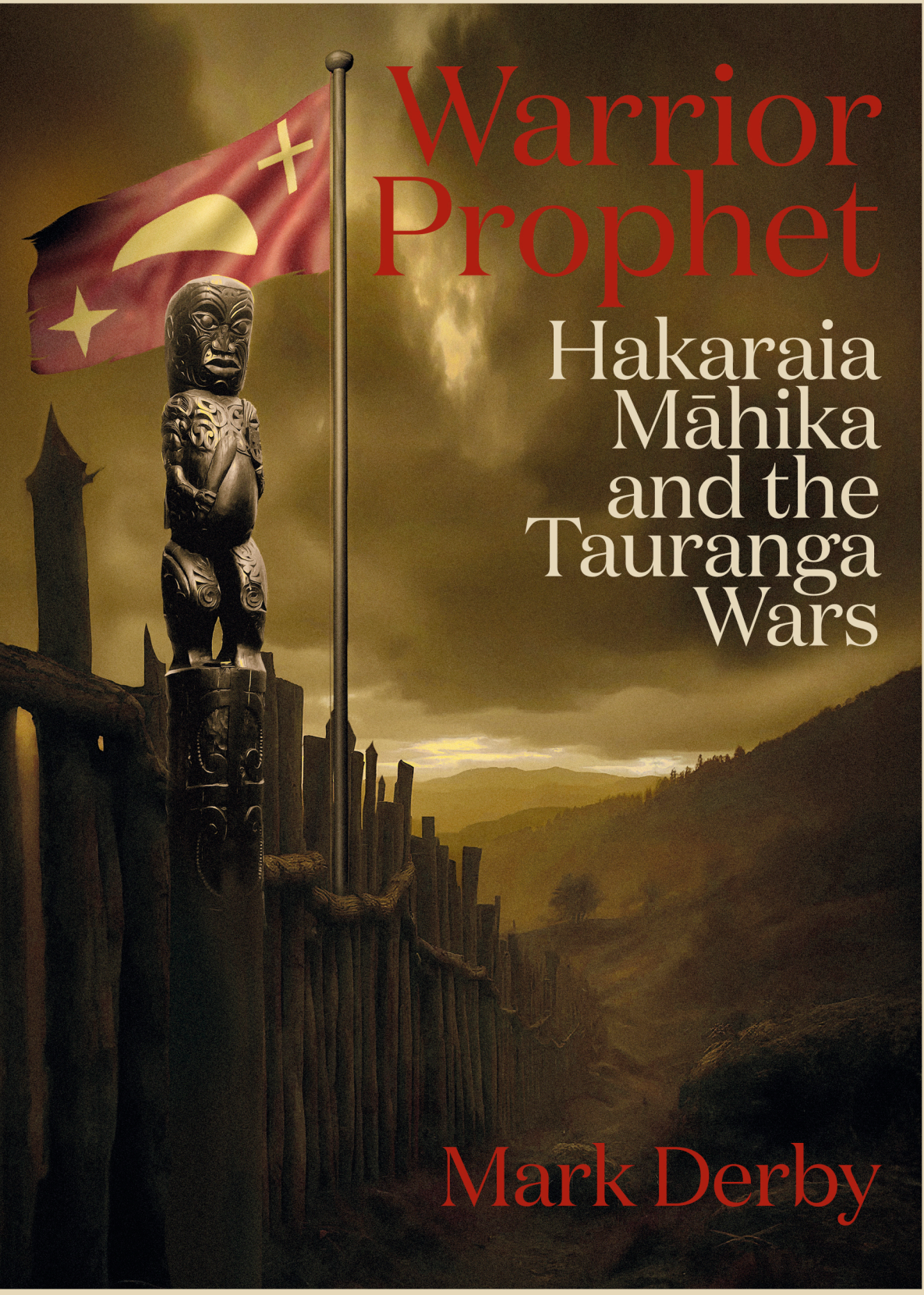

Warrior Prophet
Hakaraia Māhika and the Tauranga Wars
Mark Derby

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MASSEY UNIVERSITY PRESS

He whakamānawa

Hei whakamaharatanga ki a Hakaraia Māhika
me ōna uri whakaheke onāianei
me ngā tau kei te heke mai.

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Introduction

This is a story, improbable but true, of death and resurrection — not just once but repeatedly, in various forms, over two centuries. Māhika was a young chief of the Waitaha people, whose tribal territory was based around Te Puke in the Bay of Plenty. In 1823 a musket-armed raiding party from the north captured him and carried him back to the Bay of Islands as a slave. With no reason to believe he would ever return to them, his own people mourned him as though he had been killed. Yet 12 years later he did return, and his reappearance must have seemed miraculous. He told the Waitaha that his name was now Hakaraia, and that he had been baptised into a new religion founded long ago by a man who had been killed but rose from the dead. Those words are likely to have carried great weight, since Hakaraia's physical presence testified that such an unlikely renaissance was possible.

Hakaraia Māhika became the spiritual leader of both his own people and the neighbouring Tapuika, and he was highly regarded as a peacemaker, called upon by other Bay of Plenty and central lakes district tribes to settle long-running and often deadly disputes between them. Eventually he and many other baptised Māori grew disillusioned with aspects of the religion they had been taught by the missionaries, and also with the government's greed for land and its readiness to make war against tribes who refused to part with it.

The peacemaker became a reluctant warrior for the Kīngitanga, choosing tactics of passive resistance wherever possible, but on occasion leading his people in notable battles. Revered by many Māori

and reviled by most Pākehā, he became as well known nationally as Te Kooti or the Māori king, Tāwhiao.

