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SITE TYPES AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION IN THE WELLINGTON AREA

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The area dealt with in this paper is the south-west corner of the North Island of New Zealand, to the west of the Rimutaka-Tararua range and south of Paekakariki, where the Horowhenua dune belt ends. The dune-belt is physically distinct from the Wellington area proper, and the economy and settlement pattern of the area was quite different, both before and after European times.

The Wellington area proper is bounded by a coastline, for the most part rocky or shingle-beach, broken by two major harbours, and the mouths of a few rivers, of which only the Hutt as a broad valley. The rest of the area is hilly country with secondary valleys and ridges with peaks rising occasionally above 1500 ft, and some flat areas near the coasts.

In pre-European times a great part of this area was in heavy bush, which was often untouched in the inland areas. The broad Hutt Valley also had large areas of heavy bush.

This is not to say that the area was inhospitable. There were reasonably plentiful sources of food in bush, sea and river, and on the sea-shore. Canoes allowed easy transport, particularly in the important harbour areas.

The sources of information for this paper are:

1. Direct archaeological observation, either from recorded observations of such earlier workers as Elsdon Best and Hector McLeod, or from site recording in recent years. Since 1961 the latter has been under the auspices of the Wellington Archaeological Society.
2. Accounts from the early days of European settlement, for example journals and survey plans.
3. Traditional information. This is practically all in published versions of accounts obtained by Best (Best 1901, 1914, 1919) from Wairarapa descendants of the Ngati Ira people who had occupied Wellington for a long time up to a few years before the arrival of Europeans. This information relates mostly to the Wellington City area, and is used here only as an aid to identifying early sites and in the study of site distribution.

Evidence, both traditional and archaeological (from extensive evidence of the association of man and moa) suggests Maori occupation of the area for a long period. The region, while probably never heavily populated at any one time, had much to offer:

The sea shore: provided good supplies of shell fish except in stormy weather.

Water (river and sea): provided fishing, and access.

The Forest: was a dependable source of birds, and on the

Land there is historical evidence of kumara cultivation in the Wellington (as well as traditional evidence) and in later times a wide range of introduced crops was grown.

As will be seen later, these basic economic factors largely determined the settlement pattern, although it is likely that non-economic factors were critical at certain periods.

Political considerations induced a bewildering sequence of movements around the area in the immediately pre- and post-European years (e.g. Maori Land Court, Wellington) and, if the traditional accounts are any indication, the early Ngai Tara occupation of Wellington was largely confined to the area of Wellington city and more particularly to Miramar Peninsula (at that time an Island). Whether this was due to fear of an unknown virgin land, or of some other occupants of the area, the traditional accounts give no clue.

The main feature of the successive occupations of the area is one of periodic upheavals interrupting long periods of stability. A comparison of the various accounts makes it reasonably clear that the main occupants were as follows.

- Ngai Tara: The first Polynesian settlers of the area, well covered by traditional accounts.
- Ngati Mamoe: Arrived during the Ngai Tara occupation and are said to have been allotted the rather undesirable area west of the present Wellington City.
- Ngati Ira: This was really a general name covering several closely related tribes. The Ngati Ira probably lived in Wellington from approximately 1650 to the 1830's.
- Te Ati Awa & Ngati Mutunga: Both of these tribes came from North Taranaki in the 1820's and 1830's and expelled the Ngati Ira during the latter decade. The Ngati Mutunga went to Chatham Islands in 1835, and Te Ati Awa were dominant at the time of European settlement. In this paper I shall use the term Te Ati Awa to cover both tribes.

While there are quite extensive evidences of Moa-hunting around Wellington - at Paremata (Chapman, 1884, p. 172), Makara (Davis, 1962) and Miramar (McLeod, 1919, p. 111) it is not possible at this stage of our knowledge of the archaeology of the area, to identify, as such, any of these tribes with the Moa-hunters of the area. The Makara date, however, indicates that the Ngati Ira could have hunted the Moa in the earlier period of their Wellington occupation.

Any study such as this must take into account a number of known and unknown factors. The varying relationships of these classes of factors in different areas will determine to a large extent the certainty with which conclusions can be drawn about the settlement pattern in these areas. In Wellington the important known factors are, for example, the dependence on sea-shore foods as a staple diet, the heavily forested state of the inland areas, and the hard subsoil, which made the construction of any sort of structures in the ground difficult. On the other hand, important unknowns are the relation of traditional information to the actual situation at any time; the use of certain features e.g. the common, apparently shallow raised-rim pit, and the extent of site destruction before serious archaeological work began. This list could, of course, be extended.

