



NEW ZEALAND
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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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WARFARE DURING ARCHAIC PERIOD OF MAORI CULTURE

Alan Taylor.

According to Duff (1957: pg.26) no stone clubs have been found in Moa-Hunter Maori Camps; which means that warfare was unknown: a view subscribed to by Suggs (1960: pg.205) who also claimed that neither weapons nor signs of fighting have been observed in Archaic settlements. However, Golson (1959) questioned this thesis. And I too am inclined to do so on the basis that: (a) there is not sufficient evidence available to support it while (b) there is, on the contrary, possible material evidence that points to limited warfare during the Archaic period.

At the present time, this evidence is in the form of three stone artifacts (Figs. 2-3-4), a round house defended by a ditch and bank and the tentative findings of Golson and Ambrose at Kauri Point, in addition to Wilson's East Coast evidence (Wilson 1907: Preface pp.829, 12-13 and pp.125-158).

STONE ARTIFACTS.

In the course of surveying Otuatana pa (NZMS 1 Auckland 274-443: N 42) on the Manukau Harbour, last year, a cave was found containing several badly charred and disarticulated skeletons in association with two surface ovens. In addition to this material, two type 1A (Duff) adzes were recovered from among rocks near the entrance of the cave that also contained what appears to be the grip of a stone club (Fig. 2).

In form, the grip resembles the grip of the traditional Chatham Island patu (Fig. 1) but differs from it in that it has a finely-flaked surface rather than a bruised and roughly ground one. Made of close grained basalt, surface evidence suggests continual usage.

HYPOTHESIS.

I put forward the hypothesis that this club grip is of Archaic origin on the basis that: (a) it does not have a ground surface (a feature of classic Maori lithic material generally). (b) It was found in association with Moa-Hunter Maori type adzes. (c) It was found in the vicinity of a site where six other Archaic adzes have been recovered. (d) It was associated with several charred and disarticulated skeletons that suggest warfare and, finally, (e) the grip resembles the grip form of the Chatham Island patu: a club designed by Polynesians who, after leaving New Zealand, established themselves, according to Suggs (1960: pg. 198), in the islands in c. A.D. 1000. That is, before the Classic period of Maori Culture (see also Duff 1957: pg.33).

ARTIFACT II.

The second stone artifact that is possibly the grip of a prototype patu was recovered from Pidgeon Mt. (NZMS 1, Auckland, 418-563: N 42) a Classical Maori pa site near the Tamaki River.

In form (Fig. 3) it does not closely resemble the Manukau grip; but none the less is distinctly part of a stone club. With finely flaked edges and roughly ground face (not 'polished'), it was found among surface shell-fish near a round house (see below). But, unlike the Manukau grip, was not associated with Moa-Hunter Maoris artifactual material. However, the pa's defences consist of ditches and banks (see below) and consequently it is possible that it is of Archaic origin.

Further, in form, it does not in the least resemble any known Classic Maori patu form. And, significantly, it does not have a finely ground surface - although surface evidence points to much handling.

ARTIFACT III.

A third stone artifact was recovered close to where several Archaic adzes were found near Otuaataua pa (NZMS 1, Auckland 274-443: N 42). Unlike the other two, it appears to be the head of a short stone club (Fig. 4). Partly flaked and roughly polished, it is three inches long and two inches wide: it has no cutting edge. Originally, it would have been approximately 10 inches long, as would, no doubt, the Pidgeon Mt. club. Surface evidence suggests much handling. It was shaped from a close grain basalt.

ROUND HOUSE.

