



NEW ZEALAND  
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## ARCHAEOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND



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## REVIEWS

**Phillips, Caroline.** *Waihou Journeys. The Archaeology of 400 Years of Maori Settlement.* Auckland. University of Auckland Press. 2000. 194 pp. NZ \$39.95

For many archaeologists living beyond Iwitini (as Roger Green referred to the populous region north of Taupo), the Hauraki Plains sites have been both tantalising and frustrating. The infamous digging by Hovell and other collectors at Oruarangi and Paterangi in the 1930s revealed one of the richest assemblages of artefacts ever known in this country, distinctively different from the Moahunter artefacts turned up on many southern sites. What made Oruarangi special? Or was Oruarangi just one of several richly-provisioned pa in this watery region? Could Oruarangi have been the birthplace of the Classic Maori culture? As flood protection works on the Waihou River intensified, more artificially built-up pa and kainga were discovered. There were some preliminary attempts to synthesise evidence from the area by Jack Golson in 1959, Roger Green and Les Groube in the 1960s, and Simon Best in 1980, but as the mitigation reports built up, we waited for a substantial work that would provide a full and satisfying narrative of Hauraki prehistory. *Waihou Journeys* does this admirably.

The book is based on Caroline Phillips' doctoral dissertation (1994) and retains the flavour of a thesis in its structure: the introduction positions the study theoretically, reviews previous research and introduces the chapter themes. Then separate chapters are devoted to each of the main bodies of evidence: data on the physical environment and its past changes; the site survey results; Maori history as reproduced in the Land Court records; European historical texts and images; and finally the excavation summaries. The last chapter provides the narrative of Waihou history over the past five or six centuries before briefly re-addressing the theoretical issues raised in the introduction. Appendices provide taxonomic and common names for the plants and animals mentioned throughout, a full list

of sites, and the details of the radiocarbon dates. A glossary including explanations of words that archaeologists take for granted, such as midden, posthole and stratigraphy, reveals that the audience for this book is intended to encompass people unfamiliar with archaeology. There is a comprehensive bibliography and useful index. The quality of the figures is outstanding—not surprising considering Caroline's graphic arts contributions to her fellow archaeologists over many years. The format and paper are ideal for the clear reproduction of the numerous maps, site plans, historical images, and tables. Assistance from the Green Foundation is acknowledged by the publishers—it has contributed to a most attractive volume.

Reviewers need to mention a few areas where they disagree with authors, if only to reinforce the message that praise is not given lightly! This reviewer found a number of generalizations about New Zealand archaeology which fail to recognise that South Island studies have sometimes differed from those of the North. With reference to the 1920s–30s, the framework for constructing prehistory in the south relied much less on S. Percy Smith and others' syntheses of Maori oral tradition than is stated here (p. 3), partly because of the antagonism between H.D. Skinner and Smith, who with Elsdon Best represented the earlier generation of scholars. Post-contact period studies are more developed in the south than the references indicate (p. 8). As well, the statement that the fossickers "quarried these prolific sites for saleable artefacts" (p. 35) does not accord with the size of the collections built up by the majority of fossickers. While artefacts may have been sold on occasions, the prime motivation was the assembling of an impressive collection, either as private individuals, or as agents for a provincial museum.

This volume is curiously bereft of artefact illustrations, which one might argue are as significant a part of the evidence of 400 years of settlement as the site plans. Artefacts are referred to in the text according to functional categories, but there is no discussion of the criteria by which function was judged—for example, how is a fernroot beater identified and distinguished from other forms of beater? Material culture enthusiasts should read this book in conjunction with Louise Furey's excellent study of the Oruarangi artefacts (1996).

