



NEW ZEALAND
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THE ROLE OF THE MAORI COMMUNITY
IN ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT

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To many Maori people archaeology is just another facet of the European culture which has invaded, dominated and eliminated their own society. The archaeologist is known as a 'digger', a Pakeha who hunts in the earth for objects which are of value to white culture, a hunter of cultural trophies to hang on the academic wall. The trophies, whether artefacts or written reports, are part of the European marketplace. During the hunt the archaeologist often disregards and desecrates Maori society.

At the 1980 New Zealand Archaeological Association conference, a session focussed upon "Maori attitudes towards pre-history". A Maori elder at this session identified the archaeologist as a digger who digs in Maori underwear; that is, a rapist or a violator of indigenous culture.

In the past, Maori people have not wanted to become involved with archaeologists. They have not been shown that there is a role for them to play in archaeological research and resource management.

This introduction could also be read as a conclusion. It paints a bleak future for New Zealand archaeology and makes us realise that the database of archaeology is precariously balanced. But there is hope. Firstly, many more Maori people are coming to recognise that they can benefit from archaeology. Secondly, there is still time for archaeologists to ensure that Maori needs and aspirations are recognised in future research and management.

This paper has been divided into four sections: ethnic groups, places and society; policy; attitudes; and examples of Maori-archaeologist co-operation in the New Zealand Forest Service.

Ethnic groups, places and society

Cummin's paper (1977) on the concept of ethnic significance of cultural resources, provides an excellent framework for examining archaeological sites and traditional sites as functional components of societies. Cummins discusses four different sorts of interrelationships or abstractions:

1. An ethnic group within a society has ascribed significance to a cultural resource, having perceived symbolic ethnic value within it. The ethnic group has successfully communicated its perception of value to the larger society, which in turn has recognised it. ...Recognition can extend to legal protection (Cummins, 1977:7).

2. The second abstraction (Cummins, 1977:9) concerns a situation opposite that of the first: an ethnic group within a society ascribes significance to a particular cultural resource. The society, however, refuses to acknowledge this significance, and subsequently places no value (or an alternative value) on the resource.

3. The third (Cummins, 1977:12-13) is where, the cultural resources associated with a particular ethnic group are ascribed ethnic significance by the society as a whole but this is rejected by the ethnic group. This is because: 1) symbolic value is not perceived; 2) it is disadvantageous to express perceived symbolic value; and 3) the symbolic value is perceived but it is selective.

4. Fourthly, an ethnic group exists within a society, but lacks sites or places which contain the symbolic value necessary to reinforce group identity. This applies to immigrant groups which have undergone dislocation and acculturation (Cummins, 1977:14).

A fifth abstraction is also possible: where a society ascribes significance to a particular cultural resource, but refuses to acknowledge the ethnic group which ascribes symbolic value to the same resource.

In the New Zealand situation we can find examples of all of these sorts of interrelationships but, for the most part, we approach the second abstraction. Our society fails to recognise the significance that Maori people ascribed to particular places or sites (c.f. Morrison, 1983). This significance is evidenced by a recent Auckland Maori Planning Committee definition of ancestral land: "Land and water occupied and used by Maori ancestors and their descendants regardless of tenure" (Walker, 1982). The society at large, however, has not adopted a legal definition of ancestral Maori land (c.f. Anderson, 1983:4). If it was to recognise the definition given by the Planning Committee, it would necessitate major social and economic changes and would force reappraisal of our present land tenure system.

Our society is moving towards the first of Cummins' abstractions which is seen by many Pakeha and Maori as the ideal. The Maori awareness and activist movements are likely to continue pressing for greater recognition of the rights of the Maori as the indigenous people. The time will come

when Maori perceptions and values will be communicated successfully and our society (including Historic Places Trust, Forest Service and other government departments) will recognise this value by extending this recognition to legal protection. Already, current legislation affords protection to archaeological sites and traditional places, and communications between Maori and archaeologist, in some regions, are improving. Maori people are communicating their values to the larger society more forcefully and in a manner that cannot be ignored.

