures and cultural change, and to the loss of civil liberties due to the domination of sugar in the face of colonial expansion and capitalism.'

Jolliffe defines sugar heritage tourism as "tourism related to the heritage of sugar, utilizing sugar heritage resources to develop products and experiences for tourists to consume." She notes that "Since the history of forced labour in the form of both enslavement and indenture was often connected to sugar plantations and production, there is often a contested heritage to be interpreted." In the case of islands, with economies that were dominated by sugarcane, "there may have been a complete transition to a reliance on tourism, reflected by the associated cultural change."

The complexity of the subject is reflected in the book's research framework which is delineated along three themes: contexts (historical; economic; cultural change; cultural heritage management); points of view (postcolonialism; commodification; sustainability); and issues: politics; globalization; tourism development.

The book's eleven substantial chapters are uniformly well-written and well-researched, with substantial bibliographies and numerous useful tables and figures.

Jolliffe begins the concluding chapter by returning to the issues noted above. In terms of politics, participation and presentation, heritage-related tourism in general and sugar heritage tourism in particular must involve local populations in the development of heritage policies because of the 'dark history' aspects of sugar production, involving enslaved labour and the plantation model. The extent and economics of the global sugar trade comprise an interesting foil to the globalization and rapid expansion of mass tourism, with both reflecting

negative and potential aspects of globalization. Similarly, the problems of cultural commodification and loss of authenticity are major elements of mass tourism in general, and sugar heritage tourism in particular. It is argued that one potential solution involves community participation in community-based tourism that recognizes the positive and negative legacies of sugar production and promotes the use of sugar-based resources for the benefit of the community and of visitors, both locals and tourists. Jolliffe ends by hoping that this chapter:

... has helped to position both sugar-related tourism and associated cultural change within our current global society. Some the trends identified highlight the challenges of interpreting sugar as a commodity, including its history and heritage, as well as showing viable alternatives for reflection on the historical legacies and current realities of the global sugar industry. Past histories and current circumstance may determine how sugar heritage is interpreted. It is possible to view sugar heritage as a continuum, moving from industry to heritage to tourism under the influences of politics, globalization and contemporary tourism development.

I suggest that editor and chapter authors of this book have succeeded admirably in meeting this objective.

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**Jonathan M. Katz (2013). *The big truck that went by: how the world came to save Haiti and left behind a disaster*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 320 pp., ISBN: 978-0-320-34187-6. US\$26.00.**

Figures and acronyms – 4.53, 7.0, 25km WSW, 300,000 – used to describe the 2010 Haitian Earthquake cannot fully reflect the scale and the complexity of the event that hit the island on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2010. Unprecedented in its magnitude and impact, the earthquake is not a decontextualized event escaping comparison and comprehension, but one deeply embedded within the previous context of foreign intervention, environmental degradation and increasing social inequalities caused by the forced imposition of neo-liberal economic practices.

Only recently the numerous geological and medical analyses, which aimed to explain the immediate strategic impact of the earthquake, are being complemented by interdisciplinary examinations of the impact of the event, the far from neutral nature of international aid intervention and post-earthquake reconstruction. *Tectonic shifts: Haiti since the earthquake*, a collection of essays edited by Mark Schuller and Pablo Morales (reviewed in *Island Studies Journal* 7(2), 2012), is the first, book-length publication to do so.

Jonathan M. Katz's *The big truck that went by: How the world came to save Haiti and left behind a disaster*, merges analytical journalism and personal recollection. It offers a compelling and well researched study of the post-earthquake reconstruction and significantly contributes to the analytical approach initiated by *Tectonic shifts*. Katz creates a collection of personal reflections intertwined with an analytical inquiry into the complexities of aid, politics and reconstruction in post-earthquake Haiti.

Focusing in particular on the highly problematic relationship between Haiti and the United States, Katz's work examines the failures and inadequacy of international aid, rooted in the idea that only a "transformative, external force could solve Haiti" (p. 109), and exposes the long-term policies that shaped the reconstruction process. Uncompromising in his approach and constantly aware of the problematic position he occupies as an American journalist, he hopes that his experience will allow him to understand "both sides of the divide, between those who seek to improve how aid is given and those who have been trying to improve their own lives for so long" (p. 4). The account is at once a narrative of survival, the author's passionate and conflicted relationship with Haiti, and a story of the political and structural forces which shape the country. The shifting temporalities of the work might, however, at times confuse the reader. Although the book is aimed at a non-specialist audience, some knowledge of Haitian history helps to locate the events and processes with which Katz is engaging.

