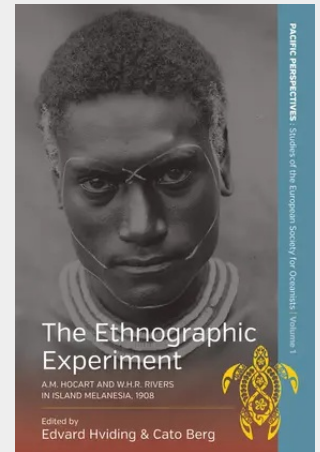


The Ethnographic Experiment

A.M. Hocart and W.H.R. Rivers in Island Melanesia, 1908

In 1908, Arthur Maurice Hocart and William Halse Rivers conducted fieldwork in the Solomon Islands and elsewhere in Island Melanesia that served as the turning point in the development of modern anthropology. The work of these two anthropological pioneers on the small island of Simbo brought about the development of participant observation as a methodological hallmark of social anthropology. This would have implications for Rivers' later work in psychiatry and psychology, and Hocart's work as a comparativist, for which both would largely be remembered despite the novelty of that independent fieldwork on remote Pacific islands in the early years of the 20th Century. Contributors to this volume—who have all carried out fieldwork in those Melanesian locations where Hocart and Rivers worked—give a critical examination of the research that took place in 1908, situating those efforts in the broadest possible contexts of colonial history, imperialism, the history of ideas and scholarly practice within and beyond anthropology.

Concentrates on the neglected work by two such important early 20th-century scholars as Rivers and Hocart in Solomon Islands and elsewhere in Island Melanesia. Examines a little-known research effort that was to provide major foundations for the development of cross-cultural method and anthropology as a modern discipline based on participant observation. Gives a unique examination of the relationships between early anthropology and the politics of colonialism and empire. A rare example of leading present-day scholars in anthropology and related disciplines re-visiting the fieldwork localities of early 20th-century anthropology; all the book's contributors have themselves carried out major fieldwork in the locations where Hocart and Rivers worked.



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