JPS

The Journal
of the
Polynesian Society

VOLUME 131 No.1 MARCH 2022

THE POLYNESIAN SOCIETY
THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
NEW ZEALAND

WEAVING CLOAKS AND WHAKATAUKĪ: A MEMOIR

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ABSTRACT: Beginning with holiday work in the ethnology workroom at Auckland War Memorial Museum, the author, a social anthropologist, traces the development of her lifelong interest and involvement in the Māori art of weaving harakeke 'Māori flax' (*Phormium tenax*). Special attention is given to the weaving of whatu 'ceremonial cloaks' and the weaving of words and metaphors in whakataukī 'proverbs and sayings', poetry and storytelling. In the process she shares treasured memories of learning, from and with Māori friends and mentors expert in these arts, and emphasises the continual interweaving of contemporary transformations with inherited traditions in response to changing times.

Keywords: Māori weaving, cloaks, harakeke, tāniko, Māori proverbs and sayings (whakataukī), New Zealand anthropology

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One of my favourites in the rich treasury of Māori metaphors is the *taura whiri*, a rope woven of many strands which is so much stronger than any of the strands separately. I began this memoir with the idea of weaving just two strands together: the *harakeke* 'Māori flax' (*Phormium tenax*) cloaks I first knew in glass cases in the Auckland War Memorial Museum and *whakataukī* 'proverbs and sayings', one of four categories of traditional Māori word weaving. As I wrote, however, I found myself adding in further strands as my experience widened to include the literary arts of Māori storytelling (*kōrero*, *whaikōrero* and *tuhituhinga*) and chanted and sung poetry (*mōteatea* and *waiata*) (McRae 2017).

BEGINNINGS

I grew up in Auckland in the 1930s through the Great Depression and the growing threat of war. I knew that my parents were descended from British immigrants who arrived in New Zealand between 1840 and 1906[1] but all contact with relatives in the "old country" had ceased and our lives were firmly rooted in the Auckland of our own day. While British history and literature were central to my learning at home and school, Māori names and stories, architecture and artefacts were also a loved and familiar part of my identity and daily life.

During my first ten years, my family lived in three streets with Māori names on the Tāmaki Isthmus between Waitematā and Manukau harbours, in suburbs dominated by Maungawhau (Mount Eden), a terraced and fortified citadel built and occupied by Māori *iwi* 'tribes' in pre-European times. Enchanted

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Metge, Joan, 2022. Weaving cloaks and whakataukī: A memoir. *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 131 (1): 7–32. | https://doi.org/10.15286/jps.131.1.7-32

by the music of these names and the stories behind them, I accompanied my parents and school classes on visits to the Auckland War Memorial Museum with its carved *waka* 'canoe', *wharenui* 'meeting house' and *pātaka* 'food storehouse', and the showcases in the Māori Hall. Sadly, my experience with the Māori world involved no personal contact with Māori, who lived mainly in settlements on the outskirts of the city.

My early interest in the Māori past was nurtured and enriched during World War II when we lived in Pukekohe and Matamata, country towns on the edge and in the heart of the Waikato with its tragic history of conflict between *ngā tāngata whenua* 'the local iwi' and the colonial government in the nineteenth century. It was in Pukekohe that I formed my first relationships with individual Māori, at school and at church. Back in Auckland in 1945 as the war was ending, I resumed visits to the Museum and read my way through my father's books on Māori history and culture.[2]

During my undergraduate years at Auckland University College (1948–1950), I spent my summer vacations working at the Museum under the supervision of ethnologist Vic Fisher, benefiting from his wealth of experience and enjoying friendly contact with Museum guard Mr Stewart, who was Ngāti Maru.

TE RANGI HIROA AND THE WEAVING OF CLOAKS

Of all my duties in the Ethnology Department, the one that gave me the most pleasure was the care of the Māori cloaks which hung from rails in tall, temperature-controlled glass cases in the Ethnology work rooms. Once a week I inspected these cloaks for signs of damage and changed the containers of formaldehyde crystals which protected them against insect infestations. Rain cloaks, dog skin cloaks, feather cloaks, *korowai* and *kaitaka* (see Table 1)—these I had learned to recognise as a child in their glass cases in the Māori Hall. But examining them up close, unscreened by glass, I learned a great deal about the materials and techniques involved in their making. In the process, I developed a deep admiration for the skill and inventiveness of the weavers and a special affection for the finely woven kaitaka cloaks (Fig. 1).

During my employment at the Museum, Director Dr Gilbert Archey received a request from Te Rangi Hiroa[3] (Sir Peter Buck), Director of the Bishop Museum in Honolulu, for photographs of specific items in our collections for his forthcoming book, *The Coming of the Maori.* A New Zealander proud to be both Māori and Pākehā 'New Zealand Europeans' and an internationally respected anthropologist, Te Rangi Hiroa had long been a hero of mine, so I was delighted when Dr Archey asked me to choose examples of the cloak types he wanted. When the Seventh Pacific Science Congress was held in Auckland in 1949, I was thrilled to attend Te Rangi Hiroa's lecture on the Polynesian outlier Kapingamarangi and to serve him when waitressing at a Congress reception.

Figure 1. Quiet beauty: the kaitaka huaki (of Ngāti Whakaue) chosen by Te Rangi Hiroa for publication in his book *The Coming of the Maori* (1949, Plate XV). From the Sir George Grey Collection (ref. 816), courtesy of Auckland War Memorial Museum.

Published later in 1949, *The Coming of the Maori* reviewed current knowledge on the Māori of New Zealand in sections entitled "The Coming of the Maori", "Material Culture", "Social Organisation" and "Religion", supporting the main text with an exhaustive bibliography and an appendix of photographic plates. Because of my museum experience I was particularly interested in the chapter headed "Clothing" in which he used weaving techniques and ornamentation to identify and classify cloak types into groups (Table 1). To my mind this chapter remains essential reading for everyone interested in Māori weaving and the foundation for further development.

As I expected, *The Coming of the Maori* was at once scholarly, thought-provoking and highly readable, its flowing and deceptively simple prose enlivened by stories from the author's personal experience. As both scholar and writer of scientific prose, Te Rangi Hiroa has been my primary role model ever since.

Table 1. Te Rangi Hiroa's classification of Māori cloaks in *The Coming of the Maori* (1949), pp. 162–77, organised as a chart by Joan Metge.

