Reviews


In my more flippant moments I sometimes think that archaeologists are of two main types: those who do archaeology but don’t actually think about it and those who think about it but don’t actually do it. The weakness of such a dichotomy is that ‘doing archaeology’ clearly means different things to different people and, furthermore, there are some of us who naïvely imagine that we can attempt to both do it and think about it. However, whether archaeological theory repels or attracts us individually, most of us would now acknowledge its fundamental importance in all that we undertake. It is for this reason that the present review has been written, although Roland Fletcher’s book was actually published several years ago. Quite simply, this is a most important book, written by one of Australia’s foremost archaeological thinkers, and a book that makes a contribution of world significance. Historical archaeologists in New Zealand and Australia may wonder how it can be relevant to them but, if they are to set their own work in the international context that it deserves, this is a text that they should read and think about.

Arguing that only the archaeological record has sufficient time-depth for the study of changes in human behaviour, the author examines how the number and density of inhabitants and the size of the settlements that they occupied have been limited by the level of human interaction that could be tolerated and the means of communication (in the broadest sense) that have been available. He constructs an ‘interaction and communication stress matrix’ on the basis of data drawn from many parts of the world over the last 15,000 years and examines how the major transformations of human settlement—from mobile to sedentary, from sedentary to agrarian urban, and from agrarian urban to industrial urban—can be fitted into it. He discusses in detail the changes that were necessary within societies for them to be able to move from one level to another. In doing this, he stresses the role of the physical evidence, what we would normally call material culture, as not merely a product of human behaviour but an influence upon it. Thus he sees ‘material as behaviour’, concluding (p. 228) that: ‘The material becomes recognisable as an actor without intent, whose operations are played out on a vast scale beyond the limited perceptions of daily life’. For example, the form and makeup of a settlement can be a constraint on its development, with the very buildings and transport networks that facilitated its previous growth becoming an impediment to further growth. He also goes on to apply his model to the present time and to the likely forms of future urban growth given the world’s exploding population. In a chilling finale he considers the eventual possibility of cities of 100–200 million people which, if they grew at a rate proportionate to previous growth rates, ‘would see much of New South Wales...’ or all of the UK, covered by buildings within twenty years’ (p. 226).

The above outline does scant justice to the complexity of this book or to its carefully structured and highly detailed argument. It would be difficult for a non-theoretician such as myself to do much else but it is probably to those of us who are not theoreticians that the book is most important. It is not an easy book to read (although it is well organized and has clearly been written with care) but it contains much of interest and much that is thought-provoking. There are probably numerous research projects that could be developed from some of its propositions, at least some of them within the context of Australasian historical archaeology. In addition, the book is important for challenging the way that ‘we allow the ethnographic present and the historically constructed past to exercise tyranny over our perception of past human behaviour’ (p. 212) and for insisting on the use of the archaeological record as a basis for testable theories relevant to both the past and the future. At its beginning the author claims that the book ‘can only be a brief moment in a dialogue which will gradually produce a form of archaeology none of us can now envisage’ (p. xvi). Perhaps so, but it is a significant moment.

In appearance this book is a model of the publisher’s and printer’s art: a clean, neat production, well printed, well designed, well illustrated with black-and-white figures. Although typographic errors usually attract this reviewer’s attention like carrion attracts vultures in the African savanna, I could find hardly any in this text. Only one detail of production disturbed me (and may annoy some readers) and this was that references given in the captions of the illustrations had not always been included in the list of references at the end of the book, although a note at the beginning of that list says that they are available from the author upon request. This does not seem to be a very satisfactory situation; surely all the references should have been published?

In conclusion, this is an important Australian contribution to the world archaeological scene, and the author is to be congratulated for his success in undertaking what must have been a very difficult task. It would be a tragedy if it was now overlooked by Australian archaeologists.

Graham Connah

Department of Archaeology and Anthropology
Australian National University


Produced under the auspices of the Sydney Cove Authority, *Anchored in a Small Cove* was inspired by the inaugural exhibition at the Rocks Visitors Centre when it moved to the Sailors Home in 1993. The original exhibition text (which was written by the historian Max Kelly) and a number of the artefacts and images exhibited at that time formed the basis of this publication. Kelly died in 1996 during the preparation of this book.

*Anchored in a Small Cove* was not intended as an academic monograph; it is rather an exhibition catalogue in format, with the stated aim of introducing the public to the history and archaeology of the Rocks. Although it is designed for a general audience the book is of interest to archaeologists, who can presumably enjoy generalist books that touch upon their own discipline; it also reveals the standard of text being produced for the public concerning archaeological research in the Rocks. It is after all through books such as this that the public draws first perceptions of historical archaeology.

