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Conclusion

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The archipelagic bioregion of Wallacea is named in honour of the pioneering work of nineteenth century naturalist, Alfred Russell Wallace, who recognised its unique endemic ecology and faunal species diversity. Taking this region as a frame of geographic reference, the present edited collection of research papers highlights another form of diversity in the proliferation of indigenous fortified settlements and defensive structures that signify a historical reality of long periods of armed conflict and endemic warfare. With their strategic locations on prominent hilltops, and protective dry stone walls in varying states of preservation, the fortifications stand as mute relics of a turbulent and conflict-ridden past. At the same time, many of these same structures are still viewed as spiritually charged mythic sites connecting contemporary populations to an abiding ancestral presence.

The chapters in this volume present detailed archaeological and ethnohistorical studies of specific fortified settlements, focusing on the regions of Lautem in far eastern Timor-Leste (see Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6), Sulawesi (see Chapters 7, 8 and 9) and the islands of Maluku Barat Daya (Chapter 10). The examples, discussed in varying degrees of detail, illustrate just how widespread the phenomenon of fortification was throughout the archipelago. Their proliferation also highlights the scope for further research into their provenance and origins. In this concluding chapter, we offer closing commentary and analysis on the historical role of the indigenous fortified structures. In reviewing the comparative evidence, we consider the chronology of fort-building in relation to the factors that prompted the expansion of fortified settlements throughout the region, along with the use of construction materials and common design features.

Fortifications on most of the islands of Wallacea remain undated. Many fortified settlement sites have exotic tradeware occurring as surface occurrences, or on graves, which can be used to provide a relative age for site use. However, this tradeware is likely to date the final period of occupation, rather than the inception of fortification, at any given locale. Only in Timor-Leste is there a large enough sample of excavated and well-dated fortified sites to provide a platform for examining the chronology of fort-building. Even here, a reliable assessment of the timing of initial fort construction is hampered by uncertainties in the radiocarbon calibration curve for this time period, which produces large error ranges on the dates, and by problems relating to the reliability of the provenance of the charcoal and shell dated (O'Connor et al. 2012:206). As Lape and Chao (2008:18) point out, anomalously old ages obtained from the lower levels of excavations within fortifications may relate to earlier use of the hilltop for farming, hunting, collecting and/or processing wild resources well before the walls and other fortified structures were built. Lape and Chao (2008) report examples of this where radiocarbon ages obtained on charcoal were significantly older than the age of the tradeware in the same stratigraphic unit. Conversely, exotic tradeware may not always provide reliable ages for occupation as, being high-prestige

value goods, items may have been heirloomed for a long time prior to breakage. Thus, they may be significantly older than the occupation level from which they were recovered (Fenner and Bulbeck 2013). In summary, a Bayesian analysis of the currently available radiocarbon data set for the Timor-Leste fortifications indicates that fort-building may have been initiated as early as AD 1300, but continued and developed for centuries, becoming widespread between AD 1550 and 1750 (O'Connor et al. 2012:211). Oral history and historic glass bottles corroborate the use of some of these settlements through into the first half of the twentieth century. Whether this chronology can be reliably extended to fortifications on other islands of Wallacea will have to await future excavations. However, it does seem to be provisionally supported by the historic and oral accounts relating to fort use.

In terms of the origins of fortified settlements, research presented in the volume has considered three general drivers that arguably created the need to initiate defensive structures. One argument that has attracted wide scholarly attention is to view sudden climate change as the primary driver of conflict over diminishing food supplies and water resources, in the process generating a defensive posture and readiness among resource rich groups. Peter Lape (2006, Chapter 3, this volume), drawing on his archaeological research in Timor-Leste, as well as comparative work on palaeoclimates in the Pacific (Field and Lape 2010), is a proponent of this view. He offers a convincing model for the widespread emergence of fortification across much of Asia and the Pacific at much the same time. The general argument is for a correlation, or at least a strong association, between extended droughts or some kind of dramatic environmental stress and emergence of fortification (see also Nunn 2007). One suggested period is the cooler climate of the so-called Little Ice Age from AD 1300 to 1400 (Nunn 2007; see also Pearce and Pearce 2010). In the case of Timor-Leste, Lape and Chao (2008) argue for a broadly similar dynamic, proposing that tests for an El Niño Southern Oscillation drought relationship to fortification-building have shown a 'probable' direct causal relationship.

