

Māori and Portraiture

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Abstract

Gottfried Lindauer's Māori portraiture offers a distinctive example of a bicultural artistic practice in nineteenth-century New Zealand, one serving both European and indigenous patronage to a degree that is unparalleled in other British settler societies. This essay places the example of Lindauer into a wider context of Māori enthusiasm for and engagement with the genre of portraiture, ranging from the voyaging artists of the precolonial period to the emergence of the 'ethnological' portrait in the later nineteenth century. In charting the evolving relationships between subjects, artists, photographers and collectors, what do we learn about Māori attitudes to portraiture?

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Māori and Portrait Patronage

[1] Portraiture was central to customary Māori culture: carved effigies memorialised ancestors and heroes, while smoked-dried human heads formed portrait collections from recent generations for the benefit of the living.¹ Unsurprisingly, the vivid and life-like realisations of European portraiture found ready acceptance within the Māori world. In the Gottfried Lindauer catalogue produced for the exhibition at Berlin's Alte Nationalgalerie in 2014, I suggested that New Zealand seemed to be exceptional among the British settler colonies in the degree to which European artists — and Lindauer in particular — were supported by indigenous patronage.² The acculturation into portraiture began in earnest with the rise of photography and the Māori patronage of studio photographers, many of whom subsequently exploited the reproductive potential inherent in the medium. This photographic phenomenon is paralleled in a great

¹ See Paul Tapsell, "Service after Death: The Art of Māori Leadership in Marae Contexts", in: Erin Griffey et al., *The Power of Portraiture: Representing Leadership in New Zealand from 1840 to the Present*, exh. cat., Auckland 2008, 18-31.

² Roger Blackley, "Gottfried Lindauer: A Career in New Zealand", in: *Gottfried Lindauer: Die Māori-Portraits*, eds. Udo Kittelmann and Britta Schmitz, exh. cat., Cologne 2014, 213-217.

many colonial contexts, where indigenous ‘types’ represented a saleable commodity that furnished material both for tourist albums and the ethnographic photograph collections amassed by museums and libraries around the world.

[2] The distinctive aspect of the New Zealand situation lay in the emergence, during the 1870s and 1880s, of the life-sized oil portrait as a status symbol in the Māori world, when Māori clients patronised those same artists who were producing portraits for European settlers. Contemporary colonial contexts that reveal European artists working for indigenous patrons include Hawai’i, where the Kamehameha dynasty avidly commissioned oil portraits of the Hawaiian elite who are usually shown in European regalia.³ What is remarkable in the New Zealand context, however, is the breadth and also the sheer *extent* of the Māori engagement with portraiture, as well as how — on the death of their subjects — these paintings not only performed significant roles in funeral ceremonies but proceeded to claim a place within the communal meeting house, alongside the carved ancestors of customary Māori art. While hybrid European and Māori ‘best’ costume makes appearance in many of these works, it is noteworthy that a good many Māori-commissioned portraits present their subjects in the identical kind of formal attire that was employed by settlers when they commissioned portraits from these same artists.

[3] Pāora Tūhaere, the leading chief of Ngāti Whātua of Auckland, chose to have himself depicted in formal European attire of the type that he wore when invited to an important engagement in town. At Tūhaere’s tangi — his funeral ceremony — it was reported that “Over the head of the coffin was suspended a large and lifelike portrait of himself, surrounded by a massive gilt frame [...]”.⁴ This must have been the portrait from 1878 that is now held by the Auckland Art Gallery (fig. 1).

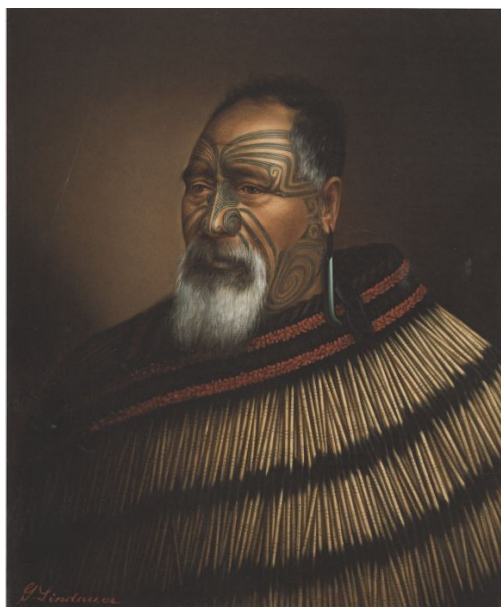
³ See David W. Forbes, *Encounters with Paradise: Views of Hawaii and its People, 1778-1941*, Honolulu 1992.

⁴ “The Late Paora Tuhaere”, in: *New Zealand Herald*, 15 March 1892, 6.



1 Gottfried Lindauer, *Paora Tuhaere*, 1878, oil on canvas, 82,8 x 69,6 cm. Gift of Mrs Emma Sloane, 1934, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki (reprod. from: *Gottfried Lindauer: Die Māori-Portraits*, eds. Udo Kittelmann and Britta Schmitz, exh. cat., Cologne 2014, 43)

It could not have been the other portrait of Tūhaere in the Gallery's collection (fig. 2), which was commissioned from Lindauer by the Auckland collector Henry Partridge in 1895 — that is, three years after Tūhaere's death.