There is a heavy reliance on radiocarbon dates for determining the commencement of occupation or other human activity on sites or at periods about which the Land Court records are silent. In view of the fact that the artificially built-up settlements utilised both sub-fossil and midden shell to create 'dry' floors above flood waters and spring tide levels, I was surprised to find that shell was used for dating these construction phases. In most cases where both

shell and charcoal samples were dated, the shell gave an older calibrated age (see Appendix 3). The differences did not exceed 120 years but in view of the tight chronological arguments advanced, the inclusion of shell dates in the calculation of the best estimate dates for the building of the first defences at sites such as Whetukura (c. 1590) and Hurumoimoi (c. 1670) requires a full justification.

These are minor weaknesses compared to the strengths of this work, which lie in the correlation of the four independent lines of evidence. Palaeoenvironmental research has provided a picture of changing shorelines and vegetation cover, increasing sediment loads in the rivers and streams, and a dramatic subsidence of the western Hauraki depression about 1600–1650. The archaeological site surveys revealed a complex array of settlement types, including various designs of fortified pa, and clusters of apparently undefended occupation mounds, often artificially raised by the dumping of old shell as well as midden. (It is clear that in this area Maori were the first to excavate the archaeological sites of their ancestors.) Curiously many of these built-up sites went unmentioned by the Maori witnesses at the Hauraki Land Court hearings. But their evidence of food sources, of political events, of the movements of communities (from seasonal to long term in duration), of site names and associated leaders, informs the historical narrative in Chapter 7 more than any other body of evidence. In comparison the excavation evidence is impoverished, providing an uneven and tentative picture of site development and use. Christopher Tilley's (1989:275) statement "that digging is a pathology of archaeology" might be invoked here. In most cases the modern excavators were restricted to slit trenches and small, scattered squares. Even at Raupa pa where 770 square metres were opened, this represented only 3.8% of the site area. With such small incisions what can the pathologist reveal? Only large-scale exposure of surfaces will provide the detail of how space was allocated and used within these large settlements. And only archaeological excavation will produce this type of evidence.

Caroline Phillips covers for the less-than-ideal archaeological environment that Hauraki researchers have worked under by weaving the archaeological strand with three separate threads to make one dynamic historical narrative. She demonstrates the power of multi-disciplinary landscape archaeology performed with skill and sensitivity to each class of evidence. Though we won't all agree with particular details of the narrative—I remain unconvinced about regular return voyages to East Polynesia 600 years ago—Caroline has provided us with a 'long history' rich in detail and peopled with real ancestors. There is a seamless transition in the narrative which should give us cause to rethink the divisions between prehistory, protohistory and history.

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**Summerhayes, Glen.** *Lapita Interaction*. Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, Canberra. 2000. 244 pp. A\$45.00 (+postage).

Lapita Interaction is, as the title suggests, about relationships between sites and regions which have been characterised, in the main, by aspects of the much-studied ceramic decoration technique of dentate stamping. In the process some of the big questions in Lapita research are tackled, including the parameters of colonisation, the integrity of the various Lapita regions, the importance of trade/exchange in the maintenance of the decorative system, and the role of the pottery itself in the society of the colonisers.

Summerhayes achieves this by an intensive study of West New Britain ceramics, both through the standard stylistic approach and, most importantly, from a sophisticated compositional analysis of the tempers and clays, and then sets the findings from these into increasingly wider contexts.

The monograph consists of 12 chapters. The first two set the scene by reviewing previous relevant work in this area and setting out the aims of the work, and by examining the geographic divisions in Lapita; the regions and provinces; and by reviewing the physical evidence for interaction between these.

Chapter 3 describes the West New Britain sites, the previous archaeology in the region (set into 4 phases), and introduces the Arawe Islands, from where the basic data on which the monograph is based was recovered.

Chapters 4-10 describe the techniques and methodology of the analytical approach, and describes the form, decoration and tempers for the Arawe sites and for 5 others in West New Britain.

In Chapter 11 the chemical analysis of tempers and fabric are described and discussed, and the results used to interpret the production and distribution of the West New Britain ceramics.

