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I TE WA I A MEA . . .

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Monty Soutar
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HE KUPU WHAKATAU

Ko nga kupu e whai ake nei he kupu mihi atu ki a koutou i awhina mai ai tenei mokopuna a koutou. "E iti noa ana, na te aroha."

Tuatahi he kororia ki te Atua nana nga mea katoa.

Ki a Professor Meihana Durie nana i whakato te whakaaro mo tenei tohu e kiia nei he tohu Mahita. Tena koe. Tena koutou oku hoa rangatira o te Tari Maori kei roto i te Whare Wananga o Manawatu. Me mihi atu ki a Julia Taiapa, ki a Tairahia Black, ki a Lindsay Cox, me Hazel Riesborough mo a ratau kupu tohutohu. Ko Julia Taiapa te kaiwhakarite moku. Na Esther Tinirau i taipa tenei putanga, i whakatakoto hoki i nga tuhituhi. Ka nui nga mihi ki a ia mo tona pumau ki tenei mahi.

E hiahia ana au ki te tuku he mihi ki oku pakeke ki a Tamati Kupenga, ratau ko Waho Tibble, ko Manu Stainton, mo nga whakapapa i tukua mai ki au. Ka nui hoki nga mihi ki a Takuta Tamati Reedy, ratau ko toku tuakana ko Barry Soutar, ko Wayne Ngata, ko Mae Kupenga mo ta ratau awhina i taea ai te whakapakari whakatinana i enei whakaaro aku.

Nui noa atu nga hoa me nga whanaunga o Ngati Porou hei whakawhetai atu maku, tae atu ki toku whanau. Kia ora rawa atu koutou katoa.

Ka hoki oku mahara ki a ratau kua wehe atu ki te po. E eke i runga i te taheke-roa e kore nei a muri e hokia.

Heoi ano, te aroha atu ki a koutou whanui tonu.

ABSTRACT

The title gives only an indication of the subject to be discussed. It reflects how the Maori thought with regard to time. Because such phrases lacked the precision of calendar dates, numerous Western historians sought to translate Maori chronologies into time units of their own reckoning. The result was the invention of several methods of dating based on genealogies.

These methods are the central focus of this thesis. It is argued that they are both inaccurate and inappropriate for the recording of Maori traditions. Each method is trialed against the traditions and whakapapa of one hapu in order to highlight their inaccuracies. So obvious do these inaccuracies become that the reader is asked to consider their dismissal altogether.

In place of the Western methods of dating the Maori method of referencing time is reconsidered from a Maori perspective. The Maori concept of time is contrasted against the Western sense of absolute time in an attempt to bring credibility upon Maori time references.

PREFACE

This thesis has been prepared to contribute a Maori perspective to the interesting and fascinating subject of chronology. The theme running throughout it concerns the debate on the use of genealogies as a means of dating Maori traditions. I have endeavoured to demonstrate that frameworks which attempt to chronicle pre-European Maori traditions in terms of the Julian calendar are inaccurate by virtue of the fact that there is insufficient reference material to arrive at anything other than conjectured dates. More importantly, I have argued that they have been constructed to satisfy Western historians as to the validity of Maori history. Many Maori people themselves regard them as inappropriate since for them, the verity of their history has never been in question. Therefore in dismissing these frameworks as inadequate, I have advanced in their place the Maori method of referencing time which was operative well before the arrival of Captain Cook and which is still actively used today.

The genesis for this thesis arose from an investigation conducted for the Department of Maori Affairs, Tairāwhiti into the early history of Te Aitanga-a-Mate, a sub-tribe of Ngāti Porou. During the exercise I discovered the various methods of applying dates to genealogies which had been invented for the purpose of dating Maori tradition. I was particularly amazed at the time and effort Western historians had put into the subject of dating Maori history since, in my upbringing, I could not recall ever having heard a kaumatua refer to an event in iwi or hapu history by a Julian date.

To say that this was because the Maori did not have an accurate dating system, I found was an oversimplification of the matter. An analysis of the methods of dating based on genealogies as well as an in-depth study into the concepts of relative and absolute time led me to the conclusion that the Maori system of referencing time was, and still is, the most satisfactory for sequencing a tribal history.

