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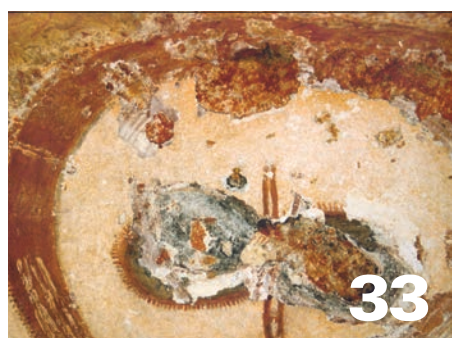
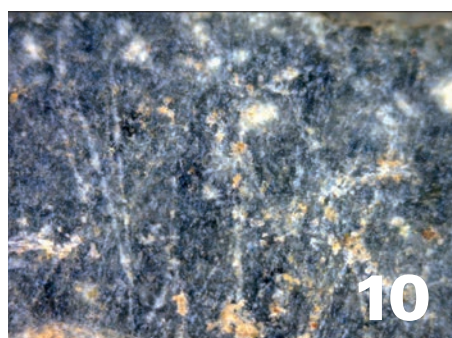
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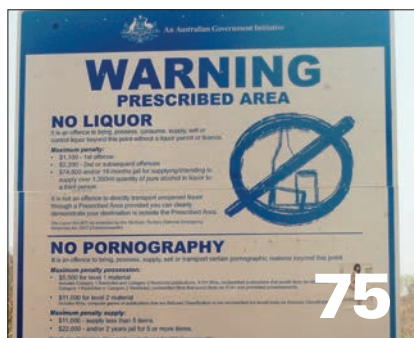
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This highly readable, well-illustrated monograph provides access to the knowledge gained from a very good PhD project. It elucidates a forgotten or missing chapter in the overall history of Chinese settlement in Australia (there are other missing chapters too), and highlights the significant role a small specialised sector of the nineteenth century Chinese migrants (the fish curers) played in the development of the Victorian fishing industry.

***Mystery Islands: Discovering the Ancient Pacific* by Tom Koppel**

2012. University of the South Pacific Press, Suva, Fiji, xv + 339 pp. ISBN 978-982-01-0888-2 (pbk).

Reviewed by Matthew Spriggs

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This is not a book for Pacific specialists and so it is quite a challenge for one of them to review it. Indeed, the audience is a bit unclear, particularly given its publication by a university press in Fiji. I can imagine it being placed on reading lists for interested first year geography or history students, say, at the University of the South Pacific—it is certainly more up-to-date than much of their current class

materials on archaeology in the region. But it doesn't seem to be addressed to Pacific Islanders per se. The author is a travel and science writer and the book mixes both—I would have thought distinct—genres. Given Koppel's own travel experiences, I would plump for an intended audience of interested Canadian and American 'yachties'.

That said, the interest of such general or 'popular' works to Pacific archaeologists is perhaps twofold. Firstly, it is always interesting to see what the wider public out there understand about our findings, and what we have so far failed to convey about them. Secondly, we should be producing more works aimed at various audiences in the region, including Indigenous, visitor and non-Indigenous residents; and we don't do enough of this. Could a specialist have written such a book as this? Probably not. We are hopefully more conscious of the limits of our knowledge than to take on the overly-ambitious range of issues covered in this book, and our continual cautious hedging of bets on issues would tend to bore the reader.

I was impressed by a generally very knowledgeable coverage of sometimes arcane archaeological issues in the text, including long and short chronologies for Polynesia, recent

debates on contacts with the Americas, arguments about how useful modern canoe replicas are in judging prehistoric voyaging capabilities and navigation techniques, as a few examples. These debates are covered in a readable and informed manner that any archaeologist attempting to reach a general audience can learn from. Of course, coverage of issues we would see as key is uneven. Koppel misses almost entirely the significance of the Kuk Swamp data for New Guinea as an early and independent centre of agriculture, implicated in the movement of major crops west into Island Southeast Asia at an early date, as well as the source for those carried eastwards out into the Pacific. His knowledge of what is happening in Melanesian archaeology in general, as opposed to Fiji, Polynesia and parts of Micronesia, is minimal, despite Lapita being a focus. Much could have been made of the extinction of large vertebrates in Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Fiji with the arrival of humans into the region, to flesh out the picture of bird extinctions in places that do get some coverage, such as Hawaii and New Zealand. But also much could have been made of the adjustments the early settlers in the entire region made after an initial phase of massive environmental impact following initial colonisation. Seeing what they had done, people of necessity developed methods of soil conservation, reef protection, and intensive but sustainable agriculture on many of the islands.

The style is uneven, slipping as I noted between travel and science writing. This is not helped by a series of colour photographs which are largely just holiday snaps of little or no relevance to the main topics being discussed. A single, truncated map on the inside does not even include New Zealand, and doesn't do justice to the text. On occasion the author, clearly here in travel writer mode, gives way too much credence to the 'traditional' knowledge purveyed by small-business tourist operators as representing something deep and meaningful about the pre-contact era in the Pacific; the science writer's necessary scepticism should have been alerted on such occasions.

Much of the final 100 pages, apart from the discussion of possible contacts between Polynesia and the Americas, could have been omitted. Attempts to prove that the average Pacific Islander would have had a truly miserable existence under their brutal chiefs, completely omit any useful comparisons, except a vague reference to medieval serfs in Europe. While the chapter can only help modern Westerners feel superior, this bubble could very usefully have been pricked by noting that life in many places that the complacent readers may have come from was undemocratic, dangerous, brutish, nasty and short until not very long ago. If we look at many of the trouble spots of the world it remains so today. Can one describe European history until well into the twentieth century without suggesting endemic warfare was a major cause of grief almost everywhere? It is presented here as entirely a Pacific problem.

