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#### ROCK SHELTER ART IN THE DUNTRON AREA

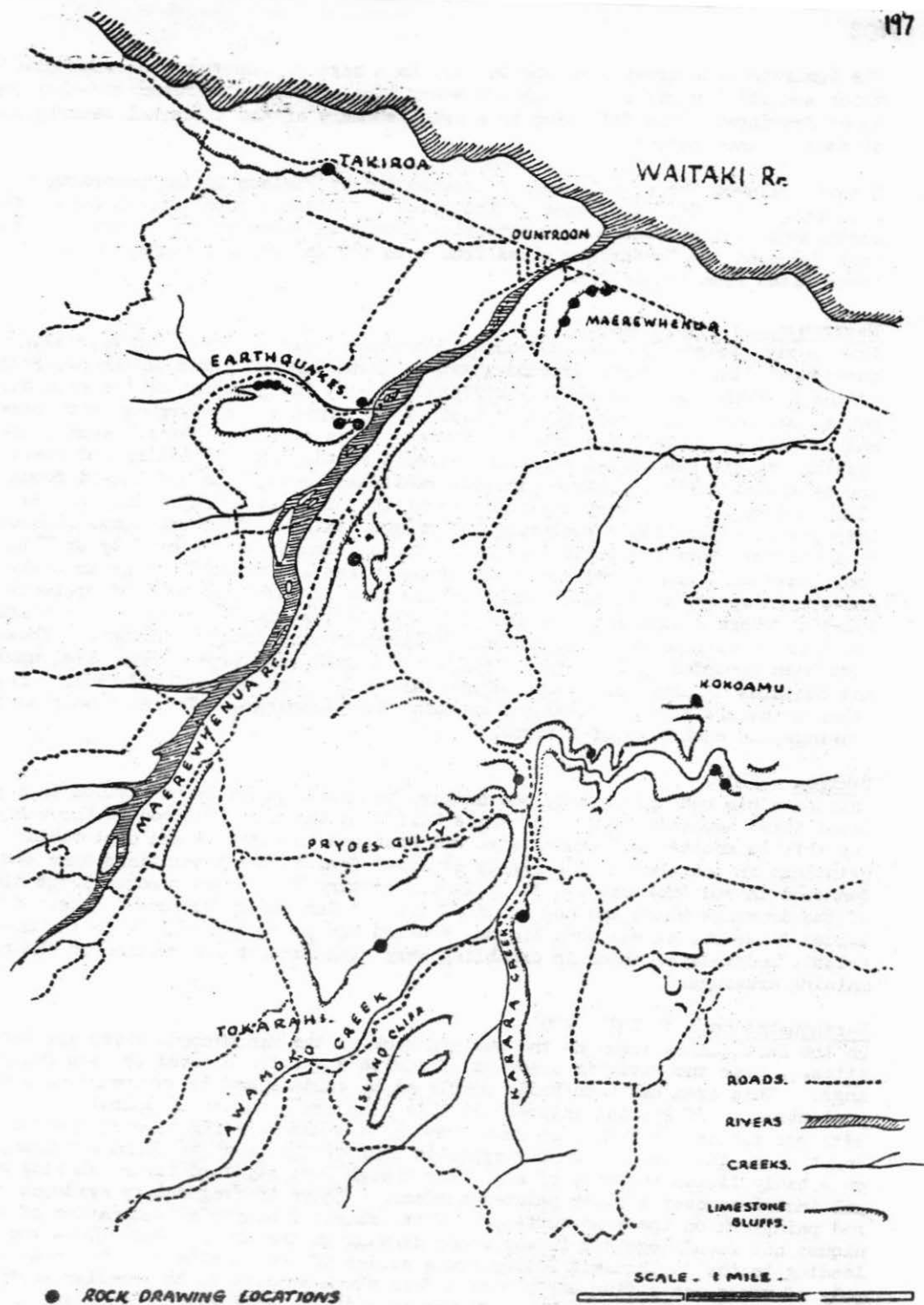
by Gwytha Peterson

Systematic recording of Maori rock-shelter art in South Canterbury has been under way for some time. In Otago, the Upper Waitaki River sites have received exhaustive treatment and recording before the waters of the Benmore dam inundate the area. (Ambrose and Davis, 1958-60). Some of the sites in the area of the present survey had been recorded before, (Stevenson, 1947) but it was obvious that an extensive search was necessary. This report is the outcome of a brief survey of the Duntroun area in North Otago. The survey was made with a view to locating and plotting the sites already known and to exploring new territory rapidly, so that the extent of the work would be more apparent. Detailed recording of the sites is planned for next summer, but this preliminary report may be of some interest in the meantime.

The area covered in this survey extends for some six miles south of the Waitaki River in the country bordering the Maerewhenua River on both banks. The block rises gradually from about 200-300ft above sea-level at the Waitaki River to a little over 1000ft. It is gently rolling farmland, cleared of bush, cut by deep meandering gullies carved in the limestone by rivers and streams, which are lined by steep limestone bluffs and outcrops. The Maerewhenua River drops gradually through a shingle bed about a half a mile in width.

The paintings are all found on limestone surfaces of varying quality, mainly in shallow shelters and on isolated boulders. They show a variety of style and medium, with some post-European contact examples depicting horses, sailing ships etc. with some Roman letter initials and Maori writing. Black paint and 'crayon' are the most common medium for the recent drawings. There are some red ochre - "kokowai" - drawings, the most spectacular of which are found in the Taikiroa and Maerewhenua shelters. Some of the forms depicted are common to those of the Canterbury area whilst others seem to be peculiar to the locality.

