Memory and monumentality in the Rarotongan landscape

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One way to understand how a landscape captures memories is to study places where documents have also preserved them. The author does this to remarkable effect in the island of Rarotonga, showing how the great road Ara Metua and its monuments and land boundaries were structured and restructured through time to reflect what was to be remembered. Students of the pre- and proto-histories of all continents will find much inspiration in the pages that follow.

Introduction

Recent studies on the archaeology of memory (Alcock 2002; Bradley 2002; Van Dyke & Alcock 2003; Williams 2003a, b) have developed an increasingly sophisticated awareness of how ancient societies were aware of and responded to their own pasts, how their successors would in turn remember them and how these memories could be conditioned by strategic actions in the present. Archaeologically, this is most commonly visible in the construction of monuments, which imply a commitment to memory – to interact with the monuments of the past is to engage in an act of remembrance. At the same time memory is fluid, so the meanings attached to the past will change to fit current circumstances. Two central parameters of memory are time and space, but notions of time and space in other cultures may be very different from our own conceptions. Western, Cartesian time and space are characteristics of a mercantile economy, with its marketable commodities composed of measurable units, a concept that may have little application outside such an economy (Bradley 2002: 2). Time and space are cultural constructs. Western time and space may provide appropriate analytical units within archaeology, but will not necessarily lead us to an understanding of non-western times and spaces (Ingold 1993). The ways in which a culture conceptualises time and space are particularly powerful clues to its (self-)identity (Roymans 1995: 2).

It is at this juncture that Pacific archaeology and anthropology have much to offer. The Pacific has a rich record of ethnography and oral tradition which can be used to examine alternative times and spaces and to illuminate the material culture that expresses them. In this paper, I wish to provide evidence for these alternatives, and to argue for a more inclusive view of difference in the times and spaces of memory. This paper looks at memory in a Polynesian culture, and how it is reflected in the archaeological record. It begins with an

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examination of concepts of time and space, using ethnographic, or oral traditional, data from the records of the early twentieth century colonial Land Courts on Rarotonga in the southern Cook Islands.

The Rarotongan landscape

At roughly 11 × 6km, with a maximum elevation of 653m, Rarotonga is a typical Polynesian high island, its topography characterised by deeply incised valleys surrounded by a continuous coastal plain generally about 1km wide. A fringing reef enclosing a shallow lagoon up to 1km in width surrounds this. The *tapere* system of landholding develops out of this concentric resource pattern. *Tapere* are radial land units, centred on the inland valleys, each containing mountain, coastal plain, lagoon and reef resources. But the *tapere* system is as much culturally constructed as it is environmentally conditioned. The *tapere* was the home of the *matakeinanga*, the corporate landholding community group. At the core of the *matakeinanga* was the *ngāti*, or local descent group, the central political unit. The (usually) senior (usually) male member of the *ngāti*, the man genealogically closest to the founding ancestor, was the *mata'iapo*, the chief.

Ariki were the highest chiefly grade and exercised vital ritual functions in society as well as heading cross-*tapere* alliances. *Ariki* and *mata'iapo* power and status were represented by the *marae*, a place that served as both a ritual focus and the house of the gods. Rarotongan *marae* survive into the archaeological record as they are robustly constructed of stone, though they are less elaborate than similar structures elsewhere in east Polynesia.

The Ara Metua

According to oral tradition, many generations ago two voyaging canoes arrived on Rarotonga together. One, the *Takitumu* from Tahiti, was captained by Tangi'ia Nui who was fleeing from his elder brother, Tutapu. While at sea he met the canoe of Karika from Samoa. Together they sailed to Rarotonga, where Tutapu caught up with his brother, but was slain. Tangi'ia landed at Ngatangiia on the east coast and built a *marae*, Te Miromiro. He then proceeded around the island establishing, by one count, 46 other *marae* or similar structures (Tara 'Are 2000: 155). These he left in charge of guardians, who became the ancestors of the chiefly and priestly lines. His circuit around Rarotonga divided up the physical landscape and established the *marae* system as well as the political and land tenure system based on the *tapere* (Figure 1).