With the Maori renaissance occurring throughout the country at present, and Maori researchers becoming involved with writing iwi and hapu histories, I felt subsequently that there was merit in discussing these findings.

It is with tribal historians in mind that this thesis draws attention to the Maori system of referencing the past as a valid and coherent one; one which deserves to be retained as the basis for chronicling future tribal histories.

In carrying out the research for this thesis, particularly where concepts of time were concerned, I found that although there existed an enormity of published material on how time was and is viewed, almost all of it related to either the Western culture or cultures foreign to New Zealand. Hence, in my attempt to explain how the Maori viewed time I was in fact breaking new ground. For this reason and the fact that there exists personal and tribal diversity in opinion on some of the matters discussed in this thesis, I make no claim to express *the* Maori viewpoint. The Maori views which are presented in this thesis are only those which I encountered in my own tribal area.

The question of how best to calculate calendar dates for pre-European Maori history is a basic issue of our times and it has been addressed by many distinguished scholars over the last one-hundred-and-fifty years. Even so, I felt it appropriate to bring into the discussion the recapitulation of their proposed solutions in order to show that I do not share them. However, I am indebted to all of those writers because they have put their fingers on the very issues and induced me to think them over in my own way. Therefore, I list their names with gratitude. This is not an empty act of courtesy, but the expression of my obligation to New Zealand's scientific community of yesterday and today. Irrespective of whether I have quoted their works and names, I am especially indebted to: Best (E.), Buck (P.), Fletcher (H.J.), Fornander (A.), Gudgeon (W.E.), Halbert (R.W.), Hongi (H.), Kelly (L.G.), McCrae (J.), Mahuika (A.T.), Piddington (R.), Porter (J.P.), Robertson (J.B.W.), Sharp (A.), Shortland (E.), Simmons (D.R.), Smith (S.P.), Sorrenson (M.P.K.), Stack (J.W.), Stokes (J.G.F.), TeHurunui (P.), Thomson (A.S.), Travers (W.T.T.), Williams (H.R.), and Wilson (M.G.).

It is common academic procedure to follow on here by acknowledging those, who through their personal assistance brought about the completion of this thesis. However, as the reader will realise, this has already been done. In keeping with a Maori line of thinking, these

acknowledgements (he kupu whakataua) have been undertaken at the beginning of this presentation.

Throughout this thesis, there are references to papers presented by Maori scholars of iwi other than my own. In Maori society it is deemed disrespectful for the young to critique the works of their elders. Hence I have been at great pains to oppose some of these scholar's work, especially as they themselves have long since departed this world. Where their work has been criticized by this writer, it should be remembered that these criticisms are levelled at an academic rather than a personal level.

The scope of this study was so vast, it was necessary to restrict the parameters of enquiry in order to complete it in the allotted time. The Maori concept of time and its delineation, for example, is one area yet to be fully dealt with. The Maori language of time contains concepts and abstractions which are foreign to the Westerner and which I found the English language sometimes lacks adequate terms to describe. In future projects I hope to further employ my own tribal traditions to expand on some of the more interesting points, which were brought to light in this thesis (eg. the Maori concept of time, the demography of pre-European Maori, archaeological methods of dating).

Part of my task in collating the early history of Te Aitanga-a-Mate was to undertake a detailed study of the genealogy of this hapu and record in table form as many lines of cognatic descent as possible. This was never achieved to any great degree and the task was taken up again during the writing of this thesis with the added incentive of providing a genealogical base from which to test Western methods of chronology.

In both attempts it was found that accessing genealogy was certainly not a simple task. The degree of effort required to obtain whakapapa varied according to where the material was housed. Without listing all the various repositories, it can be said that where the real difficulty arose was with manuscripts in family possessions. Each family had its own restrictions regarding those who were able to access their records as often the whakapapa had been recorded in manuscripts fifty to one hundred years old. But the main reason why these restrictions existed was not

because of the frail condition of the manuscripts but because of the close cultural ties the Maori has with traditional knowledge.

It is not my desire to explain here the rituals and conventions that result from such ties, nor to list the restrictions or the steps I took to meet them, as to do so would fill this book twice over. It is sufficient for the purpose of this enquiry to know that restrictions do exist in many cases where Maori genealogy is concerned, that the whakapapa tables recorded herein, particularly those in the Appendix, are of a sensitive nature to those to whom they belong and therefore, should be treated accordingly.