2 Gottfried Lindauer, *Paora Tuhaere*, 1895, oil on canvas, 83,3 x 71,7 cm. Gift of Mr H. E. Partridge, 1915, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki (reprod. from: *Gottfried Lindauer: Die Māori-Portraits*, eds. Kittelmann and Schmitz, [n. p.] 119)

[4] It was this later version that was displayed in Berlin, where the bulk of the works was drawn from the Partridge Collection, while the earlier portrait of the

chief remained at home. This seemed a pity, because together these two works offer a telling opposition — between the suavely dressed chief, depicted from life, and his posthumous rendition in picturesque Māori garb that, somewhat ironically, was itself based on a photograph of Tūhaere in a fashionable European suit. While there were several suit-wearing Māori politicians in works displayed at the Berlin exhibition, as well as two dashing collaborationist military leaders who appeared in uniform, Partridge's clear preference was that his gallery of Māori celebrities should appear in traditional dress — that is, ceremonial Māori costume. As we shall see, an important part of this story relates to how, when they inhabited the Pākehā or settler world, Māori portraits held different meanings and served different ends from superficially similar works in Māori ownership.

[5] In this essay I offer a brief and necessarily partial overview of Māori engagement with European portraiture, ranging from the earliest work by artists on the late-eighteenth-century voyaging expeditions through to the period of organised colonisation that commenced in the mid-nineteenth century. We will keep in mind the Māori experience of the genre — what it might have meant to see such depictions, to be depicted, even in some cases to possess a depiction. To highlight the diversity in Māori attitudes towards portraiture, as well as the increasing burden placed on Māori to submit to depiction, we will examine the opposing stances taken by two important 'rebel' leaders of the later nineteenth century — Te Whiti-o-Rongomai, the pacifist 'Prophet of Parihaka', and Tāwhiao Matutaera Te Wherowhero, the second Māori King. Then, moving to consider several paintings by Lindauer, we will ponder the categorisations that might be applicable to his work. Do the paintings commissioned by Māori clients rightfully belong in the realm of ethnography, alongside works by the travelling European artists? Are there significant differences between the Maori-commissioned portraits and those produced for Pākehā collectors such as Partridge? And if so, might these latter works produced for non-Māori purposes be more appropriately designated 'ethnological', given that they are charged with serving a more complex role than mere individual portraiture? As we shall see, these categories are unstable and largely dependent on contexts of ownership and display. To conclude, I will return to my claim that the bicultural patronage of Māori portraiture in New Zealand offers a point of difference within the art history of the British settler colonies.

European 'Contact'

[6] The story begins in 1769, with the momentous interaction between a British naval expedition led by Captain James Cook, and the New Zealanders — a Neolithic people in whose language 'māori' simply meant ordinary, everyday, normal. It was on this visit that Sydney Parkinson, the botanical artist working for Joseph Banks on the *Endeavour*, produced an elegant profile drawing of a young chief at the Bay of Islands (fig. 3).



3 Sydney Parkinson, *A Portrait of a New Zeland [sic] Man*, 1779, pen and wash, 39,4 x 29,8 cm. British Library, London, Add. MS 23920, f. 54a (reprod. from: Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, *Mau Moko. The World of Maori Tattoo*, Hawaii 2007, [n. p.] 39)

Some historians have denied this work the status of portraiture, suggesting that Parkinson's training led him to turn a human into a specimen of natural history.⁵ As a document of 'contact', however, it is a compelling depiction of a man who traded precious personal treasures — including both the whale-tooth neck pendant and the whalebone comb that supported his hair-do — for European goods. They apparently passed from Sir Joseph Banks to the British Museum, where since 2003 the pendant and comb have graced the Enlightenment Gallery at the museum, alongside an engraved portrait of their original owner made by Thomas Chambers after Parkinson's drawing.

[7] As a record of moko, or tattooing, the drawing tells us that the eighteenth-century visitors encountered a highly decorative form of facial moko that had disappeared from faces by the following century, surviving instead as pūhoro, the scroll-like patterning on buttock and leg tattoos. The evolution of the tattoo tradition was facilitated in part by the introduction of metal tools that enabled deep-furrowed, curvilinear facial carving, paralleling developments in the art of wood-carving. It is unlikely that the young chief ever saw Parkinson's carefully finished watercolour drawing, but sitting for a rough sketch must have formed a part of the trading exchange with the visitors. Nor would he have had any inkling that his image would reach a wide public as an engraving. Despite Thomas Chambers' prestige as one of a select few engraver-members of the Royal Academy of Arts, his print renders the tattooing as a flat pattern — in distinction to Parkinson's convincing depiction of the moko stretching over the face.

⁵ Bernard Smith, *Imagining the Pacific in the Wake of the Cook Voyages*, Melbourne 1992, 81.

