



This Horrid Practice: the Myth and Reality of Traditional Maori Cannibalism

Paul Moon

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This Horrid Practice uncovers an unexplored taboo of New Zealand history - the widespread practice of cannibalism in pre-European Maori society. Until now, many historians have tried to avoid it and many Maori have considered it a subject best kept quiet about in public. Paul Moon brings together an impressive array of sources from a variety of disciplines to produce this frequently contentious but always stimulating exploration of how and why Maori ate other human beings, and why the practice shuddered to a halt just a few decades after the arrival of Europeans in New Zealand. The book includes a comprehensive survey of cannibalism practices among traditional Maori, carefully assessing the evidence and concluding it was widespread. Other chapters look at how explorers and missionaries saw the practice; the role of missionaries and Christianity in its end; and, in the final chapter, why there has been so much denial on the subject and why some academics still deny that it ever happened. This Horrid Practice promises to be one of the leading works of New Zealand history published in 2008. It is a highly original work that every New Zealand history enthusiast will want to own and read.

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