



NEW ZEALAND
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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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BOOK REVIEW

Gail Lambert, Pottery in New Zealand: commercial and collectable. Heinemann, Auckland, 1985. 167 pp, references, glossary, index. \$34.95.

Archaeologists interested in 19th and 20th century sites in New Zealand very soon become acquainted with artefacts of much greater quantity and variety than in older, Maori, sites. Many of these artefacts are the products of factories in Europe and North America; from about the 1840s, however, much of the rubbish that is now the stuff of archaeology in this country originated here.

Among the most varied and imperishable of all archaeological materials is pottery: the New Zealand domestic pottery industry has since the mid-19th century been hard at work manufacturing raw material for archaeologists. We now have a resource book for the identification of New Zealand made ceramics which is at the same time an invaluable history of the industry.

Gail Lambert's interest and enthusiasm are apparent throughout this excellent book. The material is organised geographically - from south to north for a change. At the same time this allows a general chronological progression, from the early achievements and high ambition of the Milton works in South Otago and Luke Adams in Christchurch, to the breakthrough to high production volumes and public acceptability achieved only in the last few decades by Crown Lynn of Auckland.

The ceramics industry in colonial New Zealand reflects many others in that high transport costs and provincial pride led to the establishment of numerous small works throughout the country. This has resulted in a wide variety of wares from factories as far south as Winton and as far north as Papanui on the Kaipara Harbour. Many of the wares are known only by a handful of examples - doubtless there are many others which are yet to be correctly identified. There is an opportunity here for archaeology to explore waster pits at many of the old works for evidence of early products. Away from the factories, archaeology can throw light onto the inroads the colonial industry made on the colonial market.

Pottery in New Zealand is splendidly illustrated with 56 colour plates of a wide variety of teapots, jugs, vases, plates, jardinières and other pieces. More than 130 half-tone plates include some marvellous historical pictures of the McSkimming works at Benhar, the Milton pottery, Timaru Potteries, the Temuka works of New Zealand Insulators, Luke Adams Pottery (Christchurch) and the Hutson works (Wellington). The reader will need to turn occasionally to the glossary for illumination on such words as saggar, jolly, jigger, homers, frit, fettling, dunting, crazing and blunger.

I would also like to know what a "kale pot" is, and I was in some confusion about Herbert ('Bert') Adams and his brother Albert (also, apparently, 'Bert'). Nor do the chapters always fit together well: characters such as Jimmy Johnston and Arthur Roden Toplis have a story of their own which reflects the achievements and vicissitudes of their industry, but they pop up here and there so that one must hunt back through the book to piece together their progress.

For all that this book is an astonishing achievement. Little has preceded it in the field, yet it arrives suddenly as an exhaustive history and guide to New Zealand commercial pottery. The attractive layout and well written text make for an easy read. For the collector or student of material culture the detail (including a checklist of manufacturers' marks) makes the book an essential resource.

Nigel Prickett

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