A. Cloaks made by single-pair twining with spaced rows Rain cloaks and capes covered with strings or tags of dried *harakeke*: *pākēpara*, *pūreke pota*, *hieke*
B. Cloaks made by single-pair twining with closely packed rows War cloaks without ornamentation: *pukupuku* Dog skin cloaks fully or partly covered with strips of dog skin: *kahu kurī* Cloaks ornamented with tufts of dog hair: *māhiti*
C. Cloaks made by double-pair twining with spaced rows Cloaks without ornamentation: *parākiri* Tag cloaks with twisted black thrums: *korowai* Pompom cloaks: *ngore* Feather cloaks: *kahu huruhuru* Cloaks ornamented with *harakeke* rolls: *waikawa*
D. Cloaks with plain body (*kaupapa*) made by double-pair twining with spaced rows and borders (*pakitaha*) made by single-pair twining with closely packed rows and two or more colours in geometric designs (*tāniko*) Cloaks with horizontal weft rows on the *kaupapa*: *kaitaka* Cloaks with vertical weft rows on the *kaupapa*: *paepaeroa*

REWETI KŌHERE AND THE STUDY OF WHAKATAUKĪ

In 1951 I was studying for my MA in Geography at Auckland University College when A.H. and A.W. Reed published *He Konae Aronui: Maori Proverbs and Sayings,* translated and explained by Reweti Kōhere of Ngāti Porou (Fig. 2). In the Preface Kōhere (1951: 10) explains that "the title follows the *Kete Aronui* of the *Whare Wananga*, that is, the *Basket of Wisdom*. Mine is only a *konae*, a *rourou*, a little bit of wisdom, so that it humbly announces itself as *He Konae Aronui*."

Familiar with English proverbs, which are typically anonymous, I was surprised to find how many of the 200 proverbs in Kōhere's book recorded the doings or sayings of named ancestors. As well as being captivated by the wisdom of the proverbs themselves, I was impressed by the detailed information that Kōhere provided, not only a literal translation and/or paraphrase of each in English but also the story behind the proverb's provenance and variations in its interpretation. Studying Kōhere's text, I

realised that even when they seemed to be statements of fact about the natural world, these proverbs referred metaphorically to human social relations and typically could be interpreted in more than one way.

I was particularly intrigued by Kōhere's discussion of the proverb *Ka pū te rūhā, ka hao te rangatahi* under the heading "Youth" (Kohere 1951: 36). I had already heard this proverb delivered orally and I knew that *rangatahi* was the technical name for a fishing net about ten fathoms long, that the accepted translation was "The old net is cast aside and the new net goes fishing", and that this was generally interpreted as meaning "When one *rangatira* 'leader' dies, another rangatira rises up in his place".

In *He Konae Aronui,* Kōhere changed the word "new" to "young", subtly changing the meaning. He went on to explain that "Tama Mahupuku, the Wairarapa chief, once said: 'The present generation belongs to the young people, the century of the old is past.' He uttered these wise words when the Young Maori Party was most vigorous" (Kohere 1951: 36).[4]

Since the publication of *He Konae Aronui* this proverb has been re-interpreted to mean that leaders of the traditional kind (the rangatira) are being replaced by leaders of a different kind, leaders who are young,

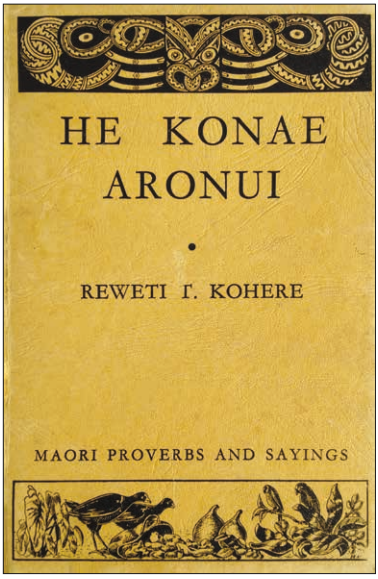


Figure 2. The cover of Reweti Kōhere's 1951 book *He Konae Aronui: Maori Proverbs and Sayings* gives pride of place to the Māori half of the title, indirectly referencing the "baskets of knowledge" of Māori mythology (see Preface).

university educated and modern in outlook. The original meaning of *rangatahi* has been forgotten and the word is used typically to refer to young people between about 15 and 30 years old, replacing the old term *taitamariki*.

Once Kōhere had aroused my interest in whakataukī, I discovered that they constituted a highly respected branch of Māori oral literature and had been published extensively in collections and other writings (see McRae 2017: 79–114). I began to watch out for their use and to take note of the context in which they appeared, the translations given and any comments as to meaning and application.

THE REVIVAL OF MĀORI WEAVING

By 1952, when I began my field research into Māori urban migration, the number of experts practising the arts of *whatu* 'cloak-making, including those with tāniko' and *raranga* 'the making of floor mats and kits' had been drastically reduced. When the Maori Women's Welfare League was established in 1951, its constitution included the practice of "The Maori Arts" among its objectives. As a first step in reviving the weaving arts, the League's tutors focused on teaching tāniko, the most individual and portable of those arts, and adapted its traditional techniques and uses to the making of articles currently in demand: belts for men and women, purses, earrings, girls' bodices, headbands and men's bandoliers for *kapa haka* 'performing arts' performances. Instead of harakeke, which took months to prepare, they used materials that were commercially available (black macramé for the warp and coloured knitting silks for the weft rows), reorganised the geometric design elements of tāniko cloak borders to fit these new shapes and dropped the *tapu* 'prohibition' restrictions governing traditional weaving.

Taking advantage of the teaching on offer, I learnt basic tāniko techniques and designs from Kuini Matiu, a member of Te Rarawa iwi of the Far North living in the Auckland suburb of Mount Albert. What is more, I learnt it the traditional way, by example and imitation, sitting side by side with Kuini on her sitting room floor. When I had given away my sampler (as tradition dictated) and had started on my first belt, I acquired a copy of *Taniko Weaving: How to Make Maori Belts and Other Useful Articles* by S.M. Mead, a teacher and former arts and crafts specialist for East Coast and Bay of Plenty Māori schools, a book the author told his readers had been "written for beginners, both juvenile and adult" (Mead 1952: author's foreword) (Fig. 3).

