

Tāura ki te Atua
The role of ‘akairo in Cook Islands Art

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Abstract

This exegesis examines the role of traditional art in Cook Islands society as the temporary instantiation of the divine and the role and function of ‘akairo (artistic motifs) in generating the aesthetic standards required to capture and contain mana. ‘Instantiation’ here refers to the aesthetic realisation of an other-worldly abstraction in a concrete form in this world – in Kaeppler’s terms “making the invisible visible” (Kaeppler, 1980:120). An art work that achieves such status is regarded in Cook Islands society as a tāura atua (a medium of rapport with the gods). While a great number of Cook Islands ‘akairo used to decorate artworks are derived from the human form (tikitiki tangata), others represent elements of nature or cosmology ruled over by atua in Te Pō (the darkness, the unknown) and include those derived from the land, sea and shore, from flora and fauna, and from the stars and skies.

Such ‘akairo are regarded as (1) statements of relatedness or akapapa’anga (genealogy) between human and natural elements in Te Ao (this world) and their divine ancestors in Te Pō (for the purposes of this study, such relations between atua and Te Ao are treated as ‘held within life stories’ (Eakin, 1999; Bishop 1996); (2) as mnemonics for meditations or karakia (incantations) to divine ancestors, or in Kaeppler’s terms, “objectified prayers” (Kaeppler 2007; 122) and (3) as a form of ‘wrapping in images’ similar to tattoo (Gell, 1993: 3-5), where the act of wrapping is seen as containing mana and ‘sanctifying’ gods, chiefs and priests. This echoes Hooper’s view that “surface carving can be understood as a kind of binding [ritual wrapping] with carved patterns” (2006: 229).

Finally, these themes are themselves instantiated in an art work which affirms human relatedness to the divine, and the ability of art to glimpse divinity while, at the same time, acknowledging the ultimate unknowableness of the life essence, I’o.

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Attestation of authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'J. Armitage', is located on the right side of the page.

Acknowledgements

Characteristic of the Māori people of Nukutere is their belief in collaboration. It is our custom and tradition to work together for the common good and that is also true of the creation of an artwork, or the composition of a song, dance, performance or piece of writing. This work is the outcome of many collaborations.

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Preface

Orthographic conventions

Words in the Cook Island Māori language are followed by a translation of the word in brackets. A full list of these terms can be found in the Glossary as further reference. The use of a long vowel has been denoted with a macron with the exception of direct quotes. The use of the hamza denotes a glottal stop. All direct quotes have been incorporated into the text in quotation marks whereas long quotes have been typed in 11 point font, single spaced and indented so that they stand out from the text. In this case, quotation marks have not been used. Square brackets are used to denote comments by the author to qualify or interpret quoted texts.

Research focus

This research critically examines the role of art and the artist in 'traditional' Cook Islands society. It focuses on the role of decorative motifs ('akairo) in generating the aesthetic standards required of objects if they are to act as tāura atua¹, or mediums of rapport with the divine (Te Pō). In Cook Islands Māori belief, such instantiations are critical for divine engagement with the affairs of this world. Mana is the power which results from this rapport between gods and people.

Images

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¹ Taura 1. (n.) 1) rope, string, thread, cotton. 2) priest, ritual specialist, medium, healer. The meaning 'priest etc' originates from the metaphor of a priest as a string that connects human beings with a god or gods. Syn. Aho, tari, kati².) taura pito naval string. (Syn. te taura o te pito)(Source: Tongareva dictionary <http://penrhyn.cookislandsdictionary.com/>) "Taura-atua – an officiating priest of the ancient gods, a sorcerer, a wizard, a diviner, one who enquires of the gods." (Savage Dictionary; 1962;368).

Chapter Outline

Chapter One: Introduction: Method and Indigenous Methodology

This chapter discusses the method and methodologies used in this exegesis. It will help the reader to understand how the application of conventional research methods combined with Indigenous Cook Islands world-views provides a rich ideological framework from which to understand this research. It also provides a strong foundation to understand the application of Indigenous Cook Islands values, principles and philosophy within this research often contained within key cultural concepts such as tākiato (proverb) and poa (spiritual exuviae).

Chapter Two: ‘Akairo e te Māori - Māori and the Image

Chapter Two suggests seven defining criteria for traditional Cook Islands art and the role of the artist which are relevant to this exegesis. Artistic achievement is defined as the aesthetic realisation of other-worldly abstractions in concrete form in this world (“making the invisible visible” Kaeppler, 1980: 120). The artist’s goal is to create a tāura atua -a medium of rapport or spiritual link with Te Pō - to give effect to the divine in this world.

Chapter Three: ‘Akairo ko te Tāura – Sculpture, Stylisation and Design

Chapter Three examines the controversy over central Polynesian ‘akairo (design motifs). Are they a two-dimensional abstract 'degeneration' from three dimensional sculptural forms as claimed by the evolutionists Read and Stolpe? Do they exist side by side with high sculptural art thus disproving Read and Stolpe, or are they geometric designs that have no relationship at all with the human form, as claimed by Te Rangi Hiroa?

The chapter argues that Hiroa’s insistence of the origin of ‘akairo in geometry rather than as representations of the real world (of human, birds, fish etc.) is both contrary to the evidence and ignores the spiritual role of art as tāura atua, linking the inhabitants of this world to their ancestors in Te Pō.

Chapter Four: 'Akairo o Nukutere - Images of Nukutere

Chapter Four surveys 100 'akairo identified on Cook Islands artefacts created between the late 18th and the early 20th century. This survey broadens the range of known 'akairo and provides evidence of their historic and geographic origin. It demonstrates that, contrary to Hiroa, 'akairo are abstract representations of things deriving from the real world, human and animal, land, sea and sky. This finding is also contrary to earlier scholars, for example Read (1892: 152), who “found not a single representation of a fish among the whole series [of central Polynesian ornamentation].”

The chapter argues that repeated displays of 'akairo in human form (as tikitiki tangata) represent “the multitudinous links between the divine ancestor and the chiefs of living tribes” (March 1893; 324). In other instances 'akairo reference links between natural phenomena and the gods that created them, a critical relationship denied by Hiroa's insistence on their origins in geometry.

'Akairo inscribed into wood or stone or woven in sennit or pandanus, or in more contemporary form stitched into tivaevae (quilts), are seen, in Kaeppler's terms (2007:122), as “objectified prayers” to the gods; in Hooper's terms (2006; 229) as forming a “binding with carved patterns” where binding ties people to chiefs to gods, and in Gell's terms a “wrapping in images” (Gell, 1993: 3-5) where wrapping seeks to capture and contain atua and mana during their temporary instantiation in Te Ao.

Chapter Five: Tāura ki te Atua – The Link or Cord to the Gods

In Chapter Five, a narrative in Nukutere (Rarotongan) language summarises the content contained within Chapters 1 - 4 capturing the full meaning of any Māori concepts lost in English.

Chapter Six: - Mei te toka ki te tāura (From a stone to a cord of union)

Chapter Six contains a journal based chronology, reporting on the conceptualisation of the artefact to its potential realisation as a tāura atua. It contains photographed images of all the stages during the process and a description of the creation of the artefact informed by the discussions in Chapters 1 - 5.

Artefact/Creative Component – Tāura atua - The Cord of Union

The artefact is a visual representation called *Tāura atua* which refers to a cord of union or rapport between people and gods, and between the visible and invisible worlds of Te Ao (light) and Te Pō (dark). For further information about *Tāura atua*, refer to Chapter Six.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION: METHOD AND INDIGENOUS METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter discusses the method and methodologies used in this exegesis. It will help the reader to understand how the application of conventional research methods combined with Indigenous Cook Islands world-views provides a rich ideological framework from which to understand this research. It also provides a strong foundation to understand the application of Indigenous Cook Islands values, principles and philosophy within this research often contained within key cultural concepts such as tākiato (proverb) and poa (spiritual exuviae).

1. This research project applies largely qualitative research methods in the exegesis component, relying on existing literature, journals, academic writings and publications. The research also focuses on traditional knowledge and family kōrero from ta'unga, tumu kōrero (a recognised body of experts), and elders of the tribe hence the use of an Indigenous methodology specific to the Cook Islands. Knowledge can also be extracted and analysed from the poa associated with traditional artefacts, legends, history, traditional life skills, the land, the ocean, and the people.
2. For the purpose of this study, the relationship between the human and natural elements in Te Ao and the world of atua (Te Pō) through vaerua (spiritual essence) are treated as “held within life stories” (Eakin, 1999; Bishop, 1996). This approach to studying vaerua has become increasingly accepted as a valid model within social sciences where people construct their life-story[ies] as a means of constructing their past in a meaningful way (McAdams, 2001). McAdams (2001) posits that life-stories include a record of significant events providing an explanation of how previous events give rise to current circumstances; therefore vaerua can be found in the contents of a person's life-story.

3. This study also adopts a ‘insider-outsider’ research approach. The researcher is an Indigenous Cook Islands Māori undertaking research on a cultural topic not readily spoken about by the Indigenous community. Indigenous community research, where the researcher is a member, has both advantages and disadvantages. Arguably the positives outweigh the negatives. Possibly the biggest challenge in terms of insider research is the researcher’s *papa’anga* links to all members of the community. While no ‘conflict of interest’ exists because no interviews are to be conducted, it is recognised and debated vigorously amongst insider researchers that this approach has the potential to engage community and develop a rich repository of depth and meaning (Kanuha 2000; Sherif 2001; Malone, 2003; Nabobo-Baba, 2006).
4. The research approach is collaborative -

*Ko t’aku raurau, ko ta’au raurau
E ora ai te tangata
My food platter, your food platter
Gives life to the people*

As this *tākiato* suggests, human survival relies on collaborative human action. The same is true for the production and ongoing transmission of knowledge in the Cook Islands. In the Cook Islands all production is collaborative— in the arts (music, performance, carving, etc) in religion, (*imene tuki*, *marae* ritual) in economic production. Recent attempts to articulate the social and collaborative nature of knowledge production in the Cook Islands include the ‘*tivaevae*² model’ devised by Maua-Hodges (2000) and elaborated by Te Ava (2011). According to Te Ava (2011; 47-49), the core values to be observed in Cook Islands Māori knowledge production include –

Taokotai (collaboration) is important when learning within a community group. Not only is striving to achieve shared objectives important, but so too is patiently practising *tivaevae* making. The sewing of the *tivaevae* involves both time and inspiration as the pattern fitting gradually evolves.

Tu akangateitei (respect) is fundamental in the production of *tivaevae*. ... According to Rongokea (2001), the making of *tivaevae* suggests

² Tivaevae are quilted covers – an art form introduced by missionary wives in the 19th century. Tivaevae are made collectively by groups of women (the *va’ine tiini*) and play an important role in affirming social relatedness (see Kuchler and Eimke, 2009)

learning is a form of respecting the knowledge of others.....According to Maua-Hodges, reciprocal practice to which both the teacher and the learner contribute is vital. Likewise, the Cook Islands women develop reciprocity abilities (*uriuri kite*) that produce a *tivaevae*

Tu inangaro (relationship) is valued in the making of *tivaevae*.A process of relationship making occurs over a period of time; time that is spent on spiritual matters, observation, demonstration, listening, practising, analysing, experimenting and reviewing the task of producing a *tivaevae*.....

Once an adroitness in handling a *tivaevae* has been reached, *tivaevae* students share their arts with the community. *Akairi kite* (shared vision) is highly respected among Cook Islands women making the *tivaevae*. When the women come together, they have a shared vision of how the *tivaevae* is going to turn out. Rongokea (2001) stated that shared vision of *tivaevae* is based on constructing knowledge incrementally, complementing personal growth and development. According to Rongokea, shared vision is culturally responsive because it represents the values of *tu akangateitei* (respect), *tu akakoromaki* (patience) and *te kauraro* (humility)

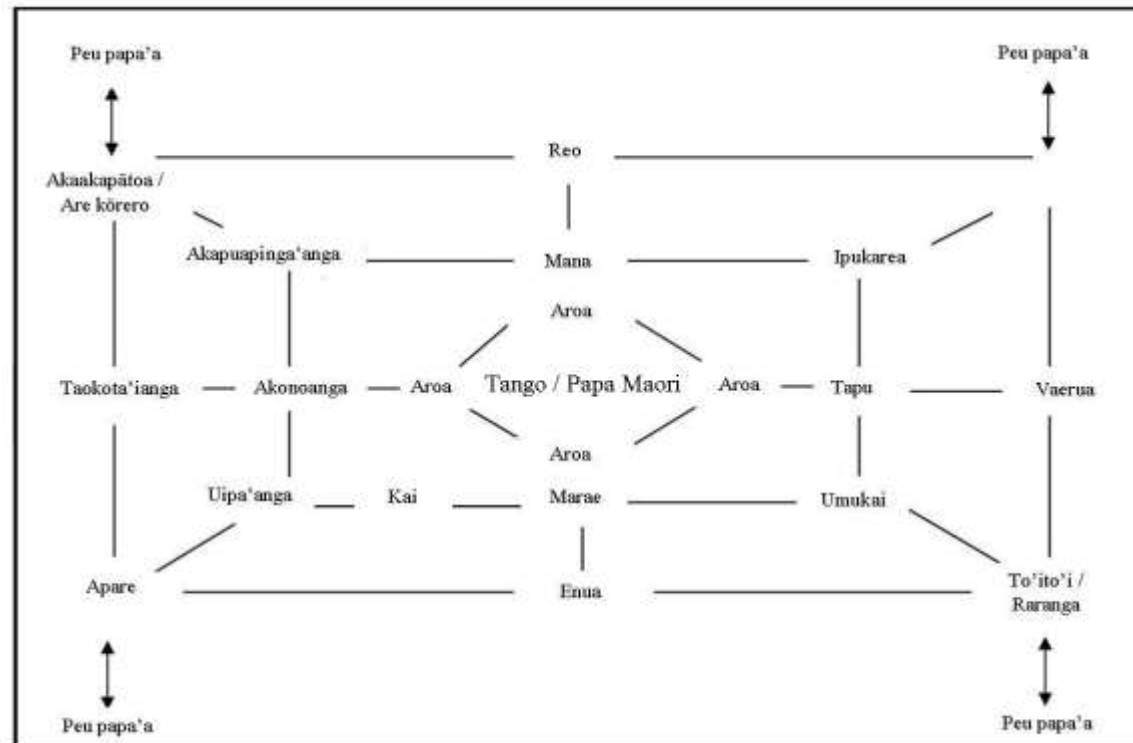
In addition to these values, Te Ava (2011b: 56-58) describes the stages of knowledge production in terms of *tivaevae* creation – *koikoi* (data collection), *tuitui* (analysis), and *akairianga* (presentation of results) -

- (i) Collaborative data collection – “*Koikoi* refers to the gathering of the patterns needed for the making of the *tivaevae*. They are picked and readied for discussion before being sewn together. ... The *tivaevae* model allows participants to be involved in discussions over a considerable time period in which the focus is determined by the interests of the participants. They, in effect, bring their own ‘patterns’ to show and evaluate.The nature, degree, direction, pathway, place and time are circumspectly determined by the participants in their immediate surroundings, and shaped by their world views. This is a dynamic interaction of story-telling, debating, reflecting, sharing knowledge of genealogies, along with food and other necessities.”
- (ii) Collective Analysis – “*Tuitui*, the sewing or stitching of the pattern on the blank canvas. When Cook Islanders come together during *tuitui* to make the *tivaevae*, they make connections with each other and begin developing relationships. In this research, making connections means that over a period of time, by speaking both English and *te reo Maori Kuki Airani* relationships with participants, families, teachers and schools are progressively established as well as acquaintances shared. This Cook Islands way of favouring one’s social standing is similar to socialisation in the world of *tivaevae* making. It is this laying and developing of one’s identity in purposeful relationships that aligns with the *tivaevae* model. This is a crucial pattern for the *tuitui* part of *tivaevae* because the strength of those relationships, positions, and connections determines the beauty and complexity of the finished *tivaevae*. Thus in terms of research and the relationships which are part of the research, the degree of honesty and transparency in sharing information, opinion, and attitudes are well identified.”

(iii) Presentation and sharing of results - “Akairianga - This is the evaluating and offering of the tivaevae to the community or to individuals as a gift. In the Cook Islands culture, the tivaevae represents a symbolical token of two Cook Islands values, aroa (love) and tu akangateitei (respect).”

5. The research is additionally framed by the ‘Akapa’anga Ideological Model’ inspired by the late John Rangihau Conceptual Model from Aotearoa New Zealand (Ka’ai & Higgins, 2004). The model was collectively conceptualised by a number of Cook Islands postgraduate students at the University of South Pacific, Cook Islands in 2012. Students contributed knowledge from their own experiences and island communities. It is described as a living generic Cook Islands ideological framework. It provides a cultural lens from which individual models can be further developed.

Table 1 – Te Akapa’anga Cook Islands Māori Model (Source: USP Cook Island Postgraduate Students, 2012) (see glossary for Māori terms)



The Akapa’anga Ideological Model and the ‘tivaevae model’ provides a portal, as well as a cultural lens from which the researcher can analyse, describe, explain and critique the material collected for this study within an Indigenous construct or paradigm. The portal and cultural concepts being used from the Akapa’anga Model to ‘ito’i which relates to ‘the way we do things’.

7. Ideally, from a methodological perspective, traditional knowledge is best transmitted in te reo Māori o Nukutere (Cook Islands language) to sustain the ‘tapu’ and ‘mana’ of the project. To this end the exegesis will be summarised in a statement in Nukutere (Rarotonga) language in Chapter 5, which will try to capture the full meaning of any concepts lost in English.

Summary

Indigenous peoples around the globe have been the subject of research interest since the 19th century (Given, 2008). Colonisers exploited Indigenous peoples as evidenced in case-studies in developing theories of “cultural evolution that implicitly legitimised the introduction of civilizing institutions to govern indigenous homelands” (Given, 2008, p.424). Polynesians across the Pacific have encountered the same treatment. They have been the object of and subjected to ‘outsiders’ research. Outsiders, as defined by Cram (2001) are non-Māori. These experiences are not unique to Polynesians, in fact, Indigenous peoples globally face similar experiences. Cram (2001) reports that research undertaken by ‘outsiders’ often results “in judgements being made that are based on the cultural standpoint of the researcher rather than the lived reality of the indigenous population” (p.37).

The researcher and the research for this exegesis is intimately linked to the researcher as an educator, an art practitioner and a community leader. Therefore, the researcher can be classified as an ‘insider-researcher’, in that they choose to study in a field to which the researcher belongs (Unluer, 2012). Advantages of being an ‘insider-researcher’ are;

- A greater understanding of the culture being studied;
- Not altering the flow of social interaction unnaturally; and
- An established intimacy which promotes both the telling and the judging of truth.

(Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002)

Research also indicates 'insider-researchers' can be considered biased, through making wrong assumptions and being too familiar can also lead to the loss of objectivity (Hewitt-Taylor, 2002). In undertaking a comparison of being the researcher and also the subject of the research, the challenge will be to remove interpretations in order to allow the research to speak for itself.

CHAPTER TWO: ‘AKAIRO E TE MĀORI - MĀORI AND THE IMAGE

The idols were covered with curiously netted cinet of finely braided cocoa-nut husk, and ornamented with red feathers. They varied in size, some being six or eight feet long, others not more than as many inches. Those representing the spirits, they called ti'i [tiki]; and those representing the national or family gods, toos [to'o]. Into these they supposed the gods entered at certain seasons, or in answer to the prayers of the priests. During this indwelling of the gods, they imagined even the images were very powerful; but when the spirit had departed, though they were among the most sacred things, their extraordinary powers were gone - Ellis (1829: 203).

To the Polynesian mind, there was nothing miraculous about the existence of psychic rapport between objects and persons, or in nature as a whole ... Handy (1927: 4).

Introduction

Traditional Cook Islands art works are evaluated in terms of their aesthetic appearance as suitable temporary instantiations of atua (gods) and for their 'effect' in the world. The role of the ta'unga (knowledge specialist, or 'artist') and the collective nature of art production are explored. The first chapter concludes with seven criteria defining Cook Islands art, the role of the artist as ta'unga and the art work as a tāura atua or medium of rapport with the divine.

Atua, ta'unga and artists in the Cook Islands

Every object, substance and place had a spiritual being or guardian and every situation, state and work of man had its tutelar and protecting deity (Williamson, 1937: 20).

The core of Cook Islands Māori belief is that this world is not a human world but a divine world governed by atua. To cut a tree, to harvest fish, or food requires the permission of the atua that created the resources and requires a tāura kai (gift or offering) in return³.

Atua presided over the oceans and its navigators, and over the valleys used for planting. There were atua of fish, atua of medicine, atua of sorcery and atua of labourers, planters, net makers, and canoe makers, etc., (Williamson, 1937: 20). These gods were instantiated⁴ in many forms - in objects, myth, ritual, and ritualized practices. Valeri notes that deities may be manifest in colors; days of the month; periods of the day; natural phenomena such as thunder, light, seawater, and so on; plants; animals; seasons; certain smells; cloud formations; a particular number; birdsongs; and so forth (1985: 15ff).

Atua resided in Te Pō which, in Cook Islands cosmology, was the binary opposite to this world, Te Ao. Human activities in Te Ao, according to Gill, are –

mere transcripts of what was supposed to be going on in Avaiki [Te Pō], their knowledge and skill being derived from the invisible world (Gill, 1876:130 -1).

The art of this world [Te Ao] are fac-similies of what primarily belonged to the nether-land [Te Pō], and were taught to mankind by the gods. The visible world itself is but a gross copy of what exists in spirit land. If fire burns it is because latent flame was hidden in the wood by Mauike in Hades. If the axe cleaves it is because the fairy [spirit] of the axe is invisibly present. If the iron-wood club kills it is because a fierce demon ... is enshrined in it (Gill, 1876:154).

Thomas describes Te Pō as -

the source not only of divine influence, but also of fertility, children and general efficacy. Agricultural growth, successful fishing and many forms of specialized work ranging from tattooing to house-building required sacrifices to deities which would ensure their presence or

³ For example, “Tane was given Forestry and hence controlled trees, birds and insect life. He naturally became the tutelary deity of wood craftsmen. Before a tree could be felled in the forest for a voyaging ship or an important house, Tane had to be placated with a ritual chant or invocation; and before commencing an important task, an offering was made to Tane by the craftsman” (Hiroa, 1939:38).

⁴ ‘Instantiate’ is used here to mean the realisation of an other-worldly abstraction in concrete form in this world.

favour; chants at the beginning of such activities summoned the deities from the world of darkness while those at their conclusion sought to compel the gods to return. This auspicious presence – desirable temporarily rather than permanently – rendered activities, places and objects, tapu, a condition of heightened sanctity...contagiously threatening to non-tapu persons or objects in the vicinity. Tapu thus required delicate management. It had to be protected for the duration of a task, such as canoe-building or planting, but subsequently had to be lifted, so that the object or product could enter into common use (1995:106-7).

Te Atua I’o – God the animating essence

*Ko I’o ē ‘atua nui o te rangi tua tinitīni
Te atua mekameka maraurau mana ko ia anake*

*I’o the mighty god of the many heavens
The omnipotent and omnipresent god; he and he only.⁵*

A further relevant aspect of Cook Islands cosmology, is the belief that far beyond Te Pō and Te Ao, beyond the world of gods and men, lies the realm of the Supreme Being, I’o metua kore, I’o the animating spirit without parents, the life creating force that made the universe out of nothingness. I’o refers to the core of anything⁶, the life essence, ‘the heart of creation...in the most distant heaven above the earth’ (Handy 1927:97) – I’o te atua nui ki-te-rangi-tua-tini-tini. Knowledge of I’o was, according to Handy, “limited to the ancient priesthood.” No image of I’o was ever made.

⁵ Savage, 1962: 12

⁶ “The word “i’o,” commonly used for “god,” properly means “pith,” or “core” of a tree. What the core is to the tree, the god was believed to be to the man” (Gill 1876: 28).

Figure 1.1 – The author prepares to cut the tāura pito or umbilical cord [of plaited ti leaves] linking this newly carved canoe to Te Pō, the place of its origin or inspiration. Through this ritual, the tapu is removed and the canoe can enter into mundane use in Te Ao, the everyday world (Source: Mike Tavioni, 2005).



Figure 1.2 – the double rainbow – ‘the belt of Tangaroa’ – a sign of success for the vaka launch (Source: Mike Tavioni, 2005).



Ta'unga

Writing of Tongareva, Hiroa noted that the atua were invisible to ordinary people but –

.....were seen (kitea) by the tāura priests ... the idea conveyed by the word kitea (seen or found) is that the priests officially established communication with the gods. The priests made materials representations of the ...gods which the people could see, and which the priests could use in ceremonial procedures (1932;87).

Writing in 1833, just 10 years after the arrival of Christian missionaries to Rarotonga, the Rev. Charles Pittman described some aspects of the work of the then still extant ta'unga marae (religious adepts) or tāura atua (inspired mediums) -

They had a meeting of their taura atua & people when they were inspired by their gods & related to the people what their respective god had said to them the previous night in a dream, or what he had seen in the po & and would say he saw so & so there who was then living, signifying he would soon die, which proved to be the case. When the god was displeased, the prophets would open the door of their sacred places (maraes⁷) & sweep away the dust, cobwebs, etc from the floor where their god was placed & from their deity also. The prophet would then take off his [the atua's] robes (immense rolls of native cloth) & carefully examine it as he unfolded it. They often found the excrement of rats, their nests &c in it & large holes eaten by these sacrilegious intruders, which when discovered the prophet would inform the people of the cause of the anger of their deity & give orders for fresh cloth to be made & a new kiikii⁸ to be adzed out, as the only means of appeasing the anger of the offended god. This was the employment of Tupe⁹. Also to karakia (Pittman, 2000:166).

The unwrapping of the tapa (bark cloth) covers, recorded by Pittman “brings the god into this world, wrapping him up again sends the god back to the nether world, the po” (Gell 1993: 113) yet leaves behind, in the hands of the chief and priest, some residual power in the form of spiritual

⁷ More probably the 'are atua or god house of the marae

⁸ Savage (1962; 105) defines ki'iki'i as “n. an ornamentation or article of adornment, used in olden days to decorate a marae with, or decorate idols; the clothing of an idol.” In this context it refers to the wooden god clothed in tapa and seems related to the Tahitian word tii – or tiki.

⁹ Tupe – a sub chief of Ngatangia, and a Chief Judge in the missionary period (see Crocombe, 1983; passim).

exuviae removed from the ki'iki'i (wooden representation of a god – see footnote 8). This residual matter is known as poa in the Nukutere language.

Figure 1.3 – the robes of the atua (Source: © Trustees the British Museum).



Figure 1.4 – a cross section of a Rarotongan atua or ki'iki'i wrapped in folds of tapa (Source: © Trustees the British Museum).



There are many types of ta'unga in Cook Islands society, each with insight derived from communication with the atua presiding over their field of speciality. There is, for example, the ta'unga tarai, who is the specialist carver of tikis or atua, atamira (ariki seats), kumete (food bowls), etc; the ta'unga tarai vaka or canoe building specialist; the ta'unga vairakau, the medicinal specialist who detects, diagnoses and treats illness; the ta'unga aka'anau, a skilled midwife; the ta'unga marae who oversees the construction of religious places; the ta'unga tautai, or Mata Ika (fish

eyes), who sees fish; the ta'unga akara etu, astrologer/ astronomer; the ta'unga akatere vaka or navigator; the ta'unga or tumu kōrero, the keeper of knowledge, history, genealogy, karakia or prayers, and the ta'unga purepure or practitioner of the 'black arts'.

Figure 1.5 – surrender of the ki'iki'i, in their tapa robes, Rarotonga (Source: *Journal of Civilization*, October 16, 1841)

They dropped at our feet fourteen immense idols, the smallest of which was about five yards in length. Each of these was composed of a piece of aito, or ironwood, about four inches in diameter, carved with a rude imitation of the human head at one end, and with an obscene figure [phallus] at the other, wrapped round with native cloth until it became two or three yards in circumference. Near the wood were red feathers, and a string of small pieces of polished pearl shell, which were said to be the manava or soul of the god (Williams 1837: 30).



The ta'unga is associated with an ability to 'see' or perceive what others cannot, as a consequence of his kinship with atua. For example, in the construction of a vaka, the ta'unga vaka looks at a log as it is turned to one side or the other to find the keel of the vaka which also establishes the top of the vaka; then he looks for the stern and bow. This is the moment of inspiration when he sees the full picture of the vaka in his mind while everyone else sees only a log. Apprentices turn the log until it lays the way the ta'unga wants it. The ta'unga says his karakia to pay homage and to honour his brother, the tree, whose life has been taken for the purpose of making a vaka. The ta'unga may then make a symbolic cut or cut a line the length of the log and then the work starts. The ta'unga guides the tools and together with the apprentices fashions the vaka. [Handy (1927: 283) points out that every ta'unga had, under his or her direction "a body of consecrated workers, some of them also adepts, others assistants or apprentices"].

Rongokea (1992) refers to the inspired role of the ta'unga in the more contemporary Cook Islands art form of tivaevae (quilting), an art which has adapted the traditional roles of the ta'unga and the group, to a contemporary context –

Most women know how to cut and sew tivaevae, but only a few women are expert in the art of designing, cutting and sewing tivaevae. Such women have attained the status of being a ta'unga (a person who is highly skilled in any art). The women may not always be able to say where a particular idea for a pattern has come from, but may find inspiration in their environment, drawing an interpretation of what they see directly onto the fabric, or onto paper before transferring it to the fabric (Rongokea, 1992; 2).

A ta'unga tivaivai may design and cut hundreds of patterns and work on only a few – the actual realisation of the tivaevae being the work of the va'ine tini (group of women). In many cases even the group's work remains unacknowledged for, despite the fact that the ta'unga decided on the motif and cut it and many women worked on sewing it, Eimke (2009) records that "if the tivaivai were displayed, for instance in an annual show, only the owner's name mattered, and the praise if any was given to her" (Eimke, 2009:31).

As with carving – the historical spear of Ninaenua, for example - it is the owner’s name, Karika Taraape Te Tae Tonga, that is remembered, not the makers. Its origin or inspiration¹⁰, remains in the supernatural world of Te Pō.

More Ta’unga (1990) points to the complementarity of ta’unga and workers, with each person’s efforts equally valued (‘do not one clamber on top of the others’) in the collective task of producing, in this case, ka’a or sennit rope, the tāura that connects human beings with the gods –

Ka tui tātou ia tātou ki te ka’a, kāre e piki ki runga, ka tui.
No te mea, me piki ki runga, ka ‘akaranga ia koe e tivarevare.
Me tui ra koe ia koe, tei roto i to’ou toto, tei roto i to’ou ivi, tei roto i to’ou kiko.
Ko te mākave tērā o te ka’a.

The production of art is never a mundane or everyday activity. Teiotu (2013;340) notes the placing of a tapu (spiritual protection) on the vaka making ground during canoe construction in Atiu in 1992 which excluded women and girls from the site. Table 2 below, derived from Teiotu (2007:5) lists six contemporary tapu placed around the production of tapa on Atiu.

¹⁰ The word ‘inspire’ is used here in its original sense of a divine or supernatural being imparting a truth or idea to someone (Oxford English Dictionary).

Table 2 – Tapu Note Ta 'Unga Tutu Anga
Contemporary Tapu Associated with Tapa Making (Source: Teiotu 2007:5)

“If any of these rules are broken, the anga will be of poor quality” (Source: Teiotu, 2007; 5)

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Kare tēta'i uaatu mama tei ikiia e akatikaia kia moe ki tana tane i te reira tuatau. Kia aati tēta'i, ka akar'ia mai te reira ki runga i te Anga</p> <p>Kia akapapu koe vaine e, kare koe e rokoia mai e toou tuatau maki marama ia kotou e tutuanga nei.</p> <p>Kare tēta'i uatu tane e tikaia kia akavaitata atu ki teia angaanga.</p> <p>Ka noo ta'akaua te au vaine i te tuatau o te tamaanga o te au kiriau i muri ake i te ina anga me kare rara anga. Ka tamaia te reira ki roto i te puna vai.</p> <p>Kare tēta'i uatu e tikaia kia na runga i te Tutunga i te au tuatau ravarai.</p> <p>Kare e akatikaia tēta'i kia katikati manga i te tuatau angaanga. Na te Va'ine Ta'unga e akakite e ka kaimanga.</p> | <p>They must not sleep with their husbands until the Anga is completed.</p> <p>They must not work during their monthly menstrual periods.</p> <p>They must banish men from the area in which they are working</p> <p>They must completely strip when washing the fibre in the pool of water selected for the task.</p> <p>They must never step over the Tutunga (anvil).</p> <p>They must not eat or drink when working with the fibre. The Va'ine Ta'unga will say when it is time to eat.</p> |
|--|---|

In entering the work site, the ta'unga recites karakia to the relevant atua designating the site as a tapu place and sanctifying the work, the raw materials, the tools and the workers. At the end of the project the ta'unga recites a karakia to lift the tapu, declaring everything 'noa' (normal or everyday) again. Thus the work of the ta'unga is undertaken as a spiritual and spiritually sanctioned enterprise, within a sanctified or tapu space. According to Handy -

The main features of all kinds of consecrated enterprise were everywhere fundamentally the same. These were: organization and direction under master craftsmen or adepts, and priests; worship of patron deities who were commonly deified men by means of prayer and the presentation of offerings; tapu and purificatory rites designed to insulate the work, the workers and the product, from evil; the taking of omens relative to the outcome of the enterprise; empowering workers, places, instruments, and the product by using conductors of mana, and endowing them directly with mana through spells; consecrating the finished product by means of ritual; and finally feasting and general merrymaking to mark the end of the consecrated period, to enjoy the product, and to render thanks to the gods (Handy, 1927; 282).

While some of the ta'unga were sacred by virtue of their association with the gods, sacred knowledge, karakia, etc., not all ta'unga were sacred. At the time of working, the ta'unga entered a consecrated or tapu space where the mana (spiritual power) from Te Pō was channelled to the creation of carved works, performances, etc. Once work was completed the ta'unga re-entered the everyday world having completed various rituals for the removal of tapu. Hiroa (1934; 135) specifically argues against regarding ta'unga as part of a sacred class –

Gill [1885; 274] states that carving was the employment of sacred men and that when Rori¹¹ carved the set of gods for the national god house [of Mangaia] he was believed to be specially assisted by the gods. When employed on important work, the craftsmen deposited their adzes in the marae overnight and used incantations to give edge and strength to their tools. But though religious observances were kept on particular occasions, the craftsmen as a class, were not sacred, as Gill states. During his period of work, Rori may have been treated with extra respect, but he was not a priest and was no more sacred than any other person of his social grade. Although some of the priests were master craftsmen, their sacred attributes were derived from their priesthood.

On the other hand, Handy, citing Gill (1894; 342; 1876; 141) writes –

The carpenter priests (ta'unga) in the Cook Islands who were charged with the ceremonial direction of canoe making, and whose symbol was the sacred adz, constituted a priestly order that offers a close parallel to, and perhaps was an offshoot of, the Samoan carpenter's guild. (1927; 151-2)

Yet Handy goes on to note that “In Samoa, *tufunga* [skilled persons] was applied only to industrial experts; apparently no religious adepts were honoured with that title” (1927: 152).

¹¹ Rori – Mangaian carver of the late 18th century, who sheltered for many years in the Mangaian karrenfeld or makatea following a change of government on the island. Rori was the grandson of Una a Tahitian ta'unga karai and is attributed with carving eleven of the major gods in the Mangaian pantheon while his own god Teipe was carved by his friend Tapaivi (see Hiroa, 1944; 362) At least five of these carved god images remain in museum collections.

In contemporary Rarotongan language, ta'unga is translated as 'priest, cleric' (Savage, 1962: 367¹²; Buse and Taringa, 1995:471) but as Buse and Taringa (1995: 341) also point out, the pre-Christian term for a priest was pi'a atua 'god container'; [in New Zealand waka atua (vessel of a god), or kauwaka (medium)¹³]. In the Cook Islands only the ta'unga marae, ta'unga karakia and tāura atua could be classed as part of a sacred class, with recorded descent lines recalled in genealogies (see for example, Hiroa, 1934: 112-115).

Unlike the 'priestly clans' or kau ta'unga (order of the priesthood) the names of ta'unga artists are not celebrated in Cook Islands history, with a few exceptions (for example, the Mangaian artist Rori). It appears that the ta'unga artist was not regarded as individually important other than as the transmitter of a style. The ta'unga was not a member of a priestly clan, though he might achieve historical recognition for other reasons. This is not to say that ta'unga were not recorded genealogically as everyday members of their ngati (tribe), and it does not disregard the fact that some families were regarded as ta'unga families, with known genealogies, whose specialism was transmitted within the lineage over time. For example, the Taraare family, ta'unga kōrero for the ngati Makea or the Tupe family mentioned in Pitman. But there is no record of ta'unga celebrated as the creators of specific works, including all the great masterpieces of Cook Islands art, with the known exception of the Mangaian carver Rori.¹⁴ Gell observes that whatever personal recognition came to the ta'unga came by way of their virtuosity –

individual tattoo artists among the Māori achieved great personal fameThey did so because their work instantiated, better than their competitors, what Māori collectively regarded as excellence in the matter of tattooing – not because their tattoos were appreciated as distinctive productions expressive of their artistic individuality.....there was no culturally recognised linkage between artistic excellence and the expression of artistic individuality, and since genres and motifs were subject to such stringent canons of stylistic coherence, it is much more appropriate to treat 'collectivities' rather than individuals as units of style than it would be in discussions of Western art (Gell 1993: 158).

