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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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BOOK REVIEWS

Barry Brailsford, The Tattooed Land. Reed, Wellington, 1981. 259 pp., references, index. \$39.95.

Barry Brailsford has produced an extraordinary book. It is not just the fact that books on New Zealand archaeology are rare and popular books on the subject are almost non-existent. It is the illustrations which really set this book apart.

There are plan drawings of over 100 pa sites, taken from the Southern Earthworks Project of Canterbury Training College, and over 80 figures of artefacts, reconstructions (mostly of palisaded defenses and houses) and cross sections of sites. It was the finely shaded drawings of the artefacts which particularly took my eye and sent me searching for the name of this so painstaking and competent artist who could give even a broken patu form and reality. I was thwarted. The only artist mentioned in the acknowledgements was Karen Mason who drew the frontispiece for each section of the book. It was only by turning to the dust cover that I discovered that most of the cartography, sketches and drawings were the work of the author. In Barry we have an archaeological illustrator par excellence, with the observant and understanding eye we have been much in need of in New Zealand. I can only hope that now this book is off his desk we will find his work appearing regularly in the Newsletter and Journal.

The organisation of his book shows long experience of teaching and the needs of those who teach. The text is relatively limited for a 260 page, A4-sized book, and it is interspersed with illustrated sections on each of the pa sites. Each section is an entity that can be read on its own, and is marked off with brown borders and a different type face. The material on a given pa may consist of an aerial photograph, a plan showing defenses, terraces, pits and other features, drawings of artefacts found on or in the vicinity of the pa, along with several paragraphs of descriptive text.

This organisation has left Barry free to work into the text a great deal of interesting associated historical detail from original sources. Many of the South Island pa were still in use when Europeans arrived and not only were traditions about them collected but some of them were visited and described by Europeans. Barry has collated and published a wealth of this material, both text and early drawings, from the Alexander Turnbull Library and other sources.

No one New Zealand archaeologist will agree with all of Barry's brief synthesis of New Zealand prehistory in the first chapters, but it

is very satisfying to have, for instance, Dave Simmon's work on the traditions of Toi, Kupe and the Great Fleet laid out in a book likely to be used by High School teachers. One of my personal regrets is that Barry has used some confusing names for cultures and periods. He notes (p.3) that "the first Polynesian settlers in New Zealand are referred to as the Archaic Maoris, early Maori or Moa-hunter Maori. This early period of Maori culture stretched from its probable beginnings in the 10th century A.D. through to the 14th and 15th centuries when the Classic--al Maori or Pa Maori culture began to take its distinctive shape". This is an unfortunate confusion of cultures, periods and important characteristics. "Early Maori" should refer to a period of time, Archaic to a culture physically represented in the archaeological record by a group of artefact styles, and moa-hunter best refers to the economic activities linked to hunting moa. Barry himself notes the problems of using Moa-hunter as a name for a culture in that "some Moa-hunters did not hunt moa at all" (p.4). Similarly it is not a useful name for a period of time, in that it was a "way of life with its particular characteristics and artefacts which continued long after the extinction of the moa itself" (p.5). I think it would clarify our thinking about what we find in the ground if we used Archaic (and its partner, Classic) as rather abstract terms, applied only to artefact assemblages and closely associated activities, as Golson intended when he defined them in 1959, and to call the people themselves Maoris as is generally done in this book. We do not have well-defined archaeological periods on a New Zealand wide scale, since major changes in economy and artefact styles were not simultaneous even for the South Island. It is much simpler therefore to either avoid period names or to use the general terms of early, intermediate or late. "Early Classic" should refer to an artefact style that is closer to the defined Classic than to the Archaic styles, and not to a period of time, though it is very easy to lapse.

To give an example of usage, for our Long Beach material, Helen Leach and I can talk of finding an early layer dated to the 13th century with Archaic style artefacts, an intermediate layer dated to the fifteenth century with too few artefacts for cultural definition and a late layer dated 17th century with typically Classic artefacts. There was virtually no moa bone present in the site, though it was quite likely that the Maoris who laid down the thick deposit of fish bone in the early layer hunted moa elsewhere, as shown by sites such as Omimi and Pleasant River further up the coast. It would have been an unwarranted assumption, however, to refer to this culture as Moa-hunter culture when there wasn't a skerrick of evidence for the killing and eating of moa on the site and no firm link with a moa-hunting site.

