
REVIEWS

SOME RECENT PUBLICATIONS OF MAORI TEXTS

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Manu van Ballekom and Ray Harlow, ***Te Waiatatanga mai o te Atua: South Island Traditions Recorded by Matiaha Tiramorehu***. Canterbury Maori Studies, no. 4. Christchurch: Department of Maori, University of Canterbury, 1987. Pp. viii, 52, index, references. NZ\$8.95.

Helen M. Hogan, ***Renata's Journey: Ko te Haerenga o Renata***. Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 1994. Pp. 175, bibliography, index. NZ\$29.95.

Margaret Orbell, ***Traditional Māori Stories***. Auckland: Reed Books, 1992. Pp. viii, 192, glossary, bibliography. NZ\$29.95.

Mohi Ruatapu, ***Nga Korero a Mohi Ruatapu Tohunga Rongonui o Ngati Porou: The Writings of Mohi Ruatapu***. Translated, edited, and annotated by Anaru Reedy. Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 1993. Pp. 256, glossary, bibliography. NZ\$29.95.

Ailsa Smith, ***Songs and Stories of Taranaki: He Tuhituhinga Tai Hau-a-uru***. Edited with translations and commentary by Ailsa Smith from the writings of Te Kahui Kararehe of Rahoitu, Taranaki. Christchurch: Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies, University of Canterbury, 1993. Pp. xvii, 80, glossary, bibliography. NZ\$10 (New Zealand); NZ\$12 (Australia and the Pacific); NZ\$13 (U.S.).

POLYNESIAN CULTURES have produced extensive literatures, of which those of the Hawaiians and the New Zealand Maori offer the largest number of surviving examples. The vast corpus of Maori literature extends from pre-contact materials transmitted in the oral tradition to contemporary works. This literature is important as art and as material for the study of Maori history and culture. Fortunately, Maori literature has been appreciated by scholars since the nineteenth century, giving Maori studies in general an unusually broad basis in native sources. The abundance of native-language texts made Māori studies influential for the whole field of Polynesian studies, an influence that continues today.

Unfortunately, those texts were not always handled with methods that are acceptable today. Literary works were not evaluated and interpreted as individual wholes but were mined for data and divided into passages that could be used as prooftexts for secondary theories. In Margaret Orbell's words, nineteenth-century scholars "created their own synthesis from a mass of disparate accounts . . . chose the versions that suited their purpose best, and they edited and translated them in an arbitrary and high-handed manner" (1985:21). Fortunately, the original Maori documents were preserved and can be studied with better methods today.

The result of the poor nineteenth-century method was inevitably to systematize the great variety of Maori traditions, reducing them to a few fabricated candidates for the true or official version. Rather than appreciating the particular traditions of each family, tribe, or thinker on the origin of the universe, scholars used them to construct a larger composite version. Some Maori themselves, newly conscious of pan-Māori relationships, joined in this effort, making it one of the most interesting movements of the formation of a native identity. Maori and non-Māori supported each other in the formulation of large, comprehensive texts, in which each relevant god was given his or her cosmic niche, as if in a fully developed governmental bureaucracy. The edifice was crowned with monotheism--the hitherto secret tradition of a single high god, Io--making Māori religion, in the thinking of the time, a respectable peer of Christianity.

This truly impressive construction, a masterpiece of nineteenth-century Polynesian thinking, was then claimed to be the original, ancient tradition of which tribal and individual traditions were fragments and simplifications. E. S. Craighill Handy, in his *Polynesian Religion* (1927), extended this claim to all of Polynesia, opening a scholarly debate that can still degenerate into dispute. The Māori themselves are divided on the antiquity of Io-centered teachings and their relation to indisputable tribal traditions.

Besides systematizing Māori texts and traditions, scholars tended to historicize them. Mythical, legendary, and fabulous elements were eliminated

or explained in order to produce a narrative that could be accepted as plausible. Historicizing was combined with systematizing to create the teaching of the Great Fleet, in which each important tribal unit was given its historical niche, just as each god had been given his cosmic one. The method was the same--combining undoubtedly ancient migration traditions--and so was the purpose: to provide a comprehensive mental framework for the Maori, now living in unprecedented contact with each other and in opposition to a foreign population.

