

# J.C. Beaglehole: Reputation, *Fortuna* and Biography<sup>1</sup>

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NEW ZEALAND HISTORIAN JOHN BEAGLEHOLE (1901-1971) is best known for his biography of the English navigator and explorer James Cook (1728-1779). This was a lifetime's work that grew out of an earlier book, *The Exploration of the Pacific* (1934). As preparation for the eventual biography, he edited the Hakluyt Society's edition of *The Journals of Captain James Cook*. This, together with the biography itself and a two-volume compilation of the journals of the botanist Joseph Banks, which Beaglehole also edited, are landmark publications in Pacific Islands historiography.<sup>2</sup> There is no question that Beaglehole's scholarship was highly regarded during, and immediately after, his lifetime. He was, Gavan Daws told a group of Pacific historians at a seminar in Canberra in 1973, "the greatest of us all."<sup>3</sup> But reputation is unstable and has a chimerical quality: it comes and goes as fancy chooses, a victim of changing fads and fashions. Or as Stefan Collini has put it:

There is an inescapable indeterminacy about all questions of reputation where literary and intellectual figures are concerned. Membership of the jury is heterogeneous and potentially infinite; the various parts of a writer's *oeuvre* or achievement may merit different ratings from different

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categories of reader; it is almost impossible to maintain a clear distinction between questions of merit and neighbouring territories of celebrity and utility; and at any given moment judgement is almost inevitably contaminated by hearsay, selective recall, and cultural lag.<sup>4</sup>

Cultural lag is an appropriate term: it would be fair to say that Beaglehole, whose scholarship was so highly regarded in his lifetime, is out of favour in some quarters and that his reputation among Pacific historians is not quite what it once was. In the three and a half decades since his death, shifts in the way historians view the past have sometimes been unkind to Beaglehole. As Jane Samson has put it, “a new set of church fathers and scriptures has been proclaimed, and the usual search for heretics is on.”<sup>5</sup> The other side of Beaglehole’s reputation is based on his civic engagement as a public intellectual, and this aspect of his life met with a mixed reception among contemporaries. Revered in some quarters, this introspective and somewhat retiring man was viewed askance in anti-intellectual circles and by New Zealand’s conservative National Party government.

Nonetheless, honours and public tributes were showered upon him during the last decade of his life. He was awarded several honorary doctorates during the 1960s. A *Festschrift* in dual honour of Beaglehole and his long-time professorial colleague F.L.W. Wood appeared in 1969.<sup>6</sup> He was the *Dominion* newspaper’s Man of the Year for 1969. The next year, for his work on Captain Cook, Beaglehole was awarded the Order of Merit, the British Commonwealth’s highest and rarest honour—an honour bestowed by the Crown, independent of the influence of any government. Victoria University of Wellington (hereafter VUW), where he worked for the bulk of his adult life, commissioned a portrait by W.A. Sutton and hung it in the newly-created J.C. Beaglehole Room, which houses the university’s rare book and manuscript collections. As well as recognition, Beaglehole has been the object of a degree of remembrance: There were glowing and flowing obituaries, and a month after his death, the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington mounted an

exhibition of Beaglehole's writing to publicize "the depth and breadth and humanity of John Beaglehole's civilising mind."<sup>7</sup> Commemorative publications followed,<sup>8</sup> as did entries on Beaglehole in various dictionaries of biography and encyclopaedias of history. Two separate J.C. Beaglehole memorial lecture series were initiated: the one organized by the New Zealand Council for Civil Liberties has been discontinued; the other remains the keynote address at the New Zealand Historical Association's biennial conference. Other tokens of remembrance include a plaque in the foyer of Old St Paul's commemorating his work to save the church; a posthumous portrait by Evelyn Page, commissioned by the Alexander Turnbull Library; and the occasional commemorative essay.<sup>9</sup>

That reputations come and go was graphically illustrated in a 2005 poll, conducted by Prime Television New Zealand, to identify and rank "New Zealand's 100 History-Makers." Those polled placed the scientist Lord Ernest Rutherford, another New Zealander who has been admitted to the Order of Merit, at number one. Beaglehole missed out altogether, although two other historians were ranked sixty-third (Michael King) and eighty-seventh (Keith Sinclair).<sup>10</sup> Neither, were they still alive, would have ranked himself ahead of Beaglehole. The omission of Beaglehole reflects the sheer capriciousness of such media circuses—for example, there was a comedian on the panel and two comedians were among the chosen one hundred. It also illustrates the extent to which reputation can be unrelated to actual achievement, how a posthumous reputation is apt to slide, and how people are unconsciously inclined to withhold recognition from those in walks of life different from their own. All the same, the aberration of Beaglehole's omission may not have come about had the major biography by his historian-son been published a year earlier, in time to have brought Beaglehole to the panelists' attention.<sup>11</sup>

Biographies, of course, can be reputation-breakers as well as reputation-makers. For politicians, the so-called accolade of a biography can cut both ways—notable examples being the disintegrating effect that successive biographers have had on the once-high

reputation of British prime minister Stanley Baldwin and the recent attempts to rehabilitate Baldwin's successor, Neville Chamberlain.<sup>12</sup> Biographies of historians are comparatively rare, typically expressions of avowal and affirmation, and distinctly elitist in the sense that only major historians enter the hall of biographical fame. Despite a roll-of-the-dice element in who gets chosen, the very fact of a biography is a measure of that historian's significance. Sometimes they are rescue missions, attempts to restore to proper prominence historians who, in their biographer's view, have been condemned to unjustifiable abeyance.<sup>13</sup> Conversely, there are attempts to explain and celebrate the recrudescence of a reputation.<sup>14</sup> Tim Beaglehole's biography of his father, who was a major figure in New Zealand cultural and intellectual life as well as an outstanding historian, fits neither category. But it does invite reflection on the role of a biography in matters of reputation.

This essay is not intended as a review article of *A Life of J.C. Beaglehole*, although I engage with the biography here and there. My purpose, rather, is to trace the trajectories of J.C. Beaglehole's reputation, using the biography as the empirical bedrock, but drawing on other sources as well as on my wider experience. The word "trajectories" is used quite deliberately to signify that reputations have multiple dualities—earlier and later, contemporary and posthumous, public and private, intellectual and activist—and to indicate that reputation is both unstable and often contested. Beaglehole was initially made to suffer for being regarded in conservative circles as a dangerous young radical, but a change of government brought patronage and preferment. This, in turn, leads to an examination of the extent to which individual reputation is a function of the wheel of fortune and of the degree to which the interplay of institutional and intellectual structures is predicated on personal preferences toward an individual. Finally, I look at Beaglehole's posthumous scholarly reputation and make observations on the role of biography in raising or lowering a reputation, as the case may be. There is a certain irony in discussing Beaglehole and reputation in the same breath, because his unusual combination of self-assurance and genuine modesty

rendered him remarkably indifferent to what others thought about him. He was not devoid of ambition—far from it—but he avoided the limelight, resisted celebrity status, and just got on with the job.

Lest readers are wondering, my direct relationship with my subject is slight. I spoke to Beaglehole twice in my early twenties, in 1969 and 1970; saw him in action at a seminar in 1971; and attended his memorial service later that year. But my perspective on Beaglehole runs deeper. He was known to me as a historian of stature who had suffered victimization, and his name cropped up often enough in conversations with my own mentor, J.W. Davidson (Professor of Pacific History at the Australian National University), during 1972. Davidson was a protégé of Beaglehole's in the mid to late 1930s, and he described him as “the most influential teacher I ever had.”<sup>15</sup> So there are issues of intellectual lineage, although, given the generation gap, I would not wish to exaggerate these resonances. There are further, and more important, dimensions to my perspective on Beaglehole. I am working on a biography of Davidson, and in that capacity, I have shared information and had discussions with Tim Beaglehole, who taught me Indian history in 1970. It certainly helps to have grown up (and returned to live) in Beaglehole's home town and to have youthful impressions of him, such as they are; to be able to talk freely with family and surviving friends; and, not least, to have been trained as a historian of the Pacific Islands during the “Davidson era.”