Kelly’s text is brief and is divided into seven chapters that outline the history of the Rocks through addressing particular historical themes including shipping, the outbreak of the plague in 1900, and the later conflicts that surround issues of conservation or development. The chapters are set in a general historical order so that the book commences with the founding of the colony of New South Wales and the consequent establishment of the Rocks, and ends with ‘The Battle for the Rocks’, a chapter which addresses the plans to raze the area in the 1960s for international-style tower blocks and the Green Bans that were imposed in an attempt to halt the destruction of heritage and a community. In addition to these ‘thematic’ chapters Kelly
also utilises 'snapshots' - short sections of text interspersed with images that address in greater detail particular aspects of life in the Rocks in the past such as boarding houses and 'The Larrinakin Push'.

The relatively short length of the text sometimes renders the layout of the book confusing. The generous use of images tends to overwhelm Kelly's history so that the eye is easily distracted from his words. Although the chapters are laid out in a linear historical sequence, images are not always arranged in an equally regular historical order. The effect of this can be subtly perplexing for, if careful attention is not paid to captions, it is difficult for the reader to tell whether an image is a half century or more removed from the period of time discussed in an adjacent paragraph of Kelly's text.

The choice of developing the book as a series of thematic chapters allows Kelly to touch upon a number of topics that would be of interest to the public, and that have been fairly standard in the historiography of the Rocks. These issues include the Rocks as working-class 'neighbourhood', the Rocks as slum, the Rocks as maritime community and finally the Rocks as heritage. It is gratifying to see that an entire chapter is provided concerning the history of the Chinese community in the area, although in contrast the Aboriginal heritage of the Rocks is only described briefly, in a single column on page 30. The only contribution of archaeology to this too brief section is a photograph of three ceramic sherds taken from the top layer of an Aboriginal camp at the Bond Store site in Millers Point.

As a catalogue the book serves its purpose well. It is the images within the book that are most immediately engaging and the paintings, maps, historical photographs and documents presented are beautifully reproduced. The documentary material published is drawn from various collections. The State Archives of New South Wales are of course well represented, but documentary material is sourced from institutions as diverse as the Museo de America, Madrid, (which provided the 1793 picture 'Ingleses en la Nueva Olanda' [on p.24], an interesting study of a free woman and a marine) and the collections of the Royal Greenwich Observatory. In addition there are numerous images of archaeological artefacts that were drawn from twelve local excavations.

Kelly, having written an engaging and accessible history of the Rocks, ignores direct mention of archaeology at all in his text, unusual for a publication subtitled 'A History and Archaeology of the Rocks, Sydney' [my italics]. Although it is fascinating to see objects such as the fourth-century BC Ushabti figure excavated from the Lilyville site, images of artefacts from the Rocks' many excavations are the only explicit archaeological content within the book. The captions provided for these photographs of artefacts go some way toward providing context for the material culture depicted. Each attempt not only to be descriptive but to provide some information about the fabric of the artefact, construction techniques, or its use in everyday life. Despite these exemplary efforts the general independence of Kelly's text from the images displayed sometimes makes it appear that archaeologists are perhaps no more than excavators of interesting birelols.

Unfortunately one cannot help but feel that in this case archaeology has once more been relegated to a subsidiary position to history. If this book does represent the standard of text being written for the public regarding archaeology, it is a reminder to the discipline that better efforts need to be made to explain to the public what archaeologists do and how archaeology differs from history. Given Sydney Cove Authority's role in commissioning a great deal of archaeological research in the area under its administration, Anchored in a Small Cove lost an opportunity to disseminate to the public the reasons for, and the results of archaeological work in the area. It is however difficult to say, given the death of Max Kelly during the preparation of this book, what final form it would have taken had the author seen this work to completion.

Wayne Mullen
Archaeology
University of Sydney


In theory, it is possible to measure the health of archaeological studies in New South Wales schools. In 1998, for instance, 6140 students sat the Ancient History examination for the Higher School Certificate, all of whom completed the topic 'Archaeology, History and Science: Investigating the Past' in the preliminary Ancient History course. Yet, relatively few of their teachers possess training in archaeology. It may be unsatisfactory, but it is a fact that teachers are sometimes compelled to teach subjects they have never been trained to teach. It is often difficult, and not because the content is difficult to grasp. One problem is gathering teaching resources and translating them for use by adolescents. A second problem is that one invariably has not had the time nor opportunity to grasp the underlying philosophy or principles of the foreign discipline. Of course, archaeology is only one facet of the Ancient History course, but Experience Archaeology provides those teaching archaeology units in schools with the means to overcome both of these problems.

