



### ***Australia and the Origins of Agriculture***

*"the history of cultivated plants is allied to the most important problems of the general history of organized beings"*

Alphonse de Candolle, 1884:viii

“This work challenges the stereotype that Indigenous Australians prior to the British colonisation of Australia were all nomadic hunter-gatherers. It also questions current mainstream explanations for the development of agriculture. Because of this it is likely to invite controversy.” (Preface)

***Australia and the Origins of Agriculture*** argues that in three areas of Australia, Indigenous populations were engaged in food production when they came into contact with British colonisers. In two cases that food production was based on agriculture, in the third it was based on aquaculture. Furthermore, it is argued that the people in these areas were living in permanent and sometimes quite large habitations, accommodating 30-40 individuals in some instances, and villages, ranging in size from 300 to 1000 people. The evidence, based on systematic analysis and a more realistic framework for assessing sedentism indicates these populations were high sedentary.

***Australia and the Origins of Agriculture***, by comparing the Australian examples with the development of neolithic cultures elsewhere, also argues that an ‘Australian Early Neolithic’ existed at the commencement of the Contact Period.

Finally, ***Australia and the Origins of Agriculture*** critiques current theories on the origins of agriculture, suggesting the failure of these theories to explain the location and timing of pristine food production in prehistory arises because inappropriate paradigms are being relied upon. Employing instead an economic development perspective, ***Australia and the Origins of Agriculture*** puts forward a new theory based on endogenous rates of innovation, and the communication of ideas and innovations through scale-free networks. Based on these factors a positive feedback mechanism is established, the strength of which is based on comparative advantage. This framework is then able to explain the location and timing of all examples of pristine food in prehistory, including Australia.

***Australia and the Origins of Agriculture*** can be obtained through:

Hadrian Books: <http://www.hadrianbooks.co.uk/>

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Archaeopress: <http://www.archaeopress.com/>