

agricultural carrying capacity and warfare was a consequence of this stress. In the warmer climate of the next two or three centuries carrying capacity increased and warfare declined. The cooler climate after 1300 was accompanied by an increase in warfare. This brief and simplified summary doesn't do justice to LeBlanc's presentation of evidence and arguments about climatic influence. Also, other archaeologists may reconstruct the climatic picture somewhat differently—prehistoric climate is not yet a simple matter to determine.

In addition to his climatic argument, LeBlanc examines abundant evidence from site locations, architecture, weapons, kiva murals, and rock art. His combing of the literature is impressive and persuasive. As Stephen Lekson says in a review in *Archaeology* (May/June 1999) "LeBlanc's argument may well become Southwestern orthodoxy, and war a major theme in Southwestern prehistory." While the evidence has been available and familiar for many decades, its "meaning" has been obscured by adherence to the myth of the peaceful Puebloans. Now the history of Southwestern archaeology has taken a major step in a new direction, less by finding new evidence in the ground than by re-examining long available data and by demonstrating that assumptions underlying one of our most important interpretations were faulty.

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Prehistory of Australia, by John Mulvaney and Johan Kamminga, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C., 1999. 480 pages. ISBN 1-56098-804-5. Paper. \$27.95 US

by

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The prehistory of Australia is a fascinating topic. But it has also been a controversial subject, as aboriginal populations, settlers, and archaeologists have argued over the past, its ownership and its meaning and interpretation. Derek John Mulvaney has seen Australian archaeology develop from its early days, and in this book, he and co-author Johan Kamminga try to review the latest evidence. It is not clear who the book is intended for, but it would include professional archaeologists as well as average Australians, aboriginal and non-aboriginal alike. This is the third edition of a work first published in 1969; a second edition appeared in 1975. A lot has changed in the last thirty years, some of which the authors refer to. It is these changes that make the book fascinating from the perspective of the history of archaeology. On one hand, there is more information available as an increasing number of sites have been identified and excavated. The first edition included 17 radiocarbon dates, all that were available at the time; most belonged to the Holocene. The first professional archaeologists began practicing in the 1960s. While there are many more today, most are employed in cultural resource management, rather than academic positions. The climate of research has shifted too, as issues of ownership and stewardship of the archaeological heritage have become extremely important. Mulvaney states that when he started as an archaeologist, he didn't need anyone's permission to do any kind of study. No permits were required, either from the state or from local authorities, and no one would have thought of consulting the descendants of the people whose material and cultural record it was. Aboriginal involvement with archaeology has barely begun even now.

Reading this book, it becomes clear that Americanist and Australian archaeologists have had to deal with very similar issues. Research in both regions began under a colonialist framework; its practitioners were of European descent, writing about the past of people without written records. The fact that Australia was inhabited solely by hunter-gatherers led to the creation of the legal concept of *terra nullius*, the idea that the land was essentially unoccupied until European arrival. Aborigines were treated as part of the native fauna, with few rights and (presumably) no history, "an unchanging people living in an unchang-

ing environment” (Pulleine 1928 in Mulvaney and Kamminga 1999:12). Maybe they were of recent origin, as no apparent cultural evolution could be discerned. Such conclusions were important in colonial times, as they denied people any control over resources, land, and eventually their past. Terra nullius was also used elsewhere in the British empire and, as recently as 1993, was the basis for the decision made by the British Columbia (Canada) Court of Appeal to deny aboriginal title in the famous Delgamuuk’w case, a conclusion which was quite rightly overturned by the Supreme Court of Canada four years later.