This circuit is preserved today by the Ara Metua, a road that in pre-contact times encircled the island along the coastal plain. Many of Tangi'ia's *marae* are located along the road. It is by far the largest archaeological site on Rarotonga, in fact it is one of the largest sites in Polynesia. Although small sections of paved road are known from elsewhere, it is unique in terms of size and elaboration. It was probably paved with basalt and coral for much of its length and kerbed where habitation was most dense (Hiroa 1927: 211). The road is currently discontinuous, and the pre-contact period road is almost completely destroyed or
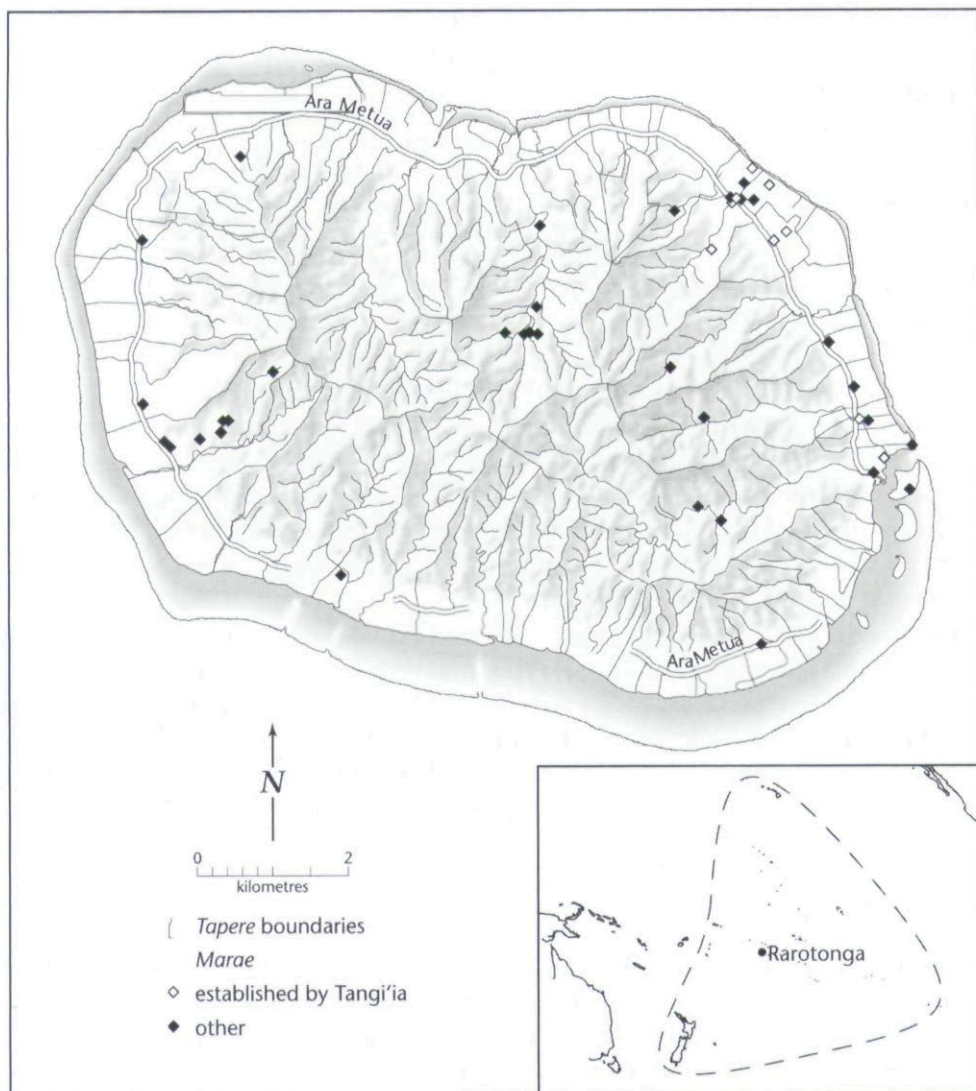
Figure 1. The island of Rarotonga, showing the Ara Metua and tapere boundaries. Inset: Location of Rarotonga.

buried by the modern road, but this largely follows its old course (Figure 2). The physical relationships of archaeologically recorded *marae* to the road remain unaltered. The road has not yet been dated directly but there is a radiocarbon date of AD 1530 for a *marae* associated with it (Trotter 1974: 146). There is no reason to think that the road is not of at least the same antiquity.

The Ara Metua can be analysed from many points of view. Its primary day-to-day function was as a road; an item of economic infrastructure that facilitated the movement of people, goods and information. It was the focus of lowland settlement (Campbell 2003: 20). The earliest European observers of the island, from the London Missionary Society, recorded

Figure 2. The Ara Metua in 1903. To the right, stone walls indicate a new, post-contact relation to space. Photo Henry Winkelmann, courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

how production and settlement were closely related with the road:

> 'There is a good road around the island, which the natives call the ara medua, or parent path, both sides of which are lined with bananas and mountain plantains . . . The houses of the inhabitants were situated from ten to thirty yards or more from this pathway'.
>
> (Williams 1837: 205)

Ritual places

The location of numerous *marae* along the road points to its also having an obvious ritual function. *Marae* are ritual sites common in east Polynesia (the *heiau* of Hawaii and *ahu/moai*

complexes of Easter Island are equivalent). Typically on Rarotonga, they are constructed of combinations of basalt or coral paving and uprights, with occasional stone-faced platforms or terraces. Pre-contact *marae* would have had wooden structures that housed carved figures (Figure 3). Early missionaries had the *marae* burnt (Pitman 1830: 166), implying that the stone complexes described archaeologically were subsidiary structures. *Marae* were central to political and religious ritual and were closely associated with chiefly lines. Unlike the well-known *marae* of the Society Islands, Rarotongan *marae* are characterised by diversity (Campbell 2000: 64; Yamaguchi 2000: 225). This does not, however, mean that their construction was arbitrary. Clearly, sets of rules regarding location, layout, orientation, construction and material would have applied, in ways that are not well understood.

