



NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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/>.

REVIEWS : A GUIDE FOR SALVAGE ARCHAEOLOGY

Fred Wendorf. Museum of New Mexico Press, Santa Fe, 1962. 128 pp.

To all who have witnessed the destruction of relics of our archaeological heritage through the unprecedented technological developments of the 20th Century, this book will be a comfort and an inspiration. It is the work of a man who is able to bring to bear, not only his own considerable knowledge of salvage archaeology in the United States and Egypt, but his apparent ability to cover his subject so selectively yet comprehensively.

The reader is introduced to salvage archaeology in the introduction by J.O. Brew, Director of Peabody Museum, Harvard University, in which he traces the development of archaeological salvage on a world scale with frequent references to sites of historic or archaeological interest under current threat of destruction. After taking a dismayed look at the "thoughtless despoliation" of the times in which we live, the author attempts to show how salvage archaeology has emerged as a formal, well defined sub-discipline of archaeological research in the United States.

The text focuses attention on the three major programs of archaeological salvage in the United States: River Basin, Pipeline and Highway Salvage Archaeology. For each of these, the author gives a detailed account of the background, legal basis, administration and field operations, and concludes with a lengthy definition of salvage archaeology. There are numerous full-page illustrations, four appendices containing statutes of the U.S. Federal Government pertaining to salvage archaeology, various policy statements, typical contracts for salvage projects, etc., and a bibliography.

This book succeeds in presenting a credible and vivid impression of the historic, legal and practical or methodological aspects of salvage archaeology. Although Wendorf has drawn heavily on Southwestern material, there is much in this concise guide of special significance to New Zealand in view of recent general interest in salvage archaeology here.

From my own observation, there is much that must be done to meet the increasing need for organized salvage work in New Zealand. Apart from efforts by the Auckland Archaeology Society to preserve earthworks on Auckland's volcanic cones and the pioneering salvage work of W. Ambrose and F. Davis at Benmore, there is little awareness of the concept salvage archaeology in New Zealand.

To the reviewer, it seems that the most important lesson to be learned from this book is simply this: that salvage archaeology can be more than a series of emergency rescue operations. Though there is no doubt that a sense of expediency is inevitable in salvagework, Wendorf has shown that carefully planned agreements between various co-operating agencies, governmental or private, can lead to results that compare favorably in terms of scope, completeness and detail of analysis, with the best of non-salvage archaeology. The use of this book in New Zealand will be a further encouraging sign that the importance of salvage archaeology is being increasingly realised in this country.

Stuart D. Scott

Brothwell, Don R. "Digging up Bones". London, British Museum, 1960. 194 pp., illus., Price (U.K.) Nineteen shillings and six pence. Size 7" x 9½".

"Digging up Bones" should not be mistaken for just another particle in the current flood of publications, which has been released upon the archaeological world in the last few years. It is an unusually valuable book, not only because it describes in plain language a field of research closely connected with Archaeology, yet little known outside a small group of specialists, but also because it draws attention to what is clearly an omission in many Archaeological reports and shows how this may be remedied.

The author, Mr. Brothwell, is probably best known in Britain for being largely responsible for the development of both interest and research in the Pathology of earlier populations. This specialized study, and that related to it in the field of Physical Anthropology, can best proceed when the samples, the skeletons and series of skeletons, are collected under well-controlled conditions. This normally means that they must be excavated by the most careful and thorough techniques of the Archaeologist. The Physical Anthropologist, in studying these samples, relies upon the quality of the work of the excavator. If the collecting, observation and cataloguing of the latter is poor, the units of the former will become mixed and contaminated as well as there being the possibility of physical damage, loss and so on, with the consequent decrease in value of the collection to the former. On the other hand, if the Archaeologist's work is good the Physical Anthropologist will be able to amply recompense the labour by providing an amazing variety of information about the living standards, health, habits, diets, customs connected with death, and groups of the people ostensibly studied by the Archaeologist, but only too often forgotten behind a welter of artefacts.

Mr. Brothwell is not concerned with giving a synthesis of all of the latest results of research in Physical Anthropology, though he quotes a sufficient number to materially increase our knowledge of the Past. But, more important, he opens the mind to what may, in fact, be learnt and how the Archaeologist may contribute towards making this possible. The book commences with a practical guide to the methods of excavation, preservation, cataloguing and preliminary reporting, all of which are within the capacity of any Archaeologist who has the temerity to disturb a site in the name of Science. It is now plain that any Archaeologist who is not prepared to devote the full range of his skills in excavation, interpretation and recording, to whatever bones that may come to light, is not fit to excavate. To assist the Archaeologist, who will not necessarily be an anatomist, there is a section on the description and study of human bones, while throughout the book there are excellent illustrations, both in line and photography. As a further, and most acceptable aid, the language is always

plain and the technical terms have been kept in their correct places and rarely allowed to spill over into those parts of the text where such words would merely disconcert the layman while adding nothing to the specialist's knowledge nor the reader's esteem for the writer.

