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## ARCHAEOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND



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BOOK REVIEWS

John Terrell, Prehistory in the Pacific Islands. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (U.K.), 1986. 299 pp., bibliography, index. \$84.00.

Prehistory in the Pacific Islands is an interesting and unusual book, with somewhat less to contribute to Pacific prehistory than it promises but perhaps more to the nature of explanation in prehistory than it claims. The title gives the vital clue to the contents; this is not a prehistory of the Pacific Islands, but a book about operational models for doing prehistory in the Pacific. It says little about archaeology and ethnography, either methods or results, but leans heavily towards ideas from biology and linguistics, notably the latter. Thus a quick count of the references will show eleven each to the linguists Grace, Pawley and Wurm but only seven each to Green and Davidson and five to Kirch. Is this, then, an essential book for Pacific prehistorians at all?

In one sense, possibly not; Terrell's main objective is the solidly Darwinian one of accounting for human diversity, and the Pacific merely provides him with the convenience of an insular test-bed. What is more, few of the issues he raises are tackled head-on. Terrell is concerned more with how we pose and solve problems than with what the best solutions might currently be. On the other hand, a book of pertinent questions designed to broaden the archaeological searching image, as well as sharpen the focus of explanation, performs a valuable service in a region where prehistory is still largely preoccupied with local chronological frameworks, domestic settlement patterns and the archaeological verification of the ethnographic present.

Terrell discusses his central theme; "...how should a better picture of the sources of human diversity in the South Pacific be put together?" (p.xiv), in a number of different contexts. One centrally important matter is the problem of accounting for linguistic complexity, especially in Melanesia. Here he eschews the traditional model, and indeed rationale, of Pacific island research, which is based upon sequential variation or isolation, and also the alternative explanation of language mixing, in favour of an argument of high antiquity; that is, the origins of many Austronesian and non-Austronesian Pacific languages may lie too deep in the past to enable construction of their root portions to demonstrate ancestral relationships. Terrell's extended and detailed discussion of this matter is, for me, the highlight of his book.

Following historical linguistics, Terrell goes on to consider the nature of colonisation and survival on small islands,

the consequences of relative isolation for cultural evolution, intra-regional variations in the style and intensity of communication and some aspects of social organisation and stratification. Most of these issues are illustrated by reference to the western Pacific, particularly the Solomon Islands, and some readers might find this regional bias goes too far on occasions. Thus Terrell (p.261) suggests that, "it demands no impossible leap of human imagination to view all of Polynesia as just another Melanesian village; that is, as a more or less homogeneous, kinship-based population directly comparable to the individually (more or less) homogeneous, but collectively quite heterogeneous, modern village populations of Melanesia." I suspect few other authorities would care to lump together in this way such different economic and social arrangements as those of the Morioris and the Tongans, to mention only a sample of the Polynesian diversity.

There are as well, some arguments which seem to miss the mark more widely. Thus the outburst of hoopla surrounding Black's simulation modelling loses sight of the fact that this good example of a useful technique is actually quite superfluous to the task of showing that some of Heyerdahl and Skjolvold's assumptions about settlement on the Galapagos Islands are unwarranted by their archaeological evidence, and that other environmental considerations are relevant.

I do not want, however, to leave the impression that Prehistory in the Pacific Islands is unusually flawed, though it is in fact, and quite deliberately, full of holes. It is Terrell's purpose, after all, to shake up the epistemological complacency of Pacific prehistory and expose its actual or potential shortcomings. That he does so in a manner which is often wordy, sometimes vague, and is irritatingly didactic, especially in the opening chapters, may be discouraging, but this book deserves to be carefully read by Pacific archaeologists; even those who will want to buy it only for the wonderful assertion (p.80) that in 1971 there was "...a young Welshman living in New Zealand named Les Grube..."

This book might be regarded as a companion volume to Pat Kirch's The Evolution of the Polynesian Chiefdoms but I hope that Cambridge University Press will not feel that it has published enough about the prehistory of the Pacific in the meantime with these two volumes. Both pose far more questions than they answer and in doing so set just the right note for the development of a longer series.

Atholl Anderson

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Glyn Daniel, Some Small Harvest. Thames & Hudson, London, 1986. 448 pp., plates, appendices, index. \$59.95.

Glyn Daniel was a man of many parts and a great figure in the post-war period of the expansion of British archaeology. His memoirs make good reading, even for those New Zealanders unfamiliar with the Cambridge University scene in which he featured for nearly all of his working life. He was a Welshman from the village of Llantwit Major in South Wales and never lost the ebullience characteristic of his race.

The book abounds in good stories and shrewd comments on the leading archaeologists of his time. It records a full life and a successful one, starting with a switch from geography to archaeology and anthropology when an undergraduate at St. John's College, which led to a doctorate and a college fellowship in 1938. He spent the war years as an interpreter of air photographs in the R.A.F., finishing up in India as a Wing-Commander in 1943 in charge of a unit of several hundreds, where he met his wife, Ruth Langhorne, a wonderful partner to be. Thereafter, he taught archaeology at Cambridge as a humane subject, inspiring a succession of young men and women and sharing with them his enthusiasm for the subject and for the good life. Among his many pupils were Barry Cunliffe, Colin Renfrew and the Prince of Wales. Eventually he succeeded Grahame Clark as the Disney Professor from 1974 to 1981.

Glyn was not primarily an excavator; his main interests and published work concerned the Neolithic chamber-tombs of western Europe and the historical development of archaeology. Somehow he found time to write a couple of detective stories as well. For nearly 30 years, he was the Editor of the quarterly Antiquity, ably assisted by Ruth as Production Editor; his editorials were always entertaining, whether commending new ventures or cursing the lunatic fringe and the fakers, who continue to haunt archaeology. He also had a long association with the publishers, Thames and Hudson, editing the hundred volumes of the People and Places series, which were designed to produce a readable, well illustrated summary by expert archaeologists of what was known concerning their topic in time and space. As one of the authors, I can testify to the helpfulness of the editor's constructive criticism and constant encouragement.

Glyn Daniel became known to a wider and non-academic audience through a succession of popular television programmes starting in 1952 with "Animal, Vegetable, Mineral?" in which he chaired lively discussions between a team of experts endeavouring to identify a museum object. Rik Wheeler was a star turn, who knew everything or at least produced a plausible

guess. This was followed by the more substantial "Buried Treasure" and "Chronicle" series, which focused on sites of famous discoveries, like Skara Brae the Neolithic village in Orkney or the Anglo-Saxon burial mound at Sutton Hoo. Such programmes could well be adapted by the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation for sites in New Zealand and the Pacific, if an inspired archaeologist could be found to select and take charge as Glyn did. It is largely due to Glyn's work as a publicist that archaeology has now become a popular subject and is well understood in Britain. This has made the conservation of important sites easier because of the support of public opinion.

The memoirs show clearly that he was a happy man and very good company. He travelled widely in Europe lecturing on his chosen subjects, making many friends and noting in detail memorable meals and hotels of character. Food and drink mattered a great deal to him. His main love was for France, where in 1963 he and Ruth acquired a small house in the Pas de Calais, conveniently situated for an escape from Cambridge by car and Channel ferry. There is a delightful picture of him there, wearing a beret and a butcher's striped apron gathering winter fuel.

All in all this is a book to be highly recommended: the narrative of this full life carries the reader along in company of a cheerful personality, with firm opinions, good sense and a good appetite. Sadly he died soon after this book was published in 1986. I count myself lucky to have been among his many friends.

Aileen Fox

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