MATERIALISING ANCESTRAL MADANG: POTTERY PRODUCTION AND SUBSISTENCE TRADING ON THE NORTHEAST COAST OF NEW GUINEA.

By Dylan Gaffney. 2020.
Dunedin: *University of Otago Studies in Archaeology*
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Reviewed by
John Edward Terrell, Field Museum, Chicago.

In a letter thanking a young economist in 1861 for his defense of the theory of evolution, Charles Darwin was blunt about saying why gathering information without a well-defined purpose is a waste of time. 'About 30 years ago there was much talk that Geologists ought only to observe & not theorize; & I well remember someone saying that at this rate a man might as well go into a gravel-pit & count the pebbles & describe their colors. How odd it is that everyone should not see that all observation must be for or against some view, if it is to be of any service.' Wise words, but in truth geologists do not always know what they will find in advance of finding it. In this regard, being an archaeologist is like being a geologist. Long ago they, too, became skilled at the refined art and science of counting and describing their own sorts of 'pebbles,' so to speak. Such drudge work is simply part of the archaeologist's job.

As Stuart Bedford at Australian National University has said in another review of this monograph, Dylan Gaffney skillfully describes what he found along the north coast of Papua New Guinea in 2014. His main focus is on reconstructing how pottery production and intercommunity exchange emerged in the Madang area starting around 650–550 cal BP. What he tells us in such exemplary detail, however, indirectly also illustrates three common shortcomings that have long bedeviled archaeology in the Pacific. The first is historical, the second is psychological, and the third is methodological. Rather than just surveying the contents of this monograph to convince you to read it, I want instead to touch upon each of these much broader professional shortcomings in how many archaeologists view deep time in the Pacific with the understanding that Gaffney is not to blame for them.

Historical: In the *Origin*, Darwin argues that life on Earth is constantly changing by means of natural selection, sexual selection, and so forth. Hence (but only by implication) biblical accounts of Creation and our descent from a single ancestral couple divinely created in a particular place on Earth called Eden can be seen as good stories perhaps, but are otherwise fanciful. It is ironic, therefore, that Darwin's own view of history (as opposed to evolution) was arguably biblical in its focus on descent with modification. Although he never uses the word 'ancestry' in the *Origin* (something nowadays heavily promoted for profit by commercial DNA laboratories), the expressions 'ancestor,' 'common ancestor,' 'remote ancestor,' and 'lineal ancestor' collectively occur in this famous book 15 times. This is no surprise perhaps because like the bible, Darwin is talking about something called 'descent.' It is noteworthy, as well, that there is only a single illustration in the *Origin of Species*. This diagram depicts what he calls the 'Tree of Life' as being rooted in an unnamed place at a single point sometime in the past.

I mention these details because the biblical view of history (rather than Creation) promoted in Darwin's breakthrough book is also one that many archaeologists working in the Pacific use to warrant their explorations and deductions. Although Darwin's own thesis is primarily about descent with modification, the view of deep time in the Pacific long favored by many archaeologists, linguists, and other foreign scholars is a story instead about an ancestral people, tribe, or race popularly called 'the Austronesians' and their lengthy migrations away from a place of origin that was not the Judeo-Christian Garden of Eden, but rather somewhere in Southeast Asia or (nowadays) on the island of Taiwan.

Psychological: Doing archaeology to trace the descent with modification of people living in the Pacific today whom you identify as 'Austronesian' is an example of what is called categorical thinking. What is this way of seeing the world and our place in it? As magnificent as it is, the human brain is predisposed to accept without too much bother that if something looks like a duck, swims like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it probably is a duck. In the Pacific, for instance, when they find pieces of pottery called 'Lapita,' archaeologists seem predisposed to claim they have found yet another place where the forebears of today's Austronesians must have settled down at least for a little while.

Methodological: At the end of this volume, Gaffney tells us he undertook the investigations he has described for a reason: 'From a methodological and theoretical perspective, this volume has attempted a new approach to Pacific ceramic analysis.' Why do this? 'Untangling how the processes of pottery production and distribution operated will aid archaeological interpretations that suggest forming technology is non-conservative and easily transmitted across large geographic distances, between non-related groups.' This is a beautifully composed and produced descriptive monograph. The illustrations are terrific. It is particularly notable that this study began life as a Master's thesis at the University of Otago. Beyond taking us into a proverbial 'gravel pit' on the north coast of New Guinea, however, it is unclear what we should make of what he tells us. The answer to the fundamental question *So what?* remains open for later consideration.

SHIFTING GROUNDS: DEEP HISTORIES OF TĀMAKI MAKAURAU AUCKLAND.

By Lucy Macintosh. 2021.
Bridget Williams Books. ISBN 9781988587332, 300 pp, 200 illustrations. RRP $NZ59.99. Hardback.

Reviewed by
Harry Allen, Research fellow, University of Auckland.

