

Book reviews

Laurent Dousset & Mélissa Nayral (Eds.) (2019). *Pacific realities: Changing perspectives on resilience and resistance*. 180pp. New York & Oxford: Berghahn. ISBN: 978-1-78920-040-9. US\$120.00 (Hardback).

Building on the heuristic lenses of resilience and resistance, *Pacific Realities* sheds light on the lives of contemporary Pacific Islanders and, to a lesser extent, indigenous Australians, with particular focus on the implications of globalization for their sociocultural and ecological context. In their detailed introduction, Laurent Dousset and Mélissa Nayral set the tone for the six chapters and afterword of the edited volume. Unsurprisingly, they begin by debunking the limitations of theories that relegate the people of Oceania to victims of dominant global forces (e.g. capitalism and neoliberalism) to which they are exposed. The authors' intention is to pursue a more inclusive theoretical approach that builds on, but nevertheless expands and complements existing "glocalization" debates. They pay particular attention to the manifold ways Pacific Islanders (and indigenous Australians) draw on their individual and collective agency to "achieve, pursue and reproduce their material and immaterial conditions of existence, in particular through what could be called forms of resistance and resilience which either cross the local-global divide or resourcefully reinterpret it for their own and purportedly local benefits" (p. 2). For the purpose of developing their theoretical framework, Dousset and Nayral go to great length to weave together two concepts which appear to serve diametrically opposed functions at the outset.

Whereas resistance "implies individual practices aimed against an existing 'system' [and] drives for change", resilience commonly refers to "sets of complex relationships which attempt to reproduce the system or regain some kind of stability [and] attempts to counterbalance change" (p. 9). Yet, they reason that one could contemplate "forms of resistance that are resilient [and] processes of resilience that are also an expression of resistance" (p. 9) and argue that this dialectic potentially offers scholars a fruitful way to investigate how Pacific Islanders (and indigenous Australians) navigate the various challenges they encounter. Dousset and Nayral conclude that pondering how resilience and resistance potentially or *de facto* interrelate is always a matter "of context and scale of reference, of level of practices, and of the rationale of motives and their potential consequences" (p. 9). Building on this conceptual framework, the contribution to *Pacific Realities* offers rich ethnographic case studies that showcase the particular ways in which resistance and/or resilience materialize in various parts of island Oceania and Australia. Yasmine Musharbash reveals how Warlpiri (Aboriginal Australian) people responded to erected signs which announced oppressive state policies by altering them through graffiti, erecting their own satirical signs or requesting sacred sight signs from the government to counter non-indigenous claims to their territory. In doing so, Warlpiri people attempted to resist the state by "speaking the language the government speaks" (p. 37). Christian Ghasarian takes his readers to Rapa in French Polynesia, a place extremely remote even by Pacific standards. Drawing on insights deriving from long-term fieldwork and focusing on local land management and tenure policies, he makes a convincing case that the people of Rapa make use of their neo-traditional Council of Elders, i.e. a colonial institution, to counter exogenous global forces. Sina Emde discusses the role of the Fiji Women's Rights Movement in the context of Fiji's 2000 attempted civilian coup d'état. She describes her interlocutors as navigating "vulnerability, resilience and resistances" (p. 67) and employs an intersectional analysis of ethnicity, class and gender to reveal how the women political activists she worked with, opposed political ethnonationalism.

Mélissa Nayral is equally concerned with gender and politics, which she analyses with a focus on the effects of the French parity law on rural Kanak sociality in the French overseas territory of Ouvéa (New Caledonia). She describes why and how women councillors (as members of state institutions) have to respond to various obstacles, given their customary-based absence from public politics in Kanak society. Laurent Dousset focuses on a kind of seemingly surreal and certainly

megalomaniac development project that aimed at erecting a metropolis or city-state in one particular area of Malekula Island, Vanuatu. He exposes the various agendas and visions that drove the idea of Lamap Cité Nouvelle, highlighting coexisting “multi-layered and imbricated forms of resistance and resilience [that embodied] competing interpretations of the local history, and through these divergent visions of contemporary and future forms of social and political organization.” (p. 110). John Burton’s interrogation of who benefits from mining incomes in three areas of Papua New Guinea raises awareness that resistance and resilience in indigenous contexts can rest on opportunistic projects that allow local leaders to exploit their subordinates. If one of the main concerns of anthropology is to be sympathetic towards the subaltern, Burton rightly claims that studies on resilience and resistance demand that anthropologists “have correctly identified who the subaltern is” (p. 141).

