

# The Invention of Papahurihia

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## Abstract

Historians portray Papahurihia as the first Māori prophet and founder of a syncretistic religion that combined elements of Judaic and Christian theology with Māori beliefs. They also say he observed a Saturday Sabbath and that his followers were known as Jews. This thesis disputes those conclusions. It re-examines the commentaries of the CMS missionaries in the Bay of Islands from the context of 1830s Protestant evangelicalism and draws on the texts of the Wesleyan and Roman Catholic missionaries and European settlers to show how Papahurihia behaved in various situations. It argues that historians have failed to take account of the way that Protestant and Catholic writers saw Papahurihia through the lenses of their own religions. The thesis recreates Papahurihia in the context of the Ngāpuhi seasonal cycle and links him to the persistence of ceremonies like the hahunga. It argues that historians have overlooked the extent to which he operated on a Māori concept of time and how the missionaries and Europeans made assumptions about the behaviour of Papahurihia and his followers based on the Christian calendar. The thesis concludes that Papahurihia responded to the advent of Christianity in a way that was consistent with the behaviour of tohunga at the time, rather than as the founder of a syncretistic religion. It also concludes that the historiography on Papahurihia ultimately went awry because historians interpreted the missionaries' comments about him from a secular perspective.

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## Abbreviations

ACL	Auckland Central Library
AJHR	Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives
AML	Auckland Museum Library
ANU	Australian National University
ATL	Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington
AUL	Auckland University Library
BA	Bachelor of Arts Degree
CMS	Church Missionary Society
HL	Hocken Library, University of Otago, Dunedin
HNZ	Heritage New Zealand
JPS	Journal of the Polynesian Society
KCMG	Knight Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George
LMS	London Missionary Society
MA	Master of Arts Degree
MHR	Member of the House of Representatives
NCEA	National Certificate of Educational Achievement
NSW	New South Wales
NZJH	New Zealand Journal of History
PHR	Pacific Historical Review
SPG	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
TK	Te Kaharoa: The e-Journal on Indigenous Pacific Issues
WMS	Wesleyan Missionary Society

## Illustrations

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## Glossary of Māori Words

ahuahu .....	mounds or hillocks of soil into which kūmara shoots were planted
ariki .....	used interchangeably with atua to denote a chief considered a god by his people
atua .....	a chief, a dead body, a deified ancestor, items belonging to the deceased
haka .....	war dance to embolden warriors & intimidate their enemies
hākiri .....	feast or harvest festival
hahunga .....	cleaning or scraping of bones of the deceased
hapū .....	pregnant, modern word for sub-tribe
Hātana .....	Satan
iwi .....	bone, modern word for tribe
kai-karakia .....	person who recites karakia, minister, preacher
kākāriki .....	green lizard, considered an omen of death by Ngāpuhi
karakia .....	formula recited by tohunga to invoke atua, modern word for prayer
kararehe .....	a quadruped or four legged animal
kaumātua .....	an elder but not necessarily a repository of esoteric knowledge
kēhua .....	ghosts
kirikiri .....	gravely sand
mana .....	modern word for prestige or standing
mātāmua .....	senior wife
mitineri .....	Māori word for missionary
moko kauae .....	the chin tattoo on women of rank
nākahi .....	transliteration of the Hebrew word ‘Nachash’ or ‘Serpent’
ngahuru .....	ancient Ngāpuhi word for ten, the tenth lunar month in Ngāpuhi
ngahurutanga .....	tenfold, the quantity of kūmara expected at harvest-time
ngārara .....	a crawling thing but not exclusively a reptile
Papatūānuku .....	the Earth Mother in the Māori Creation Myth
poutokomanawa .....	principal supporting posts of the whareniui or meetinghouse



rahurahu ..... foliage from the battlefield used by tohunga  
 Ranginui .....the Sky Father in the Māori Creation Myth  
 rā tapu..... sacred day, used by the missionaries to refer to the Lord’s Day  
 Rerenga Wairua .....place where the wairua or soul of Māori goes after death  
 rāhui ..... to place a ban on the use of a resource by invoking atua & rendering tapu  
 rākau.....divination sticks used by tohunga to foretell the future  
 raumati ..... a dead leaf or the fall of the leaf, signified the passage of one year  
 rēwera.....devils  
 ritenga ..... Māori customary practice, ritual or way of doing things  
 rūnanga..... councils of chiefs established by Governor Grey  
 takahi..... to trample or breach tapu  
 taniwha..... an atua or water spirit which dwells in lakes and rivers  
 tāpapa ..... seedbeds in which immature kūmara shoots were raised  
 tapu..... sacrosanct because one is a chief/ariki/atua or because an atua has been invoked  
 tiriti.....treaty, refers to the Māori text of the Treaty of Waitangi  
 tohu ..... sign or signs read by tohunga  
 tūpāpaku..... the body of the recently deceased  
 urupā .....place of burial, usually caves or volcanic craters, sometimes trees  
 waka ..... a person who is the canoe, vessel or medium of an atua  
 wairua..... originally two waters, modern word for soul  
 wata..... raised stages onto which mature kūmara were stored at harvest  
 wera..... hot  
 whakapapa..... genealogy, recitation of descent from an eponymous atua/ancestor  
 whakawai ..... sinners  
 whānau .....to give birth, modern word for extended rather than nuclear family  
 whare wānanga.....modern word for a school of learning  
 whiowhio..... whistling sound made by atua or Māori gods invoked by tohunga