¹² Also "any person skilled in any special art; an artisan; an accomplished craftsman" (Savage, 1962:367)

¹³ Handy (1927:160) notes "The Mangaian word [pi'a atua] for these living embodiments or containers, Gill translates as 'god-box'. The Māori employed an equally suggestive term, speaking of such mediums as waka..." (1927:160) Pitman (2000: 97) notes how early Christian converts referred to images of Christ as "Jesus in a box".

¹⁴ Hiroa (1944: 472) suggests that a possible reason why Rori is remembered is as an iconoclast of previous religious art forms and thus an exception to the rule of stylistic uniformity and coherence. "Rori evidently followed his own form of art....The form of Mangaian religious art is ...an independent development doubtless initiated by Rori."

This is not to deny the possibility of innovation as the result of individual artistic activity and even in adhering to the most stringent genres in tattoo, the ta'unga tatau is free to be innovative in the area of the pito (navel) to create innovative designs which represents his individual mark or signature.

In any case, the description of the Cook Islands artist, given above, places them at some distance from the stereotypical western artist. Handy (1927; 149) describes the ta'unga as not only an adept in his specialism but “had, in addition, sufficient experience and leadership to enable him to organise and direct the labor of other workers in communal enterprise’ The ta'unga generates an inspired vision, but he or she may or may not be directly involved in the realisation of this vision as a finished art piece. Their key role appears to be to lead and inspire the group – “a body of consecrated workers, some of them also adepts, others assistants or apprentices” (Handy, 1927: 283) to ensure a shared vision or *akairi kite*¹⁵ in the process of realisation¹⁶.

Mana, for a ta'unga, derives from the gift of ‘seeing’ (which is evidence of kinship or connectedness to atua in Te Pō¹⁷), and his or her ability to share this vision with a group of assistants who will work on realizing the final product. The art work thus produced brings credit to its owners (the commissioning ariki or priest), and ultimately to the atua, or descendants of the atua – not exclusively or necessarily to the artist as an individual. The artist is recognized, given mana and rewarded during his lifetime, but is not recorded in history as chiefs, priests and warriors are. In More Ta'unga's terms, he is a strand among other strands – he does not seek to ‘clamber on top’ – but to make sennit worthy as tāura.

¹⁵ Kite – knowledge, vision ; akairi - to add to the top, to top up – i.e. every person adds their contribution to the existing knowledge

¹⁶ This is also evident in the description of a dance performance on Atiu in 1777 – “Messrs. Anderson and Burney saw, at a small distance, about twenty young women, adorned like the chiefs with red feathers, engaged in a dance, which they performed to a slow and solemn air, sung by them all....They seemed to be directed by a man, who, in the capacity of a prompter, mentioned the several motions they were to make....” (Cook, 1784: 114).

¹⁷ In Tahiti, “a man's soul was something out of him, rather than in him, that ...lived in the Po, the other world and would only come to him at certain times, as when he dreamt” (Williamson, 1937; 204). In the Cook Islands, “a man's spirit was supposed to leave the body in sleep, and travel over the island; to hold converse with the dead; and even to visit the spirit world [Te Pō]. This was their explanation of dreams” (Williamson, 1937; 220).

Art in context of the Cook Islands

The main forms of art in the Cook Islands have traditionally been –

(1) Material art, including

(1.1) Religious or sacred art - art crafted for the marae, such things as atua, unu¹⁸ and ‘ata‘ata (altars) - plus the atamira (wooden chief seats), tokotoko (staffs or war spears), tapa for the gods or priests or chiefs, head dresses, the woven waist band, fibre sandals for the ariki, priests and helpers on the marae

(1.2) Decorative art – art for adornment and for identity – for example, tapa designs for each ngati¹⁹, tatau designs on skin^{20 21}, designs on mats and tapa, intricate designs on carved objects, including the vaka.

(1.3) Functional or practical art – vaka, kumete, nets, eel traps, fish hooks, baskets for food gathering, weapons for warfare, etc.

(2) Performance art - dance, drumming, imene, dramatic performances, festivals²² funeral dirges and eva, and associated instruments and ritual props (drums, flutes, unu, etc).

¹⁸ Unu - Captain Cook refers to the unu as a “Piece of Carved wood in which their gods were supposed *to reside occasionally*” (emphasis added - Cook cited in March; 1893:309).

¹⁹ Rev Charles Pitman (2000:213) reported “Looking at one of the tutugnas [tutunga/anvil] on what the Native women beat their cloths, noticing the carved work, was informed that this was the sign of the tutugna [tutunga] of a chief, the poor people could not obtain it.”

²⁰ Writing of Atiu in 1777, Samwell notes – “Their tattawing seems to be a kind of Heraldry, for those of the same tribe or Family were marked exactly alike, however our stay was too short to make certain of such Circumstances as these.” *Some Accounts of A Voyage to South Seas in 1776 – 1777- 1778 Written by David Samewell, Surgeon of the Discovery*, in Beaglehole, 1967; 1009 .

²¹ According to Hiroa – “An island developed its own tattooing patterns, which were respected by others as much as if they were protected by patent rights. One of the old Rarotongans, on the back of whose neck I saw the *rauteve* motif ..., told me that he was tattooed with a group of other young men who planned a visit to Tahiti and who all wanted the *rauteve* to show that they were Rarotongans” (1944; 489). According to Mangos and Utanga (2006: 316) “In times of war [people] would wear their’s [‘akairo] like as emblem, signifying tribal affiliations.” If a motif was appropriated, conflict ensued “such conflict is consistent with the cultural tradition of the island of Aitutaki where if the mark of one tribe was stolen by another, a fight ensued” (Croccombe and Crocombe, 2003: 65).

²² For a description of “Ceremonies and Festivals brought by Tangi’ia to Rarotonga from Ava’iki” see Tara’are (2000:189 - 193).

Figure 1.6 – Tribal designs of Te Manahune, Ngati Tane, Ngata Akatauirā, Ngati Ruaunuku and Ngariki of Mangaia (Source: Pa1-o-1239-076 Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington).



None of these categories was exclusive – for example, the painted vaka was both decorative and functional²³; the carved unu was decorative and sacred and played a role in rituals and festivals. Kaeppler writes of “the usual Polynesian integration of visual and verbal arts in a performance” (2007; 122) and has argued that it was a -

²³ “Two of these boats were most curiously stain’d or painted all over with black in innumerable small figures, as squares, triangles &cthey seem’d to have taken more pains in doing this than punctuating their own bodys.” William Anderson, *A Journal of A Voyage Made in His Majesty’s Sloop Resolution*, in Beaglehole, 1967: 841

combination of product and process that makes objects sacred and divine, and that the performative elements of the process are most important to give divinity to the .[objects] themselves as well as to what they contain (2007;123).

Figure 1.7 – New Zealand’s trade with the Islands: Taking fruit out to a steamer by canoe at one of the Cook group (Source: AWNS 19090506-3-2 © Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries).



What set performance and productions apart as art²⁴ was their suitability as media to instantiate atua in their communication and dealings with the mundane world (Te Ao) – to become, in effect a tāura atua.

When invoked, the patron spirit was evidently supposed to descend into a figure [or object] in much the same way as a spirit was believed to enter the body of a prophet and possess him (Handy, 1927: 122).

²⁴ In the Cook Islands there is no such word as art. Its closest cognates are the words akamanea, meaning, to decorate or beautify; ‘akairo meaning to create marks or markings or groves that represents images of some sort; ta tatau, ta meaning to hit or smack, or to cut or pierce skin and make marks or designs; tatau meaning to read or for reading.

This process of instantiation of a person or object by an atua is referred to as *haatopa te etua* (to cause the god to fall) in the Marquesas and *faaiho* (to use prayers and ceremonies to procure the presence of a god in or with the image) in Tahiti.

They supposed their gods were powerful spiritual beings, in some degree acquainted with the events of this world, and generally governing its affairs; never exercising any thing like benevolence towards even their most devoted followers, but requiring homage and obedience, with constant offerings; denouncing their anger, and dispensing destruction on all who either refused or hesitated to comply. But while the people supposed they were spiritual beings, they manufactured images either as representations of their form, and emblems of their character, or as the vehicle or instrument through which their communications might be made to the god, and his will revealed to them (Ellis 1829: 337)

The term ‘*tāura*’ is often glossed as ‘prophet’ or ‘medium’. For example, writing of Tahiti, Handy notes –

Taula [*tāura*] ...signified one who was subject to possession by a god or spirit and was thus applied to the ‘inspired oracles’ into whom gods or spirits were supposed to enter in order to speak to men..... At the times when they were in a state of possession, these prophets and mediums were regarded by the people as living embodiments of the gods or spirits believed to be in possession of their bodies or faculties. They perhaps might better be described as vessels or containers that held the indwelling spirits (1927;159).

Hence the Mangaian term for these oracles as *p’ia atua* or god containers. But as Handy points out, *atua* could also become present in other natural and artificial, animate and inanimate objects, including animals, insects, birds and fish associated with an *ariki* – for example, the *veri* or centipede for *Pa Ariki*, or the *ika moeava* or shark for *Kainuku*. An animal thus instantiating a god or divine ancestor is also referred to as a ‘*tāura*’ *atua*. But *tiki*, god-sticks and other carved objects could also instantiate the divine, and become divine containers and thus meet the definition of *tāura atua*, as could performances. In the case of performance, the most beautiful and/or skilful men and women [*Te Karioi*] were chosen to attract the presence of *atua* to their performances²⁵.

²⁵ According to Teuira Henry, for Tahiti, “The men set apart for the priesthood were able bodied and most of them were tall. They were free from personal defects, as the gods were supposed to reject a man with a blemish, such as having a hump back, bald head, blind eye or eyes that squinted. They must be deft of hand and sure footed, so as not to be awkward in the service of a god” (1928; 155).

Hooper in his introduction to *Pacific Encounters - Art and Divinity* (2006) writes that -

Māori definitions of art link it to aesthetics, to assessments of beauty, taste, form and skill in manufacture. Anyone viewing objects in this book [*Pacific Encounters*] will notice the enormous care and refinement with which they were made. These qualities were pleasing to the makers and users, and also effective, for such care was intended to please the gods as a form of sacrifice designed to bring about beneficial effects..... These things were made to do a job, to have effects in the world. And they still do (2006:28).

“Effect in the world” (Te Ao) is also Hooper’s definition of mana – “the ability to bring about effects which go beyond normal human agency” (Hooper, 2006:37). These “effects” might include, for example, a hook or net or canoe used successfully in catching large quantities of fish, a spear or club that brings great military victory, an adze that creates exquisite carving, a magic token generating illness or causing death, etc. Similarly, Handy describes mana as experienced in -

MANIFEST ACCOMPLISHMENT; in objects, rites and processes it was exhibited in PROVEN EFFICACY (Handy 1927:28 - capitals in original).

Thus, as Hooper notes –

....a god image and a chief, or a magnificent feathered cloak and an apparently humble fish hook. All four were regarded on specific occasions, as vehicles suitable for the physical manifestation [instantiation] of divinity in the mundane world (2006: 31).

In such circumstances, these items become tāura atua or mediums of rapport with the divine²⁶.

²⁶ According to Handy (1927: 126) the New Zealand Māori word ‘aria’ “denoted the form of incarnation of, or embodiment of a god.” He quotes Best (1922: 16-17) who defines aria to mean “the conception of a material representation of an immaterial being or condition : thus the aria of an atua is its form of representation, the form in which it is visible to human eyes.”

For this sort of image, the god can be summoned, coaxed or entreated by offerings to enter the image for the purpose of communication with humans be this for medicinal, divinatory, military or other reasons. Once the human/god exchanges are completed the god retires to a distance and its temporary vessel returns to “normal” mundane life (Hooper, 2007: 172).

In my own art practice, some work may have intrinsic mana (the result of inspiration or visitation) while an ordinary object like a weapon, tokotoko or staff may have no intrinsic mana at all. But as Handy (1927; 28) points out – “Beings and objects of all kinds were capable to a greater or lesser degree of being mediums and reservoirs of divine psychic potency” [mana]. In such cases mana can be induced by, for example, placing an object on a marae with the owner or ta’unga asking or praying for it to be sanctified by atua.

Objects, persons or products acting as a vehicle for an atua’s temporary²⁷ instantiation were imbued with mana only when utilised by atua for this purpose. For the period of visitation, objects “bound and wrapped and ‘decorated’ to personate and embody divinity ... are ... not a ‘depiction’ of the god, but the body of the god in artefact form” (Gell 1998:99; Hooper, 2007:172).²⁸

The following chant from Mangaia (recorded and translated by Gill, 1878; 219; translated March, 1893;327-8 and Tavioni) illustrates a number of these points –

²⁷ The temporary nature of visitation from Te Pō is illustrated by the fact that “temples [marae] were not in constant use....Before an important ceremony, the people were assembled by the priests, and the temple courtyard and surroundings were cleared and weeded. Any necessary repairs to the stonework and woodwork upon the court were made by the priests and their attendants” (Hiroa, 1939; 27).

²⁸ Hiroa notes – “The piece of sennit representing Tane-kio and the sennit roll representing Mokoio were ordinary material until priestly ritual converted specific pieces into religious symbols. ...The representation of the national god Rongo in Mangaia by so simple an object as a shell trumpet may appear contradictory to the general rule of simple objects for minor gods but the particular shell trumpet was used by the king to call the warriors together for a campaign in the name of Rongo. *Thus the sound of the trumpet was the voice of Rongo.* (1944; 464 emphasis added)

Tataia i te tanga o Tane
O te vaa ia i tuku a ite ka'ara

Beat the drum of Tane
From the ka'ara [drum] his
voice issues

Taipo e

Go on!

Kua tangi reka te vaa o Tane
Rutu ake i te tangi
Ka rutu au, e Tane!
....

So thrilling is the voice of Tane
[i.e., the drum]
The very heavens are shaken
O Tane, I will beat your drum!

E kakara tuputupu
E kakara koritonga
E maire titatoe e a kake

Abundance of fragrant leaves
Beautiful sweet scented flowers
With garlands of maire for the
arrival (of Tane)

Taipo e
Uru are te kakara i tau ai
Ae!

Go on!
And white pandanus blossoms
Aye!

Here, flowers, scented leaves (maire) and the drum (ka'ara) are used to entice the god Tane from Te Pō to Te Ao. As the god enters, the drum embodies Tane. As March observes -

It is evident...that the drumwas regarded as Tane's embodiment; when the drum was beaten it was Tane that was struck; and for the ka'ara [drum] fissure it was Tane's voice that issued (1893; 328).

For the period that the god is present, the beat of the drum instantiates or embodies the god in this world. It becomes a tāura atua.

Figure 1.8 – An elaborately carved slit gong, ‘Ranginui’. This figure from Mangaia Island is unusual as Mangaia has no recent tradition of the anthropomorphic representations of gods (Hiroa, 1944: 463). Yet the drum figure can be seen as instantiating the god – “when the drum was beaten it was Tane that was struck; and for the ka’ara [drum] fissure it was Tane’s voice that issued.” (Source: Carved drum, known as ‘Ranginui’, formerly in the Oldman Collection, now on loan to the Cook Islands Library and Museum Society).



Figure 1.9 – Head-dress made of tapa, barkcloth, feathers, shell, sinnet, tropic bird feathers, cane and human hair. Red feather rosettes feature prominently (Source: AN215856001 © Trustees of the British Museum). Red feathers were considered attractive to the gods.



The corollary, when the god does not come, is described by Pitman for Takitumu in 1835 -

It appears that Tagnaroa [Tangaroa] their god often left them & went over to their foes....This was known to be the case in their non-success in war, or the illness of some great chief. A great quantity of food was instantly collected, with pigs &c & taken to the Marae to invite his return, which when he saw, he would sometimes return. But if his displeasure was very great & he did not return, they would cut out another

kiikii, i.e. representation of their god & clothe it with rolls of new cloth & often times erect a new Marae in order that his anger might be appeased (Pitman, 2000:235).²⁹

Meanwhile atua that had become ineffectual in this world, were discarded, as in the case of the ariki Tamatoa of Aitutaki who burned his marae and abandoned his god after his daughter died despite “invoking the gods from morning to evening, day after day” (Williams, 1837:19). In *The Dirge for Atiroa* (Gill, 1878:281-2) Koroneu rejects his god Tane following the loss of his son and calls for the image of Tane to be plastered with faeces and farted on (u’), saying “Tutae keinga e te tuarangi” (Faeces is good enough for this god). Here the image no longer functions as a tāura atua or medium of rapport and has to be refashioned to achieve or regain spiritual efficacy.

The presence of atua was further induced by the addition of red feathers to the artefact or to a performer. As Thomas (1995:154) notes “Any feather artefact enhanced the efficacy and divinity of its wearer.” In 1829, William Ellis noted of Tahiti – “red feathers ... were the most valuable offerings that could be presented; to them the power or influence of the atua was imparted, and through then to the objects to which they might be attached” (Ellis, 1829: 260). William Anderson (a Lieutenant on board Cook’s ship *Resolution*), visiting Atiu in the Cook Islands in 1777, noted that the red feathers were reserved for decoration of the ariki or senior people, but “when the Ceremony of Introduction was over, ... they now appeared without their red feathers which we took for a regal distinction as none had any but these & the women who danc’d.” (Beaglehole, 1967; 84) Lieutenant Gore noted that the Atiuans “ware [sic] Roses made of red Feathers with the Rose forward resting on their temples” (Beaglehole, 1987, I; 87n). The presence of red feather rosettes on the dancers, as well as chiefs and orators, suggests that the performer also sought inspiration/communication through their performance with the atua, channelling the gods from Te Pō to Te Ao and back again. This summoning of gods through performance is most apparent in marae rituals –

²⁹ This overlooked reference definitely identifies the large wrapped Rarotongan ‘staff god’ as Tangaroa and places doubt on the identification of Te Rongo (British Museum LMS 169; 69cm, ex LMS Collection.) which, in my view, should also be identified as Tangaroa.

All the priests of the Mangaian tribal gods were inspired priests who became possessed by the gods when their advice was needed. They were all *pi'a atua*. When Rangi wished Mоторо to manifest himself, he consulted Papaaunuku. As the priest worked himself up into the state of possession, Rangi cried, "Ka uru Mоторо!" (Mоторо enters!) The eyes of the priest became suffused, his face and body twitched, his mouth opened (*'amama*), and finally he spoke the words of the god...(Hiroa, 1934; 177).

At this moment the priest instantiated the god, and became a *tāura atua*.

Summary

This brief discussion of Cook Islands art and of the *ta'unga* or 'artist', suggests seven defining criteria for Cook Islands art and the role of the artist which are relevant to this exegesis.

- The 'art' work originates in communication/inspiration/visitation from Te Pō [place of the divine] to 'this world', Te Ao;
- The medium of this inspiration/divine communication is the *ta'unga*/artist who channels (through *karakia* and the imposition and removal of *tapu*, etc.) the divine presence and the process of its instantiation into an artistic product or performance, to have effect in this world (for example, influencing the outcome of war, the process of healing, etc);
- The *ta'unga*, acting individually or more often collectively, with a group of apprentices or adepts, works to create the receptacle or vehicle for this instantiation in material form or performance or enterprise, often in a physical area designated as *tapu*. Even everyday enterprises such as fishing and planting required the observation of *tapu* rituals, such as sexual abstinence, to ensure success ;
- The finished product or performance manifests the aesthetic standards required to successfully instantiate the thoughts or communications or visitations of *atua* from Te Pō – anything less would not be worthy as the temporary "body of an *atua*." A masterful carving or performance, 'speaks' and has effect; in it, the invisible become visible; it becomes a *tāura atua*. A lesser work remains silent;
- The finished product is not regarded as the exclusive product of the *ta'unga* who is rather a medium of its inspiration and leader of those engaged in its realisation;

- The finished product has mana in the sense of “the ability to bring about effects which go beyond normal human agency” (Hooper, 2006: 37). It is valued for its “manifest accomplishment and proven efficacy” (Handy 1927;28).
- No art work retains its power or mana without renewal by rituals, offerings, and karakia to atua and periodic renovation and reconstruction. The contemporary art of tivaevae (quilting) has successfully incorporated some aspects of this tradition, with tivaevae periodically opened, inspected, repaired and rededicated.

Art which observes these criteria can be regarded as having successfully achieved the realisation of other-worldly abstractions into concrete form in this world, thus becoming a tāura atua or medium of rapport with the divine.

CHAPTER THREE: ‘AKAIRO KO TE TĀURA - SCULPTURE, STYLISATION AND DESIGN

Introduction

This chapter looks at ‘akairo or design motifs used in Cook Islands Māori art to create the aesthetic standard required to instantiate atua.

Controversy exists in the literature over central Polynesian ‘akairo - are they a two dimensional abstract 'degeneration' from three dimensional sculptural forms as claimed by the cultural evolutionists Read and Stolpe? Do they exist side by side with high sculptural art thus disproving Read and Stolpe, or are they geometric designs that have no relationship at all with the human 'tiki' form, as claimed by Te Rangi Hiroa? The researcher disagrees with Te Rangi Hiroa and challenges aspects of his critique of Read and Stolpe.

‘Degeneration’ or abstraction

Cook Islands ‘akairo were a topic of debate among a small group of scholars in the late 19th and early 20th century. The debate concerned two opposing views of ‘akairo – (1) ‘akairo as simple geometrical designs, or (2) ‘akairo as abstract or ‘conventionalised’ representations of the human form.

The starting point of the debate is a statement by the London Missionary Society (LMS) missionary to the Cook Islands, Rev. William Wyatt Gill, concerning the intricate designs on many Mangaian adzes –

The carving ...was previously intended for the adorning of their gods. The fine pointed pattern is known as The shark’s teeth pattern (nio mango). *Other figures are each supposed, by a stretch of the imagination, to represent a man squatting down...* (Gill, 1885: 223 my emphasis).

During discussions with Gill at Oxford, the anthropologist E. B. Tylor “suggested to him that these carvings were human figures at the last stage of conventionalisation. Mr. Gill replied that not only was this the case but that the natives recognized certain of them by the name *tikitiki tangata* ‘images of man’ (Read, 1892: 159). According to Te Rangi Hiroa, who believed, above all, in the geometric origin of ‘akairo –

This statement led Stolpe [1927], Giglioli [1902] and others to regard the bar and chevron combinations on the Manganian adz shafts as having developed by progressive degeneration from carvings of the human form (1944: 391).

Hiroa also disputed Gill’s assertion that the term *tikitiki tangata* indicated that ‘akairo derive from “images of man” -

In the Cook Islands, the verb to carve is ‘akatiki....and though it may have originally applied to carving the human form, it came to be used in current speech as applying to any form of ornamental carving (1944:391).

Charles H. Read developed Gill’s observation further in a paper dated 1892, “On the Origin and Sacred Character of Certain Ornaments of the S. E. Pacific.” In this paper, Read argues that Polynesian ornament experienced a *degradation* from the three dimensional representations of human figures “in the round” to surface decoration with conventionalised or geometric representation of the human form. Plate XIV from Read’s paper, reproduced below as Figs 2.1, show his reconstruction of the progression from three-dimensional human representation to geometric symbols.

Read’s article appeared after the publication of Hjalmar Stople’s “On Evolution in the Ornamental Art of Savage Peoples.” The original essay appeared in 1880 in the journal 'Ymer, ' published by the Swedish Society of Anthropology and Geography. This became available in English in 1903, (translated by H. C. March in *Transactions of the Rochdale Literary and Scientific Society* - S.1-80).

Figure 2.1 – The figure illustrates Read's reconstruction of the process of conventionalization of a three dimensional sculpture of the human form to a geometrical surface design (Source: Read 1892; Plate XIV).

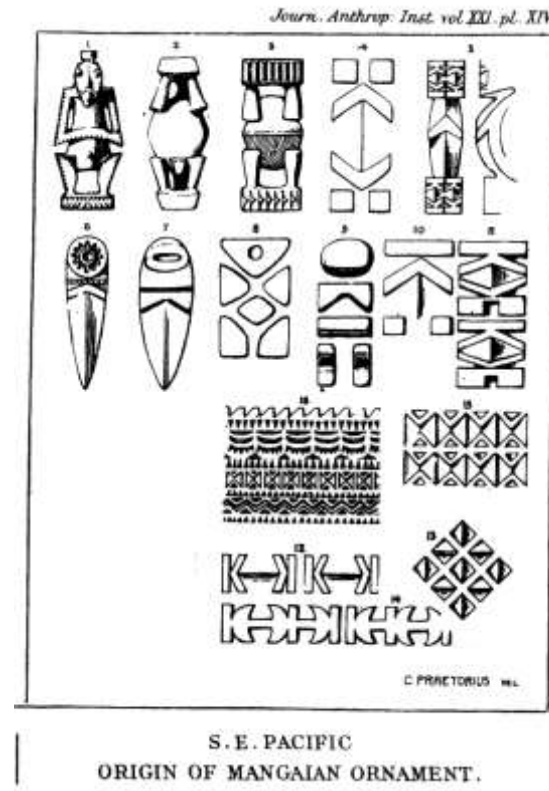
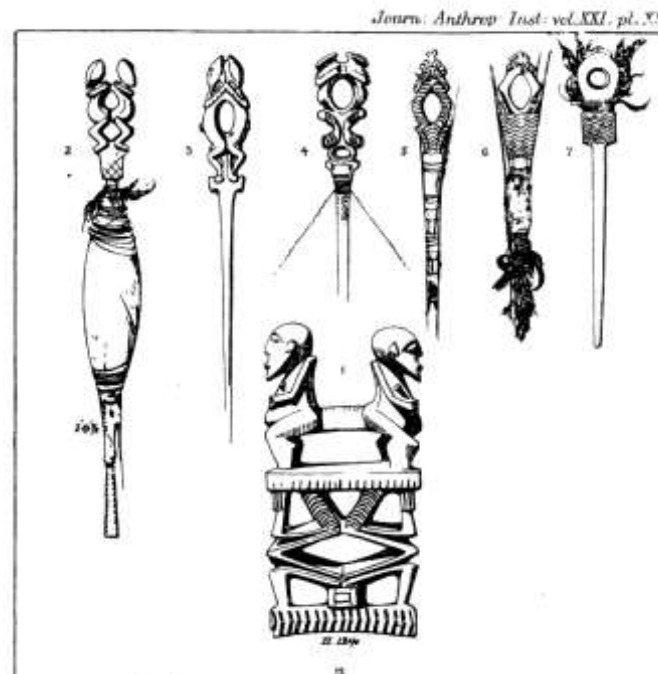


Figure 2.2 – Another sequence from Read indicating his reconstruction of the process of abstraction of a three dimensional human sculpture (Source: Read 1892; Plate XII).



Stolpe's examination of early Central and Eastern Polynesian decorative carving led him to conclude that -

among all the different elements in the decoration of axes and paddle shaped implements an organic relationship exists, which proves that they have each been derived from *one and the same prototype, a human figure* (Stolpe, 1903; 91, emphasis added).

As noted, Read, writing in the period before modernism and ‘abstract’ art, refers to this process of abstraction as the ‘degradation’ of human images to symbols. Tylor speaks of this process as ‘conventionalization’ (Read, 1892: 159). Stolpe also refers to stages of “conventionalization, beginning with undoubtedly human figures” (Stolpe; 1903; 91).



Figures 2.3 (left) and 2.4 (below) – examples of anthropomorphic tiki figures “in the round” with tikitiki tangata motifs co-existing, on their surface or base. This co-existence tends to disprove Read’s notion that ‘akairo were an ‘evolutionary’ degradation of three dimensional forms into symbols. (Source: Figure 2.3 (left); standing figure of female deity, LMS35 © Trustees of the British Museum; Fig. 2.4 (below) “Idols Worshipped by the Inhabitants of the South Sea Islands” (Ellis 1829, II: frontispiece. All except the large central figure are attributed to the Cook Islands).



Stolpe disagrees with Read's designation of 'akairo as 'degraded' noting that the Cook Island carvers demonstrate too great a skill for this term to be justified and, indeed, often combine representations of intricately carved human figures with the symbolic, supposedly 'degraded', motifs (for example, Figures 2.3 and 2.4). He concludes –

the transformations [are not] due to any want of skill on the part of the Herveyan [Cook Islands] carver, because he often used to place on the very same implements the realistic prototype, as well as a whole series of intermediate forms down to those that are most transfigured... (Stolpe, 1903: 131-2).

Figure 2.5 – Deity figure made of wood, sinnet, Cook Islands (Source: Oc ,LMS.168 © Trustees of the British Museum).



This marae ornament from the early nineteenth century indicates the co-existence of sculpted three dimensional anthropomorphic figures (at top) and abstracted or conventionalised representations of the human form in the arches or cleats below.

Te Rangi Hiroa also rejects Read's use of the term 'degradation.'³⁰ He goes further, arguing that Gill, Read and Stolpe are wrong in assuming 'akairo to be conventionalised human figures. He presents the diagram reproduced below as Fig. 2.6 (1944; Fig 242) to conclude that 'akairo derive from simple geometric designs, based on various combinations of chevrons and bars, "with no trace of derivation from the human form" (1944; 393) –

Readapplied the term degradation to Manganian geometrical motifs because he held that they were all that was left of the human figures originally used in art motifs in Mangania. I have shown that Manganian carving patterns were developed from simpler geometrical motifs (fig.242) without any connection with human figures, hence Read's contention is both inaccurate and misleading (Hiroa, 1944:500).

there is nothing to suggest any derivation from a human figure or to justify the 'degradation' that some writers have applied to this form of design (Hiroa, 1944: 377).

Hiroa concedes one case of 'akairo as human form - one of the five surviving Mangania gods attributed to the carver Rori (then in the Oldman Collection now in the The Otago Museum) which he considers –

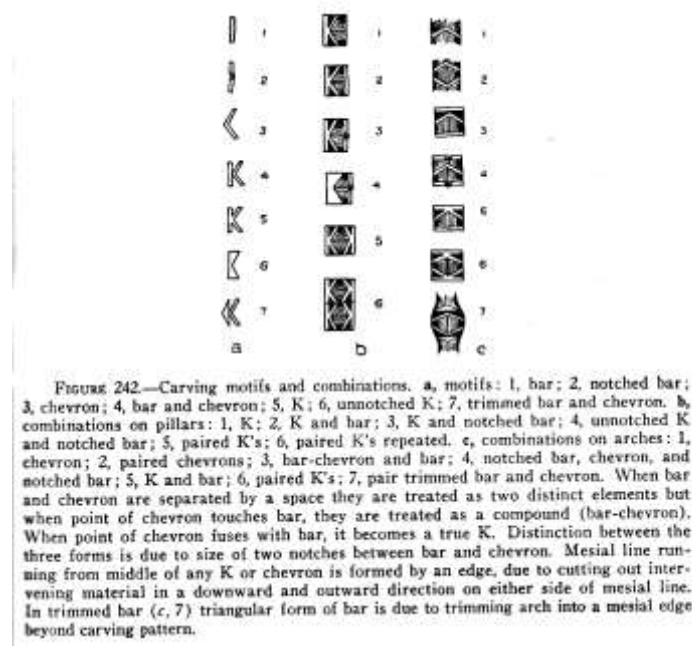
a departure from the general technique....[which] gives the appearance of a conventional human body but I regard it as a development from the more general form....On the evidence I believe that Manganian carving has undergone development from simple geometrical motifs and not 'degradation' from the human figure (Hiroa, 1944; 393).

He makes a further concession in the case of a representation of an Atiuan god –

The Atiu arch resembles a conventional human figure in which the lozenge-chevron figure forms the head, the arch, the body, and the other end the legs. However, this is an end result that cannot be accepted as an example of the degradation of an older human figure (1944;468).

³⁰ “....such terms as degradation and degeneration carry implications that we have no right to assume” (Hiroa, 1944:500).

Figure 2.6 – Te Rangi Hiroa presented this diagram to indicate his reconstruction of how ‘akairo on Mangaian staff gods derive from “variations and combinations of the bar and chevron” rather than conventionalization of the human figure (Source: Hiroa 1944; 377).



Later, in his examination of three district atua from the island of Mangaia, now in the British Museum, Hiroa returns to the argument -

Although Gill notes that Motoro was “a rude representation of the human form, carved in ironwood” (1894:246)³¹ and conveys the impression that the other district gods carved by Rori had a similar form, there is no support from the objects available for study...It may be that Gill was so obsessed with the idea that the geometric motifs on these objects represented human figures that he used the term ‘human form’ somewhat loosely (1944; 279).

³¹ Gill writes (1876:107) “the principal gods [of Mangaia] were simply pieces of iron-wood roughly carved into the human shape and well-wrapped with native cloth”.

Roger Duff notes Hiroa's reluctance to concede human representation in Cook Islands 'akairo writing -

Although our 'maestro' Buck [Hiroa] (1944) seemed reluctant to draw the conclusion, the carved arches for feather attachment seem obviously conventionalised human figures, placed caryatid-fashion one above the other...As such, the whole concept would seem a powerful symbol of the pantheon of the gods (1969:62).

Commenting on a Mangaia adz, Duff notes, "The apparently geometric surface carving of the haft represented stylised human figures as indicated in the word for carving ('akatikitiki ...to make like men') (Duff, 1969; 63). He goes on to describe the highly geometric ornamentation on a Mangaia uete [Fig. 2.7] as "in the distinctive Mangaian stylized *human* design" (1969: 65, emphasis added).

Figure 2.7 – Mangaia uete [kumete] "in the distinctive Mangaian stylized human design" (Source: Duff, 1969: 65).



Archev has also noted how Hiroa “studiously avoided calling the arches of the [Mangaia] staff gods anything but cleats ...But we have from a native source that they were representations of the gods... They are, moreover, close in manner to other figure stylizations in the Cook Group” (1965;21).

Figure 2.8 – Cleats or abstractions of the human form. Priest’s fan made of palm leaf, sinnet, wood. Closely related to carvings on two Mitiaro staff gods (Source: left: LMS 58 © Trustees of the British Museum; right details, Mitiaro staff gods - © Trustees of the British Museum).



Figure 2.9: – Fan handle, Central Cook Islands, early 19th century, wood, 17 x 2 1/4 in (Source: David Shaw King).



Archey (Figure 2.10) reproduces part of Read’s progression in Figure 2.2, to indicate “trends or movements away from realism, namely towards simplification to angular abstraction and to plastic design” (1965;10).

He concludes that Tahitian art “stands as an art of realistic natural forms, chiefly human figures, with stylization of those images leading to design and decorative motive...” as indicated in Fig. 2.10 below. For the Society-Cook-Austral area –

the art of each of these island groups is comprised of the same elements – (a) a locally characterized figure sculpture; (b) stylizations of the local figure and (c) designs and patterns derived from the stylization, used either as the composition of a staff god or as decoration on useful articles (1965;22).

Figure 2.10 – Archey’s progression from realism to simplification to stylization and abstraction (Source: Archey 1965;10).



“The two figures set back to back become an almost compelling invitation for still further formalism. This is sometimes called degeneration but is rescued from being so belittled by the design asserted at every stage” Archey (1965; 10).

The sequence indicated is –

- 1 – realistic natural form, chiefly human figures
- 2 – simplification
- 3 - stylization

Figure 2.11 – Mitiaro god staff (Source: The Otago Museum)



More recently Steven Phelps has written that Mitiaro gods (Fig. 2.11) reveal –

...a form of stylization which reduces the head/arms and legs whilst exaggerating the protruding abdomen and navel. It is only a short step to conventionalize these features into the regular patterns found on this image (Phelps, 1976:129).

Finally Appel, (2010; 277) takes the argument a step further describing the ‘akairo and painted ornaments on an Aitutaki female figure and serrated carved slabs from Aitutaki as – “meant to represent superimposed images of man, referring to the succession of generations.” Nia (2010) also regards ‘akairo as a mnemonic device for genealogy (see also Chapter 3).

‘Absence’ of fish and birds in representation

Read, in further support of his argument that ‘akairo are largely abstracted human representations, argues that fish and birds and other elements of nature are strangely absent from central Polynesian ornamentation -

considering the great number of marine deities in the pantheon of these islands, and the semi-sacred character of the shark, who was believed to be the servant or messenger of the gods, and who shared with other fishes a kind of divine inspiration; notwithstanding these points of intimate connection with the gods I have not found a single representation of a fish among the whole series (1892:152).

He also notes the similar absence of birds, notwithstanding “a number of birds as well as fishes were worshipped” (Read, 1892:153). The implication is that much central Polynesian carving is concerned primarily with the human figure, often in highly conventionalised form. Chapter 4 disproves Read’s assertion by presenting numerous ‘akairo derived from birds, fish and marine species, flora, fauna and elements of cosmology.

Conclusion

In rejecting Read and Stople’s argument of ‘akairo as abstractions from the human form, Hiroa argues that -

The fault of the method used by Stolpe and Read is the fact that the definite human forms had to be imported from Tahiti, Huahine, and the Austral Islands to introduce the sequences [of transformation from the three dimensional to the abstract] (Hiroa 1944; 392).

He concludes -

Stolpe ...spoiled his chain of reasoning by grouping the Hervey (Cook) and Austral Islands together as one art area (1944; 391).

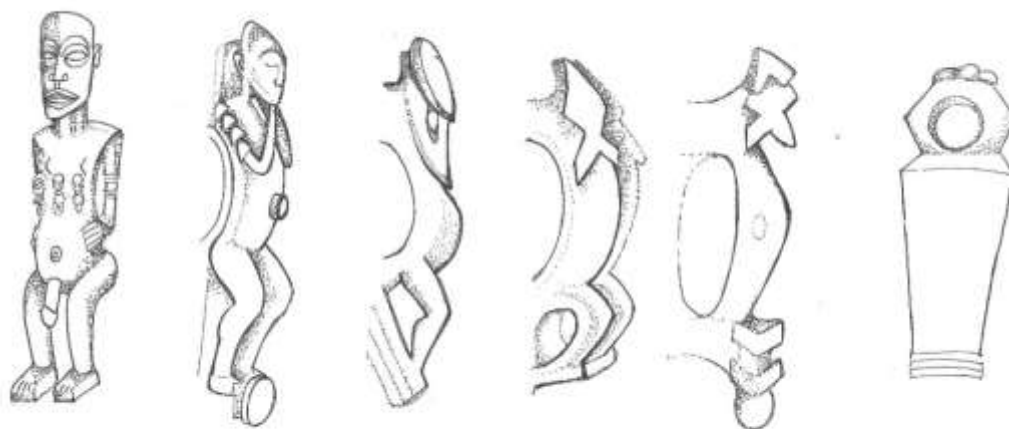
while,

Read (1892) ...used a sequence of 16 drawings [see Fig. 2.1 above] from artefacts of which five were from Tahiti and Huahine, four from the Austral Islands, and seven from Mangaia. The human figures that headed the sequence were from Tahiti and Huahine (1944;392).

