

Article

Authenticity and Divine Accommodation in a 19 Century Māori Context

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Abstract: How did early 19th Century Māori assess the authenticity of the gospel narrative based on their own traditional worldview? This essay explores the thoughts of Whangataua, an ancestor of the author from the Ngāi Tahu and Rangitāne tribes of the upper Manawātū River region in the North Island of New Zealand. How might Whangataua and his contemporaries have negotiated the authenticity of the gospel narrative shared by the missionary William Colenso between 1846 and 1852? This paper explores the cultural and intellectual negotiation that took place when Māori first heard the gospel message by comparing the story of the virgin birth of Jesus from the book of Luke with the traditional narrative of Tamatea-ure-haea and his wife Iwipupu. The intersection between the virgin conception narrative and Māori tribal beliefs held by 19th Century rangatira (principal chiefs) reveals an overlapping of realities where Māori worldview could become an agent of divine accommodation and authenticity for the gospel narratives.

Keywords: accommodation; authenticity; baptism; negotiation; Nephilim; Puehutai; rangatira; whakapapa; whakapono



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1. Introduction

This paper investigates the negotiation between the gospel and Māori narratives that occurred at Puehutai and surrounding villages on the upper Manawātū River region of the North Island of New Zealand in the late 1840s and early 1850s. William Colenso's recorded missionary journeys from 1843 to 1852 through the east coast regions from Ahuriri to the Wairarapa introduced the gospel narrative and Christian orthodoxy to the tribes of this region, causing great change in the thought and practice of the time. While on this journey, I believe Colenso would have encountered my ancestor Whangataua, a veteran mercenary warrior of the Ngāi Tahu people of the Takapau region, who was residing at Puehutai in this period. While Colenso does not mention Whangataua in his journals, it is possible that he was one of six adults baptized by Colenso just before Whangataua's passing around 1852.

Whangataua was steeped in the knowledge and practices associated with Māori epistemology, social custom, warfare, sustainable living and the adherence to traditional deities. Sitting under Colenso's strict rule of instructing baptism candidates on Christian doctrine, Whangataua would have been informed on the meaning of committing to Christian baptism as an act of allegiance to Christ. Having an intimate understanding of the ancestral world and learning core tenets of the gospel, Whangataua would have had the capacity to make informed decisions about belief. His generation of rangatira (principal chiefs) held the mana (executive authority) and tapu (power) at this time and I do not believe they were forced into choosing a Christian baptism without sufficient cultural intellectual negotiation. To say so would ridicule their authority and integrity to decide for themselves and for the good of their people.

This study seeks to reason why Whangataua might have chosen baptism and what kind of cultural intellectual negotiation took place in that decision. For this exercise, I will present two narratives for comparison from the biblical and Māori worlds to find resonating points of convergence. The narratives presented here are the biblical story of the

virgin conception of Christ and the ancestral story about Tamatea, a founding ancestor of the Takitimu people. Whangataua and his contemporaries, from the teachings of Colenso and other missionaries, would have been familiar with the virgin birth of Christ as part of the core tenets of Christian faith. The story of his ancestor, Tamatea, would also have been well-known to Whangataua as one of his descendants. It is proposed that Whangataua would have perceived the truth or falsity of the virgin conception story through the lens of his own traditional narratives and cultural concepts of belief and authentic validation.

I chose these two narratives because they both present a picture of the interaction between the spirit and the human realms which is a reality of belief present in both the biblical and Māori worldviews. Comparing the biblical story and this traditional narrative will help us understand how Whangataua and his contemporaries might have weighed up the plausibility of the narratives of the Bible and how that may have contributed to their decision to accept baptism.

2. Accommodation and Authenticity

Before making a comparison between the biblical and traditional narratives, it is important to understand the theology of divine accommodation and authenticity in Whangataua's cultural intellectual negotiation of the gospel's virgin conception narrative. John W. Hilber describes divine accommodation as "the manner by which God manifests his presence or intervenes in time and space in order to facilitate finite, human understanding" (Hilber 2020, p. 84). He cites John 1:14–18 and the incarnation of God taking on human nature to make his gracious attributes personally experienced by humankind as an example (ibid.). God's intervention includes the spoken word; this accommodation is therefore also linguistic. "All scripture is an accommodation by the mere fact that God speaks to people in languages that are linguistically and culturally conditioned" (ibid.). In this sense, linguistic and cultural accommodation are inextricably linked and are not "easily disentangled" (ibid., p. 85). Because languages exist within a cultural context, interpretation, whether in Hebrew or Greek, for example, includes a wide range of attached ideas. Moving across diverse cultural boundaries requires another level of interpretation. My interest is understanding how divine accommodation might apply to this scenario where ancestors with their own traditional beliefs and narratives find validity, rather than falsity, in the gospel narratives. The traditions of Māori creation cosmologies and the narratives of superhuman and human activities in the metaphysical and physical world of ancestors have been carried for thousands of years across oceans and adapted into the tribal landscape of Aotearoa. Can divine accommodation embrace these traditions to influence the validation and truth of the scriptures and the Christian message?

The cultural intellectual negotiation process for Whangataua and his contemporaries would have employed their own traditional concepts of hermeneutics, for want of a better term, to authenticate truth and validity. A traditional Māori hermeneutic process can be devised through the study of 19th century Māori writers who constructed written narratives utilizing a number of customary concepts to validate the truth of their texts. In general, the principles of testimony (you were there), whakapapa (genealogy recitals), waiata and whakataukī (generational songs and customary phrases), tapatapa (naming of the land) and the link to te ao tawhito and te ao tipua (the natural and supernatural realms) were key. Extending this, the following 13 Māori hermeneutic/exegesis principles were devised by Māori lecturer Matua Hakiha at Laidlaw College in 2015 as further points of exploration into exegesis of the Bible based on Māori worldview thinking (Hakiha 2015). These principles are derived from elements needed to interpret the Māori language, metaphors, poetry and knowledge used in the composition of waiata koroua (traditional songs and dances) (Hakiha 2024). Hakiha develops the following principles:

1. Whakapapa—genealogical connections. Do the scriptures possess genealogies of the characters in the narrative?
2. Taiao/Ao Tūroa—The natural environment and place. How does place and the natural environment feature in the narrative?

