
Reviewed by Ian Barber, University of Otago

During the 1980s, the volcanic landscape incorporating the modified cone known as Pouerua in the inland Bay of Islands, New Zealand, was the subject of a large-scale archaeological investigation. The results of this work have been reported and interpreted in university theses, several published papers, and three volumes. The first two volumes as edited by project director Sutton present a series of reports on the archaeology of undefended settlements and smaller pa (defended earthwork sites) of the Pouerua area. The last volume of the project is under the multiple authorship of Sutton and two colleagues. It is a full report on the archaeology of the large, extensively terraced and defended Pouerua cone itself and has been long awaited in New Zealand archaeology.

This publication is without question one of the most important archaeological research statements on New Zealand pa. Chapter 1 begins with a critique of pa scholarship that sets out the fundamental assumptions of the volume. The authors imply that earlier views of pa as period artifacts or settlement types are inappropriate for the investigation of a complex sociopolitical site such as Pouerua. Chapters 1 through 3 propose that the only way to advance our understanding of a place like Pouerua is to identify in fine stratigraphic detail examples of the many events of the site’s history. This is achieved through extensive survey and a combination of selective trench and large area excavations. Given the ambitious nature of this project, it is no surprise to learn that “the complexity of the excavations and the large number of stratigraphic layers identified … made analysis and interpretation difficult” and that a form of the Harris matrix was employed to sequence stratigraphic contexts (p. 29).

The greater part of the book is taken up with the documentation and interpretation of excavation results, including summary tables of events and layers, clear line drawings, some well-resolved photographs (chapters 5–11), an integrated cone sequence (chapter 12), and radiocarbon results (chapter 13). The focus of these chapters is on identified “events” that are separated out for description, labeled, and related by stratigraphy (where possible) for and between several discrete excavation areas. The investigation units include the elevated, constructed parts of the rim (tihi), defensive ditches and scarps, and separated terraces and terrace clusters from the upper to the lower parts of the cone. This has resulted in a detailed excavation report focused on excavated soils, layers, features, and objects. The detail is a little overwhelming in places, where the reader may need to refer back to the helpful summary overview of chapter 4 (intended to “help make the complex excavation data more accessible,” p. 30). Even so, the writing is generally clear and straightforward and the report co-
herent. By the time one reaches the discussion of the form of the cone and its changing use over time in chapters 14 and 15, the major identified events and features at least are familiar, and their interpretation is generally satisfactory.

The careful description and sequence of construction events supports a compelling and somewhat surprising conclusion about Pouerua’s complex history. The cone is interpreted as a place of defended and undefended uses that changed over time, where the most considerable settlement activities occurred before and after the time of its strongest and most conspicuous fortification. In short, when the greatest number of people were living on or using Pouerua most intensively, the cone itself was only lightly defended at best. This is an important contribution to our understanding of pa as sociopolitical monuments.

“People were not cowering in defended settlements up on the Pouerua cone,” the authors contend: They were instead “advertising their presence, wealth and situation ... in a highly visible, even commanding, manner” (p. 233). In conclusion, the authors interpret Pouerua and by comparison other pa as places that combined “ceremonial, symbolic and defensive purposes” (p. 237).

The difficult task of presenting and correlating the complex excavation results is handled well overall. As one might expect with shared rather than multiple edited authorship, the Pouerua volume presents a more coherent interpretation than the earlier monographs of the project. There is some repetition of detail through the data and interpretation chapters, but in general the complexities of the stratigraphic relationships justify ongoing reminders and reference points. Radiocarbon data are presented fully and calibrated and interpreted carefully. Suggestions for the very early construction and sustained use of a pit from the smaller Haratua’s Pa of the Pouerua area in the 1993 monograph are referenced obliquely and not advocated otherwise in this volume, while a reported radiocarbon error from the 1993 publication is also corrected (pp. 198, 22; see also p. 1 acknowledging the current consensus of a shorter Maori archaeological sequence c. 800 years old).

The only real quibble I have concerns the commendable expectation raised in chapter 1 that Pouerua is to be considered in the context of “archaeological, ecological, economic and socio-political contexts” (pp. 9–10). In this regard, it is acknowledged that Pouerua cone is at the center of a “vast horticultural landscape,” where “it would never be possible to understand the nature of settlement ... without also understanding the nature of horticulture on the surrounding lava field” (p. 10). Indeed, some of the adjacent stone field walls and rows begin on the cone’s lower slopes (p. 18). The discussion of this larger horticultural landscape is brief, however (primarily on pp. 18 and 19 respectively, with reference to short published descriptions only), while the suggestions of terrace gardening on the cone (pp. 158, 164) are not explored further or related to the greater area and sequence. It is unclear also why the intriguing “possibility” of early terrace gardening (p. 181) is raised when evidence of garden soils is conspicuously absent from these excavated features (pp. 172, 181). It is to be hoped that the important archaeological evidence of crop production at Pouerua can be presented more fully at some stage.

