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# THE FIRST THOUSAND YEARS

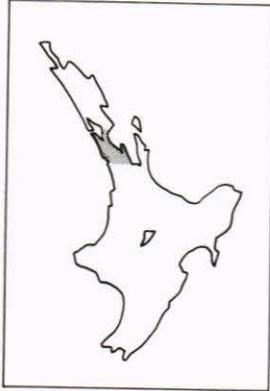
Regional Perspectives in New Zealand Archaeology

Edited by Nigel Prickett



# AUCKLAND

Janet Davidson



The modern metropolis of Auckland lies at the heart of a region rich in prehistory. Just as the Auckland isthmus is today one of the most popular areas for modern settlement, so in the past it was attractive to prehistoric Polynesian settlers. Its Maori name, Tamaki-makau-rau, or Tamaki-of-the-hundred-lovers, is said to symbolize its attraction and the fact that it was fought over by numerous warring groups seeking possession of its rich resources.<sup>1</sup>

The area described in this chapter centres on the Auckland isthmus, but reaches beyond it in all directions, for the isthmus alone is too small an area for a meaningful reconstruction of prehistory to be made.

The greater Auckland area extends north to South

Kaipara Head and south to the Waikato Heads on the west coast, covering a comparable area of the east coast and including the inner islands of the Hauraki Gulf, which are particularly rich in surviving archaeological remains (Fig. 2.1).

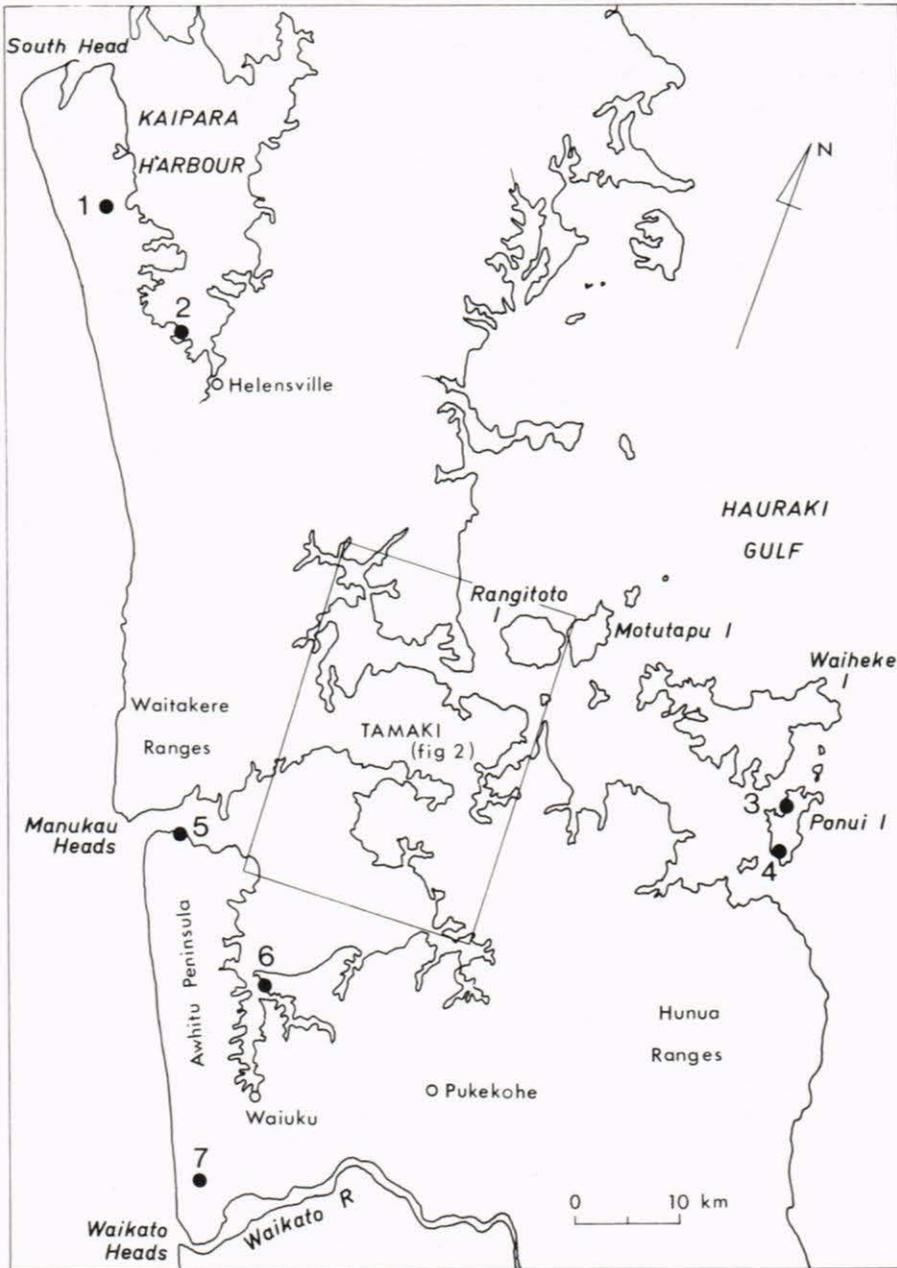
The Auckland isthmus (Fig. 2.2) lies at the narrowest point of the North Island, bounded by the Waitemata Harbour on the north and the larger Manukau Harbour on the south. The Waitemata opens to the relatively sheltered waters of the Hauraki Gulf with its indented coastline and numerous islands, while the Manukau opens to the more tempestuous and exposed west coast, with its long expanses of open beaches. At several points the distance between the two harbours is so slight that canoes could be dragged across fairly easily. The isthmus is thus at the centre of an area rich in marine resources and readily accessible to prehistoric settlers.

## The natural landscape

The oldest rocks of the region are the Jurassic and Triassic sediments which form some of the Hauraki Gulf islands and the large and often hilly block of land to the south-east, fringing the Hauraki Gulf. An area of Quaternary volcanics lies to the south around Pukekohe, and there are older Tertiary basalts and conglomerates to the west, north of the Manukau Heads. Both the south Kaipara and south Manukau peninsulas and the land immediately south of the Manukau are composed of Quaternary sediments;<sup>2</sup> the two former areas are rich in prehistoric sites, but the latter, now a rich dairy farming region, was apparently relatively little occupied in prehistoric times.

The landscape of Tamaki itself is characterized by numerous small volcanic cones, representing spasmodic volcanic activity over the last 50,000 years.<sup>3</sup> These Quaternary volcanoes have overlain Tertiary sediments in the immediate vicinity. The youngest and largest of the volcanoes, Rangitoto, broods over the entrance to the Waitemata. It is the only one of the volcanoes active during human occupation of the region and its appearance and growth to its present form must have been one of the most dramatic events in Auckland prehistory.

Among the soils of the region are some found also in Northland, such as northern yellow brown earths, podzols, yellow-brown sands and red and brown loams



