

# JPS

The Journal  
of the  
Polynesian Society

VOLUME 128 No.1 MARCH 2019

*Special Issue*

TE AO HOU: WHAKAPAPA AS  
PRACTICAL ONTOLOGY

THE POLYNESIAN SOCIETY  
THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND  
NEW ZEALAND



# SPIRALLING HISTORIES: REFLECTIONS ON THE 1923 DOMINION MUSEUM EAST COAST ETHNOLOGICAL EXPEDITION AND OTHER MULTIMEDIA EXPERIMENTS

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**ABSTRACT:** In March and April 1923 the Dominion Museum undertook an ethnological expedition to the East Coast region of New Zealand's North Island, which was initiated and hosted by politician and scholar Apirana Ngata. Along with researchers Johannes Andersen, Elsdon Best and Peter Buck (Te Rangihīroa), the Museum's acting director, James McDonald, took photographs and made films which recorded the cultural practices and traditions of the Ngāti Porou people. These traces in manuscripts, photographs and movies of the relationships that shaped the expeditions still travel through space and time, spiralling into the future as they allow contemporary and future listeners and viewers to reconnect with the past. Although these people have long since died, they live on in McDonald's films and photographs, along with the many Māori people from the communities they visited, in documentation of ways of life which provide invaluable resources for cultural heritage and contemporary tribal development today. In this paper, McDonald's descendant (his great-granddaughter Anne Salmond) and Billie Lythberg reconstruct the activities of the team on the expedition, drawing on a rich range of archival and other sources, and then reflect on the meaning of these "reflections" drawn with breath and light on wax cylinders, nitrate film and paper, as well as current digital technology. Whether present in these recordings or as the eyes through which we see and the ears through which we hear, these *hoa aroha* 'dear friends'—McDonald, Ngata, Buck, Andersen and Best—cannot be disentangled from the archive, the people who hosted them, and the *whakaahua* 'images' they created together.

*Keywords:* Dominion Museum, ethnological expeditions, historical photography, *whakapapa* 'kin networks', East Coast, Ngāti Porou, James McDonald, Apirana Ngata

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On 10 April 1923 at Waiomatatini, on the East Coast of New Zealand, James McDonald, artist and photographer at the Dominion Museum, filmed an old man making a crayfish pot from young stems of the *mānuka* 'tea tree' (*Leptospermum scoparium*) and vines. As he heard the camera whirring, the old man addressed it, saying, "Oh machine, speak on, speak on. I shall go with the pictures to London, to Japan, to so and so" (Andersen 1923: 11).

This exchange took place at the Bungalow, as the home of Apirana Ngata was called, during the fourth Dominion Museum expedition, the last of a series of ethnological field research trips to visit Māori gatherings and remote communities to make records of *tikanga Māori* 'Māori ways of living'. Ngata, a leading Māori scholar and politician, had invited the research team—his close friend Dr. Peter Buck (Te Rangihīroa), a medical doctor, former member of Parliament (MP) and soldier with a passion for Māori material culture; McDonald, pioneering cinematographer and the Museum's acting director (Fig. 1); Johannes Andersen, from the Alexander Turnbull Library, who studied Māori music and string games; and the distinguished ethnologist Elsdon Best—to visit his home district and record ancestral ways that he feared might be disappearing, as well as new agricultural developments.

For Ngata, the East Coast expedition was yet another step in a journey towards the cultural and economic renaissance of Māori people. As early as 1909, the Young Maori Party (an association that Ngata and Buck helped to found) had spelled out a programme for revitalising Māori communities



Figure 1. James McDonald and Johannes Andersen with the cameras used on the Dominion Museum ethnological expeditions 1919–23. Courtesy of Anne Salmond.

(see Amiria Salmond this issue). Although the notion that Māori were dying out persisted, the population was now known to be increasing after the demographic collapse of the nineteenth century, following decades of disease, musket fighting, colonial ambition, the Land Wars and the confiscation of most of their lands. In its manifesto, along with innovative initiatives in health, education and land reform, the Young Maori Party stated that it aimed to “preserve the language, poetry, traditions and such of the customs and arts of the Maori as may be desirable and by promoting research in the Anthropology and Ethnology of the Polynesian race to contribute to science and provide a fund of material which should enrich Literature and Art of the future” (Ngata 1909).

Ngata first heard of anthropology during his studies in arts and law at Canterbury University College, probably from Professor Macmillan Brown, who had a passion for Pacific cultures, and from Buck, who became interested in the discipline during his medical studies at the University of Otago. The spark that inspired the expeditions, however, was ignited in 1915, when W.H.R. Rivers, an ethnologist and former lecturer in experimental psychology from the University of Cambridge, visited New Zealand after attending a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in Sydney (*Auckland Star*, 8 February 1915; Best 1915: 5).

In Wellington, Rivers delivered a public lecture, *The Peopling of Polynesia* (Rivers 1926; Skinner 1922: 87–88; Slobodin 1978: 51–53), and met Elsdon Best, whom he encouraged to produce a series of monographs on Māori life (Best 1915) and to join the Royal Anthropological Institute. Rivers must also have told Best about the University of Cambridge expedition to the Torres Strait that he had joined in 1898, led by Alfred Cort Haddon and accompanied by three other Cambridge graduates, including a photographer and a musician who knew how to make wax-cylinder recordings. He may also have met James McDonald, who had recently rejoined the Museum staff as its photographer and art assistant, and Apirana Ngata, who already had a lively interest in anthropology.

