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BIRDS OF A FEATHER

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Atholl Anderson

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MAORI GODSTICKS AND THEIR STYLISTIC AFFINITIES

Peter Gathercole

Maori godsticks have been discussed extensively in the ethnographic literature (Barrow 1959a, 1961, with earlier references), and it is not my intention to recapitulate that discussion here. This paper, offered to Ron Scarlett as a token of a friendship extending over more than twenty years, might perhaps be seen an unfashionable excursion into antiquarianism. But it attempts to be something more, namely a study of structure and form in Maori art, which endeavours to relate the morphology and style of the godstick to the wider panoply of Classic Maori carving. The first part of the discussion is historical; the second is speculative. I hope that the result is to Ron Scarlett's taste.

In his book Te Ika a Maui the Rev. Richard Taylor said: "The Maori could scarcely be said to be idolators, although they certainly had idols, yet they were not generally worshipped, but only used by the priests as adjuncts to their karakias" (Taylor 1870:211). Some of these "adjuncts" were the so-called godsticks, which Taylor described as follows: "The Wakapakoko, or images, thus used, were little more than wooden pegs with a distorted figure of the human head carved on the top; these were about eighteen inches long, the other end was pointed so that they could be stuck in the ground". According to Barrow, who has described 27 examples (Barrow 1959a, 1961), there are two forms: one consists of a carved mask or human head, below which is a shaft, usually recessed to take a flaxen binding, and a peg base, generally pointed. The other form is similar, but with a complete human figure, not simply a head. The length is usually about 14 inches.

Godsticks have received considerable attention from ethnologists, largely, I imagine, because they are one of the few classes of artefact within the corpus of Maori carving about which there is good documentation. This comprises two long statements by Taylor and a letter from the Rev. John Aldred to Sir Walter Buller, dated 1892, enclosing a copy of a letter from the Rev. T. G. Hammond (Barrow 1959a:183-186; Barrow 1961:219-221).

Taylor discussed godsticks both in his manuscript Journal, now in the Turnbull Library, Wellington, in a section probably dated 1844, and in Te Ika a Maui (1855, 1870). The relevant remarks in the Journal are as follows:

"The natives of Wanganui had many Gods, and likewise images of them, the principal of these were Maru, Kahukura, Reua Korongomai.

"In the northern part of the Island I never met with any of these images nor am I aware that any of the Europeans have seen any prior to those which I obtained; for long before the gospel was generally embraced the sound of it

had reached these natives who learning from it the folly of worshipping senseless Idols literally cast away their Gods to the bats and moles concealing them in clefts of rocks or hollow trees, it was only when I enquired about them that they were induced to search for them and bring them to me. Their manner of worshipping these Idols was singular if not unique the head of God alone was represented which was carved on the top of a short stick and ornamented with feathers of the parrot, this was called the Pahau or beard the rest of the stick was bandaged round, when worshipped this image was stuck into the ground with a string attached to it which the worshipper held in his hand, who sitting down and leaning by a stone pillar (called a ngahu or praying stone about 2 feet high) gave the God a little jerk to arrest his attention and then repeated a prayer which being done he stuck a little stick in the ground near the image and then giving another jerk and uttering another prayer he placed another stick by the side of the former to remind the God how many prayers had been said, this was done as often as a prayer was uttered" (Taylor n.d. (1):542-543).

In Te Ika a Maui, Taylor's comments contain more detail on the ritual involved:

"The Wakapakoko, or images, thus used, were little more than wooden pegs with a distorted figure of the human head carved on the top; these were about eighteen inches long, the other end was pointed so that they could be stuck in the ground. In respect to idolatry, the Maori differed from almost every other heathen people, in not having images of their gods of gigantic size, . . . they seemed to have a more spiritual idea of their gods; the only exception, a large human figure over the chief entrance of the Ohine Mutu pa at Rotorua, the door being between the legs of the figure, but this was not an idol, merely a figure to strike terror in the enemy. These images were only thought to possess virtue or peculiar sanctity from the presence of the god they represented when dressed up for worship; at other times they were regarded only as bits of ordinary wood.