Policy

Two pieces of legislation attest to changing attitudes in New Zealand society. The first, Section 3(1)(G) of the 1977 Town and Country Planning Act, identifies as a matter of national importance "the relationship of the Maori people and their culture and traditions with their ancestral land" (c.f. Anderson, 1983). Ranginui Walker (1982) commented that "this amendment represents a tremendous breakthrough for the Maori people. It means that for the first time Maori culture is given a place in a general statute of the country."

The second is the 1980 Historic Places Act. Part II, Sections 49 and 50, of the Act provide a mechanism by which the Historic Places Trust can recognise and convey to other persons or bodies the importance of specified historic areas and traditional sites and for it to convey recommendations as to their future management and protection. (It should be noted that the sections of this Act, in themselves, do not provide protection for historic areas or traditional sites.) In the act a traditional site is defined as "a place or site that is important by reason of its historical significance or spiritual or emotional association with the Maori people or to any group or section thereof". To have a place declared as traditional requires an application to be made to the Historic Places Trust. The application passes through a number of referral stages where decisions are made about the importance of the place or site and the action, if any, that should be taken to protect it. People who make these decisions include the Historic Places Trust, Ministers of Internal Affairs and Maori Affairs, the Maori Association or Maori Land Advisory Committee, or Maori tribal authority, or any other appropriate authority. In 1982 the Trust used its powers under Section 50 of the act in two instances where it gave recognition to the traditional importance of sites (N.Z.H.P.T., 1983).

Scientific investigation of archaeological sites within New Zealand requires the approval of the appropriate Maori authority or committee. To some degree this ensures Maori involvement with archaeological research and management.

But inevitably it is the individual archaeologist who determines the degree of this involvement. (Maori approval is not required for archaeological sites which, for a variety of reasons, require no further management and whose modification has been authorised by the Historic Places Trust. For a discussion of criteria for selecting sites for protection see Coster, 1979, 1981; and Jones, 1981.)

Attitudes

I would like to be able to say that all New Zealand archaeologists recognise the importance and value of Maori involvement in their activities, but quite often their actions have suggested otherwise. Negative actions by archaeologists include:

1. re-writing and publishing Maori tribal traditions without consulting the elders of the tribe;
2. public display of tapu or sacred objects (usually burial associated) when Maoris have expressed a wish that they be respected (see Trotter, 1972);
3. carrying out archaeological investigations (surveys and excavation) without Maori consultation or involvement; and
4. carrying out excavations without any regard for the tapu or sacred nature of the exercise. (More often than not basic marae etiquette is not adhered to - food is prepared or consumed around excavations, equipment or samples - and archaeologists are looked upon as being 'unclean'.)

These and other negative actions on the part of archaeologists have frustrated investigations and management problems and have even led to a rahui (ban) on all archaeological work in one New Zealand region already (Trotter and McCulloch, 1980:68). The archaeologist in most regions is still treated with suspicion.

On the other hand, there have been many positive actions by archaeologists. Maori involvement with investigations has ranged from providing the major labour force in a large excavation (Trotter and McCulloch, 1980); through assisting with archaeological reconstruction exercises (Sutton and Phillips, 1980); to participating in excavations by 'blessing' the proceedings (Russell, 1978; Edson, 1979; Furey, 1981 and 1982; Lawlor, 1981 and 1982); to consultation with the archaeologist over excavation procedures, problems and interpretations (Edson, 1979; Lawlor, 1982). These actions can be called successful because they recognise the importance of the tangata whenua (people of the land), there was active co-operation, and archaeologists went out of their way to directly communicate and involve the local Maori community. In most instances the potential contribution that archaeology could make to Maori society was discussed with the local community.

I would like to quote parts of the concluding section from a recent article by Dr Ranginui Walker entitled "A cultural perspective on Maori land-use" (1981). These passages will help to place archaeology within the broader sphere of contemporary Maori attitudes towards 'things' European:

"As *tangata whenua*, Maori people have a special place in New Zealand society. They are the custodians of the indigenous culture which relates them to the land in a unique way that differentiates them from the dominant culture of the Pakeha."

And:

"...pastoralism and animal husbandry displaced agricultural skills and ultimately alienated 70% of the Maori people from close affinity with the land. That alienation is heightened when monocultural land-use and planning cut across Maori values, traditions and customary usages."