The two-fold nature of *The big truck that went by* – its personal and analytical character – is reflected in the structure of work. It opens with maps of Haiti, Port-au Prince and Pétionville which, by marking which significant sights are damaged or destroyed, indicate the scale of the disaster. The book is divided into thirteen chapters; but chapters four and nine are interrupted by an additional italicized depiction of two personal experiences: the author's psychotherapy sessions and the start of his relationship with Claire. The work is also accompanied by eight pages of black and white photographs, eleven of which were taken by the author, and which appear in the middle of chapter seven.

The opening chapter, 'The End' describes the moment the earthquake struck and is followed by 'Love Theme from *Titanic*' which provides a sketch of the country's history from the pre-colonial times to the author's arrival in 2007. In 'Blan and Nèg' the narrative intertwines the account of the post-earthquake destruction in Port-au-Prince with a reflection on, on the one hand, the problematic relationship between foreigners and the local population in Haiti and, on the other, that between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, two states sharing the island of Hispaniola. 'The Crossroads,' referring to *Carrefour* – the name of a neighbourhood at the outskirts of Port-au-Prince left without any aid in five days after the earthquake – analyses the American "compassionate invasion" immediately after the disaster, the fatal inadequacy of aid efforts and the disparity in aid distribution. The foreign rescuers had no idea where to go and being able to locate only the major sites shown in the media, like the international Hotel Montana or the UN headquarters, directed their aid there instead of helping the populous neighbourhoods. In its highly selective and simplistic coverage, the media contributed to the misinformation and misunderstanding of the scale of the disaster. The subsection '*In Louisville*' recounts the author's experience of post-traumatic stress disorder and contemplates the ways in which PTSD is hailed as a 'stamp of unimpeachable authenticity' (p.89) among foreign correspondents.

'Spoiled Corn' and 'Bon Dola' focus specifically on the disaster response system, the so-called 3Rs: emergency relief, medium-term recovery, and long-term reconstruction, and the distribution of foreign aid. The money raised at the donors' conference, 'Towards a new future for Haiti, held in New York on March 31, 2010, was mainly spent on outside, unaccountable contractors. The refusal to give aid to the government was based on the failed premise that an increase of aid would directly aggravate corruption, a claim Katz powerfully deconstructs in his comparative analysis of U.S. and Haiti. An examination of the controversial and problematic role of Bill Clinton as a head of the INTERIM commission is the subject of the subsequent 'The Governor.' "When I get Older" covers a range of topics from rap music to

Haitian post-earthquake politics and healthcare. 'Sugar Land,' interrupted by 'Miracle Falls' subsection, focuses on the importance of land in Haiti and examines the increasingly obvious permanence of temporary camps. 'Face to Face' analyses the complexity of the first post-earthquake elections and, in particular, Martelly's and Wyclef Jean's candidature for the Haitian Presidency. The thorough and uncompromising nature of Katz's investigation, maintained throughout the book, is, however, at its best in 'Gut Feeling' where he investigates the spread of cholera in Haiti caused by a bacteria, brought over by Nepalese UN troops, against which Haitians had no immunity. In two consecutive chapters, 'A Cardboard Palace' and 'All Together Now,' Katz follows the period from the run-up to the presidential elections to the first-year anniversary of the earthquake and in 'Epilogue' offers a forceful summary of the year of earthquakes. Aid was misdirected, based on the flawed assumption that the earthquake would cause immediate riots, a dissolution of the state and an epidemic. As things turn out, the 'responders helped spark the first, undermine the second, and by all evidence caused the third' (p. 278).

*The big truck that went by* presents a powerful analysis of the complex internal and external pressures to which Haiti, like many other small developing island states, is subject. As a contribution to disaster and island studies, Katz's work, by attracting a much wider readership than more specialist and academic analyses, succeeds in deconstructing the discursive constructs of Haiti, offers an analysis of island dynamics and a reconsideration of the impact and nature of aid efforts in Haiti. This is a daring and much needed intervention.