The volume, in short, is an admirable example of a thoroughly presented excavation report for a complex earthworks site. It offers a stimulating interpretation that joins a number of calls in New Zealand archaeology to reconsider pa as places with complex histories and uses, where defensive purposes are part of the picture only. Some readers of this journal may be less convinced by the discussion that considers pa and other monumental Pacific earthwork sites in relation to stone religious architecture in Polynesia (pp. 234–237). In my view, the record of multiple constructed open spaces and bounded areas of variable form and size over the huge Pouerua cone justifies the comparison and helps to relate the too-often marginalized archaeology of New Zealand to its larger Pacific context.
Bill Solheim founded this journal, *Asian Perspectives*, which first appeared in 1957. For over 50 years he has been a leader and contributor to Southeast Asian archaeological studies. He has been prolific, and his work has been foundational for studies in the region. He has recently revised and republished his *Archaeology of the Central Philippines: A Study Chiefly of the Iron Age and Its Relationships* (Solheim 2002) as well as updated earlier reports in "Archaeological Survey in Papua, Halmahera, and Ternate, Indonesia" (chapter 6 in this volume under review). He also recently revisited ceramic collections in the Sarawak Museum from the Gua Sirah project, which he is currently preparing for publication. In other words, Solheim has been vigorous and productive since his "retirement" from teaching in 1991 from the Department of Anthropology at the University of Hawai‘i. He is currently on the faculty of the Archaeological Studies Program at the University of the Philippines in Diliman. The festschrift *Southeast Asian Archaeology* was published in 2005 in his honor by his colleagues and former students, and it includes articles from throughout Mainland and Island Southeast Asia—the latter a neologism that he helped coin.

This book on the Nusantao is a consummate review by Solheim of his life’s work in the region. It is written in a fresh and sometimes conversational style, with an eye not only toward reviewing his previous work, but also accommodating recent findings and literature. Solheim takes advantage of hindsight to revise a few earlier misconceptions or misstatements, and he also takes the opportunity to frame his vision of migration in the region in light of a current controversy of contending models. In this sense, this volume presents the history of an idea as well as the fieldwork and analyses that Solheim has done over the past half century. *Unraveling the Nusantao* is at the same time a recounting of the data, a historiography of the concept, a personal intellectual biography, and also a vision of a vibrant maritime culture that has inhabited the region since the Late Paleolithic. It is a compelling argument for his model of dispersive and expansive settlement in Southeast Asia.

The concept has evolved considerably from its earliest presentations as a Neolithic era “Nusantao” culture, and this volume reflects not only the emergence of data but also an emerging and quite sophisticated model of migration. The theme is central to theory and interpretations of migration throughout the region and is currently controversial in its opposition to models that focus on Taiwan as the fulcrum of Austronesian Neolithic period diffusion. Solheim examines this alternate model and compares it unfavorably to the data, as well as to his own theory.

Solheim himself eschews the term “theory,” as he has long been skeptical of fads and fashions, old wine in new skins, or revisionistic explanations. In contrast, Solheim remains close to his experience of the archaeological landscapes of the region, to the data, and to his prodigious knowledge of artifacts, sites, and collections in his illumination of a powerful and resilient model for settlement and migration. He presents the ethnographic, ethnohistorical, and linguistic as well as archaeological bases for his theory.

The book is divided into seven chapters, with two contributions regarding the analyses of his Sa Huynh–Kalanay ceramic tra-
dition that he had first proposed in 1952 for the central Philippines as the Kalanay tradition. He later expanded the concept into a panregional tradition where ceramic styles from the Sa Huynh site in Vietnam were interpreted as genetically related to the Kalanay, with stylistic flow occurring over probably a very short period of time during the Neolithic and evolving throughout the early Iron Age in the region. David Bulbeck and Ambika Flavel have contributed appendices to this volume that statistically support Solheim’s earlier stylistic lumpings. Another brief section, an account of survey results from Papua, Halmahera, and Ternate, Indonesia, is also appended to the Nusantao volume as chapter 6. This chapter adds more detail from the region regarding artifacts and sites but is somewhat tangential to the main thrust of the volume.

In Chapter 1, Solheim lays out the Nusantao model as a maritime communication and trade network that provided the frame for regional migration as well as exchange. This model is an elegant visualization of the movement of people and resources in the region as known from contemporary, ethnographic, and ethnohistorical accounts, as Solheim recounts in chapters 4 and 5. Migration in this account might more reasonably be termed “geographical mobility,” in the sense of Ralph Piddington (1965) or its application to the Limau villagers of Galela in Halmahera by Matsuzawa (1980). Here kinship occasioned nondirectional and sporadic “migration” that could not be explained by linear or clinal migration models. The term recognizes the tremendous fluidity of human movement in the region, where the maritime is field to the figure of social agency. It is unbounded by terrestrial resources except as temporary landing zones, and these are often ephemeral point references in a very expansive seascape. The system is driven more by spatial perceptions of dispersed maritime resources, kin networks, cyclical weather, and tides, currents, and prevailing winds than by “landmarks.” Small groups can travel great distances very quickly and can drop off nodes of settlement and revisit them throughout the region on very short notice. Further, the nature of trading shifts in the maritime field from terrestrial or transhumant patterns to “down the line trading” that itself contributes to the pulsative and dispersive character of mobility rather than linear or unidirectional migration. Solheim comments wryly that this kind of exchange “has been termed smuggling when it involves trade over national boundaries” (p. 154), and in that phrase he captures much of the difference between Western and regional perceptions of space, time, and relationships. To the West, the region is awash in corruption. Locally, power flows are perceived as horizontal and in a web of kin networks, not through hierarchical and linear systems. One man’s graft is another’s habitus.

