

Reviews

Jane Lydon, *Many Inventions: The Chinese in the Rocks 1890-1930*, Melbourne, Monash Publications in History, 1999; pp. xxii+276 paperback \$19.95. ISBN 0 7326 0032.

'Between worlds' Greg Denning observed recently 'is more of a human condition than an occasional exoticism'. The ways and means by which people negotiate the spaces and confluences between cultures, languages, genders, classes, generations, between past and present, between what ought to be and what is, are not incidental, but *integral* to any understanding of the past. The spaces 'between worlds' are the sites of tension, anguish and suffering, but also of great creativity. This plays havoc with more traditional heuristic approaches which turn upon oppositions, fixed polarities, neatly dividable categories and types, and quixotic quests for grand, all-explaining theories.

Denning adds that 'We all have to cope with the opposing stilling qualities of our minds and institutions and the flowing indivisibility of living experience'.¹ In *Many Inventions*, Jane Lydon copes rather well. Based on a Master of Arts thesis, and so reflecting the work and experiments of a maturing researcher and writer, the book explores the spaces between Chinese and European worlds in Sydney's Rocks area, and the cross-cultural 'pidgin English' or 'jargon' developed to broach and manage them. A number of the 'stilling qualities' of minds and institutions topple in the process. Of the mental structures and images with which scholars have approached their subjects, Lydon asks 'how can our histories overcome these crisply demarcated categories?' (p.21), models of one-way acculturation, the narrow search for 'Chineseness' or 'Europeanisation', for example, or the simple oppositional model of racism and hatred, oppressed and oppressors. In shifting 'between worlds', to the actions, words, encounters and possessions of real people in a real place, Lydon allows a far more complex scene, something of the 'flowing indivisibility' of the 'lived city', to emerge.

The implications push ever-outwards, like concentric circles. The cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary approach means that the artefacts from Sampson's cottage have been hauled not only from the ground, but also out of the deeply worn ruts and 'stilling' encrustations of traditional archaeology. This collection, Lydon says firmly in her closing reflections, '...still doesn't speak for itself.... these bits and pieces ...start off as meaningless, in need of a matrix only language can provide' (p.176); hence her excursions into history, culture, text and context. Those who still think historical archaeology should be studied all on its own, 'pure' and 'untainted', will have conniptions. And about time too. Pronouncements about what archaeologists 'do' and 'don't do', what they can and can't 'say' in their work, have had the effect of shutting out new thought and fresh insights, severely limiting the contribution historical archaeology can make to our understanding of the past.

We plunge first into a whirlwind tour of theoretical approaches, arguments and counter arguments from cultural theory, history, anthropology, archaeology and others, which somehow made it from thesis into print. We emerge, a little dazed, but armed with the idea of ethnographic 'collage', the juxtaposition of fragments of different kinds, as a means of capturing the process of combining seemingly incommensurable perspectives on a single plane', the plane being the printed page (p.xiv). Lydon is not alone in her wondering, and sometimes angst, over the complexities of her subject, and the role of the author in it. Shirley Fitzgerald, in *Red Tape, Gold Scissors* has written simply and movingly about the difficulties and rewards of writing the history of the

Chinese in Sydney.² It is curious that these ideas and themes are not engaged with, while those of so many others, rather more distant, are included.

The subsequent chapters are more straightforward and plain-speaking, moving dutifully from the Rocks the Europeans occupied in this period, to what can be gleaned of life 'inside the Chinese community', and thence to the intersections and the 'many inventions' devised by the Chinese to survive, get around legislation, and even to beat the Europeans at their own game. The findings of the 1891-92 *Royal Commission into Chinese Gambling and Immorality* are heavily drawn upon. The descriptor is 'collage', but this work also make me think sometimes of nested boxes, or rooms-within-rooms, or hypertext; and at other times of dialogue, the complex to-and-fro of conversation between Europeans and Chinese, amongst Europeans and amongst Chinese, the manipulation, trying-it-on, bluff and bluster, gorgeous spectacle and deep silences.

