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'Pou maumahara', 'the memory place': Remembrance and material cultures of colonial conflict at the Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira

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ABSTRACT

This article explores how material objects reveal patterns of remembrance in the public histories of the nineteenth-century New Zealand Wars fought between British regiments and colonial forces and Māori hapū and iwi (tribal groups). It is based on collections research conducted at the Auckland War Memorial Museum which conceptualises a new gallery displaying stories and objects relating to the wars. Bringing together museology and historiography, the article argues that an engagement with the material culture of the New Zealand Wars and public lexicons of memory in a museum context offer opportunities to move beyond national narratives. Just as these colonial conflicts reconfigured the materiality of violence and collective belonging, so too do museum-based objects activate the presentation of these histories in light of new public needs since 2017.

KEYWORDS

Auckland War Memorial Museum, Colonial Violence, Māori, New Zealand Wars

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Introduction

In a passageway between galleries on the second floor of the Auckland War Memorial Museum, one finds a discrete display of a small box (*Fig 1*). Its lid is painted in a Māori poutama design, the simple but striking geometric style used as part of the visual narratives of a wharenui (traditional meeting house) on marae (the gathering area and complex of buildings around wharenui). On closer inspection, the box itself is of a modest make and purchased, we discover from the display label, from *The Warehouse*, a local New Zealand retailer. A nearby short film explains its purpose: this was one of four boxes that held the 13,000 signatures collected by Ōtorohanga students over 2014 and 2015 asking the New Zealand Government to establish a formal day of commemoration for the New Zealand Wars. The petition itself sprung from a school history trip to the battlegrounds of the Waikato War (1863-1864), especially the kainga (unfortified village) of Rangiaowhia sacked in February 1864. "We were shocked and horrified at the stories told by the kaumatua [elder]", student organiser Leah Bell states in an interview clip, "who were distraught sharing their ancestors' stories about innocent women, and children, and elders being burned alive. We decided that it was our responsibility now to take action and be proactive about our history." Their hard work paid off: the petition gave impetus to government work with iwi negotiating October 28 as 'rā maumahara' the day of remembering – akin to Anzac Day on April 25 (Gibson, Williams, Cairns, 2019, p. 21).[1] Indeed, the students drew on a commemorative vocabulary of twentieth-century conflict: "in our country we do not commemorate those who lost their lives here in New Zealand both Māori and colonial. Their blood was shed on New Zealand soil, their lives were given in service to New Zealand."

Figure 1

Te Waka-Petihana: Petition Box, for national day commemorating New Zealand Wars

Note. Collection of Auckland Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 2018.12.1 Gift of Timoti Harris and Lesleigh Henderson. AWMM.

The nineteenth-century wars between Māori and the British Crown, popularly called the New Zealand Wars, were the defining crisis of colonial New Zealand. These were conflicts between and across Māori communities, against or aligned with the colonial government, and fought by professional regiments, volunteer groups, and settler militia from around the 1840s up to the

1880s. These conflicts produced new divisions: the language of 'settler' and 'settlement' that obscure the realities of military invasion and occupation of colonial New Zealand, and indigenous Māori as 'rebel', 'native', 'Kingite'– Māori who aligned with the Kīngitanga (Māori King movement) – in contrast to 'kūpapa', a term originally meaning neutral 'fence-sitter', which was transformed, pejoratively, into alignment of 'Queenite' hapū or iwi with the Crown (Crosby, 2015, pp. 8–9). As well as suggesting dynamic spaces of neutrality and belligerence, these categories pointed to the spiralling contours of colonial violence, which demanded responses from even those who sought to avoid conflict.

The experience of 'ngā pakanga', a term in te reo Māori that captures a wide set of experiences from collisions and war, to invasion, occupation, genocidal acts or intentions, and more intimately, local and personal acts of violence – was also marked by a reconfiguration of the space between history and memory. Writing a century ago towards the end of the memory boom of the *long nineteenth century*, James Cowan published the first substantive general history of the New Zealand Wars (a term he popularised) in 1922 (Cowan, 1922). Structuring his histories around interviews with those who experienced the conflicts, he inaugurated a new historiography, one textured by languages of memory. Cowan's own project was not without its problems: the Māori anthropologist and statesman Apirana Ngata critiqued Cowan's tendency to obscure the historical experience of Māori with romantic versification; he dismissed Cowan as part of a set of writers who "direct their attention to the popular public and may be left there" (Ngata, 1986). A hundred years later, Vincent O'Malley's recent edited collection of nineteenth-century primary sources, *Voices of the New Zealand Wars / Ngā reo o Ngā Pakanga o Aotearoa* (O'Malley, 2021) speaks to this entanglement of memory and history. The popular esteem held for *Voices of the New Zealand Wars*, while reflecting O'Malley's contribution to public history in his corpus of work since 2016, also points to an appetite for more textured stories of colonial conflict among the New Zealand public. It reflects the power of witness history (Margalit, 2003); one in which the dead themselves seem to speak as they did to the Ōtorohanga students at Rangiaowhia. Ngata's particular point, nonetheless, stands as a warning to any author of historical accounts of the wars: one must attend to the experiences of these conflicts in collective memory as systems of knowledge and meaning-making or risk reducing it to national mythology.

