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SOME THOUGHTS ON THE IDENTITY OF THE NGAI TAHU

Helen Leach
Anthropology Department
University of Otago

The idea of a deliberate migration of a North Island group into the South Island in comparatively recent times appears in the writings of historians (McLintock, 1949: 31), prehistorians (Green, 1977: 38; Golson, 1960: 389; Duff, 1962: 209) and early commentators on Maori life and customs (Shortland, 1851). Frequently the group is identified as the Ngai Tahu. Examining the validity of the idea is not a straightforward task, however, for once the tribal name Ngai Tahu is applied, the only information strictly relevant to the issue is Maori oral tradition. As Golson pointed out (1960: 380) archaeological evidence does not furnish proof of tribal identity. Despite this handicap, archaeologists have a genuine and legitimate interest in the dispersal and movements of prehistoric groups. In particular cases they may even be able to demonstrate cultural continuity with a named group of the 19th century.

Such continuity was not explicitly argued by the excavators of Pari Whakatau in Marlborough. Duff (1961), on the basis of a verbal description, identified a particular site (S55/7) with the traditionally known Pati Whakatau (also called Pakihi), and proceeded from there to test the one type of evidence (archaeological) against the other (traditional). The site was excavated by Duff and Bell in 1955 (also 1956-8), and subsequently by Scarlett in 1960 and Fomison in 1962 (reported by Trotter, 1975: 145).

Traditions describe Pakihi as a defended settlement built by Tukiauau, son of a Ngati Mamoe chief Rakaimomona who had been killed by a spear thrown by the Ngai Tahu chief Manawa. This incident had taken place at the Ngati Mamoe settlement of Omihi (Goose Bay). One of the Ngai Tahu warriors, Maru, who had Ngati Mamoe connections, persuaded Tukiauau not to flee further south but to build his pa at Pakihi, from where he might be able to obtain revenge on Manawa. A truce prevailed long enough for Manawa to propose betrothal of his son to a Ngati Mamoe occupant of the pa. When the time came for the formal betrothal, Manawa arrived at the pa with his followers who included Maru's brother and other relatives. Maru's kin were shown to one house while Manawa and his companions were escorted to a large house set apart for their reception. As he entered the house Tukiauau struck him on the head twice. Trapped inside, the dying Manawa urged his followers to escape. All but one were unsuccessful. A year elapsed before the Ngai Tahu came to take their revenge. They laid siege to the pa but made no progress until one of their party, who had relatives inside and was accustomed to visiting the pa to talk peace, set fire to the roof thatch using a hot oven stone. Because a strong nor-westerly wind was blowing, the pa was destroyed, although Tukiauau escaped (Duff, 1961: 272; Stack, 1877).

Duff had several reasons for excavating the site. Since it was believed to be a Ngati Mamoe pa, artefacts recovered from it should prove

once and for all whether the Ngati Mamoe were of pre-Fleet, non-Polynesian stock as Best (1916) had maintained, or were a 'Fleet' tribe from northern Hawkes Bay as the earliest recorders of South Island traditions had maintained. Furthermore, the visiting American scholar Bell wished to excavate a house site, and this site had clearly visible rectangular depressions each surrounded by a raised rim. Orthodox opinion at the time equated large rectangular pits with houses.

Nineteen pits were recorded in two clusters. The largest, 11 x 7.5m was assumed to be the house in which Manawa had been trapped. It was excavated along with two others. No hearths were recovered, the post-holes were found to be closely spaced (<1m), and the pit floors were clean. Duff ascribed this to "the brief occupation and uncertain tenure of Pariwhakatau" (Duff, 1961:284), yet there had been time for the two smaller pits to have been re-framed (ibid.: 271). Today, the paucity of artefacts might be explained by adopting the view that these pits were food stores, not houses. Until open spaces between the pits are tested for the presence of post-holes and slab hearths, the accuracy of Duff's identification of raised rimmed pit houses must remain in doubt.

