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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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THE COLLIER COLLECTION: STONE AND BONE ARTEFACTS FROM OTAGO

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The Collier collection of artefacts was made in the 1920s. By this time the 'heyday' of Otago curio-hunting was over and Otago archaeology had entered what Helen Leach (1972:5) has described as the second phase, the museum period. This developed following the appointment in 1919 of H.D. Skinner to a joint position as Assistant Curator at the then Otago University Museum and Lecturer in Anthropology at the University of Otago. Skinner's enthusiasm for archaeology and artefacts was such that within a few years there was sufficient interest to establish an archaeological branch of the Otago Institute (Leach, 1972).

The first excavations undertaken by the newly formed group were at Murdering Beach in 1926 (Skinner, 1959; Harsant, ms). Sites at neighbouring Kaikai and Long Beach (Fig.1) were also briefly investigated at this time. There was a further season at Murdering Beach the following year. In 1929 the attention of Skinner and the archaeological group turned to Little Papanui, on the Otago Peninsula (Simmons, 1967). Skinner directed the excavations; students, members of the Archaeology Section of the Institute and other interested persons assisted in the field. Among those present in 1925 were Bettina Hamilton (nee Collier) and her brother, Hilary Collier (de Beer, ms).

It was these excavations that led to the formation of the Collier collection. Mrs Bettina Hamilton writes,

"... a collection of Maori artefacts made by my brother and I, our interest having been aroused or rather stimulated when I was invited by the Miss de Beers to join a party excavating at Murdering Beach under Harry Skinner. Our collection was got together by fossicking on the middens at Kaikais, Long Beach and Little Papanui. But a few things were given to us ..."

Included among those items given to the Colliers was a whale ivory chevroned amulet which had been found at Cargill's Cliffs, near Dunedin in the 1880s (Harsant, 1983). Artefacts personally collected are unlikely to have been acquired during Skinner's excavations as the owners of the land excavated at Murdering Beach and Little Papanui, at least, donated all materials recovered to the Otago Museum (Skinner, 1925 and 1960). They are more likely to have been obtained during weekend excursions to the sites and, in the case of places further away from Dunedin, during holidays.

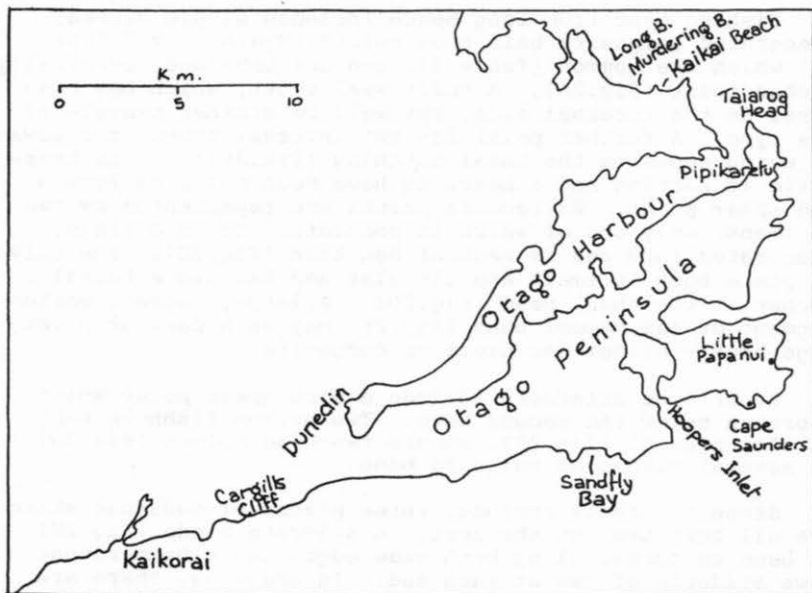
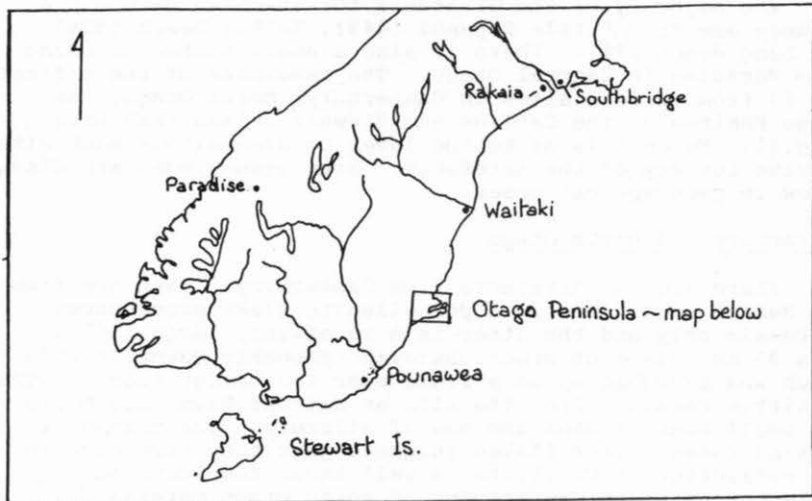


FIGURE 1. Location map showing sites mentioned.

