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REVIEWS

Hamel, Jill. *The Archaeology of Otago.* Wellington, Department of Conservation, 2001. 226 pp.

McFadgen, Bruce. *Archaeology of the Wellington Conservancy: Kapiti-Horowhenua.* Wellington, Department of Conservation, 1997. 43 pp.

Walton, A. *Archaeology of the Taranaki-Wanganui Region.* Science for Conservation 154. Wellington, Department of Conservation, 2000. 52 pp.

The Department of Conservation is to be congratulated on the publication of these stand-alone, conservancy-based archaeological reports. Two of those reviewed here are by Department staff members; the third is from a long-time worker in Otago pre-European and historic archaeology.

Jill Hamel's is much the most substantial, and deserves most attention. The first half deals with Maori prehistory and archaeology, with an emphasis on economic and environmental matters. There are excellent summaries of the archaeological evidence for moa hunting and the exploitation of other birds, sea mammals, freshwater mussels, dog and kiore, each with a map showing the distribution of relevant sites. An account of stone resources available to Otago Maori in particular deals with silcrete, porcellanite and nephrite.

A section on settlement types that deals with just four defended pa in the whole region shows how different is the archaeological landscape to most of the North Island. In the last section, the Little Papanui, Long Beach, Whareakeake and Shag Point sites are introduced, where archaeological evidence illustrates change over time, before the author gives a general account of culture change ending with the impact of European settlement.

The second half of the book deals with the historical period. Whaling station dates are not all correct, the author being unaware of 1844-47 statistics in 'The New Zealand Spectator and Cook's Strait's Guardian' and other data. There is a pioneering summary of the archaeology of early pastoralism, beautifully illustrated from Blackstone Hill and other stations. This is a topic that is crying out for more work.

Three-quarters of this part of the book is concerned with gold mining, reflecting once again the disproportionate interest that is a wider problem in Australasian historical archaeology. The emphasis can be seen in the site distribution map. It is not that gold mining is not a fascinating topic, but that other topics deserve at least equal archaeological attention, in particular pastoralism and agriculture, and urban, civic and industrial Dunedin and the region's rural towns and villages.

That having been said, the chapters on alluvial and quartz mining, 20th century mining and the Chinese presence do give an excellent summary of the subject, superbly illustrated from the special Central Otago landscape. Pictures of lovely stone buildings (see the 1873 Serpentine Church, p. 140) and other sites are supplemented by Kevin Jones' detailed aerial shots.

'The Archaeology of Otago' is an outstanding introduction to the subject. The photographs in particular tell of the relationship of people with the landscape and resources of the region. There are however relatively few photographs in the first half of the book to give context to Maori sites and archaeological data. In the historical section every one of nearly 100 black and white pictures deserves its place. There is also a section of colour photographs of Maori and European sites.

In the introduction the Department of Conservation is credited with being in operation in the early 1980s, which is incorrect. 'Ngai Tahu' in the first half of the book is suddenly 'Kai Tahu' from page 103, and site numbers undergo a change from mostly metric to mostly imperial at the same time.

Tony Walton's work provides a useful summary of archaeological work carried out in the Wanganui Conservancy for people with little or no prior knowledge of the subject. The material is organised under resource use, settlement patterns, change and historical archaeology. Suggestions for a research agenda also have site protection implications. An 11 page bibliography is a useful start for anyone working in the region. Appendices list site surveys, excavations and radiocarbon

dates. There is a production glitch in the text on page 10, and inconsistent treatment of new chapters throughout.

Bruce McFadgen has produced a more particular report, which deals only with the dune-belt and related sites of the Horowhenua and Kapiti coasts. The approach is signalled by the sub-heading describing the work as, 'a prehistoric and palaeoenvironmental study'. An appendix lists radiocarbon dates obtained from sites in the Wellington Conservancy as a whole. While I found this report very interesting – perhaps because I knew less of the topic than the others – it did make me think about the purpose of these publications.

The most accessible of the three reports as a presentation of current knowledge and a call to action is Walton's, which should be useful to archaeologists and non-archaeologists alike. Hamel's report is more ambitious, and deserving of a wider readership than will be achieved by the format and restricted publication outlet. The Kapiti–Horowhenua publication is more limited in scope.

