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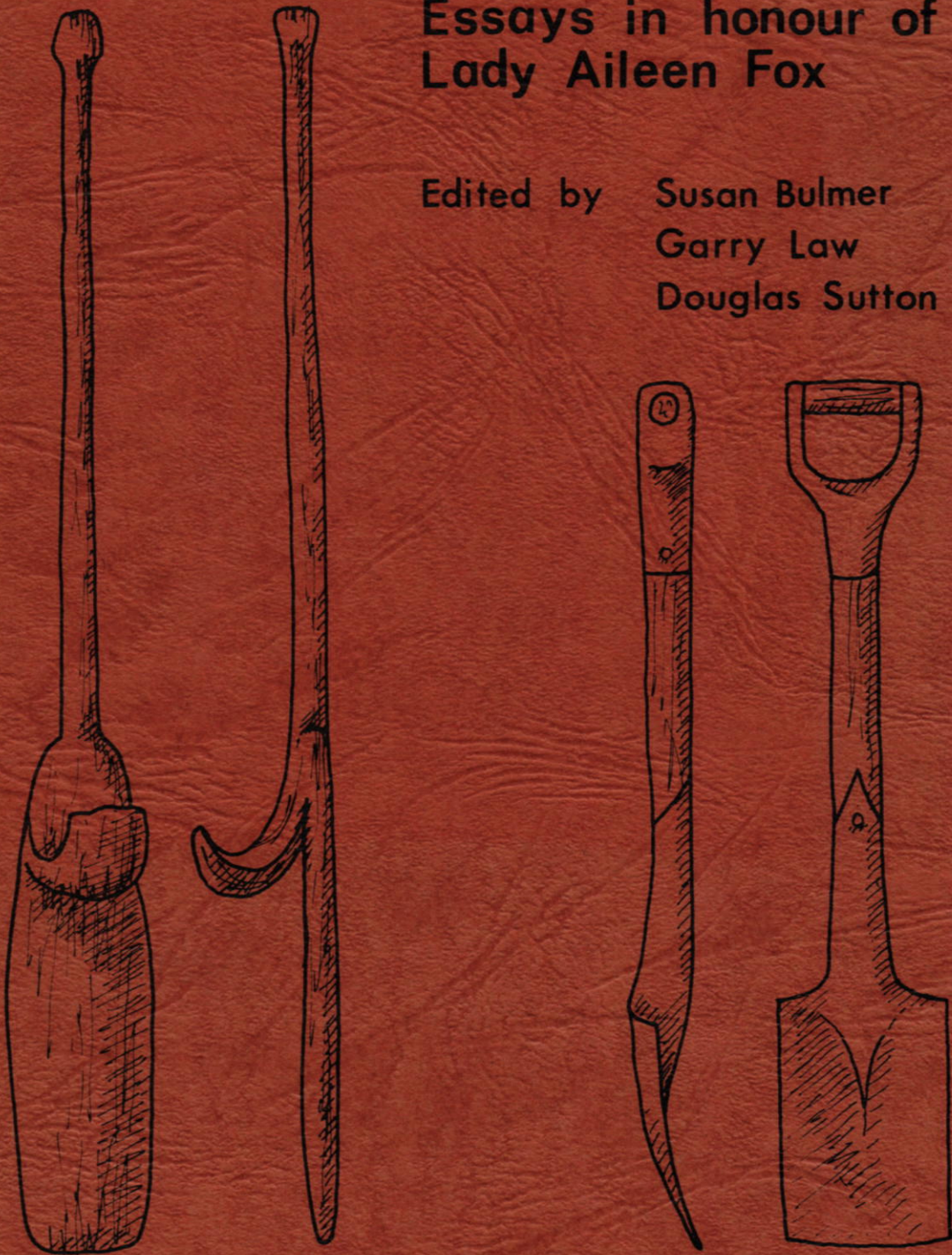
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# A LOT OF SPADEWORK TO BE DONE

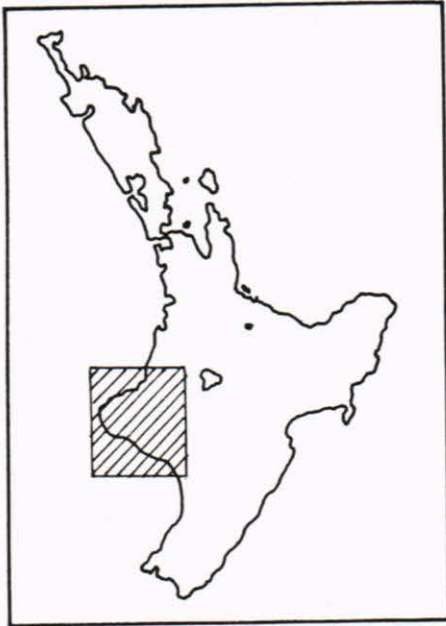
Essays in honour of  
Lady Aileen Fox

Edited by Susan Bulmer  
Garry Law  
Douglas Sutton





# WAITOTARA KI PARININIHI: ASPECTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE TARANAKI REGION



Nigel Prickett

Auckland Institute and Museum.

The modern province of Taranaki lies on the west coast of the North Island. The prominent bulge which juts into the Tasman Sea is bounded by the North and South Taranaki Bights and reaches furthest west at Cape Egmont. The region is dominated by Mt Egmont - 'Taranaki' - an almost perfect volcanic cone of late Pleistocene age which rises to 2710 m.

Taranaki is exposed to prevailing westerly winds and has a rainfall that falls consistently throughout the year. Rainfall averages 1000 mm at Hawera and 1500 mm at New Plymouth, and rises to more than 3000 mm at higher altitudes on the slopes of Mt Egmont. Although New Plymouth has an average of 166 rain days per year, sunshine is abundant at 2110 sunshine hours. The temperature is equable ranging up to a mean daily maximum of 69.4°F in January and down to a mean daily minimum 43.3°F in July.

The region as a whole consists of two very different physiographic and geological parts (Fig. 1). Inland is the deeply dissected hill country of Tertiary mudstones, sandstones and siltstones (Hay 1967), commonly known as 'papa'. In the west are a

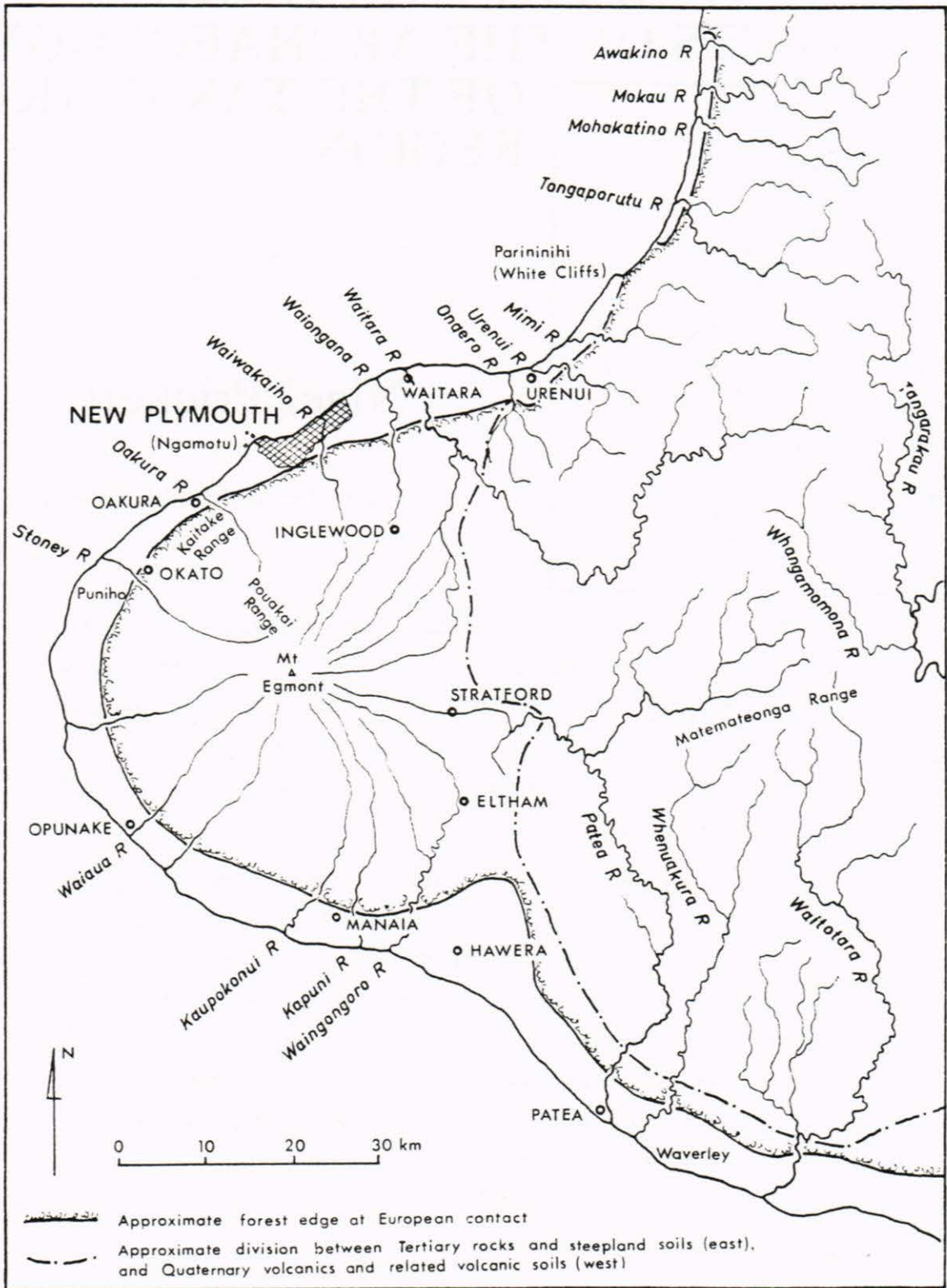


Fig.1 Major physical characteristics of the Taranaki region.



number of volcanic centres of the Quaternary era along with their surrounding ring plain of ash and volcanically derived soils. The most recent volcano is Mt Egmont, with the Pouakai and Kaitake Ranges and the Sugarloaf Islands (Ngamotu) being the remains of earlier activity.