Site Types

I have applied to the sites of the area the basic classification used for the site recording scheme (Golson & Green 1958) with the addition of the kainga - the undefended occupied site. It would, of course, be possible to produce a much more sophisticated classification of these sites, but this would not be possible to operate fruitfully in a paper of this length, nor would it be entirely justified by the small number of sites involved in some categories. I will, however, indicate some of the more subtle differences in site types under the various headings which follow.

The assemblage of the sites, numbering 224, is made up as shown in the table below. I have included the information of the number of sites whose names are known because I feel this sort of information can be important. It is of assistance in verifying sites known only through tradition, and, in the case of the rather nebulously defined "kainga" could be an indication that a site was sufficiently important, and occupied for a sufficiently long time, to be given a name.

TABLE I
SITE TYPES

Type	No. known	Known from archaeological or historical evidence	Traditional evidence only	Name Known
Pa	54	38	16	46
Kainga	54	35	19	42
Pit groups	15	15	-	-
Pit complexes	3	3	-	-
Terraces	27	27	-	-
Cultivations	16	14	2	14
Ovens & Middens	55	55	-	-

Pa

It is a not uncommon misbelief that there are very few pa sites in the Wellington area. The above figures indicate that this is not so, but it is true that most of the sites are hardly imposing and most are small. In fact the largest does not exceed 150 feet on the long axis.

They also show heavy reliance on natural defensive features with a very low incidence of earthworks. Only 11 pa out of 54 have any indications of earthworks and of these only eight are definite. These all comprise a single ditch and bank on one side only.

Terraces were very rarely used for defence on Wellington pa. Only 10 sites have terracing of any description, in most cases because they are on steep headlands and terracing was imperative to provide flat ground for living areas. Only on three or four sites could terraces have been defensive, and this is by no means always quite clear.

Few pa sites show outward signs of prolonged occupation. While pits are not uncommon in Wellington only four pa have surface pits and only two have underground pits (rua).

The classification which I have found to best illustrate the differences in the Wellington pa sites is a simple topographical one as formulated by Best (Best 1927) and expanded by Golson (Golson 1957).

On first sight, a classification of these pa sites by number of internal units, as proposed by Buist (Buist 1965) would not seem to bring out any differences between these sites. On the other hand, I still consider that the topographical classification has some value. In an area such as Wellington where a wide range of defensible sites in varying topographical locations was available, the choice of one topographical feature in preference to another must inevitably have some significance, simply because a choice was available and had to be made. In some cases the choice of feature was pretty obviously the result of the limited numbers available to defend the site, so that small headlands were chosen in favour of ridge or hill positions which would have provided better defence but required greater numbers. A choice on cultural grounds, resulting in ingrained preference for a particular type of pa site, is also arguable, and there remains the possibility that in many cases pa were constructed simply in the nearest suitable location to the undefended habitations of the group concerned.

TABLE II

Pa Sites - Topographical Classification

<u>Location</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>No. with earthwork defence</u>
Ridge	6	-
Promontory	28	11
Flat land (stockade defence)	12	-
Hill	2	-
Miscellaneous	2	-
<u>Total</u>	<u>50</u>	

An examination of the tribal origin of these sites is interesting.

TABLE III

Pa sites - Tribal origin & topographical location

	<u>Ridge</u>	<u>Promontory</u>	<u>Flat land</u>	<u>Hill</u>	<u>Misc.</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Ngai Tara & Ngati Mamoe	2	7	-	-	-	9
Ngati Ira	1	9	2	-	1	13
Te Ati Awa & Ngati Mutunga	-	3	9	1	1	14
Unknown	3	9	1	1	-	14

These figures seem to indicate a distinct preference among all the pre-European inhabitants (Ngati Tara, Ngati Mamoe and Ngati Ira) for ridge or promontory positions. The marked preference among all three for the promontory location is, I think, evidence for a rather small population during these times. All the promontory sites are small ones and could have been easily defended by a small number of people. Such small sites are more difficult to find in hill or ridge positions.

The 14 sites of unknown vintage include the most striking surviving pa in the area, such as the pa at Makara, misnamed (in my opinion) "Warehou" Pa (Brodie, 1962, p. 158 and O'Rourke, 1962, p. 150) and the two pa at Te Ika-a-Maru Bay. Most of the pa with earthwork defences are included in this category. It is probable that these pa date from a pre - Te Ati Awa period. Te Ati Awa showed a distinct preference for stockaded flat land pa, most of which were occupied for quite short periods of a few years, and their few earthwork examples are very small sites. Te Ati Awa activities in the area are well recorded in European accounts, and in accounts recorded from Maori eyewitnesses. It is therefore unlikely that if they had constructed any of the larger "unknown" pa sites this would have gone unrecorded.

