

Reviews

Nigel Prickett, *Landscapes of conflict: a field guide to the New Zealand Wars*. Random House New Zealand, Auckland, 2002; 144 pp + xxxii colour plates; paperback; ISBN 1-86941-542-6.

This book is a guide to the landscapes and sites of the New Zealand wars, fought in the nineteenth century as British settlement expanded against Maori resistance. The author's preface makes clear that it was written for New Zealanders. Although others may well be interested, the book assumes some geographical and historical background - knowledge that few except New Zealanders are likely to have. And of course, as is entirely appropriate for a guidebook, it assumes a readiness for active engagement with its subject on the part of the user. In other words, it is a book intended for the enthusiast, not the more passive tourist or reader of history. Nevertheless, it reads well at a distance from the landscapes and sites described.

The period covered begins with the Wairau incident of 1843, the precursor to subsequent resort of European settlers to armed force in land conflicts, and the only South Island episode included. It ends with the remarkable Parihaka campaign of 1880-81, the last of the military campaigns to secure Taranaki for European settlement, in which government forces were met by Maori pacifism. Not all armed conflict within this period is included, the most significant omission being wars among Maori. The sites included are those accessible by virtue of their public ownership. The author notes that many more of these sites are memorials to Pakeha than to Maori, and suggests that it is time for more public awareness of Maori losses. The book should help raise awareness of this imbalance, because its attention to the physical remains and landscape contexts of sites that have been conserved may help to highlight the obliteration of many others, and the continuing need for conservation of what survives.

An introductory chapter provides a brief outline of historical background, the nature of the sites, and the organisation and equipment of the opposing forces. The first eight chapters follow chronological order, through to the end of fighting in Taranaki. Subsequent chapters are grouped according to regions. Further reading and museum displays are outlined in a final chapter.

The text is clear and concise, striking a good descriptive balance between action and personnel on both sides. There are occasional inclusions of colourful detail without any explanatory context, such as the ritual removal of the heart of a soldier (p. 121). More detail explaining how preserved remnants relate to individual sites as they were, with superstructures intact, would have been helpful. Notes on landscape changes would also have been a useful inclusion, for many people will have difficulty imagining how these landscapes would have appeared clad in nineteenth-century vegetation. Sometimes site descriptions are unclear or simply lacking, as for Te Ngutu

o te Manu, noted in the text as bush village (p. 115), stronghold, pa and battlefield (p. 118), without further clarification of whether there are any remains, such as earthworks, to be seen. For this and other sites, there are insufficient descriptions of their relationships to local topographic or other features that made them strategic positions in a physical or social landscape.

As befits a guidebook, it is copiously illustrated. The marginal notes and road maps describe how to find sites. These will be comprehensible to New Zealanders with reasonable geographical knowledge, but confusing to others without recourse to more inclusive maps. Regional maps would have been a useful addition. Some parts of the text, for example the land purchases in Taranaki, would have been much clearer with accompanying maps.

Thirty-two pages of colour plates include both modern photographs and reproductions of nineteenth-century paintings. Some of these paintings provide useful information about landscapes and sites. Others are more subtly informative of nineteenth-century European attitudes to Maori and to the New Zealand landscape. These attitudes, and the artistic traditions that they exemplify, pass without comment. Many of the black and white reproductions of nineteenth-century drawings are less than helpful, their notations virtually illegible.

The book is well produced, with paper and binding strong enough for the rigours of glove box or map pocket rather than bookshelf. My gripes are the inevitable displacements of text and illustration, and especially the disappearance of page numbers from many pages, leaving one scrambling to find indexed items in the text. And the index omits entries for major place names including Hawera, Hutt Valley, Taranaki and Tauranga, and a cross-referenced entry for Hau Hau.

This is a useful book, which I enjoyed reading despite being removed from the landscapes and sites to which it is a guide. I confess it made me rather homesick. Perhaps I will find consolation in rereading Belich (1988) and Shadbolt (1986). I hope it leads others to explore the links between landscapes, sites and texts, and thus to foster the interdisciplinary focus so important to the vitality of historical studies of nineteenth-century New Zealand.

BELICH, J. 1988 *The New Zealand wars and the Victorian interpretation of racial conflict*, Penguin, Auckland, N.Z.

SHADBOLT, M. 1986 *Season of the Jew*, Hodder and Stoughton, London.

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Alan Mayne and Tim Murray (eds), *The archaeology of urban landscape, explorations in slumland*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. xi+192, paperback, \$55. ISBN 0 521 77975 8.