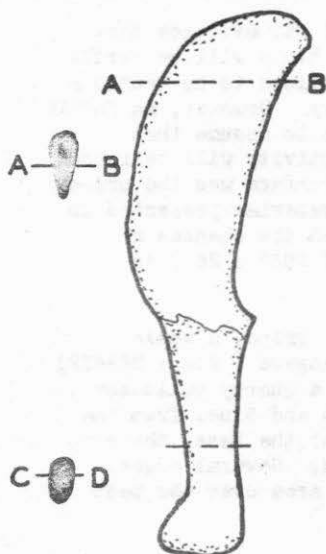
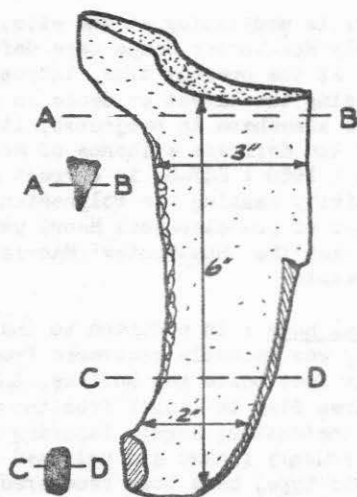
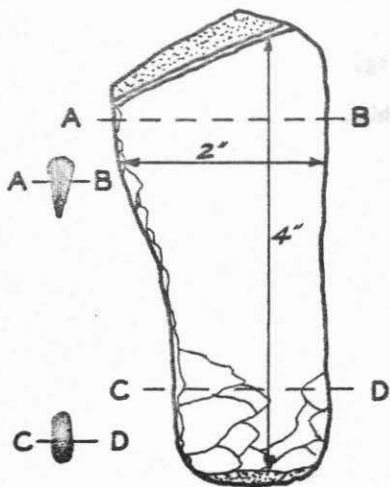
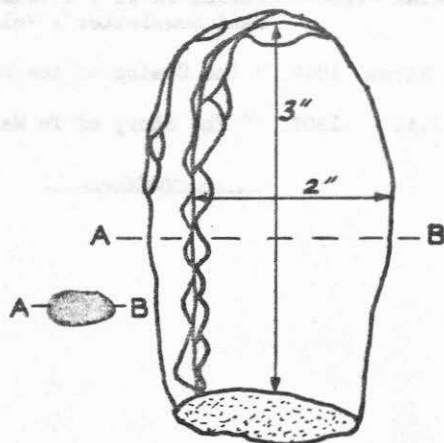
Close to Ihumatao pa, a small contemporary Maori village on the Manukau Harbour, a round house was found in association with a bank and ditch, which suggested a small fortified Kainga of Archaic origin (NZMS 1, Auckland, 284-454: N 42). Situated close to the Oruarangi Creek and along the sea cliffs forming the Manukau Drainage Scheme boundary, this site has not yet been fully excavated, and consequently there is not yet a great deal of evidence to prove, definitely, that it is of Archaic origin. However, similar structures have been observed at the Wairau Moa-Hunter Camp, and Suggs (1960: pg. 195) claims that Moa-Hunter Maori houses were of the general archaic Eastern Polynesian type noted in Tahiti, Easter Island, the Marquesas and Hawaii; that is, they were either oval or round.

In regard to the embarkment, ditch and general position of the settlement, these suggest that the village was a defensive position. In short, the site is a small, fortified Archaic village. Finally, this hypothesis is strengthened by the finding of another small fortified position in the area, which I surveyed and suggested was of Archaic origin (Taylor 1962: pg. 84). Little artifactual material was recovered from the Manukau site. But several Moa crop stones were found near the round house.

EAST COAST EVIDENCE.

In dealing with the early (Maui-Maori) natives of the East Coast, Wilson (1907 pg.130) claims that they built their pa in strong positions, having ramparts that were often extensive. 'Sometimes,' he says 'earthworks were thrown up to divide the pa into two or more sections, which would seem to show that while the hapus combined against the common enemy, they had to guard against each other.' One of these pa, Tawhitirahi, near Opotiki, is described and an account of its history is given by Wilson (1907 pp.8-9, Preface).

In war, Wilson further claims (1907 pg.129), these aboriginal Maoris were courageous and had 'a good reach in the delivery of their weapons'. In regard to these weapons, he claims that two 'wooden swords' were recovered from a swamp near Hamilton, Waikato, which 'there can be little doubt' were 'Maui-Maori' weapons. He believes that the stone mere used by the later Maoris was developed from this early form of weapon.

ARCHAIC WARFARE: ARTIFACTS.FIG. 1: CHATHAM IS.FIG. 2: OTUATAUA PA.FIG. 3: PIDGEON MT.FIG. 4: OTUATAUA PA.

Kauri Point.

Work is continuing at the site, and possibly, out of it, evidence that some early Moa-hunter Camps were defended by ditches and banks will be forthcoming. At the present time, Ambrose (1962 : 56) is inclined to be cautious in assessing the latest evidence in support of this theory. However, as future fieldwork elsewhere is projected, it is perhaps premature to assume that no clear and definite evidence of Moa-hunter defensive activity will be found. If Suggs (1960 : 227-8) is correct when he claims that warfare was the principal activity causing the Polynesian migrations and the material presented in this paper of pre-classical Maori warfare is tenable, then the chances of proving that the 'Moa-hunter' Maoris had no enemies (Duff 1957 : 26) is rather remote.

Additional note : In addition to the possible stone patu grips, a whale bone grip was recently recovered from Ellets Mountain, Mangere (N42 : 268432) Found six feet below the surface, in a midden exposed by a quarry bulldozer , it measures 6ins in length from the base of its back edge and 5ins. from the base of the 'cutting edge! Tapering from 3ins. to 1 in. at the base, the surface is roughly flaked and polished and is well preserved. Several adzes, of Archaic type, have been recovered close to the midden area over the past six months.

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