Born and brought up in Wellington, Beaglehole came from an improving lower middle-class family where books abounded, where classical music was part of the household atmosphere, and where he learned the piano and the organ to a high standard of accomplishment. In the background was the Unitarian Church, with the sturdy self-betterment ideology of that sect. Although Beaglehole would develop a markedly secular outlook,<sup>16</sup> he never deviated from the Unitarian work ethic and sense of obligation. These influences were the building blocks of his future career and successes: Beaglehole could unaffectedly list “books, typography, music” as his recreations in successive editions of *Who's Who in New Zealand*. But

for all the bookishness in the home environment, there was nothing pre-destined in Beaglehole's eventual choice of vocation. He wanted to be a librarian or a bookseller, rather than to go to university as his father desired. But a deal was struck: he would work in a bookshop for a year, followed by a year at university, and he would then be free to make his own choice. Ultimately, he continued on at Victoria University College (hereafter VUC).<sup>17</sup> Historians are often inspired to their vocation by an exceptional undergraduate teacher, someone who, they may later come to realize, was not a very good scholar for all that.<sup>18</sup> There was no such person in Beaglehole's life; the professor of history at VUC was a non-researcher who delivered his lectures at dictation speed. Rather, Beaglehole's inspiration came from H.G. Wells's *Outline of History*, read in twenty-five instalments during 1920. His gradual self-improvement during his studies was rewarded with a postgraduate traveling scholarship to London in 1926. The next three years were a period of mixed emotions: his budget was spread thinly over books and the theatre, concerts, museums, restaurants and travel to the Continent; he was snubbed by A.F. Pollard at the Institute of Historical Studies, which he found devastating; he attended A.P. Newton's seminars on imperial history; he found intellectual sustenance with Harold Laski; his MA thesis was published; he discovered that he aspired, above all, to be "a writer," as distinct from someone who happened to write; he enjoyed intense and supportive relations with fellow postgraduate students;<sup>19</sup> and he turned down the offer of a job at Rhodes University in South Africa in the interests of completing his PhD thesis, only to be unsuccessful in subsequent endeavours to obtain a university posting. To add to the volatile mix, his PhD thesis on the Colonial Office's instructions to governors was rejected by Oxford University Press, by which time he was engaged to Elsie Holmes, whom he had met through the VUC Tramping Club. On the eve of his return to New Zealand he said, with typical flourish, "It is fatal for youths of my temperament and tastes to come to England and Europe at the age of 25, they should be set firmly to dig potatoes in the Wairarapa, with due & stringent safeguards against falling in love."<sup>20</sup>

At the end of his ordeal by thesis, with the good life of London tugging at his sensibilities, Beaglehole made a reluctant return to New Zealand in 1929, at the onset of the Great Depression: “I put it mildly when I say that my first sight of the Wellington streets, after my Bloomsbury Square, was dispiriting.”<sup>21</sup> Not that Beaglehole was unaware of, or indifferent to, the poverty and suffering in England,<sup>22</sup> but the lack of cultural attractions and academic opportunities in New Zealand were grimly evident. And it got worse. The depression deepened and children came along. Beaglehole was reduced to menial academic work, when he could get it—“commercial travelling in miscellaneous wisdom” was how he described it<sup>23</sup>—and he seemed to be trapped on the conveyer belt to the academic scrapheap. A temporary lectureship at Auckland University College was not renewed, ostensibly for reasons of economy, but, in reality, because of his outspokenness on civil liberties.<sup>24</sup> Just as disappointingly, he was denied appointment as professor of history at his *alma mater*, Victoria University College, in 1934, and this was almost certainly due to “direct ministerial pressure,” his radical views again being held against him.<sup>25</sup> And despite being the outstanding candidate, he was also passed over for the chair of history at Melbourne that same year because they wanted a generalist rather than a colonial historian.<sup>26</sup>

These were major reversals, but what seemed the most egregious of these at the time were blessings in disguise—immense strokes of good fortune, in fact. The successful applicants for the VUC and Melbourne chairs (F.L.W. Wood and R.M. Crawford, respectively) were weighed down by head-of-department duties—these being a lifelong sentence for a university professor in those days—to the detriment of their published output. Sadly, “Wood is remembered, if at all, as that dear and gentle old man who was running out of puff by the late 1950s, when he still had a decade to go as Professor, while...Beaglehole was seeing the just rewards for his decades of hidden work on Cook.”<sup>27</sup> There was a happy immediate outcome in that Wood appointed Beaglehole to the VUC history department in 1936, thus ensuring that he received a steady

income. That he and Wood became close colleagues was another good fortune, and also to the great benefit of others, and recalls the words of their departmental colleague and professorial successor, Peter Munz: “The fact that the inadvertence of the university administrators brought these two men together must be considered due to *fortuna*, which the ancient historians considered to play such an important part in human destinies. The goddess *fortuna* smiled and there began thirty years of a fruitful, beneficial and constructive partnership.”<sup>28</sup>

Beaglehole’s friend Eric McCormick almost sees, in Beaglehole’s career, the workings of a divine and benevolent providence: “How inevitably it all unfolds and with what felicity, so that even the setbacks seem to have contributed to the final triumphant conclusion.”<sup>29</sup> Beaglehole himself contributed to this notion, saying, on several occasions, that he had lived a very fortunate life. Indeed, one of the enduring attractions of biography (and autobiography) is that they are often reassuringly couched as morality tales whereby prominent and successful lives are presented as eventual triumph over adversity. That is an accurate enough depiction of Beaglehole’s onward march. But it was not nearly so certain or foregone that Beaglehole would eventually get a research fellowship (with a professorial salary) and thus be given unimpeded time to work on Cook’s and Banks’s journals. That happened in 1948, a full thirteen years after missing out on the chair at VUC, and in the meanwhile, he was tied to university teaching.

A fortuitous chain of events began in 1938, when Beaglehole came within the orbit of that great enabler, J.W. (Joe) Heenan, the permanent head of the Department of Internal Affairs, a bureaucratic impresario *par excellence*, and one of New Zealand’s most remarkable civil servants. First, Heenan arranged for Beaglehole’s attachment to the Alexander Turnbull Library, the idea being to provide a measure of relief from teaching so that Beaglehole could commence work on Cook. Heenan then convinced Beaglehole to take on the role of “typographical adviser and editor-at-large” in the government-sponsored centennial publication program, which included



the ill-fated Historical Atlas project.”<sup>30</sup> Beaglehole divided his time between the university and the centennial efforts and wrote the centennial survey on the discovery of New Zealand by Māori and, later, by Europeans. When the centennial celebrations concluded in 1940, Heenan had the Centennial Branch within the Department of Internal Affairs converted into the Historical Branch. Beaglehole was retained as “a somewhat unclassifiable ... part-time public servant,”<sup>31</sup> and a few years later, Heenan helped to secure for Beaglehole the research fellowship that paved the way for his work on Cook.

That in itself was an “agreeable miracle,”<sup>32</sup> a matter of fortuitous timing, and a benevolent contingency: Briefly, the Hakluyt Society in London, which published annotated editions of records of voyages and travels, had long planned a definitive edition of the journals relating to Cook’s three voyages. In October 1947, Beaglehole was under the misapprehension that others had been chosen as editors. He put up his hand very firmly and received strong support from J.A. Williamson, the English colleague who had suggested two decades earlier that Beaglehole write his *Exploration of the Pacific*. As it happened, the Society had not decided upon editors, and Beaglehole was invited to edit volume one of Cook’s journals. But Beaglehole first had to shed some of his existing commitments. Sir Thomas Hunter, the far-sighted principal of VUC, then proposed the creation of a research chair for Beaglehole.<sup>33</sup> But the new position required a government grant and, therefore, government approval. Hunter’s initiative was endorsed by Heenan, who was big enough to set aside a serious disagreement he had had with Beaglehole the year before over the newly-formed national symphony orchestra. But to complicate matters, the Australian government was party to proceedings, having been asked to sponsor Beaglehole’s editing of Banks’s journals.<sup>34</sup> In May 1948, the stakes were raised when Beaglehole was invited by the Hakluyt Society to edit volume three in addition to volume one (with Williamson to edit volume two), but the research chair upon which this depended had still not been approved. To further add to the uncertainty, a professorship at London was advertised, and Fred Wood was contemplating applying for the vacant

chair of history at Sydney; if Wood went to Sydney, Beaglehole was the obvious choice for the chair he should have been awarded thirteen years earlier. He was in a quandary: he was not keen on either chair, but neither had the research fellowship come through. The tension broke when the research position was approved in late July, commencing October—and Hunter, meanwhile, pre-empted possible difficulties with the University Senate by implying that the position would not be a permanent appointment, but a rotating, university-wide senior research fellowship, for which Beaglehole was the first incumbent.<sup>35</sup>

The opportunity to edit Cook's and Banks's journals—the labour upon which Beaglehole's reputation largely rests—can be seen as the workings of a benevolent *fortuna*. Yet this could have unravelled at any point along the way. To repeat, Beaglehole often remarked on his good fortune in life, but this was only *after* he had been given unimpeded time to work on Cook. Beaglehole made a lot of his own luck by dint of energized industry, not to mention the efforts of his wife, Elsie, who organized the household around his writing.<sup>36</sup> All this would have been to no avail but for the timely interventions of Heenan and Hunter. Then again, Beaglehole deserved his luck, considering how much he had given to the Department of Internal Affairs: as Heenan remarked, “At no time has he ever been paid by us in a manner commensurate with the worth of his work to the Government and to the country.”<sup>37</sup> The commitment of the Labour government (and especially the prime minister, Peter Fraser) to the arts, generally, also had a bearing.<sup>38</sup> A paradox of New Zealand life is that more conservative National Party governments, whose supporters are more likely to be consumers of “high” culture, were, in their earlier days, indifferent, even hostile, to cultural endeavours. In that regard, Beaglehole's research fellowship was timely, because the National government that came to power in 1949 would never have sanctioned it. Indeed, the incoming government peremptorily closed down the Centennial Atlas project, partly as an economy measure, and partly because it was unsympathetic toward state patronage of historical work. The latter antipathy was exac-

erbated by the recognition that the historians in the public service were so obviously Labour Party supporters.<sup>39</sup> In early 1952, Beaglehole's position as a part-time civil servant was terminated, and this, coming so soon after his opposition to the Police Offences Amendment Bill, introduced after industrial upheavals on the waterfront in 1951, strongly suggests cause and effect. It is, therefore, well to remember, in the context of Beaglehole's later successes, how difficult and debilitating it sometimes was along the way, and how fortunate it was that circumstance and a few key people conspired to give Beaglehole the necessary breaks. The conclusion was gratifying but the beginnings so uncertain.

Given the social mores of the 1940s, it could have indeed worked very differently had the one "scandal" of Beaglehole's life become public knowledge. At the Centennial Branch, there was a nursery of female talent known as "Beaglehole's kindergarten," among whom was Janet Wilkinson (later Janet Paul).<sup>40</sup> A former student of Beaglehole's, she shared his interest in book design and painting. They eventually had an affair, which lasted until her marriage to the publisher Blackwood Paul. The extent to which the affair was kept under wraps is indicated by the fact that Tim Beaglehole (who was about eleven years old at the time) had no idea of it until commencing work on the biography. Knowledge of the affair was confined to a few loyal friends who were not about to publicize it.

Writing about Beaglehole, at least from 1936, presents the same problems that confronted John Maynard Keynes's biographer: the subject's curiosities and competencies were so varied, ranging over academic life, literature in its widest sense, the arts, and practical affairs, and he left a mark on everything he touched.<sup>41</sup> The point is, Beaglehole did not lead one life, but many, and one of those lives was that of a public intellectual. This aspect of his reputation has receded, and his son's biography is a timely reminder of the extent to which Beaglehole was a significant national figure. In part, this was bound up with the process of his increasing identification as a New Zealander after the cultural delights of London. This process was

neither smooth nor easy: “for a while politics and social life in our country were not exactly encouraging for the free human spirit.... To be candid, I was not interested in New Zealand [when I returned from London in 1929]—except in so far as I had to be.”<sup>42</sup> By the mid-1940s, he was embracing his “New Zealandness” once again,<sup>43</sup> more or less, when he turned down the offer of a position at the Australian School of Pacific Administration in Sydney, with a chair to follow at the nascent Australian National University. But that did not imply a coming to terms with “the scrubby vulgarity, the third-ratedness and complacency” that he discerned in New Zealand life.<sup>44</sup> He commonly used the term “civilized,” and by that he meant a high culture of paintings, classical music, and literature. As well as bemoaning his philistine environment, Beaglehole added his mite to improving the situation as a foundation member of the Wellington Chamber Music Society, an enthusiastic advocate for the National Orchestra from its formation in 1946-47 (although not of its initial conductor), an advocate for the proper preservation of archives, and, generally, a great encourager. Books and music “were at the very heart of civilized life” for Beaglehole,<sup>45</sup> and, for that reason, he never connected with much of mainstream New Zealand. Although *for* the people, he was not *of* the people. Nonetheless, he was secure within his own values and preferences and was not about to concede that “his” New Zealand was any less valid by virtue of its distinctly small constituency.

Despite his “high” cultural tastes, Beaglehole’s increasing identification with the country of his birth was partly the result of assuming the mantle of an activist academic. His former student J.W. Davidson (who became Professor of Pacific History at the Australian National University) claimed—and Tim Beaglehole concurs<sup>46</sup>—that Beaglehole’s reunion with New Zealand was, in no small measure, possible because of his ability to combine an involvement with the wider world with an intimate identification with a small society.”<sup>47</sup> His civic engagement was more than just that of a concerned citizen; it involved an altruistic sense of public obligation to do what he could to make New Zealand more civilized and less intolerant, con-

formist, and narrow-minded.<sup>48</sup> He was, recalled a student, “sharply critical of New Zealand society and forced his students to think about its values,” while, at the same time, insisting on the imperative to do one’s bit to enhance national life.<sup>49</sup> He embraced the causes dearest to his heart and gave of his time unstintingly, notably to the Historic Places Trust and the Council for Civil Liberties. For his pains, Beaglehole remained out of favour in conservative circles. His questioning attitude and readiness to speak his mind forthrightly were not appreciated. The publisher Hugh Price recalls that during his own visits to small towns from the late 1950s to the mid-1960s, Beaglehole was roundly condemned whenever his name came up. Price wonders whether the detractors were familiar with the issues and suspects a generalized anti-intellectualism, with Beaglehole as the target purely because of his unusual and easily remembered name.<sup>50</sup>