Ritual in Polynesia is closely bound with the concepts of *mana* and *tapu*. While these differ from place to place in their operation and expression, and little is known about the *tapu* system of Rarotonga specifically, some common features are clear. *Tapu* is a quality that is inherent in all people to a greater or lesser degree, depending on their status. *Tapu* is the ability to focus and channel the supernatural forces of *mana*, which had to be properly directed if it was to be efficacious and enlarge rather than diminish human life (Shore 1989: 154). In its active capacity, *tapu* was the potency of a person, place or thing; in its negative capacity, when the potency was not regulated, it denoted great danger and the forbidden. *Mana* is a complex concept, comprising status, power and efficacy, many aspects of which have no equivalent in western culture. Of the rituals that regulated *mana* and *tapu*, rituals of binding were universal. On Rarotonga, the
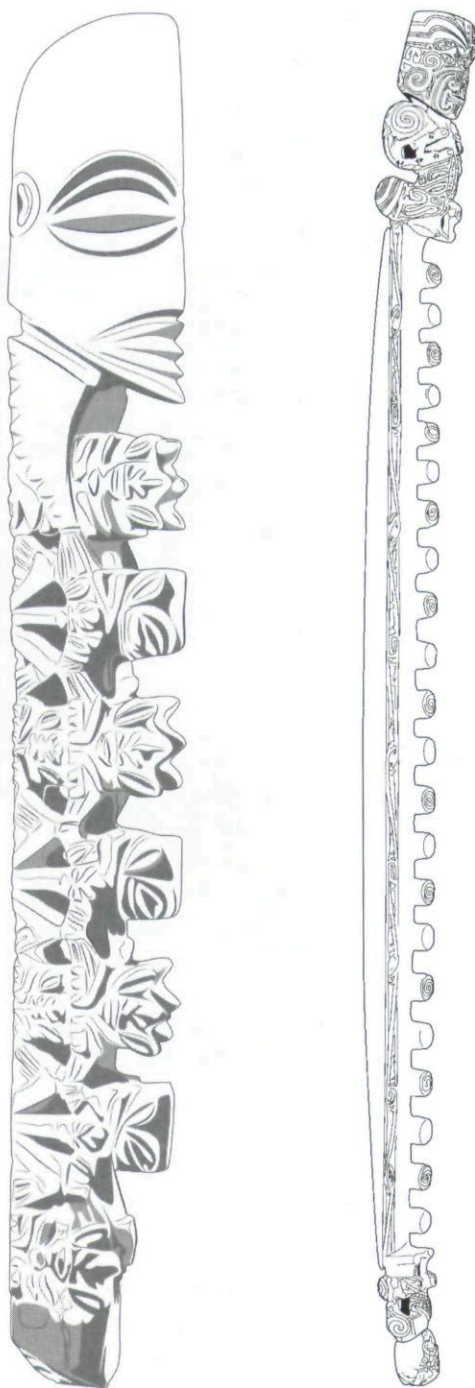

Figure 3. *Rarotongan staff god (right, 835mm, courtesy of the Otago Museum) and New Zealand Maori rakau whakapapa (left, 1160mm, courtesy of the Auckland War Memorial Museum).*

missionary Charles Pitman (1833 II: 207) describes how the carved wooden gods were bound in rolls of cloth:

> *'When the god was displeased the prophets would open the door of their sacred places (Maraes), & sweep away the dust, cobwebs &c. from the floor where their god was placed & from their deity also. The prophet would then take off his robes (immense rolls of native cloth) & carefully examine it as he unfolded it. They often found the excrements of rats, their nests &c. in it, & large holes eaten by these sacrilegious intruders, which when discovered the prophet would inform the people of the cause of the anger of their deity, & give orders for fresh cloth to be made, & a new kiikii to be adzed out, as the only means of appeazing the anger of their offended god'.*

This *tapu*-removing ritual de-sanctified the old god image (*ki'iki'i*), requiring the carving of a new one. These carvings are genealogical in nature; for instance in Figure 3, Tangaroa is represented as the head of a staff with his descendants carved below him (Schuster & Carpenter 1996: 64). The association of these images with genealogy and memory is made explicit by the analogous *rakau whakapapa* of the New Zealand Māori. Here a similar staff is surmounted by an ancestral figure and has a series of knobs along its length, with each knob representing a generation. Touching these knobs in turn aids the memory in the recitation of genealogy (Mead 1984: 218).

The ritual landscape

Closely related to binding rituals are the ritual circuits of chiefs and gods. Sahlins' analysis (1981) of the death of Captain Cook describes how Cook circumnavigated the island of Hawai'i in the *Resolution*, replicating the ritual circuit of the god Lono during the makahiki festival. On Rarotonga, the circuit made by Tangi'ia when he first came to the island is of the same kind. This circuit established the political system as we have seen, and it also bound the *tapu*, controlling and directing the *mana* of the gods for human use, making the island safe to live on. This circuit is permanently inscribed on the landscape by the Ara Metua, making the whole island a ritually sanctified landscape (Campbell 2002a).

The inscription of a cosmological principle on the landscape through the physical construction of the road and its associated *marae* allowed Rarotongans to control it. The road represents the controlling powers of the universe, and allowed the Rarotongan elite in turn to direct and control those powers. A ritual procession along the road replicates the route of Tangi'ia, so it is also an act of remembrance, akin to the performance of oral tradition. The link with Tangi'ia is genealogical, he was the founding ancestor, and first gave the ancestors of the *mata'iapo* and priests their titles. The road and the memory it embodies can be strategically employed to reinforce the socio-political system.

