LAPITA: ANCÊTRES OCÉANIENS, OCEANIC ANCESTORS

Christophe Sand and Stuart Bedford (eds.), 2010.
Somogy Éditions d'Art & Musée du Quai Branly
304 pp., chronology, bibliography, maps,
photographs, line drawings.
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In November 2010, Christophe Sand, Stuart Bedford, the Vanuatu Cultural Centre and the Institute of Archaeology of New Caledonia and the Pacific took Lapita to Europe in an acclaimed exhibition at the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris. This large format, lavishly illustrated book, with complete texts in French and English, was published to accompany the exhibition, in place of a more orthodox exhibition catalogue. The exhibition and publication received significant sponsorship from the Pacific Fund of the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, UNESCO, the European Commission in Vanuatu and the Maison de la Nouvelle-Calédonie in Paris.

The book is not merely a beautiful work that could grace any coffee table; it is a very useful and succinct review of a wide range of current topics relating to Lapita spread, settlement, and disappearance. Twenty-two authors, all well known authorities in their fields, have contributed 16 chapters and seven shorter two-page 'insets' on specific topics. Given that the book has only 304 pages, including the introductory and reference sections, full texts in two languages, and a great many illustrations, it is amazing that so much interesting information is so clearly and successfully imparted.

The structure moves initially from west to east and from older to more recent. After a general introduction (Sand and Bedford) comes a background section: history of research (Sand), first human settlement of Melanesia (Allen), Neolithisation of Southeast Asia (Spriggs), Austronesian languages (Pawley), with insets on the origin of the term 'Lapita' (Sand), and Lapita canoes and navigation (Irwin). The second section has chapters on Lapita emergence in the Bismarck Archipelago (Summerhayes) and the movement into Remote Oceania (Sheppard), with insets on obsidian sources and distribution (Summerhayes) and the Lapita pottery of the Reef/Santa Cruz islands (Chiu). The centrepiece of the volume is really the third section, with six chapters on the Lapita traditions of remote Oceania: Northern Vanuatu (Bedford and Galipaud), the Teouma site on Efate (Bedford *et al.*), funerary practices in Remote Oceania in the 1st millennium BC (Valentin), genetics of island settlement (Matisoo-Smith), southern Lapita /New Caledonia (Sand) and the dispersal to Fiji and Western Polynesia (Clark), with two insets: the Makué and Shokraon sites in northern Vanuatu (Galipaud) and the Lapita pottery pit at Foué in New Caledonia (Sand *et al.*). Lastly, a section on Lapita cultural dynamics and diversification has four chapters: Lapita shell working (Szabó), stone tool technology (Sheppard), ecology and subsistence (Kirch) and the end of an era – cultural diversification of Lapita traditions (Sand), with one inset on the Lapita impact on native fauna (Anderson).

Understandably, the volume places considerable emphasis on Lapita sites of Vanuatu and New Caledonia. The transformation of Vanuatu in the last 20 years from a 'Lapita gap' to a place seen to have played a central role in the Lapita colonisation of Melanesia is very instructive. Convincing arguments are put forward as to why the main Solomon Islands may really be an area of Lapita avoidance (Sheppard), but I cannot help wondering whether, following the Vanuatu example, Samoa may yet be transformed into a place of greater Lapita significance than has yet been demonstrated.

There is a heartening move away from overly simplistic models equating language, biology and culture to a better understanding of the complexities of Lapita colonisation and settlement and indeed, of what preceded them in both New Guinea and islands further west. Spriggs points to parallels in the colonisation of the Marianas and Palau in western Micronesia. Several authors mention Green's Triple I model with approbation. Spriggs suggests that 'the new prestige languages of the Austronesian family' came to be spoken by people of widespread geographical and genetic origins. Matisoo-Smith is emphatic that, 'while the linguistic evidence suggests that the origin of the Austronesian languages is in Taiwan, none of the human data point directly or specifically to Taiwan as a likely source. Instead, the combination of genetic data suggests that biologically, the various components of the Lapita culture, the plants and animals transported with the pottery and other artefacts we use to define Lapita, came together in Near Oceania.' Sheppard argues that, in near Oceania, 'the presence of Papuan speakers makes it impossible to categorically state that Lapita cultural features were always held by Austronesian speakers or that non-Lapita carrying populations did not speak Austronesian.'