The majority of the artefacts for which we have a provenance are from Little Papanui (44%), Kaikai Beach (32%) and Long Beach (9%). There is also a small number of adzes from Paradise in Central Otago. The remainder of the collection is from various sites in Canterbury, North Otago, the Otago Peninsula, the Catlins and Stewart Island (Rakiura) (Fig.1). No details as to the layer or area within each site survive for any of the artefacts. Site assemblages are discussed below in geographical order.

Canterbury and North Otago

There are two artefacts from Canterbury. Both are from the Rakaia area. One is a porcellanite flake provenanced to Rakaia only and the other is a relatively large (105 x 52 x 35 mm) flake of green obsidian (probably Mayor Island) which was ploughed up in a field near the bridge (Southbridge) at Little Rakaia. From the site at Waitaki River mouth are two small chert flakes and one of silcrete. The method of marking these latter flakes suggests that they were once in the collection of Griffiths, a well known fossicker and collector of South Canterbury and North Otago material.

Long Beach

Fishing gear from Long Beach includes single barbed, undecorated composite bait hook points (Hjarno, 1967:Type C3a) which are common (Table 1), and one unbarbed, externally notched point (Fig.2A). A split seal tooth, which has been worked on the internal side, may well be another example of this type. A further point has two internal barbs, the lower one being opposite the basal notching (Fig.2B). It is crescentic in section and appears to have been modified from a bird spear point. Barracouta points are represented by two specimens, only one of which is complete. It is a plain, undecorated form and is made of dog bone (Fig.2C). The only one piece hook is small and circular and has two external notches at the shank head (Fig.2D). A large, robust, worked fragment of sea mammal bone (Fig.2E) may be a part of a very large hook - either one piece or composite.

Other bone artefacts include a bird spear point which is broken below the second barb. Two broken fishhook tabs are also present (Fig.2F), as are two bone points (Fig.2G) and several pieces of cut bird bone.

Stone artefacts include: three pieces of mudstone which have all been used as abraders. A silcrete blade (Fig.2H) has been retouched along both side edges and a hammerstone shows evidence of use at each end. In addition, there are three small, chisel-like flakes which show signs of polishing

on one or more surfaces (Fig.2I), a fragment of nephrite and a piece of grey stone which has a cutting groove down the centre.

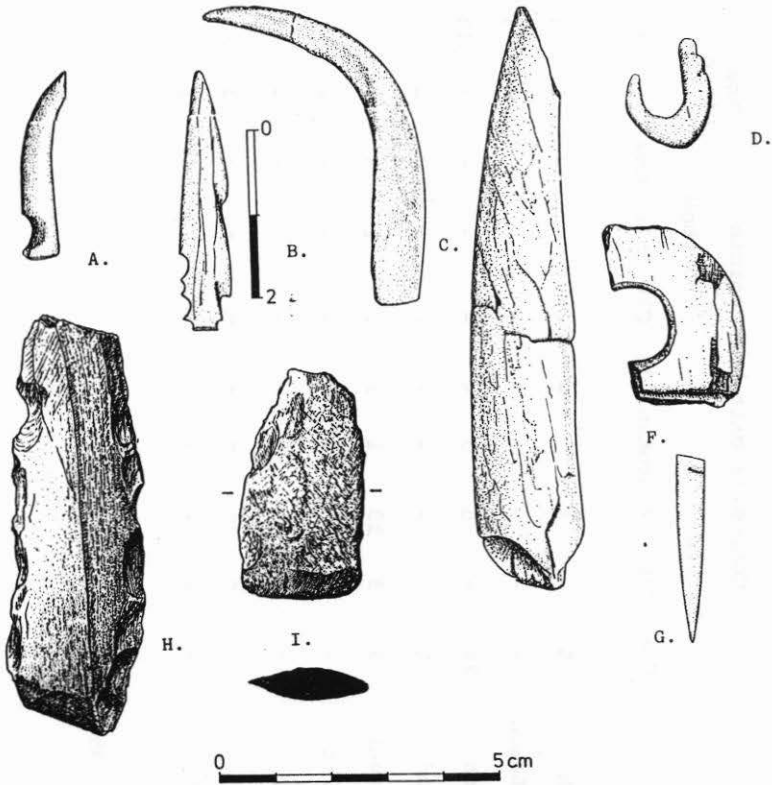


FIGURE 2. Long Beach bone and stone artefacts.