The Ara Metua represents what Rowlands (1993: 142) has called inscribed memory; memorial practice that relies on repetition, ritual and integration into daily life. This is opposed to incorporated memory; memorial practice that relies on infrequency, secrecy and the capacity to shock or surprise. As an example of the former, Lillios (2003) shows how engraved slate plaques from the south-west Iberian Peninsula represented the genealogical memory of the local inhabitants, the memory of persons engraved on things. Their final

resting place was in tombs, emphasising the connection between plaques, persons and landscape. By contrast, incorporated memory can be seen at work in the Malangan sculptures of New Ireland, which also memorialise the dead, but after a brief ceremonial display they too die, left to decompose in the bush or, in modern times, to be sold to western collectors, setting free the dead person's life force. The reproduction of Malangan sculptures is based on the memory of sculptures previously seen but no longer available (Küchler 1987). Although this memory is invested in persons and things, place too is important – the place of destination or destruction – the bush or a western display collection – away from the living, away from access and away from direct interaction with memory. The archaeology of memory is thus closely related to archaeologies of landscape (Bender 1993; Ashmore & Knapp 1999) and of the body (Hamilakis *et al.* 2002); it has much to say about how persons are positioned or position themselves in space and time. Most archaeologically recoverable memories will be inscribed (indeed that is what we mean when we talk about cultural practices inscribed on the landscape) but at the same time memorial practices are never entirely one or the other: incorporating practices surely also formed part of the ritual along the road.

Rarotonga is the only Polynesian high island with a continuous coastal plain (Atlas of the South Pacific 1986), and so was the only island on which a road like the Ara Metua could have been built. Kirch (1984: 135) has shown how Polynesian colonisers brought with them the plants and animals that were central to their economic practices, as well as a 'cognitive map' of how these should operate in production, economy and society. He called this a 'transported landscape'. The term applies equally to Rarotonga and the ritual landscape of the Ara Metua. A pan-Polynesian ritual conception is fitted to a unique pre-existing topography – the environment provides opportunities as well as constraints, and landscapes are found, as well as transported and created.

Tangi'ia's circuit, though memorialised by the road, was not confined to it. Tara 'Are (2000: 155) describes how Tangi'ia built the *marae* Ārai te Tonga and *'after this [Tangi'ia and his companions] went inland and made another marae and called it Paepae-tua-iva; dedicated to the god Tonga-iti, while Ta'ivānanga was made the guardian. Again they went seaward and built a marae named Marae-koroa'*. The contrast between *tai* (seaward) and *uta* (landward) is evident in Tangi'ia's actions, and this is reflected in the archaeology of *marae* throughout Rarotonga. Yamaguchi (2000: 140) contrasts mountain *marae* and coastal *marae*. Marae Te Mareva on Motutapu Island, a sand key in the lagoon, is constructed of basalt brought from the mountains, whereas Marae Piako built in the mountains contains blocks of coral brought up from the coast. Ocean *marae* and mountain *marae*, *tai* and *uta*, form *'an inter-complementary as well as dichotomous set in the cosmological landscape'* (Yamaguchi 2000: 149). Many large *tapere* seem to have had similar 'sets' of *marae* located in a series of similar topographical locations – on the beach ridge, along the Ara Metua, on valley floors and far inland (Yamaguchi 2000: 138).

These complementary locations correlate with complementary functions in the ritual system, extending the contrast between ocean *marae* and mountain *marae*. On Rarotonga, different *marae* had different roles in the community and in public ritual. *Marae* located on the Ara Metua were integral to the public, island wide ritual focused on the road. Those located far up the valleys were part of a more private, focused ritual. These *tapere*-based

systems of ritual intersected with the public ritual of the Ara Metua on the coastal plain (Campbell 2002a: 156).

Time and space, memory and place

Insights on how these landscapes were structured through Rarotongan concepts of time, history and inheritance can be gained through examinations of ethnographic, or oral traditional, data from the records of the early twentieth century colonial Land Courts. Such records offer an entry into the framework of Rarotongan memory. The basis of *time* in the Land Court records, in Rarotongan culture, is genealogy – in fact the stories told in the courts were essentially the recitation of genealogy, while the historical and social data that are of interest to western scholarship are only adjuncts, acting as mnemonics and declarations of interest in specific resources. Fortunately, because the traditions were recited within the western forum of the court, they were tailored to western understandings and expectations. Genealogy is consequently played down in favour of narrative, but still it lies at the root of all the evidence.

Samuela Te Rei (1917 M.B. VIII: 242), a frequent litigant, provides the court with his genealogy, which comes in two parts that are quite different in character (Figure 4). The first gives his descent from the founding ancestor Tangi'ia in the mythic past. This is not uncommon. Witnesses in other cases give their descent several generations back into 'Aivaiki, the mythic homeland (Te Ura Uritaua 1905 M.B. II: 36) or even from Atea and Papa, the primordial couple (Kainuku 1908 M.B. IV: 168). Te Rei's genealogy here serves to establish, through connecting him and his family to the founding ancestors and ultimately the gods, the status relationships between *ngāti* (local descent groups) and their place on the land. In this case he demonstrates his own family's long-term occupation of the land, and also makes a claim to status, tracing his descent from Tangi'ia himself.

