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This book brings together papers on various aspects of the topic by five authors with a short foreword by Ken Colbung and preface and introductory chapter by Desmond Ball. Colbung, distinguished descendant of a Western Australian tribal group, links effective defence to wise use of natural resources in the age-old Aboriginal pattern. Ball's preface identifies two prevalent 'myths' about Aborigines and defence, the first encapsulated in the 1986 statement of Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen that:

The Aboriginal people wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for the United States of America, together with our people who fought the Coral Sea Battle.

Given the difficulty inherent in determining the real meaning of Sir Joh's political utterances, he may have had a point if he was suggesting that all Australians, black and white, would have had a hard time without American support. If, as Ball assumes, he was denigrating the Aboriginal defence effort in the Second World War, that view has been well and truly demolished by Bob Hall in his book *The black diggers*. Hall's first chapter in *Aborigines in the defence of Australia* is a concise and well written version of the relevant parts of his earlier work. Ball's second 'myth', that the achievement of Aboriginal land rights is deleterious to national security, receives attention from several contributors who note that the Army's North West Mobile Force ('Norforce') has never been refused permission to operate on Aboriginal land; that Aboriginal survival and observation skills are vital to the defence of remote areas; and that along vast areas of our vulnerable northern coastline, Aborigines form the main, if not the only, population - and one which the establishment of land rights and the subsequent outstation movement has helped return, with the addition of modern communication links, to previously depopulated areas.

Much of the book's purpose stems from Ball's comment that 'there remains no analysis of the potential contribution which Aborigines could make to current defence efforts and in credible future contingencies'. Geographer Elspeth Young provides a background for such an analysis in considering the nature and distribution of the Northern Territory population. Aborigines form only 9% of the urban population, but no less than 55% of rural dwellers. Young divides the latter group into four: inhabitants of Aboriginal 'towns' such as Yuendumu, Milingimbi, Ali Curung; those living on Aboriginal-owned cattle stations; those living on White-owned cattle stations - as Young notes, by far the most deprived group; and outstation dwellers.

Rhys Jones and Betty Meehan follow with a lengthy chapter on the history and ethnography of eastern Arnhem Land. Much of the interest here lies in the account of the development of Milingimbi in the 1960s and its partial depopulation in later years because of the outstation movement.

Graham Neate provides a chapter on legal aspects of land rights in the Territory quoting, at one point, the perceptive comment of Mr Justice Deane that, in regard to an Aboriginal future, 'even amongst men and women of goodwill there is no obvious consensus about ultimate objectives'.

Bob Hall ends the book with sensible comments on army-Aboriginal relationships. This work has the common fault of co-authored volumes; it is disjointed and at times repetitious. It also concentrates heavily on the Northern Territory and within that context, on traditional Aboriginal lands and their holders rather than the whole Aboriginal
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It is customary amongst academics to defend land rights where they exist rather than advocate them where they do not, but it is disappointing to find that this book follows convention and omits examination of the Aboriginal situation and defence prospects in Cape York and in the Kimberleys; they are just as relevant to the defence debate as Arnhem Land. Still, it is a beginning and a very useful one at that. It is to be hoped that the momentum generated by this book will carry the energetic Professor Ball and the ANU's Strategic and Defence Studies Centre to greater depths in analysis of this vital area.

Alan Powell
Northern Territory University


These two books seem at first sight to have little in common, but they share at least two features. One is that they are both, in part, works of history not written by academic historians; the other is that they are published by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

Rose, an anthropologist who has spent over a decade in the Victoria River District (VRD) of the Northern Territory, has written no ordinary history. Her starting point is the analysis of the region's history by Hobbles Danayarri,1 whom Rose regards as 'the most philosophically gifted of the Yarralin and Lingara historians'. About a year after she arrived in 1980, he addressed to her a fairly formal history of the area: the invasion and the establishment of White control, working life on the stations, and the strike. Rose's history is a contextualising, a commentary and an expansion upon his words, most obviously by her organising the chapters on the same format as Hobbles' analysis. In the concluding chapters she carries the story a little further to describe the post-strike, post-land rights history of the region. Hobbles' analysis, of remarkable strength and insight, should be placed amongst the most powerful Aboriginal narratives in English, and although much of it appears in quotations throughout the work, I would have liked it formally set out at the front.

Some reviewers of this book, I think, have missed the novelty of history via text-analysis. Rose does not begin by asking that question implied by nearly all contact historians: 'On the basis of all the available evidence - what happened?' Instead, by carrying the anthropologist's attention to spoken text from the present to the past, she proposes: 'This is what the Aborigines say about their past: let us consider it'.

Close attention to the texts of Hobbles and others allows Rose to enter a number of current debates in Aboriginal history. One is whether Northern Territory Aboriginal pastoral workers enjoyed a symbiotic relationship with the pastoralists, whether, as Riddett has argued, they moved 'in and out of the industry as it suited them'. I suspect that such freedom has been greatly exaggerated by some previous historians; Rose cautiously closes her discussion with: 'There is undoubtedly some truth in [Riddett's] analysis, and it is therefore

1 Rose 1989.
important to note that the perspective which Victoria River Aboriginal historians bring to bear emphasises their confinement rather than their mobility. She uses some sophisticated genealogical techniques to calculate that the Aboriginal pre-1788 population of perhaps 4200 people had dropped to 187 by 1989, a loss of some 95%. The technique of text-analysis also brings some disadvantages. While Rose follows the events chronologically, there is sometimes a confusion as to which decade is being discussed and what forces of change were working upon whom. The picture drawn by Rose, as indeed it probably appeared to Hobbles, is sometimes more static than dynamic.

*Born of the Conquerors* is not immediately comparable because Judith Wright's book is a series of essays on ecological and Aboriginal topics written since 1976. A major theme is the metaphorical distance of white Australians from Aboriginal perceptions of the land, and from the land itself. Wright believes that Laurens Van der Post's description of 'modern man' as moving 'among a comfortable rubble of material possessions, alone and unbelonging, sick, poor, starved of meaning' describes non-Aboriginal Australians also, living in a country where 'they have no abiding title nor depth of relationship'. Herein lies a disadvantage of the re-published essay: Van der Post's sentiments are already sounding a little like nineteen-seventies rather than nineteen-nineties. The title *Born of the Conquerors* is explained by the essay 'The broken links': 'Those two strands - the love of the land we have invaded, and the guilt of the invasion - have become part of me. It is a haunted country'. Part of the amends non-Aborigines need make is keeping the country 'in the closest state we can to its original beauty'. Wright, possibly partly because of her own connection with nineteenth-century pastoralism, feels more acutely than most the burden of guilt of the invasion and dispossession.

Rose's country is not quite so haunted because it still is filled with living people whose most profound symbol of resistance was that they survived. Her position, described in chapters like 'Nyiwanawu and Bilinara deathscapes', 'Shot like a dog' and 'Terror', is that 'the early years of the VRD deathspace were violently brutal'. Despite cautions by Gordon Reid in a recent work⁴, the evidence she provides is irrefutable, and again the technique of reflecting upon the Aboriginal texts frees her to discuss elements often missing in more conventional contact histories. Condemnation of white atrocity is mediated by her understanding that few, if any, of the European Aborigine-killers consciously undertook a systematic program of complete destruction: they believed that annihilation would happen without their having to take responsibility for it. She cautions the reader that Aboriginal memories, like those of Whites, can be self-serving. She discusses two themes not usually addressed by historians: the extent of *inter-tribal* warfare before and during the invasion (including deeds of 'horrendous violence') and the extent to which the bush people were killed not by Whites but by police trackers and Aboriginal station-hands. We can note here the anthropologist's concern for community dynamics rather than the orthodox historian's emphasis on Whites fighting Blacks (wherein such themes are held to be less relevant and less palatable) and also note that Judith Wright, by contrast, is not prepared to make public concession that Whites were not wholly guilty nor Aborigines totally good. Wright challenges a different conventional wisdom. She argues (in a paper first published in 1983, when the conflict was first becoming apparent) that environmental and Aboriginal issues do not necessarily sit comfortably together: she points out that land once declared as national park, for instance, is legally, irrevocably out of reach of any Aboriginal claim.

The first question for Wright and the last question for Rose is: what is the guilt and responsibility of the present? Rose asks, in relation to a final, chilling, account of the

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⁴ Reid, 1990
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murder of an old man - are we the pile of ashes, the exterminator or the fearful onlooker? Guilt arises, she suggests, from accepting the viewpoint of the latter. The onlookers, modern non-Aborigines, are silent because they too are also potentially part of the ash pile. It is not only the White ringers and battlers who struggled, suffered and died in the working-man's paradise, but present-day Australians under a similar potential of colonisation by latter-day descendants of the Australian Investment Agency, the multinational companies. I would add that the onlookers share guilt also because, while fully understanding the dreadful past, they are well aware what their acknowledgement of violence and dispossession would imply. Therefore they continue to keep silent."

