

dates per test pit (complemented by detailed chemical analysis of cassowary eggshell – Chapter 13). Data tables allow independent assessment of patterns and trends. Evidence reveals first insights into broad-ranging hunter-gatherers on the western edge of the Torresian plain during the Pleistocene. Chronological variations in the range of animals hunted are related to changing availability linked to environmental change. Flooding of the plain is registered with the addition of marine foods into diets from 17,000 BP but mostly from 9000 BP. The last 1000 years mark entry of pottery, pigs and dogs and ‘by proxy the introduction of an agricultural economy to into the Aru Islands’. The Rumsfeldian ‘jack-in-the-box’ was a c.16,000-18,000 year old, near complete human burial from Liam Lemdubu; a remarkable find for a 1 x 1m ‘test pit’. Detailed and sophisticated anatomical analysis of this body and more recent human remains by David Bulbeck in Chapters 8 and 12 provides unique and important insights into what turns out to be the mostly ‘Australian’ form of Pleistocene inhabitants of tropical northwest Sahul. Focused analyses of flaked stone artefacts by Peter Hiscock (Chapter 10) and bone artefacts by Juliette Pasveer (Chapter 11) are conceptually and methodologically informative. In particular, Hiscock’s technological/taphonomic analysis is innovative but hampered by lack of supporting information on raw material sources. Once these sources are mapped, changing mobility patterns can be inferred and integrated with changing patterns of subsistence.

Two sites dated to the last 1000 years signal large-scale entry of the Aru Islands into regional trade networks. Analysis of the Wangil midden by Peter Veth, Bill Dickinson *et al.* (Chapter 6) shows how detailed analysis of ceramic form, style and fabric reveals long lost trade connections. Ironically, the most elusive site is the largest and most recent – the Ujir settlement featuring half buried cannons and coral block ruins engulfed by jungle (Chapter 5). Perhaps dating from the late 15th century, the site reveals the hidden mysteries of the Moluccas spice trade network and the wonderful potential of historical archaeological research in the region.

The Aru Islands volume came out 10 years after the first field season. This is a reasonable turn-around period given the scale and depth of scholarship presented in each chapter. The volume is a timely reminder to administration paparazzi that rigorous, world class scholarship in archaeology takes time, and good results demand patience. But make no mistake, the Aru Islands project was largely exploratory in nature. As such, results are patchy and variable in detail. Furthermore, due to the cultural historical bent of the research, discussions are often hamstrung by a lack of comparative regional data. But like all good research, the project provides fundamentally new information while raising new questions and viable research directions for the future. I congratulate the Australian and Indonesian participants on a project well done. The volume is instructive reading for all those interested in both the regional archaeologies of island southeast Asia and Pleistocene Sahul, and how to initiate, undertake and report on large-scale, multi-disciplinary, archaeological research projects.

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## Archaeology in Practice. A Student Guide to Archaeological Analysis.

Edited by Jane Balme and Alistair Paterson.  
Blackwell Publishing, Oxford. 2005. ISBN 0631-23573-6 (hardback; GBP 55.00) 0631-23574-4 (paperback; GBP 19.99). Pp. xxv + 438.

Older generations of Australian archaeologists grew up with either Mulvaney’s *Guide to Field Techniques* (1968) or with its successor (Connah 1983) as their introductory guide to archaeological practice. For them, at least, these handbooks will initially appear as the original model for this volume, especially as it contains two chapters recycled from the latter. This book is, however, significantly different, in part because it is intended for use beyond Australia. The style is more that of a textbook, the range of topics is wider and half the contributors are not Australian. The Australian perspective is, however, still evident, so that local practice – for once – moves into the mainstream of international textbooks on archaeological method.

Each of the fifteen chapters provides an introduction to different types of research, evidence, or issues. Many go over some of the same ground, particularly the importance of problem definition and research design as an essential stage in any study. This is no bad thing, for repetition, especially when differently framed and explained, will reinforce this basic message. Moreover, few students will work through this volume from cover to cover, and all stages of the analytical programs need to be addressed in each case.