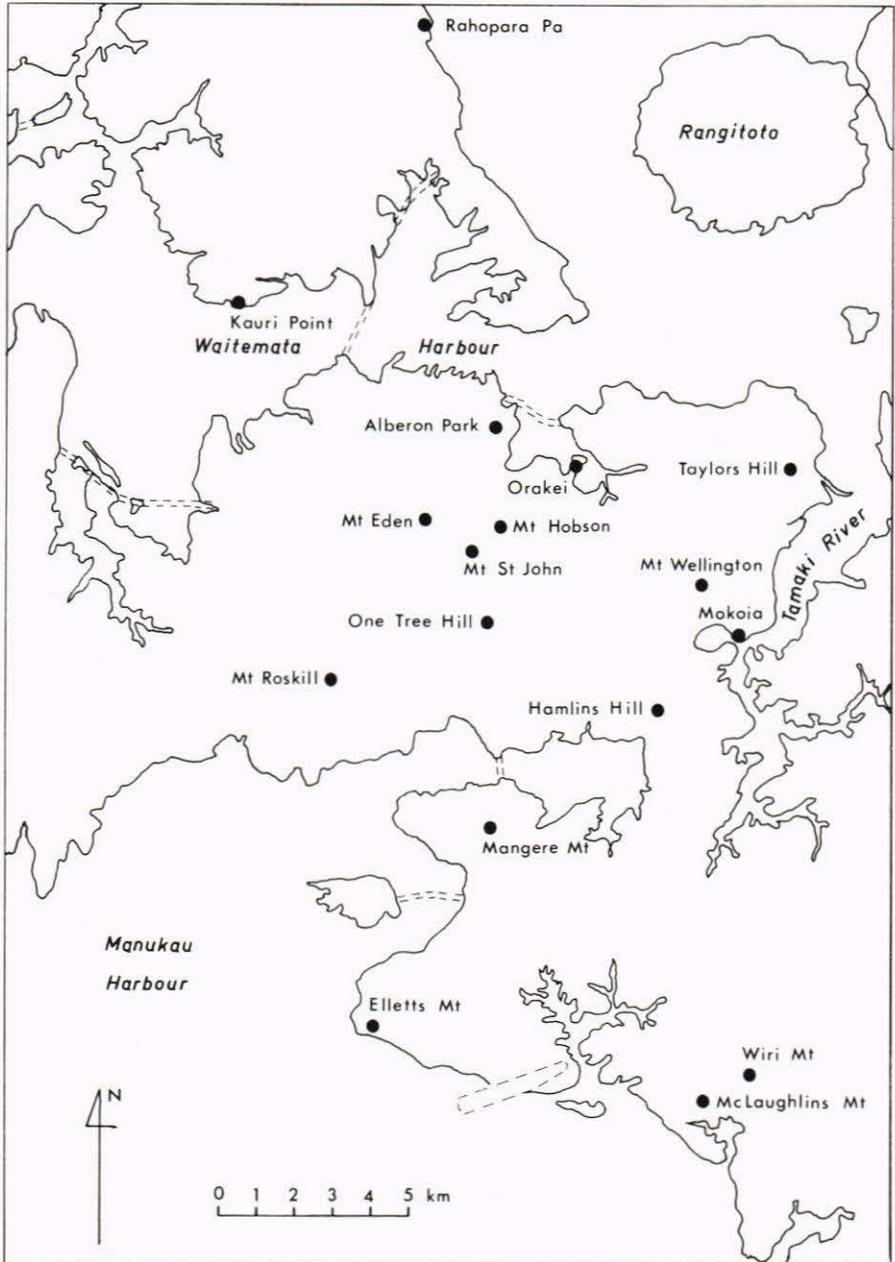
2.1 The greater Auckland region. Numbered archaeological sites are: 1. Waioneke; 2. Otakanini; 3. Galatea Bay; 4. Ponui Midden; 5. Manukau South Head; 6. Waitete Point; 7. Maioro.

and angular brown clays. On the isthmus itself and in much of the land south of the Manukau, the soils are mapped as central zone yellow brown loams and brown granular loams, similar to those found widely in the Waikato and Taranaki.<sup>4</sup>

The climate is similar to that of the drier parts of Northland<sup>5</sup> — mild and humid, generally equable, and attractive for Polynesian settlement. Some coastal areas are almost frost-free, although quite heavy frosts are experienced further from the sea.

Much of the region was covered in scrub and fernland at the end of the prehis-

toric period. The only substantial remaining forests were in the two more mountainous areas — the Waitakere Ranges to the west of Tamaki and the Hunua Ranges and adjacent hill country to the south-east. In both places kauri was intermixed with softwoods and hardwoods.<sup>6</sup>



2.2 The Tamaki Isthmus and environs showing archaeological sites mentioned in the text.

### Prehistoric resources

The two outstanding attractions of Tamaki and its environs for prehistoric settlement were the marine resources and the fertile soils. The harbours were rich in shellfish such as pipis and cockles, which were readily accessible; scallops were numerous in places. The shores of the Hauraki Gulf also abounded in shellfish — pipis, cockles and tuatuas on the sandy beaches and estuaries, rock oysters, mussels and a variety of gastropods on the rocky shores. The harbours and the sheltered waters of the Hauraki Gulf were excellent fishing grounds for snapper,

kahawai, dogfish and other species. The soils developed on the various volcanic ashes of the region were suitable for cultivation by Polynesian techniques, as were the loams of south Kaipara and south Auckland.

The region was less well endowed with certain other resources of interest to Polynesians. The first settlers evidently found plenty of bird life, although there is little indication that the moa was ever important in the diet, and sea mammals did not venture into the inner waters of the Hauraki Gulf. Stone resources seem to have been of local significance only. On Motutapu Island and probably elsewhere in the eastern part of the region were found rocks that were used locally throughout the prehistoric period. These included greywacke, suitable for adzes and drill points, jaspers for hammerstones and occasional flake tools, and sandstones for grinders. Other rocks in the region were also exploited by local communities, although little work has been done on this aspect of the region's prehistory.<sup>7</sup> However, Auckland did not export stone resources, and was dependent on external supply for such major items as obsidian and some adze material as well as greenstone. It is possible that the region did export some other durable items, one possibility being Dentalium shells for ornaments, which may have been more easily collected in the Manukau Harbour than in most other regions.<sup>8</sup> In general, however, the great attraction of Auckland was its suitability for the important food gathering activities of gardening and fishing.

The Auckland isthmus, lying as it does at the centre of several different lines of communication, was open to influences from several directions. The traditional history of the latter part of the prehistoric period reflects these influences. The early occupation of the region is poorly remembered, although some traditions about important migratory canoes, such as Tainui and Te Arawa, refer to the Auckland area. By the early 18th century, the isthmus was in the possession of several closely related groups, collectively known as Wai-o-hua, who variously made and broke alliances and fought among themselves, as well as uniting against threats from further afield. Competing for influence in the area were the northern Ngati Whatua, and various southern tribes including the Ngati Paoa of the Hauraki Gulf. The Manukau and south Auckland areas were also exposed to influences from the Waikato. By the end of the 18th century, as a result of conquest, Ngati Whatua were in possession of much of the isthmus, having moved down from the Kaipara; Ngati Paoa were established on the Gulf islands and in the east of the isthmus, with a large settlement on the Tamaki Estuary in the vicinity of Panmure.<sup>9</sup> The Ngati Whatua and Ngati Paoa in turn were threatened by the northern Nga Puhi, old enemies who in the early 19th century armed with muskets devastated southern areas, particularly the Ngati Paoa settlements of Mauinaina and Mokoia at Panmure.<sup>10</sup>

Any brief summary of the shifting tribal allegiances must oversimplify them and obscure the very complex nature of the interrelationships. Seldom did one tribe completely replace another; people often had allegiances in several camps, and remnants of allegedly vanquished groups might be found living with impunity amongst victors. Presumably such shifting social groups have ebbed and flowed across Tamaki from earliest times, although only the more recent episodes were remembered and related in the 19th century.

Apart from a few pioneering descriptions of individual sites and artefact finds,<sup>11</sup> the archaeology of Auckland was completely neglected until the 1950s, when modern excavations and intensive site surveys began. The impetus was given by the appointment of an archaeologist to the newly established Anthropology Department at Auckland University in 1954, and the growing realization that an important part of the region's heritage was being destroyed, sometimes wan-

## Tribal history

## Archaeological investigations

tonly but more often casually or in ignorance, as the modern metropolis expanded. The continuing threat to archaeological sites has been a major factor in Auckland archaeology until the present day.

The first modern excavation took place on Taylor's Hill (N42/89), a small, little known volcanic cone at Glen Innes, between 1954 and 1957 in response to a proposal to quarry part of the site which was not a reserve. Most subsequent excavations on volcanic cones and other mainland sites have also been emergency or rescue excavations, to learn something about a site in the face of imminent damage or destruction by quarrying, reservoir construction, road works, subdivision and other developments.

Research-oriented excavation, by contrast, has been largely limited to the South Kaipara region and the off-shore islands. After two initial research excavations on Motutapu Island in the late 1950s and early 1960s, a long-term research programme on the island developed. This involved intensive site recording, two excavation seasons involving three sites, several minor excavations, and integration of the results with those of the earlier investigations.<sup>12</sup>

The Auckland region saw some of the earliest systematic site recording in the late 1950s and early 1960s.<sup>13</sup> In recent years, however, more intensive recording programmes in both rural and urban areas have revealed a density of prehistoric occupation not fully appreciated previously.<sup>14</sup>

An unfortunate aspect of archaeology in Auckland is that only a minority of excavations have been adequately reported. This is partly due to the rescue emphasis of many of them, but some research excavations are also incompletely published. This makes full understanding of the results difficult.

