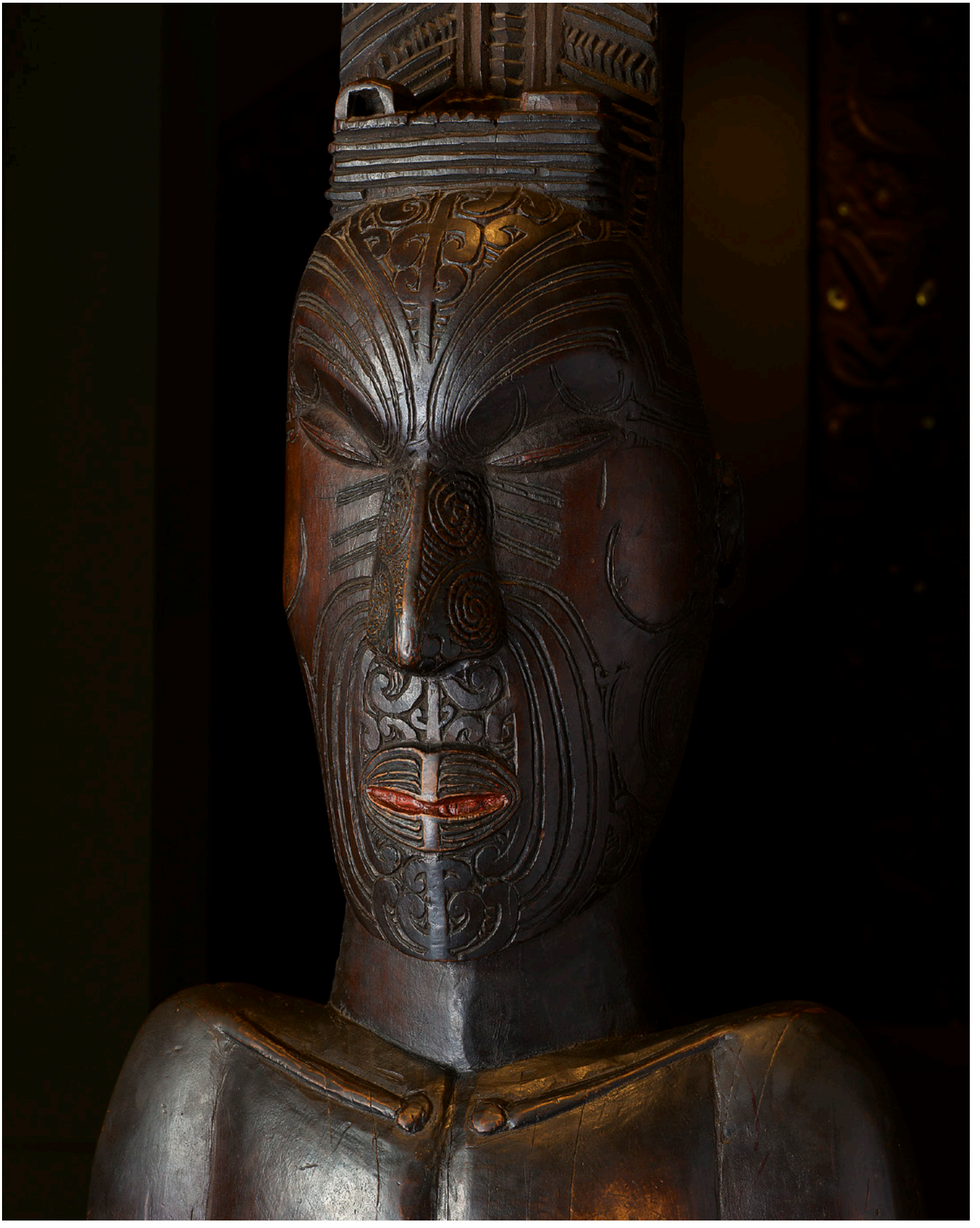
A Whakapapa of Tradition

100 Years of Ngati Porou Carving, 1830–1930

Ngarino Ellis

With new photography by Natalie Robertson



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He whakamaharatanga tēnei ki a

The Venerable Dr Hone Te Kauru o Te Rangi Kaa rātou ko
Professor Emeritus Judith Binney rātou ko
Professor Roger Neich.

He rau aroha tēnei ki a koutou.

Ko Hikurangi te maunga,
Ko Waiapu te awa,
Ko Ngāi Tane, me Te Whānau-a-Takimoana ngā hapū,
Ko O Hine Waiapu me Tai Rāwhiti ngā marae,
Ko Ngāti Porou te iwi.

Ko Rākaumangamanga te maunga,
Ko Ipipiri te moana,
Ko Ngāti Kuta te hapū,
Ko Te Rāwhiti te marae,
Ko Ngāpuhi te iwi.

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Front cover: The ancestor Iwirākau as represented on a poutokomanawa now at Auckland Museum. *Photograph by Natalie Robertson with the kind permission of Te Morehu Te Maro and Auckland War Memorial Museum.*
Back cover: View of Ruatepupuke II, an Iwirākau meeting house now in the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago. *Photograph by Diane Alexander White and Linda Dorman with the kind permission of Eru Riwhi Wharehinga and the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago.*
Frontispiece: An Iwirākau-style poutokomanawa carved in the 1870s by Hone Taahu for Karaitiana Takamoana, now at Otago Museum. *Photograph by Natalie Robertson with the kind permission of Rose Mohi and Otago Museum.*

Book design: Katrina Duncan
Cover design: Duncan Munro

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RE-ENE

Introduction

Te Ao Hurihuri o Iwirākau

Titiro ki muri kia whakatika ā mua.
Look to the past to proceed to the future.

Between 1830 and 1930 Māori art and architecture underwent a radical transformation. Three dominant art forms – waka taua (war canoes), pātaka (decorated storehouses) and whare rangatira (chiefs' houses) – were replaced by whare karakia (churches), whare whakairo (decorated meeting houses) and wharekai (dining halls). This book, *A Whakapapa of Tradition*, examines how and why that fundamental transformation took place by focusing on the Iwirākau School of carving, based in the Waiapu Valley on the East Coast of the North Island. Iwirākau was an ancestor who lived around the year 1700 and who is credited with reinvigorating the art of carving in the Waiapu region. Between the 1860s and the 1920s, six major carvers of his tradition created more than thirty meeting houses and other structures. These carvers and their patrons renegotiated key concepts within Māori culture: ideas such as tikanga (tradition), tapu (sacredness) and mana (power, authority) became embedded within the new architectural forms, while established rituals were repurposed around the new buildings' creation and use. The importance of whakapapa (lineage) and whenua (land) remained paramount, but these concepts were newly articulated in a way that allowed creativity to flourish.