Some large rivers, many of which are navigable for canoes, penetrate the hill country of the east. Notable among them the Wanganui River and its major western tributaries the Whangamomona, Tangarakau and Ohura, the Awakino, Mokau, Tongaporutu and Waitara Rivers which flow into the North Taranaki Bight and the Patea, Whenuakura and Waitotora Rivers which flow south to the ocean at the southern boundary of the Taranaki region. Mt Egmont and its surrounding plain has a radial drainage pattern with many small rivers making their way swiftly over stony beds to the sea, or inland to the Waitara and Patea Rivers.

The Taranaki coast takes two general forms (University of Auckland 1974:31). To the north and south are discontinuous precipitous, if not vertical, cliffs commonly up to 50 m high, at the base of which is usually a sand beach, sometimes boulder-strewn in the south. To the west the coast may be characterised as a wave platform up to 300 m wide, often backed by a sandy beach, on which are accumulations of andesite boulders. Both coastal types are exposed and without natural harbours. Estuaries are confined to limited areas within the mouths of the larger rivers of the north and south.

Soils fall into two general types following the geological and topographic division of the region. To the east are steepland soils derived from a mixture of volcanic ash and weathered sandstones and siltstones (N.Z. Soil Bureau 1968 I:52-54). The Mt Egmont ring plain on the other hand consists largely of friable and free-draining yellow-brown loams derived from volcanic ash erupted from Mt Egmont in the past 50,000 years.

Original forest cover is still present on the slopes of Mt Egmont and its northern ranges and over large areas of the hill country inland. Inland forest is dominated by beech (Nothofagus spp.), especially at higher altitudes. Abundant species in remnant lowland forests include rewarewa, kohekohe and hinau, while remaining forests on the lower slopes of Mt Egmont are dominated by kamahi. Rimu was formerly the common podocarp of lowland Taranaki.

#### The people

For present purposes the most interesting aspect of the human past in the Taranaki region is the variety of Maori tribal groups who have made their homes there in the past and who live there still (see Fig. 2). In his History and Traditions of the Maoris of the West Coast, Percy Smith (1910) outlines the history of these tribes.

The northern approach to Taranaki is held by the Ngati Tama whose lands extend from about the Mohakatino River to Titoki, a paa the remains of which can be seen east of the Pukearuhe Road 4 km from the road end. From Titoki to another paa, Te Rau o te Huia, 4 km west of Urenui (again clearly visible from the road) is the land of Ngati Mutunga, a tribe sometimes included within the Te Atiawa. In the headwaters of the Waitara River are the Ngati Maru who are alone among Taranaki tribes in being confined to inland valleys and forests. The lands of the many hapu of the Te Atiawa extend from the Ngati Mutunga to Paritutu at Ngamotu. All four tribes - the Ngati Tama, Ngati Mutunga, Ngati Maru and Te Atiawa - ascribe their origin to the Tokomaru canoe.

On the coast south of the Te Atiawa is the Taranaki tribe - said to be driven like a wedge between the powerful groups north and south (Smith 1910:128-129). The southern boundary of the Taranaki



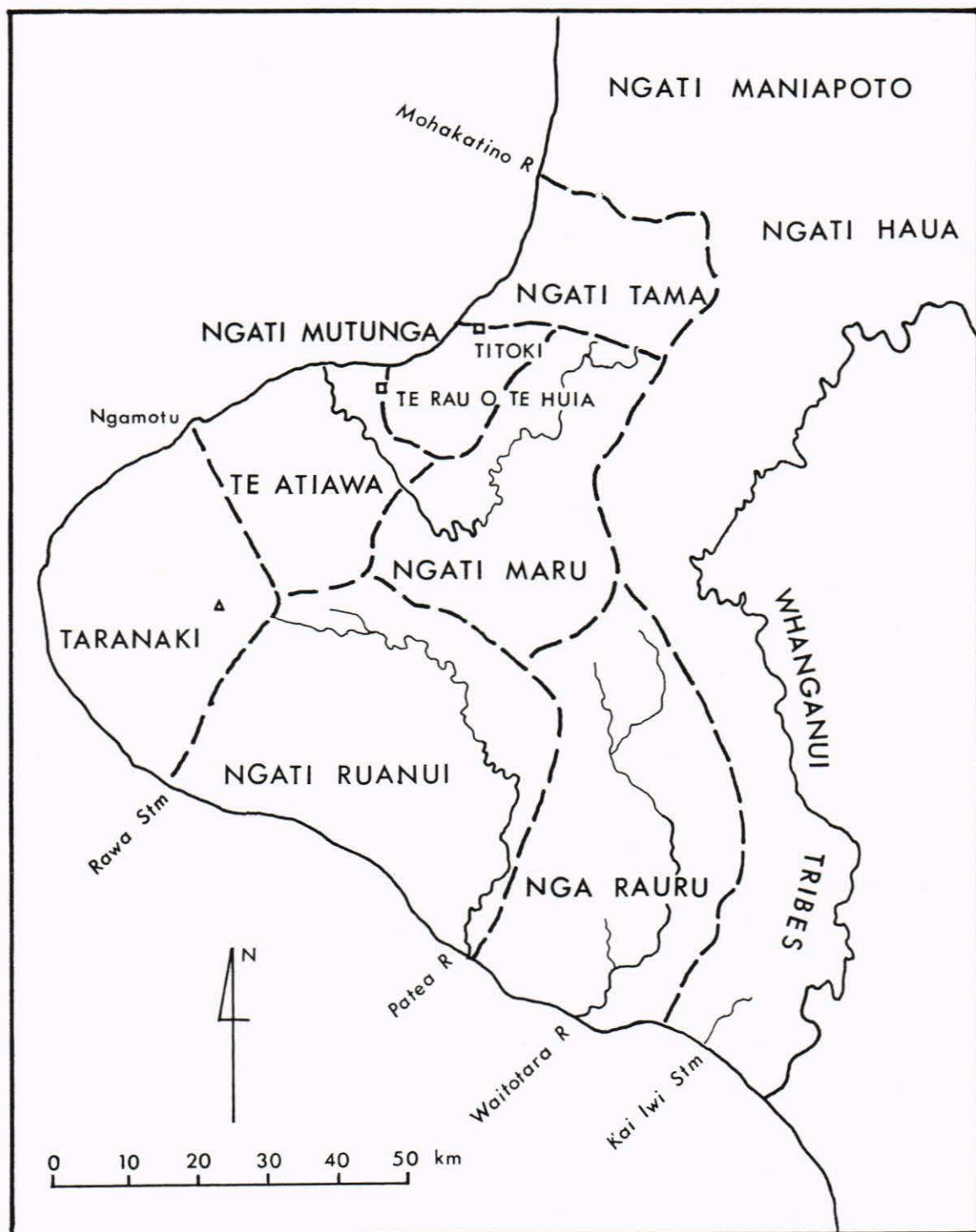


Fig.2 Maori tribes of the Taranaki region (after Smith, 1910:opp.p.1).

Smith puts at the Raoa Stream, others put it a little to the north. The Taranaki people are descended from ancestors in the Kurahaupo and Aotea canoes.

The related tribes of Ngati Ruanui and Ngarauru, both of whom claim descent from the Aotea canoe, complete the list of Taranaki tribes given by Smith; local people today would add the Ngaruahine-Rangi of the Manaia district (see Fig. 1). Ngati Ruanui land extends south to the mouth of the Whenuakura River, while Ngarauru marches with the Whanganui tribes at Kai Iwi.

It is of course impossible to accurately establish Maori numbers in Taranaki prior to the arrival of the Pakeha with his notebook and census paper. Nonetheless a sensible estimate may be made. We may adopt as a starting point Pool's well considered estimate for the total New Zealand 1769 (that is, effective European contact) population of 125,000 - 175,000 (Pool 1977:208). The proportion of total Maori population made up by Taranaki in nineteenth century census may then be taken and the percentage used to match Pool's estimate.

In 1857-58 Fenton conducted a comprehensive census of the Maori population which gave a total figure of 56,049 (Fenton 1859). Pool feels that this figure errs on the low side and notes that, among other places, census enumerators encountered some difficulty in Taranaki. Fenton's Taranaki figure of 3385 (which includes Waitotara in his Wellington province list) may be among those regional figures which fall short of the true number. An 1878 census gives the Taranaki Maori population as 3344 (this figure excluding the Ngati Maniapoto Mokau people) out of a total New Zealand Maori population of 42,819 (AJHR 1878 G2:10 and 18).

The Taranaki proportion of the whole of Fenton's figures is



6.04% which, translated into a like proportion of Pool's estimate gives the region a population of between 7550 and 10570 in 1769. The 1878 census gives Taranaki 7.81% of the total Maori population. This may reflect more accurately the 1769 situation because of problems with the earlier census as outlined above. Translated into a like proportion of Pool's estimate for 1769 the figure 7.8% gives Taranaki at European contact a population of between 9750 and 13650, which range seems likely to include the true figure.