The colonialist history of archaeology has led to conflicts between aboriginal groups and archaeologists, most recently in Tasmania where all fieldwork has been suspended. The first legislation protecting archaeological sites was only passed in 1965. Numerous skeletal remains and artifacts have been repatriated or reburied, including some of the oldest human remains found in the continent. Mulvaney insists that aboriginal people must recognize the need for free scientific inquiry, and “argues that the claim of ownership and control is a form of reverse cultural imperialism” (Mulvaney and Kamminga 1999:9). Even the concept of “prehistory” is politically loaded. The authors mention that, in 1988, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies proposed that the word history be used to refer to the aboriginal past, even in the absence of written records aborigines have different concepts of the past than Western researchers. In the Dream or Dreaming Time, both people, animals, plants, and the land itself, were created by supernatural beings. History is contained in stories, oral traditions handed on from elders which emphasize the importance of places in the landscape. The authors point out that aboriginal concepts present no barrier to acceptance of archaeological data, but “assume a virtual biological stability for people, plants, and animals” (Mulvaney and Kamminga 1999:10). In fact, in land claims cases, aborigines have included archaeological evidence and radiocarbon data to support conclusions about their history derived from the Dreaming Time. They don’t try to reconcile their views with Western science, and Mulvaney and Kamminga don’t expect them to. In turn, however, archaeologists have a wealth of historic and ethnographic information, as well as the direct historical approach, to interpret past in the way they want.

In the first chapter, the authors review the history of archaeological research, and say it extends back to the first European settlement. An interesting point is that the great British social anthropologist, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, had the Chair in Anthropology from Sydney University from 1926 to 1931. In 1930, he wrote that anthropology “will make little progress until we abandon these attempts at conjectural reconstructions of a past about which we can obtain no direct knowledge in favor of a systematic study of the culture as it exists in the present” (in Mulvaney and Kamminga 1999:12). This past was established in the 1960s by the first generation of professional archaeologists. Their research strategy was to try and find sites with deep cultural deposits, in order to obtain a temporal sequence. Many employ a culture ecological approach. Ethnoarchaeological research was also initiated by people like Brian Hayden and Richard A. Gould. The second chapter introduces the kinds of evidence found; this includes lithic scatters, shell middens, caves and rockshelters, stone circles, linear earthworks, rock art, grinding hollows for ground stone axe production, and human burials. Then they discuss the changing periodization of the Australian past, its palaeoenvironmental context, and the kinds of food and resources utilized by people. The social situation at contact is reviewed, and ethnic, linguistic and social groups are also described.

The rest of the book discusses cultural history, in chronological order. Mulvaney and Kamminga point out that some research questions have remained the same in the last few decades: when did people arrive in Australia, what were the routes of entry, did they have a role in Pleistocene megafaunal extinctions, and when did they first settle the desert? The first peoples crossed from mainland southeast Asia into Sahul, a supercontinent formed of Australia, New Guinea, and Tasmania during full glacial periods. To do so, they crossed Wallacea, the region which would have remained open water even during periods of low sea level. Recent discoveries point to the first possible occupation of Wallacea around 800,000 years ago, as some artifacts and mainland fauna of this age were recently excavated on the island of

Flores (Morwood *et.al.* 1998, 1999). Wallacea is named for Alfred Russell Wallace, the co-discoverer of natural selection, who proposed the existence of a barrier beyond which placental mammals could not migrate. This biogeographic marker was eventually named Wallace's line in his honor. The first Australians crossed into a new world dominated by marsupial fauna, unlike any they had seen before. A number of routes of initial colonization of Australia have been proposed, and a date of about 60,000 years ago is generally accepted for first entry. Controversial dates that are older have been obtained using thermoluminescence at sites like Jinmium Cave, but are hotly disputed. Who the people were remains unclear; the authors point out that only eight Pleistocene sites with human remains are known, and most of these are found in the southeast, at places such as Willandra Lakes, a long way from the points of initial entry. Most habitats were colonized by 25,000-30,000 years ago, but they are not sure about when desert environments were occupied. Pleistocene and Holocene archaeological sites are reviewed. There may have been a period of social and economic intensification about 4000 BP, something proposed by Henry Lourandos. Finally, the authors discuss the prehistory of islands around Australia, including Tasmania, rock art production and interpretation, and the arrival of later populations, both Asian and European, which ushers in the historic record.

All in all, this is a satisfactory review of the history of human settlement in Australia. In a world dominated by conflicts between indigenous people and colonialist or neo-colonialist states, it would benefit many people to understand the history of this continent of hunter gatherers, as Lourandos (1997) once named it.

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As a teenager my parents received through the Book-of-the-Month Club a volume that could easily have led me to want to become an archaeologist if I had not already made that decision. *Gods, Graves, and Scholars* by C. W. Ceram (pseudonym of German journalist Kurt W. Marek) had been first published in Germany in 1949 and translated and published in the U. S. in 1951 (Ceram 1951). This book, still in