All the contributions to *Pacific Realities* demonstrate that resilience and resistance do not operate uniformly in any given setting, i.e. they reaffirm that “the local level [is no] coherent and uniform body of representations and practices” (p. 13). Simultaneously, all chapters make the convincing case that resilience and resistance are not “limited to reconstructing past states of being or social structure” (p. 13) but display the creative ways Pacific Islanders (and indigenous Australians) draw on culture and tradition as resources for future-oriented projects that “are in a constant flux” (p. 162) and often lack a “nostalgic bent” (p. 156). This is made particularly clear in Martha Macintyre’s afterword which skilfully weaves together the book’s theoretical concerns, its individual chapters and her own material from Papua New Guinea. Macintyre reminds the reader that “the reasons why some aspects of traditional life, identity and cultural values persist [and not others] are complex and unpredictable” (p. 152) and that “resilience is rarely the pure, virtuous continuity of tradition in the face of foreign onslaughts” (p. 153).

Overall, *Pacific Realities* makes an important contribution to a better understanding of life worlds in Oceania (with a slight overrepresentation of Melanesia). Although this volume is a poignant reminder of the challenges indigenous people face in the current global condition, it also aptly demonstrates the agency of these social actors to resist these challenges and act resiliently. Presumably, *Pacific Realities* will mainly draw attention from scholars interested in Oceania. However, it should be read well beyond this limited circle because it offers rich ethnographic insights and a handy theoretical framework to better grasp contemporary island societies and cultures and their respective place in the world today.

Dominik Schieder

Department of Social Sciences, Siegen University

dominik.schieder@uni-siegen.de

Lorenz Gonschor (2019). *A power in the world: The Hawaiian Kingdom in Oceania*. Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press. ISBN: 9780824880019 (hardcover) US\$18.00; ISBN: 978-0-8248-8829-9 (paperback). US\$28.00.

In the 1990s the historiography of Hawai‘i took a new departure. The centenary of the United States’ *coup de main* in 1893, and then that of the annexation by the United States in 1898 (which no lesser body than the US Supreme Court deemed illegal), were catalysts for a re-evaluation of the sovereign state, whose existence had been unceremoniously erased under the cover of US warships. With a few exceptions, the old Hawaiian Kingdom had been considered a quaint, perhaps even lovable, curiosity, whose eventual absorption by the United States was overdetermined. Since then, scholars such as Kamanamaikalani Beamer, Tom Coffman, Willy Kauai and Kanalu Young have spearheaded a move to study the Hawaiian Kingdom on its own terms: a non-Western state that was diplomatically proactive and managed for almost a century to safeguard its independence in the age of empire. Lorenz Gonschor adds to that body of scholarship by giving us a comprehensive account of the foreign relations of the Hawaiian Kingdom with a focus on the Pacific Ocean, its natural hinterland.

Chapter One sets the stage, wherein Gonschor argues that Hawai'i was one of the very few cases of primary state formation, i.e., without exogenous influence from existing states. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the consolidation of the small island polities of Oceania into archipelagic states had not been completed, and since it coincided with the growing activities of European powers and the United States in the area, outsiders were able to intervene in state-building processes in such places as Tahiti, Fiji and Samoa. The one exception was Hawai'i, which was unified by Kamehameha I before imperialism started in earnest. This made the Kingdom a power to reckon with. After the United Kingdom and France recognized the independence of Hawai'i in 1843, the Kingdom was for many years the only non-Western member of the so-called "family of nations," which in the context of nineteenth-century diplomacy referred to those sovereign states that were accepted as equals by European powers. Hawai'i signed treaties with the United States, European nations, and Japan, established and received permanent diplomatic missions, and joined the Universal Postal Union. The government mastered the rules of international law governing the acquisition of uninhabited islands and added the Leeward islands northwest of Kaua'i, as well as the distant Palmyra and Johnston atolls to its territory.

