

Preface

This collection of papers evolved from the Oceanic Explorations Conference organised by the Tongan Traditions Committee and Professor David Burley of Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, Canada that was held at Nuku'alofa in the Kingdom of Tonga from August 1st – 7th 2005. A total of 62 papers were presented during the five days of sessions, along with six posters. At the end of the Conference, discussions were held regarding the potential publication of papers and while the all-inclusive nature of the Conference was one of its strong points, the wide range of topics, time periods, disciplines and regions did not easily lend itself to publication. Initially Bedford and David Burley corresponded over the potential of a Lapita focused volume, following in the fine tradition of Spriggs (1990), Galipaud (1992) and Clark *et al.* (2001). After some months of deliberation the form of the volume had been decided and commitments to its publication confirmed. Bedford was joined at that stage by Christophe Sand and Sean Connaughton as the editors. During this time several suitable papers presented in Tonga had been submitted for publication elsewhere (Allen 2006; Clark and Murray 2006; Sheppard and Walter 2006) so a number of those same authors were invited to submit other Lapita-related papers.

Three years can be a very long time in Lapita research and this was the time period between the Kone-Noumea 50th Anniversary Conference (2002) and the Oceanic Explorations Conference in Tonga. It is four years since the proceedings of the Kone-Nouméa Conference were published (Sand 2003) so although it has been a little slow coming this volume does bring together much of the most significant Lapita-related discoveries that have surfaced since 2002. New discoveries often lead to reassessments with new and modified theories. Such is the case in Lapita research as demonstrated by a number of papers included here. Following an introductory paper with an updated inventory of Lapita sites (Bedford and Sand), the 16 papers reflect on a broad range of interrelated themes including Lapita chronology (Burley, Connaughton, Felgate, Nunn, Specht,

Specht and Torrence), site location, geomorphology and settlement patterns (Burley, Connaughton, Dickinson, Felgate, Galipaud and Swete Kelly, Nunn, Specht, Specht and Torrence), migration, interaction and exchange (Galipaud and Swete Kelly, Pawley, Specht, Specht and Torrence, Summerhayes and Allen), sampling strategies (Burley, Sheppard and Green, Specht and Torrence) and ceramic analyses including decorative technique (Ambrose), profiling of specific Lapita regions and sites (Bedford *et al.*, Connaughton, Felgate, Nunn, Sand) and the social significance and meaning of the famously decorated pots (Ambrose, Bedford *et al.*, Chiu, Clark, Summerhayes and Allen).

We would like to thank the contributors who were it must be said widely varied in terms of meeting deadlines but who all eventually produced. A whole host of reviewers from many different countries also played their role in improving the quality of the papers. Particular thanks go to Sue O'Connor, the *Terra Australis* series editor, who welcomed the volume proposal during an uncertain period of infrastructural change in publishing conditions at the Australian National University. Formatting of the volume was undertaken by Aldo Ganter of Totem Infographie, Nouméa and Duncan Beard of ANU E Press designed the cover and has facilitated its final production. The costs for producing the volume came from the Department of Archaeology of New Caledonia and the Centre for Archaeological Research, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.

During the gestation of this book, the archaeological community learnt of the sad loss of two of the pioneers of Pacific Archaeology, Professors José Garanger and Richard Shutler Jr. As colleagues and as friends to a great number of the professionals working in the region, and also as mentors to younger generations, these gentlemen had during the last 50 years held a special position in our small community of prehistorians devoted to the past of the peoples of Oceania. They will be sadly missed and it seemed only appropriate to dedicate this volume to their memory. "Au revoir monsieur le professeur" and Richard the "warm-hearted".

The Editors

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