

Ron & Marjorie Crocombe and Harry Maude: Partnerships, Ethnohistory and Publishing

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'I have a student; poor wretched innocent, handed over for eventual slaughter – he is working on land use and usage in Polynesia (with special reference to the Cook Islands)'. [1] Thus did Harry Maude, in 1958, describe his first PhD student, Ron Crocombe, who had enrolled with high hopes at the Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra. Born in 1906, Maude's background was varied for an academic. He had graduated in anthropology at the University of Cambridge in 1929 and entered the British Colonial Service, accompanied by his wife Honor. Posted to the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony as a District Officer, he had an unhappy interlude in Zanzibar before returned to the GEIC and rising to the position of Resident Commissioner in 1946. Following a largely unhappy secondment to the newly created South Pacific Commission, commencing in 1948. In 1956, aged 50, Maude finally achieved his life's ambition to enter academic life, becoming a Senior Research Fellow (later Professorial Fellow) in Pacific History at the ANU. [2]

These details are filled out in Susan Woodburn's biography of Harry and Honor Maude, [3] which Ron read and commented on in its draft form. It is typical of his modesty that he made no attempt to be assigned a larger role in Harry's life story. He is barely mentioned, [4] and to that extent Ron did himself an injustice given his close and lasting friendship and professional relationship with Harry. The other great collaboration in Ron's life was with his

wife Marjorie (Marjie) Tuainakore Crocombe (b. 1930), a Cook Islander. Together, they co-authored books and facilitated Pacific Islanders getting published until Ron's death in 2009. A scholar and author in her own right, Marjie received her secondary school education in New Zealand and was first employed by the Cook Islands Department of Education. A graduate of the University of the South Pacific (USP) and the University of Papua New Guinea, she was awarded an honorary doctorate by USP in 2011.

The Canberra Years

Ron Crocombe was born in New Zealand in 1929 and was employed by the (then) Department of Island Territories and the Cook Islands Administration for most of the 1950s. His academic background was unconventional, working as a full-time student whilst (mostly) in full-time employment. Two years of his undergraduate degree were undertaken as an external student while he was posted to the Cook Islands, initially to work in the Public Works Department, and he took out the anthropology prize in his final year at Auckland University College, graduating in 1956. Moving to Wellington, he took MA courses in economics and cultural psychology but was unable to graduate because he had been posted back to the Cook Islands before the completion of the course as Resident Agent at Atiu, aged 27. Here he met Marjie, who was school teaching on the island. From that remote outpost, he applied for PhD scholarships and was accepted at both Harvard and Stanford. Then Ron heard that there was a Research School of Pacific Studies at ANU, which hosted interdisciplinary seminars: 'That to me was marvellous. Everyone focused on the Pacific and from different angles. So I jumped at it'; and his referees furnished exceptionally strong recommendations. [5] Also in Ron's favour was, his practical experience in colonial administration, which impressed the Professor of Pacific History, Jim Davidson, himself an exponent of 'participant history'. [6]

Ron was not, and never became hostage to a particular academic discipline and was disconcerted that the 'integrated Pacific programme' he looked forward to being part of was not, on first appearances, what he had been led to believe: 'I did not want to go into a department, but [ANU] had not emerged that far out of the dark ages to allow such a sensible possibility. The reality was the faculty were all trained in the one box or another. The compromise they suggested was that I do the PhD jointly with anthropology and history and take part in any others as appropriate. Fine'. [7]

Ron's anthropologist supervisor should have been Derek Freeman [8] but he was on sabbatical. Ron was then allocated to the 51-year old Harry Maude, who had arrived at ANU the year before, after an earlier career in the British colonial service and a secondment to the South Pacific Commission. He seemed the ideal supervisor given that Ron's thesis topic was on land tenure and Harry in his younger days had been Lands Commissioner in the GEIC. While Ron was relieved to discover that the Research School did actually function as a unified intellectual entity, with anthropologists and historians, and to a lesser extent the geographers, attending all the School seminars, he was annoyed about being assigned to Harry's supervision:

“Harry did not have a PhD himself, had never taken a course in history, and had never taught in a university, and was not familiar with the countries I was to be researching. I had just turned down the offer of Harvard and Stanford under world class academics in world class universities, both of whom were experts in Polynesia. Everyone I had consulted had advised me against ANU...” [9]

Assessments of Ron Crocombe

To be quite frank, I have met no young man in my 30 years or so in the Department [of Island Territories] who had contributed in fertile ideas to the solution of our many problems and driven himself so hard in assisting their execution.

J.B. Wright (1957) [10]

Personally Crocombe is an extremely pleasant and easy man to work with. He is forthright in expressing his own opinions but very receptive to the views of others. In other words, he is concerned wholly with finding the answers to problems, not at all with considerations of personal pride. As one consequence of these qualities, his relations with indigenous peoples in the Pacific has always been excellent: he is utterly incapable of assuming the role of a 'superior person'. He is generous almost to a fault with his time and energy in assisting others.

J.W. Davidson (1961) [11]

[Ron Crocombe] possesses undoubted intellectual capacity and is a tremendously hard worker, unspairing [sic] of his time and energies whenever he considers that help is needed in a worthwhile cause. His main motivation is, I believe, a deeply-felt belief in the capacity of the Pacific Islands people for advancement in the social, economic and political spheres; and the keynote of his character is absolute integrity. H.E. Maude (1965) [12]

He was not impressed at the prospect of being supervised by a ‘superannuated colonialist’, and he said that to Harry on their first meeting. [13] And neither were the Crocombes impressed that the White Australia Policy was still in force and Marjie could only enter the country under restrictive conditions.

It was an inauspicious beginning but Ron and Harry quickly found rapport, Three years later when Ron’s thesis was passed, although not without difficulties along the way. This had nothing to do with Ron’s aptitude and work ethic. As Jim Davidson (the Professor of Pacific History) remarked, ‘Crocombe has a tough and good mind. He seizes upon the important questions and works upon them till he has found the answer. He has a tremendous enthusiasm for research and works to the limit of his capacity’. Acknowledging Ron’s ‘high intellectual calibre’ Davidson went on to say that Ron’s ‘essentially non-literary approach has created some difficulties: the solution of problems is, for him, the main objective, the writing up of conclusions is distinctly secondary. As a result of criticism of drafts of the thesis, a somewhat barbarous initial presentation has been greatly modified – I hope sufficiently to

satisfy the examiners'. [14] Little wonder that Harry had his fingers crossed when the thesis went out for examination, especially since Ron wrote 'English like a civil servant (Government reports having been almost his sole diet for years)':

"I had never [supervised] anyone in my life before and I'm sure that between us we made many mistakes; but I was proud of him in the end particularly [the way he stood up for himself] when he was attacked by some of the more orthodox (both among the historians and the anthropologists). He knew his stuff without a doubt." [15]

The examiners' reports arrived, and he congratulated Ron on his thesis being passed. [16] Ron immediately perceived the necessity of rectifying his written expression. Indeed, the same person whom one of his examiners – the great J.C. Beaglehole – accused of some 'rank bad writing' and in need of 'some candid and merciless person of taste to read through his prose with a critical pencil in hand', consciously transformed himself into a lucid author and an exceptional copy editor. [17]

What was it, then, that transformed a relationship that started off inauspiciously into a deep and abiding friendship, and especially between two people separated by temperament as well as generation? In personality, they were polar opposites – the introvert and the extrovert. Harry was a loner and a recluse, who needed valium and/or a stiff drink to get through public occasions. [18] Ron was gregarious and inclusive. The painfully shy Harry never liberated himself from a self-protective 'wall of reserve' and was decidedly non-confrontational, whereas the outgoing Ron was more than willing to stand his ground and to express exactly what was on his mind, whether face-to-face or in print.