Most of the shelters are under overhangs at the base of the limestone bluffs and in nearly all cases are used today as shelter for stock and the storage of hay. At the lower levels they are covered with grease from the sheep's wool, but otherwise stock damage does not appear to be great. Natural erosion is causing flaking on the more exposed surfaces and in some cases only faint traces remain, though this varies with the nature of the rock.



● ROCK DRAWING LOCATIONS

The Duntroon area covered in the survey, is a maze of limestone outcrops most of which are still unexplored. Almost every line of bluffs searched revealed traces of drawings. The following is a brief summary of the sites and descriptions of some of the drawings.

I have followed the system used by Ambrose and by Fomison in the recording of the area. On this basis some of the sites are divided into several bays, often contiguous, whilst others less extensive have been given only one number. Fomison numbered the Canterbury sites from 1 to 189 and we have continued the Duntroon sites from 190 to 225.

Maerewhenua : (190 - 200).

Previously recorded in some detail by Stevenson (1947), covers ten bays along a continuous line of bluffs extending two to three hundred yards on the north side of the Maerewhenua River mouth - S127/298950 - at the junction of the main highway to Duntroon and Livingstone. Most of the frontage is overgrown with boxweed and is well protected from natural erosion. The site is, however, easily accessible to the public and shows the effects of this in initialling and overdrawing of the paintings. Styles include realistic human, fish and lizard forms in black and red. Some very stylised geometric forms are found, mainly in red, and late period naturalistic renderings of horses, sailing ships and human figures. In a shelter above the lower line of shelters, blocks were removed by Dr Ellmore many years ago, and recent copies of ships, names and other drawings in chalk and crayon appear to be increasing. This site is in urgent need of protection. 192-196 covers a contiguous series along the overhanging baseline of the bluffs, and this is covered with a profusion of drawings some dozen in number. These have been recorded by Stevenson (1947). A larger and deeper 'cave' lies uphill and contains a large assortment of similar variety and number (197-198). The other sites are more isolated and contain fewer drawings. Two show only single drawings, in each case of a horse.