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**Ottmar Ette & Gesine Müller (eds.) (2012). *Worldwide. Archipels de la mondialisation. Archipiélagos de la globalización*. Madrid and Frankfurt: Iberoamericana-Vervuert. 416pp. hbk. ISBN: 978-8484896-70-8. €29.80.**

The premise of this volume is that the metaphor of the archipelago offers a promising conceptual model for thinking the ongoing process of globalization. As observed in the text serving "A modo de introducción" [By way of an introduction], the coteries of cultural studies and postcolonial studies are at something of an impasse in dealing with ethnic or cultural difference without falling into the sin of essentialism or, to put it another way, coming to grips with the double problematic of identity and relationality in cultural systems caught up in the turmoil of globalization. The metaphor is attractive, not only because, as Bertrand Westphal writes, "the concept of the archipelago is one of the most complex that there is" (p. 391), but also perhaps because the concept is so elusive, indefinite, and indeed ill-defined, as Westphal hints: "one evokes the idea of the archipelago from the moment when one can attest to the presence of a certain number of islands (the minimum number of which, to my knowledge has never been defined) that harbour a geographic proximity and a geological homogeneity" (p. 391). The archipelago is "a sea sprinkled with islands" (p. 388), sharing an unspecified dosage of proximity and a similarly indeterminate degree of homogeneity. Here, we have a more flexible model for "bordering": the neologism of contributing author Naoki Sakai in his 'Heterolingual address and transnationality: translation and bordering' (pp. 343-58). The

notion of archipelago, etymologically the “archi’-sea” (p. 387), invites one to weaken the exclusionary act of bordering and replace the rigid frontier with a literally fluid boundary. As such, the archipelago in its literal and metaphorical senses provides for a quasi-deterritorialized notion of identity and relationality, as opposed to strictly insular, national, regional or continental modes of demarcation.

The volume is the result of a conference held in Berlin and titled *Weltweit/worldwide. Los archipiélagos como espacios de prueba de una con-vivencia global* (Instituto Iberoamericano, June 29 – July 1, 2011). As such, and as is often the case, it brings together a wealth of materials, but in a series of articles of uneven quality. One might call it an archipelago of papers, among which Ottmar Ette’s text ‘Worldwide: living in transarchipelagic worlds’ stands as the dominant “island” and attempts to trace a fluid theoretical boundary around the heterogeneous “archipelago” of the rest of the textual contributions by summarizing, recapitulating, and in a word *encompassing* their content. Ette’s text, fortunately, begins with strong and stimulating discussions of Benedetto Bordone’s *Isolario* (1528), José Lezama Lima’s *La expresión americana*, and the work of Édouard Glissant (a central figure of inspiration for the volume as a whole). Ette does good theoretical service by relating the problematic of islandness with that of the archipelago. In a word, this relation can be resumed in Ette’s pair of contrasting concepts: the *island-world* (“a closed-off world producing its own spatial and temporal structures”) as opposed to the *islandworld* (“an entire world of islands”) (pp. 32-33). One wishes that Ette had limited the scope of his article to these materials, instead of over-reaching to comment on the rest of the volume, and at too great length. Such is particularly the case with his treatment of Khal Torabully’s text, which comes immediately after Ette’s: Ette quotes Torabully at length and, to put it bluntly, steals his thunder. Ette’s text is further prolonged by two long, tedious sections commenting on the work of Japanese-German poet Yoko Tawada (a point to which we shall return presently).

Khal Torabully, from Mauritius, writes beautifully on his notion of *coolitude* and its significance for transculturation in the globalizing world. Beautiful as well is his development of the metaphor of coral, that hybrid of phytoplankton and zooplankton, which he proposes as a symbol of archipelagization; this reader, for one, is sympathetic to Torabully’s overt power move to privilege the coral metaphor and displace the over-valued Deleuzian paradigm of the rhizome. But Torabully begins with a stimulating provocation by apparently according a certain truth-effect to Columbus’s famous misnomer. Both the (West) Indies and India proper, says Torabully, are “un lieu rêvé par l’Occident” (p. 64), a place of ontological indetermination in the discourse of the West. “Fondamentalement, on n’arrive jamais aux Indes, on s’oriente toujours vers elles” (p. 64). It would seem as though both India and the improperly named Indies were being proposed as a single indeterminate space and possibly a sort of utopian horizon, though it isn’t quite clear how Torabully means us to take his provocative conceptual gesture.