Wright and Rose share a hope for the future, but it is not the same hope. Rose asks us to acknowledge that VRD Aborigines, at least, are prepared to work together with non-Aborigines, whatever the past. Hobbles said:

"You know before, Captain Cook made a lot of cruel, you know. Now these days, these days we'll be friendly, we'll be love each other, we'll be mates. That'll be more better. Better than making the trouble. Now we'll come and join in, no matter who ...

It is up to the Whites to accept the olive-branch which the Aborigines have held out for so long. Wright maintains, however, that peace must be made with the land itself. 'We can speak [the land's] syllables, we cannot feel its meaning any more. This is what really lies at the deepest roots of [the Aborigines'] loss and of our loss too'. Her remedy is for non-Aborigines to make their own peace with the country by renewing their own sacred responsibility.

The books share another, less fortunate, characteristic. Rose's book is sold with a long list of errata, mainly concerning the position of maps and diagrams. A hand-drawn pound sterling sign looks very amateurish. The worst feature of the Wright production is the colour photographs, drawn from the AIATSIS picture file. The photos are disfigured by poor colour-separation, contrast or overall lighting, chemical blemishes and dirty negatives. Some of the problems stem from poor originals and some from poor production, but the overall pictorial effect is thoroughly unprofessional. Surely one of Australia's most distinguished writers is entitled to better treatment than this.

Rose's book won the NT's Jessie Litchfield Award for Literature for 1992. Hers will last the longer because Born of the Conquerors, though authored by one of the most perceptive observers of the environmental and the Aboriginal issues is an already somewhat dated re-publication. Wright's is also the more despairing. Rose's work challenges by exposing the VRD contact period in a way similar to R. and C. Berndt's End of an era. It is also important methodologically. While historians frequently discuss the limitations of, and alternatives to, chronological history, Rose has a fresh approach. She calls her informants 'historians', she puts their words in larger type than her own commentary throughout the book. She begins with the historical consciousness of the studied, writes a passionate meditation upon their perceived experiences, and concludes with a profound chapter 'Memory and the future' which I recommend to anybody who does not have the time to read the whole book.

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Peter Read
The Australian National University
Although Aboriginal biographies, autobiographies and life histories are today well represented there have been comparatively few occasional collections of Aboriginal commentary from lecture courses or symposia published over the years. Those which come most prominently to mind are Black viewpoints (1975) and, eight years on, We are bosses ourselves (1983). Consequently the publication of Being Aboriginal, almost the same time-span later than Bosses and culled from a series of radio programmes, is a welcome addition. The 121 pages make for a somewhat slender volume, however, and one might have hoped for a little more meat from such an important subject. The contributions are short, in keeping with the time restrictions of this kind of radio where programmes rarely last longer than half an hour, and the excerpts are often considerably briefer. Another reason for the book’s short length might be the always time-consuming nature of typing transcripts within a busy work schedule. The production of oral narrative in print is for this reason never particularly easy. Nuances and original liveliness of the medium are of course lost but it is an advantage to have a written version.

The volume has eleven chapters plus a two-page introduction by Bowden and a background commentary of the same length by Bunbury midway through the book, 'A hidden history', describing the fieldwork setting and the contributors he interviewed for the programme. Not all contributors are identified by name. Perhaps some preferred anonymity but we are not told. The themes covered are by now familiar to students of Aboriginal history though probably less well known to the wider radio audience for whom they were prepared - for example: the taking of Aboriginal children from their own families and raising them in white foster homes (told articulately by Coral Edwards of Link-up); the importance of indigenous languages and Dreamtime stories (although these are often fragments, sadly, of what had been a far richer cultural heritage) in the broadcasts of CAAMA and moves in several communities towards teaching their children those things; conservation of traditional lands such as the Musgrave Park project in Brisbane (told anonymously); several personal reminiscences about relations with the police (Shorty O'Neill); and growing up in welfare homes (told poignantly by Iris Clayton for Cootamundra and by Alice Nannup for Moore River). This is a cross-section of Aboriginal comment which includes traditional 'on the site' matters such as those voiced by Paddy Roe near Broome (a chapter deserving much greater length), but on the whole the contributors mirror, and reflect upon, their urban or fringe camp experiences.

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Bruce Shaw
Adelaide
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I.D. Clark is already known for his work in historical geography, particularly his edition of some of the Port Phillip Journals of George Augustus Robinson1 published in the same series as the present work. In Aboriginal languages and clans he continues his investigations into nineteenth-century historical sources on Victorian Aboriginal people. This book is an exhaustive and careful reconstruction of the distribution of tribal subdivisions or clans, i.e. local groups, and their wider affiliations. The study is based on all available published and unpublished materials and it gives insight into the ownership of land before the time of European settlement.

It is evident that years of dedicated research have gone into the making of this work: it will no doubt remain the definitive and authoritative work on the subject. Apart from the introduction there are ten chapters, each dealing with a specific region, since there were ten 'tribes' or major groupings of people in the area. Each section gives a summary of available material on clan organisation and location, the external relations with other 'tribes', what is known of contact history, a list of sources and a discussion of clan names and variants. The historical summaries are well written, concise and informative: they convey in a detached and therefore poignant way the tragedy that befell each group with the expansion of white settlement. As a geographer and in his understanding of nineteenth-century data Clark is outstanding and the work is a major achievement. When it comes to anthropology and linguistics the book has some minor controversial aspects. Thus on p.361 Clark quotes a clan list of Wergaia 'clans' or 'castes' published in 1904 by R.H. Mathews. He considers this list as 'problematical' because the names do not have the customary appearance of clan names, i.e. they are not formed with the use of finals like -gundidj or -balug; moreover they do not correspond to any of the clans named in other sources on Wergaia. He concludes 'the status of Mathews' clans is unresolved'. There can however be no doubt that the list published by Mathews gives the names of matrilineal descent totems, not of 'clans' in the sense of patriloclal local groups. The 'miyur' or 'home' referred to for each of these totemic subdivisions is a mythological centre. This to some extent corresponds to the information given by Howitt2 and quoted on p.339 of the present book. Yauerin is cited on this same page with a meaning that is far too vague, namely 'flesh or skin and class and totem'. In Wergaia yauer means 'meat' and yauerin literally means 'your meat' and hence 'your matrilineal descent line'. The second person form became known to ethnographers from phrases like njanja yauerin 'what is your "meat"?', i.e. 'what is your "line"?'. The use of the word for 'meat' in this context is widespread, it is found for instance in Paakantji on the Darling. The problem is that in the area covered by the present book there are at least three different types of social organisation:

1. Predominantly matrilineal moieties and patrilineally oriented local groups or clans.

The area where this type of organisation is found covers most of western Victoria (as shown on the map in Berndt and Berndt3) and it included the country of the Wergaia.

2. Patrilineal totemic clans, no moieties.

1 Clark 1988.
2 Howitt 1904.
3 Berndt and Berndt 1964:56-58.
3. Patrilineal moieties (as among the Kulin people of central Victoria). Throughout the area clans are patrilocal, and Clark's lists are therefore accurate though the concepts differ somewhat from place to place. Clark is clearly aware of the differences in organisation and they are mentioned in a number of instances in the text, as on p.237, but they are never drawn together. It would have been particularly interesting if there had been some discussion on this important aspect, and also on the related matter of the varying attitudes towards social organisation reflected in the nineteenth century accounts. As pointed out by Barwick, the nineteenth-century gentlemen whose ethnographic publications influence modern research were not mere scribes: their jealousies, ambitions, loyalties and roles in colonial society shaped their enquiries and the content of their publications. This kind of diversity does not come across clearly in the present book.

Clark has been most careful and accurate in his use of primary linguistic sources, but his acceptance of some secondary sources is controversial. The source that names 'rg' as a phoneme in Dhauwurd Wurrung (p.29) is clearly wrong: there is no such phoneme in Dhauwurd Wurrung or in any other Australian language. The system of referring to what might be called a dialect as 'language1' and wider language affiliation as 'language2' is described on p.3 and is carried on through the work. Such a classification may be suitable for some kinds of areal linguistic studies, but it is depressingly schematic and does not do justice to the diversity of Aboriginal languages in Victoria.

