



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/>.

FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS AT KAURI POINT, KATIKATI

By W. Ambrose

Last year's report¹ on the excavations at Kauri Point ring ditch pa included historical, traditional and geological information which need not be repeated here.

As Mr. Golson pointed out, various lines of evidence suggested that the Kauri Point site might give information about the relationship between the Archaic and Classic phases of New Zealand's prehistory. Excavations last year indicated certain points of coincidence between traditional history, cited by Mr. Melvin, and the observed stratigraphic sequence described by Mr. Golson. A most significant division was seen to exist between an earlier pit-terrace complex and a later ring ditch defensive system. This major division was very conditionally seen as an archaeological manifestation of the traditional evidence for an early people (Ngamarama) being supplanted by a later people (Ngaiterangi). Stratigraphic and traditional evidence, though dealt with separately, were both seen to corroborate a wider assumption about the exclusiveness of two cultural forms; the one, Archaic, being represented by earlier terrace and pit constructions, and the other (Classic Maori) by the later ring ditch pa. Mr. Golson was careful to point out the very tentative nature of his conclusions and made a strong recommendation for further work to be carried out at what he considered key points. Despite his note of caution, some of his suggestions have already been taken as read and incorporated in other work.²

Archaeological Society excavations this year have shown the need to re-evaluate some of last year's findings. In this brief report the suggested changes will be as far as possible compared with the results from last year so that readers may see what particular modifications are necessary. This new evidence is presented while redrawing some of the major divisions of the sequence, and also in the final discussion, of the defence works, rectangular structures and the cultural status of the site.

The Sequence

Three periods of structural activity were outlined from last year's excavations. Briefly they were as follows:

Period 1. The earliest structural evidence with three small isolated rectangular pits.

Period 2. Large scale earthworks in the form of terraces with associated large rectangular pit complexes arranged in an orderly pattern.

- - - - - Major stratigraphic break - - - - -

Period 3. The present well preserved double ditch and bank defensive earthworks.

This sequence, though relatively correct, is not complete nor does it fully describe the range of features associated with each period. Though we are still unable to give an unequivocal account of the site's complete history, we have seen the need for redrawing both the sequential account and the overall character of one period. The three-period sequence from last year was based on the evidence of a section excavated along the long axis of the site. This year a series of squares, laid out at right angles to last year's long trench, (Fig.1.) was excavated and showed the need to insert two extra periods after the infilling of the terrace pits of Period 2. (Fig 2)

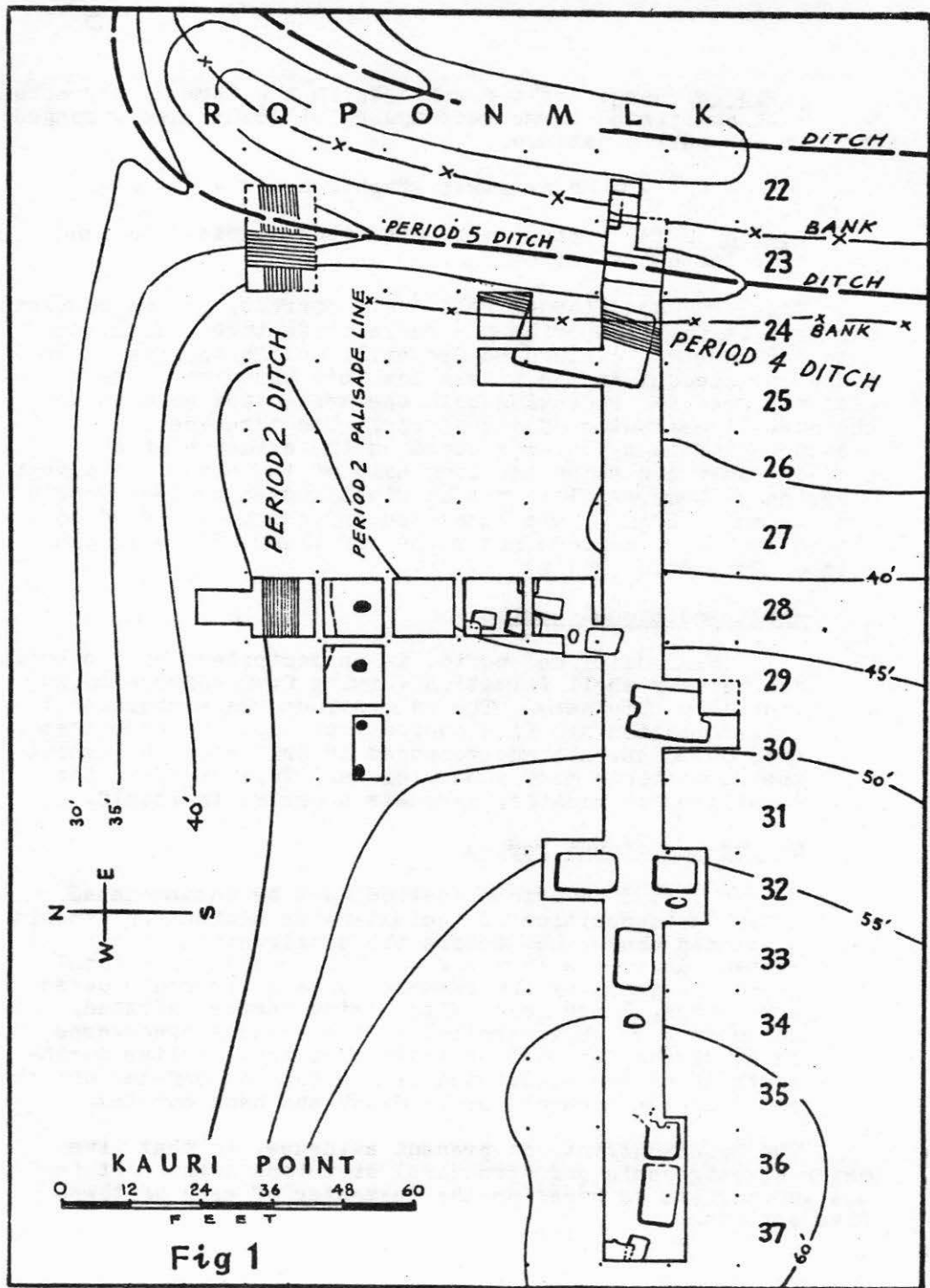
First Additional Period

This additional period is characterised by a burnt, fragmentary shell formation varying from a trace to 24 inches in thickness. The only structures associated in this formation are fire depressions, and the ever present postholes, all superimposed in profusion throughout the formation's many subdivisions. This deposit, for stratigraphic reasons, warrants a period to itself.

Second Additional Period

A second additional period must be accommodated after the deposition of the extensive habitation deposit mentioned above, but before the construction of the present defensive earthworks. This second additional period is shown by the presence of a north-south defensive ditch, later recut after being partly infilled, which runs roughly parallel to the present transverse outer ditch. It will be shown that this earlier north-south ditch was associated with a form of defence different from the present double ditch and bank complex.

The broad outline, on present evidence, is that five major stratigraphic and structural divisions exist. It is now appropriate to redefine the character of each of these five periods.



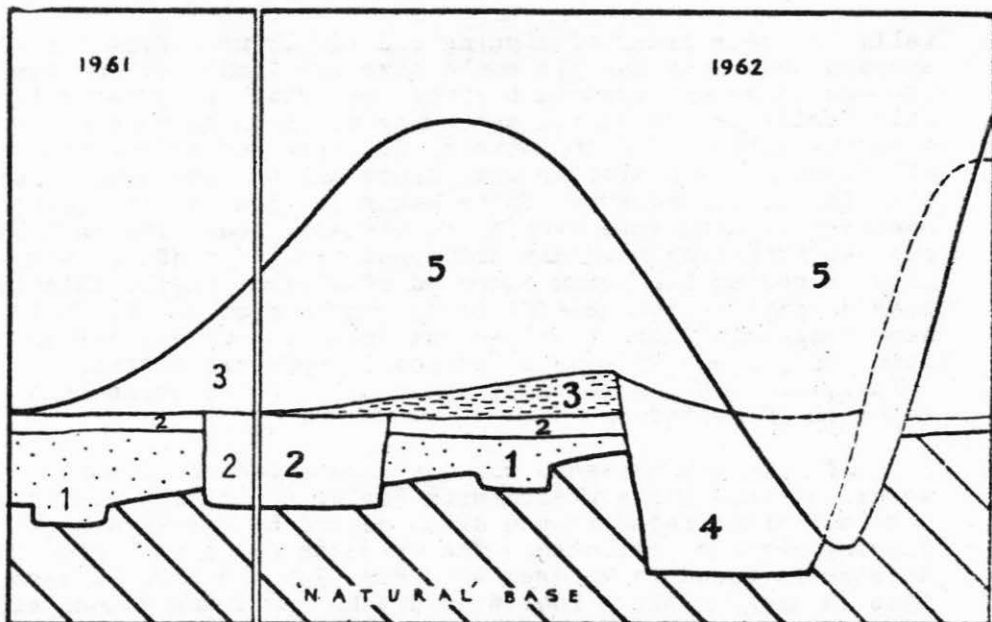


Fig. 2.

Diagrammatic composite cross section showing the additional periods postulated from the 1962 excavations.

Period 1.

There is no clear evidence for any additional structures, other than the three pits described last year, to be added to this period. The three pits were all sealed by a deposit which is in turn cut through, or built on, in the development of features of Period 2.

Period 2.

The substantial earthworks comprising the terraces and their associated pit complexes were seen last year as a major feature of the site. Again, this year, excavation has reaffirmed the major earthmoving operations of this period. Seven additional rectangular structures without hearths were uncovered in two squares at the foot of the bottom terrace. (Squares M, N, 28). Five of these pits are affected by being cut into by subsequent pit digging. Six of these seven pits are infilled by relatively sterile material, similar to the fill of the larger pits on the terraced hill-slope above them. With one exception these seven pits can be arranged sequent-

ially in their order of digging and infilling. From this it appears that only one pit would have functioned at any time. The exception may rest in a single pit which at present is only partly excavated and which may be shown to be contemporaneous with one of the others. The size and orientation of all seven pits is similar but, since all but one extend outside the excavated area, their other characteristics such as posthole arrangements cannot yet be described. The last dug pit has infilling markedly different from that of the six pits preceding it, being composed of a burnt shelly material seen as part of the deposit comprising Period 3. It would seem from this fact, that the extension of our excavation into the terrace at Square N29, could show the correct relationship of the terrace, the pits, and the subsequent deposits of Period 3.

Of utmost importance was the excavation of defensive works, at this stage placed with Period 2, and comprising a six-foot wide flat-bottomed ditch backed by a raised bank bearing massive postholes. The evidence for this Period 2 defence is found in Squares Q28, P28, P29 and P30. It seems that in digging the 6 foot wide ditch, spoil was dumped along its edge to raise a bank. The total difference in height between ditch bottom and bank top at present is 9 feet; 3 feet as bank build-up and 6 feet excavation in forming the ditch. The buried surface underlying the bank slopes slowly to the south and, where the foot of the bank gives out, is overlain by the distinctive burnt shelly formation of Period 3. This formation continues over the inner flank of the bank, and thus becomes an invaluable upper limit for the defensive works on this part of the site.

All of the four large palisade postholes had originally been dug from the same surface upon which the bank was raised. The material forming the bank also forms part of the fill originally packed about the posts. There is no doubt about the contemporaneity of the postholes' use with the building of the bank and the digging of the ditch.

Fifty feet to the east, and in line with the ditch-bank-palisade, in Square Q23, excavation revealed another section of the same ditch. However, unlike the simple, single-stage earthworks we had seen in Squares P and Q28, the east-west ditch had been truncated by at least two later ditches running north-south. The long east-west single ditch and bank had been infilled before being truncated by the first of the north-south ditches.

The largest rectangular pit (20 feet by 11 feet) yet uncovered on the site was partially excavated in Squares L24

and 25 last year, and then ascribed to Period 2. The evidence for this was that it cut through the layer which elsewhere seals the earliest (Period 1) structures. There is no reason to modify this view. This large rectangular pit, though 3 feet 6 inches deep, is not buttressed. Only two-thirds of this structure has been excavated, but the area uncovered allows a reasonable estimate of its total posthole pattern to be made. This consists of two rows of seven holes parallel with the long sides and about 2 feet from the walls. A central row is estimated to have six postholes. Both the long walls are extensively slotted at close intervals and each of these vertical wall slots has a corresponding extension as a normal posthole into the pit floor. The western wall is plastered to a thickness of about 6 inches with material so like the "natural" sub-stratum as to be almost indistinguishable from it.

This pit was not infilled in one operation, for there are several layers of well compacted sterile deposit separated by thin bands of ash and charcoal. In this respect the character of its infilling is very similar to that of the pit on the lowest of the three terraces (described last year as House B). Finally this large pit is sealed at its northern end by the widespread black shelly formation of Period 3.

Period 3. (First Additional Period)

The characteristic burnt, broken shelly formation which distinguishes Period 3 has already been mentioned. In Square N28 it seals the fill of several small rectangular pits, and is the fill of another. In Square P28 this formation seals the flank of the built-up bank, associated with single ditch and palisade defence. In the next Square, Q28, the initial deposit on the floor of the east-west flat bottom ditch, is the same burnt shelly formation of Period 3. This formation seals the fill of the large pit in Squares M, N, 24-25. Its thickness appears to increase as it approaches the northern edge of the flat between the terraced hill and the present pa. It does not appear, except as a discontinuous trace, in the area excavated last year. It is mainly composed of fine laminations of burnt and crushed shell well mixed with charcoal and ash. Innumerable shallow basins occur throughout the deposit while the presence of burnt and fractured stone is another common feature.

This distinctive formation may subsequently be shown to be functionally linked with a final stage of Period 2 or possibly an early stage of Period 4 - described below. However, whatever the final analysis shows, the deposit's stratigraphic position is quite clear: it overlies features

seen to be Period 2 and is cut through by features of Period 4. In Square N24 the Period 4 north-south ditch clearly truncates the Period 3 formation.

Period 4. (Second Additional Period)

As mentioned earlier the long east-west flat-bottomed ditch (Period 2) has been truncated, in Square Q23, by at least two north-south ditches; one, the earlier, (Period 4) has probably been re-dug after a certain amount of infilling, while the other is the visible outer ditch of the present (Period 5) double ditch and bank earthworks.

The earliest north-south ditch continues south from Square Q23 and in Squares N and L24 it cuts through the fill of the large Period 2 pit, both its end walls, and its overlying Period 3 formation. Last year in Square L24, the presence of a later structure cutting through the fill of this pit was identified correctly, but then, because of the limited area uncovered, this later structure was thought to be a second pit. The profile of the Period 4 ditch, with its wide flat bottom, is no different from the preceding Period 2 ditch.

Period 5. (Final Period)

The double ditch and bank complex, constituting the most distinctive feature of Period 5, has already been mentioned in discussion of the ditch sequence in Square Q23. Of all the extensive earthworks carried out at different times in the site's history, the defence system of Period 5 alone remains clearly visible. Even so, erosion has modified and filled some areas. This is seen in Square S12 where the narrow outer ditch has been almost completely filled by slumping and filling with material from the high inner bank. (Fig. 3)

North Flank of the Pa

It had been suggested in last year's report, that the large shell middens swelling the contour on the north flank of the pa could be linked with Period 2 or, less likely, Period 1. Our excavations have not completely sectioned the area which promises to give the necessary stratigraphic link between the shell middens and structures related to Period 2. Whatever relative position the shell midden assumes, it forms the second depositional cycle at this part of the site. The first cultural deposits are finer and more clay-like and form a fairly level surface upon which a continuous layer of debris has been deposited. The shell midden is clearly interstratified with fire remains, and no doubt the two are function-

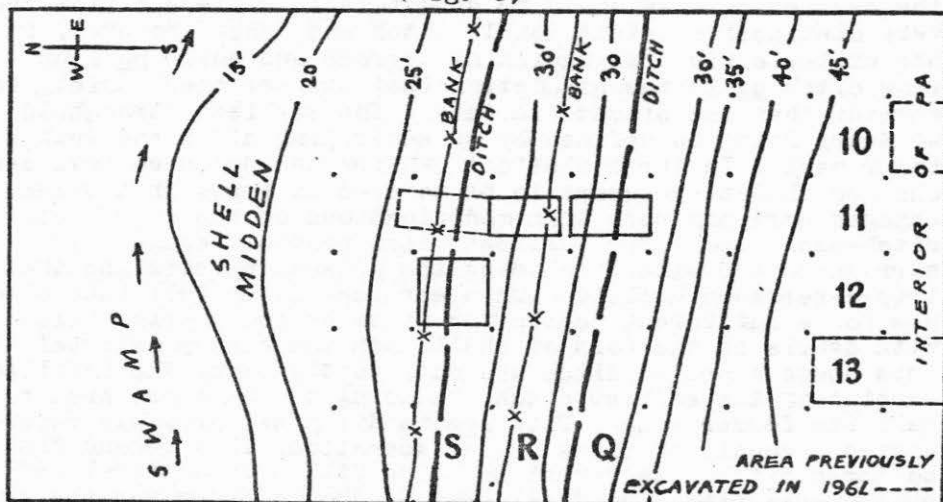
ally related. However, this shell midden on the northern flank of the pa is only circumstantially attributed to Period 2 activity by virtue of its link with a relatively early artificially flattened area.