The editors deliberately avoided dealing with excavation, well covered by other books. Fieldwork is, however, not entirely neglected: nor should it be, as the establishment of context is crucial to all later stages of research. Even so, these chapters are generally less directly useful than the others. The first, Andrew David’s ‘Finding sites’ is perhaps the most out-of-place. It focuses on more technical geophysical prospecting, with minimal attention paid to research and survey design, sampling strategy and what still remains fundamental to Australian prehistory at least – field walking and its attendant problems of site survival, visibility, identification and definition. More challenging and relevant is Larry Zimmerman’s essay on consulting stakeholders, which provides a clear vision of a socially embedded archaeology, where techniques are inter-personal rather than mechanical. Jo MacDonald provides a good exposition on rock art, blending research problems with methods of recording and analysis. The editors’ own chapter on stratigraphy is designed to deal with issues of context, but does not really come to grips with the underlying complexities of discard and site formation, nor with the wide varieties of context definition and scale stemming from different sites and excavation strategies. Context is a key element in the case studies presented by Simon Holdaway, which illustrate well the application of absolute dating techniques to address issues beyond simple chronology. A better link could have been made between Gary Huckleberry’s chapter on sediments and these chapters on stratigraphy and dating to demonstrate the values of close analysis of soils either within sites or across landscapes.

Chris Clarkson and Sue O’Connor provide a very clear and comprehensive introduction to stone artefact analysis (to their list of references one should now add Holdaway and Stern 2004). A brief guide to the literature on the more specialised area of residues and usewear is provided by Richard Fullagar, while Linda Ellis does the same for the vast field of ceramics. Her critical comments on good practice may well frighten anyone. Terry O’Connor and James Barrett’s section on animal bones gives more practical

advice, and emphasises the need to situate faunal studies within overall research agendas and strategies (especially for those teaching in Australia, an appropriate addition would be Cosgrove n.d.). Wendy Beck uses an Australian example to illustrate the range of questions that can be addressed using plant remains, and an Australian perspective also comes through strongly in Sandra Bowdler's reworked discussion of shells and shell middens, where once again issues of field strategy and sampling are recognised as crucial factors. The enormous array of different types of artefacts of the modern world is well handled by Susan Lawrence, who is able to balance the presentation of historical and technical information with questions, procedures and approaches. Barbara Little explains how to approach historical documents, and breaks down the simplistic dichotomies between types of evidence. It is a pity, however, that nature and use of texts in earlier periods and the cognate use of anthropological literature were not also addressed. Finally, Peter White has revised for the second time his sound advice on writing and preparing material for publication.

These days one might have expected a chapter on applied archaeology, dealing with the practical issues surrounding heritage management, especially as this is where most archaeology graduates will find employment. The editors, however, have chosen to focus on archaeology in its own terms. One of their explicit aims was to link research question, analysis and conclusions. Some chapters have succeeded better than others in achieving this, but the overall product provides a useful introduction which should find a place as a textbook in courses on archaeological method, and, one might hope, on students' bookshelves – or better still, their desks.

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#### References

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## Book Notes

### **A revised and redated event phase sequence for the Reber-Rakival Lapita site, Watom Island, East New Britain Province, Papua New Guinea.**

By D. Anson, R. Walter and R.C. Green  
University of Otago Studies in Prehistoric Anthropology 20, 2005.  
ISBN 0-473-10233-1. Pp. iv + 56.

This publication supplements the extensive reports on the Watom Lapita site published by Green and Anson in *New Zealand Journal of Archaeology* 20 (1998). It is concerned particularly to counter Best's *Lapita: a view from the East* (2002) criticism that all stratigraphy and dates later than c2500 bp associated with Lapita pottery must be in error, because Lapita was not made after that time. It is notable that continuation of 'Lapita' pottery until the early centuries AD has been documented elsewhere in New Britain, unlike the situation further East.

JPW

### **Appropriated Pasts. Indigenous peoples and the colonial culture of archeology.**

By I.J. McNiven and L. Russell  
AltaMira Press, 2005. Pp. x + 317.  
ISBN 0-7591-0906-0, \$US70 (hb);  
ISBN 0-7591-0907-9, \$US34.95 (pb).

Using examples from Australia, North America and elsewhere, the book shows how colonized peoples were objectified by research, had their needs subordinated to those of science, how diffusionist theories dissociated them from their accomplishments, saw their histories shaped by social evolution and had their cultures appropriated. The remedy: decolonized archaeological practice through partnerships.

JPW

#### **Correction**

Ian Lilley's review of the *Lexicon of Proto-Oceanic* (AO 41 (2006) 45-6) understandably understood the reference on page 37 fn to refer to volume 3 of this series. It in fact refers to Green and Pawley's chapter in R. Blench and M. Spriggs (eds), *Archaeology and Language III*, Routledge 1999: 33-89, in which the paucity of archaeological data Lilley comments on is corrected.

RCG