

terra australis 32

Terra Australis reports the results of archaeological and related research within the south and east of Asia, though mainly Australia, New Guinea and island Melanesia — lands that remained *terra australis incognita* to generations of prehistorians. Its subject is the settlement of the diverse environments in this isolated quarter of the globe by peoples who have maintained their discrete and traditional ways of life into the recent recorded or remembered past and at times into the observable present.

Since the beginning of the series, the basic colour on the spine and cover has distinguished the regional distribution of topics as follows: ochre for Australia, green for New Guinea, red for South-East Asia and blue for the Pacific Islands. From 2001, issues with a gold spine will include conference proceedings, edited papers and monographs which in topic or desired format do not fit easily within the original arrangements. All volumes are numbered within the same series.

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- Volume 32: *Altered Ecologies: Fire, Climate and Human Influence on Terrestrial Landscapes*. S. Haberle, J. Stevenson and M. Prebble (2010)

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Altered Ecologies

**Fire, climate and human influence
on terrestrial landscapes**



E P R E S S



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Papers in honour of Geoff Hope

Mungo Lunette

by Mark O'Connor

(in honour of Geoff's leadership on departmental excursions)

*Among saltbush greyer than seaweed
we boardwalk the yeasting waves of the old golden-perch pond.*

Rabbit dung dots a lake bottom dry since their coming

*– only once, last century, after seven inches of rain
a farmer had to rescue his sheep by boat.*

*The roo bounces down-slope,
a brown branch crackling.*

*The professor's eye, noting the local runoff
and what the westerlies do, observes
seas that rush in and out of a continent's middle,
salt lakes spreading and emptying,
hills pimpling up and down with cartoon-like speed,
or gullying themselves into extinction,
rainforests and deserts zipping back and forth like Tom and Jerry.
A human mouse plague swiftly swarms, perhaps soon gone.*

Impermanent planet.

Impermanent surface.

All under air and water.

*The lunette is a wave, a dumper of sand,
a collapsing tower in the mad rabbit years when its top blew off
and old bones winked through,
with a vault's worth of fine stone cores.*

*Once so simply mislaid in sand,
now so obligingly sluiced out
to the un-subincised world
that smiles at stone knives.*

*You might as well offer your table knife
to a carpenter.*

*Cane grass and the Dreamtime's stone
fight the eroding rivulets together.
In today's rare downpour each lost core, or blunted scraper
crowns some tiny eroding hillock,
plops its anchor in the dissolving silts.*

*The bettong whose skin took off the stone tool's edge
has vanished – sacrifice to future fertility.*

*Through the softening soil Homo sapiens's
skeleton bumps up like a carp's back.*

Waits for the wind to shave it off in pieces.

Preface

The impetus for this volume was the retirement of Professor Geoffrey Hope from the Department of Archaeology and Natural History at the Australian National University in June 2009 after a distinguished career in teaching and research in the fields of physical geography, and more specifically, palaeoecology. His pioneering efforts and long term commitment to research in Australia and in neighboring countries such as Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and Vanuatu exemplifies his tenacity and unwavering fascination for the natural world as well as the human dimension of our environment. This is illustrated in the variety and depth of the subjects he has tackled in the numerous scientific publications outlined in Chapter 1. Throughout his career Geoff has been a mentor and friend to many students and colleagues and has instilled a deep appreciation of the small and large dimensions of global change science. His unwavering support and encouragement of all who show an interest in the study of our environment has been an inspiration and guiding light to all of us who work with Geoff. In this volume contributors were asked to write on a theme that would reflect the impact Geoff has made on the many disciplines he has influenced. The title *Altered Ecologies: Fire, climate and human influence on terrestrial landscapes* reflects this wide-ranging influence and engagement with the past as well as the present. All papers were refereed and we are grateful to the authors for their participation and the referees for their time and dedication to producing this collection of papers. We also thank Kirsten Lawson, Adam Black and Duncan Beard for their generous help with volume production. Publication was possible with financial assistance from the Department of Archaeology and Natural History (ANU) and the Australasian Quaternary Association.

Simon Haberle, Janelle Stevenson and Matthew Prebble (Editors)

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