The earliest defensive flat bottomed ditch, described previously in Squares Q23 and Q28, might be expected to occur in Q11 if it maintained its general east-west lineation through the intervening area. In fact, three flat bottomed ditches occur in Square Q11. The earliest of the three seems reasonably linked with the earliest east-west ditch in Squares Q23 and Q28. The remaining two seem plausibly related to two later fortification phases, mentioned above in describing Periods 4 and 5.

We might expect a stratigraphic continuity between the shell midden and the first ditch if both in fact arise from Period 2. An unexcavated 3 foot baulk between the two areas conceals any such link. We hope to test this intervening baulk shortly.

The sequence of the three ditches is quite clear in Square Q11. The first ditch has been partly destroyed in the subsequent constructions, but nevertheless sufficient of its floor remains for its flat bottom and steep northern wall to be seen. This is also the case with the next ditch in sequence which, apart from a peculiar raised lump of natural about 18 inches square, has the same character. The last ditch of the three uncovered in Q11 represents the latest

(Fig. 3)



(Period 5) earthworks and will be described more fully.

The present (Period 5) defensive system consists of a double ditch and double bank. The inner ditch has virtually the same character as the ditches of the periods which precede it. Its most distinctive feature is its association with an outer ditch and bank. The development of this extra feature is clearly seen in the northern flank of the pa in Square S12. The earthwork in question is a narrow trench only 18 inches wide at floor level, and cut through the extensive shell deposits mentioned above. Its northern wall is vertical and ends in a low outer bank which shows a couple of small post-holes. Its southern wall rises steeply to become the high inner bank and near its base there is an erratic row of stake holes, generally orientated at a high angle northwards. The claylike "natural" base has a 30° slope to the north and this, coupled with the bulk of the high inner bank, has caused slumping into the ditch.

Discussion

Defence

From the evidence of this year's excavation, defence work is seen as a relatively early feature of the site. Though this was accepted last year as a possibility for the site's early phase, it was thought that the form of defence would show as terrace and scarp,⁵ on the grounds that early occupation of the site was Archaic, and that Archaic defence might be by terrace and scarp. It was correctly thought that the earlier defence would be structurally different from the very distinctive latest double ditch and bank. However, in the criteria for distinguishing terrace and scarp pa from ring ditch pa is the assumption that the terraced variety is earlier than the ditched variety. The earliest stronghold at Kauri Point is defined by an encircling ditch and raised inner bank. In three distinct stages the defences have been changed, but there seems to be no need to imply that these changes were any more than modifications of the same basic ditch-bank form. The earliest ditch probably completely surrounded the site, including the present pa area and the triple-terraced hillside. This earliest ditch fell into disuse for a sufficient period for it to be completely filled with debris in the form of shell, ash and clayey material. At this stage a second ditch was cut, partly along the infilled remains of the earlier ditch, reducing the defended area to half its former size. This second ditch was probably rejuvenated a couple of times by re-excavation. This second flat bottomed ditch arrangement was also filled by cultural and erosion deposits. The final system, though defending the same

area, has an additional outer ditch and bank. All three main ditches dug at different times are very similar. The present narrow-bottomed outer ditch is as dissimilar to its associated inner flat-bottomed ditch as it is to the ditches which precede it. Morphologically all three defence phases, attributed to Periods 2, 4, and 5 respectively, are sufficiently alike to make suggestions of abrupt cultural differentiation unnecessary. The latest double ditch and bank is of course sufficiently different from the single ditch and bank to be classed differently, but up to the present however, no description of these two forms suggests that they are culturally distinguishable, in the sense of Archaic-Classic Maori.

Rectangular, and Associated, Structures

The sequence of changes shown for defence is quite clear compared with the picture for other features. This is due to the difficulty of linking sequentially, disparate structures when the intervening strata may be dismembered by larger features such as ditches and terrace scarps. For any really reliable association to be shown between separate small features, the intervening stratigraphic link must be explained. For many structures at Kauri Point we have only been able to describe the actual sequence within each localised area we have dug. Links on a broader scale have been made by comparative methods. In this the hill terraces and the flattened hill top were seen to be associated in time as part of the Period 2 system.