These impressive nineteenth-century syntheses by Maori and non-Māori have proved compelling for several generations of scholars and students of Polynesian cultures. But no historical claim can escape periodic challenge, and the resulting disputes can have an existential importance. Challenges to Christian claims by biblical and historical studies have been basic and painful forces in the intellectual development of the West, and the debate continues to form and divide us.

Objections to received views of Maori tradition have been made from a number of different fields. Because of the importance of Māori studies for Polynesian studies as a field, the resulting debates have a wide significance. I will discuss only the use and importance of texts as bases both for criticism and for reconstruction.

As to philological method, the nineteenth-century use of texts is unacceptable. Systematizing and historicizing were already discredited in the nineteenth century, and every subsequent development in philology has reinforced that judgment. The nineteenth-century constructs cannot, therefore, be accepted as the supposed original tradition but should be appreciated as forming their own valuable chapter in the history of Maori thought. For the earlier chapters, the scholar must turn to the original materials that were used by the systematizers themselves. In sum, what must be reconstructed is not a single intellectual system, but a many-branched intellectual history. Fortunately, Maori literature supplies evidence in abundance for such a task.

A pioneer in the new approach to Maori texts was J. Prytz Johansen, whose two books (1954, 1958) are considered among the greatest ever written in the field of Polynesian studies. Schooled in the European philological tradition, Johansen "acted on the principle of making texts take precedence of other sources and of studying concrete situations and events rather than of using general formulations" (1954:270). He scrupulously treated each text on its own and sought the best methods of interpreting it. He then induced his general views from the evidence of the texts rather than subjecting the evidence to theories formulated in other areas: "I have as far as possible made my studies of the Maoris be self-contained without drawing on cur-

rent theories of e.g., myth and rite, etc., as I am of the opinion that these phenomena can vary somewhat and therefore must preferably be elucidated in each separate case" (1958:3). Johansen's work ranged from the definition of key terms to the interpretation of narratives and chants. In doing this, he demonstrated that certain texts should not be interpreted historically, but needed to be interpreted by their connection to ritual: "the ritual gets a mythical context, which offers a solid basis for an interpretation of the ritual" (1958:9).

Margaret Orbell, considered the foremost scholar of nineteenth-century Maori texts, argued in her important book, *Hawaiki: A New Approach to Maori Tradition* (1985), that Johansen's books "provide the groundwork on which all later investigations in this area must be based" (1985:12). Many Maori traditions "are not historical accounts, but myths: that is, they are religious narratives which tell how things were arranged in the beginning, and why, therefore, events now happen as they do. Most of the figures in the myths were archetypal, in that their actions were seen as providing patterns to be followed by later generations." Maori texts must first be respected as autonomous works of literature, not as an undifferentiated mass to be exploited piecemeal. Those texts must then be interpreted with all the methodological rigor used in the study of other literatures: "People have not expected to find in works on Maori tradition the standards that apply in other areas" (p. 22). Proper method will make possible "the study of ancient Maori thought, religion and poetry" (p. 65).

Accordingly, Orbell has been dedicating herself to the difficult and demanding work of the edition, translation, and interpretation of Maori texts. She has also been training students such as Christine Tremewan, whose doctoral thesis (1992) is an exhaustive study of a body of South Island texts; Lyndsay Head, whose article "The Gospel of Te Ua Haumene" (1992) exhibits impressively the state of the art; and Ailsa Smith and Helen Hogan, whose work is reviewed here. Orbell has also worked as an adviser to others in the field, such as Anaru Reedy and Ray Harlow, whose work I also review here.¹

The work of such scholars has a pedagogical as well as a scholarly importance. The language of the nineteenth century is sufficiently different from modern Maori that contemporary readers find it difficult. Nineteenth-century texts have in fact been neglected in the ongoing effort to preserve Maori as a living language. But such texts must be studied to provide a literary and cultural link with the past, to preserve the richness of the language, and to deal with the ever-increasing amount of litigation based on nineteenth-century documents. The publication of more texts, translations, and notes provides materials for students to familiarize themselves with the

older language. Such texts can also replace secondary sources in courses, facilitate the establishment of courses in Polynesian literature, and encourage the use of Polynesian texts in courses on world literature.

