

The Romanticized Māori - Māori Portraits on Late 19th- and Early 20th-Century Postcards and Photographs

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Abstract

In New Zealand, daguerrotypes since the 1850s and later on wet-plate photography already had Māori portraiture as an important motif. The 1860s saw a dramatic rise in *cartes de visite*, and since the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, photos and postcards representing Māori men, women and children boomed. Mainly produced by Pākehā (European settler) photographers for a Pākehā audience, these portraits depicted Māori in a stereotypical way which also characterised photography on the Pacific Islands of the time: often propped with emblematic weapons or jewellery, men were staged as fierce warriors, women either as innocent belles or, like men, as very old, often with the allusion of a 'dying race'. New Zealand tourism, especially in the Rotorua area with its thermal attractions, was thriving by the 1890s and brought along a souvenir production which already proved so large and lucrative that it was partly outsourced to companies in Germany. *Cartes de visite* and postcards were sent overseas in large numbers, evidence for 1909 shows a peak of nine million cards posted from New Zealand. Their impact as a form of popular media must have been immense, creating and perpetuating stereotyped images of Māori people in Aotearoa (the Māori name for New Zealand) and all over the Western world. However, the 1890s brought an increasing acceptance and appropriation of photographs by Māori people themselves. Especially in the *tangi* mourning ceremonies, photos of the deceased took a prominent part. Furthermore, the photos of important ancestors were given their place in the *whare whakairo* meeting houses.

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Introduction

[1] Many of Gottfried Lindauer's paintings of Māori individuals can be traced back to photographic portraits which he used, among other things, as memory aids and in place of preparatory drawings. Lindauer was also well-known for his posthumous portraiture, and indeed quite a number of Māori individuals painted by him were already deceased before he even set foot on New Zealand soil. The photographic portraits he relied on had been taken by photographers specialising in this genre; many of these portraits were widely sold and were also turned into postcard motifs. Lindauer's idealised portraiture of Māori people was thus part of a trend involving the depiction of Māori individuals and the dissemination of these pictures throughout New Zealand and many parts of the world.

Postcards

[2] In nineteenth-century Europe, the invention and success of the postcard was closely linked with industrialisation and democratisation and, thus, with modernity. Letter writing was a formal affair which required calligraphic effort, flawlessness and the creation of an overall aesthetic textual image on paper. Furthermore, hierarchical differences between writer and recipient – children and parents, employers and employees, writers from different social strata – had to be mirrored by style: communicating down meant being brief while communicating up called for rhetorical elaborateness and polite formulas of deference. Hence, letter writing was an elitist form of communication and implied time and effort: considerable thought was put into it and drafts were often written first.

[3] By contrast, postcards as developed and standardized in Austria, Germany, Britain, France and the United States in the 1870s were intended for fast, informal and cheap communication at a time when postal services delivered mail twice or three times a day, so that the answer to a postcard sent in the morning could be expected in the afternoon. They were a medium intended for and eagerly used in business communication, and also became part of soldiers' knapsack equipment in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870/1871, thus popularising them further. Advanced print technology facilitated the emergence of the picture postcard, while international postal contracts enabled cards to be sent abroad; by the 1880s, postcard communication had gained considerable momentum, reaching its peak between the 1890s and WWI. In an era when time was increasingly becoming a scarce resource and an issue in daily life, postcards offered an opportunity for immediate and spontaneous communication and response when exchanged within the same locality; they were also a means of fostering relationships with people far away. Developing into a social convention, the sending of postcards became part of the tourist experience, and this was to be of considerable relevance in the New Zealand context. At the same time, the images on postcards – if not picked randomly – were often part of the message conveyed by a combination of written text and picture motif. As part of a canon of social respectability and striving for upward mobility (including self-education),

picture postcards with their motifs could also become collectors' items that were filed in albums and displayed to visitors.¹

[4] First issued in December 1897,² New Zealand picture postcards immediately became widespread, their production and use peaking in the 1910s: as King³ points out, the famous photo studio of the Burton Brothers in Dunedin, renamed *Muir & Moodie* in the 1890s⁴, later advertised itself as the 'Great Postcard Emporium'. Apart from being available in book and stationery shops, vending machines for picture postcards were put up in several places.⁵ Furthermore, in "1909 alone nine million⁶ cards passed through the New Zealand postal system, and this at a time when the total population of the country had only just reached one million".

Manufacturing a Māori Past

[5] The decades prior to this had brought tremendous change for Māori. European and American whaling stations established on New Zealand shores since the late eighteenth century, the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, wars with the New Zealand government after the 1840s, the gold rush of the 1860s and 1870s as well as rising immigration all brought a steady influx of Pākehā to the country. This led not only to traumatizing events and changes but also to new lifestyles, both enforced and voluntarily adopted. According to King, it was only in the 1850s that the term 'Māori' came into use as a collective ascription applied by both Pākehā and Māori to members of culturally and regionally very different *iwi* (tribes) and *hapū* (subtribes or extended kin groups).⁷ This usage served to stress the Pākehā perspective of othering Māori as a group different from Europeans, and yet it also illuminated the Māori perspective of counteracting Pākehā influences through concerted efforts. By 1860, the New Zealand population consisted of more Pākehā than Māori. *Moko* (tattooing) was no longer practised. Māori dress had

¹ Anett Holzheid, "Einfach modern. Zur Beschleunigung der Kommunikationskultur per Postkarte", in: *Geburt der Massenkultur. Beiträge der Tagung des WGL-Forschungsprojekts 'Wege in die Moderne. Weltausstellungen, Medien und Musik im 19. Jahrhundert' im Germanischen Nationalmuseum, 8.-10. November 2012*, ed. Roland Prügel, Nürnberg 2014, 81-91; and William Main, *Send Me a Postcard. New Zealand Postcards and the Stories They Tell*, Nelson 2007, 7.