The relationship of pits within the present pa to those on the terraced hill has not been investigated further. New areas opened this year have not exposed any pits which cannot be matched morphologically by those already referred to Period 2. The newly-opened squares re-affirm the early position of rectangular pits and the lateness of numerous and extensive postholes.

It would be of great importance if the pit-bearing terraces could be shown to be contemporaneous with the first defensive ditch. There is at present, no unquestionable relationship between these two features. The circumstantial evidence (they both have a similar stratigraphic position, sharing a similar Period 1 base-level and a possible upper limit below the Period 3 ashy black layer) could be tested by the extension of investigations to Square O30 or 31. It is believed that in these squares will be seen the relative position of bank building and terrace construction since, from surface indications, the two features converge in this area. In Square P30 the top surface of the built-up terrace, extending south, seems to run without a break on to the top surface

of the defensive bank. If this is the case, and only further excavation will prove this, then it would appear that the terraces, the pit system and the earliest defence were all part of the one complex.

If the earliest single ditch (Period 2) defence is associated with an extensive pit system, then it might be expected that the second, or more restricted, single ditch defence could also be associated with an extensive pit system. In this case, a longer total period for pit construction would have occurred within the area of the later restricted defence system than in the abandoned area defined by the earliest line of defence. As Mr. Golson pointed out in last year's report, the concentration of large rectangular structures within the present pa area is far greater than that on the terraced slopes. It seems reasonable that this concentration represents a longer period of use, and that this longer period comprises Period 2 and a superimposed Period 4.

Cultural Status of the Site

Despite a few questions which will need further excavation for their proper solution, the evidence from Kauri Point seems internally consistent. It is only when individual items, such as terraces, pits and ditches from different periods of the site's development are seen as items of differing Cultural Phases, that inconsistencies appear. The major difficulty in this respect has arisen in the first place, from the attribution of terrace and pit constructions to the Archaic Phase because of their similarity to other pits and terraces in other areas of Archaic provenance; and in the second place from the attribution of the ring ditch pa to the Classic Maori Phase. The end members of the cultural sequence or the two distinct cultural forms that the terms Archaic and Classic Maori imply, have been formulated in terms of artefactual assemblages. Kauri Point's artefactual remains are meagre indeed, but its structural remains are exceedingly rich. Since "there is no body of well-authenticated Archaic and Classic Maori structural data"⁴ to compare with features of different periods from this site, there seems to be little virtue, at this stage, in making subdivisions referable to wide-scale cultural criteria. The appearance of ring ditch defence, stated to be a Classic Maori feature, in possible association with terraces and pits, which are claimed to exhibit Archaic affinities, suggests the need for closer examination of more structural features and their relationships elsewhere. Until this is done, ascription of titles such as Archaic and Classic Maori is bound to be a hazardous enterprise.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our thanks to the following people who helped us during our work at Kauri Point. Mr. C.A.Moore and family of Athenree, Mr. A.H.Honeyfield and family, Mr. and Mrs. R.Larsen, Mr. and Mrs. Wilkes and Messrs. E.Noble, D.Noble and I.Noble, all of Kauri Point; the Katikati County Council, Mr. Jack Wharekawa and the Maori people of Katikati and Mr. Earle of Ongari Point.

References

- (1) Golson, J. 1961. "Investigations at Kauri Point Katikati." N.Z.Arch.Assn. Newsletter. Vol.4. No.2. pp13-41.
- (2) Mabon, A.D.; Pullar, W.A. 1961. "Kaputerangi (Toi's Pa)" Historical Review. Journal of the Whakatane and District Historical Society. Vol.IX No.3. p119 and 122.
- (3) Golson (Ibid) p41.
- (4) (Ibid) p39.

A PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE AGE OF ROCK CARVINGS AND "CAVE DWELLINGS," ONGARI POINT, KATIKATI

By J.C. Schofield

Introduction

Mr. W. Ambrose¹ records the presence of rock carvings "cut at intervals along a section of low cliff face between Kauri Point and Ongari Point in the northern Tauranga Harbour area". He points out that there are two forms of carving, namely incised and "linear bas-relief" and concludes that because of Roman lettering associated with the former and script lettering associated with the latter, that the "age for the whole group" dates from "the earliest years of European contact."