

# Preface

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The Lapita Conference series began in 1988 with the Lapita Design Workshop held at The Australian National University (ANU) as part of the Research School of Pacific Studies' Austronesian Project (Spriggs 1990). The second was held in Nouméa, New Caledonia, in 1992 (Galipaud 1992). This established the pattern of holding the conferences in countries and territories where the traces of the Lapita culture have been found. The next conference was in Port Vila, Vanuatu, in 1996 (Galipaud and Lilley 1999), while the fourth was planned for Fiji in 2000 but had to be shifted to ANU, Canberra, at the last moment because of a military coup in the host nation (Clark et al. 2001). The next was in Nukualofa, Tonga, in 2005 (Bedford et al. 2007). The extended gap was because of the standalone 2002 International Conference for the 50th Anniversary of the First Lapita Excavation, held in Koné and Nouméa in New Caledonia (Sand 2003), particularly memorable for the presence of Dick Shutler, one of the original excavators (with EW Gifford) of the eponymous site of Lapita in 1952. The sixth of the Lapita Conference series was held in Honiara, Solomon Islands, in 2008 (Sheppard et al. 2009) and the seventh in Apia, Samoa, in 2011 (Summerhayes and Buckley 2013). The decision was made at that conference to return to Port Vila in 2015 for the Eighth Lapita Conference because of the extremely significant findings made during the excavation of the Teouma Lapita Cemetery site on Efate Island, Vanuatu, from 2004 to 2010. This allowed the examination 'on site' as it were of the Lapita pottery and associated artefacts held at the Vanuatu National Museum in Port Vila. The conference was co-hosted by the Vanuatu Cultural Centre and ANU. The eighth conference made the effort to return to a focus on Lapita itself, the original intention of the Lapita Conference series, as well as what came immediately before and immediately after it in the Western Pacific. This publication, rather than conference proceedings, has been generated from the conference and includes several chapters produced following requested contributions. Some papers given at the conference had been previously published or were subsequently published elsewhere. A full list of papers and posters presented in 2015 can be found at the end of this volume.

The conference was supported at many levels by many different people. Principal funding was supplied by both the College of Arts and Social Sciences and the College of Asia and the Pacific of ANU. Further major funding was given by the Melanesian Spearhead Group Secretariat, based in Port Vila. Crucial logistical support was supplied by the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, whose staff worked tirelessly beforehand to finalise the permanent Lapita Exhibition in time for the conference, and who ensured that the event ran smoothly throughout. The Vanuatu prime minister in 2015, the Honourable Meltek Sato Kilman Livtunvanu, graciously opened the exhibition and the conference, and his opening remarks are given immediately after this preface. The Australian and New Zealand High Commissions sponsored a social evening at the Australian High Commissioner's Residence, and the French Embassy sponsored refreshments for the Lapita Art Competition, which was hosted at the Fondation Bastien. We particularly thank Macha Paris of the Fondation Bastien and other members of the Lapita Art Competition Committee for their efforts ahead of the prize event at the Fondation: Georges Cumbo, Sero Kauatonga, Eric Natuovi, Richard Shing (Chair), Anne Smith, Juliette Thirouin and Edson Willie. The main prize was won by artist Tony Bruce. Past and present directors of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre and members of the Vanuatu National Cultural Council were all very supportive of the event. The Vila Rose Hotel (at the time still under construction) hosted a welcome kava

night party, which was sponsored by Rosemary Leona and the ‘Vanuatu Wise’ kava brand and ran concurrently with registration for the conference. Throughout the conference food was ably produced and served by staff of the Lapita Cafe. The community of Eratap village produced a grand feast during the mid-week fieldtrip, with particular thanks to Silas Alben, as did the community of Lelepa Island during the visit to the Roi Mata UNESCO World Heritage site. Richard Matanik is particularly thanked in relation to that visit. Professor Paul Pickering, the Dean of the College of Arts and Social Sciences, ANU, came through with emergency ‘top-up’ funding after one of our promised funding sources was much reduced. The conference was audio-streamed live, and we thank Mark Lowen for arranging and hosting this. Monash University kindly provided airfares for two of the Papua New Guinea delegates.

Our local sponsors in Port Vila (in alphabetical order) were: Fondation Bastien, Lapita Café, Nambawan Brewery, Rainbow Nakamal, Sharper Image, Tusker Brewery, TVL, Vanuatu Wise Kava and Vila Rose Hotel. The University of the South Pacific provided a venue when our previous venue was destroyed in Cyclone Pam, and manager Ruben Bakeo Markward and staff Nettie Collins and David Worek are thanked for their efforts. Hotels and guest houses that offered special rates for conference participants were: Benjor Beach Club, Coconut Palms Resort, Emalus Apartments, Fatumaru Lodge, Kaiviti Motel, Melanesian Hotel, Moorings Hotel, Sportsmen’s Hotel, Tradewinds Resort, Traveller’s Motel and Trinity Orchid Lodge.

In addition, we thank for their help: Chris Ballard, Tracey Caulfield, Georges Cumbo, Bruno David, Dominique Dinh, Alice Gorman, Tony Heorake, Matthew Leavesley, Ian McNiven, Robert Monvoisin, Elia Nakoro, Michelle Richards, Père Rodet, Siri Seoule and Howard van Trease. We deeply apologise to anyone else who contributed and whom we have inadvertently forgotten to acknowledge here.

The Conference Organising Committee was co-chaired by Stuart Bedford, Matthew Spriggs and the director of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, Marcelin Abong. Committee members were Catherine Fitzgerald, James Flexner, Makaras Longga, Mark Lowen, Iarawai Philip, Terence Malapa, Richard Shing, Ambong Thompson and Edson Willie. We thank all of those who participated in Port Vila and made it a memorable conference. Patrick Kirch, in his keynote address, mentioned the significant contributions of the three Gs—Edward Gifford, Jack Golson and Roger Green—to Lapita research. We were privileged to have Jack Golson attend the conference. Along with Wallace Ambrose, also in attendance and who presented a paper in Port Vila, Golson first encountered Lapita pottery in the field in 1957, more than six decades ago. Thanks also go to the *Terra Australis* series editors for accepting this volume for publication. The chapters were peer-reviewed individually as was the entire volume. Many thanks to the those who willingly gave their time to undertake the various reviews. Funding to support the publication came from the Department of Archaeology and Natural History, College of Asia and the Pacific (ANU), ANU Press, Terra Australis and the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History through the auspices of Professor Russell Gray.

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