In more important respects they had a great deal in common. Harry had been an enlightened colonial official who believed that the object of colonial rule was, so far as possible, to facilitate the needs of subject people in accordance with their wishes: as early as 1945 Harry, as Resident Commissioner of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony, was expressing his 'profound admiration of [the Islanders'] ability to manage their own affairs'. [19] For his part, Ron was an outspoken critic of colonial paternalism and a staunch believer in Islander self-determination. Like Harry he was libertarian in outlook, believing that people should be allowed to do as they wished, providing their activities were not harmful to others. As Resident at Atiu Ron was distinctly uncomfortable at the extent of his authority and disturbed that 'At no stage has [the colonial] government made any serious attempt to ensure any significant degree of indigenous participation in administration'. [20] Atiu retained a place in Ron's heart and he wrote or edited several books about the island. [21]

Ron and Harry were at one in believing that Pacific history ought to be 'ethnohistory', and by this they meant the use of indigenous oral traditions, in addition to the conventional European documentation, as the means to adequately explain the dynamics of cross-cultural encounters and in ways that would foreground the role of Pacific Islanders in their own history. As Davidson pointed out to a puzzled reader, 'Crocombe's thesis is historical. But it is rather odd history. He begins by attempting mainly from vernacular material to

reconstruct the land tenure system before the arrival of Europeans. From then on he tries to see developments from both the indigenous and the European point of view, again using vernacular sources (of which he discovered a surprising amount in Rarotonga)...'. [22] Ethnohistory by this reckoning is a cast of mind as well as a methodology. Another binding point of contact was their commitment to publishing works for a Pacific Islands audience and in facilitating a corpus of work by Pacific Islands authors. During Ron's candidature as a PhD student, Harry brought both strands together by co-authoring a substantial journal article with Marjie on an abortive trading venture to Rarotonga in 1815. It is typical of Harry's monumental shyness that his messages and instructions to Marjie were relayed through Ron. [23] Entitled 'Rarotongan Sandalwood', one of the paper's methodological points was that their cross-cultural collaboration had resulted in 'more valid and objective study than either of the authors could have produced alone'. [24] Marjie reworked the article into a booklet for younger readers. [25]

The Works of Taunga} }} *The two strands of ethnohistory and an Islander-focused historiography initially came together in their work on the book that became {The Works of Taunga. Commenced when Ron was working on his PhD, it eventually saw the light of day in 1968. [26] Its arduous road to publication might have tested a friendship less firmly grounded. The Works of Taunga} had bizarrely happenstance beginnings: in 1960, when ordering material from the Polynesian Society, Ron and Marjie were inadvertently send the copy of a manuscript by Taunga (c.1818–1896), a Cook Islands pastor of the London Missionary Society (LMS). [27] A first draft of the Taunga book was sent to Harry at the end of 1962, as Ron promised. It was just that – a first draft and nowhere near being ready for publication. Ron and Marjie's plans for a volume of Taunga's writings dovetailed with Harry's own plans for the discipline. He realised that future Pacific historians would be well served by a series of books of documents – such as The Works of Taunga} – or new editions of rare books with scholarly annotations. In late-1963, ANU's Publications Committee approved Harry's Pacific History Series, or what he and Ron earlier referred to as the 'ethnohistory series', and accepted 'The Works of Taunga' for publication in the series 'subject to additions and revisions which Mr Maude was to discuss with Dr Crocombe'. [28] Thus emboldened, Harry was telling colleagues in the ensuing months Greg Denning's Marquesan Journal of Edward Robarts would inaugurate the series followed by Taunga}. [[Maude to Patrick O'Reilly, 7 April 1964; Maude to Ida Leeson, 1 May 1964; Maude to Robert Langdon, 1 May 1964; Maude to Margaret Titcombe, 11 May 1964; Maude to A. Grove Day, 27 July 1964, all in Maude Papers, Series J.]]* *It is indicative of Harry's incautious enthusiasms that the edition of Robarts did not come out until 1974. [[Greg Denning (ed.), {The Marquesan Journal of Edward Robarts, 1797-1824}*

(Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1974).]]
{Taunga also had an unexpectedly difficult gestation.

A particular difficulty was that *The Works of Taunga* is not a single text but a series of texts that had to be shaped into a coherent narrative. Between 1962 and 1965, further Taunga manuscripts were located or the existence and possible location of others were revealed, largely through a close reading of reel after microfilm reel of the LMS's South Sea Letters. In 1964, during a brief stopover in Honolulu, Marjie chased up leads at the Bishop Museum while Ron worked his way through the entire run of the Samoan Reporter. Colleagues also made available their own discoveries: for example Niel Gunson (a Research Fellow within the Department of Pacific History) passed on a Taunga manuscript on the emergence of a volcano at Manua in 1866. [29] In other words, the shape of the Taunga volume was continually changing as new manuscripts came to light, requiring repeated retyping of the text – which was quite an imposition in those days of manual typewriters. It was as though Ron and Marjie were working on an unstable platform. Nonetheless, by late 1964 Ron was confident that only 'a few minor points need trimming up', such as illustrations, method of citation and copyright clearances. [[Crocombe to Maude, 29 October 1964, Maude Papers, Series I/34.]]

But it was not so simple. It is hard to tell from the surviving record quite what was going on, but Gunson remembers that there was disappointment when the Taunga manuscript arrived, 'not because of the quality of the translation and background material but because of the lack of scholarly apparatus'. [30] Jennifer Terrell, a Research Assistant in the Department, suggests that 'There may have been some misunderstanding as to what was required and possibly Ron thought that the translating work was the main focus, rather than the scholarly apparatus and historical framework'. [31] Ron readily accepted the force of the argument that annotations were a necessary ingredient and made no quibbles when Pat Croft, ANU Press editor, reminded him that:

"scholarship is slow. Nonetheless it is also worthwhile. Once a work is in print, that is the end of it for a very long time. If books are worth reproducing, they are worth doing well. It is at this editorial level that the delays are inevitable." [32]

A second difficulty stemmed from the number of people that were co-opted to the Taunga project. Given the wide thematic and geographic range of Taunga's long career, and on the principle that many skills were required, Harry enlisted the services of Jean Guiart (anthropologist of New Caledonia) and Dorothy Shineberg (historian of the Melanesian sandalwood trade), as well as that of Gunson (historian of evangelical missions). [33] Jenny Terrell was co-opted as editor. It proved an almost unworkable arrangement and convinced Harry, who could neither prevent nor control the cross-currents, that a gremlin was working its mischief. The initial idea was to have an anthropological introduction by Guiart and an historical introduction by Shineberg, or else

by Maude. [34] Matters came to a head with a disagreement between himself and Shineberg in March 1966, although they quickly patched up their misunderstanding. [35] Even then problems persisted, with Terrell finally imploring Harry, in writing, 'Please, what is my function re Taunga?' [[Terrell to Maude, 23 August 1966, Maude Papers, Series J.]] The difficulties were eventually sorted out. Ron and Marjie recast their manuscript. As mentioned, it was not a case of sequentially presenting the various Taunga manuscripts and leaving it at that. Rather, they carefully interpolated various manuscripts bearing on the same topic. They incorporated supplementary material from other manuscripts where they clarified or elaborated. The chapters on Samoa, where little Taunga material was located, mostly comprise Ron and Marjie's own commentary – for example, the moving last chapter on Taunga's retirement years. The project had taken its final shape.