Although by then I did not need its detailed weaving instructions and diagrams, I found it useful as a source of old and new designs and advice on how to attach belt linings and buckles. Finding weaving tāniko both challenging and relaxing as a leisure activity, I made some ten belts for my father, friends and myself over the next 30 years, taught the technique to others when asked and recommended tāniko weaving to pianists and occupational therapists as excellent exercise for the fingers.

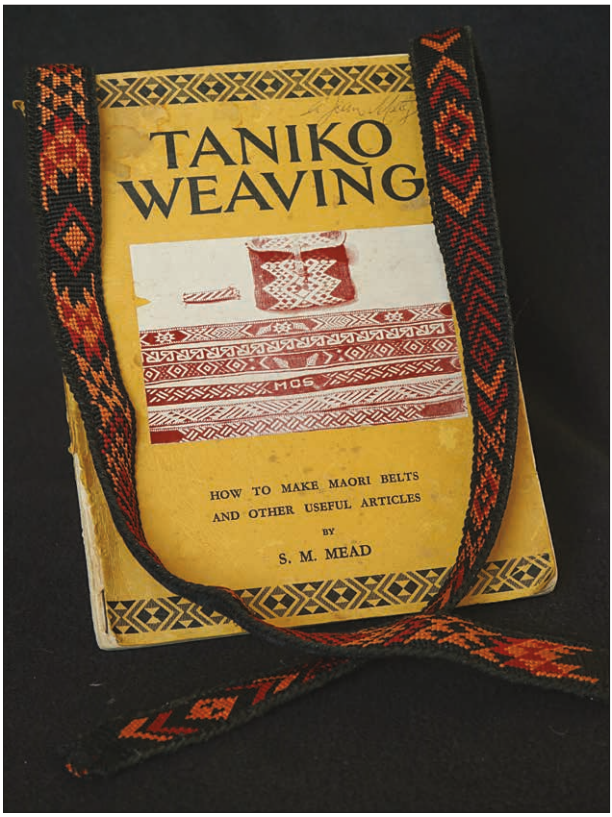


Figure 3. The cover of *Taniko Weaving: How to Make Maori Belts and Other Useful Articles* (Mead 1952) with tāniko belts designed and made by the author. Photograph by John Miller.

When I returned to New Zealand in 1958 after two years' doctoral study in Britain, I was delighted to find the revival of all forms of traditional weaving proceeding apace with the involvement of traditionally trained experts like Rangimarie Hetet of Ngāti Kinohaku working independently or with the Maori Women's Welfare League. In July 1960, while I was carrying out research around the North Island on the organisation of *marae*-based community activities, Ngāti Maniapoto friends took me to visit Rangimarie in her home in Ōpārure and we spent several memorable hours talking with her and watching her weave a cloak. I was impressed by Rangimarie's skill and

knowledge of whatu and delighted with her creativity and vision. Instead of insisting on adherence to the traditional styles classified by Te Rangi Hiroa, she was already experimenting with the adaptation of cloak weaving to present and future needs, combining elements from different traditional cloaks (for example, the thrums of korowai with feathers and tāniko) and incorporating elements from *whāriki* 'woven mats' and *kete* 'woven kits' in innovative ways. I loved her for her modesty and for her willingness to share her knowledge with all who valued it, including non-kin and Pākehā like myself.

In September 1960 my research took me to Rotorua where I stayed in Ōhinemutu with Kaa Bennett and her husband, Reverend Manu Bennett, the minister in charge of St Faith's Anglican Church on the shore of Lake Rotorua. Every time I walked into St Faith's my eyes and feet were irresistibly drawn to the pulpit with its six amazing tāniko panels (Fig. 4). With long weft rows set vertically, the tāniko in these panels is woven from harakeke prepared and dyed the traditional way with traditional geometric

Figure 4. The pulpit of St Faith's Anglican Church, Ōhinemutu, Rotorua, showing three of its tāniko panels. Reproduced with permission.

designs in muted colours. Knowing from experience the time and care needed to prevent even an inch-deep belt from developing a curve as rows are added, I was and am full of admiration for the skill of the weavers and the even tension of their weaving.

LOOKING BACK, MOVING FORWARD

The 1960s were an exciting decade marked by a string of research-based publications on aspects of Māori traditional arts and by innovative and new directions by their current practitioners. Both publications and new developments fed directly into my interests in cloak making and whakataukī and from there into Māori poetry and storytelling.

The publication of *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse* edited by Allen Curnow in 1960 was notable for the inclusion of two sections on the Māori poetic tradition: "A Note on New Zealand Verse and the Maori Tradition" (pp. 68–77) and "Maori Poetry" (pp. 79–87). In the latter section Pākehā poet Allen Curnow, working with anthropologist Roger Oppenheim as translator, recreated six *mōteatea* 'lament, traditional chant and sung poetry' as poems in English. *Te reo Māori* 'Māori language' expert Wiremu Parker told me that he found these English versions "true in spirit to the originals". The poem "Tangi mo Te Huhu/Lament for Te Huhu" (pp. 86–87) has a special resonance for me for the quality of both versions and because Te Huhu and the lament's composer, Papahia, are *tūpuna rangatira* 'chiefly ancestors' of the Te Rarawa communities I know well. This public recognition of the Māori poetic tradition by a leading Pākehā poet was followed in 1961 by *Nga Moteatea* Part II, jointly edited by Apirana Ngata and Pei Te Hurinui (1961) and published by The Polynesian Society. This followed on from the ground-breaking work of Ngata as Part I in 1958.

In September 1961, I joined the staff of the University Extension Department of Auckland University College. For three years I worked closely with Māori tutors Matiu Te Hau (Ngā Puhi and Whakatōhea) and Kapunga Dewes (Ngāti Porou), teaching non-examination courses on "Maori Society Today" and attending *hui* 'meetings' on marae in the university's territory, including ten Young Maori Leaders Conferences organised jointly by University Extension and local Māori communities (Fig. 5). As well as deepening my understanding of Māori imagery in art and literature, these years gave me access to a new generation of Māori writers and artists represented by writer Arapera Hineira Kaa (1986, 1995), artist Arnold Wilson (Skinner 2008: 6–15) and poet Hone Tūwhare (Tuwhare 1964).