For twenty or so years, Beaglehole’s scholarly reputation largely rested on his stature as a major historian of New Zealand. Between 1927 and 1949, he published five volumes on New Zealand history and edited several others,<sup>51</sup> and in the late 1950s, he resisted offers from four publishers to write another short history of New Zealand.<sup>52</sup> These refusals, in turn, contributed to the reputations of two younger historians, when the jilted publishers turned to Keith Sinclair and Bill Oliver.<sup>53</sup> Oliver later expressed the regret that Beaglehole expanded his focus beyond New Zealand history and thus failed to become “the first major historian of New Zealand.” This, he discovered “to be an unacceptable opinion among those who prefer a splendidly executed piece of eighteenth century English history to what could have been the foundation work in modern New Zealand history.”<sup>54</sup> Some historians put a different spin on it, remarking that Beaglehole’s work on Cook reflected that Beaglehole, despite having repatriated himself in person, remained an expatriate in an emotional sense; writing about Cook helped resolve this tension because Beaglehole could mentally detach himself from “provincial” New Zealand culture and enter “the values and traditions of eighteenth-century England.”<sup>55</sup> More likely, the decision to work on Cook was a

straightforward professional preference: it did not mean he saw no merit in the study of New Zealand history. His historical interests, after all, ultimately came to centre on the eighteenth century, although they were wider-ranging and embraced “the development of responsible government, seventeenth-century Puritanism, and American history.”<sup>56</sup> True, he did not think that New Zealand history should be taught at the undergraduate level in the 1940s, but this was because he believed that the extant literature was insufficient to sustain such teaching.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, when Max Crawford got the Melbourne chair that Beaglehole did not, he cut back on his predecessor’s Australian history curriculum for similar reasons.<sup>58</sup> Beaglehole, in fact, never ceased to be a historian of New Zealand in that he continued to write the occasional article and to supervise and examine postgraduate theses on the subject. What he cannot be accused of doing is embracing, much less anticipating, the introverted “nationalist” stance, so prevalent in New Zealand historiography, that led one observer, in 1984, to declare that “a good deal of recent writing about New Zealand ignores the wider horizon.”<sup>59</sup> How little has changed. Beaglehole, by contrast, was dubious of the parish-pump approach to the study of New Zealand, and sought instead to place the subject matter within wider contexts.

He was also a stern enforcer of scholarly standards. His enlistment by Heenan came at the very time when the so-called amateur historians of New Zealand history were being displaced by trained graduates, and when historical writing was becoming “professionalized.”<sup>60</sup> The saga was played out in the Centennial surveys, with Beaglehole and his associates pressing for authors capable of writing books to academic standards. It complicated matters that Heenan sought to enlist some of the “amateurs,” and that the celebratory Centennial surveys were intended for a “popular” audience.<sup>61</sup> Beaglehole’s feelings—and the sheer force of his biting irony—were evident when he spoke of another government-sponsored publication, Guy Scholefield’s two volume *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* (1940):

Our Dr Scholefield is not the man to soil a tomb with ambiguous flowers; he lays the pure lily; no weed of criticism enters into his wreath; our Great it seems were all Good; or if not good then Misunderstood.... But this is all very small beer, and who the hell is interested in Scholefield anyway? He is only one of the curses that have afflicted me since April, when we started printing his damned book.<sup>62</sup>

And Beaglehole remained at the intersection of the amateur/professional controversy. It was most clearly manifested in his relationship, if it can be called that, with the publishing house of A.W. & A.H. Reed. The Reeds took an almost militant pride in their lack of formal education and felt unfairly treated by the Literary Fund. But they had a good eye for openings in the market, they published many financially successful books, and the firm survived twelve years longer than Beaglehole lived. As a commercial publishing house, they cut their cloth accordingly, publishing many slender history books, often authored by one or other of the Reeds. They recognized, somewhat bitterly, that there was little common ground between them and the “intellectuals.” There were, in their perception, two “reading circles” in New Zealand: their own readers, and the high-brow “Caxton circle.” Beaglehole was indubitably in the latter, and A.W. Reed felt some animosity toward Beaglehole, who appeared not even to notice.<sup>63</sup>

During the 1950s, Beaglehole was gaining international scholarly recognition for his work on Cook, and in 1962, he turned down the offer of the Beit Chair of the History of the British Commonwealth at Oxford; now in his early sixties, the move would have been a wrench, and there was the underlying uneasiness that the duties involved in the Beit Chair would prevent the completion of his biography of Cook.<sup>64</sup> His reputation as the world authority on Cook soared during the rest of the decade, and this was accompanied by opportunities and acknowledgement: the elevation to a chair at VUW; honorary doctorates from Oxford, VUW, Otago, and Sydney; awards such as the Linnaeus Medal of the Royal Swedish Academy of the Sciences and the ANZAAS Meuller Medal; and invitations in

New Zealand and overseas to deliver distinguished lectures on Cook. The flow of formal recognition had an escalating effect, as Beaglehole himself recognized: “I think these honours spawn one another. And all these letters after one’s name, it’s very embarrassing.” He thought it better to have “just one big honour that swallowed up all the others ... like J.C. Beaglehole, O.M...”<sup>65</sup>—which is exactly what happened.

Beaglehole retired from VUW in July 1967 and commenced the Cook biography. But retirement brought no respite, and he was now working in the shadow of a heart condition, diagnosed in 1965. The biography got off to a slow start, and he was greatly dissatisfied with drafts of the earlier chapters. Moreover, the various Cook bicentenary celebrations fuelled invitations to present lectures and write papers on Cook that taxed his energies and often involved lengthy absences from Wellington. And all this while, he was maintaining his work for the Historic Places Trust, the Council for Civil Liberties, and the Old St Paul’s Advisory Committee, not to mention more frequent appointments to his heart specialist.

The routine of daily life was indeed strenuous, and the price of eminence correspondingly high. Beaglehole effectively completed a seven hundred-page biography of Cook in four years and three months, but the various distractions put him under enormous pressure. Unlike Arnold J. Toynbee, who engaged in highly-paid lecture circuits, Beaglehole was not “addicted to the limelight,”<sup>66</sup> and neither did he lap up the adulation that accompanies international fame. To the contrary, this rather disturbed him. Beaglehole did his best not to show the strain, but its extent was indirectly revealed in his response to yet another invitation to lecture on Cook. He entitled his lecture “Not About Captain Cook” and spoke about other things: “I am sorry...,” he explained, “but I couldn’t—I really *couldn’t*—compose another lecture about Captain Cook. It has been too wearing.”<sup>67</sup> The various Cook bicentenary events created opportunities and raised Beaglehole’s international profile. It is an interesting speculation whether an Order of Merit would have come his way without the accident of bicentennials and the follow-on exposure. Another



speculation is whether Beaglehole would have received a knighthood had he left New Zealand to accept the Oxford chair. It does seem certain that the distractions and exertions of writing Cook's biography and coping with a heart condition took a few years off Beaglehole's life. Very likely, he worked under the lurking fear that he might not live to see the completion of his great retirement project, uncomfortably aware that his two younger brothers had died suddenly of heart attacks within six months of each other.

Beaglehole's reputation as a great scholar rests on his work on Cook and Banks. He is, however, primarily associated with Cook: For the first time, we had in print, with extensive annotations, what Cook actually wrote on all three of his voyages, and the journals were prefaced by introductions that were almost books in their own right. It was an enormous undertaking, and the association between navigator and historian was underlined with the posthumous appearance, in 1974, of Beaglehole's *Life of Captain James Cook*. The fact is, however, that the biography of Cook was the culmination of Beaglehole's scholarship, but not of Cook scholarship. Revisionism set in by the end of the decade, the initial impetus being the "Captain James Cook and His Times" conference at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, Canada, in 1978. The general tenor of the conference was recognition of Beaglehole's work as the massive achievement to which subsequent work was beholden. But there was underlying disquiet that the emphasis on Cook, and therefore Britain, had cast the discovery achievements of other European nations into the shade. Three of the participants, moreover, had written, or were working on, biographies of Cook's contemporaries, and claimed that Beaglehole was insufficiently appreciative of their subjects. Both objections were brought together in a robust paper by Michael Hoare, the biographer of Johann Forster, the irascible naturalist on Cook's second voyage. Hoare posited that Beaglehole had over-rated Cook and had thus skewed the overall picture of European exploration in the Pacific.<sup>68</sup> Beaglehole also, according to Hoare, showed unnecessary animus toward "unamiable men" such as J.R. Forster, Joseph Banks, and Alexander Dalrymple, and the view that

Beaglehole had an “almost pathological contempt for Johann Forster” persists.<sup>69</sup> It is likely, though, that Beaglehole’s reservations about Forster were based on the latter’s “moral—in a general sense—character... not his brains.”<sup>70</sup> There is no question that Forster was unsuited to seaborne life and that his extreme disagreeability severely strained relationships, with crew as well as with the captain.