This article explores how historians and researchers might approach these fraught issues and trajectories, through two starting points. First, only histories configured by collective memories can meet public demands for recognition of colonial conflict while at the same time resisting the mythologisation of war. Second, objects in museums play an invaluable role because they activate spaces of memory, violence, and collective belonging. In light of contemporary public debates and discussions, the petition box, for example, carries a weighty burden in the museum (MacKintosh, 2019). Its power partly lies in its activation of commemorative practices, bringing into tension and attention different remembrances of the wars: Māori collective memory defined by "intimacies of violence" (Kidman, 2021) and the constitutive forgetting of Pākehā or non-Māori memorialisation (Bell, 2020). The petition box operates, in this way, as an anchor; it starts the visitors with a contemporary question – how and why should we remember the New Zealand Wars – while signalling the work of the Auckland War Memorial Museum as 'pou maumahara', a space in which multiple memories of violence can be recognised and relationships of meaning made explicit in the encounter with the past (Auckland Museum, 2016) and the ways that the wars are not resolved for many communities. It poses fresh questions: what is the role of the Auckland Museum as a war memorial, an institution built to mark the fallen of the Great War which brings together histories of conflict and violence into arrangements of mourning and commemoration, in the remembrance of these conflicts here in this place?

These are live research questions in my work as project curator in the Human History team at the Auckland War Memorial Museum assisting with the research and conceptualisation of a new gallery displaying stories and objects relating to the New Zealand Wars. This entails a collaborative re-thinking about what it means to present these histories of conflict and violence in light of the establishment of Rā Maumahara Day of Commemoration every October 28 which offers the potential to substantially revise our commemorative cultures of war. An important

example was offered by the 175th anniversary of Te Ruapekapeka, the final battle between British and Māori forces in the 1845-1846 Northern War, in Te Tai Tokerau (Northland). The striking imagery of layered hands (*Fig 2*) conveyed the intergenerational stories, communities, and whakapapa (connections of descent) from both sides of the battle, while the emphasis on "reverence", "remembrance", and "reconciliation" indicated key registers of the global memory boom and its "terrain of injustice" (Connerton, 2008, p. 17).

Figure 2

The icon for the 175th anniversary commemoration of Te Ruapekapeka, 8th January 2021 hosted by Ngāti Manu, Te Kapotai, Ngāti Hau and Ngāti Hine.

Note. The theme for the commemoration was 'Kawea a puriri mai' – in reverence, remembrance and reconciliation.

A consideration of several arrangements of objects from the museum's war collection, offered here, reveals crucial historiographical problems, intersections, and junctures. Most of these objects discussed are currently on display as part of the museum's *Scars on the Heart* gallery, which opened in 1996 (Light, 2022). There are some twenty distinct objects, each forming part of a cluster of around half a dozen possible displays. The aim of the selection is to present a diversity of perspectives and voices. Major aspects of ngā pakanga are represented. These arrangements of objects are organised through a series of historical problems in relation to colonial conflict: 'te pūtake o te riri' (the causes of the anger), the roots of conflict in these histories; how we might read these conflicts 'ko te pu o te Pākehā' – through 'the gun of the Pākehā' – that is, the relationship between violence, technology, and knowledge; and 'te rau o te patu' (the edge of the blade) the aftermath and legacies of colonial conflict and how this challenges current historiographical framings of the wars. In parsing problems of New Zealand Wars histories through arrangements of objects and space, I argue that, whereas museum practice and historical research have been separate in New Zealand Wars scholarship, these arrangements are historiographical as well as museological. The intention is not just to represent the wars but interpret colonial violence and its meaning for communities. Drawing attention to problems of causes, experiences, and legacies – each requiring careful work – will ultimately complicate our

sense of these histories in new ways, while drawing into public spaces, especially pou maumahara, memories of violence that have been obscured over time.

'Te pūtake o te riri' / 'the causes of the anger': Colonial conflict and its roots

A seminal shift in New Zealand Wars historiography over the twentieth century was from Cowan's focus on the *how* of the conflicts – where and what groups engaged in fighting during the nineteenth century – to *why* the conflicts were fought in the first place (Keenan, 2021). The desire to understand *causes* has left a powerful impression on subsequent histories. 'Te pūtake of te riri' –*the cause of the anger* – is the official name adopted by hapū and iwi for the October 28 commemoration suggests that this emphasis is also a priority for Māori communities. 'Pūtake', however, conveys a sense of the *roots* of violence in a way that suggests connections, continuities, and on-going relationships rather than abstract historical forces. Broadly, historians fix their emphasis on one of three interconnected factors: land, sovereignty, and nineteenth-century empire – especially the global forces of migration enabled through imperial systems. Danny Keenan challenges any siloed approach to causality in the wars when he suggests that 'historians need to do more than posit sovereignty, as an overarching cause with no grounding, existing somewhere out there in the process of dismissing Māori counter narratives framed by the sustaining land, forests, rivers and other resources rooted in cultural millennia; which as it so happened were taken from Māori with such violence and yes causing immeasurable suffering' (Keenan, 2019). This is evocative of the relationality of remembrance; how "what is being remembered, or perhaps more accurately re-constituted, is … that radical interconnectedness that has been so shockingly betrayed in and through the violence of trauma" (Edkins, 2006, p. 98). In Keenan's presentation, a central conceptual framework is of *mana whenua*, territorial claims based in and around land which are the foundation of tribal belonging. This *economy of mana* remains the organising principle of Māori memories of the these nineteenth-century wars.