It is too much to assume that a composite sequence made up from three different groups of islands indicates what happened in one...” (1944; 393).

In Figure 2.12, I have redrawn Read's sequence (from Fig. 2.2) using the art of a single area – namely, the Cook Islands - to indicate the sequence of transformation from a three dimensional tiki to abstract 'akairo. This removes Te Rangi Hiroa's objection to Read and Stolpe's methodology while leaving their conclusions intact.

Figure 2.12 – a reconstruction of Read's sequence (in Fig. 2.2) showing the progression from three dimensional sculpture to conventionalised design, using Cook Islands art only (Source: Michel Tuffrey after Mike Tavioni).



Summary

While some early writers considered 'akairo to be a 'degradation' from three dimensional sculpture (tiki) to conventionalised representations of the human figure (tikitiki tangata), the co-existence of both three dimensional sculpture and tikitiki tangata on single art pieces tends to disprove this (see Fig. 2.3, 2.4, 2.5). In rejecting the notion of 'degradation', Hiroa argues that tikitiki tangata have no relation whatsoever to the human

form and instead represent combinations of simple geometric designs. At the same time, Hiroa acknowledges several exceptions which tend to nullify his thesis. Hiroa is correct to reject the origin of 'akairo as evidence of the 'degradation' of Cook Islands sculptural art practice. But his insistence on the origin of 'akairo in geometry rather than as abstract or conventionalised representations of the real world (of human, birds, fish etc.,) is contrary to the evidence (see Chapter 4) and, at the same time, ignores the spiritual role of art as a medium of rapport between elements of this world and their origins or ancestry in Te Pō.

As noted, much of this discussion preceded the introduction of abstraction in western art through the Modernist movement. Karen Stevenson (2008: 84-5) has written that –

The West has claimed abstraction as its own; however abstraction (as defined by the West) has been the foundation of Pacific art production ...the facility to speak and move metaphorically has reinforced the principles of abstraction within Pacific art.

As we have seen from Read and to a lesser extent Hiroa, faced with abstraction in Pacific art, "it was suggested that their creators did not have [or through 'degradation' had lost] the ability to depict a realistic human form" (Stevenson 2008;85). This chapter has shown that Cook Islanders had both the skill and artistic inclination to create both tiki and tikitiki tangata, realistic human forms and abstractions, on the same canvas. Polynesians were practicing abstraction, long before it was 'discovered' by the West.

Figure 2.13 Polynesian abstraction and modernism. The British modernist sculptor Henry Moore first saw the Rurutu sculpture A'a or Tangaroa (Figure 2.4) in the 1920s. A copy remains in the entrance hall to his British home, Hoglands. In 1950 Picasso saw a cast of A'a on a visit to the studio of the English surrealist, Roland Penrose, and arranged to have a bronze cast. This stood prominently in his studio in the Villa La Californie in Cannes, seen below on the right of his easel. A'a is the figure shown in the centre of Figure 2.4 above. (Source: <https://raffdergi.com/picasso-henry-mooreun-hayran-oldugu-polinezya-heykeli-sanilandan-eskiymis/>)



CHAPTER FOUR: ‘AKAIRO O NUKUTERE – IMAGES OF NUKUTERE

Introduction

This chapter surveys 100 ‘akairo identified on Cook Islands artefacts dating from the late 18th to the early 20th century. This survey broadens the range of known ‘akairo and provides evidence of their historic and geographic origin. It demonstrates that, contrary to Hiroa, ‘akairo are abstract representations of things deriving from the real world, human and animal, land, sea and sky. This finding is also contrary to earlier scholars, for example Read (1892: 152) who “found not a single representation of a fish among the whole series [of central Polynesian ornamentation].”

Method

In many cases, traditional names for Cook Islands ‘akairo have not been historically recorded. In such cases, a provisional name is suggested, determined by the island of origin of the art work on which the ‘akairo appears, the purpose for which the artefact was made, or the resemblance of the abstract motif to a real object. These are arbitrary and provisional names that will change as more information becomes available.

This survey is limited to Cook Islands art-works dating up to 1930 and does not include those created by contemporary Cook Islands artists. For these, both the name and ownership rests with them. In a number of cases the motifs are universal to the Pacific or a region of it. In those cases, the Cook Islands name and details are recorded.

Where available, an historical photograph of the original pre-1930 Cook Islands art work is presented to identify the origin of the ‘akairo. These photographs derive from research undertaken for this thesis on Cook Islands artefacts in overseas museum collections. Where photographs are not available, an illustration and textual source are given to establish the artefact’s provenance. The key ‘akairo located on the art work is isolated and represented graphically and named. It is then, additionally, presented in composite form, made up of repetitions of the basic ‘akairo

or motif, as is often the case on the source artefact. This is followed by a discussion of the motif, identifying details of the source artefact and stories or provenances associated with it.

Tiki and tikitiki tangata

A number of these ‘akairo are described as variants of ‘tikitiki tangata’. The term ‘tiki’ refers to anthropomorphic three dimensional figures representing deities or deified ancestors (for example, see Figure 3.1). The act of carving an anthropomorphic figure is ‘akatikitiki. Tikitiki, on the other hand, refers to generally small abstract anthropomorphic images or designs found on carvings representing the human progeny of gods.

Figure 3.1 – A tiki of the atua Tangaroa “Fisherman’s god or oramatua’ Cook Islands, wood and black paint, 33x15.5x14cms. (Source: © Trustees of the British Museum).



Whereas gods or atua are represented *individually* in anthropomorphic form ('tiki' – image above) or abstractly, humans ('tangata') are always represented *collectively* as 'tikitiki tangata.' At the same time, a number of anthropomorphic and abstract god images ('tiki') also include tikitiki tangata in their composition. Gell refers to them as 'fractals', that is "a figure which demonstrates the property of *self-similarity* at different scales of magnification/minification" (Gell, 1998: 137). This is seen, for example, in Rarotongan images of Tangaroa (Figures 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 below).

Figure 3.2 – (left and middle, detail) Tangaora (see Hiroa 1944; 316); standing male figure, made of wood, sinnet (probably iron wood) (Source: Oc, LMS.169; © Trustees of the British Museum).

Figure 3.3 (right) Free standing figure from Rarotonga also known as 'The Armitage Figure'; in the George Ortiz Collection (Source: Ortiz, 1994 Cat. Mo. 274, 56.5 cms © Bridgeman Images). This figure has six small figures or 'fractal images', two on the chest and two on each of the thighs and buttocks.



Representation of Tangaroa tiki with additional minor tikitiki figures

Figure 3.4 (left) Staff god, figure (Source: Oc1919,1014.1 © Trustees of the British Museum) includes small 'fractal images' of stylised human forms or tikitiki identified in the drawings; some clearly male, some female, some young people and some children. The numbers of small images varies between atua suggesting these smaller tikitiki represent the genealogical heads of households, sub tribes or ngati.

Figure 3.5 (right) Rarotongan god staff (Source © Sothebys).



In the more abstract (non-figurative) rendering of gods found on many southern group islands other than Rarotonga, (for example the Mangaian atua in Figure 3.6 and 3.7) the atua is constituted by multi-tiered tikitiki tangata. In both cases, the god can be said to represent or comprise “an assemblage of relations” (Gell, 1998; 139) – “the outcome of genealogy, fanning out in time and space” (ibid.).

“An assemblage of relations”

In Cook Islands belief, the ngati takes its descent directly from a deified ancestor or atua. The repetition of tikitiki tangata in Cook Islands art works, and particularly in the artistic representations of atua, can be regarded as a form of akapapa’anga, tracing the ngati back to its founder. Or as March (1893 :324) writes “The conclusion now drawn is that tiki-tiki-tangata were the multitudinous human links between the divine ancestor and the chief of the living tribe.”

In the Mangaia atua figures, the “assemblage of relations” literally constitutes the god, “a body composed of other bodies” with each of the component tikitiki tangata suggesting the kinship units descended from the founding ancestor (Gell, 1998: 140). In short, a god (tiki) given form by its own lineage (tikitiki tangata).

Figure 3.6 – detail of a Mangaian atua (Source: LMS62 © Trustees of the British Museum) – a tiki composed of tikitiki tangata.



Figure 3.7 – Carved staff god made of wood, sinnet, feathers, human hair (Source: LMS43 © Trustees of the British Museum).

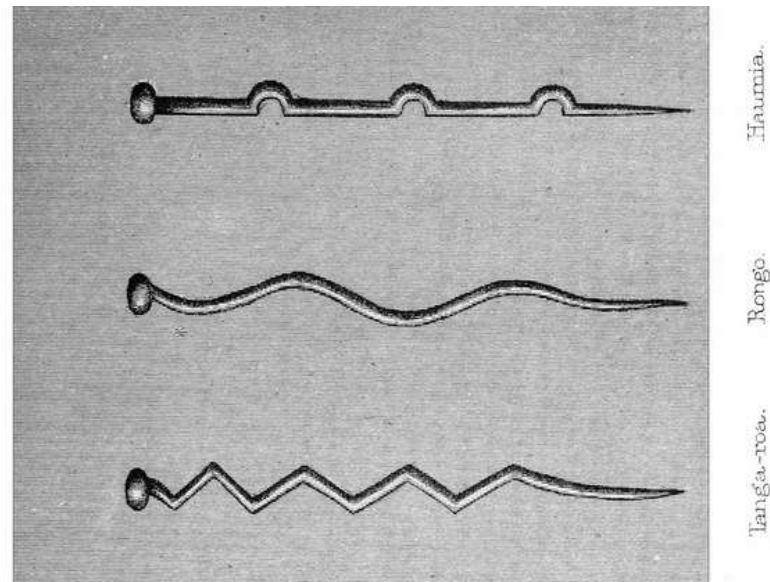


Repetition of ‘akairo may also act as a mnemonic for a series of meditations or incantations (karakia) to the founding atua. Repetition was regarded by Stolpe as, in part, a pragmatic response to the space available for decoration. But, at the same time, he observes “By means of perpetual reiteration of certain ornamental elements, they suggest the divinity to whose service the decorated implement was in some way dedicated” (Stolpe, 1903:103).

While a great number of Cook Islands ‘akairo are derived from the human form, others represent elements of nature or cosmology such as fauna and flora, the sun and stars, all of which are guided by atua in Te Pō. The ‘akairo presented below are set out in 5 categories, those derived (1) from the human form (tikitiki tangata); (2) from the sea and shore (3) from flora and (4) from Te Rangi. Finally, there are some motifs which cannot be easily categorised and those which are compositions of multiple ‘akairo. An example of the latter is the “Rauteve” from Rarotonga (No 52 below), comprising triangle shaped leaflets (flora) with a stalk made up of replications of the “Ivi” or bone motif (No 28).

John White (1888, Vol 1; 2), notes a direct symbolic relationship between design motifs and specific gods in the design of New Zealand Maori toko or god sticks. He describes the stick representing Haumia (Figure 3.8), the god of the fern root, as having three half circles which “represented the irregular and twisted form of the fern-root when newly dug up.” The toko representing Rongo, the god of the sweet potato, “was in rounded waves lines along its whole length to represent the growth of the tuberous kumara as it raised the earth in little mounds.” The toko representing Tangaroa, “the lord of the sea”, was symbolized by “a zigzag line, not unlike the teeth of a saw, to represent the waves of the sea.”

Figure 3.8 – New Zealand Māori toko or god sticks (Source: White 1888, Vol 1; 2).



It seems likely that the design motifs identified in the 100 ‘akairo presented below had a similar symbolic relationship to Cook Islands atua. Ta Ariki Tara ‘are (2000: 89) describes the ‘akairo known as Aka-ā-rangi as “apinga me Te Pō” – that is, a motif “brought back from Te Pō” suggesting a very direct relationship indeed.

Jolly (2014; 441) in her discussion of Hawaiian quilting patterns writes of the ‘kaona’ or ‘hidden meanings’ found within design motifs -

Kamehiro suggests that the common image of the sea urchin, evoked associations with an opened eye and the rays of the sun, and thus with aristocratic brilliance in making the invisible visible. Following Kaeppler, she observes how a series of stacked parallel chevrons mediated by a central line referenced not just the backbone of a sea eel but the seriation of chiefly genealogical succession. For the most part Hawaiian

designs, unlike those from New England, were not rectilinear but curved and arched, imaging crescent moons and rainbows, both strongly associated with chiefly power.

Finally Stevenson, noting that Polynesian patterns created in lashing “are also seen in tatau, bark cloth, plaiting and on Lapita ware” speculates that –

these designs are more than a pleasing aesthetic; they are integrally enshrined in Pacific lives and have been part of this cultural whole for millennia. Referencing astronomical, navigational and environmental knowledge, these abstract concepts became mnemonic devices that allowed for the dissemination of cultural knowledge (Stevenson, 2008: 84).



Summary

This chapter has surveyed 100 ‘akairo identified on Cook Islands artefacts dating from the late 18th to the early 20th century. This survey broadens the range of known ‘akairo and provides proof of their historic and geographic origin. It demonstrates that, contrary to Hiroa, ‘akairo are abstract representations of things deriving from the real world, human and animal, land, sea and sky. This is also contrary to earlier scholars, for example Read (1892: 152) who “found not a single representation of a fish among the whole series [of central Polynesian ornamentation].”

The chapter posits that repeated displays of ‘akairo in human form (tikitiki tangata) represent “the multitudinous links between the divine ancestor and the chiefs of living tribes” (March 1893; 324). In other instances ‘akairo reference links between natural phenomena and the gods that created them, a critical relationship denied by Hiroa’s insistence on their origin in geometry.

‘Akairo inscribed into wood or stone or woven in sennit or pandanus, or in a more contemporary form, stitched into tivaevae (quilts), are seen as contributing to the aesthetic qualities required to convert inanimate objects into ‘tāura atua’, or mediums of rapport between this world and atua in the other world. They are, in Kaeppler’s (2007: 122) terms, “objectified prayers” to the gods; in Hooper’s (2006: 229) terms they form a

“binding with carved patterns” where binding ties people to chiefs to gods, and in Gell’s (1993; 3-5) terms they provide a “wrapping in images’ where wrapping seeks to capture and contain the atua during their temporary instantiation in Te Ao.

| Source artwork | ‘Akairo | Comments |
|--|---|--|
| (1) Anthropomorphic ‘Akairo – motifs based on human forms | | |
|  <p>Figure 3.9 – Deity image staff made of wood, sinnet ropes, parrot feathers (Source: OC, LMS.49 © Trustees of the British Museum).</p> | <p>There are five distinct motifs on this atua, as noted below -</p>  <p>Ariki Tutara Ariki Vaine Maroitiki Te ika mata a te Rongo Potiki</p> <p>These individual motifs are described in more detail below.</p> | <p>This atua, from Atiu, known as Tangiia Nui, was taken by Rongomatane and the missionary Rev. John Williams from its marae close to the Orongo marae in Mokoero, Atiu. It was transported to England in the late 1820s and initially deposited in the LMS Museum. It is now in the British Museum (see Hiroa, 1944; 345 Figure 215).</p> <p>The atua represents a deified ancestor or head of a tribe. In many of the Cook Islands, the head of the tribe is known as the Ariki Tutara. Accordingly the main motif is provisionally named Ariki Tutara.</p> <p>The motifs on this carving acts like a key showing the human form in various stages of development, - from childhood to youth to adult status, as indicated in the notes following.</p> |

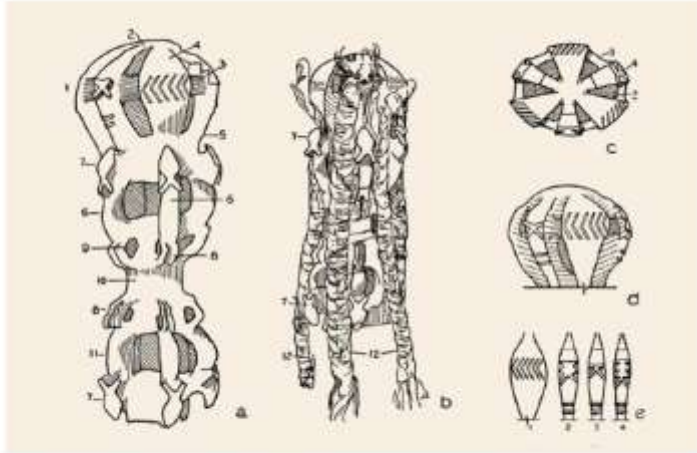
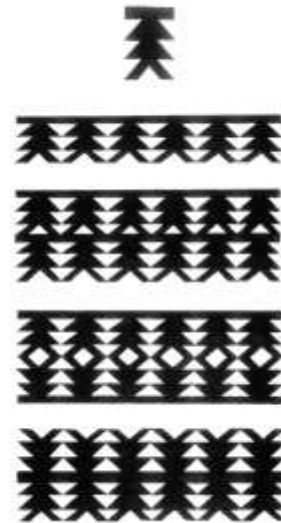


Fig. 36: Drawing of Taringarua, the superior God from Atiu, see Fig. 34 and 35c
(from: Te Rangi Hiroa 1944: 345, Fig. 215)

**Figure 3.10 – Hiroa’s representation of the atua Tangiia Nui
(Source: Hiroa 1944: 345).**

1. Ariki Tutara (Supreme High Chief)



Reading this ‘akairo from the bottom to the top, two feet are followed by body and arms and head. Balanced on top, a line signifies a chief’s headdress suggesting a man of high degree – the ariki tutara or supreme high chief.

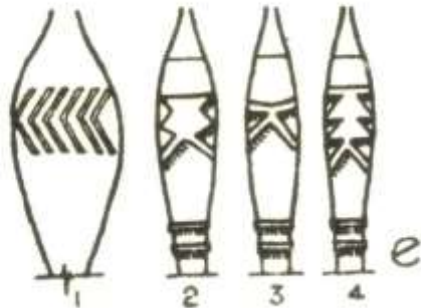
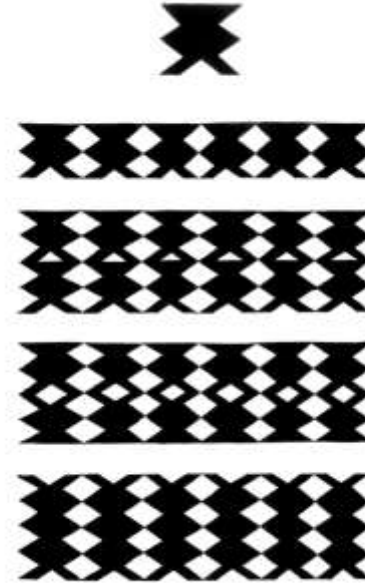


Figure 3.10a – detail of Figure 3.10 above - Hiroa's representation of the atua Tangiia Nui (Source: Hiroa 1944: 345).

2. Aketairi – Te Ariki Vaine

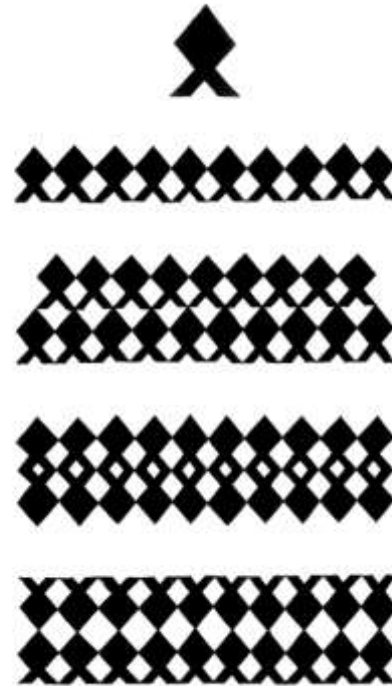


This 'akairo, also found on the atua Tangiia Nui, is a variant of tikitiki tangata and represents a prominent woman such as an ariki va'ine. The large middle part of the body suggests abundance of food and wealth. This image is named for Aketairi, the wife of Taura Ariki Tangapatoro owner of Te Atua Tangiia Nui, also owner of the marae Tangiia Nui in Mokoero, Atiu.



Figure 3.11 – Aitutaki deity figure, the lower portion presented as a pair of stylised human legs; wood; height 51 cms; private collection (Source: Bridgeman Image # BON83852 © Bonhams, London, UK).

3. Ika mata a te Rongo



This motif appears on several atua from Ngaputuru and Aitutaki. The basic form is like a fish, but in fact represents an adult female. The “ika mata a te Rongo” (literally “the raw fish of Rongo”) is a human sacrifice that was traditionally placed in each corner of a new marae to consecrate it. However, the sacrifice of an urua (giant trevally, *Caranx ignobilis*) was considered a satisfactory substitute. Thus the ‘fish’ or sacrifice might be either fish or person. This ‘akairo’ is the most commonly carved motif found on atua on the islands of Atiu, Mitiaro, Mauke and Aitutaki.

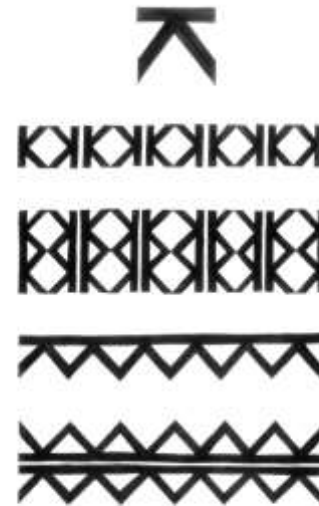


Figure 3.12 – detail of Mitiaaro staff god (Source: photo# OC1982, Q.121 © Trustees of the British Museum).



Figure 3.13 – Carved Manganian ka'ara or slit drum. Late 18th or early 19th century (Source: photo# LMS 488 © Trustees of the British Museum).

4. Maroitiki



In this 'akairo, the body and head are compressed, forming a straight line with two legs extended to one side. Most of the carvings using this motif are small and intricately carved. Manganians call this 'akairo Maroitiki, meaning tying or binding the maro (loin cloth). Some people call this motif Uritua, meaning 'turned back.' Sir Peter Hiroa calls it the 'K' motif because of its resemblance to the letter 'K' (e.g., Hiroa 1944: 266). This design belongs primarily to Mangaia but similar motifs are seen on artifacts from the Austral islands and Ngaputuru. In its Manganian form, the back of the heads of two K figures are usually represented back to back, but in Ngaputuru, the motifs are carved individually in isolation and unconnected.

On Manganian artifacts, this 'akairo is carved to cover the entire surface area. On an Atiu god, illustrated by Hiroa (1944: 345, Figure 215) the motif appears as an individual unit, one of several other similar motifs, all representing the human form.

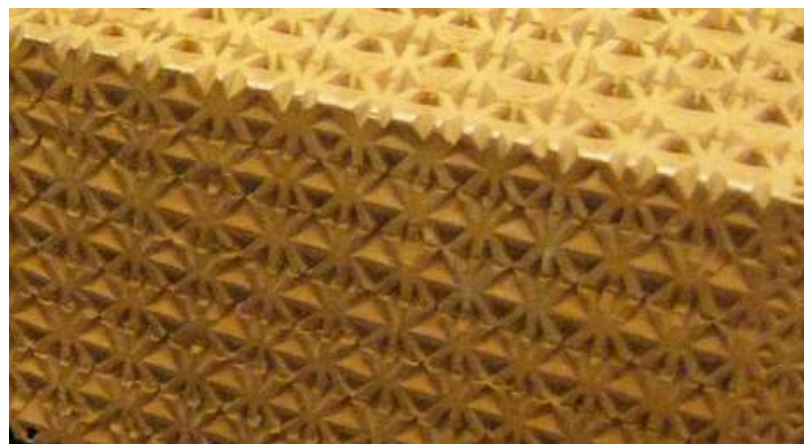


Figure 3.14 – detail of stone adze with ornamental wooden handle, Polynesia, Mangaia, stone and wood (Source: photo# ANT 007020, Peabody Museum, Harvard).

5. Arokapiti



Unlike Maroitiki, in this ‘akairo, the reverse Ks share a common back, rather than standing separately. This ‘akairo is said to symbolize the back to back fighting technique of Mangaian warriors who tied themselves together with a maro or loin cloth to form a single fighting unit, as in this account –

Ua itiki te nga tamariki a Tevaki i to raua maro e ua aere mai te Ngariki i te puruki ia raua. Ua aere raua na te tua katau i te purukianga. Ia oti, ua aere raua na te tua kaui i te purukianga. No te ngao oki o te Ngariki (tei karangaia i te reo enua e, e koapa kaka’o te Ngariki me aere i mua i te taua puruki), are atu i reira i rauka ana ia raua i te ta e ua mate atu oki raua.

Tevaki’s two sons tied their maro (loin cloths) together as the Ngariki tribe came to fight them. They battled on the right flank and when they had finished, they battled on the left flank. Because of the large number of Ngariki, (it was said in the language of the island, that the Ngariki were like a koapa kaka’o [closely woven reed walls] when they went toward the battlefield) they were not victorious and were killed (*Unpublished Mangaian oral tradition*).



Figure 3.15 – Deity image staff made of wood, sinnet ropes, parrot feathers (Source: OC, LMS.49 © Trustees of the British Museum).

6. Pōtiki



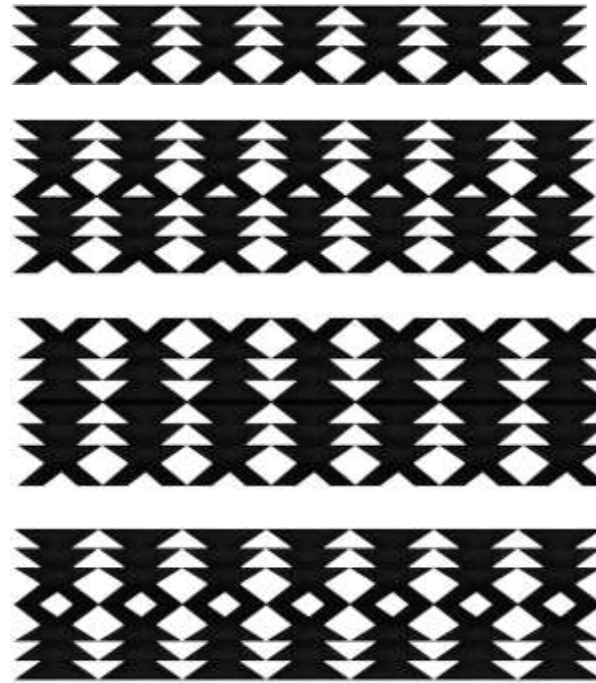
This motif is very prominent on the crown of Tangiia Nui Atua.

This basic design refers to the most simple human form, the child, hence the provisional name pōtiki, or little child.



Figure 3.16 — Detail, Forms of carving on Mitiaro gods
(Source: Hiroa 1944: 359).

7. Parekura



The southern islands of Atiu, Mitiaro and Mauke are known collectively as Nga Pu Toru. Their ariki and most of their marae have the same names and their motifs are variations of each other. Although this 'akairo is from Mitiaro it is a very close variant of 'Ariki Tutatra' from Atiu. Its provisional name is Parekura meaning the headdress of the ariki.



Figure 3.17 – Detail, carving on the butt of an atua figure from Mitiaro (Source: Hiroa 1944: 359).

8. Tupuna va'ine

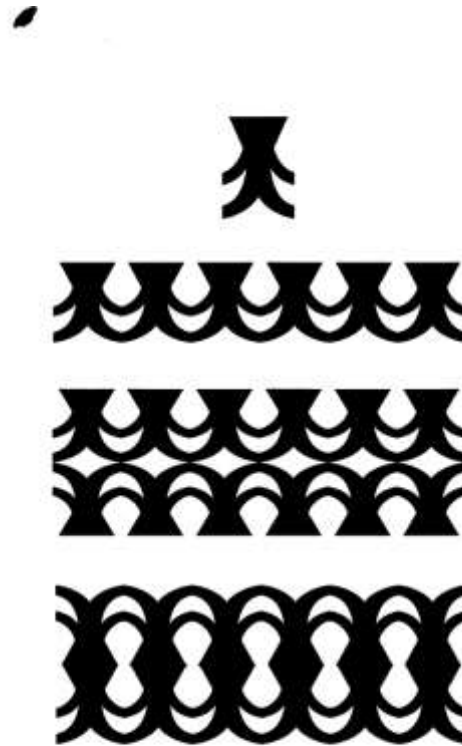


This tikitiki tangata 'akairo is prominently located on the butt of the arches of some of the atua images from Atiu, Mitiaro and Mauke (Hiroa 1944:359). Because it is female, it has been provisionally named Tupuna Va'ine.



Figure 3.18 – carving on the arch of a Mitiaro slab god (Source: Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology)

9. Pa Vaine tini



This 'akairo is found on the arch of a Mitiaro atua in the collection of the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. The 'akairo represents and honours women and is provisionally named 'Pa va'ine tini'.



Figure 3.19 - Hiroa (1944: 359) describes this as a “triangle-double chevron motif.”



Figure 3.20 – detail, Aitutaki unu or marae ornament, late 18th or early 19th century (Source: photo# LMS Oc.1982 © Trustees of the British Museum).

10. Tama Ariki



This design or motif, from Aitutaki, is a variant of the Komua design (see below). The image has been simplified to fit in the allocated space on the carving.

The body, hands and head have been compressed into a single triangle.

This motif can be seen on a number of carvings especially on slabs or unu representing atua or gods from Aitutaki.



Figure 3.21 – Aitutaki atamira or carved seat, Auckland War Memorial Museum, (Source: photo# AM12995-07, Auckland War Memorial Museum).

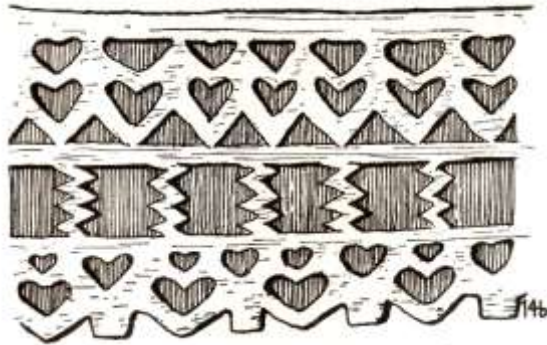
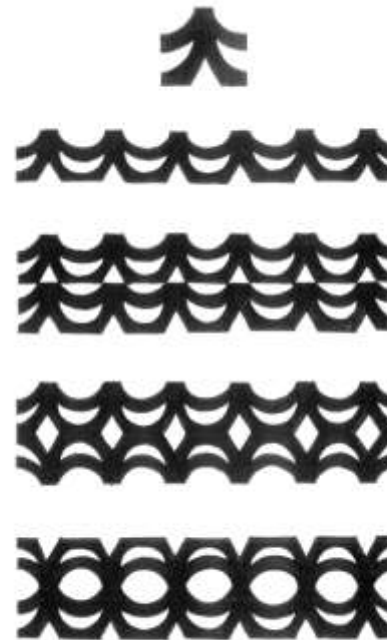


Figure 3.22 – Detail, Aitutaki atamira, Auckland War Memorial Museum (Source: Archey 1965:18).

11. Matakeinanga or moumourima



This motif represents the human form and is a variant of tikitiki tangata. It is predominantly Aitutakian. Found on the side of the Aitutaki atamira, or chief's seat (Hiroa 1927: 369, Figure 315) the continuous joining of hands and feet of the motif depicts the people's unity in support of their chief. Thus, it is figuratively the people and not the atamira that supports the chief. This design is provisionally named 'Matakeinanga', meaning tribe or family.

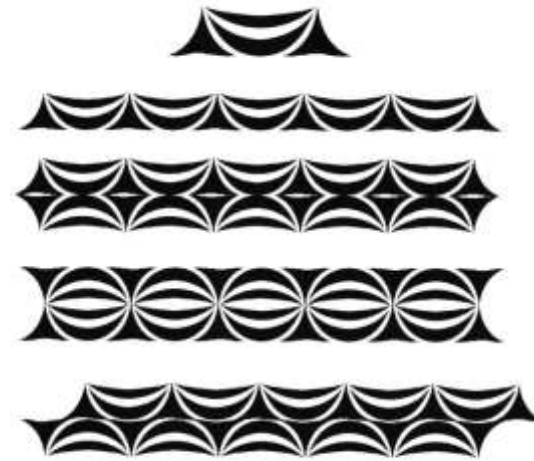
The alternative name for this motif, 'Moumourima', means "holding hands" and was coined by the Rarotongan carver Uka Marotini in the late 1970s.

This motif has slightly different forms in the art of other islands of the Cook Islands. In skin drums, ceremonial paddles, and other artifacts of the Austral Islands, the motif is more detailed and depicts the headgear, nose, ears, and mouth among other details.



Figure 3.23 – Vaka (canoe) A’ua’u, circa 1900 Cook Islands by Daniela Tangitoru, Terepo. Purchased 1907 CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 Te Papa, FE010422)

12. Matakeinanga 2



This ‘akairo is found carved on the seat of the Mangaian vaka A’ua’u in Te Papa Tongarewa, National Museum of New Zealand. It is a variant of the matakeinanga motif found on the Aitutaki atamira (above) and is provisionally named Matakeinanga 2.

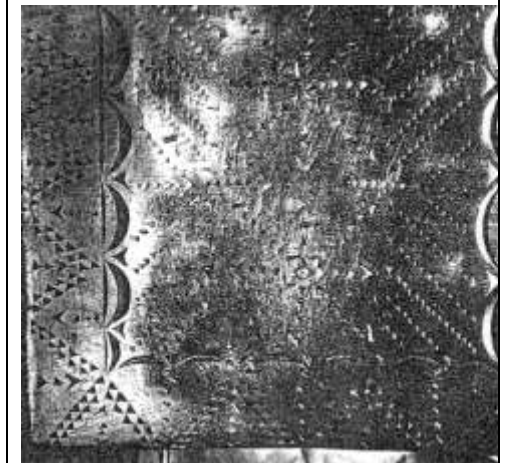
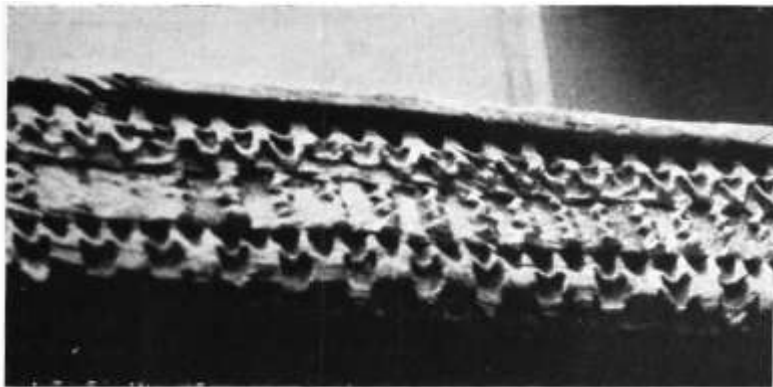


Figure 3.24 – Detail from Figure 3.23



Figures 3.25 above and 3.26 below – The tupuna onu motif is found in the bottom layer of designs on the Aitutaki atamira or carved seat, (Source: photo# AM12995-08, Auckland War Memorial Museum).



13. Tupuna onu



This 'akairo is provisionally named tupuna onu or ancestral turtle. Despite the resemblance to a turtle, the motif is a variant of tikitiki tangata and depicts the family or ngati of the chief, united under his leadership.



Figure 3.27 – detail, Aitutaki unu (Source: © Trustees of the British Museum).

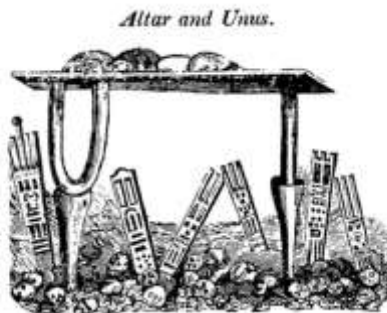
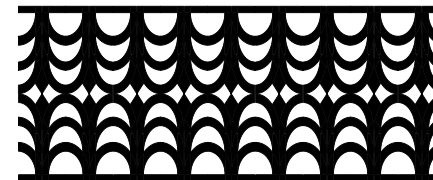
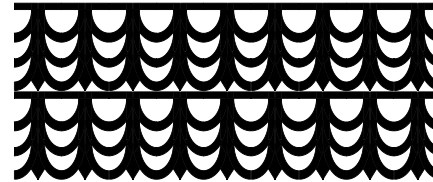


Figure 3.28 – the unu located on a marae (Source: Ellis, 1829; 217)

14. Tamatoa Ariki Tutara



This design is provisionally named Tamatoa Ariki Tutara, after the Aitutaki ariki of that name. The phallus indicates the motif is male, and the multiple limbs suggest the chief carried on the shoulders of his tribe.



Figure 3.29 – Aitutaki unu (Source: © Trustees of the British Museum).

