

REGAINING AUTHORITY: SETTING THE AGENDA IN MAORI HERITAGE THROUGH THE CONTROL AND SHAPING OF DATA

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There is an air of conflict to any discussion on the heritage of now minority indigenous groups colonised by the West. Indigenous assertions of ownership are fuelled with the grief of dispossession of places, traditions and ancestral remains. They are shrouded with historical, and sometimes ongoing, impoverishment of peoples. If a discussion concerning indigenous heritage does not directly express a tension, then the chances are that it is reporting a new initiative implicit in which is the recent resolution of a past pain. Over fifteen years ago Layton's *Conflict In Archaeology of Living Traditions* showed a recognition of the failure of outside research interests to match the concerns of indigenous communities, and the belief by some that the only resolution to the issues was indigenous people taking control over access to their own past.¹ In the pursuit of such control the interests and values of the indigenous and non-indigenous parties are often contested in a framework of rights – indigenous rights, human rights, property rights, perhaps native title, and, particularly in New Zealand, 'Treaty rights'. In introducing discussion over fifteen years ago that critiqued a narrow and supposedly empirical biological treatment of Indian remains in America, Layton notes that 'within the data lies part of the evidence that indigenous burials belong to an alternative cultural tradition. The issue... is one of the right to cultural self-determination, to religious freedom, not the suppression of the objectivity.'²

It is clear from this that the contest for authority over heritage values is often principled and theoretical. This article develops the view that the control of heritage hinges equally on the practical matter of having access to and the ability to shape the data. Such information allows the knowledgeable party to set the agenda for the heritage item, regardless of any principled statements and claims. It is suggested here that traction for indigenous peoples in determining the future of their cultural treasures comes with securing that data. Only then are they able to reset it in a way that recognises their cultural values and priorities, and a way that most appropriately serves the future of their culture. This idea is explored here through a historical review of the work of Ngai Tahu, a Maori tribe of the

South Island of New Zealand firstly considering koiwi tangata (tribal human remains) held in museum collections, and the secondly, Ngai Tahu's rich rock art heritage. In the course of a twenty-year career in Maori heritage management, I have had an active hand in both the series of events case studied. The historical approach adopted in this discussion loosely mirrors my professional involvement in the sector and any observation not otherwise referenced in the following is drawn from my own experience of the event.

KOIWI TANGATA: HUMAN BONES

Introducing current discussions on the archaeology of indigenous people, Smith and Wobst note that still 'Without a doubt, the area of greatest contention and potential for conflict is the treatment of the dead'.³ The furore over the 'Ancient One'/'Kennewick Man'⁴ demonstrates how this issue can remain a persistent barrier to resolving relationships between archaeology, museums and the indigenous peoples. A decade and half earlier some American Indians were engaged in the intergenerational training of tribes people in preparation for 'a very long war against those enemies who seek to destroy Indian religious practices, customs, and traditions.'⁵ At the same time in New Zealand archaeologists had long been felt by Maori to endanger the dead, but attitudinal shifts were afoot among both tribes and the heritage sector⁶. Even by 1985 when I started with the National Museum of New Zealand, the Maori human remains had already been removed from display. This reflected a respect for Maori values regarding the display of ancestral remains that was already entrenched in the New Zealand museum curators of the day, although it did not then extend to the display of other human remains including those of Egypt and some other Pacific islands.⁷ Then the focus of activity regarding Maori human remains were efforts by the staff and late Maui Pomare to quietly repatriate to New Zealand some of the moko mokai (preserved heads) that had been taken from New Zealand during the colonial period.

It was also about that time that some New Zealand museums holding human remains relevant to Ngai Tahu introduced new or revised policies on such collections including the then National Museum (1988), Canterbury Museum (1991) and the Southland Museum and Art Gallery (1988). A feature common among these museum policies was that any action on koiwi tangata would be at the discretion of the respective museum director.⁸ This was intended to recognise the high level consideration demanded by the sensitivity of the issue to Maori who would also be consulted in the course of any development. Despite this shift to formally accounting for Maori cultural values, the museum policies were inherently written from a museum perspective and avoided the most fundamental of concerns of Maori. These were that, firstly, the decisions over the remains were not being made by those with an ancestral cultural connection to the deceased and, secondly, that the ongoing holding of bones in museum collections continued the desecration of the original burial.