In 1963 A.H. and A.W. Reed published *Maori Proverbs* edited by A.E. Brougham and A.W. Reed, a comprehensive collection of whakataukī gathered from existing sources from Sir George Grey to Reweti Kōhere. For more than 20 years this collection remained the essential reference work on

Figure 5. Rangatahi, *kaumatua* 'elders' and Auckland University staff attending the Young Maori Leaders Conference in Kaikohe, 1964. Left photo: Dr. Nai Paewai and Matiu Te Hau. Right photo: Joan Metge (front row, far left) with other attendees. Photographer unknown, image in possession of author.

Figure 6. The nest of the *mātātā* 'fernbird'(*Bowdleria punctata*) is referred to in the whakataukī "Ka mahi koe i te whare o te mātātā" (You are making a nest for the fernbird). (Soper 1972, plate 33)

Figure 7. Wiremu (Bill) Parker, Māori broadcaster and expert in ngā tikanga Māori, who taught the foundation course in Māori language and literature at Victoria University of Wellington in 1965. Photograph from a 1986 *VUW News.*

Māori proverbs for the general reader. While the Māori and English versions of the proverbs are consistently accurate and accessible, explanations about meaning and application vary widely in length and helpfulness, reproducing the wording of the sources. The proverbs are listed alphabetically under topic headings without an index, a practice that makes it difficult to locate known proverbs. I was disappointed with the entry listed under "Weaving" which compares the cloak a woman is weaving with "the nest of the fernbird" without explaining the reasons for the comparison and whether it was a compliment or criticism. I had never heard of the fernbird, knew nothing of the nest it made and did not know how to find out (Fig. 6). The experience made me recognise the importance of exploring the imagery of whakataukī in depth. Typically, their interpretation depends on detailed knowledge of their creators and their natural and social environments.

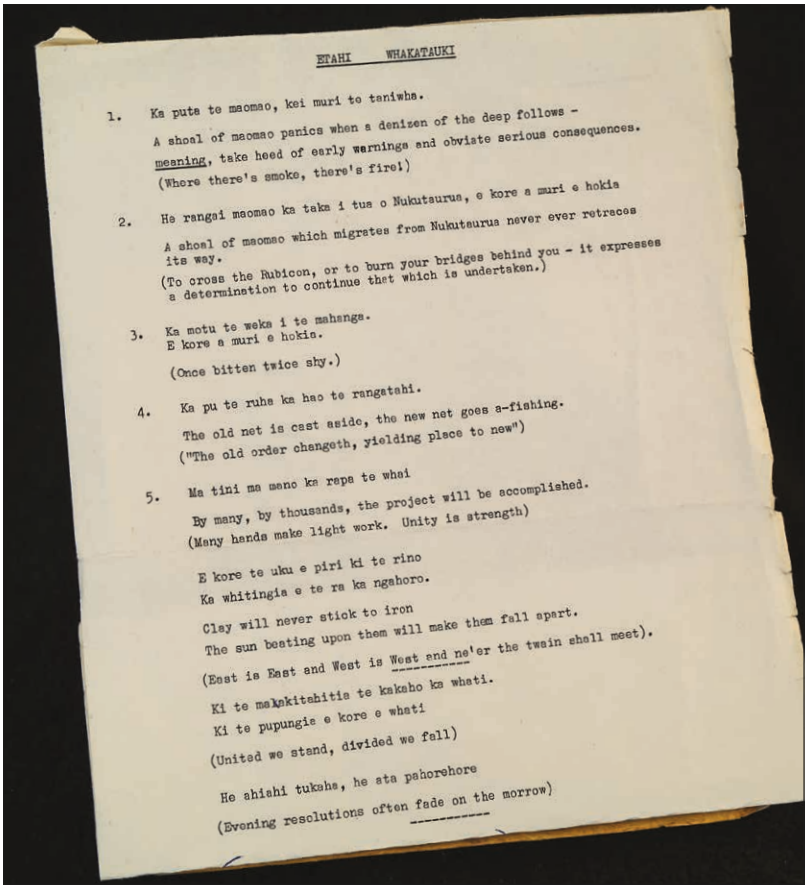
At the beginning of 1965 I took up an appointment in the newly established Anthropology Department at Victoria University of Wellington and spent a memorable year working with Wiremu Parker (Fig. 7), seconded from Victoria's University Extension, in the inaugural teaching of "Māori Studies I". Wiremu planned and taught the Māori language and literature paper while I taught the paper on Māori society and attended Wiremu's classes whenever possible. In his teaching Wiremu loved to explore both the similarities and differences between te reo Māori and the English language, in both of which he was at home. I keep among my most treasured papers a copy of "Nga Whakatauki: Maori Proverbs and Sayings", the cyclostyled page Wiremu provided for his students listing his favourite whakataukī with translations and comparable sayings in English (Fig. 8). One example presents as follows:

> He rangai maomao ka taka i tua Nukutaurua, e kore a muri e hokia.
>
> A shoal of maomao [a fish] which migrates from Nukutaurua never ever retraces its way.
>
> (To cross the Rubicon, or to burn your bridges behind you—it expresses a determination to continue that which is undertaken.) (Parker 1965)

Wiremu Parker published on whakataukī in *Te Ao Hou* the following year (1966).

For the rest of the 1960s I combined coming to terms with Lévi-Straussian structuralism (introduced to Victoria by inaugural professor Jan Pouwer in the late 1960s) with teaching a non-advancing course on Māori history, art and literature in partnership with Bernie Kernot. To accompany these courses, I compiled the "Maori Literature Booklet" (unpublished and undated) which comprises resources on Māori storytelling, whakataukī and poetry, traditional and modern (Metge n.d.). In addition to our joint courses, Bernie and I worked closely with Wiremu Parker in his University Extension work in the city and beyond, continuing to learn and profit from his store of knowledge.

The decade of the 1960s ended as it began with three landmark publications in the field of the Māori arts: *The Art of Taniko Weaving* (Mead 1968), *Traditional Maori Clothing* (Mead 1969) and Roger Duff's *No Sort of Iron: Culture of Cook's Polynesians* (1969), a souvenir handbook that accompanied the *Cook Bicentenary Exhibition of Polynesian Art*. I read them as they became available, without fully appreciating them at that time.



NGAHI WHAKATAUKI

1. Ka puta te maomao, kei muri te taniwha.
   A shoal of maomao panics when a denizen of the deep follows - meaning, take heed of early warnings and obviate serious consequences.
   (Where there's smoke, there's fire!)

