

Preface

Scientific collaboration between France and Australia in the social sciences and humanities has really forged ahead since 2000, with collaborative agreements covering a wide range of disciplines across a broad spectrum of French and Australian institutions of higher learning.

In 2001 an International Program of Scientific Collaboration (Programme International de Coopération Scientifique, PICS) was initiated between the National Centre of Scientific Research (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, CNRS), France's national research body, and The Australian National University (ANU), Canberra. This program bears the title "Early Encounters in the Pacific."

Within this framework, this volume, *Oceanic Encounters*, is the first fruit of ongoing collaboration between the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies (RSPAS) at The Australian National University and the Centre of Research and Documentation on Oceania (Centre de Recherche et de Documentation sur l'Océanie, CREDO), a research centre within an Institute of Asia-Pacific (Maison de l'Asie-Pacifique), located at the University of Provence in Marseilles, incorporating members of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), and the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, EHESS).

This multidisciplinary research program, initiated by Serge Tcherkézoff in Marseilles and myself in Canberra, has flourished since its inception, involving twenty researchers and research students in France and Australia. Thus far it has resulted in two symposia, held in Marseilles and Canberra, examining the connections between history and anthropology in the early days of exploration and colonial contact with the indigenous peoples of the Pacific.

A second series of multidisciplinary symposia is looking at contemporary issues such as socio-political upheaval in Oceania. The first symposium of the series has already taken place in La Ciotat, organized by CREDO, with the second set to take place in Canberra. It is planned that this will lead to a volume on contemporary issues in Oceania, perhaps as a special number of the *New Pacific Review/La Nouvelle Revue du Pacifique*, itself a product of French-Australian collaboration in the social sciences.

While scientific collaboration between the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) and the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies (RSPAS) at The Australian National University is now becoming well established, there is an urgent need to make Francophone research more accessible to the English-speaking world. This was one of the principal findings of the French, Assises de la Recherche Française dans le Pacifique – a French government review

of French research in the Pacific over the last twenty years, held in Nouméa in 2004.

In response to this, and partly as a result of Serge Tcherkézoff's appointment as Linkage International Fellow in the Gender Relations Centre in 2004–05, we have seen the recent publication of *The Changing South Pacific: Identities and Transformations* (Pandanus Books 2005), edited by Serge Tcherkézoff and Françoise Douaire-Marsaudon, itself an English translation of *Le Pacifique-sud aujourd'hui: identités et transformations culturelles* (CNRS 1997); "First contacts" in *Polynesia: the Samoan case (1722–1848): Western misunderstandings about sexuality and divinity* (Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies and *The Journal of Pacific History* Monograph 2004); and *Tahiti—1768: Jeunes filles en pleurs: la face cachée des premiers contacts et la naissance du mythe occidental* (Au Vent des Îles 2004), the latter two both authored by Serge Tcherkézoff.

Oceanic Encounters represents a further step in Australia-France collaboration in multidisciplinary research in the social sciences and the humanities in the Pacific. At the same time, our broader French-Australian collaboration is building for the future through the increasing involvement of younger scholars as the program develops.

Darrell Tryon
The Australian National University
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