The visual culture in the northern East Coast even before 1830 was complex and sophisticated. Chapter One maps out this territory, introducing the key historical figures Ruatepupuke, Hingangaroa, Te Ao Kairau and Iwirākau, and the whare wānanga Te Rāwheoro and

Figure 1: Reneti Church, Mangahānea Marae, Ruatōria. *Photograph by Natalie Robertson.*

Tāpere-Nui-a-Whatonga. It then moves on to survey the main contemporary sites of Iwirākau carving: the waka taua, pātaka, chiefs' houses and palisade posts. But new art traditions often emerge at a time of socio-cultural upheaval, and the early nineteenth century on the East Coast was just such a time. After the building of the first 'Native Chapel' in the Waiapu Valley in 1839, local chiefs competed for mana by building bigger and more ornate churches. Decoration from pātaka and waka taua was transferred into churches, and within a single generation, from 1830 to 1855, chapels came to be traditional within the community, as explained in Chapter Two. They became central to hapū culture and reflected the strength of leadership, both tribal and religious.

Many social practices, such as those marking significant events like marriage, began to take place in chapels rather than on the ātea (area in front of a structure) of chiefs' houses. And from the mid-1850s many chapels were rebuilt into larger ones, demonstrating their continuing importance within communities. During the growth in church-building from the 1840s, Waiapu Māori drew on tradition selectively, maintaining older ideas and applying them to new situations. Traditional building practices were used in the chapels both practically (in terms of structure and materials) and symbolically (in that each phase of construction was marked with karakia [prayers] and hākari [feasts]). This flexibility of approach would be drawn on again in the 1850s and 1860s when another disjuncture occurred.

In the period from 1860 to 1900, the whare whakairo became the dominant architectural structure within Māori communities. Part I of Chapter Three tracks how existing elements of chiefs' houses, waka taua, pātaka, pou whakarae (large carved posts on the palisades of pā, or fortified settlements) and chapels all contributed to the style and function of the meeting house. Part II describes the type of meeting houses built by Iwirākau carvers. This style was recognisably different from those of other iwi, and soon became a distinctive marker used by carvers from outside the region to reference the East Coast in their own work. The meeting house was not a static entity based in a timeless era but, like the chapel, became another vehicle with which to articulate change and innovation in the community.

The carvers themselves were the key transmitters of culture in this community, simultaneously retaining and breaking with tradition. Chapter Four examines the genealogical relationships, social organisation, reputations and styles of the Iwirākau carvers and the ways in which they were paid. One group of artists – the 'Super Six' – became the primary exponents of a style which came to be known as Iwirākau: Te Kihirini, Hone Taahu, Hone Ngatoto, Riwai Pakerau, Tamati Ngakaho and Hoani Ngatai. The chapter also analyses the concept of tradition in relation to the carvers and considers the ways in which they embraced innovation within the context of their communities and their patrons – the subject of Chapter Five.

The patrons of Iwirākau carvers made deliberate choices about the type of architecture they commissioned and which artists would create it for them. They wanted to demonstrate visual links with the past, but they also defined tradition for themselves in a fluid way. Carving in particular was paramount in the creation of new buildings; ancestors were depicted in order to emphasise and reinforce whakapapa and ties to the land. Part I of Chapter Five discusses the general nature of both Māori and Pākehā (New Zealand European) patrons of Māori carving; part II

focuses specifically on patronage of Iwirākau carvers in the nineteenth century. I consider the range of arts patrons, beginning with local Ngāti Porou and moving outwards to other iwi and lastly Pākehā. Two case studies are presented in the last section: the building of Porourangi and Hau Te Ana Nui o Tangaroa. For both, patrons called on the concept of tradition because of specific political and cultural agendas.

Finally, the concluding chapter examines the period from 1900 to 1930 and in particular the work of Tā Apirana Ngata. The renovation of Porourangi (1908) and the building of Ngata's carved study (1916), St Mary's Memorial Church (1925–26) and the Arihia Dining Hall (1930) are the four key moments here. The Arihia Hall formed the basis for one final art tradition – the dining hall – and thus its date of construction acts as the book's cut-off point. Ngata emphasised the continuing importance of carving as a marker of identity, and acted as both artist and patron, vacillating between the two roles – much as he did between tradition and modernity.

The place of tradition within Māori culture

The mission of this book is to find ways to discuss transformations in Māori art and architecture between 1830 and 1930. These can tell us much about the role of tradition and innovation in Māori culture.[1] In te reo, 'tradition' might be translated as 'tikanga', which derives from the word 'tika', meaning 'just', 'fair', 'right' or 'correct'. According to the *Ngata Dictionary*, 'tradition' can be translated as 'kōrero tipuna' or 'tikanga a iwi', and 'traditional' as 'tikanga' or 'tuku iho'.[2] Tikanga is a crucial aspect of Māori culture and society. Mason Durie explains the concept:

> Tikanga are used as 'guides to moral behaviour' and within an environmental context refer to the preferred way of protecting natural resources, exercising guardianship, determining responsibilities and obligations, and protecting the interests of future generations . . . . the most appropriate tikanga for a group at a given time, and in response to a particular situation, is more likely to be determined by a process of consensus, reached over time and based both on tribal precedent and the exigencies of the moment. Tikanga is as much a comment on process as it is on fixed attitudes or knowledge.[3]

Durie emphasises both the significance of tikanga for Māori and, critically for this study, the way that tradition *changes* over time in response to the group for whom it has relevance. One of the most thorough discussions of tikanga is by Hirini Moko Mead in his book *Tikanga Maori*. He asserts that tikanga is

> . . . the set of beliefs associated with practices and procedures to be followed in conducting the affairs of a group or an individual. These procedures are established by precedents through time, are held to be ritually correct, are validated by more than one generation and are always subject to what a group or individual is able to do.[4]

He provides a practical way of thinking about tikanga:

> Tikanga are tools of thought and understanding. They are packages of ideas which help to organise behaviour and provide some predictability in how

Figure 2 (overleaf): The mouth of the Waiapu River, East Cape. *Photograph by Natalie Robertson.*

> certain activities are carried out. They provide templates and frameworks to guide our actions and help steer us . . .[5]

However, the extent to which the terms 'tikanga' and 'tradition' can be interchanged is indeterminate. Both Māori and Pākehā acknowledge that 'tradition' and 'tikanga' are integral to identity, whether explicit or not, self-conscious or not. The degree to which these guides to behaviour are adhered to depends as much on individuals and their circumstances, as the society in which they live. Whatever the culture, no tradition or tikanga remains static.