[8] Māori were reassured by the presence of another artist on board the Endeavour with whom they could communicate with ease. This was Tupaia, a Tahitian priest whose geographical knowledge of the Pacific proved so valuable to Cook. While not a portrait as such, Tupaia's celebrated depiction of a Māori who is bartering a gigantic crayfish with a European — thought to represent Banks — illustrates the material exchanges that were at the basis of the voyagers' interactions with the local people. Tupaia's status might also explain the presence of the greenstone heitiki [a carved pendant] that is displayed in the British Museum alongside the whale-tooth pendant and the comb. Despite complaining of the impossibility of obtaining these carved heirlooms, Cook and Banks presented this beautiful example to King George III. Māori scholar Paul Tapsell has suggested that it was a gift made by Māori to Tupaia, whom they may have regarded as the leader of the Europeans.⁶ Tupaia unfortunately died on the voyage to Europe.

[9] William Hodges, a landscape painter travelling on James Cook's second Pacific voyage in the early 1770s, made a series of red crayon drawings that are often counted as the first genuine portraits of Māori individuals. While the names of his subjects are unknown, we do know that, in recognition of his illusionistic skills, Māori bestowed on Hodges the name 'Tuhituhi' (or, as Cook spelled it, 'Toetoe').⁷ Tuhituhi today usually signifies writing, but here we glimpse its wider sense of drawing, or pattern making. Showing their subjects in three-quarter perspective, the drawings were executed on large sheets of paper, evidently on board the ship. That the Māori acculturation into portraiture coexisted with highly exploitative exchanges is testified by Anders Sparman's sardonic account of the genesis of the work known as *Woman of New Zealand* (fig. 4):

Language difficulties at first gave rise to a misunderstanding between the girl and the painter, for she, having been paid well to go down into the saloon, imagined that she ought to give satisfaction, in the way she understood it, as soon as possible in return for her gift; perhaps she had had previous experience with our sailors? She was astonished when signs were made for her to sit on a chair; such a novel way of doing things struck her as absurd, but she promptly volunteered a prone position on the chair for the painter and his companion. To her further surprise she was eventually put in a correct position, just sitting on the chair with nothing to do; whereupon, to the wonderment and entertainment of herself and the two savages with her, she quickly saw her likeness appearing in a red crayon drawing.⁸

⁶ See Paul Tapsell, *The Art of Taonga*, Gordon H. Brown Lecture 9, Wellington 2011.

⁷ Laurence Simmons, *Tuhituhi: William Hodges, Cook's Painter in the South Pacific*, Dunedin 2011, 11.

⁸ Smith, *Imagining the Pacific in the Wake of the Cook Voyages*, 83.



4 William Hodges, *[Woman of] New Zeland* [sic], 1773, red chalk, 54,4 x 37,4 cm. National Library of Australia, Canberra (reprod. from: Rüdiger Joppien and Bernard Smith, *The Art of Captain Cook's Voyages*. Vol. 2, *The Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure 1772-1775*, Melbourne 1985, 155)

[10] The primary purpose for Hodges' large-scale drawings was translation into engravings to illustrate the official publication. As with the case of Parkinson on Cook's first voyage, and John Webber on the third, there were significant differences between the original works — made on the site and usually in the presence of the subject — and subsequent reproductions manufactured in metropolitan print workshops.⁹ In addition to radically reducing the scale of the drawings to conform to the quarto publication, the 'informational' value of Hodges' ethnographic realism was blunted by the classicising lens applied by the engravers. Until Joppien and Smith's systematic publication of the fieldwork in the 1980s, the engravings alone served as the primary visual records of Cook's three voyages.¹⁰

[11] It was during this second Cook voyage that a select group of Māori acquired a marvellous object of personal adornment — a metallic medal that portrayed the two ships, *Resolution* and *Adventure*. Its manufacture and distribution undoubtedly served a distinctly imperialist purpose as an object that could serve as evidence of 'discovery' — an enduring equivalent of the quaint ceremony of erecting a European flag over distant territory. For its lucky recipients, however, the medal was a tactile memento of encounter with the pale-skinned foreigners. On the reverse of the medal was a profile depiction of King George III, which

⁹ Smith, *Imagining the Pacific in the Wake of the Cook Voyages*, 77-109.

¹⁰ Rüdiger Joppien and Bernard Smith, *The Art of Captain Cook's Voyages*, 3 vols, Melbourne 1985-1987.

thereby became the first European portrait to circulate within the Māori world. The profile format, standard for the depiction of rulers on coins and medals, may have challenged Māori viewers. In their traditional imagery, human portraits were invariably frontal in orientation, as opposed to the profile mode that was reserved for mythological and monstrous entities such as the manaia. It is noteworthy that a decided Māori preference for frontal orientation emerges in the later commissions from portrait painters such as Lindauer.

Wandering Artists

[12] English-born Augustus Earle, known to his contemporaries as ‘the wandering artist’, was the first European artist to reside in New Zealand. To the dismay and disgust of the missionaries stationed on the far side of the Bay of Islands, Earle immersed himself within the pagan Māori world for a six-month period over the summer of 1827-1828. Here he forged a close friendship with a local tattooing expert called Rangī, whom he depicted in a sensitive watercolour portrait (fig. 5).