Given its international stature, Hawai'i became a model for other Pacific islanders to emulate. This is illustrated in Chapters 2-5 wherein Hawai'i's diplomatic relations with the rest of Oceania is chronicled. Beginning in the 1850s, the Hawaiian government developed an original Pan-Oceanic policy, aiming to forge close links between the various archipelagos and nascent states in order to preserve them from Western imperialism. This policy culminated in the treaty of confederation signed in 1887 between Hawai'i and Samoa, but before it could take effect European powers intervened in Samoan politics and soon thereafter occupied the islands. Under King Kalakaua, Hawai'i turned towards Asia in the 1880s, establishing friendly relations with Japan, Siam and Johor. This new Pan-Asian thrust may in fact have contributed to the fall of the Kingdom in 1893. The originality of Hawai'i's hybrid modern institutions, which contained indigenous elements as well as European ones, appealed to leaders elsewhere. Chapter 5 tells us about attempted institutional transfers between Hawai'i, on one hand, and Tonga, Fiji, Samoa, Kiribati, Kosrae and Pohnpei on the other. Of these attempts, only the Tongan one succeeded. One of the most interesting aspects of Hawaiian politics, was the large role played by non-natives in the employ of the government. Charles St. Julian, who inspired the Pan-Oceanic initiatives and acted as a Hawaiian diplomat at large, was an Australian by birth, while various foreign ministers and prime minister were American or European. Robert Wyllie, for instance, was a Scotsman who served as foreign minister for twenty years. He is directly relevant to the book under review in that it was he who set up the Hawaiian state archive on which a good part of Gonschor's research is based. The loyalty with which most foreign-born officials served the Hawaiian state testifies to a sense of nationality in the Kingdom that was neither ethnic nor racial; in this respect Hawaiians were far ahead of most Europeans. The prominence of non-natives was probably not unrelated to the relentless decline in the native population brought about by disease, a point on which one would have liked to read more.

In 1887 a group of settlers known as the Missionary Party carried out a coup and forced a different constitution on the king. The new government immediately ceased Hawaiian representations abroad, signalling its intent to end the country's international role as a sovereign power. Faced with local resistance, the Missionary Party staged another coup with the help of invading American troops and declared a republic in 1893. This was followed in 1898 by American annexation pure and simple, carried out through a joint resolution of the US Congress rather than a treaty. Following the seminal work of Keanu Sai, Gonschor convincingly argues that this procedure made the annexation of Hawai'i illegitimate under international law, for which reason the islands should *de jure* be considered a sovereign nation under foreign occupation. The author makes the intriguing suggestion that European powers acquiesced in the annexation of Hawai'i to facilitate their own colonial aims in the Pacific Ocean.

In the last chapter and the epilogue, Gonschor discusses the afterlife of the Kingdom. The new *de facto* authorities banned the use of the Hawaiian language in schools, a policy that may yet lead to

its extinction as a spoken language in daily use. As part of a 4th of July fireworks display in 1912, the flagship of the Hawaiian navy, HHMS Kaimiloa, was sunk in Honolulu harbour, symbolically obliterating the Kingdom's sovereignty. Today, the only living reminder of the prominence and path-breaking approach of the Hawaiian Kingdom to modernity in the nineteenth century is the constitution of the Kingdom of Tonga, which, while often amended, dates from 1875 and is heavily influenced by the Hawaiian constitution of 1864. The author makes copious use of sources in Hawaiian and a number of other Polynesian languages, as well as works in French and German. A number of original maps help the reader grasp the stages of state-building in various archipelagos. *A Power in the World* is a succinct but comprehensive history of Hawaiian foreign relations in the nineteenth century. It is a work of immense erudition, written with verve and panache which may interest scholars with a regional interest in the Pacific or the United States, with a thematic interest in world or diplomatic history, and a passion for island studies.