Hakaraia, whose followers knew him as Te Hēpara (the Shepherd), gave shelter to Te Kooti at his refuge in the King Country. When their settlement was attacked by government troops, the two 'rebel' leaders and their supporters fled southward towards Te Urewera. In early 1870 the troops finally caught up with Hakaraia in the Waioweka Gorge, inland from Ōpōtiki. He was captured, killed in cold blood and buried — and eventually reburied — in an unmarked grave. This time, it seemed certain, the tough old survivor would not rise again.

Over the following century Hakaraia's name and accomplishments became almost completely erased from history. He was scarcely mentioned in books on the New Zealand Wars and other significant events in which he had played a leading part. If he was remembered at all, it was as an evil man, a 'son of Satan', blamed for the wrongs of others, although he may have had nothing to do with them. Even among his own people he was held responsible for the near-total loss of their ancestral lands. His descendants were made to feel ashamed of their forebear and ceased to speak of him. His tribe, Waitaha, were similarly overlooked, and national and local government agencies did not consult them over developments affecting their lands, waterways, coastline and traditional sites.

By the early twenty-first century, however, the Waitangi Tribunal began investigating the Waitaha Treaty of Waitangi claims. Intensive research into the tribe's history confirmed Hakaraia's central role in some of the most notable events of the wars. In their evidence before the Tribunal, given on Hei Marae at Te Puke, and with the greenstone mere he once carried in battle held by his great-great-great-grandson, his descendants recalled him with pride. Their heartfelt oral and written testimonies brought Hakaraia back to life. *Warrior Prophet*, written with the cooperation of his descendants, is part of the ongoing process of restoring this intriguing and impressive figure to the place in history he deserves.

Research for the book both uncovered a number of surprising findings and highlighted Hakaraia's prominence in the country's historical record during his lifetime, and his almost complete eradication from it after his

death. Those unexpected discoveries include the sophisticated processes of peacemaking developed and practised by Māori, alongside their better-known propensities for tribal warfare. Rituals developed in the distant past to prevent, mitigate and end battles evidently remained in use into the era of devastatingly asymmetrical musket wars.

Hakaraia may have witnessed those traditional practices during his long years in the Bay of Islands and integrated them into the Christian teachings he acquired there. When he returned to his tribal homeland he was often called upon to resolve disputes between armed groups. Later in his life, however, he became a renowned protagonist in the New Zealand Wars, although he chose to avoid armed conflict whenever possible. A reputation as a bloodthirsty rebel nevertheless clung to him. He acquired this undeserved notoriety because the antagonistic actions of others were unjustly attributed to him, and because government officials interpreted his prophetic utterances not as visionary predictions but rather as military strategy.

Despite his descendants' support and my own best efforts, some areas of Hakaraia's life remain mysterious and obscure. The many years he spent in the Bay of Islands, for example, are almost entirely undocumented. The thousands of pages of journal entries, letters and formal reports kept by Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionaries are frustratingly imprecise regarding individual Māori. A group of Māori mission workers or travelling companions who might well have included Hakaraia are typically referred to in the CMS records simply as 'the Natives'. As a result, this formative period of Hakaraia's life could be reconstructed only from what is known of the general body of nameless captives taken in the same time and place.

His later achievements as a leading recruiter for the Kīngitanga, and as an outstanding spiritual and guerrilla leader, are more fully documented, although mainly through the hostile, partisan and questionably accurate accounts of his adversaries in the government, the armed forces and the settler press. Those sources have accordingly been drawn upon only sparingly and critically, and after attempting to sift fact from wartime propaganda and patriotic bigotry.

Another conspicuous absence in the historical record is any detail of the life of Hakaraia's wife Hārete (Charlotte), of whom little more could be learned other than her name.

From these unfortunate gaps and slanted perspectives in the written evidence emerges an image, cloudy and incomplete yet compelling, of an enduring and admirable figure who inspired devoted loyalty in his followers and commanded respect even from his enemies. On behalf of his Waitaha people Hakaraia negotiated shrewdly and determinedly with rival tribes, and earned the trust and esteem of other leaders, including the founder of the Pai Mārire faith, Te Ua Haumēne, the Māori king's chief adviser, Wiremu Tāmihana Tarapīpipi, and King Tāwhiao himself. Among missionaries and other Pākehā he was admired and valued for several decades, until his support for the Kīngitanga caused most of them to turn against him.

Hakaraia Māhika was witness to, and often influenced, some of the most dramatic and formative developments of this country's nineteenth-century history. Their after-effects continue to impact our society today. His descendants, and the Waitaha people more generally, have paid a terrible price for the distortion and erasure of his historical legacy. He, and they, deserve a comprehensive, considered re-evaluation of his remarkable life and accomplishments.

Chapter 1
Fire from the north
Te Puke, 1823

In the years when Hongi Hika and his Ngāpuhi warriors first swept southward 'like a consuming fire', a sighting of their great war canoes, up to 30 yards long and powered by as many as a hundred paddlers working in perfect unison, was a forewarning of devastation.[1] Each intricately carved taurapa, or sternpost, glistening with red ochre and charcoal black and adorned with snowy albatross feathers, might tower more than twice the height of the chief who stood beneath it, handling the great steering oar.

Several kaihautū, or lieutenants, paced between the twin rows of paddlers, urging on their efforts and marking time with their long-handled, axe-like tewhatewha. In preparation for battle, all those on board painted their bodies red with a mixture of oil and ochre, and oiled and bound their hair in topknots, 'ornamented with the feathers of the gannet or albatross; and a bunch of the more downy feathers of these birds is usually fastened on one ear'.[2] In waterproof compartments at each end of the canoes lay the muskets, powder and ammunition that

generally ensured swift and annihilating victories over adversaries possessing only hand weapons.

