John Williams was not the first London Missionary Society missionary to Polynesia, but his passion to conquer the whole Pacific region, and resolute belief that he knew better than his Directors in London how this vision might be achieved marked him out as an ambitious and aggressive man. Samoa, the setting of these Journals, was the last island group where Williams personally introduced the gospel before he was murdered at Eromanga. It was over Samoa that his evangelising precocity caused a much-publicised demarcation dispute between his own Society and the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. Of the several journals kept by Williams during his pan-Polynesian travels, the two relating to his visits to Samoa in 1830 and 1832 are the most comprehensive and illuminating. In the course of both journeys, Williams also visited Tonga, and provided graphic eye-witness accounts of contemporary Tongan and European life. Their importance to Pacific historians, archaeologists, anthropologists and linguists has long been recognised and they have been perhaps the most frequently cited unpublished sources on Samoa. Their descriptions of the geography, settlement patterns, warfare, material culture, customs, language and music remain unrivalled in the ethnographic literature of the period. With their publication here, they become available to a wider readership interested in formal and informal life in Samoa 150 years ago.
The Samoan Journals
of John Williams
1830 and 1832

Edited, with an Introduction by
Richard M. Moyle

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The Pacific History Series of books provides an outlet for the publication of original manuscripts important to historians and others interested in the Pacific Islands.

I would like to record the patient assistance of Colin Cummins throughout the preparation of this book, particularly with the transcription of William's journals. Niel Gunson and Bob Langdon kindly gave editorial and reference suggestions. Much of the labour involved burning the midnight oil. I would like to thank my wife Linden for providing the oil.
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Introduction

The 1830 and 1832 journals of John Williams provide the earliest detailed accounts of Samoa when European influence was still in its infancy. Their wealth of ethnographic material has long been recognised by Pacific scholars, although the manuscripts may also be read as fascinating and often dramatic narratives in their own right. They are published here for the first time.

In the first decade of the nineteenth century, England was still feeling the effects of an evangelical revival which commenced in the first half of the eighteenth century. Amid the turmoil of the French Revolution across the Channel, the military successes of Bonaparte throughout Europe, and local social and political struggles (which were to result in the Reform Bill of 1832), virtually every nonconformist denomination in Britain heard and heeded the missionary call. The initiative taken by the Wesleyan Thomas Coke, who began mission work in India in 1786, and by the Baptists William Carey and John Thomas, who began mission work in India in 1793, was soon taken up by other churches. The Biblical exhortation 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature' seized the imagination and consciences of evangelical clergymen, nonconformist ministers and a variety of interested laymen to the extent that in 1794 the first formal meeting occurred in London to consider the practicability of establishing a new missionary society. On 22 September 1795, after further meetings, this surge of interest culminated in the formation of the nondenominational Missionary Society (known from 1818 as the London Missionary Society (hereinafter LMS), from its subtitle, to distinguish it from similar Societies, such as the
Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society and the Church Missionary Society), whose sole declared aim was 'to spread the knowledge of Christ among heathen and other unenlightened nations' (Directors' minute, 22 September 1794).

At the urging of the Rev. Thomas Haweis, one of the Society's first directors, Tahiti, 'or some other of the islands of the South Sea' was agreed on as the location of the first missionary attempt (Lovett 1899:1:30). A ship, the Duff, was purchased by the Society from donations, and on 10 August 1796, she sailed from London carrying thirty missionaries and their families. The captain's orders were:

that a mission be undertaken to Otaheite [Tahiti], the Friendly Islands [Tonga], the Marquesas, the Sandwich [Hawaiian] and the Pelew [Palau] Islands ... as far as may be practicable and expedient (Wilson 1799:xcii).

In 1797 missions were established at Tahiti, Tonga and the Marquesas. Both the Tongan and Marquesan enterprises were abandoned by 1800, leaving the station at Tahiti. Although itself temporarily abandoned in 1808. Tahiti survived to become the central base of LMS activities in the Pacific, and by 1822 missionaries had settled in other islands of the Society group: at the immediately neighbouring island of Moorea, as well as at Huahine, Raiatea, Bora bora and Tahaa to the north-east (Gunson 1978:12, 13).

The fifth of six children, John Williams was born in London in 1796, the year of the Duff's sailing. After elementary schooling, he was apprenticed to an ironmonger where he remained for six years. Converted to evangelical Christianity apparently by chance (his employer's wife found him on the streets one Sunday evening and persuaded him to accompany her to a meeting at Moorfield's Tabernacle), he immediately and enthusiastically immersed himself in the church's program of instruction and visitation. An auxiliary to the LMS had been founded at the Tabernacle by the Rev. Matthew Wilks, himself an ardent advocate of the missionary cause, and Williams was invited to join a class run by Wilks for young men intending to enter the ministry. Through Wilks, Williams's interest in missionary work was aroused, and in 1816, on Wilks's encouragement, he applied to the LMS directors for employment as a missionary (Gutch 1974:7). The minute for his interview by the Society's committee of examination on 5 August 1816 reads:
His examination as to his motives for offering himself in that capacity, as to the Sermons he had heard the preceding Sabbath and in English Grammar, satisfactory (Gutch, ibid.). He was again interviewed the following week, when, according to the minute, he:

underwent a more particular examination as to his views on Christian doctrine. His replies, though on the whole satisfactory, evinced the want of further instruction. He showed considerable talent and appeared to have taken a most decided resolution to devote himself to the Missionary Work, notwithstanding much had been done by his Connexions to dissuade and terrify him from his purpose (ibid.).