Along the journey, Lydon points out the many ways our 'crisp demarcations'—such as ethnicity, community, self and 'other', authority and people—are constantly subverted by a close-up examination of gender relations, or surprising alliances according to status, or in the actions of those emissaries who crossed over. In the betrayal of a Chinese deserter by a local Chinese informant, for example, she reads '...the fragmentation of the Chinese "community", as its members exploited one another for personal advantage...white restrictions were known quantities, to be manipulated for his particular ends.' (p. 157). That evidence for both 'community' and 'fragmentation of community' are presented is not equivocation (as those in search of 'coherent models' might claim), but a recognition of complexity, the tensions and 'fields of force' which often co-exist with the mutual support and comfort within a 'community'.³

This critique could have been extended to the rather cobbled portrait of the European Rocks (chapter 2). It tends to fall back on such much-loved, stereotypical categories as 'the working class', the 'community', 'the marginal, disorderly' and 'seething' Rocks, women who were 'forbidden the street' (pubs maybe, but streets? Who flocked to the department stores? The races? The dance halls? The beaches? The theatres for matinees?), and once more zooms in on the plague of 1900. A bit of a muddle, this, for some of the significant contradictory evidence and interpretations offered by recent historical, archaeological and family history research are nevertheless also included here.

What is refreshing is that that the relatively small assemblage and the features excavated at Hong On Jang's household in George Street, with which Lydon started, does not dominate this narrative. In fact it plays a relatively small role, although there are fascinating observations of the crossover of both Chinese and European ceramics on this and other sites. A great deal of time and energy has gone into the research and analysis of these artefacts (the material culture of the overseas Chinese is, obviously, global culture, and has to be researched globally, see pp.179-235). But Lydon has kept it in perspective, and not contrived to make archaeology the sole focus, a peg upon which to hang everything else. Instead it takes its place in a panoply of other evidence, other practices and gestures, and, thus contextualised, offers glimpses into the private, hidden world of Hong On Jang's household. A sand pot, an item rarely found outside China (why? one wonders), was used to prepare food that required long cooking time, such as 'tendon, ligament, pork knuckle' (though, interestingly, it appears that fish bones dominate the faunal assemblage). With 'its slow,

even diffusion of heat, releasing excess moisture through its surface, while excess grease was absorbed' (p.99), the sand pot conjures up the smells, the shared meals of a vanished world.

Some might wonder at the choice of so small a collection, and from a period when the Chinese were not very numerous on the Rocks in any case. But one of the functions of archaeology is that it can 'shift the emphasis', spark a new line of questioning, it can be a springboard into new, multifaceted and multi-sourced approaches. Viable ways are left open for further research too. Do 'transient lifestyles' and 'cleansing' fully explain the archaeological silence about Chinese occupation on other, earlier sites on the Rocks? (p.91). Did they not share the 'bonds forged...through sharing food'? Or is the archaeological record, for all the millions of artefacts recovered, still too scattered and incomplete? On a broader level, did the Chinese, in creating, performing or assenting to 'pidgin English', also construct a prison of language and stereotypes for themselves? What happens to 'cultural jargon'

over time? These themes resonate with the songs of migrant peoples everywhere – what outgroup is not regarded as dirty, violent, diseased and a menace to 'society as a whole'? What migrant group does not find deep solace in food?

This study could so easily have been yet another narrow recounting of 'my site and what I found', sticking rigidly to a lengthy exposition on dirt, contexts and taphonomy, and earnest discussions of widths, lengths, weights and proportions, with the occasional myopic nod in the direction of the great surge of people and processes making the neighbourhood, making the city. Instead *Many Inventions* is a welcome and thoughtful addition to the emerging, increasingly sophisticated body of work in historical archaeology, as well as to a growing, glowing collection of works on the Chinese in Australia.

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- 1 Greg Denning 'Between Worlds', *Australian Historical Studies*, 112, April 1999, 172-7.
- 2 Shirley Fitzgerald, *Red Tape, Gold Scissors*, Sydney, State Library of New South Wales Press, 1996, pp. 1-10. See also Diana Giese, *Astronauts, Lost Souls & Dragons: Voices of today's Chinese Australians*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia 1997.

- 3 E P Thompson, 'Eighteenth Century English Society: Class Struggle Without Class?', *Social History*, 3:2 1978, 133-65; G. Karskens, *The Rocks: Life in Early Sydney*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne 1997, pp. 50-51.

