



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/>.

SITE RECORDING IN THE URENUI DISTRICT OF NORTH TARANAKI

161

by E.W. Robinson

Not many areas in which site recording is being carried out have been as thoroughly documented as has the Urenui district by Elsdon Best in "Pa Maori". With this book as a stimulant and three weeks of faultless weather over the Christmas period of 1960, an attempt was made to record the fortified sites between the Onaero River and the Momi River. It had been assumed that Best's map of the district (p.164) would indicate most of the sites, and the aims of the project could then be stated as:

- (i) to locate the sites by Grid Reference;
- (ii) to record and photograph as much data as time allowed;
- (iii) to compare the present state of preservation with the state recorded by Best, as a means of assessing rate of dilapidation.

Best's map No. 1, reproduced herewith, will be seen to show 16 sites in the area. In actual fact, with the aid of local residents and miles of footwork, 42 fortified sites were located and are indicated on the map prepared and reproduced herewith. Since the initial survey a further three sites have been located, bringing the current total to 45. With such a concentration of sites to be recorded the detailed examination was reduced to an inspection in most cases.

Artifact collections, ranging from two or three items up to dozens are almost a universal household effect among the landowners of the district. All too often though, the owners told of fossickers and buyers in years past, taking away irreplaceable artifacts. Of particular interest in the collections sighted, the prevalence of the typical classic Maori adze (Duff 2B) shaped in the axe form with double bevel. Many of these adzes show extensive bruising of the poll, so much so, that the inevitable surmise was reached that they had been used as chisels and struck with a mallet of some type.

A small number of archaic adze types seen in local collections tends to add weight to the possibility of very early occupation in the area; classic Maori tradition assigns the district to the Ngati-Mutunga tribe.

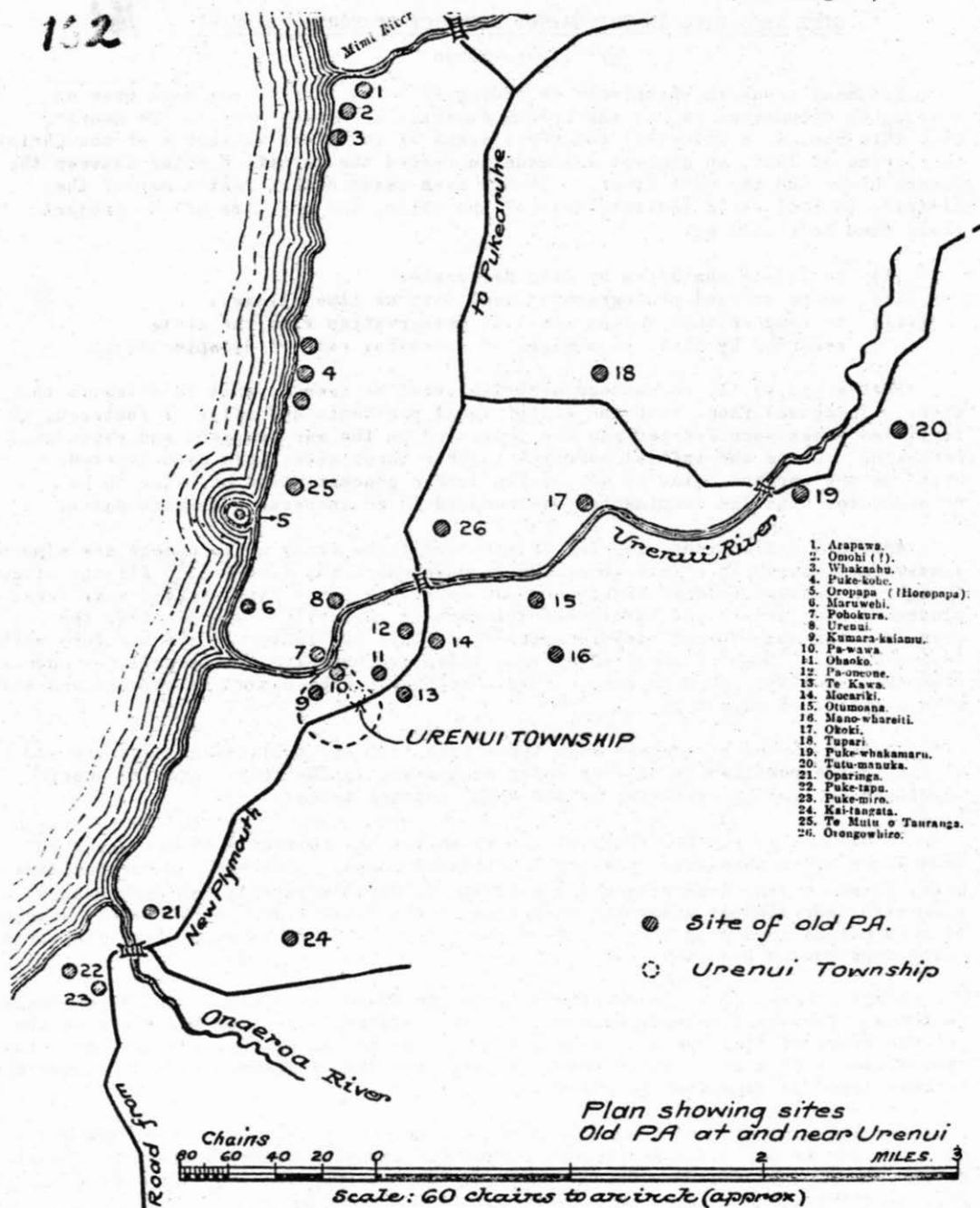
It has not as yet been possible to establish the antiquity of the sites in general by other than Historical or Traditional means. However, on one headland site, Kumara-Kaiamo (concerning which see A. G. Buist's article) an exploratory excavation carried out under the direction of the local filekeeper, reveals a sequence of occupations numbering three or possibly four, with the earthwork fortifications being constructed over the lower horizons.

