PACIFIC ISLAND HERITAGE: ARCHAEOLOGY, IDENTITY AND COMMUNITY

Jolie Liston, Geoffrey Clark and Dwight Alexander (eds), 2011.
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Reviewed by:
Ian Lilley,
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit,
University of Queensland 4072, Australia.

If it is about anything, this book is about communication: about archaeologists communicating with each other, with their colleagues in cognate disciplines and, above all, with local and descendant communities. It could hardly be otherwise, based as it is on the 2009 conference on *Pacific Island archaeology in the 21st century: relevance and engagement.* Held in Palau in Micronesia, this meeting of more than 300 delegates was concerned with the ways in which contemporary 'Pacific Islander culture is integral to preserving and protecting the natural and cultural resources of Oceania as both are currently threatened by rapid economic, social and environmental changes'. The book is dedicated to the late Rita Olsudong, who passed away a few months before the conference. Rita had been involved with cultural preservation in Palau since the early 1990s and was National Archaeologist for almost 15 years before her death. A conference and publication about archaeological communication are great tributes to someone so dedicated to that cause.

Though obviously intended to meet an affordable price-point (for a book in Australia), the volume is very well-produced. The binding is adequate, the font and line-drawings are clear, and there are many full-colour illustrations. Importantly for a work about engagement and outreach, it can also be downloaded free from the publisher's website. This is the case for all recent editions in the *Terra Australis* series, and is a boon to researchers, students and general readers alike, even if it might take a long time to download in many Pacific countries.

The book's 12 papers are grouped under four headings: prehistory and identity, community engagement, heritage management and oral traditions and archaeology. The first includes papers by Geoffrey Clark, Rosalind Hunter-Anderson and Unasa Va'a, covering issues in New Zealand, the Marianas and Samoa respectively. The community engagement section covers topics in Fiji, Guam and Palau, in order by Joeli Veitayaki and colleagues, Shannon Murphy, and Ann Hillman Kitalong and 12 collaborators. Heritage management papers range from Christian Reepmeyer *et al.*'s work in Palau to more on Samoa, this time from Helene Martinsson-Wallin, and then Duncan Wright and a group of customary owners writing about Torres Strait in northern Australia. The final section, oral traditions and archaeology, presents three papers on Palau, by Karen Nero, by David Snyder and colleagues and by Jolie Liston and Melson Miko.

The papers in each section vary considerably in nature. Among the more scholarly or academic are 'Identity and alternative versions of the past in New Zealand' by Clark, 'Is a village a village if no one lives there?' by Wright and the Goemulgan *kod* and 'Dynamic settlement, landscape modification, resource utilisation and the value of oral traditions in Palauan archaeology' by Snyder, Masse and Carucci. There are also more descriptive or technical reports on matters such as 'Cultural factors and Marine Managed Areas in Fiji' by Veitayaki *et al.*, 'Plants, people and culture in the villages of Oikull and Ibobang, Republic of Palau' by Hillman Kitalong and colleagues and 'Selecting cultural sites for the UNESCO World Heritage List: recent work in the Rock Islands–Southern Lagoon area, Republic of Palau' by Reepmeyer and others.

Do these diverse offerings hang together? No, they don't, in the conventional academic sense of tightly following a narrow theme or topic, but yes, they do, as a reflection of the range of interests and approaches canvassed at the original meeting. If we are going to go down this road of community engagement (and it is WAY too late to turn back now), this is precisely what we should want to gain from meetings such as these. The varied local/descendant and cognate professional communities involved with questions of 'archaeology, identity and community' are exactly that – *varied* – and it is up to those of us from the Western academy working in this broad arena to understand the point and accept that a classic Western scholarly approach to things is not the yardstick by which we should judge the contributions of non-Western and/or non-academic colleagues and collaborators. As the editors' introduction makes clear, we are all in this together, and 'if groups and individuals with a shared historical focus and respect for the past do not combine their resources, there will be far fewer heritage sites in the Pacific for future generations'.