At about the same time Otago Museum in Dunedin initiated a review of its policy on human remains and initiated consultation with Ngai Tahu towards this. Rather than see another museum policy developed that pulled up short on the tribal values, local Ngai Tahu encouraged Otago Museum to hold back while the tribe developed its own policy statement. The idea of developing such a tribal policy was promoted to the 1991 annual tribal gathering with the result that a committee responsible to the tribal council, Te Runanganui o Tahu,⁹ was established to tackle the task. The committee membership included Ngai Tahu professionally involved in museums and archaeology as well as members dealing with koiwi tangata at a grass-roots level at runanga (local tribal organisations). It was therefore able to ensure that the policy clearly addressed issues of concern to museums and anthropology, as well as other matters internal to the Tribe. Three years in the making, *Koiwi Tangata: Te wawata o Ngai Tahu e pa ana ki nga taoka koiwi o nga tupuna* aimed to give full expression to the Tribe's cultural values without being unduly constrained by the interests of museums. It made some blunt statements including:

2.0.1: The only group of people who have the right to manage the [Ngai Tahu] human remains identified below is the tribal authority of Ngai Tahu whanui.

2.0.2: ...The implementation of this policy must ensure the return of any of our koiwi tangata to our kaitiakitanga [guardianship] and to a location within our tribal rohe [territory].

2.0.3: Ngai Tahu whanui has a clear preference that wherever possible koiwi tangata in situ should not be disturbed and that the integrity of the burial remains intact.

2.0.4: ... numerous of our koiwi tangata have been removed from burial and have found their way into public, and possibly private, collections. The iwi [tribe] considers the collecting and possession of our koiwi tangata by anyone other than ourselves as abhorrent and culturally insensitive in the extreme.

2.4.13: In respect of koiwi tangata currently held in collections and where reburial is the preferred option...¹⁰

The committee identified three general goals with regard to museums that must result from implementation of the policy:

Authority and control over the bones of our tupuna [(ancestors)] must be re-vested in the tribe and not maintained by museums.

Were academic research on koiwi tangata to continue it must be on terms sensitive and accountable to the tribe.

Wahi Tapu (designated rooms) operated under tribal authority should be formed in selected museums to facilitate the management and research of koiwi tangata.¹¹

The policy was formally adopted by the tribal council in 1993 and was intended as a starting point for negotiations with the museums. It gave careful attention to practical management issues such as storage of bones and identifying the legitimate tribal connection to particular bones. It was hoped that this would allow discussions with museums to focus on the key question which was whether or not the tribal remains should be returned to tribal control. This was the question Te Runanganui o Tahu presented to a meeting of southern regional museums at Arowhenua Marae with an expectation of hard negotiations to follow. What followed was entirely unexpected.

Subsequent to the gathering, in a landmark decision for New Zealand museums, the Southland Museum revised its own policy in favour of the tribal aspirations noting that the 'Southland Museum and Art Gallery acknowledges the Ngai Tahu policy on Koiwi Tangata of June 1993 and agrees to place its research collection of Maori human remains under Ngai Tahu management and authority...'.¹² As part of Southland Museum's new policy therefore, a wahi tapu for koiwi tangata was to be constructed within the non-public storage area. In advising the tribe of the acceptance of Ngai Tahu policy, the Museum sought direction as to how the wahi tapu room should be set up. The tribe was totally unprepared for this and was at a loss without having any clear understanding of the quantum and detailed nature of the collections held. This was perhaps the first inkling of the fact that authority over any remains could only be realised with a clear appreciation of the data associated to the koiwi. As it was, the Tribe was dependent on the advice and good services of the Museum staff to effect the new arrangements. The wahi tapu was formally dedicated by Iwi in a special ceremony on 14 February 1994. One of the most contentious issues within Maori-museum relationships had been addressed in Southland.¹³