Among the most important findings of this excavation were adzes of the Classic Maori type (Type 2B, Duff 1956) with rounded rectangular section. Although comparable in shape to many North Island examples these had been made in poor quality Nelson-Marlborough argillite. As well, the fish-hooks were of Classic type, including a notched barracouta point, a barbed composite bait-hook point and a shank-barbed one-piece hook, all types absent from local Archaic sites. Thus excavations at this site reinforced the view that the late culture of this coast was strongly influenced by external styles. The rectangular raised-rim pit and the shank-barbed hook relate specifically to the east coast of the North Island (Trotter, 1956: 251); H. Leach, 1976: 113, 132-3; Law, 1969: 233).

The archaeological evidence from the Kaikoura coast was seen to support a model of cultural replacement rather than the blending of local and intrusive styles (Duff, 1962: 209). This conclusion was also reached by some excavators working further south on Banks Peninsula (Thacker, 1961) and in Otago. In 1959 Lockerbie enumerated twelve major differences in technology and material culture between the Classic Maori site of Murdering Beach, Otago and earlier Moa-hunter sites (Lockerbie, 1959: 92-3). Subsequent investigations at the 18th century site of Katiki Point (Trotter, 1967), Mapoutahi Pa (Anderson and Sutton, 1973), Huriawa Pa (Mackay and Trotter, 1961; H. Leach, 1969), Taiaroa Head (H. Leach and Hamel, 1978) and Long Beach (Hamel, Leach and Fyfe, n.d.) have in general substantiated this list. Although there has been no definitive study of the Classic Maori material culture of Murihiku, the contents of these sites share characteristic elements with those of Banks Peninsula and the Kaikoura coast. In particular one can cite elaborate notching of lure points, composite bait-hook points with serrations and multiple barbs,

extensive use of human bone for fish hooks, barracouta points made from split dog mandibles, frequent use of nephrite, flutes made of Diomedea wing bones with incised decoration, small adzes of 2B type, the manufacture of patu, much use of kokowai (red ochre), and clear evidence of cannibalism.

Hjarno's (1967: 41) study of fish-hooks concluded that the many new types which appear in the late sites suggest "a sudden break in material culture, with an essemblage which is not a cultural development from the earlier phase. Such marked change is normally explained archaeologically by a migration of new people into an area." Once again a northern origin was proposed.

On the grounds of material culture alone, the thesis of a substantial migration southwards would appear to have been proved. A major discrepancy arises, however, if linguistic evidence is taken into account. During the transition from the whaling period to the time of official land sales, well-educated Europeans such as Shortland who made a census of Murihiku Maori in 1842-3, and Watkin, first minister at Waikouaiti (now Karitane) from 1840-2, discovered that there was a distinct dialect being spoken by South Island Maori (Shortland, 1851: 305-315; Watkin, n.d.). The majority of the southern dialect speakers claimed to belong to the Ngai Tahu tribe and sometimes acknowledged a few Ngati Mamoe ancestors. For example, Shortland's chief informant Tuhawaiki had a Ngati Mamoe grandmother, while Tairaroa's grandfather had one Ngai Tahu and one Ngati Mamoe wife. It is possible that the dialect was transmitted by the latter tribe, who were generally believed to have arrived in the South Island at least a century before the Ngai Tahu. To examine this hypothesis, one must return to the oral traditions, to determine if either tribe had sufficient time in isolation in the South Island to develop a distinctive dialect. In this respect, the question of reliability and origin of sources becomes paramount.

Published versions of Ngai Tahu traditions begin with Shortland's "The Southern Districts of New Zealand" (1851). This presents a historical synthesis of the information which Shortland obtained from Ngai Tahu chiefs such as Tuhawaiki, Te Warekorari, Te Huruhuru, and Te Rehe, some eighty years before. Seven genealogical tables accompanied this account and it is interesting to note that on some, spelling of names is in a mixture of northern and southern styles. For example in his Table B, Ta wha-ki-te-raki appears as the father of Rangitumana.

In 1859 Stack took up his missionary post at Kaiapoi and began the collection of traditions and genealogies. These were first published anonymously in the Church Quarterly Journal in 1862. He wrote:

"The following traditions of the island in which we live was obtained from an old chief at Kaiapoi" (Anon, 1862).

