

Jukka Siikala, *'Akatokamanava: Myth, History, and Society in the Southern Cook Islands*. Auckland: The Polynesian Society in association with the Finnish Anthropological Society, 1991. Pp. ii, 153, figures, bibliography, index.

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Jukka Siikala makes a fine contribution to anthropological studies of Polynesia; and particularly of the Cook Islands, with this publication. Cook Islanders and those of us who study the Cook Islands now have a new presentation of material concerning the articulation of Cook Islands "myth, history, and society" to consider with the appearance of this volume.

The title *'Akatokamanava* refers to the original name of the island of Mauke; the subtitle calls attention to the book's highlighting of the Southern Cook Islands. The book's content concerns the island of Mangaia to some extent ("The Cosmogony of Mangaia" in chapter 2); Ngaputuru at some length, that is, "the threesome" of Atiu, Mauke, and Mitiaro islands (the whole of chapter 4); and most especially the island of Mauke.

Siikala's residence in the Cook Islands for research purposes has been rather lengthy, eight months in 1984-1985, one month in 1986, and eight months again in 1987-1988 (in the Foreword). His data are rich and detailed (see also Siikala 1990). He has worked closely with knowledgeable Cook Islanders, especially the eminent Rangi Moeka'a with reference to Mauke. Siikala's command of his material is noteworthy, and it is pleasing that the mythological texts appear in two languages, Cook Islands Maori and English.

Yet, the nearly unavoidable insider-outsider differential confounds Siikala's work, as well as the subtleties of exchange that occur when shifting between the Maori-language and English-language texts. For example, what

was the intrinsic character of Mariri-tutu-a-manu (pp. 85-86)? Should we say that he was able to fly "like a bird"? Or, because he could fly, did he then "become" a bird? Do we highlight Mariri-tutu-a-manu's remarkable ability to enhance his human creativity by taking up a new transportation mode, that of flight? Or, did Mariri give up something of his humanness because he took on *manu* (bird; sometimes glossed as creature) characteristics? The motion aspect may be that which is most significant for our consideration, that is, our knowledge that the Polynesian ancestors readily moved about from island to island. Isn't it so that some canoes "fly" through the water? A Cook Islands woman was known as Vaine Rere (Flying Woman), I was told in 1973, because "she flew all over the place; she never stayed in one place very long." "Taku Manu E," a haunting song of Aitutaki with the theme of flight, does not concern a bird at all, but rather a beloved kite. Siikala draws on other Polynesian materials, for example, works by Sahlins, in this section. But, let us consider other possible shades of meaning in the Mariri-as-bird discourse.

Status and rank do not fit into a single mold in precontact Polynesia. With reference to titleholders in the Southern Cook Islands, status and rank were no doubt much more complex than we can ever discern or likewise hope to reconstruct. Siikala does not mention the *mataiapo tutara* (big *mataiapo*), whose status was intermediate between that of the *ariki* (chiefs, those highest in rank) and the regular *mataiapo* (chiefs of a major lineage or descent group; cf. Savage 1980 for a further description of Cook Islands titles in the context of local culture). In the case of Atiu, the *mataiapo tutara* titles were apparently created after the *mataiapo* and *ariki* titles. Duff states:

At a period we might date from a lineage succession of twelve chiefs prior to 1823 [the date of the arrival of missionary John Williams at Atiu], the immigrant warrior Mokoero displaced the existing hierarchy and introduced the rule of Mokoero (*au o mokoero*). The victorious party then created seven *mataiapo* (chief) titles, with a corresponding division of the island into seven districts, each controlled by one *mataiapo*. About 1760, following an unsuccessful attempt by the *taagata* [sic] *enua* descendants to regain control, the victory elevated the then senior *mataiapo* to the *ariki* title of Ngamaru. (1971:45)