On the question of Lapita subsistence, Kirch restates his conviction that Lapita people were serious horticulturalists, using both linguistic and archaeological evidence. The recent developments in identifications of plant microfossils strongly support this view, along with the growing evidence for plant domestications in Near Oceania. However, the ghosts of strandloopers appear not to have been entirely laid to rest, with Clark suggesting that early Lapita settlements in the central Pacific 'were sustained as much

by wild and predominantly near-coast food resources as they were by domestic flora and fauna…'. Pigs and dogs may not have arrived in the first canoes, but surely the evidence is building for the plants.

The two technology chapters make some interesting points. Szabó has done a great deal to broaden our understanding of Lapita shell working. With a large sample of shell material from a number of sites she questions whether there is firm evidence for stable trading networks moving shell artefacts and highlights this as a question for further investigation. Sheppard in discussing stone technology also highlights areas where a great deal of work remains to be done, and makes the important point that it is time to stop discussing tools according to material (shell or stone) and instead consider all adze blades, for example, as adze blades.

Pottery, still central to Lapita, was central to the exhibition and features largely in the book, with perceptive discussions of the roles of ritual and domestic ware, and the rates of loss of both in various island groups.

In the difficult area or ritual and belief, Valentin, who has overseen the excavation of the great majority of Lapita skeletons, rather than merely studying the exhumed remains, makes a valiant attempt to describe Lapita burial practices.

In a book of this kind, there is inevitably some variation in quality. Some chapters are better written than others; some have suffered a bit from sometimes too literal translation into English. Some are more fully referenced than others but even so, the references at the end provide a set of very useful pointers to recent literature for readers who are not specialists in the Lapita area.

Producing and designing a book of this kind, with fully bilingual text and large quantities of illustrations with bilingual (sometimes lengthy) captions, must have posed a huge challenge. The design and layout are excellent. There are many photos, mostly in colour but including historical black and whites, and excellent line drawings. Illustrations show not only pottery and other artefacts, but excavations in progress, other aspects of fieldwork, and scenes of sites. Maps are generally excellent, although in at least one case (Southeast Asian sites) not all sites referred to in the text appear. An inset photograph of a Vanuatu shell bracelet, referred to by more than one author, appears not to have made it to the page. These slips and a handful of typos are probably inevitable in any large ambitious publication produced to a tight deadline.

This book sets a standard that will be very hard to match. It deserves a place on the shelves of anybody interested in Pacific archaeology, art or history.

ALTERED ECOLOGIES: FIRE, CLIMATE AND HUMAN INFLUENCE ON TERRESTRIAL LANDSCAPES

Simon Haberle, Janelle Stevenson and Matthew Prebble (eds.), 2010.
Terra Australis, Vol. 32, ANU E Press, The Australian National University, Canberra ACT 0200 Australia.
512 pp., ISBN 9781921666803 (paperback)
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This volume was compiled as a retirement tribute to Professor Geoffrey Hope, who served on the faculty in the Department of Archaeology and Natural History at the Australian National University from 1978 until 2009. In the course of that tenure he influenced and inspired countless colleagues and students through his investigations of past and present vegetation communities in Australia, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and Vanuatu. As is clear from the volume's 27 papers, many of which reference his work (and on four of which he is a co-author), Geoff was keenly interested in documenting and understanding changes in past ecosystems and how they evolved to what we see today. He was, in a word, a palaeoecologist, but also one who deeply appreciated the important role humans often had as integral components of the natural environments in which they lived. Prebble, Stevenson, and Haberle provide a wonderful introductory essay, 'A D-section and a tin whistle,' offering brief personal remembrances of Geoff and his work over a long career, and ending with a long list of his publications. For the record, I must note my own experience with Geoff when I first visited Australia in 2000 for the Jim Specht tribute conference at the Australian Museum. Being introduced to Australia beyond the confines of Sydney by such a delightful and knowledgeable person was certainly as extraordinary as it was unexpected.