H. E. Chehabi

Frederik S. Pardee School of Global Studies, Boston University

hcchehabi@hotmail.com

Matt Tomlinson (2020). *God is Samoan: Dialogues between culture and theology in the Pacific*. 160pp. Honolulu HI: University of Hawai'i Press. ISBN: 978-0-8248-8831-20. US\$28.

God is Samoan is an intriguing, almost unfairly limiting title for a book which offers new research on culture and theology from several central Pacific islands. At the same time, it is a very fitting title of Matt Tomlinson's theoretical and methodical approach. The author spent time in four Protestant seminars, namely at the Kanana Fou Theological Seminary on American Samoa, the Piula Theological College on Samoa, the Pacific Theological College on Fiji and at the School of Theology at the University of Auckland in New Zealand. His four field sites are well chosen in order to strive for representational research on contextual theology in Polynesia. Insights from Tonga and to a much smaller extent from Niue are incorporated although the author did not attend theological seminars on these islands. Numerous important Tongan voices are represented in his research through attendees and theological voices from the four field sites. Tomlinson reflects the possible downfalls of a multi-sited research project, which might be conducted at the expense of depth and time at each site. Yet his approach and choice of field sites is in line with the region's specific history and the subject of his research, the teachings and philosophy of contextual theologians, who themselves do not see their ideas bound to one specific island.

The Pacific is understood by its people as a "sea of islands", and history, as well as Tomlinson's anthropological research underlines the connectedness of individual islands from New Zealand to Hawai'i and Rapa Nui to Palau. Time and again, Pacific Islanders have crossed the vast ocean and in course developed uniquely island-centered identities and at the same time, a larger regional identity encompassing the entire ocean. Tomlinson's theoretical and methodological approach in a way follows the history and lives of his subjects and the reader quickly understands why for contextual theologians, *God is Samoan or Fijian or Tongan*. His research is grounded in history and harmonizes the anthropological and theological disciplines in a fruitful manner and thereby offers understanding of the role of Christianity in the history of Oceania. It also offers access to an understanding of the cultural power of individual priests and theological seminars in contemporary society and politics on each Pacific island.

The structure and theoretical part of the book are without fault and make Tomlinson's book worthwhile for students starting in Pacific Studies as well as scholars looking for answers in the omnipresence of churches, theological seminars and the presence of Christianity in the daily lives of Pacific Islanders. From the onset, Tomlinson's strength as a writer and researcher becomes apparent: he elaborates theoretical terms with clear explanations and gripping quotations from historical sources

and his own ethnographical fieldwork. He interweaves the necessary explanation of cultural techniques from Pacific islands, e.g. the emphasis and advocacy of dialogue in theology and the importance of storytelling (*talanoa*) in his research, and has gathered convincing examples how people from Oceania retell or write back at the bible in their own words and more importantly with their own history and cultural concepts. Tomlinson succeeds in sparking an engaging process between anthropology and theology, thereby adding to a deeper understanding of the history of the Pacific Islands from a social and cultural perspective.

Tomlinson's fieldwork was very fruitful: He sheds light on the importance of delays in storytelling in the Pacific Islands which leads to new interpretations of biblical texts (e.g. Judg 11, 1 Sam 1-2 and Gen 38). Contextual theologians from Oceania can offer particularly Tongan readings of the bible, where despite the biblical text, Rahab is not understood as a prostitute but discussed in alignment with the Pacific experience of having women from the islands portrayed as promiscuous and desirable in Western narrative. Worthwhile for students and scholars are his observations about class in Tonga (*tu'a-'eiki*) as well as spirits in Samoa (*aitu*) and how Pacific Islanders have incorporated their culture with Christian beliefs. Here readers can not only gain an understanding in the global acculturation of Christianity but also in the specific contributions and changes made by Pacific Islanders and especially by Samoans. His categorization of practitioners into weavers, servants and prophets offers a pathway to understanding the various roles people on the islands can adopt. Tomlinson's research and discussions on Samoan contextual theology offers one of the strongest cases in his book. His chapter on pre-missionary beliefs, Samoa's creator god Tagaloga, in Hawai'i Kanaloa, leads to valuable observations on how Samoan belief systems corresponded to the teachings of the London Missionary Society, which began its work in the middle of the 19th century.

