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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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TIROMOANA PA, N135/1, TE AWANGA, HAWKES BAY

SECOND INTERIM REPORT, 1975

Aileen Fox,
Auckland Museum.

A second season of excavation was carried out at Tiromoana pa from January 6-20, 1975, under the direction of Lady (Aileen) Fox, Acting Archaeologist at Auckland Museum, and Karel Peters, Senior Technical Officer, Anthropology Department, Auckland University. The work was carried out by eight university students and six members of the Archaeological Association, who were accommodated in the shearers' quarters; Mrs Mary Jeal acted as caterer. As in 1974, we had the ready co-operation and interest of the landowner, Mr W. Shaw; Mr P. van Asch kindly arranged for New Zealand Aerial Mapping to take an air photograph of the site.

The purpose of the excavation was to complete the examination of the defences and to undertake further work on likely occupation sites within the pa and on an external terrace.

The defences, Sites VI and IX

The history of the defences of the inner zone proved more complicated than was envisaged in 1974. Further investigation of the line of palisade post-holes visible on the surface along the east side of the pa (Site VI) located an entrance facing the relatively easy slopes of the "dry" valley. Here four post-holes were set back forming a shallow recess and the way into the pa was shown by a spread of charcoal and burnt stones which continued through a one-metre wide space between two of the posts. Beneath the uppermost post emplacements, there was a smaller deeper hole that had been repacked, and eventually a line of similar small holes 2-3 m apart was traced along the hillside, about 3-4 metres behind the main palisade. The holes of the inner line had all been repacked solidly with domestic rubbish; they must represent a palisade of earlier date than the main defences, which was replaced by the outer line of more massive posts in larger holes.

On the west side of the pa (Site IX) a short length of two similar lines of palisade posts was found, which covered a vulnerable flank. Butts of posts were found in two of the holes on the outer line, one with a radiocarbon date of A.D. 1620 ± 70. A third massive timber had been dug out from below, and the gap refashioned as an entrance, though no holes for door-posts were found. Heaps of soil between the posts indicated that a rampart was under construction.

The outer defences across the ridge (Site VII) proved to be unfinished: the bank and ditch had been started at either end but tailed off, leaving a 7 m wide gap in the centre.

Occupation sites

A carefully levelled area 6 x 4 m between two raised rim pits on the west side of the pa (Site VIII) was completely cleared. In the centre of the clean surface there were four small post-holes 1.25 m apart, forming the corners of a square. These can be interpreted as the supports either of a small wooden *pataka* or raised storehouse, or for a timber platform or rack probably for storing fern root, such as were depicted in the deserted pa at Kahouera in the Bay of Islands (Fox, 1974, a. fig. 1).

The second area investigated (Site XI) was a cooking area amongst the block of raised rim storage pits in the centre of the pa. The stones of several *hangi* were found in position, in one case overlapping each other. Beneath the layer of cooking debris there were small post-holes belonging to an earlier occupation from which radiocarbon dates of A.D. 1490 \pm 80 and 1520 \pm 50 were obtained. A single post-hole had been cut through both layers, perhaps for a pole on which things could be suspended in baskets.

Excavation of one of the terraces (Site X) outside the main defences at the head of the "dry" valley was hampered by the dryness of the shallow soil. Nevertheless it was evident that a wooden structure at least 3½ m long had been erected with its long axis similar to that of the terrace. A small drainage gutter at the foot of the scarp indicated the rear, and there were three or four small post-holes in the centre which presumably supported a ridge pole. No post-holes for the side or end walls could be located with certainty. The floor was well trodden but clean and the structure was probably a sleeping house of slight construction.

Chronology

It has now been demonstrated that there were two successive palisades as part of the main defences of the pa as well as one of earlier date found on Site I in 1974, and that there were three periods of occupation in the pa interior (Site II, 1974, and Site XI, 1975).

No artefacts were found to throw light on the chronology or the cultural origins of the occupants. As in 1974 (Fox 1974 b, p. 169), the only source of dating evidence was the radiocarbon analysis of wood and charcoal by the Institute of Nuclear Sciences. These show

that there was occupation in the centre of the pa from the late 15th century onwards, approximately contemporary with the main defences. Their date was established in 1974 from timbers of the stage at A.D. 1380 and 1520 ± 60 , averaging to A.D. 1450. The new date of 1620 ± 70 from the second palisade on Site IX indicates that additions and alterations were being made to the defences about a hundred years later. Unfortunately, the only fragment of wood, found in a post-hole of the early palisade, proved to be antique, with a radiocarbon date of A.D. 430 \pm .

<u>Radiocarbon dates</u>	<u>Site</u>	<u>Old half life BP</u>	<u>Corrected BP</u>
<u>Lab. No.</u>			
R 4910/1	Site IX, first palisade post-hole 3	1550 \pm 90 (A.D. 400)	1520 \pm 100 (A.D. 430)
R 4910/2	Site IX, second palisade post 4	250 \pm 60 (A.D. 1700)	330 \pm 70 (A.D. 1620)
R 4910/3	Site XI, post-hole layer 5	410 \pm 80 (A.D. 1540)	460 \pm 80 (A.D. 1490)
R 4910/4	Site XI, post-hole layer 4	350 \pm 60 (A.D. 1600)	430 \pm 50 (A.D. 1520)