The second half of the genealogy, though it follows directly from the first, is of an entirely different nature. From the time of Aua, six generations before Te Rei, the nature of the genealogy, the construction of history it reflects and its purpose change. It becomes a record of births, deaths and marriages, and establishes degrees of status and rights to land and resources within the *ngāti*. Te Rei is establishing his right to speak for the Te Rei family. The applicant in the case is Tangiiau Papai (1917 M.B. VIII: 239, he does not appear in Te Rei's genealogy), who holds the Maui title and claims through Maui, son of Aua. As Te Rei points out, 'trouble started' when an adopted line briefly held the title. Te Rei is able to demonstrate that Maui Te Rei and the holder of the Maui title are not the same person, and wins the case. Genealogy legitimises status relationships between people, and consequently legitimises relationships between people and resources, in the case of the Land Courts to land, but also social resources. The explicatory and mnemonic aspects of genealogy are of interest to us here, but these are peripheral to its primary function.

Genealogical history is not factual history, and the ancestors that are named and known were not necessarily real. For Te Rei all his genealogy would have been true, but its truth is based on its acceptance by others. Memory, the redeployment of memory and forgetting are some of the processes that condition and ensure this acceptance. Genealogy is a very
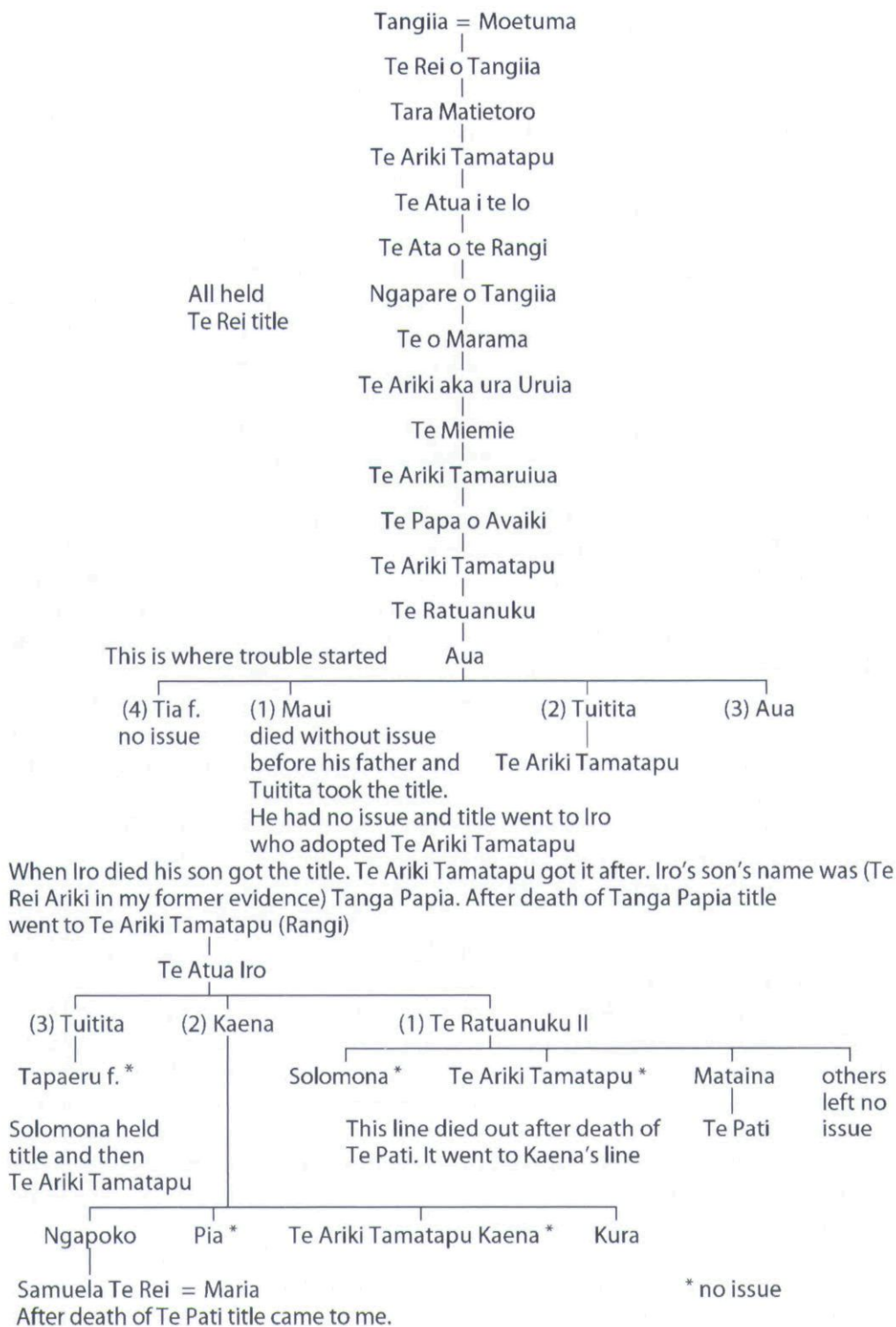
Tangiia = Moetuma
|
Te Rei o Tangiia
|
Tara Matietoro
|
Te Ariki Tamatapu
|
Te Atua i te Io
|
Te Ata o te Rangi
|
All held   Ngapare o Tangiia
Te Rei title |
Te o Marama
|
Te Ariki aka ura Uruia
|
Te Miemie
|
Te Ariki Tamaruiua
|
Te Papa o Avaiki
|
Te Ariki Tamatapu
|
Te Ratuanuku
|
This is where trouble started   Aua