Large numbers of stone fishing sinkers are found on pa sites, and more frequently on the mud flats and beaches adjacent to river mouths. A notable feature is the preponderance of flat ovaloid stones, roughly notched on either side and measuring approximately 3" x 2". This frequency justifies the assignment of a type name and "Urenui type" is suggested as suitable.

Continuously grooved round stone sinkers are relatively much less common, although one farmer had a sufficient number for use as missiles against his recalcitrant dogs! It could be deduced that the Urenui type sinkers were used for estuary and river fishing when lighter tackle was necessary.

The accompanying map 2 indicates the locations of the sites recorded so far. The site numbers on the map are references to the tabulated data. Site recording scheme numbers will be found on the tabulation.

152



1. Arapawa.
2. Omohi (?).
3. Whakakahu.
4. Puke-kohu.
5. Oropapa (Hioropapa).
6. Maruwhiri.
7. Pohoakura.
8. Urenui.
9. Kumara-kaiamu.
10. Pa-wawa.
11. Ohako.
12. Pa-upone.
13. Te Kawa.
14. Mocariki.
15. Otumoana.
16. Mano-whareiti.
17. Ohoki.
18. Tupari.
19. Puke-whakamaru.
20. Tatu-manuka.
21. Oparinga.
22. Puke-tapu.
23. Puke-mira.
24. Kai-tangata.
25. Te Mulu o Tauranga.
26. Otongowhiro.