Curiously little attention has been given to the important and extensive work being conducted in Māori philology. In all likelihood, this is due to the general neglect of language and literature in Polynesian anthropology and historiography and to the small number of people capable of assessing the recent publications. My own knowledge of Maori is too rudimentary for a thorough criticism of the following works, and I will concentrate on points that I can make from my own areas of research.

Orbell's *Traditional Maori Stories* (1992, cited above at the beginning of this review essay) is the most recent example of her work. She has chosen an interesting variety of stories and has carefully transcribed the texts from available original manuscripts (even when they have been published previously). For easier reading, she has regularized the text and added diacritical marks. Her translations are careful and readable; their excellent English remains very close to the Māori originals and gives a good impression of their energy and forward movement. Such translations are possible only when one is a genuine expert. Introductions and notes provide the available information on the storyteller and the date and place of origin of the text. Information is provided on the manuscript, prior publications and studies, and differing versions. Orbell sketches the cultural and literary context, both Māori and general Polynesian, and the peculiar characteristics of each text. She emphasizes the need to appreciate "stylistic individuality": storytellers have "their own approach, their own artistry" (p. 5). Photographs of the storytellers and artworks have been chosen expertly and are genuinely useful (Orbell has worked also as an art critic and historian). Great care has clearly been taken to make the book interesting for the general reader, instructive for the student, and useful for the scholar.²

A most important new publication is *Ngā Korero a Mohi Ruatapu Tohunga Rongonui o Ngati Porou: The Writings of Mohi Ruatapu* (1993, above), on which Orbell "worked closely" with Anaru Reedy: "Without her insights and experience, the task would not have been possible" (p. 7). Ruatapu was one of the most learned Maori of the nineteenth century and one of the three principal teachers of the last Whare Wānanga (School of Learning), started in 1836. His writings thus preserve the highest level of teaching of the time.

The book is a transcription and translation with informative notes of two of the four extant manuscripts written by Ruatapu; publication of the other two is promised. The translator has proceeded with great caution: passages were apparently left untranslated unless they were securely understood

along with the references and cultural context. The words of some untranslated passages yield a sense, but the translator did not want to proffer that without greater certainty on the point being conveyed. As with all other such books, translations will be improved through scholarly discussion.

Significantly, no mention is made of Io traditions in Ruatapu's writings, although the claim has been made that they were taught at the school in which he was active. In fact, Ruatapu's traditions can be fitted perfectly into the context of Māori and other Polynesian traditions. Polynesian texts on the origin of the universe provide some of the strongest evidence for the cognate character of Polynesian intellectual culture and can be adequately understood only when studied together (Charlot 1991). This publication will certainly take a prominent place in the comparative study of the subject and provide an incentive and a model for the publication of further texts. The need and desire for such texts is indicated by the fact that the first printing was sold out before publication.

An example of the interesting materials available is Ballekom and Harlow's *Te Waiatatanga mai o te Atua: South Island Traditions Recorded by Matiaha Tiramorehu* (1987, above), the text and translation of "one of the longest and earliest documents written by a South Islander" (p. viii). Tiramōrehu wrote his manuscript in 1849 in the varying spelling found in writings by other speakers of South Island Maori. John White, in his 1887 publication *The Ancient History of the Maori* (Wellington: Government Printer), "used this material . . . but without giving any credit to the author, or even keeping the text together as a coherent whole" (p. vi). This edition is therefore a good example of the rescue operations being performed by contemporary scholars. The text was transcribed from the original manuscript, and after the tragic death of Ballekom, Harlow provided a translation and a few short notes. The book recounts the origin of the universe and the earliest generations, and reading this version along with Ruatapu's creates a strong impression of the similarities and differences of Maori traditions.

