

A Note on Place Names

A note on the use of Vanuatu and New Hebrides: New Hebrides is a colonial name, given to the islands by Cook in 1774 (Beaglehole, ed. 1969), while Vanuatu is the name of an independent nation established in 1980. They refer to the same group of islands, and as such will be used somewhat interchangeably here. I will use New Hebrides when discussing colonial-era phenomena, and Vanuatu to refer to the land in abstract, as well as contemporary places and people (ni-Vanuatu).

There are other cases where European names overlie indigenous ones, a result of a palimpsest of toponymy derived from explorers, traders, missionaries, and contemporary political landscapes (see Jolly 2009). In general, I try to follow the names that would have been used in the missionary period, making reference to local toponymy where possible. For example, the village called 'Williams Bay' by Erromangan people today after the first martyr missionary was only named as such after a 2009 reconciliation ceremony. Before that it was Dillon's Bay, named after a sandalwood trader, and the area has for much longer been referred to as Umponkor. I generally use Dillon's Bay, but may use the indigenous toponym to refer to the broader Melanesian landscape in which European settlement was embedded.

This text is taken from *An Archaeology of Early Christianity in Vanuatu: Kastom and Religious Change on Tanna and Erromango, 1839–1920*, by James L. Flexner, published 2016 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.