Accepted by the LMS, and released from his apprenticeship, Williams did not leave immediately for the mission field, despite an urgent need for workers in southern Africa and the South Seas. The committee of examination voted to delay his departure for several months on the grounds of his youth (he was then 19) and imperfect education (Prout 1843:28). Williams continued to busy himself in religious instruction under Wilks's tuition, and also in visiting manufacturers and processing firms in London; these latter activities, doubtlessly stimulated by the practicality of his own former profession, reflected one of Williams's major missionary ambitions— to introduce the arts and comforts of civilised society hand in hand with the spiritual benefits of a superior religion.

In the light of encouraging news of the mission at Tahiti, the LMS directors decided that Williams should be sent there. On 16 September 1816, the committee of examination interviewed another candidate, Miss Mary Chawner, also a member of Moorfield's Tabernacle, who, according to the minute, was 'desirous of going to Otaheite as a missionary and as the wife of Mr Williams' (Gutch 1974:8). The committee carried out its examination, and declared her 'a suitable person to go out as the wife of Mr Williams in the capacity of Missionary to Otaheite' (ibid.), and six weeks later the two married. They departed for the Pacific on 17 November travelling via the Colony of New South Wales, and reached Tahiti in 1817, before moving to Raiatea, where Williams was based until his first voyage to Samoa.

1. His employer accepted an offer from the LMS of £30 as compensation for the seven months remaining (Directors' minute, 17 and 26 August 1816).
By 1821, when Williams was learning of the existence of islands in the adjacent groups and contemplating the extension of his work throughout this area, Polynesian inter-island and inter-group travel was both common and extensive (see, for example, Golson 1972). While it remains a moot point whether Williams’s use of expatriate Polynesians, converted or otherwise, was a key factor in the success of his work, it cannot be denied that such people were instrumental in establishing good initial relations between their fellow countrymen and Williams himself when he took them back to their own islands. It was the presence at Aitutaki of a number of converted but homesick Rarotongans which first caught Williams’s attention, and which he interpreted as a providential opening for the introduction of the Gospel to that island. In 1823, in the course of looking for Rarotonga, he visited Mangaia and Aitu in the Cook group, and established the first European contact at nearby Mitiaro and Mauke. His eventual arrival at Rarotonga was not entirely joyous, as all but one of his native teachers declined to stay there following the ill-treatment of their wives by the Rarotongan men. During the brief stay, however, Williams made the acquaintance of a chief called Makea (whom he preferred to refer to as the ‘King of Rarotonga’), who was eventually converted, and who accompanied him on his 1832 voyage to Samoa. Makea received deference from the Samoan and Tongan elite during this voyage, and there is little doubt that his presence as Williams’s companion added considerably to Williams’s own prestige.

By contrast, Williams’s first visit to Samoa in 1830 seemed set on proceeding without expatriate assistance, when the fortuitous meeting with one Fauea, absent in Fiji and Tonga for almost eleven years and eager to return home to Samoa, provided him with a welcome means of introduction to what was to become the final island group where he personally had an active role in introducing the Gospel.

It is probably no coincidence that the one occasion when Williams arrived unannounced at a foreign island and went ashore without any of his native teachers or homecoming expatriates was to result almost immediately in his own murder, at Erromango, in Vanuatu, on 20 November 1839.

Williams’s personal interest in Samoa began at least as early as 1822. Writing to the LMS directors from Sydney (where he had undergone medical treatment), he advised them of his intention to
Map 1  Central Polynesia
visit several islands en route back to the Society Islands — the Chathams, Rurutu, Tubuai, Opara (Rapa) and the Marquesas. He continued his letter with a sketch of a plan which was to occupy the rest of his life:

I had nearly come to England for the purpose of proposing that the Church, the London and the Methodist Societies should jointly fit out a vessel to visit the various islands of the South Seas. My recommendations would have been, that one missionary from each Society should go to New Caledonia, New Guinea, the New Hebrides [Vanuatu], the Navigators’ Islands [an alternative name for Samoa], Tongatabu [Tongatapu], the Marquesas, &c. &c. (all large places and numerouslly inhabited) to ascertain the practicability of forming missionary stations on these islands. At the close of this voyage, a report might be made by each missionary, a mutual agreement entered into by the Societies for the occupation of the different groups. Thus:—

those contiguous to New Zealand, and speaking the New Zealand tongue, the Church Missionary Society might consider their charge. Tongatabu and the adjacent islands, in which that language is used, might be undertaken by the Wesleyans; whilst the Marquesas, Chatham Islands, and others, where Tahitian is the common tongue, might fall to our share. The expense to each Society would be comparatively trifling, and great good might result from it; and a person speaking the Tahitian would be able, more or less, to converse with all the South Sea Islanders (quoted in Prout 1843:156-7).