This dressing consisted in the first place of the pahau, or beard, which was made by a fringe of the bright red feathers of the kaka, parrot, —next of the peculiar cincture of sacred cord with which it was bound; this mystic bandage was not only tied on in a peculiar way by the priest, who uttered his most powerful spells all the time he was doing it, but also whilst he was twisting the cord itself, and lastly, painting the entire figure with the sacred kura; this completed the preparation for the reception of the god who was by these means constrained to come and take up his abode in it when invoked. But the presence of the atua was not supposed to be confined to these images, he more frequently took up his abode in the priest himself, who, when thus filled with his spirit, was so violently distorted in all his limbs, so frantic in his movements, foaming at his mouth as to appear filled with the god, and no longer the master of his own actions, his body was then entirely surrendered to him; every word he uttered whilst in that state was regarded as proceeding from the god, and not from himself; This was thought to be the case after uttering certain karakias, at other times he was only an ordinary person.

When the chief wanted to carry any measure which he felt he had not sufficient influence to do by his own mana, or power, he usually called in the aid

of the tohunga, who not only managed to be inspired when thus wanted, but to utter just what agreed with his chief's wish, which coming direct from the atua at once convinced the people.

To return to the subject of idols. The chief use to which they were devoted was to render sacred their plantations; the image was stuck in the ground and powerful spells uttered to make the men scared, that none of those employed should leave the work before it was finished, pass over, or even enter them, except for their cultivation. This was done at the tokanga, or planting; the ceremony was again repeated when the kumara began to grow, and again at the haukakenga, or in-gathering" (Taylor 1870:211-213).

In his book Taylor published two of his own drawings, one illustrating the ritual of a tohunga addressing a decorated godstick, to which he is attached by a cord, and another of four godsticks in a basket (cf. Barrow 1959a:185, 187). Two of the artefacts illustrated are in the University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, one is in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford; and one is in the Oldman Collection in the National Museum, Wellington.

Taylor's remarks indicate that, prior to their conversion to Christianity, tohungas in the Wanganui area engaged in ritual whereby they became possessed by atua, which also possessed carved and appropriately decorated sticks. This transference from a profane to a sacred state would only occur if both tohunga and stick undertook a precise ritual, the purpose of which could be to assist the chief "to carry any measure which he felt he had not sufficient influence to do by his own mana, or power" and "to render sacred their plantations." The gods which could be invoked were not apparently limited in number or interest. The Wanganui Maoris "had many Gods, and likewise images of them, the principal of these were Maru and Kahukura, and Reua Korongomai." According to Buck (1950:461) Maru and Kahukura were important war gods of the Taranaki and Wanganui tribes, and Rongomai was a tribal god of the Ngati Tuwharetoa, his symbols being shooting stars and comets. The Pitt Rivers' specimen was identified by Taylor as being Rongomai (Barrow 1961:228), the Cambridge ones as Hukere (according to Buck "probably a local god in the Whanganui district" (Buck 1950:469)) and Kahukura (Barrow 1959a:188-9), while the Oldman specimen in Wellington has a label which says "mokotiti a New Zealand God from NZ" (Barrow 1959a:192). Other specimens attributed by Barrow to Taylor were apparently associated with Maru (Barrow 1959a:189, 190, 193).

Taylor's evidence is very convincing. He went to New Zealand as a missionary in 1839, aged 34, with prior experience at Parramatta, a Cambridge graduate with a strong interest in botany and geology. For a time he was at Waimate North, but in 1843 he was appointed to the Wanganui mission. He stayed in Wanganui for most of the remainder of his life, dying there in 1873. He made two visits to England; in 1855, when he saw the first edition of Te Ika a Maui through the press, and between 1867 and 1870, when he published The Past and Present of New Zealand. He was thus a notable observer and scholar. His Journal entry for 1844 can be regarded as important field evidence concerning the use of godsticks, and the account in Te Ika a Maui as a more considered and literary version of that evidence. The fact that he

sought for and obtained some actual specimens from converts who had previously hidden them "in the clefts of rocks or hollow trees" indicates that Taylor had a strong interest in the sticks themselves, in the associated ritual, and its paraphernalia.

The information provided by Taylor is confirmed and to some extent amplified by information given by the Rev. John Aldred in a letter to Sir Walter Buller in 1892 (Barrow 1961:219-222). Aldred (1818-1894) was a Wesleyan missionary who possessed three godsticks, now in the Auckland Museum. Aldred said that these "came into my hands . . . between the years 1845 and 1847. I obtained them through Mr. William Hough, who was at that time the Wesleyan catechist stationed at or near Waimate, . . . between Wanganui and New Plymouth. The principal tribes then living in that district were the Ngatiawa and the Ngatiruanui, and the gods now in question probably belonged to the former. The information I received regarding them was given to me personally by Mr. Hough, and was confirmed by certain of the older Maoris from the same district who were known to me, and whose trustworthiness and knowledge of the mythology of the tribes named gave weight to their statements. The images were parted with by the Maoris when they embraced Christianity, and were said to be of great age . . . Among the Maoris the sole custody of the gods lay with the *tohunga* (priest or diviner), and they were seen by eyes other than his upon special occasions only When invoking a particular spirit the *tohunga* would hold the image of that god in his hand while he uttered his incantations" (Barrow 1961:219-220).