Buck was not in New Zealand at that time. In January 1915 he had enlisted as an officer in the First Maori Contingent<sup>1</sup> (later the Maori Pioneer Battalion), acting as their spokesman when they landed in Egypt with a passionate plea to the British military authorities that Māori should be allowed to serve as front-line troops:

The members of this war party would be ashamed to face their people on the conclusion of the war if they were to be confined entirely to garrison duty and not given an opportunity of proving their mettle at the front. We would sooner die from the bullets of the enemy than from sickness and disease—for

what says the Maori proverb? Man should die fighting hard like the struggling ururoa (shark) and not submitting like the lazy tarakihi [a fish, *Nemadactylus macropterus*], which submits without a struggle.

Though we are only a handful, the remnant of the remnant of a people, yet we consider that we are the old New Zealanders. No division can truly be called a New Zealand Division unless it numbers Maoris among its ranks (loud applause from the members of the New Zealand battalions who were looking on). (Buck quoted in Condliffe 1971: 127–28)

Buck went on to fight at Gallipoli and the Somme, winning the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) and becoming the Battalion's second-in-command. On 17 May 1918 when he was sent to command the New Zealand Military Hospital in the United Kingdom, he met Sir Arthur Keith, president of the Royal Anthropological Institute, and the eugenicist Karl Pearson, who encouraged his interest in physical anthropology (Luomala 1952: 39).

As the war came to an end, inspired by the use of cutting-edge technologies on the Torres Straits expedition—including still and movie cameras, phonographs and wax cylinders—Apirana Ngata wrote to the Minister of Internal Affairs in September 1918 suggesting that phonographic records of Māori music and cinematographic recordings of *tikanga* 'ancestral Māori practices' should be made (Ngata 1918). He must also have discussed these ideas with James McDonald, acting director of the Dominion Museum, who soon afterwards wrote to the undersecretary proposing an expedition to Gisborne to record Māori songs and games as illustrations for the monographs on Māori life that were being prepared by the Museum's ethnologist, Elsdon Best:

The opportunity to secure phonographic records of Native songs and incantations and also moving picture films of Poi dances, haka ['posture dance'], etc., at the Maori gathering in March next is one of which every advantage should be taken. As the Hon. Mr Ngata truly says the elders are fast passing away, and the chances of securing such records are steadily diminishing. (McDonald 1918)

#### THE DOMINION MUSEUM EXPEDITIONS

The first Dominion Museum ethnological expedition set off for Gisborne in March 1919, when the Pioneer Battalion was formally welcomed home at the Hui Aroha, as the gathering was called. Ngata's private secretary, Te Raumoia Balneavis, helped to organise the expedition, which included Best, Andersen and McDonald but not Te Rangihīroa, who was still on active service. During their visit to Gisborne they collected a rich haul of photographs and films of action songs, string games and other ancestral arts, and wax-cylinder

recordings of Māori songs, speeches and chants. Later, Ngata asked McDonald to thank the Minister of Internal Affairs for authorising their absence from Wellington (McDonald 1919).

In April 1920, the second Dominion Museum ethnological expedition attended the Rotorua welcome by thousands of Mātaatua and Te Arawa people for the Prince of Wales, who was escorted by Te Rangihīroa (now Director of Māori Hygiene) as interpreter and equerry. Assisted by Te Rangihīroa, Best, Andersen and McDonald joined the tribal encampment where they collected more films, photographs and wax-cylinder recordings of ancestral arts.

In March 1921 the third expedition visited the Whanganui River to record ancestral customs and aspects of contemporary Māori life. On this occasion Best, Andersen and McDonald were joined at Korinitī for four days by Te Rangihīroa, who had begun a detailed study of Māori material culture, particularly fishing and weaving. This expedition yielded an extensive collection of photographs (over 300), film (6,000 feet), artefacts and recordings of songs and incantations (McDonald 1921).

Impressed by what the team had achieved, Ngata now decided to invite them to visit the East Coast to record the ancestral practices of his own people, Ngāti Porou. With his support, McDonald (now acting director of the Dominion Museum) wrote to William Herries, the Minister of Native Affairs, requesting funding for this fourth expedition including an Edison phonograph (McDonald 1922). By this time Te Rangihīroa's interest in international anthropology had been fuelled by a visit in 1922 by John Stokes of the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum in Hawai'i, who met him to explore his work on Māori weaving (Te Rangihīroa 1922). James McDonald and Te Rangihīroa had also begun to discuss a British and American tour illustrated by films and photographic slides from the expeditions (Te Rangihīroa 1923c), and McDonald alerted Te Rangihīroa to the forthcoming Pan-Pacific Science Congress in Australia (Te Rangihīroa 1923d).

Once again, Ngata's secretary and friend, Balneavis ("Bal"), helped to organise the expedition. The team travelled to Gisborne on the *Arahura*, a coastal steamer; by motor car to Waipiro Bay; and then by buggy with Ngata to the coastal settlement of Whareponga, where they arrived on 18 March 1923. By now they knew each other well, Te Rangihīroa addressing Andersen in his letters as "Tarawhai," McDonald as "Mac" and Best as "Peehi", remarking to Andersen, "You see how I have to come to the Wellington triple alliance for comfort" (Te Rangihīroa 1922). After a ceremonial welcome on the *marae* 'ceremonial centre' and a lavish meal of roast meat, crayfish and onion fritters, jelly and plum pudding, the team got to work, sitting with local experts and recording ancestral songs on wax cylinders until late that night (McLean and Curnow 1992: 137–40). These *waiata* 'songs' included the

well-known lament “I hoki mai au i Kereruhuahua”, composed by Rāpata Wahawaha’s grandmother Hinekaukia for her son, who had been burnt to death near Waipāoa in the Gisborne district. This waiata came from Ngata’s own family (Rāpata Wahawaha was his foster grandfather), and this and other waiata included many references to local ancestors and landmarks (p. 139).<sup>2</sup>