2. He rangai maomao ka taka i tua o Nukutaurua, e kore a muri e hokia
   A shoal of maomao which migrates from Nukutaurua never ever retraces its way.
   (To cross the Rubicon, or to burn your bridges behind you - it expresses a determination to continue that which is undertaken.)

3. Ka motu te weka i te mahanga.
   E kore a muri e hokia.
   (Once bitten twice shy.)

4. Ka pu te ruha ka hao te rangatahi.
   The old net is cast aside, the new net goes a-fishing.
   ("The old order changeth, yielding place to new")

5. Ma tini ma mano ka repa te whai
   By many, by thousands, the project will be accomplished.
   (Many hands make light work. Unity is strength)

   E kore te uku e piri ki te rino
   Ka whitingia e te ra ka ngahoro.
   Clay will never stick to iron
   The sun beating upon them will make them fall apart.
   (East is East and West is West and ne'er the twain shall meet).

   Ki te mahkitahitia te kakaho ka whati.
   Ki te pupungia e kore e whati
   (United we stand, divided we fall)

   He ahiahi tukaha, he ata pahorehore
   (Evening resolutions often fade on the morrow)

Figure 8. A handout on whakataukī prepared by Wiremu Parker for his Māori language and literature class. Photograph by John Miller.

STUDY LEAVE 1970: NORTH AMERICA

In September 1970 I flew to Vancouver to spend the first four months of my study leave at the University of British Columbia, famed among anthropologists for its long association with American anthropologist Franz Boas and the peoples of the Northwest Coast of Canada. Based in the Anthropology Department, headed by New Zealander Harry Hawthorn, I enjoyed attending seminars and engaging in lively intellectual discussion with university colleagues, but missed the personal encounters of fieldwork in Māori communities.

Two memorable experiences stand out as both intellectually and emotionally exciting.

During a visit behind the scenes at the Museum of British Columbia, I was shown a set of black-and-white photographs of life among the Northwest Coast peoples at the beginning of the twentieth century. Among them I was excited to find a photograph of a Kwakiutl woman wearing a blanket-like garment with a weave that resembled that of the *kaupapa* 'main body' of a Māori cloak. When staff members produced an example of Kwakiutl weaving, close examination of it established that the Kwakiutl weaver had indeed used the technique of single-pair twining in making the weft rows, but had left a space between rows. Traditional Māori weavers also used single-pair weft twining but they did so by packing the rows closely together, leaving no spaces between rows and producing a stiff impenetrable weave suitable for special purposes such as war cloaks and tāniko borders. In the weaving of dress cloaks indicative of rangatira status, Māori weavers used double-pair weft twining, leaving spaces between the rows. Most significantly, the single-pair weft twining of Kwakiutl weaving involved a simple cross-over between warp threads, whereas the single-pair weft twining of Māori weaving was and is achieved by a double twist between warps, which creates a much closer weave.

To mark the end of a course on the structural analysis of Northwest Coast myths, professors Pierre and Elli Maranda invited the students to a social evening in their home, together with storytellers from local tribes. When discussion took an academic turn focused on the structure of the stories rather than their content, a student and I retired to a quiet corner with one of the storytellers and listened enthralled as he told his own people's stories. Reluctantly deciding that we should re-join the others, I waited politely for him to finish the story he was telling before intervening, only to realise he had already launched into another. A flash of insight suggested that this continuity is a feature of oral storytelling in general, linking stories seamlessly into one continuous whole. In contrast, publication in print favours their separation into discrete chapters or short stories. This is certainly true in the Māori case.

CAMBRIDGE 1971: AN EXCITING DISCOVERY

Early in 1971 I crossed North America, paying short visits in Toronto, Chicago and Boston on the way, and spent the rest of my leave based at the London School of Economics. While in London I visited Cambridge University to read a seminar paper based on my teaching back home. Entitled "Myths Are for Telling", it was at once a tribute and a challenge to Claude Lévi-Strauss and his dictum that "Les mythes sont à penser" (Myths are for thinking with) (Lévi-Strauss 1963: 206–13; Metge 2010: 29–40).

While in Cambridge I also visited the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology (now the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology), primarily to catch up with its director, Dr Peter Gathercole, who had become a good friend while teaching in New Zealand at the University of Otago. Inspecting the Museum's display of Māori artefacts collected on Captain Cook's first visit to New Zealand in 1769, I was excited to discover a kaitaka with a deep tāniko border of alternate panels of zigzags and light-coloured dots unlike anything I had ever seen. The director opened the display case for me, and I was able to examine that border closely, inside as well as outside. The weaving was so fine and the pattern so unusual that they took my breath away.

Home again in Wellington I searched the sources known to me but found no record of the Cambridge kaitaka. I did, however, locate three cloaks with tāniko borders which were collected on Cook's first voyage. The first, in the British Museum, is a kaitaka with a narrow tāniko border woven in a simple chevron pattern (Mead 1969: 47, fig. 5a). The second, in the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford, has a deep tāniko border on which plain panels alternate with panels of zigzags and squared meanders (Roth 1923: 94; see also Gathercole 1970). The third, a māhiti war cloak (see Table 1) located in the Ethnographical Museum of Sweden, has an even deeper tāniko border with a pattern of concentric diamonds (Duff 1969: 33). In *Traditional Maori Clothing*, Mead identifies these three cloaks as belonging to the early phase of the Classical Māori era when tāniko patterns were in his words "exceedingly complex and highly elaborate creations" (Mead 1969: 68).

I had reached this point in my search when my copy of the latest issue of the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* arrived containing an article by Wilfred Shawcross, "The Cambridge University Collection of Maori Artefacts, Made on Captain Cook's First Voyage". To my delight, this article included both a verbal description and a diagrammatic drawing of the kaitaka border which so enthralled me, confirming my own assessment of its uniqueness (Shawcross 1970: 324, pl. IV: 325).