(4) Tia f.   (1) Maui   (2) Tuitita   (3) Aua
no issue   died without issue
before his father and   Te Ariki Tamatapu
Tuitita took the title.
He had no issue and title went to Iro
who adopted Te Ariki Tamatapu

When Iro died his son got the title. Te Ariki Tamatapu got it after. Iro's son's name was (Te Rei Ariki in my former evidence) Tanga Papia. After death of Tanga Papia title went to Te Ariki Tamatapu (Rangi)
|
Te Atua Iro

(3) Tuitita   (2) Kaena   (1) Te Ratuanuku II
|
Tapaeru f. *   Solomona *   Te Ariki Tamatapu *   Mataina   others
left no
Solomona held   This line died out after death of Te Pati   issue
title and then   Te Pati. It went to Kaena's line
Te Ariki Tamatapu

Ngapoko   Pia *   Te Ariki Tamatapu Kaena *   Kura
|
Samuela Te Rei = Maria   * no issue
After death of Te Pati title came to me.

Figure 4. The genealogy of Samuela Te Rei, M.B. VIII: 242-3.

malleable medium, and recitations of genealogy are suited to the occasion. Unimportant names are omitted, and may eventually be forgotten. This is one of the factors that defines the differences between the two halves of Te Rei's genealogy.

If the ancestors listed in the first genealogy are not necessarily the blood forbears of the Te Rei, they are, in a very real sense, Te Rei himself. Witnesses frequently make the identification between themselves and their ancestors as though they were the same person: *'when I landed there was no one at Avatiu'* (Te Ura Uritaua 1905 M.B. II: 39), though Te Ura's evidence makes it clear that it was his ancestor Te Pou a Rongo who landed and claimed the empty land many generations ago. When a witness says *'I know such-and-such a thing'* the 'I' in the evidence is not necessarily ego, but may be this more comprehensive person speaking on behalf of and embodying the *ngāti* and the *matakeinanga*. Memory is invested in these persons, it is a living memory, and this ancestral identity is the core around which Rarotongan chiefly self-identity is based. The chief is an embodiment of his title (*taonga*), and the *taonga* is unchanging through the generations. He *is* his ancestors (and descendants), and cannot exist or act without them. This socially and genealogically embedded person has long been recognised in Polynesia. Among the New Zealand Māori, for instance, Johansen (1954: 38) shows how this 'I' encompasses the kin group, which projects into the genealogical future as well as the past. This concept of personhood clearly has much in common with Gell's 'distributed person' (1998: Chapter 7) or Wagner's 'fractal person' (1991), but here I want to emphasise the *unity* of the Rarotongan chiefly conception of personhood. The embedded person is made up of numerous other persons, rather than breaks down into them – a subtle change of perspective perhaps, but not a trivial one.

Two words of warning about time and the court records are appropriate here, since they highlight the dangers inherent in the use of this type of material. Firstly, there is a danger of creating an essential, timeless Rarotongan. Memory may imply history, but the self we read in the Land Court records has little concept of change in time. Even so a close reading of the records reveals a fluid and dynamic history (Campbell 2002b), as we should expect of any enquiry into the past. Secondly, the situation is complicated by the early twentieth century Rarotongan conception of time, which has one additional feature that could not have formed part of the pre-contact conception, and that complicates our reading of the records. Time is broken into a before and after, following a missionary trope that contrasted the darkness of the heathen before with the light of the Christian after (Gill 1876: 165). The time before is referred to as the time of the ancestors, or ancient, or heathen times, but a measure of continuity is retained when genealogy extends across this artificial divide: *'This is the ancient boundary of the land down to the present time ... Kainuku Te Angakuku knew this boundary [two generations before missionary contact]. So also Kainuku Te Anguangu [Te Angakuku's son]'* (Parakoti 1904 M.B. I: 107).

Another dimension of pre-contact Rarotongan culture is space. It was the court's business to determine freehold on numerous land sections (*kainga*). The spatial dimension of a *kainga* is defined by its boundaries, so that the nature of boundaries is of considerable interest. Another topic of importance is how the *mata'iapo* and *matakeinanga* related to their *kainga* – how they were anchored within it, and how it supported them and their identity.