He concludes that

"If New Zealand is to achieve its destiny as a model bicultural society, then future land-use planning must take cognizance of Maori needs and future aspirations for the development and retention of what remains of their tribal lands."

His message for the archaeologist is clear enough: we must continually recognise and consult the Maori people in all aspects of our work on their land and sites. Recognition of our task is followed by planning and action.

In New Zealand, Maori attitudes towards archaeologists are for the most part more negative than positive. This is because archaeologists have been insensitive or have failed to recognise Maori values, customs and traditions. (In my experience, Maori people have tended to group archaeologists with staff members of museums and universities. If these institutions have had mis-dealings in the past, the archaeologist usually has to contend with these. The converse is also true, good relations have promoted good communication.) Archaeologists in New Zealand may profess to study Maori culture but they are often ignorant of the basic customs of the descendants of the people they are studying. It is little wonder that some Maoris have viewed archaeologists as 'cultural rapists'.

I would like to finish this section on attitudes on a positive note. In 1979 a seminar was held in the Auckland region focussing on Northland archaeology (Coster and Cassels, 1979). During the seminar, Waireti Norman of Te Aupouri (a Northland tribe) spoke about the Maori view of archaeology. She pointed out that prehistoric land tenure, population movements and genealogical affinity are matters of considerable importance to the Maori people, and that the potential contri-

bution of archaeological research needs to be made known by direct communication with, and involvement of, Maori communities (1979:154):

"I applaud the desire expressed here ... that the Maori people merit consultation and I can assure you that they do want to be consulted and involved. ... As yet there is no Maori archaeologist but I feel that there will be in the near future."

Examples of Maori-archaeologist co-operation in the Forest Service

The New Zealand Forest Service is the government department responsible for the establishment and management of forests, both indigenous and exotic, on land which has been placed under its control. As a government department it is unique because it employs two full-time archaeologists, as well as one archaeologist on a short term contract. Forest Service archaeologists are required to identify and describe the relative worth of archaeological sites, to identify and document the location of artefacts found within the search area, and to protect and manage the archaeological resources of state forest lands.

Some areas of forest were originally identified in early land deeds and gazette notices as Maori wahi tapu (sacred areas). These areas were left intact and reserved as burials, or, because of land instability problems, they were sometimes incorporated into forestry reclamation programmes and planted in pines. As time has passed the location of some burials has been forgotten. This may have happened because either the Maori people were perceived by the Forest Service not now to ascribe significance to the burial areas (possibly because new burials were no longer interred there) or, alternatively, the ascribed or symbolic value was no longer perceived by the Maori people or this perception was not actively communicated.

Today, some Maori groups are trying to re-communicate their perceived symbolic value in wahi tapu and other sacred precincts or traditional sites. As a result Forest Service archaeologists are increasingly called upon to incorporate Maori values into the management of sites. Recent work by forestry archaeologist John Coster in the Aupouri sand dunes study (Northland), and work Jill Pierce and I have undertaken in forests located on the west coast of Northland has involved the surveying of traditional burial grounds.

Often Maori communities themselves have initiated the discussions; otherwise contact with the communities was made

through Forest Service staff or a local marae committee. Ensuing discussions with the elders usually focussed upon the significance of traditional places, the identification of the area on the ground and on forest management plans, area protection (physical and legal), and the future management of forest resources, if any, within the traditional areas.

Once the wishes of the Maori community have been outlined they are included within a report. Forest Service staff can then incorporate these wishes into future management plans.

Conclusions

If there is to be a Maori involvement in archaeological research and management in New Zealand, the archaeologist has to play an active role. It is wrong to say, as Cummins does (1977:16), that the archaeologist's role as a jack-of-all-trades is over. The director of archaeological investigations and the cultural resource manager has a personal responsibility to make contact with the local Maori community and to maintain this contact. Anything less would be wrong. As Moratto and Kelly have said (1976:196):

"...sensitivity to ... (ethnic) values will enhance the importance of cultural resources in the eyes of the decision makers and should improve the relationship between archaeologist and the ethnic communities with which they interact."

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