Tomlinson also reflects on the insights from his research in Polynesia and critically discusses notions like 'dialogue' and 'culture' which are often broad and blurred terms in public but also scientific discussion, where 'dialogue' can be a method, idea or value at the same time. It is very refreshing to read his observations on how Pacific Islanders themselves use dialogue and this is essential to understand how contextual theologians in Oceania see themselves and understand their ideas about the bible and the culture of their native islands. Furthermore, readers learn about theologians' view on contemporary challenges and communication with the wider world. Readers of *God is Samoan* are offered new cultural field studies of the Pacific Islands and allows the reader to uncover a web of ideas bound to individuals, which are connecting central Polynesian islands and culture. Tomlinson's research is an example, that studying the history and culture of islands almost always leads students and scholars on the path of exploring the wider world.

Moritz Pöllath PhD

Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Munich

Moritz.Poellath@lrz.uni-muenchen.de

Karin Amimoto Ingersoll (2016). *Waves of knowing: A seascape epistemology*. 216 pp. Durham: Duke University Press. ISBN: 978-0-8223-6234-0. US \$23.95.

This is a book about *ma ke kai* (in the sea), a reflective journey inward. Ingersoll's book is coherent and responsibly grounded in lived experiences and post-disciplinary methodologies (highlighting the importance of knowledge as regulated by the senses and affect). Throughout the book, she reminds us that the world is multi-sited; becoming intelligible can only take place as part of an interconnected matrix. Thus, the rhythms of this book's seascapes assemble with the author's body (and the knowledge bodies of other surfers, islanders, and oceanic scholars) through an affected voyage through time and through philosophical, spiritual, and kinaesthetic interactions with place. Place-making realises through the embodiment of oceanic knowledge, where 'locations' are a series of encounters. This book's first photo depicts a (surfing) body submerged in an ocean that is centred, aesthetically,

epistemologically, politically, and kinaesthetically. In an elaborated engagement with oceanic processes of becoming a self-defined by the totality to which it belongs and by its relations to other parts of the whole (p. 109), Ingersoll reflects upon her own navigating of indigeneity and identity. For the Kānaka Maoli, identity is born from the sea, identity is 'being-in-the-world' and 'being-in-time'.

Ingersoll calls for situating the ethical experience of movement in knowledges of Ho'okele (navigation), Lawai'a (fishing), He'e nalu (surfing) back into ontological perspective. This offers a myriad of perspectives on oceanic knowledge and ecology in collision and collusion at times, with the emerging burgeoning surf tourism, commercial fishing, privatisation of the ocean, zoning, and other forms of contemporary colonialism and militarism. Fortunately for readings, Ingersoll's critique of past and present discrimination and exclusion of native Hawaiians acknowledges the regulating and re-shaping agency of Kānaka Maoli in the surfing industry, as well as in education; through localised practice-based education and research: the seascape as a living classroom and Hawaiian vocabulary as mediums conveying the knowledges that have long constituted and regulated island and oceanic spaces and places. Kānaka culture, teaching and learning, through contemporary community involvement, decentres the locus of power, as it engages knowledges that transcend the academe.

This book also offers methodological insights: our readings of our surroundings will determine the way we move, which in turn regulates our interaction with our surroundings and the relationships in which we engage. These are familiar reflections for those of us who participate in critical ethnographic research. Seascape epistemology, oceanic literacy and storytelling as central methodology can help avoid outdated and or western notions of places' existence or non-existence, through mapping guided by foreign spatial divisions (often including gendered and racialised divisions that facilitate the categorisation, management, and control of space). In this book, a seascape epistemology is an embodied voyage through history, the senses, movement of body as one with the sea and creates alternative and autonomous realities. A body-ocean assemblage through movement, reading (the surroundings) and doing, offers political potential within ocean literacy. In such approaches to the sea, the human only exists in its (w)holism through fluid movements and rhythms and is contextualised in kuleana (responsibility): caring for Mālama 'Āina ('the land' - including the ocean as extension of land with water and wind).