It is obvious that many ideal defensive positions (which would certainly have been fortified in many other areas) were not used in this area. This seems to indicate that there was never a large population in Wellington, and therefore simply not the manpower to use large defensive positions. Indeed, some (about six) of the surviving sites are miniscule and could not have accommodated more than about 20 people for living purposes.

Kainga:

These sites are marked by various combinations of components, frequently midden, ovens, pits or karaka groves. Nearly all are named sites, or historically recorded. It is interesting to note that, while accounts of the early people mention many named pa, they include very few named kainga. While this may not necessarily be significant, it could indicate that in these times settlement was so scattered that there were few undefended settlements whose names could be preserved in memory. In later (Te Ati Awa) times, however, when economic and political forces induced more concentrated settlement, many named villages, occupied in some cases by hundreds of people, are recorded.

While there is no space in this paper to analyse kainga sites in detail, one interesting component of three such sites may be noted. These are stone structures. They take two forms. One, a single example, is the stone wall at Parangarahu in Fitzroy Bay (N 164/31) described by Palmer (Palmer, 1963, pp 131-2). It seems fairly clear that this wall was erected to prevent talus from the unstable slope above the beach flat falling on the wheat gardens north of Parangarahu.

Other stone structures occur at Okakoho kainga (N164/28) and an unnamed kainga site at the mouth of the Orongorongo Stream (N164/67). These two sites contain low mounded stone rows (Leahy & Nicholls 1964, p. 107) about one to two feet high. At Okakoho there are two of these rows, each about 120 feet long and in parallel 80 feet apart, running at right angles to the shore line.

At Orongorongo similar structures run straight for up to 250 feet among and around the many pits on the site, but in no apparent pattern. I am certain that there must have been similar structures on other sites, but that in these cases the stone rows have been obliterated by farming activities or stock.

I think it very likely, though without being able to verify this, that these stone rows are connected with agriculture, probably as internal divisions or as supplementary strengthening to fences erected to keep animals out of the gardens in Post-European times.

Cultivations:

All but two of these are Te Ati Awa sites. There are also traditional references to two Ngai Tara cultivations. The sites are evenly divided between large and small areas, the largest having covered between 50 and 100 acres, the smallest just a few. There were, of course, countless gardens around kainga in Te Ati Awa times. The largest Te Ati Awa cultivations, which were often named, were located as a rule some distance from other occupation, and grew such crops as potatoes, maize and pumpkins, besides kumara.

An interesting fact is that a well-qualified early observer, Col. McCleverty, who was concerned with the definition of Maori Reserves in the area in the 1840's, has recorded that most cultivations faced east (McCleverty 1847, p. D11). There is some evidence for this. Of the 12 Te Ati Awa cultivations whose aspect can be correctly determined, six face east.

Middens:

These are associated with many major sites, and isolated middens appearing in many places indicated the scattered settlement pattern of the area. Apart from simple recording, insufficient analysis of middens has been done in the Wellington area to enable any conclusions to be drawn about them.

Terraces:

These occur usually on low hill slopes and spur ends. They are rarely many in number, the largest group at Whitireia (N160/28) number 14 and are unique in extent and definition (Daniels, 1961). Owing, perhaps, to the hard subsoil of Wellington there are no considerable terrace formations.

Most terraces are near other occupation and are below 100 ft. in altitude. Most examples are 10ft-12ft wide, 30 ft. long by 10 ft wide being a fairly common size. The longest are 100ft long. Very few terraces have midden or pits associated with them; this probably indicates their use for cultivation of some sort.

Pits: (groups)

This classification includes small groups (up to seven in number) of rectangular depressions up to about two feet deep, half with raised rims. This sort of feature is difficult to analyse because of its susceptibility to infilling and surface weathering. It is therefore hard to say much about their depth from surface examination.

Two characteristics of these sites are noticeable. First, they often occur in pairs or multiples of two. Second, these pairs often have one pit distinctly larger than the others. There are ten groups of even numbers of pits as against five groups of odd numbers. It is interesting to speculate whether such pairs could indicate occupation and food storage side by side.

Pits in high altitude situations are at first sight puzzling, but I believe that these can be accounted for as a special class of site. There are about six known groups of pits over 200 ft above sea level in situations where their use is not readily apparent. They are also in places which in pre-European times would have been quite heavily bushed. Some of the groups have other components (e. g. terraces, midden, karakas) but pits are the constant element in each case. One is the large complex at Paekakariki of over 30 pits (N160/505585).

The probable purpose of these sites becomes clearer when it is realised that they are all either directly above settlement sites or near intensively occupied areas. The Paekakariki complex overlooked a heavily occupied area at the southern tip of the Horowhenua dune belt; others are near small kainga.