Since the 2009 meeting and publication of the volume, Palau's Rock Islands–Southern Lagoon has been listed as a 'mixed' (i.e. cultural and natural) World Heritage Site. Here I must declare an interest as I was the ICOMOS 'technical assessor' of the cultural dimension of the nomination. ICOMOS is the statutory Advisory Body to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee on cultural World Heritage, just as IUCN is for natural World Heritage, and 'technical assessors' from these bodies go into the field to examine the nominated property and proposed management regime first-hand.

In this capacity I was well-and-truly thrust into most

of the communication issues raised by the papers in this book, concerning both Palau and more generally. On the basis of that experience coupled with my work on archaeology and heritage elsewhere around the planet, I have to say that despite our ups and downs, the Australia-Pacific region (i.e. 'Oceania') is progressing as well as anywhere else, and much better than many places when it comes to involving local and descendant communities in archaeology and heritage management. Indeed – and I am not sure if this is a bad thing or a badge of honour – people from our part of the world are increasingly reporting a rather negative attitude from 'established interests' in the heritage field towards what we consider 'best practice' in community engagement and are keen to export around the world. I have been noticing it for almost a decade now, but the 'push-back' is definitely becoming more frequent and more strident, as anyone who witnessed the public infighting at the ICOMOS General Assembly in Paris in 2010 will attest.

This is not to dismiss such criticism out of hand. Scholarly explorations of the issue such as those emanating from the 2008 World Archaeological Congress in Dublin need to be taken seriously by all of us (see Cooney 2009, Holtorf 2009 and Willems 2009 in *World Archaeology* 41(4), 'Debates in World Archaeology'). Holtorf (2009: 672) argues that 'indigenous perspectives on the cultural heritage must not be privileged over others' because (Holtorf 2009: 679) 'we should not surrender the important principles of equality and equal opportunities that modern democracies proudly embrace. Not even past injustice suffered by indigenous groups can legalize or legitimize present injustice against other groups'.

That's a fair point in general terms, but what one person sees as injustice another might characterise as the wholly justifiable withdrawal of an ill-gotten and unjustified privilege. In a broadly similar vein, Willems (2009: 652) says first that in countries such as 'New Zealand and also Australia, though at times events were quite tempestuous…, there appear to have been somewhat different processes of reaching social consensus and at the same time establishing a more inclusive and socially relevant archaeology', but also notes (Willems 2009: 653) a 'far less beneficial' unforeseen consequence of such inclusiveness, namely the fact that 'respecting indigenous rights or those of local stakeholders has – especially in Anglo-American countries but not only there – also led to a disconcertingly tolerant attitude towards claims to archaeological heritage resources by all sorts of cranks, religious sects or political fundamentalists and other such folk'. This is a real concern, because conservative forces in many parts the world have for some time been appropriating the language of Indigenous rights in heritage to underpin ultranationalist calls for ethnic purity and the like. The Greek 'Golden Dawn' fascists, for instance, call their obnoxious website 'faithandheritage.com'. Although nothing quite so bad has yet surfaced in Oceania, some of the material that has appeared over the years in Australia, New Zealand and Pacific states such as Fiji has certainly trended in the same direction. Clark's paper in the review volume considers a relatively mild case-in-point in New Zealand.

The sorts of issues raised by Holtorf and Willems are not going to go away, but we must make an effort to resolve them rather than just accept them as our fate, not least because the momentum 'at the top of the food chain' on the global heritage scene is very strongly pressing for greater rather than lesser consideration of what UNESCO calls the 'fifth C' in its strategic priorities for World Heritage. This 'C' is enhancing the role of Communities (in addition to Credibility of the World Heritage List; effective Conservation of World Heritage properties, effective Capacity-building and increasing support for World Heritage through Communication). In October 2012, UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova called a high-level meeting in Paris to discuss 'the World Heritage Convention - thinking ahead'. This gathering heard a number of briefings that addressed the concerns of the above-mentioned World Heritage Advisory bodies. ICOMOS stressed the urgent need for a formalisation of currently ad hoc processes to involve communities in decisions concerning World Heritage sites. By this is meant permanent, formal changes in the structures of the World Heritage Committee and in the Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Convention (which inform the assessment and management of World Heritage sites). As goes World Heritage, so (eventually) goes heritage management at regional, national and local levels around the planet. To repeat the editors' exhortation, it is up to all of us to make sure it happens in our neck of the woods. This book is witness to that endeavour.