The real criticism in the universe of post-Beaglehole Cook studies has been directed at Cook, rather than Beaglehole, although criticism of one often implies criticism of the other. Some of the current assessment is summed up by Nicholas Thomas’s observation that “despite its very considerable enduring value, [Beaglehole’s biography of Cook] is opinionated, and belongs to the tradition of Cook idealization.”<sup>71</sup> Postcolonial discourse theorists have been severe, seeing Cook’s voyages as part of the imperialist project that ravaged and dispossessed indigenous peoples. Beaglehole does indeed cite Cook’s attempts at amelioration:

The eighteenth century lower-deck seaman was no great respecter of the blood of other people, had no great plans in view, was not gifted with foresight, got into a scuffle with remarkable facility, had no sense of responsibility of the deadly disease he carried with him, no sense—one sometimes thinks—whatsoever. It is one of Cook’s great achievements, therefore, though a not much publicised achievement, to have kept these men so much out of trouble.<sup>72</sup>

Such statements, not to mention Cook’s general reluctance (until his last voyage) to take punitive action against indigenous peoples, fail to impress the postcolonial theorists. Cook is presented as a symbol of all that was wrong: the explorers’ voyages, Cook’s included, resulted in “virtual genocides.”<sup>73</sup> The Pacific historian Kerry Howe has criticized the “deductive moralizing” of “postcolonial extremism”: “It can be a shallow game. Instead of reading Cook’s entire journal ... you only have to read and deconstruct a single paragraph and find in it every possible sin such as racism, sexism, culturalism. Cook becomes the personification of all modernist evil.”<sup>74</sup>

Indeed, “Cook’s posthumous reputation has been put to use to serve a variety of ends he would never have imagined,”<sup>75</sup> some of which would have appalled Beaglehole. There have been rabid statements by native Hawaiians that their forebears can defend their “honor” and “glory” because *they* did the job of killing Cook, even though New Zealand Māori had their chance.<sup>76</sup> The additional charge from these quarters that Cook was “a syphilitic racist” is nowhere supported by the medical evidence.<sup>77</sup> Bernard Smith did warn that “native historians of the indigenous peoples of the Pacific [will find it difficult] as they come increasingly to write their histories to draw the fine line between Cook the individual and the culture their ancestors inherited in the wake of his vessels. Cook is not their culture hero...”<sup>78</sup> All the same, the language of hatred, with its ringing endorsements of violence and the exaggerated denigration of others’ cultural heroes, is uncondusive to dialogue and has no place in scholarly outlets.

On a quite different plane, is the unsubstantiated assertion by Nicholas Thomas that the “authoritative annotations” for the first two volumes of Cook’s *Journals* are “largely the work of A.M. Lysaght.”<sup>79</sup> On the contrary, Averil Lysaght was one of many colleagues who assisted Beaglehole in their areas of expertise. Lysaght furnished most of the zoological data in the notes, as distinct from the bulk of the notes, for Cook’s *Journals*, as well as for the *Endeavour Journal of Joseph Banks*. She, in turn, availed herself of the knowledge of colleagues in the British Museum when she thought this necessary.<sup>80</sup> She sent these notes to Beaglehole through the mail,<sup>81</sup> and, on one occasion, upset Beaglehole by correcting and altering proofs beyond those that concerned natural history.<sup>82</sup> She was a willing, if somewhat difficult, collaborator, and her assistance, and that of others, is acknowledged.<sup>83</sup>

The strong climate of revisionism around exploration has caused Beaglehole’s reputation to suffer in consequence. Revisionism is an ongoing fact of the historical enterprise, and there have been, and will be, modifications to Beaglehole’s life of Cook—notably, those spurred by the greater awareness now of cross-cultural

dimensions and the more critical scrutiny of Cook's relationship with his crew. Yet none of these seriously diminish Beaglehole's achievement.<sup>84</sup> It is also the case that subsequent depictions of Cook have themselves been severely critiqued. The "Lono debate" between Marshall Sahlins and Gananath Obeyesekere, over whether or not the Hawaiians regarded Cook as a god, turned ugly;<sup>85</sup> and two recent books on Cook's voyages, by Anne Salmond and Nicholas Thomas, have received sharply contrasting verdicts.<sup>86</sup> It seems safe to say that Beaglehole's work on Cook will endure. There is some disagreement on the character of Cook and on whether or not he was idealized by Beaglehole, who himself never pretended to have penetrated the inner core of his subject and who disavowed having final answers.<sup>87</sup> It is more the case that Beaglehole's work remains absolutely foundational. Beaglehole's reputation has suffered, in some quarters, from changes in fashion and approaches to history—passing moods that will be superseded by subsequent changes, which themselves will fall from favour. To put it another way, Beaglehole's work was described, at the time of his death, as being "more enduring than brass,"<sup>88</sup> and the metaphorical brass has undergone slight surface corrosion. The invaluable part of his work was the laying of such sturdy foundations: those seven volumes on Cook and Banks. The editing of Banks's *Endeavour Journals*, we now know, was something of a nightmare. The editing of Cook's journals, moreover, required close cooperation between Beaglehole in Wellington and the Hakluyt Society in London, especially its honorary secretary, R.A. Skelton. Part of the achievement is the accomplishment of such a mammoth project before the advent of word processors and e-mail attachments.

One can see why Beaglehole had such a commanding reputation at the time of his death—he had accomplished so much, had given so much of himself to public causes, had been showered with honours. But even then, credit was being withheld in some quarters. The year before his death, several of his students felt that he was receiving inadequate recognition in his own country, and a hastily-arranged dinner in his honour was attended by friends and colleagues

throughout the country. He gave an out-of-character reply to the toast: “his customary self-deprecating wit was missing; rather, he spoke movingly of just how fortunate a life he had had.”<sup>89</sup> This was neither the first nor the last time Beaglehole remarked on being graced by *fortuna*. On one occasion, he commented that he had been “lucky to be given a research job and a relatively high salary in the exercise of [his] hobby.”<sup>90</sup> The same understatement was evident when Beaglehole shrugged off the debilitating earlier career reversals—for example, making light of Oxford University Press’s rejection of his PhD dissertation by mock-dismissing his work as “a forbiddingly erudite and unpublishable thesis,”<sup>91</sup> though it was keenly felt at the time.<sup>92</sup> In the same almost whimsical vein, he spoke about the “strokes of quite undeserved good fortune” that had befallen him.<sup>93</sup>