It is difficult not to read into Williams’ final comment the suggestion that the LMS should — or at least could — reserve the right to send its own missionaries to any island group, notwithstanding its linguistic affiliations. As will be seen below, the only formal arrangement in Polynesia between missionary societies in which Williams had a hand resulted in very little goodwill and mutual agreement.

In 1824, Williams repeated his interest in Samoa in a letter to the directors (Williams 1838: 142). And in 1826 he reiterated the need, as he saw it, for extending the mission to the Marquesas, Navigators, New Hebrides, New Guinea and New Caledonia, but did not repeat his earlier hope of a joint project with the other societies. ‘Of the islands we have [already] visited — Rurutu, Aitutaki, Mariota [Marutea], &c. it may almost be said: We came, we saw, we conquered’ (Williams to LMS, 19 August 1826). He
concluded this particular letter with a tempting thought — 'If such success has attained us on these islands, is it not reasonable to expect the same at other places...?' 2

Following the placement of the native teacher Papeiha at Rarotonga in 1823, Williams returned to Raiatea. Some time later he received word from Papeiha that he and those whom he had converted were enjoying 'uninterrupted prosperity' (Williams 1888:113), but required a few months' assistance in so great a task. On 6 May 1827 (together with Charles and Elizabeth Pitman, who were to become resident missionaries there), Williams and his wife arrived back in Rarotonga. Intending to stay only a few months, Williams was delayed there for a year for want of a vessel.

Williams's own enthusiasm for travel contrasted with the attitude of his wife, Mary. During their enforced stay in Rarotonga in 1827, she learned of her husband's plan to undertake a long voyage, and was initially opposed on the grounds that it might result in his death and the uncertain fate of herself and her children. (Throughout her stay in Polynesia, she was in poor health, suffering from filariasis and a 'dreadful affection in her face' (Gutch 1974:131), and lost seven children through miscarriage or stillbirth.) At this stand, Williams later noted rather coolly, 'Finding her so decidedly opposed to the undertaking, I did not mention it again' (1838:143). Soon after, Mary became seriously ill, and on her recovery, interpreted the affliction as a divine rebuke for her opposition to the voyage (which was to include Samoa). Fearing that further resistance might prove fatal to herself, she readily gave her consent (ibid.), which Williams himself took as 'the first indication of Providence favourable to my design' (ibid., p.144). (At this stage he was also interested in the New Hebrides, and indeed had intended travelling to both groups, as well as to Fiji, on his 1830 voyage. However, adverse accounts he was to receive from the Wesleyan missionaries in Tonga caused him to alter his plans.)

Following his wife's abrupt change of mind, Williams set about providing his own means of transport back to Raiatea, and began building a two-masted schooner. Using great ingenuity and with virtually no machinery, he and his native workers succeeded in constructing the Olive Branch, a craft 20 metres long and with an 8

2. Further letters in the following year reiterated this view (Williams to LMS, 20 April, 30 May 1827).
metre beam. A trip to Aitutaki provided a sea-trial, and shortly after (having got the Buzacotts, fellow-missionaries, settled in at Rarotonga), the Williams family returned to Raiatea, taking the Rarotongan chief Makea along for a two-month visit.

For the LMS, Williams's voyage to Samoa in 1830 was the culmination of an attempt begun more than thirty years earlier to establish a mission station there. The captain of the Duff carried instructions from the directors to set down four of the single men from among the missionary passengers at either Tutuila or Savai'i (Campbell 1840:379) during the ship's second voyage to the Pacific in 1798. (After consultation among themselves, the missionaries chose five; no reason was given for the additional man (Gregory 1801:12).) However, three weeks later, the Duff was captured by a French privateer (ibid., pp.151ff.), and although the passengers and crew eventually managed to return to England, the incident prompted the LMS to concentrate on the mission in the Society Islands.

After reading Williams's and Barff's account of their 1839 voyage, the directors resolved:

that Messrs Williams and Barff be informed that the account of their visit to the Hervey [Cook], Tonga, Hapai [Ha'apai] and Samoa Islands has afforded the Directors great satisfaction and they will cheerfully render every suitable attention to the field for missionary labour present in those islands. Resolved, that although the directors regard the opening in Divine Providence for introducing the Gospel among the important and populous group called the Navigators' Islands, as requiring the attention of the Society, they do not consider the information to be such as to warrant the immediate appointment of a new mission to those Islands but that should subsequent intelligence afford equal encouragement, it is their opinion that this important field should be occupied by an efficient mission with as little delay as possible (LMS to Williams and Barff, 12 April 1831).

