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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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uncovered on their doorstep. If we demonstrate our willingness to follow this policy of co-operation, we will have more chance of improving our legislation to deal adequately with the sites which must not be destroyed, and of ensuring that sufficient staff exists to survey and maintain them.

Book Review

The Discovery of the Pacific Islands. Andrew Sharp. Pp.xiii + 259.

Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1960. 55s. (N.Z.)

Mr Andrew Sharp's latest work, *The Discovery of the Pacific Islands*, will almost certainly arouse no strenuous controversy. For here, in some 122 chapters varying in length from ten pages to a few lines, he sets out merely to identify the first European discoverers of the islands of the Pacific and, presumably, to correct the admittedly often speculative identifications of the past.

For lack of any personal knowledge of the islands - which he strangely holds to be superfluous - he relies mainly on a comparison of the relevant topographical details in the explorers' narratives with the data contained in the records and charts of 'modern hydrographic authorities' though not, it seems, the British Admiralty charts themselves. He makes much use, too, of sequences of islands and of the times of passages as compared with the feasible sailing times and, in the case of more recent discoveries, of observed latitudes and longitudes.

Several of Mr Sharp's earlier identifications are admittedly only conjectural. For instance, he identifies Magellan's Los Tiburones as Caroline rather than Vostok because in Albo's report there is a reference to catching a large number of sharks and Caroline has a bay on its lee side and is noted for its fish. Similarly, he holds that Taongi in the Marshalls group was discovered in 1526 by Salazar because it is the only island anywhere near 14° at 12 days' sailing from the Ladrões and the Pacific Islands Pilot, Mr Sharp's bible, specifically comments on the green colour of the lagoon mentioned by Salazar. And Grijalva, he thinks, must have seen one of the Gilberts since it is scarcely possible that any ship running along the equator could have got past them.

In his reconstruction of the later voyages of the Spaniards Mr Sharp is, however, on much firmer ground and his identifications show a good deal of penetration. He sees, for example, that in his passage through the eastern Pacific in 1606, Quiros must have discovered Hao and not Anaa. But he is only the most recent investigator to point this out. As he admits, Cook surmised as much in 1769 though, to be sure, Cook's most recent editor has rejected this identification on the ground that Quiros must have seen Nengo and therefore missed Hao out of sight on his north. In 1884, too, Lieutenant Cailliet, the surveyor of the Tuamotus, in an article apparently not known to Mr Sharp, set out in considerable and very precise detail the course Quiros must have taken through the group and his conclusions were reproduced in 1929 in Teuira Henry's monumental volume on Tahiti. And the identification has been made independently twice in the last two years, by Father Celsus Kelly and by Mr H.E. Maude. Mr Sharp has been anticipated elsewhere. Both Meinicke and Aitken have shown that Mendana's San Bernardo of 1595 was Pukapuka in the northern Cooks; and Father Kelly and Mr Maude have shown that the San Bernardo of 1606 was Caroline. And as long ago as 1897, Louis Becke showed that Quiros's Gente Hermosa was Rakahanga. Nor is Mr Sharp infallible. It is,

I think, clear that Quiros could not have sighted Amanu, a low atoll to the north-east of Hao, and the discovery of that island must therefore be credited to Andia y Varela in 1774, if indeed Mr Sharp's bare assertion that that explorer saw it next can be sustained. Mr Sharp also gets wrong the two other islands in the Tuamotu seen by Quiros after leaving Hao. His account of the discoveries of Quiros in the Banks group and the northern New Hebrides in the Western Pacific, while basically accurate, is scarcely more than perfunctory. The clearing up of the confusions in Markham's edition of the voyage must now await the publication of Father Kelly's edition of the journal of Martin de Munilla, Quiros's Father Commissary.