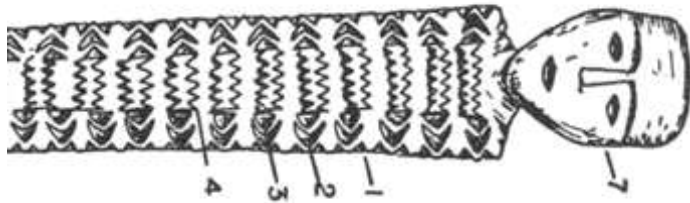
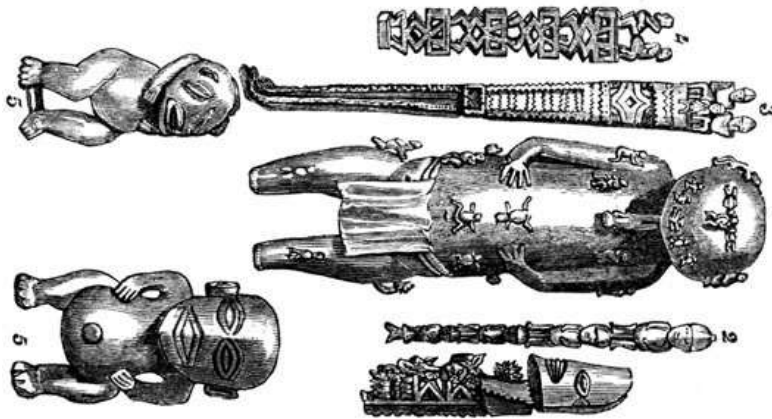
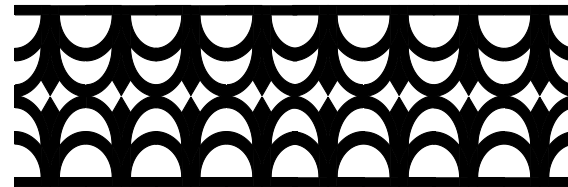
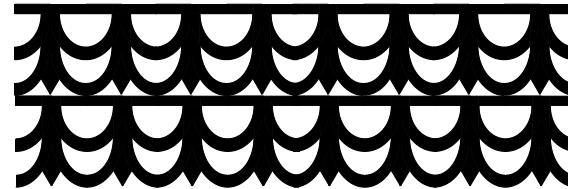


Figure 3.30 – detail from carved slab, Aitutaki (Source: Buck 1944; 338, and below, Ellis 1829; 355)



15. Mataiapo Tutara

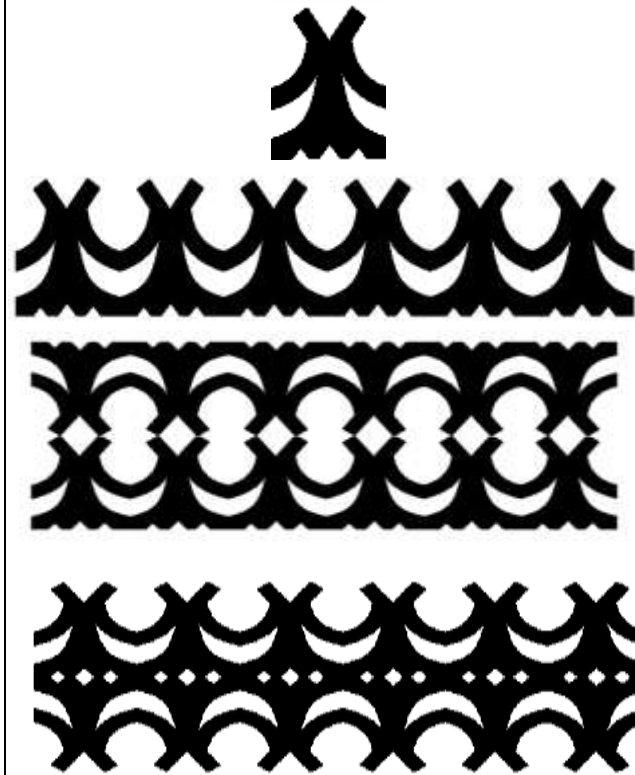


The phallus indicates that this motif is male. The bar at the head of the motif represents a parekura or headdress suggesting the motif is a priest or chief. It indicates someone lesser than an ariki (see 14 above) and thus is provisionally named Mataiapo Tutara.



Figure 3.31 – Aitutaki unu or marae ornament. Late 18th early 19th century (Source: photo# LMS Oct.1982 Q.120 © Trustees of the British Museum).

16. Tapairu Vaviatini or Ariki Va'ine



Tapiaru means honoured woman, and vaviatini means literally multiple feet; thus, this 'akairo has been provisionally named Tapairu Vaviatini. A variant of tikitiki tangata, it appears on the back of the unu or 'slab god' from Aitutaki.



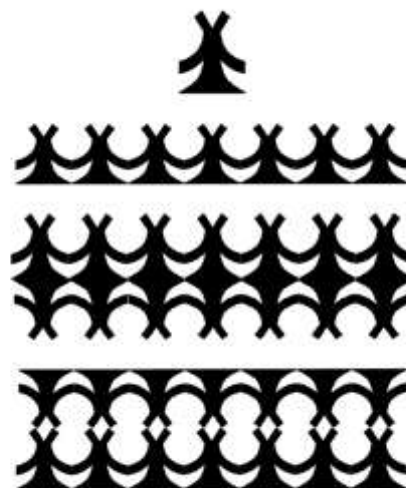
Figure 3.32 – detail from Fig. 3.31.

Also the motif may be seen as a woman wearing tapa serrated at the lower fringe and with head gear which suggests a prominent female, or Ariki Vai'ne, wife of a chief.



Figure 3.33 – Detail, Aitutaki painted paddle (Source: photo# image 050-080_3 © Otago Musuem).

17. Va'ine Tutara

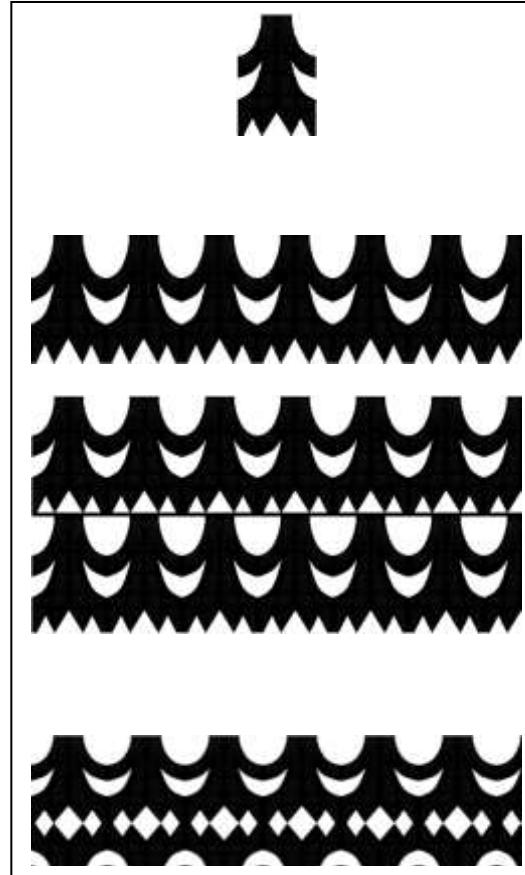


This motif is provisionally names Va'ine Tutara, referring to a woman with mana and power. It is a variant of tikitiki tangata and is found carved on an unu from Aitutaki.



Figure 3.34 – Detail, Aitutaki Painted paddle (Source: photo# image 050-080_3 © Otago Musuem).

18. Pa Tapairu

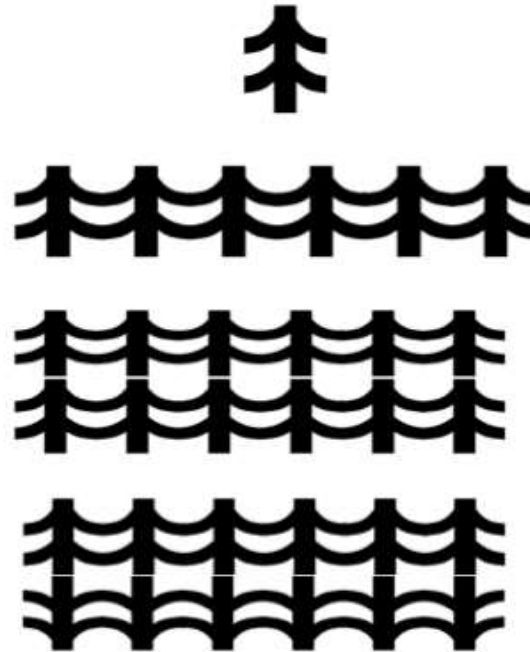


This image is found on an Aitutaki painted paddle and is a variant of tikitiki tangata. It is provisionally named Pa Tapairu in honour of the women who sailed with Ru to Aitutaki.



Figure 3.35 – Aitutaki unu or marae ornament. Late 18th early 19th century (Source: photo# LMS Oct 1982 Q.120 © Trustees of the British Museum)

19. Pou enua or pou tama



This 'akairo, a variant of tikitiki tangata, resembles a pou (post). It is evident on the front of an unu or carved slab from Aitutaki (see Hiroa 1944:332 and Fig 3.17 left).

The pou enua, or central post, is the most important post in a house, and secures the structure to the ground.

The motif can, alternatively, be seen as a variant of the 'akairo Matakeinanga with the phallus representing the lower 'post' securing the home. Here 'Pou tama' refers to the young warriors who secure the tribe and keep it safe.

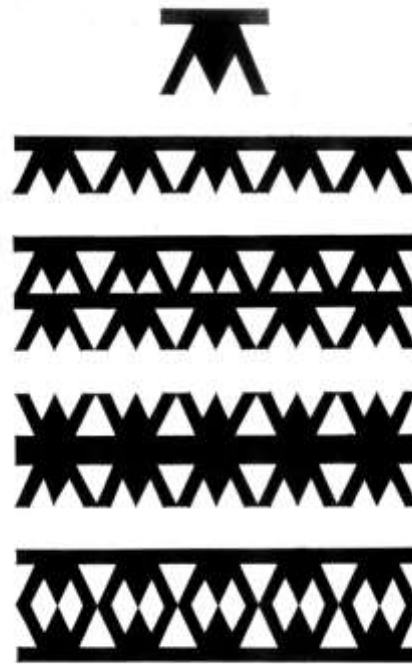


Figure 3.36 – detail from the Aitutaki unu in Figure 3.35.



Figure 3.37 – Deity image made of wood, sinnet cord, coir, barkcloth (Source: photo # Oc, LMS.44 © Trustees of the British Museum).

20. Tamatoa vero



This 'akairo found on a unu from Aitutaki represents a young male warrior and is a variant of the tikitiki tangata design.



Figure 3.38 – detail from Figure. 3.37.

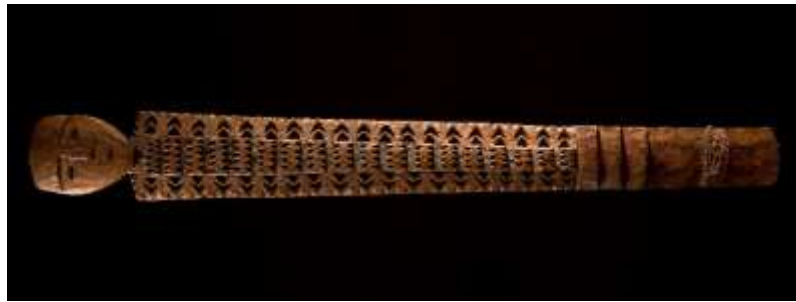
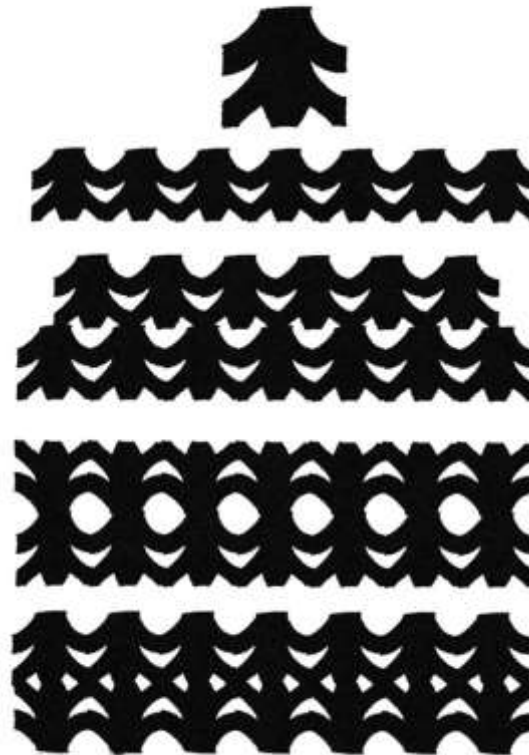


Figure 3.39 – Carved slab from Aitutaki, wood, 66x 8 cms, 19th century (Source:photo# AM31502© Auckland Museum).



Figure 3.40 – detail from Figure 3.39 above.

21. Nuku



This 'akairo is provisionally named 'nuku' meaning a group of people or warriors. It is a variant of the Matakeinga design but has a prominent phallus, though blunted. The feet and hands are typically joined.

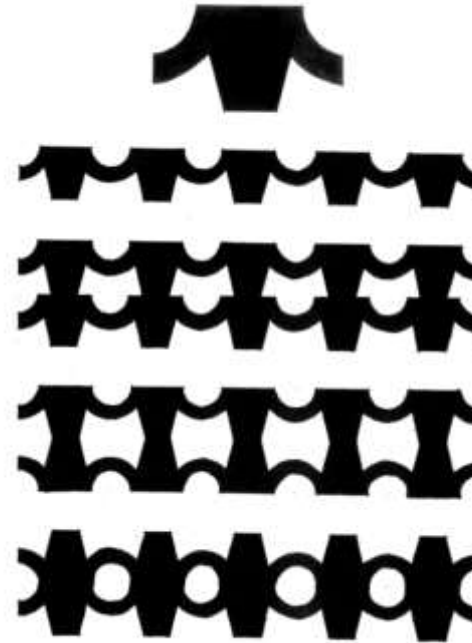


Figure 3.41 – detail from Figure 3.39.



Figure 3.42 – Detail of Female deity, Aitutaki , early 19th century (Source: photo# Munich 190 © Museum Fünf Kontinente, München).

22. Tama Potiki

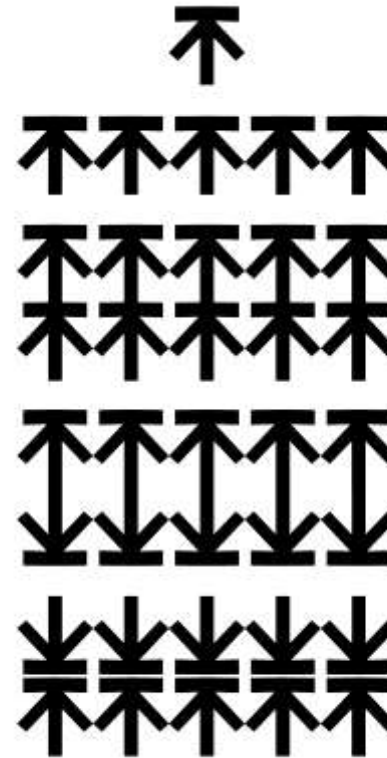


The provisional name given to this 'akairo – Potiki - means baby or child. It can be seen both carved and painted in a continuous line on the side of a female god from Aitutaki and on other atua or god figures.



Figure 3.43 – Head of a staff god made of casuarina wood, Rarotonga, 19th century, 112 x 16 cms. (Source: photo# Oc1919,1014.1 © Trustees of the British Museum).

23. Te Ariki Tū Roa



This 'akairo is found on one of the tikitiki of a Rarotonga Tangaroa staff god (Tangaroa). These tikitiki represent the genealogy of the tribe or family that owns the staff god. This particular 'akairo is located on the forehead of one of the ancestor figures. It is provisionally named Te Ariki Tū Roa- the longstanding chief.

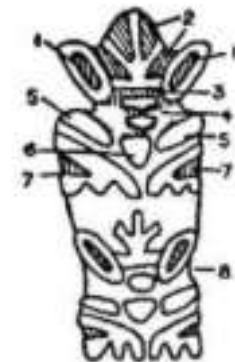


Figure 3.44 - drawing from Hiroa (1944:328) with akairo on the forehead of the tikitiki.

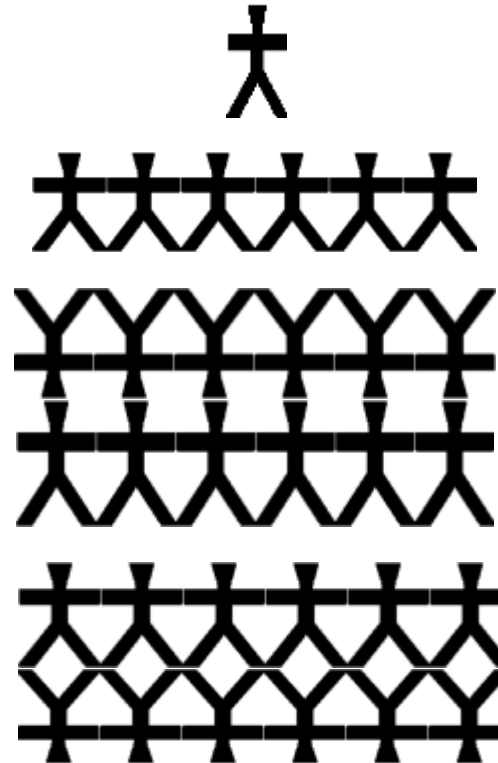


Figure 3.45 – Detail of a god staff, Rarotonga (Source: photo# AN00495552_001_1 © Trustees of the British Museum).



Figure 3.46 – drawing by Hiroa (1944: 328) identifying the akairo (at centre).

24. Mimiti



This 'akairo is found on the forehead of a tikitiki on a Rarotongan staff god (Tangaroa). It is a variant of tikitiki tangata and provisionally named "Mimiti" or forehead.



Figure 3.47 - Partie supérieure d'un dieu bâton, Rarotonga, îles Cook, Polynésie Centrale, probablement XVIIIe siècle ou antérieur. Bois. H. - 72,5 cm. (Source: photo# E 1895.158 [Z 6099] © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge University).

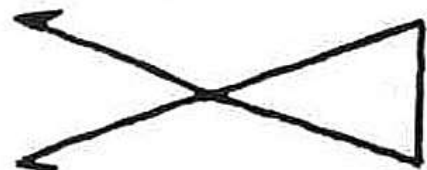


FIGURE 311.
Komua motive.

Figure 3.48 – Tattoo design, Aitutaki (Source: Hiroa 1927; 366).

25. Komua



Hiroa, (1927; 366) identifies komua as a ta tatau motif from Aitutaki noting “The *komua* motive was introduced by Irakau, who came by the Ui-tariao canoe and entered by the Taketake passage. *Komua* means the forward thrust of a spear.”

The triangle image may be either solid or vacant and the ‘akairo is found on tapa, in carving and in ta tatau (tattoo). It is a variant of tikitiki tangata

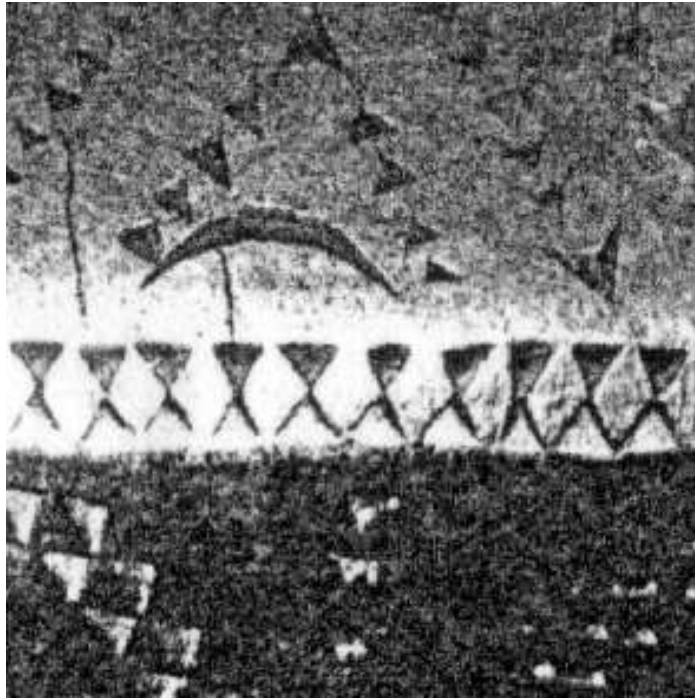
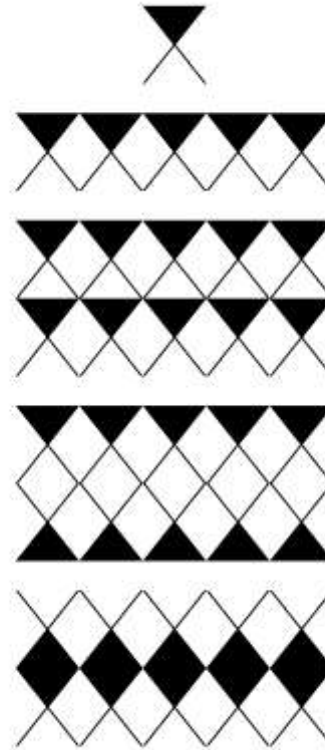


Figure 3.49 – Detail in Figure 3.23

26. Komua 2



This variant of the Komua motif can be found on tapa, carvings and tatau. Aitutaki is not the only island that uses this motif – the example shown in Figure 3.23 is from the seat of the vaka A’ua’u from Mangaia.



Figure 3.50 – trimmed bar and chevron, identified on Mangaian god staff (Source: Hiroa (1944: 377).

27. Maine



This 'akairo was identified as a carved design on a Mangaian staff god by Hiroa (1944: 377). The motif is another variant of tikitiki tangata and related to the 'akairo Maroitiki (No. 4 above).

Although it is a simple image, it is also an attractive and well balanced design. The provisional name 'Maine' refers to a young woman.



Figure 3.51 – Rarotongan staff god, c. 1827, wrapped in tapa. Late 18th or early 19th Century (Source: photo# BM Oct1978 Q.845, l © Trustees of the British Museum).



Figure 3.52 – detail of a Rarotongan staff god, c. 1827, wrapped in tapa. Late 18th or early 19th Century. (Source: photo# BM Oct1978 Q.845, l © Trustees of the British Museum).

28. Ivi



Ivi is the vertebrae of a human, fish or animal. When minor tribes are joined in one large tribe they are collectively called an ivi. As an isolated motif, ivi is found in weaving, carving and tatau. In composite form it is found in the stock of the Rau teve (No. 52 below).

The motif can either be solid or blocked in, or it may be simply an outline with narrow or bold lines.

The Ivi 'akairo is found in all parts of Polynesia and in some Polynesians outliers such as Tikopia.



Figure 3.53 – detail of a Manganian paddle, 19th century
 (Source: photo PM# 99-12-70/53508 © President and Fellows of
 Harvard College, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and
 Ethnology).

29. Ivi 2



This is a variant of the previous “Ivi” design, but it is completely solid. This design is used in many Pacific cultures and is almost always called “Ivi” the vertebrae of the backbone.

It is used in carvings, in ta tatau, incorporated in woven craft such as mats, fans, baskets and ruru and painted on tapa.



Figure 3.54 – Shoulder ornament, serrated club, Rarotonga,
(Source: Hiroa 1944: 287).

30. Tāura Momore (Totem of the Club or Spear)



Many Cook Islands weapons, especially Rarotongan spears, have designs or motifs representing the human eye, carved at the shoulder or the base of the blade. The eye or eyes provide a connection or tāura linking the wielder of the spear to the god of war Tutavake. Without the tāura, there is no mana in the weapon.

In this case the eye with raised flanges has been elaborated into an abstract image of man.

It is provisionally named Tāura Momore or Totem of the Club or Spear.

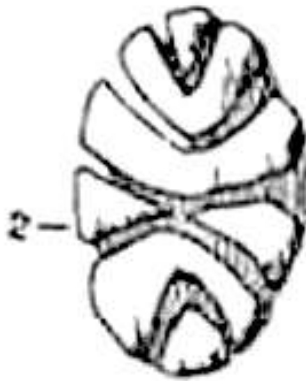


Figure 3.55 – Carved shoulder ornament, Hervey Islands spear, probably Rarotonga, British Museum (Source: Hiroa 1944; 297).

31. Tāura Momore 2

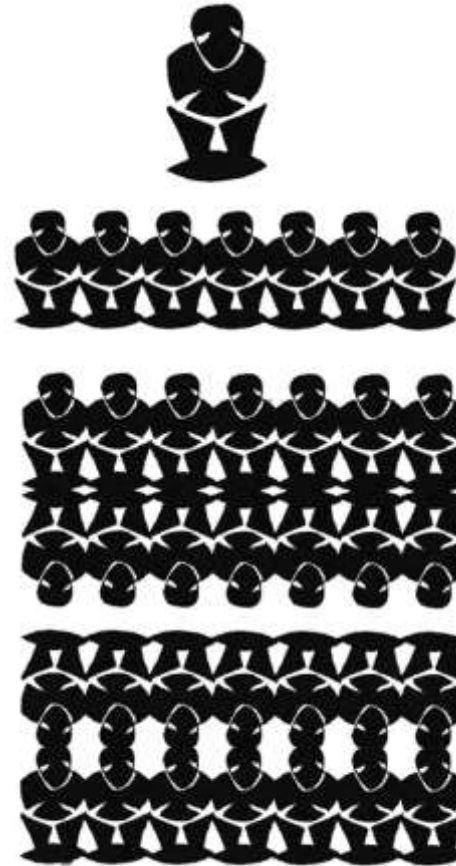


This 'akairo is a variant of the Tāura Momore motif above. This motif can be seen at the base of the blade of a Rarotonga serrated club or spear. It is carved in abstract human form (tikitiki tangata).



Figure 3.56 – detail, drum, Central Polynesia Cook Islands, late 18th/early 19th century, wood, fish skin, sennit, 150cms (Source: LMS80 © Trustees of the British Museum).

32. Tāura Momore 3

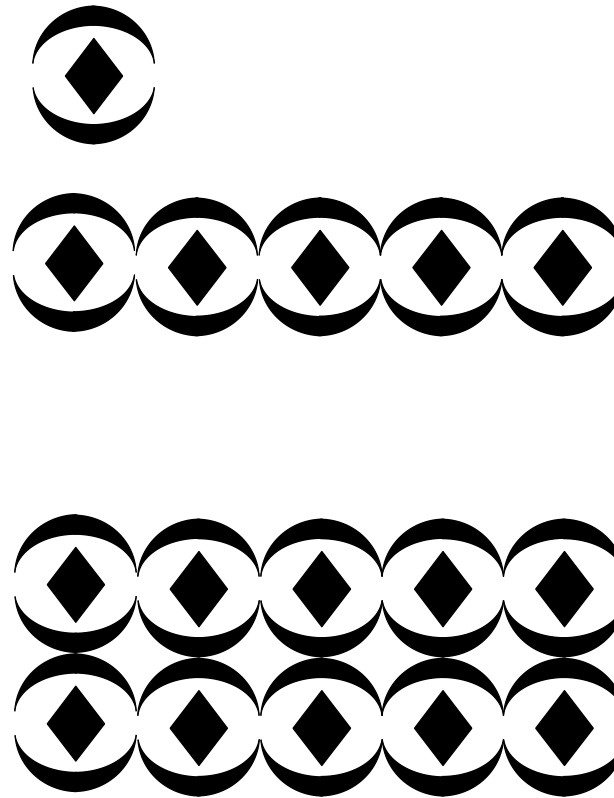


This motif is found on a sharkskin drum attributed to the Cook Islands and is a variant on the Tāura Momore 'akairo (above). It is provisionally named Tāura Momore 3.



Figure 3.57 – Te Kakite wearing tapa, from Figure 3.58 showing Elders of the Ngati-Makea Karika tribe (Source: Reference No. 1/2-045075-F, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington).

33. Tuke Mata



This 'akairo is found on a tapa worn by Te Kakite, an elder of the Ngati Makea Karika tribe.

This Rarotongan 'akairo represents an open eye or mata painted on a dark brown tapa cloth. The man wearing the tapa is called Te Kakite meaning "The one who can see." suggesting a gift for prophecy.



Figure 3.58 – Detail from Figure 3.57

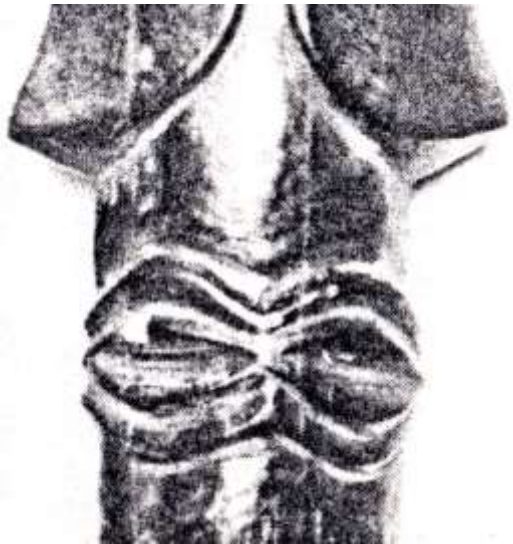
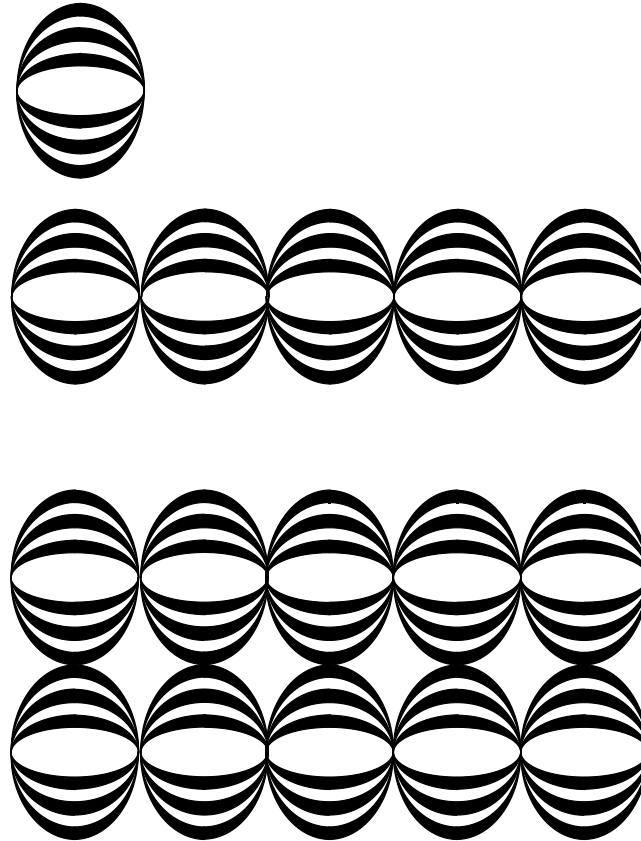


Figure 3.59– shoulder ornament on Rarotongan serrated club
(Source: Hiroa 1944: 287).

34. Mata



A variant of the eye design - “two eyes with eyeball, lids and brow curve above” (Hiroa 1944: 287).

It is found on the shoulder of a Rarotongan spear or serrated club. It is also found on tapa and in tatau designs.



Figure 3.60 – Rarotongan carved staff (with pairs of god figures)
(Source: photo# Oc1905, 1114.1 © Trustees of the British Museum).



Figure 3.61– Atiu performer in tapa tunic - “Ngati Arua of Atiu in Old Time Dress” (Source: Gudgeon Album © Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand).

35. Tinokura

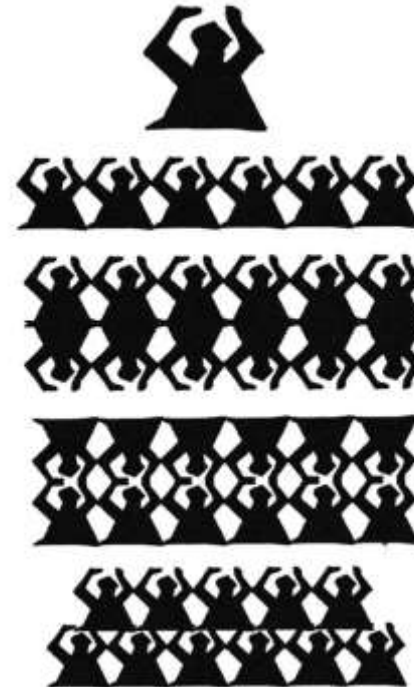


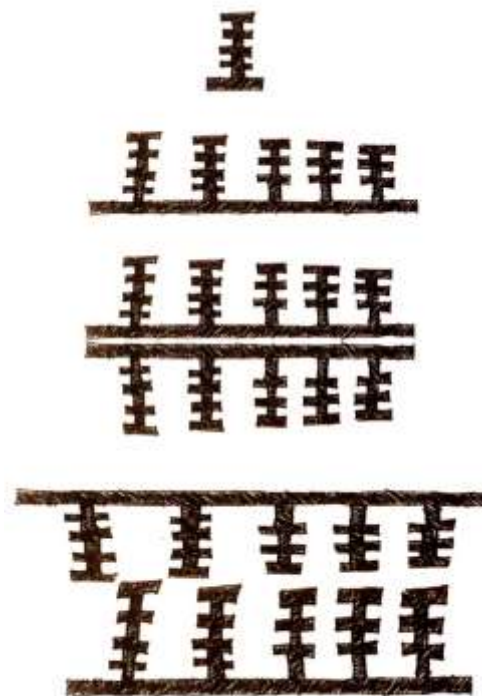
Figure 3.62 – “Ngati Arua of Atiu in Old Time Dress” (Source: Gudgeon Album © Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand).

Tino refers to body and kura refers to the red of royalty. The ‘akairo denotes a warrior, or bodyguard. The tapa on which the ‘akairo is found, is a warrior’s tapa.



Figure 3.63 – Detail, Aitutaki painted paddle (Source: photo# 050-080_9 © Otago Museum).

36. Ata Tangata

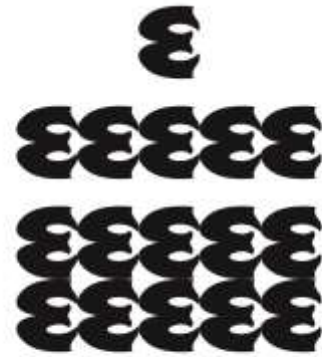


This 'akairo is provisionally named Ata tangata – or the Shadow of Man. It is found on a painted paddle from Aitutaki.



Figure 3.64 – Fisherman's deity, Rarotonga. Late 18th or early 19th Century. Height: 32.500 cm (Source: photo# AOA 9866 © Trustees of the British Museum).

37. Pukai Taringa



This tatau motif represents the human ear. It is located on the head of a deity figure from Rarotonga (left and below). Hiroa writes “The three-limbed motif ... somewhat resembling the *rau-teve* motif in tattooing, is placed on the front of the ear instead of the back. The vertebra motif [ivi] is on the thighs instead of the back of the neck.” (Hiroa 1944: 314)

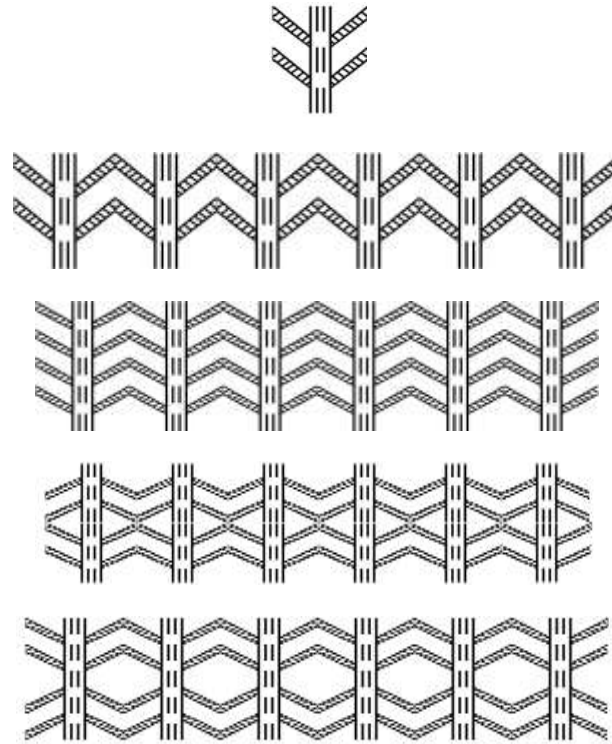


Figure 3.65 – detail of Figure 3.64.



Figure 3.66 – detail of a pare eva or painted tapa mask, Mangaia, late 19th century (Source: photo# 37898 © Auckland War Memorial Museum).

37. Tuata'iti



This 'akaio appears as a tattoo comprising "vertical lines running down the spine and oblique pairs running upwards to mid-auxiliary lines" (Hiroa 1944:130; see also Hiroa 1927: 365).