It is doubtful that the stance of the medium sized Southland Museum set a benchmark that the major museums felt compelled to rise to. The managerial attitudes of Otago and Canterbury Museums were already generally favourable towards the Ngai Tahu propositions, but the proactive approach of their small southern counterpart may have helped galvanise the readiness with which the tribal policy was accepted. Whatever the case, in July 1994 the Otago Museum Trust Board agreed in substance to the Tribe's policy position and established a wahi-tapu room under tribal authority in August of that year¹⁴. The small voluntary run Clyde Historical Museum contacted the tribe asking if it would receive a Maori skull that had been found locally and placed in the Museum's care. The then

Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (previously National Museum of New Zealand, now Te Papa) accepted the policy position of the Tribe but sought to defer a return of the bones due to the intense redevelopment it was undergoing. Nonetheless, it responded to Tribal prodding and prioritised the return of Ngai Tahu bones held in Wellington which were mostly received into the Otago Museum wahi tapu in March 1998¹⁵. Canterbury Museum and the Ngai Tahu runanga in that region had operated in line with the policy for some years although it wasn't formally accepted by that Museum until September 1998. This left one collection outstanding, that of the Anatomy Department of the University of Otago. It was the biggest.

The Anatomy Department acknowledged aspects of the iwi policy but wanted to have a wahi tapu established in that institution. The wish to retain the bones in that institution was at odds with the tribal preference for a single wahi tapu in Dunedin based at the Otago Museum. It also cast a doubt among tribal members as to the fullness of tribal authority that would be realised. At that time the wider University of Otago engaged in a Treaty of Waitangi audit which reviewed the institution's overall relationship with Maori. Discussions with the Anatomy Department went on hold during this process, but a concern to see the re-vesting of the ancestral remains was a key part of tribal submissions to those conducting the audit. Over this period the Tribe also put on hold developments around the management future of koiwi held in the other museums so as not to unduly influence discussion with University of Otago. At the conclusion of the Treaty audit a return of koiwi to the tribe was negotiated with the University which included an opportunity for the Anatomy Department to ensure current research projects were completed. The team from the Anatomy Department then worked with the tribe to transfer several hundred koiwi to the nearby wahi tapu at Otago Museum in May 2003.

At this point Ngai Tahu had gained authority over all the koiwi tangata it knew of being held in New Zealand public museums. The Tribe had simply stated its position. In some cases it did not even have to wait for response, and in some it simply had to wait politely for a while. Even where the tribal position was not fully accepted in the first instance, nor was it vehemently contested – at least not to the Tribe – and after a slightly more prolonged wait the bones were returned to tribal care. Whatever the case, it is noteworthy that the terse relations, hard negotiations and painful conflict that might have been expected didn't eventuate. Ngai Tahu got the bones back without a fight.

Despite the apparent position of authority the Runanga now had over almost 900¹⁶ registered human remains, any action or decision making was still dependent on the advice of museum staff which in itself was shaped by nature of information available to them. All the information accompanying the bones had been collected and structured in a way to suit the museum curatorial and research needs. It did not at all reflect how Runanga would either think about the bones or be able to make decisions concerning their future. In June 2004 I was engaged by the Tribe to facilitate a number of regional meetings to progress

Runanga management of the koiwi tangata. It was immediately recognised that before the Runanga could set in train culturally appropriate management processes the data associated with all the koiwi had to be reconfigured into tribally meaningful categories. The two areas of particular concern were the geographical information about the source of the bones and the description of body parts.