From the outside view shown in the drawing I could not tell whether the panels in the tāniko border of the Cambridge kaitaka had been woven as one continuous length or separately for later joining. Viewing the border

from the inside confirmed my intuition that the former was the case, an amazing achievement. However, the Shawcross article started me wondering how the zigzags had been made. In single-pair twining the "stitches" that create the pattern slope ever so slightly upwards from left to right: how (I wondered) had the weaver achieved the "zags" that slope in the opposite direction? Developing a hypothesis on this point, I made a sampler to test it, using double-pair twining in the making of the zigzag panel (Fig. 9). Disappointingly, this produced what looked like zigzags from the front, but a puzzling difference in depth between the panels when viewed from the back. To my regret, I never tried again. Years later Margery Blackman solved that problem as well as those presented by the three other cloaks collected in 1769 (Blackman 2011: 83–85).

The art of Māori weaving has remained a continuing source of interest and personal pleasure throughout my life. I have continued to keep watch on developments in *whatu kākahu* 'garment making' and raranga through visits to exhibitions in museums and art galleries and personal interaction with weavers.

Figure 9. A sketch of the unique tāniko border of a kaitaka cloak of pre-European provenance in the Cambridge collection of Māori artefacts (from Shawcross 1970, plate IV), along with a sampler the author wove in an attempt to replicate it. Photograph by John Miller.

WHAKAIRO: CARVING AND THE FIBRE ARTS

While the word *whakairo* is popularly understood to refer to carving, it properly has a much wider range of meaning. In Williams' *Dictionary of the Māori Language,* it is listed under *iro* as a transitive verb meaning "ornament with a pattern, used for carving, tattooing, painting, weaving" (Williams 1975: 80). In *Māori Sayings and Proverbs*, Murdoch Riley groups nine proverbs under the heading "About Carving and Weaving". Of these, five are concerned with carving alone, two with the weaving of cloaks, one with the weaving of roof thatch and one with neat work in either (Riley 1990: sec. 14).

In the early 1980s I was caught up in the excitement surrounding the preparation of an exhibition of "traditional Māori art" to be sent to the USA, the publication in 1984 of its accompanying text *Te Maori: Maori Art from New Zealand Collections*, edited by H.M. Mead, and ecstatic reports of the reception of *Te Maori* in New York. Before long, however, I became aware of undercurrents of resentment in New Zealand among weavers, museum ethnologists and women's groups at the omission of the fibre arts from *Te Maori* and what was perceived as a failure on the part of the organisers and news media to adequately explain and acknowledge their absence.

Challenged to "return the mana to weaving" by Ngāti Porou *kuia* 'female elder' Ngoi Pewhairangi, Māori weavers formed the Aotearoa-Moana-a-Kiwa National Weaving Committee and dispatched an exhibition of women's work to join *Te Maori* in Los Angeles near the end of its American tour (Van Dongen, 1986). In New Zealand women artists Patricia Grace, Robyn Kahukiwa, Toi Maihi, Arapera Kaa and Keri Kaa founded a collective of 60 women who staged a month-long exhibition of artworks, discussions and workshops in several centres.

This exhibition opened in the Wellington City Gallery and small venues in Gisborne and Auckland on 4 May 1986 under the title *Karanga Karanga* (Toi Te Rito Maihi, pers. comm.). I vividly remember entering the Wellington City Gallery in a group with other visitors in response to a powerful *karanga* 'chanted invitation' from the women hosts to be immediately confronted by *Nga Morehu* (*The Survivors*), a group of life-sized terracotta women callers (*kaikaranga*), the work of Shona Rapira Davies, now in Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa Press 2005: 81). Stunned though I was by this work my attention was almost immediately captured by *Taranga*, an innovative creation conceived and assembled by Roma Potiki, Patricia Grace and Robyn Kahukiwa, which dominated the centre of the gallery. Described as a *poutokomanawa* 'the centre post supporting the ridge pole inside a meeting house' and named after Māui's mother in Māori mythology, *Taranga* is a tall uncarved wooden pillar wrapped in a magnificent cloak made of unprocessed leaves of *tī kōuka* (cabbage tree), *nīkau* (a palm), *pingao* (a coastal grass) and *kiekie* (a climbing plant), with a collar of mussel shells. For me, *Taranga*

was a highly dramatic introduction to the imaginative transformations of traditional Māori arts which had been pioneered by Māori women artists in the time of Rangimarie Hetet and Emily Schuster.

Te Maori was formally welcomed home at the National Museum in Wellington on 16 August 1986, spent two months on display there hosted in turn by iwi from various parts of the country and was then exhibited for similar periods in Dunedin, Christchurch and Auckland. In all four centres, *Te Maori* was complemented by an exhibition called *Maori Art Today* organised by the Māori and South Pacific Arts Council (MASPAC) and the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council. In Auckland, where *Te Maori* was exhibited in the City Art Gallery, the Auckland War Memorial Museum mounted a complementary exhibition called *Te Aho Tapu: Traditional Maori Weaving* and introduced it with a publication of the same name (Pendergrast 1987).

I visited *Te Maori* in the National Museum while it was being hosted by Te Āti Awa, the holders of *mana whenua* 'authority over land' in Wellington. For me, the emotional impact of the occasion was reinforced by my being able to share it with Te Āti Awa kuia Mairatea Tāhiwi (née Pitt). As soon as the welcome finished, she led me to the special exhibitions gallery where she greeted a kaitaka then in her guardianship (Te Papa Press 2005: 16). This cloak (she told me) played an important part in Wellington's early history (Fig. 10). The story began when 12-year-old Thomas Wilmor McKenzie, newly arrived on an immigrant ship with an insatiable curiosity and no knowledge of *tikanga* 'accepted Māori ways', trespassed on the site of a house which members of Te Āti Awa were building for a settler. The rangatira Te Rīrā Pōrutu drew his *mere* 'greenstone weapon' to strike him for this breach of tapu but his relation, Ruhia Pōrutu, untied the cloak she was wearing and threw it over the boy, saving his life. Young Thomas grew up to be a prominent citizen in the town and a good friend of Te Āti Awa all his life. When he died, Te Āti Awa honoured the relationship by draping the cloak over his coffin as the funeral cortege passed through the town. For 25 years, Dinah Priestley's batik portrait of Mairatea wearing the cloak hung in my home until I gave it (as was fitting) to her niece.

