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**NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**



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BOOK REVIEWS

David Simmons, Whakairo. Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1985. 188 pp, 139 illustrations, bibliography, index. \$35.00

Nobody in recent times has published more on Maori ethnology than David Simmons. His recent M.B.E. award for services to ethnology was recognition of this. Simmons' latest book deals with wood carvings, their meaning and stylistic interpretation.

The book is divided into four sections. The first is 'Nga Tangata' which deals with the origin myths and gods associated with them. To help with this certain karakia are given in Maori and English. The second section is 'Te Mana'. It is in this section that he 'interprets' carvings. Simmons says, "The clues provided by a knowledge of Maori thought and a study of carvings have been discussed with Te Riria, a graduate of Te Arikimohowhakaiteiti whare wananga held at Wairoa, who was taught the meanings and symbolism on Maori carving for all tribes. He and the Ahupiri Council have approved the final text as a correct interpretation" (p. 19).

The third section is called 'Nga Ahua'. It is here the subject of styles are discussed and the serpentine/square stylistic division introduced. This division was put forward by Archey in 1933 and expanded by McEwen in 1966. The fourth section Simmons calls 'Nga Iwi' and it is in this section that he sets out to define the various styles. He supports the lean text with photographs and sketches of particular items.

The two sections which I feel will cause the most discussion are 'Te Mana' and 'Nga Iwi'. As far as Te Mana goes this reviewer does not feel competent enough in that particular field to offer judgement. However, I suspect that this section will provide ample fuel for academic debate.

I was surprised with the choice of illustrations used in the section dealing with 'Te Tai Hauuru' (?Hauuru). Simmons has not mentioned a whole corpus of items which in my opinion are very important and should be included in any study defining styles for that area. In my own work I have identified 34 pieces which have good provenances from Te Atiawa, nine pieces from Taranaki and one piece from Ngati Ruanui.

Several very important paepae are not shown, for instance the Ainsworth and Otaraoa pa paepae (both in Taranaki Museum). A figure from the Ainsworth paepae is illustrated (p. 85) along with a sketch of the right hand manaia of a paepae from

Te Kawau, Awakino (Fig. 26). The caption says, "The carving almost certainly belonged to the Ngati Rakei of the Mokau area" (p. 35). However, Simmons' sketch of this piece occurs in the section dealing with Te Atiawa. If we turn back to the Ngati Rakei section (pp. 80-81) we find the central figure has been sketched from this paepae and the head has been completed when, as can be seen in the photograph of it, the top of the head is missing from the piece. It may have been better to dot the reconstruction in.

I would have expected the five epa recovered from Motunui, North Taranaki, which go to make up the back wall of a pataka to have been illustrated, especially in the light of a statement (p. 35) that "... the lack of one complete storehouse from which to assess the total expression of thought makes interpretation of the symbolism difficult".

Epa from the vicinity of Manukorihi pa, Waitara, are not illustrated, nor are the two very distinctive paepae held in the National Museum.

For the Taranaki tribal area there is no mention of the Koru paepae (Taranaki Museum) and, while the Warea paepae (Taranaki Museum) is represented by two figure sketches, I feel an actual photograph would have been more appropriate. These two items are the major carvings from the Taranaki tribal area.

We now come to Simmons' South Taranaki form in which are grouped, "Ngati Ruanui, Nga Rauru and possibly Ngati Apa". As I stated earlier as far as I am aware only one item can be accurately provenanced to Ngati Ruanui: a kumete from near present-day Normanby (Auckland Museum). This is neither illustrated nor mentioned. Instead three items held in overseas museums and one held in the National Museum are used. I fail to see how a 'South Taranaki' style can be defined using these pieces when they have no accurate provenance other than they are of South Taranaki style!

On the end paper maps the term 'Te Tai Haruru' is used for the Taranaki region. The same term is used on the contents page. On turning to p. 82 I find that it is now 'Te Tai Hauuru'. I wonder if both versions are wrong and it should, in fact, read 'Te Tai Hauauru' (the western district).

I must say that I was somewhat disappointed when I opened this book, especially with reference to the tribal style section and in particular to the area I have recently worked on. Notwithstanding David Simmons' vast knowledge of items held both in New Zealand and overseas museums I suspect he still

relies far too heavily on an intuitive approach to this area of study. The photographs which have been used are of a high standard and it is the first time that several have been published. This in itself is a valuable addition to the literature.

Kelvin Day

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Margaret Orbell, The Natural World of the Maori. Collins/Bateman, Auckland, 1985. 230 pp, illustrations, glossary, notes, bibliography, index. \$44.95.