The Works of Taunga was published in 1968 as the second volume in the Pacific History Series, with an 'Introduction' and an opening chapter ('The Historical Setting') by Ron and Marjie and a quota of scholarly annotations by Guiart, Gunson and Shineberg (but only 80 or so of the total 300). Jim Davidson, as Literary Editor of the series, deplored the amount of departmental time and money spent on getting such manuscripts into shape but {Taunga stands out as something special – and Terrell summed up in saying that 'the end product was, looking back after 40 years, impressive'. [36] Indeed it was, and remains so. Although Taunga} was neither the first nor the last book of memoirs by an Island pastor, it is the most striking and significant. [[Eg. Joeli Bulu, {The Autobiography of a Native Minister in the South Seas: translated by a missionary} [Lorimer Fison], edited by G. Rowe (London: Wesleyan Mission House, 1871); Semesi Nau, {The Story of my Life: a Tongan }{missionary on Ontong Java}, edited by Allan Davidson (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1996).]] It retains a special place in Pacific Islands historiography, and it put the pastors on the map as historical figures in a way that no book has done before or since – much as Maude had done for beachcombers a few years earlier. It was the progenitor of numerous subsequent studies of Islander pastors. [[Doug Munro and Andrew Thornley, 'Pacific Islander Pastors and Missionaries: some historiographic and analytical issues', {Pacific Studies}, 23:3/4 (2000), 1-31; H.E. Maude, 'Beachcombers and Castaways', {JPS}, 73:3 (1965), 254-93 (republished in {Of Islands and Men}, 134-77). Later works on Islander pastors includes Ron and Marjorie Crocombe (eds),

{Polynesian Missions in Melanesia: from Samoa, Cook Islands and Tonga to Papua New Guinea and New Caledonia} (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1982); Doug Munro and Andrew Thornley (eds), *{The Covenant Makers: Islander missionaries in the Pacific}* (Suva: Pacific Theological College, and Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1996); Michael Goldsmith and Doug Munro, *{The Accidental Missionary: tales of Elekana}* (Christchurch: Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies, University of Canterbury, 2002). The most substantial text is Raeburn Lange, *{Island Ministers: indigenous leadership in nineteenth century Pacific Islands Christianity}* (Christchurch: Pandanus Books, 2006).] An important part of the reason was Taunga himself: the man could write vivid and evocative prose and did so on a wide variety of topics spread over several decades in many parts of the Pacific. As if to underline the point, Marjie went on to edit the manuscript of Maretu, another Cook Island pastor of the LMS, and she readily acknowledges that he was no match for Taunga as a writer. [[Information from Marjorie Crocombe, 12 August 2010 (Rarotonga); Maretu, *{Cannibals and Converts: radical change in the Cook Islands}*, translated, annotated and edited by Marjorie Tuainakore Crocombe (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific in association with the Ministry of Education, Rarotonga, 1996).] His views were not so much Eurocentric as resolutely missionary-centric – all too faithfully reflecting the prejudices and moral outlook of European evangelical missionaries to whom he hitched his star, [[Initially by Gavan Daws (review of *{The Works of Tuunga}*), in *Journal of Pacific History*, 4 (1969), 227–28, and more recently by Nicholas Thomas, *Islanders: the Pacific in the age of empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 164. With regard to Taunga reflecting missionary prejudices, David Hanlon has suggested that there are other ways to read *{The Works of Taunga}*, but without indicating what these alternative readings might be, apart from the generalised observation that ‘the ambiguities and contradictions in Taunga’s text ... reflect a more personal and complicated relationship with the various peoples among whom he worked’. See Hanlon, ‘Converting Pasts and Presents’, in Lal and Hempenstall, *{Pacific Peoples, Pacific Places}*, 149.] but for all that *{The Works of Taunga}* is a book we would not wish to be without. When Brij Lal and Doug Munro were planning their volume on the foundational texts of the discipline, there was no debating as to whether or not Taunga qualified: it was an automatic inclusion. [[Hugh Laracy, ‘The Missionary Position: *{Messengers of Grace}* and *{The Works of Taunga}*’, in Doug Munro and Brij V. Lal (eds), *Texts and Contexts: reflections in Pacific Islands historiography*

(Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 127–39. Laracy describes Taunga as ‘the first Polynesian anthropologist’.

]] But the book itself was a difficult birth – perhaps a breach birth.

There was a happy sequel to the publication of Taunga}. Ron and Marjie wanted their royalties to establish a fund for Pacific Island students, which resulted in the Te Rangi Hiroa Prize for the best undergraduate essays both within and outside the Islands. [[Laracy, ‘The Missionary Position’, 139 n.22.]] It is also the case that the lessons learned from the Taunga project were of advantage to subsequent volumes in the Pacific History Series.

If getting Taunga} ready for the press was something of a trial, it was also something of a template for the remainder of Ron’s and Harry’s lengthy association, in that their shared concerns and mutual interests maintained the strong bond between them. They supported each other through thick and thin. Even before the publication of Taunga, Ron issued an early warning when he leapt to Harry’s defence, in 1965. At that time Harry was putting together a selection of his essays – the book which became Of Islands and Men – which his publisher, the Melbourne branch of Oxford University Press, proposed to call Trade Wind Mosaic. Ron was horrified, and shot off a forthright letter of protest:

“The subject of this letter does not concern me at all officially, but does concern me a great deal personally. I have just heard from Harry Maude that you intend to publish his ‘Essays in Pacific History’ under some obnoxious title about trade winds. I could not possibly understand why such an important work can be presented to the public in such an unacceptable form and can only assume that somebody felt that this title with its concepts of sloppy lagoons and treacly [sic] moons would in fact enhance sales. If this is indeed the reasoning, then I am quite certain it is fallacious.” [37]

Ron went on to provide his own assessment of marketing opportunities in the Pacific Islands, assuring Eyre of the demand for ‘this type of material’, and he concluded with a full-throated ticking off: ‘The quality of Maude’s work is so high that it would be a sacrilege to bring it out other than under its proper title, and I expressed my personal opinion to him that if O.U.P. insisted on lowering its standards, then he should withdraw the manuscript and hand it to a responsible publisher’. Harry did acknowledge that Ron’s ‘well-intended’ intervention was ‘a bit intemperate’; but he was rather pleased all the same – and the book did appear under a more suitable title.

Further publishing ventures

Ron and Harry shared a belief that Pacific Islanders become more historically aware and be given the means to become more involved in their own history. Their reasoning was slightly different. In Harry’s view, in the rapidly changing Pacific world:

“the historian...begins to fulfil an essential role – a practical, one might almost say therapeutic, service to the community. As a result of many years spent among the islanders I have become convinced that it is through a proper sense of pride in their history that they will once again find themselves.” [38]

For Ron it was more a case that Pacific Islanders would gain in self-confidence and self-esteem if they were published and had their names in print. He became Professor of Pacific Studies at the University of the South Pacific in 1970 and in 1975 doubled as Director of the newly-created Institute of Pacific Studies (IPS). The Institute’s primary function rapidly devolved to publishing and Ron spent a great of his time in facilitating, coordinating and promoting research by Pacific Islanders. Ultimately, Ron and IPS between them published the work of about 1,700 Pacific Islanders. [39] To Ron – and here is where his interest in ethnohistory took a utilitarian turn – it was vital that Islander perspectives displace the dominant European depictions of the Pacific, through the agency of Pacific Islander authors. It was also a matter of equity – that the prevailing ‘academic imperialism’ which overwhelming meant that Pacific history was written by non-Pacific Islanders, be displaced, and this could only happen if Islanders were given comparable opportunities. [40] But Ron was no exclusivist: he believed that expatriate writers had an obligation to collaborate with Pacific Islanders and he was active in publishing the results of these literary partnerships. [41]

As early as 1966 he had urged the Papua New Guinea Society to consider reprinting early works on PNG. [42] That suggestion did not come to fruition due in large measure to a shortage of funds; the Society was dependent upon subscriptions and donations and was not institutionally affiliated. In 1969 he spoke of the obligation of European researchers in the Islands to ensure that there was reciprocity – that local people be involved as co-researchers – and he drew the distinction between the metaphorical ‘miners’ who came and took and the ‘planters’ who gave tangible returns to the local people. Researchers were under a moral obligation to do and to be the latter. [43] In 1972 he frankly stated that ANU ‘desperately’ needed Pacific Islander historians ‘to legitimate the [Research] School of Pacific Studies’ and, moreover, that a certain flexibility was required when selecting them for scholarship or staff positions. [44] At USP, Ron now had the institutional means to achieve such goals, and to that end IPS developed an extensive publications programme to cater for an Islander authorship and readership.