5 Augustus Earle, *A New Zealander [Rangī, the Tattoo Artist]*, 1827-1828, watercolour, 21,1 x 18,6 cm. Rex Nan Kivell Collection, National Library of Australia, Canberra (reprod. from: Jocelyn Hackforth-Jones, *Augustus Earle, Travel Artist*, London 1980, 36)

In his lively *Narrative of a Residence in New Zealand*, first published in 1832, Earle’s descriptions of Rangī’s work exhibit a remarkable openness to Māori art.

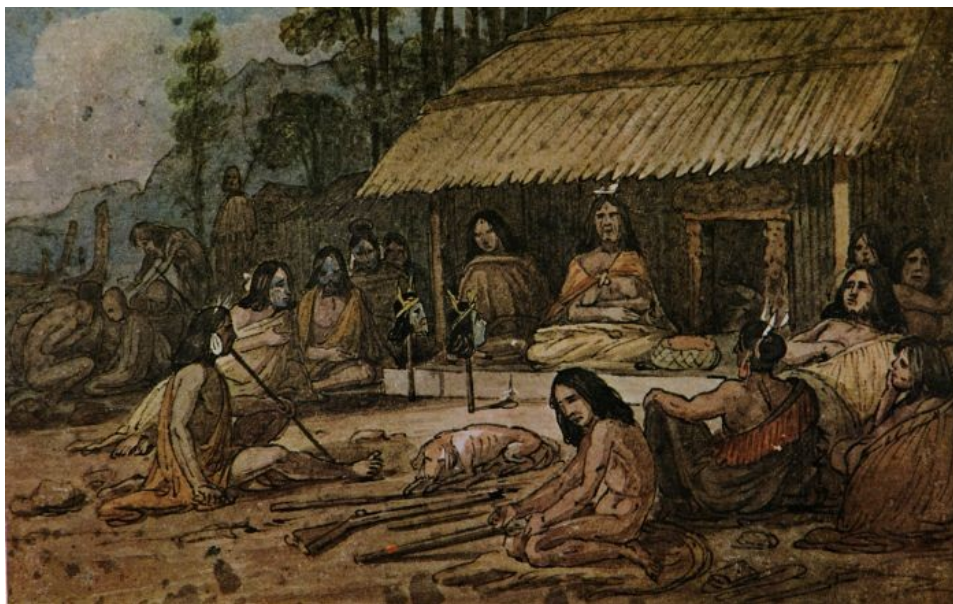
As this ‘professor’ was a near neighbour of mine, I frequently paid him a visit in his ‘studio’, and he returned the compliment whenever he had time to spare. He was considered by his countrymen a perfect master in the art of tattooing, and men of the highest rank and importance were in the habit of travelling long journeys in order to put their skins under his skilful hands. [...]

I was astonished to see with what boldness and precision Aranghi drew his designs upon the skin, and what beautiful ornaments he produced; no rule and compasses could be more exact than the lines and circles he formed. So unrivalled is he in his profession, that a highly-finished face of a chief from the hands of this artist, is as greatly prized in New Zealand as a head from the hands of Sir Thomas Lawrence is amongst us.¹¹

The most remarkable aspect of this passage is how Earle situates Rangī's tattooing work as the aesthetic equivalent of the paintings of Sir Thomas Lawrence, the reigning president of the Royal Academy of Art. Earle reported that Rangī was particularly delighted with his watercolour drawings, especially his own portrait, and makes a tantalising reference to lessons in painting that Earle provided to Rangī, whom he considered 'a great natural genius'.

[13] Earle arrived in New Zealand at a turbulent time, when expeditions led by Ngāpuhi war chief Hongi Hika — who was the first to acquire a store of firearms — had been laying waste to traditional enemies to the south. Hongi was now dying from a battle wound and the missionaries dreaded the human sacrifices that they imagined would attend his death, in order to supply him with retainers in the other world. Earle arranged a meeting with the great chief, bringing a bottle of wine as an offering, and back in England he memorialised the encounter in an autobiographical conversation piece, *Meeting of the Artist and the Wounded Chief Hongi* (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington). It had been Hongi's practice to go into battle wearing the chain mail and helmet gifted to him by King George IV in London. Left unprotected in battle when runaway slaves absconded with his armour, Hongi sustained a mortal wound. Other watercolours by Earle, made at close proximity to the extraordinary episodes he witnessed, suggest that his sketches were made with an eye to developing evocative paintings. In one of these we see Te Ruru, the mother of Earle's host, receiving two preserved heads of fallen chiefs while to the left are naked prisoners of war, cowering in fear of their lives (fig. 6).

¹¹ Augustus Earle, *Narrative of a Residence in New Zealand*, ed. by E. H. McCormick, Oxford 1966 (first published 1832), 124.



