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Te Puna: 
The Archaeology and History of a New Zealand Mission Station, 1832 – 1874

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Abstract

This thesis examines the archaeology and history of Te Puna, a Church Missionary Society (CMS) mission station in the Bay of Islands, New Zealand. Te Puna was first settled in 1832 following the closure of the nearby Oihi mission, which had been the first mission station and the first permanent European settlement in New Zealand. Te Puna, located alongside the imposing Rangihoua Pa, was the home of missionaries John and Hannah King and their children for some forty years. As well as being a mission station, Te Puna was also the site of the family’s subsistence farm.

The research is concerned with the archaeological landscape of Te Puna, the relationship between Maori and European, the early organisation and economy of the CMS, the material culture of New Zealand’s first European settlers, and the beginnings of colonisation and the part that the missions played in this. Artefacts recovered from archaeological investigations at the site of the Te Puna mission house are connected with other items of missionary material culture held in collections in the Bay of Islands, including objects donated by the King family. The archaeological record is also integrated with documentary evidence, in particular the accounts of the CMS store, to produce a detailed picture of the daily life and economy of the Te Puna mission household. This integration of a range of sources is also extended to produce a broader view of the material culture and economy of missionary life in the Bay of Islands in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The humble, austere artefacts that constitute the material culture of the Te Puna household reveal the actual processes of colonisation in daily life and everyday events, as well as the processes of the mission, such as schooling, the purchase of food and domestic labour, the purchase of land and building of houses, the stitching of fabric and ironing of garments. These practices predate, but also anticipate the grand historical dramas such as the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, glorified but also critiqued as the defining moment of the relationship between Maori and Pakeha and of colonisation.
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Abbreviations used in the text and references

ABCFM   American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions
AIML    Auckland Institute and Museum Library
ATL     Alexander Turnbull Library
CMS     Church Missionary Society
LINZ    Land Information New Zealand
LMS     London Missionary Society
MNE     Minimum number of elements, i.e. the smallest number of anatomical elements necessary to account for all of the specimens in an assemblage
MNI     Minimum number of individuals, i.e. the smallest number of items/animals necessary to account for all the specimens in an assemblage
NISP    Number of identified specimens, i.e. the number of complete and fragmentary items identified to a category within an assemblage
NZHPT   New Zealand Historic Places Trust
NSW     New South Wales
WMS     Wesleyan Missionary Society

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