In chapter 2, Solheim lays out the case that he had previously identified as a Neolithic phenomenon, which actually had its roots in the Palaeolithic settlement of the region. He depicts artifact complexes in Korea and Japan as genetically related to the Nusantao and links them all to the Hoabinhian or Palaeolithic stone tool complexes found throughout the region. In chapter 3, he discusses the “four lobes” of the Nusantao Maritime Trading Network, and with this image he figuratively contrasts his model of geographical mobility to the linear models of migration advanced most notably by Peter Bellwood, among others. He presents a close reading of the literature and the data from throughout the region and clearly contrasts the Nusantao concept with its rather one-dimensional alternative. Solheim, with the Nusantao model, provides a mechanism as well as a broader frame within which to consider the rapid movement of people and culture throughout a very expansive region. The Nusantao concept is more like a swarm of bees than like the startled beekeeper who makes a “beeline” to escape their wrath! This comparison might best clarify the contention between the “out-of-Taiwan” migrationists and Nusantao proponents.
No doubt Austronesians did move from Taiwan to Batanes and perhaps then directly to northern Luzon, but it is likely that this was just one small corner of expansive geographical mobility throughout the region. Solheim was recently told that an expedition to the Batanes had just returned with a report that they had found red-slip pottery and jade, two of the hallmarks for regional Neolithic culture. “Why not?” he remarked. “It’s everywhere at that time, why not also in the Batanes?”

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Reviewed by ELIZABETH M. BRUMFIEL, Northwestern University

*Gender and Chinese Archaeology* presents an introduction and 11 original studies that draw upon already published data. The authors are professors and graduate students of art history, Asian studies, anthropology, and history at the University of Pittsburgh. Their studies cover a 3500-year span, from the Neolithic Majiayao culture of northwestern China to the Shang, Zhou, and Han dynasties. Most of the chapters examine mortuary data, and most are concerned with the relative status of women and men and the sources of their equal or unequal status. I approached *Gender and Chinese Archaeology* with great interest, curious to know whether the engendered archaeology of an unfamiliar region from a non-Western point of view would yield new and challenging insights. I came away somewhat disappointed—but also impressed by the potential of these scholars and their data.

As Gideon Shelach explains in his introductory chapter, the Marxist foundations of the People’s Republic of China during the 1960s through the 1980s encouraged the study of ancient social structure, including family organization and the status of women. True, Chinese researchers accepted as given Engels’ (1972 [1884]) model of social evolution from matriarchy to patriarchy, accompanied by a decline in the status of women. And they also accepted that women throughout the ages were confined to the domestic sphere due to their biologically imposed roles in reproduction and child rearing. But within these limiting assumptions, debates could and did occur among Chinese archaeologists concerning the classification of particular cultures as matriarchal or patriarchal, the reconstruction of marriage systems, and the effects of different gendered divisions of labor and property regimes on the status of women. This led in turn to methodological discussions of using archaeological house plans, burial practices, and ethnographic analogy to reconstruct ancient gender systems. Although Marxists presented stereotyped models of gender in ancient societies, they did produce relevant data and they did envision ancient societies that were significantly different from those recorded in historical documents.
With liberalization during the 1990s, Marxist approaches in Chinese archaeology were superseded by a nationalistic program that sought to recover the deep historical roots of Chinese culture. This nationalist program has tended to diminish the power of archaeology as an independent source of knowledge about the past because it projects onto prehistoric data the social and cultural institutions recorded in Chinese historical texts. The nationalistic program has produced less work on gender and a less careful formulation and testing of hypotheses about ancient gender systems. This volume, then, might have provided a timely return to the topic of gender, drawing on the strengths of earlier Marxist research and introducing new theoretical approaches of the scholars' own design or from outside sources. For the most part, this has not happened. While the 11 case studies presented in this volume are data rich, the analyses sometimes draw conclusions prematurely and at other times fail to explore the full implications of their findings.

Examining Majiayao culture (3300–2000 B.C.E.), Yan Sun and Hongyu Yang ask: Did this Neolithic culture evolve from a matrilineal society to a patrilineal/patriarchal society with parallel increases in gender and social inequality? And were these trends intensified during the subsequent Qijia culture (2200–1700 B.C.E.) with the emergence of metallurgy? They examine 397 tombs from ten Majiayao and Qijia cemeteries. Looking at the relationship between tools and sex in single burials, they find two patterns. In half of the cemeteries, there is no consistent association of tool types with sex, either because no tools are present or because tools are the same for female and male burials. In the other cemeteries, some tools (stone chisels, adzes, knives, awls, arrowheads, and axes) are mainly associated with males and some tools (spindle whorls) are associated with females. Sun and Yang conclude that these two patterns show different attitudes toward gender, with some groups playing down gender differences and some groups choosing to highlight them. They offer no explanation for this difference, and they do not discuss the possible consequences of this difference for gender relations outside of burial practices.

Looking at double burials, Sun and Yang observe a change from the Majiayao period, when both burials were given equal treatment, to the Qijia period, when males were placed in coffins and females were not or a male was buried in an extended position with an associated female in a flexed position facing him. Sun and Yang conclude that the earlier culture took a symmetrical approach toward gender, treating males and females similarly. In contrast, the Qijia culture was characterized by male dominance and female subordination.

The large number of burials analyzed in this study and the care in delineating burial patterns for women and men are admirable. On the other hand, the interpretations seem a little naive: Is privileged treatment in burial a reliable indicator of matrilineal or patrilineal descent? Is patriarchy a unitary phenomenon? In other areas of the world, archaeologists have developed various indices of gender equality and inequality, and they recognize that these different indices do not always coincide. For example, Crown and Fish (1996) found that high-status women in Hohokam society were advantaged in some ways (e.g., they had access to high-prestige spaces at the tops of mounds) but disadvantaged in other ways (e.g., their personal autonomy was limited by walls enclosing high-prestige domestic space). Rather than characterizing an entire society as matriarchal or patriarchal, archaeologists outside of China have begun to investigate the various dimensions of women's and men's well-being and to define what is gained and what is lost at each step of social change.