The third section of the book deals with the different kinds of measurements and physical features which are used to compare skeletons and groups of skeletons and will serve as a very useful reference, particularly when there is the actual problem of showing the relationship of a group being studied to others. Sections four and five deal respectively with evidence for injuries and disease. They demonstrate how much may yet be learnt about early peoples when evidence is put before the specialist in a satisfactory manner. In all fields connected with Archaeology the time has passed when an imaginative guess was considered a sufficient reconstruction of some aspect of life in the Past. Furthermore, the deductions of the Physical Anthropologist go towards solving the same problems as those of the Archaeologist. Finally, there is a brief concluding chapter, entitled "A sympathetic word to the archaeologist", which is better than that because it gives sound advice, in particular, by showing how the reporting of skeletal remains may be made both simpler and yet exhaustive by the use of a blank form.

It may now be asked of what value this book will be in New Zealand. The purpose of this lengthy review is to show that Archaeologists should be aware of the value of human remains in this country as much as anywhere else. Many people believed that there could be no Archaeology here because the occupation was too recent to have accumulated any deposits. It is probable that a similar attitude towards the remains of the human body still exists here. There is the idea that the modern survivors of the prehistoric population are physically unchanged. For a number of reasons this cannot be: in the first place, there was no physical Anthropology at the time of the first European contact, so that by the time the subject had developed to any degree there had been the best part of a century of genetic mixture, introduced disease and a vast alteration in foods, economy and habits. In the second place there is absolutely no reason to assume that the prehistoric population of New Zealand was a homogeneous one, indeed, it is highly probable that there were a number of populations existing as local communities, and possibly even as separate immigrant groups. These differences are capable of being found by a careful study of bones. In addition, it would be very interesting to learn about the health of the Prehistoric New Zealanders and how their bodies responded to the new environment. For this purpose, a whole series of good reports are necessary in order that a comparison may be made with populations from elsewhere in the Pacific, if and when their evidence becomes available.

Fortunately, the basis for these studies has already been created in New Zealand. It is to be found in the two papers by Dr. R.M.S. Taylor on "Non-Metrical Studies of the Human Palate and Dentition in Maori and Moriori Skulls", published in the Journal of the Polynesian Society last year. A list of these articles and other relevant publications, taken from Dr. Taylor's References, is added at the end of this review. There is no need to repeat the conclusions here, but it is sufficient to say that they are a very valuable point from which further research should progress fruitfully.

Finally, there is the problem which must be faced, of the understandable reluctance of many Maori towards having the bones of their ancestors disturbed. This has been aggravated by the deliberate plundering of graves for burial goods, and probably by a mawkish fascination of many Europeans in human bones. The situation is made worse by some grave-robbars posing as Archaeologists, or even believing themselves to be so. While the genuine Archaeologist is sometimes embarrassed by the uncovering of haphazardly disposed human remains, the relics of a time when ancestry was bounded by narrower definitions and not the more general one which has arisen since the super-imposition of European Culture. How the problem is to be approached is very much up to the individual, but it should not be allowed to remain as an excuse for turning a blind eye to a rich source of information. Nor, with the publication of "Digging up Bones", is there any need for the Archaeologist to feel the lack of guidance. It is a book which should be available for reference on every excavation, as well as during the study of the finds afterwards.

A list of studies of human bones in New Zealand:

- Duckworth, W.L.H., 1900. "On a collection of Crania of the Moriori". Journal of the Anthropological Institute, 30:141.
- Pickerill, H.P., 1912. "Some Pathological Conditions found in the teeth and jaws of Maori skulls in New Zealand." Proc. Roy. Soc. Med. Vol. V. Odontol. Sec. : 155.
- Scott, J.H., 1893. "Osteology of the Maori and Moriori". Trans. N.Z. Inst., 26.
- Taylor, R.M.S., 1962. "The Human Palate". Acta Anatomica. Supplementum 43. 1 ad Vol. 49. (1962) Basle.
1962. "Non-metrical studies of the human palate and dentition in Moriori and Maori skulls". Part 1 and Part 2, Journal of the Polynesian Society. Vol. 71. No. 1, and Vol. 71. No. 2., Wellington.

Since writing this review my attention has been drawn to the paper by Graeme Schofieldon "Metric and Morphological Features of the femur of the New Zealand Maori", published in the Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute. Vol. 89, Pt. 1. 1959.