An early IPS publication was a reprint of Harry’s *Evolution of the Gilbertese Boti*. As Ron explained to Harry, ‘while we will be giving most of our emphasis to publications by Pacific Islanders, this particular work seems to me to be of such importance that it merits modifying our rule and making it available if at all possible’. [45] Harry was delighted at this vindication of a work on ethnohistory that had met with such a negative response from departmental colleagues:

“It was essentially written for island folk and not for European historians, who have never been able to make head or tail of it. Possibly you remember Jim Davidson’s typical comment

that: “Harry has at last excelled himself by producing a work that is totally incomprehensible”. That is why I am so happy that you are reprinting it, for it will now reach people to whom it will seem perfectly normal and straightforward history.” [46]

If Harry were agreeable to the proposal, which he was, then Ron wanted a coloured cover to ‘make the work much more attractive and much more marketable’; in the event only a black and white cover was affordable. There was also the matter of subsidies: did Harry know ‘of any source of finance which could give us some assistance by way of a subsidy in the reprinting in order to keep the selling cost to a minimum so that it is in practice accessible to Gilbertese and other people of the Pacific’? The questions of availability and affordability to an Islander audience were critical ingredients, and Ron was forever scratching around for subsidies. Some viewed this askance but Ron was unphased:

“Let us not get subsidies out of perspective. The University of California Press, which claims to be the largest academic press in North America, stated in its 1983 annual report that almost all its academic publications were subsidised. And Australian National University Press made a loss of about A\$250,000 per year – about 50 times more publication subsidy per book produced than by the Institute of Pacific Studies, which has for some years published considerably more books per year than ANU Press.” [47]

Harry approved of Ron’s efforts. It recalled the days of the early-50s when his own publishing initiatives were hobbled at the South Pacific Commission. Since his time in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony, he longed to provide for ‘vernacular education’ involving the creation of teaching material, and not least history textbooks, that had local content and salience, and written if possible in the local language, rather than the subject matter being presented in English and confined to Old World subjects. In 1952 he presented a submission arguing that ‘efforts to promote the welfare and development of the peoples of the Pacific islands may fail to be fully effected unless we can assist them to recapture...pride in their own country and ancestral heritage...’. In order to ‘counteract a feeling of social inferiority in the face of the technological supremacy of Western civilization’, he proposed ‘the systematic study of local historical material, leading to the production of local histories for school and popular use, can play an important part in assisting genuine cultural development without which plans for economic improvement may prove ineffective, if not positively harmful’. [48] The unanimous rejection of the production of vernacular literature was another of those rebuffs that made him wonder whether his time at SPC was not being wasted. He now explained how close Ron’s work was to his own heart:

“the Institute is performing a most worthwhile job for the Pacific countries that can be conceived. Economic development, improved health measures, tertiary education and the growth of regional co-operation I had expected to blossom with independence; but not such an efflorescence of creativity and renewal of interest in cultural matters.

I tried in a small way, to bring about some of the things that you are now doing when I was Social Development Officer for SPC but...I was twenty years before my time.... When I

founded the Literature Bureau it was prevented from publishing anything but school texts in English and French....

But this renaissance – for it is really a rebirth – would have died from inanition would have if Margie [sic] and you had not perceived it and provided the means for its expression – and at the right price.” [49]

Ron was protective of his publishing programme and vigorously countered criticism, real or implied, on the issue of Islander authorship. In 1979 Barrie Macdonald (whose PhD thesis had also been supervised by Harry [50]) questioned the alleged superior knowledge of the ‘insider’ historian in a book review – none other than a review of Harry’s *Festschrift*:

“Two of the essays in particular – the first, ‘The Pacific as an Artefact’ by O.H.K. Spate and the last, ‘Hawaiian Historians and the First Pacific Seminar’ – draw attention to the degree of academic imperialism, the degree to which Pacific Studies can be, or should be ‘decolonised’. While most Pacific historians would see a place for themselves in an international (and interdisciplinary) community of scholars, there are still those who would argue that Pacific Studies should be the preserve of Pacific Islanders (and presumably that German history should be the preserve of Germans, and that all foreign correspondents should be recalled to report on their respective domestic scenes). Finney *et al*, drawing on the example of Hawaiians writing their own history, show that these writers are no more and no less vulnerable to axe-grinding, distortions through editing, and other temptations of writing history than are outsiders; while Spate’s argument that the best history, and not just that of the Pacific, will be produced by the shared perceptions of both ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ is both eloquent and convincing.” [51]

In the light of ‘Rarotongan Sandalwood’ Ron could hardly take issue with the final statement, but he took umbrage at everything else. The burden of his retort was equity. In particular, there was a structural problem whereby research in the Islands was being monopolised by Europeans to the near-exclusion of Islanders, who were ‘less financially and educationally advantaged’. [52] Redressing such disparities was at the heart of IPS’s publications programme, and this included the founding in 1972 of *Pacific Perspectives*, a journal that catered for a predominantly Pacific Islander authorship. As well, Ron was active in other local publishing ventures with similar missions, being an Executive member of South Pacific Social Sciences Association and at one point a Director of Lotu Pasifika Productions.

Another of Ron’s initiatives to redress the balance was a series of edited histories of various islands or island groups, written by local authors with the aid and assistance of outside ‘facilitators’. [53] The first such volume of these ‘indigenous histories’ was on Kiribati and Harry was deeply hurt, in 1976, not to have been asked to be involved. Ron and Marjie had to muster all their tact to explain to Harry that there were political imperatives and that the project needed facilitators who were teachers (whereas Harry was a researcher). [54] That is why Barrie Macdonald and Howard van Trease were involved rather than Harry. Actually, Ron had placed himself in a very awkward position because it had simply not occurred to him

that the shy and retiring Harry, who was getting on in years and constantly stating his desire to slow down, would want to be involved. [55] It took considerable efforts, especially on the part of Marjie, to mollify Harry but once he got over his disappointment he gave the project his full support, providing documentation, furnishing illustrations and commenting on chapter drafts in accordance with Ron's parameters:

"we very much look forward to your helpful comments for the improvement of the work. While I much appreciate that the Gilbertese must express themselves as they wish, I think it would also be quite unfair of us to allow errors of fact, undue repetition [sic], weakness of argument, poor sentence construction or any other things of this kind to be published which would likely lead to unfavourable criticism of the authors due to the fact that they are writing in foreign language and in most cases writing for publication for the first time. While I agree that we must not in any way interfere with the things they want to say, we are obliged to ensure that they will not be embarrassed by having put things in ways which they would not have done had they had more time and more experience." [56]

When *Kiribati: aspects of history* appeared in 1979, Harry favourably reviewed the book in *Pacific Islands Monthly* – the only book review he wrote in his retirement. [57]

Slavers in Paradise

USP's Institute of Pacific Studies published or handled several of Harry's post-retirement works. [58] When *Of Islands and Men* went out of print in late-1983, Harry offered IPS 500 copies of the book in his keeping at \$2.00 apiece for resale at a rock-bottom price; and when these were sold out Ron brought out a paperback reprint. [59] The major collaborative effort, however, was IPS becoming a co-publisher of Harry's book on the Peruvian slave trade, 1862-64, an episode which had devastating consequences on several Polynesian islands. [60] Harry had been gathering material on the subject even before he and Ron first met, and it became his great retirement project. Harry sent Ron and Marjie a couple of draft chapters for comment, [61] and that got Ron thinking about an inexpensive edition by IPS. Negotiations commenced with Harry's publisher, the ANU Press and Ron struck a hard bargain. He was 'indeed interested' in 500 paperback copies of *Slavers in Paradise* 'but whether or not we take them on depends on the terms'. First, those 500 copies would have to come at the right price, and Ron envisaged no difficulties since the initial outlay – copy editing and typesetting – had already been accounted for. This meant that IPS would only be liable for the marginal cost of printing an extra 500 copies, and the IPS edition could then be retailed at a price affordable to Pacific Islanders. Second, Ron wanted any IPS involvement to be 'clearly shown on the book'. It was not simply a matter of appropriate recognition but an indirect recompense for the costs of handing and distributing the book at the USP end: 'So if could you confirm that the book (or at least that 500 of it that we are taking) clearly shows the USP involvement..., and if the price is rock bottom, then we will very definitely be interested...'. [62]