Jui-man Wu examines Late Neolithic burials at Dadianzi in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. She differentiates between grave goods placed within tomb niches (said to reflect social status) and grave goods placed in the coffin (said to reflect personal identity). Gender-associated differences occur in both sets of grave goods. Eleven graves are defined as elite
because they contained rich burial goods and are located in close proximity to each other. In terms of gender relations, Wu claims that “the social status of an elite female was closely related to that of the male buried in proximity to her” (88).

This conclusion privileges male status: The data might as well indicate that the status of an elite male was related to that of the female buried in proximity to him. Wu admits to deciding which females were associated with which males by pairing the tombs in such a way that large, richly endowed graves containing females were matched with even larger and more richly endowed graves containing males. But what if the large, richly endowed female graves were associated with less impressive male burials? And even if the associations that Wu proposes are correct, couldn’t well-endowed females be associated with well-endowed males because of the assets that the females brought to the association?

Ying Wang examines the rich tombs of four ladies at Anyang. Lady Jing was the highest ranking female, the only woman to have a tomb with ceremonial ramps. Her tomb also contained a heavy bronze vessel, many bone arrowheads and sacrificial victims. Lady Hao’s tomb had bronzes commemorating her important family, and oracle bones recorded her military achievements. The woman in Tomb 18 has small inscribed bronzes and elaborate hairpins. And finally, a woman in the king’s tomb, believed to be a sacrificial victim, was associated with the most elaborate headdress found in Anyang and other body ornaments. The woman in Tomb 18 has small inscribed bronzes and elaborate hairpins. And finally, a woman in the king’s tomb, believed to be a sacrificial victim, was associated with the most elaborate headdress found in Anyang and other body ornaments. Lady Jing and Lady Hao are both named in the ritual calendar and thus were regarded as ancestors and the objects of offerings from royal descendents. However, the tomb of Lady Hao contained 499 carved bone hairpins, 28 jade hairpins, 33 other jade ornaments, and many of the 50 ritual bronze objects in the tomb were wrapped with luxurious silks. Wang concludes, “Fashion must have played an important role in the gendered ritual performance of elite women” (112). Yet, was this the display of a “trophy wife” or was this a display of Lady Hao’s own wealth and power? Again, the former interpretation seems to be favored because historical accounts portray Chinese court ladies as the consorts of powerful kings. But the historical records might be biased: For ideological reasons, they might underplay the wealth and power exercised by women in royal courts and overemphasize their status as the passive ornaments of male agents. The archaeological data suggest that some women of the court were powerful individuals in their own right.

Yu Jiang examines 21 Western Zhou tombs at Baoji. Bone preservation in the tombs was poor, but the gender of the tombs’ occupants was identified by inscriptions on bronze vessels. In one case, the second of a double burial was identified by the bronze inscriptions as “er” (i.e., “the son”); however, the excavators decided that this burial belonged to a concubine because it was a part of a double burial, and it was accompanied by 24 hairpins but lacked horse trappings and bronze weapons and tools. Jiang provides no account of how a bronze inscribed to “er” found its way into a concubine’s tomb. This seems like a classic case of slighting data that do not fit preexisting ideas about who received double burial in ancient China and what the proper contents of a male grave ought to have been.

Tsui-mei Huang shows great inventiveness in using the contents of female and male tombs to gauge the autonomy of the Jin state. She analyzes changes in bronze and jade artifacts from female and male tombs in three Jin state cemeteries in early and late Zhou times. In early Zhou times, men were buried with bronze vessels and bronze weapons and women were buried with ceramic vessels and jade ornaments. By late Zhou times, both men and women were buried with bronze ritual vessels, and ornamental jades were placed in both male and female graves. Since these patterns do not conform to the jade regulations for men and women listed in the Zhou Li (Book of Rites), Huang concludes that Zhou regulations did not apply to the state of Jin and that the Jin state exercised a degree of autonomy.
Ying Yong analyzes 19 elite joint burials in Jin cemeteries to see if the status of elite women equaled that of their husbands. In the tenth century B.C.E., the status of women was relatively high, and Zhou ritual regulations were not fully in effect. Women were not regularly buried to the west of their husbands, they had more bronze than later women, and they were sometimes buried with small chariots. In the ninth century, men had fewer chariots and women had none, and both men and women were accompanied by fewer bronze vessels. In the early eighth century, the tombs of two women were larger than those of their husbands, but the number of bronze vessels continued to decline for both men and women. Although bronze was less plentiful, jade continuously increased from the tenth through eighth centuries, replacing bronze as the primary indicator of wealth and status. Women regularly had less jade than men, which is said to indicate their lower status and wealth. According to Yong, the declining number of bronze vessels suggests that "Zhou ritual regulation became more rigid." But it is also plausible, as Huang suggests, that Zhou ritual simply became less popular and that jade was adopted as the local measure of status and wealth.