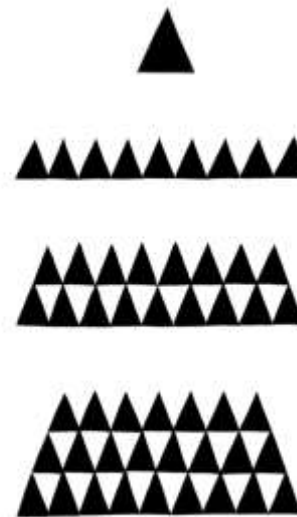
The motif originates in Mangaia (Hiroa 1944:131) and is seen (left) on a painted tapa mask or pare eva from Mangaia in the Auckland Museum.

| (2) 'Akairo or motifs relating to the sea and shore | | Comments |
|---|---|---|
| <div data-bbox="201 392 945 700" data-label="Image"> </div> <p data-bbox="174 735 972 855">Figure 3.67 above and Figure 3.68 below – detail of a Manganian paddle, 19th century (Source: photo# PM# 99-12-70/53508 © President and Fellows of Harvard College, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology).</p> <div data-bbox="264 884 882 1292" data-label="Image"> </div> | <p data-bbox="999 331 1435 379">38. Manuta'i (Mangaia)</p> <div data-bbox="1151 507 1464 986" data-label="Image"> </div> | <p data-bbox="1659 331 2123 699">The name of this Manganian design is manutai, meaning seabird. According to Hiroa (1911:96) –when used as a tattoo motif, “Manutai runs across and encircles the forearm, with the sharp points of the angles towards the hand.” Individuals who originally wore this tattoo design were likely prominent people with some relationship to the sea, as navigators, canoe builders, or fishing experts (taunga tautai). It is also found on painted paddles (Figures 3.67 and 3.68) and on tapa.</p> <p data-bbox="1659 730 2123 850">Hiroa (1944: 130) records the following Aitutaki chant collected from Kake Maunga relating to the ‘akairo manuta’i and papavaro -</p> <p data-bbox="1659 882 1962 978">Ie uria, uria, uria Uria te manuta’i ki taitikura Uria te papavaro ki taitikura</p> <p data-bbox="1659 1010 2040 1098">Turn, turn, turn Turn the manuta’i to one side Turn the papavaro to the other side.</p> |



Figure 3.69 – Detail from Figure 3.23

39. Ni'o mango

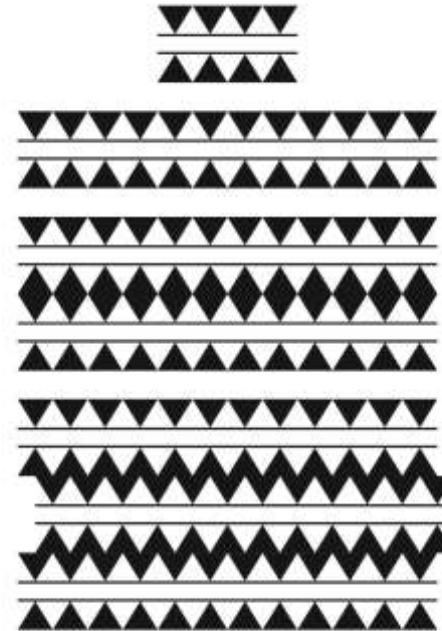


A row of triangles representing shark's teeth, this 'akairo symbolizes strength. Repeated rows, one on top of the other, represent a toa (warrior) and again symbolize strength and valour. William Wyatt Gill recorded that "the sharks teeth pattern (ni'o mango)" (1885; 274) was carved on the hafts of adzes. This 'akairo is universal to Polynesia. In its basic form it is found in tapa, carving, lashing, tatau and weaving. It is seen here on the carved stern post or repe of the Manganian vaka A'ua'u in Te Papa Tongarewa, National Museum of New Zealand.



Figure 3.70 Basket made of woven strips of pandanus leaf, leaf in black, red & white with vegetable fibre handles attached (Source: photo# Oc,+2086 © Trustees of the British Museum).

40. Nga Ara Nio Mango

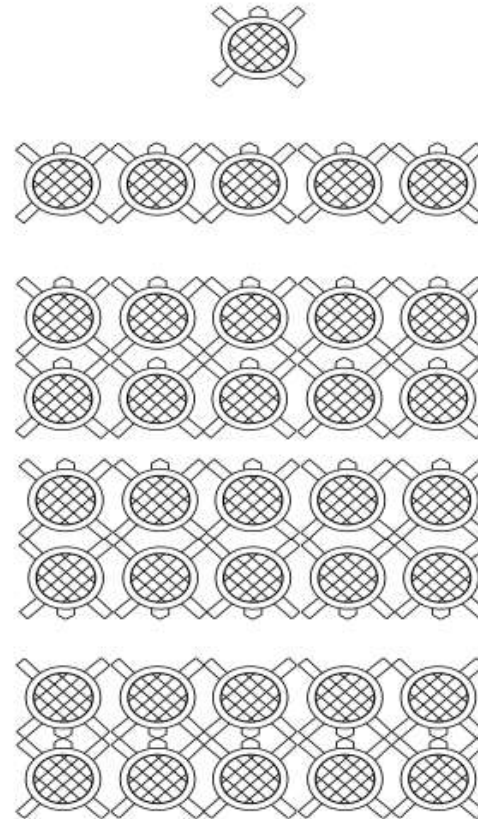


A double row of shark's teeth – nga ara nio mango - found in woven mats, baskets and ruru, carving and tatau.



Figure 3.71 – “Makea Pori ariki of Teautonga (Rarotonga) holding the bible in his right hand” (Source: John Williams, London Missionary Society, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Makea_Pori_Ariki)

41. Onu



This is a turtle design. Turtles were food reserved for chiefs. Perhaps, this ‘akairo was also reserved for the decoration of chiefs. The motif is seen on the knee of Makea Pori and in some versions of the portrait of Te Po (see No.42 below).

“The king, whose name is Makea, is a handsome man in the prime of life, about six feet high, and very stout; of noble appearance, and of a truly commanding aspect. His complexion is light ; and, at the time of which I write, his body was most beautifully tattooed, and slightly coloured with a preparation of turmeric and ginger, which gave it a light orange tinge, and, in the estimation of the Rarotongans, added much to the beauty of his appearance.” (Williams, 1837; 27)

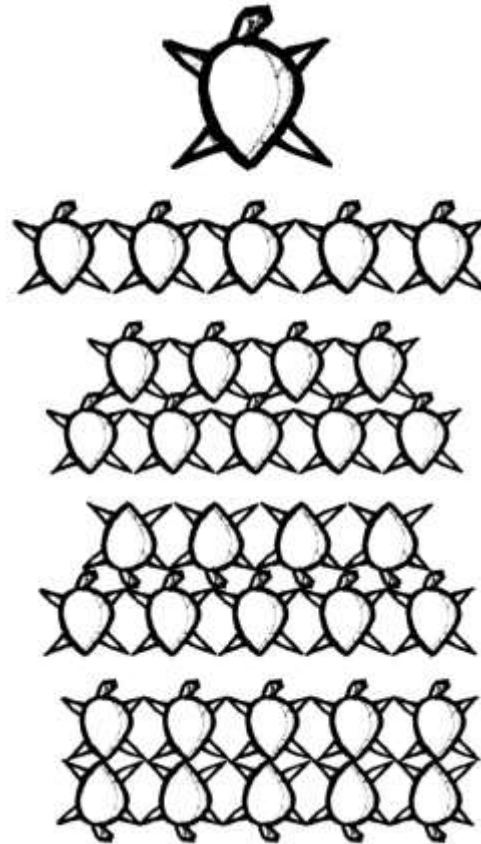


Figure 3.72 – detail of Figure 3.71.



Figure 3.73 – detail of Figure. 3.74, right (Source: Williams 1837, frontespiece).

42. Onu – Te Po



This turtle design is seen tattooed on the knees of the Rarotongan ariki Te Po.



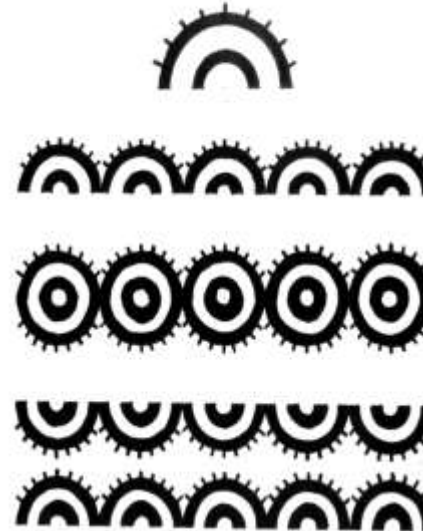
Figure 3.74 - Te Po, a chief of Rarotonga c.1830 print in oil colours by George Baxter (Source: Williams 1837, frontespiece).



Figure 3.75 above and 3.76 below – Tapa Bark Cloth dyed background and painted designs, Cook Islands (Source: photo# A106504C. © Field Museum, Chicago).



43. Kina



This 'akairo is provisionally named Kina for the spiked sea urchin (*Echinometra mathaei*) which is used for food and for medicine.

This 'akairo is found on numerous tapa cloths attributed to Cook Islands and on various wood carvings.



Figure 3.77 – Kina, the Pale Burrowing Urchin *Echinometra mathaei* (Source: Cook Islands Biodiversity Database).



Figure 3.78 – Decorated bark cloth, Aitutaki, (Source: photo# Oc1911- 211, © Trustees of the British Museum).

44. 'Etuke



'Etuke is the edible pencil-urchin (*Heterocentrotus sp.*) so named because its spikes were used for writing on slates in the early years of formal schooling. This is another variant of the kina type 'akairo found on numerous tapa from Aitutaki.

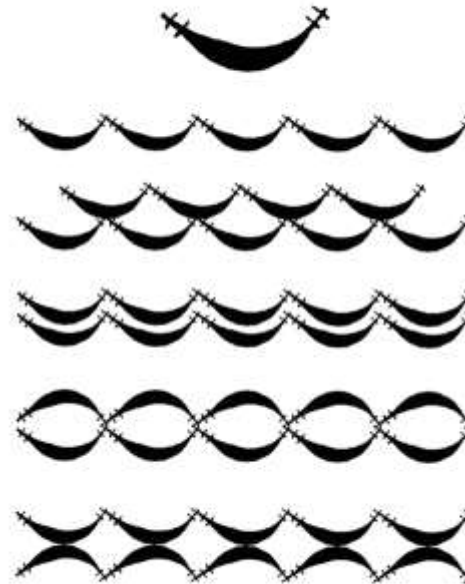


Figure 3.79 – Brown Pencil urchin *Heterocentrotus mammillatus* (Source: Cook Islands Biodiversity Database).



Figure 3.80 – Tapa Aitutaki, mid 19th century (Source: photo# E1901.123 © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge).

45. Rei Moana



This 'akairo is provisionally named Rei Moana and refers to the traditional neck ornament made of pearl shell.

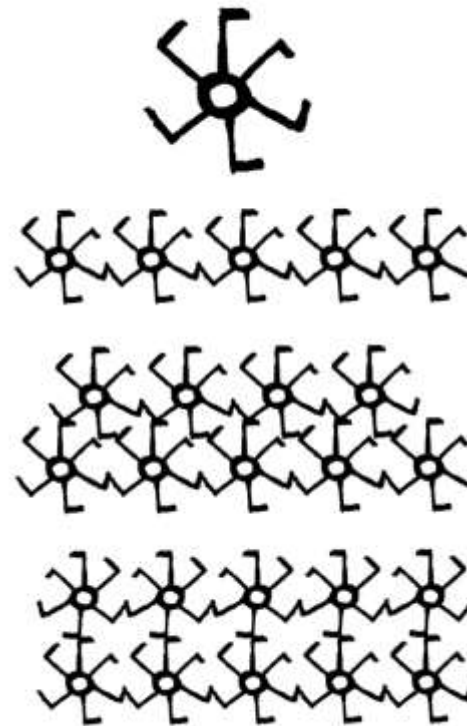


Figure 3.81 – Chief's breast ornament, consisting of a pearl oyster shell pendant Mangaia (Source: photo# Oc.9945 © Trustees of the British Museum).



Figure 3.82 - Cook Islands Tapa (Source: photo# E337+01.jpg Australian Museum, Sydney)

46. Etu Moana



This 'akairo is provisionally named Etu Moana, where Etu refers to a star and Moana to the ocean. The Etu Moana or Vivid Blue Starfish (*Linckia laevigata*) is found in Cook Islands lagoons.

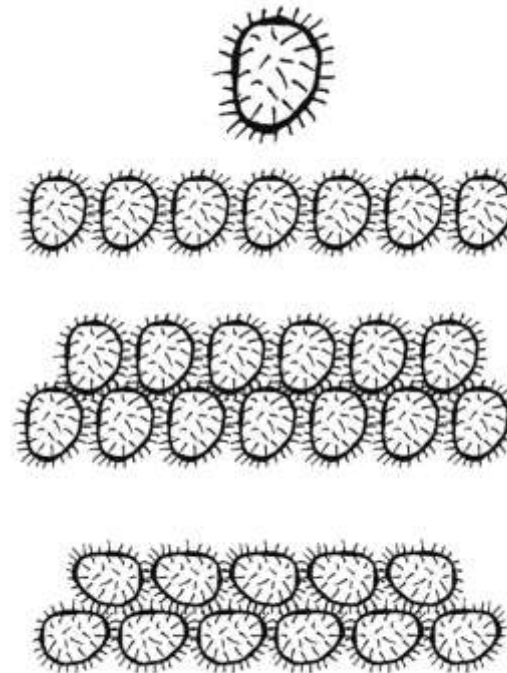


Figure 3.83 – Etu Moana or Vivid Blue Starfish (*Linckia laevigata*) (Source: Cook Islands Biodiversity Database).



Figure 3.84 – Sheet of tapa: background of faint cream and brown stripes decorated with a variety of patterns in black. (Source: photo# Oc1981,Q.1639 © Trustees of the British Museum).

47. Vana



Vana refers to Sea-eggs with long black spines (genera *Diadema* and *Echonothrix*). The tear-drop spiked images in the tapa opposite and below are variants of the kina motif.

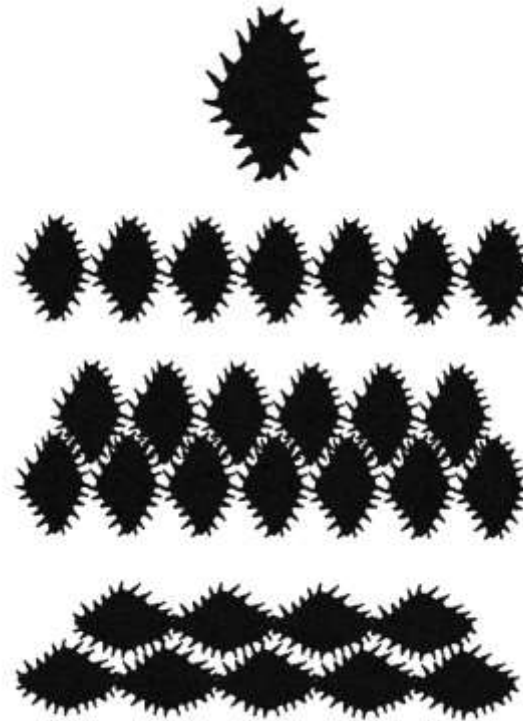


Figure 3.85 – Detail of bark cloth decorated with black pattern on neutral background. Poncho, Rarotonga, 200x70 cms (Source: photo# Oc1981,Q.1524, © Trustees of the British Museum).



Figure 3.86 – Detail of a tapa attributed to Cook Islands
(Source: photo# AN00857076_001_1 © Trustees of the British Museum)

48. Rori Ngata Kerekere



There are several varieties of sea cucumbers (rori) in the lagoons of Rarotonga. This 'akairo resembles the mildly poisonous black sea cucumber (*Holothuria atra*/rori kirikiri). The toxin from the skin of the rori is used to stun fish. This 'akairo is provisionally named Rori Ngata Kerekere.

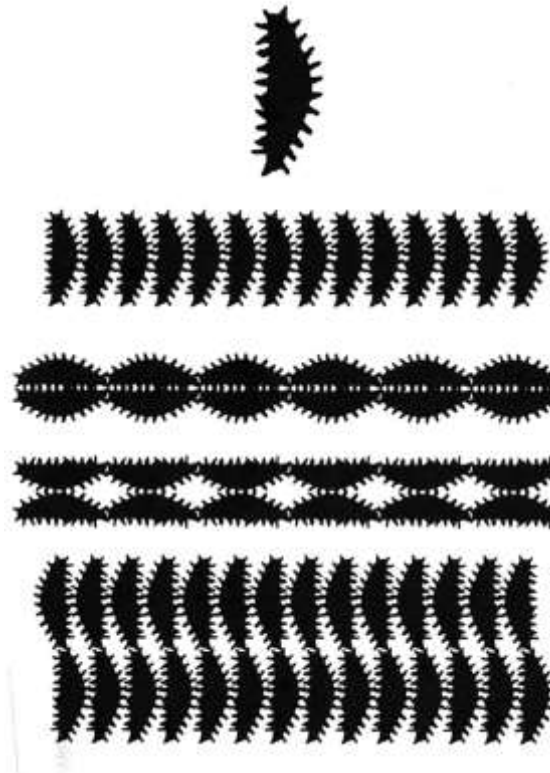


Figure 3.87 – Blood sea cucumber
(*Holothuria atra*, Rori Toto)
(Source: Cook Islands Biodiversity Database).



Figure 3.88 – Detail of a tapa, attributed to Rarotonga, 19th century (Source: Photo# e1263, Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter City Council).

49. Rori Ngata Kerekere 2



This motif, a variant of sea cucumber, runs along the length of the tapa in Figure 3.38 opposite separating a number of lizard-like creatures. It is provisionally named Rori Ngata Kerekere 2.



Figure 3.89 – (Source: photo# AN00857076_001_1 © Trustees of the British Museum).

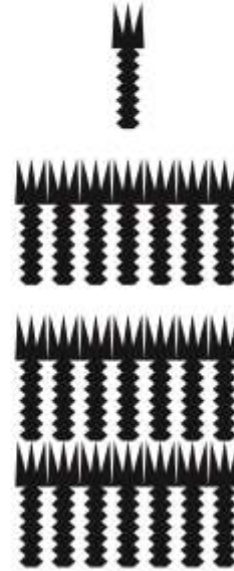


Figure 3.90 – Black Melting sea cucumber (Stichopus black) (Source: Cook Islands Biodiversity Database).



Figure 3.91 – Fisherman's God, Rarotonga, painted wood, 33 x 15.5 x 14cms. (Source: photo# Oc.9866Oc.9866 © Trustees of the British Museum).

50. Rori Puera

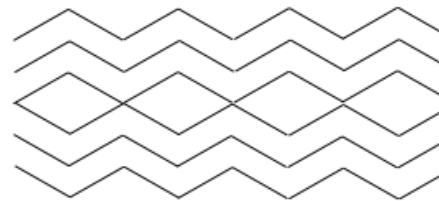
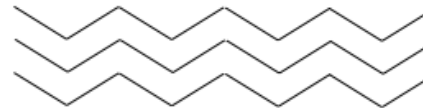


This 'akairo is Rarotongan. It is found painted on the thighs of one of the Rarotongan Tangaroa god images. It is provisionally named Rori Puera meaning the bloom or filaments of the sea cucumber.



Figure 3.92 – Wood club with a flat serrated head and 30 serrations on each side. Mangaia. Length: 61.5 inches (Source: photo# Oc1957,08.1 © Trustees of the British Museum).

51. Papa varo



Hiroa recorded this design as an Aitutakian tattoo motif, (1927: 364) generally located on the abdomen and on the front of the thigh. Sometimes the design is also tattooed on the back of the thigh.

The Aitutaki name “Papavaro” may refer to the tracks made by the varo (a crustacean) walking in the sand. The varo is similar to a crayfish or lobster.

The motif also appears in decorative weaving, tapa and carvings.



Figure 3.93 – Piece of bark cloth decorated with black pattern on neutral background. Tiputa or Poncho. Rarotonga (Source: photo# Oc1981, Q.1524 © Trustees of the British Museum).


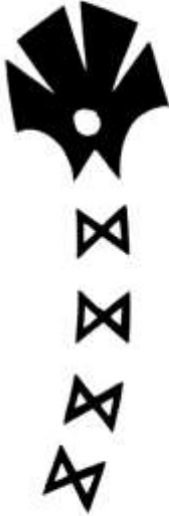
| (3) 'Akairo or motifs relating to flora | | Comments |
|--|---|---|
|  <p data-bbox="174 1217 936 1289">Figure 3.94 – Rauteve tattoo design on the neck of Tupai (Source: photo# SP_15654 © B.P. Bishop Museum, Hawai'i).</p> | <p data-bbox="996 284 1216 323">52. Rauteve</p>  | <p data-bbox="1619 284 2125 496">This 'akairo comprises two elements. The top part of the design, with three or four leaflets is the 'Rau teve' or 'Leaf of the Teve' (a type of yam). The stock is made of the Ivi motif (see No.28 above). In this composite form the 'akairo is used exclusively in Rarotonga and only in tattooing.</p> <p data-bbox="1619 528 2125 1201">Hiroa (1944; 131) wrote- "In 1929, I saw three old Rarotongans who were tattooed. They were Tupai of Ngatangia, age 60, and Pakitoa and Tai 'Uritaua both of Avatiu and both about 77 years old. All three bore the <i>rau teve</i> motif on the back of the neck. Tupai said that formerly all Rarotongans who joined ships as sailors had the <i>rau teve</i> tattooed upon them to show that they were Rarotongans, the <i>rau teve</i> being an exclusive Rarotongan pattern of which they were proud. He stated that he was the last Rarotongan to be so tattooed. The full tattooing of this pattern extended from the back of each ear and across the neck in a curve with the convexity downward. Tupai's tattooing was on the left side, and he stated that the pain was so great that he refused to have it completed on the other side. His two older countrymen had the tattooing on the right side; and evidently they also objected to the pain, for their tattooing stopped on the middle line of the neck."</p> <p data-bbox="1619 1233 2056 1265">See also Hiroa1944: 132 Figure72 a & b</p> |



Figure 3.95 – Pakitoa with a partially completed rauteve tattoo
 (Source: phot# SP_15652 © Bishop Museum, Honolulu).

53. Rau teve 2



In this version of the Rauteve design which was tattooed on the neck of Pakitoa of Rarotonga, the blank circle at the center of the cluster of leaves is replaced by an angular ivi style design (see Hiroa 1944: 130 – 132)



54. Maire Rau Kota'a



Figure 3.96 (left) and 3.97 (above) details of tapa worn by elder of Ngati-Makea Karika tribe (Source: photo# 1/2-045075-F, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand)

This 'akairo is seen on the tapa worn by a Rarotonga sub chief of Ngati Karika and is provisionally titled Maire Rau Kota'a. This translates as 'the ferns of many frigate birds' or 'the ferns with leaves that look like the frigate bird'.

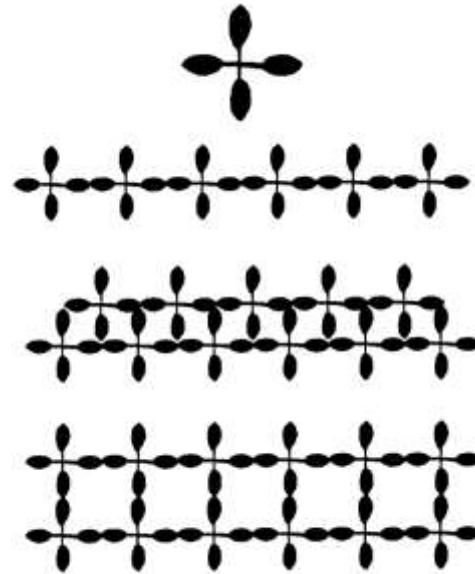


Figure 3.98 – Atiu female chief, Akataui, in tapa robe with Maire Rau Kota'a motif (Source: photo# c/nE6425/10 © Hocken Library, University of Otago).



Figure 3.99 – detail from Installation of Makea Tinirau, 30 August 1921 (Source: photo# PH-CNEG-C20600 © Auckland War Memorial Museum).

55. Pua Tiare



This design is found on a tapa cloth worn by one of the sub-chiefs at the installation of Makea Tinirau Ariki in 1921. It is a simple four petalled flower design. In the Auckland example, below, the flower is set in a square, with a motif of leaves in the adjoining square.



Figure 3.100 – Tapa cloth attributed to the Cook Islands (Source: photo# 120421 © Auckland War Memorial Museum).

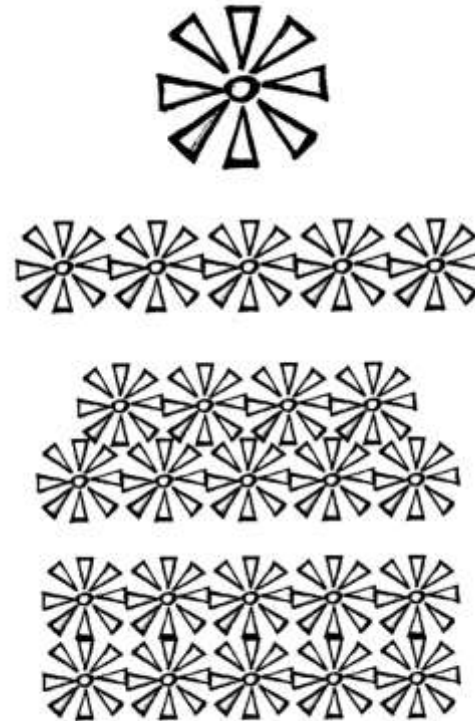


Figure 3.101 – Installation of Makea Tinirau, 30 August 1921
(Source: photo# PH-CNEG-C20600 © Auckland Museum).



Figure 3.102 – Detail in Figure 3.23

56. Pua Tiare 2

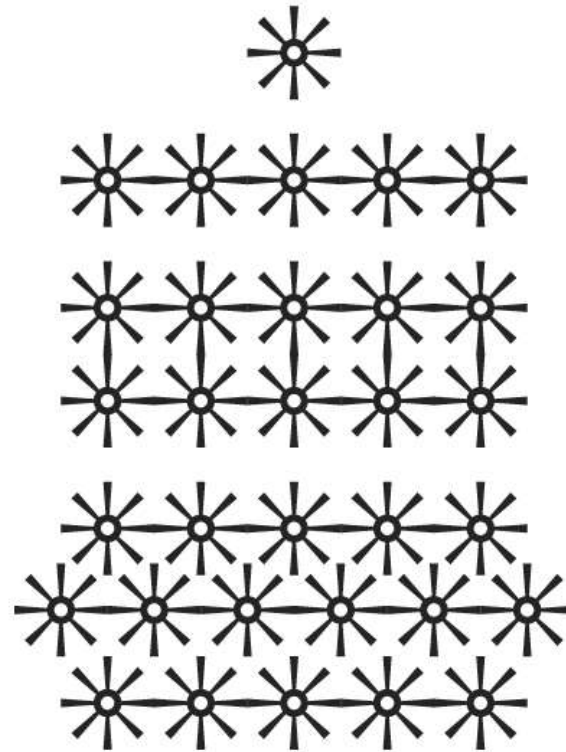


This 'akairo is found on the hull of the vaka A'ua'u, 1906 from Mangaia in Te Papa Tongarewa, National Museum of New Zealand.



Figure 3.103 – Mungaia Tapa costume, 1907 (Source: Stephen Savage, USP Cook Islands Archive).

57. Pu Tiare 3

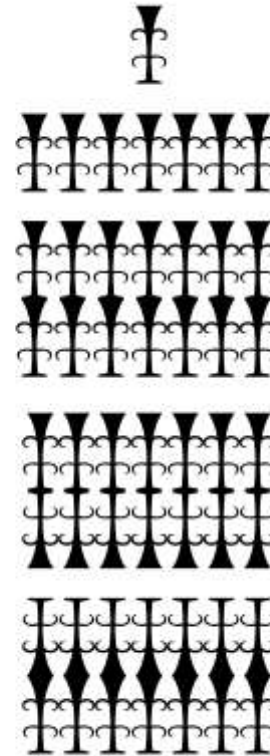


This is another stylized flower pattern. It is a very simple but clear and effective design, seen here on the tapa of a Mungaian performer in 1907.



Figure 3.104 – detail from an Aitutaki pa’u or drum (Source: photo# 987 Auckland War Memorial Museum).

58. Pu Rauti



Hiroa collected the name Puauti for a similar tatau facial design from Mangaia. He writes “This is a face pattern, consisting of a long triangle extending across the cheek, with a curved base towards the ear and apex towards the nose. From the apex stretch two curved lines inclining to a spiral form, with another short line near the base of the upper spiral. This pattern was used by males” (1911: 97). It is seen here (Figure 3.91) on a drum identified by Hiroa as from Aitutaki but possibly Mangaian in origin.



Figure 3.105 – Aitutaki pa’u (Source: photo# 987 Auckland War Memorial Museum).

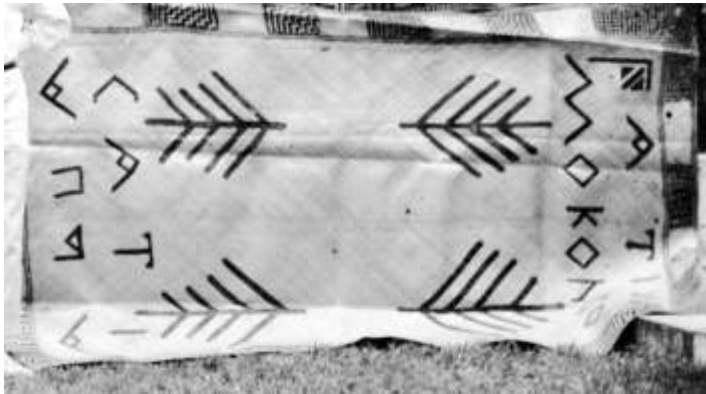
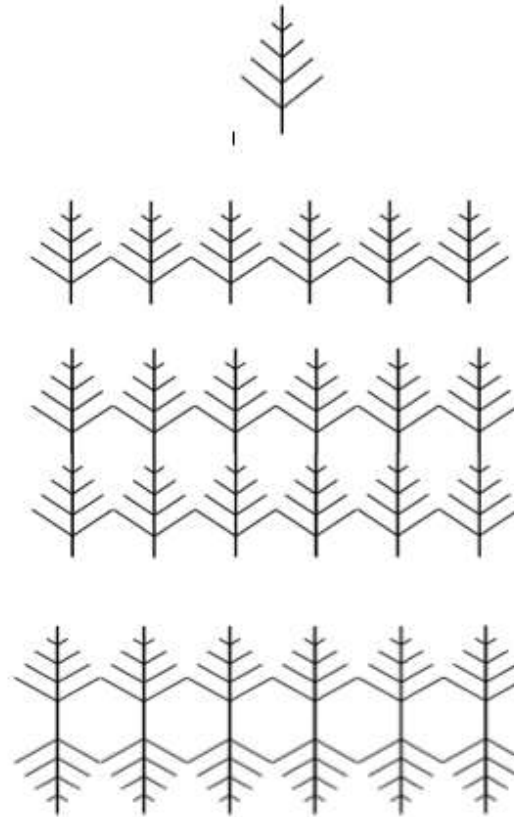


Figure 3.106 – Display of Atiu Mats (Source: photo# 1/2-104219-F © Turnbull Library, Wellington)

59. Kikau



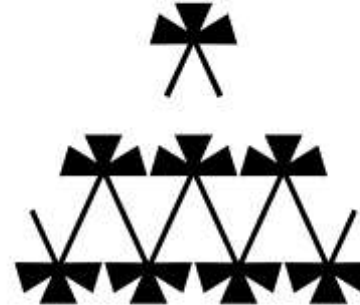
The kikau motif is an artistic representation of the coconut leaf. Traditionally, kikau had many uses, including conveying messages announcing imposition of a tapu (prohibition), ra'ui (harvesting restriction), death, etc.

The Kikau 'akairo is found on a mat (Fig. 3.106) possibly from Mokoero-Nui-O-Tautipa or Ngatiarua village on Atiu. It is used by many islands in decorative weaving.



Figures 3.107 and 3.108 tapa tunic and pare'eva (mask), Mangaia (Source: photo# AM8353 - 8355, Auckland War Memorial Museum, Auckland).

60. Puvakevake



This Manganian 'akairo represents miko or moko (taro or young taro shoots). In Mangaia, vakevake refers to a brood, or large group of children. It symbolizes a new generation or regeneration. Hiroa recorded the design, as tatau, on the chest, shoulders and upper arms of one of the Manganian performers at the 1906 Christchurch Exhibition. He wrote "Puwakevake consists of zigzag lines meeting at acute angles, with three rays projecting out from the angles. These rays are shaped like the arms of a Maltese Cross. The site is upon the chest, and also upon the shoulder and upper arm" (1911b; 96).

"According to [Daniela] Tangitoru, [Hiroa's main informant] the number of zig-zag lines have reference to the genealogy of the individual, whilst the three arms projecting from the angles represent the three ancient tribes of Mangaia." (1911: 96) [Akatauirā, Vairuarangi, and Papaarangī].

Hamilton (1911:101) noted that sometimes a fourth wedge or ray was inserted to represent the assertive and warlike Tonga'iti tribe.



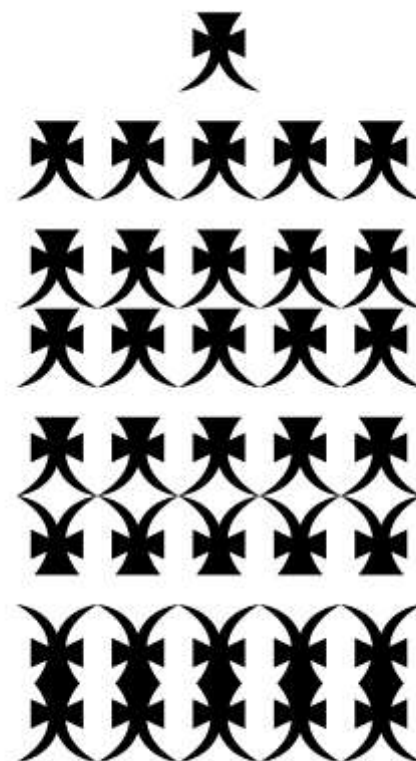
Figure 3.109 – Tāniera Tangitoru in his later years (Source: Mangos and Utanga, 2011, p.155)

Hamilton (1911:101) additionally noted of this motif – “Ancestral tattooing called tavakevake. This is a copy of the pattern on the breast of Tangitoru. It is supposed to enable the bearer to increase and multiply.”



Figure 3.110 – Aitutaki pa'u (Source: photo# 987 Auckland War Memorial Museum).

61. Vake



Another variant of the puvakevake motif, provisionally named Vake, in this case located on an Aitutaki (or possibly Mangaian) pa'u or drum.

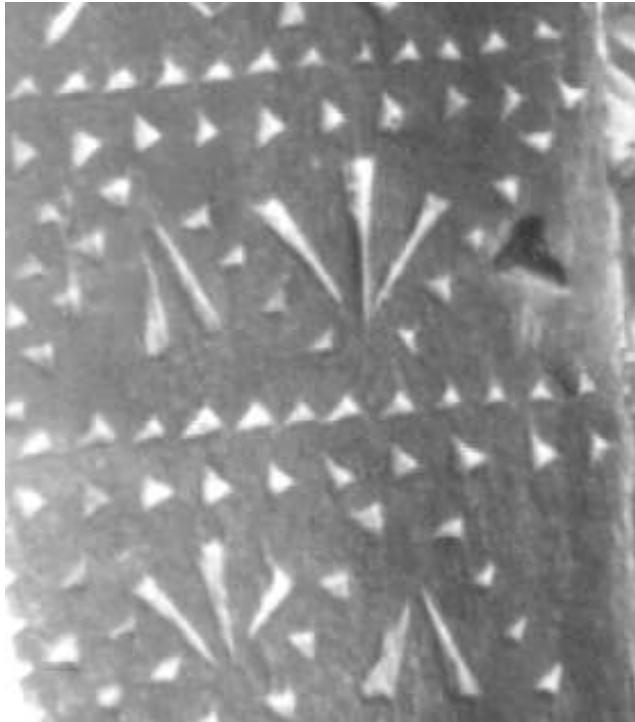
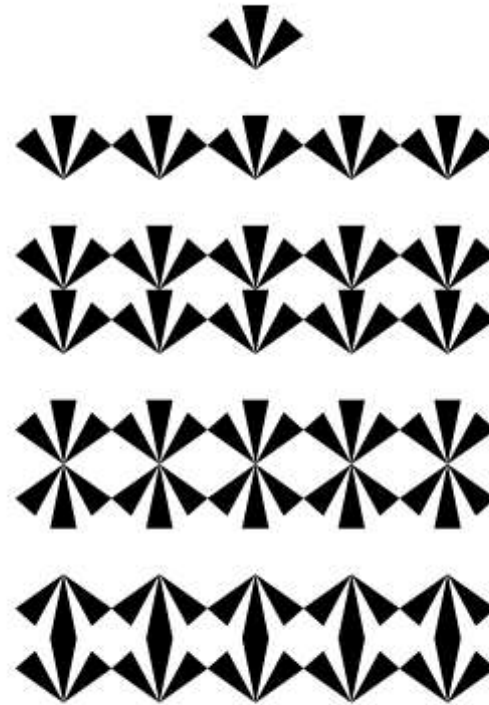


Figure 3.111 – Detail in Figure 3.23

62. Vake 2

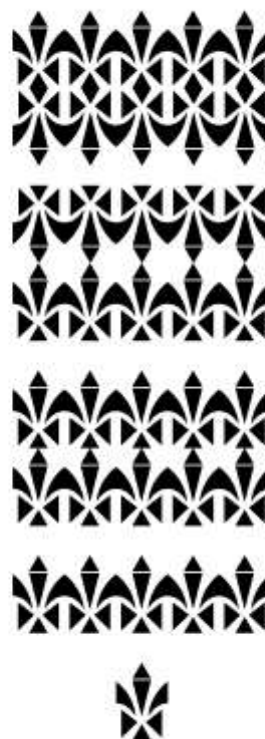


Puvakevake (above) refers to many young taro shoots. This is a variant of the puvakevake design, a singular taro shoot, provisionally named Vake 2.



Figure 3.113 – Detail in Figure 3.23

63. Vake 3



This is another variant of the puvake vake motif, provisionally named Vake 3. It is seen here as a carved motif recurring on the Mangaian vaka A'ua'u.