#### Natural resources

The foremost natural resources for people living in the Taranaki region in the pre-European period were its soils and its forests. When the Pakeha came he found that around the Taranaki coast the forest had been pushed back from the coast between one and five or six kilometres - even more in the Hawera district (see Fig. 1). The vast majority of Maori lived in this strip of land. Deforestation presumably occurred as a result of clearance for horticultural crops and through purposeful or accidental fires in hunting, maintaining youthful patches of bracken fern (Pteridium esculentum) for food, or clearing bush for other purposes. Pollen diagrams from two Taranaki localities show bracken to be rapidly increasing at the expense of forest tree species just before the Newall Ash shower of about 450 B.P. (McGlone pers. comm.1982), this presumably relating to Maori deforestation.

The fertile volcanic soils allowed intensive cultivation of food crops of which kumara was probably the most abundant with taro also important where conditions allowed. Evidence for the cultivation of food crops takes several forms. In places in north and south Taranaki, quarry pits indicate the removal of sand or light gravel for addition to plots where kumara was cultivated. This practice is said to have lightened heavy soils and, by helping to

warm the soil in early spring, added a crucial week or two to the cultivation of what was originally a tropical food plant. A Maori compost which may have been similar to that used in earlier times is described from the banks of Stoney River in the early 1920s (Bishop 1924). Buist (1976:Pls 1 and 2) illustrates some of the remarkable sand quarries of the Waverley and Whenuakura districts where adjacent pit groups provide storage for the resulting crop (Fig. 3). Other quarries are to be found in the Waitara and Waiongana River valleys of north Taranaki.

Other evidence for Maori cultivation lies in the altered soil itself which is occasionally reported by farmers who note patches of sandy soils when ploughing. Garden boundary walls or lines of stones which are a prominent feature of the pre-European landscape in areas such as south Auckland and the Wairarapa coast are now absent in Taranaki. In the early 1850s, however, Percy Smith (1910:113) noted in the Warea district, "...a vast number of paengas, or boundaries of individual lands, which crossed the native track, and ran inland from the coast. These were all marked by flat stones set on edge, and running in straight lines." The large numbers of food storage pits of various forms on almost every Maori fortification (and elsewhere) in Taranaki also indicates a very considerable production of food crops for which the pits were prepared.

Other vegetable foods were obtained in open country near the settlements and gardens. The most important native food plant was the bracken fern which may have provided the staple food for people most of the year. Evidence for the importance of fern root in Taranaki is given by the enormous numbers of wooden fern root pounders found in the region, and the large water-rolled boulders which today lie on the terraces of paa and which are said to have provided anvils for beating the starch-filled rhizomes. Other sources of vegetable food included the ti or cabbage tree, the tap



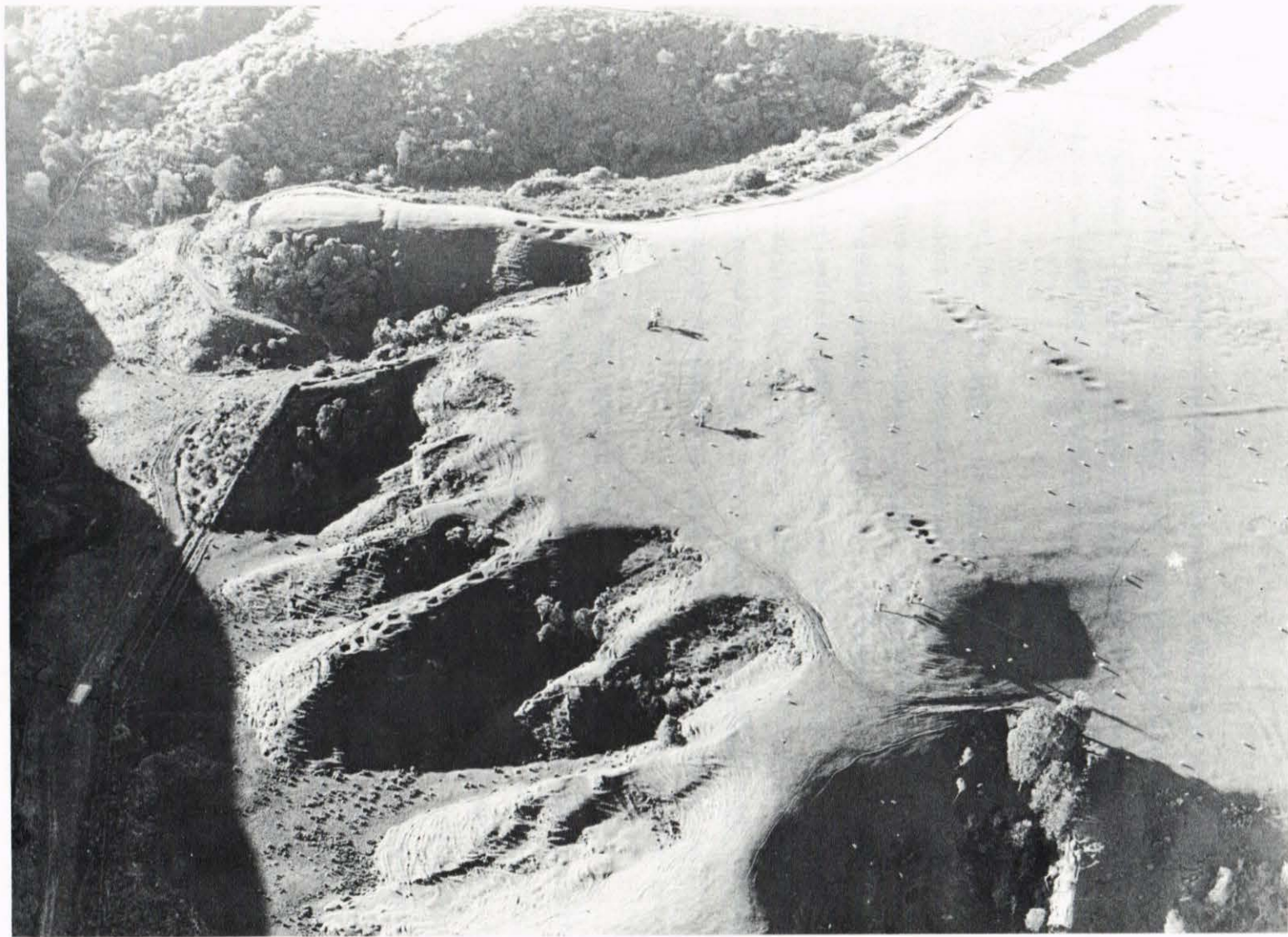


Fig.3 Sand quarries (centre right), kumara storage pits (foreground spur) and fortification with related storage pits (left background), near Whenuakura River (A.G. Buist).

root of which provided a sweetish substance after treatment. Often found on paa sites today are the karaka, the fruit of which provided an important food, and the para (Marattia salicina; commonly "horseshoe fern" in Taranaki) the edible rhizomes of which were a choice delicacy.

In the nearby forest hinau and tawa were an important source of berries, the same trees also attracting the pigeon, tui, kaka and other birds for easy snaring or spearing. The earliest settlers exploited a great variety of flightless ground birds but later centuries saw these reduced to the weka and perhaps kiwi and kakapo. The common 'mutton-bird' of the northern North Island, the grey-faced petrel (Pterodroma macroptera), very rarely nests on sea cliffs north of Urenui today and may have provided an important seasonal food in the past.

Despite the exposed coast and the sea open to sudden storms, fishing was an important source of food. The early nineteenth century loss of a fleet of fishing canoes from Puketapu near Bell Block, caught in a southerly storm while fishing on the hapuka ground Wai-tawhetawheta about 15 km offshore, tells something of the hazards and inducements of sea fishing off the Taranaki coast (Smith 1910:269-271). As well as sea fishing, lamprey, eels and whitebait were taken in the many streams and rivers of the region. Along the shore were many shellfish, with such species as pupu (Turbo smaragdus), paua, Cook's turban (Cookia sulcata), and Melagraphia aethiops commonly taken on rocky shores in the west of the region along with a very wide variety of small limpets, Diloma species and other shellfish. Also available from rocky shores were kina (Evichinus chlorotichus) and crayfish. Amongst exploited soft shore shellfish are pipi - of which massive quantities of tiny shells only 1-3 cm long make up almost all of the many middens on the narrow coastal shelf north of Parininihi.



Other important resources of forest and open country are timber and flax. Timber was used for houses and other buildings, defensive palisades, canoes and an immense range of tools and other items from the simplest digging sticks to the superb decorative carving for which the Te Atiawa in particular are so well known. Flax was also abundant and was an important raw material for everyday lashings, kits, lines and nets, as well as the highly prized cloaks (kaitaka) for which it is said that northern raiding parties were particularly anxious when they entered the territory of the Taranaki tribe (see Smith 1910:127 and 272).

Stone resources in the Taranaki region are poor compared with other parts of New Zealand. The most notable stone resource was the rough, often vesicular, andesite from which was crafted a remarkable group of massive stone sculptures and the flax pounders, often anthropomorphic, which are highly characteristic of Taranaki (Simmons 1971). Among the sculptures is the superb rendition of Hine-o-Tanga from the Nga Mahanga paa, Pukehoe, near Werekino Stream in the Puniho district (Fig. 4). Use was also made of andesite boulders for the pecking out of simple petroglyphs, mostly spirals, which are a feature of the Taranaki tribal district (Fig. 5). Another group of carvings are incised into the sandstone of the Ngati Tama coast where the most common motif is the stylised foot, often with more or less than five toes (Delph 1939).

