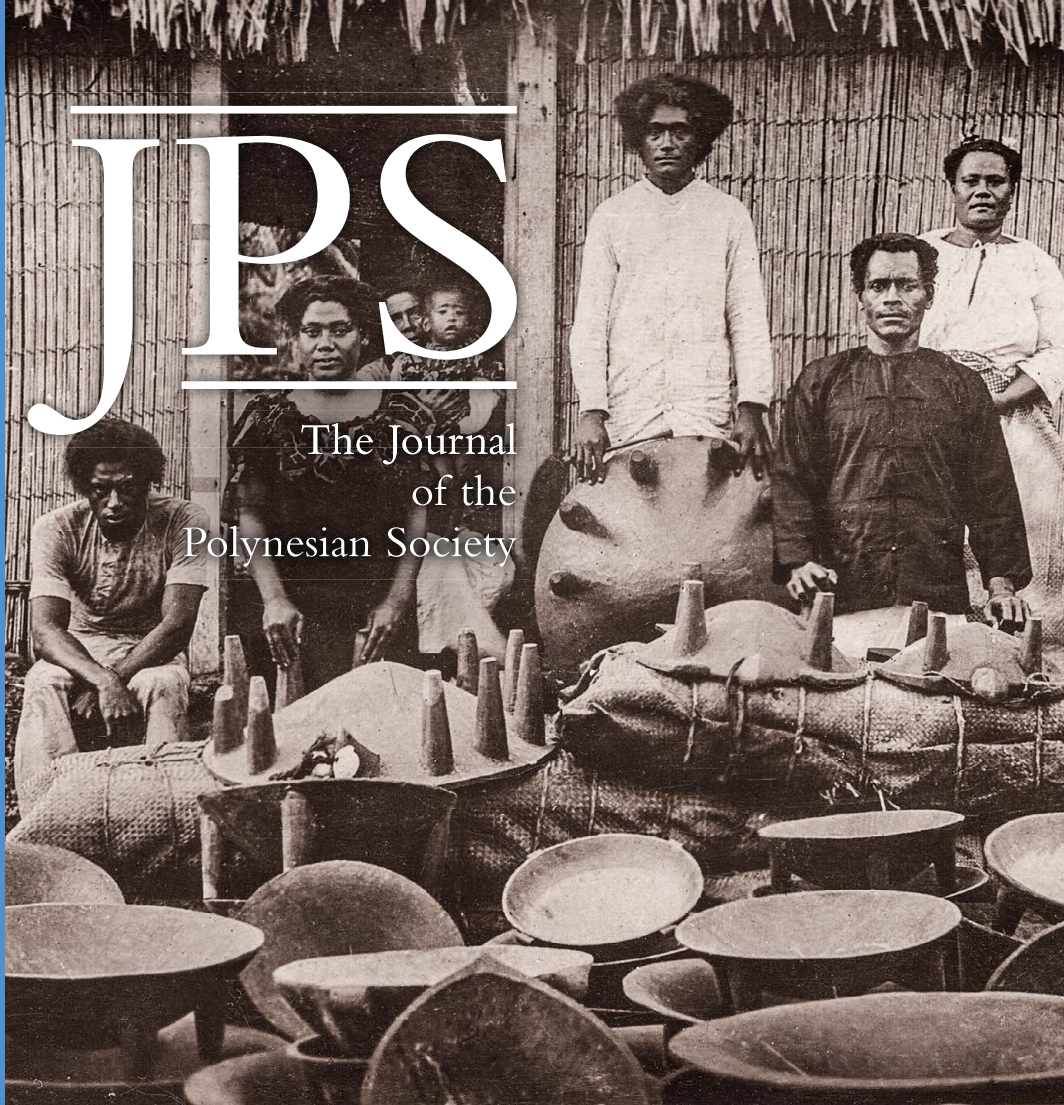


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REVIEWS

Jakubowska, Zuzanna: *Still More to Discover. Easter Island in an Unknown Manuscript by the Forsters from 18th Century / Wciąż odkrywana. Wyspa Wielkanocna w nieznanym rękopisie Forsterów z XVIII wieku*. Warsaw: Museum of the History of Polish Popular Movement and Institute of Iberian and Ibero-American Studies, University of Warsaw, 2014. 213 pp., illustrations, n.p., soft cover.

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In 2010, during routine cataloguing, a previously unknown French-language manuscript authored by Johann Reinhold Forster and relating his visit to Easter Island during the second Cook voyage was discovered in the collections of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow (Chrobak 2010). It was a few years before the news of this startling discovery reached Zuzanna Jakubowska, an Easter Island scholar at the University of Warsaw. She broke the news to the professional world with an article containing the transcription, a translation into English and some initial analysis of that text (Jakubowska 2013a). Now, with *Still More to Discover* we have a monograph dedicated to this unexpected discovery of a new primary source from Cook's second voyage.

