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## ARCHAEOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND



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## ABSTRACTS FROM THESES & DISSERTATIONS, DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY, THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND 1997-1999

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Abstracts from one thesis and seven dissertations in archaeology completed during the period late 1997 to early 1999 are given below. Copies are held in the Department of Anthropology, University of Auckland, where they may be consulted in the Piddington Room. Xerox or microfiche copies may be made available through the General Library, Auckland University, at cost, plus GST and postage. These are subject to the usual restrictions applying to theses and dissertations, namely the understanding that their use is for private research and not publication.

### **M.A. THESIS**

Glyn W. HURLEY. M.A. thesis. 1997. **Symbols from the Cemetery: The Archaeology of a Faith in Decline.** Anthropology Department, University of Auckland. 1 page abstract, (i) 115 pp., 12 charts, 7 plates.

One hundred and fifty years of colonial history is recorded in the memorials to the dead of New Zealand's settlements, towns and cities. Throughout the country, cemeteries are a testament to history, a social document to be interpreted as a narrative of political, economic, social and religious cultural practices.

The cemetery is more than a repository for earthly remains: it is an emotional nexus between this world and the next; a place attuned to the spirits of the dead, echoing the cathartic rituals of pain and comfort for the bereaved. This place of sorrow, remembrance and communion is created by the living to satisfy their own needs for expression toward the dead, in the awareness of their own

mortality. In the intensity of the solemn ritual of death, the associated material culture exhibits cultural realities not otherwise visible to the observer.

Of the media recording human behaviour, the gravestone may be most revealing when interpreted in context. In this thesis the manner of religious change over the past century is documented from the frequencies of religious references on grave markers and implications from the subsequent changes in social ideology are explored.

In the historical context of a society in transition, the implications of a changing ideology are dramatic, as much for the present as for the future. Patterns of interment, the decline in family plots and the increase in single burials may be symptomatic of social trends with contemporary impact such as change in family structures and increasing individualisation within society.

## DISSERTATIONS

Deanne M. BURT. M.A. Dissertation. 1999. **Prehistoric Marquesan Fishing in Regional Context.** Anthropology Department, University of Auckland. 1 page abstract, (v) 75 pp., 3 figures, 7 tables.

Cultural adaptation is one hypothesis proposed for the distinct differences in fishhook technology through time in the Marquesas Islands. The main argument is that the differing marine environments of the archipelago comprised a set of selective pressures to which one response was the variety in hook form. The aim is to determine whether those technological changes have a faunal signature in the fishbone assemblages from the Marquesas Islands. These assemblages are compared with those from other island groups of East Polynesia in order to define a profile of fishing in the region and to evaluate the pattern of fish remains in sites with well-developed reef formations, an attribute more common in the greater Eastern Polynesian region than the Marquesas Islands. Two assemblages from the Marquesas Islands are brought into the discussion to contribute to the growing body of evidence for Marquesan fishing in prehistory. Marquesan sites which feature some fringing reef development are similar to some East Polynesian fishbone collections in terms of taxonomic composition and relative abundances and yet are distinct from other Marquesan assemblages. Fish remains provide some information as to changing technology over time but other factors apart from environmental constraints should be considered.

Leon J, COLMAN. M.A. Dissertation.1998. *Rattus exulans* as a Food Source: The Case of Aitutaki. Anthropology Department, University of Auckland. 1 page abstract, (iv) 95 pp., 3 figures, 19 tables, 2 appendices.

This dissertation focusses upon the interpretation of an assemblage of *Rattus exulans* bones from site MR-1, Aitutaki, one of the Southern Cook Islands group. The site provided a *Rattus exulans* assemblage of 969 specimens from the vicinity of two small rock shelters. The assemblage was taphonomically analysed in order to determine whether the bones were deposited as a by-product of cultural use, or whether they were the result of *in situ* natural death.

A theme of exploitation of *Rattus exulans* on islands throughout the Pacific is established at the outset, as suggested from ethnographic sources and the distribution of this species throughout the Pacific. Background details are then provided for Aitutaki, and the excavation procedures of site MR-1 are reviewed to determine stratigraphy and a chronological sequence. A background to the taphonomy is provided afterward, and two models of deposition and taphonomic effects which differentiate them are presented. The coding protocols adopted for taphonomically analysing the assemblage are followed by the analysis of the resulting information. Finally, the dissertation is tied back into archaeology as a whole.

The two models of cultural and non-cultural deposition provide guidelines for further research into similar assemblages throughout the Pacific. The paucity of information on how to recognise a culturally deposited assemblage of *Rattus exulans* bones means that these models can be used as a reference point for further research into this under-represented area of archaeology. The taphonomic results analysis suggests how different patterns of taphonomic effects can be interpreted.

The conclusions suggest that this assemblage was principally the result of *in situ* natural death, but that some cultural utilisation of *Rattus exulans* may have occurred. The dispersal and breakage patterns of the excavated assemblage suggest that trampling and cleaning of the site by people masks some of the information which would help to differentiate further between the two modes of deposition.

