

Jim Specht: A Bibliography

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Jim Specht follows a long and illustrious line of heads of Anthropology who put pen to paper since Anthropology, or Ethnography as it was initially known, first existed at the Australian Museum in 1872.

The first to publish on anthropological matters at the Museum was Robert Etheridge Jnr. In 1887 he was an Assistant in Palaeontology, eight years later a Curator, and in 1917, Director of the Museum. However, he always had an abiding and broad interest in ethnography, writing on such topics as “An Aboriginal knife”, *Records of Australian Museum*, 1902, 4: 207–208 and “A remarkable rock shelter in the Milton district, N.S.W.”, *Records of Australian Museum*, 1904, 5: 80–85. In 1900 W.W. Thorpe, labourer, watchman and gallery attendant, became assistant to Etheridge, and in 1906 a separate department of Ethnology was created with Thorpe, then 26 years old, as head. He received all his training from Etheridge (himself not an anthropologist or archaeologist) and stayed until 1932, eight years before Jim was born.

Thorpe wrote on everything from “The Palolo Worm”, *Australian Museum Magazine*, 1923, 1(7): 220, “Bronze and ivory figures from Burmah”, *Australian Museum Magazine*, 1924, 2(3): 99, to “Stencilled handmarks”, *Australian Museum Magazine*, 1925, 2(7): 253–254.

With the appointment of Miss Elsie Bramell (later to become Mrs McCarthy) in 1933 and Fred McCarthy in 1935, the first anthropologically-trained staff had arrived, but the broad sweep of Anthropology and Archaeology still had to be catered for. McCarthy wrote prolifically on

everything from “The geographical distribution theory and Australian material culture”, *Mankind*, 1936, 2(1): 12–16, to “Sepik face masks” *Australian Museum Magazine*, 1949, 10(1): 1–8, to “Bali: emerald gem of the Indies”, *Australian Museum Magazine*, 1954, 11(6): 189–193.

Following McCarthy’s departure in 1963 to become founding Principal of the then Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies in Canberra, Doug Miles came and went after a short stay (1963–1964). David Moore became Curator of Anthropology in 1965 and in 1967 Dr Peter White joined the department as Assistant Curator. Then,

Following the resignation of White in 1970 to take up a lectureship in the University of Sydney, an Englishman, Dr James Specht, was appointed Assistant Curator of Anthropology. (*Rare and Curious Specimens*, ed. R. Strahan, Australian Museum, Sydney, 1979: 94).

Thus began the life and times of Jim Specht at the Australian Museum, 64 years after the Department of Ethnology was first established. His bibliography reflects the level of specialization now expected of the Head of Anthropology—no ranging from “The toilet vehicles of Ancient Egypt” (W.W. Thorpe, *Australian Museum Magazine*, 1922, 1(4): 119–120) to “A mirror from the Temple of a Thousand Ages, Peiping, China” (F.D. McCarthy, *Australian Museum Magazine*, 1934, 5(8): 255–256).

Jim Specht’s bibliography includes all published works as well as several unpublished reports, some of which are referred to in the following papers.