3. Wawata/Moemoeā—Dreams/visions/poetic metaphoric imagery. Do dreams, visions and metaphor appear in the biblical narrative?
4. Kupu/Whakāro Tuapapa—Foundational cultural words and thoughts. How do the original words convey deep cultural ideas and thoughts to the audience? In Māori thought, one word can unravel a whole world.
5. Rangi/tangi—Tone and tune. How does the use of poetic language and melody feature in the delivery of narrative and portray emotion and truth?
6. Whanaungatanga—Inter- and intrarelations. What are the kin and non-kin relationships within a narrative?
7. Ngā Momo Tuhi—Genre. What oral or literary form does the narrative take?
8. Reo—Language. How does the use of language portray a narrative?
9. Tikanga—Cultural practice. What cultural practices are prevalent in the narrative?
10. Kawa—Protocols. What customary protocols are practiced in the reading of the narrative and exist in the narrative itself?
11. Hoa Haere—Companions. Who are the main characters in a narrative?
12. Whakataukī—Proverbs. What proverbial statements are used in the biblical narrative?
13. Kupu whakarite—Metaphor. How is analogy and metaphor featured in the narrative?

In this study, I propose divine accommodation and authenticity play out in the intersection of the traditional narrative of Whangataua's tribal society and the scriptural narratives offered by Colenso, and that led to contemplations and later decisions for baptism. In saying that, scripture makes it clear it is the work of the Holy Spirit to guide people into the truth of Christ's testimony. As we are dealing with spirit being intervention in narratives, it should not be unusual to reckon the Holy Spirit is active in revelation and accommodation and also in the negotiation process of linguistic and cultural interpretation of the testimony of Christ.

3. Background

We find the missionary William Colenso, the gospel narrative and Whangataua in a volatile place and time. The east coast region between Ahuriri, Heretaunga and the Wairarapa was consumed by continual marauding and war before and during the Musket Wars of the 1820s. The people living there had abandoned their lands and migrated to Nukutaurua-Mahia in exile around 1824 for safety under the authority of the Ngāpuhi chief Te Wera. By 1835, there were thousands from Hawkes Bay and Wairarapa at Mahia who where they were introduced to Christianity and made contact with Pākehā traders and whalers (Hunter 2019, pp. 18–20). However, Whangataua never left his lands in order to maintain his ahi kā roa (continuous occupation to the land), along with his cousin Tuhua, living alone in the forest lands of the Takapau Plains region. There is no doubt the peace-orientated Christianity presented to Māori by CMS missionaries influenced a change in the hearts of Māori embroiled in wars they could not see an end to. The influence of the whakapono (Christian faith) and the work of the kaikauwhau (Māori evangelists) speaking the gospel assisted peace and the slow return of hapū (clans) and whānau (families) from exile in Nukutaurua back to their homes in Ahuriri, Heretaunga, Takapau, Tāmaki and as far south to the Wairarapa between 1838 and 1844 (Te Atahikoia 1900).¹ When the people returned to their homes, the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi had been signed and surveyors were already present, marking out territories for settlement. It is in this context that William Colenso arrived to Heretaunga where he set up a mission station called Waitangi at the joint mouth of the Tukituki, Ngaruroro and Waitangi Rivers, from where he set out to outreach to the people of Ahuriri, Heretaunga, Manawatū and Wairarapa (Bagnall and Petersen 1948, pp. 177, 190).²

Whangatauaa

Snippets of the life of Whangataua are recorded in the minute books of the 1889–1891 court case minutes for the Waikopiro Block, close in the vicinity to the towns of Ormondville, Makotuku, and Whetukura. The 26,590-acre block passed through the Māori Land Court in

March–April 1889 and the rehearing was in April and May 1891. The extensive evidence of Whangataua’s son, Inia Whangataua, and his nephew, Tanguru Tuhua, recorded in the land court minutes give a detailed account of Whangataua’s life. Whangataua is remembered as a rangatira nui (a general of war) and someone who held mana on the land as the ahi kā roa ([Waikopiro Minute Books \(Waikopiro MB\) 1889](#), p. 171). He was affiliated to the tribes of Ngāi Tahu ki Takapau, Ngāi Te Rangitekahutia, Rangitāne and Ngāi Tangimoana (*ibid.*, pp. 198–218).

Whangataua was a powerful warrior involved in many battles, particularly those related to the murder of his sister Te Wao. In one campaign, Whangataua was captured by Te Pōhutu of Rangitāne and was later ransomed by his first cousin, Tuhua, for a stone weapon named Te Onewa ([McEwen 1986](#), p. 107). Whangataua held the title of Kai-kawe-i-ngā-riri, a general of war, a mercenary fighter who carried the burdens of the tribes ([Waikopiro Minute Books \(Waikopiro MB\) 1889](#), p. 202). This title also meant being a facilitator of peace between warring factions. He was recognized as a leader by the following hapū: Ngāti Tangimoana, Ngāti Rangi-te-kahutia, Ngā Mokopuna-a-Rangitotohu, Ngāti Mate, Ngāti Pouwharekura, Ngāti Upokoiri, Ngāti Puke and Ngāti Hamua (*ibid.*).

With the growing need for land by the settlers, the minute books record Whangataua and his relatives Hauerangi, Tamanoho and Rangiwhakaewa holding wānanga (teaching sessions) at the villages of Puehuta, Hautōtara and the cave Te Ruamaire to convey to the next generation the genealogies, histories and landmarks of their tribal lands.³ The learners were taken on to the land and pointed out all the significant historical sights and landmarks. In this period, Whangataua lived his final days at Puehuta, where he was buried ([Paewai 2022](#)).⁴

Close to Whangataua’s death, his son Inia states that his father returned the lands of Mangatoro and Wainui, held under his authority, to his relative Hauerangi who sold those blocks immediately after the well-known Waipukurau Block purchase of November 1851. The final statement Inia makes about his father was how he was baptized and soon after passed away. There is no other elaboration on Whangataua’s baptism, his engagement with Christianity or his passing. This would place Whangataua still alive at Puehuta village at the end of 1851 and into the year 1852, a time consistent with William Colenso’s visits to Puehuta village in March of 1851 and March of 1852. It is here Colenso records baptizing six adults and three children. It is probable that Whangataua was one of the adult baptisms of March 1852 at Puehuta.