There is little doubt that this book will be welcomed by teachers of senior Ancient History in New South Wales. Its content comprehensively covers the Preliminary course: the importance of artefacts and their context; the characteristics of sites; methods of locating and recording sites, stratigraphy and excavation methods (on land and underwater), various methods of dating, conservation of artefacts and sites and ethical issues in archaeology are all examined. 'What is Archaeology', a question briefly defined in many textbooks, is explored in detail with a survey of the major schools of archaeology, followed by three chapters outlining the development of archaeology to the twentieth century. Indeed, there is more than enough to satisfy course requirements and it would be a rare class that would work through this book from cover-to-cover. On the other hand, Experience Archaeology provides an accessible and concise introduction to archaeology for secondary teachers complete with select chapter bibliographies. This just may have an added effect of stimulating archaeological studies in the junior (Years 7-10) history course, and there is a deal of material in the book which could be modified for younger students.

Zumati and Cremin know their readership. As every history teacher knows, nothing is more fascinating in the classroom than bodies, burials and death generally, and the section 'Talking Bones: The Study of Human Remains' should prove popular. Nice skulls on the cover too! But 'Talking Bones' is not an exotic indulgence. These chapters provide a good introduction to the evidence to be gained from burials and human remains, and the chapter on forensic archaeology supplied a few answers to questions concerning the identification of human remains commonly asked in my classroom. Of particular value for the classroom are the two case studies contained in this section: What Happened to the Romanovs? and Who was Buried in Tomb 55? Such inquiry-based activities are welcomed by teachers as they require some time and expertise to develop.

Experience Archaeology is not, however, the type of textbook...
that aims to replace the teacher. The provision of student activities is restrained and summative comprehension-style or essay questions, traditionally found at the end of each chapter in a text, are few. More emphasis is placed on activities involving the use of archaeological evidence and on a range of activities involving role-play, debate and empathy. The most interesting exercises suggested are those involving practical activities. Not only are these invaluable in reinforcing learning, but they assist greatly in the learning of less-able students. Of particular interest to me was the practical exercise in mummification. I have done a similar exercise in country school and it was extremely successful, but I have been reticent about getting city students to work on animal remains (I used a road-killed bird). So Zarmati and Cremin’s procedure for using a zucchini was a revelation. I also found the text’s discussion of the scholarly confusion surrounding the nature of natron most interesting, especially as I had integrated my practical activity into a wider research task that encouraged students to discover Egyptian methods of mummification themselves. We also got it wrong. However, the provision of some documentary material in support of this discussion would have been useful in establishing the need for careful and critical use of primary and secondary written sources and in proving the value of experimental archaeological techniques. This exercise, possibly used in conjunction with the Tomb 55 and Lahun case studies, has the potential to launch a broader Egyptian case study – perhaps directions should have been given to research and model a tomb-complex, complete with inscriptions, wall paintings and grave goods, rather than just a coffin.

One pleasing feature of this book is the amount of Australian material included. Students do, in my experience, gain the impression that archaeology is something that happens overseas in countries lucky enough to have pyramids. The authors introduce students to the work of Grafton Elliot Smith and Gordon Childe in addition to that of the oil-studied Heinrich Schliemann, Arthur Evans and Flinders Petrie. Also welcome are the biographies of women archaeologists, including the Australian-born Veronica Seton-Williams. Many of the photographs in the book show Australian archaeologists at work in Australia and overseas. Much of the information dealing with issues of ownership of the past and heritage management is Australian. There are the fact files dealing with Australian sites, such as Dawes Point and Jinmium, while others deal with the overseas work of Australian archaeologists, such as the Wright’s work on Holocaust sites. All of which helps to establish archaeological sites and investigation within the student’s world circle.

Nevertheless, in one way there could be an even stronger Australian perspective. The cover notes of Experience Archaeology promise that students are invited to be the archaeologist without ever having to leave the classroom. In fact, I would suggest that a priority would be to encourage the students to leave the classroom. The principles of archaeology apply as equally in a school playground as in Crete or Athens, and students should be inspired to observe, appreciate and to lend their support to the conservation of the archaeological heritage around them. The authors do suggest museum and site visits, but greater emphasis is warranted. One avenue would have been to examine archaeological surface survey in an Australian context, perhaps also transforming the ‘excavating your household garbage’ practical activity into a surface survey of playground litter.

