



NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

ARCHAEOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND



This document is made available by The New Zealand
Archaeological Association under the Creative Commons
Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

To view a copy of this license, visit
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>.

BOOK REVIEWS

Phillips, F.L. (1989) Nga Tohu a Tainui - Landmarks of Tainui. Tohu Publishers, P.O. Box 6, Otorohanga. \$90.00 including GST, postage and packaging.

Since it was published in 1949, L.G. Kelly's Tainui has been the 'bible' for anyone interested in the history of the descendants of the people who brought the Tainui canoe ashore at Kawhia some 650 years ago. And now, to supplement Tainui, Mr Phillips has produced a fascinating book, which not only records many significant events in the lives of some of the descendants during the 500 years after the arrival, but also describes with much detail and excellent photographs, the places where those events took place.

Thus the name of the book, Landmarks of Tainui. The vast majority of the landmarks described are pa sites, still showing significant archaeological features - defensive ditch and banks, food pits, terraces, etc. Obviously the author has visited all these landmarks, almost 200 in all, and is able to give the reader a picture of the manner in which each historical event is associated with the site. Grid references from both the imperial and metric map series enable all the sites to be easily located and, unlike the earlier Tainui, a very complete index is included. Unfortunately not all the grid references are correct and two errors noticed are for Kupapa (p.29) and Taumatawiwi (p.163).

The author has lived in the northern King Country area all his life and through his law practice and historical interests has acquired from various sources a vast knowledge of Tainui history. Although, in the introduction, he lists the names of people and the various publications from which he has gained information, few accounts in the book give a particular reference or source. We must assume, therefore, that most of the stories are the result of the author's own collation from the various sources and, as he says in the introduction, his "best judgement has been applied to their assessment and their integration into the book."

The first chapters deal with the voyage and arrival in New Zealand of the Tainui canoe and the various places of landfall along the coast before being finally drawn ashore at Maketu. As the author states in the introduction, the landmarks are dealt with "in chronological sequence of the first known history of each", and this can be a little confusing. It may have been better to deal with separate areas chronologically so that tribal names and genealogies had some logical sequence. However, in dealing with such a long period, such a large area and the odd inveterate travellers such as Mahanga and Hotonui,

no system would be perfect. Possibly the inclusion of a map or maps showing the various sites would have been helpful. The total area under Tainui influence is very large and, although the majority of landmarks described are in the northern King Country/Waikato basin area, the author has located historical sites in South Auckland, Hauraki Gulf, both coasts of the Coromandel Peninsula, Hauraki Plains, Tongaporutu and Mokau.

The earlier history, mostly 16th century, from Tawhao (p.17) to Mahanga (p.47) is very similar to Tainui. However, this is not specifically acknowledged, apart from the story of Mahanga's overtures to Te Aka Tawhia (p.45) where the author, without giving his own source, states "a different version of the story is recounted in Tainui". Kelly, in Tainui (p.113), gives Rore Eruera as his source with a chant included as further proof.

Occasionally a specific reference is given. For instance, for Piraunui (p.51) mention is made of Gudgeon's account, for Tukituki (p.55) a story by Anaru Makiwhara is used, for Kikowhakarere (p.62) the author questions an account in the J.P.S., for Awhitu (p.73) a description by H.J. Fletcher is mentioned, for Paetotara (p.75) the account is by Kahu te Kura, and for Taupirikauo (p.84) the last part of the story is a direct quote from Tainui.

There are a few other specific acknowledgements but the general lack of references is more upsetting when there are particular differences from Tainui. On p. 18, for instance, the author states "Ruaputahanga resolved to leave her husband from jealousy of the first wife, Apikura" whereas Kelly in Tainui (p.78) says that Ruaputahanga considered her husband was "showing a decided preference for Apakura, his second wife".

Interestingly, one other significant difference from Tainui is a direct quotation in Landmarks (p.17) from Pei Te Hurinui (who had a large input to Tainui) stating that, of the two sons of Tawhao, "the first child was named Turongo and the second Whatihua". (Turongo's mother, Marutehiakina; Whatihua's mother, Puniatekore.) Tainui (p.69 ff) has "the child of Maru-te-hiahina ...born first ...by name Whatihua" with Turongo born to "Punui-te-kore". Some comment from the author on these differences could have been expected.

One of the major contributions of this book is the locating on the ground of the sites mentioned in the various accounts. Once again, as few sources for the names of these places are given, it must be assumed the author has mostly used his own "best judgement" and there are bound to be many queries and arguments over the placing of some of these names, especially the earlier sites such as Purakau, Rangiatea and Rurunui.

The accounts of the later events such as the battles at Hingakaka, Te Karaka, Matakitaki and Taumatawiwi, are naturally much more detailed and the sketch maps of troop movements at Hingakaka are particularly full and interesting. These all took place after 1800 and it is natural that much more is known of the locations and people involved. Almost half the book deals with this period.