Following the introduction, the papers are divided into four major sections: 'Ecosystem Responses to Long and Short Term Climate Change', 'Human Colonisation and Ecological Impacts', 'Fire and Its Role in Transforming our Environment', and 'Methodological Advances and Applications in Environmental Change Research'. These headings properly reflect the main domains of much recent palaeoecological work, and the papers in each of the sections provide a good sense of the state of the art in the field. Though some papers are more specifically archaeological, mostly in the section on Human Colonisation and Ecological Impacts, this volume is definitely not oriented toward archaeologists. However, there is scarcely a paper that does not have something of significant interest for archaeologists.

Although in this age of specialisation many readers will turn right to the articles that deal with their interests and delve no further into volume, this would be a mistake. By taking in the entire range of articles, one comes away with a sense of the interconnectedness of so much of the research and how work in one area can have a bearing on understanding issues, or at least help to frame questions, for research in other areas. For example, the modelling of Late Pleistocene climate change, vegetation and fire ecology in a number of papers provides important parameters for considering early human adaptations in the Sunda-Sahul regions.

It is impossible to mention all of the papers in a review such as this, or it would amount to little more than a table of contents for the volume. However, I would like to mention at least one paper from each of the four major sections in an effort to provide a more in-depth sense of the range of subjects treated in the volume. Choosing just one paper for mention out of a number in each section is arbitrary, of course, as all of the papers have merit and make important contributions. Again, I believe it is the collective impact of the papers that make this an important volume and not any single paper.

In the first section the paper by J.G. Luly and colleagues, 'Last Glacial Maximum habitat change and its effects on the grey-headed flying fox,' provides an excellent example of contemporary palaeoecological investigations in which the interplay of sophisticated interdisciplinary methods are brought to bear on research issues. This study uses an analysis of genetic diversity of the grey-headed flying fox in Australia to demonstrate its significant reduction in population size at 21,000 BP, the Last Glacial Maximum, compared to its modern population (roughly down to 16% of its modern numbers, or about 68,000 individuals). The population findings then build on models of palaeoclimate and vegetation changes to infer the former geographical distribution of grey-headed flying foxes along the eastern seaboard of Australia, showing that it must have existed in small and highly fragmented populations during the Last Glacial Maximum. Modern populations of grey-headed flying foxes are in decline, and while this study indicates that the species can survive and persist in fragmented small populations, the complexity of the causes associated with the modern declines may be too much to ensure survival of the species. At a more general level, the findings provide a useful stepping off point for considering the historical ecology of other taxa that survived the Last Glacial Maximum in eastern Australia, including humans (e.g., see especially the paper by Sandra Bowdler about the late Pleistocene human occupation of southeast Australia).

The second section has a more obvious appeal to archaeologists as all of the papers deal with two of the main bread and butter subjects of prehistorians working in the Pacific and Indo-Pacific areas. I was particularly fascinated by Richard T. Corlett's paper, 'Megafaunal extinctions and their consequences in the tropical Indo-Pacific.' Given the long history of humans in the region, going back to *Homo erectus* times in island Southeast Asia (the Java remains date to 1.0 to 1.8 million years ago), with *H. sapiens* appearing about 45,000–50,000 years ago, and the dwarf hominin, *H. floresiensis* inhabiting Flores Island from about 95,000 to 16,600 years ago, there is an interesting question as to how these hominids impacted the region's Pleistocene megafauna (defined as species with a body mass over 44 kg). At a broader level, there is also the question of the extent to which tropical Indo-Pacific megafaunal extinctions conform to the global pattern of Quaternary Megafauna Extinctions in which 'two-thirds of all mammal genera and half (*c.* 178) of all species of body mass >44 kg' went extinct between *c.* 50,000 and 3000 years ago. Corlett's paper focuses on the last 130,000 years because the fossil record before then is so limited. The data, with few exceptions (giant tortoises and hippopotamuses) and a measure of interpretive caution, indicate that by the late Pleistocene, natural species turnover is replaced by extinctions without turnover, suggesting the impact of humans. The pattern appears to follow the Quaternary Megafauna Extinction pattern elsewhere with the exception that there was no single great extinction event but rather a steady trickle of extinctions. As Corlett concludes, 'The absence of a well-defined mass-extinction event in tropical Asia in the 60,000–40,000 BP period during which modern humans probably arrived is consistent with the 'coastal express train' model, with coastal populations moving on as they depleted resources, and only later moving inland.'