References

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PEOPLED LANDSCAPES: ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND BIOGEOGRAPHIC APPROACHES TO LANDSCAPES

Simon G. Haberle and Bruno David (eds), 2012. Terra Australis, Vol. 34, ANU E Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, ACT 0200 Australia. 472 pp., ISBN 9781921862717 (print; Aus. $55.00) ISBN 9781921862724 (ebook)

Reviewed by:
Eric Pawson,
Department of Geography, University of Canterbury.

This volume is a tribute to the work of Professor Peter Kershaw, who retired from his position in the School of Geography and Environmental Science at Monash University in October 2010, after more than 40 years of teaching and research. The opening chapter, by the editors and Donald Walker, is a short but informative assessment of Kershaw's impact on Australian quaternary science from the time of his 1974 paper in *Nature* about Lynch's Crater on the Atherton Tableland. This paper drew on the pollen record when palaeoecological research in Australia was in its infancy and contributed to a fundamental reshaping of the environmental history of the continent. As they say 'what Peter brought to the equation were long environmental records and a conceptual shift signalling the necessary and obligatory incorporation of people into interpretations of landscapes, as managed and dynamic social spaces' (p. 4). He developed this in a publication record of nearly 200 items, which is usefully compiled here. The chapter also contains some delightful photographs of the subject in the field over his long career.

The rest of the volume is comprised of 22 essays written by scientists who have been directly influenced by Kershaw's work. The choice of authors is predominantly Australian, although it is evident that Kershaw's impact has extended well beyond Australia and his home discipline of biogeography, notably into archaeology, history and cultural geography. The first grouping of papers is entitled 'Archaeology and perceptions of landscape', and examines evidence for human engagement with landscape in Papua New Guinea, China and Sweden as well as Australia. The second grouping, 'Biogeography and palaeoecology' presents some of the latest research into environmental change over the last 40,000 years, mainly in Australia. It also includes a contribution from Matt McGlone and Les Basher about Holocene vegetation change in the Southern Alps, and another by Marie-Pierre Ledru and Janelle Stevenson examining the long-term climatic sensitivity of the species *Araucaria* in the Southern Hemisphere as a whole.

Some authors in this second half deal with more contemporary themes. Chapter 18, by Patrick Baker *et al*., entitled 'Fire on the mountain', is a careful re-assessment of the resilience of temperate rainforest to fire in the Central Highlands of Victoria, a place where rainforest and eucalypt species have long been considered to be fire sensitive and fire resistant, respectively. In 2009, however, large tracts of rainforest survived intact despite high intensity crown fires, and some stands were also known to have survived the 1851 and 1939 fires. The authors use a multi-proxy approach, drawing on direct observations, tree rings, pollen and soil charcoal. The tree ring evidence shows that these trees can survive big fires, although large patches have been more likely to do so, notably in damp riparian areas, than more isolated individuals. At least one species, *Nothofagus cunninghamii*, or myrtle beech, is also shown to be capable of rapid regeneration after fires. These findings explain the persistence of temperate rainforest in the Central Highlands over the last 2,500 years, despite a level of fire activity 'as high or higher than at any other time in the past 40,000 years' (p. 388).

