



NEW ZEALAND
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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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The Canterbury Museum holds an adze collection of predominantly Archaic affinities. The relevant items, in terms of Duff's (1956) classification, are:-

- 1A Black aphanitic rock. Igneous? Length 8 cm.
- 1A? Fragment. Dark green aphanitic material. Polished.
- 2A Weathered nephrite. Length 7.5 cm.
- 3A Rough-cut. Grey fine grained igneous rock - local c.f. andesite Length 8 cm.
- 3A Tendency to poll lugs. Polished. Epidiorite? Length 28 cm.
- 4A Rough-cut. Parallel edged - prism form. Broken.
- 4A Rough-cut.

EXCAVATIONS AT SOUTH BAY KAIKOURA - SITE S49/43

Tony Fomison

A brief outline of the field archaeology of Kaikoura Peninsula has appeared in a previous issue of the Newsletter (Fomison, 1959). Since then further sites have been recorded, mostly in South Bay: two more pa sites (S49/19 and 40) two cave sites (S49/20 and 21) and the site with which this interim report is concerned (S49/43).

In 1849 this area was surveyed for a Native Reserve by James McKay, as having been part of a former Ngai Tahu site of occupation, an implication of its archaeological nature (Elvy 1950). Its name, Te Hiku o te Waeroa, "The tail of the Sandfly" is possibly an allusion to its position, as a point projecting from the end of a flat which extends westward along the seashore for over one mile, all of which has yielded signs of occupation at various points. No traditional data has been published about the site, although the late Harry Jacobs of Mangamauna Pa believed that at the time of Te Rauparaha's raid on Kaikoura Peninsula, 1829, the Upoko-ariki was not Rerewaka of Nihomanga Pa (Site S49/14) but another chief who lived at South Bay, and whose settlements were likewise sacked. (For this information I am indebted to Mr. J. Sherrard who is currently engaged in a County History of the Kaikoura Coast). This would certainly accord with the presence in South Bay of the largest pa, by surviving surface evidence, in the South Island. (Site S49/39 - Described, Fomison, 1959).

The opportunity for excavation at Te Hiku o te Waeroa was provided by the passing of the reserve into private hands and the likelihood of subdivision. In November, 1962, excavations were carried out at two points on the site: the rising, central area, and a marginal area on an old beach edge.

At both points, the feature warranting this report, namely Moa-hunter/late Maori sequence of occupation was found.

THE SEQUENCE:

Layer One:

The base of the site is a high reef of limestone outcrop which tidal action has consolidated with loose limestones, and it is these, variously sorted by the tides, that constitutes this basal layer. It contained some fish and seal bones, and the full range of shells still extant in the locality. Everything about these, their waterworn nature, the occurrence of bones in articulation, the lack of selection in shell types, suggested an entirely natural origin, and that the bones owed their survival to a relatively fast progradation of shore line by which they were buried.

Layer Two:

In our marginal squares this layer represented an interruption in the foreshore accumulations by a human occupation which had spread larger less waterworn stones, probably from the areas of outcrop and in accompanying charcoal stain. In one square this rather slight evidence expanded into an oven, a scooped hollow carefully lined with limestones of consistently large size, and placed evenly over the wood priming which had survived as a two-inch lining of grease-soaked charcoal underlying the stones. On top of the stones pelvis and tibia fragments of moa (genus yet to be identified) were found.

In the centre of the site this layer was thicker in extent, but much truncated by the similarly intense occupation represented by layer four. Where surviving, it tended to differentiate itself from the shell and stone of layer four by a composition, predominantly of ash. In neither area were artifacts recovered from this layer; the total area of this layer excavated was rather small and further excavation has a good chance of better "returns" in this regard. Some of the postholes recorded in the centre of the site seem to have originated from layer two; here again, the excavated area needs widening to make intelligible the present fragmentary record of four small squares.

Layer Three:

Layer Three was in effect a resumption of foreshore build-up continuing an increasingly fine size grading as the top gradually rose above the point where sea action could wash up the larger stones.

Layer Four:

In all squares this layer was more extensive than Layer Two, but like it, increasing in extent away from the beach line. It provided a considerable range of artifacts. Two pauashell carving 'eyes', an unfinished "kuru" pendant, an unfinished bone comb, quantities of red ochre and ochre grinders, a considerable number of bone lure hooks, composite fish hooks, fish gorges, fish awls, fragments of a few one-piece fish hooks, a sinker, an undiagnostic rough-out adze in argillite, various pieces of nephrite and numerous spawls use-smoothened in the sawing of nephrite. (Finds made by gardening

and unsystematic digging elsewhere on the site include a late Maori patu, a nephrite adze in process of conversion into a tiki, and trussed burials - all of which, on typological grounds, could be associated with Layer Four.)

Among the midden remains those of barracouda and groper predominated. Other remains according to field identifications by R.J. Scarlett, include those of albatross, mollymawk, petrel, black-backed gull, oyster-catcher, Little Blue Penguin, Shag, seal, tui, kaka, tuatara, native rat and dog. The occasional presence of china fragments on the top of Layer One would represent a post-European continuation of occupancy for certain parts of the site. In the section drawing of the site-margin stratigraphy this occupation is recognised by the designation of Layer 4.B. Throughout, Layer Four contained a high proportion of seashell midden; few if any such shells were recorded in Layer Two.

Interim Interpretation:

Although the dearth of artifactual and midden remains in Layer Two makes cultural identity difficult, this very dearth might imply a fairly early stage of occupation, perhaps Settlement phase in the now accepted occupational sequence of Green (Green, 1962). Layer Four may be more complex in origin, with perhaps both Village and Classic Maori phase and Early European Maori as well.

Our work in South Bay has obviously just begun. In the meantime I wish to thank Mr. Ron Kiethley the landowner for his considerable co-operation and provision of every facility, and the following members of the Canterbury Museum Archaeological Society for their part in the excavation: Misses R. Jenkins, K. Fletcher, S. Johnson; Messrs. J. McClelland, P. Scott, K. Wright, C. Gross; Mr. and Mrs. E. Mueller; Mrs. Campbell and Son; Mr. and Mrs. Knowles. Local help was provided by Mr. and Mrs. J. Britten, Mrs. Fowlie and Son, Mrs. Bennet, Mrs. Bateman. Most of all, I would like to acknowledge the help of Mr. R.J. Scarlett.

References:

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- R. Green and W. Shawcross "Cultural Sequence in the Auckland Province"
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