

HISTORICAL & TECHNICAL REPORT

X65.8014

**FOWLER MUSEUM (UCLA)
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES**



**REPORT PRODUCED BY
BRENT KEREHONA (PUKEPUKE-AHITAPU) *BA, MTeach*
AUGUST 2026**

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KUPUTAKA/GLOSSARY

Kupu ē-kaupapa/Term	Whakamāramatanga/Definition
Aho	Weft or horizontal strands
Haerenga	Journey
Hapū	Sub-tribe
Hītori	History
Iwi	Tribe
Kairaranga	Weaver
Kauko	lateral (side) edges of a kākahu
Kaumātua	Respected elders
Kaupapa	Project, or framework of a kākahu
Kawa	Protocols of practice, how things are done (see also tikanga)
Pūrākau	Stories, oral history
Mātauranga	Traditional knowledge
Rangahau	Research
Rangatira	Chief or chiefly in nature
Remu	Bottom of kākahu
Tāniko	Decorative woven borders on a kākahu
Taonga	Cultural treasure or artefact
Tāhuhu Kōrero	Background story
Tikanga	Correct procedure or custom (see kawa)
Tūpuna	Ancestors
Te Ao Māori	The Māori World or Māori worldview
Ua	Neckline of a kākahu
Uri	Descendants
Whakanakonako	Embellishments
Whakapapa	Genealogy
Whānau/Whanaunga	Relative/s
Whatu	Finger twining
Whenu	Warp or vertical strands

KUPU WHAKATAKI/PREFACE

‘Ko te manu e kai ana i te miro nōnā te ngahere, ko te manu e kai ana i te mātauranga nōnā te ao.’

The forest belongs to the bird who feasts on the miro berry, the world belongs to the bird who feasts on education.

Māori Whakatauki/Proverb

The *whakapapa* and *hītori* of *taonga*, or the provenance and history of cultural treasures, are as important as the items themselves. Whenever the term *taonga* is used within this report, the author is referring to cultural treasures, although Western practice usually refers to them simply as artefacts or objects.

Mātauranga (knowledge) of who the *kairaranga* (weaver) or the *kaiwhakairo* (carver) was, the *iwi* (tribe) or *hapū* (subtribe) from which they affiliate, the identity of the receiver, and the reasons for the gifting – are also *taonga* and unfortunately, far too much of this information has been lost to time.

Māori *taonga* rest in countless institutions around the world, museums, galleries, libraries, and private collections, and although the author does not take issue with this as such; he does feel that far too many *taonga* are displayed, or held, without an appropriate level of cultural and historical context. After visiting several museums in Europe, the United States of America, Australia, and the United Kingdom, the author noticed that several of our *taonga* had either minimal information, no cultural context, or worse, some information panels bore the terms ‘Unknown’ or ‘Unidentified’ and the name of the collector or collection was more prominent than the *taonga* itself.

As a weaver, a novice carver, and a Māori historian, the author felt that he was able to examine select *taonga* from institutions in countries to which he travels and produce documents that would provide these institutions with a general level of historical and technical information. The author has been fortunate to have undertaken extensive international travel, for work, research, and holidays, and has recently begun integrating museum and gallery visits into these trips; contacting institutions prior to any of his *haerenga* (journeys), to ascertain what *taonga* they have, and what he might want to access and examine – or what they would like to know more about.

By no means does he claim to be an expert in the study of Māori *taonga* and feels that there are others of greater standing within the field; however, he offers his knowledge, as best as he is able, to produce research documents that provide substantially more information than is currently held on these specific *taonga*.

The compilation and provision of these reports serve several purposes: to do the *taonga* justice by visiting and spending time with them; to examine them and promote their whereabouts; make their locations known to Māori (and other interested persons); and to uncover their *pūrākau* (narratives) and bring them back to life. This third practice of uncovering their *pūrākau* achieves several outcomes, these being: to reunite them with *uri* (direct descendants) and *whanaunga* (relatives); to provide the institutions with a credible and informative record of the respective *taonga*; and ensuring their stories are not forgotten – *ka maumahara tonu tātou kia rātou*.

