



NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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The Christchurch Conference also provided a much-needed reminder that the Association could concern itself much more with research. Except for the production of the Newsletter, it has tended to become rather remote from local activities, and because the Council only rarely receives accounts of current fieldwork, it is not often in a position to assist in the planning of further work. Yet, because it has the means to pool opinion, the Council ought to be able to suggest not only methods but also aims in local research which would be particularly valuable for the country as a whole.

This would not mean the replacement of local initiative by outside direction. It would avoid duplication of effort, and, by opening up the avenues of communication, could help to raise standards of excavation by constructive advice and criticism.

The Council for British Archaeology has a number of committees which direct attention to the research problems of particular periods. While such a formal arrangement is hardly required here, there would seem to be a case for the Council to act in the same spirit. Some fields which suggest themselves are the collection of radiocarbon samples from nationally significant sites; the co-ordination of the work on obsidian dating, and the build-up of more representative and reliable avifaunal collections - Scarlett's highly important list of the known distribution of moa genera could surely be filled out very rapidly in this way.

If we can develop a more directional view of the immediate future, the problems aired at the Christchurch Conference on the cultural succession have some chance of solution. Moreover, the acceptance of the principle that what matters is the relating of local interests to national needs would enable us to tailor our strategy and tactics to the human resources available.

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ASPECT AND PHASE ON SKIPPER'S RIDGE (OPITO) AND
KUMARA - KAIAMO (URENUI)

Abridged by R.H. Parker

In New Zealand Archaeology the use of typologies of portable artifacts to define cultural sequences has resulted in a certain circularity of argument. A given type must have originated either in New Zealand or out of it. There are thus two necessary classes of types, which if we use the infrequent finds to classify the components of our sites, must yield two necessary classes of sites:- "early" sites characterised by the presence of artifacts of types widely distributed in Polynesia, and "late" sites characterised by the

presence of types originating in New Zealand. In this situation the finer and more precise discrimination of cultural periods remains difficult if not impossible.

Two years ago Golson proposed an alternative procedure for analysing the archaeological evidence. This paper is an attempt to apply Golson's methodology to the analysis of structural evidence from two sites widely separated in the North Island.

As basic data for the description of cultural sequences structural evidence has three advantages over the evidence of portable artifacts:-

1. It is found directly related to the overall stratigraphy.
2. The earthwork structures of New Zealand sites exhibit a wide variety of forms within any functional category.
3. Houses, store-pits and fortifications are from their nature likely to reflect changes in social organisation.

SKIPPERS RIDGE.

Four occupational levels were defined stratigraphically. Each yielded a characteristic range of structures of distinctive types.

Level IV:

1. A single small bell-shaped pit. (rus)
2. A rather elongated "bin" store pit.
3. A large number of ovens (haangi).

Level III:

1. Three small bin-shaped pits. All lacked the complex internal features found by Golson at Sarah's Gully site.
2. Three shallow elongated pits (length to breadth = 2:1 with central line of post holes with the end posts inset into the short walls. These pits exhibited a close general resemblance to certain pits found at Sarah's Gully by Golson and Birks. This suggests that this level is likely to be roughly contemporary with Golson's Sarah's Gully site and hence with the upper layers of the Sarah's Gully working floor and with layer 4a of Golson's Opito site. This suggestion was strengthened by the finding in the fill of one of the pits on Skipper's Ridge of two adze roughouts of Duff's type 4A and one of Duff's type 3. (see photo 1.)

Level I:

1. Four large and relatively deep pits with a length breadth ratio of 3:2. These were arranged end to end in two pairs with evidence that each pair had formed a unit and had been covered with a single roof. Three of the pits had in each a single buttress protruding from one of the long walls, and one pit in each pair contained a scoop hearth. Each pit contained a single pair of postholes held well back from the end walls at each end. (see photo 2.)

- Two flat roofed rectangular underground pits, one opening directly off one of the larger pits and the other free standing and opening from a small square pit. The door of each had been fitted with a wooded frame recessed into the earth and the sill had been protected from wear by a light beam set into the earth across the bottom of the door.

At the time of the excavation there was no known parallel for any of these features. Last Autumn, however, on Mt. Roskill, the fragmentary but recognisable remains of a buttress pit were located. On that site it seemed likely that this was the earliest feature on the site, predating even the big square pits which themselves resembled the similar pits on Mt. Wellington cut in the period immediately after the building of the first terraces.

- Three small circular pits about eighteen inches in diameter and six inches deep.

On his Opito working floor immediately to the north of Skipper's Ridge, Golson defined a stratigraphy which seems to correlate significantly with that on the ridge. The following table represents the probable relationship:-

SKIPPER'S RIDGE	OPITO WORKING FLOOR	SARAH'S GULLY
Level III	Layer 4a	Pits and later working floor
Level I	Layer 4c	Earlier working floor

KUMARA - KAIAMO.

In all seven occupation periods were defined stratigraphically:

Level I:

- Two elongated relatively shallow pits. The one of these which was completely excavated had a length-breadth ratio of a little less than 2:1 and a central line of post holes with the end post at the southern end inset into the short wall. In these features it closely paralleled the level III pits at Opito. (see photo 3 & 5)
- Five bin-shaped pits. These were similar in size to the Opito bins but differed from them in that each pit had a single central post hole.
- The presence of a very large post hole on the outskirts of the settlement suggests that the site may have been palisaded at this period.

The parallels between Level I here and Level III at Opito are obvious when allowance is made for regional differences. It is proposed that the assemblages of this type should be recognised as a distinct Aspect of early New Zealand culture and that provisionally it should be called "New Zealand Archaic B".

Level II:

1. Five flat roofed, underground, rectangular structures. One pair of these had a dividing wall pierced by a tunnel and the more westerly of them opened onto a floor thought to be the floor of a living house. The other three were free standing and all badly damaged by later occupational disturbance. In no case did it seem that the door had been framed in wood. The dimensions were similar to those of the similar pits at Opito. (see photo 3 & 4)
2. The floor just referred to had been the base of a relatively deep pit the walls of which had been almost entirely removed by later disturbance. Only about half of the floor was preserved. The roof had been carried on two posts placed on the centre line and held well back from the end walls, and there was present a shallow scoop hearth between the southernmost post and the south wall of the pit. It was not possible to say whether or not a buttress had been a feature.
3. To this period belonged the construction of the massive earth platform for which at present we have no precise parallels.

The association of living pits and store pits and the general character of both strongly suggests parallels between Level II at Kumara-kaiamo and Level I at Skipper's Ridge. The differences in detail are marked but on neither site did structures of these types occur at any other level and the evidence suggests a basic house unit very different from that found in either Classic Maori or Archaic B. This seems to justify treating these assemblages as another distinct Aspect and provisionally "Archaic A" seems the most convenient name.

Level III:

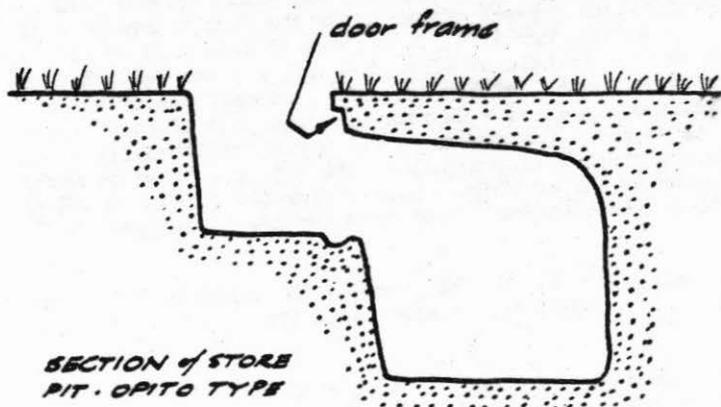
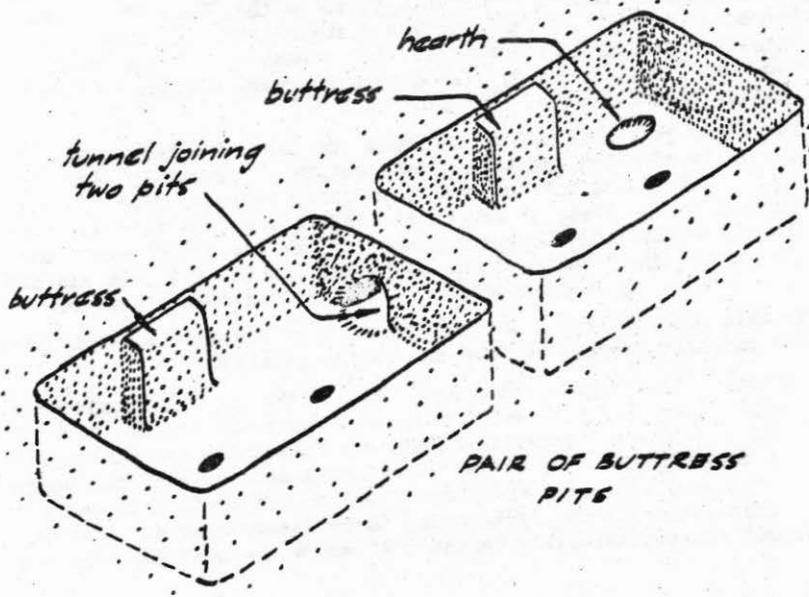
Yielded a double line of large, deep and almost square pits similar in dimensions and general character to the deep square pits of Mt. Wellington and Mt. Roskill. Store pits of this kind do not fit well into either the Archaic or Classic Maori, and one feels they should be treated as a distinct Aspect. The fact that one of these pits at Kumara-kaiamo contained a 2B adze and that pits of this type are common as an early feature on pa which are traditionally associated with "fleet" tribes suggests that this may in fact be an early Phase in the development of Classic Maori. For the time being "Early Maori" seems to be the most convenient term for it. (see photo 6-8)

Level V and VI:

Were Classic Maori in the full sense, with ditch and bank fortification rua store pits, houses of Classic Maori type and 2B adzes.

Level VII:

Could be dated historically to the period 1868-76 and contained the objects of European manufacture that could be expected at this date. "Late Maori" seems to be the most convenient term to describe the culture of this period.



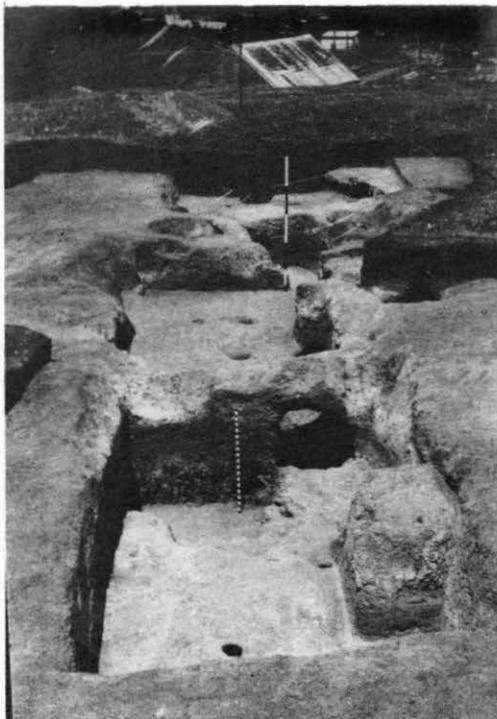
ARCHAIC 'A'

(1)



(1) TWO ARCHAIC "B" TYPE HOUSE PITS IN FOREGROUND.

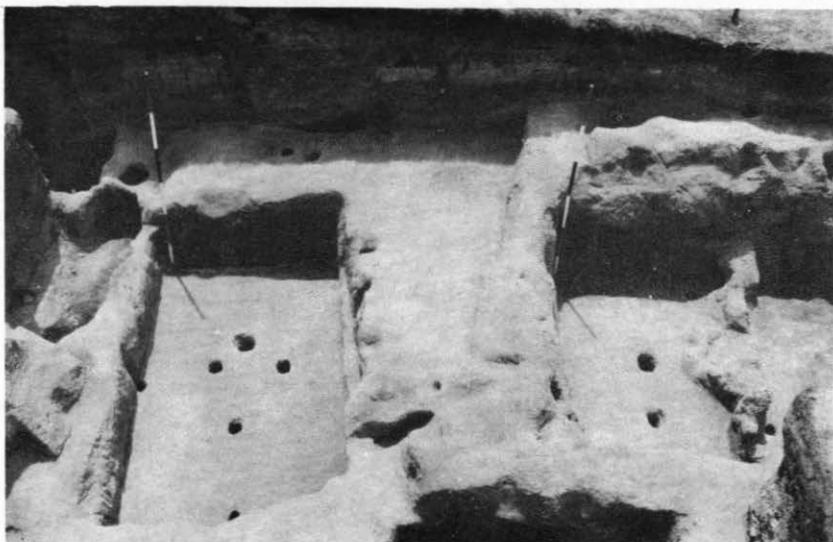
(2)



(2) PAIR OF BUTTRESS PITS.

URENUI

(3)



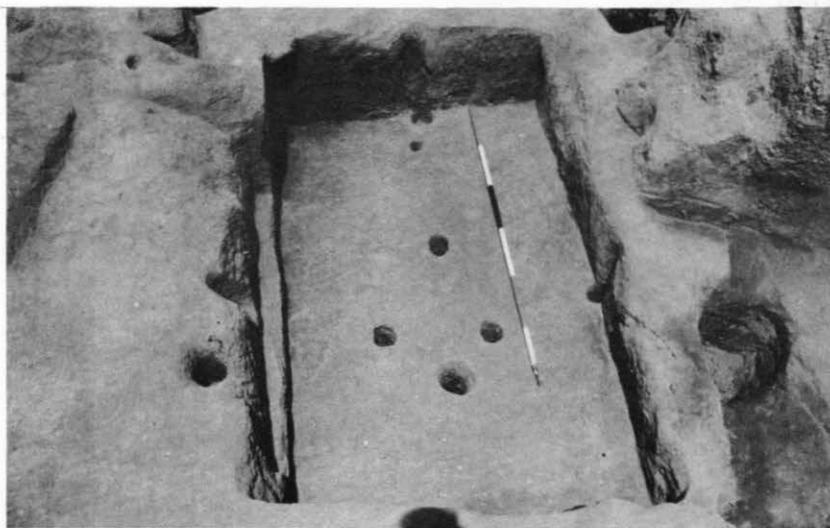
(3) ARCHAIC "A" HOUSE. FLOOR CUT BY ARCHAIC "B" PIT.

(4.)



(4) ASSOCIATED DEEP PITS WITH DIVIDING WALL.

(5)



(5) ARCHAIC "B" PIT.

(6)



(6) "EARLY MAORI" PIT.



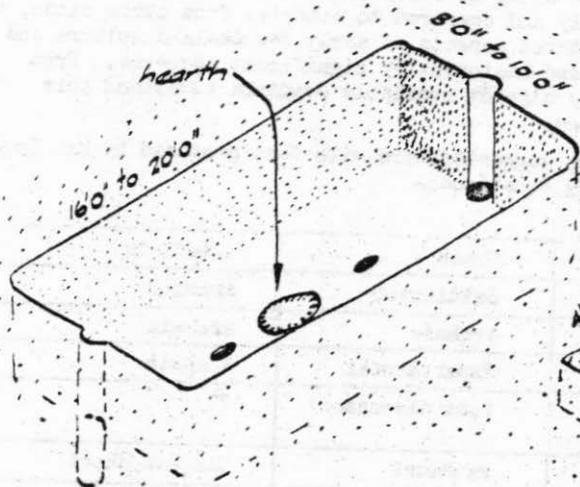
(7) URENUI

(7) LINE OF "EARLY MAORI" PITS
FROM EAST.

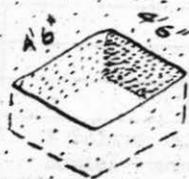
(8) EXCAVATION FROM WEST
ARCH. "A" IN FOREGROUND.
BIN PITS ON RIGHT.
CUTS "EARLY MAORI" PITS, MIDDLE.
"EARLY MAORI" PITS, BACKGROUND.



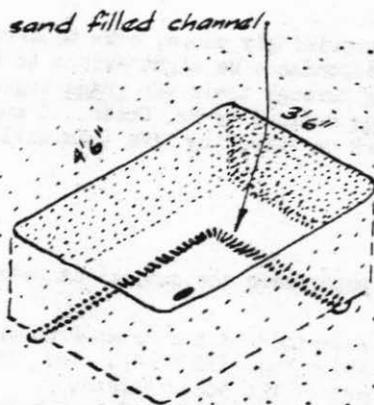
(8)



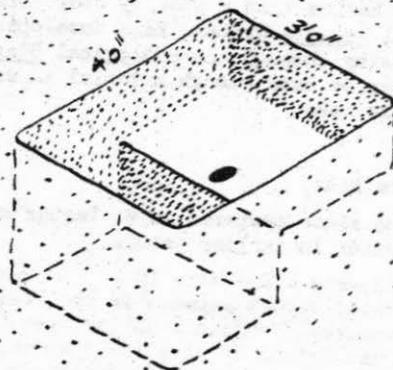
NOTCHED PIT
OPITO TYPE



BIN PIT
OPITO TYPE



BIN PIT
KUMARA-KAI-AMO



BIN PIT
KUMARA-KAI-AMO

ARCHAIC "B"

On the evidence of these two sites it seems possible, when their components are defined stratigraphically and compared to material from other sites, to recognise at least five distinct aspects of early New Zealand culture and to arrange them in an orderly and historically significant sequence. From several other sites there is already available evidence to extend this sequence towards completeness.

A comparison of the sequence suggested here with that proposed by Mr. Roger Green suggests the following equations:-

Parker (Absent)	Green Settlement	Artifacts Archaic
Archaic A	Archaic	Archaic
Archaic B	Experimental	Archaic
Kauri Point period 2 Great Mercury Island	(not discussed)	??
Early Maori	Pa Maori	Classic Maori
Classic Maori	Classic Maori	Classic Maori
Late Maori	European Maori (or Contact)	European Artifacts increasing

The correlation of these stages seems surprisingly close, even embarrassingly close. Rather than a step by step correspondence we might expect to find the cultural Aspects defined here developing through their own Phase organisation and passing through the ecological Stages defined by Mr. Green. I suspect that when we have enough material to work on something like this will prove to be the case.

(Editors Note)

The two sites compared in H. Parker's paper were the subject of detailed description in earlier papers.

The Skipper's Ridge site (N) was described at the Science Congress 1960 and a brief report appears in the Newsletter Vol. III No. 2. The site is on the Coromandel Peninsula on the East Coast of the North Island. The Kumara-kaiamo Pa site (N109/9) excavation was described in a paper at the Science Congress 1962 and a brief report appears in the Newsletter Vol. IV No. 4. The site is on the West Coast of the North Island, north of the City of New Plymouth. The full excavation reports of both sites have yet to be published.