This monograph provides some compelling reading for urban archaeologists and others interested in urban history. It showcases a broad range of approaches to the problem of understanding life in the so-called urban slums of the post-colonisation world of late eighteenth-century Britain and her 'settler-colonies' over the succeeding two centuries. The monograph presents twelve papers on urban slums in five different countries and eleven locales: Britain (2), South Africa (1), Australia (2), Canada (1) and the United States (5). The authors include eleven archaeologists and five historians who explore a range of slum-related projects, mostly undertaken by archaeologists in association with historians but with some specifically historical or archaeological research projects. Some papers are by consultants while others are by academics with several incorporating or reviewing the results of projects undertaken by other archaeologists. The introduction, by the editors Mayne and Murray, maintains that in all the inner-city neighbourhoods examined by the authors the 'past textures of these places have been obscured by distorting slum stereotypes'.

The main theme of the introduction is the need to merge archaeology and history. Mayne and Murray note that 'hopes for the effective integration of urban history and archaeology have largely been disappointed' and that this failure denies the urban resident 'an informed and abiding sense of their urban past'. The editors outline the obscuring of public knowledge, or a more complex understanding of the history of these urban places, by previous writers who constructed the 'homogenising, universalising and changeless qualities of slum myths'. The editors relate the development of slum myths or stereotypes to the political and economic decisions behind the removal of these places and the destruction of these neighbourhoods.

While the editors claim that the main premise for these papers is the integration of archaeology and history, the first three papers fail to achieve this aim. Ellen Ross, a British historian, provides a detailed historical analysis of middle-class women, and their 'visiting' of working-class families, mostly women and children, residents of London's slums. This paper presents a contrast between women of the middle and working classes. There is a clear sense of the 'other', the 'slum visitor' as the 'outsider'. While a fascinating contextual paper for understanding slums and slum diaries, there is no incorporation of archaeology other than a passing reference. The papers by Elaine-Maryse Solari, and Antonia Malan and Elizabeth van Heyningen, while interesting examples of how politics created slums, do not achieve a successful incorporation of archaeology and history as proposed in the introduction.

Barbara Little and Nancy Kassner examine the archaeology and history of the residents of alleys in Washington, D. C. to interpret how the lives of African-Americans, who mainly lived in the alley properties, were different to the lives of the residents on the main streets. By exploring consumption in association with ethnicity and cultural difference, Little and Kassner have been able to refute the more simplistic assumptions which feed current interpretations of consumption by contesting whether archaeologists or historians can know 'what the price of goods means in an assemblage. The economic evaluation of assemblages often misses the point that methods of acquisition vary considerably. There are second-hand shops, gifts, barter, theft and other sources of goods' (64). Archaeological analysis relating to ethnicity and consumption needs to be cautious. People living in poor or notorious areas are not homogeneous but have a range of homes and living conditions. Those considered to be poor owned posses-

sions and may have gained them in a variety of ways, therefore any direct assumptions about the ownership of 'objects' as an equation with wealth needs to be cautiously made within wider cultural, ethnic and social contexts.

Papers by Beaudry and Mrozowski, McCarthy and Yamin incorporate class, ethnicity, gender and consumption into the interpretative frameworks of their slums. Mary Beaudry and Stephen Mrozowski examine another aspect of The Boott Mills, Lowell, Massachusetts (1987). Through using a dialectical approach with multiple voices they examine how people construct power and identity. Their focus is interpreting the material culture, not the 're-writing' of history. Their analysis emphasises class-consciousness as 'one of many factors that shape the dynamics of social interaction. Issues of age, gender, ethnicity and race all converge to contribute to social discourse' (127). Class should no longer be seen as a 'rigid, objective social category' but as a 'discursive object'. Beaudry and Mrozowski have used various perspectives and analytical scales to reveal how 'workers created their own cultural space by looking at how they manipulated the public and private presentation of self through the use of seemingly trivial finds, the lost fragments of everyday life' (128). This paper uses primary and secondary histories as part of the interpretative framework but does not allow them to dominate the interpretation of the archaeological evidence, which shifts from artefacts, to buildings, to the landscape of Lowell.

John McCarthy explores the 'Values and identity in the 'working-class' worlds of late nineteenth-century Minneapolis' by seeing material culture as expressions of 'cultural categories and principles...that are essential elements in the representation, reproduction and manipulation of complex socio-cultural identities' (145). This is the framework used to explore four topics: sanitation, consumer choices, 'separation of work and home' and 'investment in childhood relative to the construction of social identity' (145). As part of his analysis he observes that we know much about middle-class lives but little about working-class lives and considers these terms 'inadequate, if not misleading'. McCarthy proposes that the terms themselves are inadequate and 'mask the complex variability of the social matrix and deny individuals their distinctive identities, and do not do justice to the multifaceted socio-cultural identities that affect the values and behaviours of individuals, families and communities' (151). This paper brings into question the role of class in the creation of material culture assemblages unless it is made more complex by incorporating a deeper understanding of other socio-cultural influences such as ethnicity, gender and consumerism.

