

ASAO Monograph Series 1991-2001  
Andrew Strathern and Pamela J. Stewart (Strathern)  
University of Pittsburgh

This account is divided into four sections:

- 1. The period of succession and transition from the Editorship of Margaret Rodman and the former association with the University Presses of America.
- 2. The ongoing framework for volumes via the University of Pittsburgh Press and the volumes published
- 3. Achievements and problems up to 2001-2
- 4. Conclusions and Comments

-1. Succession and Transition

Margaret Rodman approached Andrew Strathern at an ASAO meeting after indicating that she wished to relinquish the task of Editorship. She pointed out the main problems for the Series deriving from the arrangement with University Presses of America (UPA) and asked if he could craft an association with the University of Pittsburgh Press to give the Series a stronger academic and financial footing. Andrew Strathern had recently joined the Department of Anthropology in Pittsburgh as its Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Anthropology after a period of time serving as Director of the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. After gaining approval of the ASAO Board, he discussed possibilities with Frederick Hetzel, then the long-serving Director of the Press, and entered the process of constructing a contract for the Series, which was executed in final form in March 1993.

The difficulties with UPA were made clear in Margaret Rodman's reports. UPA had been slow in producing volumes and in paying out royalties to the Association. They required a technology that was labor intensive, for camera-ready copy. They also required that the ASAO purchase 70 copies of each monograph on its publication and then attempt to sell these individually to its membership. Camera-ready copy meant that the UPA offered no copy-editing services for volume editors.

An agreement was reached with the University of Pittsburgh Press, enabling an arrangement for a number of volumes to be considered for

publication from 1991 onwards. This arrangement included the republishing of the volume *Aging and its Transformations*, which had been awaiting a reprint by UPS. *Christianity in Oceania*, published by UPA, was also selling well from 1990-1991, but the ASAO Board did not go ahead with a reprinting of it, preferring to move ahead with a set of new volumes, that eventually included *Clowning*, *The Business of Marriage*, and *Migration*, as recorded in the Editor's 1992 Report. Andrew Strathern was away on fieldwork during a part of 1991 and Richard Scaglione agreed to stand in on his behalf at this time. Royalties for \$1520.54 were eventually extracted from UPA and accrued to the publication funds for the Series, with the help of Deborah Gewertz.

In order for a new Series contract to be drawn up, UPA had to indicate its release of the Series. A proposal was sent to them via their Editor-in-Chief, Jonathan Sisk, but they did not reply within the time period set. When this had elapsed, a new contract could be made with Pittsburgh.

The new contract, drawn up with Andrew Strathern as the ASAO representative, specified that the Press undertook to be the sole publisher for the Series, for books approved by the ASAO Board, with the Association's choice of cover design. The press would render royalties yearly to ASAO, while ASAO would pay the composition costs for each volume. The contract would be reviewed every three years as necessary, and either party could provide written intention to end the contract with 12 months advance notice.

There was no requirement to buy 70 volumes. The Press also undertook to appoint professional reviewers of volume proposals, in addition to the evaluations arranged by the Association. The escape clause was included because none had been made with UPA, leading to the problems noted above.

## -2. Framework of volumes published

The framework noted above was followed throughout. Dr. Pamela J. Stewart (Strathern) joined as Associate Editor from 1997 onward, with approval by the ASAO Board.

Margaret Rodman had passed on funds in a savings account for the Series, which had built up amounts over time from dues paid yearly by the Association

members, amounting to \$1,208 each year. (Andrew Strathern also contributed \$400 in his initial year as Editor.) In 1993 this revenue stream was diverted into support of the Pacific Islanders Scholars' fund.

Andrew Strathern operated with a current account set up with the Mellon Bank in Pittsburgh. The savings account was a backup fund.

The University of Pittsburgh Press paid an initial two sums of \$1093.58 and \$959.01 as royalties in 1994. \$1000 was paid out as a contribution to defray costs of two *Pacific Studies* special issues. In 1994 the Editor asked whether payments from members' dues would be reinstated or not. The Board continued to pay amounts into the Special Publications Fund, but not to the Monograph Series. Royalty revenues dropped sharply in 1996-1998.

The Editor and Associate Editor were very active both in personally participating in sessions and in urging session organizers to produce new volume proposals and to ask everyone in ASAO to set Series volumes for teaching.

After volumes 12-15, new volumes that emerged were *Money and Modernity*, *Adolescence*, and *Identity Work*. The Editor and Associate Editor played very active roles in bringing these volumes into publication, through 2000 (volumes 16, 17, and 18).

Michele Dominy was appointed Incoming Editor by the Board after Andrew Strathern and Pamela J. Stewart (Strathern) indicated that because of numerous other professional duties, including the editorship of numbers of other series which they had undertaken, they would not be able to continue in their roles.

They nevertheless continued to work with the Press to see volumes 19 (*In Colonial New Guinea*) and 20 (*Handle with Care*) through to successful evaluation and publication through 2002, making a total of nine volumes published through Pittsburgh, an average of one monograph per year.

### -3. Achievements and Problems

The Series was rescued from UPA and regenerated on a professional basis with the University of Pittsburgh Press.

The initial contract was arranged via Frederick Hetzel, Press Director, and continued through Cynthia Miller, his successor, and with Niels Aaboe, who succeeded Catherine Marshall as Senior Editor.

Respectable royalties were earned on all volumes. It became quite evident, however, that the Series could not be viable on the basis of royalties alone, without a portion of members' dues. Some funds had to be used from the savings account to meet this deficit over time.

There were problems also in encouraging members to produce viable volumes out of the ASAO process of three-year sessions.

The process of double evaluation by members for the Board and readers for the Press generally worked well but could lead to difficult negotiations if either side insisted on its viewpoint.

When the Editor and Associate Editor resigned their positions, the ASAO Board appointed Michele Dominy as Editor. However, in accordance with its established practice in relation to other Series, the Press decided that it would not continue the relationship with any other set of Editors.

#### 4. Conclusions and Comments

The Series was run very successfully for more than ten years, with a set of excellent volumes.

Presses generally are reluctant to take on Series for Associations, especially without subventions, as University of Pittsburgh did, on the basis of the close professional ties set up with it.

One volume to which we ourselves also contributed, *Unseen Characters*, was later published by Penn Press.

The further history of the Series belongs to Michele Dominy and Rupert Stasch.

Creating and maintaining a Series needs a lot of commitment and work. We wish the Association and its officers all the very best for their ongoing activities.