Torabully’s ‘Quand les Indes rencontrent les imaginaires du monde’ opens the first of the volume’s five sections – ‘Archipiélagos del Océano Índico’ – and is followed by Ralph Ludwig’s fine article on archipelagic language-use and hybrid identity-construction in Mauritius. In the section titled “Archipiélagos del Océano Pacífico,” Torsten König’s historically grounded “L’imaginaire géopolitique de la Polynésie dans la littérature française: de Bougainville à Chantal T. Spitz” does yeoman’s service not only to bring into theoretical view the “invisible continent” of Oceania but to challenge our ingrained, naturalized pattern of geopolitical thought which privileges continental formations. Disappointingly, given that

archipelagic theory owes so much to Caribbean thinkers such as Antonio Benítez Rojo, the section devoted to ‘Archipiélagos del Caribe’ is rather weak. Under the rubric of ‘Archipiélagos continentales’, the literary celebrity Jorge Volpi entertains us with his crisp, scintillating prose, but is definitely light-weight in terms of his contribution to archipelagic theory. The strongest piece in this section is Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink’s article on the francophone archipelago in North America. Drawing on the writings of literary critic and theorist François Paré, whose work deserves to be better known, and citing many French-language writers from this continent, Lüsebrink traces with care and workman-like scholarship the North American francophone “réseau archipélique” and its particular “écologie culturelle” (p. 289). Héctor Pérez Brignoli’s study of ‘Las plantaciones bananeras como archipiélagos globales’ is an interesting case, but blurrily contextualized within the general problematic of the book. The volume’s final section, ‘Archipiélagos teóricos’, features Naoki Sakai’s theoretical argument (or polemic) that translation, rather than bridging or linking, does the opposite: by presupposing borders, translation brings them into existence – it ‘borders’. Sakai’s method of argument depends on the sort of deconstructive reversal made famous by Derrida but, despite the generally rigorous pursuit of his thesis, it leaves one unconvinced. Translation is also the theme taken up by Beate Thill, Édouard Glissant’s German translator. French-German translators will find her examples interesting and instructive, but her review of Glissant’s main ideas and concepts, and her appeal to the translation theory of Antoine Berman, do not really get us anywhere new.

The volume is long, too long: 23 texts in all. Several articles, in their current state, are either too weak or too peripheral to the book’s theme to warrant inclusion. The book as a whole has other structural faults. Why does it need two introductions? (Answer: it doesn’t.) On the other hand, why is Bernard Westphal’s high-quality piece on the meaning of the term “archipelago” buried near the end of the book? It should have been foregrounded, placed at or near the beginning or, alternatively, as the volume’s conclusion. Instead, this privileged position is occupied by a transcription of Yoko Tawada’s poetic performance piece. There is nothing wrong with including such a text in a volume like this, but only as an appendix, not as the concluding text. The Tawaka text’s main drawback, however, brings us to a more general problem with the book: its vexed relationship with multi-lingualism.

The book’s tripartite title includes English, French, and Spanish. Fair enough. It is quite reasonable to assume that a very large number of scholars across the world have a reading knowledge of all three international languages. But German is no longer a “world-wide” language; significantly, in the passage from conference title to volume title, German has been suppressed. So why is the Yoko Tawada piece here? Surely, her creative use of German is accessible only to native speakers of the language. Secondly, if it is assumed that readers are competent in the three languages of the title, why are some pieces translated from one to another? Specifically, why has Westphal’s piece been translated (with visible mishaps) from French to English? And Consuelo Naranjo Orovio’s article from Spanish to French? Certainly, the wise editorial decision to exclude German-language texts (with the glaring exception already mentioned) amply justifies that articles originally written in German be translated into one of the three chosen languages. But in several cases, starting with the volume’s (first) introduction, the original language is not indicated, and the reader, somewhat dizzied by this linguistic variant of the game that in English we call “Musical Chairs,” must try to guess what it was. Finally, in some articles, when quoting in another language, the authors provide footnoted translations of the source material; good editorial policy, except that the translations

are not always very accurate. In at least one case, a block quote in Portuguese — *not* one of the three languages — is left untranslated. Let's be clear: the inclusion of three major world languages in a single volume is, in principle, a great idea. But the corresponding increase in textual complexity demands an equal degree of editorial consistency and rigour; a demand not adequately met in this book.

Nevertheless, its editorial lapses notwithstanding, *Worldwide* will reward the patient reader with many interesting discoveries and fresh perspectives. The metaphor of the archipelago, too long ignored in both postcolonial and transareal studies, has been theoretically sketched out by the best parts of this volume with a vigour that cannot be overlooked.

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**Peter Brunt, Nicholas Thomas, Sean Mallon, Lissant Bolton, Deidre Brown, Damian Skinner & Susanne Küchler (Peter Brunt & Nicholas Thomas, eds.) (2012). *Art in Oceania: A new history*. London: Thames & Hudson. 536pp. hbk, ISBN: 978-0-500-23901-8. £60.00.**

During my first visit to the Kingdom of Tonga (1988), I bought a wooden sculpture of an octopus holding an island map. Sometime later, a woman who saw it told me that her father was the first to make this kind of carving: Aleki (Alexander) Prescott, who had moved to Australia in the 1970s. When I came to know him, he told me that, after he left Tonga, local craftsmen began to produce sculptures that were designed by him, without revealing this to those who bought them. The most well-known one depicts a skinny man who sits cross-legged drinking *kava* (a ceremonial drink) from a coconut cup. It has even been reproduced for the souvenir trade in Hawai'i and, consequently, probably believed by buyers to be a genuine Hawaiian design. On the other hand, carvers in Tonga are commonly making *tikis* in a Hawaiian style, selling them as 'Tongan gods'.