Rebecca Yamin examines the narrative as a form of interpretation and concepts of respectability within the notorious Five Points slum. Yamin is concerned to provide an alternative narrative to that of the 'imagined slum' but finds historians' statistics and archaeologists' data usually fail to counteract older, more powerful stories of the slum because they tell no story at all. As the nineteenth-century slum was conceived in the literary imagination it is difficult to provide another and more accurate account of the past if it does not include imaginative stories within the framework of an interpretative archaeology. This new narrative needs to be 'strong enough to communicate agency in a way that does not seem trivial, or incidental' (154). The archaeological and historical evidence is woven into a narrative, 'a vignette of daily life' (163). Yamin, as with Beaudry and Mrozowski, has adopted Glassie's 'from the inside out' perspective to explore people's lives and suggests that the construction of narratives assists with the 'process of understanding' (164). Yamin contends that these new narratives provide a way of including as much of the historical and archaeological data as possible, stating that 'coherence is measured by finding an explanation that makes sense of most of the data' (167). Yamin acknowledges

that these narratives are no more 'real' than Dickens, but they 'begin (and end) with the real stuff of everyday life'. This approach does offer a new and important way to construct alternative narratives. It also allows archaeologists to explore issues of agency and complexity using their data. It should inspire many archaeologists to undertake similar approaches once they have completed the analysis and synthesis of the archaeological program.

The two Australian projects included in this book focus on 'notorious slums' in The Rocks, Sydney (Karskens) and Little Lon, Melbourne (Murray & Mayne). Grace Karskens' paper is one in a series of books and articles based on her work on the Cumberland/Gloucester Streets site in the Rocks. There are many issues with Karskens' interpretation of the archaeological results. A central problem arises from the excavation report (Godden Mackay 1999). Karskens has not grasped the limitations on the extent to which artefacts were catalogued or analysed. While she enthuses about the collection of '3/4 million artefacts', the cataloguer does not! 'The sheer size of the artefact collection required a rationalisation of the time allocated to analysis... The identification and organisation of each [artefact] class took up much of the allocated time for analysis. Units were prioritised to enable some level of analysis to proceed on the most significant contexts in terms of the research questions' (Godden Mackay 1999(4)1:10, 11). An examination of the excavation report shows there is no synthesis of the results of the archaeological recording program and no analysis of the artefacts other than quite general specialist reports focused on presenting the results of the type series. The 750 000 artefacts presumably refers to sherds as apparently the cataloguing system did not use minimum item or vessel counts (Wilson 1999(4):207).

Karskens' discussion and use of the artefacts tends to over-generalise, as in the assertion that 'cleanliness was evident in the wash sets ..., combs and brushes' (76). These comments could be made about similar material from many nineteenth-century sites in Sydney, but there is no chronological understanding of the depositional process, of the numbers of such items, how many buildings contained these artefacts, nor any discussion of the theoretical framework through which they were interpreted. Crucially, there is no discussion about at what stage in the life of the site the artefacts were deposited. The problems arising from lack of clear context-based or functional analysis can be seen, for instance, in the way Karskens endows the working class of the Rocks with rational scientific thinking as seen in their collection and ordering of tropical shells. Cones, cowries and coral are briefly mentioned in the excavation report as mostly fragmentary, but it does not go into detailed description or analysis (of either the shells or the contexts), other than to list all the shell species found at the site and the identification of these tropical shells as items of aesthetic collection or appreciation (Steel 1999(4):151, 212). Between the excavation report and Karskens' narrative, these shells have become representations of individual scientific collections in a number of houses. If Karskens chooses to interpret the shells in this way it is important that the shells are discussed both specifically and generally. What is the whole corpus of shells? How many houses had shells? What range and quantity of shells were typical? Were seriations of shells found in single contexts? This is the sort of information we need if the shells are to be interpreted as being something more specific than the characteristic range of shells to be found in any house on this harbour-side site, or the nearby Lilyvale site, or across the water in Pyrmont.

Many of Karskens' comments appear to arise from the perspective of surprise that the working classes could have had so much material culture, but as Little and Kassner, and Yamin, show in this book, this is a naïve view of working-class lives. The way Karskens has used the material evidence disconnects

it from its context and its time of purchase, use and deposition. Karskens interprets much of the archaeological evidence through class. As other papers in this book have shown, class needs to be complicated by ethnicity, consumerism, gender and other interpretative concepts which allow us to explore how artefacts were chosen and used to create personal and social identity.

