Vientiane

*Vientiane* is the first work of its kind to explore the development and cultural significance of this neglected South-East Asian city, both past and present. The book interprets Vientiane’s landscape – physical as well as imagined – as a reflection of key aspects of Lao geo-political history, the nature of Lao urbanism, and its critical relation to constructions of Lao identity in the contemporary period. The authors argue that the patterns of change seen through Vientiane’s past embody the key political and economic processes and transformations impacting on the people of Laos.

This work is distinctive in foregrounding the Lao urban past, which has rarely been an object of attention by scholars: Laos, in fact, is most commonly portrayed as a rural backwater with no significant urban present or past, and marginal to the dynamic trends affecting most of the South-East Asian mainland. In contrast to these persistent and static portrayals of Laos as a tiny landlocked backwater, the authors document and evaluate the significance of the Lao urban landscape. They suggest that Vientiane’s apparent ‘marginality’ is in fact a historically produced phenomenon resulting from geo-politics dating from the pre-colonial period and extending into the post-colonial period.

By drawing on a wide range of research material and extensive fieldwork, *Vientiane* will be of huge interest to scholars of South-East Asia history, Asian culture and society, and urban studies and heritage.

**Marc Askew** is Associate Professor in the School of Social Sciences, Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia.

**William Logan** is Alfred Deakin Professor and holds the UNESCO Chair of Heritage and Urbanism in the School of History, Heritage and Society, Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia.

**Colin Long** is a lecturer in cultural heritage at the Cultural Heritage Centre for Asia and the Pacific at Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia.