



NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

ARCHAEOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND



This document is made available by The New Zealand
Archaeological Association under the Creative Commons
Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

To view a copy of this license, visit
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>.

A LURE SHANK FROM THE MATATUAHU SITE,
MANUKAU SOUTH HEAD

Nigel Prickett
Auckland Museum

In May 1987 Mr Jim Brambley of Pukekohe brought into the Auckland Museum a complete lure shank which he had found the previous year at the Matatuahu site (N46-47/17), Manukau South Head. As the lure shank is otherwise absent from the wide ranging "archaic" assemblage from N46-47/17 (see Prickett 1987) this new find is of some interest.

The lure shank was found in autumn 1986 as it emerged from the eroding dune face which now covers what remains of the Matatuahu site. It came from a point approximately two-thirds of the way along the site from the eastern end (Te Pirau point), 50-60 m west of the November 1960 University of Auckland Archaeological Society excavation.

Mr Brambley relates that what first drew his attention to the find was some extremely fragmentary bone - whale bone from its size - which was, however, too fragile for recovery. The shape put him in mind of a whalebone patu. The lure shank was in the sand just beside the bone.

The Matatuahu lure (Fig.1) is 65 mm long, 11 mm deep and 10 mm across at its widest point. It has a rounded triangular cross-section. The stone is argillite of a dark red-grey colour. It is drilled for line attachment and has at the other end a well-prepared platform and lashing groove for the hook point.

Triangular sectioned lure shanks, bilaterally drilled for line attachment are highly characteristic of South Island "archaic" sites (see for example Duff 1956:Figs. 52-3). They are uncommon from excavations in the northern North Island (Davidson 1984:63). But they are, nonetheless, not rare among surface finds from the area, the Auckland Museum having a number in its collection including samples from Kaipara (cat. no. 18624.7) and off-white petrified wood (?) from Great Barrier Island (28401), both on display in the "Nga Mahi" gallery. Indeed lure shanks are numerous enough for their absence from the Matatuahu collection to constitute a gap in what is undoubtedly the region's most important "archaic" assemblage. All the more so because the Matatuahu material bears a marked resemblance to major South Island "archaic" assemblages where lure shanks are strongly represented.

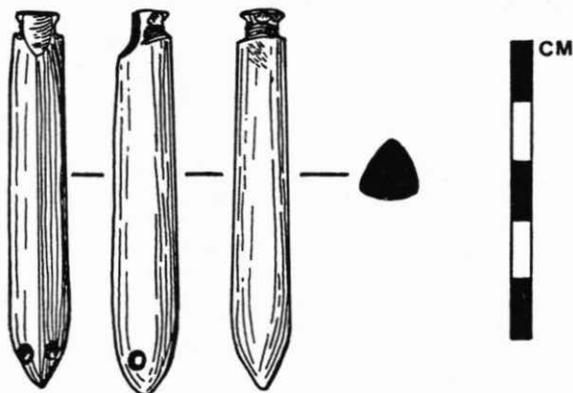


FIGURE 1. The Matatuahu lure shank.

The Brambley Collection, gathered over many years in the South Manukau Head district by Bill and Mavis Brambley and family was recently described in the Records of the Auckland Institute and Museum (Prickett 1987). Material from the Matatuahu site makes up a major part of the collection which was given to the museum in 1981. The finder of the lure shank, who is the son of Bill and Mavis Brambley, regularly returns to the Manukau Heads on fishing expeditions. It was during one of these trips that he found the item described here which is now added to the Brambley Collection in the museum (cat. no. AR7546)

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Kathy Prickett and Fred Brook for discussions on the stone material and Joan Lawrence for the drawing.

References

- Davidson, J. 1984. The Prehistory of New Zealand. Longman Paul, Auckland.
- Duff, R. 1956. The Moa-hunter Period of Maori Culture. Government Printer, Wellington.
- Prickett, N. 1987. The Brambley Collection of Maori artefacts, Auckland Museum. Rec. Auckland Inst. Mus. 24:1-66.