Murray and Mayne's paper is very similar to their recently published article in *Historical Archaeology* (2003 (1):87-101) which was in press at the time of publication of this book. Murray and Mayne present some preliminary results of their reanalysis of Little Lon, a slum area of inner city Melbourne. They are reanalysing work undertaken by another archaeologist (Justin McCarthy) in the 1980s and focus on the results from two excavated houses. They present a considerable critique of the state of the discipline and raise a host of issues of concern in Australian urban archaeology, and on the desire to move forward to more powerful and meaningful interpretations of urban archaeological material.

The central problem within this paper, and also with the one published in 2003, is the failure of the archaeological methodology and the subsequent analysis to offer a new meaningful narrative due to the absence of a theorised interpretative framework. The re-cataloguing of the material used sherd counts (Murray 1998) rather than minimum vessel counts (although we do not know this from the paper but from a seminar given by Murray in 1998). This methodology produces a dated form of pattern recognition which is about archaeological processes and does not help us to elucidate people's lives and the choices they made (Casey 1999). The graphical analysis, based on the flawed use of sherd counts, is further hindered by using functional categories which are not sensitive enough to assist with the meaningful interpretation of this material culture, such as a category called 'residential'. They could have used more sensitive categories such as food: teawares, tablewares, storage; personal: hygiene, grooming, health etc. The evidence is not analysed within any theoretical, social concepts about the role of material culture in people's lives, let alone working-class lives or the lives of women and children whose activities typically dominate the creation of residential artefact assemblages. Therefore the interpretations gained from this reanalysis are limited to historical revision, rather than extending the integration of archaeology and history. At the end of the paper a model is presented for research strategies into 'global material culture in urban settings'. This, along with the form of pattern recognition inherent in the use of sherd counts, is coming from a 'processual' view of archaeology where processes are the focus, rather than the interpretation of people's behaviour and lives. Some of the papers in this book are creating post-processual or post-positivist interpretations of their slums by using narratives to reveal meaning in the archaeological evidence. Murray and Mayne are trying to mesh an approach to the post-modern historical narrative with a processual archaeological framework.

The papers that present complex, thoughtful and convincing analyses of their slums are those who present a deeply theorised understanding of the archaeological evidence within the context of recent material culture studies. The complexity is provided by using a range of socio-cultural constructs within which to investigate the lives of working-class people; specifically where class has been linked to ethnicity, i.e. Little and Kassner, Beaudry and Mrozowski, McCarthy, and Yamin. Where the papers are not so convincing in revealing new interpretations of the past is where the artefacts and their contexts have not been rigorously and systematically analysed using new methodologies and interpretative frameworks, or where there has been extremely limited use of archaeology to inform the historical interpretation. Many of the papers reinforce the perceptions of 'otherness', underlining that there were substantial and visible

differences between the residents of these slums and the outsider, such as Ross's fascinating paper, and Karskens and Yamin. While some of the authors have questioned the way in which people are identified as members of the working class, or the usefulness of such terms (Karskens; McCarthy) the suggested alternatives have varied from interpreting the working class as having similar socio-cultural practices and therefore seeking to emulate middle-class genteel behaviour (Karskens), to considering that it is not a useful category in the way it is defined and understood (McCarthy). In fact the archaeological evidence, when interpreted mostly from economic perspectives, would suggest that there is limited difference between the working and middle classes (Karskens; McCarthy; Little & Kassner). Yet the nineteenth-century middle and working classes appear to have thought there was a difference, as made clear in many contemporary reports. This is the crux of studies which use material culture to begin to understand the meaning behind these differences, and the degree to which there were 'real' differences, as opposed to cultural perceptions of difference. The denial of difference at the start of the analysis does not allow for it to be explored within the (re)interpretation while acceptance of difference does not mean the archaeologist necessarily prescribes to the paradigm of the slum residents as filthy, poverty-stricken criminals.

- CASEY, M. 1999 'Local pottery and dairying at the DMR site, Brickfields, Sydney, New South Wales', *Australasian Historical Archaeology* 17:3-37.
- GODDEN MACKAY PTY LTD 1999 *Cumberland/ Gloucester Streets Site, the Rocks - archaeological investigation report*, vols 1 to 5, for the Sydney Cove Authority.
- MAYNE, A. 2003 Road to Nowhere? Explorations in slumland, paper presented at the seminar 'Exploring the modern city. Recent approaches to urban history and archaeology', May 2003.
- MURRAY, T. 1998 'In Little Lon wiv Ginger Mick': archaeology and the Melbourne poor of the 1870s, paper presented at the Prehistoric and Historical Archaeology Seminar Series, University of Sydney, April 24.

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