The book contains a foreword by Jeremy Coote, Curator and Joint Head of Collections at the Pitt Rivers Museum, and an introduction by Christopher Vorbrich, a biographer of the Forsters. The main text of the book is composed of three parts. In the first we are presented with facsimile of the original hand written document "*Mémoire Sur Waïhou, ou L'Isle de Pâques*" (Treatise on Waihu or Easter Island) and its transcription into printed font followed by its translation into both English and Polish. The second part consists of a formal analysis of the text, its authorship and relation to other of the Forsters' texts, and the addressee, the King of Prussia, Frederick the Great. The third part is the Polish version of the above. Thus the book should be considered bilingual, with all text available in either Polish or English. French readers might also be interested in the book for the original text.

The manuscript itself comprises 33 pages, including a language comparison table and five illustrations (some known from other sources and some new). Given that the author has recently completed a book whose stated goal is the translation and analysis of all primary sources from 18th century expeditions to Easter Island (Jakubowska 2013b), she is in the perfect position to analyse the current document. According to Jakubowska's analysis, the document, which is not dated, was probably written around the year 1779 and its supposed recipient was Frederick the Great, King of Prussia. The possible motivation for the composition of the manuscript might have been as an incentive of sorts for the King to bail out Johann Forster from an English prison and offer him a professorship in the University of Halle. The manuscript would have been written either as a thank you note for this act if it was composed afterwards or

as a type of persuasion to help Johann Forster achieve favours from King Frederick if the manuscript was written before the bailout.

Although the author of the document is stated to be Johann Reinhold Forster himself, the handwriting is nothing like his. Both the handwriting and the literary style of some parts of the manuscript clearly point to Georg Forster as the actual author. This ambiguity in authorship is well known from other works by the Forsters.

The manuscript contains observations on the geology, nature and ethnography of Easter Island. The information in the *Mémoire* gives more detailed observations of Easter Island than other published works by the Forsters: the *Voyage* (Forster 1777) and the *Journal* (Hoare 1982). While it is very similar in content to *Observations* (Forster 1996 [1778]), in many small details *Mémoire* and *Observations* differ from each other. For example, *Mémoire* seems to be the only document from Cook's voyages, or even the only document from all 18th century expeditions, where the author claims to have actually seen the stone quarries where the *moai* figures were made. This and other new details will undoubtedly spur further interest and analysis beyond what has already been provided by Jakubowska. For example, the table of equivalence of the "South Sea Languages" presented in *Mémoire* contains the same glosses as those already known from a similar table in Forster's *Observations* but, while in the latter case the words are written in phonetic notation natural to English, in the former they are rewritten to convey the right sound to the French reader. As such we are given a unique observation of Pacific languages as they were spoken in the 18th century.

Also the presence of high quality facsimiles of the original document gives the book the rank of a real primary source. All scholars of Easter Island will be interested in the presented contents. The book is also a new and invaluable source for all those interested in Cook's voyages. Finally the *Mémoire* manuscript is not only a travel account, but also an anthropological and philosophical treatise. Thus it presents a unique window into a mind of the era of Enlightenment.

Praise is due to Jakubowska for bringing *Mémoire Sur Waihou, ou L'Isle de Pâques* to the world's attention in such a comprehensive way. This book is highly recommended to all students of Easter Island and Cook's voyages because, as we have seen over and over again, there is still much more to discover.

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Nicole, Robert: *Disturbing History: Resistance in Early Colonial Fiji*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010. 328 pp., illustrations. US\$52.00 (hardcover).

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Robert Nicole writes a compelling and engaging book on the resistance to colonial rule in the interior region of Fiji from a grass roots level. This book has been successfully adapted from Nicole's PhD thesis, although some parts may be a little too theoretical for a non-academic audience. The chapters are well written and easy to follow for any person who has an interest in this topic.

Nicole challenges the idea that all indigenous Fijians were accepting of their country becoming a British colony. He states that he wanted to "highlight a number of alternative dates, events, and characters that seldom if ever get a mention in our conversations about the past" (p. 13). In doing so, he discusses a number of resisting strategies of not only the indigenous population but also the Indian population who opposed the colonial administrations ambition of not only establishing European political domination but, more importantly, creating an economically viable colony. In Chapters 1 to 4 the author examines larger organised resistance events and movements, including some that are relatively unknown. This provides the reader with background information on the structures of country's politics and economics as well as its peoples' involvement with traditional and introduced religions.