The last chapter uses the results from the study to re-examine a number of important assumptions; that trade/exchange was responsible for similarities between sites, that regions are different due to their geographical parameters, that the colonisation process did not leave an early footprint in the Bismarcks, and that contact between east and west was a restricted affair, with the Vanuatu/New Caledonia water gap acting as a barrier.

All these are shown to be incorrect. Summerhayes finds little evidence for the physical movement of pots, since tempers and clays in the vessels sampled are found to be local, and concludes that the similarities between sites and regions are not the result of a physical interchange of pots but of parallel changes in some aspect of the society.

Since ceramics in the various Lapita regions progress through much the same sequence but at different times, then similarities and differences between regions are not (in the main) the result of differential interaction. Following on from this the Bismark ceramics are shown to have an early component, and are not just a regional variation which arose later. Because of the presence of similar motifs in the late end of both the east and west sequences, continued interaction over the entire Lapita world is proposed.

These are all extremely important findings, and have repercussions for how we look at the most basic of Lapita questions. If there is a temporal primacy for the Bismark region, with only the odd sherd turning up west of there, then the Bismarcks are the ultimate source for what we know as Lapita. If trade/exchange is taken out of the equation, then the extraordinary ceramics, in all their perplexing complexities, are reflecting some social process which, if understood, could allow us a rare insight into a prehistoric society and its motives. If time is the main factor in the differences between sites and regions, then we have a stronger relative dating method than previously recognised; a much needed tool since the short Lapita chronology lies dangerously close to the limits of C14 usefulness.

The only one of Summerhayes major findings that I find questionable is the significance of similarities between sites and regions towards the late end of the sequence. This when "...Few would disagree with the notion that Lapita ends with a retraction of a long distance network into regionalised ones..."

(Summerhayes 2000:235), and yet similarities in motifs that are on their last legs and devoid of their original meaning are still slavishly copied from Samoa to the Bismarcks. The Vanuatu-Fiji water gap is a related problem - because it was crossed by the Lapita colonists in the first flush of their expansion does not mean that it continued to be traversed when the fires were out.

The monograph is well set out and illustrated, with 334 figures and tables.

This work is a welcome change to the theory-based articles on Lapita that have plagued us for the last 25 years or so. By taking a small region for study, employing sophisticated analytical techniques and doing it well, and building on a comprehensive data base, Summerhayes is able to throw new light on aspects of the whole Lapita society.

The monograph is a major advance in our understanding of those early colonisers, and sets a standard for future research in this field.

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**Christopher M. Stevenson and William S. Ayres (eds).** *Easter Island Archaeology Research on Early Rapanui Culture*. Los Osos, California. Easter Island Foundation 2000. 224 pp. US\$25.

The volume is organised into four parts that consist of a total of 17 chapters covering: (1) an early contribution to Easter Island archaeology; (2) religious architecture and symbol (including rock art); (3) mortuary analysis; and (4) chronology, artefacts, floral and faunal remains. The volume is heavily weighted towards the analysis of human remains (41% of all pages, not including two chapters on burial features).

The preface, by Ayres and Stevenson, provides a good, but brief, historical overview of Rapa Nui archaeology beginning with the pioneering work of the Norwegian Archaeological Expedition in 1955. Numerous research projects are mentioned in this review and it would have been helpful to cite published material so the literature can be accessed easily.

One fundamental theme repeated throughout the volume is the reliance on obsidian hydration "dates" to anchor the chronology of architectural features, human burials and cultural layers. Ayres and Stevenson state that the "...the obsidian dating method provides a solid chronometric foundation for the