M. Casey, D. Donlon, J. Hope & S. Welfare (eds), *Redefining Archaeology: Feminist Perspectives*. ANH Publications, RSPAS, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia, 1988; pp. 245, soft cover \$62. ISBN 0 90952 404 1.

The Australian Women in Archaeology conference represents the main forum of feminist archaeology in Australia. The resulting publications can be seen as a primary resource discussing feminist archaeology. This book contains the proceedings of the third Australian Women in Archaeology Conference, which was held from February 3rd to 5th, 1995, at the University of Sydney. 34 of the 46 papers presented at the conference have been published.

Feminism, as a discipline, is notable for the many disparate subgroups covered by that term. In fact feminism is suited to the conference proceedings format as it gives readers a chance to familiarise themselves with the variety of perspectives (by no means uniform) which are all covered by the moniker 'feminism'. In conjunction feminist theory has been applied to all archaeological site areas and time periods, resulting in the unifying threads which do exist being difficult to find. Given that conference proceedings often cover a diverse range of topics, the editors have faced a challenge in collating a book of this nature. The papers within this volume present a dramatic overview of the different archaeological arenas to which feminist theory has been applied.

The opening two sections of the book contain theoretical papers. Section One: Feminism and the Politics of Archaeological Discourse examines the importance of language in interpretation of archaeology. The three papers in this section all present different scenarios, language as a tool to exclude certain readers (Zarmati), language as a constraint on archaeological inquiry (Clarke), and language to reinforce dominant viewpoints, be they androcentric or feminist (Colley). Section Two: Feminism and Archaeological Theory explores the direct impact of feminist theory on archaeological theory. Spencer-Wood provides a model to identify and navigate the layers between androcentrism and feminist interpretation. Walshe shows that feminist critiques of sexist interpretations of

the past have failed to permeate some areas of archaeological inquiry. Smith argues that feminism has failed to make a greater impact on the culture of Australian archaeology due to a preference for excavation over theory. Knapp urges caution in the application of feminist theory, emphasising the bias of replacing an androcentric view of the past with a gynocentric one.

Section Three: Feminism in the Field looks at how a feminist approach to research results in different work practices, questions and interpretation. Spector explores this theme in an excavation environment whilst Phillips contends with the university/academic environment. Both come to similar conclusions regarding flexibility and mentoring, a point reinforced by Cooke as she describes her career in CRM. Casey examines the publication rates for women working in historical archaeology in New South Wales since the first Australian Women in Archaeology conference. She proposes that the increase of publications by women is a result of women playing a greater editorial role, but is also a flow on effect of that conference.

The remaining sections all use feminism as a starting point in different case studies, the aim being to arrive at a more comprehensive picture of archaeology and the past. It is these sections which highlight the practical applications of feminism. Situations and interpretations which have been taken for granted are questioned by feminist approaches and the results of such inquiry are surprising and often contradict the accepted dominant explanation and interpretation. Section Four: *Redefining Archaeology: Case Studies* exemplifies this argument. Feminist theory has been applied to different time periods around the world. The resultant interpretations of Egyptian, Bronze Age European, Lapita, Australian Aboriginal, Archaic Greek and nineteenth-century American and Australian societies provide a unique insight to the wealth of previously neglected information feminist research provides.

Section Five: *Archaeology and the Goddess* provides some of the most robust and entertaining papers in this volume, which may be expected given the enigmatic nature of the 'Goddess'. Papers were divided into two sections. Firstly, the

archaeological and historical context of the Goddess, and secondly the use of the Goddess in the present day as a stable platform for women.

This same division between past and present is also evident in Section Six: Pictures Past and Present, which focuses on the (re)interpretation of iconography and its translation to modern producers and consumers of art. Egyptian tomb art, the Panathenaic frieze, Bronze Age Aegean art and Pictish symbol stones, although spatially and temporally diverse, all highlight the prevalent biases in standard interpretations of pictorial representations. Prehistoric Aboriginal art is shown as a source of inspiration for new Aboriginal artists whilst in California archaeology is used to unite scientific and indigenous explanations in a theatrical museum exhibition. These final papers demonstrate that a flexible definition of what constitutes archaeology actually increases the relevance of archaeology to modern society.