The tribal policy is clear that 'Koiwi tangata which can be provenanced to within a runanga rohe [territory] should be dealt with by the runanga concerned'.¹⁷ At a conceptual level the idea of assigning a guardian to specific remains based on a correlation of a museum recorded provenance with a geographically detailed tribal district is easy. At a practical level it is fraught with difficulty. In the first instance those making the correlation need to know in detail the different territories. In the case of Ngai Tahu's eighteen runanga, these boundaries are generally clearly defined near the coast but loosely defined further inland. In some cases this leads to multiple Runanga sharing interests as a result of the lack of definition, such as in the upper reaches of the Waitaki River. Such shared interests are not always agreed and even within the last decade there are several cases of neighbouring runanga contesting territories in inland Canterbury, the West Coast and regarding Stewart Island. In addition to this there are also areas that are traditionally recognised as places of shared interest among multiple Runanga such as Central Otago where nine of the eighteen are recognised as having mana (authority). Navigating these issues is necessary as the policy states that 'Provincial, and remains with a wider provenance, should be dealt with by the collective runanga concerned'.¹⁸

Having identified the appropriate interest in a formal sense, there are further factors that need to be accounted for. For example, under the policy a runanga has an equal responsibility for all the Ngai Tahu bones found in its area, but there is a reality that those known to have come from the immediate vicinity of the marae (traditional community centre), or a known graveyard are likely to strike a more emotive cord than others that were unexpectedly found in far reaches of the territory where the Runanga are not active on a daily basis. Notwithstanding that, different families within a Runanga may also feel more strongly about koiwi from localities where they have a more intense family association.

Another challenge is simply accurately matching museum provenance ascriptions to actual places. In the course of history place names change and what once was commonly known is now forgotten. This dogs museum records despite New Zealand's relatively short post-colonial history. The difficulties are exacerbated by multiple uses of the same place name. For example, the name Kaik, meaning home or village, is used to refer to several different places around the Otago coast. Added to this may be poor spelling, unclear handwriting, a neglect to clarify the region of a specific locality or only a note of the regional provenance of a find. In this context it may be difficult for Runanga to establish a koiwi's provenance with sufficient confidence to allow for long term or definitive decisions on the future of the particular bones.

The second issue to be addressed with the data derived from museum catalogues was the manner in which body parts were described. At a simple level the scientific terminology adopted in some catalogues, and particularly that from the Anatomy Department, required translation into common English terminology. At a different level, there is an issue of the different tapu (sacredness) associated with different body parts. A broad theoretical position is that any part of an ancestor should be dealt with as if it is the ancestor. This would mean that all body parts will be managed with the same regard. Yet the emotional response is markedly different when dealing with a whole skeleton rather than a single limb bone. This difference is more accentuated when a toe phalange is considered in comparison to a skull given the very sacred nature of a person's head in Maori culture. Accordingly the data was reconfigured for the tribal meetings into simple categories of (i) a part, being one or a few bones; (ii) skull, being the head of a person and; (iii) skeleton, being the representation of a whole person.

With the data so reconfigured into these body part groupings and into culturally relevant geographic areas, the participants of the tribal meetings were able to pursue discussions with a clear focus on the issues at hand. They could see how many of the collections they might relate to as particular individuals as represented by whole skeletons and by skulls. They were clear as to which bones were from their immediate home areas and those that were from further a field for which responsibility may be shared with neighbouring Runanga. Equally importantly, it became clear that it is not known at all where almost 200 of the koiwi under tribal management were actually from. If cultural practice demanded the reburial of the bones, then the nature and scale of the task was becoming apparent.

Pragmatic discussions followed on whether or not isotopic analysis of the bones should be undertaken in an attempt to identify the general source of the koiwi in order that they may be re-interred closer to the ancestors' origins. Here some tribal members considered the benefits of getting the bones closer to their home outweighed the negativity associated with intrusive analysis. A point of interest raised at the meeting held in Christchurch was an idea that perhaps unlocalised bones could be kept for research but that those of known provenance should be reburied. This particular suggestion came from an individual renowned in the tribe for his strong adherence to matters of tikanga (appropriate cultural practice). Tribal members felt confident raising such suggestions as they could clearly see where their discussion was going and why.

