



NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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/>.

ADZES WITH DECORATED BUTTS

Aileen Fox
 Topsham
 Exeter, U.K.

When preparing a regional study of Hawke's Bay for The First Thousand Years (Fox, 1982:62) I collected some information on the greywacke adzes with decorated butts known to be a Hawke's Bay type. These were first recognised by Skinner (1974:24) from specimens in the Otago Museum but no full list was published. It was my intention to do an analysis of the motifs and techniques after examining and measuring the majority of specimens; unfortunately, there was no time to do this before my return to England in June 1983. With the help of correspondents in the major museums, it has been possible to compile the following list and a distribution map (Fig. 1). I am indebted for information to Betty McFadgen at the National Museum, David Simmons and Nigel Prickett, Auckland Museum, David Butts and Mary Jeal, Hawke's Bay Museum, Wendy Harsant, Otago Museum and Warner Haldane at the Gisborne Museum. Roger Fyfe confirmed that there were none in the Taranaki Museum and David Simmons recorded none in the Whakatane Museum, although adding a specimen in a private collection from Opotiki. Nevertheless it is highly probable that there are other specimens to be located in museum stores and in private collections on the east coast. This article is a preliminary account, and inevitably is incomplete.

The 60 adzes are heavy tools of the 'classic' Maori type (Duff 2B) with a rounded quadrangular cross-section and tapering towards a squarish flat butt. The lengths are usually between 21 and 27 cm, occasionally up to 33 cm. There are many plain examples as well as those with decorated butts. None have been found in a dateable context or recovered from a scientific excavation. The material is an east coast greywacke, which has not yet been sourced. Phil Moore of the New Zealand Geological Survey wrote me in 1981 that "it is most likely to come from the Tararua, Ruahine, Kaweka or Urewera Ranges. Greywackes may have been obtained from all of these but I suspect, because of the similarities of the rock types that there was one major source somewhere in western Hawke's Bay. The use of the term 'Tararua greywacke' is most misleading." Greywacke would also be obtainable as water worn pebbles or boulders from the rivers flowing from the ranges to Hawke's Bay.

There is no archaeological evidence to indicate the place of manufacture as yet. Since unlike Tahanga basalt or the

metasomatised argillites from the Nelson mineral belt, greywacke does not flake, the adzes had to be hammered and ground into shape. The resulting debris would consist of broken pieces and coarse grit which would be inconspicuous and unlikely to attract attention to a quarry or place of manufacture. The odds are therefore heavily weighted against the discovery of a workshop, if it existed, in the rugged high country west of Hawke's Bay. No specimens have been recorded from the accessible parts of the ranges; the farthest inland are two adzes from Tiniroto in the Hangaroa valley south-west of Gisborne, 35 km from the coast.

The general distribution pattern (Fig. 1) is clearly east coast, extending from Tokomaru Bay to Te Whiti in the Wairarapa. There are two minor concentrations on the coast of northern Hawke's Bay between Wairoa and Mahia, and on the Tukituki River around Waipawa. There is a significant extension to the west coast by way of the Manawatu River which breaks through the ranges to Palmerston North, evident by specimens from Lake Horowhenua and Rangiotu, and perhaps by another example provenanced only to 'Taranaki' (Otago Museum). Other outliers come from Taupo and Cambridge on the Waikato River, from Eastbourne on the Wellington Harbour (National Museum), and from the Waioeka Gorge near Opotiki (private collection). These all hint at long distance contacts and trading connections for Hawke's Bay people, probably originating as gift exchanges by the Kahungunu with visiting chiefs. The decoration of the adze butts made these distinctive tools very suitable for this purpose.

The devices on the butts are varied, consisting either of spirals or of lines in low relief; details when known are included in the list but further study is required. The patterns have been produced by the laborious pecking of the coarse-grained greywacke and considering the limitations of the material and the small size of the butt represent a considerable achievement by the craftsman. Of the 33 spiral devices, there are single spirals covering the whole of the butt, others termed 'linked spirals' in the list consist of two single coils linked centrally with a V or Y shaped join and suggest a diagrammatic face, with eyebrows, eyes and nose. There are dish-shaped hollows, some with an oval or indented surround also suggesting eyes. The linear patterns (19) are also varied: most consist of a horizontal raised line worked across the butt, a device that can also be found on some patu handles. On one example from Waipukurau (Otago Museum) there are three vertical lines; in others there are lines cut on the side of the butt which may be to hold the binding securely.