THE KAITAKA AS METAPHOR

When Keri Kaa of Ngāti Porou tossed the whakataukī "Nāu i whatu te kākahu, te tāniko tāku" into a discussion of Māori methods of learning and teaching in the late 1980s without translation or explanation, I immediately identified it as a reference to the kaitaka, translated it into English as 'You wove the body of the cloak, I wove the tāniko border' and interpreted it as referring to the complementarity of the kaitaka's body and borders as a metaphor for partnership and teamwork. When I asked Keri from whom she had learnt this proverb she attributed it to Te Aue Davis (Tainui, Ngāti Uekaha, Ngāti

Figure 10. Thomas Wilmor McKenzie's funeral procession outside St John's Church, Dixon Street, Wellington, 2 March 1911. The casket is draped with Ruhia's cloak. Photographer unidentified. PAColl-5345-2 (Mairatea Tahiwi). Courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library.

Maniapoto and Ngāti Te Kanawa) and went on to interpret it as referring to the complementary roles played in the upbringing of children by Māori parents on the one hand and grandparents and older relatives on the other.

Surprised that such a relevant whakataukī had escaped my attention for so long, I searched through my copy of *Maori Proverbs* page by page (since entries are listed under headings only) and found it (in my mind unexpectedly) under the heading "Heredity" with no translation and an explanation as follows:

> The cloak is woven before the ornamental border is added. It is the parents who are responsible for the character of the child. (Brougham and Reed 1963: 54)

During my search for this proverb about the kaitaka in *Maori Proverbs*, I once again dismissed the entry listed under the heading "Weaving" as unsatisfactory but discovered three more entries which referred to cloaks directly or indirectly. The first of these, listed under the heading "Clothes",

identifies the māhiti and the paepaeroa (see Table 1) as the "proper garments for a chief" (Brougham and Reed 1963: 14). The second, under the heading "Cold", refers to a *huruhuru kakapo* 'cloak of kākāpō feathers' (Brougham and Reed 1963: 15). The third appears under the heading "Work" and reads as follows:

> Ano me he whare pungawerewere / As if it is a spider's web. A saying applied to fine and intricate work in carving or weaving. (Brougham and Reed 1963: 134)[5]

The obscurity of the fernbird proverb listed under "Weaving" in *Maori Proverbs* continued to irritate me until quite lately when I consulted a book by an ornithologist. In *New Zealand Birds*, M.F. Soper reports that fernbirds are hard to find because their habitat has been largely destroyed by cultivation (Soper 1972: 76). In the Tākaka-Collingwood district in the South Island, fernbirds live in a dense growth of rush, umbrella fern and low mānuka scrub on damp ground with the umbrella fern forming an unbroken canopy. The fernbird nest is hidden, suspended in this growth, 15 to 30 cm above the ground. Soper describes the nest: "Woven out of grass, it has a characteristically deep cup, the lower half of which is often, though not always, lined with a few feathers, generally those of the Pukeko" (Soper 1972: 77–78). Photographs show that it is beautifully and intricately woven, leaving no doubt that comparing a human weaver with a fernbird is a compliment to both (Soper 1972: 75–78, pl. 33 and 49).

Reassured by Keri's affirmation of my stress on the complementarity of the two parts of the kaitaka, I proceeded to use the whakataukī "Nāu i whatu te kākahu, te tāniko tāku" in publications. In a seminar on whakataukī in general, presented with Shane Jones of Ngāi Takoto at the Stout Research Centre in Wellington in 1994, I described it as "stressing the complementary importance of parents and grandparents in the education of children" (Metge 2010: 51) and in 1995 I used it with that meaning in *New Growth from Old* to accompany the dedication to Te Rarawa kuia and at the head of Chapter 10 "Grannies, Aunts and Uncles" (Metge 1995: 175–76). In both places the quotation of the proverb is illustrated by a pen-and-ink drawing by Toi Te Rito Maihi (Ngā Puhi, Ngāti Kahungunu), based on a photograph in *Whaowhia* (Archey 1977: 101).

Eight years later editors Hirini Mead and Neil Grove included the kaitaka whakataukī in their magnificent collection *Ngā Pēpeha a ngā Tīpuna* with interpretations which stress complementarity but value one part of the kaitaka more highly than the other.

> Several meanings have been associated with this saying, e.g. "You did most of this work, I supplied the fine work"; or "You provided the less skilled input for this project but I polished it off". (Mead and Grove 2003: 319)

Mead and Grove also reference the entry in *Maori Proverbs* (Brougham and Reed 1963: 54) but add a further clause:

> Some consider the saying a comment on a child's heredity and development, i.e. the parents provide the long-term daily guidance necessary to develop a child's character while further training is gained from those skilled in certain specialties. (Mead and Grove 2003: 319)

While these interpretations differ from mine on one or more points, I appreciate the contribution they make to debate about the "meaning" of proverbs. Where whakataukī are concerned there is no one correct interpretation. In responding to particular proverbs it is helpful to know the names and circumstances of particular interpreters, for interpreters bring their own experiences, aims and insights to the task. The anonymous interpreters reported in *Ngā Pēpeha a ngā Tīpuna* were probably non-weavers more interested in the visual impact of the parts of the kaitaka than in the weaving skills involved.

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

The kaitaka and the whakataukī based on it do not exist in isolation but are embedded in an ongoing history of development involving both continuity and change. Published in 1969, 20 years after Te Rangi Hiroa's *The Coming of the Maori,* Mead's book *Traditional Maori Clothing* explores this long history in great depth and detail, the Classical Period (largely the eighteenth century), the Transitional Period (the nineteenth century), and thereafter the Modern Period in which he recognises the transformation from recovery to creative mode and the roles played therein by the Maori Women's Welfare League, the Rotorua Māori Arts and Crafts Institute and inheritors of traditional knowledge like Rangimarie Hetet. The themes of creativity and innovation rooted in love and respect for ancestral legacies emerge powerfully in the growing library of books on Māori fibre arts published in recent years by weavers, museums and art galleries, notably *Whatu Kākahu: Māori Cloaks* (Tamarapa 2011) and *E ngā Uri Whakatupu: Weaving Legacies* (Hetet and Te Kanawa 2015).

Early in 2016, the Auckland War Memorial Museum made a significant contribution to this ongoing history of continuity and change with the exhibition *Kōrero Mai, Kōrero Atu*. This juxtaposed a kaitaka from the Museum's collection with a circle of four modern cloaks woven from harakeke fibre, light, and kiln-formed, cold-work glass by Te Rongo Kirkwood (Waikato, Taranaki, Waiohua, Te Kawerau a Maki, Ngā Tai ki Tāmaki) (Lythberg 2016: 33–38).