This is not really a major criticism. Experience Archaeology must satisfy a market and the fact is that Australian archaeology has a low profile in schools. To a large extent, this is institutional – a product of the educational background and training of teachers and the pressures generated by the Higher School Certificate examination. Equally, it is influenced by the very patchy commitment of rank-and-file teachers to the teaching of Aboriginal history (especially pre-contact history); and few teachers would be familiar with developments in Australian historical archaeology. Zarmati and Cremin, by including a substantial body of Australian material in this book, will greatly assist change in this area. I might add that the inclusion of Asian material will be equally beneficial. All in all, it is marvellous to see an entire volume devoted to secondary studies of archaeology in Australia.

Michael Smithson
Trinity Catholic College
Sydney


As the ‘traditional’ boundaries between prehistoric and historic archaeology continue to blur, a fertile meeting ground for the two subdisciplines has been in the archaeology of contact and colonialism. This is particularly the case in southern hemisphere settler societies like Australia and New Zealand, where the prehistoric era ends barely two hundred years ago, and historic archaeology has largely been a study of settlement. Coupled with the increasing growth in what are loosely termed ‘post-colonial studies’, it is becoming increasingly clear that colonised cultures were not the victims of a fatal impact, and that colonised peoples continued, within their own cultures, to make their own accommodations to rapidly changing circumstances. Indeed the colonial experience was a two-way process, with both colonisers and colonised accommodating each other, although obviously with greater force on one side than the other.

Central to this realisation has been the view that native cultures are neither armless, chronically, or remote existence in prehistory. Prehistoric archaeologists, of course, have long studied cultural change, but in this they have often taken a deterministic lean. Systems interact with other systems, change in the ecological system determines change in the cultural system. From this standpoint the insights gained from ethnohistory can be projected back into a changeless past, which is interpreted in terms of the ethnographic present. However it is clear that cultures, whether prehistoric or historic, have always been dynamic, changing in response as much to internal, social stimuli as to the external environment. These two insights, dynamic change in prehistory and dynamic response to colonial processes, are clearly bound together.

These two recent volumes on the ethnohistory of Maori clearly demonstrate the dynamic nature of change in Maori society during the period prior to initial contact with Europeans and during the early colonial period. Anderson’s account begins earlier and ends earlier than Ballara’s, indeed he begins with the mythical origins of Ngai Tahu, the dominant and inclusive tribal grouping of most of the South Island. The traditional histories of Southern Maori form the basis of this account, and as Anderson points out traditions are not a linear narratives like European histories, but rather ‘emphasise descent over incident’, that is they are essentially genealogies to which ancestral stories are attached. However, as traditions were recorded by Europeans from the mid-nineteenth century they were rearranged into something more resembling the narrative form, and it is these European renderings that form the basis of Anderson’s account. The recording of Ngai Tahu tradition was ‘carefully and authoritative’, with learned and chiefly men giving their knowledge to sympathetic Europeans from the 1840s, early in
the colonisation of the South Island.

Traditional histories state that beginning around 1650 A.D. various related but not necessarily allied groups of the descendants of Tahu Potiki from the Hawkes Bay region began to cross Cook Strait and establish themselves in the northern South Island. Already present in the South Island were Ngati Mamoe who had arrived perhaps two centuries previously, and Te Rarawa and Waitaha, two closely related groups who were possibly the original inhabitants of the island. The various groups of Ngai Tahu were not initially unified as a single tribal identity. Each group made their own way down the Kaikoura and North Canterbury coasts, defeating Ngati Mamoe in battle and subsequently intermarrying with them to form lasting kin-based alliances. Not until they were harried out of the northern South Island by musket-armed Ngati Toa in the 1820s did Ngai Tahu fully penetrate the lower half of the island. At this time the term Ngai Tahu also came into more general use as previously independent groups were forced to unite in the face of invasion.

Ngai Tahu are an iwi, a term frequently glossed as ‘tribe’. The component groups of Ngai Tahu, those that became united in the 1820s, are hapu, or ‘sub-tribes’. Ballara examines the changing role of these two kin-based groupings throughout New Zealand, particularly in the North Island. As Maori responded to the changes brought about by increasing contact with Europeans, so their relations between themselves evolved. Membership of social groups in Maori society was based on descent (Ngai Tahu, for instance, means the people or descendants of Tahu). In the eighteenth century the focal social grouping was the hapu. Intermarriage between members of different hapu ensured that a complex genealogical web existed outside the local group, but each hapu acted independently, allocating its resources to its members and forming alliances with or waging war on its neighbours. Hapu would have been named for their founding ancestor and other hapu would branch off from the original to achieve their own independence. Only outsiders would have considered the related hapu to be a single people, and this is exactly what happened with the arrival of Europeans. Early missionaries were slow to grasp the complexity and fluidity of the social situation they encountered, and their simplistic account was accepted by the colonial government, which was reluctant to deal with Maori at a hapu level. They preferred to treat with paramount chiefs rather than a plethora of small groups, even when such paramountcies lacked legitimacy and were often, in part, created by government at the expense of one hapu over another. This was particularly the case with the land agents, who would play off one group against another, purchasing land from those that often had at best only a partial say in its disposition.