Myriad objects in the museum's New Zealand Wars collection evokes this challenge to ground the causes of colonial conflict in land and its relationships. An illustrative example might be, by way of contrast, a cluster of objects that relate to Governor George Grey, one of the most influential of the colonial governors in nineteenth-century New Zealand. Grey's seal, signature, and despatch box were used by Grey as part of the wider practice of colonial governance at different points in his career (*Fig 3*). Most significant, under Grey's policy, was the conclusion of the Northern War in his first term in office (1845–1853) and, in his second term, planning and instigating the invasion of the Waikato in 1863. In this way, these objects are symbols of Crown power. Through letters, first, from Government House in the heart of colonial Auckland and, later, from his island retreat of Kawau, Grey exercised colonial authority, strategised over its extent and expansion, and conducted military campaigns.

Figure 3

The seal of Governor Sir George Grey at Auckland War Memorial Museum. AWMM.

These objects also evoke Grey's complex legacy. The assertion of colonial power under Grey was a crucial catalyst for the invasion of the Waikato. He was subsequently mythologised as 'the good governor' among some (although not all) of Auckland's population for whom he was a saviour and advocate – leading to the establishment of a statue of his likeness outside the Auckland Town Hall. Grey's imperial career – a 'pioneer of empire' (Henderson, 1907) – across South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand formed part of Keith Sinclair's argument that New Zealand's race relations were superior to these other contexts (Sinclair, 1952; 1971). On the other hand, recent vandalism of the Grey statue (Martin, 2020), now situated in Auckland's central Albert Park, speaks to another mythology: that of Grey as the embodiment of Pākehā racism and hubris (Kidman et al, 2022), with blood on his hands – through his writing and policy-making, rather than direct violence.

These symbols of an abstracted colonial authority can be juxtaposed with Māori strategies. Two wax impressions of a European-made seal form part of the New Zealand Wars collection at Auckland Museum. The seal was used by Potatau Te Wherowhero, the first Māori King, and taken from a document by colonial official F. D. Fenton during his residency in the King's capital at Ngaruawahia, prior to the outbreak of the Waikato War (*Fig 4)*. The establishment of the Kīngitanga was a key Māori response to the growth of colonial government and the exclusion of Māori from parliamentary democracy in 1854 (under the New Zealand Constitution Act 1852). The movement was an experiment in collective belonging, institutionalising Māori land interests in a way that spanned lines of iwitanga (tribalism). The occasion of the appointment of Te Wherowhero as the first King in 1858 was the occasion of important patterns of memory: "I love New Zealand", declared one Waikato rangatira in attendance, "Let us have order, so that we may increase like the white man. Why should we disappear from the land? Let us have a king, for with a king there will be peace among us. New Zealand is ours—I love it" (Cowan, 1922, p. 232). The intentions of the 'Kingites' was expressed in the Waikato haka (war dance), 'Ka ngapu te whenua', which in its contemporary meaning compared the coming of colonial governance as an earthquake to which Māori responses must be to cleave ever more closely to the land – 'kia mau, kia mau' – or be lost.

Figure 4

Two wax impressions of a seal made by Europeans for the use of Potatau, the Maori King.

Note: Taken from a seal by F. D. Fenton while residing at Ngaruawahia, prior to the Waikato War. AWMMAWMM.

Importantly, not all Māori communities aligned themselves with Kingitanga. Sinclair suggests up to half of Māori in the wars were neutral or loyal to the government (Sinclair, 1961, p. 269). A prominent example was Maihi Kawiti, a leading Northern rangatira, who refused to join the Kingitanga and, instead, declared his own rohe potae (protected territory) aligned with the Crown – a strategic partnership ultimately expressed in the investiture of Maihi and subsequent Ngāti Hine leaders with their own seal, Rongomau. This context of cause points to how boundaries between Crown and Māori authority changed overtime as Māori navigated their relationship with an evolving colonial politics (Belgrave, 2005, p. 37) which requires more careful attention by historians of the wars.

Flags are similarly useful shorthand for motivations, intentions, and relationships that complicate notions of colonial conflict and its causes, while also evoking claims on space and its occupation as place (Mulholland, 2018). The regimental colours of the 58th Regiment, for example, reflect the material memory of the fourteen British regiments as well as various auxiliary units that served in Aotearoa during this period. Colours represented the prestige of that regiment within the global network of the British Army (Lidchi & Allan, 2020, pp. 5–7.) Within this tradition of colours was that recording of battle honours – 'mapping' all the places that this regiment had served since its formation in 1755 and, in this way, connecting New Zealand and these conflicts to an imperial circulation of military force. The British Army was an effective network in which men, with perhaps no other job prospects in British society, could join the army and be deployed to different parts of the world (MacDonald & Lenihan, 2019). This imperial experience was transplanted to New Zealand as much as the material colours. It points to the personal relationships of the British Army, with its own cultural meanings and scripts of military violence, that were an important part of the texture of colonial conflict and need to be foregrounded if empire is to be a meaningful cultural context in explaining the roots of colonial conflict. There is a need to restore this cultural context to our understandings of imperial military collections.