William Colenso

William Colenso was a Cornishman born in Penzance who at the age of 15 began a printing apprenticeship at St Ives. Later he was employed by Richard Watts, printer for the Church Missionary Society. He attended church, prayer meetings and biblical groups. He also composited, printed and bound missionary accounts from all around the world, including NZ ([St George 2018](#), p. 1). He arrived in Paihia at the end of 1833 where he was expected to be a preacher and a printer. The printing output from his office was enormous. He traveled through the north and twice to Poverty Bay and became fluent in te reo Māori.

He printed thousands of copies of the book of Philippians; Ephesians in te reo in 1835; 5000 copies of William Williams’ Māori NT; and 27,000 copies of the *Book of Common Prayer*. By 1840, he had produced over 74,000 copies of various books. He also printed the Māori text of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. His observations of the treaty signing stands as the most authentic European account of the signing. The greatest number of volumes he printed at the Paihia press were those of the *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP). The BCP had been central to Anglican worship since the Reformation. In total, he printed around 53,000 of these in the period 1835–42. In these years, Māori unceasingly requested copies of the Bible and prayer book—they called the latter *Te Rawiri* (David), after the Psalms of David that were included in it.

From October 1843 to 1844, he explored from Wairarapa to Ahuriri (Hawke’s Bay) and settled on the site for a new mission station at Waitangi between the mouth of the Tutaekuri

and Ngaruroro Rivers at Hawke's Bay. After this reconnaissance, he eventually moved his family from Paihia to Hawkes Bay, where he would make 12 journeys visiting villages from Napier/Waitangi to the Wairarapa and to Wellington between 1845 and 1852. Many of the people from these villages had never met a European. His writings survive as the only record of its kind from this region and from this period.

He recorded in his diary entries the names of the villages he visited, the names of Christian and "heathen" rangatira (principal chiefs), native teachers, monitors, whānau and tribes. He recounted the incidents important in the 19th century histories of the region associated with the actions of chiefs and their people. He attended the memorials of dead chiefs and recorded the passing of many due to influenza. He recorded the touching Ōhākī (last words) of the chief Karepa Te Hiaro of Te Hāwera pā (Bagnall and Petersen 1948, p. 463).

Reading through his diaries and letters, Colenso comes across as rigid, paternalistic and condescending towards Māori and their customs. This brought him into conflict with many rangatira who were offended by his antics. He held many of the rangatira to account for what he considered to be their immoral actions, something that could have seen others put to death. Amidst such adversity he seemed to hold the chiefs' attention and found genuine respect amongst the people because he stayed amongst the people and fought for Māori against a tsunami of settler imposition. Colenso was considered a tohunga (priest) and became someone who deserved respect as the oracle of the new God of the book.

Ian St George writes, "his writings reveals a sense of awe, an admiration for tikanga Māori, a respect for rangatira, a delight in te reo..." (St George 2018, p. 2). On the other hand, European squatters called him a "philomaorist", a "Maori-lover", and he was accused of treason because he tried to "protect Māori from tobacco, prostitution, gambling and drunkenness" (ibid.). He saw how influenza impacted Māori and the mortality of tuberculosis and administered medicine and care to the people as best he could. Colenso believed the encroachment on Māori society of land transactions and settler prejudices would lead to the "shipwreck their faith" (Ibid).⁵

Puehutaiai

According to William Colenso's diaries, recorded in Ian St George's publication *Mr Colenso's Wairarapa—Twelve Journeys: 1843–1852*, he arrived to Puehutaiai village for the first time on his fourth journey in 1846. Puehutaiai village is located on the Manawatū River directly across from the Ōrīngi Freezing Works. It is a papakainga (village) on the flats close to a bend in the river. Puketai pā sits on the ridge above Puehutaiai as a fortified refuge in times of flooding and war. A church made of raupō (bulrush—*Typha orientalis*) and tōtara (*Podocarpus totara*) wood with a high steeple was built there for Colenso at Puehutaiai, and many people were taught from the scriptures and baptized.

The diary entries between 1843 and 1852 give a glimpse into his observations about the activities of the people at Puehutaiai village. In September of 1846, he met the principal chief Hirawanu Te Kaimokopuna and taught 22 candidates for baptism. At the end of March 1847, he was met by a large group from the Ngāti Marau tribe and their chief Te Kohu. Two Ngāti Marau chiefs, Barnabas and Robert, were baptized. A tōtara bark chapel 18 × 27 with an 8 feet wall plate was in construction. Colenso instructed 52 baptismal candidates. In November of 1847, the chapel at Puehutaiai had been ornamented and had a bell. On 20 November, Colenso ran catechist classes for 42 people. The people answered the simple questions when tested by Colenso "and appeared to know the simple truths of Christianity" (ibid., p. 167). Hohepa Paewai was the native teacher in the village of Puehutaiai. On the 24th of November 1848, Colenso reached Puehutaiai where more than 60 people with others from the settlements of Pōrangahau, Puhangina and Waipukurau were present. On 25 November, there were 70 people who attended the service and there were 6 candidates for baptism. On the 26th of November, Colenso preached to 79 people and baptized 5 children in the evening. The next day, he married a couple from Pōrangahau. In March of 1849, Colenso and his team reached Puehutaiai and held a service for 24 people based on 1 Thessalonians 5. Others from the village of Hautōtara arrived to hear speeches and share local news. On the 15 March, there were 50 people in the school. In 1851 on

21 April, Colenso left for Puehutai and met Ihakara, the monitor of the village. On the 22 April, Te Hirawanu the principal chief was very disappointed with Colenso having to depart early for Waitangi to meet the Rev. Thomas Grace. Finally, in 1852 Colenso arrived to Puehutai on 18 March. Colenso preached to 48 people from 1 Timothy 1:5. He held a biblical class for 13 baptized readers. On the 20th of March, he instructed 6 people, selected catechumens and prayed with them all. Colenso also taught 17 aged and baptized natives from Ephesians 4. On the 21st of March, he baptized 6 adults and preached to 72 people from John 8:12. He also held a school for 60 and baptized 3 children.