Chapter 19, by Tim Denham *et al.*, seeks to test the assumption that European landscape transformations 'have been more dramatic than those made by Aborigines over tens of millennia' (p. 393). They aim to synthesise historical reconstruction with the palaeoecological record in an investigation of 19th century European settlement of the Willunga Plains south of Adelaide. It confirms the 'apocalyptic' nature of vegetation change in the 19th century, with the two approaches providing corroborating data sets that the authors argue mutually inform each other. This is a valuable interdisciplinary perspective: that historical research should be integrated with palaeoecological study, rather than being 'a cursory appendage' as is more usually so (p. 408). In this case, it has enabled calibration of the relative chronology derived from multi-proxy, i.e. pollen and phytolith, diagnostics.

There are equally illuminating and varied studies in the first half of the volume which looks at landscape, where several chapters are concerned with Aboriginal archaeologies. For example, Thomas Richards, in Chapter 3, uses early-Holocene data from excavations at Cape Duquesne in south-west Victoria to compare with late-Holocene data. His purpose is to advance the debate to which Kershaw has substantially contributed about the emergence of socio-economic complexity amongst Aboriginal groups. His results provide what he describes as 'a textbook signature' (p. 95) from the early-Holocene for highly mobile and egalitarian hunter-gatherers. The late-Holocene evidence, in contrast, points to more highly organised occupations by semi-sedentary peoples. This conclusion is echoed in Chapter 4, by Asa Ferrier and Richard Cosgrove, who return to the Atherton Tableland, and also use archaeological and historical data. Their investigation suggests that the use of toxic nuts for subsistence might have played a 'significant role in the development of complex semi-sedentary rainforest societies that were recorded at contact' (p. 116).

The last two chapters in part 1 are quite different. These are written by cultural geographers. Christian Kull and Haripriya Rangan discuss 'Science, sentiment and ter-

ritorial chauvinism in the acacia name change debate' in Chapter 9. They focus on the controversy over ownership of the genus name *Acacia* in the last two decades. Much of their essay concerns the technologies and politics of naming. They record the acrimony surrounding the vote at the International Botanical Congress in Vienna in 2005, which determined that *Acacia* should be conserved for the subset of trees from Australia, and the charge that Australians inevitably had an advantage in attending that meeting, compared to their poorly resourced African counterparts. In their analysis, scientific attempts to resolve classification issues are unlikely to succeed, because these take little note of place-based associations and attachments to particular plants. Put another way, science is frequently embedded with the political.

This point is amply demonstrated in Chapter 10, by Lesley Head and Joachim Regnéll. Their topic is contested landscapes among environmental managers in Skane, southern Sweden. This is clearly a region where human impact on the land is longstanding, although not always reflected in management frameworks and methods. They make the interesting point that there is often resistance to recognising the role of people in the development of forest landscapes compared to grasslands and meadows, which they speculate reflects the power of trees in scientific and historical imaginations, as well as the more obvious human origin of open landscapes. This difference in turn has implications for the ways in which reserved areas are managed and, they suggest, in how landscape managers are themselves trained.

This volume is therefore a rich and impressively researched tribute to Peter Kershaw's considerable impact on a range of disciplines interested in the long-term environmental history of Australia and other lands. *Terra Australis* is a series published by the ANU E Press; the review volume is in A4 soft cover format. It is well produced, with excellent diagrams, maps and photographs, many in colour. The key theme that links all the chapters, and which is central to Kershaw's legacy, is highlighted by the editors when they describe Australian landscapes as 'not prefigured … as stages for people to subsequently act upon, but rather engaged landscapes at their very core' (p. 9). In foregrounding an understanding of landscape as defined by human engagement, this collection brings a tremendously useful sense of both the dynamic and expressive to the concept.

Furthermore, there is a strong element of spatiality in many of the contributions. The editors describe this as deriving from Kershaw's ability 'to transcend different spatial scales of interpretation', using palynological research from individual sites to join up histories of landscapes 'rarely legitimately achievable in purely archaeological research' (pp. 8–9). Harry Lourandos *et al.*, in the second chapter, extend this through dating and interpretation of rock art and cultural materials to claim 'a *spatial history* of Aboriginal Australia' (p. 55). Hence, quite apart from the interest of the individual case studies in this volume, in a collective sense it has some valuable things to say to practitioners in a range of disciplines about how we understand the making of 'peopled landscapes'.