We could set up the 58th colours in a dialogue with a very different statement of place and relationships through another flag, one that declares the existence of the place of 'Aotearoa', This 'map' was produced by Te Arawa woman Heni Te Kiri Karamu at the outbreak of the Waikato War. As someone living in Auckland but loyal to the Kingitanga, in part due to her family connections, Heni formed part of the first wave of displaced people forced to abandon livelihood over the course of the invasion. This flag (*Fig. 5*), woven from red silk, was gifted to Wī Kōkā of Ngāti Koheriki; it offers a powerful statement of identity and what this war meant for many Māori and for Heni. The iconography of Christianity, with customary reverence of the star, is combined with the text 'Aotearoa', a declaration that has gained considerable interest to contemporary New Zealanders in light of debates about the naming of 'Aotearoa New Zealand' (Dexter, 2022).

Figure 5

Postcard reproductions of the 58th Regiment Colours (left) and the 'Aotearoa' flag crafted by Heni Te Kiri Karamu. Both original flags are now kept at the Auckland War Memorial Museum. AWMM.

Both flags now sit in the Auckland Museum in various stages of decay. The 'Aotearoa' flag appears like a series of silk strips; the 58th Regiment Colours as a patchwork of fragments. As a metaphor, the fragments are evocative of Pākehā neglect of these histories. Importantly, however, it is also an opportunity to return to patterns of collective memory in colonial society. The 'Aotearoa' flag was captured as a trophy and lauded as the trappings of a conquered foe; the colours were gifted to the city of Auckland after the Regiment was redeployed to Europe in the 1850s. Under British custom, military flags were intended to disintegrate organically, placed, traditionally, in churches. The fact that this custom was translated to the war memorial museum is part of its role as a sacred institution and interlocutor between complex meanings of the wars which required different configurations of memorialisation. It also speaks to the fragmentation of cultural remembrance around the wars since the nineteenth century.

Returning to Keenan's challenge, New Zealand Wars historiography will remain hindered by siloed emphasises on land, sovereignty, and people as historical abstractions unless it attends to the lived meanings of this experience patterned by collective memory. On the one hand, conventional arguments of causality do not recognise the cosmological connection between 'peoplehood' and whenua in te ao Māori; on the other hand, a strict 'national' framework misses the personal and intimate loyalties that shaped the wars. As these object 'impressions' suggest, attention to relationships of memory is key.

'Ko te pu o te Pākehā': Experiences of violence

It was through 'the gun of the pakeha' that colonial conflict was experienced by Māori and non-Māori. This was the insight of Ralph Johnson's seminal 1972 study (Johnson, 1972) which challenged historians to consider the cultural meanings of colonial violence; one that produced new configurations of cultural life through the collision of technology. Conflict "between different cultures affects both parties reciprocally; there is a two-way flow of cultural information and ideas" (Johnson, 1972, p. 50); while Māori knowledge and technology surprised and bewildered Pākehā who continuously underestimated the capacity of Māori to confront and adapt to new circumstances (Belich, 1986). Weapons are both ubiquitous and hidden in these histories, even barely registering in military histories with recent exceptions (Thompson, 2017). On the other hand, the contrast between 'muskets and tomahawks' – the name of a table-top miniatures war game (Faulconbridge, 2022) – has been a favoured romantic device since the earliest fictional writings about the wars (See, for example, Henty, 1891), obscuring the violent reality of the wars through sanitising fictions. New military histories have paid greater attention to the construction of knowledge in the course of the wars (Taylor, 2004; Simons, 2019), although this has focused on the practical waging of conflict rather than its cultural meaning. The need to make meaning of violence, on the other hand, is the heart of the memory boom (Winter, 2008).

Unsurprisingly, the New Zealand Wars collection at Auckland War Memorial Museum is filled with the armaments, trophies, and loot of the British Army. The officer's sword of Cyprian Bridges, commander of the 58th Regiment, whose diary of the Northern War is an important source for that conflict; an Enfield Pattern 1853 (1st Pattern) percussion rifle issued to members of the 40th Regiment in 1856, with its bayonet attachments; a cartridge maker, or teki, made from polished bone and with an extended tongue carved at its narrow neck as a pukana or challenge; a tewhatewha (customary two-handed Māori fighting weapon) dug up at Pukehinahina / Gate Pa in 1875; a double barrel percussion shotgun looted after the battle of Rangiriri. Each of these reveal a range of perspectives and histories, even by a single object. A carbine rifle carved by Eremiha Neke Te Kapua of Te Arawa speaks to multiple layers – the trajectory of the weapon itself as a European product and its literal inscription with Māori memory by Te Kapua (*Fig 6**).***

Figure 6

Detailing of a carbine, carved by Eremiha Neke Te Kapua circa late 1800s, currently on display at the Auckland War Memorial Museum. AWMM.