Colenso's journeys to Puehutai exemplifies his call as a missionary to the "great commission," as commanded by Jesus in Matthew 28:19–20, to go and disciple, baptize and teach nations, nationalities and peoples into the way of Christ. Colenso's diary notes clearly show his tenacity to follow the great commission to teach and baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, but in the context of te ao Māori (the Māori world). The following selection includes some of the scriptures recorded in his diaries that were taught and discussed at Puehutai village:

- God spoke through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but now speaks through his son Jesus today who is appointed heir to all things and through him was made the universe (Heb 1:1–2).
- Jesus is the light of the world. His followers will never walk in darkness (John 8:12).
- As a believer your name is written in heaven (Luke 10:20).
- The Ethiopian official on a chariot desired baptism when he realized Isaiah's writings are speaking about Jesus (Acts 8).
- Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. The blood of the covenant (Heb 9:19–22).
- Fix your thoughts on Jesus who is the great apostle (Heb 3:1).
- Belief in Jesus gives access to the Father (Eph 2:18).
- Jesus is the source of eternal salvation for those who obey (Heb 5:8–9).
- Do everything in love, stand firm in faith (1 Cor 16:13–14).
- Preach the word and be prepared in season for a time will come where people will turn away from the truth and turn aside to myths (2 Tim 4:2–4).
- Build yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the holy spirit waiting for the mercy of Jesus to bring you eternal life (Jude 20:20–21).
- Jesus is not ashamed of you to call you family (Heb 2:11).
- Do not turn away from the living God with a sinful unbelieving heart (Heb 3:12).
- Be baptised into Christ's death and be raised from the dead through the glory of the Father to live a new life (Rom 6:3–4).
- Live in a way that is worthy of the calling you have been called to. Maintain unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph 4).
- The gospel will be preached to the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come (Matt 24:12–14).
- Blessed are those who keep the words of the prophecy written in the scroll/book. Jesus is coming again soon (Rev 22:6–7).

None of these points make sense without understanding the birth, death and resurrection of Christ. Colenso was committed to ensuring new converts knew how to read and were instructed well in their own language about Christ and Christian orthodoxy. This was to make sure the people understood what they were being baptized into. When he felt people were ready in the knowledge of the foundations of Christian belief, they were baptized (*ibid.*, pp. 2–3). People heard his sermons, participated in morning and evening prayers, were taught literacy and instructed in biblical narrative which generated great debate and discussion. Letters written to Colenso by leaders from Ahuriri to Wairarapa show great affection for Colenso and an insatiable desire for the teachings about God and the need for books. Baptism, confirmation and communion became normal practice in village life as did the keeping of the Sabbath, all expressions of the influence of Christianity. A selection of new leadership positions such as deacons, teachers and village monitors

were implemented to maintain biblical teaching and to check the morality of the people. These new leadership roles were often at odds with traditional hierarchical leadership roles of *tohunga*, *rangatira* and *toa* (warrior). Whakapapa still played a large role in the selection of faith-based leaders, but the aptitude of commoners who understood the faith opened up pathways of new status for them. The building of chapels, the introduction of bells and burials around the church were new practices that came into vogue, as indicated at Puehutai. These were all changes to local Māori societal life that Whangataua and his contemporaries would have witnessed and participated in.

4. Validation

The narratives taught from the Bible at Puehutai reached into the physical and meta-physical realms of Māori belief and thought. This influenced new rituals and practices and inspired new moral norms. The people spent days and nights listening, debating and negotiating the biblical narratives, comparing them to their own cultural messages, histories, and philosophical thoughts about the world.

Neither the land court minute books nor Colenso's diaries reveal insights into Whangataua's private thoughts on Colenso's teachings. And so, for the sake of this essay, the oral narrative about Tamatea-ure-haea (Tamatea the circumcised), taken from the corpus of narratives from his tribal region, has been selected to compare to the central gospel narrative about the virgin conception and the birth of Jesus recorded in Luke 1 and 2. Both of these narratives will be given below followed by a discussion on the ancestral process of validation of the traditional narrative and how it applies to the biblical narrative. This will provide a perspective on the thoughts of Whangataua and his contemporaries about Colenso's biblical teachings of Jesus.

Tamatea is an eponymous ancestor in the history of the peoples of the Tākitimu waka. He had three names that remember his exploits as a navigator: Tamatea-mai-tawhiti (Tamatea from afar), Tamatea-pokai-whenua (Tamatea who traveled around the land) and Tamatea-ure-haea (Tamatea the circumcised). His name can be found throughout the North and South Islands of New Zealand in the cultural landscape and is part of the longest placename in New Zealand—Te Taumata-whakatangihanga-koauau-o-Tamatea-turi-pūkākā-piki-maunga-horonuku-pōkai-whenua-ki-tana-tahu (The summit where Tamatea, the man with the big knees, the slider, climber of mountains, the land-swallower who traveled about, played his flute to his loved one) ([The Longest Place Name in New Zealand n.d.](#)). However, it is the name Tamatea-ure-haea that this paper will feature. The following narrative written by Hori Ropiha would have been well-known in the region. While the text mentions key founding ancestors whose genealogies can be traced back into Māori mytho-history, it has a supernatural aspect to it comparable to the virgin conception story, but in a very different context.

Hori Ropiha was the son of Te Ropiha Tākou of Ngāti Parakiore, an adversary of Whangataua, but both are descendants of the ancestor Te Rangi-te-kahutia.⁶ Hori's manuscript writings were sent to Sir George Grey who, along with Eldson Best, published his writings and historical accounts. Hori Ropiha and his generation were the educated and literate sons of warrior chiefs. They recorded in writing the myths, legends, traditions and histories of their tribes that were usually recited orally by the adepts. Comparison of Hori Ropiha's manuscript and those also of Mohi Te Atahikoia of Waimārama reveals that their construction of the narrative is similar. Both being of Ngāti Kahungunu, they recite their tribal narratives beginning with the story of Paikea from Hawaiiki leading to the migration of people onboard the Takitimu voyaging vessel to Aotearoa. They recite the traditions of the navigators and the settlement of Aotearoa, followed by a selection of tribal histories over generations. Their constructed narratives recorded in text form are validated, that is, they demonstrated the truth of their narratives by including the following cultural markers: whakapapa (genealogy), waiata (song), whakataukī (quotations), tapatapa (placenames) and ao tawhito me te ao tipua (natural and supernatural encounters).