The large number of variants for the name of particular clans as listed in nineteenth-century spellings would call for some general comments on the transcription of Aboriginal words: thus the English spellings k, ck, g, c, kk, gg could all be used to represent one and the same consonant in an Aboriginal language. Similarly the sound [i] may be rendered in English by 'e' as in 'he', 'i' as in 'him', and also by ee, ei, ey, ie. There is a brief discussion of spelling on p.15, but the matter is not made clear. The comment about 'the phonetic equivalence of the vowels a/u' is misleading. All the languages in the area make a significant distinction between the vowel [a] as in English 'but' and the vowel [u] as in English 'put', it is simply the English spelling that is ambivalent. Clark lists a 'preferred spelling' for each clan name, but it would have been valuable if in each case he had grouped together names that varied in spelling only, as opposed to those that showed other differences.

Inevitably in a work of this magnitude there are occasions where further evidence is available that has not been mentioned. Comments on Jackson Stewart - an important man who has many descendants - are quoted from the John Mathew Papers (p.339). Similar and further information appears in the work of Stone; moreover the myth of the Bram brothers, recounted by Jackson Stewart, has been frequently quoted elsewhere: it must have been one of the major myths of the western Kulin people.

The present book fills a gap in that it deals mostly with areas not covered by Barwick's important papers. Clark's command of nineteenth-century manuscript material is impeccable, and he brings many new insights. The work is of quite particular significance to various Aboriginal groups who are working on studies of their ancestry and it has been widely appreciated. It is a reference book that will be used and valued for many years to come.

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4 Barwick 1984:103.
5 Stone 1911 passim.
6 Barwick 1984.
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Luise Hercus

The Australian National University


Most readers of *Aboriginal History* will be familiar with Josephine Flood's earlier overview of Australia prehistory, *Archaeology of the Dreamtime*, now in its second edition. This new book is a better one, and complements that volume, providing descriptions and discussions of interesting and significant sites in all parts of the country. The two together form a set introducing the general public to archaeology in this country.

*The riches of ancient Australia* takes the reader - or the traveller - on a journey around and across the continent, touching on a wide variety of sites, ancient and modern, archaeological, cultural and natural. Interwoven with descriptions of sites are snippets of information about them, about researchers and the results of research, about Aboriginal life and mythology and history. Some entries on geological sites or features are somewhat out of place in a book really about the human, rather than the palaeontological or geomorphological, past.

With so wide a variety of sites their treatment varies, and there is no fixed format. Some places get several pages of detailed description and discussion, others get only a paragraph. It is not, therefore, a simple guidebook. Details on access are provided for most, but not all sites (some are physically inaccessible, others too sensitive). In many cases the committed visitor will still need to consult local sources (noted in the text) in order to find places.

It is an interesting book, and a useful one. But it is not without faults. Information on sites varies in quality as well as in style. This is partly due to the quality of information available. Some well researched and published sites can be given good coverage; others seem to rely on poorer, if not inaccurate, sources; some entries read a little too much like local tourist brochures. Although people with specific knowledge of individual places and their archaeology may disagree with details of fact or interpretation (my greatest personal objection is to the misleading account of western Victorian stone houses) the overall quality is high and reliable.

As in her other general work, Flood tends to gloss over the complexities of archaeological research, and to give an impression of authoritative and conclusive knowledge. For example, she strongly espouses one current view of 'intensification' in
Australian prehistory in the last few thousand years, and brings some quite unlikely data into the discussion. There is no suggestion of any alternative views or debates. Perhaps my own approach is too cynical and critical, but I am not convinced that the general public is best served by simple answers without an awareness of the problems, or at least some suggestion of uncertainty.

This book serves an important need. It invites people to visit archaeological sites, and develop an appreciation of the nature and significance of the Australian cultural and natural landscape. In doing so it confronts directly one of the most pressing problems faced by cultural resource managers today: how to open up sites to tourism, encourage an interest in them, and yet retain control and maintain protection. As Aboriginal studies, including Aboriginal prehistory, become increasingly important within school curricula and an awareness of the Aboriginal past and its remains becomes more widely spread, there will be increasing demands for access to sites and for easily understood information about them. This book is therefore very important. It will, I hope, stimulate archaeological authorities, in conjunction with Aboriginal communities, to open up and develop more sites for visitors, although this will be neither easy nor cheap. In this regard I fully endorse the underlying message in this book - that the only long-term protection will come from an educated and sympathetic population.

Some years ago I travelled much the same path taken by this book and visited many of the sites described in it. It would have been a useful companion to have on the way, and can be highly recommended for the cultural tourist, whether seated in a landcruiser or in an armchair.

David Frankel
La Trobe University


*Through white eyes* is a collection of eight reprinted articles published originally in the journal Historical Studies. The articles are linked by two threads: they deal with various aspects of Aboriginal-European relations since 1788; and they were written by white Australian historians. The collection begins with D.J. Mulvaney's comprehensive review (published in 1958) of the Australian historical literature on Aborigines, then passes to Peter Corris' 1973 paper 'Racialism: the Australian experience'. The rest of the chapters were published in the early and mid 1980s and range from Glyndor Williams' archival account of reactions to Aborigines from sailors on the *Endeavour*, to two articles (by Beverley Blaskett and Susanne Davies) on violence and the criminal law as they pertained to Aborigines in the Port Phillip area in the mid-1850s and Henry Reynolds' study of the assistance provided by Aborigines to early European explorers (a theme taken up in his recent monograph *With the white people*). The other two papers are Alan Frost's 'New South Wales as Terra Nullius' and Tim Rowse's 'Aborigines as historical actors'.

In addition to the reprinted articles, the book contains two papers written specifically for the collection. In 'Aftermath: the view from the window', D.J. Mulvaney seeks to relate discoveries by Australian archaeologists and prehistorians to the work of Australian historians and to Aboriginal interpretations of their own past. Mulvaney extends the
criticism levelled at historians by the anthropologist W.E.H. Stanner and claims that as a group they remain unwilling to use the much larger time-scale provided by archaeological evidence to develop a more integrated Australian history. All in all Mulvaney's postscript represents a systematic and provocative overview of changes in Australian historiography during the past three decades, an overview which provides a useful context for studying the reprinted articles in the book and which brings up to date R.H.W. Reece's and James Urry's literature surveys, both published in 1979.

The other new paper in Through white eyes is the 'Response' to the book written by Jackie Huggins, a young Brisbane Murrie historian. Her thesis is that the cultural ideology brought to Australia in 1788 and underlying the subsequent frontier violence between Aborigines and Europeans is manifest also in much of the writing about Aboriginal history by white historians. She urges younger Aboriginal writers to explore from their own perspective the racial violence which loomed so large in Australia after the arrival of the first fleet. In making her challenge she acknowledges the inherent psychological difficulties and she cites some successful Aboriginal attempts at portraying our common Australian history.

As well as the endnotes pertinent to each reprinted article, the book includes a useful list of 'Additional references' and has an index of the proper names cited in the various papers.

Through white eyes is a timely collection of reprints. It is 'historiography in the making' in that it contains a representation of historical writing about Aborigines, mainly published during the 1980s. It would be interesting to speculate about the contributors to and the composition of another such volume were it to be published in the year 2000.

P.A. Danaher
Brighton Grammar School (Victoria)


It is common knowledge that Aboriginal languages disappeared early in the areas of maximum initial European contact. It is less well known that in much of the 'outback' the situation is nearly as bad: practically all the languages of western Queensland are now extinct. In the sixties some of these languages were still represented by one or two speakers. It was very fortunate indeed that at that time Gavan Breen began his important work over the whole of the area, travelling year after year, for months at a time, seeking out and revisiting speakers in small townships and in the remotest of localities, on outstations and in droving camps, and recording nearly extinct languages often in the most adverse conditions.

The present work deals with two of the languages where major study was no longer possible, and only partial information was available even in the sixties. These are Pirriya and Kungkari, once spoken on the lower Barcoo and Thompson rivers. Breen recorded Kungkari from the last speaker at Belombre station. The partial Pirriya information was recorded from Albert Upperty whose father was 'said to have been the only, or almost only
survivor of a massacre of his tribe by (native?) police and whites at Poolpirree waterhole on Keerongoloo at the turn of the century' (p.6).

The other languages treated in this book are: 'Kungarditchi', Dharawala, Yandjibara, Wadjabangayi, Yiningayi, Guwa (chapter written in conjunction with B. Blake) and Yanda, all extinct earlier this century. For all these languages Gavan Breen has brought together the entire available material. He has added exhaustive comparative notes to the wordlists, and the work thus represents a definitive account. The only exception is 'Kungarditchi' for which there is some further unexpected material recorded by B. Schebeck in the sixties from a Yawarawarrka man who had a form of 'Kungarditchi' as his second language.