While there is something to be said for a variety of approaches according to the strengths and interests of authors, there is also an urgent need for standard, comprehensive and clear direction for planners and resource managers who know little or nothing of what is out there. The Department of Conservation may need to think more clearly about exactly what purpose the reports are to serve.

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Price, T. Douglas (ed.) 2000. *Europe's First Farmers*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. 395 pp. \$A59.00

This volume contains a series of papers (11) by archaeologists actively working on the questions of how, when and why did food production appear in Europe. For the most part the authors represent the 'middle-aged' archaeological view as opposed to the young post-processualist or the elder statesmen views, so there is no Renfrew nor Hodderites but there are Bogucki, Tringham, Price, Jochim, Zilhão, Zvelebil and other younger archaeologists. The papers cover the country from Tringham in the southeast, through Zilhão in Iberia, up to Woodman in Ireland and over to Price in Scandinavia.

The story is a very familiar one for Pacific archaeologists. We have Late Pleistocene/Early Holocene movement of obsidian across water (Lipari to Franchthi Cave) along with lots of other exotic materials moving around Europe suggesting considerable interaction; a sea of islands (Aegean) within very short sailing or paddling distance of each other and adjacent to an area where plants and animals are domesticated (Near East); difficulty in seeing evidence of early Holocene Mesolithic settlement; sudden appearance of ceramics, ground stone and settled villages over large areas of Europe including rapid movement along the sea coasts and comparatively rapid movement into mainland Europe (although the 3000 years required for the complete coverage of Europe is a little slow by Pacific standards); we even have a puzzling 'pause' in central Europe where for nearly 1000 years farmers lived to the south and east of a "stop line" and hunter-gathers to the north and west (p. 212). How did it all happen? We have colonisation models that suggest movements of new people into Europe from the east bringing their language, biology and culture – in particular domesticates. We have indigenous development models, which range from the extremes of the unlikely local development of domestics, through those who see adoption of new ideas diffusing from the east to those who see some new settlers interacting with indigenous populations who adopt the new ways but ultimately swamp out their teachers. Lately the indigenous development models have been getting more attention and one senses reluctance among many of these authors to let migration or colonisation have an important role. What then does this volume add to this old familiar tune, can we learn some new tricks that we can play locally?

What they do have is lots of data and in the last 20 years this has resulted in an increased appreciation of local variation in the archaeological record and the rejection of single mechanism explanations. Although most of the authors have differing models of how things happened in their areas they all acknowledged that things might be different over the hill. Given the size and diversity of Europe this would seem to be common sense. They also have lots of theoretical models or concepts and differing ways of thinking about how food production developed. Tringham begins by looking at the development from the point of view of the Mesolithic or indigenous inhabitants interacting with new food producing populations; this is thanks to the unique (her words) record of the Danube Iron Gates and the Lepinski Vir settlements. This is one of the few papers that can take this tack, the other being the Portuguese work reported by Zilhão, for in most areas they know little of what came immediately before. Tringham looks at the relationship between hunters and farmers in almost a structuralist fashion where she considers, without using these terms, the

'structure of the conjuncture' or how both parties may have altered each other, together creating as a product the first full-scale agricultural community in the area. Zvelebil and Lillie review earlier models and define a series of old and new concepts that they can use to talk about the problem. These include models of different forms of population transfer: *demic diffusion*, *folk migration*, *elite dominance*, *infiltration*, *leapfrog colonization* and *individual frontier mobility* as well as what is presented as an alternative to the general theories of colonisation and indigenous development which he calls an *availability model* that accommodates the role of the pre-existing populations. I will leave you to discover the details of these models as well as Bogucki's venture into the theory of complex adaptive systems which have self organizing agents that can transcend themselves and take on new collective characteristics- his agents are longhouses. How all this theorizing gets us ahead is often not clear but it is stimulating reading. I found it hard at times to hear the ease with which they talked about Mesolithic and Neolithic social systems, residence rules, trade and exchange, etc. when I have trouble divining descent, authority and exchange systems in the historic period in the Solomons. It is occasionally hard to know if we have really got beyond the 60s.