The region has no source of obsidian or other high quality material which might be used where a sharp cutting edge was required. There are, however, a number of exposures of adze quality rock in the inland hill country: characteristically green impure chert in the Purangi district, upper Waitara River (Keyes 1971:158), and grey indurated sandstone/mudstone and silicified mudstone from the upper Patea tributary which rises in the Matemateonga Range (Hooker 1971). Adzes made from these rocks appear to make up a large part of museum



Fig.4 Stone sculpture from the Nga Mahanga pa, Pukehoe, near Okato, representing the ancestor Hine-o-Tanga (54 x 54 cm; Taranaki Museum).





Fig.5      Petroglyph on andesite boulder in the Omata district  
(see Prickett, 1981).

collections of Taranaki material: most are of small and nondescript forms.

#### The Moa hunters

Two very important sites in south Taranaki are representative of the first people to arrive in the Taranaki region. Waingongoro and Kaupokonui are at the mouths of the two rivers of those names (see Fig. 1). Both sites are rich in the remains of extinct birds, in the variety of which they are unequalled in the North Island.

The Waingongoro site is now frequently referred to in the literature as Ohawe and Te Rangatapu, after two paa which bound the east and west margins of the sand flat on the south bank of the river on which has been found the evidence of much earlier occupation. The name "Waingongoro" commemorates Turi, the great ancestor of the Aotea canoe who snored as he slept here.

The Rev. Richard Taylor first noticed moa bones at the mouth of the Waingongoro River early in 1843 (Buick 1931:89-91). In 1847 Walter Mantell obtained a major collection of moa bone from the site (Mantell 1848:238), digging mostly in the dune sand beneath the escarpment at the east margin of the sand flat. Both men noted the clear relationship between the bones of moa and other extinct birds and human activity. Taylor, describing the small heaps of bones scattered over the sand flat says that, "...each heap was composed of the bones of several kinds of Moa, as though their bodies had been eaten, and the bones of all thrown indiscriminately together" (Owen 1879:135). Mantell noted "...small circular beds of ashes and charcoal and bones..." (Mantell 1848:240). In manuscript notes now in the Auckland Museum, Mantell also records finding sinkers, fragments of obsidian, "pieces of coarse jaspery or cherty flint (probably) brought from Mokau", a whalebone mere about 18 inches



(45 cm) long, remains of a whalebone comb, dog and seal bone "in abundance" and "human bones not infrequent" (Mantell ms:2).

In October 1866 Sir George Grey visited military posts near the Waingongoro River. As soon as the tents were pitched he asked Richard Taylor, who was with the party, to show him the moa bone deposits.

"Between the cliff on which the redoubt stands and the Waingongoro River there is a sandy plain or valley of a concave form, gradually rising up the opposite side to the old site of the Rangatapu pa . On the south side of this plain there is a semi-circular bank, along the whole length of which there were several lines of old ovens, covered over with sand, but indicated by fragments of bones still laid on the surface. In various places along this bank we found large quantities of them, many of which were of considerable size and quite perfect... In a few minutes we collected a large heap of them. Several soldiers volunteered their services and dug down in the sand, where they soon came to the old ovens. The scene was quite an animated one as all, including His Excellency himself, being eagerly engaged in the search. The opening up of these ovens, and the heaps of refuse on their sides was, in fact, the recovering of a page from the ancient history of the Maori race. It presented a picture of their way of living, and some convincing proof that, when those ovens had been heated, the Island was stocked with the various kinds of wingless birds whose huge bones excited our wonder and astonishment".

(Buick 1931:93)

In January 1960 Buist excavated an oven uncovered from beneath low dunes at the seaward edge of the sand flat by westerly gales (Buist and Yaldwyn 1960:78). In the oven was an articulated leg of Pachynornis mappini, a medium sized moa. The oven and moa leg are now on display in the Taranaki Museum. In this and subsequent excavations the only artefacts Buist found at Waingongoro were obsidian and chert flakes, one broken moa bone needle and a small ring cut from bird bone (Buist 1960:85). At the Te Rangatapu part of the site

Canavan (1960:87-88) reports the usual evidence of moa and other birds, rat, fish sea mammal and kuri, and rare artefacts including fragments of bone fishhooks and obsidian.

Thirteen kilometres west of the Waingongoro site are similarly early moa hunter remains at the mouth of Kaupokonui River. Here the site is on the left bank of the river and has been revealed only in recent years as prevailing westerlies and south-westerlies have funnelled up a small gully in the dune next to the river, removing the sand cover from the moa hunter remains. Like Waingongoro, Kaupokonui has links with the ancestor Turi for it was here that he opened and spread out the sacred cloak "Hunakiko" for the people to see (Houston 1965:28). The name "Kaupokonui" was given by Turi and his people to the headland just south of the river mouth: hence follows the name of the river.

Initial excavations at Kaupokonui were carried out by Buist in the early 1960s (Buist 1963; Robinson 1963). In May 1974 a party of students from Auckland University under Richard Cassels carried out rescue work at the rapidly deflating site (Cassels n.d.).

Kaupokonui helps fill out the picture afforded by the Waingongoro site. At Kaupokonui Buist and Cassels each excavated some 30 m<sup>2</sup> (Foley 1980:12). Bird bone from the two excavations has been identified by Ron Scarlett and Diane Foley respectively. The list of ten moa species identified at Kaupokonui brings to eleven the total represented at the two south Taranaki sites (see Table 1). The most abundant moa species at Kaupokonui are Pachyornis septentrionalis and P. mappini, Euryapteryx curtus and E. exilis and Anomalopteryx didiformis, all medium sized moa.

In addition to moa, Foley has identified 55 other bird species from Cassels' 1974 material, including nine which are now extinct (Foley 1980:13-15). Of 480 individuals represented, 127



MOA	WAINGONGORO		KAUPOKONUI N128/3B		OPUA N118/96
	N129/77 Ohawe	N129/77 & 223 Te Rangatapu	Scarlett/ Buist	Foley/ Cassels	
<u>Pachyornis septentrionalis</u>	*	*	15	7 (+3?)	7 (+1?)
<u>P. mappini</u>	*	*	15	5 (+11?)	3 (+3?)
<u>Euryapteryx curtus</u>	*	*		12	2
<u>E. exilis</u>	*	*		26 (+6?)	
<u>E. gravis</u>				1	
<u>E. geranoides</u>	*	*	1	3	4 (+2?)
<u>Anomalopteryx didiformis</u>	*			16 (+11?)	1 (+1?)
<u>Dinornis giganteus</u>	*	*	5	1	
<u>D. struthoides</u>	*		1		1
<u>D. novaezealandiae</u>	*	*			
<u>D. gazella</u>			1		(2?)
OTHER EXTINCT BIRDS					
<u>Cygnus sumnerensis</u> (extinct swan)				1	
<u>Euryanus finschi</u> (Finsch's duck)	*		1		1
<u>Harpagornis moorei</u> (extinct eagle)	*				
<u>Circus eylesi</u> (extinct harrier)			1	1	
<u>Capellirallus karamu</u> (Falla's rail)				5	
<u>Gallirallus minor</u> (extinct woodhen)				1	
<u>Tribonyx hodgeni</u> (Hodgen's rail)	*		1	1	
<u>Aptornis otidiformis</u> (giant rail)	*		2	3	
<u>Palaeocorax moriorum</u> (extinct crow)	*	*	4	4	1
BIRDS NOW EXTINCT IN NORTH ISLAND OR RECENTLY EXTINCT					
<u>Apteryx oweni</u> (little spotted kiwi)	*	*	14	16 (+1?)	4
<u>Coturnix novaezealandiae</u> (N.Z. quail)	*			2	
<u>Notornis mantelli</u> (takahe)	*	*	6	10	1
<u>Strigops habroptilus</u> (kakapo)	*		1	4	1
<u>Heteralocha acutirostris</u> (huia)	*		3	5	

TABLE 1. Extinct and locally extinct birds present in Taranaki sites. Waingongoro data is from Foley (1980:40-46), Lydekker (1891) and Millener (1981:829-830). Minimum numbers for Kaupokonui are given by Foley (1980:13-15), and for Opuia by Roger Fyfe (pers. comm.) and Millener (1981:827). In Foley's Kaupokonui moa list a further 25 individuals could not be assigned to species or, in cases, to genus.

are moa and a further 107 other flightless birds. The most numerous birds are weka 55, pigeon 42, kaka 36, and tui 34.

Also represented at Kaupokonui are sea mammals, kuri, rats and fish. Ian Smith (pers. comm. 1982) has identified 15 sea lions (Phocarctus hookeri) and one elephant seal (Mirounga leonina). A range of waste and flake stone material and rare finished artefacts was found at the site (Robinson 1963; Cassels n.d.). A group of well finished chisels in moa bone and a small adze made of D'Urville Island argillite are particularly interesting (illustrated in Robinson 1963:182). Other items include obsidian flakes and cores, hammer stones, chert flakes, pumice files, bone needles and awls, and a small ring of bird bone. A reel ornament, made unusually of pumice, links the people who lived here with archaic sites elsewhere in New Zealand.

The Kaupokonui site is in two parts. On the terrace edge some 10 m above the moa hunter midden is the so-called "village" site. Buist (1962:236) has carried out limited excavation here where he emptied two pits. One was 4 x 5ft (1.2 x 1.5 m) in plan and 12 inches (30 cm) deep at the margins dipping to 18 inches (45 cm) depth in the centre. A larger rectangular pit nearby was 15 x 15½ft (4.6 x 1.7 m) and three feet (.9 m) deep. This pit had a well defined entrance with steps down and a stone hearth in the centre. More pits, stone walls and occasional artefacts are revealed in the vicinity as the wind strips recent dunes off the underlying terrace. The relationship of the village site to the moa hunter midden below has not been established, but if they are contemporary then clearly the village may be of uncommon importance in describing the way of life of the earliest arrivals in this part of the country.