This raises the age-old question: do humans make their own destiny or is it shaped for them? Fellow New Zealander Alan MacDiarmid (who was awarded the 2000 Nobel Prize in Chemistry) is quoted as saying: “I am a very lucky person and the harder I work the luckier I seem to be,” implying a correlation between industriousness and recognition.<sup>94</sup> That is too simple, in the sense that reputations are never made on the basis of one’s unaided efforts. Would Delius have been other than a minor English composer but for being promoted by Beecham? And where would Darwin be without the shameless backing of Huxley? In Beaglehole’s case, the patronage of Joseph Heenan, Thomas Hunter, and Peter Fraser in the matter of the research fellowship was *the* critical juncture in his life, yet this backing was only forthcoming because they thought he deserved it. It was fortunate that Heenan and the prime minister believed in state patronage of the arts generally; and equally fortunate that the research chair, from which so much else flowed, came when it did—because the National Party, which attained office the following year, would never have sanctioned it. It was also extreme good fortune (and pure coincidence) that J.A. Williamson’s family circumstances compelled him to abandon the editorship of volume two of Cook’s *Journals*,<sup>95</sup> thus giving Beaglehole the accolade of having edited the

entire corpus. The exercise of patronage is also evident in the offer of the chair at Oxford and the conferral of the Oxford honorary doctorate. The instigator was E.T. (Bill) Williams, the influential Warden of Rhodes House, Oxford, whom Beaglehole had mentored in the 1930s.<sup>96</sup> But Williams, too, only acted because he thought Beaglehole merited these things. The vagaries of recognition are also evident in the National government withholding from Beaglehole an imperial honour, whereas the Labour Party, when returned to power for a single term in the late 1950s, awarded him a CMG. Beaglehole achieved enough to deserve the awards he received but his political opponents were conspicuous in withholding honour and recognition.

The extent to which ability and recognition can take divergent routes is graphically illustrated by Stefan Collini's dissection of the English historian A.J.P. Taylor (1906-1990). The "striving for effect," embracing the role of "a lifelong *enfant terrible*," the "increasingly promiscuous media exposure," the "compulsive attention-seek[ing]," the "characteristic perversity," the "shameless fluency in expressing his wilfully mischievous views," the "thirsting for the extra little splash of attention," together with a "relatively unorthodox private life," had the counterproductive effect of garnering powerful detractors, whose justifiable disapproval blended with a perverse disinclination to acknowledge Taylor's substantial abilities. Taylor was his own worst enemy in constantly displaying an "intellectual nihilism" that undercut his authority as an academic historian and a public figure.<sup>97</sup> Beaglehole was too modest and serious to be directly compared with Taylor, but a comparison reveals, nonetheless, a significant truth: that the institutional and intellectual structures that go into the making, reshaping, and even the unmaking of reputations can be highly personalized. Beaglehole was generally disparaged in conservative circles, despite the obvious merit of his body of scholarship.

Reputation, then, especially after death, is always in the hands of others. Beaglehole was a scholar of international standing, but when revisionism is in the air, the former greats are at risk of being denigrated as yesterday's men. It is sobering to reflect that almost all

historians have short shelf lives. We remember Tolstoy and Dickens but often struggle to recall their contemporary historians. Perhaps the highest compliment a historian can expect is to be remembered as one of the finest of his/her generation. As the generation passes, so too the legacy and the memory of the work recedes—a point explicitly recognized by one of Beaglehole's former students, who said that his own work would eventually be “denude[d]...of relevance, except as an incident in historiography.”<sup>98</sup> And the exponential increase in historical scholarship only serves to hasten the onset of obsolescence. Historians survive, if they are lucky, as footnotes in other people's texts, although there are exceptional cases: R.G. Collingwood (1889-1943) remains firmly in sight on the basis of a single posthumously-published work, *The Idea of History* (1946). Sometimes—but rarely—an exceptional body of work has endured with seemingly unanimous endorsement: the sheer quality of the *oeuvre* of the English medievalist F.W. Maitland (1850-1906) has attracted numerous analyses and biographical studies, all favourable, which, in turn, have maintained his reputation.<sup>99</sup>

This raises the role of biography in the ebb and flow of individual reputation. Biographies of historians, however varied in other respects, are affirmations of reputation. Historians may traduce each other's work, and it follows that there can be highly judgmental opinions as to whether a given historian “deserves” a biography. That said, I am not aware of a single instance of a debunking biography of a historian by another historian. Even when the subject has unappealing qualities, there is ready acknowledgement of professional accomplishment.<sup>100</sup> Quite simply, it seems, no historian would wish to spend years researching and writing about another historian who was insignificant or unimportant. In the same way, I would never have undertaken this essay but for a conviction that Beaglehole was worth the effort. To put it another way, biographies of historians do not fall into the category of “underdog history.” Some historians' biographers attempt to rehabilitate a reputation that has undeservingly, in the biographer's view, fallen by the wayside. In this way, John Clive has stoked the embers of Gibbon's and Macaulay's

reputations, creating quite a blaze.<sup>101</sup> The medieval historian Eileen Power's biographer speculates that Power is undeservingly forgotten because she died during the Second World War at a relatively young age: had she lived on, the chances were that she would have consolidated her reputation.<sup>102</sup> By contrast, the posthumous reputation of her contemporary, French historian Marc Bloch, had much to do with the fact that he was killed during the war by the Gestapo. Not only was his historical work of the first order, but he died a hero-martyr in the cause of the Resistance, and thereafter his posthumous reputation was carefully cultivated, lovingly manicured, and institutionally tied up with the fortunes of the *Annales* school.<sup>103</sup> David Cannadine felt obliged to mount an explicit rescue operation on behalf of G.M. Trevelyan, and William H. McNeill "dare[d] to hope" that his biography of Arnold J. Toynbee would help his subject's reputation emerge "from the eclipse into which it has fallen."<sup>104</sup> Beaglehole's reputation is more secure, but there is still the need to increase general awareness of his contribution, and Tim Beaglehole's biography will raise his father's profile—although to what extent is uncertain. There is the challenge posed by differences in education levels and interests among the reading public, not to mention the globally small market for books on New Zealand and Pacific Island history, except for those able to lock into wider networks of enquiry on the international scholarly scene. At the very least, *A Life of J.C. Beaglehole* will enhance Beaglehole's reputation and prompt a revival in the standing of this extraordinarily gifted man. Above all, the two substantial chapters on "The Scholar at Work"<sup>105</sup>—a topic rarely included in biographies of historians—will abundantly demonstrate the resolution and endeavour that underpin John Beaglehole's reputation as a great historian.

Resolution and endeavour were necessary but not sufficient conditions, and it might have turned out so differently but for accidents of timing and personality. Counterfactual scenarios are, to be sure, inherently inconclusive, because events that never happened cannot be tested against the evidence. Nonetheless, it can be argued that for all his dedication and ability, Beaglehole achieved what he