These sea-going raiding parties made their attacks according to a seasonal cycle, after gathering and storing the kūmara and potato that then sustained them during the weeks and months of ranging beyond their own territory. It was, therefore, in the late summer of 1823 that a fearsome armada drawn from 'each tribe of Nga-Puhi . . . from Muriwhenua (the North Cape) to Whangarei' assembled in the Bay of Islands. They were reinforced by a party of Ngāti Whātua from further south and a few members of Ngāti Tāhinga, a Waikato hapū whose chief was related to the senior Ngāpuhi leader Hongi Hika.[3]

Twelve hundred warriors in some 40 large canoes voyaged 'under sail and paddle' down the east coast towards Tauranga.[4] This war party was headed by Hongi himself, then aged about 50 and at the height of his powers. He and his fellow chiefs had already primed their men for battle with inflammatory orations on the raid's purpose. They were heading south to punish the numerous and powerful Arawa tribe in retribution for the killing, the year before, of a group of visiting and unarmed Ngāpuhi that included a young chief named Te Pae-o-te-rangi. Only the Tūhourangi subtribe of Te Arawa had carried out this duplicitous slaying, but Ngāpuhi were known to be indiscriminate when seeking vengeance.

When the flotilla reached the narrow peninsula that sheltered the entrance to Tauranga Harbour, the steersmen turned their prows landward and the canoes were pulled ashore within the territory of the local Ngāi Te Rangi people, who were then recruited as allies in the impending battle. Word of the warriors' arrival travelled rapidly to the Arawa subtribes living along the coast south-east of the harbour, and from there to the many Arawa settlements along the shores of the inland lakes.

The Arawa chiefs, meeting in urgent conclave to prepare for the anticipated onslaught, had no doubt of the deadly threat the flotilla represented. In past years smaller war parties from the north had ravaged their coastal settlements and left hundreds dead. This new invasion was the greatest military force yet seen in the region, but the widely dispersed

Arawa could muster only a token few muskets to oppose it. Their chiefs concluded that their sole hope of avoiding a great slaughter was for the entire tribe to withdraw to a safe haven.

Lying at the heart of their territory was the conical and sacred island of Mokoia, a naturally moated fortress in the centre of Lake Rotorua. The chiefs were confident it would prove secure against invasion, since they believed Hongi's warriors would leave their canoes on the coast and proceed inland on foot. Word was sent to the people of all the lakeside villages to remove themselves immediately to the renowned and traditionally accommodating island. Provisions were laid in for a prolonged siege, and the tribe's many canoes were hauled ashore on Mokoia so that the approaching war party could not use them. The island was already heavily populated, so it had been largely cleared of bush to its summit, but as a final precaution the few remaining trees were felled to make spears, taiaha, lances and other hand weapons to repel any warriors who might chance an attack by swimming across the lake.[5]

Te Arawa relatives, the neighbouring and interrelated subtribes of Waitaha and Tapuika, who lived on the fertile coastline between Tauranga and Ōpōtiki, were urged to protect themselves against the firepower of the northern raiders by joining the rest of their tribe on Mokoia.[6] Some chose instead to flee to ancient refuges in the ranges, or to seek shelter in friendly settlements elsewhere, but most began, hastily and fearfully, to leave their homes and prepare for the journey inland.

The potatoes and pork they carried on their forced march were among the few physical signs within their region that a mysterious and ghostly new people had recently come to live in the north of their country. These peculiar newcomers were often discussed but only rarely encountered by Waitaha and Tapuika. They had watched with wonder as sailing vessels passed along their coast, including Captain James Cook's ship in 1769 and whalers more recently, but none had yet landed in their district, and no Pākehā had settled there. The produce, steel axes and other novelties obtained from Pākehā were highly prized, but the visitors were also known to have supplied Ngāpuhi with their thunderous new weapons.

In small, agitated family bands, Waitaha and Tapuika headed inland through their cultivated lowlands, crossing swamps and waterways by marked trails used in more peaceful times to travel in both directions between the coast and the lakes. The best known of these ancient footways, running south from the Maketū estuary through the old pā of Pukaingataru, was named Ikaroa Ruangutu.[7] Before the refugees entered their bush-covered hills, a traditional place of shelter during earlier wars, they could turn back and see the great sweep of coastline that defined their tribal territory, from the sharp peak of Mauao at the mouth of Tauranga Harbour down to Ōhiwa Harbour in the east.

Both Waitaha and Tapuika had occupied this coastline continuously for half a millennium, since their forebears left their own homeland of Raʻiātea and made the unimaginably long voyage south through an unknown ocean to make landfall in a barely peopled country. These first migrants had sailed aboard the 130-foot, double-hulled *Arawa* canoe, and 20 generations later their descendants still identified themselves collectively by that name. They told the story of how, after endless days at sea, the *Arawa* lay offshore between Mōtītī Island and the mainland. The mild climate, safe harbours and abundance of food in the forest and sea of this great north-facing bay convinced the gaunt and exhausted crew that they had finally found a place suitable for settlement.

On board were the twin brothers Tia and Hei, said in some accounts to be brothers of Tamatekapua, captain of the *Arawa*.[8] Tia indicated a great stretch of the lowland and foothills spread out before them and claimed it for his son, Tapuika, while Hei did the same for his son, Waitaha. The Waiari Stream, flowing through the plains to the sea just east of where they lay at anchor, was agreed as the boundary between these adjoining territories, and remains so. The *Arawa* then came ashore at the mouth of a river they soon named Kaituna for the quantities of eels caught there.

According to these origin stories, most of the crew of the voyaging waka dispersed widely across the newly discovered country, some settling in the geothermal area around the lakes in its centre. The young chiefs Waitaha and Tapuika, however, remained on the coastal plains

their fathers had claimed for them, and their descendants formed tribes named for these progenitors that eventually comprised the confederation of Te Arawa.