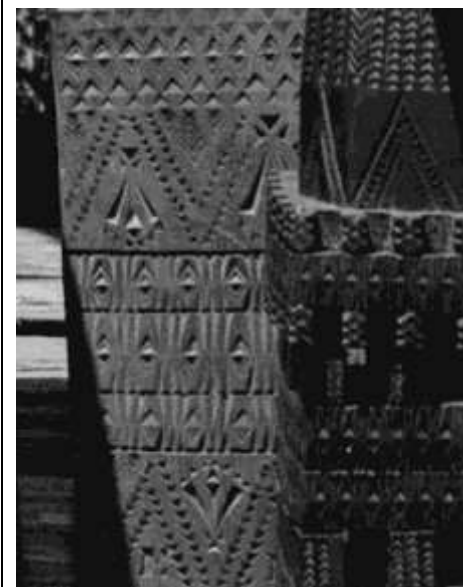


Figure 3.114 – detail, carved boards, Mangaia, Christchurch Exhibition 1907 (Source: photo# MA_I063011 Te Papa Tongarewa, Museum of New Zealand).

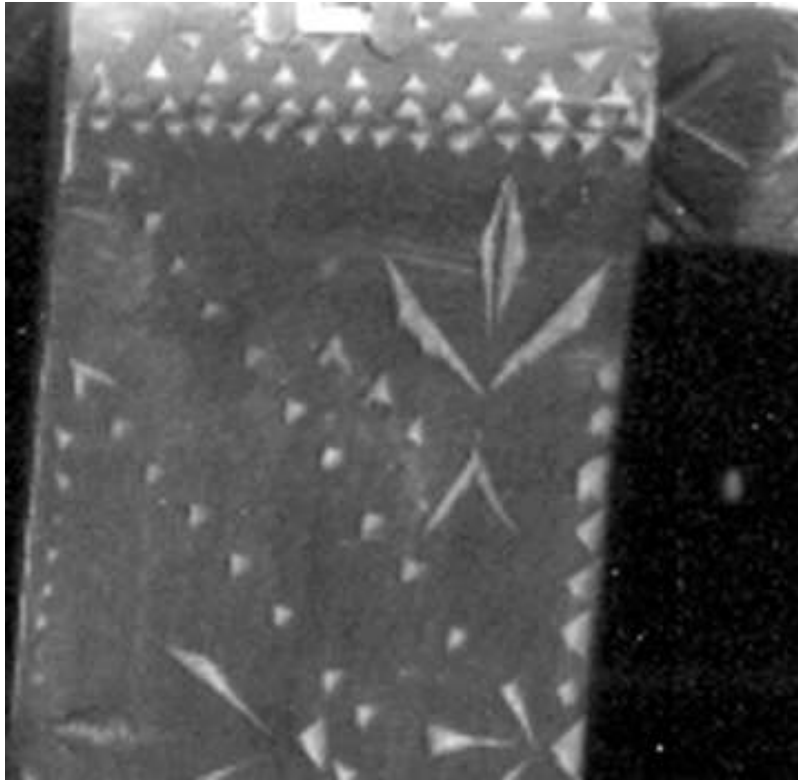


Figure 3.115 – Detail in Figure 3.23

64. Vake 4



Another variant of the puvake vake motif, provisionally named Vake 4, located on the Mangaian vaka A'ua'u in Te Papa Tongarewa, National Museum of New Zealand.

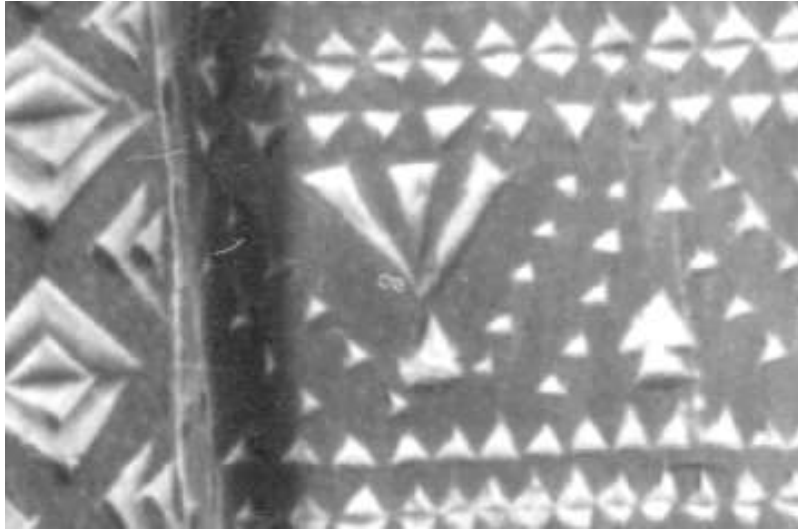
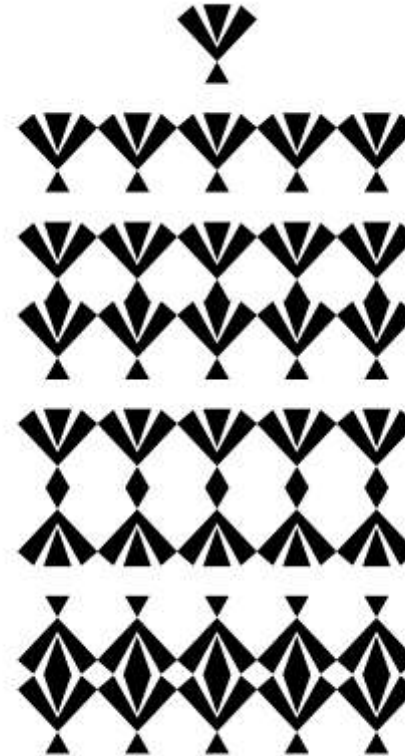


Figure 3.116 – Detail in Figure 3.23

65. Vake 5

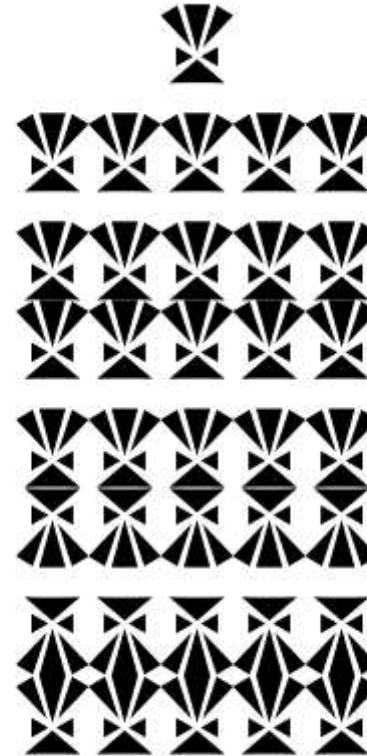


A fifth variant of the puvakevake motif, provisionally named Vake 5, located on the Mangaian vaka A'ua'u in Te Papa Tongarewa, National Museum of New Zealand.



Figure 3.117 – Detail in Figure 3.23

66. Mamio

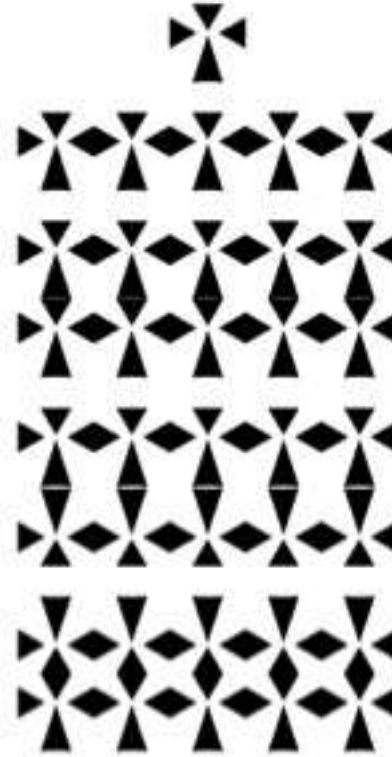


This motif is a sixth variant of the Puvakevake pattern, in this case carved on the bow and just below the front cover ornament of the Mangaia vaka A'ua'u. The provisional name Mamio is the Manganian word for taro and references the pronounced triangular shaped taro tuber seen at the base of the motif.



**Figure 3.118 – detail, hull of the vaka A'ua'u from Mangaia
(Source: Te Papa Tongarewa, National Museum of New Zealand)**

67. Puvake Tikoti

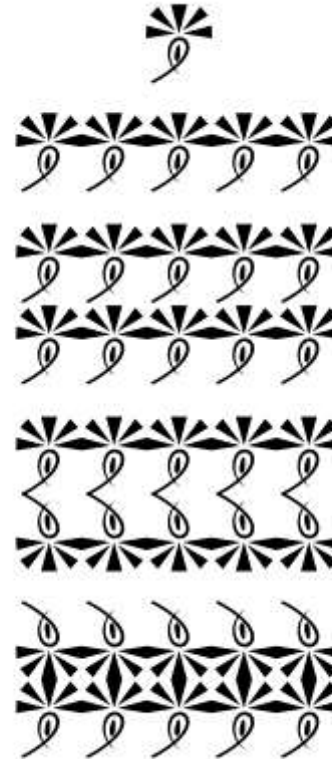


This motif is provisionally named Puvake Tikoti where puvake refers to the taro plants and tikoti to the cross. It is seen on the side of the Mangaian vaka A'ua'u in Te Papa Tongarewa, National Museum of New Zealand.



Figure 3.119 – Detail in Figure 3.23

68. Ma'ora



This motif is another variant of the vake design, seen here on the prow of the Mangaian vaka A'ua'u in Te Papa Tongarewa, National Museum of New Zealand. The named was recorded by Hamilton (1911).

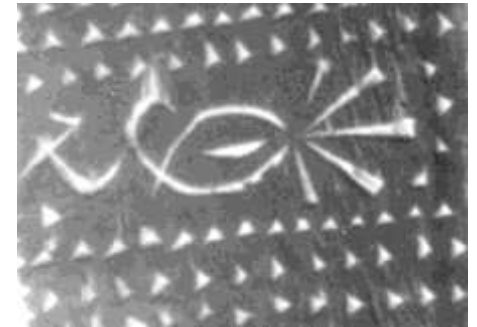
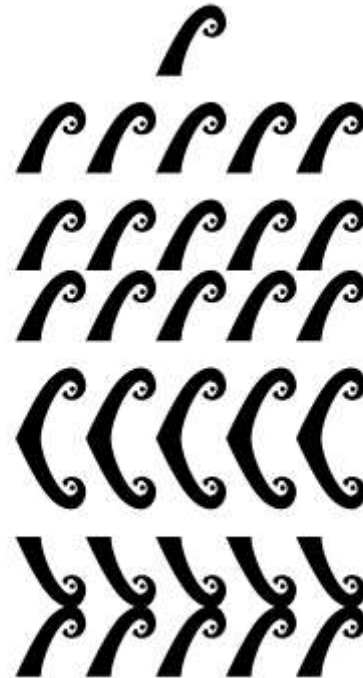


Figure 3.120 – Detail in Figure 3.23



Figure 3.121 – Detail in Figure 3.23

69. Mokomoko or Ariri



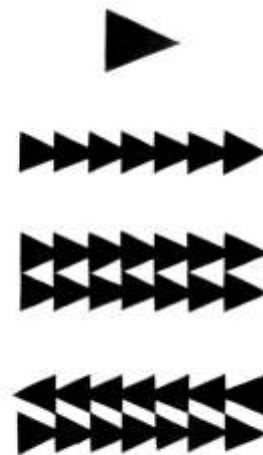
The provisional name Mokomoko refers to young taro shoots or the young unopened leaves of fern plants and symbolize new growth or fertility and renewal. This 'akairo is also seen on here (left) painted on the hull of the Mangaia vaka A'ua'u in Te Papa Tongarewa, National Museum of New Zealand, Wellington.

=



Figure 3.123 – Ruatanga (ceremonial adze) circa 1906 Cook Islands, maker unknown. Purchased 1907 (Source: CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 Te Papa FE002306).

70. 'Ara tai



The 'ara tai is the pandanus variety that grows on the beach (*Pandanus tectorius*). The ara tai motif represents the segments of the pandanus fruit strung together in a row.

This 'akairo is used in weaving, tapa, carving but mostly tattooing.

The 'akairo usually appears in a continuous row of units joined end to end.

The 'ara tai 'akairo is found everywhere in Polynesia. In many islands the name is the same.

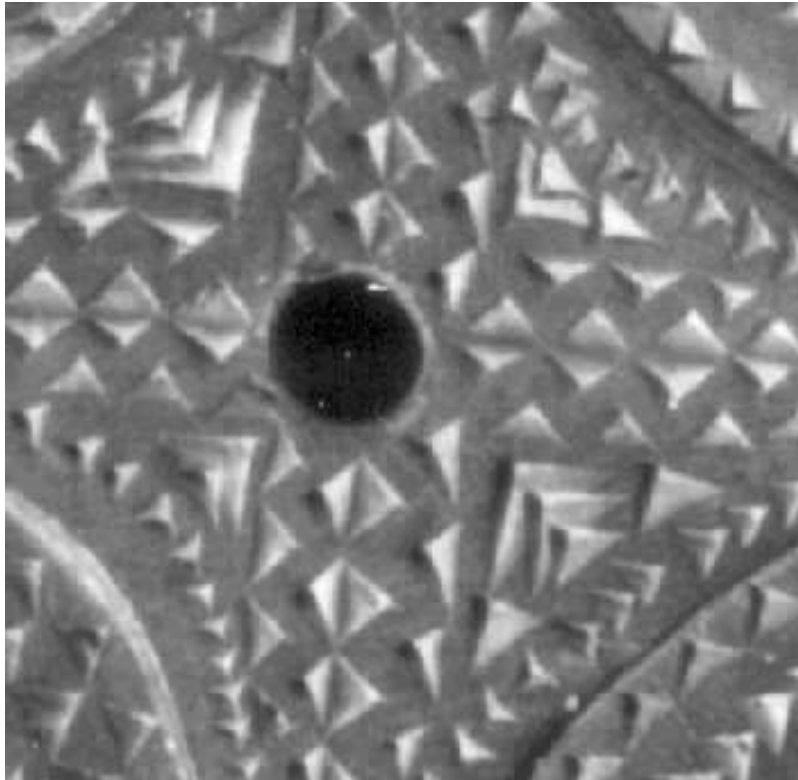
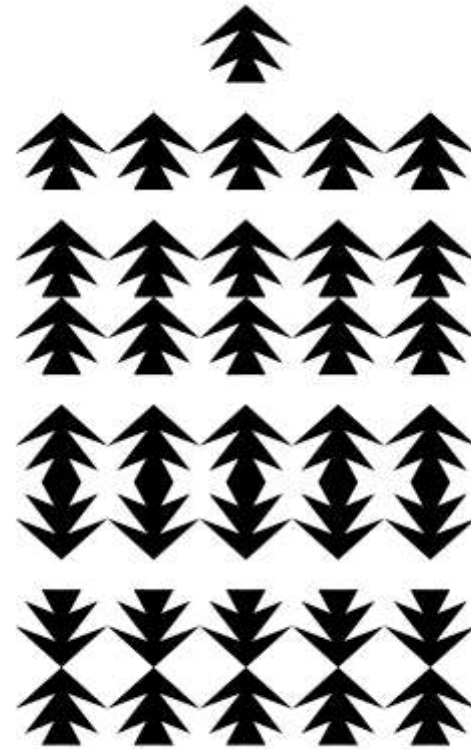


Figure 3.124 – Detail in Figure 3.23

71. Pu ‘ara



The provisional name Pu ‘ara means a pandanus tree. This ‘akairo is seen on the carved prow of the Manganian vaka A’ua’u in Te Papa Tongarewa, National Museum of New Zealand.



Figure 3.125 – Pare ‘eva or festival mask from Mangaia, tapa, late 19th century, (Source:photo# 8391, Auckland War Memorial Museum).

72. Pu ‘Ara 2

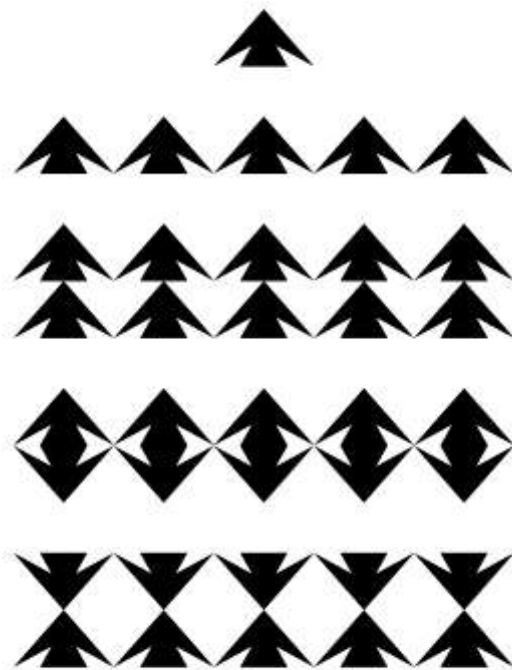


This design is another variant of the Pu ‘Ara image and is seen here on the painted tapa mask or pare eva from Mangaia. It is also found carved on many art works.



Figure 3.126 – Detail in Figure 3.23

73. Moko ‘ara



The design is provisionally named Moko ‘Ara meaning a young pandanus plant and is seen on the prow of the Manganian vaka A’ua’u in Te Papa Tongarewa, National Museum of New Zealand.

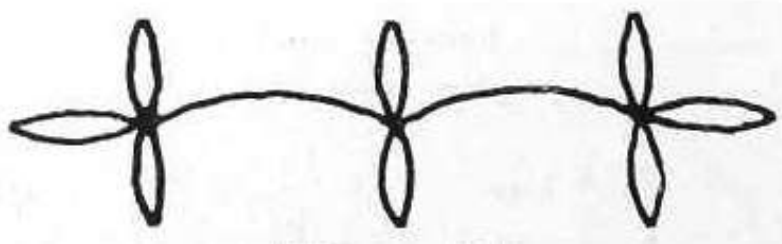


Figure 3.127 – parepare tattoo design from Aitutaku (Source: Hiroa 1927: 365).

74. Parepare



Parepare can mean ‘late’ or ‘afternoon’. But also it refers to people wearing hats or wreaths made of fern or other leaves. This tattoo design was recorded from Aitutaki by Hiroa (1927: 365) who notes “It was used on the shoulder, over the deltoid region, and also on the chest and wrist.”



Figure 3.128 – detail from Aitutaki pa'u or drum (Source © Trustees of the British Museum).

75. Rau maire



This 'akairo is located on an Aitutaki drum in the Peabody Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts and another in the collection of the British Museum. It is provisionally named Rau Maire because of its resemblance to the leaves of the maire (*Polypodium* sp.).



Figure 3.129– detail, tapa cloth, Cook Islands, (Source: photo# A106504C, Field Museum Chicago).


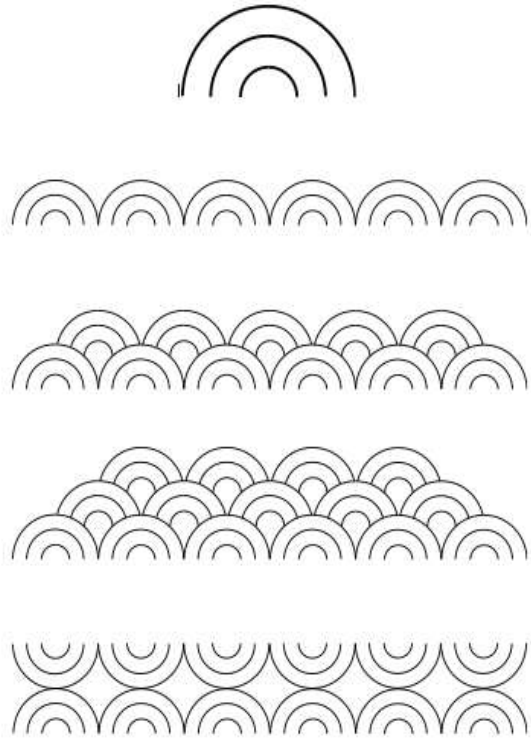
| (4) 'Akairo derived from Te Rangi and cosmology | | Comments |
|---|---|--|
|  <p data-bbox="174 1153 896 1262">Figure 3.130 – Tapa cloth, Cook Islands, mid-19th century Appleton-Sturgis Collection (Source: photo# ST4355 © American Museum of Natural History).</p> | <p data-bbox="999 284 1234 323">76. Anuanua</p>  | <p data-bbox="1619 347 2134 435">This motif consists of three half circles, one inside the other, and in most of Polynesia, it represents Anuanua - the rainbow.</p> <p data-bbox="1619 475 2134 627">This motif can be seen on different types of carvings, on tapa cloth, tattoo and on other artifacts. It is one of the many designs universal across all the islands of the Cook Islands but also throughout Polynesia.</p> |



Figure 3.131 – detail, star with six rays, tapa cloth (Source: Australian Museum, Sydney.

77. Maurua



This is a Mangaia tatau motif seen on the abdomen of a man from Mangaia, but it may also be tattooed on other parts of the body. It was recorded by Te Rangi Hiroa (1911; 96). There are typically 4 lines representing the trail of a comet (see illustration from Hiroa 1911;96) below. Hiroa writes “The pattern resembles a comet having a tail but is really a representation of the star Maurua, which was one of the signs of the heavens by which early Polynesian navigators directed their course across the ocean. It is mentioned in the song *Ko Maurua te etu/ E ka i te rangi*” (1911;96). According to Hiroa “There is a Ngati-Maurua in Mangaia.”(ibid.)



(see also Hiroa 1944; 131)



Figure 3.132 – Atiuan warriors (Source: archives, University of the South Pacific, Cook Islands Campus).

78. Te Akatauira



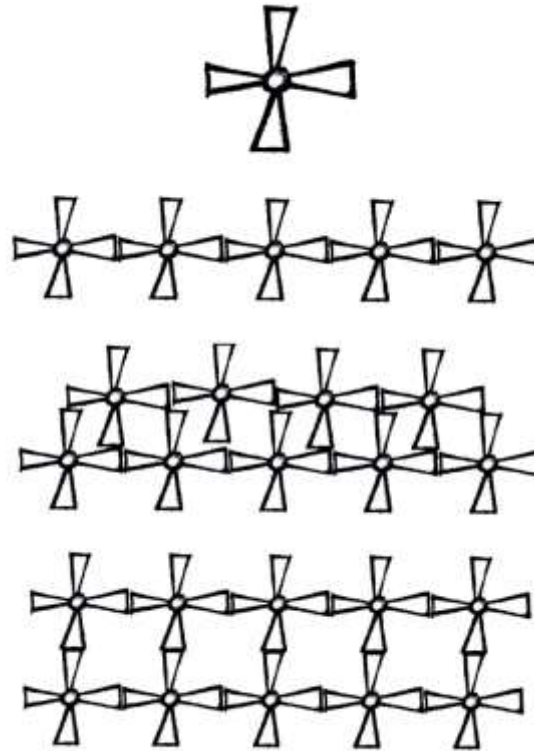
Akatauira means to observe or mark. It is a star used in traditional navigation. It is also the name of one of the ngati or tribes and a mataiapo tutara title of Atiu. It is shown here on an Atiu warriors tapa tunic.



Figure 3.133 – installation of Makea ariki, date unknown, (Source: photo# PAColl-8066-08-18-1, National Library of New Zealand).



79. Pua Tikoti

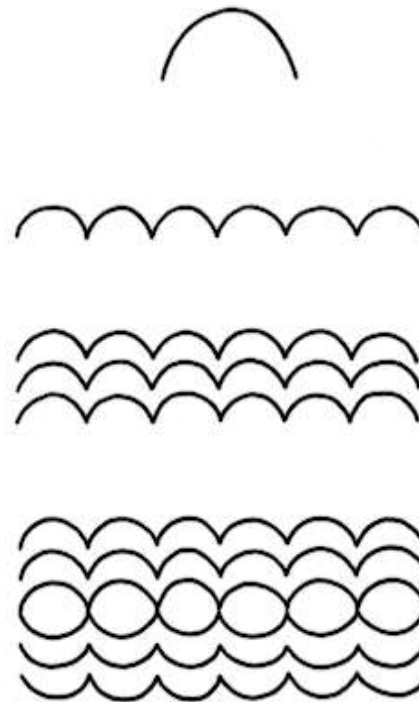


This 'akairo denotes a cross shaped flower and is seen on a tapa worn by Makea ariki at the time of his installation.



Figure 3.134 – detail of Mangaia tapa tunic, early 20th century
 (Source: MA_I012781, Te Papa Tongarewa, National Museum
 of New Zealand).

80. Ngaru

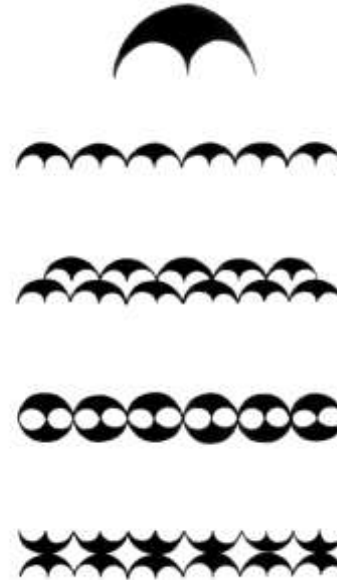


This design is called ngaru meaning waves. It is a design used throughout Polynesia.



Figure 3.135 – Te Kiva o te Rangi -a vaka katea (double hull canoe) donated by Parua Ariki of Atiu. (Source: Auckland War Memorial Museum).

81. Nio Manu



The three sharp points of this motif indicate teeth. It is provisionally named Nio Manu after an Atiuan ancestor.

This 'akairo is seen on the prow of a double canoe from Atiu, in front of the forward carrying pole.


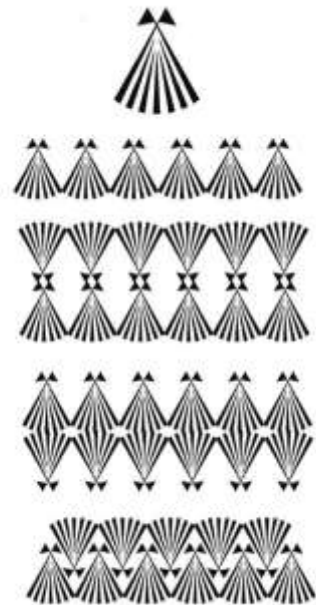
| (5) Miscellaneous | | Comments |
|---|---|---|
|  <p data-bbox="174 1037 974 1141">Figure 3.136 – Ruatangaeo (ceremonial adze), circa 1906, Cook Islands, maker unknown. Purchased 1907 (Source: CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 Te Papa FE002314).</p> | <p data-bbox="996 351 1344 399">82. Pātūanga Toki</p>  | <p data-bbox="1619 414 2132 598">This design is found carved on the shoulder of several Mangaian ceremonial or ‘peace’ adzes. It represents several adzes stacked against each other, perhaps a sign of peace, and is provisionally named Pātūanga Toki (standing axes)</p> |



Figure 3.138 – Mangaia paddle, 19th century (Source: PM# 99-12-70/53508 © President and Fellows of Harvard College, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology).

83. Momore Mata rua



This ‘akairo, comprising serrated bars with triangular shape at their ends is found on an Aitutaki unu or carved marae ornament (Hiroa 1944:334) and on the Mangaian painted padded illustrated in Fig. 3.67. It is provisionally named Momore Mata referring to a spear pointed at both ends.



Figure 3.139 – Mangaia paddle, 19th century (Source: PM# 99-12-70/53508 © President and Fellows of Harvard College, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology).

84. Ata and matarua



The black silhouette motif is provisionally named *ata* or *atamira* for its resemblance to a traditional chief's seat. The white silhouetted motif is provisionally named *matarua* – for its resemblance to two spear points.



Figure 3.140 – detail of Mangaia paddle, 19th century (Source: PM# 99-12-70/53508 © President and Fellows of Harvard College, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology).

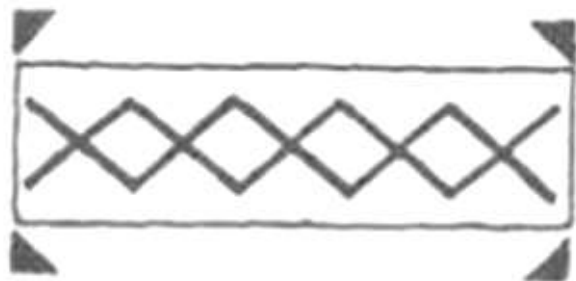
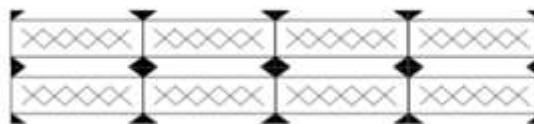


Figure 3.141 – tattoo design recorded by Hiroa in 1929 located on back of left wrist of Pakitoa of Avatiu, Rarotonga 56 mm. long (Source: Hiroa 1944:132).

85. Ruru

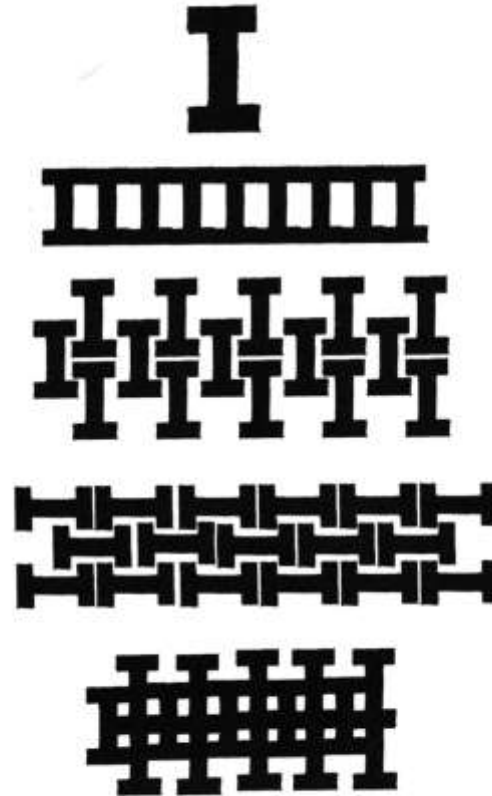


Ruru refers to a band – for example, a band of tattoo around the wrist; or of cloth tied around the waist. “It is evident that *ruru* as a term for the pattern around the wrist was shared by people in all the islands” (Hiroa 1944:132) In this case the ‘akairo does not refer directly to the motif itself but to the reiteration of a motif as a decorative band. The motif itself probably originally had another name.



Figure 3.142 – detail, Tapa cloth, Te Mata o Nga Atua, “The Eye of the Gods’ (Source: Te Papa Tongarewa, National Museum of New Zealand, gifted in 1989 by the family of Terei Mataiapo Tutara of Takitumu, Rarotonga).

86. Raranga



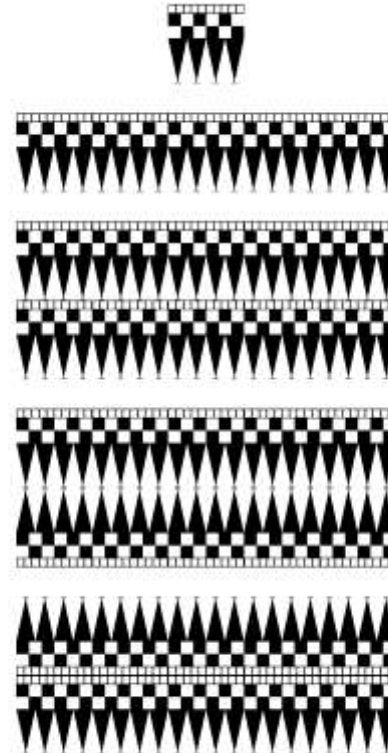
This motif is provisionally named Raranga (weaving). Although painted on tapa it appears as if a woven motif. In the tapa design, it is arranged in offset straight lines, one on top of the other but not touching.



Figure 3.143 – bark cloth girdle or maro, late 18th century, Rarotonga (Source: photo# C03209 © Southwark Collections).



87. Ruru or Kau

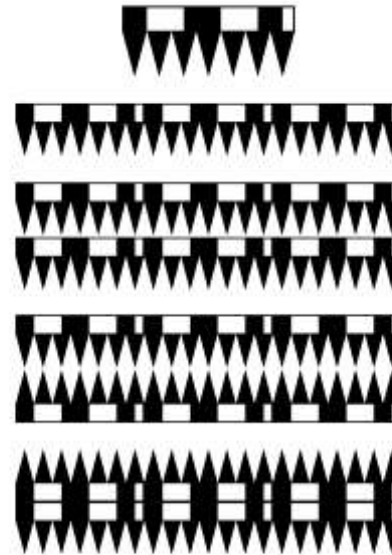


Hiroa, 1944; 131) identifies this as a tatau motif “ruru or kau: around wrist below manuta'i with points toward fingers...” but it is also found on tapa as in Fig.3.143



Figure 3.144 – the Manganian tattoo motif ruru or kau, first recorded by Hiroa in 1911 (Source: Hiroa, 1911; 96, 1944:131).

88. Ruru or kau 2



This 'akairo is a variant of ruru or kau identified by Hiroa as tattooed on the Manganians attending the International Exhibition in Christchurch, 1906-7 (see Hiroa 1911; 96 and 1944:131). He notes "These patterns encircle the wrists or lower part of the forearm below the manutai, like bracelets. They consist of transverse parallel lines, which are divided off into rectangles alternatively coloured and plain. There may be one or two rows of these, forming a base from which triangular rays project down towards the hand. From the apices two short lines may project.' (1911; 96).



Figure 3.145 – detail, Staff, Rarotonga, late 18th/early 19th century, 248cms (Source: A.1968.406 © National Museum of Scotland).

89. Kena



Kena means boundary or border and, in the example illustrated, the kena 'akairo is used to divide the upper from the lower part of the carving.

Leg - Thigh
Pote'a.

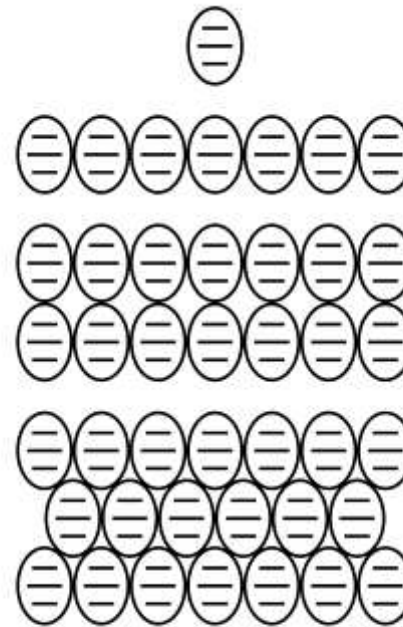


Figure 3.146 – The *pote`a* motif is tattooed on the thigh above the *vava`anga* in sets of four to encircle the limb (Source: “Mangaia: Tattooing Designs”, Box 4.18, Ms. SC [Special Collection] Buck Archives, Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu); (below: Hiroa 1911:95).

(a.) *Pote'a* (pronounced *poteha*) consists of ovals with usually three short transverse lines contained within the ovals. These were tattooed upon the thigh above the *vava`anga*, and the long axes of the ovals were vertical.



90. Potea'a



The *pote`a* motif is tattooed on the thigh above the *vava`anga* in sets of four to encircle the limb (Hiroa, 1944, p.131).

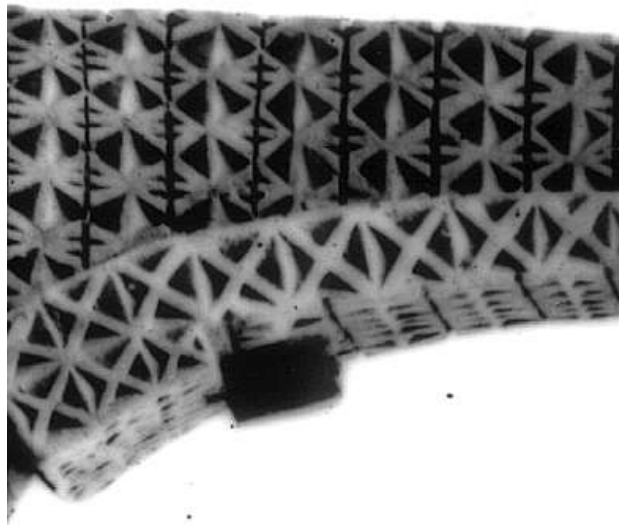


Figure 3.147 – Detail in Fig 3.23

91. Pepe

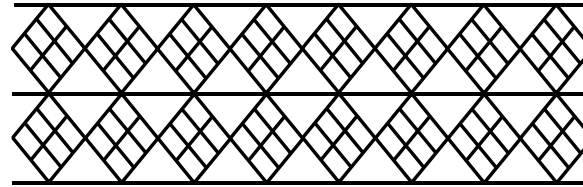
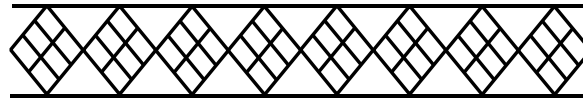


This motif is provisionally named Pepe meaning butterfly or moth. It is found in tapa design, carving and weaving.



Figure 3.148 – Carved staff, Cook Islands (Austral Islands), Polynesia GLAHM E.438/3 (Source: The Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow, 2017).

92. Kupenga

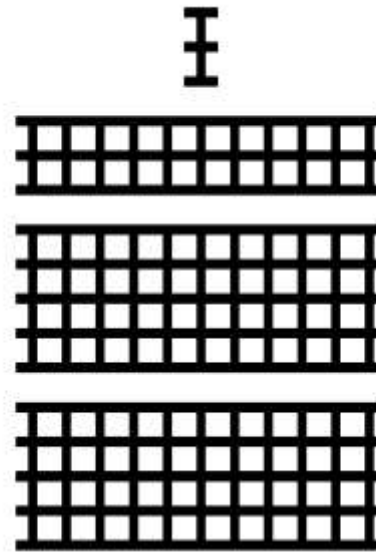


This 'akairo is provisionally named kupenga or fishing net. This image is common in all of Polynesia it can be seen on the stomach of the carved figure in Fig 3.148.