Over the next three days the team recorded a range of other songs and chants, including a sexually graphic song traditionally accompanied by a flute, and a *haka taparahi* ‘ceremonial dance’ performed by Ngata himself (p. 139). As a finale Tuta Ngarimu and Maakere performed a chant to commemorate the arrival of Te Rangihīroa, Te Peehi (Best) and their friends at Whareponga, “hai taonga mā ngā uri whakatipu” (as a treasure for the rising generation) (p. 143). At the same time McDonald filmed string figures for Johannes Andersen; men fishing for *kehe* ‘granite trout’ and women diving for *kōura* ‘crayfish’ on the beach at Whareponga for Te Rangihīroa; men and women preparing food in an *umu* ‘earth oven’; and competitive hand games on the porch of the meeting house, including one that ended with a woman diving on top of the man (probably her husband) who had just defeated her. In these filmed episodes, the mood is exuberant and relaxed. Before they left Whareponga, a *poroporoaki* ‘speech of farewell’ addressed to the team was also recorded: “Hei kōnei rā koutou e te rōpu hopuhopu o ngā takenga a te iwi Māori” (Farewell until we see you again, the group who capture the ways of the Māori people) (p. 140).

After leaving Whareponga the team travelled to the Bungalow, Ngata’s home at Waiomatatini near the mouth of the Waiapu River. When they arrived there on 22 March, a bright, hot day, an old man, Riwai Miringa-o-rangi,<sup>3</sup> began making a *tāruke kōura* ‘crayfish pot’ for Te Rangihīroa, who was working on a study of fishing and netting techniques that he later published in the *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute* (Te Rangihīroa 1926). Over the next few days McDonald shot a series of still photographs of the process, while Johannes Andersen recorded a number of string figures in a notebook (now lost), many of which later appeared in his book on this topic (Andersen 1927).

On 24 March when Ngata was summoned to meet his close colleague Gordon Coates (the Native Minister) at Rotorua, he left his friends in the care of his wife, Arihia, and Dr. Tūtere Wi Repa, who like Ngata and Te Rangihīroa had attended Te Aute, the Anglican boarding school for Māori boys. The team visited Tikitiki, an inland settlement, where they stayed in the local boarding house and showed a film of their 1921 Whanganui River expedition to a crowded hall, aiming to inspire a competitive spirit in the East Coast people, as Buck had suggested in a letter to McDonald.<sup>4</sup> Although the film was silent and the lights kept going out, people called out to the people on screen, giving them advice and talking to them as though they were in the

room. One young man observed that although he had often heard of people fighting over *pā tuna* ‘eel weirs’, he couldn’t understand why until he saw the pictures of the impressive *pā tuna* along the Whanganui River. After the screening, Te Kani, Ngata’s son-in-law, played Chopin on the boarding-house piano while Elsdon Best, who had caught a bad cold, went to bed. According to Johannes Andersen, both the boarding house and the store at Tikitiki were owned by the tribal co-operative, one of Ngata’s initiatives and a source of great pride for the local people (Andersen 1927: 13–14). At Ngata’s suggestion, the funds from the screening were donated to the local village committee (McDonald 1923).

Over the next couple of days Buck and Andersen scoured local streams for *kōkopu*, a native freshwater fish (genus *Galaxias*), but found only one specimen. During these excursions, Andersen noted *kūmara* ‘sweet potato’ and maize plantations fenced with *mānuka*, and dozens of horses with saddles and bridles lined up along Tikitiki’s main street. He also recorded more string figures and visited the Tikitiki school, which was attended by about 140 children. He described the pupils as neat, clean and alert, and enjoyed talking to them about his articles in the *School Journal*, which many of them had read (Andersen 1923: 17). On 26 March when Buck, Andersen and McDonald travelled north to Te Araroa they stayed at the local hotel, while Best (who was still ill) returned to the Bungalow at Waiomatatini with Mrs. Ngata. That afternoon the team recorded three *karakia* ‘incantations’, and Andersen collected more string figures.

The next morning after Dr. Wi Repa welcomed them in front of the local meeting house, they recorded a series of classic Ngāti Porou waiata that Apirana Ngata later published with extensive explanatory notes in *Nga Moteatea* (Ngata [1928] 1959: nos 1, 2, and 209, among others) (McLean and Curnow 1992: 144–48). On 28 March Andersen collected a series of string figures, and McDonald took photographs of plaiting techniques and different types of netting for Te Rangihīroa. That evening they showed films of the Whanganui River and Gisborne, which Te Rangihīroa narrated to a lively audience at Te Araroa, while Andersen demonstrated a couple of string games and played a recording of Māori music. Afterwards they were given a supper of crayfish with *karengo* ‘a sweet-tasting seaweed’ and cake, before heading back to Waiomatatini the next morning.

On Good Friday, 31 March, the team stayed quietly at the Bungalow, writing up their field notes. Although Elsdon Best was now out of bed, he was still very weak. The next day Buck, Andersen and McDonald attended a church service conducted by one of the Kōhere brothers. Afterwards they climbed the hill behind the marae to look at Puputa Pā, an ancient fortified site then used as a burial ground, before joining the others for dinner in the meeting house. In the afternoon they went by buggy to the mouth of the



Waiapu River to film the netting of *kahawai* (*Arripis trutta*), a tikanga Te Rangihīroa (1926: 615) identified as “*kupenga kōkō kahawai*” (see details in Robertson this issue). In the evening, some of the party played croquet while Andersen played Te Kani’s songs on the piano and talked with one of the local girls about the team’s 1919 expedition to the Hui Aroha in Gisborne, the gathering to welcome the Pioneer Battalion back from World War I, which she had attended as a nursemaid for Ngata’s children (Andersen 1923: 27).