The N.Z. Archaeological Association Waikato File, which includes only part of the area covered in the book, has some 1,000 pa sites recorded and in that area Mr Phillips has located and named about 120 sites. Very few of those names, and not all the sites, are recorded in the Waikato File.

Mr Koro Wetere, in his foreword to Landmarks, says "this book may provoke disagreement, for the descendants of different ancestors will naturally wish to record their account as they have been told it. If so, their further contributions may add to our knowledge of the past". Putting oral histories into written form has the advantage of allowing argument and encourages other evidence to be produced and alternative stories to be told. The disadvantage, of course, as has happened with Grey's Nga Mahi a Nga Tupuna, is that once written the stories become accepted as facts.

Landmarks is a most attractively presented and very readable book; it is not only essential reading for all those interested in our early history and archaeology, but for local residents in the various areas who will learn more about their own districts. As Mr Wetere says in the foreword, "this book will inspire many New Zealanders to preserve the ancient marks of the Maori upon the land, and create a greater awareness and appreciation of our traditional history".

Mr Phillips must be congratulated not only for the painstaking research and enquiry this work has involved him in, but for being brave enough to publish these landmarks, to name them and give their associated histories. Not everyone will agree with him and we should expect some healthy and productive debate. We look forward to further publications and more landmarks being identified and discussed.

Neil Laurie

King, Michael (1989) Moriori - A People Rediscovered. Viking/Penguin Books, Auckland. 223 pp. \$44.95

Michael King has finally set the record straight about who the Moriori really were. The old popular myths have at last been dispelled for the general public. Unfortunately, in executing his commission to write Moriori, King may well have created two new fictions.

The stated purpose of the book is to set aside long-held misinformation and reveal the truth about the Moriori and what happened to them following the rediscovery of the islands by Lieutenant Broughton in 1791, and the arrival of the Maori in 1835. Much of the narrative history, from antiquity to modern day, has been written before, but never all in one place and never readily accessible to the general public.

Although the sequence of events is presented with the accuracy and clarity readers have come to expect from King, much of the evidence intended to change our perception both of the workings of traditional Moriori society and the disasters to which it succumbed, is unconvincing.

The book is in eleven chapters and the text is well supported with black and white photographs, an extensive bibliography, and detailed chapter notes and appendices. The chapters fall naturally into two parts of which the first, comprised of the prologue and chapters 1-3, describes the origins and history of the Moriori up to 1840.

Moriori prehistory is outlined in a straightforward, perhaps too simplistic, manner. King, like several scholars before him, clearly establishes that Moriori were solely those people who were the traditional inhabitants of the Chatham Islands. In doing this he clearly distinguishes them from the Moriori as conceived and popularised by Stephenson Percy Smith and Elsdon Best and puts the old myths to rest. King goes on to decide that the Moriori are very probably descended from the Maori and explains that in any event, like the Maori, they are typically East Polynesian in physiology, language, and material culture.

The general public may be well served, but most scholars will find the uncritical summary of the archaeological evidence and inferences, and the manner in which recorded oral traditions are used to complete the picture of pre-contact society, to be superficial and academically unacceptable. The approach may serve to enforce redress for the prejudice and bigotry the Moriori have had to endure in the past but there is a danger that it does more than correct the balance.

One might expect from an historian of King's experience a

far greater willingness to scrutinize. Instead one is presented with vague Rousseauist images of pre-contact society: they certainly help the storyline, but not the cause of history.

The first fiction, and much of the impact of the book, relies on the proposition that a people who had deliberately renounced killing each other some centuries before (according to Moriori tradition), and who said that they had developed a numerous harmonious and egalitarian society, were as a result as doomed as 'sheep in the fold' when the 'sanguinary' and 'restless' Ngati-Tama and Ngati-Mutungua Maori came down upon them in 1835.

However, this near-biblical scenario does not fit well with all the evidence. If Moriori had long since given up lethal fighting, why did they attack the first European visitors in 1791 with a variety of stone patu (now common in museum collections) and spears, only to be driven off by muskets? And why did they contemplate the same action against the invading Maori, as some Moriori witnesses conceded during the land hearings in 1870.

And what of the second fiction? It seems that the general public, led by the media, have accepted that King's finding somehow substantiate that the Moriori were decimated by the Ngati-Tama and Ngati-Mutungua.

Certainly the size of the Moriori population in 1835 of about 1700 makes a reduction to 300 or so in 1842 take on the appearance of a Polynesian 'holocaust', but the original figure, accepted uncritically by King, is taken from a list of names compiled by Moriori survivors in 1862, twenty seven years after the events, as part of a petition to Governor Grey for redress of grievances over land. It is obviously unwise to accept it as representing a census, especially without as much as a cautionary review. The list contains some clear duplication of names, is devoid of any evidence of genealogical relationships, and is dependant on memory and circumstance. There is no doubt that as many as three hundred Moriori were killed in the excesses of the process of Maori subjugation, but it is difficult to find in the traditional evidence a credible explanation for the loss of 1200 people in seven years, especially as some of the Maori chiefs, once assured of their supremacy, treated the Moriori quite well. The explanation offered, "despair at the loss of mana", is somewhat less than plausible and one is forced to conclude that the figures are significantly distorted.