Writers about Māori art have also discussed tradition. Robert Jahnke writes of 'stylistic traditions',[6] Mead calls them 'art traditions',[7] whilst Arapata Hakiwai entitled his MA thesis 'The Carving Traditions of Ngāti Kahungunu'.[8] However, few have interrogated what the term 'tradition' actually means in relation to Māori art until now. This study argues that a tradition is formed over time by innovation as well as repetition.

In this context, over the past hundred years the term 'tradition' has usually been applied in relation to art forms that are based on the marae, encompassing tukutuku (ornamental lattice-work), kōwhaiwhai (decorative patterns on house rafters) and whakairo (carving). The use of the term 'traditional' in relation to these artworks increases their mana and that of their makers. Jahnke describes the term 'traditional' in this way:

> Customary (traditional) Māori art was an art created by Māori that maintained a visual correspondence with historical models (usually carving, weaving and painting prior to mid nineteenth century) in which the shift from historical models was usually minimal.[9]

He uses the term 'customary' rather than 'traditional' because 'it is less susceptible to temporal stasis allowing the term to be used to also describe "contemporary" practice'.[10] Jahnke's intention is to acknowledge all art forms made by Māori, and he terms those that engage with both customary and modern practices and styles 'trans-customary'. Such a descriptor creates space for the practice of artists such as Cliff Whiting and Sandy Adsett, who draw on earlier models and practices to guide their involvement with contemporary issues, such as the retention of land and primacy of history. Jahnke explains further,

> The term 'contemporary Māori art' continues to be used when speaking of current developments in art, and to distinguish between 'contemporary' (here synonymous with 'modern') and 'traditional' developments. Herein lies a contradiction, since art defined as 'traditional' is also created today. In coining the phrase 'contemporary', Māori participate in the elitist game of reinforcing a hierarchical structure that promotes the new (novel, innovative) over the old (traditional, hackneyed). Equally, Māori perpetuate the anthropological dislocation of culture into past and present.[11]

Pine Taiapa, one of the most significant Māori carvers of the twentieth century, once advised, 'even though the patterns used are traditional, the Māori artist, through variations mentioned, is allowed personal liberty to express himself creatively'.[12] Such liberties are critical within Māori art, as Robert Jahnke and Huia Tomlins Jahnke explain: 'In reality there is no Māori artist, craftsperson or designer today whose creative products are created using only traditional technology or whose creative products are informed by non-traditional referents.'[13] The same could be said for carvers working in the nineteenth century. They

were breakers of tradition, men who were trained in the whare wānanga (school of learning), but who used this education as a springboard for something new and dynamic rather than repeating older prototypes. Mead outlines this tension between artists:

> [Modern artists] see themselves as exploring the frontiers of change, as agents of change who will take it where no traditional artist will dare take it, and as the forward-thinking people, the developers, the thinkers, the worthy ones. On the other hand the traditional artists are seen as . . . backward looking, non-thinking, non-innovative people . . .[14]

The challenge for those who write about Māori art is to use such terms as 'traditional' and 'contemporary' with care, simultaneously recognising innovation as well as adherence to older modes of practice. Jahnke and Tomlins Jahnke suggest that the term 'traditionalising' can be read negatively, particularly when museum curators use it to describe the changes in Māori architecture in the twentieth century. They link the term 'traditional' with 'orthodoxy', which presumes a level of conformity with existing norms. They argue that in relation to Māori art, curators like Augustus and Harold Hamilton were 'at the forefront of an archaizing museum-based orthodoxy that devalued breaks in tradition while promoting a conservative, orthodox approach to Māori art'.[15] Thus, when whare whakairo such as Te Hau ki Tūranga (built 1842–45) were placed in museums, curators and directors like the Hamiltons transformed them by removing any innovative features, such as corrugated iron roofing and the use of non-red paint in the kōwhaiwhai, in the interests of presenting an 'authentic' Māori wharenui (large house). The fact that such forms of whare were actually relatively recent creations, having being built just over fifty years before, was conveniently ignored. Gradually over time, Te Hau ki Tūranga as it was presented at the Colonial Museum became synonymous with what audiences believed a 'traditional' meeting house should look like.

Mead describes humorously those involved with tikanga on the marae as '"the monitor of tikanga" – some regarded them as "the monster of tikanga"'.[16] They had complex relationships with artists – each used the concept of tradition in different ways according to their own social, political and cultural agendas. Jahnke and Tomlins Jahnke describe influential chiefs and master carvers as being 'dominant' personalities,[17] and by way of example refer to the work of Rongowhakaata carver Raharuhi Rukupo and in particular his first whare whakairo, Te Hau ki Tūranga, discussed above. The house continued to 'provide the model' for other meeting houses more than a century later – for example Whitireia at Whāngarā, carved by Pine Taiapa in 1944. Rukupo and artists like him discarded existing styles and forms by doing what Jahnke and Tomlins Jahnke describe as 'judicious editing'.[18] In doing so they set a 'standard of excellence . . . a customary conservatism that was to remain prescriptive [until alternatives were eventually established]'.[19]

Change was integral to the continuity of Māori culture, as Durie has noted in discussing the history of Māori in the early nineteenth century: 'although a "corpus of basic convictions about reality and life" has remained relatively constant, the manifestations of culture are subject to flux, so that change becomes the norm'.[20] Similarly, Mead

Figure 3 (overleaf): View of the Waiapu River and Mount Hikurangi. *Photograph by Natalie Robertson.*

asserts that 'Tikanga Maori are not frozen in time although some people think that they ought to be.'[21] He calls for change within traditions to be respected:

> It is true, however, that tikanga are linked to the past and that is one of the reasons why they are so valued by the people. They do link us to the ancestors, to their knowledge base and to their wisdom. What we have today is a rich heritage that requires nurturing, awakening sometimes, adapting to our world and developing further for the next generations.[22]

Such changes within Māori architecture were not random but deliberate acts. The idea of 'formal sequences', a concept introduced by American art historian George Kubler in 1962, is useful here.[23] These sequences begin with what he called 'prime objects', which are 'not explained by their antecedents'[24] but rather were a solution to a new problem. The concept applies to Māori art, as Mead notes: 'Changes in Maori art are brought about by Maori artists who employ new technologies, introduce new images, and recombine elements of Maori art in new and exciting ways that are accepted by the Maori public.'[25] The response to new ideas and technologies in Māori communities resulted in a number of new forms emerging in the period 1830–1930. Most significant of these was the whare whakairo which developed in response to the pressing issue of where to hold large inter-tribal meetings, as well as addressing the problem of how to assert tribal and sub-tribal authority on specific blocks of tribal land.

This was certainly not the first time Māori had created a solution to a pressing issue. Indeed, it could be said to characterise Māori art: the arrival from the Pacific required solutions to new problems, both practical (such as how to store food in colder climates – the result being pātaka) and symbolic (such as how to articulate guardianship over land visually – the result being pou rāhui). American cultural critic James Clifford explains the creation of new things in this way:

> It is assumed that cultural forms will always be made, unmade, and remade. Communities can and must reconfigure themselves, drawing selectively on remembered pasts. The relevant question is whether, and how, they convince and coerce insiders and outsiders, often in power-charged, unequal situations, to accept the autonomy of 'we'.[26]

Tradition, then, can be considered to be a mix of both innovation and repetition of forms and styles of art. Within Māori culture in the nineteenth century, radical changes to existing forms were accepted and promoted, particularly post-1850 when Māori society was undergoing unprecedented levels of change and challenge. Through these changes, Māori culture adapted and reinvigorated itself to such an extent that major shifts in the use of different forms (pātaka, waka taua) were taken on board with relatively little discussion: it was survival of culture that was of critical importance.

Other studies on Iwirākau carving

This study sits within a wider field of scholarship on Māori tribal carving. Surveys of whare whakairo on the East Coast in the past have been the ambit of anthropologists. Augustus Hamilton was one of the first to draw on Iwirākau carvings in his survey *Maori Art* (1901),[27] using them as prime examples of what he believed was 'authentic Māori art'. Hamilton's successor in many ways

was ethnologist W. J. Phillipps, who was based in Wellington. He made a precedent-setting effort to consult iwi leaders for his research, in this case Tā Apirana Ngata, as well as to speak with local Māori when he travelled the country looking at Māori architecture. From Ngata he received a letter that guided him around the East Coast, advising him which wharenui to look at and whom to contact, as well as a very brief assessment as to the quality of the carving.[28] Phillipps visited all houses deemed worthy by Ngata, and published his account as 'Carved Maori Houses of the Eastern Districts of the North Island'[29] in 1944. This provides an invaluable snapshot of wharenui of the day. His other publications looked at architecture in different regions and by different iwi, such as Taranaki and Ngāpuhi.

Following his example, in 1961 Mead published *The Art of Maori Carving*, which remains a standard in Māori art history courses today. Here Mead identified a number of carving styles along the East Coast by virtue of specific geographic locations: Ūawa, Tūranga, Waiapu and Te Kaha. He described the people as generally regarding themselves as Ngāti Porou, and identified key exemplars of 'the Waiapu style' including a poutokomanawa (interior central post in a meeting house now in Auckland Museum [Fig. 56 right]), as well as the wharenui Porourangi, Rakaitemania and Kapohanga. He also identified the main artists as Hone Ngatoto, Hone Taahu, Wi Tahata, Wi Haereroa and Hone Te Wehi. Jock McEwen, writing in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* in 1947,[30] reinforced Mead's attributions and provided details of the types of amo (front panels on a meeting house), maihi (slanted bargeboards descending from the tekoteko) and raparapa (end of the maihi) (Fig. 6), as well as the figure types and surface decoration from the wharenui in this region (Fig. 7).

McEwen's study provided the groundwork for David Simmons's 1973 report on fifty meeting houses around the East Coast from Hicks Bay to Tolaga Bay.[31] Like Phillipps, Simmons described each house and gave his assessment as to the identity of the carver and its history, and in doing so provided his own snapshot of wharenui in that year. This manuscript was later published as *Meeting-houses of Ngāti Porou o Te Tai Rāwhiti*[32] in 2006.

Undoubtedly the most detailed study of the style of individual carvers in the Iwirākau School has been Ngāti Porou artist and writer Robert Jahnke's doctoral thesis 'He Tataitanga Āhua Toi: The House that Riwai Built/A Continuum of Māori art' (2006).[33] Riwai Pakerau was Jahnke's great-grandfather and one of the most significant carvers in the Iwirākau School. His text argues for a distinct lineage (tataitanga āhua toi) from one generation to the next, and from one carver to another.

This book uses Jahnke's thesis as a point of departure. The following chapters examine the concept of tradition, its making and breaking. The focus here is on a specific time period (1830–1930) when change was acute, and on the specific architectural traditions that changed over this period, with separate chapters devoted to the chapel, the whare whakairo and the wharekai. *A Whakapapa of Tradition* extends Jahnke's groundwork by identifying further key artistic traits of the main carvers (other subsidiary carvers are briefly described on pages 250–58) and adding several carvings to each carver's oeuvre. Of prime interest here is the larger picture of each carver's art practice as a chronology and also within the tradition.

Figure 4: Anaura Bay. *Photograph by Natalie Robertson.*

While previous studies of East Coast carving reveal it to be a fertile area for examination, there are gaps and omissions, both conceptual and concrete, in these studies. There is information about who carved what, but explanations as to the wider dynamic of how these new works operated within specific art traditions and how these traditions changed have not been considered before, particularly in relation to the period 1830–1930. Many of the buildings and their associated taonga have not been identified or documented before, such as the house Hau Te Ana Nui o Tangaroa, for instance, which had previously not been photographed in full, especially the unusual figurative painted panels. The discovery and discussion of taonga in museum basements in overseas institutions as well as in New Zealand museums also signal this book as distinct from earlier writings. In addition, the patronage of East Coast artists has been relatively little recognised or researched until now.