On 1 April when Buck, Andersen and McDonald travelled by horseback to Kōhere’s house, Andersen admired the garden with its citrus trees, grapevines and flowers. They stayed the night there, playing waiata on the phonograph. The next day when they returned to the mouth of the Waiapu River to film the casting of a kahawai net, the sea was rough, and although the net was cast, no fish were caught. On 3 April when they returned to Waiomatatini, Andersen and Buck helped to dig and stack kūmara, McDonald filming the process. As Andersen remarked, “Mrs Ngata is always cheery and laughing, so are her old woman friends; we younger ones began to be quiet as our backs began to protest against the unusual labour” (Andersen 1923: 31). That afternoon they recorded a *whakaaraara* ‘chant to alert a fortified village or settlement (*pā*)’ and a karakia.

In the evening a party from Te Araroa arrived at Porourangi meeting house to farewell the expedition team. When Buck and Andersen joined them, Andersen spoke jovially in English, ending his speech with a Danish song that Buck interpreted as expressing Andersen’s ardent desire to settle down with one of the local widows. As Andersen wrote in his journal, “They enjoy fun, and I enjoy seeing them enjoy it.” The night was clear and starry, and wrapped up in rugs and leaning on pillows, they listened to the speeches, which went on until after midnight. When they returned to the meeting house in the morning, the Te Araroa people had already left, so Andersen went up the hill and wrote a song of farewell, which he decided he would sing on his last night at Waiomatatini (Andersen 1923: 35).

Andersen had taken a fancy to a young local girl, Mary Maxwell, and over the days that followed, he often went to see her. Te Rangihīroa was still determined to catch some kōkopu, and on 5 April he, Andersen, McDonald and Paratene Ngata, Ngata’s father, built a stone fish weir in a channel of the Waiapu River. Paratene was gloomy about their prospects, saying that it was the wrong night in the moon to set the net; and as they approached the river, when a dog urinated on the left side of the path and one of the horses defecated in the river above the weir, Paratene remarked that these were bad omens. Early the next morning when Te Rangihīroa went to check the net he found just a single *ūpokororo* ‘New Zealand grayling’ (*Prototroctes oxyrhynchus*) in the net, a very rare native fish that had not been seen in the Waiapu for at least a decade. Ever the optimist, he declared that it was worth

“a hundred kokopu” (Andersen 1923: 36). The following day, three more ūpokororo were found in the fish trap.

Still eager to catch kōkopu, on 7 April Te Rangihīroa worked with Andersen and McDonald to build another fish trap in the river with stones, mānuka stakes and brushwood. Ngata returned from Rotorua, and when they played the songs that they had recorded at Te Araroa on the phonograph, they found that Ngata knew all but one of them. Early the next morning when Te Rangihīroa and Andersen visited the fish trap, they were astonished to find 26 ūpokororo in the trap, leaving them there so that McDonald could photograph their haul after breakfast. As Andersen wrote in his journal, “It was something that the expedition should prove the existence of a fish that had not been seen by the elder people for from 16–20 years, many had not seen it at all. ‘It almost seems sacrilege,’ said the Dr. in the evening when they had the fish for tea, ‘eating a rare fish like this; they ought all be preserved for specimens’” (Andersen 1923: 41–42).

Over the days that followed, Te Rangihīroa studied local fishing methods and Best talked with local elders, recording snippets about customary practices in his notebook; Andersen recorded a series of string games; and McDonald photographed an elder, Iehu Nukunuku, playing a *kōauau* flute, in fact a 10-inch length of gas pipe with three holes bored at the lower end, while Andersen recorded the music on a wax cylinder (Andersen 1923: 46; 1933: 231). McDonald also shot film and photographs of Te Rangihīroa and Ngata on the lawn at the Bungalow as they worked on a *tukutuku* ‘latticework’ panel to decorate the walls of a local meeting house (Fig. 2), a local artist painting *kōwhaiwhai* ‘rafter patterns’ and Ngata working in the sheep yards on the family farm. In the evenings they played croquet, listened to Te Kani playing the piano or went visiting local families with Ngata, who enjoyed their company.

On 10 April when the old man, Riwai Miringa-o-rangi, finished his crayfish trap (Fig. 3), McDonald filmed Te Rangihīroa laughing as he walked a small black kitten into it, instead of a crayfish. Dr. Wi Repa also teased Riwai by pointing out an error in its manufacture and saying that his own people made much better *tāruke kōura*. This provoked Riwai to retort that at least the machine and its pictures would transport him overseas. When the filming was finished, the elder stood and sang a song over his trap (Andersen 1923: 10–11). On 12 April as they were about to leave Waiomatatini, Ngata presented Andersen with a thrummed cloak, and no doubt similar gifts to other members of the expedition (p. 54).

As Natalie Robertson explains (this issue), the network of relations that shaped the fourth and final Dominion Museum ethnological expedition reflected an intricate matrix of *whakapapa* ‘kin network’ links between Ngata and many local participants as well as his close friendship—“*hoa*



Figure 2. Apirana Ngata and Te Rangihīroa (Peter Buck) with tukutuku panel, outside the Bungalow, Waiomatatini, 1923. Photograph by James McDonald. Courtesy of Alexander Turnbull Library, ref 1/2-007887-F.



Figure 3. Te Rangihīroa (centre) measures the tāruke kōura made by Riwai Miringa-o-rangi (right), 1923. Photograph by James McDonald. Courtesy of Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, ref. MU0523/006/0025.

