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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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REVIEW

Green, R. C. and M. Kelly (Eds), *Studies in Oceanic Culture History*, Volume 1. Pacific Anthropological Records No. 11, Department of Anthropology, Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu, Hawaii, 1971. \$US.6.00.

K. C. Gorbe

The papers presented at the Wenner-Gren Symposium on Oceanic Culture History held at Sigatoka, Fiji, in August 1969 will eventually fill three volumes. Volume 1 contains the contributions that relate mainly to Polynesia, while the two volumes yet to appear will cover other aspects of Oceanic prehistory. The type, figures, and maps are reproduced in a very clear manner. However, the binding is weak and constant reference to the volume results in individual pages coming loose.

Only one contribution to Volume 1, that of L. M. Groube, is directly concerned with New Zealand, and it is this paper that will be reviewed here, although Higham in his paper, "The Role of Economic Prehistory in the Interpretation of the Settlement of Oceania" reviews recent work done in the south of the South Island to point up the potential of economic archaeology in Polynesia.

Groube's paper discusses the origins and development of New Zealand prehistoric fortifications. He begins by considering the possible relationship between population development and the growth in the number of fortifications and having arrived at ideal figures, favours a very high increase in fortification building activity as early as the late 14th Century. In the second section, Groube first establishes a classification of pa based on defensive devices and then discusses the distribution of these different classes. He then goes on to link one portion of this distribution pattern with a consistent pattern of genealogical evidence and from this proposes that the Class 3 forts, defined by transverse and lateral bank and ditch arrangements developed on the west coast of Northland and were "exported" to other areas by "important internal migrations". A lengthy discussion of environmental potential zones follows which leads to the conclusion that dispute over cleared land in the northern zones would have led to the emergence of warfare.

To the archaeologist concerned mainly with the North Island, Groube's paper offers some solution to the problem of the pa. It will therefore be studied with interest. At many points specific criticisms will arise.

The classification of pa seems badly defined. Does a pa with transverse bank and ditch and oversteepened lateral scarp defences fall in Class 2 (transverse bank and ditch pa) or Class 3a (transverse and lateral bank and ditch pa with formal raised platform)? If in Class 2, then very many of the simple unit and unit cluster pa of Taranaki have apparently more affinity with the East Coast type of pa than with their truly "ring-ditch" neighbours. If they are Class 3, then a large number of sites in the South Waikato basin - Te Kuiti area are of Taranaki - West Coast type, a most confusing anomaly that challenges the "tightness" of the Class 3 distribution. It must also be observed that many truly ring-ditch, Class 3a sites were apparently built by Maniapoto - Waikato people, far from Taranaki, Bay of Plenty and North-west Coast areas. Similarly, placing Pouerua, N15/5, among Class 2 sites demonstrates the difficulty of classifying pa, for surely most archaeologists would place this large cone pa with the terraced sites (Class 1) of the Tamaki Isthmus.

Other criticisms will arise over the hypothetical nature of the population and pa number calculations, over the arguments on the emergence of warfare and probably over the traditional data. However, perhaps the most basic difficulty that many archaeologists will encounter will be in the scale of Groube's work, for here is offered a hypothesis of population development and internal migration that covers a huge area and many thousands of archaeological sites. The appeal of this paper to archaeologists will vary greatly. This variation of appeal will depend largely on how "tightly" different archaeologists frame the hypothesis they will test in their research work. Those who would normally work in a narrower sphere, moving where possible from tested hypothesis to tested hypothesis will find the grandeur of Groube's scheme disconcerting. One suspects that what Groube has proposed in this paper is so far-reaching that it will never be fully tested archaeologically.