Aldred had forgotten the names of two of the three gods concerned, and enlisted the help of the Rev. T. G. Hammond (1846-1926), another Wesleyan missionary then at Patea, who was "an acknowledged authority" on Maori traditions. Hammond identified the three gods as Tangaroa (or Turanga), Maru, "the most important atua of these people" (some of whose images still survived at the time of writing), and Rongo, "as the descendants of the Turi always offered incantations to Rongo in order to secure good crops" (Barrow 1961:221). These identifications amplified Aldred's own recollections. The latter included the remark that "Te Maru is short and thick set, well corded, and coloured red. The cord that entwines his body was *tapu* (sacred), and within it was said to lie the secret of this deity's mighty power" (Barrow 1961:220).

It is, of course, probable that both Aldred and Hammond had read Taylor's *Te Ika a Maui*, and may have been influenced by his remarks on the sticks. But it is clear from the letters concerned that each was casting his mind back to his own earlier experiences: Aldred to 1845-1847, and Hammond to about twenty years later. They added new information. Aldred said the sticks were held in the hand during a *tohunga's* ritual, not stuck in the ground as Taylor reported. Hammond named another god, Tangaroa, in addition to those referred to by Taylor. We thus have evidence that godsticks were associated with at least six gods, at two or even three levels of importance in the Maori pantheon. Tangaroa, god of seafarers and fishermen, and Rongo, god of agriculture, were two of the six main "departmental" gods, to use Best's classificatory term. Maru, Kahukura, Rongomai and Hukere were recorded as tribal gods in the Wanganui-Taranaki areas¹. Moreover,

as Taylor said that a tohunga could be used by a chief to "utter just what agreed with his chief's wish" (Taylor 1870:212), it appears very likely that a number and variety of gods could be invoked in the operation of the ritual on different occasions. To judge from Taylor's rather cynical comment, it is possible that rituals were occasionally used to invoke "family and inferior gods", as Buck termed them (1950:462-464), sometimes, as he noted, by charlatans. Be that as it may, the godstick ritual was not only very systematic and controlled but also extremely flexible. Some sticks were clearly associated with particular gods, but no stylistic design was peculiar to any one of them. Indeed Barrow has maintained that at least 15 of his 27 sticks, whatever their god associations, were made in the Wanganui carving style. However ambiguous might have been the relationship between tohunga and atua, the material expression in carving style appears to have been a matter more of social tradition and aesthetics rather than specific ritual affiliation.

This leads me on to three other aspects of this body of evidence to which I wish to refer. Firstly, the styles represented are quite varied. Aside from the Wanganui specimens, one is in the Taranaki style; one in the East Coast-Bay of Plenty; at least two are indeterminate by the canons of Classic Maori carving, and five have features reminiscent of carvings, such as the Kaitaia lintel, which appear to pre-date Classic Maori art (Barrow 1959a:188-189, 191-192; 1961:222-226; cf. Mead 1975). Some of these five specimens may be in a style contemporary with the Archaic phase of New Zealand prehistory. One, from Kai-iwi, Wanganui (Barrow 1961:222-223), has a mask stylistically reminiscent of a recently discovered fragment from the western Bay of Plenty, which Simmons considers to be the head of a godstick, carved in a style similar to that known ethnologically in the Cook Islands (Simmons 1973). Two others, from Moa Flat and Wickliffe Bay, Otago, respectively (Barrow 1961:223-226), have features which invite comparison with ethnological material from Easter Island. The specimen from Wickliffe Bay was found in an undated archaeological deposit. It is similar in form to a possible godstick found by Dr. Peter Coutts in 1968 in a cave at Southport, Chalky Inlet, Fiordland (SP/5) in a prehistoric context (Coutts 1972)². In other words, although the evidence is sparse and rather ambiguous, there is no reason to assume that godsticks were either confined to the Wanganui area or restricted in their use to the late prehistoric or protohistoric periods. Indeed, the existence of similar stick gods in Hawaii (Barrow 1961:217-218, with refs.) and the fact that the pattern of the flaxen binding on some Maori specimens is similar to that found "on the shaft of a god symbol in Mangaia where it is termed inaere and is highly valued" (Buck 1950:469), goes some way to suggest that godsticks, sui generis, had considerable antiquity in eastern Polynesia.