In the wake of the directors' response, the way was left open for

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3. According to Newbury (1961:309), he named the vessel Rarotonga, later changing it to the Olive Branch. Williams himself claims to have named it the Messenger of Peace (Williams to LMS, 22 November 1827). It retained the name Olive Branch for several years (see, for example, its appearance in Sydney in 1830 under that name (Nicholson 1977:57) and also the title of the 1832 journal). By contrast, in later published references, including William's own book (A narrative of missionary enterprises...), the name is given as the Messenger of Peace. As both the Olive Branch and the Messenger of Peace, however, it took its name from its pennant, which showed a dove with an olive branch in its beak (Williams 1838:292).
Williams to return to Samoa ‘to make a personal survey ... after the several months should have elapsed from the time of the Teachers commencing their labour’ (ibid.). Williams had already told the chiefs and people of the Samoan island of Manono that he hoped to return in about a year (p. 85), but circumstances were to more than double the waiting time. On the one hand, his wife’s relapse and political problems at Raiatea occupied much of his time, and on the other hand, when he eventually succeeded in returning to Rarotonga in September 1831 en route for Samoa, a hurricane devastated the island, destroying the ship’s provisions and carrying the vessel itself several hundred metres inland. To add to his trouble was his wife bearing a stillborn child a few days later; this was the seventh baby she had lost.

With local help, Williams was able to place his ship on rollers and move it to the sea, after which he returned to Tahiti for provisions for the Rarotongans, whose crops had been destroyed. On reaching Tahiti, he learnt that the people of Raiatea were constructing stills, following the example of a visiting ship’s captain. Williams hastened there to try and counter this new threat to his station; the success of his actions was not equivocal. On returning to Rarotonga with provisions, Williams stayed only a few days before setting off for Samoa, on 1 October 1832; Aaron Buzacott had originally intended accompanying him, but was prevented by the need to repair damage caused by the hurricane.

In keeping with the directors’ suggestion, Williams paid particular attention to the present and likely future circumstances of the native teachers in Samoa. He repeatedly questioned the chief Malietoa Vaiinupō on his reaction to the possible introduction of European missionaries, and on steadfastness of his own profession of Christianity. The conviction with which Malietoa answered such questions was ably reflected in the journal itself, so much so that on learning of the situation in the following year, the directors were able to note that their earlier queries had been met almost point for point:

That in consideration of the extent and importance of the Samoa or Navigators Islands - the amount of their population, the attention given to the native teachers - the desire expressed by the King [i.e. Malietoa] and chiefs for European instructors - the promise of security and assistance in procuring support - and the wide door effectual[ly] opened in Divine providence for the introduction of the Gospel - four Missionaries and a
Missionary Printer be appointed to proceed to those Islands by the earliest suitable conveyance ... (Directors' minute, 4 October 1833).

On 9 November 1833, six missionaries and their wives set out for Samoa (Directors' minute, 9 November 1833).

Williams's initial landing in Samoa could not have been better timed. Lei'ataua Tonumaipe'a Tamafaigā had combined in himself the offices of high chief and high priest, although he was not the supreme religious leader Williams envisaged. His assassination just before Williams's arrival in 1830 had left vacant the position of highest political authority in the country. In the war of vengeance following Tamafaigā's death, the forces of Malietoa were virtually assured of victory, and Malietoa himself certain to succeed to the supreme position of ta'afifā (Gilson 1970:70). It is apparent that Tamafaigā was a man with ascriptions of supernatural powers, and these alone commanded a certain respect; this respect was considerably enhanced by his political status as the highest-ranking member of the mālo, the dominant group. Although his death did not create a vacancy in the religious leadership comparable with that of the ta'afifā position in the political system, there seems little doubt that Williams's task in introducing a new religion was eased by Tamafaigā's removal. Exactly how much of a rival he might have considered Williams, and what steps he might have taken to oppose him, will, of course, never be known. However, the tolerance by the Samoans of the cults organised by beachcombers and the mystic Siovili suggests that there might well have been no concerted or forceful opposition to the efforts to introduce Christianity, although both Williams and Faueā feared that Tamafaigā would prove an obstacle. On learning of the assassination, Faueā told Williams that the Samoan people were now free to embrace the new religion (p. 69), and for his part, Malietoa expressed pleasure at having been sought out specifically by the bearers of this religion and agreed to allow the teachers to stay. In exchange for giving them his protection and the freedom to proselytise, Williams held out the possibility of European missionaries arriving at some future date.