This dissertation provides reference material and a set of protocols for future *Rattus exulans* assemblage analyses, but warns that some of the hypothesised

taphonomic effects may need to be altered to suit the location of the assemblage under study. It further recommends that actualistic study should be undertaken to evaluate how different methods of cooking may affect the appearance of discoloration and carbonisation in an assemblage, and ascertains that more research is needed in the field of small mammal archaeology to provide a comparative set of reference material similar to that enjoyed by faunal analysts who focus on large animals.

Brent D. DRUSKOVICH. M.A. Dissertation. 1998. **Analysis of the Lake Huro Midden Site, Chatham Island, New Zealand.** Anthropology Department, University of Auckland. 1 page abstract, (ix) 89 pp., 6 figures, 16 tables, 5 appendices.

A programme of archaeological research was undertaken by the Anthropology Department, University of Otago in the 1970s. This came to be known as the 'Chatham Islands Project'. The Lake Huro Midden (Ch166) was excavated as part of that project, but consequently never reported upon.

To reach a better understanding of Chatham Island prehistory Chapter 1 of this dissertation reviews the ethnographic and archaeological research which has taken place in the past and the conclusions they reached on the prehistoric lives of the Moriori.

Chapter 2 reconstructs the excavation procedures, stratigraphic interpretations and functional areas of the Lake Huro site (Ch166) and concludes that there were two prehistoric and one historic occupation phases. The site was primarily used for food processing and artefact manufacture.

The third chapter reviews the post-excavation history of the Huro collection. This includes locational changes, recorded losses and sampling of the collection, as well as evidence which points to unrecorded sampling. This chapter also summarises the previously unrecorded work of Sutton (n.d.) on the bird component and Smith (n.d.b., n.d.c.) who analysed New Zealand Fur Seal (*Arctocephalus forsteri*) and Cetacean components from this site.

The next chapter deals with the author's work on the collection, including the production of a detailed inventory for the majority of the material as it stands at the University of Auckland. Some sampling was undertaken of the total samples in the laboratory, and the results are presented here. They indicate that the midden consisted primarily of tuatua (*Paphies donacina*) and that other

components were poorly represented. Much of the sampling contrasted with what was known from previous work, which suggested the importance of sea mammals and birds.

The final chapter summarises a variety of archaeological and ethnographic sources to bring together an argument for what the Lake Huro midden site represented. Two theories on the site function - a seasonal camp and a settlement camp are put forward. Arguments are presented for both, and the author concludes that the seasonal camp is more likely, but that the settlement site theory cannot be completely discounted.

A summation is then given of what is needed for any further research into the Huro site. This involves the identification of the location of the missing components, and bringing together all the published and unpublished sources of information.

Tania M. FISHER. M.A. Dissertation.1998. **Middens in Northland.** Anthropology Department, University of Auckland. 1 page abstract, (vi) 73 pp., 17 figures, 9 tables.

This research looks at middens located in Northland. Excavations and analysis which have taken place on these are of principal interest. Sites looked at in the body of the text include a midden at Twilight Beach, Mount Camel, Moturua Island, and one in Whangarei Harbour. For the most part, these are early middens that are generally located in the Far North. One exception to this is the midden on the coast in Whangarei Harbour, which is of a later age. These middens show that settlement in Northland was well established by the 13th century.

Many resources were being utilised and can be seen through the midden assemblages. These include moa, seal, dog, fish, and shellfish. Shellfish tends to dominate in these middens, but in many cases it is the mammalian species which were significant in dietary terms, as they provided more meat weight than the other species. This is particularly true of the fur seal in the sites of Twilight Beach and Houhora.

It is concluded that much more work needs to be done on these middens before any prehistoric sequences can be constructed. This is especially true of later middens as these have not had much archaeological focus in Northland.

Shaun P.G. HIGGINS. M.A. Dissertation.1998. **Reflections After Life: The Social Dimensions in Colonial Auckland's Symonds Street Cemetery.** Anthropology Department, University of Auckland. 1 page abstract, (vi) 67 pp., 18 figures (including 7 col.), 2 tables.

Symonds Street Cemetery is a landscape which reflects the society of 19th century Auckland. The study of the cemetery landscape using a landscape archaeology methodology and GIS can reveal new insights into the nature of this society. The social dimensions held in the cemetery reflect human interaction over time, complete with accurate chronological markers. This study is an experimental investigation of the application of a landscape framework to mortuary archaeology. It is the first time that such an approach has been used on an historical cemetery.

The visual aspect of GIS and landscape archaeology allows the investigation of space within the cemetery, a perspective which operates on a macro-scale looking at the entire cemetery. Religious division is the key to identifying the social dimension reflected in Auckland's primary 19th century graveyard. Religious segregation allows the investigation of space, plot size, occupancy, gender, and kinship in the archaeological record.

The spatial analysis of these components of the cemetery landscape is an important contribution to our understanding of 19th century society in early colonial New Zealand. It can also provide insights into death and the mortuary landscape of this time period.