Xiaolong Wu gauges female and male status based upon 79 tombs at a commoners' cemetery in the fifth to third centuries B.C.E. at Maoginggou. This cemetery yields two burial programs; Wu suggests that one program was used by agricultural people and the other by pastoralists. In the graves attributed to pastoralists, males displayed wealth through animal sacrifice, pottery, weapons, and body ornaments. Females displayed wealth only through animal sacrifice and body ornaments. Using the correlation of wealth with age to measure achieved vs. ascribed status, Wu argues that males' wealth, which increased as a function of age, was achieved through their own efforts and that females' wealth, which did not correlate with age, was ascribed by marriage. But with only one young male burial in the burial sample, it is difficult to support the claim that the relationship of wealth and age was different for males and females. I wonder whether the male:achievement female:ascription conclusion was accepted on such slender evidence because it conformed to the male:active female:passive stereotype that pervades Western culture and, I suspect, Chinese culture as well.

Wu observes that the possible presence of agriculturalists and pastoralists in a single cemetery challenges "the dichotomous worldview in traditional Chinese literature that sees the pastoral nomads in the north and the agricultural peasants in the south" (231–232). Thus, Wu favors using archaeological data as an independent source of information about the past and not fitting it to the accounts provided by historical documents.

Jian-jing Li examines 118 graves at the Pengyang cemetery in the northern frontier area to reconstruct gender relations and the division of labor during the sixth through third centuries B.C.E. Earlier multiple secondary burials imply the importance of kinship as an organizing principle, with women and men enjoying approximately equal status. Later double burials suggest the importance of the individual family and male domination of females. Knives and arrowheads are associated with male burials; needles and spindle whorls are associated with female burials, suggesting a gendered division of labor. However, these tools are occasionally associated with members of the other sex, so the gendered division of labor was not absolute. In other areas of the world, archaeologists have considered the possibility that the presence of tools usually associated with females in burials sexed as males—or vice versa—might mark the existence of third and other genders (Hollimon 1997; Weglian 2001). However, Li does not explore this possibility.

Sheri A. Lullo analyzes historical change in the myths and depictions of the Queen Mother of the West during the Han dynasty to show how this figure was domesticated to reconcile it with Confucian ideals of social structure. In early myths and depictions, the Queen Mother of the West
is an awesome, fearsome, and alien demonic figure, with a leopard's tail and tiger fangs, a companion of dragons, tigers, and snakes. Over time, the Queen Mother of the West becomes humanized, docile, and benevolent. She was paired with the King Father of the East, the male creator of order in the universe. This pair then served as a model for behavior desired by the Han rulers: a balanced, ordered world with female authority controlled and domesticated. This analysis will contribute to broader discussions of gender and the state (Gailey 1987; Joyce 2000; Silverblatt 1991).

Tze-huey Chiou-Peng examines the size and contents of male and female tombs in the pastoral Dian society of Yunnan (350–50 B.C.E.) to gauge the degree of gender inequality and to establish the basis of differential power. The tombs are labeled female or male according to their contents. Personal adornments and weaving tools identify female tombs; bronze weapons, implements, plaques, and horse gear identify male tombs. Twenty-five percent of the plaques depict male horsemen; according to Chiou-Peng, these plaques commemorate the use of horses in raids or cattle, sheep, goats, women, children, and tribute payments. Horse ownership and equestrian skill, Chiou-Peng claims, were important bases for male power. This interesting hypothesis rests upon limited archaeological data, but it is certainly amenable to further testing. The movement of livestock, women, and children though raiding could be confirmed through bone chemistry studies (Price et al. 1994a, 1994b; White et al. 2001, 2004), while the movement of tribute payments can be traced through other methods of chemical composition analysis of ceramics and metals (Ciliberto and Spoto 2000).

In the concluding paper of the volume, Penny Rode balances Chiou-Peng’s examination of male status in Dian culture by examining the bases of female power. She focuses upon carved depictions of women that appear on the lids of shell containers found in female tombs. These scenes portray a dozen or so female figures engaged in weaving, accompanied by a larger female figure who does not herself weave. Rode suggests that these scenes depict textile workshops, supervised by elite women who derived status from their roles as supervisors rather than as actual participants in the work process. Rode further suggests that the status of women declined in Han times as imported silk replaced locally produced cotton textiles as status items and women’s roles in supervising textile production diminished. Rode successfully suggests the existence of dimensions of the Dian economy resting on female labor not considered by Chiou-Peng.

While this volume is data rich, the analyses would be strengthened by greater familiarity with the gender and archaeology literature from other parts of the world. Such familiarity would sensitize the contributors to the pitfalls of androcentric interpretation and overdependence on historical and ethnographic sources, as well as the benefits of using multiple strands of evidence in reconstructing ancient gender systems. Surely this will happen as gender studies in Chinese archaeology mature. This volume is an important beginning; it lays a substantial foundation upon which to build.

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Reviewed by Laura Lee Junker, University of Illinois Chicago

This edited volume on the earthenware pottery studies by prominent scholars working throughout Southeast Asia is a very welcome addition to the Southeast Asian archaeological literature, with John Miksic bringing together for the first time work by a broad range of archaeologists working in the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Assam. I believe there would be little disagreement between archaeologists working in Southeast Asia about Miksic’s clearly stated rationale for publishing this 22-chapter compendium of work on Southeast Asian earthenware pottery. Comparing Southeast Asia to other major cultural regions of the world, where regional scholars have collaborated more on developing comparative chronologies and shared interpretive frameworks for their earthenware ceramics, Miksic rightly notes that there has been relatively limited communication between archaeologists working with earthenware remains in Southeast Asia. Miksic sees the limited dissemination of earthenware pottery studies through publication, conferences, and other forms of international collaboration as a formidable obstacle to making substantial gains in comparative studies between regions, not only in terms of pottery-based regional chronological frameworks, but also in terms of more contextual issues such as how pottery production is organized and technologically implemented; what ceramics can tell us about the migration of human groups, trade interactions, and the dissemination of widespread symbolic systems.
(whether through actual colonization, socially or politically charged exchange interactions, or emulative production); how pottery reflects aspects of social and political relations (e.g., gender relations, kin groups, social ranking, factional competition, political alliance); and the cultural meanings of pottery in various past societies (e.g., why are anthropomorphic burial jars found at Ayub Cave in the Philippines? Why are certain earthenware forms used in burial, feasting, and other ritual contexts?).

In his introduction, Miksic identifies what I also view as key factors that have impacted the publication and dissemination of an empirical database on Southeast Asian earthenware. First, he notes the difficulty of finding publishing venues, specifically academic or more popular presses that will publish well-illustrated (but often expensive) books that are really specific and emphasize basic data on sites or artifactual categories, since many presses see these kinds of books as having low marketability and potential for profit. Secondly, he emphasizes the fact that earthenware studies are often eclipsed by archaeological investigations of what are considered more “spectacular” finds in Southeast Asia, such as monumental architecture, foreign porcelains or beads, Buddhist or Hindu religious statuary, and inscriptions. This primacy given to architectural studies and emphasis on ceramics associated with “royal” or “elite” areas of sites rather than nonelite households is also underlined in a paper by Mundardjito, Pojoh, and Ramelan on Javanese ceramics (chapter 9) and a paper by Miriam Stark on Cambodian earthenware (chapter 15). I would add to this list of factors limiting comparative work on earthenware in Southeast Asia the fact that the university tenure process in many countries emphasizes the publication of cutting-edge theoretical work rather than more empirically oriented aspects of research, and therefore professors and beginning scholars are discouraged from publishing “basic data” and “site reports” in favor of these more academically splashy theoretical papers and books in the first decade of their professional career in academics. I can very well relate to Miksic’s refreshingly honest reflections on his regret that his dissertation and many early works on ceramics were not published and hence unavailable to many scholars, since I too, now “safely” tenured and in the “mid” part of my career, am feeling the same regret about unpublished empirical work and reprioritizing publication plans to include more detailed descriptive writings on excavation, archaeological survey, and artifact analysis. I should note that linguistic barriers to communication between scholars working in the arena of Southeast Asian archaeology are formidable, since we as a group may be one of the most linguistically diverse academic communities working in a “cultural region.” Furthermore, in his introduction, Miksic emphasizes the importance of expanding scholarly interactions with South Asian, East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, and Korean), and Oceania (particularly Lapita) specialists, given the several millennia of maritime trade interactions with these other regions, making linguistic and nationalistic barriers to shared scholarship even more formidable. Miksic also urges archaeologists to work closely with ethnographers and/or to carry out their own ethnoarchaeological research as a means of gaining a richer understanding of the varying cultural milieus and historical contexts of pottery production and use. Miksic’s frank discussion of these issues should stimulate all archaeologists working in the area to find ways to be inclusive and proactive in getting beyond language barriers to fruitful collaboration with scholars with similar research interests, to assist younger scholars in finding publication venues for both “site reports” and “theoretical” works (and to see the value of both types of publications), and to not relegate earthenware ceramics to ubiquitous “background noise” at archaeological sites, recognizing their significant value in developing interpretive frameworks for cultural practice in the past.

Miksic has assembled a truly international range of scholars in this volume, mostly from Southeast Asian institutions, but some from Europe, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. Geographically, the
papers cover many of the islands of the Philippines and Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam, with an interesting paper from the western edge of this regional distribution (Assam) and with significant comparisons to southern China earthenware in many papers. The time range is equally broad, ranging from Early Neolithic sites to historic period sites, with some studies including ethno- graphic work with contemporary potters in regions of archaeological interest. Some papers focus more narrowly on certain time periods, a particular site or small research region, a particular methodological approach to pottery analysis, and/or a highly specific research problem such as trade routes or production techniques, while other papers provide a synthesis of earthenware pottery finds and analyses for the whole time range of pottery making in certain areas of the region, with an emphasis on addressing larger-scale and more generalized issues of pottery chronology and distribution. In addition to Miksic’s introductory chapter, two following chapters by Wilhelm Solheim present a more regionwide synthesis of issues related to earthenware analysis; the remainder of the book is largely organized according to modern nationalistic boundaries. Miksic recognizes that this may not be the most ideal structure for encouraging noninsularity among archaeologists of different nations and for emphasizing shared research issues rather than regional foci, but the many significant cross-cutting research themes and approaches do tend to come through despite this choice of ordering the chapters (and the fact that many papers are rich in shared themes and insights with a broad range of other papers might have made any organization by topic very difficult). In this review, however, after commenting on Solheim’s introductory chapters, I will attempt to briefly review the numerous and diverse additional papers by grouping them by shared themes and approaches rather than in chapter order.