In 1973 at Atiu I was told that, after the Ngamaru title, two additional *ariki* titles were created, those of Rongomatane and Parua (some say Parua Nui). The remaining four *mataiapo* of the original seven who did not succeed to *ariki* titles became *mataiapo tutara*. The names of the *mataiapo tutara* titles at Atiu were given to me by various Atiuan *tumu korero* (per-

sons who are knowledgeable about matters of tradition) as Maokopi in Teenui district and Paerangi, Tinokura, and Aumai in Areora (Stephenson 1981:114). Paiere Mokoroa of Atiu (1984:21), however, states that the four titleholders not raised to *ariki* ranking assumed the dual role of *ta'unga* (ritual specialist) and *mataiapo tutara* and names them as Maokopi, Paerangi, Tinokura, and Terea.

Tongia, working with the Earthwatch Cook Islands Project at Mitiaro in 1989, was told that the present stratified and hereditary system of leadership there was introduced from Atiu, which Siikala also indicates. The Atiuans had "succeeded in extending their foothold on Mitiaro via two successful military campaigns. Prior to the Atiu colonization period, there was no ascribed *ariki* or high chief system. . . . Prestige was gained through prowess in war" (Tongia n.d.:2). But then, writes Tongia (*ibid.*), a certain Makara, a warrior-chief, gained sufficient *mana* such that his became a *mataiapo tutara* title, subsumed under no *ariki*, and "he was an independent *mataiapo* and chief unto himself." Thus, again the place of the *mataiapo tutara* is called to our attention. Leadership dynamics appear to be somewhat more complex in the Southern Cooks than Siikala has mentioned.

Siikala considers in some detail the putative identities of the first human inhabitants of Ngaputoru (pp. 84-104). The Earthwatch Cook Islands Project of 1985-1989 in the Southern Cook Islands addressed itself to matters of *marae*, *mana*, and Cook Islands Maori origins, with archaeology as the principal methodology of data pursuit (Kurashina 1991, n.d.; Kurashina and Stephenson 1985, 1994; Sinoto 1991, n.d.). Concerning Mitiaro, the following account was collected by Bennett (in English) from several Mitiaroan *tumu korero* during the project's 1988 field season:

The first canoe coming to Mitiaro was called Kutikutiraumatangi. It is not known where the canoe came from, *but it might have come from Tahiti, because most canoes came from there in the early days.*

There were from 50-100 people aboard each canoe. . . . Then a man named Ru came to Mitiaro and began to look for water. The two daughters of the Taratau Ariki were bathing in a cave, Tekopu-o-Karo. These were the most beautiful women Ru had ever seen. Although they were nuns [virgins?], the eldest, Teremake Ariki, fell in love with Ru and married him. *Ru and Teremake went away together to Atiu. . . .* (After Ru was lost at sea) Teremake fell in love with her second husband, Makona, which heralded the start of the eight tribes of Mitiaro. *The eight tribes never fought with each other, only with Atiu.* The tribes are known as Nga-kopu-e-varu, the eight-born. (1991:73; emphases added)

What emerges from the above account is a point of view different from Siikala's discussion. Overwater (but not airborne) origins of the Mitiaro people from the Society Islands are suggested in Bennett's account, which meshes with current archaeological theories concerning the settlement of the Southern Cooks. The shift of residence of the wedded pair, Ru and Teremake, from Mitiaro to Atiu was apparently a natural, uneventful one, speaking perhaps to early harmonious dynamics in Ngaputoru. Warlike intransland relations apparently occurred later in time.

Siikala states that the chiefly titles found in Ngaputoru are remarkably homologous (p. 91). Paiere Mokoroa says that the *ariki* of Atiu appointed representatives to Mauke and Mitiaro (1984:32), usually younger men of chiefly status, who were given *mataiapo* or *rangatira* titles (*rangatira* being a tribal title subsumed under an *ariki* or *mataiapo*). Those titles later became *ariki* titles in their own right on Mauke and Mitiaro. Tongia learned that no one seems to agree as to the names of the *ariki* offices of Mitiaro: "The Ngati Te Akatauiria tradition states that the name of their *ariki* office is Teikamata. Teikamata is, of course, the name of the first Ngati Te Akatauiria *ariki* installed by Atiu prior to 1823" (n.d.:7). Let us leave it to the Mitia-roans to sort this one out!