Like the cloaks, the kaitaka proverb continues to be given new life by new interpretations. In 2014, the Royal Society of New Zealand adopted

it as the theme for the Society's annual Awards Dinner, featuring it on both the invitation and the programme, and illustrating it with a display of innovative modern cloaks at the entrance to the dinner venue in Te Papa Tongarewa (Figs 11 and 12). In their acceptance speeches, several medallists made effective use of the proverb when acknowledging the contributions of members of their research teams.

In the years since I cared for the cloaks in the Auckland War Memorial Museum, the art of Māori weaving has continued to develop in new directions, winning increasing recognition at local, regional and national levels. When I stayed in Ahipara in the Far North in 1955 there were no weavers living there, but during the 1960s many of the local women joined the campaign to adapt traditional arts for modern times and by the late 1980s they were keeping their households and marae supplied with whāriki and kete, innovating new forms such as backpacks, baby carriers and outsize vases, and sending work to shops and galleries in Kaitāia, the nearest town. Several of the leading weavers of the area are recognised among the finest weavers in the land (Maihi and Lander 2005: 20–24, 76–79; Te Papa Press 2005: 6).

In 2005, Ahipara weavers formed themselves into an incorporated society and established Te Whare Whiri Toi Arts Centre in a custom-built building on Roma Marae (https://www.facebook.com/TeWhareWhiriToi/). Experienced and learner weavers from all over Te Tai Tokerau gather there periodically to weave together, to share skills and ideas and to run workshops that include painting and bone carving and are open to all men and women who are interested in Māori art.

The saying that appears at the head of Te Whare Whiri Toi's handbook and papers was not inherited but created by the Centre's founders in a brainstorming session "to express the dreams, values and aspirations of our collective" (Nathan 2005: 1). Widely accepted today as a fully-fledged whakataukī, it provides a fitting conclusion to this memoir:

> Whiria te tangata, ka puta he oranga;
> Whiria nga mahi toi, ka puta he tino rangatiratanga.
> By weaving people, promote well-being;
> By weaving the arts, promote excellence.

Figure 11. One of four contemporary cloaks on display at the 2014 Royal Society of New Zealand Te Aparangi annual awards ceremony held at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. Photograph by Gerry Le Roux of Sciencelens.

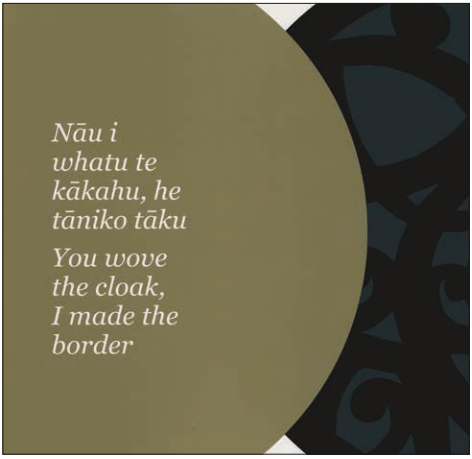


Figure 12. The whakataukī chosen by the Royal Society of New Zealand Te Aparangi as the theme for their 2014 New Zealand Research Honours awards ceremony.

NOTES

1. My father's maternal great-grandparents were Scottish weavers who sailed into the Waitematā harbour on the *Duchess of Argyle* in 1842. His father, an Irish school teacher with a French surname, arrived alone in 1879 and married the weavers' New Zealand–born granddaughter a year later. My mother's English parents arrived in Auckland via Australia in 1906, when my mother was three years old.
2. For example, George Grey, *Polynesian Mythology* ([1857] 1961); Elsdon Best, *The Maori*, vols I and II (1924); and William Satchell, *The Greenstone Door* (1914).
3. In this article, I have chosen to refer to Sir Peter Buck using the form of his Māori name as he expressed it when I met him in 1949 at the Seventh Pacific Science Congress: Te Rangi Hiroa. At the same time, I acknowledge that if contemporary orthography was applied, his name would be written as Te Rangihiroa (see Māori Language Commission 2012). The *JPS* editorial team and I have also been guided by Sir Peter Buck himself in these matters, who reflected in this journal on how his name had changed as he navigated life:

> The use of diacritical marks to make a more accurate phonetic record of the Polynesian dialects has been ably set forth by Mr. F. Stimson in the pages of this *Journal.* His scheme forms a valuable guide for students who wish to make a more intensive study of linguistics. The above suggestions deal with a few of the minor difficulties encountered by the general field-worker.
>
> Nothing can be more inconsistent with these suggestions than the recording of my own name. When I sat for the Medical Preliminary Examination of the New Zealand University I registered myself under my Maori name of Te Rangi Hiroa. I was called Hiroa by my relatives so the use of the capital letter with Hiroa seemed natural to me. Later on I entered Parliament as Te Rangihiroa since the outside people with whom I had been mixing were accustomed to calling me Rangi. The necessity for capitalizing Hiroa did not then seem so necessary. Later on again, when I commenced to write ethnological articles, I reverted to Te Rangi Hiroa because it was customary to add academic degrees to the author's name. My degrees had been granted to Te Rangi Hiroa and not to Te Rangihiroa. Now I feel that my name should be written as Te Rangi-hiroa, but as an author I must remain Te Rangi Hiroa. (Te Rangi Hiroa 1932: 260–61)

Also, in the placement of his published works in the References below his Māori name is recognised as a single attribution, not a first and surname as in English. Condliffe (1971: 20) provides some further context here:

> He was pleased when in his teens the elders of the tribe revived for him the ancestral name. It had been spelt as Te Rangihiroa; but he derived it from Te Rangi Ihiroa, meaning 'the heavens streaked with the long rays of the sun'. After some hesitation he began to spell it Te Rangi Hiroa, no doubt to make it easier for Pakehas to pronounce. In this form he used it on most of his books, with his Pakeha name (P. H. Buck) in parentheses.

4. The Young Maori Party was the name given to "[a] group of young Maori professional men who worked for social and health reforms among Maoris in the 1890s and early twentieth century" (Metge 1976: 350).
5. All of the weaving proverbs referred to in the last two paragraphs appear without change in the second edition of *Maori Proverbs*, albeit with different page numbers (Brougham and Reed 1987: 13, 47, 114, 118).

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