Secondly, four of the sticks discussed by Barrow, i.e. specimens from Wanganui, Taranaki, Waimate and Moa Flat, have double, so-called janus, heads, facing opposite ways (Barrow 1959a:191-192; 1961:218, 223-224). Another Wanganui-style specimen now in Ipswich Museum has a rudimentary janus design not on its head, but on its peg base, below the median recess (Barrow 1961:216-217). Of these janus examples, the Waimate specimen is the only one to have an association with a particular god (Tangaroa), and it is one of six godsticks in Barrow's corpus to have their bindings intact. The janus form was a well-established constituent of Maori carving. It is

known, though rarely, on tiki (e.g. a specimen (D.36.901) in Otago Museum, Dunedin), and more commonly on taiaha and shell trumpets. The form is echoed in the way identical heads are sometimes found at the opposite ends of feather boxes, serving as handles. In eastern Polynesia the form is found, for example, in the Austral Islands on the handles of fans and fly-whisks, and in the Marquesas Islands on stone pounders, and on stone and bone tiki. Here also, therefore, is an indication that the Classic Maori godstick, in this case with janus head, embodied characteristics of some antiquity in eastern Polynesia.

The third point I wish to make refers to some of Skinner's remarks concerning the Cambridge specimens acquired by Taylor (Skinner 1922). More or less in passing he pointed out that the local god Maru was "presumably a deified ancestor, as it is recorded of him (Taylor 1870:138) that he was killed and eaten when on earth" (Skinner 1922:169). In other words, godsticks associated with Maru, at least, may well have occupied a similar position in the minds of Maoris as did the carvings of ancestors which graced so much of Maori architecture. Structurally, the Maru godsticks might have provided a bridge between the worlds of gods and of men. The dichotomy may have been partial rather than absolute.

Skinner went on to stress a point noted but not given prominence by other commentators. While remarking that sets of godsticks "are by no means common", he noted that "they appear usually to go in threes" and he listed four such sets: the three Aldred specimens in the Auckland Museum, the three from Taylor at Cambridge, three in the British Museum, and three in a private collection. In two of the four cases quoted, one stick of the three has a janus head (Skinner 1922:172). It seems to me very likely that the "ideal" set of godsticks comprised three specimens, one of which was a janus. It is worth asking why this arrangement should be so, but in order to do so, the question must be set in a wider frame of reference.

Sufficient has been said about the function and likely antiquity of godsticks for it to be accepted that the objects had conventionalised meanings as physical expressions of persistent patterns of ideas, even if their specific designs changed over time. These changes would have been particularly sensitive, I believe, in the treatment of the three major components of Maori carving, namely, the representation of the human figure (especially the head), the manaia motif, and associated curvilinear patterns. To put the point in another way, I wish to explore the question why certain godsticks, e.g. those examples from western Bay of Plenty (Simmons 1973) and Otago (Barrow 1961:223-226) have a simple (Archaic phase?) decorative patterning, while others, notably in the Wanganui style, conform to designs we call Classic Maori. Logically, however flimsy our evidence to document it, a change of style must have occurred. This change must also have reflected a larger process of social transformation. The very hegemony of Classic Maori carving revealed to Cook and his colleagues in the 1770s, demonstrating a close interrelationship of material and esoteric life, indicates that this was so.

In his paper "Aspects of Symbolism and Composition in Maori Art", Jackson devoted much attention to the symbolism of lintel (pare) carving

(Jackson 1972:40-60). Lintels, of course, bring together human figures, the manaia, and curvilinear designs, as carved motifs which have to be considered in an interrelated way. But, as Jackson showed, the significance of these three elements did not rest there. It permeated the whole composition of the lintel at numerous levels. Jackson demonstrated that a trinary principle operated in the composition of the lintel. For example: "At this point it is possible to account for the 3-fingered hand in Maori art on the basis of a logical consistency which it shows with other aspects of composition. Sufficient has been said to make it clear that the number three is central to the principles of composition underlying pare design. I have noted how the three elements are brought into unity through powerful and rhythmic deployment. The three fingers unified in the single upraised arm might be considered to be consistent with the overall concept of the design. Its meaning is to be found in the total positional sense, not in isolation. Taken as an isolated referential symbol it would defy attempts to elucidate it" (Jackson 1972:48). Later in the paper, when discussing "The pare and Maori social life", Jackson argued that the lintel was an example of condensation symbolism for the dynamic structure of Maori society. "The process described here is logically and symbolically connected with the processes of fission and fusion by which lineage segments in Maori society (or even individuals) merged together to become a single identity—the tribe—or fragmented to live and act as partial units. The pare compositions permit both a statement of independence for the half-groups (as it were) and a statement of interdependence concerning the way in which these half-groups combined with one another to make up a whole, a wider unity, a tribe. The necessities and actualities of tribal segmentation and fragmentation are admitted. But the principles underlying this fission and fusion of tribal elements or individuals are condensed into a single powerful symbolic composition in the pare" (Jackson 1972:57).