Section Seven: Gender and Death uses accepted scientific methods to explore the feminist questions of status in mortuary practices and burials. Issues raised include whether women have lower status burials (indeed if they are buried differently) to men, if women die earlier than men and if the interpretations of burials with grave goods are the result of the archaeologists preconceptions.

The diversity of authors and topics contained in this volume is one of its strongest points. Within Australian publications there are few with such a strong showing of female authors, the obvious exceptions being the previous two volumes in this series. It is good to see a publication actively promoting the issues which have been raised in the conference. Casey discussed the lack of an Australian arena in which women and feminists can publish, and this journal is one of the first steps in the mainstream publication of feminist archaeological perspectives. Another point succinctly argued was the value of support networks for women in archaeology. *Redefining Archaeology: Feminist Perspectives* provides a forum for archaeologists with a variety of publication experience, from those with many publications, to those whose

contribution here marks their debut.

A further proposal made at the conference which has been followed is the use of simple, non-exclusionary language. The language used by the contributors is quite clear, and although there are papers discussing many different areas of archaeology, it is not necessary to be a specialist in those areas (or even an archaeologist), to follow the arguments critically.

One of the main criticisms of *Redefining Archaeology: Feminist Perspectives* is the lag between the conference and the publication of the proceedings. Three and a half years is a long time in publishing, and papers which were on the cutting edge in February 1995, may not be so now. This is particularly relevant in the theoretical sections of this volume. Feminist archaeology has witnessed a burgeoning number of publications in recent years and much of the once innovative theoretical discussion contained herein has been incorporated into other publications in the intervening time period. Authors attending the conference have taken the theoretical discussion on board and this has been reflected in their work since then. A further indicator of the lag between the conference and the publication are the number of papers presented at the conference which have been published complete in alternate sources before this one (eg. Knapp and Meskell). This may make this volume less useful to post-graduates and academics needing to stay abreast of the current state of the field.

Overall *Redefining Archaeology: Feminist Perspectives* is well organised to provide a good introduction to feminist archaeology. The lag between the conference and the publication of proceedings does not negate the value of the theoretical sections, and for those who have not been following the debate closely, no lag may be apparent. The case studies provide an interesting array of situations in which feminist approaches can yield unexpected results and reinforce the value of feminist theory as a relevant avenue of archaeological inquiry.

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John Mulvaney & Johan Kamminga, *Prehistory of Australia*. Allen and Unwin, 1999; pp. xx+480 paperback \$59.95 ISBN 1 86448 950 2.

In 1969 when *The Prehistory of Australia* was first published, it was possible to accommodate all the diverse knowledge about Aboriginal archaeology in Australian in a single volume. By the book's second edition, in 1975, there really was too much information to be crammed within the format. In the 1990s the authors of such a work face a daunting array of archaeological work, too much I think to successfully be covered in a single text without considerable omissions. The authors have tried but ultimately this is a sketch of the archaeology of Aboriginal Australia, not a full picture.

The authors try to deal with this problem by signposting other works (curiously two are to be published by Allen and Unwin) and avoiding discussion on methods (apart from dating) and archaeological theory (apart from one curious section on ethnographic analogy). The authors see the book as a descriptive account of archaeological discoveries organised on a roughly historical basis and integrated into regional prehistories. In fact, the book maintains much of the slightly confusing structure of the previous editions. Surely, given the author's aims the work should be narrative in form beginning at the arrival, going right through to contact, and then stopping. Instead, the Pleistocene makes its main appearance in Chapter 7 after various other interesting but occasionally extraneous diversions. Given the breadth of archaeological work in

Australia there will be the inevitable omissions and the inevitable criticism that important papers have been omitted.

One important point not fully developed is that the whole nature of the practice of archaeology has changed over the years from the last edition. Certainly, Mulvaney and Kamminga discuss the obvious change in the nature of Aboriginal involvement in archaeology (curiously, without commenting on the issue of the term 'prehistory' which certain Aboriginal communities object to). However, there is no acknowledgment that the majority of archaeology is now being undertaken outside the academy by consultant archaeologists and to a limited extent by Aboriginal communities. This has been a huge change since the previous edition and surely worth a comment. Consulting is briefly discussed in about a paragraph and the usual comment about the lack of consultants publishing and a patronisingly dismissive comment about consulting being, routine but 'sometimes there is an unexpected discovery'. This is point worthy of greater discussion, as this change in the practice of archaeology has effected the understanding of the past.