temporal ordering of the Rapa Nui archaeological record." (p. xi), yet Stevenson (p. 9) mentions that "... chronological controls are presently poor for the prehistoric record of Easter Island..." One reason for this may be the uncritical selection and small obsidian samples used for dating. Unlike charcoal that can be obtained from well-defined combustion features in primary context, obsidian artefacts are usually small in average size and subject to post-depositional movement within and between cultural layers - especially when small artefacts are deposited in coarse, architectural rubble fill with large interstices, or sandy deposits. These depositional contexts demand that numerous obsidian artefacts (ideally, statistically valid samples) are taken from each layer to examine depth to rim-thickness correlations. Adequate dating can not be accomplished by selecting one or two samples per layer. It is also essential not to take samples from known historically-disturbed layers, such as Stevenson's excavation of a semi-pyramidal ahu where sheep bones and teeth were recovered from three of the five dated layers (p.10-11), yielding questionable chronometric results. Careful sample selection for obsidian hydration analysis is of no minor importance since rapid changes in Rapanui society took place during the 400 or so years prior to 1950 - precisely the time when there are numerous fluctuations in the radiocarbon calibration curve.

As dating the colonisation of Pacific islands is a fundamental question that is hotly debated for nearly all island groups (especially, the Cook Islands, Hawai'i and New Zealand to name but a few), the summary chapter by Martinsson-Wallin and Wallin is a welcome addition to that literature for Rapa Nui. They excavated important site complexes at 'Anakena and La Prouse that, based on the environmental settings, should contain some of the earliest archaeological evidence on the island. A sequence of monumental architectural construction and inferred subsistence changes is presented within a corpus of 23 radiocarbon age determinations that document occupation as early as the 11th century A. D. (p. 37). Despite extensive excavations at 'Anakena (Skjolsvold 1994), additional work will benefit from sieving all cultural sediments through fine-mesh screens, retaining all cultural material and making identifications, where possible, to family and genus for bird and fish bones (see Steadman *et al.* 1994). The 3929 bones reported as "fish" from excavations at La Prouse (Stevenson *et al.*, p.171, Table 13), when identified to nearest taxon, will yield important information on marine subsistence.

Those interested in biological anthropology will be pleased with the various chapters on, for example, burial practices, an anthropometric summary of 136 early historic skeletons from Ahu Nau Nau by Gill, and an analysis by Stefan of Rapanui crania held in museums. Others will be drawn to the concluding section

with its emphasis on issues of subsistence, artefacts and palaeo-vegetation reconstruction. Of these, the chapters by Ayres *et al.* on late prehistoric to early historic subsistence patterns is informative and the typology and use-wear study of obsidian artefacts (Ayres *et al.*) sets the foundation for future studies.

The quality of the illustrations found throughout the volume is satisfactory, while some photos are blurry and the lettering on a few figures is difficult to read. All in all, these small blemishes are minor in reference to the low cost of the volume. The Easter Island Foundation should be applauded for keeping its monograph prices low, especially in reference to New Zealand consumers.

We now know much about religious architecture of Easter Island, human remains and overall settlement patterns (e.g., Vargas Casanova 1998), but little attention has been paid to the terrestrial productive base of prehistoric Rapanui agriculture. Elsewhere, a provocative point has been raised by Doug Yen and Roger Green who suggested that the introduction of the sweet potato may have been the caloric basis permitting widespread construction of monumental architecture - an idea that merits testing with archaeological data.

Finally, a sage Pacific archaeologist once said to me that publication is merely formal conversation and, if you don't publish, you won't be part of the conversation. Stevenson and Ayres are to be congratulated for getting this volume out, especially since some chapters report on excavations that are a couple decades old. These contributions will now foster critical review and new directions for Rapa Nui archaeology.

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**Mulvaney, J. and Kamminga, J.** *Prehistory of Australia*. Allen and Unwin, St. Leonards, 1999. A\$45.

This is the third edition of Mulvaney's *Prehistory of Australia* originally published in 1969 with the second edition in 1975. The book is written as a text book on Australian prehistory and in large measure succeeds, giving a more academic treatment than Josephine Flood's *Archaeology of the Dreamtime* (1994) and one less concerned with pushing a particular theoretical line than Harry Lourandos' *Continent of Hunter Gatherers* (1997). It joins Tim Murray's (1998) edited reprint of classic papers on Australian archaeology, *Archaeology of Aboriginal Australia*, in providing a wealth of material for those wishing to gain an overview of the continent's prehistory. Perhaps the availability of so many new syntheses will encourage more New Zealand archaeologists to take an interest in the prehistory of Australia.