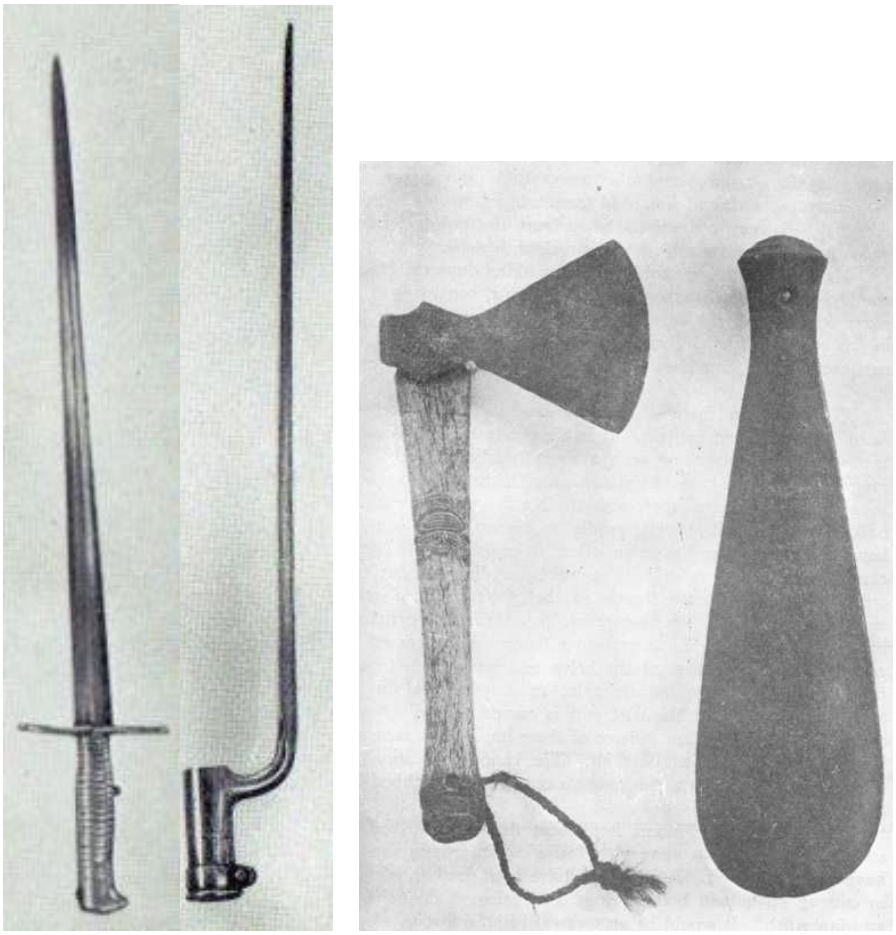
What is more surprising is how little these crucial material expressions of colonial violence have been considered by historians. Despite – or because of – their ubiquity, little attention has been paid to the cultural meanings of these technologies. Thomson shows how the Enfield rifle (such as the one mentioned above) materialised a sense of settlers' imperial innovation and self-superiority. Colonisation in the nineteenth century was, at its heart, a physical act of displacement, of maiming, and of killing. An illustrative example was the experience of Sergeant W. H. Free of the 65th Regiment, later recorded in a series of interviews with James Cowan as part of his 1922 history, at Mahoetahi in the Waitara valley at the outbreak of the first Taranaki War in 1860:

> There was some good bayonet-work at Mahoetahi. One of our men, W. Marshall, had an encounter in the swamp with a powerful Maori, who tried to wrest his rifle from him. Marshall at last got his arms free, and sent his bayonet clean through his opponent's body up to the locking-ring. A Maori got a soldier of the 65th face downwards in the muddy swamp-water, and would have drowned him but for a bullet from a fellow-soldier which stretched the Ngati-Haua dead. A soldier of the same regiment bayoneted a Maori through the chest, but the amazing warrior gripped the barrel of the rifle with his left hand and tomahawked his opponent on the arm before he fell. (Cowan, 1922, p. 198.)

The most confronting aspect of this episode – the heart of this history – is the physical violence in which two groups of people encounter each other and attempt to kill each other. The "bayonet work", "the work of the day", both reveals and obscures much of this transgressive act of taking the life of another human person (the euphemism of 'work' is not only unsurprising but necessary to filtering "the red business" of war) (Winter, 2017, p. 1). It reveals a significant lexicon of memory which folds conquest of people and place into uses of technology which has long been a useful side-step from the reality of conflict. In both Cowan's historical framing and the sergeant's testimony, a stark and deliberate contrast is drawn here between the British bayonet and the Māori tomahawk. *Tomahawk* was a kind of catch-all phrase that would more appropriately is described as pātītī, a kind of short axe, or a mere, a blunt weapon made of stone or bone. A juxtaposition of these technologies from the Auckland War Memorial Museum adds to our understanding of the 'work' of Mahoetahi: British officers, regulars, and settler militia used variations of the bayonet. Conversely, the Māori patiti or mere were adaptations of customary weapons. In this moment, we glimpse something of this 'work' when Marshall is driving his bayonet into (and through) this person, into this human body, up to the locking ring or hilt of the bayonet *(Fig 7)*. Despite the centrality of these tools, or perhaps because of their ubiquity, their material importance has not been commented on by historians of the wars.

Figure 7

An arrangement of bayonets and Māori patiti and mere from the Auckland War Memorial Museum. AWMM.



