



NEW ZEALAND  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
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**NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**



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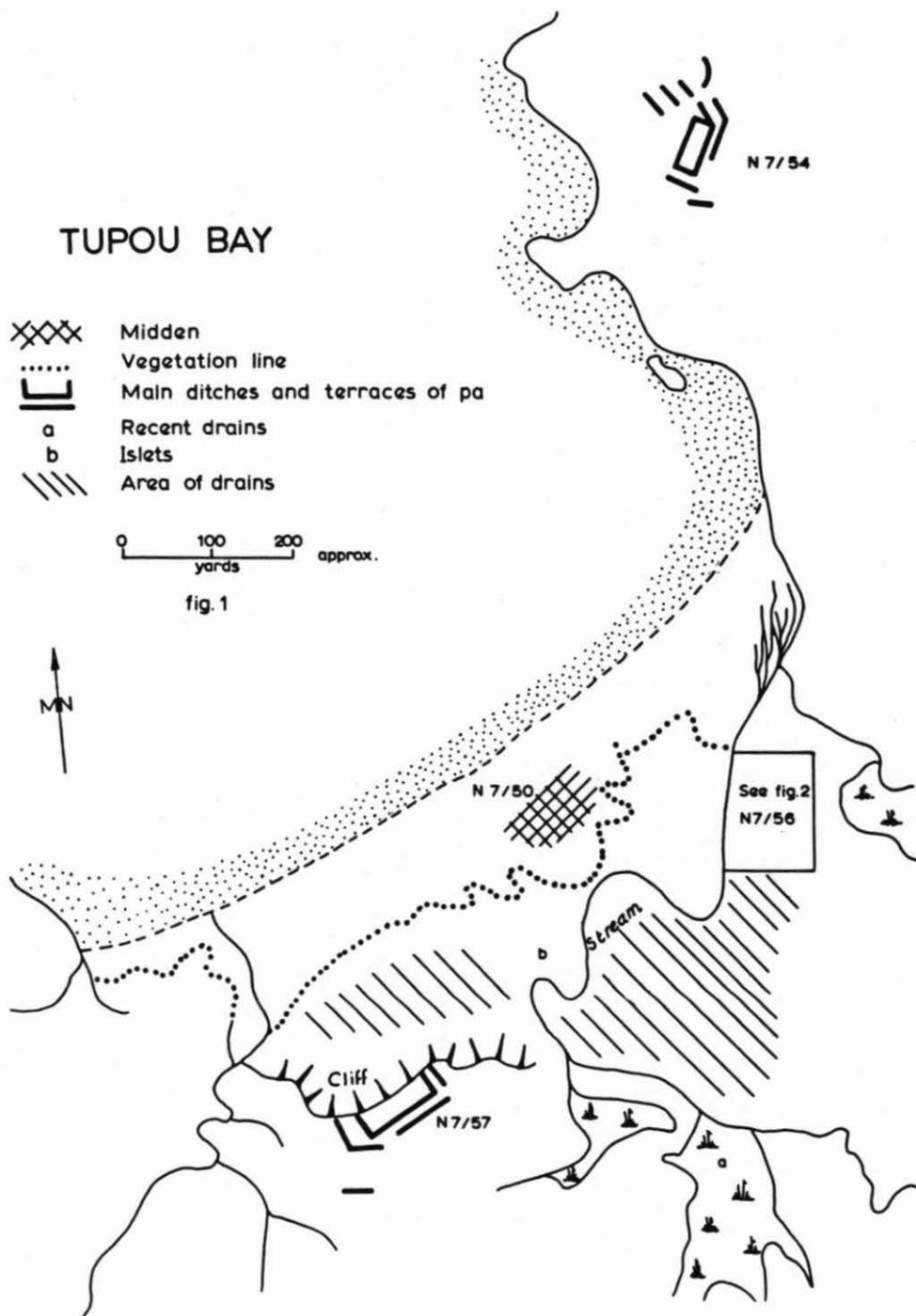
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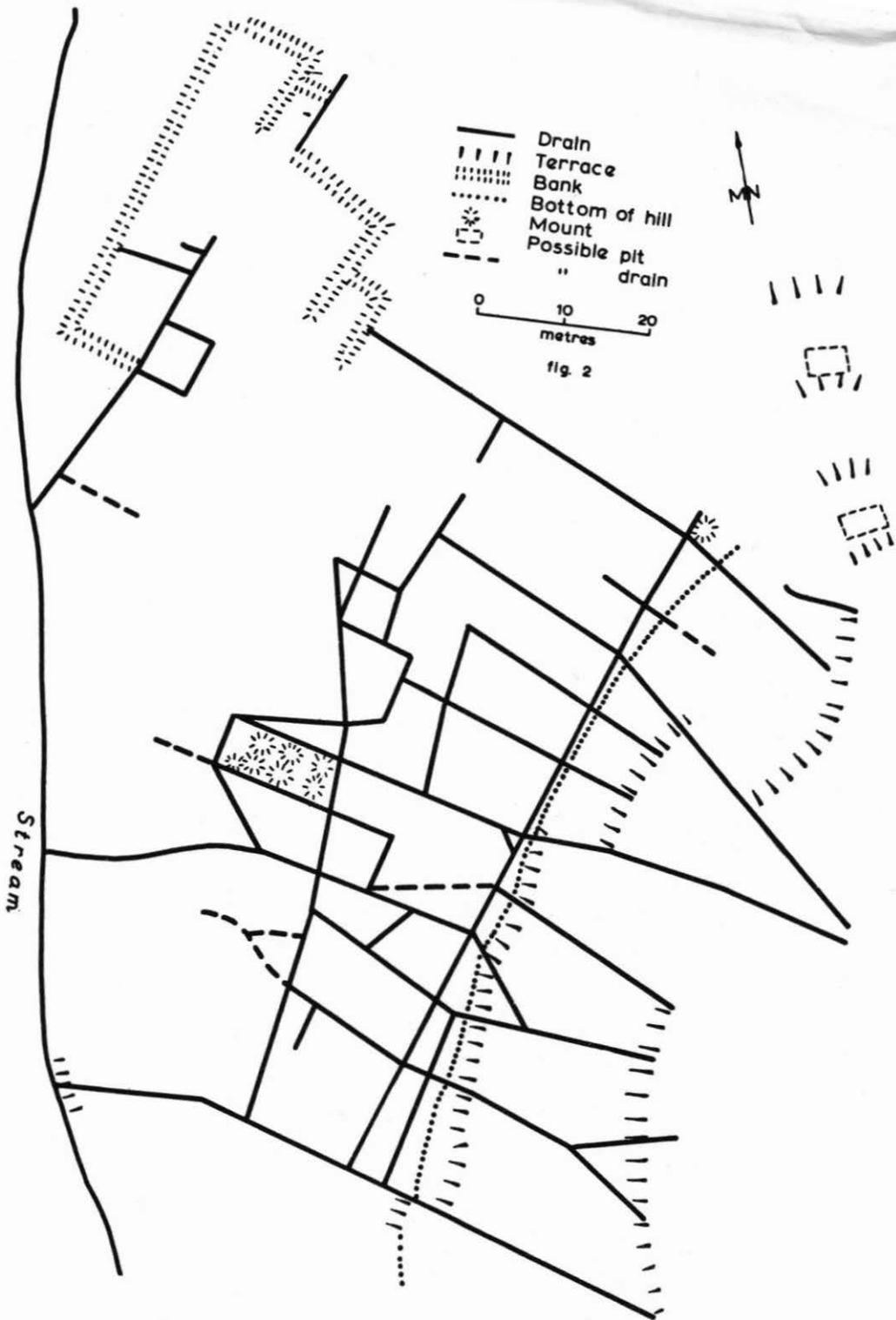
# TUPOU BAY