Then he proceeded to describe how the Waitaha were the first occupants of

the South Island, arriving some 500 years before 1860, how they were conquered by the Ngati Mamoe who in turn were compelled to submit to the Ngai Tahu "about two hundred years ago" (ibid.). The traditions included the story of Tuteuretira and his cousin Apoka in the Marlborough Sounds, the canoe battle involving Te Kaue off Waipapa, the siege of Peketa, and the events at Pari Whakatau.

In 1871 Stack commented on an address by von Haast to the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury. His remarks indicated that he had begun to work out genealogical dates for the arrival of the various tribes (Stack, 1871" 107-8):

"The present Maori inhabitants - Ngai Tahu - have occupied this island for about ten generations. Allowing twenty-five years for a generation, their occupation dates back 250 years... The Ngai Tahu found this island in the possession of the Ngati-mamoe, another Maori tribe, whom they exterminated or absorbed. The Ngati-mamoe having previously succeeded Waitaha, a tribe descended from a chief of that name, arrived from Hawaiki in the canoe 'Arawa', twenty generations ago".

Mackay's synthesis of South Island traditional history appeared in 1873. It quoted long passages verbatim and unacknowledged from Shortland's "The Southern Districts of New Zealand" (B.F. Leach, 1978), and even more from Stack's contribution to the Church Quarterly Journal.

In 1877 Stack published his major paper entitled "Sketch of the Traditional History of the South Island Maoris". He acknowledged that his primary source was the late "Peta Te Hone" (in the genealogy spelt Pita te Hori) of Kaipoi. He added:

"Since 1863, I have repeatedly submitted my notes to chiefs in all parts of this island, and have carefully recorded their comments, and this paper contains the result of my inquiries" (Stack, 1877: 57).

For the first time the details of events at Hataitai are included, certain names are changed (Kaue becomes Te Kane, Tukaruatoro becomes Tukaroua) and the events leading up to the Pari Whakatau massacre appear in their modern revised version. In the 1862 account, Manawa demanded Ahuarangi, the daughter of Tukiauu as a wife for his son. In the later version, Manawa asked for Te ahua rangi, the daughter of Tuwhakapau. The chronology was now based on 20 years per generation "as the Maoris married early" (Stack, 1898: 14).

Later, Stack was able to supply more details of local events when he contributed the Maori History section of "Tales of Banks Peninsula" (Jacobson, 1893). The basic framework remained unchanged, as it did when his "Kaiaophia: The Story of a Siege" was published, also in 1893. No new

material was introduced in his 1898 work "South Island Maoris: A Sketch of their History and Legendary Lore" which closely followed the 1877 text. On this occasion, however, the name of his main informant appeared as Pita Te Hori and he stated that his information was "collected between 1859 and 1863, from native chiefs residing in different parts of the island..." (Stack, 1898: 4), whereas, in 1877 he had indicated that these other sources were consulted after 1863.

Thus by the turn of the century, South Island traditions had been published, republished, plagiarised and mis-spelt to a degree that largely obscured the original sources. Of these, the most important seem to have been Tuhawaiki talking to Shortland in 1843 and Pita te Hori in conversations with Stack between 1859 and 1862.

A belated attempt to obtain more details of Murihiku events was made by Beattie, who published his "Traditions and Legends. Collected from the Natives of Murihiku" between 1916 and 1922. Working with elderly informants he contributed much new material. Although his informants were already acquainted with Stack's publications, on several occasions they tried to resolve discrepancies in names and details of events. For example, Tu te makohu, a Ngati Mamoe chief, who killed the famous Ngai Tahu chief Kaweriri at Aparima, was said by Stack's sources to have been pursued and killed at Teihoka, further up river. Beattie's Foveaux Straits informants who claimed descent mainly from Ngati Mamoe and Waitaha ancestors described Teihoka as a battle won by the Ngati Mamoe in Colac Bay, and stated that Tu te makohu died of old age (Beattie, 1919).

