



NEW ZEALAND  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

## ARCHAEOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND



This document is made available by The New Zealand  
Archaeological Association under the Creative Commons  
Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

To view a copy of this license, visit  
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>.



## REVIEWS

**John Andrews. 2009. *No Other Home Than This: A History of European New Zealanders*. Nelson: Craig Potton Publishing. 364 pages, five maps. ISBN 9781877517082. Hardback \$49.95.**

*Ian Smith*

This is an ambitious book. It sets out to explain what makes New Zealanders of European descent distinct – people who could have no home other than this country. It does this by charting their history from the emergence of modern humans in Africa c.1.5-2kya, through their spread into Europe, to their subsequent engagement with the physical and cultural landscape of New Zealand. While charting this journey John Andrews tries to identify the adaptations that made Europe and Europeans distinct, identifying key elements of the cultural, economic and ecological baggage they brought to New Zealand, how they modified this new land, and how it in turn shaped them. Foremost amongst these adaptations, he argues, was the development and spread of agriculture, which transformed the nature and scale of European society as well as the landscape within which it flourished. Alongside this were the development of cultural traditions, including Christianity, law, democracy, imperialism and capitalism, that provided some unity across the vast area that came to be known as Europe, and helped to shape the ways in which Europeans perceived and responded to the wider world. From the 16th century these people began to colonise that wider world, drawn by resources available for exploitation and pushed by rapidly growing home populations particularly during the 18th and 19th centuries. Although they settled in most parts of the world, their most enduring colonies were in the temperate parts of the northern and southern hemispheres best suited to the European agricultural economy. Nonetheless each new land presented ecological, economic, social and cultural challenges to the incomers, and Andrew devotes the second half of his book to examining these in the New Zealand setting.

With such a long time-scale and broad cultural scope one might have expected this book to draw strongly upon the archaeological record, but here it disappoints. Less than 3% of the 500 or so references in the bibliography are to archaeological works, and most of these are general accounts of the emergence of farming in Eurasia. Far greater reliance is placed upon the results of biological anthropology, and on the work of general synthesisers such as Jared Diamond

and Tim Flannery. Equally, the brief (two page) account of pre-European human settlement in New Zealand draws as much from James Belich as it does from the four archaeological sources cited. Lack of familiarity with the archaeological literature presumably explains the naïve explanations that the author offers for human migration out of Africa (pp. 23-24) and the origins of agriculture (pp. 29-30), and vast oversimplification of the archaeological evidence for the advance of farming through Europe (pp. 33-34). The numerous passages on European settlement of New Zealand make absolutely no reference to the archaeology, leading to repetition of old historically inaccurate accounts of the sealing and whaling industries and blinkered representation of early missionary interactions with Maori.

Despite the lack of attention to archaeology, there is much in this book that is of interest, both to the general reader and to those with historical and archaeological interests. It is well written and thoroughly referenced. The strongest elements of the book are in its emphasis on landscape, plants and animals, and their role in the history of European New Zealanders, reflecting Andrews' background as a zoologist and former head of Biological Sciences at Victoria University. The flip side of this, however, is lack of serious consideration of the urban and industrial. Living in large, dense settlements arguably played just as much of a role in shaping the cultural traditions of Europeans as did the nature of crops and animals that they farmed, and the rapid transformations wrought by the industrial revolution contributed significantly to both the stimuli for and the mechanisms of global colonisation. Two key aspects of the Europeanising of New Zealand were the creation of urban environments and establishment of the industries that have provided the living and working places for a significant proportion of the population, yet there is virtually no consideration given to these by Andrews. He does, however, devote attention to important aspects of cultural expression, using two of the final three chapters that explore the ways in which 19th and 20th century New Zealand literature and painting developed a 'sense of place'. Indeed, it is this perception, Andrews argues, that is central to the distinctiveness of European New Zealanders. Although clearly influenced by their ancestral connections and subsequent borrowings from the wider world, it is through adaptation to the local environment and accommodation with its indigenous people that these people have developed the affection for place that makes it home.

**Geoffrey Clark and Anderson, Atholl (editors). 2009. *The Early Prehistory of Fiji*. Terra Australis 31. ANU E Press. ISBN 9781921666070 (pdf). 437 pp, 175 figs, 91 tables. Paperback, AUD55.**

*Janet Davidson*

The *Terra Australis* series has a long and proud history (almost 40 years) of publishing detailed, data-rich reports on Australian and Pacific archaeology. This volume continues that tradition and, in its emphasis on palaeoenvironments and human impact, sets a new benchmark. The research began in 1995 as a programme on ‘prehistoric colonisation and palaeoenvironment’ and broadened to investigate not only initial colonisation and its effects on the environment but later transformations, covering both the Sigatoka and Navatu phases of the standard Fijian sequence.