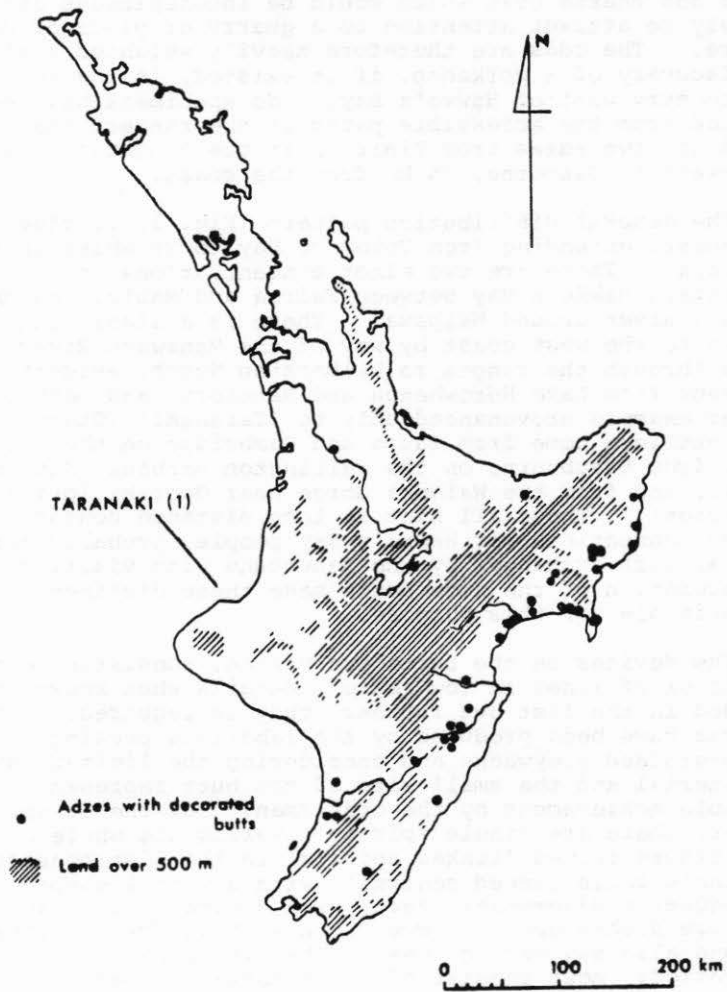


FIGURE 1. Map showing distribution of adzes with decorated butts.

The reason for the devices is not obvious; they may have been the equivalent of a trade mark and indicate the product of a workshop, or a means to enable an owner to identify a special tool. It cannot be ruled out that the face and spiral motifs were magic symbols believed to impart extra power to the implement.

It can be concluded that the characteristic material, the form as well as the devices and distribution establish the adzes as a regional type.

References

- Adkin, G.L. 1948 Horowhenua. Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington.
- Fox, A. 1982 Hawke's Bay. Pp. 62-82 in, N. Prickett (ed.), The First Thousand Years. Dunmore Press, Palmerston North.
- Skinner, H.D. 1974 Comparatively Speaking. University of Otago, Dunedin.

Appendix. List of adzes plotted on Figure 1.

Abbreviations: AM, Auckland Museum; NM, National Museum; OM, Otago Museum; HBM, Hawkes Bay Museum; CM, Canterbury Museum; GM, Gisborne Museum.

<u>Provenance</u>	<u>Device</u>	<u>Location</u>
Cambridge, Waikato	-	AM
Eastbourne, Wellington	2 raised lines	NM ME6639
Gisborne	Raised lines	OM 79.93
Lake Horowhenua, Te Hou midden. (Adkin, 1948:161)	Spiral	NM ME11316
Lake Horowhenua, Waikiekie	Curved line	NM Black coll. 58
Loisel'a Beach, Tolaga Bay	Linked spirals	GM 79.93
Mahia	Linked spirals	OM D70.303 (cast)
Mohaka, northern Hawkes Bay	Linked spirals	OM D32.1274
Mohaka, " " "	Spiral, worn	AM 29271
"Martin Bay (1867)" Site not not located in Hawkes Bay. N. Auckland unlikely.	Linked spirals	HBM 52.64
Nuhaka, northern Hawkes Bay	Linked spirals	AM 13824.2
Nuhaka, " " "	Linked spirals	NM ME1609

Omanuke, Waipare	Spiral	HBM 38.368
Opotiki, Waioweka Gorge Rd.	Linked spirals	Private coll.
Pakowai, Hastings	Linked spirals	HBM 37.713
Rangiotu, Manawatu	Linked spirals	NM ME10903
Ruataniwha, W of Waipawa	Linked spirals	CM E174.148
Tamumu, SE of Waipawa	Curved line	NM ME10786
Taranaki, no location	Two spirals	OM D53.696
Taupo	Raised line	OM D26.1320
Te Houra, Dannevirke	Raised line	NM ME6721
Te Whiti, Wairarapa	Worn	NM ME12108
Tiniroto (2 adzes)	Spirals	AM 18995.1,2
Tokomaru Bay	Raised line	HBM 38.366
Waione, SE of Dannevirke	Raised line	NM ME12550
Waikare river mouth	Spiral	Private coll.
Waipare, Gisborne	Dished 'eye'	HBM 38.361
Waipare, Gisborne	Spiral	HBM 38.371
Waipawa, 'Iron gate pa'	Spiral	AM 37098
Waipukurau	3 vertical lines	OM D47.79
Wairoa	Linked spirals	CM E138.1235A
Wairoa	Raised line, 2 lines side of butt	NM ME12414.m
Waitai, Wairoa	Linear device	NM ME1922.C
Whangara, NE of Gisborne	Linked spirals	GM 75.55

Additionally, there are 25 unlocated adzes with decorated butts in the following museums. It can be presumed that they were obtained from the east coast.

Auckland Museum, 534, linked spirals; 9847, spiral; 2009.6 spiral, worn; 16419.3, raised line; 43773, linked spirals.

Gisborne Museum, 54.673, linked spirals; 59.1835 vertical lines.

Hawkes Bay Museum, A 89, spiral; 52.69, lines on side of butt; 53.193, spiral, worn; 59.194, raised line; 78.149, raised line.

National Museum, 'East coast' ME896.6, raised line; ME1120, raised line; ME3278, device worn; ME7950a, two raised lines; ME7950b, two dish-shape 'eyes'; ME7948, oval device; ME10781, raised line; ME889, curved and vertical line; ME3816, linked spirals; ME4261, linked spirals; ME5500, dish-shaped 'eyes'.

Otago Museum, 'East coast' D27.1364, raised line; 'East coast' D54.113, spiral.