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ABSTRACTS FROM THESES AND RESEARCH ESSAYS,

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND, 1979 - 1980

Dorothy Brown
Anthropology Department
University of Auckland

Abstracts from four theses and three research essays completed at the Department of Anthropology during the academic years 1979 and 1980 are given below. This is in line with Association policy to encourage their publication in the Newsletter. These essays are held in the Department of Anthropology, University of Auckland, where they may be consulted. Xerox copies may be made available at cost (plus postage) on an individual basis, subject to the usual restriction applying to theses, on the understanding that their use is for private research and not publication.

1979 theses

Gerry Barton, Ngarradj Warde Jobkeng rock shelter, western Arnhem Land: an analysis and assessment of the flaked stone assemblage. Anthropology Department, Auckland University. Two page abstract, 114 pp., 18 plates, 6 figures, 42 tables, 7 maps, line drawings.

Ngarradj Warde Jobkeng, a rock shelter in the northwest corner of the Arnhem Land plateau, Northern Territory, Australia, was excavated by an Australian and New Zealand party directed by Dr. H. Allen during the dry season of 1977. It is the most intensive single excavation carried out in the Alligator Rivers region and also the most recent. The project was designed specifically to test previous conclusions rather than set up a prehistoric sequence. It is to this end that the analysis of the flaked stone tools from Ngarradj Warde Jobkeng is presented below.

A prehistory of the Alligator Rivers region has been proposed by Carmel White based on her excavations of five sites in the area in the mid-1960s. She defined two successive industrial traditions. The earlier one, represented by large stone scrapers, utilised flakes, and edge ground axes, is present both in the plain and plateau sites and lasted from 20,000 years to 6,500 BP. The more recent occurs as two marked regional variants - plains and plateau - which continued from about 6,500 years BP to the ethnographic present. The assemblage is typified by stone points, adzes, utilised flakes, edge ground axes, and shell scrapers. White declared seasonality to be the cause of

this recent variability. In the dry season the inhabitants roamed the plains hunting and gathering; in the wet, extensive flooding forced them to retreat to the plateau country where they hunted and collected around the waterholes and manufactured stone tools. White found no evidence to suggest stone implement fabrication occurred other than at the plateau sites.

Ngarradj Warde Jobkeng was occupied from 9,000 BP. Its flaked stone assemblage endorses some of White's findings but contradicts others. The two traditions appear at Ngarradj Warde Jobkeng but the earlier is a flake industry comprising of numerous utilised flakes rather than a formal typology of scrapers as defined by White. The difference is important as the Ngarradj Warde Jobkeng assemblage breaks the generally accepted claim to morphological uniformity of Australian Pleistocene tools, namely that of steep sided scrapers. Also, in contrast to White's results, implement/small unretouched flake density in the upper levels of Ngarradj Warde Jobkeng imply that tools of the recent stone industry were in fact manufactured in at least this flood plain site.

A review of White's excavations and of those undertaken by Allen and Kamminga in 1972 suggests, with the new material from Ngarradj Warde Jobkeng, that a greater degree of site specialisation took place in the region than was earlier supposed.

James S. Daugherty, Polynesian Warfare and Fortifications. Anthropology Department, University of Auckland. Two page abstract, ii, 212 pp.

Fortifications are found on many of the scattered Polynesian islands. In no place are they known to have occurred until at least 200 years after the initial settlement, and each island group that built them initiated their own particular style.

It is my contention that the building of fortifications is not a rote cultural activity divorced from any cultural context, but that their construction reflects individual responses to a complex of military needs. Different types of fortifications served different functions. A garrison camp built to hold siege against a fortified village serves a different purpose than the walls of the village it is besieging, and both are different from a walled fastness in some desolate area serving to protect fugitives when all else has failed.

Societies have specific concepts of social structure and military procedure, and if they built fortifications, these defenses will reflect the specific criteria of their builders. It is my intention to correlate the available data on political organisation, military organisation, weapons and patterns of warfare to the advent of fortifications. The

massive amounts of labour involved in the construction of some of the Polynesian forts did not require, as some might think, a highly structured system of government. But the manner in which the society was organised, their level of factions, does influence the construction of their forts by influencing the size and organisation of the armies that could be fielded, the reliability of allies, the probable results of the conflict, and the reasons for which the war was being fought. When this is understood, along with a knowledge of their available military tools, we should then be able to grasp the functional aspects of the Polynesian fortifications and correlate similar input with a similar structural response.

1979 research essay

Catherine Olsen, Patterns of Tooth Wear in Prehistoric New Zealand. Anthropology Department, University of Auckland. One page abstract, ii, 139 pp., 15 plates, 5 figures, 2 tables, 5 appendices.

This essay examines patterns of tooth wear in prehistoric inhabitants of New Zealand using provenanced samples of skeletal material. A major objective of the essay is to test the relationship between the severity of tooth wear with latitude and antiquity.

