

courses, that would embrace all professionals in archaeology in Australia. Some action on these fronts is already taking place as a result of the conference.

On the last day there were discussions of the way forward for both gender studies and feminism in the intellectual discipline and in countering sexism in the practice of the discipline. I have been told that the supportive atmosphere of the conference made some feel comfortable enough to recount their personal histories of discrimination. That these occur at all is a blight on our profession. It is to be hoped that this conference will be the start not only of a more exciting

intellectual field but also of a more tolerant and equitable discipline.

### References

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## REFLECTIONS ON THE TOWNSVILLE AAA CONFERENCE FROM THE WOMEN IN ARCHAEOLOGY CONFERENCE

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This is not an academic paper but an attempt to clarify erroneous assumptions and misunderstandings. Before I begin, there are a few points I wish to make. Firstly, I would like to thank Laurajane Smith and Hilary du Cros for having the vision to see the importance of holding the conference for women in archaeology. I know that future support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women involved in archaeology will come from those who were present. Secondly, I make mention of the new title now given to us by the Australian Government — that is, ATSI or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We prefer to call ourselves by the name which is used in our own area — for example, Goori is the name used on the north coast of New South Wales, Murri in Queensland, and so on. I will use the ATSI acronym here. Thirdly, I would like to bring to your attention a future conference which will be held at Charles Sturt University in July this year called 'Aboriginal Involvement in National Parks and Protected Areas'. For those of you who work with ATSI people and organisations I think this would be an excellent time for discussion, communication and participation on issues of relevance to you. Your response in the way of questions and constructive criticisms will be appreciated.

Earlier papers refer to gender as being only one interrelated dynamic of archaeology. To me, gender is related to oppression and oppression relates to the indigenous people of Australia. It is about the assumptions, politics and values belonging to one culture which are imposed on another. An example of this occurred at the AAA Conference in Townsville in December 1990. My comments are not intended to make you feel guilty but to clarify a situation which has caused a lot of confusion and some discussion.

The AAA coincided with the northern Queensland ATSI Conference held at the same venue but not in the same building. ATSI participants came from Western Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory to present papers or simply to hear of developments and work involving their field.

### DAY 1

It was brought to my attention that the ATSI participants at the AAA were expected to be at the ATSI 'local' conference situated on the bank of Burdekin Dam. This was a surprise. Why should we be at a meeting where local community issues were being discussed? Thus, in my opinion, began communication problems which lasted until the final day of the conference. We were forced into a situation which caused stress and created antagonism between the group on the hill (group one) and the group on the banks of the Burdekin (group two). We were intruding in local community business — community business which did not concern us and to which we were not officially invited. Nevertheless, we reluctantly imposed ourselves on the local conference. We were welcomed by the local ATSI group and invited to participate in their conference. Meanwhile, up on the hill, some archaeologists were concerned that no ATSI people were present at the presentation of their AAA papers.

My paper was on 'Communication and Consultation'. It appears that this should have been given on day one — rather than on the afternoon of the day before everyone left. My co-presenter, David Johnston, intended to give a report to the AAA Conference on his trip to Venezuela where he attended the World Archaeological Congress (WAC). David wished to

focus on the First Code of Ethics and its principles which outlined member's obligations to indigenous peoples. However, because of our presence at the 'tent' conference, and because of the continual reference to cultural remains and ethics, David decided to present his report there. This meant that 'ethics' was discussed in great detail on the Tuesday and Wednesday before those attending the AAA Conference on the hill got to hear about it. We assured the local conference group that AAA already had a code of ethics but the ATSI people were skeptical. After sitting for hours on uncomfortable benches under a canvas roof where temperatures reached 35°–40° C, I for one was uncomfortable and not looking forward to spending the next day in the same conditions.

## DAY 2

Some workshops were conducted. My workshop group was the one which stimulated a lot of discussion and debate. It was chaired by Mr. O'Neill. Mr. Mullet contributed greatly. By the end of the day the heat had caused tempers to fray. Naturally discussion time was spent on 'what is going on up on the hill?'. The general comment was 'those fellows up there are discussing us and our area and we should be up there listening'. During the evening meal myself, Marlene Bruce, Sandra Mullet and others approached various individuals and asked what was going on. We were informed by a number of people that they did not know. They wanted to know. The local ATSI group were under the impression that they as 'hosts', were isolated and had no interaction with their 'guests'. Meanwhile some archaeologists were concerned, even angered, about the stories they were hearing. Some thought that ATSI people 'didn't give a damn about what was happening in their community and country' because we were absent from the proceedings.

## DAY 3

This could have been a day of conflict. Group two decided to sit in on the AAA proceedings. It appeared to me that group one felt 'threatened' by the presence of so many ATSI people. The ATSI people felt intimidated by the presence of the archaeologists but wanted to make their presence felt. I and my fellow ATSI/AAA participants did our best to defuse the situation by listening and responding to different points of view. I explained to the best of my ability, to group two, what AAA was and informed them how it (the Annual General Meeting) held a conference every year. At this meeting AAA agreed that there would be two ATSI members on the Executive Committee. The two people appointed were Albert Mullett from Victoria and Cilla Pryor from northern Queensland. Whilst I certainly approve of ATSI community involvement in AAA management I would like it noted that there now exists ATSI academics in archaeology and their involvement is paramount. Having studied archaeology for years,

these ATSI scholars should not be overlooked. They now have an important contribution to make for their people.

