

Dirk Smidt, Pieter ter Keurs, and Albert Trouwborst, eds., *Pacific Material Culture: Essays in Honour of Dr. Simon Kooijman on the Occasion of His 80th Birthday*. Leiden: Stichting Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, 1995. Pp. 336, maps, figures, photographs, biography, bibliography.

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As the title suggests, the sixteen papers that make up this volume are organized around the theme of Pacific material culture. The collection represents a welcome addition to Pacific ethnography on two fronts: first, it makes available to an English-speaking audience some of the work being done by colleagues in the Netherlands; second, it brings some much-needed attention to a topic that has tended to receive short shrift in the ethnographic literature on the Pacific.

The papers in this volume are written in honor of Dr. Simon Kooijman, who served as curator of the Oceania collection at the Museum of Ethnology (Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde) in Leiden from 1946 to 1980. Trained as a social geographer at the University of Utrecht, Kooijman emerges from the various biographic sketches presented here as something of a modern-day “Renaissance man.” In addition to his museum work, he published extensively on Polynesian barkcloth and “primitive” art, and carried out first-hand field research in Western Polynesia (Samoa, Tonga, and Fiji) and among the Marind-anim of South New Guinea. (A ten-page bibliography of Kooijman’s writings is included in the volume, attesting to his continuing activity as a research scholar.) Also deeply committed to the visual documentation of material culture and social life, he is known for his film-making efforts and extensive photographic collections.

The book is divided into four parts, each of approximately equal length. The first section, comprising four chapters (by van Wengen, Trouwborst, Smidt, and Rosema), sets out the historical background to Kooijman’s work. Here we learn all we ever wanted to know (and frequently a lot more) about Kooijman’s activities at the Museum of Ethnology in Leiden. In addition to providing the reader with a detailed life history of the man (see particularly the paper by van Wengen), we are introduced to the general principles that guided his organization of temporary and permanent museum exhibits (Smidt), including his use of slides and photography to augment the artifactual displays (Rosema). Trouwborst’s paper, which focuses on his fieldwork and subsequent publications on Moce Island (Fiji), rounds out the picture of the man and his accomplishments. The essays in this section will have some appeal to those who are engaged in museum work but are of less interest to the general reader of anthropology or Pacific studies.

The five chapters in part 2 are devoted to the study of barkcloth in Oceania--a central theme of Kooijman’s own scholarship. Yet, if Kooijman’s publications on tapa were primarily descriptive in nature, focused on the techniques of tapa manufacture and design (a point that is made in part 1 of the book), the papers in this section take a decidedly more interpretive approach to the subject and focus instead on its social and symbolic meaningfulness. Kaeppler’s paper explores how indigenous ideas of power and prestige are reflected in the design features of Tongan barkcloth. Here we see how barkcloth designs may “record a visual history of important events, places and people” (p. 121), thereby linking the past and the present in single aesthetic image. The contributions by Teilhet-Fisk and Hooper, which are focused on Tonga and Kabara (Fiji) respectively, relate tapa production and use to indigenous constructions of gender and to cosmological understandings of life and death. Teilhet-Fisk’s paper is a particularly compelling analysis and deserves special mention in terms of the sensitivity that

she brings to bear on the relationship between cultural symbolism and social change. Hoogerbrugge's essay shifts the focus of attention from Polynesia to Indonesia. In his paper, he documents how an efflorescence in barkcloth painting in the Lake Sentani area between 1993 and 1994 was related to the growth of the tourist industry and to other forces of globalization, including the activities of two museums in the area. Ter Keurs's discussion of the ornamented barkcloth jackets of Enggano Island (Indonesia) highlights the difficulty in interpreting design motifs and the need for further research in this area.