² Holzheid, "Einfach modern. Zur Beschleunigung der Kommunikationskultur per Postkarte", 7.

³ Michael King, *Māori. A Photographic and Social History*, Auckland 1983, 2.

⁴ Muir & Moodie, one of New Zealand's largest companies dealing in picture postcards, opened in 1898, taking over from Alfred Burton upon his retirement. Thomas B. Muir and George Moodie had been Burton's employees. Muir & Moodie had to close in 1915, apparently due to decreasing demand; see Main, *Send Me a Postcard*, 8, 113.

⁵ Main, *Send Me a Postcard*, 8.

⁶ King, *Māori. A Photographic and Social History*, 2. According to Main, *Send Me a Postcard*, 8, it were 7,5 million plus many more sent in envelopes.

⁷ King, *Māori. A Photographic and Social History*, 73.

already been largely given up for Pākehā everyday attire in the 1850s and continued to be used only in ceremonial contexts. At the same time, the Māori population had fallen dramatically⁸ as a result of measles, whooping cough, influenza and sexually transmitted diseases.⁹

[6] Hence, reinforced by an evolutionary Pākehā worldview of themselves as ‘creation’s most advanced crowning glory’, a common perception among late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Pākehā was that Māori were doomed to extinction. The 1870s saw rising demand among Pākehā for items evoking a Māori past which apparently was considered ‘distinctively and typically New Zealand’.¹⁰ This is reflected not only in the large number of photographs produced during those years but also, for example, in the market for Māori-style jewellery and weapons. In the 1880s, and all the more with New Zealand’s flourishing tourism industry starting in the 1890s, *heitiki* (anthropomorphic greenstone pendants worn by persons of rank) and other greenstone ornaments as well as *mere* (short-handled flat war clubs with a sharpened edge, made of bone, stone or greenstone) were sold in high numbers. This souvenir industry was so lucrative that profits could even be made by exporting large slabs of greenstone to Idar and Oberstein in Germany’s Rhine Valley, where they were cut into Māori-style artefacts based on Māori models and exported back to New Zealand.¹¹ In about thirty to forty years, 50,000 to 100,000 *heitiki* alone are estimated to have been produced in just one of the several German jewellery cutting companies in Idar and Oberstein. In addition, there were also British as well as New Zealand Pākehā and Māori cutters.¹²

[7] It is in this setting that photographic portraiture of Māori flourished. While early daguerreotype photography, invented in 1839, was used in New Zealand from the late 1840s onwards, very few photographs of Māori were taken back then, and even fewer from this period survived. The wet-plate photography of the 1850s (cheaper and more mobile) and especially the *carte de visite* fashion, which began in the 1860s, brought a boom in photography of Māori. Although some pictures were taken in Māori settlements in the countryside, most of them were taken in the country’s few cities,¹³ and the overwhelming majority seems to

⁸ King estimates a decrease of more than fifty percent between 1843 and 1896; King, *Māori. A Photographic and Social History*, 73.

⁹ King, *Māori. A Photographic and Social History*, 14, 49, 50, 73, 74.

¹⁰ Bell speaks of the “manufacturing of a Māori past” which I have adapted as the title for this sub-section; Leonard Bell, *Colonial Constructs. European Images of Māori 1840-1914*, Melbourne 1992, 202.

¹¹ Several European ethnologists and learned travellers commented on this in the 1910s, and pointed out that these greenstone artefacts even ended up in a number of museums as ‘authentic Māori’ items. Cf. Rolf Herzog, *Tiki. Über Originale und Imitationen von Nephritobjekten der Māori-Kultur*, Berlin 1990, 84, 85, 90, 100.

¹² Herzog, *Tiki. Über Originale und Imitationen von Nephritobjekten der Māori-Kultur*, 79.

¹³ It must be kept in mind that in 1900, 95 % of the Māori population lived in the countryside; King, *Māori. A Photographic and Social History*, 75, 76.

have consisted of portraits.¹⁴ The extent to which this kind of photography mushroomed not only among New Zealand companies is mentioned by Baker:

*By 1876 the American Photographic Company claimed to have a stock of 22,000 carte-de-visite prints of Māori neatly stored fifty to an envelope. [...] Unfortunately today only a fraction has survived.*¹⁵

The trade in postcards was so successful that even international outsourcing proved profitable: Thomas Pringle (1858-1931), a Scotsman who had settled in Hokitika, and probably Josiah Martin¹⁶ had their postcards printed overseas (and, in the case of Pringle, coloured in Germany) and sent back to New Zealand for sale.¹⁷

[8] However, up until at least WWI, the Māori-Pākehā relationship in the realm of photography was one of imbalance: photographers of Māori were nearly exclusively Pākehā. Although their works are of documentary value with regard to many historical aspects of Māori life today, certain facets of daily Māori culture were not photographed;¹⁸ as a consequence, the photographs constitute in large part images of Pākehā ideas about Māori life. Pākehā customers apparently were New Zealanders wishing to collect photographs and write postcards to their circle of friends and relatives, recent immigrants writing back home, and wealthy overseas tourists who could afford a trip to New Zealand.¹⁹

[9] Photographic and picture postcard motifs, which in a number of cases were identical, went back to conventions which had been established much earlier than the 1860s, however. As Bell shows, they referred to topics and stereotypes already mentioned in early European travelogues of New Zealand and other literary representations; poses and composition often followed those of European classical or popular *en vogue* depictions of people.²⁰ The – sometimes topless – ‘exotic belle’ with accessories such as fruit, jugs or flowers, for example, was a

¹⁴ King, *Māori. A Photographic and Social History*, 1-43.