The *Prehistory of Australia* is divided into 23 chapters, the first six of which provide background information on Australia. Topics covered include an introduction to site types found in Australia, and to the chronological schemes that have been developed to help interpret the prehistory of the continent. Introductions are also provided to Aboriginal people, language and society (where questions of past population numbers are reviewed) and to subsistence practices. A general introduction is provided to Australian geography.

The following seven chapters deal with the Pleistocene record of Australia, describing in turn evidence for movement into Australia from South East Asia, and the nature of Pleistocene Australia. The issue of human interaction with Australian extinct megafauna is dealt with at this stage, and like in much of the book, Mulvaney and Kamminga opt for a conservative approach to evaluating the evidence. They conclude that only a small number of sites contain evidence for human and megafaunal interaction, insufficient at least at present, to demonstrate that humans were a major vector in their destruction.

The same conservative stance is apparent in the evaluation of evidence for the date of settlement of Australia. Mulvaney and Kamminga urge caution before early dates for colonization are accepted. The biological anthropology of the earliest Aboriginal Australians is dealt with in a separate chapter where the debates concerning population migrations into Australia are reviewed. Two chapters discussing Pleistocene archaeological sites in Australia round out the Pleistocene section, the first discussing evidence from northern, coastal and temperate regions and the second sites from the arid interior. A final chapter deals with Pleistocene stone artefacts.

The Holocene record is dealt with in six chapters beginning with a discussion of Holocene changes in stone artefact assemblages. The mid-Holocene saw a range of new flaked stone artefacts appear in the archaeological record and these types are described. The same conservative approach displayed in earlier chapters is evident in discussions of claims for the earlier appearance of these stone artefact types. Chapter 15 deals with theoretical models that have been put forward to explain changes in the Australian archaeological record. External influences are discussed by Mulvaney and Kamminga, but they largely support the indigenous development of many of the changes that appear mid Holocene. The so-called intensification theory, introduced by Harry Lourandos in the early 1980s, is described together with studies by its supporters and detractors. This model is based on the notion that social, rather than environmental, reasons should be sought to explain changes in the mid to late Holocene record of Australia, and debate concerning the veracity of the model continues to occupy many Australian archaeologists.

Chapter 16 through 19 deal with the prehistory of different geographic regions of Australia, beginning with evidence for coastal settlement and continuing with evidence for settlement of the arid interior and upland regions. The record from the offshore islands scattered around Australia's long coastline is given a separate chapter, as is the Holocene prehistory of Tasmania.

Three chapters deal specifically with the rock art record from Australia, the first describing the nature of rock art and theories for its interpretation, then two chapters that describe the rock art of temperate and coastal Australia. A final chapter deals with archaeological evidence for interaction between the Aboriginal inhabitants of Australia and visitors from Asia and Europe.

The book includes a glossary to help readers with technical terms and endnotes that suggest additional reading by topic for each chapter.

The *Prehistory of Australia* is certainly a worthwhile purchase for those interested in world prehistory, and offers a good introduction for those in New Zealand who feel that they should know more about the prehistory of our large neighbour. Earlier editions of this book effectively plotted the future direction of archaeological research in Australia, it is less clear whether this edition will have the same effect. Partly it reflects the state of Australian archaeology some 30 or more years after the *Prehistory of Australia* first appeared but I suspect it also reflects the intention of the authors of the present edition. In its current guise, the *Prehistory of Australia* is a textbook, one that seeks to introduce students to the database of Australian prehistory. It will be up to this

generation of archaeologists to provide new directions for Australian archaeologists to follow.