Ron's audacity paid off and the ANU Press agreed to provide IPS with 500 copies at a special price, because Harry had agreed to forego his royalties on those copies. [63] Ron also insisted

that a coloured cover, at least for the IPS edition, would make the book more marketable in the Pacific. Despite his qualms Harry again came to the rescue and paid \$1,638 out of his own pocket for an artist to design a cover depicting the forced embarkation of Islanders with a thuggish rifle-bearing Peruvian standing guard. [64] It was the stuff of pulp fiction and, despite the ‘melodramatic and technicolour effect[s]’ of the original design being toned down, a reviewer made no bones about ‘a cover of unappealing vulgarity which belies the true character of the contents’. [65] Be that as it may, when *Slavers in Paradise* appeared toward the end of 1981 the various financial arrangements translated into the IPS edition retailing at \$5.00 compared to \$25.50 for the Australian hardback edition. [66] In fact, another 500 paperback copies were run off for IPS the following year, again on very favourable terms to IPS thanks to Harry’s intercession. [67]

Other relationships and partnerships

The relationship between Harry and the Crocombes was not only enduring but intense to the point of intimacy. On the wider front, however, they had interests and activities of their own. Harry had a vast circle of correspondents. With his Colonial Service background, no letter went unanswered and he never discarded any correspondence, resulting in a marvelous personal archive. He kept in touch with those of his former Colonial Service and academic colleagues with whom he had formed strong friendships. But most of his correspondence involved fielding multitudinous enquiries from fellow researchers, and this continued well into his old age.

Ron had an equally extensive circle of correspondents but being so widely traveled and so outgoing by nature, his dealings with others was more face-to-face. It seemed to know everyone of any importance throughout the Pacific Islands and was almost universally referred to as ‘Papa Ron’. He was a regular participant at the conferences of the Pacific Islands Political Studies Association, where his outspokenness was apt to cause discomfiture. His wide and unceasing involvement with the Pacific Islands, coupled with his inter-disciplinary leanings and ability to write quickly, meant that he wrote on an astonishing variety of topical topics, including land tenure, governance, migration, increasing Asian influence, and education. His intellectual span is exemplified by his survey volumes on the Pacific. What started as a short, small-format book in 1973 (based on a series of radio broadcasts) expanded exponentially into a 739-page seventh edition – a monument to his commitment and erudition. [68]

He was at once the region’s most ardent supporter and its greatest critic. In the late 1960s, to give an early example, he extensively critiqued Papua New Guinea’s first development plan for minimizing indigenous participation in an expanding economy. In doing so, he crossed swords with noted economists and he resolutely held his ground. [69] He (and Marjie) were also dedicated to helping Islanders to write their own histories. As mentioned, they made facilities available for them to do so as well as putting aside a good deal of their time in copy-editing such work. But woe betide defaulters: ‘Stories abound of Islanders pursued to the “death” by Ron for not making good their promises to write or finish a

manuscript'[[Tuimalealiifano, ‘“Papa Ron” Crocombe’, 373.]] Whenever Ron ran his quarry to ground his opening gambit was, ‘Well, where is it?’, and the defaulter was confronted with a very awkward conversation. Marjie also had her own circle. As well as writing history books for younger readers, her interests extended to creative writing. She was active in such organizations as the South Pacific Creative Arts Society and a mentor to aspiring authors. [[Marjorie Crocombe (ed.), {The Mana Annual of Creative Writing} (Suva: South Pacific Creative Arts Society, 1973: Crocombe (ed.), {The Mana Annual of Creative Writing 1974} (Suva, Fiji: South Pacific Creative Arts Society, 1974); Crocombe (ed.), {Third Mana Annual of Creative Writing} (Suva, Fiji: South Pacific Creative Arts Society, 1977); {Pacific Islands Communication Journal} (Special issue: ‘Writing and Publishing’), 14:1 (1985); {Pacific Islands Communication Journal} (Special issue: ‘The Written Word: writing, publishing and information in the Pacific Islands’), 14:2 (1985); Marjorie Tuainekore Crocombe, et al (eds), {Te Rau Marie: poems and stories of the Pacific} (Rarotonga: Tauranga Vananga [Ministry of Cultural Development], 1992).]] The ramifications went beyond authorship and getting published. A poignant such moment occurred at a 1970 UNESCO writing workshop at USP’s Suva campus, which Marjie helped to organise. One of the participants was the poet Alistair Te Ariki Campbell (1925–2009), the son of a New Zealand father and a Cook Islands mother. In his early childhood, following the death of his father, Campbell was sent to New Zealand, never to see his mother again. He would never have become the poet he did without going to New Zealand, but at the cost of always feeling himself to be different and ‘without a tribe’. As Marjie recalls, ‘He was so happy to have been invited to come to USP and be part of the then budding group of writers on the Pacific. Then when he made the decision to come to Rarotonga [in 1976] and meet his mother’s family and their island home of Tongareva he couldn’t help but be changed by it all. First just to being accepted by Pacific Islanders in Fiji and here was an amazing time of transition for him to start the healing process’[[Marjorie Tuainakore Crocombe, e-mail, 22 April 2011.]] Thus did Campbell become ‘reconciled with his past and his Polynesia identity’.[[Nelson Wattie, {Scribbling in the Dark: Alistair Te Ariki Campbell} (Wellington: Steele Roberts, 2011), 47.]] {{Winding down}} With Harry living in Canberra and

seldom moving beyond the city limits, and the widely-travelled Ron based in Suva but seldom coming to Canberra, their paths did not often cross. Their frequent exchange of letters kept them in touch, and their correspondence involved far more than the IPS publishing programme. Harry, for example, expressed his congratulations to Marjie when her MA thesis on Maretu was passed by the examiners. In the same letter he thanked Ron for his sympathetic review of Roberts Langdon's {The Lost Caravel}, whose theories of widespread Spanish influence in the Pacific were rejected by most academics: "...I especially appreciated your kind review of Bob Langdon's {The Last Caramel}, as the girls in the office call it; for I not only agree but am grateful to you for having the guts not to high-hat as some (not quite all) of the academics in Australia have rushed to do. Too many appear to agree with Deryck Scarr, who once told me that Robert would be well advised to stick to the work of a clerk to which he was appointed and not try to pretend that he possessed the qualifications or ability to engage in academic pursuits."[[Maude to Crocombe, 31 July 1975, Maude Papers, Series J; Marjorie Tuainekore Crocombe, 'Maretu's Narrative of Cook Island History', MA thesis, University of Papua New Guinea, 1974; Robert Langdon, {The Lost Caravel} (Sydney: Pacific Publications, 1975).]] There was another flurry of correspondence in 1985 when Ron tried to persuade Harry to attend the Pacific History Association Conference, in Suva, as a distinguished speaker. But Harry declined. He was getting old, travel was becoming stressful, he was ill at ease at gatherings of people, not to mention the strain of having to write the paper, and he quite simply preferred to stay at home. His pretext not to come was that Jacqueline Leckie, a history lecturer at USP, had published a paper in the USP-based {Journal of Pacific Studies}, placing the blame for what she regarded (in Harry's words) as 'the misguided state of Pacific Islands historiography on the incompetence of Messrs Jim Davidson and Harry Maude'. Harry did not want to walk into an ambush, or so he said, and get 'sneered at by Ms Leckie and jeered at by her students'.[[Leckie, 'Towards a Review of History in the South Pacific', 9-69; Maude to Crocombe, 27 January 1984, Maude Papers, Series H/13.]] Ron was not buying it: 'All that bullshit about being intimidated by Jacqueline Leckie does not impress us.... Now just be a good boy and sit up and eat your porridge and get dressed and come to the