It is, of course, obvious that the most recent discoveries, Cartaret's, Bougainville's, Cook's for example, largely identify themselves, and Mr Sharp's task thus becomes easier the further he goes. The navigators of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, thanks to the rapid advance of science, were able to estimate both latitude and longitude with a fair degree of accuracy and there is therefore very little room in the second half of the book for the skilful detective work that marks Mr Sharp's earlier pages. The mistakes seem few enough though one or two might be mentioned. In his account of the second voyage of Cook, for example, Mr Sharp has misspelt several of the island names in the New Hebrides, no doubt because he has adhered too slavishly to a single source; and he identifies Nguna and Emau by names which have long since ceased to be used. But it may be doubted whether this part of the work might not have been less dull, less a series of snippets of information which give little idea of the progress of Pacific exploration, of the drama in which often quite large islands were constantly rediscovered and lost. Nevertheless, though the majority of the identifications are already contained in other sources, the Oriental Navigator, Findlay's Directory, Brigham's invaluable Index to the Pacific Islands - oddly not cited by Mr Sharp - and the Pacific Islands Pilot, it is certainly useful to have them all drawn together in one place.

Mr Sharp's pioneer and occasionally impressive work, then, will undoubtedly fill a gap. It nonetheless suffers from a number of grave defects which must limit its usefulness. It is lamentably lacking in illustrative material of the sort which makes Mr H.E. Maude's recent articles on the same theme in the Journal of the Polynesian Society so valuable, of maps indicating passages through particular island groups, and of detailed analyses of controversial courses which anyone with some expertise in map-reading and practical seamanship would naturally supply in proof of his contentions.

The ethnological notes which supply the place of the navigational data are irrelevant and indeed pointless. From Mr Sharp's point of view, their great significance is that they were set down at a time when European influence could not have been important. But it is not clear just what difference this makes and the summaries lack needful explanation. How many of Mr Sharp's readers, for example, will know that the tree which has fruits like a pineapple is the pandanus? And how many will know that sticks he describes as cudgels were in fact *tokotoko*, or badges of chiefly office? The descriptions of the various island groups are in any case too slight. Cook's detailed observations of the Society Islands are dismissed in a couple of lines, Mendana's of the Solomons group in five. The serious student of anthropology must still turn to the originals; the uninitiated will find no particular enlightenment.

It may also be objected that the book begins too early and ends too soon. The discovery of the Pacific Islands might indeed be said to have begun only with Cook. The activities of his predecessors were too often haphazard, unco-ordinated and uncertain. The earliest navigators lacked the requisite skills to rediscover any island on which they might have stumbled and in any case they were in search of a continent rather than of mere islands. The chief interest in analysing their discoveries lies in tracing their courses across the Pacific rather than in determining their con-

tributions to geographical knowledge. In this sense, the book belies its title and disappoints its reader's expectations. The discovery of the Pacific, too, did not end in 1850. There is too little in this book about those who in the latter half of the 19th century determined the latitude and longitude of every point and reef and thus made the ocean safer for navigation or, for that matter, about the preponderant rôle of the whalers in the opening up of the Pacific.

But the fundamental defect of the book lies in what Mr Sharp plainly thinks its chief merit, its originality. It is, of course, extremely doubtful just how original his work can be. It is scarcely feasible that he has not been influenced in one way or another by earlier writers, whom he has read, by, say, Dr J.C. Beaglehole's identifications of the islands seen by Cook in his first voyage. But Mr Sharp designedly does not attempt any systematic review of the history of previous opinion on the identity of the islands discovered by the explorers nor of their subsequent rediscovery. His is a study, he claims, *ab initio*, of the first discovery of the Pacific islands. In consequence, it is impossible to see just how ingenious he has been, or what exactly he has contributed to our knowledge of the subject he treats. There is, for example, a long history about the identification of Quiros's *La Conversion de San Pablo*, the modern Hao, which the reader ought to know. Wharton thought it to be Tahiti. Meinicke made it Hereheretue. Rozpide thought it must be Anaa and this view, based on the discovery on a beach of a Spanish cross which Mr Sharp supposes might have been a sort of Polynesian coat-hanger, has long held the field. The mistake is now obvious but it has been so for a long time and the point ought to have been made. Mr Sharp's opinions on the matter are of course interesting but they can have no lasting significance unless they are stated in their proper context. For the truth of the matter depends not on what he says but on the consensus of scholarly opinion. In the circumstances, his work will inevitably have to be done again, preferably by a team of experts working perhaps under the aegis of the Hakluyt Society who will bring to the task not merely a knowledge of the relevant literature but a personal knowledge of the islands and some competence at least in the interpretation of charts. And that work, it may be suggested, if it is to be useful to students, will need to incorporate both an analysis of particular voyages and a new and exhaustive gazetteer.

G. S. PARSONSON