Apart from governmental pressure on Maori to act within the scope of larger groupings, other factors were giving the iwi a new importance. The musket wars of the 1820s and 30s often forced larger groups to coalesce in self-defence, as with Ngai Tahu, and the migrations that came about as a result of the wars meant that the original inhabitants of an area often redefined their separate identity in terms of iwi.

To summarise a few salient points in the course of a book review is to risk missing the complexity of the processes described. The independence of hapu often meant that responses to similar situations differed from place to place, and the interrelationships and shifting alliances of hapu and iwi, hapu and government only add to the complexity. Situations ebbed and flowed, hapu have never been entirely subsumed by iwi and have continued to assert their independent status and identity.

Ballara points out the limits to these processes, and the fact that such processes were often reversed when the pressure was relieved. Much of her evidence comes from the records of the land courts between 1866 and 1900. The land courts, as an arm of government, were also reluctant to deal with hapu, often ignoring the evidence of a group’s independence in favour of their iwi identification. Maori themselves would have had their own reasons for giving particular types of evidence, and, as interested parties, introduced their own biases into the accounts. This aspect of the source material is less rigorously explored by Ballara, and the same can be said of Anderson’s use of his sources. Anderson has compiled, from numerous sources, an ethnohistoric account of 200 years of Southern Māori history. The book is aimed at a more popular level than Ballara’s more scholarly and specialised work, which takes much of its evidence from fewer sources, but both works may be read together, complementing each other well, and telling similar stories from different viewpoints.

Both books are dense with the names of people and places, making them at times quite difficult to follow. This is probably unavoidable, but could have been improved with a little effort. Anderson, for instance, tends to reintroduce characters some pages after their first mention, and leaves it to the reader to make the connection. Ballara gives numerous genealogies, but then rather than explain the history of these people, writes about different members of the same family who are not illustrated in the genealogy. These are not minor quibbles, given the often complex and confusing nature of the subject matter. Both books, Ballara’s in particular, are aimed at a fairly academic audience, assuming a fair knowledge of New Zealand history and Maori society in the reader. While not a bad thing in itself, this does hamper the dissemination of this scholarship in the wider community, where it deserves to be. Ballara claims her book is aimed primarily at ‘Europeans ... and ethnic groups other than Māori’, those ‘New Zealanders of all kinds [who] find it hard to express their national identity other than through Māori cultural phenomena’. The chocolate box version of this national identity is well known, the All Black haka and a good feed of kumara chips. It is to be hoped that these books will reach the audience Ballara aims for, increasing the understanding of Maori culture and society among all New Zealanders. Academics anywhere interested in the study of colonialism and contact will be well repaid by careful attention to the excellent scholarship in these books. These are important studies and will surely go a long way towards furthering the view of all cultures as active and dynamic rather than the passive recipients of change imposed from outside.

Matthew Campbell
Archaeology
University of Sydney


The main value of this book is to allow wider public access to some important BA Honours theses in the field of Aboriginal history by students at the Department of History, University of Sydney, written between 1982 and 1992. Since then two of these former students (Richard Glover and Noel Pearson) have gone on to become well-known public figures. The volume is edited and introduced by Jan Kociumbas who lectures in Australian and Pacific History at the University of Sydney. According to Kociumbas, key student research theses held by the Department of History are constantly sought out by journalists, politicians and interstate researchers. The theses are also important to the research needs of staff and other students at the university. Through publication Kociumbas has made four of these works more readily accessible to students and outside researchers alike.
Another major stated aim of the book is to encourage history students currently enrolled at Sydney University in their own research endeavours by providing published examples of top-quality undergraduate history research by people who have since become successful in their own fields both inside and outside of academia. This is an admirable aim, and as such the book may even be of value to some undergraduate archaeology students by providing examples of possible good ways to approach and write a top quality BA Honours thesis on a historical topic. However, on the whole this volume is probably only of marginal value to historical archaeologists and to archaeologists more generally, unless they have very specific interests in some of the subjects covered in the theses. The theses are presented with minimal editing. For quite understandable reasons, no attempt has been made to re-write them or bring them up to date, although Kociumbas’ introductory essay does place the four theses within the broader context of the history of, and problems raised by, Aboriginal history and Aboriginal studies more generally, including some discussion of archaeology.