The authors seem to ignore the 'grey' literature of consultant reports. Presumably this is why the Hunter Valley with over 500 consultant reports between 1970 and 1993 and numerous excavations of Holocene sites, has been ignored. Yet, a considerable amount of research in response to Hiscock's paper on Bondian technology in the Hunter Valley has been undertaken as part of consultant archaeological

projects. This work has identified considerable variation within in the microlith industries of the last 4000 years. There is no mention of this in the discussion of Holocene archaeology. My concern is whether this is the prejudice of the authors towards 'academic' research and whether they view consulting research as irrelevant. Alternatively, is it a case of not enough space?

I have a similar concern about research on the Cumberland Plain, which is discussed in a paragraph. So much for all the work at Rouse Hill! The Western District of Victoria with its fish traps, mounds, stone houses, burned rock middens and quarries is poorly dealt with, as the evidence is scattered in the text and clearly not seen as a single archaeological landscape, one that is important in dealing with questions of intensification. Most of the Western District material, unlike the Cumberland Plain and Hunter material, is published in book, article, and map form and readily available. Such important areas deserve better treatment.

The Pleistocene age sites, however, get extensive treatment. This is not surprising given the traditional 'cowboy archaeology' emphasis on the oldest and deepest, I thought archaeology had got over this. It is not that the Pleistocene is

unimportant but the Holocene is also important and deserves a more sophisticated treatment. Furthermore, there seems to be little discussion of what Aborigines did between say 15,000 BP and 3,500 BP. There is some reference to the Gamberian and vague references to 'Mid Holocene' changes in stone technology but this gap remains largely unconsidered.

Apart from a discussion of Macassan sites (familiar to those who have the 1975 edition) and brief discussion of the Dutch shipwrecks there is no direct discussion of historical archaeology. There is no hint as to how the 'prehistory' ended nor that Aboriginal life continued on except for a brief discussion of the contact period in Tasmania. But why only Tasmania?

To conclude, although I was disappointed with this text, it seems a little ungracious for a reviewer to be too critical of a work that seems too large a task to be achieved in a single book. Mulvaney and Kamminga have tried and produced a useful text but a new approach to the problem of writing an Archaeology of Australia is needed.

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Paul Sillitoe, *An Introduction to the Anthropology of Melanesia: Culture and Tradition*. Cambridge University Press, 1998; pp. xxiv + 254, illustrated, paperback \$A34.95, ISBN 0 521 58186 9 (hardback), ISBN 0 521 58186 7 (paperback).

This volume looks at the anthropology of Australia's nearest, but often poorly understood, neighbours. This is a region characterised by enormous cultural variation; there are, for instance, as many as 1000 languages spoken, making any comprehensive summary of the region's cultures impossible. Wisely, Sillitoe does not attempt to do this. Rather he looks at a number of thematic issues, ranging from subsistence, through social and political relations to ideology and myth. In dealing with each theme he focuses on its expression in a particular area or among a particular people. The chapter titles make this approach clear: 'Swidden cultivation in the Bismark Range' (among the Maring people), 'Exchange cycles in the Massim Archipelago' (the famous *kula*), or 'Initiation rites on the Sepik River'. Each chapter is a case study based on a well known ethnographic study previously undertaken, often by such luminaries as Malinowski or Mead. In taking this approach, he also leads the reader through a history of anthropological study in the region; functionalism, the application of economic theory

to exchange systems, feminist anthropology and the study of gender relations; to name a few. Some themes, such as the egalitarian nature of Melanesian societies, recur throughout, and serve to add cohesion.