Could these pit sites be refuges for the occupants of the kainga? It is well known that it was usual for people to retire into the bush when attack was feared. The pits were well hidden, but gave a good view on all sides. From them watch could be kept and, if the raiding party passed on its way, the people could return to their villages, or if not, in all cases a line of escape was open to heavily wooded ranges behind. It is likely that more such sites will be discovered as time goes by.

Pit Concentrations:

I have already mentioned the large concentration at Paekakariki. Two others have been recorded. At Mana Island a large number of pits (N 160/63-72) are situated along the foreshore immediately behind the beach. It is known that there was much cultivation on the Island at the time of the first European arrivals, but whether the pits are connected with this is not known.

On the shingle bar at the mouth of Kohangatera lagoon there are a large number of badly weathered pits, and a few better-defined and apparently larger and deeper ones (N164/39). Ovens and hillside terraces are nearby.

Site Distribution:

The most obvious finding is that occupation was confined largely to the coastline. Sites are either actually on raised beach levels or on low hills and spurs overlooking the coast. For obvious reasons, hospitable parts of the coast such as harbours, bays and flat areas were favoured, but parts of the precipitous outer coast were also occupied.

Food supplies were obtained largely from coast or sea. Food would also have been obtained from the forest, but there would be no need to build permanent settlements there. There is, in fact, a record of a temporary birding camp at the head of the Kaiwharawhara stream (Best, 1919, p.95). There were a few permanently occupied inland sites, particularly in the Hutt Valley, and the Te Ati Awa had cultivations some distance from the sea. This leads to the question of settlement pattern. The restricted range of food resources would have meant that seasonal movement in this area was much less than in some others. The mainly coastal pattern of occupation meant that there was little incentive to move, particularly as the very areas where coastal foods were most plentiful were those sheltered enough for some kumera growing.

The pattern appears to be one, not of cyclical or seasonal movement, but of small-scale occupation broken down into very small units, possibly at the extended family level. The area therefore provides an example of occupation neither cyclical nor nucleated. I realise that this conclusion does not account for some pa sites which occurred in concentrations, particularly in Wellington city area. In the city area there does seem to have been nucleated settlement centred on pa sites, many in close proximity, and the traditional accounts of the early period bear this out very forcefully (e.g. Best, 1919, 19-21). Why the Ngai Tara were obliged to live in this manner if they were the first occupants of the area is, however, one of the question marks hanging over the early traditional accounts.

However, the pattern of most pre-Te Ati Awa occupation is amply described by Best (1919: p. 115)

"In any examination of the sites ... in the vicinity of Wellington, the observer is impressed by two facts, the very few signs of hamlets having been fortified, and

the situation of a number in places that could not possibly have been defended. The evidence before us seems to show that the people of this district were never so much harrassed by raiders as were those of many other places. One of the principal causes would be that occupants of this area were in most cases, nearly related to those of the Wairarapa district, hence most of their quarrels were with the Muaupoko of the Otaki district, and other tribes to the North of them. Hamlets situated at the mouths of gullies or on the slopes would be indefensible, yet the middens at such places call for prolonged occupation. Doubtless the men of yore lived much of their time at such places ... but on the approach of enemies retired to stockaded positions, or took refuge in the forest".

Most of the defended sites in the area appear to have been secondary ones, too small for continual occupation except by a mere handful, but used as refuges. However, the more usual response to attack must have been retreat to the bush, which was never far away. This is borne out by fact that in several heavily occupied areas there are few pa. Porirua (Daniels 1961) and Paekakariki are examples.

The Te Ati Awa period:

In contrast with the picture outlined above, the Te Ati Awa tribe had many permanent villages, some quite large. Thirty-three of the fifty-four kainga in the area are known to be Te Ati Awa. There are obvious economic reasons for this concentration into villages. Te Ati Awa introduced the potato to Wellington (by their own account) (Smith, 1910, p.453 fn) and they had many other easily cultivable vegetable crops. Wheat also assumed some economic importance to them for a few years in the late 1840's. The Te Ati Awa displacement of Ngati Ira was followed closely by the full force of European impact on the area, which had before the late 1830's been quite isolated from it. There was, for instance, no whaling in the area south of Mana Island.

Most Te Ati Awa pa were built only for temporary tactical reasons during disputes with other tribes or with Europeans over land in the 1840's, and occupied only for a few years.

To summarise, the Te Ati Awa period brought a change from scattered occupation with pa defence in some areas to larger unit occupation with fewer defended sites.

Conclusion:

This paper is the result of both the work of earlier observers, and of the large amount of site recording in recent years. While some of my conclusions will undoubtedly have to be modified as a result of further research, I believe that the main characteristics of the site distribution and settlement pattern of the area are clear.

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