Elaborating on these cultural markers, whakapapa (genealogies) in narratives provided the backbone to history, connecting all phenomenal life, human, non-human, living or dead to the world of time and to the storyteller; waiata (songs) included cosmological, mythological, tribal histories and narratives important for connecting to genealogy, history and geography; whakataukī (mnemonic quotations and sayings) were a “vital way of transmitting knowledge and history” in a short concise statement but with “a large sphere of reference” (McRae 2017, p. 81); tapatapa (naming the land) established connection between ancestors, history, geography and the names; and te ao tawhito me te ao tipua (natural and supernatural encounters) recognized the junction between the seen and the unseen realities. These were essential tenets to validate the authenticity and mana of the oral accounts. Without these aspects, the accounts would have little worth and categorized as kōrero tara (fiction).

These tenets are present in both Mohi and Hori Ropiha’s written recitations. It could safely be said that Whangataua and his contemporaries like Karepa Te Hiaro, Te Hirawanu Kaimokopuna, Ropiha Te Tākou, Hauerangi, Paora Rangiwhakaewa and many others, who were all one generation before Mohi and Ropiha’s time, would have applied these same principles of thought to their negotiation of authenticity. It is feasible to consider they would have vigorously debated and tested the validity of the biblical narratives they were hearing based on these same principles.⁷

5. Narrative and Discussion

The two narratives chosen for this comparative study are the conception of Jesus and the account of the ancestors Tamatea-ure-haea and his wife Iwipupu. The biblical account of the conception of Jesus is found in the books of Matthew and Luke in the New Testament. The account from Luke 1:26–38 (NRSVUE) is as follows:

LUKE 1: 26–37.²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth,²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary.²⁸ And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.”^[b]²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.³⁰ The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David.³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”³⁴ Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?”^[c]³⁵ The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born^[d] will be holy; he will be called Son of God.³⁶ And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren.³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God.”³⁸ Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her. (New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVUE) Bible (2021))

Luke Chapter 2 continues the account of the birth of Christ.

LUKE 2:1–7, In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered (LUKE 2: 1–14).² This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.³ All went to their own towns to be registered.⁴ Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David.⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the

guest room.⁸ Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah,^[b] the Lord.¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,^[c] praising God and saying,¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!” (ibid.)

Hori Ropiha’s manuscript opens with the creation narrative of the sky and earth that was separated by Tāne and the making of the first human. This is followed by his version of the saga of Ruatapu and Paiea that leads to the migration of ancestors from Hawaiki to Aotearoa, the waka of Tainui, Te Arawa, Tākitimu and Kurahaupo. Ropiha’s manuscript includes the narratives about founding ancestors like Pou, who brought the kumara, Māhu, Ruawharo and Kupe, and tribal ancestors Te Rangi-te-kahutia and Whatu-i-apiti. These accounts are all confirmed with whakapapa and songs included to accompany the narration. As part of the Tākitimu waka narrative, Hori Ropiha gives an account of his ancestor Tamatea-ure-haea and his wife Iwipupu. This account is as follows:

Ko Tamatea-mai-tawhiti tona ingoa mo tona haramaitanga i Tawhitinui, i Tawhitiroa, i Tawhiti pamamao, i te Hono-i-wairia. Koia a Tamatea-mai-tawhiti; no te haenga i tona ure ka tapaia ko Tamatea-ure-haea no tona mahi haere tonu i Aotearoa, ka tapaina tona ingoa ko Tamatea-pokai-whenua. Ko nga ingoa tenei o tenei tangata o Tamatea.

Ko te take o tenei ingoa o Tamatea-ure-haea. Kotahi ano ta raua wahine ko Rawenga, ko Iwi anake. Ka moe a Iwi raua ko Tamatea a ka ai raua, kaore a Iwi e aue. Na, ka moe a Iwi raua ko Rawenga, a ka ai raua, na ka reka raua i to raua aitanga, na ka aue a Iwi i te reka. Na ka ai ko Iwi raua ko Tamatea na, kaore a Iwi e aue. E pera tonu raua me ta raua wahine. Katahi a Tamatea ka kimi i te take i aue ai ta raua wahine. Na, ka tae ki t era pai, katahi a Tamatea ka ki atu kia Rawenga kia haere raua ki te kaukau, katahi raua ka haere kaukau ana raua, a ka mutu, ka heare aua ki te one tapapapa ai kia manana raua. Ka roa e tapapa ana, katahi a Tamatea ka titiro atu ki tona hoa, a he ure tehe ano hoki tona hoia, koia nei ano e aue nei ta raua wahine i te reka. Ka hoki raua ki te kainga, I te ahiahi katahi ka haea e Tamatea te kiri matamata o tona ure, ka motu, ka takaia ka hoatu ki tona atua kia Uenuku, ka whakairia ki runga ake o te mataao o to ratou whare. I te po katahi a Uenuku ka ai ia Iwi, I rongo noa ake a Tamatea e aue ana a Iwi. Katahi a Tamatea ka uiui atu “E Kui he aha tau e aue nei?” Ka ki atu a Iwi “mehemea nei te ahua o te mea i ai nei maua, ko te mea i whakairiria nei e koe ki te whare nei. Koia ra haere tonu mai nei ki te ai i a au”. Kua mohio a Tamatea ko tona atua ko Uenuku. Heoi aitia tonutia e Uenukurangi ki roto i a Iwi puta tonu mai ko Uenukuwharekuta, na te atua tena o Tamatea i ai ki a Iwi. Na Tamatea i ai ki a Iwi:

Ko Kahungunu

Ko Kahukuranui

Ko Rakaihikuroa

etc. (Ropiha n.d., pp. 16–18)

Translation: Tamatea-mai-tāwhiti, this was his name because of his journeying from Tawhiti-nui, Tāwhiri-roa, Tāwhiti-pāmamao and Te Hono-i-wairua. That was why he was called Tamatea-from-afar. After the cutting of his foreskin, he was called Tamatea-ure-haea (Tamatea who was circumcised). Because he kept traveling around Aotearoa, he was given

the name Tamatea-pōkai-whenua (Tamatea who traveled around the land). These are the names of this man Tamatea.

As for the reason for this name Tamatea-ure-haea: he and Rawenga had but one wife between them, Iwi (Iwipupu). Iwi and Tamatea slept together and when they made love Iwi did not cry out. Now, Iwi and Rawenga slept together, and they made love. They enjoyed their lovemaking and Iwi cried out with pleasure. Now, when Iwi and Tamatea made love Iwi did not cry out. It was always like that with them and their wife.