In his book (A narrative of missionary enterprises in the South Sea islands ...), Williams attributed his successful landing of the teachers in Samoa to the timely death of Tamafaigā (1838:570), the providential meeting with Faueā in Tonga, and this man's eloquence in detailing to the Samoans the Society's advance
through Polynesia (ibid., pp. 256-7, 571). To these factors one must add Williams's own forceful personality, local prophecies that Malietoa should expect a new religion to arrive (Henry n.d.:125), and, as mentioned above, the Samoans' tolerance for the gods of other men (Gilson 1970:72). And for the success of the mission by the time Williams returned two years later, one may also cite the impact of advanced technology on a 'primitive' society, the substitution of Christian for heathen worship practices without wholesale humiliation or destruction of sacra, and the Polynesian teachers' deliberate simplification of conversion by means of the superficial acceptance of sin (loc.cit.).

For some time before the 1832 voyage, Williams had been contemplating a return to England on account of his wife's poor health. Back in Rarotonga after the voyage, he furthered his intention by overhauling his ship and sending it to Tahiti to be sold.

In Raiatea, political problems continued, to the extent that most of the beneficial results of the mission work there were negated. Williams himself was still undecided about returning to live there when the arrival of the whaler Sir Andrew Hammond at Tahiti en route to England prompted him to travel back home.

Williams was not without his critics during his own missionary enterprises. The labours of the Raiateans in procuring provisions for Williams's earlier vessel the Endeavour in 1823 were the subject of complaints, according to Williams's co-worker, John Orsmond (Journal, 14 October 1823). For exploiting local labour in building the Olive Branch at Rarotonga, he was taken to task by his colleague Charles Pitman (Journal, 12 September 1827). For spending time on repairs to his ship during a period of political upheaval at Raiatea, he earned the disapproval of James Smith, resident missionary on the neighbouring island of Tahaa (Gutch 1974:93). And for allegedly deceiving both the LMS and the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (hereinafter WMMS) concerning the removal of the Wesleyans from Samoa, he received a stream of criticism from the missionaries in Tonga (e.g. John Thomas to WMMS, 7 April 1837; 7 November 1837; Nathaniel Turner: personal narrative) and Australian Methodists (e.g. Dyson 1875). Details of this last event are given below.

Within a week of his arrival back in London, Williams was introduced to the LMS directors and informed them that 'on account of the impaired health of Mrs W[illiams] he had been
obliged to quit for a short season the interesting field of his labours which he had occupied for 18 years' (Directors' minute, 23 June 1834).

Williams's four years in England were spent in seeking material support for his principal objectives - money for a theological college at Rarotonga, and a ship to enable him to continue his pan-Pacific crusading. He raised funds for the former by extensive speaking engagements throughout the country, but achieved the latter only after the success of yet another venture - the publication of his book. The writing of the book, which drew heavily on material in the 1830 and 1832 manuscripts, was done with the 'kind assistance of Rev. Dr Reed of London, and the Rev. E. Prout, of Halstead' (1838:xi); the numerous annotations and emendations in the 1832 journal, not in Williams's handwriting, appear to date from this period.

While in England, Williams attended to another matter which was to have ramifications even greater than the appearance of Missionary enterprises - the removal of the Wesleyan presence in Samoa in favour of the LMS. The LMS directors' minute for 11 April 1836 reads:

Resolved, that as it appears from the statement of the Rev. Mr Williams, himself and the Messrs John Thomas & Nathaniel Turner agreed that the Navigator Islands should be assigned to the London Missionary Society, while the Fiji group should be allotted to the Wesleyan Society, that as it further appears that at the time when the arrangement was made the London Missionary Society had actually several native agents from the Society Islands employed at the Navigator Islands and that the express object of the Revd Mr Williams in undertaking the visit on which he saw the Wesleyan Missionaries at Tonga was to make arrangements for extending the Missionary operations of the London Society in the Navigator Islands ... the Committee do now confirm the agreement entered into by Messrs Thomas & Turner with Mr Williams, namely that the London Missionary Society shall occupy the Navigator Islands, and the Wesleyan Society the Fijies.

To place the veracity of the information supplied by Williams to the LMS in context, it is useful to consider the whole matter of his reliability of reporting.

Other writers (e.g. Gilson 1970) have noted apparent discrepancies between Williams's book and his journals, and indeed
several hundred individual points of difference may be discovered. Limiting reference to the 1830 and 1832 journals, these are of several kinds.

(a) Slight exaggerations; e.g. the estimated seating capacity of the Samoan chapel at Amoa rises from 'about three hundred people' (p. 146) to 'about four hundred persons' (1838:446). Again, the single breathless messenger who arrives while Williams is at Lalomalava village (p. 150) is later enlarged to become the 'chiefs and people of another settlement' (1838:451).