6 Augustus Earle, *New Zealand Warriors Presenting Trophies of Conquest to their Queen, Trurero [Te Ruru], Bay of Islands 1827-28*, watercolour, 11,1 x 18,4 cm. Rex Nan Kivell Collection, National Library of Australia, Canberra (reprod. from: Anthony Murray-Oliver, *Augustus Earle in New Zealand*, Christchurch 1968, 99)

In the Māori world, the preserved head functioned as a form of memorial portraiture, one that offered an absolute correlation of subject and object. With the rise of a ghoulish European trade in such artefacts, this memorialising portrait tradition would soon cease.¹²

[14] To conclude this brief survey of Māori portraiture is a mid-century project that achieved wide international distribution and recognition. *The New Zealanders Illustrated*, an opulent 1847 publication by George French Angas, was based on an extensive field trip conducted in 1844. Of the 60 hand-coloured lithographic plates in the volume, no fewer than 46 were portraits or figure studies, mostly of named individuals. Prefiguring the later collection of Māori celebrities painted by Lindauer for Henry Partridge, Angas's was the first concerted portrait cycle in New Zealand art. *Savage Life and Scenes*, an accompanying publication drawn from the artist's journal, includes the text of a letter written by the leading Waikato chief Te Wherowhero — the future King Pōtatau — to his friend Te Heuheu Tūkino, paramount chief of Ngāti Tūwharetoa. Te Wherowhero explains that Angas is an artist — “he kai tuhi tuhi ahua ia” (he is a writer of images) — and asks that Te Heuheu offer protection and hospitality to the “strange foreigner from England”.¹³ Interestingly, there is no sense here that these powerful chiefs felt there was anything out of order in having their portraits taken, and taken is the appropriate word, for Angas was leaving them with little more than the memory of having been depicted. Another letter written

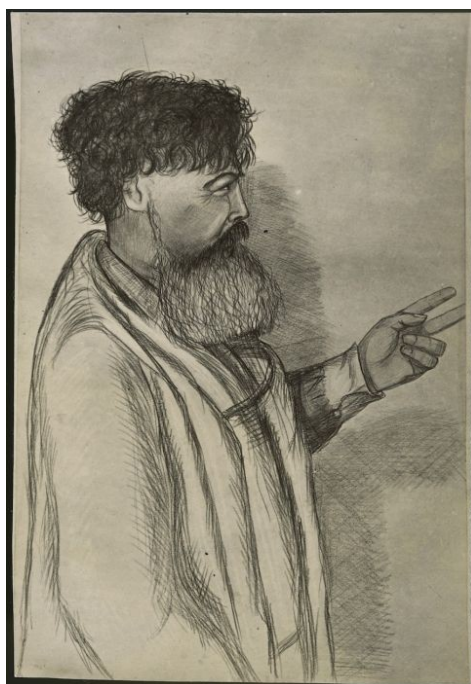
¹² See Horatio Gordon Robley, *Moko: Or Maori Tattooing*, London 1896.

¹³ George French Angas, *Savage Life and Scenes in Australia and New Zealand*, London 1847, 2, 52.

by a missionary, who listed a range of important chiefs, seriously inconvenienced Angas when he found he was obliged to paint everyone named in the letter.

Indigenous Response

[15] As the century progressed, and the realities of colonisation became clearer, Māori attitudes towards portraiture grew more complex. Some, like Te Whiti-o-Rongomai, were implacable in their opposition to portraiture in general and to photography in particular. Te Whiti, the pacifist prophet of Parihaka who in the late 1870s led a campaign of passive resistance to land surveying, forbade the presence of photographers at his community and thereby hoped to frustrate colonial desire to possess his image. That he failed in this quest, as had the rebel leader Hone Heke in the 1840s, should not be surprising. The task was first accomplished by William F. Gordon of Whanganui, who at Parihaka in 1880 secretly sketched Te Whiti on his shirt cuff while the chief was making a speech.



7 William Gordon, *Erueti Te Whiti-o-Rongomai III*, 1880, albumen photographic reproduction of a covert pencil drawing, 9,1 x 6,2 cm. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, PA1-o-423-10-4 (© Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington)

[16] After he had transferred his portrait to paper, Gordon deployed photography as the means of reproduction (fig. 7). To his undoubted disgust, the chief endured the dissemination of his likeness in the form of a *carte de visite*. Te Whiti's immovable stance was based on a conviction that images held power, and that they could be injured when handled wrongly. When asked by an unaware Pākehā visitor for a photograph by which to remember him, Te Whiti replied: "You do not need a photograph of your friend to remember him by; you carry his picture in

your mind. Besides, you never know how a photo may be treated; it may be reproduced on paper, and that paper may be put to most ignoble uses.”¹⁴ Nevertheless, Te Whiti lost his battle against photography. The existence and circulation of his portraits emphasise the absolute impossibility, by the later nineteenth century, of combining notoriety with visual anonymity.

[17] The only surviving depiction of Pōtatau Te Wherowhero, the first Māori King, is a hand-coloured lithograph in Angas’s *The New Zealanders Illustrated*. It was Te Wherowhero’s son and successor, King Tāwhiao, who embraced both painted and photographic portraiture. His 1882 painting by Lindauer that was shown in the Berlin exhibition was based on one of the earliest photographs of the king; many others followed, especially during his expedition to London in 1884. One widely distributed photograph, an image that furnished a host of subsequent reproductions (including on New Zealand’s one-pound note), is universally attributed to the leading New Zealand-based photographer Josiah Martin (fig. 8).