*aroaha*”—with Te Rangihīroa. These relationships had been forged at Te Aute and afterwards between Te Rangihīroa, Ngata and Dr. Wi Repa, and during World War I between Te Rangihīroa and the Kōhere and Kaa families. There were also longstanding relations of collegiality and camaraderie among the expedition team members—Eldson Best, the most senior, increasingly frail but a renowned expert in Māori lore; Te Rangihīroa, convivial, amusing and a dedicated student of Māori material culture; Andersen, with a roving eye, but also enthusiastic and knowledgeable about string games and music, although he could speak no Māori; and McDonald, a skilled photographer and filmmaker, congenial and good-humoured. These relational networks interwove very different realms of experience, with Te Rangihīroa as the close link to Ngata, and the Kōhere and Kaa families in particular, and Ngata as the thread drawing together the team and East Coast communities.

During the expedition, these relations were both reinforced and tested. Best was ill much of the time, and less active than he had been on previous expeditions. Te Rangihīroa was in high spirits (although his wife was unwell), delivering amusing speeches and engaging in repartee and jokes with local people. Ngata and his wife, Arihia, galvanised local networks to extend warm hospitality to the team, marked by the final presentation of gifts. Andersen provoked laughter with his string games and songs, and a hint of mockery for his ardent pursuit of Mary Maxwell (who was only 15). McDonald went up to his boots in the Waiapu River, capturing photographs and films as needed, a resourceful, affable travelling companion. Local people went out of their way to help them, seeing their participation in the films and photographs as another gift, not just to the team but to future generations—and so it proved.

While recording various tikanga, whether in fishing, singing, chanting or painting kōwhaiwhai, Ngāti Porou people were activating their ancestors. They often welcomed their guests at the local marae, where the ancestors were present. As Pei Te Hurinui Jones, a Tainui scholar who also worked closely with Ngata, once noted, the double spirals carved into the portraits of ancestors or painted in the kōwhaiwhai on the rafters of meeting houses invoked the creation of the cosmos, with lines of descent unfurling from its earliest beginnings, encompassing all forms of life (Jones 1959: 232). At the same time, they forged links with their *manuhiri* ‘visitors’ to pass on down the generations, while reaching out to their own *uri* ‘descendants’, the inheritors of these ancestral treasures.

For both Apirana Ngata and Te Rangihīroa, the 1923 East Coast expedition was a turning point. For Te Rangihīroa, the journey led him away from New Zealand and towards the international discipline of anthropology. In June 1923 he delivered a lecture, *The Old Maori: His Arts and Crafts*, at the Auckland Institute, illustrated with films taken by McDonald during the Whanganui and East Coast expeditions, and was “heartily applauded at the conclusion of a most illuminating lecture” (*Auckland Star* 1923).<sup>5</sup> In August he applied for leave to attend the Pan-Pacific Science Congress in Melbourne

and Sydney, where he presented a paper on Māori clothing, showed some of McDonald's East Coast slides, including those showing Riwai Miringa-o-rangi making the crayfish pot, and gave a lecture on Māori migrations, the forerunner to his famous books *Vikings of the Sunrise* (1938) and *The Coming of the Māori* (1949).

At the Congress, Te Rangihīroa met leading scientists from around the Pacific Rim and eminent anthropologists including Alfred Cort Haddon from the University of Cambridge—describing him as “a delightful old man, with thick white hair and dark eyebrows, a somewhat hesitating speech, a fund of humour, and a don't-give-a-damn kind of manner”. As he also reported in a long letter to Ngata, Te Rangihīroa was lionised by his colleagues. He was given the honour of delivering the only public lecture during the Congress at Melbourne; and when he reported to the Congress on the bill that would establish the Board of Maori Ethnological Research in New Zealand, noting that “one of the Native Races of the Pacific is assisting in carrying out one of the objects of the Congress and furthermore the idea originated from within themselves”, there was deafening applause, and Haddon remarked that “he regretted he wasn't a Maori” (Te Rangihīroa 1923e).

When the Congress shifted to Sydney, Te Rangihīroa met a number of Australian and American anthropologists, including Professor Gregory from the Bishop Museum in Hawai'i, and showed McDonald's films in the Australian Museum. Another public lecture illustrated by slides from the East Coast expedition included an image of himself and “Hon. Mr. A.T. Ngata M.A. L.L.B.” weaving a tukutuku panel, “keeping alive the ancient arts and crafts”, to a rapturous reception. As he confided in his letter to Ngata, “On the whole, Api, I can honestly say we came out of the show more than holding our own. Whether the uneasy consciences of the Great Races are aroused or not, I cannot but say that anything to do with the Maori Race was met not only by the scientists but by the Australian public with acclamation” (Te Rangihīroa 1923e).

In 1924 these international contacts bore fruit when Te Rangihīroa was invited by Professor Gregory to become an associate at the Bishop Museum and join their expedition to the Cook Islands. This was the beginning of a long and distinguished career in Pacific anthropology that culminated in his appointment as a visiting professor at Yale University (1932) and director of the Bishop Museum (1936).