The languages studied by Gavan Breen are of quite particular interest because the area 'forms a large part of the interface between two great language groups and yet contains languages which seem to have differed in important and interesting ways from both these groups' (p.1). The two groups are the Kama languages and the Mari languages. The work gives insight into the complexity of the problems of cognates and borrowings. The comparative notes are of such great interest that one feels tempted to join in and to add a few further suggestions:

Kampu 'bone' had a wider spread in the Kama languages than indicated (p.14), but with a difference in meaning: it was used for 'skeleton' in Yarluyandi and probably also in Diyari as indicated in the Diyari placename Kampumatarli.1

thuru 'sun' (p.150) could have cognates further afield towards the Gulf with Wanyi duru 'sun'.

Puralku 'brolga' (p.151) is widespread in the Kama languages.

'workia' 'food' (p.151) has an interesting parallel in Wangkangurru warkanganyi 'vegetable food'.

Regarding the placename 'Bools' (p.104) which refers to a star, this may well be based on a misreading as suggested, but on the other hand it could possibly be linked to the widespread word burli 'star' found to the south in the Baagandji, Yarli and Yura languages. It might have been worthwhile adding a note on the spelling 'bohemia' for 'bauhinia' in one of the sources (p.210).

This is a thorough and authoritative work, a model of what can be learnt from languages even when there is only limited information available. It is an absolutely essential sourcebook for all who work on Australian linguistics, but it is also of wider interest to those who would like to know something about the tragic history of the Aboriginal people of western Queensland.

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Luise Hercus
The Australian National University

1 Reuther VII:436.
BOOK REVIEWS


This volume presents the edited proceedings of a workshop of the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health held in July 1989. It is a far cry from sixty years ago when all but a few enlightened members of the medical profession worried about Aboriginal morbidity only when it threatened the health of the rest of the population. There were twenty-four participants consisting of doctors, other health workers, statisticians and demographers. All states were represented as well as the Australian Institute of Health, the National Centre for Epidemiology, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands Studies.

The first section, six chapters, concerns infant and child mortality. Though rates have fallen considerably from the shocking figures of the 1960s they are still up to three times the rates for non-Aborigines. The other two sections, 'State and local studies' and 'National and comparative studies' disclose similarly disquieting figures for mortality of Aboriginal youths and adults. It seems that life expectancy for Aborigines is about twenty years less than for the rest of the population.

The final chapter deals with the Aboriginal deaths in custody about which we have recently heard a great deal. To this reviewer the real revelation of this chapter was the great number of deaths in custody of non-Aborigines; perhaps the Royal Commission should have investigated these too.

Further noteworthy figures were the high rates of deaths due to violence among adult Aboriginal males and females.

Though the papers and the subsequent discussions were concerned with statistics and not with possible measures to close the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal death-rates, the report gives a basis for action not only by policy-makers but also by Aborigines if they wish to regain control of their own lives - and deaths.

Isobel White
The Australian National University


Regional archaeological studies are crucial to the writing of prehistory. Over the last twenty years, however, Australian archaeologists tend to have been more concerned with questions of antiquity and colonisation than with the less spectacular results of detailed regional surveys. The publication of this revised version of Helen Brayshaw's PhD thesis on the Herbert-Burdekin district, firmly in the tradition of Isabel McBryde's pioneering work in northern New South Wales, is therefore a welcome reminder of the importance of this type of work.

The scope of the study was extremely broad, encompassing ethnographic and ethnohistorical evidence as well as archaeological survey and excavation. The result is an impressive compilation of ethnographic, historical and archaeological data from north...
Queensland, begun as a doctoral project in 1973 and completed in 1977. The introduction briefly outlines the aims of the research and highlights the responsibility to make the results more widely accessible through publication - a responsibility now fulfilled through this well-illustrated and well-produced monograph.

The scene is set in the first chapter by a review of the environment of the Herbert-Burdekin district. A brief chapter follows in which the nature and quality of the ethnohistorical evidence is critically reviewed. This evidence is then synthesised in chapters 3 to 6 under the headings 'People', 'Ritual', 'Diet' and 'Material culture', while supporting appendices provide tables detailing the nature and sources of individual observations. In chapter 7 and appendix 7A, the ethnographic collections are described. A total of 569 items specifically from the Herbert-Burdekin district was identified in the course of this study held in museum collections in Australia and overseas, and in private collections. This material is catalogued, illustrated and discussed in detail. Use of a framework similar to that of the previous chapters facilitates comparison between the two different resources, although more could have been done to integrate them explicitly.

The final three chapters are concerned with archaeological data. While the author has attempted to update the study by reference to more recently research, it is in this section that the thirteen year delay between completion of the thesis and its publication is most apparent. The discussion of the rock art sites and the various types of open site lacks a clear statement of the methods used and is rather generalised. There is little attempt to consider the reliability or representativeness of the aspects of the archaeological record described, although these problems are certainly recognised and the historical evidence is well used to identify site types that should occur in the area, but are not preserved or not visible. The survival of only 'modest midden remains' in the Herbert-Burdekin district, for example, is discussed in terms of both the probable role of shellfish in the diet, evidence from historical sources of traditional camping practices and site locations, and the destructive effects of tropical climatic conditions. It is not clear to what extent systematic field surveys were conducted during the research and it is therefore difficult to evaluate the discussions of preservation and visibility. Similar problems arise in considering the discussion of regional variation in rock art motifs. Only in the final chapter, where the results of the four excavations are presented, is any rationale given for the archaeological component of the study, namely to identify cultural variation through time and to see if the regional variations identified in rock art and other site types could be detected. In this chapter too is the most successful integration of archaeological and ethnohistorical evidence in the discussion of the human remains found in the excavated sites.

The monograph ends very abruptly and unexpectedly; there is no final synthesis and little attempt to draw together the different sections. This is disappointing in view of the wealth and variety of data presented.

Nevertheless, as Isabel McBryde points out in her Foreword, this research stands as a pioneer ethnographic and archaeological survey, and it is a pity that its publication was so long delayed. The study illustrates very well the great difficulty of successfully interweaving the documentary, material and archaeological strands of evidence to provide a unified view of Aboriginal life. From the perspective of 1991, we have a great appreciation
of the complexity of the undertaking than was possible in the 1970s. Helen Brayshaw must be commended for an impressive compilation of material which will undoubtedly serve as a valuable resource for students of past Aboriginal society in North Queensland.

Caroline Bird
Victoria Archaeological Survey


Not only do three nation states come together in its vicinity, Torres Strait is also a topographically extremely complex area, whose shallow waters, studded with reefs and islands, are affected by salt or brackish waters from the Arafura and Coral seas and from the gulfs of Carpentaria and Papua as well as by the massive outpouring of fresh, though contaminated and heavily sediment-laden, water that the Fly River brings southward from the mountainous centre of western Papua New Guinea, site of the Ok Tedi and Porgera mines. No less complex or varied are the socio-cultural and economic influences. In or near the strait exist commercial and subsistence fishing, 'high' tourism, large-scale shipping with its potential for oil spills, the biggest marine park in the world, two or three Fourth World nations, several cultural traditions, in- and out- migration, subsistence economies, Australian federal and state bureaucracies, and communities largely dependent on welfare payments and remittances to maintain their appearance of prosperity.

The publication under review (the proceedings of a conference organised as part of the Torres Strait Baseline Study) demonstrates this complexity through some 40 papers arranged under three major headings: Physical Environment, Biological Environment, and Human Environment of the Torres Strait region. In styles that range from chemical-analytic to ethnographic-empathic, the papers cover topics as varied as sedimentation on the northernmost Great Barrier Reef, fisheries management in the Torres Strait, the effects of the Ok Tedi mine on the Fly River system, the status of the dugong in Torres Strait, the artisanal turtle fishery at Daru (PNG), the eastern islands of the Torres Strait, the assessment of the impacts of heavy metals in a complex and diverse tropical marine system, traditional fisheries in the strait, and the question of indigenous economic development in the context of sustainable development.

A notable section at the end of the volume, which is attractively arranged and well produced throughout, contains 'draft summaries' - each summary providing the five most central points of a paper, expressed in lay terms. These summaries were prepared during the conference because some of the almost 100 participants, several of whom represented Torres Strait Islander communities or communities on the PNG coast of Torres Strait, expressed concern that the physical and biological material presented was overly complex and technical and did not directly engage inhabitants' social and environmental concerns, or provide answers for the participants to take home. The draft summaries were intended to convey clearly the essential message of each paper, making the papers more useful and accessible to all.
The Torres Strait Baseline Study, which gave rise to the conference and this volume, was instigated by the Australian government in response to concerns expressed in 1985 by Torres Strait Islanders, commercial fishermen, and scientists about possible effects on the Torres Strait marine environment from mining operations in the Fly River catchment of Papua New Guinea. The objectives of the conference were: (1) to bring together current information on the strait's environment with regard to the potential impacts of mining operations, (2) to consider ways whereby environmental protection and economic development can be made compatible in the region, and (3) to consider ways whereby the long-term economic and environmental well-being of the traditional inhabitants can be sustained. To call the study 'baseline' is misleading, for it was started after major mines had begun operation (Kelleher); however, the conference can be seen to have marked another kind of baseline by bringing together physical and biological scientists with social scientists, traditional inhabitants, and government officials - a step of particular merit in integrating an understanding of bio-physical processes into social, economic, and administrative actions.