This book contributes to a growing discipline of Māori art history, which is distinct from anthropology and Māori Studies in relation to the approaches used and concerns discussed. Placing the word 'Māori' before 'Art History' does more than merely add an indigenous slant; rather it investigates Māori art forms as unique and distinct in the wider discipline, articulating what Jonathan Harris and other exponents of the 'New' Art History have argued.[34] They encourage researchers to use approaches that many writing in the field of indigenous art have been using for some time, such as stressing the significance of oral accounts and the importance of reciprocity – returning to the community that which you have learned. As Canadian art historian Ruth B. Phillips comments:

> Under the pressure of these new paradigms, art history . . . moved away from set canons of great works organised into narratives of the progressive rise of western culture. In their place are being inserted plural histories of art traditions belonging to particular communities and considered as parallel, contemporary and interactive with those of the mainstream culture.[35]

The story of the Iwirākau School is one such plural history; it is, as we shall see, a distinctive tradition that is 'parallel, contemporary and interactive' with other related schools and carving movements.

Research process and definitions

I began the study for this book by compiling a list of known carvings (both *in situ* but also in museums) and carvers in preparation for visits to museums in New Zealand with East Coast holdings: Auckland, Gisborne, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. At each site photographs were taken of every carving, visual analysis was applied and available archival material recorded. As the technology improved, this moved towards digital imaging and note-taking.

From 1998 to 2006 four field trips overseas were made to visit twenty museums around the world that held Iwirākau carvings: American Museum of Natural History (New York), Australian Museum (Sydney), Bishop Museum (Honolulu), British Museum (London), Brooklyn Museum (New York), De Young Museum (San Francisco), Field Museum (Chicago), Liverpool Public Museum, Melbourne Museum, National Gallery of Australia (Canberra), Museo Nazionale di Antropologia ed Etnologia

(Florence), National Museum für Völkerkunde (Berlin), Peabody Museum (Boston), Peabody Essex Museum (Salem), Perth Museum (Scotland), Phoebe Apperson Hearst Museum of Anthropology (Los Angeles), Pitt Rivers Museum (Oxford), Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto), Royal Scottish Museum (Edinburgh), and the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (Philadelphia).

It was not possible to examine Iwirākau carvings in person at the following institutions: Green Centre for Non-Western Art (Brighton), Musée de Cinquantaire (Brussells), Musée de l'Homme (Paris), Musée de Rouen (Rouen), Musée de Tahiti, Museum der Kulturen (Basel), Museum für Völkerkunde (Vienna), Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (Cambridge), National Museum of Ireland (Dublin) and the Royal Danish Museum (Copenhagen). Nonetheless, all these institutions have been contacted during the research process, and most have been generous in providing information, photocopies and photographs of the required material.

Research also unearthed unpublished textual material outside museums; and I subsequently consulted collections at the National Archives, the Alexander Turnbull Library, the Historic Places Trust, the New Zealand Film Archive and Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand. At Tairawhiti Museum in Gisborne I found and analysed boxes of materials, written and photographic, that had been deposited by whānau and researchers, most notably Rob de Z. Hall. I interviewed experts in the field (such as Bernie Kernot who has written extensively about Māori art) as well as museum curators. Pākeke (elders) and artists were also consulted to widen the frame and examine the material from many angles. Conversations at exhibition openings, at hākari and by telephone have added a further dimension to the research.

Making drafts available to carvers and local historians was an important way of ensuring engagement with a diverse range of interested groups. The research in progress was disseminated by publishing some material,[36] presenting at conferences, both in New Zealand and internationally, and in local seminars. All in all, the research and its dissemination have been all-encompassing personally, spiritually and geographically.*

With some exceptions, the architecture and its artists covered here are located on the upper East Coast of the North Island (Fig. 5).† Over the years carving from this area has been categorised in a number of ways:

- **Iwirākau:** This ancestor lived around 1700 and is credited with reinvigorating the art of carving in the Waiapu region of the northern East Coast. Apirana Ngata, in writing about the origins of Māori carving,[37] used the term 'Iwirākau School' to describe the carvers of the house Hinetāpora. (Further on he used the phrase 'Waiapu carvings' to describe a related work in Auckland Museum 'and in Wellington and two very fine carved meeting houses, Porourangi at Waiomatatini and Hinetapora near Ruatoria'.[38])

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* In 2009–10 the author was part of a consultation group for the exhibition *Iwirākau: The House of Ponga* at Tairawhiti Museum in Gisborne that ran from December 2009 to February 2010. This involved exchanging information with curator Jody Wyllie about which carvings to choose, as well as writing the wall text on one of the carvers, Hoani Ngatai. A public talk was presented as part of the seminar series associated with the exhibition, which allowed for the research to be presented to the community for their feedback.

† There are two complete wharenui in museum collections. One is erected – Ruatepupuke II in the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago. The other – Hau Te Ana Nui o Tangaroa – was built at Canterbury Museum but later dismantled and currently resides in the basement. In addition, there are 21 carvings from the wharenui O Hine Waiapu in Auckland Museum (currently catalogued under another house's name).

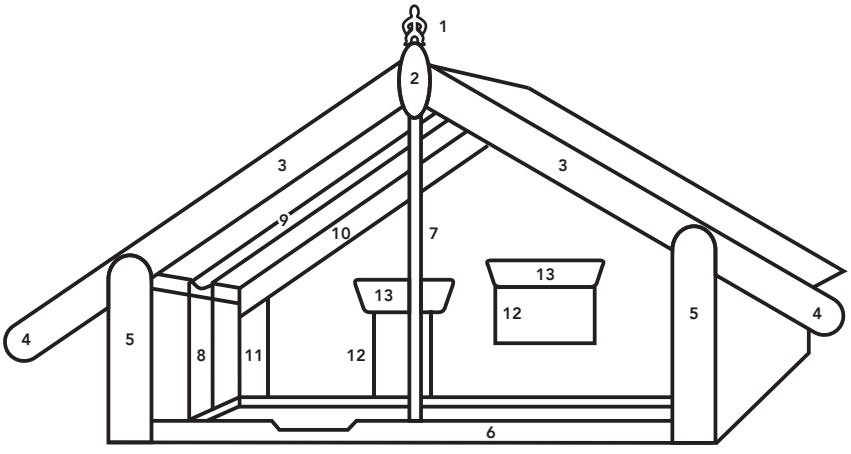
Robert Jahnke also uses the term 'Iwirākau' in preference to 'Waiapu' in accordance with his emphasis on tataitanga in his PhD thesis.