For Apirana Ngata, on the other hand, the journey was all about the revitalisation of *te iwi Māori* ‘the Māori people’ and his own people on the East Coast. Shortly after the fourth Dominion Museum ethnological expedition left Waiomatatini, a long article written by Tūtēre Wi Repa appeared in the *Gisborne Times*, celebrating their achievements:

Regret was expressed by nearly all the elders of the Ngatiporou people that such a visit was not made years ago, before the real men of knowledge passed away. ... It will be seen that the visit of this party of ethnologists to the East Coast has resulted in the recovery of much material that was on the verge of being lost. From an ethnological point of view the mission was a success. But in other directions the expedition has borne fruit. The Ngati-Porou has suddenly been aroused from his indifference of many years to take an interest in his own life story as a section of mankind. (Wi Repa 1923)

The article went on, “After the elders who had recorded songs and chants have been ‘caught in the net of Taramainuku’ and their spirits have passed to the bright land of Te Reinga, their living voices will be preserved for the benefit of their relatives.” The star Taramainuku is the commander of a star *waka* ‘canoe’ that travels through the sky each night, his net sweeping up the *wairua* ‘spirits’ of those who have died.

From this time on, Ngata actively promoted ethnology not as just a way of preserving ancestral arts—such as *mōteatea*, *haka*, *karakia*, *tukutuku*, *kōwhaiwhai* and *whakairo* (chants, performing arts, prayers, woven panels, painted designs and carving), along with basketry and fishing practices—but also as a means of inspiring pride and active engagement in *Māoritanga* ‘being Māori’. The practice and preservation of ancestral knowledge increasingly became a key element in his programme to revitalise Māori communities, ensuring that Māori people would survive and thrive *as Māori* into the future.

Over the years that followed, Ngata pursued his programme “*kia ora ai te iwi Māori*” (to give life to the Māori people) with unflagging zeal. As McCarthy describes in this volume, in October 1923 he established the Board of Maori Ethnological Research (Te Poari Whakapapa), with Te Rangihīroa as one of its members.<sup>6</sup> In 1924 Ngata published a collection of 90 *mōteatea*, and established the Maori Purposes Fund Board to invest unclaimed funds from Māori lands in Māori and Pacific ethnological research, effectively taking over the discipline of anthropology in New Zealand. In 1926, inspired by Ngata, the Board of Maori Ethnological Research urged Auckland University College to include Māori as a bachelor of arts subject, and the Māori Arts and Crafts Act was passed, enabling the Schools of Maori Arts and Crafts in Rotorua and Tokaanu to be established and carved meeting houses to be erected in many parts of New Zealand. In 1927 Ngata was knighted, and in the following year he published the first volume of his four-volume collection *Nga Moteatea* (Ngata [1928] 1959); presented a paper, “The Genealogical Method”, to the Wellington Historical Association (Ngata 1928; analysed in this issue by Amiria Salmond); and was appointed Minister of Native Affairs.

While fostering ancestral arts and crafts, Ngata was equally determined that his people should master contemporary technologies and skills—in agriculture, horticulture, medicine, the law and other professions—and make a good living for themselves and their families. Over the next six years, as Native Minister, he led major initiatives in Māori education and land development, other lifelong passions, setting up scholarships and schemes in different parts of the country to foster sheep farming, cropping and dairying so that Māori could take care of their remaining lands, and arousing acute jealousies and resentment in the process.

In 1934, Ngata was ousted from Cabinet after an inquiry into the financial management of these schemes, although he was found not to have been personally involved in any irregularities. He remained an MP until 1943, when he lost the Eastern Māori seat, and for the rest of his life dedicated himself to fostering the artistic and cultural renaissance that he and Te Rangihīroa had helped to instigate.

After a long and intimate correspondence in which they often discussed the application of anthropological insights, in 1949 Sir Apirana Ngata and Sir Peter Buck were finally reunited when Te Rangihīroa returned to New Zealand for a visit, suffering from cancer but as eloquent, witty and charming as ever. Ngata died the following year, and Te Rangihīroa in 1951.

#### REFLECTIONS

Although Te Rangihīroa, Apirana Ngata, Elsdon Best and Johannes Andersen have long since died, they live on in McDonald's films and photographs, along with the many Māori people from the communities they visited. In the same way, the voices of many of those people still speak and sing, sometimes clearly and sometimes muffled and inaudible, from the wax-cylinder recordings made during these expeditions—recordings made by *hā* 'the breath of life' driving a stylus through soft wax. These traces of the relationships that shaped the expeditions still travel through space and time, spiralling into the future as they allow contemporary and future listeners and viewers to reconnect with the past.

This is the stuff of whakapapa: the layering of time–space coordinates so often reduced to “genealogies” but perhaps more aptly described as a “veritable ontology” (Sahlins 1985: 14; Salmond 2013)—a world patterned by intricate, dynamic networks of relations among people, living and dead, and between people and other life forms. These ancestral relations are embodied in material traces in the present. From pre-contact times until today, for instance, the *tekoteko* ‘carved figure’ on the apex of the meeting house, the carved wall panels and posts in the porch and interior, and often the ridgepole itself invoke particular ancestors, allowing them to be present in the same space–time location as their descendants. In historic times, photographs of

deceased kin-group leaders came to serve the same purpose, standing at the feet of the dead during *tangi* ‘funerals’ and hung around the walls between more remote ancestors. When a kin group gathers before or inside a meeting house and welcomes its visitors, their ancestors are activated and stand among them, joining in the ceremonies.