A common Rarotongan description of boundaries (particularly *tapere* boundaries) is that they run *'from the mountain to the sea'* (Uatini Vakapora 1903 M.B. I: 23, the first instance in the minute books of this very common expression). A typical description of a boundary runs:

> *'from the boundary of Connel's lease of Totokoitu, which is a stone in the sea, to the pa ika [fish trap] of Taipara. Thence to Vaimaara of Kainuku. Thence to a toa* [Casuarina equisetifolia] *on the beach, called Te Toa Ara who was a man of Kainuku's. These are the boundaries of Kainuku's land. Thence to the border of a marae called Paengataua, (viz.) the floor on which gathered the arikis. Thence to the edge of the swamp, to a c.c. tree called Te Nu Tutai. Thence to the dry land a place called Tikirau, which was a house of Kainuku's, an ancient arekura, thence to the mountain to Te Mua a Moa'.*
> (Parakoti 1904 M.B. I: 107)

Other boundary marks could include 'tukunga patu' (ancestral shrines) (Samuela Te Rei 1905 M.B. I: 250), roads or tracks (e.g. Tui Puia 1905 M.B. II: 129), and very commonly, lines of trees (*pa rakau*) (e.g. Kao 1905 M.B. I: 338). These boundaries extended as far as the reef (Aniteroa 1904 M.B. I: 163; Ati 1906 M.B. II: 258) where they were marked by reef passages or stones.

Boundaries were marked not only by physical objects, but also by the memory of persons or events:

> *'there were two persons on the land, Maa on the beach side, Vaere on the inland portion. Vaere was the son of Kite. When he got to the bend in the line he met a man of the Ngati Vaikai called Atata who stood on defence. Vaere made a thrust with his spear. Atata stooped and spear went over him. They afterwards made peace. That is why the line is not straight'.*
> (Samuela Te Rei 1904 M.B. I: 130)

Boundaries were frequently disputed, and so commonly came before the Land Court. Burning trees or moving stones seem to have been common in boundary disputes (Kao 1905 M.B. I: 338; Tutara 1905 M.B. I: 340). Boundaries and land were often claimed by those with power and status, at the expense of those without: *'When Taraare grabbed all the titles of Te Ava, Pi and Potikitaua he messed up all of the boundaries. All the boundaries have been humbugged [fraudulently claimed] by this Taraare and his father'* (Rei Potikitaua 1908 M.B. IV: 92). This leads us to ask to what degree were boundaries permanently fixed, and to what degree were they mutable? The missionary John Williams (1837: 204) describes *'rows of superb chestnut trees, (inocarpus,) planted at equal distances, and stretching from the mountain's base to the sea'* marking permanent boundaries on the coastal plain. Tinirau (1913 M.B. VII: 22) claimed that boundaries always run along ridge lines in Takuvaine Tapere, a position the court (Judge Gudgeon 1913 M.B. VII: 32) accepted as common knowledge. This is certainly the case for boundaries between *tapere* as well as within them. Rows of large trees and ridge lines are permanent, immovable markers, and yet other marks seem to have been changeable, and boundaries open to dispute.

One source of insight into this is to consider a common Polynesian conception of space, which Lehman and Herdrich (2002), working in Samoa, refer to as the 'point field' model.

This is opposed to the 'container' model, which is by far the most common worldwide, and the standard European conception. In the container model, space is bounded, things are located *in* space. In the point field model, space extends indefinitely from a point until it comes up against another such point field and a boundary forms between the two (Lehman & Herdrich 2002: 181). Things are located *with reference* to the centre. The point field model is strongly embedded in language, for instance the word *mata*, which in Samoan means 'eyes', 'head', 'point', 'source', etc. (Lehman & Herdrich 2002: 184), and seems to have very similar meanings in Cook Island Māori. It forms the root of compound words like *mata'iapo* and *matakeinanga*, and the concept of a point or source is central to notions of physical, social and ritual space. Gill (1876: 20) for instance describes the Mangaian conception of creation as emanating from a primordial point. When Akanoa (1907 M.B. III: 251) says '*Taiaruru is the marae and belongs to Akanoa. Kuruai is ours. It is the head of Akanoa's land*' he means that the *kainga* Kuruai and the *marae* Taiaruru are the point, the potent source, from which Akanoa's place, both in society and on the landscape, stems. *Marae* and *kainga* provided social as well as economic resources.

The boundaries between point fields change as the power relations between the relevant points change, in other words the *mana* of the *mata'iapo* and *matakeinanga*. This is what is being disputed, or competed for, in the court. *Mana* can be seen as a point field concept and as the *mana* of contending individuals or of communities waxes and wanes, so the social and status boundaries between them change. So when Taraare's *mana* was at its height he was able to humbug the physical boundaries and annex the land of his neighbours. In general the Polynesian point-field model remained central to Rarotongan conceptions, but was overlain and obscured by the salient features of the environment – the heavily dissected terrain creating obvious boundaries along ridge lines; and the socio-political system – the *tapere* located in each valley system. Many spatial boundaries were by nature immutable, but this is not the case for social boundaries, which continue to be determined by the contending *mana* of groups and individuals.

Another important spatial concept, and one also embedded in both the language and socio-political system of Rarotonga, is directional reference. Indo-European languages use an anthropocentric system of reference – we say 'in front' on the basis of humans having fronts and backs; many other languages employ an absolute system – e.g. east:west, or landward: seaward (Palmer 2002). The latter is very common in the Austronesian languages of Oceania, since people in these cultures frequently live by the sea, and the boundary between land and sea is a highly salient influence on their everyday lives and forms the basis of directional reference (Palmer 2002: 114): in Cook Island Māori this is *tai:uta*, or seaward: landward.