Following discussion of the dental evidence, an examination of archaeological and ethnographic evidence for diet in relation to the patterns of wear found leads to the development of an alternative explanation for patterns of wear. In this, the localised environment and diet of each sample are seen as the factors determining severity of tooth wear. In addition, suggestions are made concerning the development of fern root planes, and the importance of fern root in the prehistoric diet.

1980 theses

Diane Foley, Analysis of Faunal Remains from the Kaupokonui Site (N128/3B). Anthropology Department, University of Auckland. One page abstract, x, 243 pp., 5 plates, 4 figures, 77 tables, 11 appendices.

This thesis is a study of the faunal remains from the 1974 excavations of the Kaupokonui beach midden site (N128/3B) in south Taranaki. The analysis involves identification and quantification of the bone material. There follows an interpretation of the distribution pattern of the material in different levels, and different areas, of the site. Different types of activity areas are proposed, namely primary butchery areas, secondary and tertiary processing areas. There is an examination of the ecological implications of the fauna, for the environment

around the site, the seasonality of occupation of the site, and the types of hunting/gathering techniques used. Butchery patterns are investigated, particularly through a study of bone breakage.

Terry L. Hunt, Towards Fiji's Past: Archaeological research on south-western Viti Levu. Anthropology Department, University of Auckland. Two page abstract, xvi, 235 pp., 52 plates, 30 figures, 27 tables, 2 appendices.

Fijian prehistory has been regarded as a complex sequence of migrations and intrusions with a resultant culture that is little more than a Polynesian-Melanesian hybrid. Simplistic assumptions have led some prehistorians to correlate ceramic change with intrusions from Melanesia with models of cultural discontinuity pervading interpretation toward a single direction for Fiji. In part, problems of assessing cultural continuity have derived from the limited available evidence. Understanding the transition from Lapita to Impressed ceramics in Fiji has remained a major problem. In order to explore crucial issues for Fijian prehistory, archaeological data from two coastal sites on southwestern Viti Levu were analysed. The new evidence makes a valuable contribution to various aspects of prehistory on southwestern Viti Levu.

Archaeological remains date to the first millenium B.C. and span a temporal gap in the evidence known from Viti Levu. Analysis of ceramics included several fields of variation, supporting a model of evolutionary change within a context of cultural continuity. Carved paddle-impressed ware may enjoy contemporaneity with Lapita ceramics at an early date. Analysis of non-ceramic artefacts point to local stone resources comprising an unspecialised lithic industry. Stone adzes reflect a more specialised technology. Other early artefacts compare to Lapita assemblages found elsewhere, while some from Yanuca remain unique. Faunal evidence points to various fishing strategies, shellfishing, some hunting, domestic animals and an agricultural component comprising a generalised subsistence economy. Assumptions regarding ceramic and cultural change are questioned and further research must focus on processes of cultural change and human diversification. Overall synthesis for Fijian prehistory must be approached with reserve. Several independent lines of evidence allow an interpretation of cultural continuity, with supportive data drawn from historical linguistics and biological anthropology. Going beyond the models of migrations and population replacements becomes essential. The prospects for Fiji's contribution to compelling issues in Oceanic prehistory and anthropological theory will prove challenging and exciting.

1980 research essays

Ian Perks, Traditional Fijian Agriculture. Anthropology Department, University of Auckland. One page abstract, 107 pp., 12 figures, 3 maps, 1 appendix.

This essay surveys and examines traditional agricultural practice in Fiji. The study derives the bulk of its data from published sources and accordingly, contains a brief review of the literature; it also places some stress on the social and environmental background to Fijian agriculture.

Traditional agriculture is largely covered here under the headings of each of the three staple root crops: the different methods of cultivation associated with the production of each of these, defined and structured the major agricultural systems of Fiji.

Lynette J. Williams, Kohika Coprolites. Anthropology Department, University of Auckland. One page abstract, v, 104 pp., viii, 13 plates, 5 figures, 9 tables.

A sample of coprolites excavated from Kohika (site N68/104), a defended habitation site in the Rangitaiki Swamp, was analysed. After a discussion of the possibilities and limitations of coprolite analysis, the results of this analysis are presented. All the coprolites were found to contain large quantities of fish bone and fine inorganic material as well as plant material, including bracken fern fronds and possibly stem fragments. The coprolites were also analysed for their pollen content. Large numbers of pollen grains and fern spores were recovered from some samples, including some from the economic plants raupo and puha.

An analysis of some of the coprolites for evidence of endoparasites revealed the eggs of a nematode, tentatively identified as a species which is specific to rats. The major problem throughout the study was whether the coprolites were dog or human in origin, and some emphasis was placed on deciding this question. The conclusion drawn is that the coprolites are most likely to be dog in origin, the dogs being fed food scraps and being allowed to scavenge around hearths. On the pollen evidence the site was probably occupied some time between early spring and late summer.

It is concluded that the range and degree of inference that can be drawn from the coprolites is minimal, due to problems with the methodology and to their species of origin.