Orbell is covering new territory with this book. No other author has similarly explored the interaction between the Maori and their surroundings. The book deals with the natural world encountered by the Maori and examines how resources were utilised and also how the Maori perceived the world in relation to themselves. Orbell describes this relationship (p15). "The Maori were entirely dependent upon their immediate environment for their survival, and they had a profound knowledge of the resources it offered them. On an intellectual and emotional level, their relationship with their environment was equally close. It shaped the very processes of thought; it led to the development of ideas explaining the origin and nature of the world; and since affinities were felt to exist between all living things, it was a source of images that were applied to human beings."

Six chapters each deal with a different aspect of the natural world. 'Land and People' outlines the settlement of Aotearoa, mainly based on archaeological research. 'Ways and Means' outlines how the physical environment was exploited. Chapter Three, 'The World of Light', deals with the origin of the world and how the landscape is viewed in relation to the gods and creation. 'Shaping the Land' covers the traditions of the settlement of Aotearoa and legends which account for the physical landscape. 'The Realm of Tangaroa' deals with the sea and the animals and birds which inhabit it. The forest is covered in Chapter Six, 'The Children of Tane'. Rituals associated with tree cutting or seasonal bird hunting are explained as is the importance of some birds as a source of feathers for cloaks, food or as an inspiration for other aspects of life. The epilogue gives an overview of the preceding sections, and discusses the theme of the Maori in the natural world in an anthropological context.

The publications of Elsdon Best are heavily drawn upon for information. Nineteenth century Maori writings and trans-

lations give the poems, songs, legends and proverbs which evoke the links between men, women and their world. The book is well illustrated with superb photographs of the natural world taken by Geoff Moon. Angas paintings show details of Maori life in the mid-19th century. Themes are followed through: a painting of a huia is placed opposite photographs of a woman in the late 19th century wearing huia feathers, and a folk-painting of a huia from a meeting house.

Notes and references at the back make it apparent the book is for the general reader. More specialised reference books are marked with an asterisk. There are also references to general natural history books.

The book, however, has several weaknesses. There is a noticeable lack of Maori words or names for objects. English words are always used in preference. For example, uwhi and hue are referred to as yam and gourd and a hinaki, an eel pot. I found it difficult to source the illustrations in the book. Many of the photographs are of artefacts or wood carvings held in museums but neither catalogue numbers nor museums are mentioned in the captions. The page of credits in the front of the book demands some time when locating particular items.

Some interpretation is rather simplistic. For example, in writing of the early period of settlement, Orbell states (p.8), "The east coast of the South Island was one of the favoured areas at this time, for the climate was warmer then and the region had abundant moa and seals. By the early 15th century the climate was changing for the worse... The best place to live was now the North Island..."

The book deals with an important and all-embracing aspect of Maori life. But don't expect a scholarly work to replace Best's now classic works. The large format and glossy photographs probably places it closer to the coffee table than the reference shelf.

Louise Furey

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Lyndel V. Prott and Patrick J. O'Keefe, Law and the Culture Heritage (Vol.1) Discovery and Excavation. Professional Books, Oxford, U.K., 1984. 434 pp. 23 pounds U.K.

This remarkable and most valuable volume is the first of a series of five concerned with law and the cultural heritage. Future volumes are: "Creation and Preservation",

"Movement", "Monuments and Sites" and "Principles". If the standard of the first volume is maintained, then this series will form a significant section in the library of every serious archaeologist (professional and amateur), museologist, art historian, cultural conservator, and lawyer interested in or concerned with the protection and conservation of the cultural heritage of mankind.

Prott and O'Keefe are academic lawyers at the University of Sydney. The aim of their study has been to "examine the effect of existing laws on the cultural heritage, the ways in which laws on other topics relate to the cultural heritage, the efficacy of laws passed with intention of improving protection of the cultural heritage, and the loopholes which are found in them". No comparable study exists. The decision to produce a series recognised the inter-relatedness of the various sections of the protection of the cultural heritage. Some 400 jurisdictions, national and international, have been studied. Relevant case law interpreting and applying these laws has been examined.

The authors have recognised the limits of knowledge and experience of both their principal groups of readers - archaeologists and lawyers. They have consulted both groups extensively, and have ensured that sufficient background information and discussion is included to ensure that archaeologists will understand the legal concepts involved, and lawyers, the archaeological concepts. This is done in a manner which is condescending to neither, the two strands being put together in a manner which makes them mutually supportive. It is difficult, on completing the reading of this book, to think of any relevant topic which has not been explored.