### The archaeological landscape

The archaeological landscape of Tamaki and its immediate environs is dominated by the volcanic cones, which offered ideal situations for settlements and strong points. Such well known Auckland landmarks as Maungakiekie (One Tree Hill), Maungawhau (Mount Eden; Fig.2.3), Maungarei (Mount Wellington) and Remuera (Mount Hobson; Fig. 2.4) are sculptured with prehistoric earthworks covering many hectares. They are amongst the most splendid archaeological monuments in New Zealand. However, the cones visible today are only a remnant of those that once existed.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the archaeological evidence of the surviving cones is only a remnant of the former archaeological landscape of the isthmus.

Part of the attraction of the cones to Polynesian settlers lay in the relatively fertile soils developed on the lava flows and ash deposits around them. In prehistoric times, each cone was surrounded by extensive garden areas dotted with small undefended settlements and storage units — outposts of the major central settlements. Traces of these features can still be seen in parts of south Auckland, particularly around McLaughlin's Mountain, but the modern city has swallowed up the comparable remains around the better known volcanoes, relatively recently in the case of Mount Wellington, and long ago in the case of Mount Eden for example.

The coastline of the Waitemata was dotted with small fortified headlands. Only one fully intact example survives at Kauri Point, Birkenhead. Many of the clay hills and ridges away from the shore were also inhabited. A notable surviving example is Hamlin's Hill, adjacent to the southern motorway near Westfield, where there was a large prehistoric settlement. A few much smaller examples consisting only of a few storage pits survived until recently in some small parks and undeveloped sections. Another indication of the extent of prehistoric settlement can be seen in the numerous patches of shell midden in suburban gardens all over the isthmus.

This archaeological landscape of Tamaki covered the isthmus, and extended to the northern shore of the Waitemata, and south and east to the limits of the

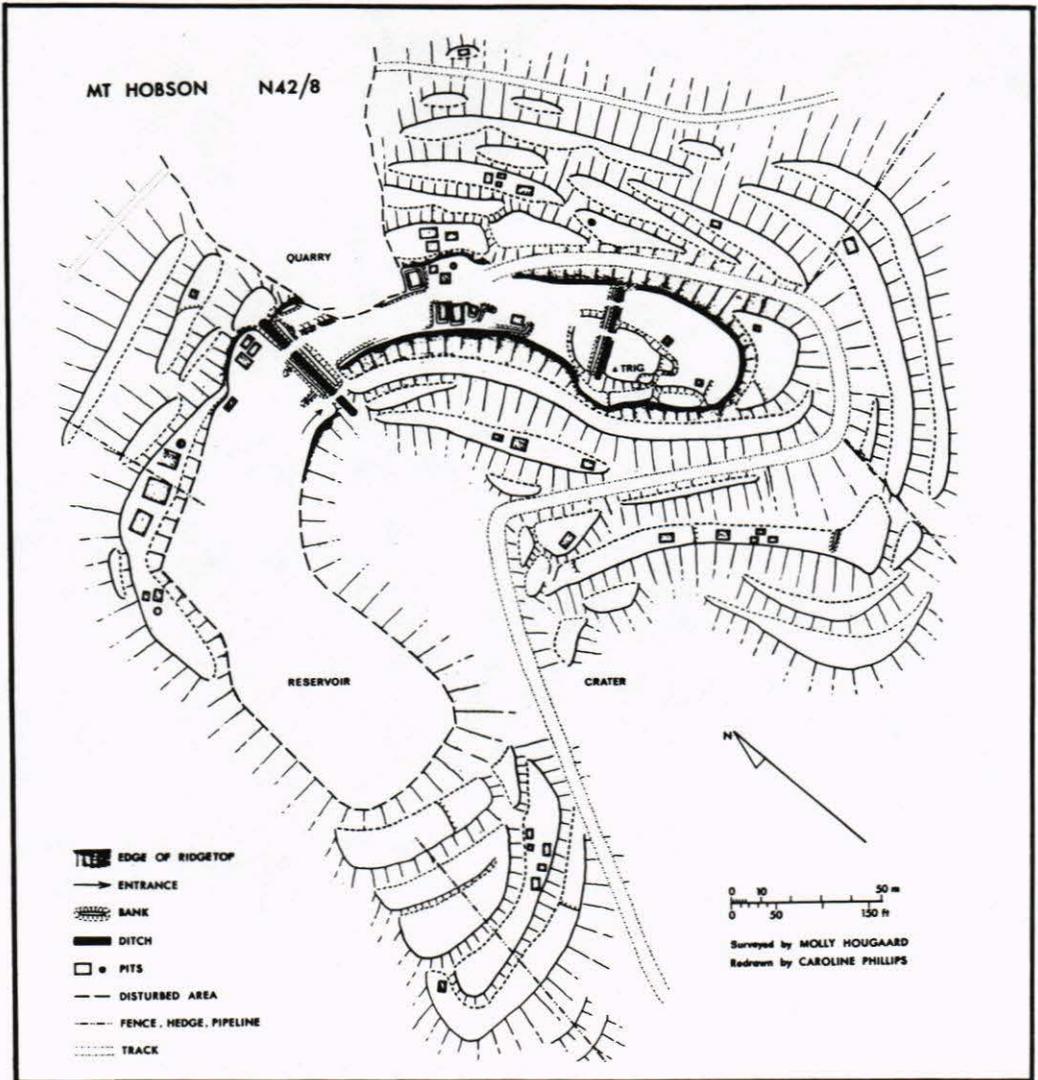


2.3 Maungawhau (Mt Eden) from the air, showing the spectacular terracing on the eastern slopes (Whites Aviation).

volcanic field. Beyond this the character of the landscape changes. Much of the east coast is characterized by headland fortifications and some open settlements. In places these remains are sparse compared with those on the isthmus, although some individual sites are impressive.<sup>16</sup> The off-shore islands, however, particularly Motutapu, are extremely rich in prehistoric sites. The archaeological landscape of the islands is relatively undisturbed, despite farming activity. Really large sites are absent, apart from one terraced hilltop on Motutapu and a few unusually large fortified sites on Waiheke, but on Motutapu alone, over 300 archaeological sites have been recorded, representing a full range of prehistoric activity on the island. The majority are open or undefended settlements — hamlets or villages on the gently sloping ridges.

In other parts of the region the character of the landscape is somewhat different again. The South Kaipara Head is more like parts of Northland. Here are found many fortified sites, including a number of ring-ditch pa (enclosed by ditch and bank defences on three or four sides) in contrast to the predominance of headland pa on the east coast and the islands of the Gulf. There are also large complexes of storage pits and a number of middens, although some sites of these kinds have undoubtedly disappeared as a result of farming activity.

To the south lie the more rugged and still partly bush-clad Waitakere Ranges. Here, archaeological sites are generally smaller and less obvious in the landscape. Middens and small rock shelters are numerous, and there are fewer pits and fewer sites with defensive ditches. Many of the sites in this area may have



2.4 Plan of Mt Hobson showing surviving earthworks and later European features (after Fox, 1977, p.8).

been occupied during the 16th and 17th centuries.<sup>17</sup> South of the Manukau, however, on the Awhitu Peninsula, the density of sites more closely resembles that of South Kaipara. Between the Manukau and Waikato Heads there are many complexes of large storage pits, as well as pa and other sites.

These varying landscapes represent the end point of many centuries of prehistoric occupation of the greater Auckland area. Not all the sites are contemporary, and indeed, it would have been impossible for more than a fraction of them to have been occupied at any one time. The results of excavations throughout the region are gradually enabling a picture of occupation through time to be superimposed on the timeless mosaic of archaeological sites. However, very few sites can confidently be identified as typically 'early' or typically 'late'. Indeed, the basic lifestyle of prehistoric Aucklanders may have changed rather little over several centuries.

#### Early settlement

One of the problems of Auckland prehistory is the relatively slight evidence of human occupation before about A.D.1300. Three sites on off-shore islands and

one on the mainland have yielded Archaic artefacts which are similar to those known from early sites elsewhere in the country.<sup>18</sup> But of these sites, only an undated example near the Manukau South Head may be earlier than about A.D.1300.