It was decided at the AGM that the venue for the following day's deliberations would take place on the banks of the dam with the ATSI group.

## DAY 4

Group two from the AAA joined the local conference group on the dam's edge. There I presented my paper which can be summed up thus: 'without communication it has been shown that inferences and wrongful assumptions can be made – this only serves to broaden the existing gap between academics and indigenous people'. It was also the venue to express the view that communication is a two way process. Is what I heard what you said or have I misinterpreted what you said and meant? There are positive contributions and benefits to be shared by us with all archaeologists for our children and our children's children.

David Johnston presented his paper to both groups. It created a lot of discussion. Aggressive contributions added further to levels of stress and anger. Unfortunately those who left on the Thursday did not get to attend the social gathering that night where some reconciliation occurred and several misunderstandings were resolved.

## DAY 5

This day saw papers given at the tent venue occupied by the local ATSI people. My sympathy lay with the Aboriginal Sites Officer from Western Australia. She had overheads to illustrate her talk but no overhead projector on which to show them.

Marlene Bruce had brought an elder from the Kimberley to the conference with her. He wanted to discuss with AAA members his concerns regarding mining in his area. Naturally she was disappointed at the venue and at being the second last presenter. I know she would have liked feedback not only for herself but for the elder from her area. The haste with which we all wished to depart from the AAA conference will be well remembered.

## CONCLUSION

Therefore, as you by now may have gathered, it was a traumatic experience for the ATSI participants of the AAA conference. This could have been easily avoided if communication links had been established at the beginning of the conference. Hopefully, by the time of the next AAA conference in December of this year, things will be smoother, especially if the organisers allow us to contribute. AAA conference organisers must consider allowing indigenous participants giving papers, the time to discuss and get feedback on their

topics. This means having our sessions moved to Day 1 or Day 2. Placing us towards the end of the conference indicates that you are not interested in our contribution. Whilst our presentation might not be as scientifically oriented as yours we do have a contribution to make and wish to make it.

I hope my story has shed another light on events of the 1990 AAA conference. It is important to me to thank the ATSI people of northern Queensland for their hospitality. It is ATSI protocol of which we became a part. When we presented ourselves at the local conference we became recipients of ATSI protocol. This protocol is observed when we are in other people's country and is returned when ATSI people visit us. With

effective communication, your people and my people can work towards changing harmful attitudes. We are interested in your contribution to Australia's indigenous past, we ourselves have an 'inner awareness' about the great antiquity of Aboriginal people and can relate to the scientific concerns to preserve cultural remains. Let us make an effort to understand each others cultural values and work through issues together.

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## CONJOINS AND CHALLENGES: A REJOINDER TO PACKARD

**Bernard M.J. Huchet**

In a recent article Packard (1989) documented his reconstruction of a 47 piece conjoin. In bringing his report to an end, Packard posited two questions: 'is this a record? and does anybody care?'. Regarding the first query, the answer is NO. If one takes the world as a basis for comparison, it becomes obvious that larger conjoins have been refitted. For instance, Van Noten (1982: Plate 14) reported a 102 piece conjoin recovered from Gombe, Central Africa. Within Australia, conjoins exceeding 47 pieces have also been refitted. For example, a knapped boulder collected by Stephen Sutton near Mount Isa and conjoined by myself (Sutton and Huchet 1988) comprises, as far as I can remember, a minimum of 85 pieces and very possibly 100 pieces or more. The exact number is beyond recall since counting the number of pieces did not matter to me.

This last statement represents a personal answer to Packard's second query. That the number of pieces means little stems from my views about the rationale for conjoining in archaeology; similar views are shared by others (eg Fullagar 1990). I believe that a far more challenging aspect of conjoining is the amount of information one may be able to squeeze out of archaeological puzzles, whether the material be stone, bone, engraved art panels or pottery. Accordingly, it may be suggested that an appropriate means to measure the success of a conjoin is to calculate the ratio:

**Amount of Information Extracted ÷ Number of Pieces Refitted**

The higher the ratio, the more successful the conjoin can be considered. The amount of information may be

established on the basis of the number in **types** of information that a given conjoin yields. I now briefly summarise the types of information one may derive from conjoins, although this list is by no means exhaustive.

1. The vertical distribution of conjoined pieces can indicate the extent to which post-depositional processes have occurred at sites, as reflected in the mixing of archaeological material from different occupation layers and their downward or upward movement (Cahen 1978:55; Villa 1982; Flood and Horsfall 1986:19; Richardson 1988; Huchet 1989:113-4, 166);
2. When no mixing has occurred between occupation layers, conjoins may be useful in establishing the thickness of individual layers (eg Conkey 1980:626-7);
3. Conjoins may present opportunities for summarising the reduction sequence followed in the knapping of a lump of stone. As such, information can be gauged regarding the manufacturing process of various types of tools including axes (Sutton and Huchet 1988), adzes (Leach 1984; Jones 1986:198); burin spalls (Alexander 1963:Fig.5), Juin knives (Knight 1990); unretouched tools (Fullagar 1990) and blades (Leach 1984) among other types (see also Fasham and Ross 1978:57; Luebbers 1978:Ch.6; Cahen et al. 1979; Huchet 1989:70; Packard 1989);
4. The size of refitted elements represented in conjoins may indicate whether or not artefacts are