The seedlings the *Arawa* carried from distant Ra'iātea — kūmara vines, taro, gourd, yam and paper mulberry — were found to flourish in the well-watered lowlands. The forests behind them, loud with succulent birds, also supplied materials for making canoes, dwellings and other essentials.[9] The coastline varied from sandy beaches and rocky shore to estuaries, mudflats and mangrove swamps, and held many kinds of seafood. More still were found in the rivers and open ocean and around offshore islands. Waitaha and Tapuika were accomplished sailors, catching deepwater species such as hāpuku at named fishing spots such as Wairākei, off Mōtītī Island.[10]

These bountiful lands eventually became more densely settled than almost anywhere else in the country, but their abundant resources appealed greatly to less favoured tribes, who fought for them periodically over generations.[11] To defend their territory against the invaders, the original settlers built fortified pā, which Captain James Cook observed through his telescope as he sailed west along this coast in the early summer of 1769. He named the area the Bay of Plenty for its ample provisions, and noted 'a great deal of Cultivated land laid out in regular inclosures a sure sign that the Country is both fertile and well inhabited'. He also saw that 'the Villages are built upon eminences near the Sea, and are fortified on the land side with a Bank and Ditch, and Palisaded all round . . . I rather think that they are places of retreat or Stronghold where they defend themselves against the Attack of an Enimy [*sic*].'[12]

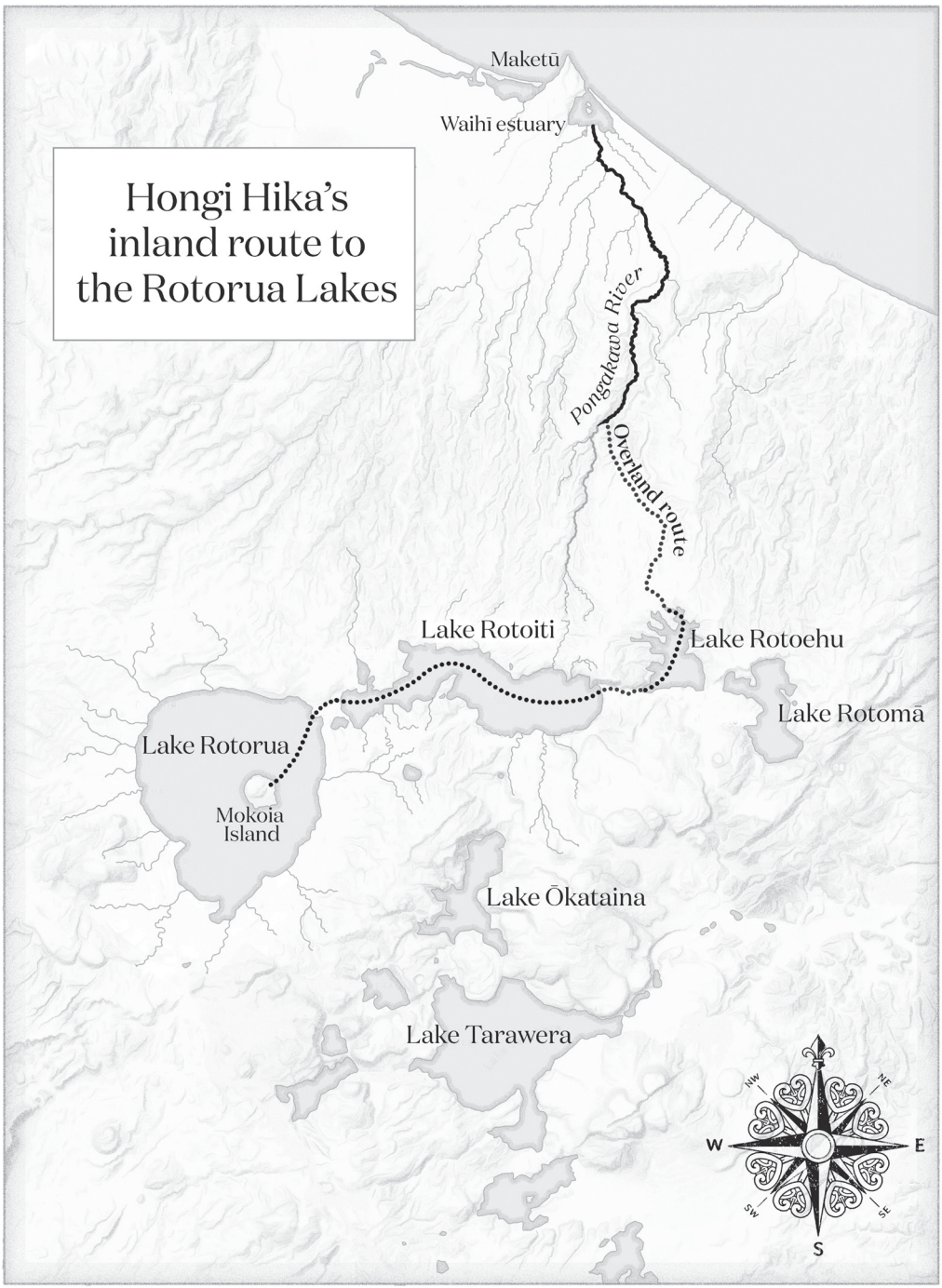
From the early eighteenth century the most determined and successful of these hostile tribes was Ngāti Rangihouhiri, later known as Ngāi Te Rangi, who invaded from the east and captured the prominent headland of Maketū. This famed seafood-gathering area was a defensible, steep-sided plateau strategically positioned between two small estuaries, each giving access to waterways that enabled canoes to travel inland towards the lakes of the Rotorua district. Maketū therefore commanded vital food-gathering, trade and transport routes.[13] Its conquest by Ngāi Te

Rangi around the year 1700 compelled both Waitaha and Tapuika to relocate their main settlements a short distance inland, at Te Puke and Rangiuru respectively.[14]