In adopting a landscape approach in *Shifting Grounds*, Lucy Macintosh sets herself an ambitious task arguing that physical and sensory clues can reveal voices that are inaccessible to us through other media. In these terms, Ihumātao and the Ōtuataua Stonefields are places where multiple histories and knowledge systems coalesce in the physical environment shaping the identities of local people and the wider Auckland community. The book has six chapters along with an introduction and a brief concluding chapter. Of the six, those dealing with Ihumātao and the Ōtuataua Stonefields and Pukekawa/Auckland Domain provide the best support for Lucy's approach. In them, the volcanic record, the archaeological past, the landscape, Māori traditions and recent historical records blend to reveal relationships and tenwsions that extend to the present day.

What clearly comes through is the extent to which Auckland's volcanoes have shaped the lives of both its Māori and later inhabitants. As we stream down Auckland's motorways, winding between the numerous surviving volcanic cones, I wonder how many of us consider the active volcanic field lying beneath us. The author also reminds us that the war against Waikato began with the brutal eviction of Te Ākitai Waiohua from Ihumātao, an act that turned Māori British subjects into refugees, days before colonial forces crossed the Mangatāwhiri Stream. The destruction of homes, possessions, livelihoods and the subsequent confiscation of land remains a stain on the record of the colonial administration. As we mourn the late Queen, it is salutary to consider that the only piece of New Zealand legislation that Queen Elizabeth II has signed personally (*The Waikato Raupatu Claims Settlement Act* 1995) contains an apology to Waikato for the unjustified invasion and confiscation of its lands. *Shifting Grounds* is an important source from which to gain an understanding of the background for the recent protests over the Government's, now defunct, plan to allow the subdivision of Ihumātao for housing.

The book began its life as a PhD thesis and it is a credit to Lucy Macintosh that she has succeeded in the task of shifting from an academic framework to one that is well written and easy to read. Her footnotes and references are excellent and allow the reader to follow their own lines of inquiry. An innovation is to cross reference page numbers against the notes saving one from having to go backwards and forwards checking chapter numbers. The book is well illustrated, though a minority of illustrations are blurred and difficult to read. This book is essential reading for all those interested in the manner in which the past constantly breaks through into our presen.

UNCOVERING PACIFIC PASTS: HISTORIES OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN OCEANIA

Edited by
Hilary Howes, Tristen Jones, and Matthew Spriggs. 2022
Canberra: ANU Press, The Australian National University.
578 pp. eBook free. ISBN: 9781760464875

Reviewed by
Tim Murray, University of Melbourne

Uncovering Pacific Pasts is an important outcome of the Australian Research Council Laureate research program *(Collective Biography of Archaeology in the Pacific* (CBAP)) awarded to Professor Matthew Spriggs of the Australian National University, and undertaken between 2015–2020. The project had several ambitious aims, not the least of which was to create a subfield in the history of archaeology in the Pacific by using the vehicle of disciplinary historiography to explore the theoretical underpinnings of archaeology in Oceania.

This review is hardly the place to present an assessment of the outcomes of that project, though I am bound to observe that this publication and the slew of papers and dissertations published by Spriggs, and by its doctoral and post-doctoral participants, gives us plenty to work with. At the very least we can observe that the CBAP project has connected research into the history of archaeology in Oceania with the current dominant approaches to the historiography of archaeology more generally – with the aim of contributing to a developing understanding of the genesis and development of archaeological theory and practice on a global scale.

This is particularly the case in the adoption of key observations about the use of critical historiographies to evaluate past and present archaeological theories, and the application of 'object biographies' to track the impact of strategies for understanding the importance of changes in the context of the interactions between people and material things. In this sense, while neither CBAP nor *Uncovering Pacific Pasts* have broken new theoretical or methodological ground, it is still the case that the application of these now conventional approaches to the context of Oceanic historiography has created something new. Significantly, that process has also 'reconnected' archaeologists and the Indigenous peoples of Oceania with collections of material culture described and analysed in ways that emphasise the benefits of tracking the histories of those collections – if only to underscore the reality of change in expectations

and attitudes among Indigenous and non-Indigenous observers. The Appendix to this volume 'Statement by Rakival People' and the concluding chapter 36, are eloquent testimonies to some real transformations in both contexts.

At one level this large book is essentially a very detailed catalogue of exhibitions of Oceanic material culture staged from 2021, with some remaining 'open for business', and still others in the pipeline once the restrictions of the Covid pandemic ease – hopefully very soon. At another, each of the 36 chapters that comprise *Uncovering Pacific Pasts* contribute to a more general understanding of the history of archaeology (and anthropology) in Melanesia and Polynesia. The bulk of these chapters are 'object driven' and adopt the now conventional approach of 'object biographies' – most directly associated with the work of Igor Kopytoff and Arjun Appadurai begun some 36 years ago – but strangely uncited in this volume (Appadurai 1986; Kopytoff 1986).