Photography in *te ao Māori* ‘the Māori world/worldview’, then, is not simply an art of representation. It gives presence to past people, events and places, allowing them to travel through space and time, helping to shape the future. Photographs—even those produced over and over as multiples or reproduced as poor copies, and more recently those digitised or “born digital”—have been embraced by Māori as holding something of the *mauri* ‘life force’ of their subjects. Robertson draws on Māori Marsden to explain:

Māori Marsden ... maintains that *mauri* is a form of energy that originates in Tūā-Uri, “the real world of the complex series of rhythmical patterns of energy which operate behind this world of sense perception” (Marsden and Henare 1992: 7, 8). Marsden illuminates the connection between *whakapapa* and patterns of energy, saying that *mauri* radiates outwards from Tūā-Uri into Te Aro-Nui, the world before us, the one apprehended by our senses. Comprehending *mauri* as a radiating energy clarifies how it might come to reside in inanimate objects, such as photographs. (Robertson 2017: 58)<sup>7</sup>

This concept of radiating energy seems especially applicable to photography and film, recording and absorbing light as it reflects off people, places and things in order to distil, be-still or—in the case of film—animate something of their presence. Indeed the word “photograph”, from its Greek roots, means ‘light recording’.<sup>8</sup> Photographic and filmic processes capture light; the light that touches the camera’s subjects is the light that activates and is absorbed by volatile chemicals on the surfaces of negatives. Glass-plate photography in particular, a medium used by McDonald and the Dominion Museum expeditions, was understood by Māori to produce not merely illustrations but also manifestations of people and places. Glass-plate negatives themselves emerged from the darkness of a camera’s body transformed, harnessing light to materialise presence (Lythberg 2016: 35).

Thereafter, prints and multiples could be made by passing light through these negatives and onto a substrate of photographic paper or cellulose in a process of activation and transformation; and bright light allowed films to be projected—every projection a light-driven animation. The Māori descriptor for the products of the camera is *whakaahua*, which conveys not only the physical outputs of photofilmic capture (‘to photograph’) but also their acquisition of form in the process of transformation (‘to acquire form, transform’) (Lythberg 2016: 35).



Such a recursive vortex is evident in the work of the Dominion Museum East Coast expedition team, who at once captured light *and* played it through the films they had already completed. Their screenings were lively affairs. As we have seen, at the Tikitiki screening of the 1921 Whanganui expedition the audience called out to the people on screen to try and influence their actions. Those being filmed, such as Riwai te Miringa-o-rangi, would have known exactly what they might expect their own films to be like and how they might be received. Later that same year, Te Rangihīroa's screening at the Auckland Institute and his showing of slides in Sydney in 1923 demonstrated the *mana* 'ancestral power' of the East Coast expedition's whakaahua, taking the light that had radiated from Riwai and his kin, land and waterways on the first of many voyages around Aotearoa and to distant lands.

In his 1928 paper "The Genealogical Method", written just five years after the expeditions, Ngata drew a contrast between the immediacy of such images and the documentary records of European observers including Captain Cook and his successors, remarking that although they "took more or less satisfactory literary photographs of the condition of the Māori tribes as they found them in the early days", these "do not carry conviction to those of the people they passed in review".

Here Ngata drew a distinction between the efficacy and potential for future impact of the *literary* photograph made with ink and paper and the "drawings with light" made by the camera. The ideas he was developing about whakapapa (and see Ngata and Ngata this issue) informed the Dominion Museum expeditions and their emphasis not just on written documentation but also sound recordings made with wax cylinders and light recordings made with film and photographic cameras. Not only was Ngata promoting the products of these recordings as more likely to "carry conviction" to those they reviewed, the expeditions he championed and the invitations he extended to McDonald and his cameras also "foresaw the genealogical value of photography to hold whakapapa and kōrero ['narratives'] for future generations" (Robertson 2017: 57).

In addition to carrying conviction for the descendants of the people "they passed in review", the efficacy of film, photographs and wax cylinders in capturing traces of mauri has been activated in evidence to the Waitangi Tribunal. In the Whanganui River claim, for instance, *iwi* 'tribal groups' used the Dominion Museum expedition photographs and films to support their claims about the intimacy of their relationships with their ancestral river. When the Whanganui River Deed of Settlement was finally signed on 5 August 2014 it concluded the longest-running legal case in New Zealand history, after 148 years. At the heart of the settlement was the legal recognition of the Whanganui River as a being with its own personality and rights. The life of the river in the 1920s, and its existential entanglement with the lives

of ancestors with their eel weirs and waka, was conveyed to the Tribunal in the photos and films made by the Dominion Museum expedition's team, vividly evoking the harm to the lives of both river and people caused by Crown decisions made since that time.

Today, these films and photographs still bring together descendants of those who made them and those who continue to appear in them. In 2010–11, directors Libby Hakaraia and Tainui Stephens led an expedition that produced the television documentary *The Scotsman and the Māori*, following three generations of James McDonald's descendants with a film crew on a voyage of discovery that retraced the expeditions. In this journey, McDonald's descendants (his great-granddaughter Anne Salmond, her daughter Amiria and Amiria's son Tom) came face to face with the uri of those whose *āhua* 'likeness' he had captured in still photographs and film. Welcomed onto some of the very marae where "Mac", Ngata, Buck, Andersen and Best had stayed, the team held "sheetings" of films and photographs from the expeditions: a projector bringing ancestors to life on a white cotton sheet suspended from the ceilings of meeting houses. Again, people called out while watching the films, naming ancestors and places and telling stories about them, giving voice to the silent films just as the *tāruke kōura* maker had predicted. Once again, cutting-edge technology of the day was taken into Māori communities, with photographs of ancestors being screened from a laptop while a portable printer allowed these to be printed almost as soon as they were identified by descendants—yet another demonstration of the efficacy of photography for transcending space–time distance, conveying the radiating energy of mauri to new generations, whirling from *te pō* 'the dark, invisible ancestral realm' into *te ao mārama* 'the everyday world of light' and allowing the team to exchange gifts with their hosts.