Siikala does not elaborate on the ranking among the *ariki* titles in Ngaputoru. It has been my understanding that the Ngamaru Arika title is the highest ranked of the three *ariki* titles, followed by the Rongomatane Arika title and then that of Parua Arika. If that is so, why was Rongomatane so greatly feared at Mauke and Mitiaro at the time of John Williams's arrival? Where was Ngamaru Arika then? Ngamaru Arika of Atiu was the individual most influential in building the first church on Atiu (Tangatapoto 1984: 144). Did that event cement or earmark Ngamaru as the highest-ranking Atiuan *ariki*?

It may be useful to question whether there could have been a shifting of predominance among the three Atiu *ariki*, regardless of the ranking of the titles, depending on the individual titleholders at any given time, the nature of their strengths, charisma, leadership capabilities and so forth, and other extenuating circumstances, such as the success of the *karakia* (bestowal chant) at the time of the Investiture (cf. Mokoroa 1984). Gilson has raised this point when considering the impact of missionization in the Southern Cooks: "Each contact situation must be examined closely for a number of different things: social structure and ideology (which varied from island to island within the same cultural area), the personalities involved, and the incidental events occurring before, during and after the landing of the missionaries" (1980:23). Crocombe also has noted a lack of parity between

power positions of the Atiuan titleholders (1967:97, 99). Around the turn of the century, Ngamaru Ariki of Atiu was a man of considerable stature and influence; moreover, he was married to Makea Nui Ariki of Rarotonga. When I first went to Atiu in 1973, Parua Ariki was by far the most prominent of the three *ariki* in the Atiuan community. The Ngamaru titleholder had recently died; that title was not succeeded to until June 1974. The Rongomatane titleholder was not residing on Atiu then. Parua Mataio Ariki was an older man of considerable personal charm, he was well spoken, and he was quite popular among the Atiuan people. His dominance among the Atiuan *ariki* persisted until he passed away in the mid-1980s. My point is that some shifting of the power base might have occurred among the *ariki* of Mauke and Mitiaro as well, perhaps with reference to the particular Atiuan *ariki* in the forefront. Or, it may be that the time when Mauke and Mitiaro had the most to fear from Atiu was during the reign of a single Rongomatane titleholder, namely Ngaka'ara Rongomatane Ariki, in the years just prior to missionization in the Southern Cooks.

Siikala has taken on a difficult task in this book. He seeks to "get it right" in terms of his presentation of the building blocks of Southern Cook Islanders' identity and consciousness. But other accounts in print concerning ethnohistory in Ngaputuru merit consideration (e.g., Kloosterman 1976; Kura et al. 1984). Each generation of Cook Islanders may prefer to tell the tales of their island in a slightly different way. Likewise, there are considerable intergenerational variations within the discourses. Nonetheless, Siikala's book is of considerable value in the context of contemporary Polynesian studies. It offers a Western scholar's comprehensive view of a particular Polynesian recounting of history. It also affords us the opportunity to consider yet again the matter of "tradition" in the context of a particular Oceanic sociocultural system.

'*Akatokamanava*' is an important and timely contribution to Cook Islands studies. But an urgent need remains for Cook Islanders to continue to articulate with each other their construction of identity. Differences in textual materials--for example, which version of Mariri-tutu-a-manu is the generally preferred one?-- can become points of cultural enrichment rather than contention. With the death of Tangata Simiona in 1992, another greatly valued *tumu korero* of Atiu is no longer available for consultation. I call upon Ina Teiotu, Paiere Mokoroa, Tatuava Tanga, and other Atiuans, in spite of their demanding work schedules as well as kinship and community obligations, to press forward in their chosen task of collecting and recording the Atiuan narratives. Jukka Siikala's book may offer considerable inspiration for them and for other Cook Islands people.

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