

Editorial

As the *Journal of Pacific Archaeology* enters its second year of publication we are heartened by a continued increase in subscribers and contributors, hopefully indicating that we occupy a useful and sustainable niche in the ecology of academic publishing. In the current issue the geographic range of that niche is well illustrated – we present papers deriving from studies in the southern and northern extremes of the Polynesian triangle, the central Pacific, southern and western Melanesia, and far western Micronesia.

Defining the topical boundaries of a publication is always a difficult task no matter what limitations are specified. Decisions are always liable to become arbitrary at the margins. Other journals publishing Pacific archaeology draw geographic boundaries that encompass Asia or Australia, but we have chosen to simply follow the ocean to where it touches land, whether island or continental coastline. In so doing, we draw attention to the pervasive role of the sea as a source, resource, connector and frontier for Pacific populations. One of the great paradoxes of the sea is that it both separates communities and is the medium for their connection – a fact that makes the Pacific such a vital site of research, facilitating comparison. So although the locations studied in this issue are dispersed over more than 26 million square kilometres of ocean, they are also unified by that ocean and its history of human involvement.

The first two papers in this issue focus on New Zealand. In our lead article Richard Walter and colleagues describe excavations at Cook's Cove, a remote locale which serves as the type site of the North Island Holocene stratigraphy. It is a small place with a big history, reinterpreted by Walter *et al* in a new series of 'event phases' spanning 700 years from first settlement by Polynesians, through periods of environmental, economic and social change, to the present day. The cove is named after Captain James Cook who visited in 1769, and a cave in the bay is named after the Ra'iatean priest of the 'Oro cult, Tupaia, who travelled aboard the *Endeavour*. Cook's Cove may also have been the place where Tupaia drew his now famous picture of Joseph Banks exchanging cloth for a crayfish. Other,

earlier, kinds of exchange and community connection are explored by Moore in his paper on the transport of obsidian across the central North Island. Using both visual and geochemical characterisation, Moore argues for long term interaction along particular geographical lines possibly mediated by cultural/political boundaries.

We then move on to Melanesia with three papers that address pottery sequences, in Fiji (Cochrane *et al*), New Caledonia (Sand *et al*) and southern Papua New Guinea (Allen *et al*). Here again the overriding themes include the nature of community connections and movement, the emergence of localised differences, and negotiations of environmental and social change over the long term. Each of these papers, in its own way, engages with debates about how to interpret variations in material culture assemblages and what these say about continuity, change and connection – and in this respect each paper addresses fundamental issues of culture history in the region.

Flexner contributes a report dealing with the more recent past, discussing the use of animals in a historic Leper colony on Moloka'i, but the balance of continuity, change and connection are crucial here too. Flexner's central question is the degree to which traditional lifeways on Moloka'i were variously adapted, replaced or replicated in the new context of a colonial institution overlaid on top of an existing Hawaiian cultural landscape.

Lastly we host a debate stemming from a piece in the previous issue, in which Fitzpatrick critiqued a model of climate induced pan-Pacific societal change, using Palau as a case study. The main targets of that critique, Nunn and his co-authors, respond in this issue, followed by a reply from Fitzpatrick. The JPA is glad to be able to host these direct responses to published articles, since it is our belief that rigorous debate is the best way to challenge and advance our understanding of key issues in Pacific archaeology. We hope to host similar debates from time to time in the future, and also welcome short Letters to the Editor responding to individual articles.

Once again, we thank our contributors, reviewers, subscribers and those involved in the production of the JPA for the support we continue to receive.

Tim Thomas