¹⁵ Matiu Baker, “Photography in New Zealand: The Visual Representation of Māori in the Nineteenth Century”, in: *A Glimpse Into Paradise. Historical Photographs of Polynesia*, eds. Wulf Köpke and Bernhard Schmelz, Hamburg 2014, 130.

¹⁶ Englishman Josiah Martin (1843-1916) emigrated to New Zealand in the 1860s and started taking photos there in the 1870s. Since 1879, having to give up his career as a schoolteacher, he concentrated entirely on photography and won a number of prizes; cf. Main, *Send Me a Postcard*, 20; “Martin, Josiah”, in: *Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2m36/martin-josiah> (accessed 20 July 2018).

¹⁷ Main, *Send Me a Postcard*, 19, 30.

¹⁸ King, *Māori. A Photographic and Social History*, 5, 29.

¹⁹ According to the article on the emergence of the tourist industry in *Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, the majority of Pākehā New Zealanders did not travel much in their own country or overseas until about the 1930s or even later; cf. “Tourist Industry”, in: *Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/tourist-industry/page-4> (accessed 11 May 2016).

²⁰ Bell, *Colonial Constructs*, 205, 218, 224.

common motif in nineteenth-century paintings, as were “‘quaint’ children, older people ‘silent as monuments’, the ‘brave warrior’ of old”²¹, as Bell explains:

*[...] there were [...] photographic images of elderly Māori women posed seated in front of whare – in a manner and with titles which either stated explicitly or implied the persistent European preoccupation with the passing of Māori. [...] a type of image that already had currency in popular or low art imagery [...] can also be seen as antipodean versions of an image type that was very popular in British and European art at the turn of the century – images of picturesque old people, which invoked a nostalgia for the passing of the old ways and memories of the past. [...] They could operate as vehicles for a European view of Māori, or as conventional anecdotal pieces, for which the Māori identity of the figure was interchangeable with an elderly rustic, an old sailor, or some other aging party.*²²

[10] With regard to the depiction of young women specifically, Bell notes:

*Representations of young Māori women in late nineteenth- to early twentieth-century New Zealand painting and photography are dominated by two types. There is the charming and idealised young mother, usually half-length and smiling, with a baby or sweet little child, her head tilted, even if slightly, downward, and her gaze either level or directed downward too. [...] And then there is the belle – either in Māori or European dress, softly pretty, mouth often slightly open, either smiling invitingly or coyly, or with her head tilted to one side, a flirtatious look in her eye, or, if unsmiling, looking vulnerable, meek, or bashful. Again the head and eye direction are either level or downward.*²³

²¹ Bell, *Colonial Constructs*, 224.

²² Bell, *Colonial Constructs*, 230.

²³ Bell, *Colonial Constructs*, 236.



1 Arthur James Iles, *Ani Doherty carrying her son Bob Doherty on her back*, 1899. Übersee-Museum, Bremen, photo collection, inv. no. P11361 (© Übersee-Museum, Bremen)²⁴

In portrait photography, often reproduced as a postcard, this resulted in a high prevalence of “Māori beauties”. Not surprisingly, and mirroring what has been found for late nineteenth-/early twentieth-century photographs from the Pacific²⁵ as well, the young Māori women are often depicted in a way that has erotic undertones for a male Pākehā audience – beautiful and innocent, with long, open hair and a direct gaze, or, in the case of the frequent motif of two young women *hongiing* (touching or pressing their noses and foreheads together in greeting), a voyeuristic one of two women touching closely and fondly, sanctioned by their culture.²⁶

²⁴ Ani Doherty (1863-1929) was the daughter of James Melbourne and Peata Motoi Aperahama. The photo was taken around 1899 (information from the Photographic Collections of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, PAColl-0736).

²⁵ Max Quanchi, “Visual Histories: Contrasting Postcard Views of Early 20th Century French, British and Australian Colonies”, in: *Photographies. New Histories, New Practices*, conference papers, Australian National University, July 2008, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/27478261_Visual_histories_contrasting_postcard_views_of_early_20th_century_French_British_and_Australian_colonies (last accessed 20 July 2018).

²⁶ Beets, who worked through the picture postcards kept in the Alexander Turnbull Library, divides postcard motifs of Māori women into the four compositional categories of the lone female (old or young) or maiden, pairs of women, mother-and-child-images and group

[11] Portraits of young men seem to be largely absent, however. Instead, the “fearless fighter”²⁷ of old is a frequent category, as it was in New Zealand literature of the era. With the wars between the New Zealand government and Māori leaders still fresh in the minds of Pākehā in New Zealand and overseas, prominent Māori men were a favourite motif. There is clear evidence that a number of these photographs were later turned into postcards and disseminated widely long after the individual depicted had passed away.