8 Josiah Martin, after John Mayall Studio, *King Tāwhiao*, 1884, albumen silver print, 20,3 x 15,8 cm. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, PA1-o-334-35 (© Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington)

In reality the photograph originated in London in July 1884, when Tāwhiao and his entourage of chiefs visited the John Mayall Studio in Bond Street, and was subsequently pirated by Martin on the basis of a large carbon print that was dispatched to Auckland Museum by a former settler.¹⁵ While the King had his own

¹⁴ Michael Graham-Stewart, *Negative Kept: Maori and the Carte de Visite*, Auckland 2013, 184.

¹⁵ Roger Blackley, “King Tāwhiao’s Big O. E.”, in: *Turnbull Library Record* 44 (2012), 36-52, here 46.

uses for photographs — such as when he presented a signed photograph to a Belgian capitalist for transmission to the Belgian monarch — he must also have had an awareness of generating valuable commodities in the market for celebrity images.

Gottfried Lindauer

[18] From a diversity of contexts and attitudes, we return to consider the issue of diversity within Gottfried Lindauer's own practice. Annette Tietenberg relates an anecdote concerning the Hauraki chief Hōri Ngākapa Te Whanaunga, who held a paying exhibition of his portrait in a hotel — asking a shilling for a look — and then used the proceeds to shout rounds of drinks. The important point here is that Ngākapa was exhibiting his own portrait, Partridge's version of which was on display in the Berlin exhibition. Tietenberg makes a direct comparison between chiefly Māori patronage and European society portraiture: "It is not by chance that their badges of rank and insignia of power are foregrounded so effectively: rare feathers, precious necklaces of pounamu and sharks' teeth as well as the kaitaka passed down in their families."¹⁶

[19] However, the early Māori commissions from Lindauer tell a somewhat different story, in which important chiefs including Pāora Tūhaere and Hōri Ngākapa present themselves in immaculate European attire. From a Pākehā perspective, the exoticism of these works resides in the collision between the formal attire and demeanour and the deeply chiselled moko on their faces.

[20] Another work in the Berlin exhibition was *Māori Girl*, a charming but anonymous portrait from the collection of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (abbreviated Te Papa) in Wellington (fig. 9).

¹⁶ Annette Tietenberg, "Gottfried Lindauer's 'Veracious Pictures': On Transfers between Media and Patterns of Reproduction", in: *Gottfried Lindauer: Die Māori-Portraits*, eds. Udo Kittelmann and Britta Schmitz, exh. cat., Cologne 2014, 218-223, here 219.



9 Gottfried Lindauer, *Māori Girl*, c. 1874, oil on canvas, 65,7 x 52,8 cm. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington (reprod. from: *Gottfried Lindauer: Die Māori-Portraits*, eds. Kittelmann and Schmitz, [n. p.] 77)

Although it presumably originated as a Māori commission, the subject similarly presents herself in completely Pākehā attire. Even the greenstone earring — which the Berlin catalogue strangely claimed as a sign of her chiefly status — has clearly been sourced from a colonial jeweller. If the proposed date of 1874 is correct, it would be one of the artist's earliest Māori portraits, made either in Wellington or Nelson. But who is this self-assured young woman, currently bearing the demeaning title of Māori 'Girl', and what is her precise status? Could she be the daughter of a chief? Or might she instead be the wife — or even the daughter — of a wealthy Pākehā settler? The real sign of her elevated status is less the fashionable attire she is sporting, than her appearance in a portrait by Lindauer.

[21] There are a number of such works that, originating as Māori commissions, are now located in museums or libraries. Te Papa holds Lindauer's 1880 portrait of Manihera Te Rangitakaiwaho, a leading chief of Wairarapa who assisted Pākehā settlement through facilitating land sales. Noted for his fashionable dress sense, he presents himself in entirely European attire. The Alexander Turnbull Library meanwhile holds the portrait of his wife Ngāhui, also from 1880, who combines European fashion and hairstyle — including the tight ringlets featured in the coiffure of *Māori Girl* — with unmistakable Māori elements — huia feathers, shark's-tooth ear ornaments, and a massive greenstone heitiki. The histories of these works entail a shift from Māori ownership to public collections, effectively a further commodification of the portraits, which is emblematic of many such works. It is probably worth noting that a portrait such as that of Te Rangitakaiwaho — lacking tattooing, or cloak, or weapon — would struggle to

achieve an effective result in the auction room. While undeniably a sympathetic portrait of an influential individual, does the absence of Tietenberg's 'badges of rank and insignia of power' mean that such a work lacks ethnographic conviction? Indeed, we might question whether it is appropriate to place such Māori-commissioned works within the category of ethnography, alongside those by Parkinson, Hodges, Earle and Angas. However, production for an indigenous as opposed to a European agency need not disqualify such categorisation, for the ethnographic realism here relates to the fact that the subjects are exerting control over their appearance. What Ngāhui Te Rangitakaiwaho is modelling is her idea of best dress for a woman of chiefly status in 1880s Wairarapa — that is, how she would appear when invited to a party at a settler homestead, or to receive guests at an event of her own. The cultural significance of her personal accoutrements and appearance is of a different order from the extravagant yet generic wardrobes sported by the majority of Partridge's celebrities.