Chapters 4-9 describe in sequence the wretched Auckland Islands colony in which Moriori participated with their Maori masters; the arrival of European settlers and missionaries, and their relationship with the remnant Moriori; the disastrous

Chatham Islands Land Court hearings; and the process of gradual disappearance of full-blooded Moriori.

As King makes it apparent, it was not so much the treatment of the Moriori during and immediately after the Maori invasions which sealed their fate, but rather the outcome of land claims in the early 1870s, as a result of which the Moriori were all but disinherited. The failure lay partly in a very ill-judged Moriori case and partly with the Government's 'hidden agenda'. In an ironic paradox, it was thought that the lure of title to land in the Chathams would siphon away support from the Taranaki prophetic leaders Whiti-O-Rongomai and Tohu Kakahi, whose passive resistance was frustrating the Taranaki land surveys.

In the epilogue King reinforces perhaps the major point of the book, the fact that the Moriori remain extant, with a growing number of part-descendants. As a popular history the book will obviously serve its stated purpose well and undoubtedly bolster the growing Moriori ethos. For others, however, it will be seen as a vehicle for political interference in tribal matters - interference that some will claim is based on a misinterpretation of tribal history and a mistaken identification of key players and events.

Roger Fyfe

- - - - -

Newman, Mary (1988) Archaeological Investigations in the Vicinity of Lake Rotoaira and the Lower Tongariro River 1966-1971. N.Z. Historic Places Trust Publication 21. 132pp. \$22.

It is difficult to review a report which is ten years out of date in style and lacks the substantive interpretative chapters which, it seems, will appear in a separate volume by Tony Batley. At least this publication removes the stigma of another unpublished exercise from N.Z. Historic Places Trust. Its usefulness was unfortunately bypassed in 1979 when a copy of the manuscript was not made available to the Forest Service at the time this reviewer was writing an archaeological management report for Rotoaira State Forest: a forest which lies in the study area.

Fourteen pages are used to describe the site survey by Trevor Hosking which recorded 187 sites. The site list and metric conversion use another twelve pages. The definitions are generally good.

An important point obscured by the definition of house pits is that many house floors have no depth and thus are clearly

not pits. The interior floor is enclosed on three sides by the built up earth bank or scarp or both and is often continuous with a terrace in front. Where the floor is sunken, it is not usually deeper than 10 cm. N112/131, listed as house pits, is an excellent example of seven house floors that have no depth.

We have to wonder also at the status of the records that have been left. N112/115 is listed in Appendix 1 as Post and Rail Fences, Te Henga. The site was re-recorded by Perry Fletcher in 1982 as house floor (9.4 x 4.5 m), shed, pits, sawpits, drain, dam, and a post and rail fence. There is a discrepancy here, either in the initial recording, in the transcription from someone else's notes to site record forms, or in the production of this volume.

It is heartening to learn that Hosking had the sense to burn off Opotaka before surveying it. The increased visibility of fine, shallow features and surface finds is amazing. Unfortunately, Opotaka had been well pig rooted and the gain was limited.

Twelve excavations are summarised filling between two and fourteen pages each. Clay is described in the stratigraphy of several features and test pits and we would like to know more about it. Clay is usually a weathered product of rocks and would be very unusual on the surface of a young volcanic landscape. I assume a fine tephra is referred to, similar to a greasy clay-like deposit at the north end of Rotoaira.

The large maps are unfinished. Why is there no title on the first foldout? This anonymous map would be much improved with some more contours, even at 500 ft intervals to show the distinction between the four mountains and the plains. The long lines of sites in several places could have been better explained in the script or even depicted on the map as following the prehistoric and historic forest edge. The second foldout appears to be called Lake Rotoaira but is actually Motuopuhi Island pa. The third foldout is titled but has no frame. A curious mismatch, spoilt for cost of a sheet of leterset. North, on the maps amidst the script, occasionally points up, sideways or down.

The volume was sent to this reviewer because of similarities to the Whirinaki Valley, another inland basin though smaller. The geography is similar, a pumice mantled landscape with podocarp forest and grasslands. The same sites lie along the old forest edge: scattered kainga with house floors and hangi, although rua are rare at Whirinaki. The same gunfighter constructions with flanking angle pits occur at Whirinaki and at Poutu (N112/24) where they do not seem to have been recognised and are written off in the conclusion. The re-use of a Maori village as a base for the Armed Constabulary

occurred with both Whitmore at Harema gunfighter pa in May 1869, and with McDonnell at Poutu in September 1869.

Publication removes part of the reporting load from DoC/NZHPT but the resulting 130 pages seem meagre for five years of Hosking's work and two of Newman's. It may have been better kept back and offered as a companion volume to Batley's work, although this approach seems to have already kept it on the shelf for twelve years.

Anyone who buys it will probably read it once and put it back on the shelf, but it will remain an essential reference for the central North Island.

Dave Nevin