[12] With photographic images stressing the notion of the Māori as a ‘dying race’ and of the glory of New Zealand’s native but (as considered by Pākehā in those days) practically bygone culture, the individuals depicted are nearly always clad in pre-European Māori attire of the finest kind, including cloaks of the tassled *korowai* (chief’s cloak decorated with twisted black tags) or the *kahu kiwi* (adorned with kiwi-feathers) variety, accompanied by accessories such as greenstone²⁸ ornaments and weapons (fig. 2). Some of these garments can be seen on photographs of different individuals, suggesting that they were kept as props by the photographers and used only for the photographs.²⁹

photographs including formal portraits and representations of village life; see: Jacqui Sutton Beets, “Images of Māori Women in New Zealand Postcards”, in: *Bitter Sweet. Indigenous Women in the Pacific*, eds. Alison Jones, Phyllis Herda and Tamasailau M. Suaalii, Dunedin 2000, 18-24, here 30.

²⁷ Bell, *Colonial Constructs*, 232, 279.

²⁸ Not all raw materials for Māori-style ornaments of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century actually turn out to be nephrite or bowenite (*pounamu* or *tangiwai*). This holds especially true when looking at the huge production carried out overseas and (re-)imported to New Zealand (cf. Herzog, *Tiki. Über Originale und Imitationen von Nephritobjekten der Māori-Kultur*, 22) and the props which Pākehā photographers used to equip Māori models. This is why I use the general term ‘greenstone’ here.

²⁹ King, *Māori. A Photographic and Social History*, 5; Beets, “Images of Māori Women in New Zealand Postcards”, 24.



2 Josiah Martin, *Makereti Papakura (1873-1930)*, wearing a feather cloak and a *heitiki* pendant, and holding a *patu* or *mere* in her hand, around 1900. Übersee-Museum, Bremen, photo collection, inv. no. P11239 (© Übersee-Museum, Bremen)³⁰

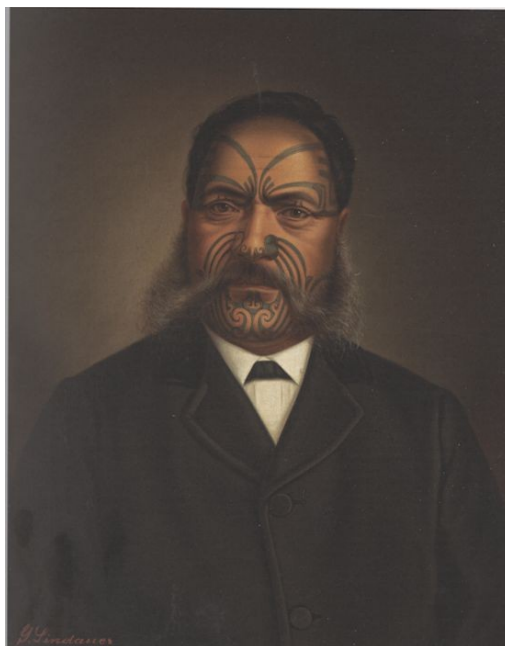
[13] As *moko* had been given up decades ago, individuals with tattoos were very much sought-after for photographs by the 1890s,³¹ and the distinctive ‘Māoriness’ of the individuals depicted was stressed by overwhelmingly choosing only those who had a facial tattoo. Dress, accessories and tattoos thus served as ethnic markers: they (over-)signalled the Māoriness of the people portrayed for the sake of a Pākehā audience who would not be able to recognize or appreciate subtle visual ethnic markers as Māori of those days might have used them in their everyday life, even when wearing European clothes and appearing untattooed (fig. 3, 4).

³⁰ Makereti (Margaret) Papakura was born in the Bay of Plenty as the daughter of English storekeeper William A. Thom and high-ranking Te Arawa woman Pia Ngarotu Te Rihi of Ngāti Wahiao *hapū*. Maggie Papakura became one of the most famous tour guides in the Whakarewarewa area in the Rotorua region, as she was charming, witty and accomplished. When asked to give her Māori surname, she picked the *nom de plume* Papakura from the Papakura geyser. She was a strong, well-connected advocate for Māori rights and toured with her own cultural group to Sydney and London. She continued to live in Great Britain until her death. Makereti Papakura enrolled in Oxford University and was the first Māori scholar to write an extensive published ethnography. See “Papakura, Makereti”, in: *Te Ara - The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/photograph/1928/makereti-papakura> (accessed 18 July 2018); Mandy Treagus, “From Whakarewarewa to Oxford: Makereti Papakura and the Politics of Indigenous Self-Representation”, in: *Australian Humanities Review* 52 (2012), 35-53.

³¹ The man with the last full-face *moko* died in 1908; cf. King, *Māori. A Photographic and Social History*, 14.



3 Arthur James Iles, *Hori Ngakapa Te Whanaunga* (dates of birth and death unknown), wearing a flax cloak. Übersee-Museum, Bremen, photo collection, inv. no. P11747 (© Übersee-Museum, Bremen)³²



4 Gottfried Lindauer, *Hori Ngakapa Te Whanaunga*, 1878, oil on canvas, 67.5 x 54.7 cm. Gift of H E Partridge, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki (reprod. from: Matiu Baker, “Gottfried Lindauer in Berlin – 49 Māori-Portraits and Their Stories”, in: *Gottfried Lindauer – Die Māori-Portraits*, eds. Udo Kittelmann and Britta Schmitz, Cologne 2014, [n. p.] 79)

³² An important nineteenth-century chief of Ngāti Whanaunga *iwi* from the Hauraki region, Hori Ngakapa Te Whanaunga was among a party of chiefs leading a war canoe invasion of Auckland. He was a supporter of the Kingitanga (Māori King movement). For more detailed information, see his biography in: Baker, “Gottfried Lindauer in Berlin – 49 Māori Portraits and their Stories” in: *Gottfried Lindauer – Die Māori-Portraits*, eds. Udo Kittelmann and Britta Schmitz, Cologne 2014, [n. p.] 78.