Site	Composite bait hook points								One piece	Lure points				TOTAL
	Barbed				Unbarbed					A1	A2	A3	?	
	C3a	C3b	C4	Broken	Cl a	Cl b	Cl c	C5a						
Long Beach	5	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	10
Murdering Beach	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Kaikai Beach	21	-	5	3	-	-	-	-	2	11	1	-	1	44
Taiaroa Head	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Little Papanui	5	3	13	1	1	1	1	3	-	3	4	7	4	46
Hoopers Inlet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Sandfly Bay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	3
Pounawea	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	6
Stewart Island	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1

TABLE 1. Fishhooks (Hjarno types).

Murdering Beach

The bone artefacts from this site comprise two pieces of cut bird bone, one of which is the proximal right humerus of a mollymawk (Rick McGovern-Wilson, pers.comm.), and a badly weathered, unfinished barracouta point. The remaining artefacts are a piece of red kokowai which has been ground on two surfaces, a small sandstone grinding stone, an unused chalcedony flake, a broken piece of worked nephrite and a rectangular sectioned nephrite chisel (Fig.7A).

Kaikai Beach

One-piece hooks are represented by two fragments only. One of these is a bend portion and the other a shank leg. The latter has a simple external projection and an internal notch and groove for line attachment (Fig.3A). Single barbed points with external basal notching (Figs 3B-C) are the most common of the composite bait hook points (Table 1); multi-barbed and serrated types (Fig.3D) are also present. With the exception of one example of sea mammal tooth (Fig.3E) all are made of bone. There is only one serrated (Hjarno Type A2) barracouta point, the remainder are undecorated Hjarno Type A1 forms (Fig.3F). Two pieces of fishhook were not able to be identified.

Two complete bird spear points are decorated with serrations (Figs 3G-H) and both are crescentic sectioned. Four of the broken spear points are also crescentic in section

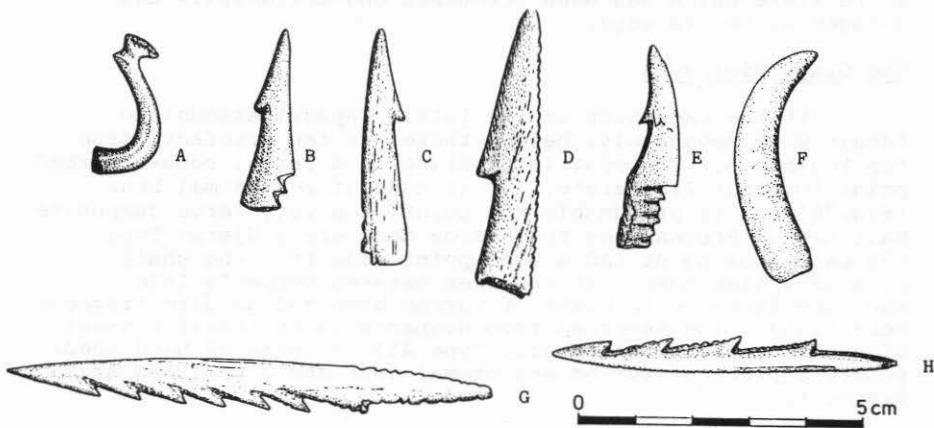


FIGURE 3. Kaikai Beach bone artefacts.

and the remaining three are oval. A further three single barbed, broken points may be the proximal ends of composite bait hooks or bird spears.

Bone points vary in size and shape - from pointed shafts of bird limb bone and slender sharpened points made from slivers of bird bone, to more rounded, solid, 'stout' points made of thick-walled mammal bone.

Two small pieces of worked dog jaw were probably intended to become barracouta points before they broke. Several broken and unfinished moa and sea mammal bone tabs are present as are many other pieces of worked bone, especially bird bone.