This intersection of technology and memories of violence is reflected in other objects. The outbreak of colonial conflict in the nineteenth aligned with the new British imperialism, with its attention to not just military power but an extension of control and authority through the production and ordering of knowledge (Richards, 1993). The New Zealand Wars are a striking example of this tightly coiled relationship between war, space, and knowledge in this new imperialism, through imagery and mapping of battlefields, fortifications, and landscapes. In parallel, attention to sites of battle has been a fruitful strategy around which historians and archaeologists have fixed their narratives of the wars (Prickett & McGovern-Wilson, 2009).

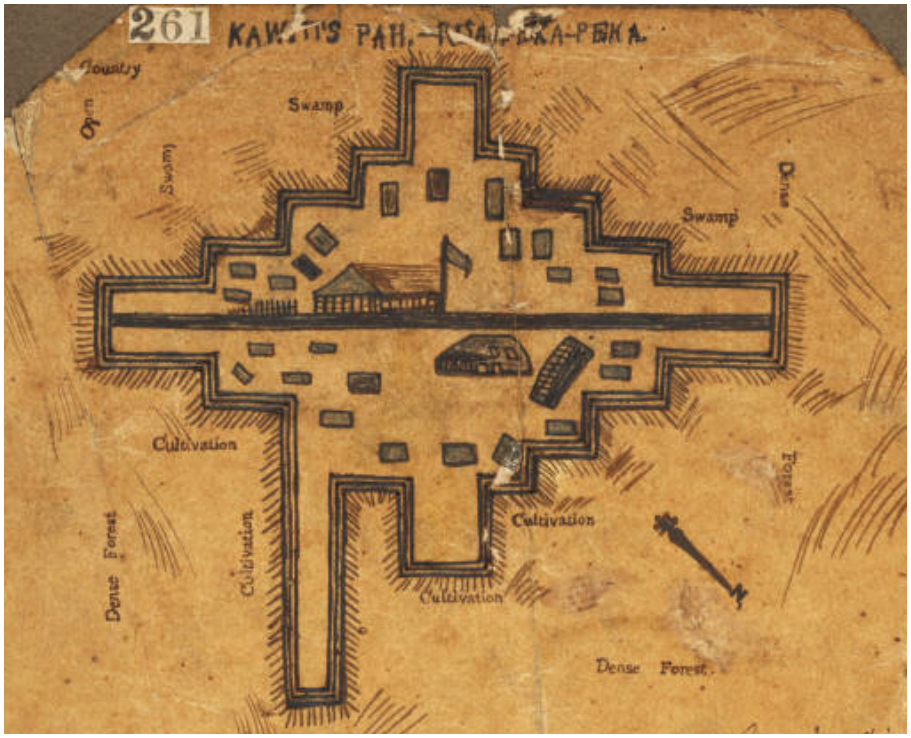
A leading example is the construction of 'Te Ruapekapeka', the first modern fighting pā, and its reproduction through maps, models, and other memorial acts. Ruapekapeka was both a major battle and a site of Māori technological innovation, designed by Ngāti Hine leader Kawiti 'Te Ruki' ('The Duke'). Popularly translated as 'the bat's nest', historian Ruth Ross suggested that Ruapekapeka had multiple meanings: it might also refer to 'rua' – 'two' – 'pekapeka', or 'zig zag', reflecting the diagonal trenches that defined the pā (Ross, 1965). This sense of multiple visions and meanings attached to this site is a useful way to disrupt assumptions of imperial certainty.

As in the production of meaning around weaponry, mapping these sites of violence and its memory was a cultural project. One of the few maps purported to have been produced by Māori during the New Zealand Wars was one that records Te Ruapekapeka (*Fig 8)*. It was commissioned by a colonial agent Henry Wriggs shortly after the battle on the request of George Grey during his first term as governor (NZMS 928, Auckland City Library). The map was later donated to the

Auckland Library along with Grey's other papers. Like all maps, it reveals the cultural world of its producer – their interests, intentions, and assumptions. In this case, the Wrigg map is political as well as an attempt to convey the strategic space of the pā. A bird's-eye-view indicates a geometric layout; split across the middle with a line representing the two sides of the alliance between Ngāpuhi and Ngāti Hine during the war against the Crown. In the centre is depicted Kawiti's flag, another linkage to statements of violent resistance and the occupation of space.

Figure 8

Map of Ruapekapeka by 'native'.



Note: Collected by H Wriggs and presented to Governor Grey at the conclusion of the Northern War. The map itself became part of the colonial archive after it was delivered to George Grey during his first governorship, becoming part of his library which later was placed in the Auckland City Library. ACL.

A different spatial arrangement of memory is evoked by a model of the pā associated with Colonel Robert Henry Wnyard, one of the British commanders who was at the battle as part of the 58th Regiment. Upon returning to Auckland, Wynyard either constructed or commissioned a model depicting Ruapekapeka. Like the Wrigg 'native' map, Wynyard's model filters this violent encounter as it attempts to reconstruct its spaces for the purposes of military advancement. The reconstruction exaggerates certain aspects – either as a fault of personal recollection or as a way to better appreciate the pā's construction. Its purpose was multifaceted; the model was a way to convey knowledge of a defeated enemy for future engagements; it was also a commemorative project for the colonial elite of Auckland who visited the model after its completion and display at Albert Barracks in 1858. Both these intentions were also acts of meaning-making; both obscure and reveal certain details of the experience of violence in the Northern War and its aftermath. There is an opportunity here to explicate the problems of re-enactment and its feint of memory.