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***Advances in Dating Australian Rock-Markings: Papers from the first Australian Rock-Picture Dating Workshop***. Editors (and part contributors) G. K Ward and C Tuniz. 2000. Published by Australian Rock Art Research Association (AURA), Publication No. 10. - Obtainable from the Association, PO Box 216, Caulfield South Vic. 3162. A\$26.00 but with a 50% discount to AURA members (Membership, A\$20, \$10 for students).

This title may seem a little odd - 'art' is apparently no longer an anthropologically correct term, despite the persistence of the term in the name of the publishers. This compilation is a series of 23 papers presented at, or derived from, contributions at a session held in 1996. This brought together many of the archaeologists and dating scientists interested in Australian rock pictures. Aboriginal rock-art is a spectacular side to the archaeology of Australia, one more accessible to the non-specialist in Australian archaeology than some of their voluminous analyses of lithic material. Stylistic analysis of depictions has a long history in Australia and before the advent of these techniques, using such analysis, superposition and clues from excavated sites, plausible stories of the history of rock-art have been written.

The papers presented are both exciting and cautionary. The exciting bit is the sheer diversity of approaches being taken to dating the markings, surprising given the minuscule nature of the material which can be analysed. There are results presented here from AMS radiocarbon dating of charcoals from

drawings, from organic material within ochre, from dating oxalate deposits which form over depictions in some circumstances and dating of beeswax used in making figures. Then there are optically stimulated light emission datings on silica grains incorporated in wasp nests, overlying and underlying depictions. Other more controversial methods include cation ratio changes in desert varnish subsequent to its deposit over petroglyphs and micro-erosion analysis.

The development of accelerator (AMS) dating allowing analysis of tiny samples can be credited with much of this wave of activity. Nor does the method loose potential for small old samples. But there is still the concern that very old samples are readily affected by small amounts of modern carbon contaminant and that is irrespective of the sophistication of the method.

A particularly neat example presented is the micro-excavation of layers of oxalate laminations built up over thousands of years at Walkunder Arch northern Queensland and their AMS dating in their exact stratigraphic sequence. The dated cross-section is shown in colour on the cover. Nearly 30,000 years of rock-marking encapsulated in a cross-section of only 2.11 mm! However it is only with careful reading that one finds that the earliest painting episode dated here is only known from the sample, as the figure (if there is one), is hidden under the subsequent accumulation on the surface of the rock. Only the more recent pictures are certainly there to be seen.

Has then this wave of science rewritten the understandings of the history of this rock-art? Not yet is short answer. There are enough cautions within this volume to see why not, though the potential is certainly there. Firstly there is the caution that dating science will never replace stylistic analysis. Dates by themselves are almost meaningless. However the community there start with a very comprehensive basis of stylistic analysis so it is hard to see that being lost sight of.

But then there are a number of other worrying things about these applications. Retouching of charcoal drawings is apparently not unknown and indeed modern restoration of beeswax figures by the indigenous descendants of the artists is also known. The uncertainty of the origin of the carbon in ochre and oxalate deposits is certainly a concern. Several of the contributions point to the diverse nature of the organic materials sampled and the presence of background levels of ancient carbon. Certainly some of the carbon in these samples does not relate to human activity.

The spread of AMS charcoal dates found for some sites is also disturbing. In one case virtually identical figures that one would conventionally consider as close to contemporary, date many hundreds of years apart. In another dates from different parts of the same figure have the same problem. One author cautions that credible investigation requires multiple dates from any single figure. If that is to be the norm, then given the cost of AMS dating, progress will be slow. The ethics of sampling sites is discussed in this volume and would become particularly problematic if such massive sampling were indeed required.

This is not a book for someone looking for a history of this aspect of aboriginallia, but for someone interested in dating science and dating prehistoric rock-art, well worth while.