The shortcomings in a book such as this are obvious and probably largely unavoidable. It is not intended to catalogue the full range of either anthropology or culture in the region, so that many studies that might be considered crucial by some are omitted by the author, and the range of cultural variation is played down as he focuses more closely on each case study. Also the writing is in the ethnographic present, despite the fact that the cultures described have never been timeless and changeless, and have by now invariably been seriously altered by the impact of Western culture. But, as the title says, this book is an introduction, designed for anthropologists unfamiliar with the region and for students unfamiliar with anthropology. As the introduction makes clear, Sillitoe is well aware of these problems, and this should not detract from what is a well written and engaging introduction to a fascinating region.

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A. Cockburn, E. Cockburn & T. Reyman (eds), *Mummies, Disease and Ancient Cultures*, edited Second Edition, Cambridge University Press 1998; pp. 402. ISBN 0 521 58060 (hardback) 0 521 58954 1 (paperback).

The biological existence of people is central to any society and yet history is often written as if only culture mattered. The biology of human existence imposes ultimate limits on possibilities of cultural change and at the same time reflects living conditions in a given society. The fragile nature of human bodies in most cases prevents study of human biology in historical perspective, skeletal studies being an exception. The widespread and ancient practice of mummifying human remains provided a unique window into the history of the interactions between human biology, diseases and cultures.

This book is a considerably altered and updated edition of the very valuable and successful original, edited by Aidan and Eve Cockburn in 1980. It had an abridged edition in 1983 and was reprinted four times (last in 1992). In this new edition the original editors were joined by Theodore A. Reyman who studied the histology of mummies autopsied under the guidance of Aidan Cockburn in the 1970s. These studies led to the formation of the Paleopathology Association, a world-wide organisation which today holds annual meetings in the USA and biannual conferences in Europe. The flourishing activity of the Association is but one of the reasons for the enormous progress in the field of studies of human mummified remains that has occurred since the date of the first edition. The World Committee on Mummy Studies held three Congresses (1992,

1995, 1998) while the activity of individual researchers produced a wealth of information.

The editors of the second edition of *Mummies, Diseases & Ancient Cultures* faced a daunting task in incorporating into one medium-size volume the wealth of information which today fills multi-volume works, without losing the imprint of Aidan Cockburn's unique intellect. They met this challenge well, producing a book that provides an up-to date and wide coverage of the subject without suffering from information overload. This was achieved through the cooperation of 37 contributors from Australia, Canada, China, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Spain, Venezuela, the UK and the USA.

The book opens with six chapters dealing with Egyptian mummies. These contain general overviews of the history of Egyptian mummification and its varied methods, detailed reports of mummy autopsies and overviews of results of paleopathological investigations – chapters on disease and on dental health in ancient Egypt. Original descriptions of autopsies were shortened to make room for new additions in other chapters. This does not detract from the content as cuts were made in the descriptions of investigative techniques which were novel at the time of the first edition but have now become well-known routines.

Mummies of the Americas are described in four chapters dealing with specific geographic areas: southern and southwestern United States, Alaskan and Aleutian regions, Peru and the rest of South America. This last chapter includes descriptions of the oldest mummies in the world, produced by Chinchorro fishing communities who lived on the Pacific coast of southern Peru and northern Chile as early as 5050 BCE.

The following five chapters deal with 'Mummies of the world', describing a varied array of bodies mummified by diverse means. Bog people of Denmark and northwestern Europe were naturally mummified by the acidic environments of raised peat bogs. They are so well preserved that hardly any tissue was lost. Most of the bodies were deposited in bogs as a result of some form of sacrifice or punishment practiced by Germanic peoples around 2000 years ago. Their state of preservation is such that it allows the study of stomach contents which consisted of a mixture of cultivated and wild grains. Due to the sacrificial nature of deposition it is difficult to judge whether these contents represent a typical diet or a specific ritual meal. Mummies from Italy, North Africa and the Canary Islands are described together because of their geographical proximity and the fact that both natural and anthropogenic mummification occurred. They cover the last 5000 years and serve as examples of various methods, cultural practices and pathological conditions.