Then, Tamatea sought the reason their wife cried out. Now, when there came a nice day, Tamatea said to Rawenga that they should go for a swim. Then, they both went swimming. When they finished, they went to lie on the beach to warm up. They lay there a long time. Then, Tamatea looked at his friend and his friend had a circumcised penis.

That was why their wife groaned with pleasure.

They returned to the village. In the evening, Tamatea cut the foreskin of his penis; he severed it, wrapped it up, and offered it to his god Uenuku, suspending it above the window of their house.

At night, Uenuku made love to Iwi. When Tamatea heard Iwi crying out, he asked, “Lady, what are you crying out for?” Iwi said, “It is as if the form of the thing that’s making love to me is the same as the thing which you hung up in the house. That’s what keeps coming to make love to me”. Tamatea knew it was his god, Uenuku. And so Uenuku-rangi kept making love inside Iwi, and there came forth Uenuku-wharekuta; he was conceived through Tamatea’s god making love to Iwi.

Tamatea made love to Iwi and had:

Kahungunu
 Kahukuranui
 Rakaihikuroa
 Hineteraraku
 Rangimatakoha
 Rakaimoari
 Kahukureamango
 Humarie
 Tataiaho
 Tuwairau
 Rakaitekura
 Tumapuhia
 Te Hinurewa
 Te Rautangata
 Awhiawhi
 Te Wharenu
 Te Kukanga
 Whakamarino
 Te Ropiha
 Hori Ropiha⁸

The central convergent idea present in the biblical text of the virgin conception narrative and that of Tamatea-ure-haea is the belief in spirit–human encounters where divine offspring are conceived and birthed into the earthly world. Narratives about human–spirit deity sexual liaisons that produced important offspring was common in Māori society. These stories are not simply a component of narrative construction to create a spicy story, they are regarded as reality. These offspring were revered as uri taniwha (supernatural descendants) or te ringa atua (by the spirit arm) because of their connection to the divine metaphysical realm.

Hori Ropiha’s telling of Tamatea-ure-haea focuses on sexual pleasure, spirit being copulation and conception. In this telling, Iwipupu is sexually satisfied by the attention of Rawenga and not Tamatea, who realizes being circumcised matters. He performs circumcision on himself and dedicates the foreskin from his penis to his god, probably at

his altar, which becomes the pathway for Ueunuku, his full name being Uenuku-rangi, to manifest and copulate with Iwipupu. From this liaison, the offspring Uenuku-wharekuta is conceived and eventually birthed. Another version of this narrative features Tamatea but is associated with his wife Ihu-parapara, a sister to Iwipupu. Here, the spirit of Uenuku enters Tamatea who impregnates Ihu-parapara. A female child is born as a stillborn and taken to the altar. The altar features in both of these narratives to indicate dedication to the deity Uenuku, who gains access to the human realm through the acts of dedication. Uenuku descends from the heavens and takes the stillborn child to the ancestors of the sea to be rejuvenated. The child later returns to her family and is led by Tamatea to the altar to be dedicated, baptized and named Uenuku-titi.⁹

This story contains similar elements in Ropiha's version but differs in that the god Uenuku seems to possess Tamatea to perform intercourse with Ihu-parapara. This version closely follows the pattern of the narrative concerning the demi-god Māui and his unfortunate birth as a stillborn child who is discarded to the sea. When the rejuvenated Māui returns to the family like Uenuku-titi, the baptismal ceremony is performed over Māui but his father falters in the ceremony, leaving Māui unrecognized. The opposite takes place with Uenuku-titi's acceptance at the dedication ceremonies. All of these names, Iwi (Iwipupu), Uenuku-rangi, Uenuku-wharekuta (otherwise known as Uenuku-herekuta), Uenuku-titi and Rongokako (Tamatea's ancestor) are remembered in an ancient oreore (known also as oriori—lullaby song) published by George Grey in 1853. This song is to memorialize a child's ancestry from te ringa atua, a divine lineage of supernatural beings.¹⁰ The divine liaisons spoken about here give Tamatea, Iwipupu and Ihu-parapara significant prominence to those like Whangataua, who claim to be their descendants.¹¹

Narratives on this subject are found in the story of Ohomairangi, the son of the mortal woman Kuraimonoa and the celestial being Pūhaorangi. Ohomairangi is a key ancestor from Rangiatea, who is the ancestor of the Tainui and Te Arawa peoples. In the Ngāti Awa tradition of Kuraimonoa, the wife of Toikairākau, she has a sexual liaison with a celestial being named Tamaiwaho who descends from the heavens. Kuraimonoa conceives and birthed a famous son named Ohomairangi. At Te Reinga near Wairoa on the east coast of the North Island is the tradition of Hinekōrako, a descendant of the spirit tribe of Iwhara. She was a water spirit who married a mortal man named Tānekino and produced a son named Tau-renga, the ancestor of the Ngāti Hinehika tribe ([Te Reinga Maori School 1957](#), pp. 45–46). In these traditions, humans cohabitated with spiritual beings and produced offspring from whom many tribes descended. The notion of liaisons between humans and spirit beings where offspring were produced is a common belief in Māori thought. These traditions were not labeled as superstitious but are part of the ancestral reality of interactions between the spiritual and the physical dimensions.

These types of liaisons between spirit beings and mortal humans, in particular with human women, are found in the Bible. Genesis 6:1–4 gives an account of the sons of god(s) copulating with human women who later gave birth to semi-divine heroes of ancient times. Deane [Gailbraith \(2024\)](#) highlights the correlation of spirit beings in biblical narrative and Māori tradition. Galbraith's focus is on challenging the early NZ missionaries' ideas about biblical monotheism, arguing that the Bible is henotheistic, accepting the existence of gods, or other divine beings, under Yahweh ([Gailbraith 2024](#), pp. 2–3). He cites Genesis 6:1–4, in which the hybrid offspring of sexual liaisons between the sons of God and the daughters of men are Nephilim, who inhabit Israel's legendary founding ages (ibid.). These Nephilim offspring were later identified under the tribal names of Anakim and Rephaim (ibid., pp. 10–11). Galbraith draws comparisons between these semi-divine beings presented in the Old Testament with the tipua demigods in the Māori tribal cosmogonical narratives, highlighting the journey and cycle of stories associated with Tāwhaki as an avenue of interpretation for understanding the biblical narrative (ibid., pp. 11–12). Galbraith claims "Tāwhaki, the Anax, Gilgamesh, and the Nephilim occupy a world of ancient elite heroes conceived in very similar ways across cultures" (ibid., p. 12).