Cultural understanding is significant too in that the sea and reefs and rich marine life of Torres Strait (fish, turtles, dugong, shellfish, bêche-de-mer, and other sea creatures) figure strongly not only in subsistence and commercial economies but also in the cultural identity of Torres Strait Islanders and in movements for cultural revival. Sea territories and seascapes are a part of social and cultural space (Fitzpatrick). Even communities whose superficial prosperity depends on welfare payments and remittances retain an integrity and cultural heritage that rest importantly on catching and feasting on marine foods (Beckett). Despite this cultural significance, Johannes and MacFarlane do not find a cultural awareness among Islanders that the sea's resources are limited or that their actions could be cause of depletion - hence the authors' recommendation that there be more environmental education in formal schooling. 'It is ironic', they note (p.398), 'that developed countries such as Australia, which routinely contribute to the funding of special, locally relevant environmental education programs for third world countries, often overlook the need for similar programs in fourth world communities within their own borders'.

In an assessment of the possibilities of indigenous sustainable economic development, Arthur concludes that a commercially productive sector based solely on fishing faces limits as economic demands and numbers of people increase - a situation that requires broadening the region's economic base or modifying policies that emphasise its economic independence. With regard to environmental protection, mention must be made of the Torres Strait Treaty, signed by Australia and PNG in 1978; it contains important environmental provisions and explicitly acknowledges and seeks to preserve the traditional way of life and livelihood of traditional inhabitants. The treaty's linking of PNG's mainland with Torres Strait explains the relevance of the many contributions about PNG in the volume - beyond of course the threat to the strait's marine environment from mining operations hundreds of kilometres away (Hyndman; Ross) but directly connected by the waters of the Fly River. Although more than a quarter of the volume's papers deal with some biophysical aspect of the Fly waters that carry mining wastes and materials into the Gulf of Papua just northeast of the strait, little conclusive can yet be said about the aggregate impact of mining. As Cordell puts it (p.516): 'the numbers are still not in on Ok Tedi'. This together with many other uncertainties that surface in individual papers (such as questions about trans-cultural communication or the ability of sustainable development to lessen poverty) show this volume, massive and valuable though it is as a source of information on Torres Strait and the Fly River area of PNG, to be only an early step in learning enough to know how to
adapt management of Torres Strait to be not only sustainable but also in accord with local needs and desires.

W.C. Clarke
Eumundi, Queensland


This major publication is part of an eight-year project undertaken by the editors to document, interpret and publicise the work of the Aranda watercolourists of the Hermannsburg Mission, and to assess their rightful place in the history of Australian culture.

The book itself is a highly significant example of revisionist history in the best sense. With its publication there should no longer be good reason for the Aranda school of watercolourists to be ignored by art historians, art critics, curators and others responsible for acquiring for our public collections, to the extent that they have been ignored in the past.

At the centre of it all stands the massive and tragic figure of Albert Namatjira. Ten essays, each by a specialist writing from a particular viewpoint, illuminate, as it has never been illuminated before, Namatjira's place in the history of Australian culture.

In his introduction J.V.S. Megaw explains that the book seeks 'to chart the evolution of the Hermannsburg Movement ... assess its place in white institutions ... and (a more difficult task) gauge its role in Aboriginal society past and present'. He stresses, and the points are made by others again and again throughout the book, that the Aranda culture was never static. It is an evolving system, and the Hermannsburg Mission, whatever its deficiencies, provided a protective role that assisted the survival of Aranda society in the face of the brutality of other white settlers.

John Morton, the LaTrobe anthropologist, opens the discussion with a detailed account of the Western Aranda and the place of Namatjira and his descendants and associates in that highly complex linguistic group. He sees the work of the watercolourists as an integral part of the evolving Aranda tradition. Robin Radford, who has specialised in the history of Lutheran missions, traces the history of Hermannsburg and the changes that took place in its policy towards Aranda culture during Namatjira's lifetime. Phillip Jones, the Curator of Social History at the South Australian Museum, provides an incisive and challenging essay on Namatjira as a 'traveller between two worlds'. He writes convincingly. The traditional art of the Aranda was no longer an option for Namatjira, he was adventurous, opportunistic (in the best sense); 'a gifted, ambitious individual'. A kind of black Nolan - but accorded a different fate. Albert distanced himself from Aranda traditions. As a Christian he played an important role in 'desecratifying and rendering harmless the potent decorative art of his ancestors'. In accepting the watercolour tradition the Aranda artists acknowledged the deeper transformations proceeding in their own society. 'Namatjira made a bid for his economic independence at a time when the Mission was gripped by poverty'.

Jane Hardy writes of the visitors to Hermannsburg in the 1930s. Of Rex Battarbee and John Gardner, from Melbourne in 1932 inspired by the Taos painters of Mexico in the search for a new landscape style from their experience of the Centre, and of Battarbee's
growing interest in Aboriginal culture. A year later came the lesser known but important visit of Una and Violet Teague, then later Arthur Murch and William Rowell. It was not until Battarbee’s second visit in 1934 that Albert Namatjira told pastor Albrecht of Hermannsburg that he wanted the chance to paint watercolours like those of Battarbee. Prior to that Albert had made and painted pokerwork plaques with scripture texts and also pokerwork boomerangs, crafts encouraged by Albrecht after he had seen similar work in Germany for sale to tourists. It was one of his several attempts to assist the economy of the mission when it survival was under threat in the 1930s.

In their essay ‘Namatjira’s white mask’, Ian Burn and Anne Stephen provide an interesting but controversial interpretation of Namatjira’s art largely grounded in Homi Bhaba’s concept of mimicry in postcolonial discourse. It includes an interesting analysis of two woomeras decorated with painted landscapes by Albert. They are said to set up an ambivalence of categories, straddling as they do the usefulness of craft and the uselessness of ‘high art’. This ambivalence the authors see as a double ‘transgression’. Yet surely it is precisely the kind of transitional situation that we expect as tribal artefacts become commodities. It is not even certain in these particular instances whether Namatjira crafted the woomeras; so we cannot assume that he was setting up ‘transgressions’ deliberately across the western categories of craft, kitsch and high art. An interesting, though rather forced, comparison is made between Namatjira’s painted woomeras and Duchamp’s use of the ready-made. This is followed by a good discussion of the way in which Namatjira’s art transgresses the modernist concept of primitivism (the basic reason of course for its relative non-acceptance by the high-art world of Australia from the 1930s to the 1960s). But when they attempt to correlate Albert’s landscapes with Bhaba’s concept of mimicry they are much less convincing. In their visual analysis of Albert’s landscapes they argue that ‘the visual emphasis on the edges holds the composition in balance without either a dominance of forms near the centre or any noticeable hierarchy of forms’.

But this is not borne out by even a casual examination of his work, indeed ‘The Western MacDonnell Ranges’, the painting selected as evidence for the claim, does not support it. It all sounds like Greenberg talking about Olitski and not about the work of an artist painting in a naturalistic landscape tradition. The trouble with this essay is that in seeking to apply an essentialist notion of ‘difference’ between Namatjira’s and Heysen’s approach to landscape painting it succumbs to a second-order primitivism in which Albert’s paintings are endowed with sophisticated but essentially ‘western’ readings in order to establish ‘difference’. It would probably be better to allow the Aranda themselves to state the nature of the difference. Phillip Jones’s better researched, and more closely argued essay on Namatjira as a twentieth-century Aranda man is a better guide here to the understanding of his art.