The third section of the volume brings up the issues of natural versus anthropogenic burning and the impact of fires on vegetation communities. The paper by Susan Frawley and Sue O'Connor, 'A 40,000 year wood charcoal record from Carpenter's Gap 1: New insights into palaeovegetation change and indigenous foraging strategies in the Kimberley, Western Australia,' will be of particular interest to archaeologists. The wood charcoal data are from a limestone rock shelter in an arid region characterised by sparse vegetation with bunch grass (spinifex), localised small trees, and a *Eucalyptus* tree steppe on the footslopes of the limestone ranges. As explained by Frawley and O'Connor, 'Carpenter's Gap 1 is unique, as it preserves plant phytoliths, wood charcoal, pollen and macrobotanic remains, as well as organic and non-organic residues of human behaviour and thus provides a window into palaeoenvironmental change and the human behavioural responses to it, before, during and after the last Glacial Maximum.' They review previous studies of botanical remains from the site (phytoliths, macrobotanic remains, and charcoal), and an additional 200 charcoal samples were analysed for their study. One of the interesting points they make is that all of the previous palaeobotanical studies of Carpenter's Gap 1 have produced differing interpretations of the palaeovegetation. However, a consideration of how taphonomic and preservation factors bias each of the

types of data largely reconciles these differing interpretations. Their take-away point is that 'a complete and balanced profile of the vegetation history of the site will only be produced by assessing multiple lines of palaeobotanic evidence in tandem,' advice that archaeologists conducting such studies elsewhere would do well to heed.

The final section contains a diverse selection of papers providing some fascinating approaches. The paper that intrigued me the most was by R. Michael Bourke, 'Altitudinal limits of 230 economic crop species in Papua New Guinea.' While his research did not make use of sophisticated field and laboratory equipment or procedures, and did not involve mathematical algorithms or statistics, it accomplishes something of great research value by dint of extensive field observations. Bourke starts by noting why his compilation is of interest: 1) agricultural planning, 2) agricultural technology transfer, such as where certain crops will grow, 3) prehistoric agricultural inferences, and 4) assessing climate change using historical data on altitudinal limits of crops. Bourke's detailed account of his field procedures, methodology and background information is helpful in understanding the basis for his observations. In considering taro, the staple food of highland dwellers before the introduction of sweet potato 300 years ago, Bourke indicates that its 'mean usual upper limit' in mixed gardens is 2400 m, though for monospecific gardens the upper limit is 2250 m. As triploid banana cultivation, an important supplementary food to taro, had almost this same altitude limit in the early 1980s (2150 m), it may be inferred that that the upper limit for food cultivation in highland New Guinea was about 2200 m before the introduction of sweet potato. Since the early 1980s, the altitudinal limit of banana cultivation has climbed as a result of global warming. Interestingly, Bourke provides data on differing altitudinal crop limits in the Andes of South America, East Africa, and Indonesia for maize, sweet potato and other cultigens for which information is available, which he regards as 'a likely reflection of the mass mountain heating effect.'

BRIDGING THE DIVIDE: INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES AND ARCHAEOLOGY INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

Caroline Phillips and Harry Allen (eds.), 2010. One World Archaeology 60. Walnut Creek, California, USA: Left Coast Press, 290 pp., ISBN 978-1-59874-392-0 hardcover.