This argument provides a lead for a deeper understanding of the meaning of godsticks and their relation to the development of Maori carving. Jackson's trinary principle can be put alongside Skinner's comment that the sticks "appear usually to go in threes." Moreover, if one accepts the notion of the "ideal" set of sticks comprising two sticks with single heads and one with a janus head, then the trinary symbolism is taken further. One can suggest that the three sticks correspond to the structural arrangement of figures on the lintel, with a central figure and two manaia at the margin. But one could go further and suggest that the janus headed godstick is itself structurally related to the lintel in that it incapsulates the lintel design. If the design on the janus is unrolled so that it is seen not in the round, but in one plane, the lintel design appears. One of the human heads is now in the centre of the design, flanked by curvilinear patterns, with two emergent manaia, one at each side, which are "created" out of the single human head from the opposite side of the janus, this head having been split down its centre. To carry out this unrolling extends the argument made by Archey (e.g. 1933) and others, on morphological grounds, that the manaia is the representation not of a bird, but of a human head divided into two parts.

This argument suggests that due to the basic trinary structure of the symbolism of Maori carving (and so of Maori life), godsticks could have been organised in trinary sets. Such an arrangement conformed to an ideological

"ideal". But why was the design of the stick itself transformed from its Archaic-like form to a Classic Maori form, to revert to a question I posed earlier? I suggest that it might be possible to answer this by considering the form and possible origin of the manaia design, a design, incidentally, which has always appeared to be the least Polynesian of motifs, and has caused most debate as to the origins of the Classic Maori style. What I shall suggest is a paradigm of artistic transition, in which a carving tradition, epitomised by "earlier" godsticks, is transformed into something recognisably similar in form and function, but is more flexible in design and is geared to new social needs and aspirations (just as the Kaitaia ridge cresting is to later Classic Maori lintels).

Firstly, what does the word manaia mean? Mc Ewen has said: "Williams' Dictionary of the Maori Language gives the following meanings for manaia: a grotesque beaked figure sometimes introduced into carving; ornamental work, a lizard; the sea-horse; a raft; and as an adjective fastidious. It is interesting that in Samoa the word (with the causative prefix) fa'amanaia means to decorate or embellish. In Niue the cognate word fakamanaia means the same. As the main use of the manaia is to embellish the principal figures, it seems very likely that the name simply means "embellishment" or decoration" (McEwen 1966:410a).

These meanings, with the exception of "raft", are consistent with one another. "Raft" might be regarded either as an aberrant meaning or one which is linked by some sort of metaphorical association with the others. Information available about Maori rafts indicates that they were flimsy, expendable things, usually made of reeds bound into a symmetrical shape with an identical bow and stern, the shape made inevitable by the method of production (Best 1925:136-140). So one of the meanings of manaia might be "like a raft" or "something symmetrical".

The manaia design, however, is not itself symmetrical. Therefore, rather than looking for symmetry in the manaia itself, we might look for examples of carving where the manaia is used specifically to bring symmetry to a larger design. The clearest example where this occurs is its use at each end of the lintel, balancing in its overall design the central human figure and associated curvilinear patterns. Lintels were much esteemed objects, and exhibit such control of workmanship in the balance achieved between these three elements in their design, that they probably reflect a well-established carving tradition. One of the functions of the manaia, therefore, could have been to complete a design on an artefact which had an important meaning; for example, in the case of the lintel, to neutralise the possibly harmful effects of the tapu of persons who passed under it. So the lintel and its attendant design must have possessed its own sacred quality. But why was this particular design, incorporating the manaia, the one that was conventionally employed? Did it also have its own sanctity, independent of its associations with the lintel?