In general in Polynesia the seaward direction carries an idea of higher status (Baltaxe 1975: 82). It was from the sea that the founding ancestors came, and Polynesian chiefs are often strangers from far away (Sahlins 1985: 78). Supreme power came from beyond the horizon (Helms 1988: 261) that delimited the island world of Rarotonga. Stratified space is thus constructed through language, which conditions actions and relations within these spaces (Keating 2002: 201). Strangely, on Rarotonga, from reading the Land Court records, the status associations of *tai* and *uta* are sometimes reversed, the seaward side of the Ara Metua, the road that encircled the island, earning lesser status than the landward side.

This is reflected in birth order for instance:

> *'More . . . divided [the land] among his people, the seaward land belonged to the younger*
> *brother and the inland to the elder. . . The beach side of the Ara Metua was given to the*
> *younger brothers Te Uraka and Te Anautai . . .'*   (Samuela More 1905 M.B. I: 225)

Status and *mana* are not only given at birth, they can be won and lost. After Puri was defeated in battle he was returned to his land, but

> *'from the Ara Metua to the mountain the land was given as rangatira [a junior relative*
> *and assistant to the mataʻiapo] land, from the Ara Metua to the sea he got the land as*
> *tautaunga (captive) land'.*   (Tinomana 1906 M.B. II: 162)

This pattern of the seaward lands going to the lower status party is commonly found in the minute books. Often these lands were highly productive taro swamps.

As Tangiʻia moved inland and seaward round the island building the *marae*, so he built inland or seaward of the road. Even *marae* that are directly adjacent to the road are built on only one side of it – none have been recorded as built on both sides. They are built with reference to the road and oriented towards it. Thus a *marae* built on the inland side of the road will be oriented across the road to the sea, and vice versa. This is not a trivial distinction. If status may be marked by *tai* and *uta*, then position and orientation will be intimately tied to status. This is why an apparent reversal of status associations of *tai* and *uta* has occurred on Rarotonga. Because these associations have become closely associated with the Ara Metua, the road itself has become the salient feature in the social landscape. To be seaward of the road is to be *oriented* inland, and vice versa.

Conclusion

For Rarotongans genealogical time and memory reach in both directions, from Tangiʻiaʼs time to now and on to the future, and back again. If chiefs are their ancestors, then it was *they* whom Tangiʻia placed on the *marae* and in the *tapere*, and the Ara Metua inscribes this genealogical fact on the landscape. When Akanoa (1907 M.B. III: 251) claimed that Marae Taiaruru and the *kainga* Kuruai were *'the head of Akanoaʼs land'* he was getting at the root of Rarotongan conceptions of time and space, memory and place. It was the head because Akanoaʼs *mana* flowed from that place, not just the man giving the evidence, but ʻAkanoaʼsʼ – him, his ancestors, his descendants and his *ngāti* – they are all one and the same. This defines his right to be there. The unity of the Rarotongan conception of personhood (that I have termed an embedded person) means that this right is derived from a living memory rather than a history: if I am my ancestors, then it was I who built the *marae*, claimed the land, and dwell in it now and in the future. Thus the idea of a Cartesian space and a Cartesian past, present and future begins to break down.

Memory, place, landscape and person are modes of analysis and understanding situated within the western academy. They are good to think with, so long as our thinking leads us to a better understanding of how prehistoric peoples situated themselves in their psycho-social and physical environment. They were unlikely to have done so through a notion of

landscape. We must employ our own perspective critically in order to discover the other perspective.

Place and memory are invariably local and particular. They are part of what sets peoples apart from one another, part of particular cultures. But they are also general and universal, since no one is without them. Oceania has a rich ethnographic record with which to examine the times and spaces, memories and places of its peoples, to try to understand what these things are and how they might work in archaeology. The Rarotongan landscape is unique. There is only one Ara Metua in the world, and it is central to the particulars of Rarotongan place and memory. But the building of monuments is a near universal activity, and their purpose is also universally bound to memory. In most preliterate societies memory is preserved in oral tradition and genealogy, and such societies will build monuments with genealogical memorial practices in mind, as the Rarotongans did with the Ara Metua and the *marae*. More than sixty years ago Evans-Pritchard (1939: 215) said, of the time-reckoning of a semi-nomadic pastoral people in the Sudan '*that not only do Nuer reckon in structural time but that this structural time is a reflection of ranges in counting kinship. Ranges of counting kinship, are in their turn . . . functions of social structure as a whole, especially of political interrelations*'. Though Nuer time may differ in its particulars, the words could as easily apply to the genealogical time of the sedentary horticulturalists of Rarotonga. The particular is only recognisable because it is a variation on a universal theme.

Acknowledgements

Minute book references

References to evidence from the Rarotongan Land Court records take the form: Witness, year. *Case or Land section name(s) and number(s)*. Minute Book: pages of case (may be discontinuous). The original records were handwritten, but in the 1950s the originals began to deteriorate, and typed copies were made. I have worked off microfilm copies of the typescripts. Typists' errors are common, and I have corrected any obvious spelling mistakes or missing words in any passages quoted in this paper. In this paper, any annotations or glosses of terms are enclosed in square brackets.

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