



NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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BOOK REVIEWS

World Prehistory. An Outline. Grahame Clark.

The title sounds rather ambitious; let us see what the author has to say about our part of the world. Well, there is a reference to the colonisation of Polynesia and a mention of the first Polynesian settlers of New Zealand hunting moas. We may wonder why he did not mention "Old X" finding that lintel in the swamp, or "Y's" excavation of that Pa. But, on reflection, he could not, because nothing has been published about them. In fact probably the only New Zealand monograph available to Clark would be Duff's megalithic work "The Moa-Hunter Period of Maori Culture", reflected in the mention of moa hunting. Even "Anthropology in the South Seas" would probably not have been available at the time of writing.

We must turn then to what is said about the rest of the world and here is the point of the whole book, because it is the balanced perspective, which it gives, that is so important. Certain specialists in various fields may query specific details, but these do not affect the total scheme. We can hope that the vigorous world of prehistory will produce new ideas and alter existing schemes, but these cannot diminish the importance of a world-wide perspective, against which one may see one's own area or period. Grahame Clark has not merely provided the first complete study, but, more important, he has given us one which is objective and free from the padding of vacant spaces with hypotheses. We may be certain that this book is based entirely upon the study of relevant evidence, subjected to the highest standards of critical evaluation by both a scholar and a gifted, practical archaeologist.

This is a book which is useful to the specialist prehistorian, as well as to anyone interested in the background to the history of mankind. And it might well be adapted as an introduction to prehistory for use in schools, now that prehistory is a subject worth studying in its own right.

F.W. Shawcross.

Asian Perspectives. Edited by Wilhelm G. Solheim II. London, Oxford University Press. Price (U.K.) £1 17s 6d.

In the past five years Asian Perspectives has achieved status as the major journal for Pacific Archaeology, filling a serious gap in the growing list of special journals with regional interests. In no small measure its success to date is due to the efforts of its Editor, Dr. Solheim II. However, until its financial problems are solved, its future is not ensured.

Archaeologists in New Zealand, amateur or professional, who desire to keep abreast of and support the now rapidly developing research efforts in Pacific and Far-Eastern Prehistory, should become both readers of and subscribers to this journal of the Far-Eastern Prehistory Association.

There can be little doubt from my contacts with the Association's membership, that there is in New Zealand a genuine interest in developments in Pacific archaeology and an earnest desire to be able to follow these developments. It is not reflected by New Zealand subscriptions to Asian Perspectives, however, the journal most adequately designed to satisfy this desire. The lines of communication are easily opened through this journal, but communication is after all a two-way process. In this case it is in danger of breaking down unless more subscriptions flow in one direction and Asian Perspectives in the other. The journal's main stumbling blocks to date are finances, due largely to the smallness of its list of regular subscribers. Those who are interested in Pacific archaeology have also, I believe, a responsibility to become subscribers in order to further the broad base which any venture such as this needs to ensure its continued success.

Asian Perspectives is not a journal of detailed site reports, but our newsletter on a bolder scale. The policy is to provide in one issue summaries of the previous year's research and current work in progress. These summary articles and their implications are written by specialists working in each of some twenty regions into which the Far East and Pacific have been divided. Included in these regions are New Zealand, covered by Dr. Roger Duff, and Polynesia, covered by Dr. R.C. Suggs, both of direct local interest. There are as well, reports on Micronesia, Melanesia, New Guinea, Indonesia and Australia, for those with a broader view of Pacific prehistory. For those whose interests also include the Far East, where linguistic and political barriers frequently stand in the way of adequate communication, the section on Japan, Formosa, the Chinese mainland, Northeast and Southeast Asia

are invaluable. As each report is a summary, the value of each is greatly enhanced by excellent bibliographies, often annotated, covering the full range of articles and books issued during the year bearing on the prehistory of the region in question. Finally in each issue, brief original articles, and topical reports with bibliographies on Trans-Pacific Contacts, Linguistics and Human Geography also appear.

The second issue of the year is intended to provide a volume of original articles, wherever possible oriented around some general theme, subject, or conference. To date an excellent Special Palaeolithic Issue and an issue on Sa-hieynh Pottery Relationships in Southeast Asia have appeared as separate numbers, while the last volume contained important articles on Korean and Hong Kong archaeology, and a translation of an article on the Palaeolithic of the Trans-Baikal by the Russian authority, Okladnikov.

By placing an order of £1 17s 6d with the Oxford University Press, Amer House, E.C.4, London, 200-250 pages per year devoted to Pacific and Far-Eastern archaeology are yours. Volume IV for 1960 was issued in December 1961, and is still available, Volume V for 1961 will appear shortly.

Roger C. Green.

Prehistoric Man. Josef Augusta, illus. Zdenek Burian. Trans. Margaret Schierl. London, Paul Hamlyn. 1960. 150 pp. 52 plates. Price (N.Z.) 32s 6d.

"Since the dawn of history Man has been interested in the mystery of his origin". This, the opening sentence of the work, sets the tone of the volume.

In the first chapter "Man Considers Himself", Augusta deals lucidly and briefly with an historical summary of the concepts of man's origin and development. The progression from the first appearance of prehistoric man to late Palaeolithic man is an account which is both easy to read and interesting.