Sylvia Kleinert provides a well-documented account of the reactions to the Hermannsburg School, that reveals how much the baleful effects of primitivism hindered its reception. Tim Rose discusses the economics of the marketing of the art and Daniel Thomas, in an engagingly autobiographical account, describes briefly no less than ten ‘worlds of art’ into which Namatjira’s work was pigeon-holed (e.g. mission-encouraged art, tourist industry art etc. etc.) all of which acted to keep his work inaccessible to ‘high art’ valuing and the major public collections. To Thomas’s exquisitely adjusted curatorial eyes, Namatjira’s pokerwork boomerangs are his most significant work - ‘a sign of creative accommodation to social change’. Several of the essayists see the Aranda watercolours as a reassertion of land rights, as a subversion of the European landscape tradition and its assertion of spiritual authority over the land.
BOOK REVIEWS

Jenny Green also shows how many of the Aranda school prefer to paint their own countries and to paint them from memory as a form of spiritual repossession. Ruth Megaw provides a chronology from 1877 with the foundation of the Hermannsburg Mission to 1991 with the death of Otto Namatjira the last surviving son of Albert, and there is a comprehensive bibliography. The book suffers badly however from a lack of editing. Again and again different essays recycle similar facts. On p.284 we read 'there are few attempts to review his life [Namatjira's] in its historical context, or to see his life and work as a unique product of his time between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginal Australians of that era'. But you will find that that, unfortunately, is an excellent summary of what the previous 283 pages are all about, should you decide to begin at the beginning and read on to the end. In short, a good book that might have been an excellent one with the help of a little intelligent, professional editing.

Bernard Smith
Melbourne


David Horton has compiled an anthology which brings to our attention the long history of European interest in the Aboriginal past through a generous selection of extracts or abridged versions of publications spanning the period from 1699 to 1976.

The three dozen extracts are grouped into six sections: Beginnings, Palaeontology, First Syntheses, Classic Archaeology Begins, New Syntheses, Kow Swamp and Mungo. Each of these has a brief introduction, setting the general scene, and there are brief biographies and portraits of the major authors. Half a dozen co-authors are deemed less significant or less photogenic.

This selection reveals shifts in style and approach, but most illustrate a common theme: the search for human antiquity and the demonstration of major environmental change. The earliest are the most out-of-place, and really belong to an entirely different set. These are brief asides on manners and customs, rather than attempts to investigate the past. Phillip in 1788 and Oxley in 1820 describe opening (recent) graves. But it is not until Mitchell's 1839 research on fossil marsupial bones, and Dawson's and MacPherson's later excavations of Victorian mounds that we have examples of archaeological investigation of ancient sites.

Geologists take over from explorers and ethnographers in the second section (Palaeontology). In these extracts, the question of human antiquity is incidental to the investigation of environmental history and especially research on extinct marsupials.

First Syntheses include papers published between 1890 and 1928 by geologists (Etheridge, Gregory, Edgeworth David), the naturalist Pulleine, and that most significant of late nineteenth-century students of Aboriginal society, Howitt. Here we fully confront the major theme of the anthology - antiquity and environment. In these studies Tasmania plays an important role, as it was used then, as later, as a critical point of departure for geological and anthropological debate.

These overviews are followed by Classic Archaeology Begins. For Horton, 'classic' archaeology means stratigraphic excavation and the development of typological sequences exemplified by the initial work of Tindale and McCarthy, followed by Gill's first use of
radiocarbon dating, Mulvaney's excavations at Fromm's Landing and Kenniff Cave, and Jones' at Rocky Cape - this last in obvious counterpoint to Pulleine's doubts as to the value of excavation of that site.

New Syntheses (that is, those of 1957 to 1961) by Birdsell, Tindale, McCarthy and Mulvaney set the scene for the culmination of the book, the apotheosis of Kow Swamp and Mungo. There are five papers in this section by Thorne and/or Bowler with a varied supporting cast.

Horton ends 'the story of Australian archaeology' in the early 1970s. His brief coda, After Mungo, does no justice to the last twenty years of research. Important as they undoubtedly were, the initial researches at Kow Swamp and Mungo have become increasingly marginalised by later work, not only because of the scandalous lack of formal publication, but also as finer grained data from all parts of Australia and Melanesia have allowed major redefinitions of even the simple issues addressed in this book.

Stopping when it does the anthology gives no hint of the major changes in the social context of the discipline of the last fifteen years. Some of these were foreshadowed 170 years ago when John Oxley hoped that he would 'not be considered as either wantonly disturbing the remains of the dead, or needlessly violating the religious rites of an harmless people, in having caused the tomb to be opened, that we might examine its interior construction'. No such scruples are found elsewhere in this book, which (as any historical anthology should) documents more than the immediate academic concerns of the authors.

It is all too easy to criticise an anthology, to suggest alternative texts, or a different scope. Horton has chosen a particular theme of Australian archaeology, emphasising the search for human antiquity and environmental change leading up to the discoveries at Mungo and Kow Swamp. But there is far more to archaeology than that, and no necessity for a long time depth and major environmental fluctuations in order to develop significant questions. Human behaviour, rather than (material) culture history can - perhaps should - be investigated at a finer scale of time and space. Much research has never addressed the primary themes of this anthology and so finds no place in it. It is important to remember that there were parallel archaeologies in the past just as there are at present. These need to be considered in a full history of research which is, of course, more complex than would appear from the image of cumulative progress implicit in this collection.

A different editor would have chosen differently; perhaps have given more, and shorter, extracts; or provided a substantial analysis of the history of thought in the place of the brief editorial comments. I would have liked to have seen S.R. Mitchell and A.S. Kenyon represented, and a recognition of the early conscious rejection of models based on overseas typologies in developing a uniquely Australian approach to stone tools, especially by South Australian researchers. The inclusion (for example) of Elsie Brammell or Daisy Bates would have provided us with some (dare I say it?) early roses among all these thorns.

Nevertheless Horton's personal selection gives the raw material for reflection on past attitudes as well as on data and approaches. This incentive toward a critical evaluation of earlier research, when coupled with an equivalent self-consciousness in present practice, will, as Horton suggests, ensure that Australia is not doomed to an unchanging archaeology, limited to the problems addressed in this collection.

David Frankel
La Trobe University
In 1961, one of Australia's great mammalogists and animal collectors Hedley Finlayson published a paper in which he stated, 'Indeed had [the value of Aboriginal knowledge] been recognized earlier and the much greater opportunities of 50 years ago seized and vigorously exploited, we would not have to deplore the great and probably permanent hiatuses which exist in our knowledge today'. His pioneering work conducted in the arid zone during the periods 1931-35 and 1950-56 recognised not only that many mammal species were under threat of extinction but that there was a patent disregard of the knowledge of Aboriginal people who truly understood much of the biology and ecology of these species. His respect for Aboriginals and Aboriginal knowledge allowed him to amass one of the most significant mammal collections in Australia and to record information about species, some of which are now extinct. Contrasting with this are the numerous biologists and collectors over the past 200 years who have risen to academic and professional prominence by their exploitation of Aboriginals and Aboriginal knowledge but who have contributed little to an acknowledgement of this debt.

Fortunately, over the last ten years there has been an increasing recognition of the value of Aboriginal knowledge, the impetus to much of this being an awareness that the arid zone has lost many of its mammals particularly the medium-sized species such as bandicoots, hare-wallabies, quolls and possums. Dorothy Tunbridge's work in the Flinders Ranges with Adnyamathanha people is significant in two main respects. Firstly, it illustrates what can still be gained from a language group which is, linguistically and culturally, '... standing at the very edge of ... survival ...' and secondly, it is the first time to my knowledge that information about the mammals and their relationship to Aboriginals has been published in detail, in a format that will be attractive to people from a wide range of disciplines.

The book has three main themes: the Adnyamathanha people, their language and their relationship to the mammals of the Flinders Ranges, mammal species extant in the Flinders Ranges and those now extinct, and finally, mammal extinctions and effects of these extinctions on the Adnyamathanha. For a non-linguist such as myself Tunbridge's description of the language was readily understood and presented in a most readable form. The fact that the book was written by a linguist, presumably untrained in mammalogy, is a credit to Tunbridge. The amount of biological, ecological and distributional detail provided by Adnyamathanha consultants will undoubtedly be all that will be gleaned from the Aboriginal mammal oral history of the region.

My main concern, however, is the ease with which Tunbridge points the finger at pastoralism as the main cause of extinctions without undertaking an in-depth analysis of all potential causal factors. Undoubtedly pastoralism was the catalyst for extinctions but the synergistic effects of other factors such as droughts, rabbits, foxes, cats and possibly changing fire regimes on the surrounding plains may have weighed against survival for some species. Identification of the causes of extinctions requires a major, detailed investigation not possible within the scope of this book. As she says '... the exact causes of species obliteration are still being argued over ...'.

I was particularly impressed with the layout of the book and the quality of the drawings and photographs, although the photos of the Greater Bilby (washed out), Brush-tailed Bettong (dark) and Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby (out of focus) were poor. A scattering of
typographical mistakes was offset by the accuracy of nomenclature used, particularly with bat species which have fluxed over the last few years.

One point worth mentioning is copyright. While Tunbridge acknowledges the Adnyamathanha consultants, non-Aboriginal 'ownership' of the information appears to lie with the author. This is not a criticism of the author but perhaps a point which should be taken up among Aborigines, authors and publishers where Aboriginal knowledge is being used.