The chapter on mummification in Australia and Melanesia is of special interest to researchers and historians in Australasia. Although the illness of its leading author, Graeme L. Pretty, prevented update to this chapter, it is a very comprehensive overview of the subject including the distribution of the custom of mummification, its origins, accompanying social and religious beliefs and techniques of mummification. Detailed descriptions of exemplary mummies from Melanesia and South

Australia are given. In the region the nature of mummification techniques was such that body was preserved only temporarily. The main reason for mummification was concern for a dead relative. The practice lapsed with intensified European contacts and with the introduction of Christianity, but there was enough time for ethnographic and historical descriptions of the mummification process to be made. These reports provide first-hand accounts of the rationale of mummification. There is still a great deal of uncertainty about mummification in Australasia and hence the need for further studies.

The chapter on mummies from Japan and China introduces a subject little known to Western researchers. Mummification in these regions is not only of considerable antiquity, but was still practiced in Japan until the early twentieth century. China, with its abundance of archaeological material and cultural diversity, presents a considerable number of natural and artificial mummies yielding valuable paleopathological and cultural information.

The much-publicised discovery of the Ice Man (Ötzi) who died in the Italian/Austrian Alps some 5200 years ago is but one of the examples of mummification occurring in cold regions of the world. The penultimate chapter of the book describes mummies produced mostly by natural processes in Siberia, Greenland, Canada, the Svalbad archipelago (north of Norway) and in the Alps and the Andes.

The last chapter of the book provides a comprehensive overview of new investigative techniques used in the studies of mummies. These include studies of ancient DNA, radiography, CT (computed tomography) scans and MRI (magnetic resonance imaging), studies of intestinal contents, chemical analysis for paleodietary reconstruction – stable carbon and nitrogen isotopes and strontium/calcium ratios – parasitology and statistical techniques for population-level analyses. Of particular interest is the availability of non-destructive techniques such as endoscopy, CT and MRI which will allow surveys of large number of mummies without damage to invaluable remains.

The language is very clear and, despite a substantial number of sophisticated specialist studies, the book can be read by anyone interested in the historical testimony of preserved human bodies.

In my role of anatomist I am somewhat disappointed that the Editors omitted the most common method of preservation of human bodies during the last 300 years, that is embalming for purposes of anatomical studies. Preservation of human bodies with alcohol, formalin and most recently by the plastination method produced thousands of anatomical specimens stored in anatomy museums of all major universities. These are already a valuable resource for the study of human bodily structure and its changes during the last few centuries and will remain such in the future. It just may be that this subject belongs in the realm of the history of medicine more than to that of archaeology.

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Christopher Chippindale and Paul Taçon (eds), *The Archaeology of Rock-Art*. Cambridge University Press, 1998; pp. xviii + 373, illustrated, soft cover, \$53.95. ISBN 0 521 57619 9.

The thrust of this book, as its title implies, concerns the study of rock-art as artefact as well as symbol. The need for such a volume is clear, as pointed out by the editors: 'doubt surrounds just what best to do in studying rock art' (p.6). The editors title

their co-introduction 'An archaeology of rock-art through informed methods and formal method' and this approach has guided the editorial policy. Rather than producing a 'How to do it' handbook, as might be inferred from the title, the volume is a collection of essays which teach by example. The result of this format is an interesting collection of articles, wide in regional scope and in content. With the exceptions of the articles by Ouzman, 'Towards a mindscape of landscape: rock-art as

expression of world-understanding' and Smith, 'The tale of the chameleon and the platypus: limited and likely choices in making pictures'. all are regional-based case studies, dealing with issues particular to a specific data set. However, in the spirit of teaching by example, their subject matter is generally more widely applicable. The only criticism which might be levelled at this approach is the somewhat random nature of subject matter addressed. Given the wide potential scope of the subject, *The Archaeology of Rock-Art* might run to several volumes if it were to provide comprehensive coverage.

The interpretation of rock-art by archaeological methods can be a frustrating business yet, despite the usual cautionary tales of the discrepancy between the conclusions of the scientist and those of local informants, the book is characterised by a spirit of optimism. Several of the studies depend on a combination of historical and ethnographic sources to provide an interpretative basis. Included among these are those by Klassen, 'Icon and narrative in transition: contact-period rock-art at Writing-on-Stone, southern Alberta, Canada', and Boyd, 'Pictographic evidence of peyotism in the Lower Pecos, Texas Archaic', as well as three articles on Southern African rock-art by Dowson, Jolly and Solomon. There is also increasing use of new analytical techniques to test hypotheses on potential meaning. Hartley and Vawser provide an example of the use of GIS modelling to examine human use of landscape in relation to rock art distribution, while Wilson

examines Pacific rock-art through multi-variate analysis. Clottes provides a cautionary tale showing how radio-carbon dating is overturning traditional stylistic analyses of European Paleolithic art. To keep things in perspective, the volume ends with an essay by Clegg on late nineteenth-/early twentieth-century rock engravings from Sydney harbour. The ways in which these might be interpreted and the associated lacunae in our understanding are significant object lessons for studies of earlier periods.