Kociumbas’ introduction seeks to provide, by her own admission, an ‘unashamedly elemental’ (p.vi) overview of the changing economic and political context within which Australian historiography has been produced, with an emphasis on writing Aboriginal history. The overview, like the book, is aimed primarily at undergraduate history students, in particular at overseas students with little or no prior knowledge of this area. Unfortunately her discussion of the history and role of Pre-Historic [sic] Archaeology within Aboriginal studies (pp.33-36 and p.37-8) is so over-simplified in places that it misrepresents archaeology and archaeologists, which is a bit unfortunate in a book which otherwise aims to self-consciously examine the idea of representation (and misrepresentation) of Aboriginal people and their history. Kociumbas’ overview of archaeology is also very outdated, failing as it does to deal with many developments in the theory and practice of our discipline since the 1970s. The last twenty years has seen a radical transformation of Australian archaeology and many of the socio-political issues raised by Kociumbas in the more general context of Aboriginal history and Aboriginal studies are well-known to and have been widely debated by archaeologists and Aboriginal people alike in recent years, with concomitant changes in the way Australian Aboriginal archaeology is practiced in the 1990s. This is perhaps a minor point in a book which is primarily about writing history, but nevertheless it is very unfortunate to think that overseas and local history students, who may know nothing about Australian archaeology, will gain such an outdated and negative impression of our discipline from reading this introduction.

Richard Glover is now a successful journalist. His 1982 thesis ‘Scientific Racism and the Australian Aboriginal (1865-1915): The Logic of Evolutionary Anthropology’ traced the history of colonial and racist evolutionary and physical anthropology in relation to Australia’s indigenous people. The work is interesting and well-written with many useful references in the bibliography, but it shows its age. In 1982 the thesis may have been saying something new, exciting and challenging, or at least may have added further ammunition to a then growing Aboriginal campaign for the return of ancestral human remains from museum and university collections. By 1998 much of the history and most of the arguments in Glover’s thesis are well-known and largely accepted by most Australian museums and universities - who have since responded to Aboriginal requests and have either returned or are in the process of returning indigenous ancestral remains to relevant communities - although many overseas institutions still refuse to cooperate.

Noel Pearson’s 1986 history of Hope Vale Lutheran Mission (1900-1950), ‘Ngamu-Nguayadji, Munri-Bunggaga and Midha Mini in Gungu Yimidhirr History’ (which translates into English as ‘Dingoes, Sheep and Mr Muni in Gungu Yimidhirr History’), has stood the test of time far better. Noel Pearson is the only indigenous contributor to the book and he has since gone on to become very well-known in Australia as a campaigner and spokesman for indigenous rights. His thesis presented a history of the Hope Vale Mission in north Queensland through the voices, experiences and written accounts of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people who lived there, including members of his own extended family. The main aim of Pearson’s history was to demonstrate that Gungu Yimidhirr people at Hope Vale Mission, in the face of overwhelming colonial domination, were nevertheless active creators of their own mission culture, and that mission history was far more than just missionary activity over Aboriginal passivity. Just as important, the theses also provided a critical analysis of the whole notion of writing an academic English-language indigenous history of colonised peoples whose first language is not English, who have a strong cultural tradition of oral communication, and for whom the whole notion of “writing history” in a western sense is a colonial imposition. Again, while such ideas have since been explored many times in many contexts by indigenous and non-indigenous writers, this is such an outstanding piece of work that it still makes fascinating reading.

The theses by Lucy O’Connor (1988) and Patty O’Brien (1992) were produced more recently and consequently have had less time to age. They both analysed changing ways in which indigenous people and their ‘Aboriginality’ have been represented by non-indigenous writers and artists and the way in which such representations both reflect and/or perpetuate colonial attitudes towards indigenous people, including romanticism and the idea of the ‘noble savage’, racism and related government policies of segregation and assimilation. O’Brien examined, from a feminist perspective, the way Aboriginal women were depicted by Europeans in New South Wales and Port Phillip between 1800 and 1850. Her work also included a critical overview of a range of related literature on this topic. O’Connor traced descriptions and visual depictions of Aborigines in New South Wales State primary schools between 1940 and 1965 through a critical analysis of curricula and related publications produced for staff and pupils, including indigenous pupils. These are both interesting works on topical subjects which, considering they were both written by fourth year students, are of a very high standard and concern topics of which any historical archaeologist working in the field of contact archaeology ought to be aware.