Several years later Ngāi Te Rangi overthrew another strategically significant coastal pā on Mauao, the upthrust volcanic peak that commands the southern entrance to Tauranga Harbour. Protected on all sides by the sea, apart from a narrow isthmus to the east, and with several freshwater springs, Mauao was an ideal site for a fortress in the era before the musket. For centuries Waitaha had occupied the mount jointly with a neighbouring iwi, Ngāti Ranginui, whose people traced descent from a different voyaging waka but who had been closely bonded with Waitaha from the earliest times in their collective memory.[15] Ngāti Ranginui's pā lay on the western side of the mount, overlooking Tauranga Harbour. Waitaha's, named Ruaparipari, faced east towards the ocean and its people's lowland territory.[16]

By the early eighteenth century the two tribes had cloaked Mauao in a network of strong fortifications guarded by hundreds of warriors and it appeared impregnable to attack. Around 1715, however, under cover of dark and stormy weather, Ngāi Te Rangi approached from Maketū, posing as a peacemaking party. As their chief parleyed with Ngāti Ranginui, his warriors silently scaled the precipitous north face of the mount to its peak, then gave the signal to attack. Both the large pā were taken by surprise and overrun. A century later Ngāi Te Rangi remained in the ascendant along the coast between Mauao and Maketū and the offshore islands.[17] Waitaha maintained their interests further inland and east of Maketū and upheld their traditional rights to harvest seafood along the entire coastline.[18]

In late 1819, the great stronghold of Mauao was again captured when one of the first musket-armed war parties appeared in the Bay of Plenty. The pā was attacked by a force of about 600 Ngāpuhi who could then muster, at most, just 35 muskets between them. Those proved sufficient to dislodge Ngāi Te Rangi, who lost about 400 men; a further 250 were taken prisoner. In a remarkable act of personal bravery, their chief Te Waru, recognising the invaders' overwhelming military superiority,


Hongi Hika's inland route to the Rotorua Lakes
Maketū
Waihī estuary
Pongakawa River
Overland route
Lake Rotoiti
Lake Rotoehu
Lake Rotomā
Lake Rotorua
Mokoia Island
Lake Ōkataina
Lake Tarawera
NW
NE
W
E
SW
SE
S

entered the victorious Ngāpuhi encampment unarmed and alone and forged a lasting peace accord with their chiefs.[19] This treaty, which committed Ngāi Te Rangi to supporting the northern iwi in subsequent battles, was invoked by Hongi Hika four years later when he swept into Tauranga Harbour at the head of a much larger body of warriors, each now the proud possessor of at least one musket, and declared his intention to permanently subdue Te Arawa.



The small bands of heavily laden Waitaha and Tapuika then making their way through the ranges towards Mokoia would have heard that their approaching enemies now included Ngāi Te Rangi, their traditional rivals, who were likely to seize their remaining lands as spoils of war if they prevailed in the coming battle. For the two subtribes, the prospect of abandoning their treasured territory was desolating, but withdrawing inland promised their best chance of survival.

On the evening of the first day's trek Waitaha reached the headwaters of the Ōturuturu Stream, above the upper reaches of the Waiari Stream, a traditional resting place on the Whakauma track to Lake Rotorua. As they pushed on through the hills the next day, they passed wooden whakapakoko, images depicting notable former travellers, at intervals along the trail.[20] After several wearying days they arrived on the northern shore of Lake Rotorua and signalled to the great numbers of Te Arawa already gathered on Mokoia to paddle across and bring them to safety.

In Tauranga, while his warriors were resting before the battle as guests of Ngāi Te Rangi, Hongi Hika was compiling intelligence on Te Arawa movements. From his new allies, and from slaves captured on earlier expeditions, he learned that the people now congregated on Mokoia had left no canoes on the lake shore that his forces could use to reach the island. Eventually, a slave named Ngaropatuki, captured in the Ōhinemuri district two years earlier, revealed an inland route that might, with immense effort, enable the war party to transport their own canoes to Mokoia. Hongi determined on this daring and risky plan of attack.[21]

First the entire fleet left Tauranga Harbour and progressed down the coast to Maketū, where they entered its shallow south-eastern estuary. The paddlers pushed upstream along the confined and winding Pongakawa River until it became impassable, then hauled their canoes ashore in a rocky gorge. At this point Hongi divided his forces into two. The larger group under the chief Te Wera Hauraki made their way towards Lake Rotorua on foot, scouting for enemies and gathering food supplies on the way. The remainder, under Hongi's command, began to drag a number of the canoes uphill through heavy bush, cutting and clearing an old and overgrown track.[22]

It took almost three days of exhausting effort to reach the deeply indented northern shore of Lake Rotoehu. Their canoes then carried the war party across the lake to its western end, where a second forest portage, by a short and easy route still known today as Hongi's Track, enabled them to relaunch into Lake Rotoiti. Twelve laborious days after they had set out from Tauranga, the warriors finally swept through the narrow channel linking the lakes Rotoiti and Rotorua. They could see Mokoia Island directly ahead.

Hongi, a seasoned and wily campaigner, was content to delay an attack to allow his men to recuperate from their efforts, rendezvous with the remainder of the war party, and consider 'the arrangements for Tu, the war god . . . for the coming fight'.[23] Great numbers of Te Arawa could be seen gathered along the base of the island, undoubtedly demoralised by the entirely unexpected appearance of the great war canoes on the waters of their lake, yet still determined to defend themselves to the utmost. They heavily outnumbered their attackers, and some of the Ngāpuhi chiefs began to fear that even their large arsenal of muskets might not guarantee a victory. Hongi, however, was undaunted. He announced that their small fleet of canoes would form up in his preferred line of battle, a wedge formation with his own vessel at the foremost point.[24] Each canoe was crewed according to tribal affiliation, 'and every chief had the command of men of his own tribe'.[25]

During these seemingly remorseless preparations for battle, there was a striking instance of the mercy that even the most ruthless leaders

were sometimes willing to accord their enemies. Some high-ranking men among Hongi's war party were accompanied by their wives, who included Te Aokapurangi, a chiefly woman of Tapuika and the Arawa iwi of Ngāti Rangiwewehi. Captured in an earlier Ngāpuhi raid and taken as a wife by the senior chief Te Wera Hauraki, she had been permanently separated from her first husband and two small children.[26] In the days preceding the attack on Mokoia she repeatedly urged her new husband, and even Hongi himself, to spare her relatives. Some accounts maintain that she had accompanied this expedition specifically to try to save her people.[27] She insisted that Ngāti Rangiwewehi had played no part in the killing of Te Pae-o-te-rangi and his companions, which was the justification Ngāpuhi used for the entire military invasion.