The beaches just inside the entrance to the Manukau Harbour are typical of the situations often chosen by early settlers throughout New Zealand. Artefacts collected from one or more sites in the eroding sand hills represent a fuller range of typically East Polynesian or Archaic artefacts than is known elsewhere in the region. These were almost certainly associated with moa bones, including those of *Dinornis* sp. A small controlled excavation in one of these sites (N46-47/16) in 1961 yielded sparse remains of a small moa, fishbones, and a beautifully finished chisel of Archaic type.<sup>19</sup>

Two sheltered beaches on Motutapu Island — Pig Bay (N38/21) and the Sunde Site (N38/24) — were first occupied at about the time of the first major eruption of Rangitoto, now thought to have taken place as recently as about A.D.1350.<sup>20</sup> The Sunde Site was definitely occupied immediately before the eruption, and from the thin occupation layer buried under volcanic ash comes the best evidence available about the economy of the early settlers. At this time they were able to obtain small numbers of several extinct bird species, including moa, crow, and eagle. In addition, they took ten species of sea bird, six types of bush birds, two species of ducks, the tuatara, and a very occasional sea mammal. They ate dogs, caught large quantities of fish, especially snapper, and gathered shellfish, including cockles, mussels, and rock oysters.<sup>21</sup> Fish, shellfish, and to a lesser extent dogs and rats would provide the major protein foods in succeeding centuries, whereas birds would quickly diminish in importance. It should not be thought, however, that these people were purely hunters and fishermen; there are indications that forest had already been cleared from parts of Motutapu before the Rangitoto eruption, presumably by Polynesian settlers beginning to make gardens.<sup>22</sup>

These two bays on Motutapu were reoccupied many times after the eruption of Rangitoto, and the successive layers at the two sites provide a valuable record of changing economy and technology. Protein foods other than fish and shellfish quickly disappeared. However, the manufacture and use of stone adzes and bone fishhooks of Archaic style continued for some time, perhaps until about A.D.1500. Indeed the working of local greywacke for adzes continued on Motutapu throughout the prehistoric sequence, although the range of tools produced became more restricted.

An Archaic site at Ponui Island (N43/1) produced material similar to that from Motutapu, although there was also a 19th century occupation of the same site.<sup>23</sup> An important difference at Ponui, however, is that whereas some finished adzes at Manukau Heads originated from the Tahanga quarry on the Coromandel east coast, and occasional items from Tahanga were found amongst the greywacke preforms and adzes on Motutapu, the Ponui people were actually working or reworking Tahanga basalt on quite a large scale.<sup>24</sup> Ponui, of course, is closer to the Thames/Coromandel region, and it is not surprising that people living on the island should have had close links with people there.

Although no Archaic sites as such have been investigated on the isthmus and surrounding mainland areas, several radiocarbon dates indicate that activities of a rather different kind were contemporary with the use of the Motutapu Archaic sites. On the lower slopes of Wiri Mountain (N42/24), gardens outlined by stone walls had apparently been laid out before A.D. 1300. A small living terrace, constructed over the top of part of a boundary wall, was probably occupied two or three hundred years later.<sup>25</sup> Excavations on other volcanic cones revealed occupation between about A.D. 1400 and 1600. There is a single radiocarbon date of

A.D. 1430  $\pm$  40 for an early stage in the complex occupation sequence on Mount Wellington (N42/4)<sup>26</sup>, while the main occupation on the summit of Mount Roskill (N42/11) took place between about A.D. 1430 and 1620.<sup>27</sup> It is reasonable to suppose that earlier dates for the initial occupations on the volcanic cones will emerge from further work.

Another important mainland site which was probably first occupied at the same time as the Motutapu Archaic sites is the traditionally important pa of Otakanini (N37/37) on the Kaipara south head north of Helensville. During Period I at Otakanini, perhaps during the 14th century, large rectangular and other storage pits were constructed, reflecting kumara gardening. Although there was no sign of fortification at this time, at least in the area investigated, the first defences on the site may have been erected shortly afterwards.<sup>28</sup>

These scattered pieces of evidence indicate that a way of life based on cultivation of the fertile soils of the region was probably established by A.D. 1200. How much earlier it began remains to be discovered. It seems likely, however, that gardening potential combined with easy access to marine resources provided the principal attractions of the area from the time of first settlement. Only the Manukau Heads sites, at present, are possible candidates for really early settlement. They could represent pioneering exploration of the west coast. However, they may not be as early as their content at first sight suggests, as has proved to be the case with the Motutapu sites. For these latter, two explanations are possible. They could indicate the presence of relatively small groups of specialists, working the local stone resources, and maintaining a rather different lifestyle than that of their mainland neighbours. They could also reflect a minor aspect of ordinary Auckland life: occasional hunting and toolmaking by people whose principal preoccupation was gardening, which they practised both on the mainland and on the islands. At present this seems more probable.

### The results of archaeological excavations

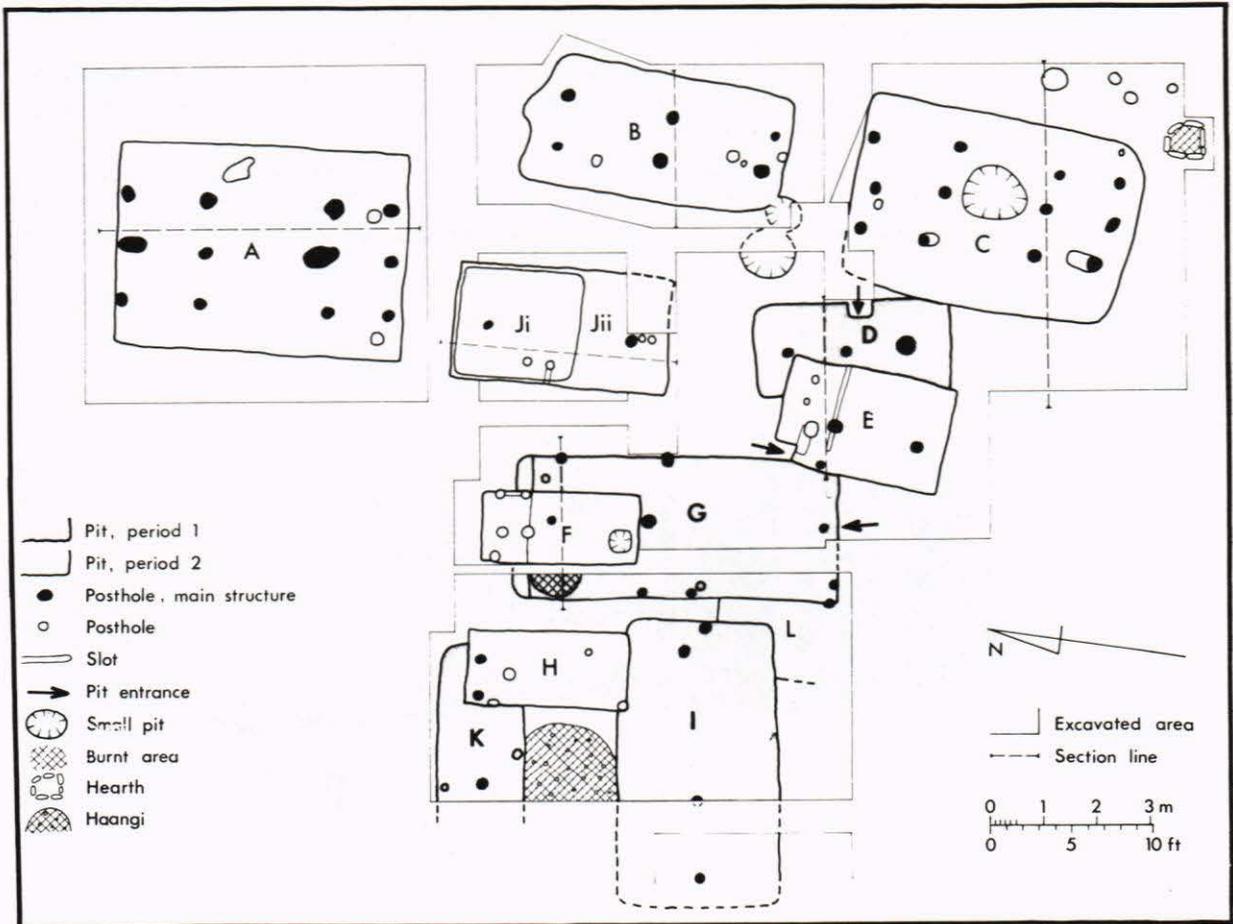
In the absence of reliable radiocarbon dates for most of the sites excavated in the Auckland region, it is impossible to divide the evidence into a series of chronological phases. In this section, therefore, the results of excavations are reviewed in terms of the archaeological landscape discussed above; different kinds of sites are considered in turn. Sites and occupations that are known to date between about 1200 and 1500 have already been described. Sites and occupations that date after about A.D. 1600 will be mentioned below. In some of these, 17th or 18th century deposits are the last of a series of repeated occupations of the same site. Many sites, however, are undated and do not contain any specific indications of either early or late occupation. These vary considerably in size and nature, and include both fortified and unfortified examples.