Should archaeologists read this book? On balance the answer is ‘yes’, if they can forgive parts of the introduction. The book as a whole is essentially a work of and about Aboriginal history, with almost no reference to material or archaeological evidence at all. However, many archaeologists are interested in history and anyone involved in the study of Aboriginal missions and contact archaeology should find Noel Pearson’s thesis particularly useful. This book certainly should also be read by anyone with a general interest in the socio-politics of Aboriginal Australia, which these days includes many archaeologists and cultural heritage managers.

Sarah Colley
Archaeology
University of Sydney

98
Environmental history is currently exciting the historians. Even historical archaeologists have recently been called on to abandon the Swiss Family Robinson model, take up with Russell Drysdale and engage with the environment. Thus a text with the title of ‘Ecology and Empire’ is of great interest to archaeologists in providing a background to environmental history.

The editors Griffith and Robin, well known inter alia for their work in the area of environmental history, have brought together 14 other contributors to write on this theme. What a dazzling array of talent they have amassed. Apart from Griffith and Robin themselves there are contributions from David Lowenthal, Michael Williams, Richard Grove, Eric Rolls, Tim Flannery and Joe Powell. At a glance, it can be seen that the scope is global and interdisciplinary, with historians at long last finding the historical geographers.

The book’s starting point is the juxtaposition of the concepts Ecology and Empire - inspired by Crosby’s Ecological Imperialism. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the terms ‘ecology’ and ‘empire’ were closely related and developed through the encounters of the empires with the environment of the countries into which they expanded. Griffith and Robin’s view on ecology and empire is from the periphery, from the settler societies of North America, South Africa and Australia (what about New Zealand?). Griffiths argues for the importance of the Australian historical experience and of that from other settler societies in demanding more complex explanations of the historical evidence. With wonderful irony, however, acknowledgments note that the work was initiated while the authors were living in London at the Sir Robert Gordon Menzies Centre for Australian studies, which suggests that the ‘core’ has some use despite their interest in the periphery!

Griffiths’ Introduction, one of the more interesting essays, traces the themes of ecology and empire and the concept of settler societies. This is followed by a section of three essays on ecological invasion with papers on fire by Payne and two on the Australian environment by Rolls and Flannery. This is possibly the weakest section with Payne rarely discussing anything but the European experience of fire, Rolls giving a rather superficial history of Australia and Flannery covering the same ground, using ecological language but with the same lack of depth.

The second section of four essays look at the relationship between the science of ecology and the development of ‘the Empire’. Robin looks at the development of ‘ecology’ in Australia and points to its relationship with industry as an applied science. Dunlop looks at connections within the ‘Anglo’ world in the development of ecology as a way of explaining its similar development in different countries. Beinart discusses the links between the improvements of stock and pastoral reform through the application of veterinary science. Powell revisits his work on water management, arguing that water management is fundamental to the Australian settler experience but that this involved hitherto unrecognised reciprocities between the imperial core and the Australian peripheries.

Nation building is the theme of the third section of three papers. Currah traces the establishment of national parks in South Africa with the development of the South African nation and its attitudes to the occupants of the land made into park. Grove traces the development of a critique of land management practices in colonial South Africa back to Scottish Calvinism with French and German influences. Hains, in a fascinating chapter on Flynn and Mawson, both folk heroes associated with extraordinary difficult environments, sees in them the antecedents of the wilderness and conservation movements in Australia.

A further three chapters attempt to grapple with the tricky issue of Economy and Ecology. Williams traces the history of forests or deforestation in the context of economic demands and ecological responses. Melville adds a welcome South American perspective arguing, possibly against the theme of the other essays, that the rise of the capitalist mode of production occurred in the nineteenth century and therefore cannot explain environmental change in South America prior to that date. Finally Milton discusses Transvaal beef in the post-Boer War reconstruction era.

The last two essays, grouped rather misleadingly as ‘Comparing Settler Societies’ are in fact useful historiographic assessments by MacKenzie and Lowenthal of environmental history and of the topics discussed in the book respectively.

Overall the essays are samples of the author’s works and reading them had the effect of diverting me to read the more substantive texts and articles, making the production of this review a slow but enjoyable task. It is for this reason and for its perspective from the edge of the empire that I highly recommend the book.

However, for all the interest that the book and its essays have there seems to me a major lack of some form of theoretical framework to bring all the diverse elements together. The concept of settler societies is not particularly well developed. Nor is it explained how all of these aspects were integrated into a single complex system. The parts and the depth of their relationships can be seen but there is not a sense of a whole entity. Clearly there is a need for some sort of theoretical underpinning of this work, no matter how unfashionable theory might be in the post-modern world. For all its difficulties, theory is ultimately a way of making something as complex as the empire and ecology during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and making it understandable.