They do have better data though, although at times the radiocarbon dating seemed a little loose, with easy comparisons being made between unspecified charcoal, shell and human bone collagen when trying to separate out the chronology of the transition. Barnett with his paper on Ireland and Britain did however have a clear message about the problems of dating the development of food production. Many of his points although fundamental are poorly appreciated by archaeologists – he notes the unwarranted surprise archaeologists often have when dating large samples from the same event; the poorly reported context for most dates; old wood problems; and the estimate that pollen dates (used to determine clearance) are only accurate to half a millennium (p 227). In sum he believes that the greatest methodological problem facing people looking at the Mesolithic/Neolithic boundary is their inability to generate fine enough chronologies to answer their questions. All sounds familiar.

My favourite paper is by my friend the Portuguese archaeologist João Zilhão. João is able to make use of a large and relatively modern dataset that his hard working team and teams from North America have put together over the last 20 years. In particular the skeletal data (isotopic and morphological) from Mary Jackes and David Lubell's study of the large skeletal samples from the Muge shell middens and other sites which span the Mesolithic/Neolithic transition allow the Portuguese to look at biological evidence for replacement or

introduction of new populations. Of course even here we get contradictory interpretations and argument about the meaning of the data. On archaeological grounds João sees a clear example of “maritime pioneer colonisation” by new populations while Lubell and Jackes see evidence of continuity. Perhaps we need to wait for DNA. Having worked on three of the sites mentioned in his close-up study of developments on the Alentejo coast I would say that some care is needed in the definition of site types. The Medo Tejeiro site is a thick shell midden almost devoid of artefacts (like some late Maori shell middens) while the other two sites he refers to as shell middens have in fact few shells and are large living sites with abundant artefacts. Whether Medo Tejeiro is a Neolithic site is a moot point as the lack of artefacts precludes any assignment other than on age, although it is not like the artefact rich Mesolithic shell middens on the Tagus.

I think Pacific archaeologists will find this volume of considerable interest. We get mentioned more than any other area outside of Europe with references to Kirch, Irwin, Anderson, and Terrell and perhaps we should return the favour by seeing what insights we might draw from the European study of familiar problems. At the moment they seem to think that things were complex, simple models won't do and drivers are social and ideological -at least given their reading of the Pacific literature.

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Doutre, Martin. *Ancient Celtic New Zealand*. Auckland. De Danaan Publishers, 1999. 288 pp.,bib.,figs.,photos. NZ\$74.95.

For the true Mathematical Science is that which measureth the invisible lines and immeasurable beams which can pass through clod, and turf; hill and dale. It was for this reason that, it was accounted by all ancient Priests the chiefest Science; for it gave them power, both in their words and works.

Dr John Dee, *Mathematical Preface*

It comes as no surprise that given the general and world-wide popularity of ‘hidden histories’ and associated works of pseudo, fringe or ‘gonzo’ archaeology, it would only be a matter of time before New Zealand’s own

prehistoric past was given the white-robed,, bearded, summer-solstice once-over. In this vein, Martin Doutre's *Ancient Celtic New Zealand* attempts to do for the study of this country's prehistory what Barry Fell's *America BC* (1978) and similar works have done for other parts of the world; namely promote an earlier discovery and occupation thereof by people from Europe and/or the Middle East, prior to the arrival of those groups currently acknowledged as native, indigenous or 'First' peoples.

Doutre's work is by no means the first to advance these theories for New Zealand. Indeed his ideas have an historical precedent in the works of many early European commentators, as well as more recent authors, who have spun together tales of a pre-Maori (or pre-Polynesian) occupation of New Zealand. The first inhabitants are often portrayed as simple, peaceful and wise and variously described as Moa-Hunters, Morihu, Waitaha, or Moriori, American Indians, Phoenicians, Celts, Scots, Jews - of the lost tribes of Israel, and Atlanteans (or their brethren from the lost continent of Mu). The basis of these ideas lies typically in tantalising but flimsy references in Maori oral tradition to earlier inhabitants barely remembered (the Waitaha of the South Island, or the fairy-like "caucasoid pygmies" known as the Turehu (Doutre 1999: 28,53-54), along with the occurrence of peculiar and mysterious practices, structures and artefacts bearing little apparent resemblance to Classic Maori material culture; fair game for the context-dispensing hyper-diffusionist parlour game of 'spot the superficial association'.