With the exception of the Paremata site near Wellington with six moa species and perhaps ten further species either completely



extinct or extinct in the North Island (Davidson 1978) there are no sites yet investigated elsewhere in the North Island that match the Taranaki sites for the array of extinct birds represented in such abundance. Clearly these are early sites. Radiocarbon dates from Kaupokonui include two which give a good estimate of the age of moa hunter remains there, and, by similarity to the Waingongoro site and remains, that site as well. Buist obtained from his Layer 6 (of 7 layers) a data on bird bone of  $660 \pm 60$  B.P. - about the turn of the fourteenth century (Foley 1980:3). From Cassels' Layer 4d, in the main moa butchery level, comes a data on moa bone of  $610 \pm 50$  B.P. (Foley 1980:4) which matches Buist's date well.

If these thirteenth or fourteenth century dates do accurately reflect moa hunter occupation then it would appear that the Taranaki region was not settled as early as other parts of the country. The fact that these first arrivals were able to exploit an unexcelled range of now extinct bird life in nearby forests and open country strongly indicates their primacy in the region. It is interesting in this regard to reflect on the traditional accounts of Turi and his people stopping at Kaupokonui and at Waingongoro on their way to Patea, and to note Walter Mantell's report that his Ngati Ruanui helpers at Waingongoro in 1847 stated that the sand flat where moa bones were found in such abundance "...was one of the places first dwelt upon by their ancestors" (Mantell 1848:240).

Another Taranaki site containing moa and other extinct bird bone is at Opua, north of Opunake. Material from this site was recovered by Mr M.G. Maxwell in the early 1900s and is now in the Taranaki Museum (Roger Fyfe, pers. comm. 1982). Six or seven moa species are present with the usual dominance of Pachyornis species quite apparent (see Table 1). Another 18 bird species include the extinct or locally extinct takahe, Finsch's duck, extinct crow, kakapo and little spotted kiwi. In the small assemblage weka is again

strongly represented. Sea mammals include four seals (Arctocephalus forsteri), two sea lions and one elephant seal (Ian Smith, pers. comm. 1982). Also present is dog and human bone.

The Opuia site occupies a river mouth location a little distance back from the beach in very much the same situation as the Waingongoro and Kaupokonui sites. The other Taranaki sites, which, from the presence of rare moa bone may belong in the group of early moa bone fragments, and artefactual material like that at Kaupokonui and Waingongoro, in sand dunes near the coastal cliffs of Hawera. Another site with similar evidence is reported from coastal dunes north of New Plymouth (Buist 1962:236).

The apparent absence of similarly early sites elsewhere in the Taranaki region, especially in the north, may be due in part to the lack of careful searching or chance finds, but in part also to erosion of the shoreline in the six or seven hundred years since such sites were occupied. Gibb suggests that a general figure of 38 cm annual coastal erosion for western Taranaki (Matthews 1977: 33-34). The wide wave platform which characterises the coast from north of Waitara almost as far south as Opunake indicates a very considerable loss of ground which may well have included the occupation sites of the earliest settlers of that part of the coast.

#### The Waitore site

The shortcomings in archaeological knowledge of Taranaki are nowhere more evident than in the period which follows occupation of the earliest sites at Kaupokonui, Waingongoro and Opuia. Sadly, this is also the period with which traditional history can give us least assistance. Knowledge of the arrival of the earliest settlers is well recorded in tradition, and there is a wealth of marvellous tales relating to the late historical period - mostly of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. While the genealogies, however, clearly link the first arrivals with present tribes, there



is little archaeological knowledge to fill out the picture of these centuries.

There is, however, one important site from this period. In recent years wooden artefacts have been eroding from the bank of a small stream that runs into the sea near the mouth of the Whenuakura River south of Patea. The Waitore site became known through the persevering interest of Livingston Baker, a local farmer. In 1974 and in two subsequent visits the site was examined by Richard Cassels with teams of Auckland and local archaeologists (Cassels 1979). The material found was eroding out of layers of peaty material beneath an overburden of sand up to 6 m high. Three radiocarbon dates indicate a date of deposition of the artefacts in the range A.D. 1380-1500 (Cassels 1979:88). It seems likely material in the Waitore site dates from the mid-fifteenth century, perhaps 150 years after people hunted moa from their camps at the Kaupokonui and Waingongoro River mouths.

Among the exciting finds at Waitore is a small stylised human head, 8 cm high, broken off at the back from the remainder of an artefact now missing. An 18 cm long wooden head, carved in a similar style is illustrated by Downes (1932b:Pl. 1) from among material recovered at Waverley in the early 1930s. More important at Waitore is the remarkable piece, thought to have been a canoe prow cover, which is decorated by spirals and lines punched into the surface of the wood (Fig. 6). Ian Lawlor (1979) has looked at the stylistic affinities of the Waitore material. He suggests that the technique of punching and the combination of linear and curvilinear design throws light on a developing art style: one that precedes the full flowering of complex curvilinear forms characteristic of classic styles.

Other material recovered as a result of natural erosion at the site and by excavation includes many small planks, usually with holes for attachment, what are described as "canoe thwarts", often notched, sections of slats, again with holes for attachment, pieces of canoe

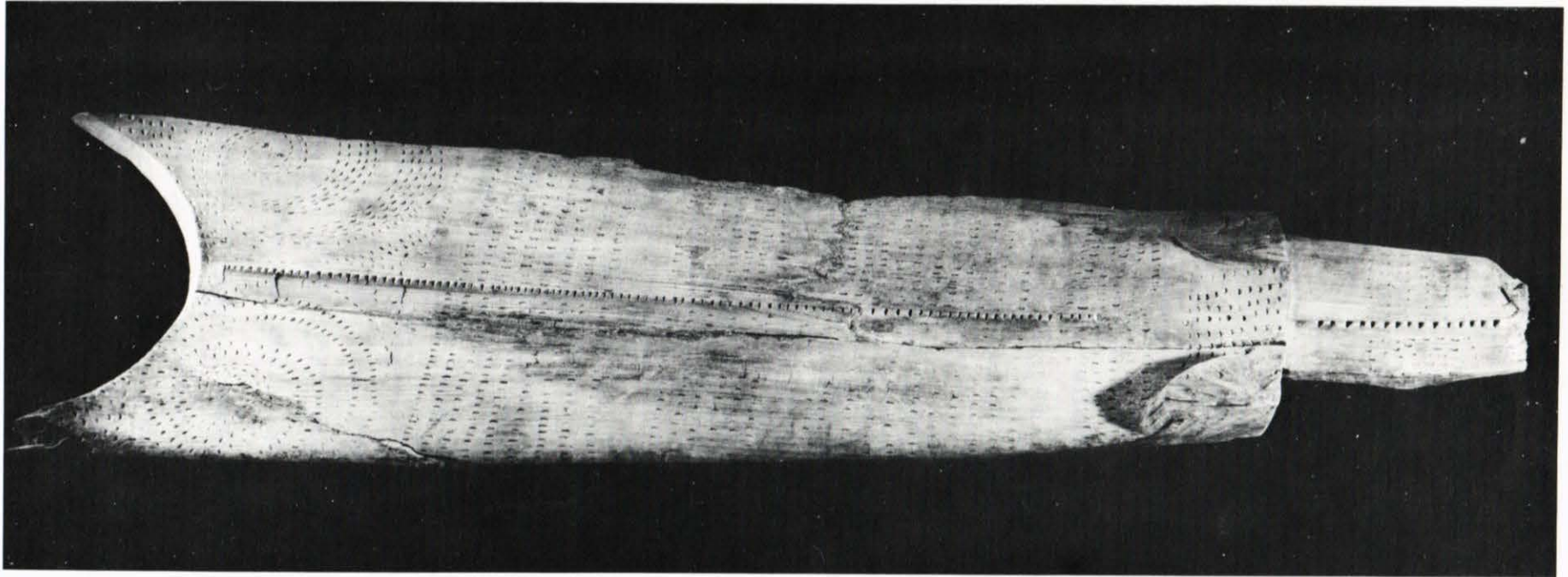


Fig.6 Canoe prow cover (1 m long) decorated by spirals and lines punched into the surface of the wood - from the Waitore site.



balers, a wooden box, notched whakapapa stick, outrigger float, anchor stones or large fishing sinkers often with lashing still attached, and many shaped fragments of wood of unknown function. Since the finds at Waitore come from a swamp, and were clearly not within a kainga or occupation site from which they might have derived, the question of the location and nature of the originating site remains open. A large proportion of artefacts, however, Cassels interprets as pieces of canoe or related items and it does therefore seem likely that the debris in the swamp relates to a beach site where refurbishing canoes was an important activity. The material recovered by Downes (1932a and b) from the Oturi Road site at Waverley, with its cultivating implements and many fern root pounders in addition to items with Waitore parallels, may be more representative of a typical living site and, from stylistic similarities, may be closely similar in age.

#### Fortifications and warfare

It is not known when fortifications were first built in Taranaki. It is clear, however, that the Polynesians who came to Aotearoa brought with them a society in which mana and conflict resolution was closely linked to warfare. While it may be argued that for the first few generations the new settlers had other priorities and insufficient potential enemies, it seems likely that the tradition of warfare was never entirely put aside. A tantalising but enigmatic link with earlier Polynesia is held in the Auckland Museum (catalogue no. 9620): a stone patu with a Taranaki attribution is almost identical in form to a whalebone weapon found recently at Vaitootia in Huahine which is dated to A.D. 850  $\pm$  70 (Sinoto and McCoy 1975: 166-168 and 183). The form is also characteristic of the Chatham Islands.