Takiroa : (201)

This site has been given only one number, but could possibly be divided into at least three separate bays. At White Cliffs on the main Duntroon to Kurow highway this is another well-known site and contains the largest and most vivid paintings in the area. The highly stylised form of these paintings have been rendered in red 'kokowai'. Early in the century Dr Ellmore removed large blocks of the drawings which are now in the Otago and Canterbury Museums. Where the harder outer cortex has been broken, erosion has proceeded rapidly in the more friable under-layer which is crumbling away with further destruction of the remaining drawings.

Earthquakes Road : (202 - 209)

In the Earthquakes area on the western bank of the Maerewhenua River are three sites. Near the river is a series of shelters partly obscured by farm buildings. This area has been badly mutilated by vandals and is in urgent need of protection. Of special interest at this site are a number of spiral incisions, with one particularly fine incised drawing of a humanoid figure with incised decoration on the torso. On the opposite bank of the creek we found a remnant, on a badly flaked surface, of a similar though less stylised figure showing spiral incisions over a black painted surface. There is fragmentary evidence of red paintwork on the same surface. This example features a combination of techniques not found together in any other drawing in the area. Just above the road leading to the Earthquakes Valley are a series of four shelters. The most westerly of these has a fine example of a form which appears to be peculiar to the Duntroon area. This is a human figure in profile, with knees flexed and arms outstretched showing three prong-like fingers. The body cavity is hollow with a black outline. This example is on a well-preserved roof surface and has been clearly retouched.

On the east bank of the Maarewhemua River about three miles from Dunroon is a shelter on a prominent outcrop above the farmhouse of Mr. W. Harvey. This features a large three feet tall human figure outlined in black with spiral body decorations and a pendent form suspended from the arm.

Awamoko Creek : (210 - 225)

Several shelters have been found on both banks of the stream. These feature mainly naturalistic bird forms, profile and front view human figures usually in black. The Kokoamu shelter has been recorded by Stevenson and has several bird forms. A boulder on the opposite side of the creek features similar forms and some profile figures. Further upstream is a very small single line drawing interesting in that it has a definite composition of three figures, two profiles draw above a front view human form. Just north of Tokarahi, high above the road, is a boulder face covered with the badly flaked remains of many drawings in black with a more recent highly stylised bird form overlying.

This account is by no means exhaustive, but is intended to convey some idea of the nature and extent of the drawings.

Ambrose and Davis, 1958-60 'National Historic Places Trust Annual Reports'.  
Stevenson, G.B. 1947 'Maori and Pakeha in North Otago'.

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Maori Occupation Layers at D'Urville Island, New Zealand. H.W. Wellman.

In this paper Dr Wellman describes his investigations of beach sites on D'Urville Island. Although his technique is not clearly explained, he details his section through sand-dunes and reaches the conclusion that there are two well-defined occupation layers at many places on the western side of the island. Altogether he discusses and details fifteen sections. In three of these Taupo pumice (about 1800yrs B.P.) occurs as a primary deposit. Assuming a constant rate of accumulation above this, he concludes that the first occupation occurred about 1000A.D. and the other, 1500A.D. These tentative dates may have to be revised when radio-carbon samples have been processed. The older occupation layer contains broken moa bones, many flakes of "baked argillite", and a few obsidian fragments, whilst the younger contains abundant barracuda bones, relatively few "baked argillite" flakes and no moa bones. On this evidence he rightly surmises that the earlier people ate the moa which became exterminated, and possibly also traded in argillite artifacts. The later people lived a different life on exposed headlands where they could defend themselves from possible attack, ate only fish and did only little trade in argillite. Even later occupations of the island extending down to historic times was mostly on the eastern and southern parts of the island.

Dr Wellman attaches great importance to a layer of gravel which lies immediately below the first occupation level and he concludes that this was deposited by the first inhabitants for the purpose of kumara growing. This, if correct, is further proof of the antiquity of kumara growing and is opposed to the traditional view.