[14] An additional aspect of this ethnic othering is the evocation of timelessness and an ethnographic present. Following the anthropological and popular paradigm of the era, the individuals depicted remained optically frozen in what Pākehā considered the 'true' Māori culture, untainted by foreign influences.³³ The idea that photography rendered a true and objective snapshot of reality was widespread in the early days of photography – at least among the recipients of photographs, if not the photographers themselves, who soon recognized the limitations of this young medium.³⁴ King makes the additional point that few Pākehā actually encountered Māori in their daily lives, which rendered the photographs and postcards with their wide distribution all the more influential and damaging:

*[Pākehā] experience of [Māori] and their attitudes toward them tended to be conditioned by the photographic images they saw. So that stereotypes which arose from ignorance or prejudice tended to feed further negative stereotypes and lead to subsequent instances of prejudice.*³⁵

[15] If this was true for New Zealand's Pākehā settler society, it would soon become a significant factor in the flourishing tourism industry. Kynan Gentry sees the social norm of sending postcards overseas as a self-fulfilling prophecy which fed the expectations of tourists about what Māori must look like and be (fig. 5, 6).³⁶ If tourism was to be successful, these mental images had to be fed, and as a consequence stereotypical photographs and postcards were reproduced over and over again:

*Paradoxically, the dying race myth also raised the value of the romantic Māori within tourism practice, and, by the beginning of the twentieth century, tourists – like ethnologists – were searching out the clichéd 'authentic' Māori of postcards.*³⁷

³³ It was only in the mid-twentieth century that anthropologists came to see culture and ethnicity as fluid and adaptable. Around 1900, their concept of culture was one of an inventory of material and immaterial cultural traits that were finite and, accordingly, could be exhaustively documented and studied. Cf. also Bell, *Colonial Constructs*, 205.

³⁴ Dorothea Peters, "Bilder für die Massen. Fotografie und (Drucker-)Presse", in: *Geburt der Massenkultur. Beiträge der Tagung des WGL-Forschungsprojekts 'Wege in die Moderne. Weltausstellungen, Medien und Musik im 19. Jahrhundert' im Germanischen Nationalmuseum, 8.-10. November 2012*, ed. Roland Prügel, Nürnberg 2014, 52-67. See also Annette Tietenberg, "Gottfried Lindauer's 'Veracious Pictures' – On Transfers Between Media and Patterns of Repetition", in: *Gottfried Lindauer - Die Māori Portraits*, eds. Udo Kittelmann and Britta Schmitz, exh. cat., Nationalgalerie Staatliche Museen zu Berlin and Auckland Art Gallery, Cologne 2014, 218-223, here 53.

³⁵ King, *Māori. A Photographic and Social History*, 3.

³⁶ Kynan Gentry, *History, Heritage, and Colonialism. Historical Consciousness, Britishness, and Cultural Identity in New Zealand, 1870-1940*, Manchester 2015, 31.

³⁷ Gentry, *History, Heritage, and Colonialism*, 33.



5 Unknown, *Rewi Manga Maniapoto* (1807-1894), wearing a flax cloak and holding a *mere* or *patu*. Übersee-Museum, Bremen, photo collection, inv. no. P15038 (© Übersee-Museum, Bremen)³⁸



6 Gottfried Lindauer, *Rewi Manga Maniapoto*, 1882, oil on canvas, 86 x 70 cm. Gift of H E Partridge, 1915, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki (reprod. from: Baker, “Gottfried Lindauer in Berlin – 49 Māori-Portraits and Their Stories”, [n. p.] 89)

[16] The portraits selected to illustrate this article are also evidence of these mechanisms and of the prevalence of certain motifs. They all derive from the small historical photographic collection of the Übersee-Museum in Bremen,

³⁸ Rewi Manga Maniapoto of the Ngāti Maniapoto *iwi* was a well-known chief, warrior and politician, and a supporter of the Kingitanga (Māori King movement). He had close links to the Church Missionary Society and experimented with *Pākehā* farming methods. For more detailed information see his biography in: Baker, “Gottfried Lindauer in Berlin – 49 Māori Portraits and their Stories”, [n. p.] 88.

Germany. The museum did not build a systematic collection of photographs or portraits but randomly acquired what was offered for sale, presented as a gift or bequeathed to the institution.³⁹ Many of the photographs were apparently acquired mainly for their aesthetic purpose as a souvenir bought during the first museum director's trip to New Zealand in the 1890s; others stem from small private collections. All of them are prints from widely disseminated photographs taken in New Zealand studios belonging to, for example, Arthur James Iles⁴⁰, Josiah Martin⁴¹ or the Foy Brothers⁴². In a number of cases, the individuals depicted can be identified, some of them later being painted by Gottfried Lindauer. In a possible indication that the curators struggled to provide a documentary-related, academic justification for the inclusion of the photographs in the museum collection, hand-written notes or captions explicitly link some of them to Māori culture, as is the case with *Two Māori women, greeting each other* on the *hongī*-photo (fig. 7). The individuals depicted had not been otherwise specified in the museum documentation system. For three of the photographs biographical notes are provided in the catalogue of the Berlin exhibition on Lindauer;⁴³ for two others, I have added mini-biographical sketches in the captions to the images.