There is thus an important emphasis on fauna and landscape. Worthy and Anderson describe excavations of palaeofaunal sites and the results. A chapter by Hope, Stevenson and Southern on vegetation history as revealed by pollen analysis provides a thoughtful discussion of the complexity of such work and its great potential. The possibility of human-induced burning as much as 4500 years ago in Fiji, suggested by Southern’s pioneering study, is more or less laid to rest. The authors also note that they found no evidence in their study for Nunn’s “AD1300 event”.

Archaeological investigations in southern Viti Levu and nearby Beqa Island are described by Anderson and Clark and those in northern Viti Levu and Mago Island away to the east by Clark and Anderson. In the early stages of the programme the emphasis was on Lapita sites, but no major new Lapita site was found. Reinvestigation of the Natunuku site confirmed its disturbed nature. Other major sites reinvestigated included the Sigatoka Dune site (remapping and coring to investigate the stratigraphy) and Gifford’s Navatu site, the eponymous site of the Navatu Phase. Palmer’s 1960s excavations at Karobo, between Sigatoka and Suva, are also reported. The excavation reports present a somewhat depressing picture of the difficulties of finding undisturbed open sites.

Radiocarbon dates from the excavations are then described by Clark and Anderson and contextualised in a review of all the radiocarbon dates from Fiji. The ensuing discussion centres on Lapita settlement, the ceramic sequence, and the development of fortifications.

Studies of faunal remains emphasise the generalised nature of Fijian exploitation of marine resources. Szabo’s analysis of molluscan remains found a low level of selectivity for both species and size categories. Basically, in Fiji anything and everything molluscan was collected. Clark and Szabo report fish remains. The seven assemblages from six sites are mostly small but quite varied,

as shown by a hierarchical cluster analysis based on %MNI. A comparison with other fish bones studies in Fiji confirms variability. The authors conclude that a range of capture techniques were employed in a variety of environments, paralleling the generalised gathering of molluscs.

The study of bird, mammal and reptile remains by Worthy and Clark included a reanalysis of Best's Lakeba material as well as material from nine new excavations. This part of the project was intimately related to the investigation of natural faunal deposits. Important results included the documentation of extinct bird and reptile remains in Lapita sites, and the suggestion that the owl, *Tyto*, established in Fiji from further west following the introduction of *Rattus exulans* and *Rattus praetor*. Although the chicken does appear to have been present in the Lau Islands, at least, during the Lapita period, the dates of introduction of pig and dog remain problematical.

Three chapters on pottery include a detailed description of the ceramic assemblages by Clark and a compositional analysis of pottery by Clark and Kennett, which compares standard petrographic (by Dickinson) and following megascopic analysis (by archaeologists), with a pioneering use of chemical Microwave Digestion Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry (MD-ICP-MS). The study shows movement of pottery within Fiji, although there appear to be some possible problems of contamination of sherds from burial matrix with the latter method. Sandwiched between these two data chapters is an important discussion of Fijian ceramic change by Clark. At a time when the possibility of significant post-Lapita settlement in Samoa is being raised, it is particularly interesting to read a thoughtful challenge to the long-held notion of significant post-Lapita influence in Fiji from the west, particularly from Vanuatu.

Two chapters on stone tools can be described as bravely pioneering. Clarkson and Schmidt set out to provide a more detailed technological description of four relatively small assemblages than has been done in the limited previous work undertaken on stone tools in Fiji. They discuss procurement, core reduction, flakes, retouching, use wear, and the manufacture and use of drill points and adzes, with the interesting suggestion that adzes were initially roughed out as ovate bifaces. Other artefacts of shell, bone, coral and stone from the excavations are listed in an appendix without further discussion, although most are illustrated in a series of photographs. Fankhauser, Clark and Anderson report the results of energy dispersive X-Ray analysis and Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry on 25 flakes and adze fragments. In an appendix, Clark describes the chemical analysis of chert samples. These studies suggest a way forward, but until much more is known about Fijian sources of rock for tools, interpretations remains limited.

The concluding chapter leaps from the dense detail of much of the volume to a very broad picture indeed, beginning with colonisation on an oceanic scale before descending again to a fairly brief consideration of Lapita colonisation and subsequent change in Fiji. I found this chapter somewhat disappointing.

The things that emerged for me from this volume are the extent and diversity of Fijian landscape, environment, and geological resources compared with Samoa and Tonga; the difficulty of finding undisturbed sites; and the areas still largely untouched by archaeologists (notably the second largest island, Vanua Levu). There is a wealth of valuable data in this volume, which makes it a must-have for practitioners of Pacific archaeology, and it sets high standards in methodology and reporting. It is a major contribution to our understanding of the Fijian past. But it also shows how much is still to be done.