Memories of the late Aleki Prescott came to my mind when I first browsed through *Art in Oceania: A new history*. He is one of many artists who has contributed to art in Oceania – Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia (and in this case excluding Australia) – but who seldom signed his work and who, with so many other artists like him, are totally unknown by most who purchase products that are results of their creativity. I was asking myself questions such as when a new design becomes 'traditional', or what are the distinctions between an 'artist' and a 'craftsperson'.

With its 550 illustrations (including 450 in colour), this book can be enjoyed for its pictures alone, but behind them are interesting aspects of cosmology, aesthetics, trade, and life histories of individual craftspeople and collectors. The authors manage very well to show the importance of understanding art in relation to history, practices and performances. Thus, *Art in Oceania* is as much about people as it is about material objects.

The book is divided into six parts, each with two or three chapters. Part one provides an overview of art in early Oceania, from the period of initial human settlement and until around A.D. 1700. The period between 1700 and World War II is in focus of the three following parts about New Guinea, island Melanesia, and Eastern and Northern Oceania. Part five is about the

period between 1945 and the end of colonialism, whereas the last part provides examples of art from the late 1980s and until the present. Although the conventional, but questionable, division of Oceania into New Guinea with Melanesia, and Micronesia and Polynesia, is used in the book, refreshing approaches are also taken to view Oceania as an entity with much in common among its peoples, and without dismissing contemporary creativity as ‘non-traditional’ or uninteresting.

A significant source of inspiration for the authors has been Epeli Hau’ofa’s seminal paper ‘Our sea of islands’ (1993). They present a number of cases that exemplify his thesis that the peoples of Oceania did not form discrete and isolated populations but always were mutually engaged in exchange. An important point made in the book is that the tendency to identify art ‘tribally’ may obscure its temporal and historical aspects, such as patterns of long-distance trade, migration, modes of livelihood, and culture contact. While collectors in the field usually assumed that they brought back locally made artifacts, these may in fact have been produced further away. A mask acquired in New Guinea in 1910, for instance, is now believed to have been passed from one group to another some 125 miles up the Sepik River.

As stated by one of the editors, Nicholas Thomas, Oceanic “art forms were never products of isolated local aesthetics, but of histories that were entangled in many ways before, during, and after the colonial periods” (p. 23), This does not mean that there were no such things as unique local creations, only that Oceanic art has to be understood in relation to a context beyond the local and temporal. For example, although plumes from what are still culturally very significant birds of paradise have not survived in the archaeological record, 3,000 to 8,000 years old stone mortars and pestles may be related to long distance trade between the highlands and the coast of New Guinea.

Oceanic art has, in fact, always been in a state of flux. For a long time it has been common among private collectors and museum curators to perceive art or artifacts from a certain era – ‘pre-contact’, ‘first contact’, etc. – as more ‘authentic’ or ‘traditional’ than those from later times. All over Oceania, quite soon after initial contact, local people began to produce items specifically aimed at trade with Westerners, and like in many other places in a relatively short time, the range of designs became standardized and the motifs simplified. However, whereas indigenous cultures certainly suffered a great deal from the agendas of missionaries, teachers, and administrators during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, these were also remarkable fertile periods for Oceanic arts. Certain art forms went out of favour while a host of new influences and social contexts stimulated creativity in other ways, such as when churches and meeting houses came to incorporate indigenous ideas of decoration and architecture.