In the time which it has taken the reviewer to deal with this book, a second publication by the same two authors has come to notice. This is:

Lyndel V. Prott and Patrick J. O'Keefe, National Legal Control of Illicit Traffic in Cultural Property. UNESCO, Paris 1983. (Available on limited distribution). 144 pp. No price available.

This UNESCO report includes a concise discussion of the Ortiz case, which, it will be remembered, involved legal action taken by the New Zealand Government to recover five carved Maori panels illegally removed from New Zealand in 1973 and offered for sale in London in 1978. Again it is a readable, usable and relevant discussion of a topic which is of wide concern to the administrators, conservators and

archaeologists. The question of control of illicit traffic in moveable cultural property will be more fully addressed in Vol.3 of the "Law and Cultural Heritage" series.

Jim McKinlay

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Sandra Bowdler, Hunter Hill, Hunter Island, Terra Australis, 8 (A.N.U.) 1984. 148 pp. \$A10.00.

Ron Vanderwal and David Horton, Coastal Southwest Tasmania. Terra Australis, 9 (A.N.U.) 1984. 137 pp. \$A11.00

According to Rhys Jones' foreward to Bowdler's report, these two volumes commence what is intended to be a series on the archaeology of Tasmania. Dealing as they do with rather similar materials these two reports are superficially alike, but this impression is shortlived.

Sandra Bowdler's excellent book is a revised version of a portion of her Ph.D. thesis. Chapters deal with previous Tasmanian archaeology and the geography of the island; excavations and stratigraphy; vertebrate and invertebrate faunas; stone tools; and environmental and occupational histories. Very clearly written and presented, the book is a pleasure to read, and has a real story to tell. My two complaints about the illustrations are minor: the maps do not tell us much about Hunter Island and we have to rely on hints from the text that the immediate surrounds of the cave, shown in the impressive view in Plate 1, are more or less typical. And I would prefer the bird skeleton in Plate 8 to be labelled as falcon, as stated on page 61.

As it turns out, falcons are of real importance in the history of the cave, and the presence of chicks and male and female birds is important evidence for Bowdler's claim that they collected many of the birds, particularly parrots, that appear in the upper layers of the deposit. It is this aspect of the book - the concern with the 'taphonomy' of the accumulation, or just how it all came to be gathered together in the cave - that makes "Hunter Hill, Hunter Island" important in an international sense.

There is a problem with this analysis, however. I find it hard to accept Bowdler's argument against the (marsupial) cats having made a major contribution to the assemblage: "one reason for discounting native cats and tiger cats is that there are just so many of them represented in the deposit" (p.77) - and she invokes owls to explain the teeming rodents and rat-sized marsupials.

It is not immediately obvious that 30 cats to 2500 rats (Table 20) is too many cats, but even if it is, it is indeed 'arbitrary' to conclude that the cats have been selectively chosen by a larger carnivore, the Tasmanian devil (p. 77). I am not sure that the result is all that 'convenient', though. If the cats actually lived in the cave they might well seem too common, as only some of the rats the cats are catching are going to end up in the deposit. When the rats decline dramatically after the isolation of the island, Bowdler is led to wonder 'why no owls' (p. 81). But if there never were any owls and there are no owl bones at all in the deposit (Table 13), then the loss of cats as a mechanism for rodent collection would explain everything.

If this sounds like interesting material then I also recommend reading another book on cave taphonomy: The Hunter or the Hunted by C.K. Brain (University of Chicago Press, 1981), a superb book about million-year old African material.

A book I cannot recommend, however, is Vanderwal and Horton's companion volume in the Tasmanian series. The contents here include a brief Introduction setting out the theoretical framework (a rather elderly dispute between rather elderly models of Tasmanian prehistory); the natural environment and geography of the remote and obviously very difficult study area; a very brief statement of "analytical methodology"; analyses of the vertebrate and invertebrate remains; and consideration of the original argument in terms of their own "local" data and then from a Tasmanian-wide viewpoint.

This volume is less than satisfactory on several levels. For example, a species of limpet appears variously as Patellanax, Patallanax and Patallanax. The discussion of the animals available in the study area is much longer than Bowdler's brief summary, but that the descriptions mainly comprise long quotes, mainly from a single volume on Tasmanian mammals, detracts a good deal. The descriptions of the eight excavations, at a number of points on the coast and on the Maatsuyker Island about 12 km offshore, are brief in the extreme, and the stone analysis is relegated to an appendix.

The claims made for the work are rather strong, even completely unselfconscious: "All faunal remains have been subjected to rigorous analyses, using a methodology especially developed for the project" (p. 1); "This methodology is innovative without being overly complex" (p. 2); and, "each chapter is the end-product of our collective writing skills and interpretive talents" (p. 2). Talk like this is begging for trouble.