Figure 3.149 – Female figure from Aituaiki, Munich State Museum of Ethnology cited in Michael Appel (Photos: Marietta Weidner)

93. Kupenga 2



This is an Aitutaki design depicting the spaces in a fishing net. It is painted or carved on traditional artifacts but may also be used as a tatau design.

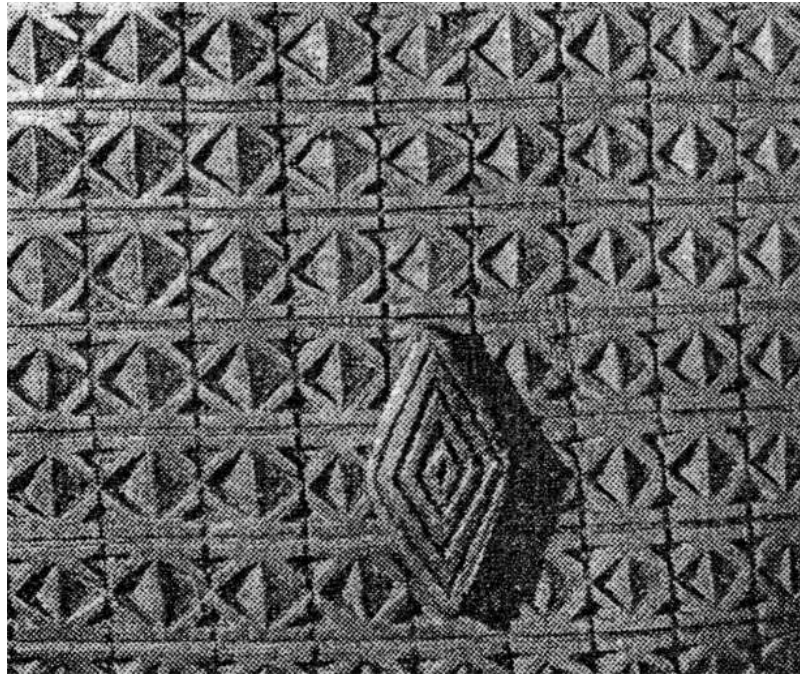


Figure 3.150 – Uete or kumete, Mangaia, Plate 24 (Source: Oldman, W. O.; Oldman Collection of Polynesian Artifacts: Tahiti, Austral & Cook Island, Polynesian Society. Mem. 15, 1938-40).

94. Punapuna

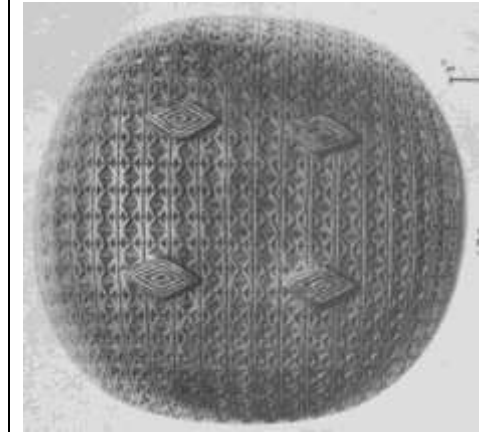
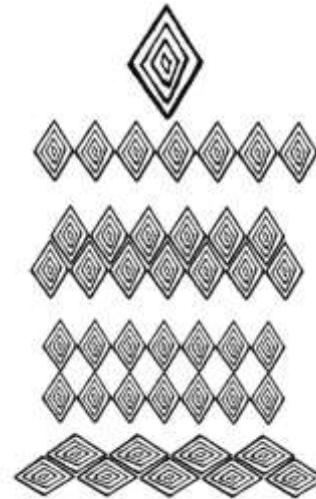


Figure 3.151 – detail, “Food-dish...under-side carved with design similar to that found on Mangaian adze-hafts, but each conventionalized figure is separated by a narrow vertical groove. Diameter, 11.5 ins.; height, 3ins. Hervey group”, Plate 24 (Source: Oldman, W. O.; Oldman Collection of Polynesian Artifacts: Tahiti, Austral & Cook Island, Polynesian Society. Mem. 15, 1938-40).



Figure 3.152 – detail of Cook Islands mat in the Auckland Museum collection (Source: photo #121456 © Auckland Museum)

95. Tairiiri



This 'akairo is identified by Hiroa as Tairiiri meaning traditional fan. The motif as Hiroa notes “is not the shape of the local fan” (1927: 153). Nevertheless, the intention of the design is to represent a fan.

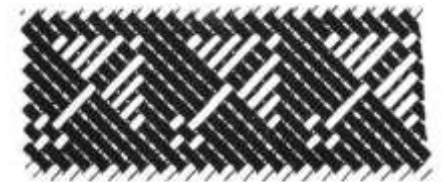


FIGURE 137.
Tairiiri, fan.

Figure 3.153 – mat motif identified by Hiroa (Source: Hiroa 1927: 153).

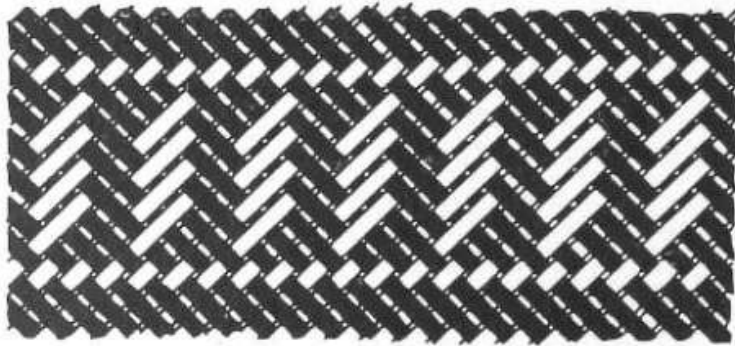
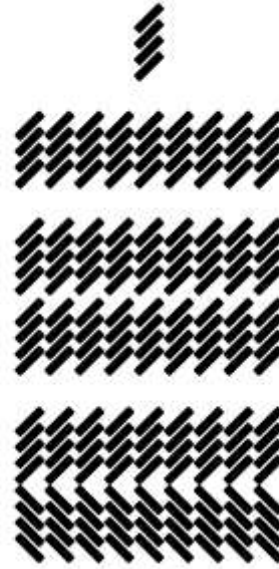


FIGURE 125.
Nihoniho, toothed.

Figure 3.154 – weaving motif on Aitutaki mat, identified by Hiroa (Source: Hiroa 1927: 146).

96. Ni'o ni'o



The 'akairo is known as Ni'o n'io or 'toothed' and consists of "vertical rows of twilled twos or threes" identified by Hiroa (1927: 146) on an Aitutaki mat.

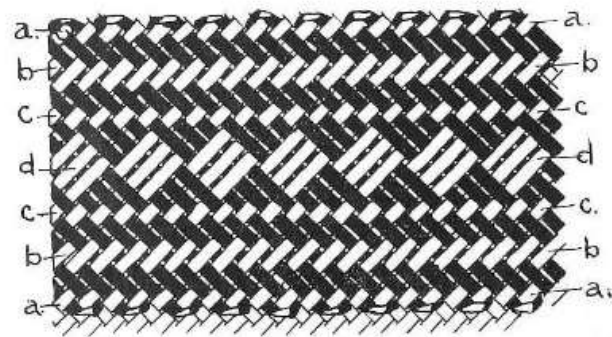
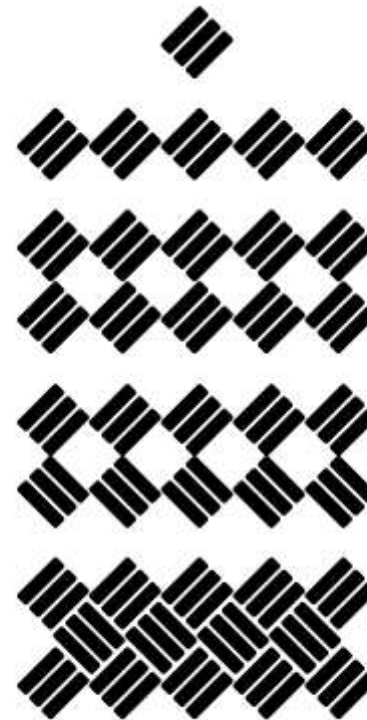


FIGURE 118.
Composition of a decorative band.
a Fixation rows of check. b Border rows of twilled twos (*ara veri*).
c Inner border rows of check (*ara maori*) d Mesial motive (*puna rua*).

Figure 3.155 – the puna rua motif identified by Hiroa for weaving (1927: 136) and shown in image below of a mat (Source: 129517 © Auckland War Memorial Museum)

97. Puna rua

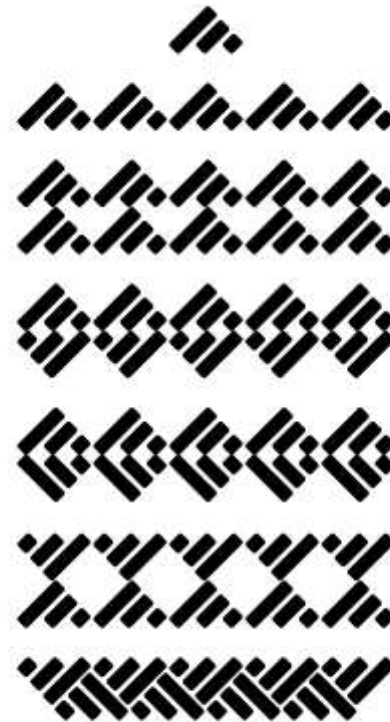


Puna Rua refers to two squares linked together at the corners. Literally, puna means water spring and rua means 'two' or 'hole'. Puna rua can also refer to the offspring of two sources or wives. In ta tatau and sennit lashing the pattern consists of two linked squares. The pattern was identified in weaving by Hiroa (1927: 136).



Figure 3.156 – detail, woven mat, Cook Islands (Source: photo# 129517 © Auckland War Memorial Museum).

98. Ni'o mango 2



Ni'o Mango is the name for the shark tooth design referred to above for carving. In this case it is woven into mats and baskets.

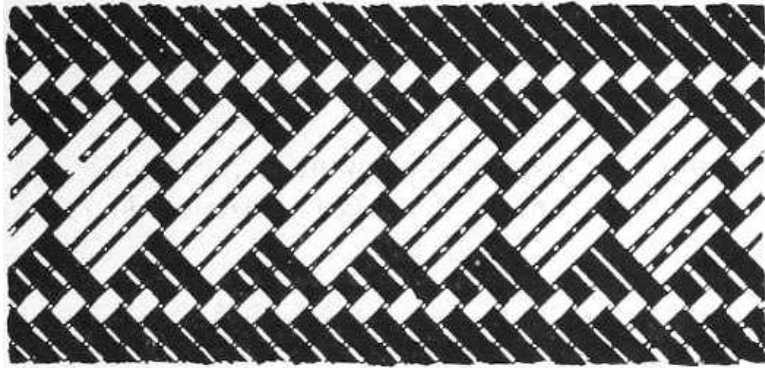
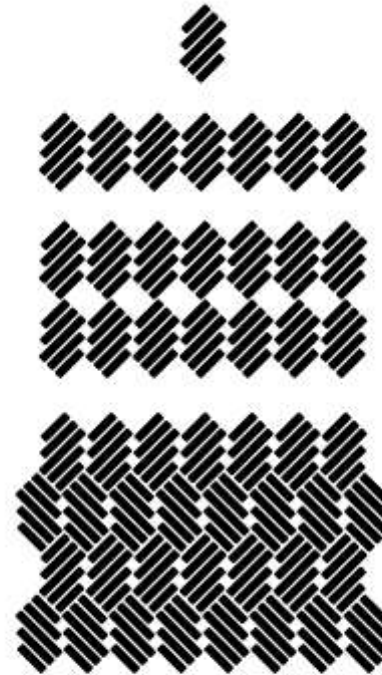


FIGURE 130.
Paka homu, the turtle's shell.

Figure 3.157 – the paka onu motif identified by Hiroa (Source: Hiroa 1927: 149).

99. Paka onu



This 'akairo is described by Hiroa (1927: 149) for Aitutaki. Paka onu means the carapace of the turtle.

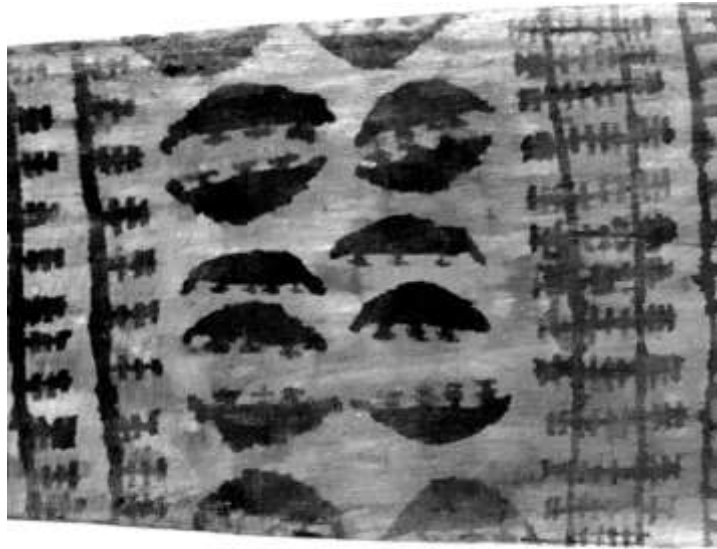


Figure 3.158 – Detail. Aitutaki painted paddle (Source: photo# 050-080_9 © Otago Musuem).

100. Anue



This 'akairo is provisionally named Anue meaning grub or caterpillar. It is found prominently on a painted paddle from Aituaki in the collection of the Otago Museum.



Figure 3.160 – Cook Islands mat from the period 1927, collected by Te Rangi Hiroa, with a variety of ‘akairo (Source 121456 © Auckland Museum).

TU'ANGA 5 (CHAPTER FIVE)

TĀURA KI TE ATUA – THE LINK OR CORD TO THE GODS

Ko teia Tu'anga 4, ka ko'uko'u ia mai i roto i te reo Māori, te au tumu manako nunui tei rauka i te kimikimi ia mei roto mai i te au Tu'anga 1 – 4 (Chapters 1 – 4). Mei roto mai i teia au tumu manako nei i rauka'i te 'akanauru'anga i te 'ōrama kia ngō'ie 'ua te 'anga'anga mē kore te tarai 'anga i te tao'anga mē kore te 'apinga tā te tangata i 'inangaro kia 'anga 'ia. Ko te au manako nunui tei matara mai:

1. Ko te tao'anga mē kore ko te 'apinga te kā 'anga 'ia, kia tau-rekareka te reira nō te rou 'ē te 'ītiki i te au mea o Te Ao nei ki te au mea tapu kitea-kore 'ia o Te Pō.
2. Ko te Ta'unga Tarai, kā uru mai te atua, mē kore te vaerua, mē kore te 'ōrama, nā roto mai 'iā ia kia ngō'ie 'ua te kite 'ē i te rave'anga i te 'anga'anga.

Te 'ākono'anga tupuna ō teia pā-enua, e 'anga'anga kāpiti ana tō rātou 'iti-tangata. Ei 'akara'anga, mei te mea ē, e ka anoano 'ia tāta'i vaka tautai no tēta'i taeake, tē vai ara te au tangata tei 'akataka'ia no te tauturu i te ta'unga tarai, 'inārā nāna rāi e 'aka'aere i te tarai'anga i te vaka. Ko te 'anga'anga ā te ui tupuna, kāre rātou e rave pā'arua 'ua ana i te reira. Ko te mea tei anoano 'ia, koia 'oki kia riro nā te mana ō te Atua i e 'akatika i te 'anga'anga na roto i te 'ōrama tā te ta'unga e kite ra. Āru atu, kia mātūtū 'ē kia 'aka'ie'ie te vaka kia keu te atua i te tomo ki roto no tēta'i tuātau poto no te 'akako'uko'u, te 'akatapu 'ē te 'akamana i tē reira vaka mē kore tēta'i 'uātu 'apinga tei'anga 'ia.

Ko te mea nui i te 'iti-tangata Māori, koia 'oki ko te: Tāokota'i

Ko tā'au raurau

Ko tāku raurau

E ora ai te tangata

3. Ko te tumu ma'ata i tarai 'ia ai te au 'akairo ki runga i te au 'apinga tei ma'ani 'ia koia 'oki kia rauka te tūranga teitei i te 'aka'ie'ie, ē te taurekareka, pēnei ka rauka i reira te 'akanauru i te atua kia 'āriki, 'ē kia 'akamana mai i te reira.

- Ko te mea mua, kia tau meitaki te au pure mē kore te au karakia kia 'uri mai, 'ē kia 'akarongo mai te atua ki te pati'anga ā te tangata.
- I te 'ākono'anga tupuna, ko te 'akakoro'anga i te peu va`i i teta'i 'apinga, koia 'oki nō te akatapu i te reira, i te 'irinaki'anga, 'e kā no'o poto mai te atua 'ē kia 'akaari mai ē, kua tau 'ē kua 'āriki 'aia i te reira. Ko te 'ākono'anga ē, kia "Va`i i tēta'i 'apinga", koia 'oki no te 'akatapu i te reira, 'ē me tātara 'ia te va`i, kua noa i reira te reira 'apinga.
- Ko te au mea e tā'anga'anga 'ia ana 'e te 'ai-tupuna no te va`i i teta'i 'apinga:
 - Ko te mea mua, ko te kāka'u tapa, tei va`i i te au tiki
 - Te rua, koia ko te 'akatikitiki i runga i te Toki Tarai , no'o'anga, vaka, kāara, kumete 'ē te vai atū ra. Te toru ko te nana'o mē kore te-tā-tatau i runga i te kōpapa o te tangata.

Āru atu, ko te karakia tau tei riro 'ei va`i meitaki nō te 'akatapu'anga i te vaka, te ngā'i 'anga'anga, te au tangata 'anga'anga i te 'irinaki'anga ē kia no'o mai te atua no tēta'i taime poto ki roto i te 'apinga tei ma'ani 'ia kia tapu 'ē kia mana te reira.

'E mea pu'apinga kia 'ākara meitaki tātou i teia 'ākono'anga e Karakia. Ko te karakia; 'e pure katoa 'a ia. Ei 'ākara'anga, i te mata'iti 1995, kua amo mai te tangata i te vaka 'Te Au o Tonga' mei uta mai i Takuva'ine ki te ava ko Tuitui-kā-Moana. Nā te karakia i va`i mē kore i ko'uko'u i te vaka, kāre ra te mana o te atua i no'o 'ua ki reira, kua 'apai mai 'a ia i te 'au 'ē kua ko'u atūra i te vaka 'ē te au tangata katoatoa e āru nei i te vaka. 'Ē pērā katoa, kua tāpoki tākiri 'ia 'e te 'au te 'enua mei uta i te o i Takuva'ine 'ē tae 'uātu ki te pae tai.

I te tuātau i tuku ‘ia āi te vaka ‘Ngai-te-motu’, tei ‘anga ‘ia no te USP ki roto i te tai, kua karakia te ta’unga Papa Tangaroa, e, i te tīpū’anga ō te pito kua tōrīrī ua, i reira te ngā ānuanua ‘e rua i tū mai na runga i te vaka. Ko te tuātau te reira, i ‘aere mai ei. mei runga i te ‘enua, ‘a Tane ki te ngutu’are ō te Moana-ā-Tangaroa. Ko tei tupu i konei, kua ko’u ‘ia te ngā vaka ki te karakia, kītea ‘iātu i reira te mana ō te atua tei tuku mai i te ‘au, ē, tei tuku mai i te ‘au ānuanua kia kite te tangata i te mana ō te atua.

- Te ‘irinaki’anga pāpū ē te vai’ra te piri’anga meitaki i rotopū i te atua tapu ‘ē tāna tangata i ‘anga.
- Te ‘akapāpū’anga i te piri’anga ō te tangata i Te Ao nei, ki te atua kitea-kore ‘ia ē tōna mana ‘ē te tapu i Te Pō.

Tūtū o te au pākau tei va`i ‘ia:

- i. Tiki Tangaroa va`i ‘ia ki te tapa
- ii. Toki va`i ‘ia ki te ‘akairo ‘akatikitiki
- iii. Tangata va`i ‘ia ki te ‘akairo tātatau
- iv. Vaka va`i ‘ia ki te karakia.

Tutu 4.1 – Va`i ‘ia ki te tapa – te atua Tangaroa, Rarotonga (pū: photo # Oc1978,Q.845 (c) © Trustees of the British Museum)



Tutu 4.2 – Va`i ‘ia ki te ta tatau (Pū: <http://www.creemmagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/polinesian-tattoo-design-25.jpg>)



Ko te ‘iti-tangata Māori ‘ē tōna’irinaki’anga

Ko te ‘iti-tangata Māori ko tō rātou ngutu’are ‘openga i riro mai ei rātou ei ‘iti-tangata okotai koia ‘oki, ko te Moana-Nui-ā-Kiva. Ko te ‘aite’anga i te ingoa Moana-Nui-ā-Kiva, koia ‘oki ko te Moana-Auīka-Rānuinui me kore, ma’atama’ata. Ko teia moana nei tā tātou e karanga nei e “Ko te Ao Māori”. Māori i te reo Rarotonga pērā te reo Aotearoa, Māoli i te reo Vai`i ē Māohi i te reo Tahiti. Ko te au ‘enua kātotoa i roto i teia moana, nā te ‘iti-tangata Māori i akaraanga ‘ē ko te au ‘enua tei tau no te no’o, kua no’o ‘ia ‘e rātou ē rau te tuātau. Inārā, ko teia ‘iti-tangata

kua ‘āite tō rātou tupu’anga-mai, mei te ‘āite’anga o tēta’i ingoa kē mai ō Rarotonga, koia ‘oki, ko Nukutere. Tā tātou ‘oki i mārama, ko te ‘āite’anga o te tuatua nuku, koia ‘oki ‘e pupu-va’e’au mē kore, ‘e pupu-tangata, mē kore, ‘e ‘iti-tangata tei teretere ‘uāna mai tō rātou kāpua ‘ia mai’anga ‘ē tae ‘ua mai ki teia nei rā.

‘E au tangata ‘irinaki te ‘ai-tupuna ō te Māori i te mana ‘ē te arataki’anga ā te au atua ō Te Pō i tō rātou ora’anga. Kua ‘irinaki rātou ‘ē te vaira te mana o tō rātou au atua tei ‘irinaki’ia ‘e rātou nō te tauturu, nō te ‘akapu’apinga, ‘ē nō te tiaki i tō rātou ora’anga i teia ao.

Kua waitata rāi te ‘irinaki’anga atua o te ‘ai-tupuna ō te ‘iti-tangata Māori ē ‘e ‘āiteite ki te ‘irinaki’anga o tēta’i au ‘iti-tangata kekē o teia nei ao. Ei ‘ākara’anga tē vai nei ‘a Iehova te atua kītea-kore ‘ia o te Ngaāti Iūda ‘ē te au Kerititiano, ‘āru atu ko te au ‘āngera, āru atu ko te au Tangata Tapu (Saints) ‘ē ko te mea ‘openga, ko te au pākau tā te tangata e ‘apai ‘aere ana ‘ei ‘akapūma’ana ‘ē, nō te tiaki ‘iā rātou. Kua pērā katoa te ‘iti-tangata Māori, tē vai nei tō rātou atua mana katoatoa koia ‘oki ko I’o-Metua-Kore (mei ā Iehova), āru atu ko te au atua ō te au tu’anga tūkēkē, mēi te atua Tāne.

Ko te atua Tāne, koia te mou i te mana i runga ake i te ‘enua, te au rakau ‘ē te au manu ‘ā’āere. Tērā katoa ‘oki ‘a Tangaroa, ‘a Rongo, ‘ē, ‘a Tutavake (Archangels). Aru atu ko te au tāura atua koia oki ko te au tupuna tei ‘irinaki ia e e mana to rātou (Saints). Ko ‘ēia au atua oki, ko rātou te ‘ui- tupuna tā te ‘ai tupunu ‘i ‘akariro ‘ei tāura no te ka’a atu mē kore, nō te tāpeka atu ‘iā rātou ki te atua i Te Pō.

Ei tā’openga, tē vai katoa nei tēta’i au ‘apinga tā te tangata e ‘apai ‘aere ana mē kore e ‘a’ao ana mei te ‘ei te tū, tei riro ei ‘akapūma’ana pērā te tauturu ‘iā rātou i tō rātou au taime tūmatetenga. Ko te mea ma’ata i teia tu’anga o teia kimikimi’anga mārama, koia ‘oki, ko te ‘irinaki’anga ‘ē ko te au mea tā to tātou ‘ai-tupuna i ‘anga, kua riro tē reira ei ngā’i ūru’anga mai na te atua ma te ‘akaari mai i tōna mana i roto i Te Ao tā tātou e no’o, no tēta’i tuātau poto ‘ua.

Kāre ‘oki tātou te tangata nei e rauka i te mārama kātoatoa i te au muna o teia ao tā tātou e no’o nei ‘ē pērā i te kite i te au mea muna o te ao i va’o ake ‘iā tātou. Ko te ‘akano’o’anga teia tā te ‘ai-tupuna i ‘āriki i tōna piri’anga ki te atua. Kāre ‘oki e rauka i te kite ‘o’onu atu i te mana ‘ē te tapu, ‘ē pērā te au rangi tei ‘anga ia ‘e I’o Metua Kore.

Te Māori ‘ē te au pākau tā rātou i’anga

Kua ‘irinaki te ‘ai-tupuna o te Māori ē ko te au ‘apinga, me kore, ko te au pākau tā rātou i ‘anga ko te kiato tē reira mei Te Ao e no’o ‘ia nei ‘e rātou ki te Ao Tapu o te au atua i Te Pō.

Ko te ta’unga ‘e ingoa tao’anga te reira nō te au tangata ‘iki ‘ia mē kore tei ‘ānau ‘ia mai ‘ē kia riro mai rātou ei tāura ki te au atua na rātou. I te pati, mē kore, i te karakia ki te au atua, kia nā roto mai ‘iā rātou te kite ‘ē te mārama pērā te mana no kō mai i te au atua kia rave i te au ‘anga’anga tapu tei ‘akakoro’ia nāna. Nō te ‘anga’anga tarai vaka, ka karakia te ta’unga tarai no te ‘akaara i tāna au toki mei te moe mai, ‘ē kia ‘akate’ate ‘amamao’ia te reira nō te tarai’anga i te vaka. Ka karakia i reira te ta’unga ki te tumu-rākau mate tātarā’ara nō te mea, ka anoano ‘ia te tumu-rākau tē ka tarai ‘ia ‘ei vaka, nō te tautai ‘ei ‘āngai i te ‘iti-tangata, mē kore, nō te teretere atu ki tēta’i au ‘enua kē. I te tuātau mē oti te vaka, ka ‘aka’ātinga te ta’unga i te vaka ki te atua no tāna ‘akamana ‘ē te ‘akatapu’anga. Mei te mea ‘ē, kua tau i te atua ka ‘akaari mai ‘aia i tōna mareka na roto i te tuku mai ‘anga i te Ruru-o-Tangaroa, koia ‘oki ngā ānuanua ‘e rua. Mē tīpū ‘ia te pito o te vaka, ‘ē oti ‘uātu te karakia-‘akaoti’anga ‘ē te kiriti i te tapu, kua noa i reira te vaka nō te aere ki roto i te moana.

Ko te tu’anga ā te au ta’unga, koia ‘oki ko te ‘akatere, pērā te ‘akamārama i te tū no te rave’anga i te ‘anga’anga ki tōna au tauturu. Ko te ‘akakoro’anga koia ‘oki, ko te tītau i te ‘anga’anga i tēta’i ‘apinga taurekareka kia ‘inangaro te atua i te tomo ki roto no tēta’i tuatau poto. Nō te mea ē ‘e kua uru mai te mana o te atua, na roto i tēta’i i te au tāura, ki roto ite tao’anga tā te tangata i ‘anga, ka ‘akaari katoa ‘ia mai i reira tēta’i ‘akairo ei ‘akapāpū ē ‘e kua ‘āriki te atua i te pākau tei ‘anga ‘ia, ‘ē pērā te karakia ā te tangata tei pūpū atu kiā ia.

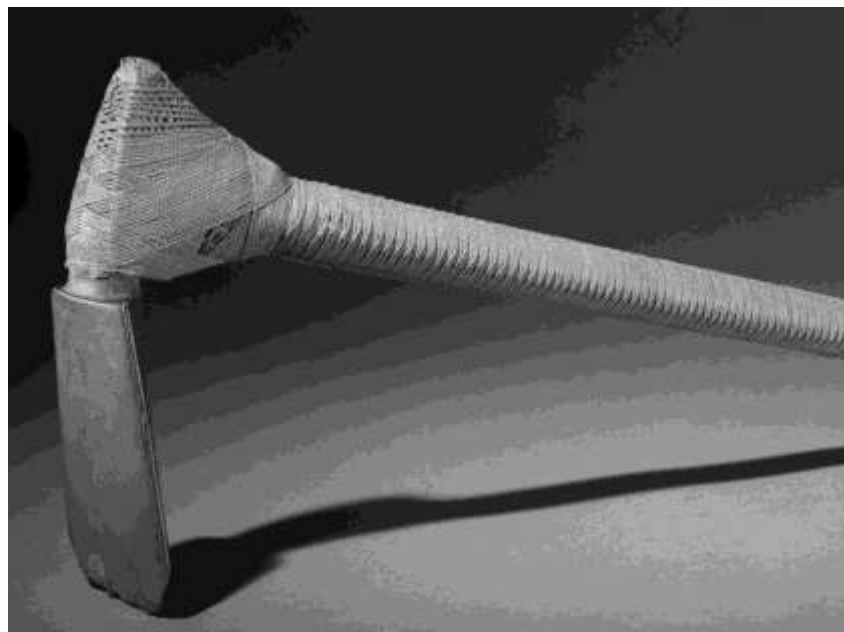
Ko te mānganui ‘anga o te au ‘akairo tei ta‘anga‘anga ‘ia ko te ‘akakoro‘anga kia rauka mai te tūranga mānea, te tū tapu i runga i te au mea tei ‘anga ‘ia mē kore tei ma’ani ‘ia ‘ē te tangata, ko teia te au tu’anga:

- 1) Ko te au ‘akairo i runga i teia au pākau kua ‘akakoro ia ei au pure tāputuputu no te ‘akaariu mai ‘anga i te atua kia tomo ‘ē kia no’o mai ki roto i te ‘apinga tei ‘āmani ‘ia no tēta’i tuātau poto.
- 2) Ko te va’i o te pākau tei tarai ‘ia koia oki ko te au ‘akairo ‘akatikitiki ia. Mei te tu rāi ē, kua va’i ‘ia tēta’i ‘apinga tei tarai ‘ia ki te au ‘akairo no roto mai i te peu Māori. Kia ‘akama‘ara ra ‘oki tātou ē, i roto i te peu Māori ko te ‘akakoro‘anga o te va’i i tēta’i ‘apinga mei te atua-tiki tei tarai‘ia; ka va’i ‘ia te reira no te tapu ‘ē te mana kia no’o ki roto, ‘ē me tatara‘ia te va’i, kua noa i reira te Tiki.
- 3) Āru atu ko te ‘akāpapū‘anga tikāi i te piri’anga tapu o te atua ki te au mea tāna i ‘anga i Te Ao nei koia ‘oki ko te tangata, te au rākau, te au manu ‘a‘āere, te au rangi, ‘ē te vai atūra.
- 4) ‘Ē ko te mea ‘openga, ko te ‘akatinamou‘anga i te au uki, mē kore, te ‘akapapa‘anga mei te tupuna tapu i Te Pō ki tāna au ‘u`ānga i Te Ao. I te tu’anga o te tangata, ‘ē tini ‘ē tini ‘uātu te au tikitiki-tangata tei tarai‘ia ei mono i te tangata, ‘ē pērā katoa, nō te ‘akamānea i te pākau tei ‘anga ‘ia.

Tutu 4.3 - Va`i 'ia ki te 'akairo - matau i mango no Mangaia, akatikitiki 'ia it te 'akairo Maroitiki (pū: photo# Oc,LMS.30 (c) © Trustees of the British Museum)



Tutu 4.4 – Va`i ‘ia in sennit, Mangaian adze, early 19th Century (Pū; photograph # A97194 © Field Museum, Chicago).



Tēta`i pae i te au mānako`anga tei rauka mai i roto i teia kimikimi`anga mārama kua tarai`ia atu te reira ki runga i te toka. Ko te toka `oki i tarai`ia ko te tu`anga `openga te reira o teia kimikimi`anga mārama. Ko te tu`anga i runga i te one, kāre te rira i tarai`ia, `ē ko te tumu kia vai rāi te reira potonga mei te tū rāi o tōna kāpua `anga `ia mai `ē, kia no`o rai `a ia ki runga `iā Papa, te metua va`ine o te au mea ora kātoatoa.

Takapini i te tu`anga vaiata atu ki runga i te one kua tarai`ia te tūtū rāranga, mei te tū o te raranga`anga i runga i te moenga, mē kore, te kete, te tapakau. Ko te `akairo `oki te reira tei rauka no roto mai i te au mea raranga `ia.

Ko te manako ma'ata i konei koia 'oki, kia riro te 'akairo tei tarai 'ia ki runga i te toka ei mea mānea 'ē, ei ko'uko'u, mē kore, va'i i te atua i tōna no'o'anga poto i te ao nei.

Te tu'anga o te toka i runga ake i te ngā'i tei tarai 'ia kua ūkī 'ua 'ia te reira kia kanapa no te 'akaari 'ē, 'eko te atua i Te Pō, kāre e rauka i te tangata 'ua nei i te kite 'ē te arapaki atu. 'Ē, ko te take o te toka, kua ūkī katoa 'ia te reira kia kānapanapa no te 'akaari mai 'iā I'o-Metua-Kore, te atua tei 'anga i te au mea kātoatoa, 'ē koia tei tū i runga ake i te piri'anga atua ki te tangata.

'E, ko teia atua 'oki e 'irinaki 'ia nei, kāre rava tōna tūtū e rauka i te tangata kia kite i roto i tōna au mānako'anga.

**Tutu 4.5 – va`i ‘ia ki te karakia – tangata tata e te au tauturu tarai, e akatapu nei i te rakau i mua ake ka tarai ei, ei vaka (Pū:
http://blackrockbulletin.blogspot.com/2010_11_01_archive.html)**



Tutu 4.6 – Akatapu’anga i te nuku vaka - Vaka Eiva, Rarotonga, 2010 (pū: <http://www.pacificdragons.com.au/pds/index.php/photo-gallery-1/event/photospds@6141823205362573137#0>)



CHAPTER SIX: MEI TE TOKA KI TE TĀURA; FROM A STONE TO A CORD OF UNION

Introduction

This chapter is a visual and written journal documenting the process of the creation of an art work from its conceptualisation through to its completion and permanent installation.

Selecting the medium

In Polynesia, it is customary that, at certain gatherings, people bring a rock which is incorporated into the structure of a marae “establishing a psychic connection between the donor to the marae” (Handy 1927, 180). Today, every ocean going vaka carries a stone as a gift to the marae they are visiting, thereby establishing rapport between two marae (that of the visitor and the host) and the two tribes. The stone embodies this rapport.

Stone is regarded as “the most permanent [material] that can be used as a medium and container of mana” (Handy 1927, 179 -180).

The most obvious examples of this usage are the carved and natural blocks of stone that served as embodiments for, and mediums of, rapport with patron deities (Handy 1927, 179 -180).

In this project, stone is used in a similar manner as a container of mana, and as a suitable medium to embody rapport between tangata and enua. All the stones considered for use in this project belong to the Arorangi vaka or district which also has an older name Pū A’i Kura. Pū means base or trunk, and can also mean source. A’i means fire, in this case perhaps volcanic fire. Kura means red, the colour of both fire and royalty and also a message or request sent ahead of a travelling group.

These volcanic stones have seen the creation and history of this island. They have witnessed the growth of the first lichens, algae and ferns. They were there when the first birds, animals and humans arrived on the island. As the rocks slowly weathered and turned into clay and then soil, they became a source of life for plants which, in turn, sustained the lives of animals and people. In other words, these sacred rocks provide the elements of life (i'o) for everything around them.

Conceptualisation and naming of the art piece

Naming a piece of art is important because it reflects the thoughts, ideas and beliefs of the artist. It is important that the art piece tells its story in the way intended. Bearing this in mind, my sculpture is called “Tāura ki te Atua” (a rope or link to the divine, a cord of union). This title has developed out of ideas researched in Chapters 1 - 5 concerning the relationship, in Cook Islands Māori thought, between the visible and the invisible worlds, and between people and ancestors. In the art piece, this relationship is visualized on the sculpture's vertical plane by a prominent Rarotongan rauteve design, linking Rangi and Papa, Te Pō and Te Ao, gods, ancestors and people. The art work is additionally a meditation on the physical and mental movement of the people of Nukutere³² –literally, “people on the move” – away from the land, language and customs of our ancestors. This movement is expressed on the horizontal plane, dominated by departing waves signifying migration and loss. The entire art work is conceived as a tāura atua, traditionally a medium of rapport between people and gods but also, in the contemporary context, a cord of union between the island and the Cook Islands diaspora living overseas.

