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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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MODIFIED STONE ADZE

Alan Taylor

With the 19th Century introduction of European metal tools, the Maori is generally believed to have made no attempt to modify native stone tools but completely replaced them with, for example, imported iron adzes and axes. However, during a recent field survey of Otuataua Paa, Mangere (N42/22), a black, close-grained basalt adze was recovered from a related machine disturbed occupation site that suggests that modification was occasionally attempted; the adze being converted, roughly, into the form of a European trade axe of the 1820's-40's.

Possibly set in a split and bound haft, the finely polished adze has sides reduced to form a triangular cutting head; the reduction being mainly a distinctive form of hammer dressing designed to hold the adze firmly when hafted.

