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REVIEWS

Atholl Anderson, Judith Binney and Aroha Harris, *Tangata Whenua: An Illustrated History*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2014. 543 pp. illus. (incl. maps, figures, graphs, drawings, paintings, photographs), appendices (statistics, reo and glossary, publication information), endnotes, index. ISBN 9781927131411 hardback.

Tangata Whenua illustrates the world created by this country's People of the Land. Starting with the oceanic migrations that brought the first generation to these shores, this book guides us through the historical highs and lows experienced by their descendants until about 2014. In conception and design *Tangata Whenua* is an ambitious and weighty book in both form and content, bursting with hundreds of images and narratives spanning the significant episodes of Māori history. The authors, publisher, designers and other contributors should feel a great satisfaction in what they have helped collectively to create. It is a monumental and masterfully wrought work, filled with pride, with pain and with aroha for the people whose stories enliven these pages.

Tangata Whenua is organised into three parts, each written by one of the principal authors. The first, Te Ao Tawhito, The Old World, is written entirely by archaeologist, Atholl Anderson, and takes the reader from the remotest ancestors of the tangata whenua to the early colonial period ending about 1830. Using scientific data he concludes that the first ancestors came from Tahitic-speaking Eastern Polynesian islands and arrived in a cluster of waka, comprising at least 100 to 200 persons, over a generation or two, around the mid-thirteenth century. He then turns to Māori traditions and reveals a parallel picture: a near simultaneous arrival, between the late thirteenth and very early fifteenth centuries, of between 12 to 25 boats, at least some from a setting-off point in the Cook Islands. Organising the archaeological evidence into three phases, he describes how settlement starts with an expansive early colonisation of various South Polynesian islands and ends several centuries later in a more consolidated traditional society, largely located in the northern half of the North Island, with smaller groups in the South and the Chatham Islands. From about AD 1500, Māori society experiences a cooling climate, rapidly growing population, and a rise in territoriality, conflict and migrations. As a result, the initially small and scattered hapū communities evolved into larger, multiple-hapū communities under powerful leaders who self-identified

as a distinctive class. Drawing on European observations from 1642 to about 1820 he depicts Māori and Moriori societies, including their cultural objects and practices, such as fishing, farming and fighting. Finally, he shows how Māori society was ultimately transformed by such European encounters. While people benefitted from new foods, animals and tools to trade more, they also experienced significant losses from introduced diseases, longer and larger war expeditions criss-crossing the islands, and the inevitably disruptive migrations of war refugees. Arguably, the Moriori losses from invasion were the most severe of anyone's following their brave decision to maintain their tradition of non-violence.

The second part of *Tangata Whenua, Te Ao Hou, The New World*, is written by the late Judith Binney and two other historians, Vincent O'Malley and Alan Ward. They introduce the European groups settling in New Zealand from the 1820s and how Māori managed this changing world, with its potential benefits, such as international trade, and its risks, notably introduced diseases and Pākehā land hunger. They discuss the Treaty of Waitangi, and the resulting ferment as Māori communities experimented with new ideas for a shared society, while facing growing pressures from Pākehā intrusions that periodically resulted in open conflict, and ultimately, in a search for a new Māori political order, the King Movement. They then recount the war and consequential confiscations of land that rippled throughout the North Island, between 1860 and 1872. In the three decades from 1860 governments continually used legislation and force to undermine any Māori capacity to act as a separate people. The authors highlight the continuing resistance by the King Movement and inspirational prophets at Parihaka and elsewhere, before introducing the new Māori parliamentary leaders who emerge from the late nineteenth century, as well as the various new and revived political and religious movements. All tried and frequently failed to establish even limited self-government for their communities, which continued to lose many to the First World War and the 1918 Influenza Pandemic.

The third part of this book, *Te Ao Hurihuri, the Changing World*, is written by Māori historians, Aroha Harris, aided by Melissa Matutina Williams, and updates the story to 2014. Harris maps the inter-war rise of the Rātana Church, Māori participation in sports and cultural activities, and later the contribution of the 28th Battalion and autonomous tribal organisations to the war effort, alongside the state's first efforts to address historical Māori grievances and support land development. Harris and Williams then turn to the era after 1945. They first look at the prosperous post-war decades, dominated by an all pervasive Department of Māori Affairs and the rapid urbanisation of Māori during an era of optimistic modernism, where the government's Hunn Report sanctioned a pro-active implementation of a policy of integration,

creating ‘the ethos of one nation’ (p. 404). After the 1970s they chart the achievements of Māori activism, state experiments with biculturalism and the devolution of services to Māori and the explosion of Waitangi Tribunal claims, all set against a declining economy with high rates of Māori unemployment. They end on a cautiously optimistic note, highlighting the expanding Māori control over their own futures since the 1990s through new land legislation, Crown-iwi settlements, a growing Māori economy, new Māori media, and stronger Māori parliamentary representation.

Far from being a decorative feature the book’s numerous images provide well researched complements to the text. For example, in Anderson’s chapter five the Europeans’ written descriptions of Māori society sit alongside drawings and paintings they made and material artefacts they collected. When Anderson quotes descriptions of what individuals or groups looked like, the reader can consult the actual images made at the time of Māori at work or rest. Each image is accompanied by explanatory legends, providing details about the context of the picture. The legend to the William Hodges’ sketch of a young Māori woman with child (p. 138), for example, provides ethnographic details that give a strong sense of her as a historical personality even if we do not know her name. Such images allow the reader to encounter not only the things the ancestors made and the places where they lived, but the actual individual persons who collectively created the world of the tangata whenua over many generations.

A sequence of small subject studies alternate with the larger chapters. Some look at particular places such as Whenuahou/Codfish Island’s unique mixed-race community, or Wellington’s old Pipitea pā remembered in the modern marae of that name. Others examine long struggles by particular communities to have their manawhenua recognised, such as the Rangitāne people in relation to the important early Wairau Bar settlement site, or Ngāti Whātua o Ōrākei to a place to stand in modern Auckland. Many look at significant cultural elements and practices which continue in contemporary Māori society, such as evolution of the tiki from artefact to modern art, the continuing tradition of whakairo (wood carving), the adoption of photographic portraits, the significance of flags, the role of fisheries, the maintenance of muttonbirding, and the place of te reo. While some of these vignettes are written by the principal authors a number are written by specialists in these particular topics, many of them part of a new generation of Māori scholars whose work has blossomed over the last decade or two. At the end of the book there is a comprehensive collection of statistical charts showing significant demographic changes in Māori society since the nineteenth century.

At first sight a reader might suspect *Tangata Whenua* is simply another example of the large and well-illustrated coffee table type book: beautiful to look at but lacking substance or depth. Nothing can be further from the truth.

Tangata Whenua is a richly varied and perceptive portrayal of the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand by acknowledged leaders in their fields. They bring together within the covers of one book the evidence from archaeology, oral tradition and history in order to create a rather unique synthesis of contemporary scholarship; a taonga that should adorn every reader's shelves.

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