Although the highly suggestive correlation between environmental stress, food shortages and fortification has attracted scholarly support, direct compelling evidence remains limited and provisional. As Lape has acknowledged:

to adequately test [the] model, a complete survey of fortified settlements in the Ira Ara region would need to be completed, with each site's initial fortification building episode securely dated. The earliest sites should date to times of increasing drought frequency and be located at the boundary of resource-rich and resource-poor areas. (Chapter 3, this volume)

This is a considerable challenge in itself, made more complicated by the difficulty of dating the beginning of fortification due to occupation of the Ira Ara site in the mid-Holocene prior to fort construction (see Chapter 3, this volume; see also Pearce and Pearce 2010:119 for comparable limitations elsewhere, and Chapter 7, this volume). Proponents of the causal climate change link to fortification tend to limit their claims to the immediate defensive impulse to fortify settlements, accepting that subsequent use and further construction may have been prompted by other proximate reasons.

An alternative argument for the drivers of fortification, also addressed in a number of chapters of this volume, has looked to direct external and economic conditions as fundamental to the emergence of defensive settlements. O'Connor et al. (2012) argue that most of the reliably dated structures in Island Southeast Asia are shown to be constructed from the fifteenth century AD, with a peak of fort building occurring between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. This is rather later than the climate change models generally allow. However, it is very much coincident with the emergence and expansion of various imperialist political and economic trading interests that were to dominate the region for the next 500 years. The intrusive presence of expansionary trading interests from early Chinese to European, especially Portuguese and Dutch powers,

and Muslim maritime kingdoms (e.g. Ternate, Tidore, Bugis, Makassar and Buton) may have generated conditions of endemic rivalry for economic and political ascendancy across the region. This intense competition for supremacy played out in violent struggles over control of trading alliances, especially with diverse coastal settlements. It resulted in shifting patterns of persecution, as well as lucrative opportunities for beneficial alliances (see Hägerdal 2012; Chapters 6 and 7, this volume).

At the onset of these turbulent times, residential settlements had little option but to flee inland in the face of armed onshore raiding parties. The emergence of fortified hilltop settlements in these uncertain coastal contexts was a rational and effective strategy to resist unwelcome incursions, while providing a secure basis for managing and controlling external trade relations. The construction of massive double dry stone walls with coralline rubble infill looks excessive as a defence against gunfire and spear attack, but is an effective shield against high-powered projectiles fired from cannons. Under this alternate scenario, the drivers of fortification are arguably still based around fighting over resources. However, unlike a climate-driven scenario of struggles to secure fertile land and food supplies, it is access to weapons and the associated lucrative trading arrangements that generate the rise of defensive structures. In larger islands, like Timor, Sulawesi and Sumba, inland populations were also ensnared within the intensified struggle for control over trade goods (e.g. sandalwood, slaves, beeswax, food crops), forging alliances with coastal entrepôt and constructing defensive fortifications themselves against depredations and attack by rival groups.

Antoinette Schapper (2019, Chapter 10, this volume) rejects both these analyses and offers a third and alternative theory for the rise of fortification, based upon a persuasive cultural design that diffused across a wide region. Her use of linguistic and historical evidence highlights the widespread, and broadly simultaneous, qualities of fort construction across the islands of southern Maluku and Timor, which she locates largely in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The striking similarities across the region in the nature of the stone walls fortifying villages, the common words used to name them, especially (#lutuR: stone walls) and the ways in which they were used and conceptualised are suggestive of a kind of wholesale replication of a shared vision or model of protective enclosure. Schapper considers this pattern to be linked to endemic levels of pre-existing internecine indigenous warfare that may well have predated European intervention. Evidence from various European observers also highlights the strong spiritual qualities accorded the massive enclosing stone walls, which were thought to provide a protective 'living' agency that went beyond the pure materiality of the stone itself. Evidence from Timor-Leste shares many features of the fortified landscapes of southern Maluku with their ritual spaces (*sepu*), stone altars (*tei*) and ancestral graves (*calu luturu*), along with great variations in the size of the fortified enclosures themselves. The features indicate that these structures were used both as defensive deterrents from armed attack and as sites of ritual commemoration and sacrificial invocation to a protective ancestral presence and power.