Likewise, the equating of Pa Maori with Classical (usually referred to as Classic by other New Zealand writers) creates a confusion similar

to equating Mōa-hunter, Archaic and early Māori. Pa Māori as a term implies that one important characteristic is a necessary part of the culture, an implication which would be a nuisance when considering 17th and 18th century evidence from Otago and Southland, where pa are such minor features. It would be very difficult to justify referring to the Māoris who deposited the upper layers of midden at Long Beach as Pa Māori. The presence of notched fish hooks, engraved albatross bone and the use of human bone for artefacts, however, does fit nicely into something we call the Classic assemblage of artefacts, without any implications as to what the inhabitants may have been doing elsewhere.

It might be said that these distinctions are unnecessary in a book written for popular consumption, but in fact Barry has picked his way through some rather more difficult minefields elsewhere in the book. (I liked his comment (p.4) that "the Mōa hunter occupation of Canterbury coincided with the burning of the great (sic) forests of the plains".) Pa Māori, like Classical, seems to be a term which Barry has set up himself. In Best's book by the same name the term is used quite differently. To Best, a 'pa Māori' was a pa made by Māoris, not Māoris who made pa. I feel that Barry has some obligation to us to justify the use of Pa Māori instead of Classic for the culture as a whole.

I have left the most important thing about this book to the last - it is a good read.

Jill Hamel

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Jones, K.L. (Compiled by), Selected Papers from the Goldfields Seminar, 1-3 October 1980. New Zealand Historic Places Trust, Wellington. 1981. \$5.00.

A town planner recently remarked to me, his voice heavy with cynicism, that he was interested to hear that one of the main obstacles to modern goldmining is 19th century goldmining. He was not far from the truth in that the pre-1880 sites are protected under the Historic Places Act. On the other hand the archaeological community needs to be aware that it will require a determined effort to investigate and preserve a significant sample of goldmining sites, in that modern technology makes it economic to re-open mining areas with a very low concentration of gold.

The public imagination has been captured by the recent activities of Neville Ritchie at the Clutha Valley Project, perhaps one of the most successful of the archaeological programmes ever undertaken by the Trust. Nearly everyone I talk to has seen the excellent television programme on 'Chinaman's Gold' (although the producer apparently had not

heard of the Historic Places Trust). However, little has been done to meet the threat of the very large number of applications for mining 'privileges' (Prospecting, Exploration and Mining Licenses), although a small proportion of mining companies has contacted the regional file-keepers for information about known sites. Other than organising the Goldfields Seminar, the Trust has recently sought to preserve an area of gold tailings, but has been overruled by the Minister. The Trust is also applying to the Mines Division for funds to make it possible to update surveys in mining areas and begin to effectively cope with the mining threat.

The Trust organised the Seminar to assist the conversation between Lands and Survey, Forest Service, the Mines Division, mining companies and the many members of the public concerned with the study and preservation of goldmining sites. The present volume of 29 papers is a result of that Seminar. It will be very useful and informative to many people by assembling reasonably succinct statements from a variety of people involved in a complex field. Having had some considerable involvement already myself through trying to cope with the large number of mining applications in the Coromandel, I am nevertheless impressed by the number of other people involved, and grateful for the information this volume contains.

This volume should be a very positive step toward furthering the communication between government departments that have a heavy involvement in historic preservation - other than the Trust itself, notably Lands and Survey and the Forest Service. For example, few site recorders have coped effectively with recording goldmining sites, and the Forest Service has sponsored the best efforts so far. However, the Trust's point of view in promoting the seminar and furthering communication in general is to seek a fair balance between the best economic use of the land and the preservation of historic values (p.5), a point of view that is shared by Lands and Survey and the Forest Service, but not by the Mines Division and the private mining companies, which seek to promote mining as a priority. There is an inevitable clash of interests, but the Trust hopes that a mediation of interests is made easier if misunderstanding between parties is reduced.

In conclusion, this is a fine volume and one for which the Trust can be well-praised. Its production without pagination is a serious error, but its inexpensive format and speedy production are particularly to be applauded. To those of us who were unable to participate in the Seminar, the conversation is extended.

Susan Bulmer