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## ARCHAEOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND



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**UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND  
FIELD SCHOOL FEBRUARY 2-14  
2009: R10/698 AND R10/155,  
SHAKESPEAR REGIONAL PARK,  
WHANGAPARAOA PENINSULA,  
NORTH AUCKLAND: A JOINT  
PROJECT WITH THE AUCKLAND  
REGIONAL COUNCIL**

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Two sites, R10/698 and R10/155, were excavated prior to the installation of a predator-proof fence under New Zealand Historic Places Trust Authority 2009/160 (s18) and 2009/104 (s12). From preliminary analysis, these sites appear to represent the processing of seafood, with a possible sideline in kokowai processing.

R10/698 is a midden exposed for a distance of some 200 m in the bank above the foreshore of Okoromai Bay. Three excavation areas were opened up – one at each end of the midden. In all these areas the cooking and partial preservation of shellfish and fish were taking place. Cooking features (mainly shallow firescoops with ovenstones) and stakehole alignments (probable drying lines for hanging cooked shellfish and fish) were found in close association. These activities appear to have been carried out on deliberately laid floors, though in one case, a new surface created by a landslide may have been used.

Of note is that one of the excavated areas contained a mix of both European artefacts (clay pipe, square nail, flaked black bottle glass, pit of beef bone) and Maori artefacts (obsidian and Motutapu greywacke flakes) yet the cooking

methods were the same as those recorded in the other areas of R10/698 where the archaeological evidence suggests pre-European occupation.

The local Waitemata sandstone was commonly used for ovenstones. A by-product of burning these rocks may have been kokowai of varying quality. An experiment in shallow firescoop cooking using these stones was undertaken to simultaneously gain knowledge on the cooking and preservation processes that appear to be taking place at R10/698, and to test the quality of the local sandstone, both as ovenstones and as a potential source of kokowai (many thanks to Dante Bonica and students of the Maori Studies Department for sharing this knowledge with us). At the time of writing the meat from 50kgs of pipi are still drying. Hopefully the results of this experiment will be presented at a future NZAA conference.



*Figure 1. Shakespear Regional Park, R10/155 features.*

R10/155 is a cluster of sites located along a ridge situated between Okoromai Bay and Army Bay on the other side of the peninsula, a distance of less than 1 km. Surface archaeological evidence at R10/155 was poorly defined, comprising a subsurface midden revealed through probing and some associated amorphous features that could have been terraces. Excavation revealed sixteen narrow rectangular features (several intercutting – see Figure 1) orientated across a gentle slope. These were all too shallow to be kumara pits, though their design was otherwise the same with shallow drains along the walls and a

central alignment of postholes (see Figure 1). While the majority were probably temporary shelters, some of the smaller structures may have been used for the temporary storage of sea food processed near the beach. Similar sites are located on the slopes above R10/698. Unlike R10/698, there was little evidence for cooking associated with the R10/155 structures though extensive midden patches were found on the slope below.

In summary, sites like R10/698 and R10/155 may form part of a continuous cultural landscape where fishing and shellfish gathering, and the cooking and drying of these, took place near the foreshore, and at the end of the day's work, people, with the seafood they had processed, returned to what appear to be temporary shelters and storage facilities on the upper slopes above the foreshore.