[22] Walter Buller, a New Zealand-born lawyer and collector, patronized Lindauer. His collection was shown in 1886 at London's massive Colonial and Indian Exhibition, where the pictures presided over a vast display of Māori material culture. They carried evocative titles, such as *Matene Te Matuku, a Former Man-Eater* and *Hitiri Paerata, the Hero of Orakau*, and the subjects brandish traditional weapons and are exclusively attired in native costume. I suggest that here we move from the ethnographic to the ethnological — from the graphic interpretation of Māori to an idealized discourse on Māori.¹⁷ This ethnological mode is a perfect realisation of the nostalgia that underlies the collecting projects of both Partridge and Buller, with their aim to preserve the 'old-time Māori'. Yet such a perspective needs to be balanced against the unbounded enthusiasm expressed by hundreds of Māori who inscribed the visitors' books of the Lindauer Art Gallery in the early years of the twentieth century, and the recognition by many of these visitors that Partridge's collection — encompassing a multiplicity of tribes, including traditional enemies — differed markedly from the portrait collections forming in the Māori world.¹⁸

[23] In 1993, Whanganui Regional Museum inaugurated Te Pātaka Whakaahua, a gallery that showcased the Buller Collection alongside a number of beautifully preserved portraits on loan from local Māori collections — works that Buller had helped to bring into existence. As in the Partridge Collection in Auckland, Lindauer's work here transcended its ethnological origins. Māori art historian Ngahua Te Awekotuku assertively contradicts the dominant Pākehā interpretation of this genre.

¹⁷ Nelson Illingworth's 1908 series of portrait busts of Maori 'types', commissioned by the Dominion Museum in Wellington, reveal a similar tension between the ethnographic realism of the portrait and the ethnological idealisation of an ethnic type. See Roger Blackley, *Te Mata: The Ethnological Portrait*, Wellington 2010.

¹⁸ Roger Blackley, "Te Pai o ngā Āhua: The Visitors' Books at the Auckland Art Gallery", in: *The Lives of Colonial Objects*, eds. Annabel Cooper, Lachlan Patterson and Angela Wanhalla, Dunedin 2015, 210-215.

*Their gaze is direct, and engaging; they are not romantic, archaic and residual, wistfully recalling a fading world, or conquered reality. The people of Lindauer's pictures are still fierce, defiant, assertive, proud, and in control of their own lives; their grasp of a future for their mokopuna is at least as firm and uncompromising as their grip on their dazzling array of traditional weapons. They are not haunted warriors dreaming of past battles, and wise elderly women sadly pondering twilight; they are undefeated, taking on the world around them on their terms.*¹⁹

To further confuse our notions of the ethnographic and the ethnological is the portrait of Whanganui chieftainess Wikitoria Taitoko Keepa (fig. 10).



10 Gottfried Lindauer, *Wikitoria Taitoko Keepa*, 1897, oil on canvas, 66,5 x 54,0 cm, in carved Māori frame. Private collection (reproduced by permission of the Wikitoria Keepa Mete Kingi Whānau Trust)

This painting dates from the later 1890s, when Lindauer was commissioned to depict several Keepa family members, and it remains in the possession of her descendants. The elaborately carved frame of Whanganui origin fits snugly around the gilded slip frame, the reverse of which carries Lindauer's signature – evidence that the Māori artist was working in concert with the Pākehā artist.

New Zealand Difference?

[24] By way of conclusion, I want to return to my claim that the indigenous patronage of portraiture in nineteenth-century New Zealand offers a point of difference within the art history of the British settler colonies. An intriguing

¹⁹ Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, "Lindauer: Gallery of Memories", in: *Whakamiharo Lindauer Online* [2010], <http://www.lindaueronline.co.nz/background/lindauer-gallery-of-memories-> (accessed 31 January 2016).

aspect of New Zealand historiography is a pronounced aversion to claims of exceptionalism; one historian has even claimed that New Zealand is exceptional precisely in its lack of exceptionalism — arguing that the country was a ‘Better Britain’, an improved reproduction of the original, albeit with carefully calibrated Australian and American influences.²⁰ But this completely overlooks the Māori contribution, as well as the inescapable fact that every colonial context is unique.

[25] In 1912, Australian artist Norman Lindsay produced a caricature for the *Sydney Bulletin*, commenting on news that a representative Australian portrait collection was planned for the federal capital of Canberra. Lindsay imagines a hapless young curator of the collection, confronted by an elderly Aboriginal man identified as the son of King Billy, who asks: "Yes, boss, plenty good picture here; but where my old man?"²¹ The humour supposedly lies in the very idea of an Aborigine expecting to be represented in, or even to visit, a Gallery of Distinguished Australians. The situation in New Zealand was starkly different, for it was precisely the widespread presence of Māori portraits and historicising depictions that drew Māori visitors into museums, galleries and art society exhibitions. The Lindauer Art Gallery, which opened in 1901 on Auckland's main thoroughfare to the delight of tourists and locals alike, was a veritable Mecca for the cult of the Māori portrait. And from 1920, the Auckland Art Gallery's walls were densely hung with an extensive collection of Māori portraits placed on loan by Lindauer's successor, the Māori portrait specialist Charles F. Goldie.