Recognizing that Wilhelm Solheim is in many ways the most important progenitor of half a century of earthenware pottery research in Southeast Asia, Miksic follows his introduction with two chapters written by Solheim and synthesizing his views on the history of earthenware pottery and its study in the region. In a chapter entitled “Southeast Asian Earthenware Pottery and Its Spread,” Solheim presents a broad regional synthesis of major discoveries and studies of earthenware pottery from the Neolithic period through what is loosely known as the Metal Age in Southeast Asia, with a lot of good illustrations of decorated wares from various areas of the region that are often grouped to demonstrate his ideas about cultural connections and human migrations in different periods (particularly the connection between the Lapita phenomena, Sa-Huynh-Kalanay pottery, and the earlier Neolithic expansion of Malayo-Polynesian speakers in Southeast Asia). He also provides a very useful summary of some of his evolving ideas about the meaning of similarities and differences in earthenware in terms of regional chronologies and population movements, particularly clarifying his notion of pottery “traditions” and distancing himself from earlier interpretations that saw him as advocating a single wave of cultural migration through the region (his model of a Nusantao Maritime Network now emphasizes almost continuous movement by many related maritime peoples). In addition, Solheim recognizes the problems of relying too heavily on largely nonsecurely dated decorated sherds in hypothesizing cultural connections, since archaeologists such as Stephen Chia working in Sabah (chapter 13 in the volume) have started to get 14C dates showing the same decorative elements at widely differing time periods. Perhaps the most significant and controversial aspect of Solheim’s discussion in chapter 1 is his hypothesis, based on earthenware similarities, that Southeast Asian maritime peoples may have been responsible for the influx of new pottery designs associated with the Valdivia ceramic complex of 3000–1000 B.C. of coastal Ecuador, an idea that is certain to renew long-term debate over possible early Asia-America contacts.

Solheim’s second chapter (chapter 2) is
an insightful and personalized history of how and why he became interested in earthenware pottery research. In this chapter, Solheim emphasizes his view that ceramic studies aimed at cultural historical reconstruction (i.e., local chronologies and then regional syntheses interpreting cultural "connections") should be given primacy in Southeast Asian archaeology, arguing that an understanding of cultural heritage (specifically, when and from where one's ancestors came) is of prime concern to people of the region who are the ultimate "consumers" of archaeology in museums and public institutions. I don't completely agree with this view, as well as the often-stated idea among some scholars that more recent trends in archaeological theory (e.g., various forms of "processual" or "postprocessual" archaeology) implicitly reject or devalue the use of ceramics for cultural chronologies (or what we might call "culture history"). I believe that archaeologists working in Southeast Asia can simultaneously use ceramics to construct solid regional sequences and a comparative database for making chronological correlations between sites and between regions, while at the same time using other techniques and approaches to ceramic analysis to get at contextual questions that would also be of equal interest to both Southeast Asians in general and other archaeologists. Both local peoples and scholars interested in cultural heritage would be very interested to know that certain "fancy" pedestaled earthenware might have been used for ritual pig feasts several millennia ago in Thailand or that male warriors were habitually buried with certain decorated wares as possible symbols (along with other objects) of warrior prestige 600 years ago in the Philippines, imbuing the observed patterns of ceramics with cultural meaning and practice within a historical context. The papers in this issue well illustrate that Southeast Asian archaeologists have begun to successfully attack a multiplicity of research questions with the abundant earthenware ceramics found at most Neolithic and later sites by documenting ceramic variation in a variety of ways (e.g., microstylistic analysis, various materials analysis techniques such as petrographic analysis and scanning electron microscope, statistical studies of regional spatial distributions), guided by diverse theoretical paradigms (including what are often broadly labeled as culture history, cultural evolutionary, or postprocessual approaches).

A number of the chapters in the volume present regional syntheses of both published and unpublished work on earthenware of a specific period or periods, adding substantially to the reference base of Southeast Asian ceramic specialists by making previously inaccessible work available to a broad range of scholars. Most notable are Wilfredo Ronquillo's chapter on early prehistoric pottery from the Philippines (chapter 3), Santoso Soegondho's chapter reviewing the chronologies and cultural contexts of earthenware in 6000-1500 B.C. Indonesia (chapter 6), Kyle Latinis and Ken Stark's chapter synthesizing earthenware researches on Maluku (chapter 8), E. E. McKinnon's detailed presentation of the historic period earthenware from Sumatra (chapter 11), Miriam Stark's summary of earthenware sequences in Cambodia that have long been overshadowed by the more well-known monumental architecture of the Angkor state (chapter 15), Brian Vincent's survey of ceramic sequences in northern and central Thailand (chapter 16), Amara Srisuchat's presentation of earthenware discoveries at sites in southern Thailand spanning the prehistoric and historic periods (chapter 17), Ruth Prior and Ian Glover's review of recent work on earthenware in transitional prehistoric-historic periods in Vietnam (chapter 18), and Myo Thant Tyn and U Thaw Kaung's summary of recent research on earthenware at Buddhist sites and other early historic contexts in Myanmar (chapter 19). While many of these chapters also make very significant contributions to our understanding of the changing social and cultural contexts of pottery manufacture and use in their regions (see below), they certainly meet Solheim's call for the type of comparative analysis of form and style necessary to begin to construct regional chronologies and a
framework for regional "culture history." Miksic, the authors, and Singapore University Press are also to be commended in their inclusion of numerous excellent drawings and photographs of earthenware in the various chapters, allowing this book to function as a true "reference" work in the laboratories of Southeast Asian archaeologists working with earthenware ceramics. I should also note that most of the maps of different regions of Southeast Asia and relevant archaeological sites in the volume chapters were produced in a uniform format, with the same fonts, map symbols, and conventions, which facilitates comparisons of site locations within the region.