The koiwi tangata provide a case study of a process that has gone through all the stages of the assertion of authority, the reclamation of the heritage value and the reconfiguration of the associated information so that the heritage can now be managed in a manner that reflects the culture it is a part of. In this sense the very real control and authority over the heritage is now with the Tribe. The transitional process has been different in regards to Ngai Tahu's rock art heritage but, as illustrated in the following case study, the management and shaping of data remains pivotal.

ROCK ART

Ngai Tahu had historically been separated from a lot of its rock art heritage when lands on which the art was mostly found were alienated and access to the local resources denied through the colonial process.¹⁹ Accordingly even though the vast majority of New Zealand's rock art is found within the tribal area of Ngai Tahu, and depictions of horses and western sailing ships clearly demonstrate that it continued into the historical period, painting and carving the rocks did not survive as a 'living tradition' into the modern era. By the mid 1980's South Island Maori rock art had long been considered primarily as a subject of archaeological and museological interest.²⁰ While the local branch committees of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust were actively fencing some publicly accessible rock art shelters a greater trust of the Pakeha (NZ European) scholars and curators was developing among southern Maori.²¹ In 1988 the National Museum together with the Manawatu Art Gallery curated a touring exhibition of Ngai Tahu rock art that included some pieces that had earlier been removed from sites by previous generations of collectors and large photographic panels of some particularly spectacular rock art motifs. Tipene O'Regan, the then Chairman of the Ngai Tahu Maori Trust Board, wrote the foreword to exhibition catalogue while Atholl Anderson, a Ngai Tahu archaeologist, contributed an essay emphasising that the rock paintings appeared to be the intentionally allusive as to their meaning. Despite these tribal contributions to the endeavour the exhibition remained a museum, rather than a tribally, organised and driven affair.

Heralding a change in the future of rock art management, Anderson's article raised the concern that research was obstructed by 'the lack of any comprehensive catalogue of the South Island rock drawings' and that 'it was a project worthy of proper funding before sheep, vandals and acid rain finish off what is left after the natural fading and exfoliation of the shelter walls'.²² He himself convened a meeting of interested rock art researchers to foster community buy into a pilot project. With funding from the 1990's Commission and New Zealand Historic Places Trust he then engaged a local archaeologist, Brian Allingham, as the field worker and got the project underway.

Allingham's pilot study in North Otago had astonishing results. There was a 300% increase in the number of recorded sites, and a considerable increase in the number of unrecorded motifs found in already documented shelters²³. As Anderson moved to a new position in Australia he encouraged a gathering of tribal leaders to explore the possibility of Ngai Tahu formally adopting the management of the project. Te Runanganui o Ngai Tahu accepted this recommendation and in June 1993 the ongoing survey formally became a tribal programme. This was first time the Tribe had ever taken responsibility for a project of this nature, and it faced serious funding challenges from the outset. This time preceded any settlement of the Ngai Tahu land claim and the major tribal energy and funding needed to be prioritised towards the completion of that claim. The results of the pilot study were used to demonstrate the merits of the project and thus contributed to successful sponsorship bid to the Energy

Corporation and the New Zealand Lottery Grants Board. This funding saw the project through its initial years and until Ngai Tahu, in a post land claim settlement position, could afford to pick it up more of the costs.

A turning point in the management of the rock art heritage came about a decade ago. The tribal survey was underway and had continued to have success in identifying further sites. The profile the survey gained, although not huge in national terms, was sufficiently high in the small circles of rock art enthusiasts that the Tribe came to be recognised as having the most up to date understanding of the rock art heritage. Through some tribal publications and programmes more tribal members became conscious of this aspect of their heritage. The largely non-Maori heritage organisations and landowners who had previously been leading the way in rock art heritage welcomed a greater Maori participation and increasingly sought to engage with Maori before acting. Whereas some tribal members had had an occasional air of resentment about others in the community undertaking initiatives on the rock art without an adherence to tribal values, a growing recognition of tribal authority over the heritage saw runanga actively consulted with and more directly involved in the activity themselves. An example of this was Te Runanga o Moeraki's active role with the New Zealand Historic Places Trust in the redevelopment of caging and visitor facilities at the Takiroa rock art site in the Waitaki Valley. Such was the shift in attitude that there was minimal community resistance, and none directly expressed to the local runanga, when the Tribe successfully looked to have the management of the historic reserve at Takiroa and another nearby rock art shelter at Maerewhenua re-vested in the Tribe as part of the 1998 land claim settlement.²⁴

