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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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THESIS ABSTRACT

Prehistoric Polynesian Stone Technology: A Study of Usage and Flaking Technique with special reference to assemblages of Stone Flake Debitage of New Zealand Archaic Cultural Provenance. A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Anthropology at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, 1972, by K. L. Jones.

219 pp. Addendum: Some theoretical and practical problems arising from the localization of the blade industry in New Zealand. Appendices: (a) Detailed notes on striation of the Tairua assemblage; (b) Possible prepared core technique in Hawaii; (c) Photography of translucent artefacts; (d) 'R' and 'Q' mode factor analyses. Bibliography. Plates. Figures. Map. Tables.

One of the bulkiest and yet most neglected spheres of archaeological evidence is flake debitage. While sophisticated methods of analysis have been developed, recent flake analyses in New Zealand by Shawcross and Leach fail to explore all of the behavioural possibilities which might elucidate such variation in the data as may be derived from these analyses. Particularly neglected is intentional variation in flaking techniques within any particular cultural group.

Qualitative differences in edge damage are also neglected in New Zealand.

Comparisons of flaking technique using existing methods are made but between assemblages worked in different materials, for example argillite and obsidian, from a single layer of a number of sites.

Qualitative differences, 'unifacial' and 'bifacial', are distinguished and examined for their significance using a number of metrical parameters, edge angle, length and curvature of the unit edge. Striation analysis is undertaken.

Significant variations occur between flake assemblages worked in different materials. These differences are interpreted as resulting from the difference between adze manufacture and flake tool manufacture. The blade tool manufacturing technique of the South Island is technologically closely related to the quarrying and flaking of

quadrangular and triangular section adzes. It is argued that the motor skills involved are essentially similar.

Scraping and cutting tools are distinguished. Scraping occurs mainly on hard materials such as bone or wood; cutting, infrequently done on hard materials, is predominantly of softer materials.

There are as yet not plans for publication.

A plan and excavation details of the site of Tairua, Coromandel Peninsula, are included. These have not previously been synthesized.

N.B. This abstract is not intended for quotation or reference; persons wishing to do so should refer to the detailed evidence and argument of the thesis.