At the centre of the settlement pattern were the volcanic cones. Excavations at various times on Mount Wellington (see Fig.2.5), Mount Roskill (Figs 2.6 and 2.7), Taylors Hill, One Tree Hill (N42/6), and Ellett's Mountain (N42/23), have revealed complex sequences of occupation, including levelling and terracing, digging and redigging of storage pits, and fortification.<sup>29</sup> The terraces were variously constructed by digging back into the natural slope at the back and building out in front, both with spoil won from the hill itself and with the rubbish accumulating in the settlement, principally the huge quantities of shells such as cockles brought to the site as food. The surfaces of the terraces were used for the construction of houses, cooking shelters and storage pits. Sometimes all these features are found on one terrace, either at one time or consecutively. The final form of each cone reflects up to several hundred years of occupation and modification, rather than a single construction phase.

Artefacts are rare in excavations on the volcanic cones, and those that have



2.5 Excavations on the Mount Wellington crater rim, August 1971 (Auckland Museum).



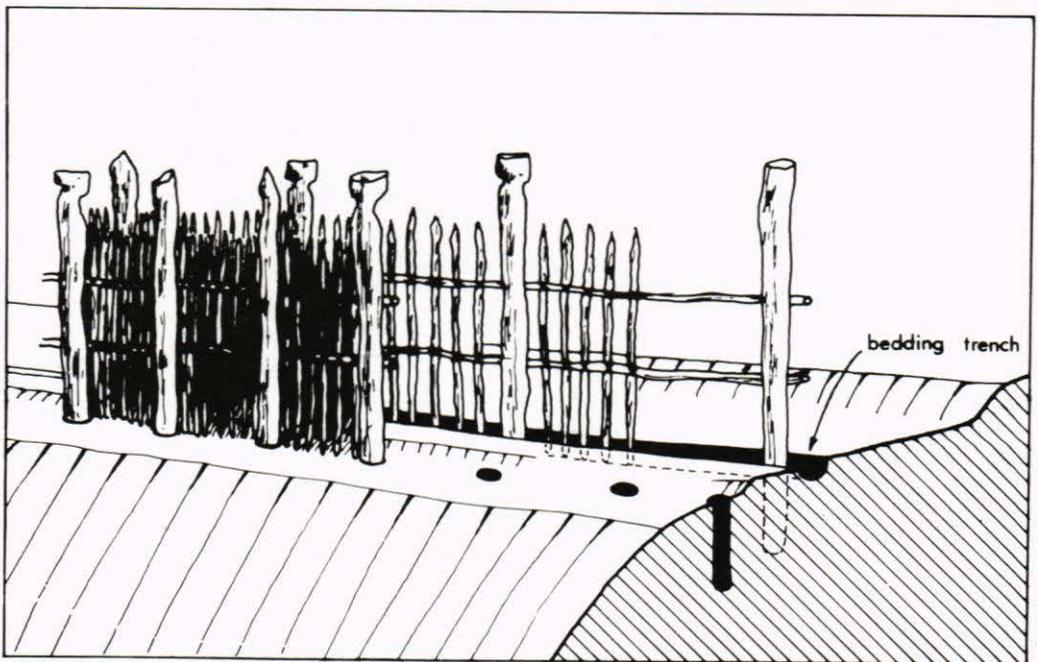
2.6 Plan of storage pits and other features uncovered during excavations on the summit of Mt Roskill during 1961 (after Fox, 1980, p.50).

been found are usually not diagnostic of any particular time period. They include needles, tattooing chisels, fishhook points, adzes, and other stone tools. Surface finds from some of the cones include some Archaic types, although the majority of adzes from the cones approximate to the 2B style. The fishhook fragments tend to be two-piece points rather than the Archaic one-piece hooks found on the offshore islands.

There has been no detailed study of the economy of any of these sites, although large quantities of midden have been collected from excavations. The middens consist mainly of shellfish, particularly cockles, although they sometimes also contain quite a lot of fish bones. Dog and rat bones are not uncommon, but bird bones are rare.

The extent to which the volcanic cones were actually fortified is uncertain, and each cone may have been different in this respect. Some have definite and quite substantial earthwork fortifications, most often in the form of transverse ditches on the crater rim. Sometimes these have clearly been superimposed on earlier terrace features. Mount Hobson (N42/6), the most notable example, seems to consist of a small pa superimposed on the summit of a much larger terraced site (see Fig.2.4). Late ditches are also visible on Mount Wellington, One Tree Hill and Mount St John. These earthworks usually define relatively small strongpoints within a much larger living area.<sup>30</sup> Excavations on Mount Roskill revealed traces of a substantial double palisade at the edge of the summit area (Fig.2.7), although there are no ditch and bank defences on this site.<sup>31</sup> On One Tree Hill, at least some of the large lateral terraces had palisades, but no traces of such palisading were found on similar terraces on Mount Wellington or Taylor's Hill. One consideration to be born in mind is the difficulty of finding sufficient timber in the vicinity for the really long palisades that would be required if many of the large terraces were fortified.

The series of radiocarbon dates from the very small excavation on Wiri Mountain suggests periodic use of this site over some three hundred years. The long sequence on Mount Wellington could well have lasted from the 15th to the 18th



2.7 Reconstruction of the defences on the summit of Mt Roskill, based on the results of excavations in 1961. The main uprights of the inner palisade are shown as 3m high (after Fox, 1980, p.48).

century, and that on Mount Roskill from the 15th to the 17th. This does not mean that any one of these sites was occupied continuously. It is more likely that each was reoccupied (and modified) from time to time as patterns of occupation ebbed and flowed across the isthmus, gardens were renewed and left fallow again, and social groupings and allegiances changed. Oral traditions hint at all these processes.

Each volcanic cone was the centre of a larger region of gardens and living sites. At Puhinui in South Auckland many hectares of gardens and hamlets on the fertile land surrounding Wiri and McLaughlin's Mountains have survived, at least in part, until recent times. Research now in progress should yield information on this important aspect of the total occupation pattern, which can no longer be studied on the isthmus itself.<sup>32</sup>

Living, cooking, dumping and storage areas, and fortifications exist in other places as well as on and around the volcanic cones. Indeed, it is probably misleading to draw too precise a distinction between the cones and other sites. Equally, as with the cones, it may be misleading to draw a precise distinction between pa, and open or undefended settlements. Some places were chosen because of their potential as fortified sites, and others were never intended to be fortified. Some began life as open settlements, and were later fortified, while others could equally well have been defended but in fact were not.

The headland known as Rahopara Pa (N38/20) at Castor Bay on the North Shore was initially a terraced living site with storage pits and cooking areas. At a later stage it was made into a pa by the addition of a ditch and bank cutting off a triangular area bounded by sheer cliffs on the other two sides.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, the pa at Kauri Point, Birkenhead (N42/27), which had splendid natural defences requiring only the addition of a small ditch at the neck of the headland, was apparently occupied only once, briefly, despite its natural advantages. Neither of these sites is close to good gardening soils, and their relatively simple histories probably reflect a preference for gardening over natural defence in the choice of locality.

The many other pa that fringed the Waitemata have been partly or completely destroyed so that it is difficult to assess their importance in the total settlement pattern. A now largely destroyed pa (N42/201) on the ridge between Orakei Basin and Hobson Bay had storage pits, substantial houses, and quite an amount of midden. Like many other sites, this one may have functioned at times as an open village, its defences erected only in times of immediate need.