Tunbridge states that, '... this book, with all its gaps and guesses, is offered as a form of redress for the past failure of "white" Australia to recognise the immense bank of knowledge that Aboriginal people have, or had until it was lost forever'. She has shown what it is possible to achieve with Aboriginal people whose traditional way of life has almost ended. Imagine what could be achieved elsewhere in Australia with many language groups whose traditional life remains relatively intact. If we are to pay more than lip service to the idea that Aboriginal people have much to contribute to mammalogy (in addition to other disciplines) then research organisations should be encouraging co-operative research arrangements with Aborigines, and Aboriginal knowledge should be considered an additional, important tool in understanding mammal distributions (past and present), and mammal biology and ecology. Overall, The story of the Flinders Ranges mammals will have a well-deserved place on every mammalogist's bookshelf.

David Gibson
Alice Springs

The history of medicine and public health needs a social and political context; this interesting anthology supplies such a background for the tropical north. All but one of the dozen essays were first given as papers at the fifty-seventh ANZAAS congress, held at Townsville in August, 1987. The collection opens with an eleven-page introduction, presumably by the editors. This discusses medical history as an interdisciplinary field, and gives a brief historical background to northern Australia and adjacent Melanesia. The essays are then presented in two parts.

The first group of essays focuses on health administration and administrators. The opening article, by Professor Donald Denoon, analyses the role of 'tropical medicine' in Papua New Guinea. In a similar vein, Dr James Gillespie relates in the fifth essay a rather curious episode from early this century, during which the Rockefeller Foundation promoted a Queensland campaign against hookworm. The efficacy and indeed the necessity of this programme are questioned; Gillespie examines the underlying bureaucratic and political agendas of its promoters.

I find the first essay rather provocative. Denoon's main argument is that public health measures in Papua New Guinea were grossly retarded by the disease-based models of tropical medicine favoured by Australian administrators. For instance, he seems disappointed at the enthusiasm with which medical authorities greeted chemotherapy for 'cosmetic or trivial' (p.22) conditions, such as hookworm or yaws. The latter condition he appears to regard as
relatively minor: '... yaws was more often inconvenient than lethal' (p.20). Would Denoon feel the same if he had caught this disfiguring disease?

Denoon decries the lack of government and medical intervention in child-birth and child rearing in the first fifty years of colonial rule, in contrast to western societies where 'parturition and nurturing were being professionalised' (p.21). Of course, there are now objections that such activities have been over-professionalised. It is ironic that at least some of the great reduction in infant, perinatal and maternal morbidity and mortality that western societies have enjoyed is the result of the same disease-based, reductionist approach to medicine that Denoon appears to dislike in 'tropical medicine'.

As another example of maladministration, Denoon records that difficulties in containing tuberculosis in the late 1930s at the Gemo Island isolation hospital were partly due to a failure 'to isolate victims from their families' (p.21). Yet earlier in the essay, he sneers at policies of quarantine and segregation as being racist, particularly those of Cilento of whom Yarwood has painted a more rounded picture (vide infra). Denoon grudgingly admits that, in the days before antimicrobial chemotherapy, there was little else that could be done: '... segregation and quarantine may not have been as stupid as they seem half a century later' (p.19). How remarkably generous!

With the help of that well-known medical instrument, the infallible retrospectoscope, it is certainly possible to argue that colonial health administration in Papua New Guinea was often misguided. Having done so, it is reasonable to enquire as to causes. However, Denoon goes much further. Denoon describes the interests that promoted tropical medicine in Papua New Guinea as actually being 'malign' (p.13) - that is, as being disposed to do evil - and labels their apparent neglect of public health as being 'criminal' (p.21). To make these serious accusations stick, Denoon should prove that the health administrators concerned really were malicious, or at least recklessly indifferent to human suffering. I consider that he has failed to do so.

Four biographical sketches included later in this first section are balanced and are particularly interesting. The first is Mr Robert McGregor's account of the attitudes and efforts of Professor Baldwin Spencer, not as an academic anthropologist but as the Special Commissioner and Chief Protector of Northern Territory Aborigines for just one year (1911-1912). Spencer was unacceptably authoritarian by modern standards: for instance, he was keen to isolate Aboriginal populations. Though it may seem strange to some modern readers, he was convinced that otherwise the Aborigines were doomed to extinction. McGregor shows that Spencer was a sincere supporter of social and medical measures that he thought might arrest or avert such a fate.

Next, Ms Lorraine Harloe sympathetically describes the work - and difficulties - of Dr Anton Breinl, an expatriate Austrian bacteriologist, whose role is also mentioned in Denoon's essay. In 1910 Breinl became the first director of the Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine in Townsville. During earlier work in Britain, Breinl had been partly responsible for introducing arsenicals as a treatment for trypanosomiasis, a great advance which was later extended by Erlich. Breinl was persecuted during the First World War and resigned afterwards. His work was however much appreciated by fellow experts, notably his successor.

The third such account reviews the life and work of a famous health administrator, Sir Raphael Cilento, who succeeded Breinl at the Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine. Its author, Professor A.T. Yarwood, pulls no punches in noting his subject's marked elitism, racism and anti-semitism, but Yarwood also lists Cilento's many contributions and gives fair weight to his expertise and diligence.
In contrast to Denoon, Yarwood points out that Cilento clearly recognised that most so-called tropical diseases could be prevented or eradicated by sanitation and appropriate lifestyle. Cilento strongly recommended physical exercise and preventive medicine as a recipe for healthy life in the tropics. Yarwood notes however that Cilento's greatest medical failure was his refusal to accept a role for sun exposure in the aetiology of skin cancer.

The final biographical note, by Mr James Griffin, concerns the career and contributions of Sir John Gunther, whose memory remains esteemed in Papua New Guinea. Despite, or perhaps partly because of, an undistinguished beginning in Sydney, Dr Gunther rose from being a salaried practitioner on a Solomon Islands plantation in 1935, through valuable wartime service mainly in Papua New Guinea, to become Director of Public Health there in 1945; eventually Gunther became the Assistant Administrator.

The second group of essays is less biographical and more sociological. The first three contributions explicitly involve matters of race. Dr Clive Moore discusses the alcohol abuse that became endemic among indentured Melanesian labourers a century ago in the Mackay district, and also reviews the various and often futile attempts at legal control. Moore's interpretation of the social significance of alcohol and associated violence has obvious recent parallels.

Also relevant is Dr Dawn May's review of Aboriginal health on North Queensland cattle stations early this century. Aborigines there enjoyed significantly better health and diet than dwellers in town camps, in whom Cilento had reported malnutrition in 1934. May attributes this advantage to isolation, with reduced exposure to infective disease, as well as to a superior diet arising both from a certain persistence of traditional lifestyle and also from market gardening at station homesteads. Though often suffering discrimination from managers, doctors and hospital committees, station Aborigines were participants in the cash economy and could buy goods and services, including medical care.

In a pleasant essay, Dr Lyn Riddett has given a moving account of the health of women and infants in the Northern Territory in the 1930s. The descriptions of interaction between Aboriginal and European women are fascinating. Riddett provides sad, and well documented, anecdotes of various medical crises; even in the 1990s, potential dangers imposed by isolation remain.

Another three contributions take a critical look at the role of government in North Queensland public health. Dr John Maguire examines the origins and management of leprosy among Aborigines (a disease probably unknown to them before European settlement). The history of the Fantome Island Leprosarium (1939-1973), near Townsville, is revealing: although long planned by Cilento, the management was assigned to the Roman Catholic church, and in the midst of war the USA generously supplied building materials not provided by Australian governments.

In another article, Dr Peter Bell investigates the poor health and diets of gold miners in North Queensland camps a century ago, which he considers are most simply explained by poverty and deprivation. In the alluvial goldfields of the 1870s, mortality was double the Queensland average, yet there was little interest shown in sanitation or public health. Ubiquitous Chinese market gardeners were a major source of good food, in camps where scurvy was not unknown.

In the final essay, Ms Janice Wegner describes the often awkward role of local government in public health until the end of the Second World War, which in practice largely meant the supply of clean water and the disposal of sewerage and garbage. As contrasting case studies, she examines Hinchinrook and Etheridge, two North Queensland shires.
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In Queensland, public health services have long been decentralised. Wegner finds that this devolution of power was driven by the desire of Brisbane governments to save money, rather than by a wish to promote local democracy in remote communities. Many difficulties resulted from inadequate funding and support. In the previous essay however, Bell shows that by the early twentieth century local government action greatly ameliorated the health hazards of the goldfields.

Except for the first essay, I enjoyed reading this book. The contributions cover a wide and interesting range, and each is well supplied with references for further reading. The authors, the editors, and the publishers should take pride in having made a valuable addition to Australasian medical history. Students of Aboriginal and Melanesian history should also find a place for this book on their shelves.