By examining the Colo War of 1876 Nicole begins to give the reader an understanding of some of the key characteristics of Fijian society before British colonisation. This is followed by consideration of the oracle priest Navosavakadura and the Tuka Movement, providing ample evidence that Fijians were not passive, and did not easily fall under colonial rule. This was an important movement as elements of it were incorporated into the Viti Kabani (Fiji Company) of 1913. From 1900 to 1903 New Zealand began what came to be known as the Movement for Federation in an attempt to annex Fiji. Nicole shows that although there appeared to be a lot of support from Fijians for this movement, in reality, the people used this as a way to express their discontent with the current government. Nicole states that the Viti Kabani, which was established in 1913, was to be the greatest challenge to the colonial administration of that time and it was described as "a powerful example of unarmed resistance" (p.70). He then explores the organised plantation protests of the indentured Indian labourers, beginning with Governor Gordon's policy of introducing Indian indentured labourers to work on the plantations. Nicole then describes how

the poor working and living conditions of the indentured Indian population led to a number of organised protests, in an effort to combat the inhumane treatment they received on the plantations.

The remainder of the book, Chapters 5 through 7, is dedicated to exploring and discussing everyday resistance in ordinary lives. Nicole starts with Fijian resistance and how people from within the villages resisted colonial administration, especially objecting to the surveying of land and having to pay tax. He also examines the resistance of the people against their chiefs who, in some areas, were in compliance with the colonial administration. The majority of the resistance from within the villages was non-violent. This passive resistance included:

...grumbling about their chiefs, the transformation of the ancient *luveniwai* ritual into a subversive pastime by village youths, ongoing tax evasion, village absenteeism, the boycott of the registration of land titles, the manipulation of religious rivalries by villagers to evade communal obligations, and the use of education as a means to break free from the cycle of chiefly exaction, tax work, and agricultural labour (p. 128).

Each of these activities is discussed with explanations on how they were used, the effect they had on the village and the response of the colonial administration.

Details of the everyday resistance of the Indian indentured labourers on plantations are described, including physical and violent resistance as well as the more passive resistance. For example, Nicole describes how workers attacked some overseers and plantation managers when they were ill-treated to a breaking point. And how some labourers used evasion of work, absenteeism, desertion, sabotage and petitions as forms of passive resistance, or what Nicole has described as “weapons of the weak” (p. 159). The final chapter is a fascinating exploration of the everyday resistance by women. This is an area that was difficult for Nicole to research as there are no individual accounts recorded by either indigenous Fijian or Indian women. Instead Nicole intensively researched individual actions that the Colonial Secretary’s Office was notified about and through generalised reports where women, who required special attention, were discussed in a broad context. He provides discussions on women who resisted being chattels and under the control of men in a number of ways, including using European laws of divorce and leaving Fijian husbands for European men, until the laws were amended and women were imprisoned if they left their husbands and abandoned their duties, refused to marry, and did not fulfil marital conjugal obligations. Drawing on his research findings, Nicole has discussed each of these forms of resistance by both indigenous Fijian and Indian women.

This book is well written, coherent and has a logical flow that makes it an easy and pleasurable read. Nicole’s use of maps provides the reader with an understanding of the areas that he is describing and explaining. He has also included some interesting historical photos. It is a pleasure to read a history of Fiji that delves into areas that have been little researched and give a different perspective of colonial administration in Fiji. I highly recommend this book for all scholars of the Pacific Islands as an addition to their bookshelf.

Sissons, Jeffrey: *The Polynesian Iconoclasm: Religious Revolution and the Seasonality of Power*. New York: Berghahn, 2014. 170 pp., appendix, biblio., illustrations, index, US\$85.00/£53.00 (hardback).

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Historical anthropology has been a particularly productive field of scholarship in Polynesia. Scholars such as Marshall Sahlins, Roger Green, Greg Denning, Valerio Valeri and Patrick Kirch have made ample use of historical, ethnographic and archaeological evidence from the region to understand the complex relationships between history, structure and agency. Jeffrey Sissons' new book adds another valuable perspective to this rich tradition in his exploration of the "Polynesian iconoclasm", a series of religious upheavals that took place on islands across the region beginning with Mo'orea and the Society Islands in 1815, later paralleled in Hawai'i and the southern Cook Islands. Reverberations from these events would deflect religious practice across the 19th century. Central to Sissons' argument is his introduction of the term "rituopraxis". Rituopraxis builds on Marshall Sahlins' concept of mythopraxis but prioritises "the structure of practice over the structure of myth" to understand the behaviour of historical actors (p. 3). For his understanding of practice as it relates to rituopraxis, Sissons draws on Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, which has become something of a requisite signifier for anthropologists working to understand the relationship of everyday action and experience to historical change. The near-ubiquity of *habitus* in historical anthropology reflects something of a consensus in the discipline about the importance of everyday dispositions or habits and human agency for understanding sometimes dramatic historical events. Sissons makes a compelling argument that both chiefly and commoner *habitus*, as expressed in everyday action and ritual innovation, was central to the historical events he explores in this book. For Polynesian people, historical change was structured by cosmological beliefs, as well as the everyday dispositions that shaped their actions in relation to mythological and ritual structures.