The appendix alone boasts over one hundred and fifty lines of Te Aitanga-a-Mate whakapapa. These genealogies have been recorded here not just to trial methods of chronology or to support claims lobbied by the writer, but more importantly for the sake of posterity, so that the descendants upon whom the lines descend may read and learn. If there is one thing I have learnt in my dealings with whakapapa it is this: always give back to the descendants of those who gave, that which was given.

The whakapapa used throughout this thesis deals solely with the human story (Te Kauaeraro), particularly of those ancestors of the recent past. Researchers of tribal history in all parts of the country have found that whakapapa is reasonably reliable and consistent where they relate to ancestors of the Hawaiki migration or to others after the introduction of a Hawaiki strain. Therefore Maori genealogies relating to cosmogony, mythology and religion are not entered into in this thesis.

The Aitanga-a-Mate genealogies have been drawn from approximately 30 separate oral and written sources of which over 80% were original manuscripts. Due to the commingled nature of these genealogies, a complete adherence to a strict order of seniority, when setting out the whakapapa tables, was unobtainable. It should be remembered that both style of arrangement and accommodation of space have influenced the relative positions of people appearing in these tables. Although I have restricted the use of genealogies to those of Ngati Porou and more particularly the hapu Te Aitanga-a-Mate, I see no reason to believe that authentic Maori genealogies from other tribal areas would bring about differing results.

I am also well aware that no matter how accurate I have tried to be in the written compilation of these whakapapa, there remain genealogies in the possession of individuals which may confirm or deny the relationships shown in my tables. In defence of any error I may have incurred, I am reminded of the opening phrase in an old manuscript:

"Let each error you find in this book be a feather in your cap."

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INTRODUCTION

"So little history has been written by the Maori themselves. But we are about to enter an era where the iwi or hapu history will be written by the tribe itself. Maori history is strongly hapu-based and already there is the notion that the iwi is the proprietor of that history."¹

From the point of view of one who has been involved with a hapu in the writing of their history, Dr King's comments seem very accurate. He would have been more exact however, had he specified that we have already entered this era. In more recent times, it has been through the medium of academics that iwi have allowed aspects of their history to be put to print. Maori post-graduate students of history, anthropology, and Maori Studies disciplines have been granted approval by their people to research their own iwi or hapu history as the basis for theses topics. The cultural benefits that result from such endorsements are very clear.

Primarily the student fulfills the requirements for a degree. The iwi will share vicariously any acclaim which is the reward for quality research and they in turn will acknowledge the efforts of their mokopuna. Secondly, the hapu receive their history in print as a learning and teaching resource and as a premise from which to make further studies.

In addition to these benefits, some dilemmas arise through the way in which the written histories have been prepared. Principally the writer's audience is an academic one and consequently the language used in the thesis is often inappropriate to the descendants of those about whom it is written. Added to this, the student may be required to present a solution to a problem, or establish a particular point of view in the thesis which may or may not concur with the Maori view of the way in which history should be related. Whereas oral renditions of tribal histories are subjective narratives, a thesis is an objective exercise in inquiry.

Currently moves are afoot to entice more Maori from outside the university system to take up the task of writing history. Government sponsorship includes the annual employment, through the Department of Internal Affairs, of a Maori Fellowship in history. In addition, the creation of the Waitangi Tribunal has led to national focus on tribal traditions, both

written and oral. Researchers, particularly Maori, are being recruited regularly to work with the iwi and in turn the Tribunal. With the demand by more and more Maori to take control of their own culture, the tribal 'runanga' are also encouraging the training of researchers for the purpose of compiling their history. It was perhaps with such initiatives in mind that Dr King made his comments.

Considering this growing interest by Maori into iwi or hapu histories, it would be well for writers to review the methods of dating which have been used to sequence such histories. Maori writers particularly, as it is to them that the compilation of tribal histories will be entrusted, need to decide which frames of reference are best suited for the chronicling of their tribal traditions and whether or not the modern dating system is necessarily appropriate to their needs. It is in seeking answers to these questions that this thesis is undertaken.