Ancient Celtic New Zealand however, is a work apart in its explicit attempts to be scientific by way of the 'archaeological' surveying and computer-aided analysis of several locations around New Zealand, within a framework of archaeo-astronomy (this can be opposed to works of purely archival research, cf. Cook and Brown 2000, Wiseman 1998). Doutre begins with a brief explanation of his interests in alternative histories before outlining the fieldwork undertaken in the pursuit of his thesis. He describes various fieldtrips and more extended surveying sessions at various sites in the North Island, with particular reference to the Waipoua Forest 'stone city' and the Puketapu and Waitapu 'stone observatories' near Maunganui in the Far North. The latter two locations, areas of scattered stone mounds and larger individual stones, form the backbone of his research. Further sections of the book outline the relationship between the dimensions and 'sacred geometries' of the stone observatories of Northland and the biblical Temple of Solomon, Stonehenge, the Great Pyramid of Egypt and various other structures and archaeological artefacts from around the world. The final section touches on voyaging, the distortion of druidic history by the

Romans and other commentators, Silbury Hill, Egyptian monuments, Carnac and the Miringa te Kakara 'cross-house', before concluding that New Zealand's real prehistory has been the object of systematic obfuscation and distortion. The original settlers (on the basis of shared sacred geometries and numerous other associations) were a group of wide-ranging and culturally advanced 'megalithic pre-Celts'. These people were later viciously eradicated by the 'Fleet' or 'Warrior' Maori after the latter had learn't all the best aspects of the former's culture and had no further use for their teachers. The authors of this vast conspiracy are a sundry cabal of academics ('the educated elite', 'moral cowards'), lap-dog pols and public servants, along with the Maori special interest groups who crack the whip for pecuniary and political gain. *Ancient Celtic New Zealand* closes with an appeal to reputable foreign researchers (presumably having no need to kowtow to the illuminati and lacking the post-colonial baggage which burdens local scholars) to come to New Zealand and uncover the truth (Doutre 1999: 18-21, 279-284).

The book itself is lavishly illustrated and almost every one of its 288 pages sport colour or black and white photographs, CAD drawings or other figures. The number of illustrations and the hard binding of the book are reflected in the sticker price of NZ\$74.95, which will put it out of the range of many casual readers (A CD-ROM edition is available albeit at the same price as the book; both items being sold by mail-order through the publishers website, www.celticnz.co.nz). The book is let down somewhat by its idiosyncratic production values: there are no chapters as such in *Ancient Celtic New Zealand*, rather the book is divided into more than one hundred sections ranging from a single paragraph to several pages in length (these are listed at the start of the book). There is no table of figures or plates and the sources of the latter are only partially referenced, while the CAD-figures that form the backbone of the work lack any indication of scale. More damning, given the sheer breadth of the work and the disparate nature of the material covered, is the lack of an index, making it particularly difficult to re-locate some of Doutre's more interesting claims and observations. Another unusual aspect of the book's production is the sheer number and nature of common words and expressions that the author has felt the need to emphasize by emboldening or inverted commas (or both); this can make for a mentally jarring read at times.

But what about Doutre's hypothesis, the science behind it, and the evidence for it? Pseudo-archaeology typically tries to pass itself off as being archaeological, but in practice the pseudo-archaeologist violates critical, and even defining, concepts of archaeology. Methods are hazy and never made explicit, years of

scientific archaeology are actively ignored, seemingly enigmatic finds or features are produced out of context, and professional archaeologists are scoffed at or denigrated. Unfortunately, pseudo-archaeologists are likely to receive relatively more attention in the mainstream media because their works are often more fun and more accessible than the real thing. In these respects, *Ancient Celtic New Zealand* could stand as the type-specimen for this sort of writing and perhaps should be on the reading list for every general or New Zealand archaeology course as an object lesson on how things should not be done.