We need to pay greater attention to the connection between space, knowledge, and imperial violence in New Zealand's colonial conflict. This is not simply representations of colonial wars, but as how the war was remembered – that is, survived and understood. This relationship of violence with the transformation of material and epistemological spaces is one activated through objects. It is hardly a new insight to suggest imperial archives reproduce imperial narratives; only in

making this production of knowledge and its connection to technologies of violence explicit and critical, however, can we present these histories in ways that witness to memory. We need to return to Johnson's original challenge – it is through the cultural meanings of violence that we begin 'see' the work of memory and might more powerfully arrange our histories.

'Te rau o te patu' / 'the edge of the blade': Legacies of war

Just as the causes and experiences of colonial conflict produces new histories and memories in Aotearoa, the legacy or aftermath of ngā pakanga gave new decisive directions to the social and cultural lives of communities. From the mid-1860s, Māori communities increasingly turned to new expressions of indigenous Christianity, inspired by new prophetic leadership. Followers of Pai Maire or 'Hauhauism', founded by Te Ua Haumene, attempted to reassert their own cosmological destiny. These myriad changes are reflected in objects – such as a walking stick belonging to the warrior-prophet Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Tūruki (Binney, 1995) – and other kinds of authority, as evoked in a Māori calendar created in Taranaki as part of a strategic adaptation to assert mana whenua over disputed land **(***Fig 9***)**. These complex responses do not fit neatly into linear notions of time; assertions of claims over time, space, and history were 'measured' in different ways in the wars' aftermath, while extending the impact of imperial violence in ecological and temporal terms**.** Kidman (2021) has invoked fruitfully the anthropological framework of 'shatter zones' – conveying the instability of traumatic events from which shock waves radiate out over time and place (Etheridge, 2006).

Figure 8

Calendar made of cartouche paper; given to Major Parrish of New Plymouth by a Māori who had picked it up on a Taranaki battlefield during the wars of the 1860s. AWMM.

The most significant expression of the post-conflict crisis was the confiscation of Māori land – first under the New Zealand Settlements Act 1863 which seized all land in the name of the Crown from those deemed 'rebels', and later as part of the process of translating Māori collective ownership to individual title through the Native Land Court. Some nine million acres of land were transferred to Crown title under these conditions by the 1890s (Boast, 2008, pp. 49–61; Gilling, 2009, pp. 27–28). This was the *raupatu*: the 'edge of the blade' that cut deep into Māori society long after the final gunshots of the nineteenth century. This produced new divisions on the

landscape and new agents of conflict, represented in the surveyor corps whose job it was to translate Māori land into Crown title to be sold to new settlers (Byrnes, 2001).

Māori responded, in kind, with new boundaries. The *aukati* was the line between the lands remaining under the authority of the Māori King, exiled to Ngāti Maniapoto territory. Colonial New Zealand, up to the 1880s, operated as a dual state system (Belgrave, 2017). Colonial officials and settlers were warned not to cross the *aukati* or else face punishment of death. An object that powerful evokes the long aftermath of the blade-edge is a chain used by surveyor Richard Todd to survey confiscated land for Crown sale (***Fig 10***). Todd was killed in Pirongia for crossing the *aukati* in 1870 by Kingite forces. The steel chain, a simple loop with a handle at one end and interspersed with brass markers, speaks to different kinds of 'weapons' – in this case, a chain to carve up the land. Todd's death also underscores to the 'two worlds' of the Crown and Kingitanga which existed up to the 1880s. There was no clear victory here for the colonial government: the wars did not end but continued in other forms. Arranged as a spiral – a key metaphor of Māori concepts of non-linear time, as shown in Brett Graham's painting – Todd's chain evokes the way that raupatu generates new crises and conflict in this shatterzone of empire.

Figure 10

Surveyor's chain, found on Mt. Pirongia, belonging to a Mr.Todd, killed in 1870, alongside Brett Graham's Recalibrate (2014). AWMM / Brettgraham.co.mz

The assertion and violation of *aukati* returns us in some ways to the spatial commemoration of the Ōtorohanga students and the *rā maumahara* day of remembering discussed in the introduction. The petition hīkoi (march) up to Parliament and visit to the site of civilian deaths at Rangiaowhia was indicative of deeper patterns of petition, commemoration, and activism since the invasion of the Waikato. Gibson, Williams, and Cairns (2019), for example, situate the petition box as part of decolonial resistance that began long before the formal movements of the late twentieth century. Thematically, the petition box might be paired with another object, a pen currently on display in a section of the museum's Māori Court, its ethnographic display of Māori culture on the ground floor. This *pene* (pen), with nib holder on one end and a paper knife on the other, was used by Wiremu Tāmihana Tarapipipi Te Waharoa 'the king-maker' at the signing of peace at the end of the Waikato invasion with General Cleary, commander of the imperial forces. The meeting between the general and 'the peace-maker' had been arranged by 'Maoriphile' George Graham. A famous picture of the meeting shows Tāmihana placing his taiaha (fighting

staff) at the feet of Cleary (*Fig 11*). The horizontality of the painting, with its two collectives on either side of TāmihanaTāmihana, emphasises the resolution between the two sides of the conflict.