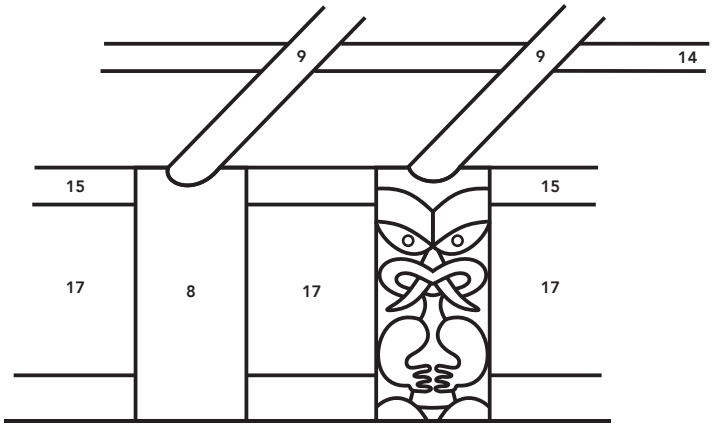
- **Tāpere-Nui-a-Whatonga:** This term refers to the whare wānanga established by Te Whironui, captain of the *Nukutere* waka. Pine Taiapa used the name 'Tāpere School' in a series of lectures in 1953 about carving.[39] He identified the carvers of this school as Te Kihirini, Tamati Ngakaho and Hoani Ngatai.
- **Ngāti Porou:** This is the tribe whose people inhabit the East Coast. The identifier is used by David Simmons in relation to the forms and artists discussed here.
- **Waiapu:** Mead uses this term to refer to the geographic region in which the vast majority of the architecture and artists are located. Most of the settlements in which the meeting houses were built were located in proximity to a river, such as Waiapu, due to its importance as a food resource.
- **Te Tai Rāwhiti / East Coast:** used by Phillipps (1944) and Simmons (1973, 2006) to describe the geographic region in which the architecture and artists reside.

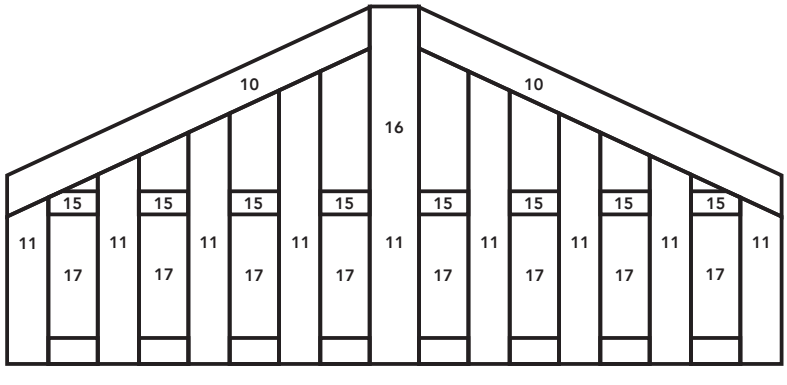
All these terms cover the same houses, artists, patrons and area. A preference for any one of them is as much a political decision as a cultural one. It is unknown what the carvers discussed in *A Whakapapa of Tradition* called themselves, or whether they even considered themselves to be part of a distinct school of carvers. In this book, however, the terms Iwirākau and Tāpere will be used interchangeably, following the lead of Pine Taiapa who is the primary link with the carvers by virtue of his being taught by the most prolific of them, Hone Ngatoto. We now turn and look back many generations to the origins of carving on the East Coast, which was the seedbed from which the Iwirākau carvers drew inspiration and guidance in their practice.

Figure 5: Map of the East Coast showing the main communities. *Drawn by James Walden.*


Cape Runaway
Whangaparāoa
Pōtaka
Hicks Bay
(Wharekahika)
Waihau Bay
Te Araroa
East
Cape
Te Kaha
RANGE
Tikitiki
Rangitukia
Waiōmatatini
Tikapa
Whakawhitirā
Waiapu R.
Port Awanui
Motu R.
Hikurangi
Ruatōria
Mangahānea
Torere
Hiruhārama
ŌPŌTIKI
RAUKUMARA
Waipiro
Waipiro
Bay
Te Puia Springs
Waioeka R.
Tokomaru Bay
Tokomaru
Bay
Tolaga Bay (Ūawa)
Hauiti
Tolaga
Bay
Te Karaka
Waipāoa R.
Waipāoa
Gable End
Foreland
Waituhi
Waihīrere
Whāngarā
Pouawa
GISBORNE
(TŪRANGANUI-A-KIWA)
Manutuke
Pākōwhai
Muriwai
Poverty
Bay
PACIFIC OCEAN
(Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa)
WAIROA
Nūhaka
0 5 10 15
km
Māhia
Peninsula

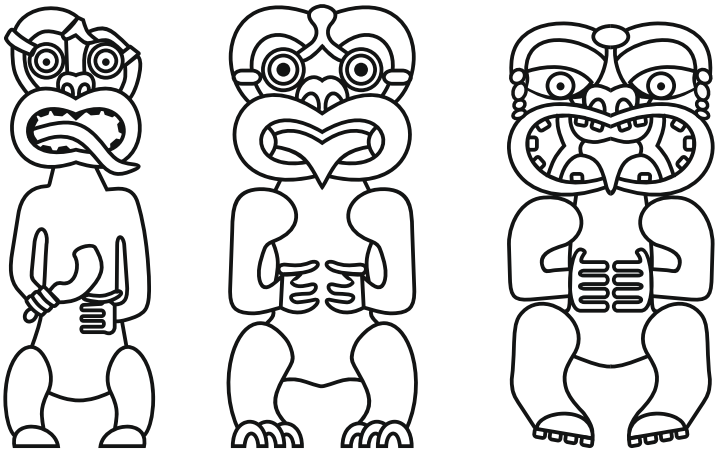






1 Tekoteko
2 Kōruru
3 Maihi
4 Raparapa
5 Amo
6 Paepae
7 Poutouaroaro
8 Poupou
9 Heke
10 Heke tipi
11 Epa
12 Whakawae
13 Pare
14 Kaho
15 Kaho paetara
16 Poutuarongo
17 Tukutuku