In general, the book demonstrates a number of ways in which archaeological methodology can contribute to the study of rock-art. These include the context of location within a landscape, parallels with other artefacts, scientific analysis of date, content and distribution, supported by ethnographic and historical information. While by no means presenting an exhaustive coverage of the subject, the various essays provide much inspiration for researchers seeking new approaches to their own material. In the end, however, it is simply a collection of essays on a theme. The reader is left to judge the validity of the various methodologies discussed. While the book itself is an excellent work, to me this leaves a hunger for a volume which provides a critical discussion of methodologies, the 'How to do it' handbook in fact.

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William Andrefsky, Jr., *Lithics: Macroscopic Approaches to Analysis*. Cambridge Manuals in Archaeology, Cambridge University Press, 1998; pp.xxvii+258, illustrated, paperback. ISBN 0 521 57815 9.

This book is not, says Andrefsky in his preface, a cookbook for lithic analysis. But it is designed for students and teachers of lithic analysis, based on concepts 'that are universal and applicable to all lithic assemblages' (p. xviii). It is also important to note the subtitle: Andrefsky notes that microwear and replication exist, but sets them aside as not central to his purpose. Big mistake.

The book opens with an account of fracture mechanics and a discussion of the fact that individual stone tools are 'morphologically dynamic articles of a material culture system', that is, unlike with ceramics, we are often not dealing with the standardised outcomes from a mental template, but rather with the irregular disjecta of a group of artisans. Designing analyses which take account of this, and go beyond typological boxes is one of the hardest aspects of lithic analysis. Having recognised the problem, however, Andrefsky's 'Getting started in lithic analysis' (Chapter 4) largely goes back to the traditional model and sets out a broad general morphological typology, with its major rationale being 'to standardise a set of artifact shapes with a standardised artifact terminology' (p.84).

It was at this point in the book that I found myself wondering just what it was that Andrefsky wanted to do with lithics. What questions does he suppose the analyses he supports will answer? There seem to be two: 'to identify the diagnostic markers or fossil indicators of prehistoric cultures' and 'to identify functional or behavioural indicators of those cultures, (p.60). These should be expounded in Chapters 8 and 9, entitled 'Artifact diversity and site function' and 'Lithic analysis and prehistoric sedentism', but both chapters in fact discuss only the second question. I never found any discussion

of the relation between 'cultures', emic or etic, and stone artifacts.

Chapter 8 discusses the attribution of a set of uses to particular tool forms and goes on to describe several North American studies that have combined these with Binford's ideas about hunter-gatherer campsites and seasonal rounds to arrive at interpretations of prehistoric behaviour. Chapter 9 focuses on western North America and demonstrates that 'artifact variability is sensitive to relative sedentism in some cases' (p.228), while admitting that raw material variation and other variables may produce similar results. How one is to distinguish between these is not very clear.

There are two chapters on debitage analysis, providing an excellent overview of several kinds of analysis currently in use. Taken together with Chapter 7 however, I believe they demonstrate the fundamentally traditional nature of Andrefsky's approach. How can we tell what are tools and what is waste if a) form does not indicate function, b) wear and retouch are hard to distinguish, c) 'tools' are frequently resharpened, thus changing their shape and d) microwear studies suggest that many pieces normally classified as waste may well have been used?

What Andrefsky has not recognised is that the questions his studies purport to answer are in fact out of date, and derive from a time when stone tools had to serve much more important chronological and cultural research agenda purposes than we now know they are capable of. He has written a book which brings together some current studies, shows us that there is a range of approaches to lithics and is well written, but a useful manual for pushing forward the field, or even training students in more than one small branch of lithic analysis, this isn't.

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