Some of the expeditions' recordings have now been digitised and enhanced by Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision, a process that has restored extraordinary details captured by the original light and sound recordings but whose revelation was beyond the technologies then available to reproduce them in printed photographs, films and audio recordings for playback.<sup>9</sup> In the photography collection store at Te Papa Tongarewa, for example, our research team placed glass-plate negatives on a light box and marvelled at the fine-grained information they contain that greatly exceeds the scope of the printing processes of their time (Robertson 2017: 54). What might be revealed if iwi descendants were to give permission for these to be printed at a large scale?

Digitisation has also permitted these *taonga* 'treasures' and *tīpuna* 'ancestors' to travel as digital files via electromagnetic waves. In 2017 during the filming of the documentary series *Artefact* a digitised wax-cylinder recording of Iehu Nukunuku playing a *kōauau* in Waiomatatini in 1923—the first known sound recording of a Māori musical instrument—was played by

Anne Salmond through a mobile phone to a contemporary exponent of *taonga pūoro* ‘Māori musical instruments’, Horomona Horo, bringing Nukunuku’s hā-activated performance to new ears. Horo was also shown digital prints of the photographs of Nukunuku taken by McDonald made at the same time. In its turn this exchange was recorded in sound and film, and later screened and able to be watched by Nukunuku’s descendants in the *Artefact* series on Māori Television. As technologies for sharing sound and image evolve, the recursive lives of these records of Māori are activating new networks of relations.

Ngata, Te Rangihīroa, Best and on at least one occasion McDonald himself were also drawn with light into the Dominion Museum expedition photographs and films. These are part of their legacy as not only orchestrators and facilitators but also actors and agents, along with the relations they forged. As Merimeri Penfold once chanted, “He iwi kē, he iwi kē, titiro atu, titiro mai”—one strange people and another, looking at each other—who in the gaze of the other see themselves, and through recognising their differences see themselves and each other differently. Whether present on film or wax-cylinder recording, or as the eyes through which we see and the ears through which we hear, these “*hoa aroha*”—McDonald, Ngata, Buck, Andersen and Best—cannot be disentangled from the archive, the people who hosted them and the *whakaahua* they created together.

As Wayne Ngata reminds us—evoking *Whakapaupakihi*, the fishing net of his ancestor Hauti—the alliances his ancestor Apirana Ngata forged in his efforts to revitalise his people, and the ways those relationships entangled people in shared projects, are still unfurling in the present:

Whakapaupakihi, tuakana taina  
 Whakapaupakihi, tuituia!  
 Whakapaupakihi, the net that brings us together to work  
 towards a common goal!

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to thank their colleagues on the Te Ao Hou project, funded by the Royal Society of New Zealand Marsden Fund (2016–2020), and project advisors from the East Coast and Whanganui, especially Dr Wayne Ngata, Gerrard Albert and Che Wilson. Our research has been supported by curators, archivists and *kaitiaki* ‘guardians/collection managers’ at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision, the Alexander Turnbull Library, the Bishop Museum and the Archive of Māori and Pacific Sound at the University of Auckland. A version of this paper was presented to the Archives & Records Association of New Zealand “Ngā Taonga Tuku Iho” conference in Rotorua, August 2018, accompanied by a screening of the East Coast film for an audience including iwi descendants. Two anonymous reviewers gave helpful suggestions, for which we are grateful.

NOTES

1. Since Buck left with the First Maori Contingent for Egypt in February 1915, it seems unlikely that he was in New Zealand at the same time as Rivers.
2. The Kereruhuahua *mōteatea* ‘chant’ is properly called “He Tangi mo Tana Tama (Ngāti Porou)”. The first line, *E hika ma! I hoki mai au i Kereruhuahua*, is sometimes given as the title; see “E hika ma! I hoki mai au i Kereruhuahua” (Ngata [1928] 1959, no. 40: 134–35), which adds that Ngata “recorded some notes dictated by Materoa Ngarimu, but these notes were not found”.
3. His name was recorded in Te Rangihīroa’s 1923 field notebook: “Taruke: Riwai Miringa o rangi—maker of taruke koura at Waiomatatini” (see Te Rangihīroa 1923a).
4. “Dear Mac, ... It has occurred to me that if not entailing bringing of too much gear, how would it be if you brought the films along and we gave the Gisborne people a demonstration. They would also interest the Maoris at Ngata’s place and perhaps make them vie with one another to produce as good stuff to put on record” (Te Rangihīroa 1923b). “Dear Mac, ... I think the pictures shown at a lecture in each centre will be a good thing. The Maoris are nothing if not competitive. The sight of the arts, crafts and customs of their tribes will stimulate them to do likewise or do better if possible” (Te Rangihīroa 1923d).
5. Te Rangihīroa was appointed to the Auckland Museum Council as inaugural chair of its Anthropology and Maori Race section around this time.
6. Te Rangihīroa resigned in 1926 due to his post in Hawai‘i.
7. Robertson notes: “See Māori Marsden for a more detailed outline of the three-world view of Māori according to Tāne’s pursuit of the three baskets of knowledge obtained by Tāne and which were named Tua-uri, Aro-Nui and Tua-Atea [1992: 7–10].”
8. From the Ancient Greek *photo* (φωτω-) ‘to shine’, and *graphia* (γράφω) ‘recorded’. “Photograph”, the verb, as well as “photography”, are first found in a paper read before the Royal Society on 14 March 1839 (Schaaf 1979).
9. The newly digitised films are always given their first public screenings at marae, sometimes with fanfare. *Scenes of Māori Life on the Whanganui River* (1921), for example, was narrated by Lawrence Wharerau and accompanied by *taonga pūoro* ‘Māori wind instruments’ when it premiered at Te Ao Hou Marae in Whanganui in 2016 (Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision).

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