The oldest dated fortification in New Zealand is Otakanini, near Helensville north of Auckland, where the defences post-date an open settlement at the site and may be as early as the fourteenth century (Bellwood 1971). Doubtless earlier paa will be found, although whether any of these will be in Taranaki is open to question if we

accept an early fourteenth century date for the period of intensive moa hunting at Kaupokonui as indicative of initial occupation in the region. Where they are available, traditional stories relating to many Taranaki fortifications refer to events at the latter end of the pre-European period, mostly the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Studies of pre-European Maori fortifications in Taranaki began in the 1920s with Best's work The Pa Maori in which he records a number of earthworks throughout the region and looks especially at the Urenui district of the Ngati Mutunga (Best 1975:223). The most important subsequent work is that of Buist who examined sites between the Onaero River and Parininihi (Buist 1964). More recently the present writer has mapped and recorded paa in the territory of the Nga Mahanga hapu of the Taranaki tribe, between New Plymouth and Stoney River (Prickett 1980 and 1982). Sites elsewhere in the region are recorded in the New Zealand Archaeological Association's site record files.

In Buist's north Taranaki study area there are over 100 paa. South of New Plymouth the present writer has recorded 90 fortifications in an area of somewhat less than 100 km<sup>2</sup>. Buist (1976:5) gives a total of 67 sites surviving in Patea County in the mid-1970s. It is likely there were about 500 pre-European fortified paa in the Taranaki region as a whole. Almost all sites are within the former belt of open country between one and five or six kilometres from the coast. In the lands of the Ngati Ruanui and Ngarauru people, however, there is something of an exception with many strongly sited paa up the deep cut river valleys behind the coastal lowlands. Other inland fortifications are at Tarata (Kerikeringa) and Purangi (Mangahau) in Ngati Maru territory, and, again, high above the watershed with the Wanganui River at Tangarakau.

Taranaki paa vary enormously in size and complexity. A



single encircling ditch may defend as little as 200 m<sup>2</sup> or an immense earthwork may enclose an area one hundred times greater (Fig. 7), sometimes with many separately defensible platforms and terraces. Some paa make use of strong natural situations, while others rely upon man-made defences in vulnerable locations low in river valleys or in open rolling country. An interesting group of sites, of which Koru, on the Oakura River, and Ngaweka at Okato are the best known, are conspicuous for the use made of round river boulders for revetting terrace scarps.

Paa defences generally follow land form. Thus strong natural positions at the margins of the hill country in the north and south require comparatively little artificial defence. Fortifications on rolling and level ground, on the other hand, require powerful artificial works, frequently of a ring (encircling) ditch form where there is little natural assistance to defence.

In Ngati Tama territory fortifications make use of the vertical sea cliff or the precipitous papa ridges inland of the narrow coastal shelf on which runs the present main road. Occupying an offshore islet on the coast between the Tongaporutu and Mohakatino River mouths is the almost impregnable Te Kawau (Fig. 8).

Buist's (1964) distribution map shows very clearly the preferences in siting paa south of Parininihi to be the coastal cliff, often topped by an abrupt consolidated dune, or the precipitous ridges inland. Transverse ditches, or terrace and scarp defence, are frequently all that is required inland, while cliff top positions generally employ ditch and bank defences on three sides.

South of Urenui the gentler topography and broadening coastal plain necessitates stronger artificial defences on paa that, while they have a marked coastal and river valley distribution, are not always



Fig.7      Tarakihi - a very large pa with massive defences, on  
the left bank of the Teikaparua River, Warea district.





Fig.8

The Ngati Tama island fortress Te Kawau is separated by a narrow channel from the adjacent pa Te Puia (right), for which artificial defence is required only at the narrow neck joining it to the mainland.

sited for natural defence. Here ring-ditch paa are of greater importance. Because of their strong sculpturing effect these earthworks are often closely similar in form.

In the territory of the Taranaki tribe there are two very different land forms requiring somewhat different approaches to fortification. North of Stoney River terrace country is deeply cut by swift rivers which flow from the Kaitake and Pouakai Ranges. Here about 50 of the 90 recorded paa have ring ditch defences, often supplemented by additional transverse defence, commonly up the spur, but often down the spur as well. South of Stoney River the countryside is flat except for the numerous lahars. These small hills of consolidated volcanic debris lend themselves naturally to simple ring ditch defence. Less typically they are enclosed within a more massive defence which might use a low cliff or scarp to a river for natural defence on one side, as at Ngaweka on the south bank of Stoney River and Tarakihi on the Teikaparua River (Fig. 7).

The low sea cliff which makes its reappearance at Opunake again provides strong natural positions as in the north. Among the paa which use the cliff top situation are Te Namu where a small garrison of Taranaki people held off a Waikato taua in winter 1833 (Smith 1910: 501-505), and Waimate and Orangi-Tuapeka in Ngati Ruanui territory near the Kapuni river mouth, which the Waikato besieged without success the following year (Smith 1910:510-515), but which were taken and destroyed in spring the same year by shore parties from H.M.S. Alligator (Marshall 1836; Fig. 9).

South of Patea River, where steep papa hill country again reaches towards the coast, the river valleys are flanked by paa occupying powerful natural positions, which were nonetheless sometimes assisted by considerable artificial works (Fig. 10). On lowlying country towards the coast ring ditch paa in vulnerable locations are not as common as transverse ditch and bank forms tailored to more



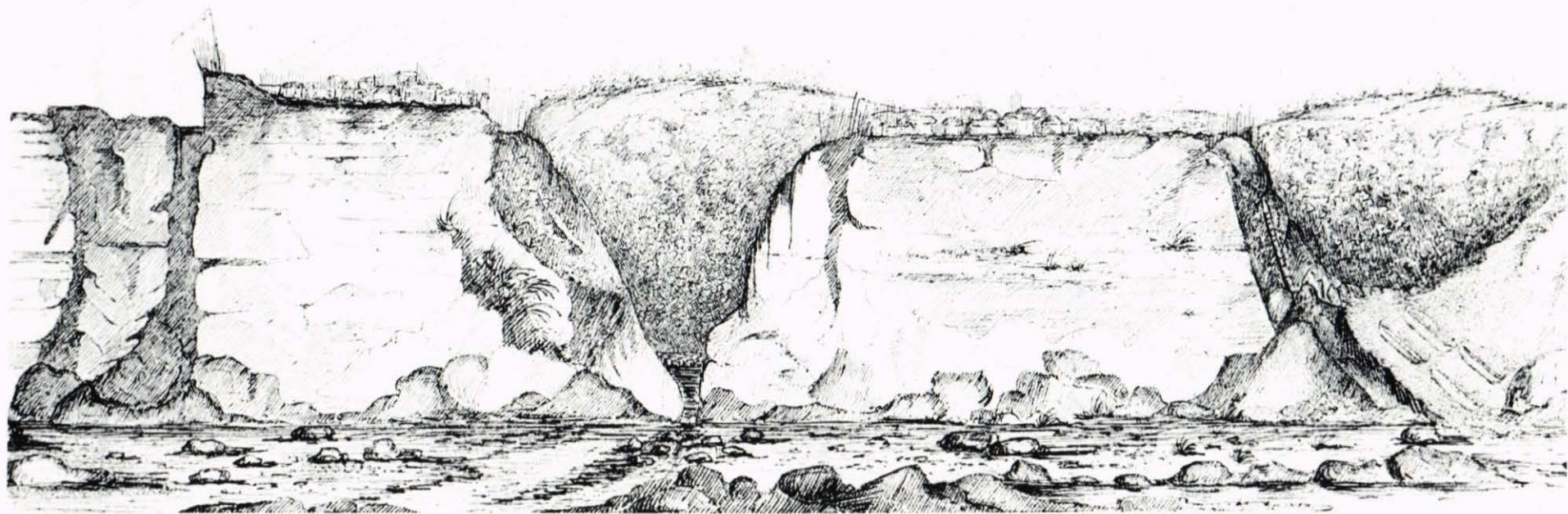


Fig.9 Orangi-Tuapeka (left) and Waimate, 1834. Sketch by  
Lieutenant Thomas Woore, H.M.S. Alligator (Taranaki Museum).

defensible situations. Among the larger ring ditch works is Mokai-a-Tonga, in the Nukumaru district, with two adjacent platforms defended by multiple encircling ditches (pictured by Smart 1962).

Within Maori fortifications surface archaeological evidence frequently gives some idea of the organisation of available space. Food storage may be indicated by underground or open pits, dwellings by rectangular platforms either slightly raised or bounded by low banks, and cooking and food preparation by hangi remains and shell midden.

In the north and west the underground pit (the so-called 'rua') is the most abundant food storage pit on surface evidence, although open rectangular pits, sometimes quite massive in size, do occur. On the single platforms of two neighbouring paa in the Tataraimaka district there are three pit forms: rua, deep square open pits and shallow elongated pits which are again of open form (Prickett 1982). Within his survey area in the Waitotara and Nukumaru districts Smart (1962:174) also notes three pit forms: underground rua, well-preserved deep rectangular pits and poorly preserved shallow rectangular pits, with the open pits in general more abundant. In the south underground pits are frequently excavated into the sandstone sides of terraces or the steep flanks of a paa, for example at Orangi-Tuapeka, and at Tarata on the left bank of the Waitotara River where Smart (1962:180) records no less than 47 of them. At Tarata there are also open rectangular pits which were not always visible on the surface before excavation. The numerous deep rectangular pits at Kumara-Kaiamo (Fig. 11) were similarly invisible on the level platform surface before excavation (Buist 1964:98-100); their presence in a district where rua might be thought more numerous on surface evidence only shows how little we know of the actual nature of defended areas within paa.