In considering the relative merits of these different theories of fortification, it is evident that that the process of building defensive enclosures over time and across the region may well have had multiple drivers and knock-on effects. Climate variability and seasonal drought have long been highly influential elements in the relative success of rain-fed agriculture across Wallacea, and we cannot discount its role in competitive struggles over food supplies. Similarly, the idea of fortification as a kind of cultural model or assemblage of ritually potent features that diffused rapidly across the region in the manner of a cult cannot be wholly discounted. However, its emergence still required a trigger. Schapper (2019, Chapter 10, this volume) suggests that the Dutch East India Company (better known as VOC, after Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie) massacre of the Bandaese population in 1621—brutally enacted to enforce monopoly control over the nutmeg and mace spice trade—caused widespread fear among indigenous populations, and

may have been that trigger. Subsequently, the endemic cultures of inter-village warfare and ritual headhunting meant that the trend was continued once established. However, this explanation brings the argument back once again to economic issues and the highly disruptive influence of the numerous external and imperialist ambitions of maritime trading powers competing for political and economic supremacy. In this context, fear and uncertainty from unseen seaborne attack may well have been a more compelling reason to initiate major defensive fortifications.

It is also difficult to reconcile the fortified settlements described in this volume with much of the theoretical literature relating to the rise of socially and economically stratified societies (although, see Furholt et al. 2019). While monumental architecture can be seen to define vertical relations within society, it is difficult to see the operation of this principle in Wallacea. Some of the settlements were said to have contained 60 or so houses within the walls (Schapper 2019, Chapter 10, this volume), while others, such as Sauo in Timor-Leste as described by Forbes (1989) in 1885, encompassed less than a dozen precariously perched stilt dwellings. In some cases, multiple fortified settlements may have been aligned under the control of a central elite ruler, chief or *raja*, but in others, fortification may have arisen as a local multi-family household response to incursions by raiding parties from neighbouring clans. Some of the forts discussed herein seem to have been occupied for hundreds of years, while others were short-lived. Reasons given for abandonment and relocation of fortified settlements are also multifarious.

In view of these differences, it is not surprising that there are marked disparities in the remains of household items from different fortifications. As well as local earthenware, coastally proximal fortified settlements such as Macapainara (Chapter 2, this volume) and Leki Wakik (see Chapter 5, this volume), contained imported tradeware from China, mainland Southeast Asia and Europe. Vasino (Chapter 4, this volume), in a more inland location, contained only locally manufactured earthenware.

Oral history indicates that, even if there was ostensible elite control over a fortification, the building and maintenance was likely undertaken by members of the clan group, or their dependants who lived within its walls, as opposed to specialist craftspeople or mobile labourers contracted to an elite leader. However, there is no doubt that, as in other parts of the world, 'ritual burials materialized elite control of landscape and ceremony' (DeMarrais et al. 1996:19) and extended the influence of some individuals and families well beyond death. Austronesian society is inherently hierarchical and 'ownership and elite privilege were sanctioned over generations, ascribed to individuals who could claim consanguinity with those interred' (DeMarrais et al. 1996:19; see also Reuter 2007). Large ancestral graves are a common feature of all fortified sites discussed in this volume, regardless of the size of the settlement.

As a final reflection on this study into indigenous forts and fortification of Wallacea, the chapters in the present volume, in addition to their direct archaeological significance, attest to the productive possibilities for collaborative research across a range of disciplines around questions of late Holocene archaeology. In this context, the time depth is such that analysis of excavated archaeological material can be placed directly into comparative perspective with the written historical records, as well as the diverse oral traditions and mythic histories of local residents. The triangulation of these sources of information makes possible a more nuanced and richer interpretation of the significance of these sites than might otherwise be the case where the archaeological evidence lies beyond living memory. Recent work paying closer attention to the value of Portuguese and Dutch archival sources on Timor and the region in order to facilitate ethnographic understanding support this possibility (see Roque and Traube 2019). It is within this expanded field of interactive meaning construction that the present collection offers a set of insightful perspectives on patterns of indigenous fortification across Wallacea. In the process we signpost future directions for productive research and greater clarity on the origins and dynamics of indigenous fortification in Wallacea and beyond.

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