The methodology used to generate Doutre's astounding conclusions is never fully explicated. The stone observatories are analysed by counting and mapping the position of the cairns by tape and dumpy level, searching for any sacred geometry in their spatial patterning and if found, observing whether these patterns align with more distant prominent landscape features, compass points or astronomical events (Doutre 1999: 64-81, 85-106). How the geometric patterns illustrated in *Ancient Celtic New Zealand* are derived remains something of a mystery, and the generation of the 'Eight Pointed Star of Isis', the 'Grand Cross', the 'Twelve Pointed Star of Gilgal', the 'Cross of Set' or the 'Holy Rectangles' (Doutre 1999: 85-109) seems little more than a matter of connecting the dots, and even then, the lines miss more often than not! If Doutre wanted prove his thesis he perhaps should have started by determining whether the stones were distributed in a natural or random fashion or otherwise. This would seem to be of vital importance yet no attempt is made to test for spatial randomness. Even if the patterns Doutre sees do exist within the stones, and even if they could be shown to have some kind of astronomical association, the question remains why Doutre seeks their genesis in Neolithic Europe and the megalithic monuments of Wiltshire rather than somewhere closer to home. Thorpe (1981) has found that it is extremely unusual for any people, regardless of their technology or type and scale of society, not to take an interest in the heavens. In that case, if the 'stone observatories' are just that, why could it have not been the Maori, season-dependant and aware gardeners and sailors, who built them? In any case, the sophisticated astronomical alignments that Doutre believes to occur at places like Stonehenge simply do not exist (Ruggles 1997). It would seem then that in Doutre's hands, Occam's razor requires some sharpening.

Ancient Celtic New Zealand ignores fifty years of sustained and systematic scientific inquiry into New Zealand's prehistoric past, along with that of the wider South Pacific, while making continual reference to Victorian science and lore and the writings of authors with no background in the archaeology and

anthropology of the region. In a bibliography containing more than 150 references, only six of the primary references concerning New Zealand prehistory were published in the last 25 years. A grasp of the relevant and contextualising archaeological data is fundamentally lacking in *Ancient Celtic New Zealand*, and complimentary linguistic and biological findings suffer likewise. Beyond the anthropological specifics, the simple appreciation that cultures are not static, that they can and do change, is absent. This is nowhere better illustrated than in the picture Doutré paints of Maori culture, of which more is mentioned shortly.

Accusations of scholastic perfidy also abound in *Ancient Celtic New Zealand* but Doutré's insistence on the existence of a massive academic conspiracy is blindly ignorant of the current realities in Academia: scholars barely have time enough to engage in their own research, let alone engage in a cover-up of anyone else's. Even if academics were so inclined, Doutré ignores the fact that one of the best ways to climb to the top of the Ivory Tower is over the bloodied corpses of one's colleagues discredited scholarship and that blowing the lid off a cover-up of this magnitude would surely be a coup of career-establishing proportions, if not necessarily here in New Zealand then certainly somewhere else, as an ex-pat archaeologist crying in the wilderness. Public servants are treated no more kindly and the author's paranoia often runs rampant. The need to calibrate radiocarbon dates is turned into a Department of Conservation-led conspiracy, and his DoC-daring secret raid on archaeological sites at Waipoua reads like a scene from a pulp spy novel; one would think that he and his band of fellow travelers were infiltrating Area 51, as opposed to a rather more prosaic state forest. That the Institute for Geological and Nuclear Sciences balked at radiocarbon dating illicitly obtained human skeletal material obtained by an unnamed acquaintance, is portrayed as scandalous. Doutré sees this refusal by IGNS as part of a wider scheme to ignore or expunge any trace of a pre-Maori occupation of New Zealand, rather than the Institute attempting to act according to the laws of the land; laws established precisely to prevent the destruction of the nation's cultural heritage by fossickers, bottle-diggers and grave-robbers (not to mention other even less savory types, developers for example).