The sections on European contact, where archaeological evidence is suddenly jettisoned as having no interest or contribution, are particularly weak. There is a massive underplaying of the facts of military conquest and savagely repressed revolt on island after island; the overthrow of Hawaii's independence by American business interests aided by US Marines doesn't even merit a mention. Indeed, one has to be slightly irked by how easy the Americans get off in general in relation to their colonial adventures compared to some other colonial powers, notably the Japanese and

French. The author is of course of US origin and knows his most likely audience is probably not going to want to be reminded of their own dark past!

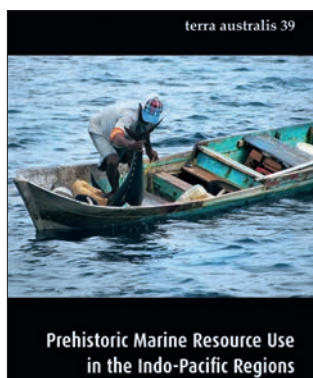
All that said, there is some very good popular science writing here about Pacific archaeology. If the author had remained focused on that topic and left out the travelogue and embarrassingly naïve and ethnocentric judgments on Pacific ways of life, this would have become a very impressive project. To me, the book shows that a good science writer could put together a better up-to-date summary of the state-of-the-art in Pacific archaeology than a practising archaeologist; but we still await that science writer.

Prehistoric Marine Resource Use in the Indo-Pacific Regions edited by Rintaro Ono, Alex Morrison and David Addison

2013. Terra Australis 39. Canberra: Pandanus Press, x + 204 pp., ISBN 978-1-92502-125-7 (print version), ISBN 978-1-92502-126-4 (online version).

Reviewed by Mirani Litster

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Discussions surrounding human impacts on marine ecosystems have often been limited to the post-industrial era, when changing technologies enabled the large-scale acquisition of marine resources. The archaeological discipline, with its capacity to examine trends to a greater time-depth, provides older evidence

for such discussions. Archaeological studies into marine resources also provide information about cultural uses of such resources beyond known contemporary and historical examples, whilst ethno-ecological studies deliver insight into contemporary exploitations.

The recent addition to the Terra Australis series, entitled *Prehistoric Marine Resource Use in the Indo-Pacific Regions*, examines such exploitations across the Indo-Pacific region within a human ecology framework. This regional focus extends from the North Pacific (San Miguel Island), to insular South East Asia and east Africa (the Mafia Archipelago). Edited by Ono, Morrison and Addison, nine of the 11 contributions derive from a conference session entitled 'Historical Ecology and Marine Resource use in the Indo-Pacific Region', held at the 19th Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association Congress in Hanoi, Vietnam, in 2009. The volume is divided into four sections, partitioned largely according to temporal case studies and thematic categories, and within each section a range of methodological and analytical issues are presented.

The first section of this volume contains five contributions detailing prehistoric and historical marine resource use. Chapter One by Olmo discusses the analysis of fish bones from middens in Guam. He highlights issues associated with the lack of information below family level and concludes by suggesting that the use of modern fisheries data may resolve some of these problems. The second chapter by Amesbury discusses pelagic fishing in the Marianas, from the period of initial colonisation through to recent times. Amesbury points out that the initial colonisers were skilled at acquiring open-ocean species, which is supported by archaeological remains of dolphinfish (*Coryphaena hippurus*) and marlin found in prehistoric period contexts. Amesbury then discusses recent changes in Chamorro fishing practices, including a brief hiatus in pelagic fishing during the 18th century Spanish period, and the introduction of more boats in the 1950s which enabled the Chamorro to reinstate open-ocean fishing practices. The third chapter, authored by Ono and Addison, examines the archaeological record of Tokelau, specifically the presence of marine resources dating from initial colonisation. They discuss the contemporary and prehistoric sourcing of both inshore and pelagic fish species, with archaeological results used in concert with the ethno-ecological record to highlight the possibility of long-standing marine conservation measures. With a focus on San Miguel Island, the fourth offering from Braje, Erlandson and Rick examines historical maritime resource use in the North Pacific. Through a comparison of datasets ranging from the early Holocene through to contemporary times, the authors propose that an apparent abundance and size increase of red abalone (*Haliotis rufescens*) was attained through human predation on local sea otter populations. This information provides important insights into human impact and is the basis for the authors suggesting that abalone fisheries would be sustainable with both a recovered red abalone population and a controlled sea otter population. The final paper in the opening section, authored by Christie, is the only contribution addressing Indian Ocean marine resource extraction. Christie discusses maritime exploitation and its social context on the east African coast during the 12th–18th centuries by examining faunal assemblages from Juani Island. She suggests that status was a causal factor in differential patterns of archaeological faunal remains; areas associated with lower status groups revealed a relatively higher presence of marine fauna when compared to higher status areas, suggesting that low status groups supplemented their diet through marine resource procurement. Christie concludes by arguing that the social context of maritime exploitation can be better understood through the examination of faunal remains within spatial frameworks.

Case studies associated with specific marine resource use are presented within the second section of the volume. The presence and significance of baler shell (*Melo* sp.) at Neolithic and metal age sites in the Philippines is examined by Vitales. Baler shells have been extensively exploited throughout the Indo-Pacific, including Australia, but the 'richest' evidence for their use emerges from the Philippines, with 30 recorded sites yielding *Melo* sp. remains. Vitales concludes that these shells were selectively exploited during the Neolithic and Metal Ages for artefact production, often for 'scoop forms' of objects. Such shells have also been found in many burial contexts, highlighting their social significance. The next chapter by Osamu presents a cultural history of dolphinfish fishing in Japan, east Asia and the Pacific. Osamu highlights