did because doors were opened for him. The decisive event was the award of the research fellowship in 1947 that enabled the work upon which his reputation rests. Had he continued as a teaching academic, Beaglehole would still have published significant works—the habit of research was too ingrained for him to have done otherwise—but he simply would not have had the time at his disposal to accomplish what he did. Without question, he made the most of his opportunities. Ultimately, however, the extent of his achievements was possible because the goddess Fortuna, having initially withheld her favours, decided to smile upon John Cawte Beaglehole.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Michael Bassett, John Dunmore, Brij V. Lal, Jane Samson and Glyndwr Williams for their comments on a draft of this essay, and to Rachel Barrowman, Mary Boyd, Marian Minson, Melanie Nolan, Frances Porter and Graeme Whimp for specific information. Tim Beaglehole's readiness to discuss his father with me is greatly appreciated. The two anonymous referees were most helpful in clarifying issues. This essay began life as seminar presentations at Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand) and at Flinders University (South Australia).
- <sup>2</sup> J.C. Beaglehole, *The Exploration of the Pacific* (London: A. & C. Black, 1934; 2nd ed. 1947; 3rd ed. 1965); J.C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on his Voyages of Discovery*, 3 vols. in four books (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press/Hakluyt Society, 1955, 1961, 1967); J.C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Endeavour Journal of Joseph Banks, 1768-1771*, 2 vols. (Sydney: Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales/Angus & Robertson, 1962); J.C. Beaglehole, *The Life of Captain James Cook* (London: A. & C. Black, 1974). See O.H.K. Spate, "Finis Coronat Opus: Beaglehole's Life of Cook," *Journal of Pacific History*, 11:3-4 (1976), 247-52.
- <sup>3</sup> Gavan Daws was Professor of Pacific History at the Australian National University, 1974-1989. A similar statement is Robin W. Winks, "Problem Child of British History: The British Empire-Commonwealth," in *Recent Views on British History: Essays on Historical Writing since 1966*, ed. Richard Schlatter (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1984), 486-87.
- <sup>4</sup> Stefan Collini, "Moralist at Work: E.P. Thompson Reappraised," *Times Literary Supplement*, 18 February 2005, 13.
- <sup>5</sup> Jane Samson, "Fatal Choices: Morrell and Scarr's Imperial Histories," in *Texts and Contexts: Reflections in Pacific Islands Historiography*, ed. Doug Munro and Brij V. Lal (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 25.
- <sup>6</sup> Peter Munz, ed., *The Feel of Truth: Essays in New Zealand and Pacific History presented to F.L.W. Wood and J.C. Beaglehole on the Occasion of their Retirement* (Wellington: A.W. & A.H. Reed, 1969).
- <sup>7</sup> *Evening Post* (Wellington), 6 November 1971.
- <sup>8</sup> *John Cawte Beaglehole: A Bibliography* (Wellington: Alexander Turnbull Library, 1972); Frances Porter, *A Sense of History: A Commemorative Publication for J.C. Beaglehole, O.M., About James Cook's Landing Sites in New Zealand* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1978).
- <sup>9</sup> Eugene Grayland, "Professor J.C. Beaglehole: He Restored Cook's Journals," in *More Famous New Zealanders* (Christchurch: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1972), 85-89; W.H. Oliver, "J.C. Beaglehole & F.L.W. Wood, 1901-1971 & 1903-1989," in *Eminent Victorians: Great Teachers and Scholars from Victoria's First 100*

- Years*, ed. Vincent O’Sullivan (Wellington: Stout Research Centre, Victoria University of Wellington, 1999), 167-80.
- <sup>10</sup> The publication to emerge was Joseph Romanos, *New Zealand’s Top 100 History-Makers* (Wellington: Trio Books, 2005). Neither is Beaglehole among the “heroes” of an organization called The New Zealand Edge, which fosters “thinking about our identity, people, stories, achievements and role in the world,” <http://www.nzedge.com/heroes>. Keith Jackson and Alan McRobie, eds., *Historical Dictionary of New Zealand* (Latham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005), contains no entry on Beaglehole.
- <sup>11</sup> Tim Beaglehole, *A Life of J.C. Beaglehole: New Zealand Scholar* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2006).
- <sup>12</sup> Philip Williamson, “Baldwin’s Reputation: Politics and History, 1937-1967,” *Historical Journal*, 47:1 (2004), 127-168; David Dutton, *Neville Chamberlain* (London: Arnold, 2001).
- <sup>13</sup> E.g. Maxine Berg, *A Woman in History: Eileen Power, 1889-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 12-13; D.A. Low, ed., *Keith Hancock: The Legacy of an Historian* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001); Donald Wright, “Reflections on Donald Creighton and the Appeal of Biography,” *Journal of Historical Biography*, 1 (2007), 19.
- <sup>14</sup> E.g. Ray Allen Billington, *Frederick Jackson Turner: Historian, Scholar, Teacher* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 420-97.
- <sup>15</sup> J.W. Davidson, “The New Zealand Scholar: A Note on J.C. Beaglehole, 1901-1971,” *Journal of Pacific History*, 7 (1972), 153.
- <sup>16</sup> Tim Beaglehole, *A Life of J.C. Beaglehole*, 98.
- <sup>17</sup> Victoria University College was a constituent college of the University of New Zealand. The latter was abolished, and in 1962 its colleges became universities in their own right. In this way, Victoria University College became Victoria University of Wellington.
- <sup>18</sup> Jeremy Popkin, *History, Historians and Autobiography* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 139.
- <sup>19</sup> Christopher Saunders, *C.W. de Kiewiet: Historian of South Africa* (Cape Town: Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1986), 10.
- <sup>20</sup> Tim Beaglehole, *A Life of J.C. Beaglehole*, 145.
- <sup>21</sup> J.C. Beaglehole, “The New Zealand Scholar,” [Margaret Condliffe Memorial Lecture, 1954], in Munz, *The Feel of Truth*, 243.
- <sup>22</sup> Tim Beaglehole, *A Life of J.C. Beaglehole*, 96-98.
- <sup>23</sup> Tim Beaglehole, *A Life of J.C. Beaglehole*, 155.
- <sup>24</sup> Keith Sinclair, *A History of the University of Auckland, 1883-1983* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1983), 151-57.
- <sup>25</sup> Sinclair, *A History of the University of Auckland*, 159.

- <sup>26</sup> Robert Dare, "Max Crawford and the Study of History," in *The Discovery of Australian History, 1890-1930*, ed. Stuart Macintyre and Julian Thomas (Melbourne: University of Melbourne, 1995), 182-84.
- <sup>27</sup> Peter Hempenstall, "Overcoming Separate Histories: Historians as 'Ideas Traders' in a Trans-Tasman World," *History Australia*, 4:1 (2007), 04.3.
- <sup>28</sup> Peter Munz, "A Personal Memoir," in Munz, *The Feel of Truth*, 15.
- <sup>29</sup> E.H. McCormick, "J.C. Beaglehole, 1901-71: A Biographical Sketch," *Landfall*, 100 (1971), 421.
- <sup>30</sup> Rachel Barrowman, "History and Romance: The Making of the Centennial Historical Surveys," in *Creating a National Spirit: Celebrating New Zealand's Centennial*, ed. William Renwick (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2004), 164.
- <sup>31</sup> Tim Beaglehole, *A Life of J.C. Beaglehole*, 270.
- <sup>32</sup> Tim Beaglehole, *A Life of J.C. Beaglehole*, 259-62.
- <sup>33</sup> W.L. Renwick, "Sir Thomas Hunter, 1876-1953," in O'Sullivan, *Eminent Victorians*, 37.
- <sup>34</sup> It is actually more complicated, illustrating how messy everything was getting. At the bidding of the Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales, the New South Wales state government asked the Australian federal government to encourage the New Zealand government to help find a way to make it possible for Beaglehole to accept the Public Library's offer for him to work on the Banks Papers—which soon boiled down to editing Banks's *Endeavour* journal.
- <sup>35</sup> Rachel Barrowman, *Victoria University of Wellington, 1899-1999: A History* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1999), 69-70.
- <sup>36</sup> Tim Beaglehole, *A Life of J.C. Beaglehole*, 443, 470.
- <sup>37</sup> Tim Beaglehole, *A Life of J.C. Beaglehole*, 301.
- <sup>38</sup> Rachel Barrowman, "'Culture-Organising': Joe Heenan and the Beginnings of State Patronage of the Arts," *New Zealand Studies*, 6:2 (1996), 4; Michael Bassett, *The Mother of All Departments: The History of the Department of Internal Affairs* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1997), chapter 6.
- <sup>39</sup> Michael Bassett, "An Overview of the War History Branch," 1997, [http://michaelbassett.co.nz/article\\_war.htm](http://michaelbassett.co.nz/article_war.htm) .
- <sup>40</sup> Mary Boyd, "Women in the Historical Profession: Women Historians in the 1940s," *Women's Studies Journal*, 4:1 (1988), 76-87; Janet Paul, "Hints of Becoming," in *Beyond Expectations: Fourteen New Zealand Women Write about Their Lives*, ed. Margaret Clark (Wellington: Allen & Unwin/Port Nicholson Press, 1986), 14; Frances Porter, "Digging in the Compost Heap," *Turnbull Library Record*, 38 (2005), 46.
- <sup>41</sup> Robert Skidelsky, "Confessions of a Long-Distance Biographer," in *Lives for Sale: Biographer's Tales*, ed. Mark Bostridge (London: Continuum, 2004), 16.
- <sup>42</sup> J.C. Beaglehole, "The New Zealand Scholar," 243-44.