Two pa on the south Kaipara peninsula and one on Motutapu Island (Fig.2.8) have complex but rather similar histories.<sup>34</sup> Each was initially an unfortified living or storage place, with the earliest excavated evidence consisting of storage pits. Each then went through more than one phase of fortification, and in each case the final occupation apparently consisted of intensive habitation but no storage pits. All three sites date in their final form to a late point in prehistory and all three have yielded artefacts that can be regarded for the most part as Classic Maori — typical of those in use at the close of the prehistoric period (see Fig.2.12). The history of Otakanini covered a long time, perhaps from the 14th to the 19th century. Station Bay Pa (N38/25; Fig.2.8) on Motutapu was probably last in use in the 18th century, although its earlier occupations are undated. The pa at Waioneke (N37/25) may have been first used in the 17th century or even later, and was probably last rebuilt in the early 19th century.

Two other pa last used in the 19th century are Mokoia or Mauinaina (N42/91) at Panmure and Waitete (N46/14) near the entrance to the Waiuku Estuary in the Manukau Harbour. Mokoia and Mauinaina were major settlements of the Ngati Paoa people in the early 19th century and were destroyed by raiding Nga Puhi in 1821.<sup>35</sup> Recent work has shown that a tiny remnant of a massive ditch and



2.8 The headland pa, N38/25, at Station Bay, Motutapu Island. Excavations took place both inside and outside the pa during the summer of 1970-71 (Auckland Museum).

bank in a vacant section by the old Panmure bridge is only a fraction of what must have been a large and impressive site covering up to 20 hectares. Waitete Point is a much smaller headland defended by a series of successive ditches. Excavations in both these sites<sup>36</sup> have suggested that such strategic locations were probably occupied many times, beginning at some unknown point in the prehistoric period and continuing into the 19th century.

Sometimes sites with no obvious defences visible on the surface are found on excavation to have been palisaded. Many pit clusters on slight eminences or knolls may be of this kind. An example at Maioro (N51/5), near Waiuku, defended by scarps and palisades, may have been a defended food store, rather than an actual living site.

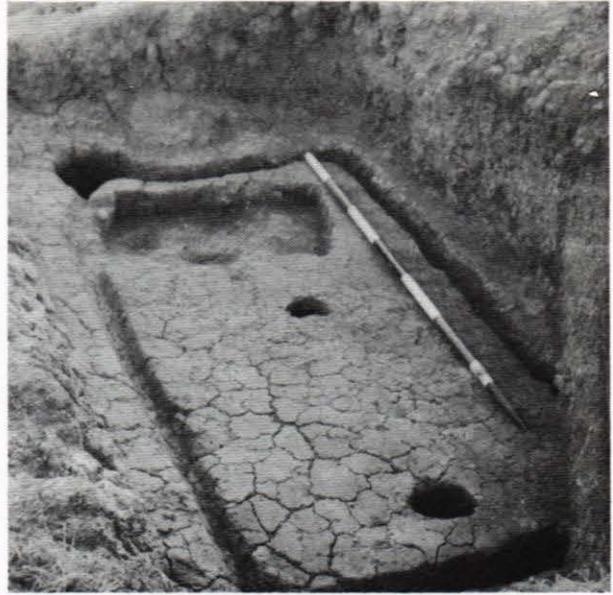
Sites that were never fortified range from isolated storage pits tucked away by themselves to large hamlets or villages. An example of the former was a pair of storage pits (N42/114) with no other signs of occupation on a little ridge in Alberon Park, Parnell.<sup>37</sup> These can be interpreted as a secret store of people living somewhere nearby, perhaps in St George's Bay. On the other hand, Hamlin's Hill (N42/137) near Westfield seems to have been a moderately large settlement, where people actually lived, as well as constructing a whole series of elaborate storage structures for their crops.<sup>38</sup> Hamlin's Hill is a clay hill with relatively impervious bedrock, and a notable feature of the site is the elaborate drainage system constructed to take water out of the pits and away from living areas. Some of these drains were covered with flat stone slabs. Such use of stone in settlements was not uncommon in the Auckland area — massive stone facings to scarps and pits and even free-standing stone walls have been uncovered on some of the volcanic cones.

The settlement at Hamlin's Hill contained rather insubstantial small houses (revealed by postholes well preserved in the clay), many storage pits, boundary fences or windbreaks, earth ovens (some perhaps in cooking shelters), and some small rubbish dumps containing mostly cockles. Although it is a relatively uncomplicated site compared with the volcanic cones, for instance, it is still too

complex for the pattern of each successive occupation to be totally distinguished. A clearer picture of a prehistoric living place has been gained from a small excavation on part of a living site (N38/30) on Motutapu Island.<sup>39</sup> A series of faint terraces run down a gently sloping ridge behind a sheltered bay. Careful and complete excavation of one of the more obvious terraces revealed a house and two storage pits set out around an open space (Figs 2.9 and 2.10). A path wound up the ridge linking this little unit of settlement with others above and below. At least one of the occupants of this little hamlet was a stone worker, like many other Motutapu people; a series of small unfinished stone adzes, made from local greywacke in a local style, were found around the house site. Across the swamp on the next ridge to the south excavations revealed another, more complicated settlement (N38/37) of a similar kind, again consisting of storage pits, cooking areas, midden dump, and the scattered debris of everyday life. This particular example has been dated to the 18th century.<sup>40</sup> This kind of archaeological site is repeated over three hundred times on Motutapu alone, and many thousands of times throughout the region.

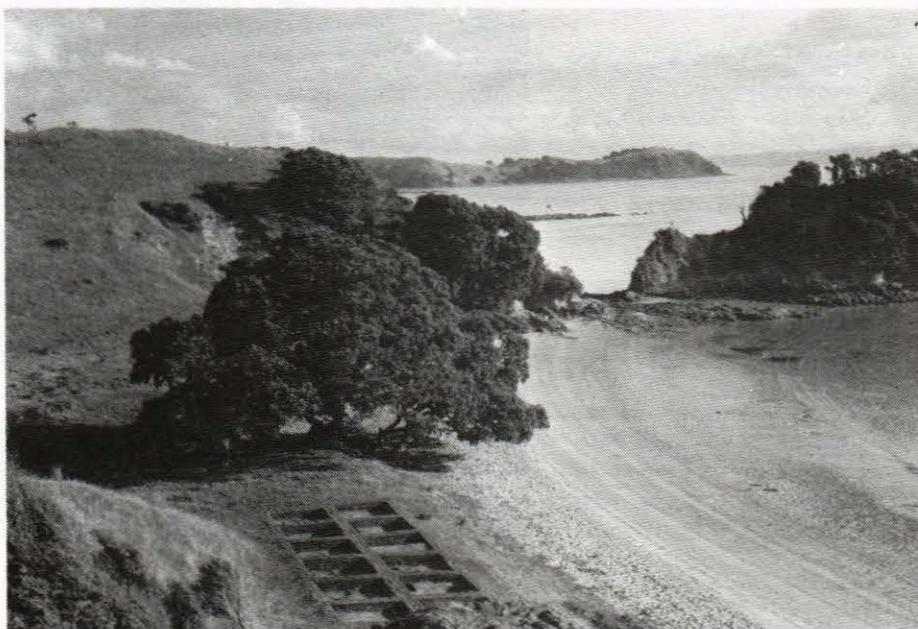
2.9 A small storage pit at the undefended settlement, N38/30, at Station Bay, Motutapu Island, on completion of excavation. This is the structure in the right foreground of Figure 2.10 (Auckland Museum).

2.10 An artist's impression of the undefended settlement, N38/30, at Station Bay, Motutapu Island. The archaeological evidence for the structure in the right foreground is shown in Figure 2.9 (drawing by J. McCaw, after Leahy, 1972, p.25).