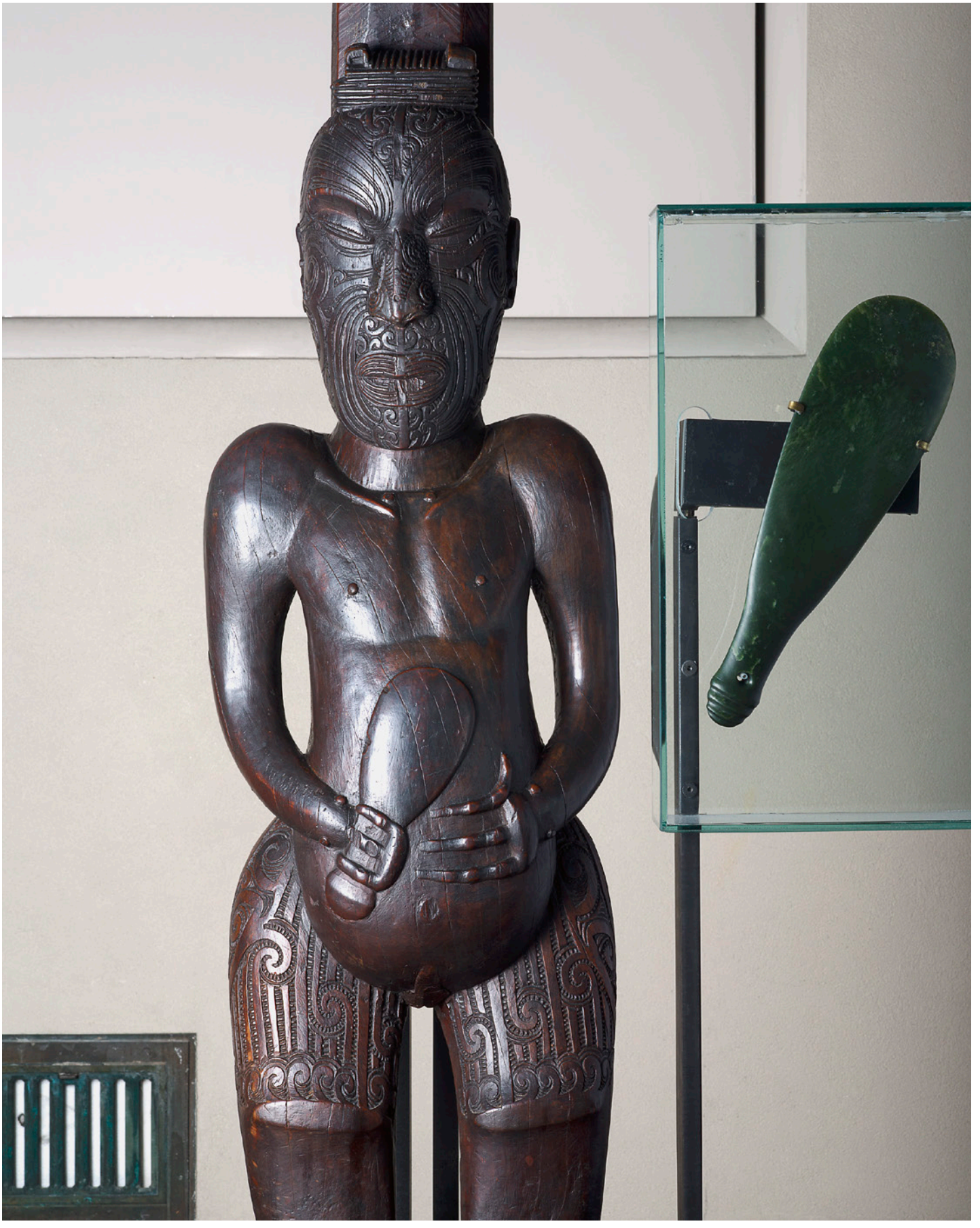
Figure 6: Parts of a whare whakairo. *Drawn by Dylan Matthews, after Starzecka.*



A COMMON TYPE OF NGĀTI POROU FIGURE

NGĀTI POROU TREATMENT OF THE WHEKU FIGURE

Figure 7: Types of Ngāti Porou carved figures. *Drawn by Dylan Matthews, after McEwen.*



Chapter One

Iwirākau Visual Culture to 1830

Our rich oral history demonstrates the ongoing importance of carving and carvers on the East Coast. The story of Ruatepupuke is a critical narrative for Ngāti Porou and tells us that carving first came to us from another realm. The story begins with Te Manu-Hauturuki, the son of Ruatepupuke, who was out on the ocean one day when Tangaroa, God of the Sea, became angry with him and carried him down to his house, Hui-te-ananui, which was under the sea. Ruatepupuke started to worry about his son, and began searching for him. When he found him, Te Manu-Hauturuki had been transformed into the tekoteko (figurehead, see Fig. 6) of Tangaroa's house. Incensed, Ruatepupuke killed those belonging to Tangaroa's house, grabbed his son and some of the exterior carvings from the house, and fled home. In doing so he not only avenged the kidnapping of his son, but also brought the knowledge of carving to this world – 'which has been passed down to the present generation'.[1]

In this narrative Tangaroa's house is described as being fully carved on the interior, and outside in the porch poupou. The carvings inside could talk to one another while those in the porch were silent. Thus, as Ruatepupuke took only external poupou, carving today is silent. Once home, Ruatepupuke kept the carvings for his children and grandchildren 'to admire'. This work later became the prototype for all carving.