Three stone cutters have been worn to a smooth, rounded surface on one edge only. Two are made of volcanic stone and the other is silcrete. The 14 abraders and grindingstones are all of fine grained sandstone and mudstone and show evidence of having been used on one or more surfaces.

Three small pieces of nephrite have been polished on one or more sides. A fourth piece is a small, reworked chisel, circular in section.

The remainder of the Kaikai assemblage consists of a drill point made of brown chalcedony, two small river pebbles which have been used as hammers at each end and a grey porcellanite flake which has been retouched and uniaxially use-damaged along one edge.

The Otago Peninsula

With the exception of the Little Papanui assemblage (dealt with separately, below) there are few artefacts from the Peninsula. The most interesting is a large, robust barbed point found at Pipikaretu. It is made of sea mammal bone (Fig.7B) and is presumably the point of a very large composite bait hook. Provenanced to Taiaroa Head are a Hjarno Type C3a bait hook point and a bone point made from the shaft of a bird limb bone. In the area between Hooper's Inlet and Cape Saunders, a piece of worked bone and an adze fragment were found. The material from Hooper's Inlet itself consists of a barracouta point (Hjarno Type A1), a serrated bird spear point, a piece of worked sea mammal bone and a polished adze fragment.

Two broken Hjarno Type A1 barracouta points, a piece of what is probably an unbarbed bait hook point, a bone tab and two bone points are all provenanced to Sandfly Bay.

A single tracheal ring was found at Kaikorai, just south of the Peninsula.

Little Papanui

Among fishing gear from Little Papanui, composite bait hook points are dominated by multibarbed and serrated Hjarno Type C4 forms (Table 1). Relatively common also are externally barbed points as well as unbarbed forms which are often externally serrated (Figs 4A-C). Included in the collection also is a broken Hjarno Type C1c point (Fig.4D). Helen Leach has suggested (1979:241-242) that points of this form may have been used as octopus lure points. 'Dog-legged' barracouta points (Figs 4E-F) and serrated ones are more common than the plain Hjarno Type A1 forms. A small, sea mammal bone minnow lure shank (Fig.4G) without a perforation completes the fishing gear.

One of the most important pieces in the Collier collection is the Little Papanui harpoon point (Fig.5A). Made of burnt sea mammal bone (John Darby, pers. comm.) it has a pair of barbs positioned opposite each other on the internal and external sides and a divided downward projecting foot. The perforation is at the midpoint. The harpoon is symmetrical

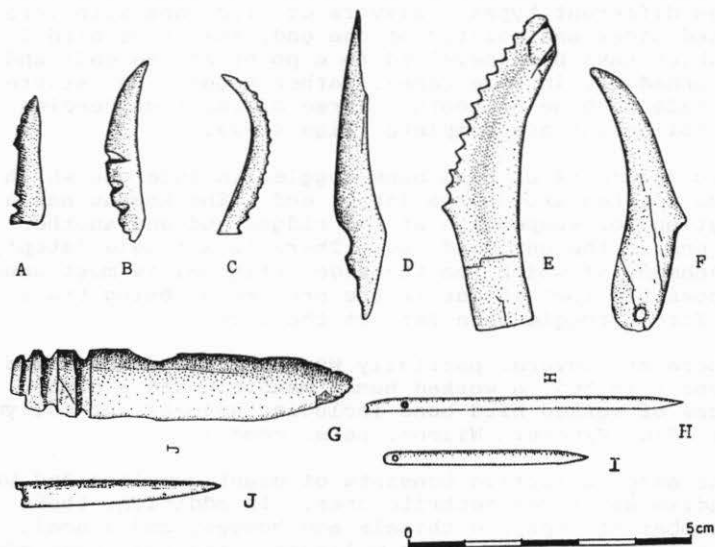


FIGURE 4. Little Papanui bone artefacts.

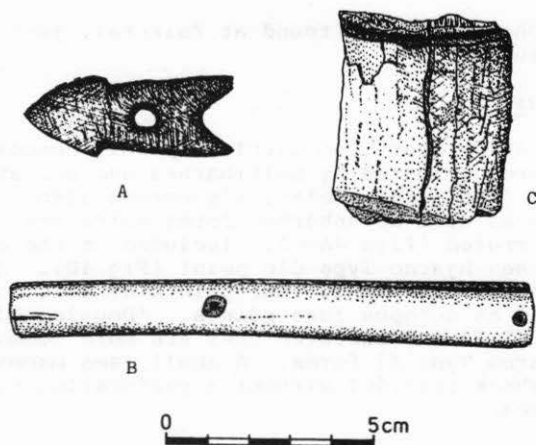


FIGURE 5. Little Papanui bone artefacts (continued).

in shape and belongs to Skinner's (1974:142) Variety 4. There is only one bird spear point - an undecorated, three barbed example. Bone points and needles: bone points are of three different types - slivers of bird bone with irregularly shaped sides and pointed at one end; shafts of bird limb bones which have been bevelled to a point at one end; and more rounded or, in some cases, rather gouge-like, stouter points made of bone or tooth. Three of the four needles in the collection are complete (Figs 4H-J).