The trouble duly arrives, in the faunal-analytic core of the volume. This analysis is intended to measure, in a statistical sense, the ecological diversity of the animals

appearing in the middens. The confusion here extends from the prose: "we call [one statistic] Divergency since it represents the extent to which diversity diverges from Heterogeneity" (p. 41), to the formulae, where "S", the number of species that appear (or might appear) in the middens, is defined as "the number of calculations" (p. 41).

The applications of the various diversity measures are also doubtful, especially for the vertebrates, because of the very small sample sizes, and two individuals of a species in an analysed unit is unusual abundance, (not surprisingly, given the very small excavations). A related but probably even greater problem is the significance to be attached to a "minimum number" of 1. At the Anchorage Cove site, for example, a 1 m<sup>2</sup> hole, total volume 0.88 m<sup>3</sup> (Table 10), was dug into a 12 m diameter midden (p. 35), and elephant seal bone appeared in 8 of the 10 spits (Table 28). Each spit was kept separate during the analysis, so the "individual" in each 0.1% sample of the site is draped in 200 kg of meat (Table 28). The risk here, that the bones of a single animal can contribute "individuals" to several spits, is explicitly acknowledged (p. 73), but this does not stop the analysis. The results swamp the meat-weight calculation, so that the measures of consumption bounce about wildly in response to the presence or absence of very small numbers of animals, or rather bones. This contrasts strikingly with the invertebrate analyses, where the numbers of individuals are much greater, but remarkably no such comparisons are made by the authors. And at the end, the statistics are not incorporated in any significant conclusions anyway. I can find only a couple of hints as to what it all might mean: that "energy was derived from more sources but collected from fewer habitats" (does this follow?) (p.90), and that "there is some suggestion that location might be important" in procurement (p.91). One interesting idea is that increasing diversity of invertebrates over time at Anchorage Cove, coupled with a decline in some important resources, may be related to the progressive removal of favoured food species (pp. 88-91), but even here the significance of this argument is immediately lost in a discussion of the reliability of the small sample size.

Faunal analysis has much to contribute to our understanding of prehistoric life and it forms the core of this volume. Unfortunately the analysis is poorly explained, poorly performed and poorly integrated. Something more is needed if the raw material is to say something valuable about the past.

Reg Nichol

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Margaret Orbell, *Hawaiiki - a New Approach to Maori Tradition*. University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 1985. 81 pp., illustrations, bibliography, index. \$13.00

This very attractive book derives from Dr Orbell's Macmillan Brown Lectures given at the University of Canterbury in 1983. It is produced in A4 format, well illustrated, fully referenced and easy to read for its comfortable spoken style and excellent layout and design. The three chapters (and, presumably, lectures) are entitled: The homeland, The voyages and The new land.

The author's central thesis is that we should cease trying to fit traditional accounts of Hawaiiki and of canoe voyages from Hawaiiki to Aotearoa to an actual historical framework. She concludes, "We should not fear that these early traditions will become unimportant when they are seen to be myths rather than historical accounts. It is then that they will reveal their true nature as powerful religious narratives which shaped human lives and made the world meaningful."

The most interesting aspect of the book is the discussion of Hawaiiki. The author argues that the original Hawaiiki was indeed Savaii (Western Samoa), as some 19th century scholars proposed. She does not, however, follow them in suggesting that Savaii was the historical Hawaiiki of the Maori. Rather, she suggests that it was the embellished memory of this homeland of East Polynesians that gave rise to the mythical paradise, Hawaiiki, home of gods and source of the most valuable gifts of gods to men. "The origin and the nature of life, the fate of the soul after death, the ways in which fertility and plenty can be achieved, are mysterious and crucial matters. The beliefs concerning the tapu, beautiful land of Hawaiiki explained these things giving coherence and meaning to human existence."

Orbell does not hesitate to argue that the various accounts of canoe voyages to Aotearoa are also myths. Attempts to make history of them require choosing the incidents which fit or seem likely and rejecting the 'fabulous' or impossible parts of the stories. This, she says, is dangerous and wrong.

This book is a thoughtful addition to understanding the proper role of Hawaiiki and voyaging myths, although not everyone will agree with the logical conclusion which rejects any historical element in these stories. The author regrets the abandonment of enquiry into tradition and mythology in favour of archaeology and linguistics, but if she is right and the Hawaiiki and voyaging myths must be disregarded as historical accounts, then perhaps this is understandable.

Nigel Prickett