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'Bridging the Divide' is a publication outcome of the second Indigenous Conference or 'Inter-Congress' of the World Archaeological Congress held November 2005 in 'Tamaki Makaurau /Auckland, Aotearoa/New Zealand' (to follow the bicultural nomenclature of the volume). The Inter-Congress ran under the theme 'The uses and abuses of archaeology for Indigenous peoples' (p.17). Consistent with this emphasis, delegates and volume contributors considered tensions and conflicts as Indigenous communities engage with archaeology, as well as the experiences of insider and outsider archaeologists engaged in Indigenous archaeology.

While delegates came from all over the world to the Inter-Congress, editors Allen and Phillips acknowledge that this One World Archaeology volume focuses on Australia and New Zealand (p.17). Of 12 chapters, five consider New Zealand themes (including some content in the first chapter that frames the dialogue and debate), two are concerned with Australia, and five consider other places (primarily the Americas and Solomon Islands). Appendix 5 also includes anonymous, summary comments by Inter-Congress panellists considering relationships between archaeological and heritage entities and Maori. By way of disclosure, I am identified as one of the panel contributors.

The New Zealand chapters include reflections by editor Harry Allen on the 21st century 'crisis' in archaeological heritage management. Allen follows the introductory Chapter 1 co-authored with fellow editor Phillips in a critique of 'short-term regulatory approaches' in archaeology (p.174). Here Allen compares and contrasts the last with the museum and environmental conservation sectors that 'have recognized the close connections in Maori culture between ancestors, places and artefacts and the well-being of descendant communities' (p.173). Allen argues that the archaeological discipline in New Zealand has fought a 'rearguard action' against efforts to counter regulatory protection and against 'a shared vision' for Maori in the conservation of heritage places (p.174). It is time, Allen argues, for archaeologists to develop a 'national strategy' for archaeological sites that engages 'Maori and the wider community' (p.176). As a practical consideration, Allen points out that archaeologists need to 'surrender control over the archaeological heritage' to ensure that it survives

under Maori guardianship (p.175). These comparisons and arguments are compelling, certainly. Allen is also realistic enough to appreciate that the way ahead will not be easy, nor even necessarily consistent in outcome. Maori are represented by multiple independent descent groups for whom negotiations must proceed separately. The results of these 'are likely to vary from place to place and to range from outright rejection to a wary welcome' (p.175). Allen's acknowledgment is an important reality check for the permitting of archaeological research in New Zealand, and elsewhere.

From the perspective of a non-Maori archaeologist, Phillips considers those engagements in a number of archaeological management experiences with Maori. Phillips is concerned with rescue archaeology where project limitations can restrict both meaningful archaeological interpretation and the exercise of Maori stewardship. Phillips argues that archaeologists need to take greater account of Maori concerns in their work, to achieve a 'holistic' archaeology. Here Phillips follows the approach of her PhD research in arguing for an 'interdisciplinary' archaeological narrative that integrates oral accounts and field research. Phillips acknowledges (p.149) that this exercise is 'not without its problems'. The more important of these I suggest are the selective nature of both oral history remembering and archaeological constructions, and the practical and ethical difficulties of 'blending' (p.149) specialist traditional and archaeological knowledge. The call by Phillips for 'more thoughtful conversations' (p.152) seems less problematic, and is an important, achievable goal in public archaeology.

Two New Zealand chapters consider diverse Indigenous perspectives in archaeological engagements. Margaret Rika-Heke explores impacts of the alienation of Maori land and the lack of Indigenous control over Maori heritage. Accordingly, Rika-Heke writes as a Maori who chose to become an archaeologist, 'because I found myself at odds with the way in which heritage management and archaeological research was being conducted in this country' (p.207). Rika-Heke also explains the seeming lack of interest of many Maori in archaeology as a consequence of cultural concerns over tapu in particular as it applies to the past. In the glossary tapu is given as 'sacred, prohibited, set apart, forbidden, prohibitive' (p.272). These definitions underscore the complex nature of tapu as it may influence and proscribe Maori actions and concerns in relation to the past. Rika-Heke recognises the challenge to qualify more Maori in archaeology, and to 'divest the discipline of some of its colonial baggage' (p.211).