³⁹ Silke Seybold, "Ozeanien in 2387 Bildern", in: *Auf Spurensuche – Forschungsberichte aus und um Ozeanien zum 65. Geburtstag von Dieter Heintze*, ed. Dorothea Deterts, Bremen 2004 (= *TenDenZen. Jahrbuch des Übersee-Museums Bremen* 11 [2003]), 105-118.

⁴⁰ Arthur James Iles (1870-1943) settled in Rotorua after 1900. He specialized in postcards depicting beautiful Māori women; cf. Main, *Send Me a Postcard*, 30.

⁴¹ King, *Māori. A Photographic and Social History*, 14.

⁴² James Joseph Foy (1844-1890) and Joseph Michael Foy (1847-1923) came from England to New Zealand with their families in 1849. J. M. Foy worked for a photographer in Auckland, and in 1872 both brothers opened their own studio in Thames; cf. A. H. McLintock, *The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, Auckland 1902; William Main, "Photographic Reportage of the New Zealand Wars", in: *History of Photography* 5 (1981), no. 2, 105-116, here 112.

⁴³ Baker, "Gottfried Lindauer in Berlin – 49 Māori Portraits and their Stories", [n. p.] 78, 88, 152.



7 Arthur James Iles, *Two women, greeting each other (hongi)*. Übersee-Museum, Bremen, photo collection, inv. no. P11360 (© Übersee-Museum, Bremen)⁴⁴

Photography, Postcards and Gottfried Lindauer

[17] When Gottfried Lindauer came to New Zealand in the 1870s, the demand for Māori(-style) curios and photographs evoking romanticized ideas of Māoridom, as described above, was in full swing. Lindauer is known to have used photographs that had been taken during his portrait sessions as a memory aid and substitute for preparatory drawings since 1876. In the following years, he relied increasingly on photographs, at times using them exclusively to paint a portrait – often, he did not even meet the individuals he portrayed; in some cases, they had passed away long before he set foot on New Zealand's shores. In fact, most of his portraits seem to have come into existence by using this technique.⁴⁵ Lindauer soon became famous for his ability to paint even from miniature photographs and to do posthumous portraiture. Having painted a number of Pākehā dignitaries, he started to include pictures of Māori notables in his repertoire. Most of his later Māori portraits were commissioned works, a very large part of them having been commissioned by Henry Partridge and Walter Buller. Both patrons were interested in paintings intended to represent 'pure' Māori culture which, as they understood it, was doomed to become extinct soon, as a form of artistic documentation of New Zealand's pre-European history.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ This photograph is one of the romanticizing pictures of beautiful women in which A. J. Iles specialised. As both women are not on eye-level, the depiction might suggest an imminent kiss to an early twentieth-century Pākehā beholder, carrying an erotic meaning under the 'innocent' documentary one of the custom of *hongi*.

⁴⁵ Tietenberg, "Gottfried Lindauer's 'Veracious Pictures'", 219.

⁴⁶ Bell, *Colonial Constructs*, 199-200. Also 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.

[18] Much like the photographs of the era whose composition conformed to similar paradigms of ‘untainted’ and ‘bygone’ Māori culture, Lindauer’s portraits and other paintings were not mere objective or ethnographic documents of Māori life. In addition to failing to document the everyday attire or lives of Māori, even the details of garments and tattoos on the template photographs were embellished and painted ‘larger than life’:

*Lindauer tended to tidy up the lines, curves, and roughness of moko, as most European artists did, in order, probably, to create more pleasingly rhythmic patterns as far as European conventions were concerned. This suggests that ethnological accuracy was not a primary concern for Lindauer, though the objects represented had to be sufficiently ‘Māori’ to be credible for European viewers.*⁴⁷

This can be seen, for example, when comparing Lindauer’s portrait of *Heeni Hirini Ana Rupene and Child* with the original photograph (fig. 8, 9): the greenstone ear ornaments look more impressive and smooth, the korowai tassels lie more tidily and are accompanied by red pompoms, which are absent in the photograph, and the moko is clearly different, but darker and richer in contrast.⁴⁸



8 Foy Brothers, *Heeni Hirini and Child*, previously known as *Ana Rupene and Child*, between 1871 and 1878. Übersee-Museum Bremen, photographic collection, inv. no. P11746 (© Übersee-Museum Bremen)⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Bell, *Colonial Constructs*, 200.

⁴⁸ Baker, “Gottfried Lindauer in Berlin – 49 Māori Portraits and their Stories”, [n. p.] 152.

⁴⁹ Heeni Hirini, member of the Ngāti Maru *iwi*, came from Manaia on the west coast of the Coromandel peninsula. The print in the Übersee-Museum is laterally reversed. For more detailed information on Heeni Hirini, see her biography in: Baker, “Gottfried Lindauer in Berlin – 49 Māori Portraits and their Stories”, [n. p.] 152.