● Site of old P.A.  
 ○ Urenui Township

Plan showing sites  
 Old P.A. at and near Urenui

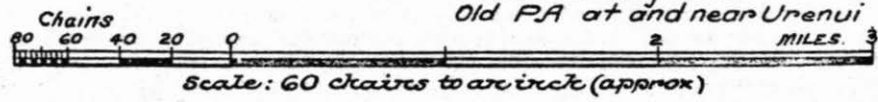
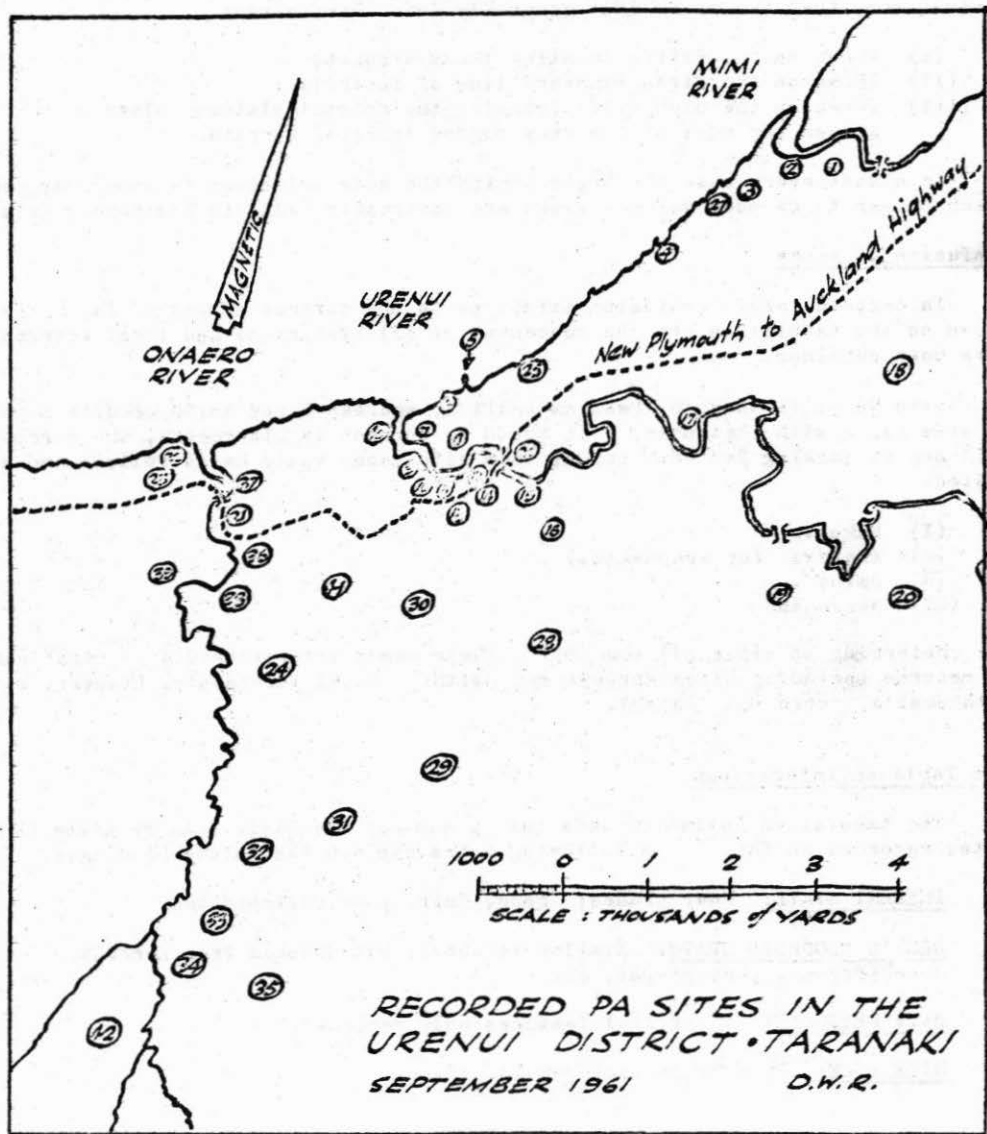


FIG. 110.—SITES OF OLD FORTIFIED VILLAGES OF THE COASTAL AREA BETWEEN THE ONAEROA AND MIMI RIVERS, TARANAKI.  
 See p. 161.  
 (G. L. Stephens.)



General Observations

It will be seen from a study of map 2 in conjunction with a NZMS:1 series contour map, that the sites fall generally into three zones:

- (i) Those on the cliffs fronting the sea coast;
- (ii) Those on the first landward line of foothills;
- (iii) Those on the high hills fringing the coastal plateau inland, and on the edge of the very rugged interior terrain.

In almost every case the logic behind the site selection is apparent, and those which appear to be poor defence risks are invariably close to a strongly defended site.

Confusion of Names

In certain cases, confusion exists as to the correct naming of Pa. The names shown on the tabulation are the consensus of all historical and local references that have been obtained.

Site No. 1 is shown by Best as ARAPAWA, whereas Percy Smith credits a photograph of site No. 2 with that name. If Smith is correct in his record, the corroborative evidence is lacking for both cases, then site names would be as follows and not as listed:

- (1) Unknown
- (2) Arapawa (or Arapawanui)
- (3) Omihī
- (27) Whaka-ahu

Referring to sites (7) and (8). These names are reversed in a great number of records including block surveys and Smith. Local informants, however, all concur with Best's record (as listed).

The Table of Information

The tabulation following sets out in summary the basic data relating to the sites recorded so far. The following notes explain the column headings:

PRESENT STATE: Four grades; good, fair, poor, dilapidated.

BEST'S RECORDED STATE: Similar to above, but deduced from records, descriptions, photographs, etc.

MAIN FEATURES: Artificial features only recorded.

SITE TYPE: From "NZAA Handbook No. 1".