(b) Seemingly trifling changes are made to the times at which specific events occurred. For example, the 1832 landing in Samoa at Sāpapāli'i is given as 'about half past four' (p.114), but later changed to 'about five o'clock' (1838:424). And the time which the two dissident chiefs Malietoa and Matetau were left together to settle their differences is lengthened from 'about three quarters of an hour' (p.162) to 'about an hour' (1838:457).

(c) Specific events in the journals are contradicted in the published account. For example, on arrival at Manu'a, according to the 1832 journal, 'no natives coming off we stood close in with the Vessel & sent in the boat' (p.99), but in the book, we find 'on nearing the shore a number of canoes approached us, in one of which some natives stood up and shouted, 'We are Christians, we are Christians; we are waiting for a falau lotu, a religion-ship, to bring us some people whom they call Missionaries, to tell us about Jesus Christ. Is yours the ship we are waiting for?'' (1838:411-12). In this particular case, what Williams did was to ascribe to his first contact at Manu'a the more favourable reception of the arrival at the second village. Again, whereas the journal has Williams returning to the reconciled chiefs Malietoa and Materau, as mentioned above (p. 162), the book has the two of them going meekly to Williams to announce their agreement (1838:457).

(d) The absence of mention in the journals of spectacular events included in the published accounts, as, for example, the collecting of live snakes by Malietoa's wives and their use as living necklaces (1838:443), and Williams's narrow escape from being accidentally shot by Malietoa himself (1888:338).

For these sorts of differences, one is virtually obliged to choose between the authenticity of an event as described in writing 'on the spot' (as Williams himself once claimed - reported in the Watchman, 6 May 1835), or a few days later (as suggested by Prout
(1843:569-70) as being Williams's custom), or as described in print some years later. Certainly, the published descriptions of these and other events read more smoothly and clearly than the originals, and Williams acknowledged assistance from two literary gentlemen in his Preface (see above). However, the question of whether or not the book achieves the author's aim of being nothing more than 'a simple and unadorned narrative of fact' (1838:x1), 'a cast of the images and impression which exist in his mind' (1838:vii) would appear open to challenge.

That the book had a profound impact on the British public is evident from the sales, which were in excess of 46,000. However, having aroused the evangelical enthusiasms of younger, and prospective, missionaries, Williams's optimistic descriptions of ideal mission conditions in Polynesia were found to contrast with those experienced on arrival at the waiting shores (Gunson 1978:317-18), and the accuracy of his comments was brought into question. Williams himself did not learn of such criticism, however, and the successful publication of Missionary enterprises was perhaps second in importance only to his martyrdom at Erromango in 1839, the two events combining to assure him permanent deference in British missionary circles, and enduring affection in British hearts generally.

As mentioned earlier, Williams's credibility was also brought into question on an even more substantial issue, which received its first published airing in Missionary enterprises, but which had been initiated some years before. During his 1830 voyage to Samoa with Charles Barff, Williams spent several days at Tonga with the Wesleyan missionaries Nathaniel Turner and William Cross, where, among other things, he 'made enquiry of our friends at Tongataboo relative to the remaining part of our voyage as to what Places they thought it might be most favourable to make an attempt to settle teachers ...' (p. 47). What is claimed by both Williams (1838:304) and Barff (n.d.) to have followed, but what is conspicuously absent from the journal, and what was not brought before the Tonga District meeting by Turner (Gunson 1978:130) was a verbal agreement that the Wesleyans should have complete missionary charge of Fiji, while the LMS should have exclusive rights to Samoa. Following personal representations by Williams in London in 1836, a resolution to this effect was agreed to by the WMMS (Minute, 14 February 1836) and LMS (Minute, 11 April 1836, quoted above), to the surprise and dismay of Turner and his
colleagues in Tonga. As already noted, *Missionary enterprises* contains descriptions of a number of noteworthy, even spectacular events not included in the journals, but none had the far-reaching and unpleasant consequences of this particular one (see, e.g. Dyson 1875; Wood 1975:263ff; Gunson 1978:130-1). It seems likely that at no other point in the history of the two Missions in Polynesia was so major a decision made on the unsubstantiated word of one man.

Although it would be inappropriate in this present work to comment on earlier published opinion on the matter, the 1830 and 1832 journals themselves contain useful and relevant information suggesting that there was not one agreement, but two, the first occurring in 1830 between Williams and Turner, and the second in 1832 between himself and Thomas. However, from the reaction of both Wesleyans to news of the 1835 decision in London to allot the LMS sole evangelising rights in Samoa, it is apparent that the 'agreement' was, in their opinion, nothing more than a coinciding of views in which they were speaking privately, and as individuals.

Although Williams returned to Samoa in 1838 and spent several months there in 1839, he apparently kept no journal of his residence. Following his murder at Erromango in 1839, his remains were brought to Samoa and interred at Apia.