Angela MIDDLETON. M.A. Dissertation.1998. **Reading Landscape For Meaning at Tataraimaka, Taranaki.** Anthropology Department, University of Auckland. 1 page abstract, (v) 106 pp., 18 figures (including 2 col.), 18 photographs, 7 appendices.

Tataraimaka is a block of land in Taranaki which was bought by the colonial government in 1847 and was subsequently a scene of battle during the Taranaki Land Wars of the 1860s. A prominent *pa* site, also the scene of inter-tribal warfare in the early 19th century, and a burial site dating from 1863, is now a Department of Conservation reserve. St George's Redoubt, which now has no surface evidence remaining, was located close to these two sites.

This dissertation examines the way this piece of land has been used by Maori and Pakeha in both similar and different ways, and how this interaction is embedded in the landscape. Using landscape archaeology, which incorporates

aspects of cultural geography and history, the author evokes meaning from the existing landscape, using evidence including archaeological remains, place names, and archival sources. The way this "symbolic" landscape impacts on Maori and Pakeha in Taranaki is examined, and how the concept and management of a heritage site has changed since the reserve was established.

It appears that the conflict generated during colonisation and the Taranaki Land Wars continues to have consequences in the contestation over land in Taranaki today, as is evidenced from claims filed with the Waitangi Tribunal and from some responses to the author's fieldwork. This contestation also demonstrates that both Maori and Pakeha share a response to and an identification with the landscape. In exploring this relationship it is important to acknowledge and analyse the underlying power relations.

Aaron P. SMITH. M.A. Dissertation. 1999. **Geochemical Adze Sourcing Studies in East Polynesia: The Formation of a Database.** Anthropology Department, University of Auckland. 1 page abstract, (viii) 93 (13) pp., 13 figures, 12 illustrations, 2 tables, appendix.

"Anyone can find plenty of [adze quality stone as good or better as mine in the nearby stream from which I took these]" (Aitken 1930)

These were the words of a native Tubuaian, as recorded by Robert T. Aitken earlier this century. They serve to illustrate an important point, one which is central to the present study. Archaeologists are interested in defining exchange systems between island groups and archipelagoes. This is one of the tools used to piece together the puzzle of past life-ways. To facilitate this, the recovery of exotic materials and the provenancing of these adzes to determine their place of origin, are conducted. Quarries are obvious geological landmarks where presumably ancestral artisans gathered, and possibly worked, the raw material.

Yet, the vast majority of knappers probably obtained their rock from whatever source was closest at hand. They presumably had knowledge of the surrounding terrain and gathered lithics from areas which today may not appear obvious. This is echoed by the words of that native Tubuaian. Travelling long distances to an archaic quarry involved costs. The benefits from these long treks are in many cases outweighed by the fact that other sources (albeit of smaller size and containing lower-grade material) were closer to habitation areas.

This research will investigate the relationships between archipelagoes in East Polynesia, as delineated by geochemical studies. It will attempt to provide further insight into a field which is, although still developing, already providing hard evidence for contacts between ancestral East Polynesian peoples.

The following dissertation may also be of interest to readers. The conditions noted above are also applicable to this piece of research.

Hilary R. COLLINGE. M.A. Dissertation.1999. **Changing Museology as Viewed Through the Life Biography of Kave, De Hine Alii.** Anthropology Department, University of Auckland. 1 page abstract, (viii) 11pp., 20 figures (including 5 col.), appendix.

This dissertation traces ideological changes in Western museum practices to illuminate how these have affected the display of ethnographic artefacts and Western attitudes towards the "Other". Museums are societal institutions which work to construct and perpetuate a society's "collective consciousness" or ideological attitudes. When Western museums collect, conserve, label, and display the material culture of other societies they often teach us more about Western subjective perceptions of the "Other" than they do of the original uses and values of the objects.

The research is focussed around the life biography of a Nukuoro statue depicting the Polynesian Outlier goddess Kave, retained in the Auckland Institute and Museum since 1878. In carrying out a life biography, the author has identified periods of recontextualisation in her that help reveal the changing attitudes of New Zealanders towards their Pacific neighbours. Kave has been recontextualised many times, as a curiosity, a scientific specimen, "primitive" handicraft, "primitive" sculpture, and more recently as a "Masterpiece" of Micronesian art. Kave's changing representation, use, value, and status within the Auckland Institute and Museum are reflected in the Museum's treatment of her, especially in regard to display prominence and conservation.

The author discusses how the depictions of Nukuoro statues are today used in tourist art, tourism advertising, and in contemporary Pacific art to form symbols of identity for both Micronesian and Polynesian societies. Contemporary Pacific artists are reappropriating images of cultural heritage and revitalising self-identity through their artistic representations. The ultimate reappropriation of museum artefacts would be repatriation, yet this is not always possible. At present the best alternative to repatriation lies in the collaborative efforts of

Western museums and the descendants of the creators of the objects to develop museums in which the objects are interpreted in the most accurate way possible and remain alive in the lives of the cultural owners.