The largest portion of the book consists of full-page well printed and coloured reconstructions with opposite-page notes and explanations presenting similar but more detailed information than that available in the main text.

Simplification and condensation of material usually lead to certain inaccuracies which do exist in this work. On the whole they are of minor importance and detract little from the volume's value. It is disappointing however, that it was in the hands of the publisher at the time of the Leakeys' early finds in the Olduvai Gorge and so these are not included to give a more rounded treatment.

This is a book which will be of considerable fascination to younger readers and provide a good general survey for those interested in the development of man, especially in Europe, to the beginning of the Neolithic.

H.J.R. Brown

The Dawn of Civilization, Edited by Stuart Piggott. London, Thames and Hudson, 1961. 404 pp, 940 illustrations; 172 colour plates, 110 reconstructions, 645 photographs and drawings, 48 maps and tables. Price (N.Z.) 196/-

Stuart Piggot has accomplished a remarkable task in editing this superb volume which will always stand not only as one of the world's outstanding publications, but also as a major British contribution to the documentation of pre-history for both the layman and professional archaeologist.

Great care has gone into its presentation - the buff paper symbolic of antiquity and "dirt archaeology", and a multitude of illustrations (940) in high quality colour, of artists' reconstructions and photographs and well illuminated relief textured black and white photographs. Maps, diagrams and reconstructions are accurate, and time sequences and tables are clearly laid out to give the greatest clarity and utmost understanding to the respective chapters. Of greatest importance is that all illustrations are credited with the find-spot and present location of the objects illustrated, wherever this is possible.

To single out one or two authors for special comment would do a great injustice to the others, as the text is generally of a high standard. Authorities in their own fields have contributed chapters on aspects of archaeology that they have been closely associated with for many years, so that the volume is a summary of the work and present conclusions of fourteen of the world's foremost archaeologists.

To regard the text as elementary is far from correct.

Each sentence is packed with meaningful interpretation and description but always expressed with such clarity that all can understand.

Those readers wishing to find sections on Africa, Japan and the Pacific will be disappointed. They are omitted, and mention of North America is only brief. Some people may argue that these should have been included. They did not attain the standard Piggott set for civilization - "a society which has worked out a solution to the problem of living in a relatively large permanent community, at a level of technological and social development above that of the hunting band, the family farmstead, the rustic, self-sufficient village or the pastoral tribe". It is unfortunate that a more liberal definition was not evolved to give a more complete survey, and so allow the inclusion of those areas omitted. Then the sub-title ("The First World Survey of Human Cultures in Early Times") would have been a true indication of the contents, provided the word "first" was omitted, for the volume is not truly a "world survey of human cultures in early times".

Despite this problem and the occasional irritating question in the back of the reader's mind, "Where was this carried to, and what people did it affect?", this is a magnificent publication which has achieved its two basic purposes of "not only to inform, but also to excite".

H.J.R. Brown.

Sons of the Shaking Earth. Eric R. Wolf. Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1959. 299 pp. Price (U.S.) 5.00.

Having specialised in American archaeology before arriving on the Pacific scene, I am often called on to recommend to students and Association members a book on the prehistory of Middle America which they could read with profit and pleasure. Until the publication of Sons of the Shaking Earth no popular book existed which adequately filled this gap. Middle American history was served with works that dealt either with specific aspects of time, or with particular areas, i.e. the Central Mexican highland or Mayan lowland. Even these had their limitations in that some were considerably dated in their information, and others too specialised for the reader who wished a more unified and general picture.

It is therefore gratifying that a book should appear which grasps as an interrelated whole, the geography, language, prehistory, and history of Mexico and Guatemala, and traces the ebb and flow of its culture and peoples from their earliest beginnings to the present day. This is accomplished in a text uncluttered by footnotes, but with every indication that the literature cited in the excellent bibliographic notes at the end has been digested and integrated into the story. However, beyond these aspects of scholarship so important to the student of any area, there is that quality necessary to the appeal of any popular book: a style of expression which so enhances the narrative that the reading of the book itself is a pleasure. This is one of that rare species of popular books written by the professional student of an area in which the transition from prehistory to history is of one piece, the presentation equal to the scholarship, and the result eminently readable.

Roger C. Green.

A LIST OF PAPERBACKS ON ARCHAEOLOGY AND PREHISTORY

By I. Free

Author	Title	Publisher	Price
Albright W.F.	Archaeology of Palestine	Penguin	4/9
"	From the Stone Age to Christianity	Anchor	12/6
Allegro J.M.	The Dead Sea Scrolls	Penguin	4/9
Atkinson R.J.C.	Stonehenge	Penguin	6/3
Bark W.C.	The Origins of the Medieval World	Anchor	9/9
Chadwick J.	The Decipherment of Linear B	Penguin	4/9
Chiera E.	They Wrote on Clay	Phoenix	13/6
* Childe V.G.	New Light on the Most Ancient East	Evergreen	17/6
* "	Prehistory of European Society	Penguin	4/9
"	What Happened in History	"	4/9