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**Barker, G. (ed.) 1999 *Companion Encyclopedia of Archaeology*, 2 Volumes, Routledge, London. £160.**

The *Companion Encyclopedia of Archaeology* is a substantial work comprising some 1200 pages and 29 chapters written by a range of archaeologists, the names of whom will be familiar to those interested in European, particularly British, prehistory. The book is styled along the lines of a similar volume, the *Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology* edited by Tim Ingold (1994) but with a more ambitious frame of reference. Whereas the Ingold volume set out to describe what anthropology can tell us, rather than focus on how this is achieved, Barker's encyclopedia attempts to do both. As a consequence, the chapter titles read as a *tour de force* of modern archaeology. The chapters form a series of essays that introduce the reader to a range of subjects brought under one title. In many instances, this range is quite extensive. Harding, for instance, in his chapter on archaeological chronologies, includes a short history of the development of chronologies, typology, seriation, calendars from around the world, and dating using historical sources as well as scientific methods of dating such as radiocarbon. He also discusses a diverse range of case studies that illustrate issues in dating archaeological materials. Barker states in his introduction that he hopes the Encyclopedia will be read rather than simply consulted. Thus the authors have been encouraged to write readable introductions rather than simply literature reviews. Having said this, the citations in all of the chapters are extensive. Harvard style references are used throughout, however each chapter includes a select bibliography that gives a guide to further reading.

As Barker describes in his General Introduction, the chapters are divided into three sections. The first covers the aims of the subject, the theories developed to explain archaeological materials and the techniques required to analyse these materials. Chapters in this section cover such topics as the history of archaeology (Schnapp and Kristiansen), archaeological theory (Redman), the nature of archaeological evidence (Collis), field archaeology (Carver), dating as mentioned above, environment and landscape (Brown), people (Hillman), structures (Johnson), the study of artefacts and preservation. The second section illustrates in Barker's words, "a series of major cross cultural themes to illustrate the interdisciplinary nature of archaeological theory and practice". These essays delve into some fundamental archaeological concepts. Julian Thomas, for instance, discusses culture and identity, readers of Pacific archaeology will be familiar with Chris Gosden's work who discusses the organisation of society. Other chapters cover settlement and territory (Blintiff), food and farming (Barker and Grant), production and exchange (in prehistory by Earle and in historical archaeology by Moreland), population dynamics (Hassan) and cognition (Mithen and Spivey). Barker describes the third section as covering archaeological history. By this he means a series of essays covering themes from human evolution to the archaeology of industrialisation. Chapters in this section cover hunter-gatherer societies (Dennell), agricultural societies (Bogucki), rank societies (Shennan), urbanisation and state formation (Stoddart), empires (Dyson), and post collapse societies (Tainter). Also included are chapters on the Middle Ages (Christie), the archaeology of Islam (Northedge), a chapter on the archaeology of European Colonialism (Delle, Leone and Mullins) and a final chapter on the archaeology of industrialisation.

It is not possible in the space available to adequately review all the chapters presented in these two volumes. Nor do I as the reviewer feel confident in critiquing the breadth of archaeology covered in so many wide-ranging treatments. I can, however, comment on the essays that deal with subjects close to my own research interests. Thus I can recommend the essays on the history of archaeology by Schnapp and Kristiansen, archaeological theory by Redman, Culture and Identity by Thomas and hunter-gatherers by Dennell. These are authoritative texts, yet written in a form that clearly shows the authors own interest and involvement in the subject. This said, New Zealand readers will no doubt feel the essays reflect a northern hemisphere, particularly European (even British) bias. This is no doubt the inevitable consequence of Barker selecting specialists, the work of whom he was familiar with. It is also the consequence of allowing the authors to write essays that convey their own experience with the subject rather than simply literature reviews.

In sum, the *Companion Encyclopedia to Archaeology* is a remarkable achievement. In a time when some profess to a certain disillusionment with archaeology in general, the work stands as a reminder of just how sophisticated and all encompassing the discipline of archaeology has become. I suspect, that given the price of the two volume set, and the dismal value of the New Zealand dollar, the *Companion* will not find its way on to too many book shelves. This will be a pity for it is a remarkable resource, a valuable set of essays for students and professionals alike. Those of you who can influence libraries to purchase copies will find it a worthwhile read.

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