Ailsa Smith's 1993 edition (above) of some of the writings of her great-grandfather Te Kahui Kararehe (ca. 1845-1904) illustrates the literary materials transmitted as family treasures among the Maori: *Songs and Stories of Taranaki* contains texts on the origin of the universe, legendary and historical narratives, chants, and political songs. The current debate on who has the right to publish Maori texts will be largely resolved as more Maori are inspired and trained to assume the task. Such family traditions contain valuable variations of Maori traditions: for instance, the raising of the sky is ascribed by Smith's family to Tangaroa as opposed to Tane in the better-known tradition (pp. 1-8). Smith follows her teacher Orbell's format and style of literal translation and shares her interest in archetypal interpreta-

tion. Smith carefully notes the local character of the language and is attentive to genres and differing versions. Her informative notes make effective use of the related literature. Smith's book raises the hope that the remainder of the family papers will be published along with a complete description and history of their origin and transmission.

Helen Hogan's text, *Renata's Journey* (1994, above), is of a different type: a nineteenth-century account in a nontraditional form of the new world of Maori-Pakeha relations. The narrative of an 1843 trip with a missionary party by Renata Kawepo (1808?-1888) is "probably the earliest surviving piece of extended prose written by a Māori" (p. 7) and has "no literary precedent" (p. 127). The learned and powerful Kawepo is an excellent example of a remarkable Polynesian negotiating the early contact period both intellectually and in his personal relations. He organizes his pioneering narrative according to the traditional form of an itinerary with formulaic expressions. He tests himself against the foreigners in deeds and manners and does not hesitate to express his opposition to and even anger at certain of their actions and decisions. Hogan's commendably full research illuminates Kawepo's terse remarks, notably by comparing them with the journal of the missionary William Cotton, with whom Kawepo was traveling. The differing interests and perspectives of Maori and foreigner are brought clearly to the light. For instance, the Maori climb a dangerous cliff to *matakitaki* (sight-see) a famous view, a Polynesian practice (pp. 62-63); Cotton complains that the Māori just wanted to take the shortest route (pp. 112-113). The tensions that revealed themselves during the trip were to reappear throughout Kawepo's long and prominent life and probably influenced his political and cultural decisions. Hogan's presentation of Kawepo's work is a model of completeness, including a description of the manuscript, an explanation of the methods of editing, text and translation on facing pages, notes on language and forms of expression, short biographies of the principal personages, genealogies of the Maori using family information, a discussion of the salient problems of culture change found in the text, illustrations--some done on the trip--and maps, both nineteenth century and modern.

Maori--indeed Polynesian--literature is good reading. The stories contain strong characters, exciting plots, and vigorous expression. The traditions of the origin of the universe and the early generations are impressive feats of memory and coordination. Most important, the reader of the original language is in direct contact with Maori self-expression, undistorted by secondary sources. In fact, the strong projection of the self, the personality of the storyteller and thinker, is characteristic of Polynesian literature.

Such texts can also be used as secure bases for further study both of Maori and other Polynesian materials. Comparative study will in turn

influence translation. For instance, a number of cognate words are shared by Polynesian texts on the origin of the universe; a comparative study would enable the translator to understand their use more precisely in that context as opposed to more modern uses of the same words.³ As a student of other Polynesian literatures (Charlot 1977, 1990, 1991), I was particularly interested in literary forms, structures, and devices. For instance, many of the same genres can be found, such as stories of the origin of a land feature or of a saying or custom.