Conference and give your paper. There will be no problems. Everyone will love it'. Harry continued to beg off, citing his and Honor's relocation to a retirement village but adding 'I have quite recovered from friend Jacqueline's diatribes...: let us hope that she gains the answer to her maidenly prayers'. [[Crocombe to Maude, 12 February 1985 and Maude to Crocombe, 10 March 1985 (both attached to Maude to Crocombe), 9 April 1985, Maude Papers, Series H/13; David Routledge to Maude, 2 April 1985 (attached to Maude to Routledge), 29 April 1985, Maude Papers, Series J.]] They touched base from time to time. Ron visited Harry in 1991, at the conclusion of the inaugural Pacific History Workshop. We do not know when they last met, and Ron was unable to attend the launching in Canberra, in 2005, of Harry and Honor's joint biography by Susan Woodburn. Honor had died two years earlier but the 99-year old Harry was wheeled in for the occasion, a moving reminder of a long-gone era of Pacific history – almost a different world – in which he and Honor played a part. Moving or not, Ron was disturbed at the news of Harry's condition and just wished that he would pass away quickly and peacefully, for his own sake. [[Ron Crocombe, e-mail, 6 October 2006.]] Harry died the following year, two weeks after his 100th birthday. Ron's immediate response was, 'Harry made wonderful contributions in many fields in his life and we are all indebted to him'. [[Ron Crocombe, e-mail, 6 November 2006.]] Ron himself had less than three years to live, and a sudden death while still in the saddle is how he wished to depart this world. The last thing he wanted was a lingering old age, because then he 'would not have been able to work at a hundred miles and hour'. [[Information from Tata Crocombe, 12 August 2010 (Rarotonga).]] Harry had lived too long, had soldiered on for too long. Ron still had campaigns ahead of him but was given insufficient time. {{Concluding remarks}} Ron and Harry's was a student-supervisor relationship that converted into an abiding affection. Yet two more disparate personalities could hardly be imagined. Some of those differences are typified by their respective work rates. Ron was an astonishingly fast worker whereas Harry admitted that he was 'a plodder and slow by nature, though I hope reasonably thorough and accurate'. [[Maude to Davidson, 9 March 1966, Maude Papers, Series J.]] Ron realised this but one of the things he admired was that Harry 'finished things'. However, the analogy between

a speedster and a slow-coach would be wrong because Ron acknowledged that his own pace of work had its trade-offs: he got through far more writing but was 'only 85 per cent right' whereas the plodding and painstaking Harry got it '100 per cent right'. [[Information from Tata Crocombe, 12 August 2010 (Rarotonga).]] For all their differences in personality, Ron and Harry were in agreement on fundamental values. The strength and endurance of their friendship and partnership involved more than a common interest in ethnohistory, although that was part of it; it involved more than the institution-building, which absorbed so much of their energies; and it entailed far more than their shared work ethic. Central to their bond of affection was a practical and emotional commitment to the Pacific and its peoples, as evidenced by Harry's remarks about the inaugural Pacific History Association Conference in 1980: "there were over 50 present, mostly I suppose students who had recently completed a thesis on some aspect of Pacific history, and it seemed to me that the subject was to the vast majority merely an intellectual exercise – one of the many branches of history in which they were interested at the time. There was absolutely no sense of commitment to the Pacific region. The themes discussed were highly theoretical, and admittedly above my head, but I did gather that the writing of narrative history was definitely out and that we must all in future make sure that our historical studies 'transcend the particular and have general, even universal, relevance'. O.K. by me provided their Freudian, Marxist, or what have you theorizing still permits the occasional glimpses of what actually happened in the islands to emerge; I gather that in one of the recent theses supervised by the avant-garde it only does in an occasional footnote." [[Maude to Crocombe, 17 June 1980, Maude Papers, Series H/13.]] To which Ron responded, 'I was most interested in your comments on the Pacific history conference. It was largely because of similar assumptions about what it would be like that I did not bother to attend'. [[Crocombe to Maude, 24 June 1980, Maude Papers, Series H/13.]] Even then there is more to it. Central to their relationship was an overt and unabashed moral dimension. In Harry it is most evident in his creed to be of service to others (a carry-over from his Anglo-Indian upbringing), and he gave assistance to all who came to his door – for no other reason than to help fellow Pacific enthusiasts. Niel Gunson was bemused at the queues outside

Harry's office at ANU, 'resembling more the exterior of a surgery than that of a scholarly retreat'. [[Gunson, 'Hexagonal Reflections on Pacific History', 72.]] Notions of selfless service also meant that Harry put enormous quantities of his time into the Pacific History Series, the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau and the {Journal of Pacific History}. [[Doug Munro and Geoffrey Gray, '"We haven't abandoned the project": the founding of {The} {Journal of Pacific History}', {Journal of Pacific History}, 48:1 (2013), 63–77.]] Ron was also an institution-builder with IPS and {Pacific Perspectives} (both sadly defunct) and there is the sheer extent of his and Marjie's hidden editorial work on behalf of Pacific Islander writers – because they believed that this was their moral duty. Ron's life was governed by a moral sense that one had obligations, commitments and loyalties to fulfil, whatever the personal sacrifice, and the standards he set himself he expected of others. His and Harry's shared sense of commitment, moral purpose and their agreement on fundamentals resulted in a half century partnership unlikely to be replicated.

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[2] Doug Munro, 'Harry Maude – loyal lieutenant, incurable romantic', in Munro, *The Ivory Tower and Beyond: participant historians of the Pacific* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 171–242.

[3] Susan Woodburn, *Where Our Hearts Still Lie: Harry and Honor Maude in the Pacific Islands* (Adelaide: Crawford House, 2003), 40–237.

[4] Woodburn, *Where Our Hearts Still Lie*, 244, 260.

[5] Ron Crocombe, e-mail, 18 April 2004;

[6] Doug Munro, 'J.W. Davidson – the making of the participant historian', in Brij V. Lal and Peter Hempenstall (eds), *Pacific Peoples, Pacific Places: bursting boundaries in Pacific History* (Canberra: The Journal of Pacific History, Inc, 2001), 98–116. There is a moving tribute, containing much biographical detail, by his son: Taturuanui (Tata) Graham Crocombe, 'Eulogy for Papa Ron', in Crowl, Crocombe and Dixon, *Ron Crocombe E Toa!*, 13–22.

[7] Ron Crocombe, e-mail, 18 April 2004. Material relating to Ron's application and acceptance as a PhD student is in his ANU Departmental file in the Australian National University Archives: ANUA 395/24.

[8] See Peter Hempenstall, *Fool's Truth: Derek Freeman and the War over Cultural Anthropology* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2017).

[9] Ron Crocombe, e-mail, 18 April 2004.

[10] J.B. Wright (Secretary, Department of Island Territories) to Registrar, 16 July 1957, Australian National University Archives (hereafter ANUA) 19/538c (Staff files, Ron Crocombe).

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[13] Harry Maude, Interview (by Doug Munro), 15 September 1997, Maude Papers, Series K/7. A

contemporary's account of ANU's Department of Pacific History is provided by Niel Gunson, 'Hexagonal Reflections on Pacific History', in Brij V. Lal and Alison Ley (eds), *The Coombs: a house of memories* (Canberra: Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, 2006), 69-77.

[14] Davidson to Registrar, 19 July 1961, ANUA 19/538.

[15] Maude to Ernest Beaglehole, 7 November 1961; see also Maude to Alexander Spoehr, 7 November 1961, both in Maude Papers, Series J.

[16] Maude to Crocombe, 15 November 1961, Maude Papers, Series J. The published version of Ron's thesis is *Land Tenure in the Cook Islands* (Oxford: Melbourne University Press in association with the Australian National University, 1964).

[17] 'Extracts from Examiners' Report – Mr. R.G. Crocombe' (attached to Registrar to Crocombe), 18 January 1962, ANUA 395/24.

[18] Maude to Crocombe, 17 June 1980, Maude Papers, Series H/13; Alaric Maude, Interview (by Doug Munro), 2 January 1999 (Adelaide), Maude Papers, Series K/10.

[19] H.E. Maude, *Memorandum of Post-War Organisation and Administrative Policy: Memorandum of Post-War Organisation and Administrative Policy* 1945 paragraph 94.

[20] R.G. Crocombe, 'Development and Retrogression in New Zealand Island Territories', *Pacific Viewpoint*, 3:2 (1962), 17–32 (esp. 24–27); also 'The Theological Students' Walkout, Rarotonga, 1954', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 79:1 (1970), 6–21.

[21] Paiere Mokoroa, 'Papa Ron Crocombe and the People of Atiu', in Crowl, Crocombe and Dixon, *Ron Crocombe E Toa!*, 477–84.