The question of tribal identity in oral traditions should be examined in the knowledge that Canterbury Maori recognized far fewer Ngati Mamoe in their recent ancestry than Otago Maori, and that Maori in Southland were prepared to acknowledge even greater affiliation to the Ngati Mamoe and Waitaha lines than those in Otago. Stack became aware of the discrepancies caused by this situation as soon as he began to collect oral traditions:

"One prolific source of confusion arose from the inter-marriages which took place between the members of hostile tribes. It was bewildering to find the same person fighting for one tribe but wishing success to the other and guilty of treachery to both... Another element of confusion arose from the two tribes being spoken of as totally distinct from each other, whereas they had a common origin, and this fact afforded the only explanation of many strange things done on either side" (Stack, 1877: 59).

As soon as one begins to analyse the traditions, however, one encounters the names of more than two tribes. Frequent reference is made to Ngai Tara (allied to Ngati Mamoe), and Ngati Kuri (linked with Ngai Tahu). The names Ngati Whata, Ngati Rua, Ngati Kina and Rakitane (Rangitane) are also

encountered. One of Beattie's informants distinguished Ngati Huirapa as a separate group from Ngai Tahu and Ngati Mamoe (Beattie, 1922: 144). Stack unknowingly presented the reason for his confusion when he concluded his 1877 paper as follows:

"It may prevent misapprehension if I here state that in tracing the history of Ngai Tahu, I have purposely avoided alluding to the exploits of particular hapus, - a favourite practice of the Maori analyst, but fraught with confusion to the European reader, who would be sorely puzzled amongst the multiplicity of so-called tribes, to know which belonged to the invaders and which to the invaded. I have classed the allies, hapus, and sections of hapus of each tribe under one common appellation: Maoris may say I am wrong, but I appeal from them to the common sense of my English readers, and am hopeful of their verdict in my favour" (Stack, 1877: 92-3).

In fact, if the confusing stories are analysed according to hapu affiliation and alliance, many of the problems disappear. A good example is the massacre and siege of Pari Whakatau (see Genealogy). The central figure and the most bewildering to Stack was undoubtedly Maru who is believed to have betrayed his own tribesman Manawa to the Ngati Mamoe. Available genealogies indicate that Maru's great-grandfather was Tahumutu, who in Tuhawaiki's eyes was the founder of the South Island Ngai Tahu. Maru also had a Ngati Mamoe mother and two of his sisters were married to Ngati Mamoe occupants of Pari Whakatau. His other sister was married to Manawa, and Maru normally resided with Manawa's group. It is likely that Manawa referred to himself as Ngati Kuri, after his great-grandfather Kuri, nephew of Tahumutu. Thus Maru of Ngai Tahu had residence and kinship ties with Ngati Kuri but rather more immediate kinship links with Ngati Mamoe. Similarly Te Rakiwhakaputa was an uncle of Tukiauau and a descendant of Kuri. As a Ngati Kuri he insulted Maru acting as a Ngai Tahu. As the son and husband of Ngati Mamoe women he acted with them when failing to warn Manawa of the plan to kill him. Again, when Maru tried to save Tukaroua from the presumed Ngati Kuri chief Te Kaue, he was trying to repay the Ngati Mamoe for sparing his relatives during the massacre of Manawa. After the major defeat of the Ngati Mamoe there was no further need to maintain his allegiance with them; so he did not try to save his other Ngati Mamoe brother-in-law, Tumataiao.

It seems clear now that at the period of the Pari Whakatau battle, the tribal names recognised in the 19th century actually belonged to two of several hapu involved in insult and revenge conflicts. As tribal names they had little meaning. The various hapu were in the process of obtaining new territory in the South Island and their traditions tell of multiple crossings of Cook Straits over several generations. It also seems likely that branches of the so-called Ngati Mamoe had preceded them to the South Island. Not all the Ngati Mamoe hapu had crossed Cook Straits,

for Ngati Mamoe women and at least one man married Ngai Tahu and Ngati Kuri ancestors up to four generations before the main body left the Wellington area for the South Island. In fact the genealogies show continued and frequent intermarriages for the next 10 generations. Only in the south is there evidence for intermarriage with the Waitaha hapu. This situation raises the possibility that the dialect spoken by the Maori of Canterbury and Otago was not passed on by Waitaha people with whom they merged but was part of their culture in the North Island. Seven to nine generations since their arrival in the South Island would not leave sufficient time for the independent development of a separate dialect. If this dialect reflects a speech pattern once more widespread in New Zealand, it might be expected that its distribution should correlate with that of the distinctive artefact styles outlined earlier.