Similarly, the structure of the Māori single-story form is the same as that found in Samoan and Hawaiian literature. It can contain the following elements: title or titular sentence, introduction, transition to the narrative, the narrative itself, one or more conclusions, and a terminal sentence (Charlot 1990:417). A good example is the story "Ko Tieke-iti" in Orbell's *Traditional Maori Stories* (p. 117). The titular sentence announces the story: "**He korero tenei no Tieke-iti rāua ko Tieke-rahi** (This is a story about Little Tieke and Big Tieke)." The introduction, "**He puta . . . taima katoa,**" provides general information necessary for the narrative, in this case, the principals' habitual activity. The narrative relates the singular events that form the plot of the story, "**Tiakina . . . kāore tahi i mau,**" and the whole is closed by a terminal sentence, "**Ka mutu tena** (That's the end)." These same elements are found often in single stories, and titular and terminal sentences frequently use the same words and expressions.⁴ The other Polynesian elements mentioned above can also be found in Māori stories, often in cognate wording.⁵ Other Polynesian devices can also be used, such as the regular expression of series of events (Orbell 1992, above:21, 73, 103) and building to a climax (p. 126). Modernizations can be found, such as the use of explanations and the more extensive expression of emotions that would otherwise be understood (ibid., pp. 151-160).

Once this structure is identified, stories can be recognized when inserted into larger complexes (Charlot 1990:425-426); complexes are in fact most often constructed by combining originally independent smaller units into a redactional framework. For instance, three terminal sentences in a large complex enable the reader to distinguish the stories from the surrounding explanatory passages.⁶

The construction of the complexes of Ruatapu and Tiramōrehu is based on genealogies into which the stories of famous members are inserted when those protagonists are reached in the lineage (compare Charlot 1991:129-132). The genealogy itself can serve as the introduction, so that only the narrative of the story is presented, as in Tiramōrehu's sections on Tawhaki and Rata (Ballekom and Harlow 1987, above:14-18, 18-21). Indeed, Ruatapu can place the expression of the genealogical connection in the traditional

place of the introduction, between the titular sentence and a transition to the narrative.⁷ Throughout, Ruatapu retains more elements of the original story structures.⁸

Ruatapu's Maui section (pp. 18-25) is framed by a titular sentence (p. 18, '**Ko ngā mahi tenei a Māui**'); p. 119, "These are the things that Maui did") and a terminal one (p. 25, "**Ka mutu i konei ana mahi katoa**"; p. 126, "That is the end of all the things he did"). After a short narration of Maui's wondrous birth, a transition--**ka noho**--leads to the first of eight stories (pp. 18-19). The same transition enables the reader or hearer to distinguish the second, fifth, sixth, and seventh stories (pp. 19, 22ff.). Subtitles are also used, which are similar to titular sentences; the subtitle for the eighth story is followed immediately by a classical titular sentence (p. 25). The last three sentences before the terminal sentence of the fifth story are a conclusion (p. 23, "**Takoto tonu . . . he motu**"; terminal sentence: "**Ka mutu tenei mahinga a Maui**"). The fourth story ends with a formal conclusion (p. 21, "**No reira . . . a Mahuika**") and a terminal sentence ("**Ko te tinihangatanga tenei a Māui a Mahuika**"; p. 122, "This is how Maui deceived Mahuika"). The sixth story also has a terminal sentence (p. 24), and less formal, summarizing statements terminate the first, second, third, and eighth stories (pp. 19ff., 25). The terminal sentence of the whole complex serves also for the eighth story. This very clear structure is an aid to understanding.

Ruatapu's tendency to employ structural elements can be seen also in his regular practice of framing chants with a presentation sentence and a terminating sentence (pp. 27, 28ff., 39-40, 41ff., 50-51, 79, 98, 108-111); one of these sentences can be omitted. The power of a form on Ruatapu's composition can be seen in his splitting a narrative in order to accommodate it to his controlling genealogical framework (pp. 34, 46-47).

Many other Polynesian literary elements can be found in the above and other Māori texts. For instance, prose can be based on chant (Ruatapu 1993, above:96, 98; compare Charlot 1988:303-308). In many Māori genres, paired opposites are used as completeness formulas and organizing principles, such as **runga/raro** (up/down), **rangi/nuku** (sky/earth), **uta/tai** (land/sea), **po/ao** (night/day), **ora/mate** (life/death), **mua/muri** (forward/backward), **tu/noho** (stand/sit), **roto/waho** (inside/outside), **ake/iho** (up/down), and **-i/-a** (sound symbolism, high and low). These pairs are essential for any description of Polynesian thinking. At an even more basic level, the reading of Maori texts helps in the understanding of those in other Polynesian languages, as words and expressions become clearer through comparison. Finally, little-studied but important Polynesian cultural elements can be discovered as articulated by the texts, such as the ideal of the completeness of learning (Ballekom and Harlow 1987, above:18).