9 Gottfried Lindauer, *Heeni Hirini and Child*, 1878, oil on canvas, 68 x 56 cm. Gift of H E Partridge, 1915, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki (reprod. from: Baker, “Gottfried Lindauer in Berlin – 49 Māori-Portraits and Their Stories”, [n. p.] 153)

[19] As Bell amply demonstrates,⁵⁰ Lindauer based his details and image compositions on a combination of components extracted from earlier paintings, book illustrations as well as from photographs taken, for example, by Samuel Carnell and Augustus Hamilton⁵¹. There was a mutual transfer between photographs, Lindauer’s (and other artists’) paintings, postcards, National Publicity photos and New Zealand tourist brochures, reinforcing their ideological scope and impact as far as images of Māori were concerned.⁵² In the hey-day of the postcard in the 1900s, however, Lindauer went out of fashion as a painter⁵³, and in 1918 Alexander Turnbull⁵⁴ wrote: “I do not care to purchase any of this

⁵⁰ Bell, *Colonial Constructs*, 200-205.

⁵¹ Samuel Carnell (1832-1920) worked at the Native Land Court and is well-known not only for his political career as mayor of Napier but also as an ardent photographer, especially of Māori portraits. Augustus Hamilton (1853-1913) was, among his many other interests and talents, an ardent collector of Māori artefacts and a photographer. From 1903 onwards, he was also director of the Colonial Museum, the predecessor of today’s Te Papa Tongarewa Museum in Wellington, see: “Hamilton, Augustus. Biography”, in: *Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2h8/hamilton-augustus> (accessed 11 May 2016).

⁵² Cf. Tietenberg, “Gottfried Lindauer’s ‘Veracious Pictures’”, and Bell, *Colonial Constructs*, 202-203.

⁵³ Blackley, “Gottfried Lindauer. A Career in New Zealand”, 216.

⁵⁴ Alexander Turnbull (1868-1918) was, among other achievements and interests, a collector of books, artefacts and artworks, see: “Turnbull, Alexander Horsburgh”, in: *Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2t53/turnbull-alexander-horsburgh> (accessed 11

artist's work. They are really coloured photographs, and of little, if any, artistic value."⁵⁵

Māori and Portraiture

[20] It is a truism that the presence of a camera changes both the people to be photographed and the setting⁵⁶ – even more so in the early era of photography where technology and equipment did not allow any unobtrusiveness. While initially acting shy in front of the camera and apparently seeing it as an evil spirit (*taipō*),⁵⁷ a number of Māori soon embraced photography for their own purposes and commissioned photographs of themselves. As with the Māori portraits arranged by Pākehā, Māori protagonists also chose to have their image taken in their finest Māori or Pākehā clothes and with the insignia of their rank. In fact, Alfred Burton⁵⁸, who in the 1880s went to the countryside to take photographs of everyday Māori life, complained that Māori insisted on being photographed only in their best attire.⁵⁹ This growing enthusiasm for portraits is also evident in the Māori crowds who flocked and did a *haka* (war dance or challenge, also used to greet distinguished guests or acknowledge achievements) in front of Wellington's Lambton Quay shop window where Lindauer exhibited his Māori portrait paintings in 1877. After that, Māori commissioned a number of portraits.⁶⁰ The *whare whakairo* (meeting houses), which essentially symbolized an ancestor and housed carved panels and figures also representing *tupuna* (ancestors), were made less and less in the late nineteenth century. Photographic portraits increasingly filled in for them. Baker states:

Māori also adapted photography and portraiture in other media for use in important cultural events. For example, during tangihanga (funerary events) images of the deceased, together with portraits of other deceased near relatives, would be arranged with fine cloaks and other taonga (treasured personal and tribal possessions) around the coffin.⁶¹ Today it would not be out of place to find a range of photographic portraits of Māori ancestors in Māori homes, even dating

May 2016).

⁵⁵ Quoted according to Blackley, "Gottfried Lindauer. A Career in New Zealand", 216.

⁵⁶ King, *Māori. A Photographic and Social History*, 5.

⁵⁷ King, *Māori. A Photographic and Social History*, 5.

⁵⁸ Photographer Walter John Burton (1836-1880) set up a photo studio in Dunedin in 1867, joined one year later by his brother Alfred (1834-1914). In 1877, the two brothers separated and each ran his own studio; cf. Paul Faber et al., *Burton Brothers. Photographers in New Zealand, 1866-1898*, Rotterdam 1987; Hardwicke Knight, "Photographers in Colonial New Zealand", in: *History of Photography* 9 (1985), no. 3, 175-181, here 17; King, *Māori. A Photographic and Social History*, 73.

⁵⁹ Faber, *Burton Brothers*, 64.

⁶⁰ Blackley, "Gottfried Lindauer. A Career in New Zealand", 214.

⁶¹ This practice seems to have gained momentum in the 1890s, generating a large number of portrait photographs commissioned by Māori customers; cf. King, *Māori. A Photographic and Social History*, 12, 77.

*back to the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Today photographs of tupuna regularly fill the walls of whare tupuna (Māori community ancestral houses) and whare runanga (community council houses) around the country.*⁶²

[21] Although photography and paintings commissioned by Pākehā and Māori thus were outwardly similar, the meaning and context of portraits were completely different from a Māori perspective. The images of the deceased ancestors stand for kinship, continuity and identity and have *mana*.⁶³ Hundreds or thousands of nineteenth-century studio photographs thus ended up in private households,⁶⁴ postcards probably among them. However, the use of ancestor images as a widespread commodity among careless Pākehā must surely have been understood as an act of desecration.⁶⁵ While nineteenth- and early twentieth-century photographers and painters such as Lindauer were gradually considered to be out of step with the times by Pākehā, this was not the case among Māori.