Let us go back to the Maori raft for a moment. Like the lintel, the raft is symmetrical in shape. In addition, however, because its terminals are identical, it looks the same from either end, and it is symmetrical from any viewpoint. This is not true of the lintel, which must be viewed only in one plane. If manaia can mean "raft", "like a raft" or something symmetrical",

it may also mean "something that looks the same from each end"—which a lintel does not. One might suggest, however, that the sacred quality of the lintel design is due, in part at least, to the fact that it is also associated with the design of objects which are themselves sacred, symmetrical, and look the same from each end, for example janus-headed godsticks, the sacred quality of which is so well documented. This form of godstick has two of the design elements found on the lintel: the human figure and curvilinear ornament. Moreover, when the stick is viewed from the side, the head is remarkably reminiscent of the manaia, and may, in fact, be its prototype. As we have already seen, when unrolled, the janus is transformed into the lintel. In its new position, therefore, the manaia is indeed like a raft. On the one hand, it can be incorporated in the representation of a janus head, which "looks the same from each end." On the other hand, it can make the design on a lintel "become symmetrical." It is created as an independent element when an all-round design is re-expressed in one plane.

This hypothesis may reflect nothing more than a jigsaw game with shapes which, because they were part of the stylistic formulae of Classic Maori carving, inevitably possessed numerous technical and symbolic interrelationships in common. However, there may be more to the hypothesis than this. It seems likely that Maori carving incorporated visual games³. Generally speaking, Maori designs were not just formal alignments of discrete parts. The parts were dynamically related, expressing relationships between the human world and the spirit world of gods and ancestors (Mead 1975:177). The division of a phenomenon into two opposing yet complementary segments, as I have suggested for the genesis of the manaia, was a well-known formula in Maori epistemology. We have seen a good example in the sacred/profane complementary dichotomy found in godstick ritual. The principle of artistic transformation, where a design was transferred from one medium or locale to another, was also known. A dramatic example was the practice by non-literate Maoris in the early 19th Century to sign a document by drawing on it their own moko, quite unprompted. It can be suggested, therefore, that the transformation of sacred godstick designs into lintel designs can be seen as an analogue of, if not the occasion for, the emergence of the manaia. One ideal aesthetic expression was transformed into another, by expressing the same stylistic formula in a new way. Innovation was a novel statement of tradition.

Can we suggest when this transformation process might have occurred? Mead has noted that work by Robertson (1965) on tribal traditions, and by Groube (1970) and Simmons (1971) on the relationship between tradition and archaeology, provides a "growing body of evidence to strengthen the hypothesis that the great population movements associated with the Hekenga or Great Migration were really internal movements like those of the Awa people" (Mead 1975:182). In other words, the Hawaiki of tradition lay not in eastern Polynesia, as Smith and Best had thought, but in North Auckland, and the migration took place southwards to the Bay of Plenty, Taranaki and Hawkes Bay. Mead has suggested that these movements were associated in some way with a change in ideology and social organisation, when canoe captains replaced time-honoured ancestors as eponymous reference points in the reckoning of genealogies (Mead 1975:202). If these hypotheses can indeed be

substantiated, then the momentous social and ideological changes involved could have been expressed in carving. They could have provided the catalyst for the coming together of hitherto discrete design elements to form the patterns we label as distinctively Classic Maori, incorporating the transformation process suggested above. It may have been the social upheavals implicit in the Hekenga which changed Maori carving from being predominantly an art form oriented to the dialogue between man and his gods, of which the godstick rituals were an important surviving component, into one which emphasised social solidarity and kinship with the ancestors, as epitomised in the canoe traditions.

One might recall in conclusion Barrow's remarks in 1959 when introducing his discussion on free-standing Maori images. He noted that representations of ancestors "are abundant especially in relation to architecture whilst the manufactured symbols of the Maori gods are comparatively rare. This situation reflects the shift from the essentially religious symbolism of central Polynesian carving to the more secular and social function of the New Zealand forms" (Barrow 1959b:111). This discussion on godsticks and their stylistic affinities underscores Barrow's comments.

NOTES

1. The appellation "mokotiti" on the Oldman specimen in the National Museum, Wellington, could be a variant of "mokotiki", meaning "decorated head."
2. Now in Otago Museum (L75.6). The stick came from the sole cultural layer (layer 2), 60 cm thick. Coutts accepts two C14 dates for this layer: 615 \pm 61B.P. and 706 \pm 30B.P., but rejects a third of 980 \pm 80 B.P. as being too early (information from G. S. Park).
3. Mrs Jean Smith has pointed out to me in correspondence that, similarly, Maori mythology subsumed verbal games.

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