Additionally, and quite centrally, this book considers, both, normative and alternative ontologies of time and space as configurations which are ideological constructions of power within epistemology. Thus, the sea is a smooth and striated space which holds a constellation of meanings by means of disrupting power structures. The language of this body-ocean assemblage constitutes a seascape epistemology that is intangible and tangible at the same time: organic, incommensurable, genealogical, boundaryless and always subject to change. An epistemology deemed visible and tangible through movement; the urge to dive in and 'breathe in the water', through navigation's readings (wind and water knowledges as interconnected grammars) and aesthetic logics that remember through performance. The narratives of this book are a fresh contrast to the discovery tropes of dominant discourses in positivist approaches to ocean and island knowledge, identity, and theory. Ingersoll's carefully crafted monograph provides the epistemological space necessary to engage with diverse and alternative presents and futures from a position of ecocultural confidence. This is a book for those interested in island and ocean theory (as identity), human- sea relations, critical historiography of the Pacific, indigenous ecology and decolonial theory and practice. All in all, a book for those who understand oceanic literacy as political and ethical literacies critical, in times of global warming, placing human awareness back in to the holism of the sea, and the human as one with the sea.

Elena Burgos Martinez
Asian Studie, Leiden University, Netherlands
e.e.burgos.martinez@hum.leidenuniv.nl

Charles W. MacQuarrie & Joseph Falaky Nagy (Eds.) (2019). *The Medieval cultures of the Irish Sea and the North Sea: Manannán and his Neighbors*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. ISBN-13: 978-9462989399. US\$127.91.

This interdisciplinary collection comprises nine chapters, each of which provides insight into a different element of the histories, literatures, and languages of the Irish and North Seas. MacQuarrie's introduction briefly sketches the complex historical, mythic, archaeological, and linguistic contexts of the Isle of Man but also seeks to provide a rationale for the diversity of disciplines and topics comprised herein. While a number of chapters focus on Manx culture specifically, the island is employed emblematically as a nexus of cross-cultural influences, both central and peripheral in turn, which bears the influence of all the societies studied within this volume and justifies the intermingling of literary treatments of *Beowulf* with a study of Hiberno-Manx numismatics. MacQuarrie also makes an evocative case for Man's suitability to represent, in microcosm, the cultural exchange across Scandinavia and the British Isles that justifies this volume. However, the focus on the Irish Sea region does highlight the slightly arbitrary presence of the North Sea in the volume's title, which appears to have been necessary to excuse the inclusion of the collection's fourth chapter which focuses on *Orkneyinga saga*.

Davies deftly utilises significant Hiberno-Manx numismatic evidence to provide an augmented understanding of Viking Age Man 1020-1065, prior to the founding of the Kingdom of Man and the Isles. Davies surveys later Manx textual sources, the Irish annals, Old Norse sagas, and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, demonstrating the uncertain picture of Manx politics they paint alongside, in some sources, the suggestion of a complex relationship between Man and Dublin. After an arguably over-brief summary of other archaeological evidence, Davies turns to the exceptional quantity of coinage preserved from Viking Age Man. These are comprehensively used as evidence for Man's status as a central market and cosmopolitan hub in the Irish Sea. Perhaps most convincingly, she argues for an independent Manx identity in the late Viking Age, starkly defined against the local rival Dublin.

Hennequin provides a novel re-reading of (H)unferth's interaction with Beowulf before the latter hero's fight with Grendel. Hennequin places herself in opposition to Clover's previous study, in arguing that the two men do not engage in flying, but, through comparison with *Njáls saga* and the *Táin*, that Hunferth instead incites Beowulf as part of his formal role as a *þyle* in Hrothgar's service. This interpretation stresses the comparative productivity and positivity of the two men's relationship, providing interesting context to the Danish equanimity to Hunferth's speech and potential motivation for Hunferth's willingness to loan Beowulf his sword Hrunting. A potential issue arises, however, in incitement usually occurring elsewhere between two figures who have strong personal bonds: incitement from a stranger risks being construed as simple insult. Hennequin seeks to tacitly circumvent this issue by speculating a familial parallel or connection between Hunferth and Beowulf based on similarities between their fathers' names.