For Te Aokapurangi to intercede in this way with such sanguinary chiefs as Te Wera and Hongi was extraordinarily courageous. As a woman, and one from another tribe captured in warfare, her status among her captors was so low that her husband held absolute power of life or death over her. Nevertheless, she persisted in her pleas at the risk of her own life, and after much debate Te Wera and Hongi agreed to spare her relatives in the coming massacre. This highborn woman's blood ties within Te Arawa, they decided, and the forcefulness of her intervention on her relatives' behalf, outweighed their grounds for vengeance.

Taking a canoe that had been stripped of its carvings to reduce its weight, Te Aokapurangi and another of Te Wera's wives paddled close enough to Mokoia to call to those gathered along its shoreline. Her uncle, the great Ngāti Rangiwewehi chief Hikairo, heard her assurance that members of their hapū would be left unharmed in the imminent attack if they separated themselves from the main body of Te Arawa. The old chief called back in cryptic and symbolic terms, acknowledging the nobility of the offer.[28]

His redoubtable niece returned to the mainland believing that she had achieved her objective. Hongi, however, then attached a culturally potent condition to his offer of clemency: relatives of Te Aokapurangi would be spared only if they first passed between her legs.[29] For a man to agree to place his head, the most tapu part of his body, beneath a woman's

genitalia was, in Māori tradition, a spiritually perilous and deeply defiling act. Paradoxically, according to ancient ceremony, it was an action that might also preserve his life, by erasing one breach of tapu with another.[30] Te Aokapurangi had little option but to agree to this imperative.



On the morning of the attack the day was still and damp, with a mist hanging above the lake that initially shrouded the canoes from sight as they raced towards the chosen landing point, the pumice-sand beach of Waipuia–Patoroa on the north-eastern side of Mokoia. According to the most reliable chronicler of these events, 'The lightning above alone could be compared to the flashing of the Nga-Puhi paddles in Rotorua.'[31] Te Aokapurangi was seated in Hongi's canoe while he stood in its prow, resplendent in the armoured breastplate and iron pikeman's helmet he had been given by King George IV during a visit to Britain three years earlier.

As the small fleet drew to within 200 yards of the island, several thousand Arawa braced for the assault. A chief named Te Awaawa almost succeeded in picking off Hongi before the battle was properly under way. He held one of his tribe's few muskets, which had been given the name Haere Ata.[32] One meaning of this name is 'to act with caution', and Te Awaawa surely did so. Recognising the imperious and iron-clad figure in the leading canoe, he levelled and fired his precious weapon with an accuracy born of desperation. The ball struck Hongi in the head, a shot that might have killed him but for the protection of his helmet. Twice more Te Awaawa fired, hitting Hongi first in the chest, where his breastplate saved him, and then in the thigh, slightly wounding him. The attackers replied with a great volley of fire that left scores of Arawa dead and dying. Hongi himself is said to have been armed with 15 muskets for his personal use, each of them recharged and loaded by his retinue as he emptied them successively into the mass of bodies ahead of him.[33]

As the canoes grounded on the beach, the battle became close-quarter carnage. Armed only with their hand weapons, the Arawa

made three concerted charges into the blaze of musket fire, killing and wounding many attackers before they were forced to break ranks.[34] At the moment her canoe reached shallow water Te Aokapurangi leapt ashore, evaded the turmoil and with extraordinary presence of mind ran to the great meeting house Tamatekapua, named for the captain of the *Arawa* canoe. She hauled herself onto its steeply pitched roof and straddled the ridgepole above the entrance, calling to her kinfolk, 'Oh, people! Behold me! Come to the house!'[35] Soon the great building was crammed to capacity and others could only crowd in its doorway. Even in the heat of the battle, it is said, the attackers 'did not prevent anyone from fleeing to the marae'.[36]

The island now resounded with the roar of muskets and the cries of the dying. In desperation, groups of 50 or more defenders flung themselves into the chill waters of the lake and swam for the mainland a mile away. Some drowned before they could reach land but many, including the chief Hikairo, succeeded in gaining the shore and fleeing for shelter.[37]

Describing the impact on Te Arawa afterwards to the missionary Samuel Marsden, Hongi said that 'a very great slaughter was made. They could not resist the firearms of our forces, and fell in great numbers.'[38] For several days the raiders scoured the mile-wide island from top to bottom, killing or imprisoning those they found.[39] Some victims were then ritually decapitated and disembowelled, and their dismembered bodies cooked in earth ovens and eaten in a traditional rite of victory, a symbolic subjugation of the defeated enemy. Marsden was told, 'Every chief when he falls in battle expects to be eaten, as it is their universal custom.'[40]

The exultant northern warriors remained on Mokoia for several weeks, gorging on human flesh and the island's supplies of food. Hongi ordered the injured to bathe in the hot springs along the lake's edge, and some spent entire nights steeping themselves and soothing their wounds in the sulphuric, medicinal waters.[41] Meanwhile, their chiefs debated at length

whether to take possession of the entire tribal territory of Te Arawa and put the survivors of the battle to work for them.[42] Te Wera Hauraki was among those who opposed this plan. He may have recognised the practical impossibility of permanently vanquishing the still numerous and proud Te Arawa people, who would inevitably rebuild their strength until they could retaliate, continuing the reciprocal pattern of wrongdoing and retribution.[43]