Interpretations

[22] Backed by a wealth of historical and visual evidence, all scholars agree that late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century depictions of Māori reveal more about European values, beliefs and attitudes towards Māori than serving as a mirror of reality. Portraits were overwhelmingly (though not exclusively) aimed at a Pākehā audience which had to recognize and understand the 'Māoriness' depicted in them; this was achieved by (over-)stressing and (over-)signalling those attributes which were photogenic and exotic such as precious garments, jewellery, accessories and *moko*. Furthermore, the influence of European artistic conventions on Māori portraiture is also evident. Photographs thus are artificial constructions of 'the Māori', or rather several versions of 'the Māori'.⁶⁶

[23] As King states, from a documentary perspective on Māori life, "[t]hese factors [as well as technical limitations] often combined to make historical photographs as infuriatingly though inadvertently concealing as they are revealing".⁶⁷ For a number of authors, then, analysing these photographs entails first and foremost studying European ideas, imaginings and representations of Māori, associated with a wide range of exoticising *topoi*, such as barbarism or savagery, the 'ethnographic type or specimen', romance and nobility, and eroticism.⁶⁸

⁶² Matiu Baker, "He kanohi kitea - The Likeness of Māori", in: *Gottfried Lindauer - Die Māori Portraits*, eds. Udo Kittelmann and Britta Schmitz, exh. cat., Cologne 2014, 224-227, here 134.

⁶³ Baker, "He kanohi kitea", 226. - Mana is a religious concept from Oceania which roughly translates as (supernatural) power, authority, prestige.

⁶⁴ Baker, "He kanohi kitea", 226

⁶⁵ King, *Māori. A Photographic and Social History*, 3.

⁶⁶ Bell, *Colonial Constructs*, 7.

⁶⁷ King, *Māori. A Photographic and Social History*, 5.

[24] Bell interprets these *topoi* in combination with the (more or less) accurate rendering of material culture in the portraits as a form of appropriation and objectification through classification:⁶⁹ savagery expressed, for example, by *moko*, and the portraits of well-known but defeated warriors could serve as a justification for colonization; romanticized associations could create an idealized past of order and harmony supposedly free of conflict – “a view of the past that Europeans wanted and needed. [...] As such, Māori existed primarily for European delectation.”⁷⁰

[25] Gentry elaborates this framework by stating that a distinctly New Zealand identity in the young Pākehā colony would not have been able to be built without embracing, appropriating and dominating Māori history, culture and landscape – a “part of the ‘national patrimony’” which had to be possessed and controlled.⁷¹ He argues that the development of tourism with its prescribed and constantly reinforced image of Māori culture thus was inseparable from the practice of colonizing.

[26] Although these frameworks do sound plausible on an intuitive level and from a macrosocial perspective, microsocial studies on the reception of certain photographs, postcards and paintings by (non-prominent) individuals have not yet been conducted.⁷² Who can tell whether any or many of the Pākehā owners or beholders of Māori portraits saw objects of desire, savagery, grace or beauty in them?⁷³ As Bell so aptly states, “Images can have a plurality of meanings, beyond the scope of a single interpretation or interpretative approach. [...] Context is crucial to the interpretation of images.”⁷⁴

[27] Māori agency counteracted Pākehā perspectives by focusing on the *mana* (a religious concept from Oceania which roughly translates as [supernatural] power, authority, prestige), *whakapapa* (genealogy) and *taonga* (valued heritage from the ancestors) aspects of the photographed and painted portraits, using them accordingly in meeting houses, at *tangi* mourning ceremonies or in private households in great numbers. No longer highly regarded by Pākehā, Māori viewers flocked to see the Lindauer paintings again and again. And they received a prominent place in the seminal *Te Māori* exhibition of the 1980s.⁷⁵ Even if

⁶⁸ Bell, *Colonial Constructs*, 7, 205, 206, 257; Beets, “Images of Māori Women in New Zealand Postcards”.

⁶⁹ Bell, *Colonial Constructs*, 5, 6, 206.

⁷⁰ Bell, *Colonial Constructs*, 206, 221.

⁷¹ Gentry, *History, Heritage, and Colonialism*, 16, 17, 31, 33.

⁷² Arguably, as with all nineteenth- and early twentieth-century popular culture and its reception, it is difficult to find, as source material, a sufficient amount of correspondence, diary entries etc. written by ‘normal’ (not prominent) individuals who did not publish their opinions in newspapers, magazines and the like.

⁷³ King, *Māori. A Photographic and Social History*, 4.

⁷⁴ Bell, *Colonial Constructs*, 8, 258.

intended as something else by their Pākehā creators, Māori used the photographs and paintings to remember and honour their culture and the individuals depicted.

Special Issue Guest Editors

Alexandra Karentzos, Miriam Oesterreich and Britta Schmitz, eds., Gottfried Lindauer – Painting New Zealand, in: RIHA Journal 0189-0197

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⁷⁵ The *Te Māori* exhibition is considered a milestone in Māori renaissance and pride. Curated by Māori, it opened in 1984 and travelled to several venues in the United States and in New Zealand. See Hirini Moko Mead and Athol McCredie, *Te Māori. Māori Art from New Zealand Collections*, New York 1984, and “Te Māori Exhibition”, in: *Te Ara - The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/photograph/3831/te-maori-exhibition> (accessed 20 July 2018).