[26] It was in 1867 that New Zealand politicians welcomed four elected Māori representatives into the Parliament, in a radical if pragmatic move that was initially intended as temporary — that is, until Māori-owned land had been fully alienated — but which was extended indefinitely in 1876. As Ron Palenski points out in his exploration of New Zealand's identity, this was a remarkable situation in comparison with the extreme marginalisation of indigenous peoples in other colonies. In Australia, for example, Aborigines did not gain the right to vote in federal elections until 1962, and it was 1971 before someone of Aboriginal descent held a seat in the parliament. In Canada, those identified as ‘Status Indians’ were excluded from federal elections until 1960, and the first Indian was elected to the Canadian House of Commons in 1968.²²

[27] The Berlin exhibition showed two very different portraits of Te Ātiawa leader Wī Tako Ngātata — used to publicise the seminar that generated the essays in this volume — that echo the ethnographic/ethnological divergence discussed in this essay. When Wellington was founded in 1840, Wī Tako was a young chief at Kumutoto, a fortified village situated above what is now the principal thoroughfare of Lambton Quay. He and his people welcomed the European

²⁰ Miles Fairburn, "Is there a Good Case for New Zealand Exceptionalism?", in: *Disputed Histories: Imagining New Zealand's Past*, eds. Tony Ballantyne and Brian Moloughney, Dunedin 2006, 143-167.

²¹ Norman Lindsay, "An Oversight", in: *Bulletin*, 4 July 1912, front cover image.

²² Ron Palenski, *The Making of New Zealanders*, Auckland 2012, 140.

settlers, partly due to the security this provided them against hostile neighbours. Wī Tako chose to live in a European-style house and to clothe himself in Pākehā fashion, using his literacy in the Māori language to agitate on behalf of Māori interests. Although he was an enthusiastic supporter of the Māori kingship when it was first established, he withdrew allegiance when war broke out in Waikato in 1863. In 1872 he was appointed a member of the Legislative Council — the upper house of Parliament. Te Papa holds the elegant writing compendium — made of native timber inlaid with gilt lettering — that was presented to him at the time of his appointment. It is a fascinating irony that the compendium was used to continue his campaigns against Māori land alienation.

[28] An 1880 portrait in the Partridge Collection — showing Wī Tako dressed in a sober European suit — closely resembles others that the chief commissioned for himself, as evidenced by a photograph taken at his tangi where a similar portrait hangs above the coffin. But how can we account for Te Papa's radically different version — also dated 1880 and apparently based on the very same originating photograph — in which he wears a chiefly dog-skin cloak, has a weighty greenstone suspended from his earlobe, and there is no sign whatsoever of Pākehā clothing? I suspect this 'ethnological' variant may be a painting that Lindauer created for advertising purposes, to display in the window of a chemist shop in the frontier town of Cambridge when in the early 1880s he was soliciting commissions from Waikato Māori. It certainly electrified the locals, for a journalist in October 1882 reported how "[...] [t]he natives assembled en masse to offer their greeting and to sing a waiata composed years ago in honour of this chief [...]"²³ Lindauer's display on this occasion also included a portrait of Hawke's Bay chief Rēnata Kawepō, 'in native costume'.

[29] In 1899 the variant Wī Tako portrait entered the possession of Alexander Turnbull, a Wellington bibliophile whose vast bequest of books, documents and art founded the National Library of New Zealand. Turnbull was an avid collector of what were then termed Māori curios, so we can safely assume that for him the painting played a firmly ethnological role — its purpose to enhance a collection of carved treasures. It is telling that Turnbull — who owned many Māori portraits but was dismissive of the photographic qualities of Lindauer's work — jettisoned this picture as part of an anonymous gift of his extensive Māori and Pacific collections to the Dominion Museum in 1916. For most of the twentieth century, the painting remained secluded in the museum's ethnological storeroom, but with the establishment of Te Papa in the 1990s, Lindauer's *Wi Tako Ngatata* and many other Māori depictions were transferred to the art collections built up by the former National Art Gallery. By the later twentieth century, the pendulum of curatorial taste — which in earlier decades firmly dismissed Lindauer as irrelevant to the mainstream of New Zealand art — had swung markedly in the opposing direction. This was due in part to Pākehā art history's belated recognition that the Māori reception of Lindauer's portraits occupied a distinct trajectory of its own, in which there had been no loss of prestige whatsoever.

²³ *New Zealand Herald*, 31 October 1882, 6.

[30] Some Māori portraits by Lindauer play highly public roles — as seen recently, when the Partridge Collection was shown in Berlin and later in Pilsen, documented in lavishly illustrated catalogues. Given that Partridge developed his cycle of portraits as a ‘national’ collection, one that he ultimately transferred to civic ownership, this is entirely appropriate. But there are other portraits that rarely emerge from the security of their family strongholds, the private residences and communal meeting houses of the Māori world. Such works effectively occupy what from a European perspective amount to secret collections, with no catalogues and no reproductions; they may make occasional appearances at funerals, alongside other family treasures, but are rarely to be seen within public exhibitions. In my view, it is precisely the multiplicity of contexts inhabited by these paintings, as well as the various roles they play within them, that allow Gottfried Lindauer to be claimed as a colonial artist of real distinction.

Special Issue Guest Editors

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