From 1999 Ngai Tahu undertook several studies towards setting up a rock art centre that would be both a visitor attraction and a base for its rock art management programmes. The ongoing funding required proved prohibitive so the tribe decided not to proceed with the centre at that time, but did favour the formation of a rock art trust as vehicle for advancing various projects. The Trust was established at the end of 2002 and became fully operational with the appointment of a rock art curator in July 2003. Its roles are to continue the ongoing rock art site survey and monitoring work, promote the preservation of the art, develop relevant education programmes and ensure Ngai Tahu people are culturally enriched by this heritage. Although only three years old and with most projects still in development, there are already some key factors emerging of interest to the current discussion. Firstly, the Trust and the local runanga who support it are widely recognised in the community as driving the rock art agenda. For example, whilst Ngai Tahu rejected the rock art visitor centre development on costs, several people and bodies in the South Canterbury area are enthusiastic about such a centre and are confident they can secure the funding for it.

Technically these groups, or an entrepreneur among them, could establish such a centre themselves. Instead they have petitioned the Rock Art Trust to

undertake further feasibility studies and have provided considerable energy, support and finances to the Trust to help achieve a successful outcome. Secondly, while there is a community expectation that all people will benefit from the efforts of the Trust, there is also recognition that it has a priority focus on achieving outcomes for Ngai Tahu tribal members. Where once the focus on the rock art was a scholastic study of 'ancient remnants from the remote past... seen as part of an academically imposed reference as primitive, early forms of expression', now ensuring educational, employment and contemporary cultural opportunities for future generations of Ngai Tahu is accepted as an inherent part of the ongoing engagement with this heritage. Indeed some of the current funding for the rock art centre study is conditional upon such outcomes.

Thirdly, and despite the favourable political environment highlighted in the above, the major restraint upon the Rock Art Trust in realising its goals is the current nature of the knowledge base underpinning its work. The survey data upon which the credibility of Trust has largely been founded remains in the archaeological format in which it has been recorded. As such it is a rich resource for archaeologists and conservators, but probably wouldn't generate much enthusiasm in any wider audience. What the motifs represent, how they relate to each other and the space they are in are all things further archaeological research will expand upon drawing from the data in its current format. Yet the interests of tribal members and groups are seldom that restricted. Whilst ensuring the archaeological integrity of the information, the overall data needs to be reframed into a rich cultural reference base that reflects how Ngai Tahu people are likely to engage in the heritage in a living context.

Reconfiguring the information may include integrating other aspects of the environment such as trails, resource areas, rivers and other special sites towards multifaceted local landscapes that Maori relate to. Maori also think in terms of landscapes that bring together geographically dispersed places based on their common cultural significance.²⁵ This is evident in the collections of place names that derive from particular Maori traditions to form oral maps, such as that of Kupe, an early Polynesian explorer to come to New Zealand.²⁶ This is akin to the notion of a contextual cultural landscape such as Stoffle et al have proffered for the late nineteenth century revivalist Ghost Dance movement among American Indians and to which Paiute rock art in Kanbab Creek, Arizona, has been associated.²⁷ A suggestion that the Maori prophet Te Maiharoa conducted ceremonies that may have related to rock art²⁸ may build towards a similar local example.