- XXXX Midden
- ..... Vegetation line
- U Main ditches and terraces of pa
- a Recent drains
- b Islets
- /// Area of drains

0 100 200  
yards approx.

fig. 1





SOME PROBABLE PRE-EUROPEAN AGRICULTURAL  
EVIDENCE IN NORTHLAND

M. Nicholls

Reports of "Maori drains" have been made for a number of years, but references to them have been relatively vague (Golson and Green 1958). When Mr C. Devonshire of Whangarei supplied information concerning some "drains", it was thought that an inspection of such an area would be valuable, and consequently Miss J. Davidson, Miss A. Leahy and I visited the area in January, 1965.

The site (N7/56) is located at Tupou Bay, (Fig. 1) a small bay a few miles north of the Whangaroa Heads, in Northland. Tupou Bay has high hills at each end, and is backed by a flat stream-laid plain, beyond which the hills again rise steeply. There is evidence of intensive Maori occupation over a large area; pa, terraces, and pits showing in numerous places on the surrounding hills, and extensive midden deposits evident on the foredunes of the bay. The "drains" lie not only on the flat area behind the beach dunes, but also in places extend on to the stabilised and grass-covered sand, as well as extending up the slopes of the hills at the back of the beach. Similar features were noted in nearby bays, with the "drains" extending up slopes, and up creek valleys.

At Tupou Bay, there was some evidence of modern drainage in one or two places in the swamp. These were long straight, deep drains, typical of other European drainage systems seen in the area. The creek, as it reached the foredunes, turned sharply east to run along the back of the dunes and enter the sea at the eastern end of the bay. The lagoon so formed had a number of small islets, and in at least two places these islets appeared to be cut off from the mainland by straight deep cuts, whether these features were Maori or European could not be determined. Some of the islets showed evidence of "drainage" on their surface, similar to those on each side of the creek.

In view of the extensive area covered by the "drains", a small sample area was mapped with compass and tape. The features in this sample area showed up with some clarity, and included a wider variety of structures than was evident in many other places in the bay. These structures included;

- (a) straight long depressions, typically running down the slope of the hill, sometimes branching as they neared the bottom of the slope. On the flat land they formed an irregular grid system.
- (b) Low scarps, about six inches to a foot high, which, on the slope usually appeared to run at approximately right angles to the "drains".
- (c) Low banks, about a foot high, and one to two feet wide. These were concentrated in the north of the mapped area, near to the bank of the stream. They appeared to enclose an area that seemed, on casual inspection in the middle of summer, to be damper than the surrounding flat area.

To the northwest of the map, (fig 2) a small ridge running down to the plain had three or four small, ill-defined terraces and pits on it, as well as a few heaps of stone, that appeared as though they had been deliberately gathered together at some time. One rectangular area, surrounded by "drains", had seven circular raised heaps of soil with

depressions in the middle of each. Another of these curious structures was evident near the pits on the ridge. Rabbit holes in these structures gave no sign of any haangi stones, midden or other evidence as to what these structures might have been.

In comparison with the other "drainage" systems in the same area, the "drains" at Tupou Bay were remarkable for their clearly defined nature, the variety of structures that they consisted of, and the extent to which they occurred on hill-slopes as well as on flatter areas.

D. Yen (pers. comm.) has pointed out that these "drains" as they have been described, need not necessarily have been for actual drainage purposes, but could have served a variety of functions, including drainage, irrigation, or boundary markers, among other things. It would appear that no interpretation as to the function of these structures is warranted until a further and more detailed investigation is made.

Reference:

- Golson, J. and Green R.C.      A Handbook to Field Recording in New Zealand.  
New Zealand Archaeological Assn. Handbook No. 1,  
1958, p. 67.

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REPORT ON WHIRITOA BEACH SITE, COROMANDEL PENINSULA

J.M. Foreman & R.G.W.  
Jolly

Whiritoa Beach is on the eastern Coromandel coast, seven miles from Waihi. The beach is one mile long with a lagoon at each end. Along the main dune of the beach there are numerous middens with chert and other flakes exposed by the wind. The southern end which was the subject of investigation by Green (1959: 21) and was allotted the site number N53/1, has been entirely altered by sand quarrying.

At the northern end of the beach is the site investigated by Crosby (1963: 46) N53/4, and the present site lies some 20 yards south-east of this. On 28.12.64 two nine foot squares were marked out and excavation of one was commenced. A 2 ft overburden of sand and lupin was removed and this was designated layer 1. Layer 2, 3½ inches deep, comprised dark brown sand, compacted shell and charcoal with occasional pieces of obsidian and other stone flakes, numerous broken oven stones and two well-defined fire-places. Layer 3 of light brown sand was 6 ins. deep over most of the square but deepened to 12 ins in the south-eastern corner. Within this layer were found the following bones:-

3 pieces of polynesian dog	2 pieces of Pachyornis mappini
6 " " fur seal	1 piece of Dinornis naouaezealandiae Owen
1 piece of kaka	1 " " porcupine fish

As well as the bones there was evidence of a working floor, namely:-