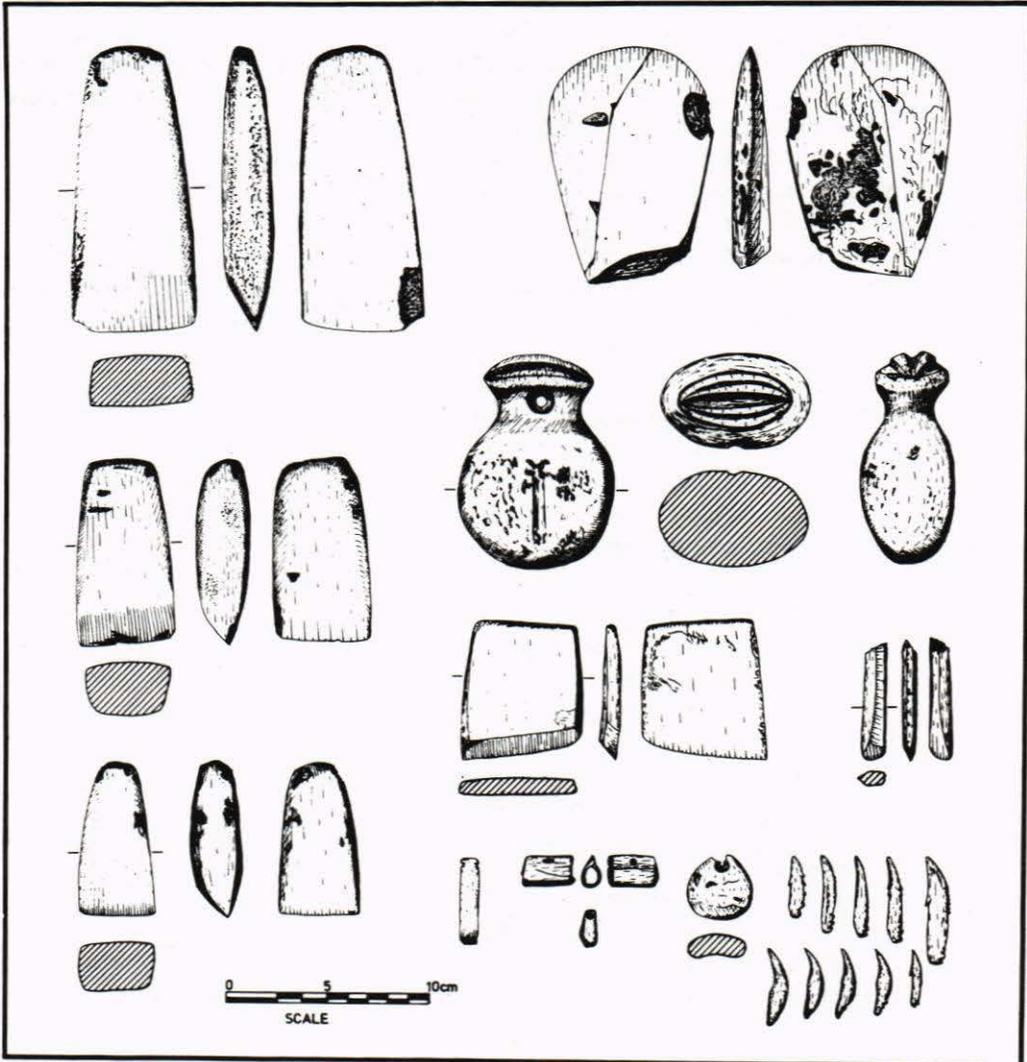
The kinds of sites reviewed so far do not encompass all aspects of human activity. The majority of archaeological sites on Motutapu Island, for instance, seem to be the remains of settlements where people lived for months or years, growing crops and storing them. It is possible, however, that the two Archaic sites on the island may have been more briefly occupied from time to time by people engaged in hunting, fishing and tool-making who normally resided somewhere else, perhaps on the mainland. If so, these sites would be the forerunners of the seasonal fishing camps which were certainly a component of life in Auckland in later times. Historical records depict temporary fishing camps on beaches in the Auckland area (for example, see Fig.2.15).

Remains of similar expeditions can be found in the sandy bays on the islands and probably in many places on the mainland as well. One such site investigated, at Galatea Bay on Ponui Island (N43/33; Fig.2.11), has been interpreted as a summer camp of people engaged in collecting and probably preserving shellfish and fish for removal and later consumption elsewhere. This particular site dates to the late 17th or early 18th century.<sup>41</sup> There are numerous traditional references to short-term fishing expeditions, and they were probably a feature of the way of life over a long period.



2.11 A view of the excavation of Galatea Bay. The site has been interpreted as a summer camp where fish and shellfish were gathered and dried for later consumption (Anthropology Department, University of Auckland).

Ritual and religious activities are particularly difficult to reconstruct from archaeological evidence, although glimpses of some of these aspects of prehistoric life can sometimes be obtained from burial practices. Individual burials have been discovered on various living sites in the region, but human bones were also hidden away in the numerous caves and crevices of the lava flows of the area — on Rangitoto and around the outskirts of many of the mainland volcanoes. The rock shelters of the Waitakere region were also used as burial places. However there were small burial grounds in sand dune areas on the east coast, and no one form of disposal of the dead can be said to have predominated in the region. Another aspect of ritual behaviour is represented by the very few examples of tuahu or shrines which have been recorded.<sup>42</sup>



2.12 A group of Classic Maori artefacts excavated at Waioneke, south Kaipara, dating from the late 18th or early 19th century. Included are: adzes (left); a broken patu blade (top right); perforated sinker; greenstone adze and chisel; bone tattooing chisel, toggle and pendants; and bone and ivory fishhook points.

In some respects, prehistoric life in Auckland seems to have been relatively stable over a long period. In other respects, distinct if undramatic changes can be discerned. The major strands which together make up the fabric of prehistoric life can be examined separately to see where there was continuity and where there was change. Among these major strands are material culture, economy, the relationship of man and environment, warfare, and settlement patterns.

**Continuity and change**

The surviving material culture of the Auckland region is not rich when the density of prehistoric occupation is taken into account. Well documented finds from excavations are relatively few (see Fig.2.12). It is therefore difficult to define changes in artefact styles (except in broad outline), or to assess the probable age of most sites on the basis of artefacts found in them. Nevertheless, there were changes in material culture, which parallel developments elsewhere in the country. It is likely that many of these changes originated outside the Auckland region and arrived there relatively late in a modified form.

Stone adzes are the most numerous artefacts in surface collections from the

region and quite a few have been found in excavations. Archaic types were well represented in the lower layers of the stratified beach sites on Motutapu and also occur in surface collections. By about A.D. 1500 they had probably given way to something approaching the Classic Maori 2B form, which is numerous in surface collections, and has been found in excavations on both volcanic cones and other sites. But throughout the sequence local rocks were worked to rather nondescript shapes, approximating the 2B form, but lacking the regular outline and high degree of finish usually regarded as characteristic of the Classic Maori adze.

There was also change in fishhooks from one-piece bait hooks to composite bait hooks with bone or shell points and wooden shanks. Archaic trolling lures seem to have been uncommon, but at least one form, with a grooved shank, persisted in small numbers until a late date. Finds of fishhooks of all kinds are rare in relation to the amount of fish bones in middens, and it can be assumed that netting was an important component of fishing. The snapper was the principal fish caught at all periods, irrespective of the fishing techniques or types of fishhooks used. This predominance of snapper and the fact that many of the fish in middens are too small to have been caught on hand lines tend to support the idea that netting was important.

Only a few rather simple ornaments have been found in excavations. The more spectacular ornaments known from other parts of the country are not represented. Tattooing was probably well developed, since tattooing chisels are not uncommon. They have been found in small hamlets as well as in large and important sites, suggesting that most people, not just important chiefs, may have been tattooed. However, little can be said as yet about the time-span within which tattooing was popular, or the time at which Classic Maori ornament forms, such as greenstone pendants, became fashionable in the Auckland region.

Very little is known about art forms. Finds from the isthmus are limited to a few small figures from the volcanic cone sites (Fig.2.13),<sup>43</sup> and woodcarving is extremely rare. Carvings such as the lintel from south Kaipara, discovered in 1971, are important witnesses to local art styles (Fig.2.14).<sup>44</sup>

The dearth of material manifestations of wealth probably gives a false picture of the actual wealth of the region. The first European visitors were impressed by the prosperity of the inhabitants in the early 19th century. In particular, the Ngati Paoa settlement at Panmure was outstanding in its size, and in the size and ornamentation of its houses.<sup>45</sup> Prosperity was reflected in carving and the evidence simply has not survived in the archaeological record as it is now known. The earlier occupants of the region may have been just as prosperous as the Ngati Paoa and may also have expressed their prosperity in art.