[22] Davidson to J.C. Beaglehole, 24 May 1961, ANUA 395/24.

[23] Information from Marjorie Crocombe, 12 August 2010 (Rarotonga).

[24] H.E. Maude and Marjorie Tuainakore Crocombe, 'Rarotongan Sandalwood: the visit of Goodenough to Rarotonga in 1814', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, (1962), 32–56, reprinted in H.E. Maude, *Of Islands and Men: studies in Pacific history* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1968), 343–71 (quotation, 344).

[25] Marjorie Tuainakore Crocombe, *They Came for Sandalwood* (Wellington: Islands Education Division, Department of Education for Department of Island Territories, 1964).

[26] R.G. and Marjorie Crocombe (eds), *The Works of Taunga: records of a Polynesian traveller in the South Seas, 1833-1996}, with annotations by Jean Guiart, Niel Gunson and Dorothy Shineberg* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1968; co-published, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press & London: C. Hurst and Co). French translation by

Georges Pisier: {Le temoignage e Taunga, ou, la Nouvelle-Caledonie vue par un "teacher" Polynésien avant l'implantation Européenne (Noumea: Société d'Etudes Historiques de la Nouvelle-Caledonie, 1980). Marjie also wrote a short biography of Taunga for a younger audience: *{If I Live: the life of Taunga* (Suva: Lotu Pasifika Productions for the South Pacific Social Sciences Association, 1976).

[27] The unexpected arrival was a 40-page MS, dated 28 July 1979, concerning Taunga's work and the way of life in New Caledonia in 1842–45.]] Intrigued by this unexpected windfall, they discovered that Taunga had left a dispersed corpus of letters and other manuscripts relating to his work and experiences over several decades and island groups – ranging from accounts of his labours, details of the 'customs' of the peoples he worked amongst, and descriptions of events as far-ranging as massacres, epidemics and volcanic eruptions. These particulars and the chronology of Taunga's life were gradually pieced together as other Taunga manuscripts came to light, one from as far afield as the New York Public Library. Here was a pioneering Pacific Islands evangelist who was unusually prolific and fluent on paper. Eventually Ron and Marjie located nineteen letters, memoirs and reports covering almost sixty years, which provided a rare indigenous voice. (Taunga wrote many other letters and reports; these are referred to in other accounts, but could not be located.)[[A listing of Taunga's known writings is in *The Works of Taunga*}, 152–54.]] Already he and Marjie had firm plans for an edited edition of Taunga's writings. This fitted in well with Ron's first post-thesis job as a research assistant in ANU's Department of Pacific History which was microfilming rare English and vernacular manuscripts in the Cook Islands, including any by Taunga. [[Davidson to Faculty Board, Research School of Pacific Studies, 19 April 1961, ANUA 395/24.]] "We do reckon he merits a monograph if we could find a publisher & having done so much work on him (& collected quite a bit of extra in Raro) it[']s a shame to drop it now. Have a very rough first draft done of all but the last chapter. It includes all his known writings (he incidentally also wrote a comprehensive history of Manua which we cannot so far locate) & of the surrounding social circumstances. In English only his writings will run to about 40 to 50,000 words and our wrapping to say 15,000 words. Previously I thought his stuff on Samoa could be edited but looking again I think it would destroy it. He writes as he sees it, & his viewpoint appears to be valuable, in part because of his different perspective. The fact that he attributes the excessive sickness in Rarotonga to God's punishment for excessive fucking is of definite importance. Taunga's [sic] views of Xianity are really best expressed in his Samoan reports. It would take at least a month to knock into shape, & once we hit New Guinea we'll have to give full time to that job. Is Pacific History likely to be able to afford a month for it? Is anyone likely to want to publish? Is the [New Guinea] Research Unit likely to agree to stalling my job there a little while. These are things I'd like to talk to you about." [[Crocombe to Maude, 14 December 1961 (attached to Maude to Crocombe, 18 December 1961), Maude Papers,

Series J.]] Harry replied that Jim Davidson ‘seemed as keen as I am and has promised to find the money to keep you on our books till you’ve finished everything...’, and the necessary funding would be appropriated the unspent salary of a staff member who would not be arriving until mid-1962. *[[Maude to Crocombe, 18 December 1961, Maude Papers, Series J.]]* The search for Taunga manuscripts continued and Ron was excitedly reporting to Harry (who was on study leave in England) that,

“The latest Taunga manuscript has a pearl on cannibalism. How each bit was divided up, how it was wrapped and baked & so on.... It’s best seller material. Just think of the illustrations! And your recipes as an appendix. To hell with provincial libraries; this is the thing that really needs doing!!” *[[Crocombe to Maude, 31 January 1962 (attached to Crocombe to Maude, 1 June [1962]), Maude Papers, Series J.]]* Ron’s letters convey the thrill of the chase as he and Marjie ran one after another Taunga manuscript to ground; they also reveal the warmth of their friendship with Harry and the efforts he and Marjie were putting into the project – their ‘labour of love’, as they called it.

In March 1962 Ron took up duties as Executive Officer at ANU’s New Guinea Research Unit, by which time:

“12 chapters [had been] revised and retyped in what I would call a fairly late, though certainly not final, draft. However, I have been in contact with the LMS chief in Manu’a [American Samoa] and find that Taunga is quite a legend there still. He says people tell of the time he died and later rose from the dead again. (A pleasant habit). So I have asked him to get some keen young man to write this all down in detail and verbatim from the lips of the sages, and that I’ll pay him £10 for his trouble. Now whether anything will in fact happen is yet to be seen, but it’s worth a try.” *[[Crocombe to Maude, 17 April 1962 (attached to Crocombe to Maude, 1 June [1962]), Maude Papers, Series J.]]* Ron, however, had a demanding job involving wide-ranging fieldwork and follow-up writing *[[See Crocombe to D.G. Bettison (Director, NGRU), 20 March 1963, ANUA 19/538 (Staff files, Ron Crocombe). As well as revising his PhD thesis for publication, Ron authored or co-authored four of the first seven New Guinea Research Bulletins – in effect, small monographs.]]* and the Taunga project lost some of its momentum. His and Marjie’s evenings were taken up with language work three nights a week, Taunga three nights a week, and the other night of the week they gave voluntary English language lessons to adults at the Salvation Army Welfare Centre – not to mention a growing family and Ron and Marjie’s reluctance, in principle, to employ a ‘hausmeri’ (a New Guinean domestic servant). Despite time being at a premium, Ron reckoned that a first draft of the Taunga book would be ready by the end of the year. *[[Crocombe to Davidson, 21 May 1962, Crocombe to Maude, 1 June [1962] and 22 November 1962, all in Maude Papers, Series J. Ron and Marjie published two short articles on Taunga, which served to advertise the*

forthcoming book: Ron and Marjorie Crocombe, 'Early Polynesian Authors – the example of Taunga', *Historical Studies, Australia and New Zealand*, 10:37 (1961), 92–93; and 'The Star Massacre, 1841', *Etudes Melanésiennes*, 18:20 (1964), 51–55.

[28] Minutes of the Publications Committee, 5 September 1963, ANUA 202.

[29] Crocombe to Maude, 29 October 1964, Maude Papers, Series I/34.

[30] W.N. Gunson, e-mail, 22 July 2010.

[31] Jennifer Terrell, e-mail, 29 July 2010.

[32] Patricia Croft to Crocombe (copy), 14 February 1966 (attached to Crocombe to Secretary, PNG Society, 17 February 1966), ANUA 419/9 (file: 'Pacific History Series – general').

[33] Guiart's major study to that point was *Un siècle et demi contacts culturels à Tanna...* (Paris: Société des Océanistes, 1956); Shineberg and Gunson's PhD theses were published as *They Came for Sandalwood: a study of the sandalwood trade in Melanesia, 1830–1865* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1967); Niel Gunson, *Messengers of Grace: evangelical missionaries in the South Seas, 1797–1860* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1978).

[34] Maude to Langdon, 1 May 1964, Maude Papers, Series J.

[35] Maude to Dorothy Shineberg, 4 March 1966; Shineberg to Maude [handwritten and undated], both in Maude Papers, Series J.

