

history. What scholars, educators and members of the public can no longer do is say that there is no definitive history to refer to. Hopefully O'Malley has increased public recognition of the Waikato war, and placed the conflict where it rightfully deserves to be: at the centre of New Zealand history.

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The World, the Flesh and the Devil: The Life and Opinions of Samuel Marsden in England and the Antipodes, 1765–1838. By Andrew Sharp. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2016. 968pp. NZ price: \$75.00. ISBN: 9781869408121.

This is a big book, for a big figure in Australasian history. Its physical size seems to speak a metaphor for the weight and significance of Samuel Marsden's life. Marsden emerges from Sharp's treatment not as the 'flogging parson' of Australia or the 'founding father' of New Zealand, but as a more complex and courageous human personality than has previously been appreciated. Sharp has illuminated Marsden's various contexts, the range of his interests, and the words and opinions of Marsden and his many contemporaries in fulsome detail. It is a work of real scholarship.

Andrew Sharp is of course the well-known political scientist from the University of Auckland (now Emeritus). A survey of his several published works, including on the English Civil Wars, Māori political discourse of the 1980s and 'juridical' Treaty claims histories, reveals Sharp as an historian of political ideas. So, although at first blush a biography of Samuel Marsden looks an unlikely project for Sharp, his background in Western political history — particularly the church and state conflagrations of the Civil Wars — has been fertile ground for comprehending Marsden's ideological and institutional battles with the various governors of New South Wales under which he served, particularly Governor Macquarie.

The book took Sharp eight years and clearly became a labour of love. The author does not shy away from the minutiae of contemporary political debates and manoeuvres, and from the strange multiplicity of Marsden's contexts: a chaplain to the penal colony of New South Wales and a civil magistrate of that colony; a promoter of Christian missions in the islands of the Pacific, particularly Tahiti and New Zealand, to the extent he personally bought a boat for exploratory visitations; a promoter and overseer of various philanthropic causes in the convict settlements, including schools and orphanages; a pioneer agriculturalist; and founder of an educational institution at his Parramatta base that seems to have largely trained the New Zealand chiefly class in the arts of agriculture, artisanal skills, commercial practices and the Christian religion.

Sharp's book tells this biographical narrative, but it is fundamentally a piece of intellectual history. Sharp is interested in ideas and opinions — as the book's title proclaims. The book is in fact filled with events, but Sharp is primarily concerned with showing actions in the light of beliefs and convictions.

What of Marsden's intellectual universe, upon which Sharp places so much stress? Sharp emphasizes the idea that Marsden believed in an ordered social hierarchy, along customary English lines, in which deference should be paid to superiors. Sharp

characterizes this mentality as ‘subordination’. Its force in Marsden’s outlook may be explained by his rise from the lower ranks of farmer and blacksmith to become a respectable Church of England priest and English ‘gentleman’ — he was raised to pay deference, and expected it to be paid. Marsden’s elevation to the clerical vocation was sponsored by leading Evangelical social reformers, many of them Anglicans like William Wilberforce, and, to the extent they were Dissenters or even Methodists, all generally taught the scriptural principles of deference and subordination to God-ordained civil powers. I feel, however, that Sharp may have underscored ‘subordination’ a little too much. Marsden can also be read as a type of Puritan, most concerned with practising a vital religion free of state dictates. Marsden’s thoughts on gubernatorial interference in the colonial church may certainly be read in this fashion. When Sharp characterizes Marsden as a Cromwellian figure, he seems alive to this interpretation.

Another, related, context was the culture of *amour-propre* — the insistence by the more elevated social grades that their position if not their exact commands be respected and obeyed. This is the type of gentlemanly culture that produced such phenomena as the duel, the armed stand-off in defence of reputation and honour. As Sharp suggests, the expectation of due deference meant that the development of free political debate was a doubtful proposition at many periods of the convict colony’s early history. If respect meant simple obedience, then this created little room for a free press. Sharp’s close analysis of the libels against Marsden through the government-controlled newspaper indicates how the press could be used in aid of a campaign against someone like Marsden who had got offside with the powers-that-be.

Sharp’s most fascinating contribution to New Zealand historiography may perhaps be his engagement with the debate on Marsden’s missiology, often dubbed ‘civilization first’, or the idea that the New Zealanders (Māori) should first be tutored in Western agriculture and trades before they could be evangelized with the Christian message. Sharp shows, I think convincingly, throughout the book, including in his appraisal of Marsden’s approach to the somewhat different Tahitian mission context, that Marsden saw Christianity and civilization in a single frame as both goal and method. The fundamental reason Sharp gives is that Marsden understood the divine work of improvement as operating in both the spiritual sphere — on the soul, by conversion — and in the material sphere — on the body politic — through the influence of the improving arts of civilization. To Marsden, God was immanent in both spheres, and as such they were not radically distinct or separate.

Two ‘opinions’ remain: I would have liked to see the more youthful portrait of Marsden (p.504, facing page) grace the book’s front cover, rather than the dour elderly portrait most associated with Marsden. The earlier portrait subtly conveys the conviction and dash that Marsden exhibited throughout his life. And I’m not sure about the book’s title: although it seems an attempt to encapsulate Marsden’s world as a ‘foreign country’, it risks portraying Marsden to the twenty-first-century mind at least as an adherent of a pietistic, world-denying religion, as opposed to the fully embodied ‘muscular Christianity’ that he so evidently lived out.

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