The external relationships of Auckland people can be traced through finds of obviously foreign materials, such as greenstone and obsidian. Identification of the sources of obsidian found in several excavations shows that Auckland people were obtaining this prized material from Northland, Great Barrier Island, Coromandel Peninsula, and Mayor Island.<sup>46</sup> Other imported raw materials include basalt from the Coromandel Peninsula, and metasomatised argillite and greenstone from the South Island. Although there were undoubtedly fluctuations in the complex networks by which these materials were transferred, too little work has yet been done to document these.

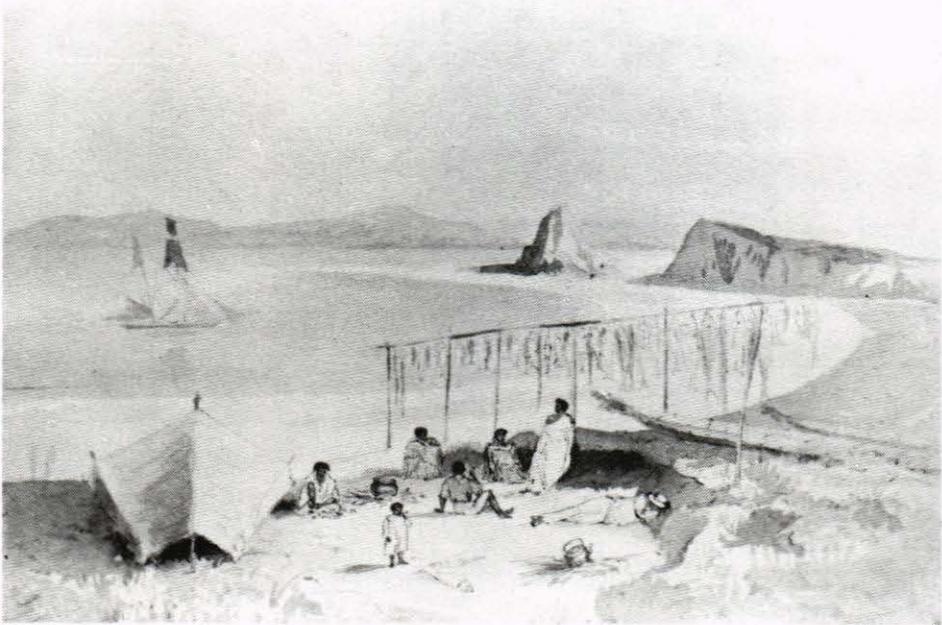
Economically, the great majority of archaeological sites represent a lifestyle based on gardening and the exploitation of local marine resources (Fig.2.15), with surprisingly few birds or mammals. The hunting of a variety of birds, reflected in the earliest layer at the Sunde Site, did not last long. Unless specialized birding sites of later eras remain to be discovered, which seems increasingly unlikely, birds were not an important resource during most of the prehistoric period. In the Auckland area, the early settlers soon established an economic basis for their



2.13 A small container in the form of a figurine, carved from pumice/scoria, found on One Tree Hill. (Upper: front view. Lower: view of the back showing how the container may have been suspended (Vahry Photography).



2.14 A small carved door lintel from South Kaipara, found in a drainage channel in 1971 by Daniel Quigley and now in the Auckland Museum. This is one of the few carvings known from the Auckland region (Vahry Photography).



2.15 A 19th century fishing camp on Pakihi Island, south of Ponui, looking south towards Clevedon. The activities depicted are probably very similar to those that took place at Galatea Bay about 150 years earlier. The original pen and wash sketch is by Charles Heaphy (Auckland Museum).

lifestyle which changed relatively little for centuries. The land was abundantly capable of supporting such a lifestyle, and consequently the area was still fought over and regarded as a desirable place to live in traditionally recent times.

Six or more centuries of occupation made an impact on the landscape. Much of the region must have been forested when the first pioneering Polynesian settlers arrived. By the early 19th century the forest was considerably reduced, and there were large expanses of fern and scrub in the places where Polynesian settlement and gardens had been concentrated. However, these changes had not affected the attractions of the region as a place to live, and it remains a very popular place to live to the present day.

The point at which organized warfare began to affect the region is not known. Finds of weapons in excavations have been few. Fragments of stone patu were found at both Otakanini and Waioneke, but not at other excavated sites. Absence of weapons need not, of course, imply an absence of war or pa building. The stone patu seems to have been a late form, which may well have had wooden proto-

types as well as contemporary wooden variants such as the wahaika.

It has been suggested that the earthwork fortifications on the volcanic cones are a late feature, probably dating from the 18th century and the time of the Ngati Whatua and Ngati Paoa assaults on the region.<sup>47</sup> Palisaded defences on the cones may be earlier. Reliable evidence from excavations is needed to test these assumptions. The dates from Otakanini could indicate that fortifications were being built before A.D. 1500, and the sheer numbers of pa in the south Kaipara region alone would make this quite likely. At present however, the evidence is at best ambiguous.

With so many archaeological sites of all kinds, so few excavations, and so much recent destruction, it is difficult to do more than speculate about the patterns of settlement and any changes in them. It does seem likely that most of the occupation on the volcanic cones was over by the middle or late 18th century, and that the most recent tribal groups to arrive on the isthmus made relatively little use of them. It is impossible to say, however, whether this really represents a definitive change in settlement pattern, or whether it was part of a continuing cycle that was interrupted by European settlement. The number and variety of archaeological sites of late and earlier periods suggest a constant ebb and flow of population over and through the region, accompanied by moves into and out of fortifications and periodic clustering in large groups and separation into smaller ones. Some of this ebb and flow was simply seasonal; some related to fairly short-term gardening cycles; and some depended on the changing political situation. Underlying all these changes, however, was a continuity in lifestyle which probably persisted for centuries.

## Notes

1. Simmons, 1980, p. 5.
2. Suggate and Riddolls, 1976, p. 96.
3. Searle, 1964; Searle and Davidson, 1975.
4. Leamy and Fieldes, 1976, p. 138.
5. Tomlinson, 1976, p. 83.
6. Wendelken, 1976, p. 104.
7. An exception is Bellwood, 1972, pp. 283-286.
8. Leach, 1977, pp. 475-476.
9. Fenton, 1879, pp. 57-68.
10. Elder, 1932, pp. 342 and 358; Fenton, 1879, p. 69.
11. e.g. Buddle, 1911; Firth, 1925; Fairfield, 1933, 1938 and 1941.
12. Davidson, 1978a.
13. Groube and Green, 1959; Brown, 1962.
14. Bulmer, 1979, p. 86.
15. Fox, 1977, Fig. 1.
16. Fox, 1974a.
17. Hayward and Diamond, 1978 and 1980.
18. For more details on these and other sites mentioned in the text see Davidson, 1978b.
19. Ambrose, 1961a.
20. Law, 1975b.
21. Scott, 1970.
22. Taylor, 1960, p. 29.
23. Nicholls, 1964.
24. Moore, 1976, p. 81.
25. Sullivan, 1975.
26. Golson, 1961a.
27. Fox, 1980b, p. 59.
28. Bellwood, 1971, 1972 and 1973.
29. Davidson, 1978b, pp. 6-7; Fox, 1980; Bulmer, n.d.c.

30. Fox, 1977.
31. Fox, 1980b, pp. 47-49.
32. Sullivan, 1972a; Lawlor, 1980.
33. Green, 1970.
34. Bellwood, 1971 and 1972; Davidson, 1972; McKinlay, 1971; Sullivan, 1972b.
35. Elder, 1932, pp. 342-358; Fenton, 1879, pp. 67-69.
36. Bulmer, n.d.a., n.d.b. and pers. comm.
37. Law, 1970.
38. Davidson, 1970a; Irwin, 1975; Pearce, 1975 and 1977; Walton, 1979.
39. Leahy, 1970 and 1972.
40. Davidson, 1970b, 1972, pp. 5-6 and 1978c.
41. W. Shawcross, 1967; Terrell, 1967; Moore and Tiller, 1975.
42. Graham, 1925.
43. Fox, 1977, Fig. 14, 1980, pp. 57-58.
44. Simmons, 1974.
45. Cruise, 1824, p. 215; Elder, 1932, p. 279.
46. Reeves and Ward, 1976, p. 280; Davidson, 1981.
47. Fox, 1977, pp. 21-22.