B.F. Leach (1978: 20) quoted a Ngai Tahu informant interviewed by White who denied any substantial difference between the language of the Ngati Kahungunu and Ngai Tahu. His comments may be more relevant than those which compare 'East Coast' with 'Southern' dialects, for the 'East Coast' words recorded are more likely to be the language of the Ngati Porou rather than the Ngati Kahungunu.

The task of correlating the characteristic Classic Maori traits evident in the South Island with material from the North Island is yet to be undertaken. Its usefulness will depend on the location of provenanced Classic Maori assemblages from the Wairarapa and Hawkes Bay to supplement museum collections from Horowhenua, Wanganui and Tananaki. Coupled with this exercise should be a systematic effort to record the dialects of those groups who still preserve differences. Only a broad approach to linguistic, archaeological and genealogical evidence will overcome the specific problem of the origin and identity of the Ngai Tahu, and the related issue of the development of Classic Maori in New Zealand as a whole.

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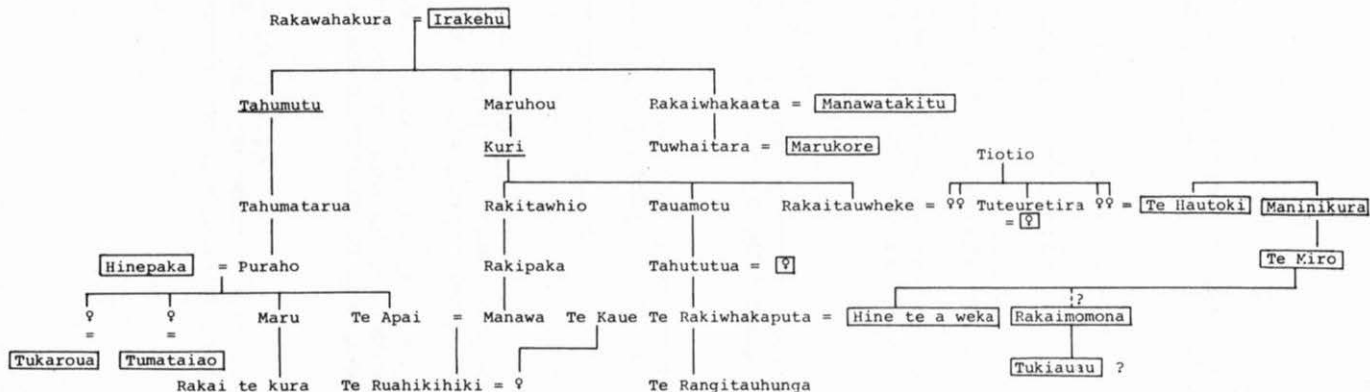
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GENEALOGY SHOWING MARU'S LINKS WITH 'NGATI MAMOE' AND 'NGATI KURI'

□ 'Ngati Mamoe'



1. Manawa kills Rakaimomona. Tukiauu retreats south.
2. Maru persuades Tukiauu to build pa at Pari Whakatau.
3. Maru's daughter's betrothal to Te Rakiwhakaputa's son is broken. Te Rakiwhakaputa insults Maru. Maru joins Tukiauu until asked to return.
4. Manawa visits Tukiauu to arrange son's betrothal. Te Rakiwhakaputa has foreknowledge of plot against Manawa but does not reveal it to Manawa.
5. Manawa is killed. Maru's kin are spared.

6. Te Kaue captures Tukaroua. Maru tries to save him but fails.
7. Pariwhakatau is captured. Maru refuses to save Tumataiao from hands of Tuteuretira.

(Compiled from genealogies and traditions published by Shortland, 1851; Stack, 1877; Smith, 1894; Beattie 1916-1922).