Two fragments of bird bone toggles include one which has been notched around the intact end. The koauau has a perforation for suspension at the ridged end and another broken one at the unridged end. There is a single 'stop', the placement of which (on the side) (Fig.5B) is most unusual. It is possible that it was in the process of being transformed into a toggle when left at the site.

There are several partially worked moa and sea mammal bone tabs (Fig.5C), a worked human mandible and a number of pieces of worked bird bone including several cut mollymawk humerii (Rick McGovern-Wilson, pers. comm.).

The adze collection consists of eight complete and broken stone adzes and three nephrite ones. In addition, there are a number of nephrite chisels and gouges, and a small bowenite flake which has been polished along the lower edge

and which probably functioned as a chisel. Most of the adzes are quadrangular sectioned, ungripped forms (Fig.6A-B), although there is one which has been bilaterally reduced at the grip (Fig.6C). Several have had the working edges reground and one broken adze has been partially reworked along the break.

Four flakes of greywacke and volcanic stone and one of a chert-like material have been ground smooth on one or more edges probably through use as cutters. A number of pieces of mudstone and sandstone show evidence of use as abraders (Fig.6D) and grindingstones. There is also a fragment of a schist file.

Included in the assemblage are four silcrete blades (Fig.6E) and four flakes - three silcrete, one chalcedony - some of which have been retouched and use-damaged. One broken blade has a smooth-sided notch on one side edge. A small quartz hammer (Fig.6F), one of grey stone (Fig.6G), an oval-shaped sinker with a longitudinal groove and indentations at each end, and a small silcrete drill point complete the collection.

In addition to these items, a double ended nephrite chisel, an externally serrated barracouta point and a broken

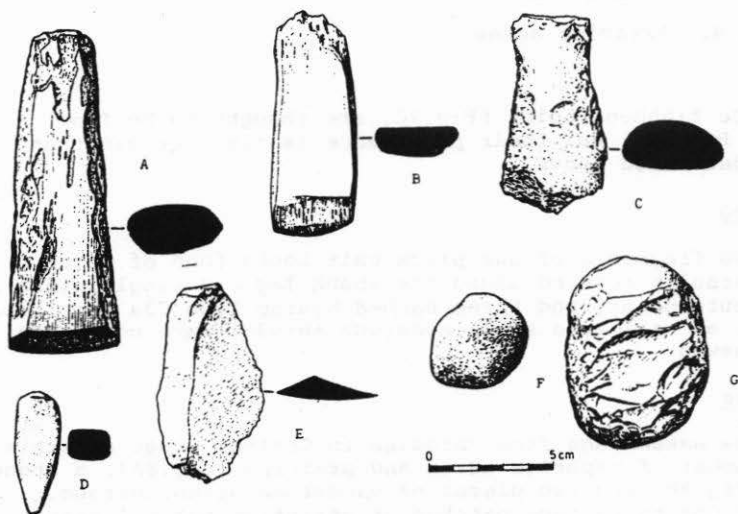


FIGURE 6. Little Papanui stone artefacts.