The potential for divestment is illustrated in the chapter by Solomon and Forbes written on behalf of the Moriori of New Zealand's Chatham Islands (Rekohu). Arguably Moriori have been the most misunderstood people in New Zealand history. Solomon and Forbes trace the development and influence of racist ideas on the historical interpretation of Moriori, as well as the positive role of archaeologists and archaeology in countering such views. Notwithstanding, they observe that even the more worthy of the archaeological debates 'mostly took place without Moriori involvement' (p.220). Solomon and Forbes describe the recent Moriori development and field trial of the Hokotehi cultural heritage database on 'all the islands of Rekohu' (p.222). Conceptions of interconnected cultural landscape are critical to this work, so that 'knowledge is alive, respected and relevant' (p.222). For Solomon and Forbes, Hokotehi field recording research designs work 'because they are developed by the Indigenous community for the management and care of their own heritage' (p.228).

If New Zealand issues are at the core of this volume, the other case studies provide context and further depth. Haber *et al.* consider 'fragments' of conversation involving museum archaeologists and local people in Argentina concerned about 'ancient things, history and memory' (p.91). The conversational approach recalls the concluding comment by Phillips, cited above. For Haber *et al.*, 'it is not about translating ourselves between meaning frames… but to bring the frames to the conversation…to con-verse [sic] with them' (p.91). This approach may deliver a more balanced and less problematic interdisciplinary archaeology. Ross considers the challenges of managing a 'living heritage landscape' under legislation that privileges 'the tangible aspects of heritage' (p.123) with respect to a Queensland Aboriginal stone arrangement. There is some resonance here in the discussions by Allen and Phillips of the New Zealand legislation that privileges physical sites of archaeological information value.

Several chapters extend the theme of Indigenous archaeology engagements internationally. Choctaw (American Indian) archaeologist Joe Watkins observes that while there are times 'I am in conflict' about being an American Indian and archaeologist, 'there is rarely a time when I am disappointed I have chosen this field'. Watkins calls on us all 'to stop apologizing' and 'start doing something useful' (p.58). The potential usefulness of archaeology and archaeologists to Indigenous communities is highlighted by Luz-Rodríguez with respect to the Caribbean invention of the ethnic Taino: 'Thankfully, recent archaeological and ethnohistoric researchers have questioned such a classificatory fiction' (p.100). Foana'ota discusses Indigenous heritage in Solomon Islands where the first people are also the sovereign people and government. Here, in spite of 'a few negative impacts, the future of archaeology is viewed by the Indigenous people as bright and encouraging' (p.192).

The chapter by Mosely considers the personal situation, and predicament, of the archaeologist who is required to engage with metaphysical worlds and assumptions in her research. Mosley writes with insight and honesty of her work with Australian Aboriginal artefacts, where she was instructed to take initiative in the appropriate cultural handling of materials. Although this left Mosley uncomfortable to an extent, she suggests also that the 'complacen-

cy of empiricism is perhaps overdue an epistemological kick in the pants' (p.76). Here is an interesting example of the potential effect of local practice and ideas on archaeologists, as the traffic on the bridge becomes two-way.

The final chapter in this volume is a provocative essay that challenges the development of separate Indigenous approaches to archaeology. Consistently, the chapter is titled, 'Seeking the end of Indigenous archaeology'. In this essay Nicholas is supportive of Indigenous archaeology endeavours but feels that there is a 'very real danger' that a separate Indigenous archaeology may become 'ghettoised' and 'marginalized' (p.243). This is a concern perhaps, although the present volume demonstrates that Indigenous archaeology is first and foremost the archaeology of particular descent groups and revitalised identities. Some measure of archaeological management separation is likely to be maintained for these groups around the politics of culture and identity at least (see especially chapters by Rika-Heke and Solomon and Forbes, discussed above).

There is sufficient diversity and universalism in these chapters to ensure that this volume contributes in important ways to the growing literature on Indigenous archaeology. And while these chapters suggest collectively that the bridge of the title cannot be crossed with ease, it seems equally evident that communities on both sides of the divide may be the poorer for not having made the attempt.