

**Archaeological Studies of the Middle and Late Holocene,
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**Pre-Lapita Horizons in the Admiralty Islands:
Flaked Stone Technology from GAC and GFJ**

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ABSTRACT. Pioneering archaeological research in the Admiralty Islands by Kennedy (1979, 1981, 1982, 1983, 2002) and others (Ambrose, 1976, 1988, 1991; Ambrose *et al.*, 1981; Ambrose & Duerden, 1982; Fredericksen *et al.*, 1993; Fredericksen, 1994) revealed early on the central position and importance of these northernmost islands of the Bismarck Archipelago. Distinguished by abundant obsidian sources that were utilized and distributed by the local inhabitants for at least 12,000 years, and chert resources that were exploited for well over 20,000 years, these islands are part of the long-standing tradition of early exploration and colonization now recognized for greater Melanesia. This paper presents new technological data for the flaked stone assemblage from the sites of Peli Louson (GFJ) and Father's Water (GAC), which have cultural contexts dated to the mid and late Holocene. The technological data provide evidence about the occupation and management of the region and its resources and join an expanding dataset describing pre-Lapita settlement in island Melanesia.

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The Admiralty Islands were first settled before 21,000 BP (Spriggs, 2001: 367; cf. Fredericksen *et al.*, 1993). Early occupation of these westernmost islands of the Bismarck Archipelago is consistent with the discovery and settlement of both New Ireland and New Britain in the late Pleistocene

(Gosden & Robertson, 1991; Leavesley & Chappell, 2004; Pavlides & Gosden, 1994; Pavlides, 2004; Torrence *et al.*, 2004). However, the minimum straight-line distance to reach Manus from New Guinea was more than 200 km over open ocean, far greater than the distances to New Ireland or