Part 3 consists of four chapters, each a contained case study of some aspect of Pacific material culture: of woodcarving, of the relationship between ethnicity and art style, of the significance of arrow designs, and of regional variation in the manufacture and ornamentation of war shields. In the first of these, van der Grijp examines how a new "aesthetics of inequality" (p. 214) is developing between Tongan men and women as woodcarvings--a traditional item of male manufacture--begin to enter the commodity market through the burgeoning tourist trade. The papers by Newton and Craig that follow are concerned with what a more formal analysis of decorative designs can tell us about the history and prehistory of non-western peoples. Newton looks at how the style of art and architecture in the Sepik (Papua New Guinea) can supplement what is known of the history of migration in the region. He concludes that anomalies in art styles reflect a complex history of population movement and ethnic interrelationships. Craig's paper also explores how variations in arrow designs can help to elucidate the history of the Bismarck Archipelago (Papua New Guinea). Boeren's discussion of Asmat war shields draws upon the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss as source of theoretical inspiration. He explores how transformations in design principles are tied to other cultural variations, including head-hunting practices and the relationships that exist between human beings and the non-human world. a

The final section includes three papers devoted to the analysis of religion and ritual. These contributions are rather far removed from the main theme of the book (material culture) and are only marginally tied to the rest of this volume. Van der Leeden's only justification for analyzing an Australian Aboriginal myth, for example, lies in his claim that Kooijman was also interested in the topic (p. 293). However, what these papers do hint at, albeit indirectly, is the range of issues to which an analysis of material culture could possibly lead. Claessen's contribution explores the role of the god Oro in the history of Tahitian polities during the eighteenth century. He shows how possession of a feather girdle associated with this god entitled its bearer to preside over human sacrifice and was thus implicated in local political

relations. Zegwaard's essay picks up on Kooijman's later-day interest in Mimika (Indonesian) art and explores the significance of Mimika penis sheaths. Although the bulk of this paper is devoted to an analysis of Mimika 'rites of male initiation, some attention is also given to the relationship between penis covers and indigenous cosmology.

Two subthemes run through this book and give it the modicum of integration that it possesses. One has to do with the link between material forms and social identity. If the reader is paying close attention, she or he will begin to get a sense of how various aspects of material culture are tied to the elicitation of culturally meaningful social identities, including those based on gender (Teilhet-Fisk, Hooper, van der Grijp, Zegwaard), kinship (Kaeppler), ethnicity (Newton, Craig, Boeren), and political relations (Kaeppler, Claessen). Again, I refer the reader to the paper by Teilhet-Fisk, which is, perhaps, the most sophisticated analysis in this volume. Secondly, several essays help to document the relationship between modernization (or globalization) and its objectified representation (see particularly the articles by Smidt, Kaeppler, Teilhet-Fisk, Hoogerbrugge, and van der Grijp). Unfortunately, these themes are never explicitly emphasized by the editors and it is left to the reader to discover points of connection between the papers.

Overall, the volume makes a number of contributions. As I noted earlier, material culture has been sorely neglected by Pacific scholars, and for this reason alone the book deserves kudos for venturing into something of an anthropological no-man's land. Further, the range of ethnographic coverage represented in this collection is impressive. Spanning Polynesia, Australia, Indonesia, and Melanesia, the book pulls together material from several major subregions and helps to remind the reader why it makes a certain amount of sense to speak of the Pacific as being a quasi-integrated cultural area.

Notwithstanding these offerings, one wishes that the editors had made a greater attempt to motivate the volume as a whole and to bring it within the scope of current theoretical debates in the discipline, including, for example, reflexive museology. Simon Kooijman is offered up as the sole glue that binds the collection together, yet by several of the authors' own admission (see, for example, Dark, van Wengen, Trouwborst, and ter Keurs) Kooijman was not prone to making theoretical statements but adopted instead a "documentary" style to cultural ethnography (p. 49, Trouwborst). Although several papers manage to move beyond the level of pure description, the volume as a whole never transcends Kooijman's stance, and consequently it fails to make a solid contribution to general anthropological theory. For this reason, the primary audience of this book will be confined to those with specialized interest in material culture.

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