Number on map	N.Z.N.A. site no.	Grid reference no.	Square no.	Name:	Type of pa site	Features:	Present state	State recorded by Best	Remarks:
1	N.99/1	998035	N24	Arapawa	headland (rectangular)	single ditch & bank with outer ditch on south	fair	good	see note re name
2	N.99/2	992036	N14	Omihi	hill	multiple defenses, 5 platforms, 6 terraces	good		see note re name
3	N.99/3	987033	N14	Whaka ahu	headland (triangular)	ditch & bank isolating the headland	poor		see note re name
4	N.99/4	978025	N14	Puke kohe	cliff	triple related occupation areas, terraced house sites	poor	fair	carved adze haft recovered & deposited in Taranaki museum
5	N.99/5	955010	N14	Oropapa	peninsula	isthmus with natural causeway	poor		eroded by sea
6	N.99/6	952009	N14	karuwhi	headland	ditch remnant	bad	poor	eroded by sea
7	N.99/7	949003	N14	Pohokura	hill	terraces on three faces	poor	poor	see note re name
8	N.99/8	954002	N14	Urenui	hill	terraces & banks	fair	good	public reserve, see note re name
9	N.109/9	949999	N13	Kumara kaiaho	headland (triangular)	ditch & bank, terraces	fair	good	excavated Dec.1961/Jan.1962 (see report p. this issue)
10	N.109/10	952998	N13	Pa wawa	flatland	midden remains only	bad	fair	levelled by farming
11	N.109/11	953997	N13	Ohaoko	flatland	raised platform	bad	fair	used as modern house site
12	N.109/12	955998	N13	Pa one one	hill	double ring ditches & banks	poor	fair	outer defenses destroyed
13	N.109/13	956997	N13	Te Kawa	headland (triangular)	ring ditch & bank	bad	good	heavily damaged by farming
14	N.99/14	957996	N13	Moe ariki	headland (triangular)	ring ditch & bank	fair		
15	N.109/15	965998	N13	Otuaoana	ridge	heavy multiple earthworks	good	good	
16	N.109/16	965993	N13	Mano-whare-itī	ridge	ditch & bank	fair	good	
17	N.99/17	981005	N14	Okoki	headland	ditches, banks, terraces, pits	good	good	public reserve, site of Sir Peter Buck memorial & tomb
18	N.99/18	002011	N14	Tupari	ridge peak	terraces & banks	fair		
19	N.109/19	992982	N13	Puke-whakamaru	ridge peak		poor		
20	N.109/20	005985	N23	Tutu-manuka	ridge peak	terrace & pits	good		
21	N.109/21	927995	N13	Oparinga	headland	ditches, banks, pits	fair		

22	N.109/22	819001	N14	Puketapu	ridge	ring ditch & bank	good		public reserve
23	N.109/23	923997	N13	Pukemiro	ridge peak		good		public reserve
24	N.109/24	932977	N13	Kai-tangata	ridge	ditches, terraces, pits	fair	good	very large pa
25	N.99/25	962012	N14	Te-mutu-o-tauranga	cliff	ditch remnants	bad		almost completely eroded
26	N.99/26	961001	N14	Orongo-wairo	headland	ditch & bank	fair		
27	N.99/33	984033	N14	not known	headland (triangular)	ditch & bank	bad		
28	N.109/38	964978	N13	not known	headland	pits	bad		
29	N.109/37	952964	N13	Tikorangi	headland	pits, terraces, ditches	bad		
30	N.109/42	948984	N13	not known	headland (triangular)	remnant	bad		
31	N.109/36	940957	N13	not known	cliff	very large ditch	good		
32	N.109/49	929953	N13	not known	ridge	pit remnants	bad		
33	N.109/41	924946	N13	not known	ridge	ditches, banks, terraces, pits	good		very large pa in papa country
34	N.109/39	921936	N13	Ruahine	ridge	ditch	fair		
35	N.109/40	931941	N13	not known	ridge	ditch & bank, pits	fair		
36	N.109/32	929998	N13	Te Ngaio	ridge	terraces, ditches, banks, pits	fair		
37	N.109/31	928997	N13	not known	cliff	ring ditch & pits	good		
38	N.109/35	926985	N13	Moerangi	headland (triangular)	ditches & banks	good		
39	N.109/46	N13 918986		Putahi	cliff	remnants	bad		
40	N.99/34	945003	N14	Te Pihanga	cliff	ditches & banks	poor		
41	N.109/2	940985	N13	not known	ridge	ditches & terraces	fair		
42	N.109/48	911931	N13	not known	ridge	ditches & banks	poor		
Number on map	N.Z.A.A. site no.	Grid square reference no.	Name:	Type of pa site:	Features:	Present state	State recorded by Best:	Remarks:	