In attempting to deal with Williams the man, it is evident that his personal identity was both established and sustained by means of a ship. 'Besides its obvious utility, the Ship was also, for Williams, both a symbol of material success and of escape. In the Ship he found escape from frustration and disappointment in the pure joys of exploratory adventure' (Gunson 1972:88). From relatively humble beginnings, his desire to possess and control his own vessel was to grow to the point where he considered the *Camden*, the 200-ton brig bought in 1838 for the South Seas Mission, to be his own, to use as he alone saw fit (ibid., p. 90). Further, his passion for travel effectively changed him from a missionary-explorer to an explorer-missionary. Indeed his arch-critic, J.M. Orsmond, once referred to him in later life as an 'Explorist' (Journal, 7 July 1839).

Following his 1832 voyage to Samoa, Williams was well aware of the nominal nature of many conversions, and drew up a list of likely real motives for a profession of faith, and desire to have resident European missionaries. However, the implication of each item on this list (journal pp. 280-1; also 1838:572) could not have
failed to produce a positive response in British hearts loyal to the Empire. If, as Williams suggested, the desire for missionaries was in fact prompted by the wish for foreign vessels to call, or for greater longevity, then the commercial and medical world had a huge potential market awaiting it. And if the natives genuinely wanted an end to wars, and protection from malignant gods, then the possibility existed for annexation and colonial administration by Britain. And religion had a crucial role to play in the march of progress towards these enterprising goals.

In Williams’s view, Christianity was a prerequisite for civilisation (Daws 1980:59), and in dealing with both natives and Englishmen, he was able to advance a persuasive argument in a quest for Polynesian souls and British sovereigns. On the one hand, the Christian God must be superior, because his followers were materially richer (at least in Polynesian eyes) and possessed a superior technology. And on the other hand, if the spiritual labours of the Mission received financial backing from Britain, the benefits would flow on to the business community as a whole. ‘By the simple aid of religion,’ reads the motion by the Coal and Corn Finance Committee to the London Court of Common Council in support of Williams’s petition for £500 to help pay for his return trip to Polynesia in 1838,

the labours of the Petitioner...have contributed in a great degree to create an asylum in safe and secure harbours which before were unapproachable by reason of the certain destruction that awaited all strangers visiting the inhospitable abodes of savages and cannibals. The mariner is now enabled to recruit his stores from the abundant supplies in islands whose natural fertility has been made available by newly created modes of industry, at the same time opening a further field for commercial enterprises, and procuring an additional market for British manufactures (Municipality of London 1838:98-9).

‘The great work of civilisation,’ noted the Court, included ‘peace, good government, religion and commerce’ (ibid.), and each of these was included in the petitioner’s designs. The £500 was agreed to.

Williams’s growing possessiveness regarding a ship appears to have been but a symptom of a larger reality: an increasing concern for material prosperity. The God whom Williams preached saved the soul but also enabled the repentant sinner to live in civilised comfort as determined by British standards. Material prosperity
was a virtue to both the preacher and convert, and the desire for European goods an indication of the sincerity of the conversion. (While Williams did not establish himself as a trader and thereby both create and meet the material as well as spiritual needs of his flock, he succeeded in setting up his son, John Chauner Williams, in such a position in Apia, then Sydney, and again in Apia (Gunson 1972:94).)

Although Williams was in Samoa for only a total of thirty days in 1830 and 1832, his descriptions of a number of aspects of the society remain unequalled in the literature for their detail and scope. He recorded events as they appeared to him, even if his ingenuousness was to reveal that he did not always escape criticism by the Samoans, or have the better of all discussions and situations. Moreover, he did not consider it beneath his dignity to describe practices which his successors were more interested in condemning - night dances, public defloration of a bride, nudity - and he was not averse to finding positive qualities in the physique, lifestyle and personalities of those whose souls he sought to save. In these respects, his Samoan journals are an invaluable source of early ethnography. His personal feelings as a nineteenth century missionary among heathens do not generally impinge on such descriptions; his liberal condemnation of beachcombers, and linking of the material and spiritual advantages of the religion he was proposing, are effectively compartmentalised in the journals, and presumably were also in his own mind.

While not denying the kindling of the English public's imagination regarding missions, which his voyages certainly achieved, historians other than his biographers have tended to take a broader view of his activities, evaluating both the personal and long-term impacts of his endeavours (see e.g. Wood 1975:261-9; Gunson 1972, 1978:115-18, 136-7; Daws 1980:23-89). Whether one considers him as an agent of empire, or a messenger of grace, Missionary enterprises represents Williams the missionary and Samoa as his mission field: the journals reveal Williams the man, and Samoa itself.