Clearly, Marxist approaches are one way of achieving this integration; however, the explanations are somewhat unwieldy and can be over- rigid, as E.P. Thompson pointed out, and of course overemphasise economic factors. Certainly, systems theory has been used to try and integrate natural and human history (in particular the work of Kenneth Boulding). Although this approach has fallen from favour in history and geography in recent years it might be worth dusting it off. Systems theory has proved particularly successful in the area of ecology and ecological monitoring as well as biogeography. There is still a strong systems approach in archaeology and perhaps this is one area where archaeology could contribute to the questions raised in this important book.

Iain Stuart
Archaeology
University of Sydney
They begin with an early bright ideas phase, when interesting ideas are being pursued. Having got everyone's attention, the scholar often then moves into a more mature phase, where progress continues and new ideas are developed. If this tactic works, a scholar may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this happens, they may exit the system temporarily to achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a peak in their career, where they achieve a measure of job security and rise up the pecking order. If this tactic works, they may reach a pe
the final interpretations we author, and can allow the reader to interrogate a variety of data and better evaluate our conclusions. The hidden process of knowledge generation is, at least to some extent, revealed. Most readers will perhaps not have the time or the inclination to follow every verdict back to the clues on which it is based, but the archive is there at the click of a mouse. Hodder also notes that readers can get into a report at different levels. Accounts designed for children, the general reader, first-year students taking a methods course, or specialists in the archaeology of that time or place can all be constructed and cross-referenced.

The equipment to allow this form of publication is all easily available, including CD 'burners' to produce CDs on demand, so money cannot be used by any serious professional archaeologist as an excuse. But time can be. As someone who has tried to do a similar project on a much smaller scale, the time spent on data entry and constructing the necessary links is enormous. But is it any more onerous than producing a conventional archaeological report and properly archiving the data generated? Probably not, and you are producing more of an original work of art rather than a forgery.

The book seems to be written for an advanced undergraduate audience and has the feel of a semester-length course guide. This might explain why a lot of it repeats the obvious, but not why so much of the obvious is claimed as new. The progression between chapters is quite clear. After the first two (mentioned above) it moves on to 'How do Archaeologists Reason?', 'Interpreting Material Culture', 'Towards a Reflexive Method', 'The Natural Science in Archaeology', 'Using the New Information Technologies', 'Windows into Deep Time: Towards a Multiscalar Approach', 'Archaeology and Globalism', 'Can the New Digital Technologies Deliver a Reflexive Methodology?' and the Conclusion 'Towards Non-Dichotomous Thinking in Archaeology'.

It is a useful book to check up on where British archaeological theory has reached at the end of the 1990s. But perhaps this is the problem I had with reading it. Because Australian archaeologists have had to come to terms with many of the issues seen here as manifestations of a post-modern world, particularly the relationship between archaeologists and indigenous peoples, they have already sorted through many of the arguments themselves, without ever having read the social theorists quoted here. To the extent that archaeological social theory is merely reflective of the times in which we live, this is perhaps not surprising. If you live a post-modern life, you must have constructed your own internalised post-modern theory of it in order to survive.

Hodder's only references to Australia are to quote Ros Langford's (1983) polemical article in Australian Archaeology on the relationship between archaeologists and Aboriginal people as she saw it at that time, and to make a completely unsubstantiated claim that in the conflicts over Aboriginal land rights, 'archaeological objective science came to be associated with vested establishment interests against which local communities had to fight'. Although not referenced, this presumably is from a certain reading of the furore more than twenty years ago over the film The Last Tasmanian. Set up as straw-persons to make a point, we are not allowed to change.

Is the problem that many of the British archaeological theorists have never had much to do with indigenous peoples? The multivocality they seem to have discovered and the post-colonialist theory they espouse may both be more to do with the threat of break-up of the British state and the increasing assertiveness of its own internal colonies in Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Cornwall, than any real understanding of the current situation in the third and fourth worlds, and in settler nations such as Australia. There is too much talking-the-talk instead of walking-the-walk in current British archaeological theory. This book perhaps reveals the isolation of British archaeology from the rest of the world, rather than providing the theoretical leadership it assumes. While British archaeologists may well need to 'dig outside their shelters'- it is up to them to say whether their own practice is being caricatured in the book - much of the rest of the world is perhaps already out there in the sunshine, reflexive trowels in hand.


Matthew Spriggs
Archaeology and Anthropology
Australian National University