The reshaping of the information is not just about how the rock art is integrated into a Maori view of the past. Arising from that view is how the art is relevant to future tribal initiatives. For example, as Ngai Tahu's cultural renaissance continues to unfold some tribal members may one day look to restart the marking of places in the landscape. Given that the practice has not been continued for over a century, some commentators may be dubious about the cultural integrity of such a development. The same doubt may have been raised

at times in regards to the revival in ta moko (tattooing) and in the playing of traditional Maori musical instruments. Yet these and other revived features of performing arts have over the last decade become well recognised and celebrated aspects of contemporary Maori culture. In this light it is not unfathomable to think that the next generation of Ngai Tahu may re-engage in the practice of rock art. The key issue will be whether the archaeological survey information has been reshaped into a resource base capable of enthusing and informing such a future rather than one limited to another generation of archaeological scrutiny alone.

DISCUSSION

The processes of regaining authority over koiwi tangata and rock art heritage has differed significantly. Ngai Tahu's authority in rock art management is underpinned by the information it now holds, albeit not yet configured for Runanga use. In contrast it was an assertion of rights that saw the human remains in museums re-vested in the Tribe. Having reshaped the associated data, Ngai Tahu are now in a position of decision making authority in regards to koiwi tangata. It is worth noting that despite the heightened cultural sensitivity and emotion that surrounds human remains, they are perhaps the most straightforward part of Maori cultural heritage to address. There are no competing commercial or private property rights. The collections are numerically small being in the hundreds, not thousands. The rationales for both scientific and tribal assessments of significance are reasonably straight forward.

Two major observations can be drawn from the case studies. Firstly, the confrontation that Ngai Tahu might have expected regarding these two examples never really eventuated. There wasn't a great struggle of reclamation in which the Tribe had to endure a terse conflict over ownership. This is not to suggest though, that the management of Maori heritage has been free of such struggles. Allen documents several cases in relation to archaeological and wahi tapu values.²⁹ Ngai Tahu once lead court action in an unsuccessful attempt to stop an ethnologist publishing what many thought was a dubious book on Maori carving.³⁰

Local runanga in Dunedin did not have to fight the fight, but they certainly benefited from the shift in museum attitude that evolved as Ngati Awa of the North Island contested, and eventually won, the ownership and return of their carved meeting house Mataatua. There have, then, been episodes in Maori heritage management that are quite rightly described as 'conflicts'. More recently, however, the greater shift within the professional heritage sector has been one of Maori rights and values associated with tribal heritage increasingly being recognised. Whilst this gives a sense of progress, in the same way as the tussle for the remains of The Ancient One/Kennewick Man has set back the sense of trust that had been emerging between American Indians and archaeologists under NAGPRA,³¹ so the conflict in New Zealand over the *Foreshore and Seabed Act* 2004 demonstrated how shallow progress based on notions of rights can be. The inability of intellectual property law to protect indigenous cultural rights sees

new encroachments on Maori heritage from both industries looking for new branding opportunities and 'New Age' groups eclectically re-crafting traditional cultures into contemporary lifestyles.

Following this, the second observation that can be drawn from the case studies is a confirmation that securing culturally relevant data is as crucial as any 'fight for rights' Maori might have to engage in to recover authority over their heritage. This idea applies to a broad array of heritage values including the management of written and photographic archives, cultural sites, natural resources of cultural significance and artefact collections in museums. Te Papa's National Services³² has funded several partnership initiatives aimed at documenting museum holdings relevant to particular Maori groups. Registering places special or sacred to Maori under the Historic Places Act 1993 involves a research and documentation process in which the tribes articulate the significance of a place or landscape in Maori terms. Ngai Tahu in Otago have initiated the development of a cultural resource inventory that builds up site and landscape information within the local runanga. Through these kinds of initiatives Maori are increasingly having heritage information reframed into data sets relevant to them. The adage 'knowledge is power' resonates loudly in this discussion, yet 'knowing' the data requires a commitment of time and opportunity for tribes people to develop an intimate understanding of the treasures. There are then significant and long term resource implications.