When Te Aokapurangi learned that her uncle was among those who had escaped, she once more prevailed upon Hongi and her husband to negotiate a lasting peace. To their credit the two powerful chiefs agreed to this, and Te Wera left in his canoe *Herua* to bring Hikairo, one of the leading men of Te Arawa, back to Mokoia to broker a pact of reconciliation. In a further demonstration of courage and trust in the midst of ferocity, the elderly chief returned to the site where so many of his iwi had been massacred and devoured just days earlier. The Ngāpuhi leaders then delivered a succession of impassioned speeches inside the meeting house Tamatekapua. Te Wera told Hikairo that the death of Te Pae-o-te-rangi could now be considered avenged, that Ngāpuhi wished to see an end to the war between their two tribes and that he personally undertook to uphold such a peace agreement. Since Te Pae-o-te-rangi had been a nephew of Te Wera, these words greatly influenced the other Ngāpuhi chiefs.

Hikairo gave an inspired oration in response. 'Let us both remain at our lake, O Ngapuhi. Both you and I will be chiefs of this land.' This invitation, he clarified, did not give Ngāpuhi the right to claim his own people's lands in Rotorua, but rather acknowledged that it was the Te Arawa foolishness in murdering Te Pae-o-te-rangi and his companions 'that caused our people to be killed, and the loss of land and prestige'.[44] Hongi concluded the debate, announcing that the killing would cease and that authority over the tribal area would be restored to the hands of Hikairo and the surviving Te Arawa.[45] According to some accounts, in a symbolic act of generosity befitting a rangatira, he then presented Hikairo with the helmet given to him by George IV, now dented by Te Awaawa's musket ball.[46]

Both parties kept their word, and no further warfare took place between Ngāpuhi and Te Arawa during this expedition. For as long as the invaders remained on Mokoia, however, they continued to relish the spoils of their victory. When, after several weeks, they left the island, they carried away with them many plundered valuables, including the finest Te Arawa war canoes, now required to transport as many as 500 captives.[47] Although the most chiefly of these prisoners were immediately freed under the peace agreement, the rest had their hands fastened behind their backs with cords of flax fibre, and were linked together in groups by a longer flax rope tied around their necks.[48] Thus, 'a whole band could be led forward with comparatively little trouble. Not unfrequently, however, the rope was interwoven with the hair of the head, and at night the end tied to the master's wrist, so that by a slight movement of the hand, the "slave-holder" could ascertain as to whether or not he possessed living property.'[49]

Despite these multiple restraints, many prisoners managed to escape over the following few nights, since the war party departing for the coast 'were so fatigued in dragging their canoes through the woods that they were unable to guard their prisoners, being overpowered with sleep'.[50] The remaining male captives were forced to help drag the canoes, while the women, tied together by a rope plaited into their long hair, carried heavy loads of food and other supplies.[51]

The Ngāpuhi war party returned to the Bay of Islands in piecemeal fashion between May and September 1823.[52] Some chiefs went north almost immediately, but Te Wera and others made further lengthy raids to the east and elsewhere throughout the Bay of Plenty.[53] Ngāpuhi saw no need to extend the peace treaty with Te Arawa to nearby tribes, and it did not seem to fully protect the outlying subtribes of Waitaha and Tapuika, whose territories lay at a distance from the lakes. Ngāi Te Rangi had not participated in the establishment of the treaty, and after leaving Mokoia they began to explore and claim Waitaha and Tapuika's recently vacated lands, just as their former occupants had feared.

A party of Ngati Hē, one of the hapū of Ngāi Te Rangi, searched the Waitaha lands inland from Maketū and followed the Ohineangaanga

Stream upstream until they reached Te Tapuaeroa, one of the largest of the Waitaha pā.[54] Sheltering there were several people who had chosen not to follow the rest of their hapū to Mokoia, perhaps assuming that the remoteness of the pā would protect them. Among them was a tall, active young man who, with his sister Ngāwhiringa, was cutting axe handles in the surrounding bush.[55] His name was Māhika, and he had been born in Te Tapuaeroa about 20 years before.[56]

Ngāti Hē chose not to kill Māhika but took him prisoner, as he was likely to prove useful to their Ngāpuhi allies as a slave.[57] They forced him to make the long journey on foot to Mauao, where a number of Ngāpuhi were preparing for their homeward voyage.[58] There the young man was added to the cargoes of desolate Arawa men, women and children crouched in the canoes, knowing that they had little prospect of surviving to see their families again.

Rather than return to their coastal homelands, where they risked suffering the same fate as Māhika, most of the surviving members of Waitaha and Tapuika chose to remain living among their Arawa kin around Lake Rotorua. The former established a new village at Te Waerenga, near the Ohau channel on the lake's northern shore; the latter settled at Ōwhata on the south-east shore.[59] As soon as possible, these refugees are likely to have held ceremonies to mourn their departed relatives — not only the dead but also the many others who had been seized as slaves, since all these casualties of the great battle were regarded as lost to them forever.