[36] Terrell, e-mail, 29 July 2010.

[37] Crocombe to Frank Eyre, 5 November 1965 (copy), (attached to Maude to Eyre, 9 December 1965), Maude Papers, Series I/18.

[38] Maude, *Of Islands and Men*, xviii.

[39] The figure taken from Ron's most recent CV: <https://www.usp.ac.fj/index.php?id=7069&type=98> (accessed 14 February 2018).

[40] Ron's major statement to this effect is 'Pacific History: perceptions from within', *Pacific History Association Bulletin*, 12 (December 1984), 4–12; see also Ron Crocombe, 'Anthropology, Anthropologists, and Pacific Islanders', *Oceania*, 47:1 (1976), 66–73.

[41] For comparative insights, see Edward P. Wolfers, 'Publishing "Homegrown" Papua New Guinea Books' (2008), http://www.pngbuai.com/development/2008/Wolfers_EPW-Book2Bukpngbuai.pdf (accessed 2 February 2018).

[42] Crocombe to Papua New Guinea Society, 17 February 1966, ANUA 395/24.

[43] O.H.K. Spate and Ron Crocombe, 'Pacific Research: the need for reciprocity', *Australian National University News*, 4:3 (1969), 1–3; S.G. Foster and Margaret M. Varghese, *The Making of the Australian National University, 1946–1996* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1996), 171–72.

[44] Crocombe to Deryck Scarr, 13 November 1973, ANUA 395/24.

[45] Crocombe to Maude, 22 February 1977, Maude Papers, Series H/13; H.E. Maude, *The Evolution of the Gilbertese Boti: an ethnohistorical reconstruction* (Wellington: Memoirs of the Polynesian Society no. 35, 1963; IPS reprints 1977, 1999).

[46] Maude to Crocombe, 10 July 1977, Maude Papers, H/13; see also Woodburn, *Where Our Hearts Still Lie*, 242–43.

[47] Crocombe, 'Pacific History: perceptions from within', 7.

[48] Quoted in H.E. Maude, review (of *The Complete History of Guam*, by Paul Carano and Pedro C. Sanchez), *Journal of Pacific History*, 1 (1966), 243; also *SPC Quarterly Bulletin*, 1:1 (1951), & 14; 1:3 (1951), & 1:4 (1951), & 19; & 2:1 (1952), 14; Woodburn, *Where Our Hearts Still Lie*, 225.

[49] Maude to Crocombe, 20 August 1979 (attached to Crocombe to Maude, 7 March 1980), Maude Papers, Series H/13.

[50] Published as *Cinderellas of the Empire: towards a history of Kiribati and Tuvalu* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1982; paperback reprint Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific, 2001).

[51] Barrie Macdonald, review (of *The Changing Pacific: essays in honour of H.E. Maude*, ed. Niel Gunson), in *Pacific Viewpoint*, 20:2 (1979), 213–14 (quotation, 213).

[52] Ron Crocombe (and response by Barrie Macdonald), 'The Academic Imperialism Problem', *Pacific Viewpoint*, 21:1 (1980), 71–72. See also Crocombe to Maude, 7 March 1980 (and attachments), Maude Papers, Series H/13. Recalling the event some 30 years later, Macdonald stressed that 'Ron always stuck to the issues' and did not allow the disagreement to cloud their professional relationship. Information from Barrie Macdonald, 16 July 2010 (Wellington).

[53] A listing of the various 'indigenous histories' is provided by Judith Huntsman, 'Just Marginally Possible: the making of *Matagi Tokelau*', *Journal of Pacific Studies*, 20 (1996), 151–52. It has been stated more than once that the earlier 'indigenous histories', which were compiled during the decolonising period, were 'geared to meet the apparent urgent need for the national history of an island group in the post-independence period', to the extent that the Vanuatu volume not merely celebrated and legitimised the newly-independent state but more specially the dominant political party and religious denomination'. Jacqueline Leckie, 'Towards a Review of History in the South Pacific', *Journal of Pacific Studies*, 9 (1983), 20; Nicholas Thomas, 'Partial Texts: representation, colonialism and agency in Pacific history', *Journal of Pacific History*, 25:2 (1990), 153.

[54] Woodburn, *Where Our Hearts Still Lie*, 260.

[55] Information from Howard van Trease, 12 August 2010 (Rarotonga). Ron was careful to involve Harry in the Tuvalu 'indigenous history'. Crocombe to Maude, 22 January 1980 (attached to Maude to Crocombe, 19 February 1980), Maude Papers, Series H/13; Hugh Laracy (ed.), *Tuvalu: a history* (Suva/Funafuti: Institute of Pacific Studies, and Extension Services, University of the South Pacific, 1983). Hugh Laracy recounts his involvement in the Tuvalu volume in 'Indigenous National Histories', in Crowl, Crocombe and Dixon, *Ron Crocombe E Toa!*, 312–15.

[56] Crocombe to Maude, 10 March 1977 (attached to Maude to Crocombe, 12 April 1976), Maude Papers, Series H/13.

[57] H.E. Maude, 'Gilbertese eyes scan their own nation's history', *Pacific Islands Monthly*, (January 1980), 46, 48–49

[58] These are itemised in Niel Gunson, 'Harry Maude: *unimane*, statesman and Pacific historian', *Journal of Pacific History*, 42:1 (2007), 117–18.

[59] Maude to Crocombe, 27 October 1983 and 26 July 1984; Crocombe to Maude, 24 November 1983 (and addendum, 21 February 1984) and 26 July 1984, all in Maude Papers, Series H/13.

[60] H.E. Maude, *Slavers in Paradise: the Peruvian labour trade in Polynesia, 1862-1864* (Co-published: Canberra, Australian National University Press; Stanford, Stanford University Press; Suva, Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific, 1981).

[61] Maude to Crocombe, 21 June 1980, Maude Papers, Series H/13.

[62] Crocombe to Brian Clouston (ANU Press Director), 23 November 1979 (copy), Maude Papers, Series H/13.

[63] Clouston to Maude, 20 November 1979, Maude Papers, Series H/13.

[64] Maude to Clouston, 16 September 1980, and Crocombe to Maude, 5 November 1980, both in Maude Papers, Series H/13; Maude to Crocombe, 11 August 1981, Maude Papers, Series C (correspondence with publishers).

[65] Robin Craig, review (of *Slavers in Paradise*), in *Mariner's Mirror*, 69:2 (1983), 211–12.

[66] Clouston to Maude, 27 July 1981, Maude Papers, Series H/13 Crocombe to Maude, 15 October 1981, Maude Papers, Series C (correspondence with publishers).

[67] Crocombe to Maude, 11 May 1982 and 6 July 1982, both in Maude Papers, Series C (correspondence with publishers).

[68] R.G. Crocombe, *The New South Pacific* (Canberra: Australian National University Press in association

with the University of the South Pacific, 1973); Ron Crocombe, *The South Pacific*, 7th edn (Suva: IPS Publications, University of the South Pacific, 2008).

[69] Teo I.J. Fairbairn, 'Ron Crocombe on Papua New Guinea's First Development Plan, 1968', in Crawl, Crocombe and Dixon, {Ron Crocombe E Toa!}, 131–41.]] The increasing levels of corruption and nepotism in the post-colonial Pacific particularly aroused his ire. He exposed such malfeasance at every opportunity and was not one to pull his punches. [[Starting with Ron Crocombe (ed.), {Cook Islands Politics: the inside story} (Auckland: Polynesian Press, 1978).]] On the other hand he was fiercely supportive of Islanders' getting more access to educational opportunity. His son Tata recalls: 'I remember as a ten year old boy being at a BBQ and Dad was holding forth the need for more scholarships for Pacific Islanders. The group was all European professors. Later, he walked away and one of them said "Ron is a good guy but I wish he wasn't so damn pro-Islander" . . . that was the way he was to the very end. He was dedicated to the education of Pacific Islanders'. [[Quoted in Morgan Tuimalealiifano, "Papa Ron" Crocombe, 1929–2009', *Journal of Pacific History*, 45:3 (2010). 372.