IKAWAI: FRESHWATER FISHES IN MAORI CULTURE AND ECONOMY

Robert M. McDowall, 2011.
Canterbury University Press, Christchurch, New Zealand.
832 pp., ISBN 978-1-877257-86-5 (hardback), NZ$130.00.

Reviewed by:
Ian Smith,
Department of Anthropology and Archaeology,
University of Otago

This is a hugely impressive, but somewhat annoying book. Its author was among the most distinguished experts on the freshwater fish of New Zealand, having revised their taxonomy and biogeography, and written over 230 papers, 14 books and more than 300 popular articles on the subject. Published just after his untimely death, this book brings together information generated and collated during his long career to form the most comprehensive account ever presented on New Zealand's freshwater fish and the ways in which they were used by Maori.

At 832 pages it encyclopaedic. It begins with an overview of the place of freshwater fishes in Maori life, before providing an overview of the available freshwater fauna that provides basic information on the taxonomy, diet, size, distribution, conservation status and fishery value of 41 fish species, two crustaceans (freshwater crayfish) and one mollusc (freshwater mussels). This is followed by detailed accounts for each of the 14 main species or species groups that are known to have been utilised by Maori. Each of these covers Maori nomenclature; dietary and other values to Maori; evidence from archaeology; historical evidence of Maori knowledge, fishing protocols, traditions, legends, proverbs and use in place names; traditional methods of capture, cooking, preservation and storage; and where relevant, information about modern fisheries.

The second half of the book begins with consideration of more general issues such as Maori role in translocation of fishes, their approaches to management of fisheries, seasonal and regional patterns of fishing, and a very interesting chapter on materials used for catching and processing fish. There are case studies of specific fishery localities including the Whanganui River, the North Island lakes, the South Island's Te Waihora (Lake Ellesmere), and the eel fisheries of the lowland rivers and lakes. There is also extensive treatment of the impacts of Pakeha settlement on fisheries, through changes in land use, modifications of freshwater habitats, introductions of new species, and new cultural attitudes to indigenous species such as eels.

The book ends with discussion of the Treaty of Waitangi and ownership of freshwater fish resources, before a more general discussion of the changing cultural environment that his study of Maori interaction with freshwater fisheries has disclosed.

The breadth of coverage and the detailed analysis of each component part combine to make this a truly impressive piece of work. What serves to annoy is its treatment of archaeological evidence. For the vast majority of freshwater species there is no archaeological evidence for their use in pre-European times. This is sometimes attributed to the small size and fragile nature of their remains, but McDowall also repeatedly lays blame with archaeologists, asserting, for example, that 'few archaeologists would recognise occasional bones from this fish' (p. 239) or 'I doubt that archaeologists would know the difference' (p. 269). Where evidence is available, as in the case of eels, he is dismissive of the conclusion that archaeologists draw that this provides no support for large scale mass capture of eels prior to the historic period. Beyond the mildly insulting portrayal of our professional competence, there is a deeper concern here.

There is an over-riding presumption in McDowall's reconstruction that because certain resources were significant contributors to diet in historical accounts from the 19th century they must have been equally important prehistorically. This outright dismissal of the potential for change prior to the arrival of Europeans stands in marked contrast to the intelligent and nuanced discussion of changing fisheries practice during the historic era with which he ends the book. What this reflects, perhaps more than anything else, is that his consideration of pre-European use of freshwater fauna is not contextualised within the broader picture of Maori subsistence patterns and population growth which are likely to have shaped the way in which these resources were exploited.

These quibbles about archaeological evidence are of minor importance in the overall assessment of this book. Its greatest strength is the thoroughness of its coverage of a topic that has for too long been neglected. It is well written and superbly illustrated with colour photographs and line drawings of the freshwater species under consideration, along with a truly impressive range of 19th and early 20th century photographs of Maori engaged in fishing practices and the artefacts and structures that they used. It will stand for a long time to come as the major reference work on the subject.