Ron J. Popenhagen provides a stylistically striking account of Cú Chulainn's relationship with armour and the necessity of the legendary Irish warrior exposing his body to his martial performance. Popenhagen perhaps overstates the cumbersome anonymity of armour of all sorts to establish a contrast with Cú Chulainn's unbound heroics, but his examination of heroic gesture is highly useful in stressing the importance of bodily movement and poise to warrior identity. Of particular note, is the analysis of the utility of a bare head and neck in battle, which concludes the chapter. Brian Cook produces a highly convincing reading of the narrative function of Ragnhild Eiríksdóttir's narrative function in the *Flateyjarbók* version of *Orkneyinga saga*. Cook suggests that the account of her orchestration of the deaths of rival claimants to Orkney's jarldom provides a rationale for Hlodvir Thorfinnsson's accession to the title. Ragnhild's characterisation is compared with that of Irish sovereignty goddesses such as Sín in *Aided Muirchertaig meic Erca*. While direct literary influence cannot be established, the case for similar pressures informing the negative portrayals of royal women in both Norse and Irish corpora is highly pertinent to reading *Orkneyinga saga*.

Stephen Kershner offers a sensitive comparison of the first-century Latin epic *Thebaid* and its Middle Irish translation and adaptation *Togail na Tebe*. The differing aims of the Classical poet Statius and an Irish medieval translator interested into converting epic into a form of history are examined, particularly with regard to the significant differences between the beginnings and conclusions to the text offered by the two figures. The Irish author acknowledges his debt to Statius but otherwise erases the personal presence of the Classical poet from his own rendering of the work, centring himself as a sophisticated unifier of Latin and Irish literary cultures.

Rhonda Knight focuses closely on the so-called 'Gawain cluster' of texts within the seventeenth century Percy Folio. She extends the connection between certain narratives within the manuscript with the Stanley family to argue for the utilisation and adaptation of earlier poetry to embellish the lore surrounding a powerful household. Many of these texts feature challenges to traditional hierarchies by outsiders who are eventually assimilated into the noble hegemony; Knight insightfully notes that as border magnates, the Stanleys would have identified with this dual status as both outsider and elite. Maria McGarrity's chapter stands as a powerful and pertinent consideration of Irish reception and reconfiguration of medieval poetry of the Anglo-Celtic archipelago. While noting the treatments provided by Yeats, Joyce, and Kinsella, McGarrity focuses upon Seamus Heaney's translation of *Beowulf* and the manner in which his 'Hibernicization' of an early medieval English epic claims Old English language as the cultural capital of modern Ireland and fit stock for its poets. This principle, coupled with Heaney's free use of Irish language in translating *Beowulf*, fosters an inclusive syncretism, which when read alongside the contemporaneous events of the Northern Irish peace process, is here argued to constitute a manifesto for the future of Ireland.

Ethel B. Bowden provides an argument for Cú Chulainn's moral suitability to function as a young adult literary hero. On a theoretical level, this is achieved by applying Kohlberg's stages of child moral development to depictions of Cú Chulainn's maturation, suggesting the young hero comes to achieve the highest level of moral judgement. While such an approach risks psychoanalysing and sanitising a medieval legendary figure, this chapter functions effectively as a self-conscious case for Cú Chulainn's suitability as a hero of children's fiction, who is no more violent than his modern counterparts— a defence directed towards the adult gatekeepers of young people's reading material.

Finally, Marc Pierce compares the decline of the Manx language, which putatively died out in 1974, with the ongoing dwindling in Texas German speakers. Davies provides brief summaries of the histories of both languages before detailing the linguistic and extralinguistic reasons for their declines. He documents the concerted, decades-long effort by Manx government to preserve the language as part of the island's cultural heritage, in contrast with the stigmatisation which speaking Texas German suffered during the First World War. Ultimately, the chapter strikes a hopeful tone in welcoming Manx's likely inclusion in the small group of successfully revived languages in the near future. This volume's entries vary considerably in content but all provide substantial contributions. As a collection, it can be recommended as an original treatment of the cultural congeries of the Irish Sea region.

Thomas Morcom
University of Oxford
tmorcom114@hotmail.co.uk