There are some paa within the Taranaki region which, even on surface evidence, appear so full of pits that there is no room for above ground structures such as dwellings. Other sites may have





Fig.10 This pa near the Whenuakura River at Upper Kohi has strong natural defence supplemented by artificial works



Fig.11 Rectangular pits at Kumara-Kaiamo, Urenui (A.G. Buist).

been without a food storage capacity, although the Kumara-Kaiamo experience shows that we must be wary of such a conclusion based only on surface evidence. Most often, however, there is evidence for both food storage and living. A small paa on the northern flank of the Kaitake Range, for example has a defended platform of about 230 m<sup>2</sup> on which are eleven well defined little terraces (Prickett 1980:41). Some of the terraces have rua on them while others appear to have been prepared to accommodate the characteristic dwelling of the Maori, the rectangular wharepuni. More rua are in the ditch, this commonly used location showing that the outer bank as well as the rim of the occupation platform of ring ditch paa was topped by a palisade to forestall or direct access into the ditch beneath the inner scarp. Other paa show rua clustered down the centre of a single living platform in a way which must have been uncomfortable for everyday living but which does have the advantage of leaving the margins within the palisade open for rapid movement in defence.

Large sites such as Koru on the Oakura River and Manawapo on the north bank of Timaru River have their food storage capacity scattered throughout. This shows the fragmented nature of Maori society with each domestic group having its living quarters and food storage conveniently located one to the other. The overall defensive arrangement was of necessity a communal affair, but the living arrangements of food storage, house and cooking area are doubtless repeated many times in these large sites which would have presented a maze of defences, palisaded enclosures and difficult accessways in a manner well described in eighteenth and early nineteenth century accounts.

Excavation carried out at Kumara-Kaiamo at Urenui in the early 1960s gives us some idea of the complexity of use and re-use of fortified paa in Taranaki. Best (1975:328-331) records the site in his survey of the Urenui district and states that it was occupied by the Ngati Hinetuhi hapu of the Ngati Mutunga. Excavations show that the earliest settlers barred the headland by a palisade within which they built a small house with two or three small storage pits



alongside. After this a further six occupation phases presented the excavators with a maze of intercutting pits and house floors. It is not until Phase V that the simple palisade defence is replaced by a ditch and bank (the latter topped by a palisade), characteristic of what we recognise on field evidence as a fortified paa.

In Phase VI, which the excavators suggest dates from the late eighteenth century, defences are again strengthened, with the ditch re-cut narrower and deeper, and a higher, more substantial inner bank thrown up, topped by massive palisade posts. Also at this stage a short length of outer ditch and bank was constructed. Artefacts found include four small adzes of late - at least characteristically Taranaki - form (pictured in Buist 1964:94), a small sandstone rubber, net sinkers and three paua shell hook or lure fragments.

Thus at Kumara-Kaiamo a simple fortification without obvious modification from surface evidence turns out to have had a very complex history which may date back many generations prior to the earthwork which now draws out attention. There are undoubtedly other paa, however, which have only one phase of occupation, although, of course, excavation is required to prove the point. One such single phase fortified site which has received some attention is Tarata.

Tarata was partially excavated in the early 1960s by Colin Smart (1962:178-182). It occupies the top of a narrow steep-sided ridge on the left bank of the Waitotara River, 15 km from the sea. Numerous living platforms are occasionally separated by short transverse ditches, but defences are otherwise left to the precipitous flanks and to terrace and scarp arrangements along the narrow ridgeway. Smart (1962:178 and 182) argues for a single period of occupation from both the simple stratigraphy and from the lack of change in living arrangements apparent in the excavated area.

Excavation of 150 feet (46 m) of ridge crest, never more than 12 m wide, revealed two house floors with stone hearths, three shallow pits, a large pit 9 x 15 feet (2.7 x 4.5 m) and up to 7 ft 6 inches (2.5 m) deep, and some small storage bins. Immediately below the excavated ridge top, on the eastern flank, is a narrow terrace at the rear of which twelve rua are dug into the sandstone. These pits are entered horizontally and have rectangular chambers about 6 x 4 feet (1.8 x 1.2 m) in plan and 3 ft 6 inches (1.05 m) in height. Evidence of fires and hangi stones is abundant on the ridge top, but midden is lacking.

Artefacts recovered by excavation and surface collection from Tarata include 21 adzes of rectangular section, slightly convex surfaces and butts unmodified for lashing, which Smart (1962:182) remarks are made mainly of locally obtainable stone. A small adze and two chisels are made variously of greenstone, and of metamorphosed argillite from the Nelson region. Five hammerstones, two grindstones, pumice bowls, a sandstone file, a sinker, a stone patu and a stone flax beater make up the remainder of the artefact collection.

Smart (1962:182) appears to prefer a late date for the occupation of Tarata. Buist (1964:101) suggests that the seven occupation phases at Kumara-Kaiamo may have extended over a period of four hundred years. Radiocarbon dates are unavailable for either site.

The contrasting stratigraphies and occupational histories of Kumara Kaiamo and Tarata give some idea of the difficulty of deriving past settlement patterns from present site distributions. We can be sure, however, that Taranaki paa were not all occupied at once. Some fortifications may have been held for many generations while others may have been thrown up for use over only as many weeks. Nonetheless a close study of the distribution and form of paa does



tell us something of how the Taranaki Maori organised themselves both for everyday social and economic goals and for tactical and strategic purposes.

An argument can be made that the many small paa in Taranaki were little more than 'defended homesteads'; comparisons may be drawn with the defensible stone houses of the Scottish border. Such defended homesteads may be the local alternative to undefended kainga which are abundant in other parts of the North Island. Thus in the Omata and Oakura districts the ten smallest ring ditch fortifications defend an average area of only 230 m<sup>2</sup> (Prickett 1980: 47). Such small living areas would be sufficient only for an extended family group, or whanau - perhaps twenty or thirty people in all - who could live in some security close to their cultivable land and sea and forest resources.

In many instances it seems probable that adjacent fortifications were designed to be mutually supportive in time of attack. For example, on the north bank of the Katikara River in the Tararaimaka district are two small paa about 120 m distant from one another, where it is reported by the present landowner that when the intervening ground was first ploughed the horses kept falling into food storage pits (Prickett 1982). This suggests that the two fortifications were sited at both ends of an extensive living area. Together the two earthworks command low-lying ground on all sides. Nearby are another two adjacent sites which are so similar in form and internal arrangements it is difficult to escape the conclusion that they were contemporary, or nearly so.

Beyond the tactical support of adjacent paa is the general strategic advantage of a network of small fortifications. A network of paa allows independence, with mutual support in case of external threat. If the threat was sufficient the occupants of the fortified homesteads could withdraw to a nearby large fortification which might

act as a tribal or sub-tribal 'citadel'. In the first decades of the last century a northern taua was defeated by a combined force of Nga Mahanga at the large paa, Ngaweka, at the forest edge on the south bank of Stoney River, by just such a strategy.

"On first hearing of the approach of a hostile force, the Ngamahanga hapu, of Taranaki, all assembled to consider what steps should be taken to meet it. Some proposed that each hapu should remain in its own pa and await attack, but one of the chiefs of Nga-weka arose and said, "Kia kotahi ano taringa hei ngaunga ma te hoa riri." ("Let there be only one ear for the enemy to bite.")"

(Smith 1910:312)

In the districts between New Plymouth and Stoney River is a marked pattern of large fortifications bounding an area of smaller paa. The inland boundary is the former forest edge; here are such 'citadel' paa as Koru, Manawapo, Pukeporoporo and Ngaweka. On the coast are other large fortifications including Kekeorangi, Tataraimaka, Parawaha and Mounu Kahawai. Coastal fortifications commanded the beach route through the district and benefited from having the sea for food and communication close at hand. Forest edge paa occupied a situation much used during the wars with the Pakeha in the nineteenth century when Maori fortifications were often sited to allow an easy evacuation into adjacent forest if required.

#### Wood carving

It can be argued that it was warfare which was behind the preservation of the most outstanding artistic legacy of the Taranaki region's Maori past. In recent decades a remarkable collection of wood carvings of superb execution and highly characteristic style has been recovered from swamps of the region. Here, it is assumed, the pieces were deposited by their owners to prevent loss to an enemy and to preserve them for later recovery. Many of the carvings,



however, were not recovered by those who hid them - and we can only imagine the human story behind knowledge of them being lost. They have since remained in their hiding places for discovery brought about mostly during the twentieth century drainage operations.

Wood carvings decorated the prestige items of Maori society. They relate to canoes, houses and food stores, all of which were highly public objects, intimately related to the mana of the tribe. Among Taranaki wood carvings are pare (house door lintels), pataka (store house) epa (wall panels) and paepae (doorsills), and complete or fragmentary canoe prows. Figures and symbols on the carvings relate to the tribe and important individuals in it and to more general Maori beliefs about life and death - about people's place in the world as they understood it.

The Taranaki style of carving may be broadly characterised as displaying a powerful use of curvilinear form and a dominance of form over decoration. David Simmons (1977) calls it a "serpentine" style, after the strongly curved central figures on pare, epa and paepae, and, with others, he associated it with other serpentine styles of Northland and Hauraki. Features of Taranaki carving include the triangular forehead, the face widest at the eyebrows, the lack of decoration on the body, the frequent trick of having arms going through a figure's mouth and emerging to grasp the body, surface motifs including rauponga and puwerewere(ritorito), and background decoration which includes the matakupenga ("fishnet") pattern and spirals.