With the theoretical background in place, Sissons turns to an annual cycle of ritual life which will be familiar to scholars of Polynesia: the seasonal division of time as related to the position of the constellation Pleiades. Sissons describes "Pleiades above" as a time of "*communitas*", marked by rites called *matahiti* in Tahitian and *makahiki* in Hawaiian (it is presumed a similar term would have existed for the Cook Islands, but it is not known). Pleiades above was marked as a season of games, dancing, tribute collection and a general relaxation of social *mores*. In contrast, "Pleiades below" saw the re-establishment of hierarchy and the rule of law, and the return of the gods, marked in Tahiti by a rite called *pa'iatua* or god-wrapping, during which the images of 'Oro and Tane were renewed, and in Hawai'i by the re-opening of the *luakini* or war temples associated with the god Ku. Polynesian societies thus divided their year into two seasons: one of relative egalitarianism and freedom, Pleiades above, and one of hierarchy and strict enforcement of rules, Pleiades below. This cycle was vital to the annual renewal of *mana*, the power of the gods that brought life to Polynesian societies each year.

This structure of annual renewal was not without historical dynamism before the arrival of Europeans in the Pacific. However, historical anthropologists in the region have long acknowledged that European contacts were often associated with major historical events shaped by the mythopraxis or rituoopraxis of Polynesian people, what Sahlins termed the “structure of the conjuncture”. Again Sissons acknowledges that he is building on Sahlins’ work when addressing the central historical problem of the book, which concerns the apparent abandonment of indigenous religion in the Society Islands, Hawai‘i and the southern Cook Islands over a relatively short span of decades in the early to mid-1800s, followed by a period of intense church-building. Sissons begins with the island of Mo‘orea, and the would-be king Pomare, where he sees the first of this series of “Polynesian iconoclasm”. Pomare had ambitions of becoming paramount of the Society Islands and Tahiti, and was attempting to use a strategy of alliances with priests who served the god ‘Oro to advance his goals. Eventually, an alliance with the foreign god Jehovah provided an opportunity to succeed where the ‘Oro strategy had not. The outcome was the burning of religious images, and the abandonment of the *marae* in a series of dramatic ritual challenges to the old order beginning in 1815, a pattern which quickly spread from Mo‘orea to neighbouring Tahiti, Ra‘iatea and Huahine. Similar patterns would follow in Hawai‘i, with the breaking of *kapu* in 1819, and in the southern Cook Islands in 1823. These iconoclasm are interpreted as innovative kinds of Pleiades above rituals, where the old order was being challenged, even overthrown, but still following Polynesian rituoopraxis. These iconoclasm were followed by a series of monumental church-building events in these islands, the largest of which was Pomare’s—over 700 feet in length and including 133 windows and 29 doors. Sissons identifies this and other church-building events with the re-establishment of order during Pleiades below. Later challenges and popular resistance to the new order reflected the persistence of Pleiades above as a structuring element of rituoopraxis for Polynesians.

Sissons makes a compelling argument for the structuring of historical iconoclasm in Polynesian terms. The historical and ethnographic details of the book are impressive and convincing, especially regarding the arguments made about the relationships between *habitus*, rituoopraxis and historical change. That said: this book can in many ways be seen as providing a framework to be built upon, rather than the last word for understanding religious change in the colonial Pacific. One aspect of this line of research that could be expanded is a more intimate look at the lives of the missionaries who played a supporting role in the dramatic Polynesian iconoclasm. How did missionary *habitus* work with and shape Polynesian chiefly relationships to the Judeo-Christian God? Examining this would not take away from the centrality of Polynesian rituoopraxis in shaping history, but it would enrich our understanding of what may have been close relationships between Polynesian chiefs and European men of God. A second line of research that could be beneficially expanded includes a closer look at the materiality of religious architecture and artefacts in shaping these interactions. Sissons hints at this in this book and his other work, but more engagement with Polynesian archaeology would provide a plethora of information to better understand the material dimensions of rituoopraxis diachronically. Surveys of ritual architecture throughout the region can tell us about the longer-term trajectories of transformations of rituoopraxis in Polynesia, the variability of temple structures and aspects of ritual behaviour not recorded in historical or ethnographic sources.