Figure 8: The ancestor Iwirākau as represented on a seventeenth- or eighteenth-century poutokomanawa now at Auckland Museum (AM.163). *Photograph by Natalie Robertson with the permission of Te Morehu Te Maro and Auckland War Memorial Museum.*

Further on in the whakapapa is the narrative of Ngae (also known as Kae) of the broken tooth. He and his six brothers lived at Reporua in a carved house named Te Kikihi Taihaki. Surviving a fishing accident that killed his brothers, Ngae came ashore at the chief Tinirau's village. There he borrowed Tutunui, the chief's pet whale, so he could return home. But once he was safely back his greed made him beach the whale, resulting in its death. Ngae's people then cut up the whale and cooked him in a hāngī (earth oven). The smell of this feast soon reached Tinirau who, bereft, sent a group to find Ngae. The group couldn't find him among the people at Reporua so they made everyone laugh, whereupon they recognised Ngae from his broken tooth. Tinirau's group then set about seeking utu (revenge, reciprocity). They recited karakia to make the people fall asleep. Later they transported the whare (house) to Tinirau's village with Ngae and his people asleep inside. When Ngae awoke he was quickly killed and eaten in revenge for killing the whale, and Tinirau kept Ngae's carved house as further payment for the death.

In summarising the place of carving in such oral traditions, Walker comments:

> Clearly, in myths and legends, chiefs had superior houses. The basic architectural elements of the chief's house are cited in the stories. These included interior fireplaces, the doorway in the front wall, the porch, which is such a distinctive feature of meeting-house design, the bargeboards surmounted by the carved human figure of a tekoteko, the poupou, which are a feature of interior walls as both structural and decorative pillars, and the poutokomanawa, the centre-post supporting the ridgepole.[2]

Mohi Turei mentions the hapū Ngāti Nua who were renowned as canoe carvers.[3] They are known to have lived near the mouth of the Waiapu and built a waka taua named *Te Ruru-a-Tarapikau*, which was used by the chief Kakatarau in the battle of Toka-a-Kuku in 1836.[4] Wananga Te Ariki Walker also identifies Umuariki from Tūpāroa as a well-respected warrior and tohunga tārai waka. He is known to have carved a waka for Tū-te-rangi-whiu at Ō-kau-whare-toa in Kawakawa (Te Araroa).[5]

Written accounts also reveal evidence of East Coast carving. An unnamed manuscript dating to the 1870s, possibly written by Mokena Romio, traces the journey of the carving from Ruatepupuke through to Hingangaroa:

> This man, Hingangaroa, was born, grew, and matured. The houseposts brought by Ruatepupuke were shown to him. Later, he erected a house and attached the houseposts to it. Preserved in that house were the models of the manaia, taowaru and many other patterns. When that house was completed Hingangaroa named it Rawheoro [Slow Sun or Rumbling Day]. This house stood at Tolaga Bay, that is, at Mangaheia. The specific place where this house stood was at Mangakuku but it is within the boundaries of the Mangaheia Block. The foundation of this house is still there.[6]

This description tells us several things. First, we are told that Hingangaroa learnt carving from copying the poupou brought from Tangaroa's house. His teacher is not named, which suggests that his whakapapa gave him innate carving skills. Secondly, these poupou were used as templates for later carvings, acting as an encyclopedia of patterns and designs. Thirdly, the account records the practice of naming houses after they were completed. And lastly, the foundations of Hingangaroa's whare were still evident many centuries later.

Through Hingangaroa there is a transition from the distant past to the present, as 'myth now enters the realm of actual tradition'.[7] In addition to Romio's narrative, there is oral evidence that carving may have arrived in the Ūawa area from Hawaiki on the waka *Tere Anini*. On board was Hingangaroa's ancestor Rongomaituaho who is remembered for bringing with him 'various exemplars of carving, adzes and the carvings from the house of Tangaroa'.[8] In this particular story the knowledge of carving originates in the Pacific.

Hingangaroa's wife Iranui was familiar with a range of carving techniques. This narrative is recounted by Apirana Ngata:

> Hingangaroa was a great artist, carver and builder. He was an expert in the building of canoes. It was this that led him and his wife Iranui to visit [her brother] Kahungunu in the Whakaki district of Wairoa. Iranui, then in child, saw Kahungunu and his people finishing the body of a canoe and fixing the prow and stern pieces by tying them on by straight joints, tuporo haumi. A canoe built in this way depended largely on the rauawa or side boards for strength and rigidity. She told of her husband, who was an expert in such matters and showed her brother the new way of dovetailing the pieces in. She effectually if not modestly illustrated what she meant by lying down and placing her brother's legs each side of her own. Hingangaroa was invited to Whakaki and there demonstrated the art of joining haumi.[9]

In another version of this narrative, Kahungunu invited Hingangaroa to supervise the construction of his new house later named Rangikahupapa at Mangakahia pā on the Māhia Peninsula. This suggests that it was Hingangaroa who was the master, or alternately that he was a master *house* builder, whereas Kahungunu's skills lay in building canoes.

Soon after, Hingangaroa returned to Ūawa and established the whare wānanga known as Rāwheoro at his home at Mangakuku. The school is described in a lament written by Tuterangiwhaitiri for his son Rangiuia, which today is regarded as the main source of information about carving and its exponents in this period. Verse 6 is as follows:

> Ko Te Rangi-hopukia, ko Hinehuhurutai,
> Me ko Manutangirua, ko Hingangaroa.
> Ka tu tona whare, Te Ra-wheorao, e;
> Ka tipu te whaihanga, e hika, ki Uawa.
> Ka riro te whakautu, Te Ngaio-tu-ki-Rarotonga,
> Ka riro te manaia, ka riro te taowaru;
> Ka taka i raro na, i a Apanui, e;
> Ka puta ki Turanga, ka hangai atu koe
> Ki te ao o te tonga, i patua ai koe;
> Kia whakarongo mai e to tipuna papa,
> E Te Matorohanga, na i!
>
> *Te Rangi-hopukia had Hinehuhurutai,*
> *Who had Manutangirua, whose son was Hingangaroa.*
> *He it was who established the house, Te Rawheoro,*
> *And arts and crafts flourished, my son, at Uawa.*
> *There came in payment the Ngaio-tu-ki-Rarotonga,*
> *And there went in exchange the Manaia and the Taowaru,*
> *Passing round thence to the north, Te Apanui,*
> *Emerging at Turanga, where you will face*
> *The clouds from the south, whence came your doom,*
> *So shall your elder and parent hear,*
> *Even Te Matorohanga!*[10]

Ngata makes the point that the lament gives 'the most definite and authoritative statement of the existence in the old centre, Ūawa, of a school of arts and crafts'.[11] Te Rāwheoro soon became the leading whare wānanga from Wharekahika