"Ma wai e rou ake te whetu i te rangi, ka taka kei raro."

Who would be so brazen as to try and collect a star from the heavens?
They that would dare would fall from above.

This favourite whakatauki is often given by kaumatua to describe the degree of difficulty involved in tasks of near impossibility. To take a star from the sky is a task not humanly achievable. It will be seen from the results of this thesis that this analogy can be applied to the matter of Maori chronology. For nor is it possible to fix European dates accurately upon a tradition which hitherto had no such dating system. Chapters one to four attempt to establish conclusively that methods of dating based on genealogies are inaccurate, that at best, all they are able to do is approximate dates and that those dates can be shown to differ by as much as one hundred years.

The questions to which answers are sought in these chapters are:

- (1) What are the methods, which up until now, have been used to fix Julian dates on Maori traditions?
- (2) What are the deficiencies in those methods which make them inaccurate?

Methods of dating based on genealogies have been debated ceaselessly ever since the first attempts by Western scholars at chronicling Polynesian traditions. Chapter one therefore seeks to provide an answer to the first question through a review of the literature relating to western modes of chronology. This review follows a chronological sequence commencing with the earliest nineteenth century writers through to the present day. Each writer's contribution is explained and then compared with other information by different authors.

In order to answer the second question, the methods of chronology determined in chapter one are reassessed in chapters two, three and four in the light of new information not available to the original authors, and with respect to controversial analysis brought to light by recent writers. In addition, each method is tested against an extensive body of Te Aitanga-a-Mate whakapapa and tradition and each is shown to be inaccurate. Because all iwi and hapu whakapapa are built upon the same principle, descent from a common ancestor, it should then follow that if these methods are applied to the whakapapa of other iwi similar inaccuracies will occur. These chapters attempt to show conclusively that with regard to the Julian Calendar, we are not yet in possession of sufficient data to arrive at anything other than a wide range of approximate dates and therefore these Western frames of referencing time are inappropriate.

Having dismissed them as inappropriate, chapter five attempts to facilitate a sympathetic appreciation for the Maori method of referencing time. It begins by examining why Western historians felt it necessary to put dates to Maori history. After advancing answers to this question, the focus moves to a description of some of the Maori terms that were used to reference the past. Finally, an attempt is made to compare Maori concepts of time with the Western sense of absolute time in order to encourage the further use of Maori time references in the recording of tribal histories.

In concluding, an analysis of some of the tribal histories which have been published during this century is undertaken to demonstrate the irregularity with which absolute dates have been employed by Maori writers and to illustrate the consistency with which these writers have dated events in relative time.

Dr Cleave Barlow has classified whakapapa into three categories; cosmic genealogies, primal genealogies, and human genealogies.² Cosmic genealogies relate to the "origin of all life and matter", the creation of the universe. Primal genealogies refer to Rangi, the sky father and Papa, the earth mother and the procreation of their children; while human genealogies apply to mortal ancestors who have inhabited the bosom of Papa from time immemorial to the present.

With regard to the study of chronology of tribal histories we are more interested in human genealogies particularly as they apply to Aotearoa. The whakapapa of each iwi or hapu converges upon an eponymous ancestor who, in most cases, was native to Aotearoa. Materoa was the progenitor of the Aitanga-a-Mate hapu and it is largely her whakapapa which is used throughout this thesis both to test methods of chronology and to support claims lobbied by the writer.

Te Aitanga-a-Mate are a hapu of the Ngati Porou tribe resident on the east coast of the North Island, between Gisborne and Potaka. Materoa lived some eighteen generations ago and her descendants populated the region in and about Mt Hikurangi (see Map no. 1).

The whakapapa of Te Aitanga-a-Mate has been selected to illustrate this thesis because it is the most accurate body of whakapapa available to the writer. The writer himself is a member of the hapu and it would be considered disrespectful for him to attempt to speak with authority on the whakapapa of a tribe to which he does not belong. As the ancient whakatauki says:

"E moe i to tuahine (tungane) kia heke te toto ko korua tonu."