Chapter 2

Many years a slave

Bay of Islands, 1823–1835

The first convoy of Ngāpuhi war canoes to return north, laden with captives and booty, reached the Bay of Islands in mid-1823. The narrow craft were eased up the winding Kerikeri inlet that led to Kororipo, Hongi Hika's main pā, to land in front of an exuberant welcome party. The crews' first action was to remove the figureheads that adorned the prows of their canoes, as a sign that they had returned from battle.[1]

Their arrival was witnessed by a young Danish seaman calling himself Phillip Tapsell, whose ship, a British whaler, had anchored in the bay that same day. He watched with growing horror as the warriors selected 40 of their prisoners and lined them up on the shore below the pā. Then, 'at a signal all were tomahawked. They met their fate with stoic courage and never betrayed uneasiness or suffering by the movement of a muscle. Some were killed with one blow and some required several cuts

to dispatch them. The bodies were cleaned, cut up and put into ovens, which soon sent up a steam having the odour of roasted pork.'[2]

Whether Māhika arrived in one of these war canoes or with a later group is not known, but he was to spend the next 12 years in the Bay of Islands. Throughout that time almost no trace of his name and activities appears in written records. This is unsurprising, since the status of most of those captured in the Musket Wars was, in the eyes of their new masters, so lowly that they did not warrant individual recognition or commemoration. Highborn women such as Te Aokapurangi might be taken as wives by their captors, and their names and deeds later honoured, but the less fortunate spent their lives in anonymous drudgery, lost to those they left behind and beneath the notice of those they now served.

During the long years Māhika spent in the Bay of Islands, the production of a surplus of goods in order to acquire muskets was the overwhelming preoccupation of Ngāpuhi and other warring tribes.[3] From the 1820s, Māori who had once supplied local produce to missionaries and passing ships in exchange for a profusion of foreign goods would accept almost nothing but muskets in return. The demand for guns was so great that a single musket might be exchanged for a ton of dressed flax, 10 large pigs or 200 baskets of potatoes. Providing such quantities of goods required large numbers of slaves.[4]

Māhika became a small component of an economy no longer geared to providing northern Māori with an autonomous living for subsistence and hospitality, but rather one that incorporated them into a thriving international import–export arms market. Missionaries ruefully acknowledged that both parties to this weapons trade bore responsibility for the harm that ensued. As missionary George Clarke wrote, 'The cruelty of our own countrymen, who have furnished the poor Heathen with so many instruments of destruction, is . . . a subject deeply to be lamented: the mischief they have done is incalculable.'[5]

Although the small number of British and American residents in the Bay of Islands in the early 1820s referred to the Māori practice of seizing and keeping captives as slavery, they noticed that it differed significantly from the forms of slavery practised in their own countries. Māori captives

were not confined or restrained but permitted to move freely around their settlements in the course of their duties.[6] Escaping, however, was all but impossible since 'The law of New Zealand is that, whoever apprehends a runaway slave, he becomes the property of him who apprehended him.' Furthermore, according to the missionary William Williams, 'so degraded is their condition, that a man once taken prisoner, though he may have an opportunity of escaping, will refuse to do it, because he is looked upon with contempt by his own friends'.[7]

Typically, life for a Māori captive in the early nineteenth century was harsh and often brief. 'A Slave has no security for his life,' Marsden noted in 1824. 'His Master kills him whenever he pleases, and treats him in any way his passions dictate.'[8] The well-born visiting English artist Augustus Earle noted that 'slaves have invariably a squalid, dejected look; they are never seen to smile, and appear literally half-starved'. He could readily distinguish free Māori from captives by their hair. The former wore their hair long and often ornately arranged; the latter had a 'half-shorn' appearance.[9]

Captives became the property of the chiefs who had defeated them, and they were made to labour at tasks their owners disdained or which were tapu to them. Preparing and cooking food, traditionally considered demeaning, was the province of captives and they became known by other Māori as kuki, from the English word 'cooks'.[10] When the French naval officer and explorer Jules Dumont d'Urville visited the Kahuwera pā, near present-day Russell, in 1824 he found that 'The male and female slaves sleep in the open, or sometimes shelter under . . . lean-tos' comprising merely a thatched roof supported on four sticks, where food was prepared.[11] Those who tried to supplement their inadequate food supplies by pilfering might suffer the fate witnessed by the British army officer Richard Cruise: 'At one place we observed a head stuck upon a pole, the flesh as yet hardly decayed. The natives told us it was the head of a slave who had been killed for committing a theft, and that it was exhibited as a warning to others.'[12]

As a young, sturdy man, Māhika is likely to have been assigned such arduous labour as catching fish and preserving them by drying, pounding

fernroot to make an edible paste, fetching drinking water in gourds and, especially, toiling in the potato plantations. Hongi Hika had his main plantations inland at Waimate, where in 1820 Marsden found what he estimated to be 'more than one hundred acres in sweet and common potatoes . . . a number of slaves were busy in drying the sweet potatoes, which were spread upon hurdles raised about three feet from the ground with small fires under them'.[13]

As one of the ancient plant varieties transported from the ancestral homeland of Hawaiki, kūmara was a sacred crop and all aspects of its cultivation were enveloped in elaborate ritual and prohibition. Tohunga recited the appropriate karakia and imposed tapu restrictions, especially during the ceremonies for planting, cultivation and harvest.[14] Captives such as Māhika were ineligible to carry out much of the ceremonial activity that the kūmara crop demanded, but they supplied the bulk of the work that produced the much heavier harvests of potato. This versatile vegetable, introduced to the north by Captain Cook just 50 years earlier, was 'subject to a much lesser degree of tapu, which meant that more of the work could be carried out by anyone'.[15] Most of the potato crop was not consumed locally but carried to the coast in flax baskets, along with preserved pork, to trade for muskets and powder with the numerous vessels that put in to the bay to reprovision.[16]

Beyond the fences surrounding the gardens, Māhika would have seen a variety of animals — horses, cattle and sheep — that were almost certainly new to him.[17] Most startling of all, perhaps, were the pallid human figures in strange and constricting clothing who had supplied these marvellous creatures. Fellow captives would have explained that these were missionaries, and that they had first come to live among Ngāpuhi a decade earlier.

Their evident leader was a bulky, bespectacled man of about 30. Reverend Henry Williams of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) arrived in the Bay of Islands with his family in the same year as Māhika.