- <sup>43</sup> Tim Beaglehole, *A Life of J.C. Beaglehole*, 260.
- <sup>44</sup> J.C. Beaglehole, "The New Zealand Scholar," 243-44.
- <sup>45</sup> Tim Beaglehole, *A Life of J.C. Beaglehole*, 296.
- <sup>46</sup> Tim Beaglehole, *A Life of J.C. Beaglehole*, 478.
- <sup>47</sup> Davidson, "The New Zealand Scholar," 152.
- <sup>48</sup> The classic critique is Bill Pearson, "Fretful Sleepers," *Landfall*, 23 (1952), 201-30.
- <sup>49</sup> Paul, "Hints of Becoming," 14.
- <sup>50</sup> Information from Hugh Price, 22 February 2007.
- <sup>51</sup> A contemporary evaluation is provided by Keith Sinclair, "New Zealand," in *The Historiography of the British Empire-Commonwealth: Trends, Interpretations, and Resources*, ed. Robin W. Winks (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 174-96.
- <sup>52</sup> Tim Beaglehole, *A Life of J.C. Beaglehole*, 364n.
- <sup>53</sup> Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1959); W.H. Oliver, *The Story of New Zealand* (London: Faber & Faber, 1960).
- <sup>54</sup> W.H. Oliver, *Looking for the Phoenix: A Memoir* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2002), 78. Oliver ("J.C. Beaglehole & F.L.W. Wood," 173) also charged that Beaglehole did not take Māori sufficiently into account, adding, for good measure, that there were some "prejudiced comments." Anachronism apart, Oliver freezes Beaglehole's scholarship to a narrow time-span (1928-1936). Rather, Beaglehole's thinking on Māori, both contemporary and historical, developed beyond the earlier stereotypes as early as 1936, when he read Ivan Sutherland's *The Maori Situation* (pp. 213-14, 284, 293).
- <sup>55</sup> Jock Phillips, "Of Verandahs and Fish and Chips and Footie on Saturday Afternoon: Reflections on 100 Years of New Zealand Historiography," *New Zealand Journal of History*, 24:2 (1990), 125 (quotations); Barrowman, "History and Romance," 164.
- <sup>56</sup> Tim Beaglehole, *A Life of J.C. Beaglehole*, 260.
- <sup>57</sup> Tim Beaglehole, *A Life of J.C. Beaglehole*, 251-52.
- <sup>58</sup> Stuart Macintyre, *A History for a Nation: Ernest Scott and the Making of Australian History* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1994), 70; Fay Anderson, *An Historian's Life: Max Crawford and the Politics of Academic Freedom* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2005), 202-03.
- <sup>59</sup> Graeme Wynn, "Reflections on the Writing of New Zealand History," *New Zealand Journal of History*, 18:2 (1984), 108. Beaglehole's influence on New Zealand historiography is assessed by Dolores Janiewski, "Producing 'National' Knowledge in a Transnational Context: New Zealand and Intellectual Nation-Building", *The Politics of Academic Knowledge in a Global Era Conference*, Budapest, 18 July 2007.

- <sup>60</sup> Chris Hilliard, *The Bookmen's Dominion: Cultural Life in New Zealand, 1920-1950* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2006), 87-97.
- <sup>61</sup> E.H. McCormick, *An Absurd Ambition: Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Dennis McEldowney (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1996), 145-46; Rachel Barrowman, "Fraser, Heenan and Cultural Patronage," in *Peter Fraser: Master Politician*, ed. Margaret Clark (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1998), 114; Chris Hilliard, "A Prehistory of Public History," in *Going Public: The Changing Face of New Zealand History*, ed. Bronwyn Dalley and Jock Phillips (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2001), 33-38.
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- <sup>71</sup> Nicholas Thomas, *Discoveries: The Voyages of Captain Cook* (London: Allen Lane, 2003), xxxvi. Other assessments include Glyndwr Williams, "'As befits our age, there are no more heroes': Reassessing Captain Cook," in *Captain Cook: Explorations and Reassessments*, ed. Glyndwr Williams (Rochester: Boydell Press, 2004), 230-45; David Mackay, "Exploring the Pacific, Exploring James Cook," *Pacific Empires: Essays in Honour of Glyndwr Williams* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1999), 251-269.
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- <sup>76</sup> Lilikalā Kame'eiehiwa, Review (of *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook*, by Gananath Obeyesekere), *Pacific Studies*, 17:2 (1994), 111.
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- <sup>79</sup> Thomas, *Discoveries*, 428.
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- <sup>82</sup> Tim Beaglehole, *A Life of J.C. Beaglehole*, 374.
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- <sup>84</sup> See Macintyre, *A History for a Nation*, 200: "in depth of scholarship, felicity of expression and profundity of judgement, [Beaglehole] surpasses all antipodean historians except [W.K.] Hancock, and his life of Cook will outlive even Hancock's great biography of Smuts." The author of the most recent book on Cook's voyages generously acknowledges Beaglehole's work. John Gascoigne, *Captain Cook: Voyager between Worlds* (London: Hambleton Continuum, 2007), xv.
- <sup>85</sup> Gananath Obeyesekere, *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook: European Mythmaking in the Pacific* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Marshall D. Sahlins, *How "Natives" Think: About Captain Cook, for Example* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995); K.R. Howe, "The Making of Cook's Death," *Journal of Pacific History*, 31:1 (1996), 108-18; Robert Borofsky et al., "Cook, Lono, Obeyesekere, and Sahlins," *Current Anthropology*, 38:2 (1997), 255-82.
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- <sup>89</sup> Tim Beaglehole, *A Life of J.C. Beaglehole*, 475.
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- <sup>91</sup> Beaglehole, “The New Zealand Scholar,” 243.
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- <sup>94</sup> Quoted in Tom McLeish, “Nobel Laureate who Found That Polymers Could Conduct Electricity,” *Guardian* (Manchester), 27 February 2007.
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- <sup>96</sup> Tim Beaglehole, *A Life of J.C. Beaglehole*, 255-56, 464.
- <sup>97</sup> Stefan Collini, *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 375-92. See also David Cannadine, *History in Our Time* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 279-87.
- <sup>98</sup> J.W. Davidson, “Problems of Pacific History,” *Journal of Pacific History*, 1 (1966), 21.
- <sup>99</sup> Most recently, Natalie Fryde, “Frederick William Maitland,” in *Rewriting the Middle Ages in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Jaume Aurell and Francisco Crosas (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 25-33.
- <sup>100</sup> Eg. Jonathan Haslam, *The Vices of Integrity: E.H. Carr, 1892-1982* (London: Verso, 1999); Adam Sisman, *A.J.P. Taylor: A Biography* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1994); Richard Ollard, *A Man of Contradictions: A Life of A.L. Rowse* (London: Allen Lane, 1999).
- <sup>101</sup> Eg. John Clive, *Not By Fact Alone: Essays on the Reading and Writing of History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989).
- <sup>102</sup> Maxine Berg, “A Woman in Power: Eileen Power, 1889-1940,” October 1996, Institute of Historical Research, *Reviews in History*, <http://history.ac.uk/reviews/paper/mellor.html>. My summary somewhat simplifies Berg’s argument.
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