The majority of carvings in the Taranaki style come from the Waitara district of the Te Atiawa people. These include remarkable pare (possibly a paepae) discovered by Shaun Ainsworth in 1959 and now in the Taranaki Museum (Duff 1961; Fig. 12). In it the carver has made much use of rauponga and puwerewere, and has alternate areas of



Fig.12 'Ainsworth' pare found at Waitara in 1959 (175 x 52 cm; Taranaki Museum).



Fig.13 A pataka end wall of five epa, from Motunui



spirals and matakupenga behind the five full figures. Another pare, from a swamp in the Tikorangi district, has marked similarities in form and decoration to the Ainsworth piece (see Houston 1948). A second group of pare are of an altogether different form: they are smaller, and examples in the National, Taranaki and Auckland Museums feature a full face head in the centre, with differing and more or less complex background designs extending to the ends where highly stylised motifs usually take the place of the end figures. Examples are illustrated by Archey (1977:33). A third form of pare has four or five reclining figures with no background decoration other than what is provided by the limbs of the figures themselves (see Phillipps 1955:124).

The most commonly represented item among carvings from Waitara and its surrounding districts are storehouse epa or end wall panels. Among these are two strongly contrasting styles. One has broad shallow figures which take up the full available width of the panel; in the other style the bodies of the main figures are narrower and deeper, commonly with two intertwining figures fitted into the width of the panel and subsidiary figures adding to complexity. A remarkable group of five epa from Motunui, north of Waitara make up a single pataka wall (Fig. 13). Four of the individual panels belong to the second style of deep narrow figures, although one of these is not so complex in its use of only one major figure. The fifth panel (left) is clearly the odd one out: it belongs to the shallow style of carving and has been trimmed to fit its new role.

Other wood carvings found at Waitara include one, perhaps two, canoe prows, one of which is markedly similar to the Awakino prow illustrated in Figure 15. The Waitara example, now in the Taranaki Museum, is more detailed and slightly larger than that shown (illustrated by Barrow 1969:132). The second carving (its identification as a prow cannot be unequivocal) takes the form of a small but



Fig.14      Wooden bowl from Hangatahua (Stoney) River (22 cm diameter; Taranaki Museum).

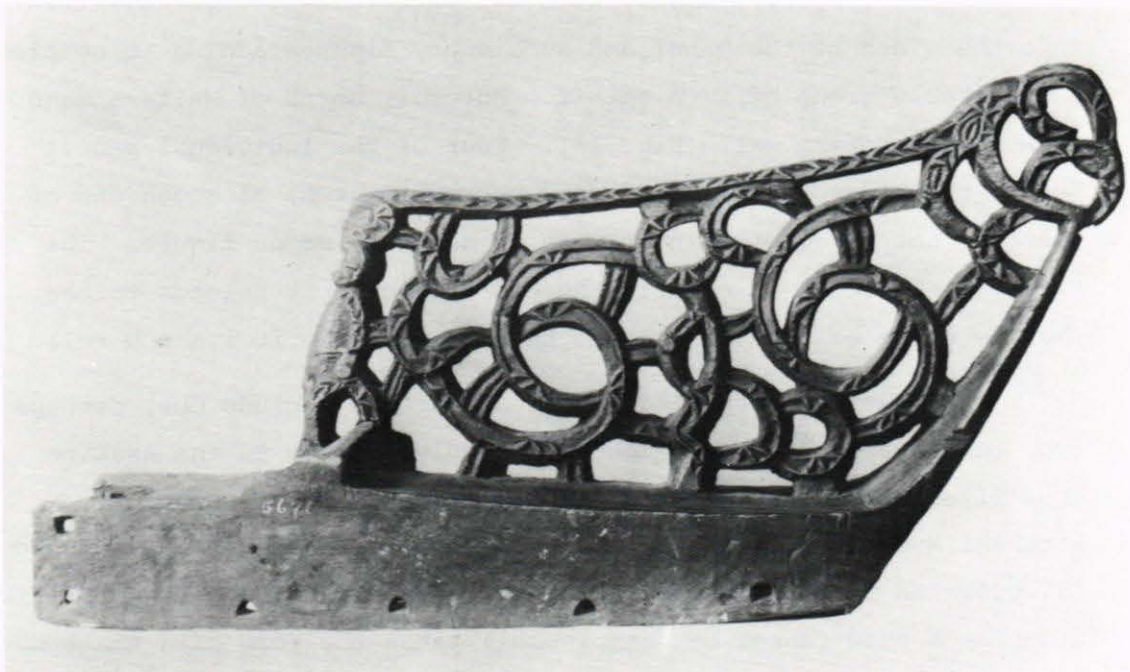


Fig.15      Canoe prow from Ounutae Stream north of Awakino (83 x 39 cm; Auckland Museum).



strongly sculptured head with protruding eyes, a marked waist in the centre of the face, and a notched upper lip. This has a family resemblance to fishing canoe prows such as are illustrated by Skinner (1973:10); it is held in the Taranaki Museum.

From the Taranaki tribal region come a small group of carvings including a pare (or paepae) from Koru (Skinner 1973:11) and another (again the function is open to question) from Tapuinikau, near Warea (Ford 1979). These important pieces have characteristics in common which set them apart from the Waitara carvings and which demonstrate a tribal tradition within the regional style. From Stoney River comes a marvellous little container carved out of a tough knotty piece of wood which adds its texture to the character of the piece (Fig. 14). A carved pataka door recently found in a swamp near Komene Road, Okato (Day 1982), is a rare item having only one parallel in the Taranaki region (a door of rather different style found at Tangarakau and now in the Wanganui Museum; Houston 1948:Fig. 10).

From north of our Taranaki region come a group of carvings in Taranaki style including a pare from Awakino, now in the Auckland Museum (pictured by Phillips 1955:123). A little canoe prow, also in the Auckland Museum, was found before the First World War by bush fellers, in a hollow rata near the mouth of Ounutae Stream about 8 km north of Awakino (Fig. 15). Interestingly, two fragments of prows of this deep cut style have been found in the Taranaki tribal district, at Rahotu (Houston 1958) and at Tapuinikau, near Warea, in addition to the Waitara example mentioned above.

From yet further outside our region are pieces of Ngati Raukawa carving, including a splendid bowl now in the Te Awamutu Museum, which have strong similarities with Taranaki material. The stylised nature of Maori carving combine with the almost infinite

plasticity of the medium to give wood carvings considerable power in the exploration of links between groups within the Taranaki region and with tribes beyond.

#### Discussion and conclusions

This review of the history of the Maori in the Taranaki region has been based upon a selection of the archaeological evidence. The aim has been to present something of the most notable aspects of Taranaki archaeology: the moa hunter remains, the fortifications and the swamp finds. Other areas have been neglected. Adzes, fishing gear, cultivating implements, weapons, cutting and grinding tools, stone and wooden beaters and many other items present opportunities for finding out about the past of the region that have hardly begun to be explored. The archaeological landscape itself is only imperfectly known.

Little attention has been paid here to traditional accounts, genealogies and other aspects of Maori knowledge of the past. This is partly because in a brief review such as this I have deliberately restricted myself to archaeological matters, the study of material remains in the field and museum, and partly because archaeologists generally do not have a good knowledge of these matters anyway. A proper history of the people of Taranaki region in the many hundreds of years before writing recorded contemporary events should look to both traditional and archaeological knowledge.

Available evidence points to the Taranaki region being entered and settled later than other parts of Aotearoa. It seems likely that the period of most intensive hunting of now extinct birds at Kaupokonui and Waingongoro represents an initial intrusion of people into this part of the west coast of the North Island. Radiocarbon dates suggest this occurred early in the fourteenth century. The relatively late first settlement has interesting support



from the late dates for the clearance of forest in the region which are provided by the pollen evidence. A sixteenth century date for this event is considerably later than dates we have for initial human interference with forests elsewhere in New Zealand.

The archaeological landscape in the Taranaki region is dominated by the remains of Maori fortifications. About 500 large and small paa are strung around the narrow coastal strip which was deforested before the Pakeha arrived. The very number suggest some antiquity for this settlement type, since it may be argued that, while some were not occupied for long, abandonment would not have been a light decision given the investment in earthworks, palisades, dwellings and store pits. Within tribal areas a strategic network of small paa or fortified homesteads may have been matched by a social network of family and descent ties which would secure people within a human landscape in which radical changes in settlement pattern might upset very complex social relationships.

The link between paa distribution and deforested land points to a link between gardening, and the harvesting of bracken fern, and forms of warfare which revolved around strong defensive positions. It may be argued that the earliest fortifications in the region coincided with forest clearance, since this is when an investment in food production would demand and allow a degree of sedentary life, and would encourage raiding by other groups.

It is of course not possible to treat Taranaki in isolation from events and changes taking place in other parts of the country. The development of fortifications in the region is clearly linked with similar developments elsewhere. Likewise the Taranaki style of wood carving is an outstanding regional style of an art that flourished throughout New Zealand. The Waitore finds are of wider than regional significance in the light they throw on the character of the developing art form.

By the time of first European contact the Maori in the Taranaki region numbered perhaps a little in excess of 10,000 people. The political map was drawn by powerful and independent tribes who thereafter would have little opportunity to change the geographical status quo. The fragmentation and yet interdependence of Maori society is a recurrent theme in traditional histories as well as in the archaeological record. Just where this would have led the people of our region had they remained undisturbed is open to question.

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