The above publications have made important new materials available to the scholar and the student. We can be grateful also for the effort that has made them so agreeably accessible.

NOTES

1. Harlow has also been influenced by the work of Agathe Thornton, a classical scholar who has done important work in establishing and translating texts with commentaries general introductions, and comparisons with other Polynesian literatures (pers. com. 1994).

2. Characteristically, Orbell is constantly taking notes for future editions: for example for p. 160, she would now change the translation "Then they heard the woman was singing her song" to "Then they realized that the woman was singing her song" (pers. com. 1993).

3. Some discussion is needed also on the appropriate English glosses for Maori religious terms. For instance, to translate *tipua* or *tupua* as "demon" seems to reflect nineteenth century foreign religious attitudes. "Daemon" is a less familiar word but more exact and less burdened with value judgment,

4. Titular sentence: Orbell 1992: above:29, 42, 53, 72, 84, 89, 101, 103, 104, 111, 117, 121, 125, 130 (118 is an alternative opening for a story); Graham 1946:28; Head 1986:25 Tremewan 1988:16.

Introduction: Orbell 1992, above:8, 20, 29, 33, 42, 48, 53, 63, 67, 72-73, 89, 103, 111, 121-122, 125, 130, 133, 147. Introductory material can be combined with titular sentences and also displaced (pp. 85, 89, 103, perhaps 125-126). Introductions can begin with the mention of travel (p. 142; compare Charlot 1990:421); Head 1986:25; Tremewan 1988:16. The last two examples are of a special type of introduction developed in New Zealand: information is provided about the migration canoe.

Terminal: Orbell 1992, above:44 58, 76, 86, 94, 106, 122, 132, 136, 158; Head 1986:26; Tremewan 1988:17.

Many more examples could be cited.

5. Transition from introduction to narrative: Orbell 1992, above:20 ("Na"), 25 ("tae noa ki tetahi ra"), 53 ("Akuanei"), 67 ("Na, ko tetehi ra"), 73 ("Akuanei"), 101 ("I tetahi po"), 147 ("I aua ra"). Conclusion: Orbell 1992, above:76 ("Tenei kāinga . . . kī ana te Māori"), 120 ("Mau tonu . . . i Waiāua ra!"); compare 158; Tremewan 1988:17 ("Ko aua puke e tu nei inaiānei").

6. Graham 1946: complex, 30-37; terminal sentences, 34 ("Heoi ano, ka mute a Ureia"; "Heoi ano, ko te mutunga tenei o nga korero . . . ngohi"), 36 ("Heoi ano ra--me mutu ona korero i konei"); this could be used also as a termination of the whole complex).

7. Ruatapu 1993, above:40, titular sentence ("Ko te korero tenei o Ruatapu"), introduction/connection ("Ko Paimatunga . . . ko Hau"), transition ("Ka noho, ā").

8. Ruatapu 1993, above: e.g., titular sentence: 34, 61, 70, 100, 108, 111; introduction: 34 ("He ika . . . ko Huwaiki"), 65 ("Ko te kainga . . . ko Tahere-pohue"). Transitions: "ka noho," etc., is used frequently as a transition to the narrative from titular sentences, intro-

ductions, genealogical connections, previous stories, and episodes; Ruatapu 1993, above:19, 22ff., 26-27, 34, 38, 40, 49, 55, 59, 65, 74, 83, 100, 111 ff. Conclusions of stories and episodes are naturally frequent, given the aetiological purpose of the complex: Ruatapu 1993, above:43, 47, 52, 56 (a particularly full example, “*No reira . . . whakaturanga*”), 59-60, 63, 77-78, 82, 84, 91, 93, 102, 114. Terminal: Ruatapu 1993, above:44, 48, 82, 88, 94, 102, 108, 114.

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