Galbraith is correct that we would miss the cultural importance of “Genesis 6:1–4’s many allusions to this primeval world, however, if we failed to acknowledge the Bible’s affirmation that many gods exist within it” (ibid., p. 19).

The virgin conception narratives written by Luke and Matthew feature this spirit–human interaction that causes the conception and birth of the Messiah. The appearance of an angel, either as a messenger or the presence of God, to announce a birth or conception is found throughout generations in the biblical texts of Ishmael, Isaac, Samson, John the Baptist and Jesus. The naming of the child by the angel signifies the importance of that person in God’s covenantal plan (Beale and Carson 2007, p. 257). The annunciation of the angel to Mary is considered a form of commissioning: an introduction (Luke 1:26–27), confrontation (Luke 1:28–30), the call (Luke 1:31–33), reservation (Luke 1:34), reassurance (Luke 1:35), sign (Luke 1:36–37) and conclusion (Luke 1:38) (ibid., p. 259). She is called “to participate in the unfolding of salvation history by being the mother of Jesus” (ibid.). Mary is mentioned twice here as a virgin, which would make gospel-reading audiences recognize the significance of Isaiah 7:14, that a virgin would give birth to a son and explains “the role and identity of Jesus” (ibid.). The angel enunciates Mary’s child’s divine sonship as the Davidic Messiah bringing forward Psalm 89. It is reiterated also in Matthew 1:1–17. In Luke 1:35, the angel answers Mary’s reservations by explaining how the Holy Spirit will come upon her and the power of the Most High God will overshadow her to conceive a child who will be called the Son of God. This angel’s proclamation alludes to Isaiah 32:15 which has similar wording, “until a spirit from on high is poured out on us” and the Son of God references 2 Sam 7:14, where “the sonship of the Davidic king is affirmed” (ibid.). The child was born in Bethlehem in a manger and the angels appeared to the shepherds later to announce the good news of the birth of a savior in the city of David. Luke’s account hearkens back to the prophet Micah 4–5, whose imagery of shepherding and the reference to Bethlehem evokes a memory of King David tending his father’s sheep in 1 Sam 17:15 (ibid., p. 267). Here, the Davidic Messiah is portrayed “as a ruler born in shepherd-country” (ibid.). This reinforces the coming of a ruler in Israel whose going forth is from ancient times and from the everlasting realm, something referenced also in Matthew 2:6. Significant for this study is the hymn of Mary in Luke 1:46–55, memorializing her situation, a form reminiscent to the song of Hannah in 1 Sam 2:1–10 where God is exalted and looks upon the humble state and reverses the fortunes of the poor (ibid., p. 261). The child’s circumcision, naming and presentation to the temple of the Lord at Jerusalem as written in Luke 2:21–39 is important in the context of this paper.

Both the biblical and Māori narratives evoke past ancestors’ interactions with spiritual encounters. Iwipupu’s encounter is explained in reference to a long spiritual lineage encompassed in the term “te ringa atua” (the spirit arm). The circumstances of Mary’s encounter are reminiscent of numerous other similar accounts found in the Old Testament narratives. Quoting the lineage of the players in both narratives is significant to both worlds: Ropiha quotes his own lineage to Tamatea and Iwipupu while the genealogy of Uenuku-rangi, Uenuku-wharekuta and Uenuku-titi is quoted in the oriori tamariki song. Similarly, the whakapapa of Jesus is quoted by both Luke and Matthew with a different thematic reference to the Messiah in each recitation. Circumcision is mentioned in both narratives. The circumcision of Tamatea was an act to heighten Iwipupu’s sexual pleasure in the first instance and then its ritual significance, when presented to Tamatea’s altar, facilitates the manifestation of the spirit being Uenuku-rangi to enter into the physical relationship. For Jesus, the circumcision and his naming were performed on the eighth day of his life, by custom, to fulfill the demonstration of his people’s everlasting covenant with God. Here, circumcision had historical and ritual significance but not sexual. Ushering the child to the altar also features in both narratives in some form, with Tamatea offering his foreskin to the altar, as already reiterated. In the Ihu-parapara narrative, her dead child is offered at the altar which facilitates Uenuku-rangi coming down to take the child to revive its life. Mary’s child is also taken to the altar in alignment with the law of Moses and

presented at the temple of Jerusalem to dedicate him to the Lord. The altar becomes the place of intersection between the metaphysical realm, the spiritual realm and the physical.

There is a difference between the spiritual encounters presented in the Māori and biblical narratives. The Māori accounts of Tamatea, Iwipupu and Ihu-parapara align more with the Genesis 6:14 text than the virgin conception narrative. The texts concerning the sons of God and Uenuku-rangi are recorded as sexual encounters which are central to the Māori cosmologies of the creation of earth, sky, humanity and flora and fauna, whereas the Holy Spirit's encounter with Mary is immersive from above but not sexual. In Genesis 1, Yahweh speaks things into existence in conjunction with the presence of the Holy Spirit. Sending an angel to announce and declare through the spoken word what is to happen is then empowered through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit and actualized in the natural world.

6. Conclusions: Cultural Intellectual Interrogation

Returning to Whangataua and his contemporaries, in light of the comparative commentary outlined here, when the full narrative of the Christ-child was taught to them, how would they have considered this text in relation to their belief in the story of their ancestors Iwipupu, Uenuku-rangi and Tamatea? Taking into consideration the five aforementioned principles of cultural authenticity, how does the virgin conception of the Messiah Son of God narrative stack up?

- (1) Whakapapa (genealogy): Luke 1 presents human parents involved in the birth of Jesus the Messiah. Reading further into Matthew 1, Jesus' whakapapa places him as a descendant of the first human man and woman, and of King David, just as Māori whakapapa descends from the first made human and the realm of chiefs. Jesus too would be categorized as uri taniwha or te ringa atua.
- (2) Waiata (song): the song of Mary in Luke 2 recorded in the written text along with the worship hymns about Jesus qualifies the merit of this narrative.
- (3) Whakataukī (mnemonic phrases): multiple phrases in Luke's account spoken by the human and supernatural beings which are continually repeated or quoted secures the narrative to memory.
- (4) Tapatapa (naming of place): the mention of real place names such as Israel, Nazareth, Egypt and Bethlehem that exist in the physical landscape of Israel testify to the narrative's authenticity.
- (5) Te ao tawhito me te ao tipua (supernatural being encounter): the Holy Spirit as an active agent involved in the miraculous conception of Jesus, and the presence of angelic beings active before and after the child's birth are supernatural acts that resonate with the Māori worldview.