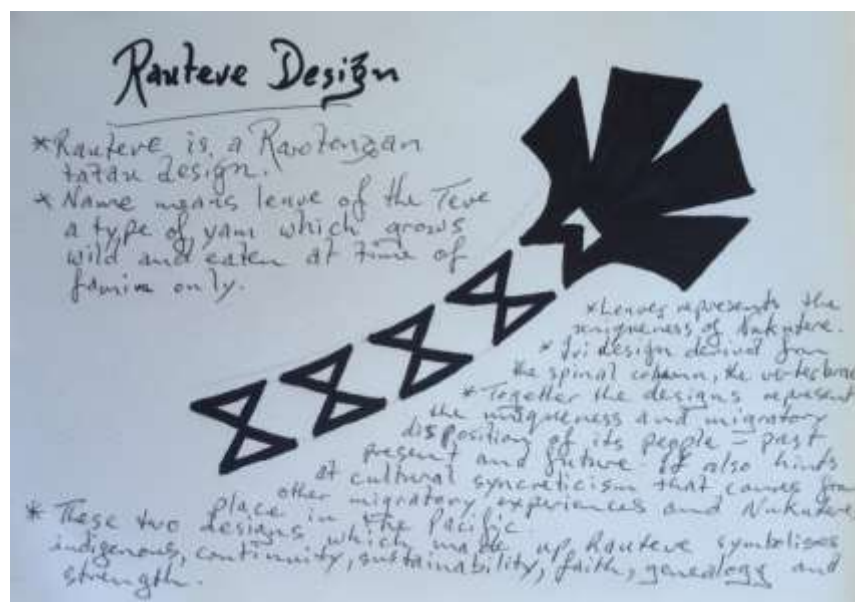
Rauteve

Initially the composition was dominated by the idea of the rauteve motif. The rauteve is composed of two 'akairo. One is the ivi design. 'Ivi' literally means spine, backbone but also tribe. It represents strength ('backbone') through genealogy ('tribe'). Teve refers to the leaf of the teve plant, a type of yam that grows wild and is harvested and eaten only in times of famine. It symbolizes the ability to survive under any

³² An ancient name for Rarotonga – nuku meaning group or war tribe; tere – travelling, sailing away.

circumstances. Taken together the teve and the ivi speak of assuredness in self reliance and survival through membership of the tribe with its sustained links to land, language, ancestors and the divine. As a specifically Rarotongan motif, the rauteve's significance is as a symbol of the enduring nature of the island's culture and its self-sufficiency.

Figure 5.1 – Extract from workbook – Rauteve (Source: Mike Tavioni workbook, 2015).



While the rauteve, as ivi or ‘backbone’, provides the vertical axis of the art piece, the sculpture’s horizontal plane was intended originally to take the shape of bracts – those hard exterior leaves that protect the life (i’o) of a plant³³ – in this case concealing and protecting the core of Māori

³³ The growing point and source of life of plants is called i’o – a reference to I’o metua kore. In Cook Islands Māori thought if the i’o of a plant is damaged the plant will die because the i’o will depart. The bracts conceal and protect the i’o and the life force of the plant.

being, I'o Metua Kore, located deep within the rock. The rippled nature of the bracts was intended to indicate their slow opening to an uncertain future.

At this stage, the art work embodied a tension between certainty (the rock, the backbone; the rauteve with its overtones of survival against the odds) and uncertainty (the slowly opening bracts, the unknown future, the threat to I'o and Māori culture from westernization and outwards migration).

Figure 5.2 – I'o – pith or core of a tree. Concealed and protected by bracts. If the I'o is damaged the plant dies (Source: Mike Tavioni workbook, 2015).

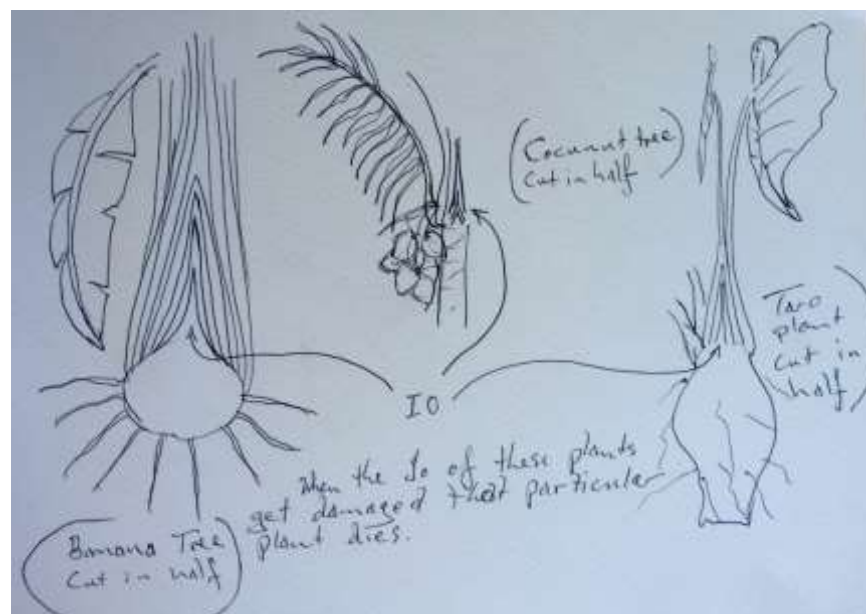
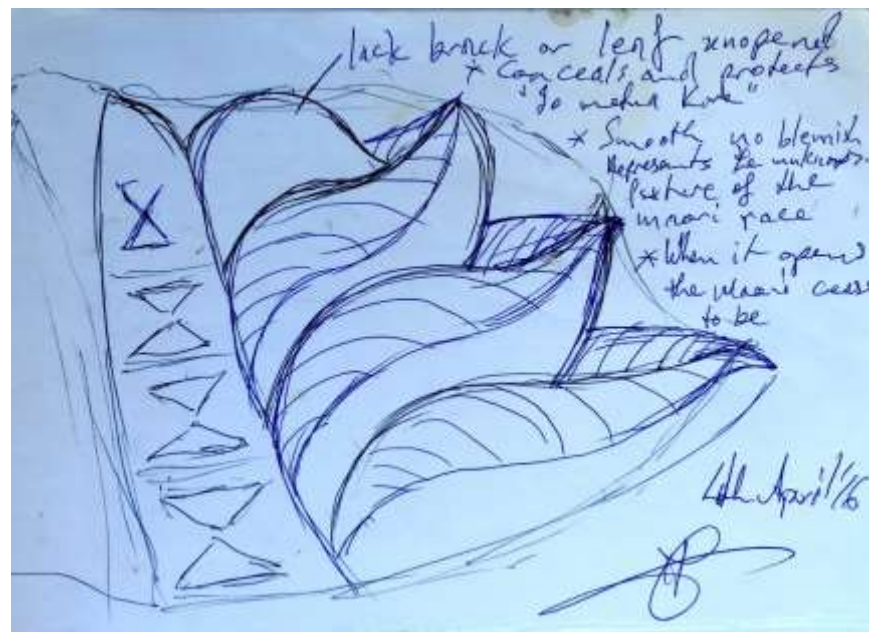


Figure 5.3 – Extract from workbook - Rauteve and slowly opening bracts, exposing and endangering the life Source, I'o (Source: Mike Tavioni workbook, 1 January 2016)



Selecting a rock

My first choice of a stone for the project was as shown in the picture below. To identify it and make it tapu, the stone was wrapped in rauti (leaves of the ti plant) while I made plans for its collection and delivery to my workshop. After many days of anticipation there was no sign of the stone. I went back to Pūa'ikura to visit the site again. The rauti had dried up and the stone was hot to the touch. Someone was filming and, later, as we watched the film, it seemed as if the stone was breathing. One of my supervisors commented that perhaps the stone was not meant for my project. She was right, but I had already paid for it.

Figure 5. 4 – The stone chosen from land at Pūai’kura with rauti attached (Source: Mike Tavioni, 2014)



While I was still waiting for the rock to arrive³⁴, I began to notice another stone in my compound. This stone, also from Pūa’ikura, had been discarded from an earlier project. I had never really been aware of this stone, although I passed by it everyday. After a couple of failed efforts to get the best stone for the project, and feeling very frustrated, I was sitting on a log when I noticed the discarded stone lying on the ground in front of me. I could see within it the lines of the image in my mind, how it reached upwards and unfolded and revealed its story in a simple flowing form. The stone had chosen me.

³⁴ Eventually, a smaller stone was delivered but broke when it was delivered. It was clearly not intended for the project.

Figure 5.5 – The discarded stone (Source; Mike Tavioni, 2014)



The images below show the rock lifted onto a base of concrete blocks for easy access when carving.

Figure 5.6 – The rock elevated for access (Source: Tavioni, 2015)



Figure 5.7 – The rock wrapped with rau ti to sanctify it (Source: Mike Tavioni, 2015)



I selected Tioti Ngapare, the Ta'unga Kōrero for Puati Mata'iapo of Takitumu, to perform the ceremony of removing the tapu from the stone and the work area around it to permit carving to begin. Tioti Ngapare is a ta'unga tarai or carver of traditional artefacts. He is also a traditional musician, a composer and a friend.

A rau ti was placed around the rock to sanctify it and to acknowledge its presence. In his karakia, the ta'unga greeted the stone and welcomed it to this new place. He asked for forgiveness from the stone for removing it from its home in Pūa'ikura and for what was about to happen to it. The ta'unga then went on to praise the stone for its beauty, strength and longevity. The ta'unga then asked the stone to allow itself to be carved and to make it easy for the carver to create something of beauty for people today and in the future. The ta'unga also explained that when the work was finished the images created would tell the stories and history of the Māori people of Nukutere to generations still to come.

The ta'unga then removed the rauti from the stone and asked that the tapu be removed from the stone and from the workplace so that the work could begin.

Figure 5.8 (left) and 5.9 (right)– The ta’unga Tioti Ngapare greeting and welcoming the stone to its new location (Source: Mike Tavioni, 2015)



These are the words of the ta’unga’s karakia -

E Tateni i te toka Pū-a'i-kura

*Te nakunaku a te ta'unga
I te toka pārai enua
Te toka rere āro i te rangi
Te toka mei roto mai i te tumu enua
Mei roto mai ia Papa*

*E toka mei roto i te Papa enua
E toka mei roto i te ai
E toka akatiamā ia
E te ai veravare
O Pū a'i Kura*

*I roto ia koe e te toka pukuru
Nga atua o Te Pō
O te Rangi
E te Tangata a Papa
O Te Ao*

*E tateni teia no ou
E te tumu enua
Te akairo o te tupuranga
Tangata Māori
E peipei atura i tona tiama*

*E karakia kia koe
No te akapeupeu
Kia ariki mai i te ta'unga
Kia nanāo, kia ta e kia tarai
Kia riro koe ei Taura ki te au atua*

*Kaura e , Kaura...
E reo porokiroki ki te ai tupuna
Teia reo pati akatenga ki te au atua
Ake, Ake, Ake,e,e,e
Io,o,o,o,o*

Figure 5.10 - The ta'unga Tioti Ngapare preparing to remove the tapu to allow work to commence (Source: Mike Tavioni, 2015)



Figure 5.11 – The ta’unga exalts the name of I’o (Source: Mike Tavioni, 2015)



Figure 5.12 - Once the tapu is lifted, work can begin (Source: Mike Tavioni, 2015)



Figure 5.13 (below left) and 5.14 (below right) - After removal of the tapu, a cold chisel and hammer were used to ceremonially chip off part of the rough side of the rock to show that work on the rock had started. This action concluded the dedication and removal of tapu (Source: Mike Tavioni, 2015)



The tools used to carve the stone were angle grinders fitted with diamond cutting discs. The angle grinder worked well but because of the very hard nature of the basalt only a little bit of rock could be removed with each cut. Heavier grinders can take bigger chunks more easily but are too heavy to handle. The job produced a lot of dust and safety gear was essential for protection. At the beginning I used no gloves and the flying

chips cut my fingers and hands continuously. I bought some gloves. After a few weeks one grinder stopped working because of the effects of the fine dust on its internal working parts.

Progression of the work

I had accepted this stone as the right stone for this project. The stone had rested in my home for many years so surely by now we had some affiliation. As the project developed, changes in design were not the responsibility of the stone but, rather, the result of my own haste to incorporate as many aspects of Te Ao Māori (Māori worldview) as possible. This created a cobweb in which I began to get lost. For a while the project ground to a standstill. I went to back to my exegesis.

‘Akairo

Undertaking further reading for my exegesis, I began to focus more closely on ‘akairo or design motifs and their role in traditional Cook Islands art. From the beginning of this research, I had been fascinated by the different forms, shapes and arrangements of Cook islands ‘akairo - images, designs, motifs, patterns and markings found on traditional carvings, tatau, tapa, woven articles, tikis and other traditional artefacts. Surely these images had some meaning and must be saying something – stories, history, genealogy or prayers? There had to be some purpose, reason or meaning for the images carved, woven and painted onto artefacts or cut into the skin of a person’s body. These ‘akairo or designs were surely also evidence of the Māori people’s presence on the many Pacific islands they had discovered and settled. The ivi design, for example, is still used and still referred to as ‘ivi’ in the Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Hawaii, New Zealand, Tikopia and many other islands.

I began to conceive of these images, multiplied across a carved surface, as a form of wrapping – wrapping in images as in tattoo, carving and sennit work. In Polynesia, wrapping is used as a means of capturing and temporarily containing mana. This led me to an examination of traditional ideas of Te Ao and Te Pō and the means by which these two realms were mediated by people (ta’unga), by animals, and by decorative art pieces, etc.

Figure 5.15 - the “pa atua” or the images of traditional gods was also attracting my attention (Source: Mike Tavioni workbook, 2015)

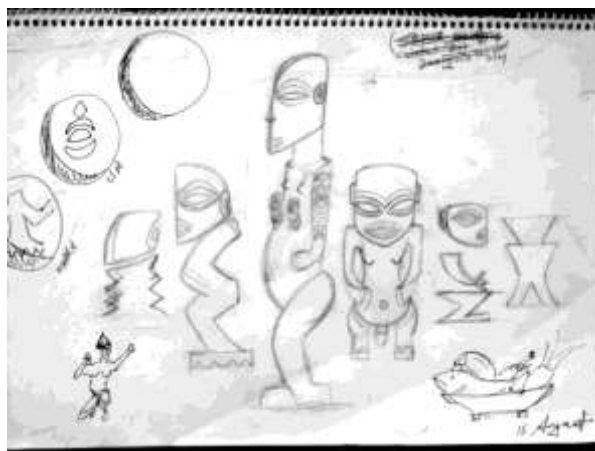
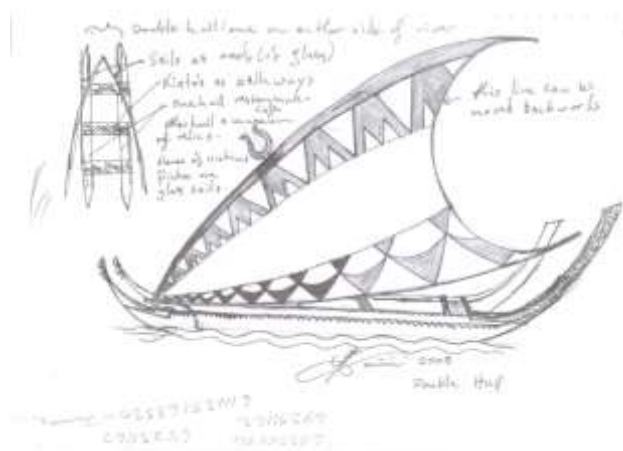


Figure 5.16 – extract from workbook – migrations (Source: Mike Tavioni workbook, 2015).



I was reminded of the launch of the Te Au o Tonga, a double hull ocean-going vaka in 1995. Very early in the morning the people gathered at the construction site of the vaka in the Takuvaine Valley. As the ceremonies and speeches got under way and the karakia was delivered, the valley began to fill with fog until it was no longer possible to see more than a foot in any direction. Conch shells were being blown to show the way, as the vaka was lifted and carried to the shore. The low thick fog continued to cover the vaka and everything around it as it continued its journey to the sea. Here the vaka was placed in the water according to tradition and culture. No one present had ever experienced a fog like this before. The question arose, was the incident coincidental or was it evidence of atua indicating their acceptance of this human creation, or was it an expression of their satisfaction with the ta'unga's karakia?

This led me to further consideration of the role of art works as attempts to make the invisible (Te Pō) visible (Te Ao), to mediate between these two realms, and the ancient notion of art works as temporary “containers of the divine.” I attempted to encapsulate some of these ideas in the stone. To tapu or sanctify the stone, I intended to symbolically wrap it with carved images of matting at the base.

But the base of the rock symbolically represented Papa so I decided to leave the base unworked, in its natural state, as it had emerged from the ground (Papa). If the base represented Papa, the apex symbolized Rangi and Te Pō. I decided to carve the matting on the vertical axis but to insert 'akairo in each of the squares of the weave to indicate a wrapping in images. The vertical progression of the 'akairo also pointed to the mediating role of 'akairo in bridging the space between Te Ao and Te Pō, adding to the idea that the stone once carved became a tāura atua or cord of union between these two realms.

Figure 5.17 – Wrapping with moenga or matting – I had intended to carve the stone at its base in matting but decided to keep the base naturally rough to emphasize its connection with Te Papa (Source: Mike Tavioni, October, 2016)



*After some time trying to
make a decision – I decided
to leave about 2 inches unworked
so as to keep the stones in contact with papa.*

Figure 5.18 – Instead of carving the matting at the base I decided to include it on the vertical axis as a link between Papa and Rangī, Te Ao and Te Pō (Source: Mike Tavioni, October, 2016)

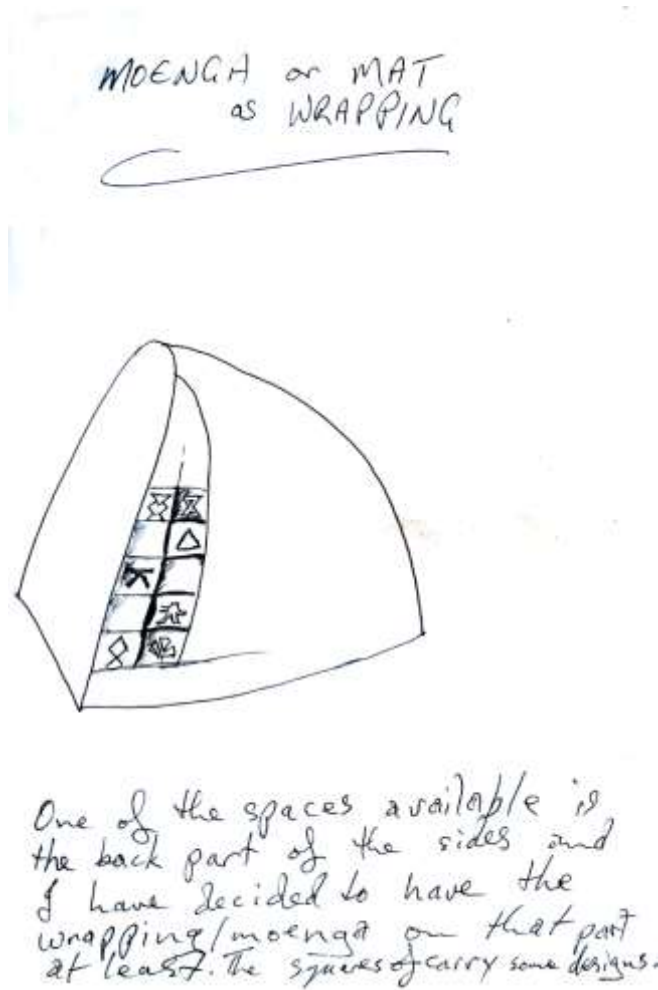


Figure 5.19 – marking the moenga or mat – each segment will contain an ‘akairo; a wrapping in images (Source: Mike Tavioni, October, 2016)



Figure 5.20 – Incising the matting squares as a symbolic wrapping – later this motif was discarded (Source: Ronnie Siulepa, March 2017)



The ideas explored in the exegesis and ideas for the stone began to come together more clearly. The perpendicular face of the rock represented Te Ao Māori, with atua, Te Pō and Rangi at the top and tangata, Te Ao and Papa at the base. This face is dominated by the rauteve/ivi design, representing strength and self-sufficiency. The middle leaf of the rauteve, which dominates this face, folds like a bract. The role of bracts is to protect the growing point, i'o, or life force, of flowers and plants. Symbolically, the middle leaf of the rauteve covers and protects I'o, the Māori life force concealed within the stone. This is, the Māori world, self contained and self sufficient.

Figure 5.21 – The middle leaf folds over the rock to cover I'o Metua Kore (Source: Mike Tavioni notebook, October 2016)



Figure 5.22 – Marking up the rauteve design (Source: Mike Tavioni notebook, October 2016).



Figure 5.23 – Incising the rauteve design (Source: Ronnie Siulepa, January 2017).



It had been my intention to carve one side of the rock in a double plait mat weave, as the symbolic wrapping of the stone in moenga and ‘akairo, with the opposite side of the rock carved in a symbolic sennit weave, indicating wrapping in ka’a or sennit. These three forms of wrapping would form part of the process of sanctifying the rock and containing its mana. The ‘akairo, ascending vertically, would provide a link between Te Ao and Te Pō, tangata and atua. But, in the event, I decided to allocate all the available horizontal space to the unfurling plant bracts.

Figure 5.24 - The slowly unfurling bracts, protecting I’o metua kore, have become departing waves of migration (Source: Mike Tavioni workbook, November, 2016)



On the horizontal plane of the stone, these unfurling bracts assume the form of departing waves, symbolizing the Cook Islands population relocating overseas. With the majority of Cook Islanders now living in New Zealand, Te Ao Māori has been opened up to the outside world. Self-sufficiency is being slowly replaced by global interdependence. As the bracts unfurl, I’o, the Māori life force, is no longer securely protected and ancient connections to lands, language and customs erode. The departing mana of Te Ao Māori is seen on the tips of the waves as the ‘akairo, which once linked Te Ao and Te Pō, tangata, ancestors and atua remain but begin to fade as the waves become more distant.

Figure 5.25 – Preparing to remove waste stone to create the bracts (Source: Ronnie Siulepa, January, 2017)



Figure 5.26 – The bracts begin to take shape (Source: Ronnie Siulepa, January, 2017)



Figure 5.27 – Working on the bracts – (Source: Mike Tavioni, October, 2016)



Figure 5.28 – Working on the rauteve design – (Source: Mike Tavioni, October, 2016)



Figure 5.29 – The sculpture begins to take shape. The matting squares are being removed and replaced by bracts (Source: Ronnie Siulepa, March, 2017)



Figure 5.30 – Polishing the stone at 1500 grid – the unpolished part is to 800 grid (Source: Ronnie Siulepa, April, 2017)



Figure 5.31 – Polishing the the bracts/waves at 1500 grid (Source: Ronnie Siulepa April, 2017)



Figure 5.32 – Incising 'akairo on the bracts/waves (Source: Ronnie Siulepa, April, 2017)



Figure 5.33 – ‘Akairo incised on the bracts/waves (Source: Ronnie Siulepa, April, 2017)



Figure 5.34 – The polished stone with the unfinished base denoting Papa (Source: Ronnie Siulepa, June, 2017)



Figure 5.35 – The rauteve; the central leaf folds at the top to provide a protective cover for I’o or the life force within (Source: Ronnie Siulepa, June, 2017)



Figure 5.36 – Bracts/departing waves; the ‘akairo fade on the farthest reach of the waves (Source: Ronnie Siulepa, June, 2017)



Installation and unveiling

In July 2017, the stone was ready for delivery to its final home – the paepae Ariki o Makea Nui. The ta’unga recited the karakia (below) as the workers loaded the stone from the workshop to the truck. As the truck moved off, the karakia faded. At the installation place the rock was lifted down and placed on a concrete plinth at the entrance to the University of the South Pacific, Cook Islands campus.

Karakia for the movement of the stone to its installation site

Neke'anga tāura

*Turou, turou, turou
Teia toka e tarava nei
Te toka no roto mai
I te Pū a'i Kura
Turou, turou.*

*Teia te au ta'unga
I akangateitei ia koe
No te akapeu i toou akaieie
No te akatae i to tere
Ki ke paepae o Makea Nui
Toou ngutuare tapu.
I roto i toou taura
Ki te atua
Akamaru mai te aerenga
Kia mania, i roto i te au
Io,ooo*

Figure 5.37 The ta'unga Melbourne Tomokino recites the karakia as the workers loaded the stone from the workshop to the truck
(Source: Ronnie Siulepa, July, 2017)



Figure 5.38 – A sling is placed around the sculpture
(Source: Ronnie Siulepa, July, 2017)



Figure 5.39 – The sculpture is lifted onto the truck (Source: Ronnie Siulepa, July, 2017)



5.40– The sculpture is secured on the tray back (Source: Ronnie Siulepa, June, 2017)



Figure 5.41 – The sculpture at the University centre (Source: Ronnie Siulepa, June, 2017)



Figure 5.42– The sculpture is lifted into place (Source: Ronnie Siulepa, June, 2017)



Figure 5.43 – The sculpture is lowered onto its plinth (Source: Ronnie Siulepa, June, 2017)



Figure 5.44 – The sculpture is secured on a concrete plinth (Source: Ronnie Siulepa, June, 2017)



Figure 5.45 – The sculpture in its public exhibition space (Source: Ronnie Siulepa, June, 2017)



Wrapping the stone

In keeping with ideas developed in the exegesis, the stone was wrapped to sanctify it as a container of mana. Initially, the stone was wrapped, metaphorically, in karakia. It was then wrapped in ka'a or sennit; and finally in tapa. The stone was now tapu.

Dedication of the stone at its unveiling

On 29 August, 2017 the stone “Tāura Ki Te Atua” was ‘unveiled’ (kiriti’anga). The ariki of the land on which the stone now rested, Vakatini ariki, was asked to unwrap the sennit. Professor Tani Ka’ai of AUT University was invited to unwrap the tapa. Finally, the ta’unga Melbourne Tomokino, unwrapped the karakia from the stone. The stone was now noa and in the public domain.

Tapuanga i te Toka – Tapu ki te noa, Tāura ki te Atua

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Io, Io,ooo</i> | <i>Tena to ka’a vai</i> |
| <i>Te toko akaie</i> | <i>Kua tatara ia</i> |
| <i>No roto mai i te</i> | <i>Te tapa koukou ia koe</i> |
| <i>Pū a’i Kura</i> | <i>Kua eeu ia</i> |
| <i>Teia te au Taunga</i> | <i>I teia nei</i> |
| <i>E Turou atu nei ia koe</i> | <i>Ko te karakia</i> |
| <i>Tau mai ra.</i> | <i>Tei akatapu ia koe</i> |
| | <i>Te kiriti nei au</i> |
| <i>I runga i teia Marae Tapu</i> | <i>Te reira</i> |
| <i>O nga Ariki o Te Au o Tonga</i> | <i>Kia riro koe e i taura</i> |
| <i>Parai ei koe i to ngateitei</i> | <i>No te tangata</i> |
| <i>I roto ia koe</i> | <i>Ake, ake</i> |
| <i>Akapeu iai te ai tupuna.</i> | <i>Io, o, o, oo</i> |
| <i>I roto ia koe tatau iai</i> | |
| <i>Te ngateitei o te Ao Māori</i> | |
| <i>Te rito o te Peu Māori</i> | |
| <i>Te tāura ki te ai Tupuna</i> | |
| <i>Te Tāura ki te Atua</i> | |

SUMMARY

This chapter visually and verbally charted the process of the creation of the art work “Tāura Ki Te Atua” from its conception, to its realisation and permanent installation, accompanied by appropriate Cook Islands Māori ritual and ceremony. Along the way, ideas were incorporated or discarded as key themes of the exegesis were realized in the stone including –

- (1) the concept of the art work as a mediation between two worlds Te Ao and Te Pō, the visible world and the invisible world;
- (2) the idea of the art work as a symbolic container of the divine – I’o the life force located within the permanence of the stone;
- (3) the role of ‘akairo, such as rauteve, which in Chapter 3 were envisaged as providing the aesthetic qualities required to transform inanimate objects, in this case stone, into mediums of rapport between tangata and atua.

In the art work, the relationship between the visible and invisible world is visualized on the art work’s vertical plane by the prominent rauteve design linking atua, Te Pō and Rangi at the top and Te Ao, Papa and tangata at the base. The teve is a famine food and the rauteve design represents Māori strength and self-sufficiency or Te Ao Māori. The middle leaf of the rauteve folds like a bract. The role of the bract is to protect the growing point – the i’o or life force - of flowers and plants. In the sculpture, the middle leaf of the rauteve symbolically covers and protects I’o Metua Kore, the Māori life force, contained within the stone.

On the horizontal plane of the sculpture, the bracts begin to unfurl, assuming the form of departing waves, symbolizing the Cook Islands migrations. With the majority of Cook Islanders now living overseas, Te Ao Māori has been exposed to external influences. Self-sufficiency is being rapidly replaced by global interdependence. As the bracts unfurl. I’o, the Māori life force, is no longer securely protected. Ancient connections to land, language and customs begin to erode. The departing mana of Te Ao Māori is seen on the tips of the waves. As the waves become distant, the ‘akairo, which once linked Te Ao and Te Pō, tangata, ancestors and atua, begin to fade.

Installation of the work required that it be made noa or ‘public’. In keeping with ideas explored in the exegesis, this involved rituals of wrapping and unwrapping as a means of sanctifying and desanctification. Four processes of wrapping and unwrapping were identified and applied to the work – wrapping in images/‘akairo (as in carving and body tattooing), wrapping in sennit, wrapping in tapa or moenga, and finally wrapping in prayers or karakia.

The unwrapping of the art work – of it's woven sennit, its tapa and finally its karakia, completed the process of the art work moving from tapu in the workshop, to its noa status as a public art work. The artwork was unwrapped as part of the 2017 AUSTRALEX Conference convened at the University of South Pacific Cook Islands Campus in Takamoa on Tuesday 29 August at 12.15pm. Not only was the event attended by conferences delegats, but it was also attended by the community which was followed by a buffet lunch on the verandah. The event was filmed by Cook Island Television.

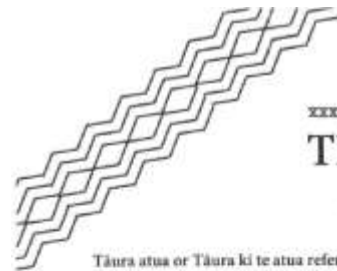
Figure 5.46 *Tāura atua*



You are warmly invited to
the 'unwrapping' of a major new art work

Tuesday
29
August
Tāura Atua
by Michael Teatuakaro Tavioni
at USP Cook Islands
12:15
pm

in the presence of
Vakatini Ariki, Professor Tania Ka'ai and delegates
to the Australex Conference, 2017



Teatuakaro
Michael Tavioni

THE SCULPTURE - TĀURA ATUA

Tāura atua or Tāura ki te atua refers to a cord of union or rapport between people (tangata) and gods (atua), and between the visible and invisible worlds of Te Ao (light) and Te Pō (dark).

In this art work, this relationship is visualized on the sculpture's vertical plane by the prominent rautave design ('akairo) linking atua, Te Pō and Rangī at the top and tangata, Te Ao and Papa at the base. The teve is a famine food and the teve leaf (rauteve) design represents Maori strength and self-sufficiency or Te Ao Māori. The middle leaf of the rautave folds like a bract. The role of a bract is to protect the growing point, i'o, or life force, of flowers and plants. In the sculpture, the middle leaf of the rautave symbolically covers and protects i'o Metua Kore, the Māori life force, contained within the stone.

On the horizontal plane of the sculpture, the bracts begin to unfurl, assuming the form of departing waves, symbolizing the Cook Islands migrations. With the majority of Cook Islanders now living overseas, Te Ao Māori has been exposed to external influences. Self-sufficiency is being rapidly replaced by global interdependence. As the bracts unfurl, i'o, the Māori life force, is no longer securely protected. Ancient connections to lands, language and customs begin to erode. The departing mana of Te Ao Māori is seen on the tips of the waves. As the waves become distant, the 'akairo, which once linked Te Ao and Te Pō, tangata, ancestors and atua, begin to fade.

Installation of the work required that it be made noa or 'public'. In Māori custom, this involves rituals of wrapping and unwrapping as a means of sanctifying and desanctification. Four processes of wrapping and unwrapping are applied to the work – wrapping in images/ 'akairo (as in body tattooing), wrapping in sennit, wrapping in tapa or moenga (matting), and finally wrapping in prayers or karakia.

The unwrapping (kiriti'anga) of the art work – of it's sennit, its tapa and finally its karakia, complete the process of the art work moving from tapu in the workshop, to its noa status as a public art work.



TĀKIATO

Te mu'u 'ua ara te paepae

'Uri mai koe

Te tu uatu nei au

To tāura atua

E tatari nei

I to 'oki'anga mai.

The paepae is now silent

You turn around

I am still standing here

Your link to the gods

Waiting patiently

For your return.

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GLOSSARY

A

- ‘akatakapātoa – meeting, discussion
- ‘akairi – to place on top, organize, sort out
- ‘akairo n., mark, token, proof, symbol, an omen, etc v.t. To make a mark on anything, to impress with a sign, to make a sign or symbol on anything v.i. to make a particular mark to represent one’s signature (Savage, 1962;78)
- ‘akapapa’anga – genealogy
- Akapu’apinga’anga – giving worth, making into something of value,
- ‘akatikitiki – to carve, engrave, sculpt
- Akatauira – the ngati Akatauira or Akatauira tribe of Mangaia
- Akono’anga – habit, custom
- Ānuanua - rainbow
- Ao, Te Ao – this world, the world of light
- ‘āpare - funeral
- ‘ara – general name for all species of pandanus
- ‘ara tai - *pandanus tectorius*
- are kōrero – house of learning
- ariki – chief
- ariki tūtara - the ariki 's second-in-command, originally usually a younger brother.
- ariki va’ine – the ariki’s wife
- ariri - the turban shell or ‘cat’s eye’
- aro’a – love, sympathy
- ‘ata‘ata – altar, raised platform
- ‘atamira – a chief’s seat,
- atua - god
- A’ua’u – ancient name of Mangaia

E

- ‘enua – land
- ‘etuke - The edible pencil-urchin (*Heterocentrotus sp.*)

‘etū moana – the Vivid-Blue Starfish (*Linckia laevigata*)

I

ika – fish

ika mata – raw fish

īpukarea – the natal soil, homeland, returning place for the spirit

ivi – bone, vertebrae

K

ka’a – sennit, cord made from the fibre of the cocoanut husk

kā’ara - sharkskin drum

karakia – prayers, incantations

kau ta’unga – priests or counsellors

ki’iki’i – Rarotongan god staff, representing Tangaroa

kīkau – leaves of the coconut tree

kina - various short-spined, burrowing sea-urchins (esp. *Echinometra mathaei*)

kiriti - unwrap

kite – to see, know, discover

kitea – discovery, insight, something seen or discovered

kōta’a – the frigate bird (*Fregata spp.*)

kumete – wooden bowl

M

maire - Scented Oak-leaf Fern (*Microsorium commutatum*)

māmiō – the Manganian term for the taro plant

mana – spiritual power

mango - shark

marae – religious site, space cleared for ceremony

maro – loin cloth

matakeinanga – a grouping of people, a tribe or district

mata – the eye or face, the head part of anything

mata ika – ‘fish eye’ – the name given to an expert fisher

matai'apo – a sub-chief, the head of a tapere
Maurua– name given to a star and a Mangaian ngati
mīmitī – head, profile, usually of an animal, fish, bird or insect
moana - ocean, sea
mokomoko - cuttings or tubers for planting out
mōmore – a long wooden war spear

N

ngāti – tribe
ni'o – tooth, teeth
noa – secular, ordinary, everyday, free of tapu

O

‘onu – turtle

P

papa māori – Māori base or foundation
parekura – a red coloured hat or cap, a chief's headdress
pātūanga – standing erect
peu papa'a – European ways or customs
pi'a atua – a medium of the gods
Pō, Te Pō – the world of night, the other-world
poa - residual matter, something left behind in memory
pōtiki – baby, the last born child
pou – pole, post, pillar
pū – Source, foundation
pū vake – a cluster of tubers, roots

R

rangi, Te Rangi – the sky, heavens
rau - leaf
rautī – leaf of the ti plant (*Cordyline terminalis*)

rei – neck ornament

reo - language

roa - long

Rongo – a great Polynesian deity, brother of Tangaroa

Rori – well known Mangaian carver from the 17th century, named after the sea cucumber

T

tākiato - proverb

tangata – man, humankind

tango – the corner stone of a marae or house

ta'okota'iana – co-operation

tapa – cloth beaten from the bark of a tree

tapu – sacred, restricted, imbued with spiritual power

taringa - ear

tatau - tattoo

ta'unga – expert, adept

ta'unga aka'anau – expert midwife

ta'unga akera etu – expert astrologer/astronomer

ta'unga akatere vaka – expert navigator

ta'unga kōrero – keeper of knowledge

ta'unga marae – marae building expert

ta'unga purepure – expert in spells, sorcery

ta'unga tarai vaka – expert canoe builder

ta'unga tatau – expert in tattoo

ta'unga tautai – expert fisher

ta'unga tutu'anga – expert bark cloth maker

ta'unga vai rakau – medicinal expert

tāura – rope, cord

tāura atua – link to the gods

teve – broad leafed plant (*Amorphophallus paeoniifolius*)

tiare – general name of flowers

tiki – representation of a god

tikitiki – carved, shaped
tikitiki tangata – carved representations of humans
tikoti – cross
tīvaevae – quilt
to’ito’ianga – act of carving with a chisel
toki – axe, adze
tokotoko – propped up, straight
tupuna – grandparent, ancestor

U

uete - Manganian term for kumete, a carved bowl
‘uipā‘angā – meeting or discussion
umukai – a feast of food from a ground oven
unu – a sacred carved board, used to decorate a marae

V

vaerua - spirit
vai rakau - medicine
vaka - canoe
vake - small size tuber(s) on the main root of a taro plant
vana - sea-eggs with long black spines of the genera *Diadema* and *Echinothrix*