David Betty
The Australian National University


In 1984 the South Australian Parliament passed the Maralinga Tjarutja Land Rights Act, handing back to the Pitjantjatjara Aborigines much of the area prohibited since the nuclear testing of the 1950s and 1960s. Some of the Yalata people reoccupied their land and established an outstation at Oak Valley, 140 km north-west of Maralinga, outside the contaminated area, which had so far undergone little of the clean-up demanded by the 1985 report of the McClelland Commission. The technological assessment group convened by the Australian government 'agreed that an anthropological study was essential to provide information on the diet and lifestyle of the Aboriginal owners of Maralinga and Emu ... similar to that which they could be expected to adopt if (and when) they could return to the rehabilitated test sites' (p.4). Kingsley Palmer and Maggie Brady were commissioned to do this study; both had already worked at Yalata and at Oak Valley.

The technical assessment group seemed to expect that a clean-up could return the contaminated area to as safe a level as before the testing program, but the authors of this study nevertheless laid great emphasis on the level of dust ingestion, suggesting that they thought complete clean-up was impossible. They observed an extremely high level of dust ingestion, particularly by the children, who spent time playing in the sand, often raising great clouds of dust. Moreover frequent high winds and willy-willies also raised clouds of dust as well as of ash from the fires. Since water has to be brought in by truck there is little used for washing persons or utensils. All the food eaten tends to be coated with dust or ash.

The authors had four twelve-day research periods at Oak Valley, in May, August, November, 1987, and February 1988, and a fifth trip to tell the community of their findings, and a further trip at the request of the technical assessment group to perform some urgent dust monitoring. On each of the four research trips they made a careful daily count of the inhabitants and of the food entering the camp, so that they could make a rough assessment of the food intake per person. There was a great deal of hunting, mostly of kangaroos, so that the intake of fresh meat was high, though this did not prevent the purchase of considerable quantities of fresh and processed meat from the store and from the...
'tea and sugar' train. Gathering of vegetable foods was unimportant in the diet because the people preferred to buy food from the store (kept supplied from Yalata), the biggest quantity by weight being bread, flour and sugar, with some variety provided by tinned products. There was an extremely high consumption of soft drinks. The diet was notably deficient in fresh fruit and vegetables. Except that there was more hunted meat the diet is similar to that observed by this reviewer at Yalata more than twenty years ago.

Dwellings also are little different from those observed at Yalata in the late 1960s and early 1970s. They are bush shelters in winter and minimum windbreaks in summer. There are no toilet or washing facilities. The camps are moved every ten days or so. There is a clinic and a health sister is usually resident. Yalata school operates at Oak Valley two or three days a week (pp.7-8). The authors devote a short chapter to health, including their own observations and some figures from outside sources. One important difference from Yalata is that there is no alcohol at Oak Valley, though some of the inhabitants are suffering from the long-term effects of alcohol abuse, having left Yalata to get away from the temptation. The authors state that 'the living conditions at Oak Valley ... are not conducive to good health, because of lack of water, sanitation, garbage disposal, unhealthy dogs and a general ignorance of personal hygiene practices ...' (p.73). Later in their report they say that: 'The desert dwellers of Oak Valley have an unbalanced and unhealthy diet ... high in refined carbohydrate and protein, lacking fibre, complex carbohydrates and balance' (p.88).

In their concluding chapter, Palmer and Brady present the dilemma that these desert outstations pose to both Aborigines and non-Aborigines (for Oak Valley is fairly typical of others even though it is the only one facing the contamination threat). Many Aborigines have chosen to face the hard living conditions in these outstations because they represent 'an environment (both physically and emotionally) that is recognised by them as their own', and a refuge from the alienation they felt on missions and government settlements. For government to try to bring such outstations to a level of health and comfort demanded by non-Aboriginal Australians would be an impossible task. To force removal of the inhabitants would be in line with policy of fifty years ago and in direct contravention of today's proclaimed policy of self-determination.

The authors have presented their findings clearly and concisely, with a minimum of evaluative pronouncements. The book is short and easy to understand but brings the reader face to face with some of the problems faced by government and by Aborigines themselves. It is well worth reading.

Isobel White
The Australian National University
This book should be read alongside Anna Haebich's *For their own good*,\(^1\) previously reviewed by Peter Read in this journal.\(^2\) The two books deal with almost the same period in West Australia's history of treatment (mostly ill-treatment) of its original inhabitants. Haebich deals with the period 1900-1940 from the point of view of the Aborigines, Jacobs tells the story of the life of A.O. Neville (1875-1954), the state's Chief Protector of Aborigines from 1915-1940, and describes the effect of the Aborigines on Neville rather than his effect on them.

Auber Octavius Neville was born in 1875 in the north of England, the eighth son of a Church of England clergyman. In 1897 he joined two of his older brothers in Western Australia. They were imbued with pride of empire, believing that their duty lay in improving conditions in the British colonies, so it is not surprising that within six months of his arrival Auber Neville became a clerk in the state public service and spent the rest of his working career in that service. He proved to be a dedicated and efficient administrator, rose quickly through the ranks and in 1908 became Secretary for Immigration with responsibility for organising and settling thousands of British immigrants on the land. This flood ceased with the outbreak of war in 1914 and in 1915 Neville was appointed Chief Protector of Aborigines, much against his will, since this represented a lowering of his ranking in the public service; Aborigines, in all government service, state and Commonwealth, held a low priority, and Western Australia was no exception. But Neville, with his stern sense of duty, threw himself into his new post with his usual dedication, and though his years as Protector were bitter ones for the Aborigines they would almost certainly have fared even worse without Neville's continuous efforts to obtain more money for their welfare.

All over Australia in those years the plight of Aborigines became increasingly desperate; without mercy they were driven into missions and settlements 'For their own good' as John Forrest remarked in criticising the Act that made this possible in Western Australia (quoted on the title page of Haebich). 'Their own good' meant assimilating them to the culture of the settlers with little regard to justice or human rights; today we would condemn this as cultural genocide. Though Neville shared some of this ethnocentrism, he regarded the Aborigines as fully human, and was aware that their pitiful conditions were due to the attitudes and actions of their conquerors. He fought throughout his working life to change these attitudes, thus bringing upon himself many attacks in the state parliament and the newspapers. Many of his attempts to help the Aborigines were thwarted by a series of penny-pinching governments. Neville was particularly worried by the plight of the increasing numbers throughout the state of the part-Aborigines, and was an advocate of taking them away from their families in order that they should have the benefit of a western-type education. Neville was particularly worried by the plight of the increasing numbers throughout the state of the part-Aborigines, and was an advocate of taking them away from their families in order that they should have the benefit of a western-type education. He genuinely believed that this would be 'for their own good', unable to realise that this was as cruel to the children and their families as it would be to take his own beloved children from their parents! We should remember that he came from a class in England that regarded it as proper to send their sons, and sometimes their daughters, away to boarding school. He escaped this fate because he was the eighth son of a not very wealthy family. But nevertheless we have to condemn Neville for the removal of Aboriginal children. Like others who believed in this process, he did not realise that for the Aboriginal

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1 Haebich 1988.
2 Read 1990.
children this was not merely taking them from a warm family environment but also placing them among totally foreign people, and for the families it meant the complete loss of their children, sometimes for ever.

Reading about Neville's career gives the impression that he spent most time trying, with little or no success, to get more money for what he saw as absolutely necessary improvements in conditions at the settlements and other institutions under his authority. Jacobs writes about Moore River settlement in 1932:

... many workers ... found themselves and their families enmeshed in the rules and regulations, even to the extent of ending up in Moore River Settlement through destitution. It caused more anger and bitterness towards Neville and the Department, although he hadn't instigated the practice and would have preferred fewer indigents to care for. Moore River was hopelessly overcrowded with the old and frail, orphans, the children of mixed blood the Department had removed from native camps, destitute families and law-breakers ... (p.198).

Pat Jacobs paints a picture of Neville as a model family man and as a dedicated and efficient public servant, whose acute sense of duty caused him to serve the state and the Aborigines to the best of his ability and according to his strong sense of what was right and proper. In his favour he attempted to learn all he could about the Aborigines, by travelling all over the state, even exploring areas in the north that were still almost unknown. Thus he became known throughout the whole of Australia as an authority on the administration of Aboriginal minorities. When he retired at the age of sixty-five both Aborigines and non-Aborigines paid tribute to his achievements.

I enjoyed reading this book, as a record both of a period of Western Australian history and of the attempts of a dedicated public servant to do his best in a climate of war, depression, racism and under a series of heartless and penurious governments.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Isobel White
The Australian National University