In Williams's own words, the 1830 journals should be 'considered as coming from Mr Barff & myself jointly' (Williams to LMS, 18 November 1830), and indeed the writing features 'we' throughout. A few entries appear to be by Barff (e.g. p. 89 'Mr Williams went on shore to hasten our departure'), but elsewhere it is not possible to determine individual authorship on the basis of the contents. It
appears that the journal is not the original document maintained during the voyage, but an enlarged version written by Williams in Raiatea in October or November 1830. On returning to Raiatea after the voyage, Williams wrote to the directors, ‘our journal we think will form a most interesting volume we therefore prefer employing a month over it to sending it immediately’ (Williams to LMS, 21 October 1830). His intention was not fully realised; the sailing only twenty-six days later of a vessel to England denied Williams and Barff the chance to include ‘a short description of each island’ as originally planned (Williams to LMS, 18 November 1830). Williams further advised the directors that ‘the work is hastily drawn up and that it is the first copy not having time to spare even to write it off a second time...’ (ibid.). If Williams himself wrote this ‘first copy’, it would explain why Barff’s entries are not in his own handwriting, but that of Williams. A second copy does exist, however, and is apparently in Barff’s writing; the two manuscripts are held in the Mitchell Library, Sydney.

The 1830 journal was apparently missing for some time, and was discovered in 1915 by Joseph King (former missionary to Samoa, and the organising agent for the LMS in Australasia), who added the following to the first page:

When Captain Morgan’s [captain of the Camden] journals were handed to me by his son, I found this journal amongst them. It is in the handwriting of John Williams. I assured myself of this by submitting it in London to the inspection of his son who said there could be no doubt about its being the writing of his father.

As with the account of the 1830 voyage, the journal of Williams’s return to Samoa is divided into two parts - the journal proper, and sections of analysis or summary. In this journal also, there is evidence that the account as it now exists is a later expansion of notes written during the voyage itself. On 19 or 20 October Williams notes that evidence of a hurricane in 1831 was seen ‘at every island I have visited from Tahiti to Niuatapu[Niuatoputapu]’ (p. 115). However, he did not visit Niuatoputapu until 6 November (p. 173). At least part of the manuscript appears to have been written in Rarotonga after the voyage; on p. 236 Williams notes that a newborn calf had been eaten by Rarotongans ‘a day or two since [i.e. ago]’. Similarly, the reference on p. 215 to J.W. Norie’s Chart (which was not published until 1833) indicates that the final section of the manuscript was written some time after the voyage of
1832. The work itself is held in the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, for the Council for World Mission.4

The manuscripts make it clear that Williams's knowledge of English grammar and spelling was far from perfect. His sense of punctuation is erratic, with ends of sentences indicated variously by periods, commas, semicolons, dashes, or with no punctuation at all. In several places, particularly where the journal begins a new page, the final word of the previous page is repeated. Elsewhere, sentences are left incomplete, and the subject-matter changes abruptly. In addition to these situations, it is apparent on two occasions that a sheet is missing from the 1832 journal; such occasions are identified in notes. In accord with the general expectation that sentences should begin with capital letters and end with full stops, I have added these where appropriate; punctuation within sentences remains unchanged. I have retained Williams’s own division of the material into separated paragraphs.

Williams’s spelling reflects to some extent his own low level of formal education. Most noticeably in the 1830 journal, his writing suffers from dislexis, resulting in such oddities as lemant, Brethern, cultavition, foliage and pslams. In the 1832 journals, however, most of these errors have gone, but the word ‘chief’ remains a problem, the vowels being reversed on at least half the occasions the word is used. On the grounds that it does not benefit the reader to struggle with misspellings, and such are unlikely to have been what Williams himself intended, I have made appropriate corrections to the text. However, I have left unchanged all non-English terms and proper names, as it is not possible to attribute consistently any differences between such words and present orthography to errors in spelling: they may possibly reflect regional or historical variations from present-day usage. Additionally, I have retained early nineteenth century spellings, where they appear (e.g. shew, plat, bread fruit) as well as abbreviated forms of certain words. On a number of occasions, Williams uses direct speech, conveying the standard of English and manner of speaking of the people concerned; here too, the original form has been preserved. When writing the Anglicised plural forms of certain non-English words, or proper names,

4. The original copies of both 1830 and 1832 journals have been copied on to microfilm as part of the Australian Joint Copying Project.
Williams often inserts an apostrophe (e.g. tevolo's, papalagni's, Venus's); I have retained the original form in such cases.

For the nineteenth century meanings of Polynesian words appearing in the journals, I have drawn principally on the following sources: Samoan, Violette 1879; Newell 1893; Pratt 1911; Tahitian, Davies 1851; Tongan, Rabone 1845; Colomb 1890; Collocott 1925. For modern orthographies, I have used the following: Fijian, Capell 1941; Hawaiian, Pukui and Elbert 1971; Maori, Williams 1971; Marquesan, Dordillon 1931; Rarotongan, Savage 1962; Samoan, Milner 1966; Tahitian, Lemaitre 1973; Tongan, Churchward 1959. It should be noted that not all lexical sources quoted consistently record vowel length and glottal stops. Vowel length and glottals are given here as reported in sources consulted; in some cases, these may not coincide with current written convention within the respective regions.