With all five cultural authenticity principles met in the virgin conception narrative, it is feasible to believe, based on the Māori validation process postulated here, that Whangataua and those elders in his tribal sphere of influence would have found a strong resonance with the gospel narrative and accepted it. By traditional principles of truth, the virgin birth would have been seen as authentic. I believe divine accommodation, empowered by the Holy Spirit, was also at play in this conversation between the gospel narrative and Māori tradition and the realm of interpretation. The convergence of ideas based on similarity was an essential aspect of mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge systems), where often diverse entities with seemingly no connection are paired together because of their similarity of morphology, behavior, texture, or seasonal activities. Here, we have narratives that have a semblance of thought and belief even though they are from completely different cultural contexts. Luke's gospel text, the narrative and its inherent associated beliefs, were enabled by divine accommodation within the context of Māori tradition to find resonance and validation with 19th century Māori ancestors.

Whangataua was part of a warrior society where every wrong had to be paid for. He would have witnessed the techniques of technology of war change from wood to steel and from hand-to-hand combat to the Musket Wars. Continual war and exile needed a

reprieve. In the 1830s, with the impact of the Musket Wars and disease, northern rangatira began to seek an alternative life to continued warfare. They found that alternative in the missionary-taught values of peace and civil order under law (Head 2001, pp. 99–103). The narratives of the gospel couched in peace-orientated Christianity were cause for great debate amongst 19th century Māori who were battle weary. This led to peace, baptism and a change in allegiance to the Christian God in the hope of finding a biblically based civil society (Head 2006, pp. v–vi, 9–10). Whangataua and his contemporaries Te Hirawanu Kaimokopuna of Puehutai and Karepa Te Hiaro of Te Hāwera lived in this era. They too would have all intellectually negotiated the biblical narratives and their implications for their personal lives and the lives of their people in this world. It is in this context all three of these rangatira were baptized, a decision that would not have been taken lightly. The chiefs' understandings of baptism would have been shaped by the ceremonial processes of the tohi ceremony for newborn children and adult warriors, who were dedicated to the traditional deities, and, in particular, those associated with war. The chiefs would have understood the tohi as a ceremony of allegiance to a deity for a particular purpose—mostly war (Mead 2003, pp. 299–300, 368). Christian baptism would have been viewed similarly, as an allegiance shift to the deity of Jesus Christ. To decide on such an allegiance would have meant a shift towards the belief of the new divine narrative.

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Notes

- ¹ Mohi Te Atahikoia private MS, a copy held by the author, and Evidence of Karaitiana Takamoana in the [Waikopiro Land Court Minute Book](#) (1889).
- ² [Bagnall and Petersen](#) (1948, pp. 177 image caption, 190). The mission station was presumed to be near the junction of the Waitangi and Ngaruroro Rivers.
- ³ [Waikopiro Minute Books \(Waikopiro MB\)](#) (1889, pp. 187–97, 201). The following genealogy shows the relationship between Whangataua, Hauerangi and Tamanoho. Hauerangi and Tamanoho were brothers. They were the sons of Hitiwaru and Hoewaka. Their genealogy is given here from the Rangitāne leader Turake who had Hineaotonga and Kapa. Kapa had Nganahau who had Hitiwaru who had Hauerangi and Tamanoho. Kapa's elder sister Hineaotonga had Te Whakaihirangi who had Te Opekai who had Iwikaingata who had Whangataua.
- ⁴ Personal comment to the Maaka family by Rangitāne tribal elder Manahi Paewai at Puehutai Pā, Manawatū, February 2022. Evidence of Inia Whangataua. [Waikopiro Minute Books \(Waikopiro MB\)](#) (1889, p. 204).
- ⁵ Ibid. Diary entry for 18 March, 1850 at Pahawa village.
- ⁶ The genealogy that connects Whangataua and Hori Ropiha is as follows: Te Rangitekahutia had Pakuku who had Te Tuatahi who had Te Anahunahuna who had Poti, who had Hori Ropiha. This lineage is recorded in Hori Ropiha's manuscript on p. 121. Whangataua's line is as follows: Te Rangitekahutia had Tatahu who had Te Rangihoutihi (also known as Te Rangiwhitiki) who had Tohungaio who had Whangataua who had Maaka Whangataua who had Aritaku Maaka who had Te Korana Maaka who had Sandra the mother of the author. Maaka Family records.
- ⁷ See also ([Falloon 2014](#), pp. 129–34). Here, Malcolm Falloon profiles the conversion of Christian Rangi and his negotiation to (1) know the identity, name, and thus the genealogy of the new God; (2) find out where this God lives; (3) understand if this God have the mana (power and authority) over the Māori world which he tests by planting two gardens for the new God to prove his jurisdiction over the bounty of the earth; (4) seek an audience with the new God in the dream world. These points of negotiation by Christian Rangi are culturally in line with the validation points discussed in this paper.
- ⁸ Author's translation.
- ⁹ [Best](#) (1976, pp. 406–7). url: <https://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Bes01Reli-t1-back-d1-d8.html> (accessed on 10 July 2024). For the English translation of this account see pp. 195–97.
- ¹⁰ [Grey](#) (1853, p. 186), Nzetc Victoria University version, URL: <https://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-GreKong-c1-226.html> (accessed on 10 July 2024).

- ¹¹ The following is a lineage from Tamatea to Whangataua. Beginning with Rongokako, he is the father of Tamatea who married Iwipupu and had Kahungunu who had Kahukuranui who had Rakaipaaka who had Tutekanao who had Tureia who had Te Huki who had Puruaute who had Te Kahuoterangi who had Wainohu who had Ngapotakirau who had Te Tarewha who had Mawete who had Te Kitea who had Parikoau who had Iwikaingata who had Whangataua. Cited from unpublished papers in the Maaka Collection held by the author.

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