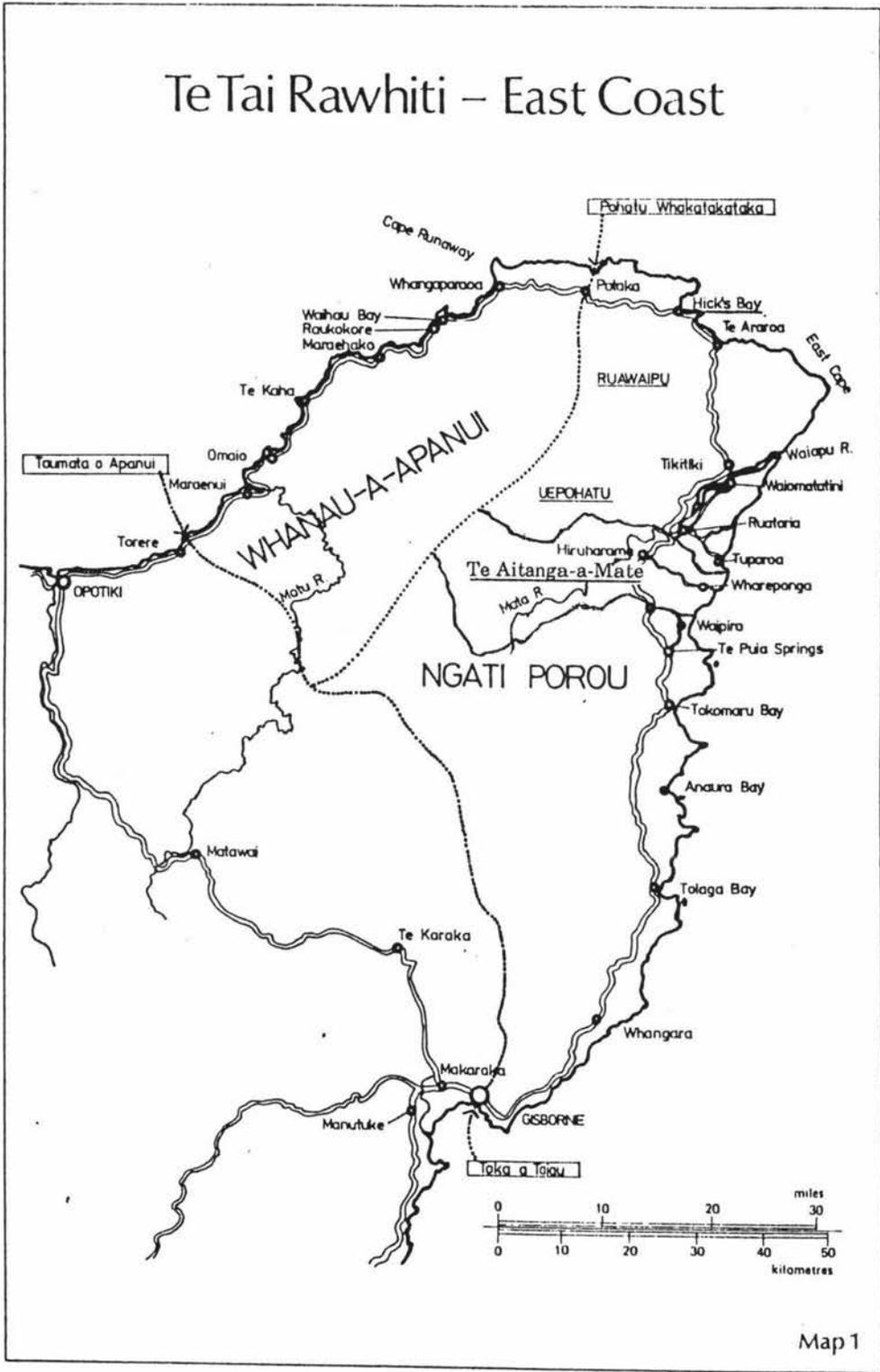
Marry your cousin so that if blood is to be shed, it is only your own.

The message here, use your own whakapapa, that if you should draw criticism, it will be from your own relatives.

NOTES

- 1 King, Micheal, Evening Post, 28 July, 1990, p9.
- 2 Barlow, Dr Cleave, "The Scope of Maori Genealogy", in New Zealand Genealogist, 18, 1987, pp34-6.

Te Tai Rawhiti – East Coast



Map 1