



NEW ZEALAND
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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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On the east bank of the Maarewhemua River about three miles from Duntroun is a shelter on a prominent outcrop above the farmhouse of Mr. W. Harvey. This features a large three feet tall human figure outlined in black with spiral body decorations and a pendent form suspended from the arm.

Awamoko Creek : (210 - 225)

Several shelters have been found on both banks of the stream. These feature mainly naturalistic bird forms, profile and front view human figures usually in black. The Kokoamu shelter has been recorded by Stevenson and has several bird forms. A boulder on the opposite side of the creek features similar forms and some profile figures. Further upstream is a very small single line drawing interesting in that it has a definite composition of three figures, two profiles draw above a front view human form. Just north of Tokarahi, high above the road, is a boulder face covered with the badly flaked remains of many drawings in black with a more recent highly stylised bird form overlying.

This account is by no means exhaustive, but is intended to convey some idea of the nature and extent of the drawings.

Ambrose and Davis, 1958-60 'National Historic Places Trust Annual Reports'.
Stevenson, G.B. 1947 'Maori and Pakeha in North Otago'.

N.Z. Journal Of Geology and Geophysics: Vol.5 no.1 (Feb. 1962) pp.55-73.

Maori Occupation Layers at D'Urville Island, New Zealand. H.W. Wellman.

In this paper Dr Wellman describes his investigations of beach sites on D'Urville Island. Although his technique is not clearly explained, he details his section through sand-dunes and reaches the conclusion that there are two well-defined occupation layers at many places on the western side of the island. Altogether he discusses and details fifteen sections. In three of these Taupo pumice (about 1800yrs B.P.) occurs as a primary deposit. Assuming a constant rate of accumulation above this, he concludes that the first occupation occurred about 1000A.D. and the other, 1500A.D. These tentative dates may have to be revised when radio-carbon samples have been processed. The older occupation layer contains broken moa bones, many flakes of "baked argillite", and a few obsidian fragments, whilst the younger contains abundant barracuda bones, relatively few "baked argillite" flakes and no moa bones. On this evidence he rightly surmises that the earlier people ate the moa which became exterminated, and possibly also traded in argillite artifacts. The later people lived a different life on exposed headlands where they could defend themselves from possible attack, ate only fish and did only little trade in argillite. Even later occupations of the island extending down to historic times was mostly on the eastern and southern parts of the island.

Dr Wellman attaches great importance to a layer of gravel which lies immediately below the first occupation level and he concludes that this was deposited by the first inhabitants for the purpose of kumara growing. This, if correct, is further proof of the antiquity of kumara growing and is opposed to the traditional view.

The topography of the island is succinctly described together with the eleven "baked argillite" quarry sites and their possible relationship to his 'occupation layers'. His discussion on hydrothermally metamorphosed argillite is easily understood and he simply settles for "baked argillite" as the term to describe the stone used in the manufacture of artifacts. This term or even the descriptive term "axite", will have an immediate appeal to the archaeologist who has no geological pretensions.

One has the feeling that the 'two' occupation layers described should not be taken too literally as he points out that it is possible that an excavation which does not rely entirely on sections may reveal that each of these two layers is subdivided into closely related (in time) levels. He is speaking very broadly when he says 'two', and this means only an early and a later period of occupation. Whether these are separate phases of culture or different aspects of the same culture cannot be determined on the evidence presented, nor is there any pretence on Dr Wellman's part to claim that it is possible to distinguish anything more than 'earlier' and 'later' on this evidence. He does not, moreover, consign these to mythical cultures. He does, however, give a tantalising hint of the possible outcome of systematic excavation on D'Urville Island. A popular summary of his investigations appears in the N.Z. LISTENER of 7 Sept., 1962.

A.G. Buist.

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from June 1961

Newsletter articles are not included.

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"The pre-European native populations ... can be held responsible for reducing the native forests to approximately half their primeval area."
- Cumberland, K.B. 'Climatic change' or cultural interference. New Zealand in moahunter times. In McCaskill, M., ed. Land and livelihood; geographical essays in honour of George Jobberns. Chch, N.Z. Geographical Society, 1962. pp.88-142.
A critical examination of the contentions of Raeside, Holloway and others, that N.Z.'s climate changed fairly abruptly ca.1200 A.D. Cumberland, while not denying the possibility of such change, argues that by the use of fire the moahunter was an "important ... agent in changing the face of the land."
- Cumberland, K.B. Man in nature in New Zealand. In N.Z. Geographer v.17 no.2 (Oct 1961) pp.137-54.
Traces the course from Archaic Maori times to the present day, of how man has "interfered significantly with [his] environment."
- Cumberland, K.B. Moas and men; New Zealand about A.D. 1250. In Geographical Review v.52 no.2 (Apr 1962) pp.151-73.
"An endeavour to reconstruct the geography of ... New Zealand at the advent of its first human inhabitants; to trace the character, course, and outcome of their contact with nature; and to describe their culture, economy and settlement about A.D. 1250. The study relies heavily on the growing body of archaeological evidence, but it is also in part imaginative and speculative."