Figure 11

Wiremu Tāmihana Tarapīpipi Te Waharoa depicted laying down his taiaha before British Brigadier General G. J. Carey at Tamahere on May 27, 1865. Archives NZ.

Although simple to look at, the pen is significant object, connected to Tāmihana Tāmihanaand the uncertain end of the Waikato War. Crucially, it underscored the bitterness for Waikato Māori in the aftermath of *raupatu*, as the 'peace' was quickly shown to be one-sided. 'Bookending' the petition box, and reiterating the connection between text, resistance, and the legacy of conflict, Tāmihana's Tāmihanapen evinces a different kind of material commemoration. Like the petition box, the pen brought into personal arrangement distinct perspectives, having been cared for by Graham upon his return to Auckland and donated by his descendants to Auckland Museum in 1954. This was "te maungarongo"—the covenant of peace—part of Tāmihana's Tāmihanaethos shaped by his Christianity and customary leadership (cast by some of his opponents as cowardice or desperation out of starvation; within his kin networks as a traitor – AJHR, 1865, p. 2.) Tāmihana referred to his "terms of submission" – continuing that "this is the sign of my making peace, my coming into the presence of my fighting friend, General Carey." The pen reveals some deeper interactions and stories of this *hoa riri* relationship, one's friend-in-anger.

This was 'peace' with a question mark; in the mid-1860s Tāmihana lodged three petitions with Parliament "regarding war and raupatu" in the Waikato (O'Malley, 2016, p. 523). He directly challenged the extent of the confiscation of Waikato, citing that "this is the condition approved by me putting an end to this war"; a war that had been caused by government provocation. (AJHR, 1865, I, G-05) This commitment to holding to the land, through the Māori kingship, "will never be given up even unto the end. It will by no means be put an end to, whether good or whether evil (comes of it)" (Ibid). Tāmihana's words, echoing from their historical context and read through a commemorative lens have wider implications for New Zealand's relationship to colonial conflict.

> E koro whakaatua mai he tika whakina mai kaua e huna mai he hori whakkina mai kia noho mohio ai matou ka pa huna atu e ngaro te tangata ae ko tenei. E koro kei huna mai koe.
>
> Friend let it be made known; if it is correct, confess it, do not conceal it; if it is false, tell us that we may be aware of it, it is not as though it could be kept secret by hiding it; and now, O friend, do not conceal it. (AJHR 1865, E11)

This inscription, linking pen, petition, and the work of commemorating colonial conflict, is a cry against injustice. It offers a double meaning as it represents the historical experience of colonial

conflict and its interpretation. Foregrounding the work of historical remembrance is key in approaching histories of the New Zealand Wars.

Conclusion

In considering, schematically, the causes, experiences, and legacies of conflicts in these histories through object stories, we begin to grasp the immense challenges in representation and meaning with which history is conventionally charged. There are some obvious gaps here: Imperial and racial hierarchies constructed through military cultures need to be highlighted, too often being obscured in Auckland's colonial history. This requires identifying how imperial military culture was translated locally. Indeed, most of the North Island in which the major conflicts of the wars were fought was part of Auckland Province during this period – something that calls into question the naming of the New Zealand Wars which might be better described as 'Auckland's Wars'. Above all, there is a need to bring an arrangement of exhibitions, objects, and practices into explicit dialogue with themes of cultural memory and commemoration in the New Zealand Wars. Museums can play a leading role. Connecting stories and objects with the communities shaped by colonial violence would be a fruitful practice in order to better reveal local languages of memory, asking what these experiences mean to these communities. Multiple 'works' – enacted, operative, and rhetorical – during and after ngā pakanga give new direction and purpose to the historiography of the New Zealand Wars and the historical remembrance of colonial conflict through objects.

Biography

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About the Author

Rowan Light is a historian of memory and commemoration, interested in public uses of the past and how communities make sense of war and violence. He is project curator (NZ Wars) at the Auckland War Memorial Museum, assisting the Human History team in the redevelopment of the New Zealand Wars gallery. His book *Anzac Nations* (2022) published by Open University Press, is a history of cultural memory that explores how the story of the Anzacs at Gallipoli has changed overtime in Australia and New Zealand. He is particularly interested in how groups and institutions shape the remembrance and commemoration of war and conflict, through museums and other forms of media. Rowan's essay 'Unknown Anzacs: the politics and performance of bodily repatriation and state formation' was awarded the Ken Inglis Postgraduate History Prize and published in Australian Historical Studies in 2018. 'Unknown Anzacs' explored the connections between nineteenth and twentieth-century histories of violence through a comparative and transnational lens. Rowan has also published in Australian Historical Studies and reviewed for the New Zealand Journal of History. His 'public impact' writing in New Zealand Herald, Dominion Post and The Press has contributed to the evolving debate about public monuments and New Zealand's colonial history.

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Endnotes

[1] Iwi are extended social units in Māori society, typically denoting a broad descent group connected to a common ancestor and territory and often translated as "tribe."