But perhaps the most disturbing thing about this book is not the moth-eaten faux-science, which can be refuted with a modicum of effort by any one with a mind to. Rather it is the book's underlying agenda and ultimate objectives that worry this reviewer. It becomes apparent in the course of reading *Ancient Celtic New Zealand* that Doutré's aim is not to simply promote an interesting alternative explanation for New Zealand's earliest prehistory, but to actively

deny the culture and achievements of the Maori people and their Polynesian ancestors. In his view they had '...no apparent ability to traverse large tracts of Ocean...' and their presence in New Zealand might have been the result of '...importation of a workforce to dig canals' by [white] Celtic privateers or traders (Doutre 1999: 224-226). Various aspects of Maori culture are described as being far too complicated for Maori to have come up with on their own and hence, worked greenstone adzes and meres, pendants, needles, ornamental jewellery and other items must have been acquired as war booty:

'The true scenario...is that Maori simply occupied the villages and buildings of the former population after the annihilation or vanquishment of that civilization. The Maori victors, thereafter, had little need to build, carve or create anything.' (Doutre 1999: 276)

When the [civilized, white] Europeans, distant cousins of the original pre-Celtic inhabitants of New Zealand, returned in the late 18th century, Maori simply got what was coming to them. Thus, *Ancient Celtic New Zealand* is at its heart an elaborate extension or reworking of 'The Great New Zealand Myth' (cf. Simmons 1976), but with successive waves of ancient, advanced, and peace-loving Britons, Firbolgs, Celts and sundry hangers-on replacing the Moriori. Liberally added to this spicy mix is a blindly ignorant old-time hyper-diffusionism and just a dash of modern New Age mysticism.

Martin Doutre has put an undeniable amount of passion, time and effort into writing and publishing *Ancient Celtic New Zealand* and the book can be appreciated as a concrete manifestation of one man's determination to make himself heard in the face of, if not a giant academic conspiracy, then at least, a general indifference on the part of various archaeologists, historians, academics, government officials and the population at large. Nevertheless, *Ancient Celtic New Zealand* is ultimately an angry and pernicious work, and very much part of a kind of anti-academic and anti-indigenous revisionist pop-history writing also appearing in Australia and North America. As it veers into the polemical and rails against 'Official Historians' and their politically motivated and indigenous-appeasing, treaty-tricking, hiding-of-the-truth, the book seems explicitly designed to appeal to the 'angry white male' faction of modern society; disconnected from its own past, secretly shamed by and willingly ignorant of the actions of its forbears, jealous of the compensation, column space, and airtime given to Maori, and desirous of a return to its past primacy.

To this pitiable and put-upon, disenfranchised and emasculated group *Ancient Celtic New Zealand* offers a far more palatable history than the real thing.

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Whybrow, Peter J. (Ed). *Travels with the Fossil Hunters*. Cambridge University Press, 2000. 212 pp. Hardback \$A69.95.

Travels with the Fossil Hunters is a collection of accounts of fossil hunting adventures told by British palaeontologists from the Natural History Museum in London. It is a large format 'coffee table' book, beautifully designed with many large colour photos and with its foreword by David Attenborough is certain to appeal to a wide lay readership. The romantic notion of the dusty khaki-shorted palaeontologist chipping away in some remote corner of the globe is reinforced, but the individual accounts of the many hardships (especially in the food department - rancid yak butter, live goldfish [well sort of singed] and in almost every account, sand in sandwiches), and also triumphs of discovery make for compelling reading.

Chapter headings such as 'Across Tibet by jeep, pony and foot', 'Fishing - and some dinosaurs - in the Sahara' 'Digging for dragons in China' and 'Ancient bones in the frozen continent' give some idea of the geographic breadth of the narratives. Each account is written in a lively and intelligent manner, explaining

in simple terms the purpose of the scientific research, be it the hunt for fossil bryozoans on the Deccan Plateau in India or neanderthal bones in a Gibraltar cave. The stories are also about the hardships and deprivations of being in the field in a strange country. The problems with privacy when you are miles from anywhere in the middle of a featureless desert seem to crop up quite a lot, as are the accounts of strange meals and illnesses. Coping with heat or cold, unreliable vehicles and suspicious locals and government officials will all be familiar to archaeologists who also work in the field in strange places.

The 'Afterword' in this book is taken from an anonymous review of the manuscript.

'Much of this book is about experiences of British palaeontologists in foreign countries. It would be nice to have had a chapter in the same style about the recovery of fossils in Britain, written by someone from, say, Africa or Asia who would indicate how supremely ridiculous are the British.'

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