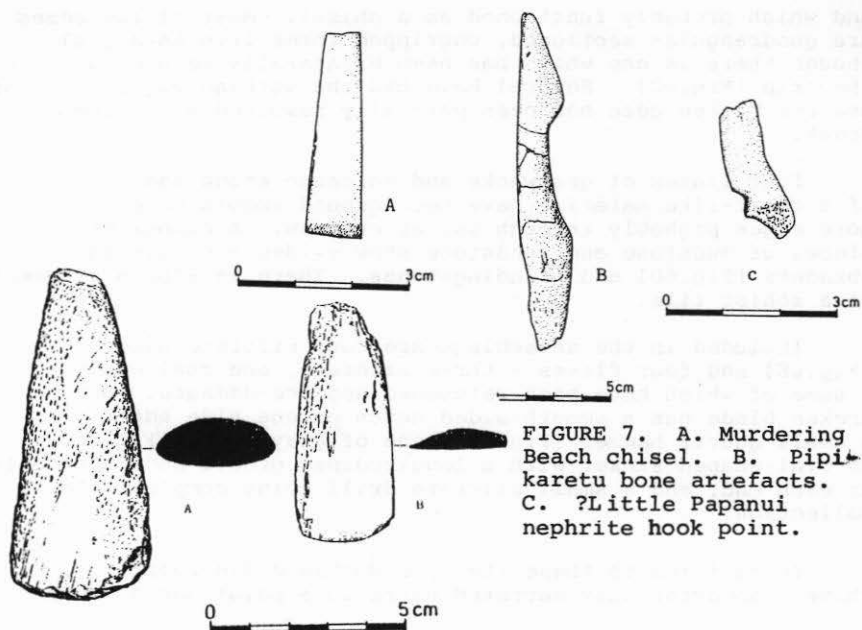


FIGURE 7. A. Murdering Beach chisel. B. Pipikaretu bone artefacts. C. ?Little Papanui nephrite hook point.

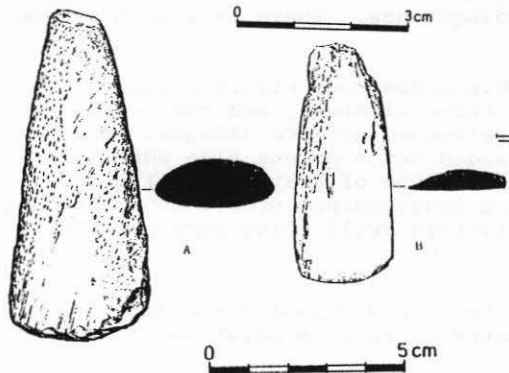


FIGURE 8. Paradise adzes.

nephrite fishhook point (Fig.7C) are thought to be from Little Papanui, but their provenance is less certain than those described above.

Pounawea

Two fragments of one-piece bait hooks (one of which is externally notched along the shank leg), a single plain barracouta point, and three barbed Hjarno Type C3a bait hook points, as well as a small mudstone abradar were collected at Pounawea.

Paradise

The assemblage from Paradise in Central Otago consists of a number of nephrite adzes and preforms (Fig.8A), a stone adze (Fig.8B) and two pieces of sandstone grindingstone. Some of the adzes have patches of polishing but are generally unfinished while others have polished working edges and are,

therefore, assumed to be complete. With the exception of one broken piece, thought to be a chisel or gouge, no cutting or sawing marks are evident. Several adzes, however, show signs of hammerdressing.

Stewart Island (Rakiura)

A broken one-piece fishhook which has been made by chipping rather than drilling and cutting, two pieces of worked bone (one probably an externally serrated barracouta point) and a small chisel-like unfinished adze make up the Stewart Island collection.

Unprovenanced material

There are a number of artefacts in the collection which have no provenance at all. They include eight adzes, two preforms, over 200 flakes, numerous abraders and grinding-stones, some fragments of moa egg shell, fishhooks and two ray barbs - one of which has a perforation at the non-pointed end and the other an incomplete perforation. Although much of this material is probably from Otago, some of it, the barbs for example, are more likely to be from further north.

Discussion and conclusions

The majority of the artefacts discussed above are the same as, or similar to, known forms from the various sites involved. Several pieces, however, are not. The harpoon point from Little Papanui, for example, is an unusual style of a comparatively rare artefact. The unfinished minnow lure shank from Little Papanui is also an important artefact although others similar in style are known from the site (Hjarno, 1967:19). Of particular interest, too, is the use of silcrete as an abrader, as in the Kaikai assemblage, and as a drill point at Little Papanui. Large, barbed bone points, like that from Pipikaretu, are also uncommon. Undoubtedly, the most outstanding piece in the collection, however, is the chevroned amulet from Cargill's Cliff which has already been published (Harsant, 1983).

There is no faunal material in the collection and, in most cases, there is no record of the provenance of the flakes and worked bone and stone. Such items were not considered of significance in the 1920s. The lack of stratigraphic data is also unfortunate, but not unexpected. Indeed, even H.D. Skinner only occasionally recorded the area and/or layer of excavated finds at Murdering Beach.

Despite such shortcomings, the Collier collection - and others in private ownership - is of considerable value and importance to archaeology. Full documentation of these collections is essential if we are to build up the accurate and complete site inventories necessary for inter-site comparisons and for studies in material culture.

Acknowledgements

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