There is, however, so much more that I came to think of while reading the book and which to me exemplify ‘art’. As once defined by Adrienne L. Kaeppler (1989), this term can refer to “any cultural form that results from creative processes that use or manipulate words, sounds, movements, materials, or spaces in such a way that they formalize the nonformal”, whereas ‘aesthetics’ can “refer to evaluative ways of thinking about these cultural forms.” Maybe Oceania is an area far too vast and culturally diverse for performing arts such as dancing, oratory, music and singing, or surfing to be included in a volume which already is impressive in its extent. Nevertheless, although I certainly find the many examples of evolved and contemporary art interesting, there are a number of other creative expressions that I would also have liked to read about. Contemporary grave decorations (with Tonga, perhaps, as the most striking case with its sand, beer bottles and tapestries), which often strike visitors as

unusual and certainly are very meaningful to local people, is one such example. The dance teams of French Polynesia and other islands that compete in creating the most fanciful costumes is another. There is almost nothing about this in the book, nor about modern *lei* (wreath) making in Hawai'i, contemporary shellcraft, the weaving of hats in the Cook Islands, basketry in Tonga, or the decoration with flowers and leaves that still are so commonly used all over the island world.

These points of critique do, however, by no means overshadow my impression that *Art in Oceania* is, in many ways, a landmark publication. Rather, they demonstrate that much more research is needed in order to better understand artistic creativity in the 'Sea of Islands'.

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**George Tolia and Jean-Luc Arnaud (eds.) (2012). *Seas, islands, humanists*, a special section (pp. 11-94) of *The Historical Review / La revue historique*, Vol. 9. ISSN: 1790-3572. PDF freely downloadable from: <http://www.historicalreview.org/>**

That islands are a special world full of symbolic values *par excellence*, exercising a special charm and attraction, is evidenced by the multitude of writings that have been devoted to them since antiquity. They have always been powerful symbols of place, hosting ideal societies, phenomena, unique human beings and animals. Islands take on the role of a true spatial prototype teeming with exciting symbolism. As such, they appear in the texts of various literatures, from Homer's *Odyssey* and Diodorus Siculus's *Nesiotiké* to the islands of the Earthly Paradise, Purgatory and Utopia, the journey of Saint Brendan, Buondelmonti's *Isolario* or "Book of Islands" (a true best-seller in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) and *The Thousand and One Nights*, from More to Shakespeare, Swift and Defoe, through a history of varying nuances that has continued even beyond the nineteenth century. For even today, despite the fact that every nook and cranny of the world has long since been explored, the island remains a place of the imagination, notwithstanding the fact that its far-from-dormant charms are promoted mainly through the exotic myths of tourist advertisements.

Moreover, their far-flung distribution, the finiteness of their boundaries, their role as bridge to distant lands – one thinks of the importance of islands for Mediterranean navigation in the ancient world – and at the same time the fact of their being a world apart (just a few miles away from the coast marks a real or perceived caesura from the mainland) are key elements of an individuality that has been reshaped by the most diverse interpretations. Hence the interest of writers, philosophers, cartographers and historians, who in the ancient civilizations inhabiting the multitude of Mediterranean islands found ideal subjects for their treatises. It suffices to recall the islands of Homer: half real and half mythical places, with ships and sailors expert in the arts of war against Troy, and at the same time enchanted settings and sorcerers that upset the real world. Even the birth of Rhodes in Pindar's seventh Ode displays a fascinating mixture of aesthetic ideals and attention to natural dynamics: the island rises from the depths of the sea like a blossoming rose, bathed in a golden rain sent by Zeus.

And it was no coincidence that Diodorus would claim, four centuries later, that islands were the fruit of divine benevolence.

The history of islands in the European imagination – from Diodorus’s *Nesiotiké* to Domenico Silvestri’s *De Insulis* (fourteenth century) and Buondelmonti’s *Liber de insulis* (early fifteenth century), which mark the start of an enduring interest that gradually embraced all the islands of the world – is long and fascinating, with a mixture of fact and fiction, objectivity and symbol.

The aim of this preamble is to introduce another important episode in the history of the island theme, a further demonstration of the longstanding interest it has aroused: a few months ago, the *Historical Review / La revue historique* (Department of Neo-Hellenic Research / Institute of Historical Research) devoted a special section entitled *Seas, Islands, Humanists* (Vol. 9, 2012). An earlier version of these papers was presented at a seminar entitled ‘Island Cartographies: Knowledge and Power’, coordinated by Jean-Luc Arnaud and George Tolia in Ermoupolis, Syros, Greece, in July 2007, an event conceived and organized in the framework of the Network of Excellence RAMSES2 activities for 2006-2010.