A good number of the chapters—particularly those focused on specific research problems in more narrow time periods and geographic areas—address the long-term and always significant issue of maritime trade and forms of social interaction in Southeast Asia, as reflected in earthenware ceramics. While I cannot mention all of the interesting work on theoretical issues by scholars included in this volume, I provide a few examples aimed at "whetting the reader's appetite" for looking at all of the book's chapters. Elisabeth Bacus (chapter 4) presents an interesting statistical analysis of decorative elements on earthenware from geographically widespread sites in the Philippines to demonstrate how ethnohistorically referenced elite alliance networks and shared emblems of status in the historic period can be documented in the archaeological record. Two chapters, one by Hilda Soemantri analyzing the clay figurines at Majapahit (chapter 10) and another by Eusebio Dizon presenting anthropomorphic burial jars from the Ayub Cave site in the southern Philippines (chapter 5), leaving the more popular research realm of interaction and exchange, illustrate how detailed analysis of excavation contexts and pottery forms can provide important insights about how societies symbolically encoded ideas about the social and political order in ceramics. Another chapter comparing tripod pottery from Thailand and Malaysia Neolithic and later sites, authored by Leong Sau (chapter 12), considers the social significance of ritual feasting in prehistoric societies of the region (also a focus of Latinis and Stark's interpretation of Maluku pottery stoves in chapter 8). However, both Santos Soegondho (chapter 6) and Mundardjito and colleagues (chapter 9) point out that we may be seeing only limited contexts for social and political action in early Southeast Asian societies, since most archaeological work with ceramics is still from burial sites and other "ceremonial" contexts or from "elite"-associated architecture. They echo the concerns of Miksic, Stark, and others that archaeologists need to turn their attention more to gaining an understanding of earthenware production and use in a household context.

Several of the chapters, in addressing theoretical questions such as long-term patterns of population interaction, production, and exchange in the region, show the effectiveness of innovative methodologies that have not been widely used in Southeast Asia but that can add new forms of empirical data to debate on these issues. For example, a chapter by David Bulbeck and Genevieve Clune (chapter 7) brilliantly demonstrates how microseriation of chronologically diagnostic porcelain and stoneware at Macassar historic period sites, cross-dated in stratigraphically secure contexts with earthenware, can provide astonishingly fine chronologies of decorated earthenware, allowing them to assign dates to surface materials in the region and to wider maritime trade patterns extending into other parts of the Indonesian and Philippine archipelagoes. Several authors (most notably Miksic, Solheim, Latinis and Stark, and Vincent) emphasize the importance of implementing various materials analysis procedures to determine earthenware chemical compositions and sourcing if Southeast Asian archaeologists are to move beyond speculative scenarios of migration and exchange and to sort out whether the distribution of certain earthenware types represent the actual migration of people, interregional or intraregional trade, or the cultural borrowing of design elements by peoples in contact (as aptly stated in
McKinnon’s chapter on Sumatra, we need also be aware that some of our earthenware sherds may come from as far afield as Persia and India!). In their chapter, Bulbeck and Clune point out that maritime specialist groups like the Bajau are historically significant in disseminating pottery and ideas about pottery forms throughout the region, and that we need material studies to identify some of these previously poorly considered forms of cultural transmission. Santoso Soegondho’s presentation of chemical analyses of various Indonesian earthenware (chapter 6), Nik Hassan Rahman and Asyaari bin Muhamad’s x-ray diffraction studies of protohistoric earthenware from Kuala Selinsing in Malaysia (chapter 14), Stephen Chia’s (chapter 13) use of multiple materials characterization techniques on Sabah ceramics, and Brian Vincent’s (chapter 16) synthesis of various forms of materials analysis on prehistoric Thai ceramics represent very significant steps in the direction of resolving these issues of earthenware sourcing and the possible social mechanisms underlying their geographic distribution. Complementing this work tracing earthenware origins is exciting new research at earthenware production sites, as exemplified by Stephen Chia’s matching of chemically analyzed clays at a probable production locale with his excavated pottery at Sabah sites and Amara Srisuchat’s (chapter 17) excavation of a probable kiln site in southern Thailand, where a finely made “ceremonial” ware widely circulated in Thailand, Java, Sumatra, and Singapore may have originated. Finally, I should note that the volume includes three very excellent ethnographic chapters on contemporary pottery production in Myanmar (Charlotte Reith, chapter 21), the larger region of mainland Southeast Asia (Leedom Lefferts and Louise Cort, chapter 20), and Assam (Dilip Medhi, chapter 22) that heed Miksic’s and Solheim’s call for more collaboration between archaeologists and ethnographers interested in the social and historical contexts of earthenware production in the region.

In summary, this is a superb book that is likely to become a valued reference work for any archaeologist working with earthenware ceramics in Southeast Asia, as well as those who desire a well-crafted synthesis of current theoretical interpretations and methodological developments in Southeast Asian archaeology by prominent scholars carrying out research in all the major geographic areas of Southeast Asia. As an endnote, I wanted to point particularly to Eusebio Dizon’s chapter discussing the hazards of preserving the anthropomorphic burial jars at Ayub Cave in the Philippines to underscore the point that sites with earthenware as the primary archaeological remains can be in as much danger of destruction as those with substantial monumental architecture and traditionally more “commercially valuable” porcelain. Therefore, we need to continue a strong pace of professionally excavating, preserving, analyzing, and publishing these significant archaeological materials.

NOTE

Laura Lee Junker was scheduled to review this book prior to becoming a coeditor for *Asian Perspectives*, and she reviewed this book as an academic colleague rather than in her role as editor.