

Deconstructing the Lapita Cultural Complex in the Bismarck Archipelago

Jim Specht · Tim Denham · James Goff ·
John Edward Terrell

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Abstract Within the Pacific Islands, the archaeological phenomenon called the Lapita Cultural Complex is widely regarded as first appearing in the Bismarck Archipelago of Papua New Guinea and then spreading southward. This complex supposedly represents the sudden arrival of migrants from Island Southeast Asia with new technologies, foreign languages, and a different worldview. We question these interpretations and the assumptions behind them and suggest instead that current evidence supports the introduction of new cultural traits over several centuries, rather than the sudden intrusion of foreign migrants.

Keywords Island Southeast Asia · New Guinea · Bismarck Archipelago · Lapita Cultural Complex · Migration · Interaction · Geographic mobility

J. Specht (✉)
Australian Museum, 6 College Street, Sydney, NSW 2010, Australia
e-mail: jspecht@bigpond.com

J. Specht
School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry, University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia

T. Denham
School of Archaeology and Anthropology, College of Arts and Social Sciences, The Australian National University, Canberra, ACT 0200, Australia

J. Goff
School of Biological, Earth, and Environmental Sciences, University of New South Wales, Kensington, NSW 2052, Australia

J. E. Terrell
The Field Museum, 1400 South Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60605, USA