Five expert, authoritative authors each tackle a specific theme while following a common line of reasoning whose purpose is to trace the evolution, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, of an increasingly open and interconnected image of the world as the Mediterranean closes upon itself. “They explore some aspects of the Humanists’ efforts to merge theory and practice, doctrine and experience, to enclose seas and islands in a renovated worldview and give shape and meaning to the open horizons of Their Age” (p. 10). So declare Jean-Luc Arnaud and George Tolia in their stirring preface, in which they reaffirm that the purpose of the research is to map a “confrontation between formal geography and empirical knowledge during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, an era of rapid maritime expansion, radical geopolitical reorganization and conceptual adjustments,” and to highlight the “novel status in late medieval and early modern western geographical culture” acquired by “The seas and the islands, always present in the human understanding of nature after the discovery of the Canary Archipelago in the fourteenth century and, later on, of new sea routes around Africa and towards the Pacific and Caribbean Archipelagos” (p. 9).

The first essay is by Frank Lestringant, an authority in the field of geo-historical studies on islands. It illustrates the various interpretations which, over centuries, dealt with the birth of islands and theories about the origins of the world and the history of the earth’s formation. He contrasts the explanations of classical antiquity with those introduced by Christian doctrine: islands as a consequence of the disorder caused in nature by original sin, and the randomness of their distribution as a clear sign of the disruption of the Earth’s primitive harmony and original unity. His excursus on the centuries-long history of the opposition between a vision of islands as product of an ancient cataclysm and that of the archipelago as universal model of the cosmos and the completion of God’s plan is indeed fascinating. Even the space reserved for the different interpretations of the Earth’s history yields surprising anticipations, such as that of Münster who claimed that the world was originally one great island which eventually broke up: a forerunner by three centuries of modern theories about supercontinent Pangaea.

The ‘island philosophy’ illustrated by Lestringant is followed by Tolia’s essay, which examines the theme of islands in a broad chronological survey, with special attention dedicated to the geopolitical approach underlying each island book: that by Cristoforo Buondelmonti, whose constant references to the ruins of classical antiquity are an attempt to salvage for Christianity a world threatened by the Ottoman superpower; that by Valentin Fernandes, which

is a frank cartographic glorification of the Portuguese colonial empire; that by Leandro Alberti, in strictly national character; that by Piri Reis, which glorifies Ottoman naval power; that by Benedetto Bordone, the first universal island book to be printed, which included all the islands of the then known world and was an attempt to stimulate maritime trade of material goods. These are followed by Tolias' review of the two next universal island books, which assemble an oceanic maritime image of the world: the works of the two major cosmographers of the sixteenth century, Alonso de Santa Cruz and André Thevet. The former is a cartographic defence of Spanish maritime expansion; the latter likewise for the French. Tolias pays considerable attention to the decline of the island, which eventually became a popular genre, ending up as a travel guide, simultaneously with the decline of the Mediterranean and Venice.

Piero Falchetta devotes his essay to Benedetto Cotrugli's *De navigatione* of 1464-65, the manuscript of which was discovered just two decades ago, highlighting its unique combination of geographical erudition and the professional world of seamanship. The work of this Ragusan merchant and diplomat, active in Naples and on the Catalanian and Dalmatian coasts, signals a significant improvement in the tradition of nautical texts, since its aim is to set up a science of navigation by promoting the nautical lore of his age by means of a fusion of practical experience and humanist culture.

The general character of the essays mentioned above allows one to fully appreciate the specificity of the other contributions of the special section, one of which is dedicated to the *Liber* of Buondelmonti, the founder of island books about the Archipelago, and another to Enrico Martello's valuable and innovative *Insularium*.

Benedetta Bessi explains how Buondelmonti was not just a passionate lover of classical antiquity, dismayed by the decay of ancient ruins and the iconoclastic fury of Christians, but also a genuine archaeologist *avant la lettre* who rejoices at the salvaging of ancient statues, tries to raise those that have fallen, and describes and accurately measures the circumferences of city walls and specific sites. I might also mention that his island maps, despite our not possessing the original manuscript, are so accurate that they are considered one of the prototypes of chorographic cartography.

As Natalie Bouloux emphasizes, the *Liber's* maps were redrafted by Enrico Martello (Henricus Martellus), active in Florence at the end of the fifteenth century, together with other well-known cartographers such as Piero del Massaio, Niccolò Germanico, Francesco Rosselli and Francesco Berlinghieri. Martello's *Insularium illustratum* is a work whose quality and refinement of map design go hand in hand with the modernity of the contents. The results are especially evident in the revision of Ptolemy's maps, updated by new discoveries, such as those of the Portuguese along the African coast. Even the world map, which provides an updated state-of-the-art overview in the years immediately prior to the discovery of America, seems to presage its imminence.

The clarity of purpose, the development and the validity of the hypotheses featured in the essays of this special section make this a basic reference point for anyone who wishes to 'know' about islands and the keys they hold to investigating the evolution of thought on world history, beyond any sort of 'insular romanticism.'