However, others stand as 'people biographies', given their focus on the work of major figures such as Roger Green, Jack Golson, and H.D. Skinner, as well as less well-known contributors from the 19th and 20th centuries. Then there are 'institutional biographies', particularly the Polynesian Society and the Australian National University. Together, these 'microhistories' provide examples of changing aspirations, interests and concerns that underwrite the historiography of archaeology and anthropology in Oceania. Nonetheless, the synthetic surveys by Spriggs (chapters 2 and 19), Dotte-Sarout (chapter 4) and Spriggs and Howes (chapter 26) provide useful 'global' context to the more object or person-oriented discussions, that occasionally lift the focus away from the minutiae of microhistories towards some reflection about what this all means for our understanding of the historiography of archaeology more generally.

The research underpinning *Uncovering Pacific Pasts* is an exercise in scale, with the essays reflecting the participation of some 38 institutions across Oceania, Australia, the United States and Europe and coordinated within the broad CBAP structure. Here the methodology of 'object biographies' gains specificity, as institutions were motivated to take the opportunity to dust off historic collections (often derived from archaeological research) and to display them to new audiences. Of course this was also an opportunity to reflect on the changing changing cultural and disciplinary contexts of those historic collections, particularly on the contemporary Indigenous communities that are most closely associated with them.

Uncovering Pacific Pasts is divided into four sections that follow a general statement of intent and approach by the editors. Part 1: E*arly European exploration of the Pacific, 1500s–1870s*, comprises 5 essays presenting a mixture of synthetic treatments (chapters 2 and 4) and much more specific discussions of material culture drawn from across Oceania. These essays also begin the exploration of the importance of national and colonial perspectives on the kinds of collections undertaken by British, French, Russian, German and American observers in the region.

Part 2: *The first archaeological excavations, 1870s–1910s* presents 11 essays that survey archaeological activity in the region and the people and institutions that undertook it. 'Object biographies' loom large here with three essays by Hilary Howes (chapters 14, 15 and 16) being exemplary of the approach, and the essays by Van Tilburg (chapter 18), Bonshek (chapter 13) and Mulrooney and Swift (chapter 17) demonstrating the geographic reach of Oceanic archaeology and anthropology, from the Bismarks to Rapa Nui.

Part 3: *The burgeoning field of anthropology and archaeology 1918–45* is somewhat shorter with 7 essays that follow the approach of Parts 1 and 2 – a synthetic essay by Spriggs then a shift in focus to essays about people, institutions (in this case the Anima Mundi Museum in the Vatican, chapter 22) and material culture. The regional focus is maintained here too, although I was surprised to see a discussion on the work of Fred McCarthy in Southeast Asia during the 30s in this context. Macknight's discussion of McCarthy's continuation of a 19th century focus on the significance of the regional links between Australia and Asia is very interesting, but I wonder about its relevance to the Oceanic concerns of the volume.

Uncovering Pacific Pasts wraps up with the 11 essays comprising Part 4: *Archaeology as a profession in the Pacific, 1945–present*. These retain the focus of the rest of the volume – a mixture of people, institutions and material culture (particularly Lapita), but also include two essays offering synthetic treatments of professionalisation (chapter 26), and the recent history of archaeology in French Polynesia (chapter 30). The volume concludes with a survey of the outcomes *Uncovering Pacific Pasts* exhibition, which includes a brief discussion of ongoing research, particularly the new project into the roles of women in the history of archaeology in the Pacific, led by Emilie Dotte-Sarout.

The theatre of Oceanic archaeology is awe-inspiring in its reach and scale, and it has been observed more than once that the first great pulse of the human settlement of the globe (begun out of Africa some 2 million years ago) ended at the farthest reaches of the Pacific at about the same time as the second great pulse of global settlement (the European settlement of the Americas) begun. As interesting as the microhistories of the human 'conquest of the Pacific' (to paraphrase Peter Bellwood) are, there are macrohistories that also need to be written. Archaeologists such as Patrick Kirch have clearly recognized this in discussions about the importance of Pacific contexts in developing our comprehension of major theoretical inquiries into migration, voyaging, island ecologies, climatic stress, and of course trends towards social complexity (just to list a few).

Uncovering Pacific Pasts does not pretend to be a history of archaeology in Oceania, though it certainly might be considered to be a contribution to it. On one level the diversity of approach represented in its constituent essays can appear bitty and episodic, lacking an overall theoreti-

cal 'guiding hand' taking advantage of the opportunities provided by CBAP. But on another, the mixture of personal and object biographies, discussions about the roles of museum exhibitions of artefact collections in 're-imagining' the nature and purpose of Oceanic archaeology, and the consequences of engaging with Indigenous interests and approaches to all of that diversity, has the potential to create the impetus to drive a transformation in Oceanic archaeology, and to write new chapters in the historiography of global archaeology. There is a great deal to look forward to.

Uncovering Pacific Pasts is very well illustrated, and stan dards of production are excellent. The text is clean and well-organized, with few boo-boos. Kudos to the editors for this. Even better, ANU Press offers the volume as a free download.

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