Wilfred Shawcross

REVIEWS : POLYNESIAN ORIGINS

By E.N. Ferdon Jr.

(Science, 1963, Vol. 141, No. 3580, p. 499 - 505, 3 figs.)

This paper by E.N. Ferdon Jr., can be considered to have many important merits. Its prime purpose is not only of endeavouring to explain the origin of the Polynesian race, but rather to act as a stimulus, a very timely stimulus in fact, particularly when so much archaeological activity is being concentrated in the Pacific, to remind workers that perhaps they are dealing with a far greater cultural complexity, in terms of origins, than has hitherto been fully appreciated.

To many, the alternative non-traditional thesis of an American Indian origin of the Polynesians has not been acceptable, but the work of Heyerdahl has been successful in recent years in illustrating the extensive South American Indian contact with the eastern peripheral islands of Polynesia. This, to many, is a very necessary means of explaining within this marginal sector of Oceania, the development of megalithic statuary and monuments which are essentially non Polynesian in concept.

Although linguistic studies have placed the present Polynesian language within the Malayo-Polynesian Group, indicating a decided South-East Asian, Western Pacific source, blood-group studies by contrast, have shown genetic affinities to lie with the American Indians. Arguments for modern "genetic impurity" within the Polynesian race, can be alternatively offset by regarding language as a purely culturally transmitted possession, which is maintained both through racial dominance within an area, or by supersession of an earlier people. Ferdon does not attempt to provide material for an "East versus West rivalry", but envisages the very divergent possibilities that he lays before the reader as a lesson in caution when the settlement of Polynesia is being considered. The appearance of specialised restricted characteristics in an island, not duplicated elsewhere in Polynesia need not necessarily be considered as examples of independent evolution, but as possible evidence of non-Polynesian contact, either from outside or through survival of remnant autochthonous race characteristics. It is most likely, that any such alien characters if present, would be introduced by minor accidental contact through unplanned voyages of outside continental peoples. The three maps Ferdon illustrates showing the dominant hurricane, the 27 m.p.h. plus wind velocity pattern and hurricanes and gale distribution within the Pacific, with their broad equatorial dominance and complete east-west spread across the Pacific, serve to emphasise the theoretical possibilities of unplanned voyages being made from the continental marginal circumference of the Pacific into the islandic world of Polynesia. If alien elements entered Polynesia, it should not be expected for them to necessarily follow a logical pattern of contacting the nearest island group first, for owing to the scattered distribution of land within Polynesia, and fortuitous dispersal

from outside, cultural traits would be just as likely to be carried well into the heart of the Pacific, there to be preserved in permanent isolation.

It is not the 'mass invasion', but rather the concept of the small accidental influx of foreign cultural elements carried into Polynesia that may well explain many hitherto anomalous cultural elements of the Pacific. It is highly probable that the first kumara tuber found its way into Polynesia by this manner, thus providing not only the plant, but the knowledge and direction of its American Continental source to a previously non-agriculturally inclined people.

If future work in the Pacific is able to recognise the presence of distinct past alien continental influences in the culture of the Polynesians, then E.N. Ferdon Jr., should be well satisfied with the clear elucidation of the possibilities that he has forecast here. Until that time however, he may rest assured that he has provided many sobering thoughts in his summary of the possible Pacific cultural complexes, which will no doubt influence the development of working hypotheses on Polynesian origins for many years to come.

I. W. Keyes

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGY
from September 1962

Newsletter articles are not included

-
- Adkin, G. Leslie. An ancient outrigger float from a Te Horo swamp, western Wellington. In Dom. Mus. Rec. Ethnol. 1:265-76 (Oct 1962).
Detailed description and comparison with the Monck's Cave float and Henley canoe.
- Adkin, G. Leslie. A patu type attributable to the Ngatimamoe culture, from the Horowhenua-Yanawatu area, western Wellington. In Jnl Poly Soc. 72:27-30 (Mr 1963)
- Fleming, C.A. The extinction of moas and other animals during the Holocene period. In Notornis 10:113-7 (D 1962)
"The simplest explanation is to attribute all late Holocene extinction to the profound ecological changes brought about by the arrival of man with fire, rats and dogs Our incomplete data are not inconsistent with this conclusion."
- Gardner, P.R. A wooden club from Kaipara. In Jnl Poly Soc. 71:402 (D 1962)
Steel-tool worked club, possibly for killing sharks.
- Golson, J. and Gathercole, P.W. The last decade in New Zealand archaeology. In Antiquity 36:168-74, 271-8 (S & D 1962).
A wide-ranging review and interpretation of N.Z.'s prehistory, and a brief note on the development of archaeological studies in New Zealand.