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**Lawrence R. Walker and Peter Bellingham (2011). *Island environments in a changing world*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 324pp. ISBN: 978-0-521-73247-5. £31.99stg.**

Islands, islanders, and island communities are at the forefront of the social and environmental changes affecting the Earth. Much has been written about these changes and responses to them. A book by two plant ecologists, *Island environments in a changing world*, adds to this literature, giving a solid overview of many of the challenges and opportunities facing islands and island communities today.

The authors start off by describing and scoping the book, so that the reader knows exactly what they are getting. The authors' goal, articulated in the first sentence, is "to examine relationships between island environments and people" (p. 1). In order to achieve that goal, in sentence two, "[w]e explore how these dynamic relationships have changed both the natural history of islands and the interactions between humans and nature" (p. 1).

The eight chapters are logically structured, framing the problem, describing the current state of knowledge, and applying that knowledge for practical endeavours and for thinking about the future, as per the book's title words "[i]n a changing world". A glossary at the end covers many technical terms from ecology.

The text generally provides a useful balance of human and environmental perspectives. That is a refreshing change from the standard approach of starting with the environment, often implied as being a pristine entity, and then incorporating human activity or "human dimensions", almost as an add-on. The authors openly describe how they write "primarily from our perspective as ecologists who have lived and carried out research on islands" (p.1); but fortunately an approach that neither denigrates nor separates the human shaping of and impacts on island environments; as well as how people have been shaped by their island environments.

This approach to human-environment integration is further indicated by the 16 colour plates along with the numerous black and white photos integrated into the text. Island environments are, quite rightly, literally and figuratively illustrated as products of humanity, nature, and most importantly human-nature interaction. A bias can be picked up towards plants and agriculture, but that is hardly a cause for complaint, given the importance of both of these alongside the authors' background.

In fact, the authors' background and experiences become a significant advantage for this volume. They deliberately focus on nine island groups, selected from amongst locations where they themselves have worked: Japan, Hawai'i, Tonga, New Zealand, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Iceland, the British Isles, and the Canary Islands. That achieves an impressive variety of island geographies, including in terms of land area and population. That also ensures that the reader gleans the basic knowledge provided by each chapter, followed by the authors applying that knowledge to islands from their own experiences.

As such, *Island environments* is both a textbook, providing a foundation of knowledge and information on island environmental science, and a personal exploration. The latter comes through most powerfully in the boxes, written in the first person and signed individually, giving intriguing insights into the authors' interests and expertise, directly from what they have completed in the field. The photos are also dominated by the authors' own images, again demonstrating their direct experience which enhances the book's uniqueness and value.

The writing style is rarely normative and is never sensationalist. Instead, it presents facts and author perspectives straightforwardly, with simple but not simplistic explanations. The weaving of physical and social sciences melds various disciplines, making *Island environments* a solid contribution to island studies and suitable for a wide range of interests. More indigenous perspectives, particularly further discussion of contemporary indigenous perspectives covering the broad topic of ‘island environments in a changing world’, would have rounded out the content.

Overall, the book provides a fascinating journey through time and space. Space is covered through the different island groups and the different scales at which island environments and changes are examined. Time is covered through providing an overview of the history of each island group and through examining current changes from historical, geological, and future perspectives.

These perspectives provide the basis for the book’s longest and penultimate chapter, “Chapter 7: Islands in the modern world, 1950-2000”. This chapter describes the problem set that anyone dealing with island environments needs to know about, highlighting challenges such as urbanisation and tourism.

That chapter especially, but also the rest of the book’s content, lead directly to the conclusions and recommendations in the final chapter. Here, the authors’ passion for their topic emerges along with the book’s central thesis, in the chapter’s title, of “remoteness lost”. That is, island environments are experiencing changes which demonstrate long-reaching influences in such a way that islands, nowadays, can be less and less characterized as being remote.

Ongoing and future challenges described in the book emphasise population and climate change, at the expense of other linked topics such as biodiversity loss and pollution. But why the authors made their selection is understandable, especially since they neither overemphasize nor gloss over the topics which they picked; instead providing a balanced, non-histrionic overview which places population and climate change in wider contexts.

Finally, the authors provide a rapid array of pragmatic, evidence-based recommendations. They recognize that island environments have major problems and could be irreversibly altered; but they also accept that it is possible to tackle the problems. Whether or not that will happen, the authors imply, is uncertain. But humanity has the options. We may choose to implement them to ensure that a world changing socially and environmentally does not destroy island environments.

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