In regard to Ngai Tahu's rock art and koiwi tangata, the 'battle' over recognition has been resolved without too much 'battling'. Over the next few years it will be interesting to see if the same result follows a reconfiguration of the heritage data in the more contested areas of sites on both private and public land, and the artefacts that are among the principal attractions of many museum galleries. If so, Maori will be better equipped to set the agenda for Maori heritage and ensure the treasures remain relevant to the culture of which they are a part.

ENDNOTES

¹ Robert Layton (ed), *Conflict in the Archaeology of Living Traditions*, Unwin Hyman, London, 1989, p12.

² *ibid*, p15.

³ Claire Smith and H Martin Wobst, Decolonizing archaeological theory and practice, in Claire Smith and H Martin Wobst (eds), *Indigenous Archaeologies, Decolonizing Theory and Practice*, Routledge, Oxon, 2005, p9.

⁴ For example see Darby Stapp and Julia Longenecker, pp.171-184, and Joe Watkins, pp189-203, in Claire Smith and H Martin Wobst (eds), *Indigenous Archaeologies, Decolonizing Theory and Practice*, Routledge, Oxon, 2005.

⁵ Jan Hammil and Robert Cruz, Statement of American Indians Against Desecration before the World Archaeological Congress, in Robert Layton (ed), *Conflict in the Archaeology of Living Traditions*, Unwin Hyman, London, 1989, p195.

⁶ Stephen O'Regan, Maori Control of Maori Heritage, in Peter Gathercole (ed.), *The Politics of the Past*. One World Archaeology Vol. 12, Unwin Hyman, London, 1990, p100.

⁷ At the time the National Museum displayed a complete skeleton in a 'paupers grave' adjacent to an Egyptian mummy and a Fijian skull was included in an animal bone exhibit.

⁸ Karl Gillies and Gerard O'Regan, Murihiku Resolution of Koiwi Tangata Management, *New Zealand Museums Journal*, vol 24, no 1, 1994, p30.

⁹ At the time 'Te Runanganui o Tahu', now named 'Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu'.

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- ¹⁰ *Koiwi Tangata: te wawata o Ngai Tahu e pa ana ki nga taoka koiwi o nga Tupuna, The Policy of Ngai Tahu concerning the human remains of our ancestors*, Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu, Christchurch, 1993.
- ¹¹ Karl Gillies and Gerard O'Regan, 'Murihiku Resolution of Koiwi Tangata Management', *New Zealand Museums Journal*, vol 24, no 1, 1994, p30.
- ¹² *ibid*, p31.
- ¹³ *ibid*.
- ¹⁴ Pers.comm. Dimitri Anson, Otago Museum, 12/12/2005.
- ¹⁵ Pers.comm. Dimitri Anson, Otago Museum, 12/12/2005.
- ¹⁶ A list of 898 koiwi was compiled by the author in June 2004 based on the records provided to Ngai Tahu Development Corporation by the Anatomy Department and the Canterbury, Otago and Southland Museums. This figure does not differentiate between the number of individuals bones under an entry, with some entreaties being a single bone and others being complete skeletons.
- ¹⁷ *Koiwi Tangata: te wawata o Ngai Tahu e pa ana ki nga taoka koiwi o nga Tupuna, The Policy of Ngai Tahu concerning the human remains of our ancestors*, Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu, Christchurch, 1993, par 2.4.7.
- ¹⁸ *ibid*, par 2.4.8.
- ¹⁹ Gerard O'Regan, 'The history and future of New Zealand Maori Rock Art', *Before Farming* 2003/1, p286.
- ²⁰ Tipene O'Regan, 'Ka Tuhituhi o Nehera', in *Ka Tuhituhi o Nehera, Drawings of Ancient Times*, National Museum of New Zealand Te Whare Taonga o Aotearoa and Manawatu Art Gallery, 1988.
- ²¹ *ibid*.
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- ²⁹ Harry Allen, *Protecting Historic Places in New Zealand*, University of Auckland, Auckland, 1998, pp.41-42.
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- ³² Te Papa is New Zealand's national museum based in Wellington. Its National Services arm works with other museums and organisations to undertake locally relevant heritage projects throughout the country.