This particular report focusses on a stunningly beautiful *kaitaka* (finely woven cloak), with connections to the Te Whakatōhea *iwi* (tribe) in the Bay of Plenty, Aotearoa New Zealand; and is now in the collections of the Fowler Museum, UCLA.

HAURONGO/BIOGRAPHY



The author's cultural background sees him affiliated with the *iwi* (tribes) of Ngāpuhi, Ngāi Tūhoe, Te Whakatōhea, and Te Whānau-a-Apanui, as well as having connections to Alveston in Gloucestershire, Bloomsbury in London, and Helsingborg in Sweden – all of which he has visited.

He is ex-military, having served in the army as a paratrooper and then military police officer; before studying a Bachelor of Arts, and then a Master of Teaching degree, and becoming a history teacher, and a military and Māori historian.

The author is a cultural practitioner: *kairāranga* (weaver), novice *kaiwhakairo* (carver), and *kaihaka* (performer).

He is a published author, producing articles, reports, and story books; produced a historical short film; delivered lectures around the world; and contributed towards exhibitions in institutions in Aotearoa New Zealand, and Australia.

The author's research has been referred to in the media; mentioned in legal cases; used on government websites; presented in museums; stopped the sale of *taonga* at auction and assisted in the repatriation of *taonga* back to Aotearoa New Zealand.

He has also appeared on television and radio in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia, as a *tumu kōrero* (historian), in documentaries, news, and cultural programs.

The author is a husband, father, and grandfather, who believes in the importance of teaching his *whānau* (family) *mātauranga* and *toi Māori* and including them in his *kaupapa rangahau* (research projects); taking them with him on these *haerenga* (journeys) if the opportunities allow.

It is his goal to contribute toward *Māoritanga* and *Te Ao Māori* (The Māori World) in a positive and impactful manner and hopes that this report goes some way towards achieving this objective.

ARA RANGAHAU/RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



The author digitally recording a section of a *tāniko* border of a *kaitaka* at the Fowler Museum, UCLA.
Photograph courtesy of Tangimoe Clay (2024).

This report was compiled by the author, utilising: online and library/archive-based research; consultation with curators; conducting interviews with *kairārangas* (weavers); as well as carrying out a physical examination of the *kaitaka* itself. The physical examinations of the artefact were undertaken at the Fowler Museum, UCLA on 12th July 2023, between 10th - 12th July 2024, and on 24th July 2025. The online and library-based research was undertaken between July 2023 – July 2025. The consultation process and interviews with Te Whakatōhea *mātauranga* (academics), *kairārangas* (weavers), and *kaumātua* (respected elders) began in August 2024, and are ongoing, as per Māori *kawa* and *tikanga*.

Facsimiles of original documentation, provided by the Fowler Museum during the research process, included: Fowler Museum Argus Report, Auction records, and the Wellcome Collection index card. Information from, and images of these documents, are either provided by, or taken, by permission of the Fowler Museum. All physical descriptions, including measurements, and any condition notes, were obtained during the author's examinations of the *taonga*.

HE MIHI/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks, and acknowledgment goes to the following people and institutions for their support and assistance: Fowler Museum (Silvia Forni – Director, Isabella Kelly-Ramirez – Manager Collections, Matthew Robb – former Senior Curator, Rachel Raynor – Director of Registration and Collections Management, Jeanette Saunders – Registrar, Patrick Polk – Lilly Endowment Curator of Art and Religion, and Carlee Forbes – Mellon Curatorial Fellow), Tangimoe Clay – *Kairārangas* Te Whakatōhea weaver, Maui Hudson – *Ahorangi Tūhono* Te Whakatōhea academic, Delise Kerehona, Angel Niania, Kaelan Russell and Ruby Rehu.

PŪRONGO KŌRERO O NEHE
HISTORICAL REPORT

TĀHUHU KŌRERO – BACKGROUND STORY

Ko Makeo te maunga,
Ko Ōtara raua ko Waioeka ngā awa,
Ko Mātaatua te waka,
Ko Te Whakatōhea te iwi,
Ko Ōpōtiki te kainga.



Makeo Maunga.ⁱ



Ōtara River. Unnamed. July 2026.ⁱⁱ

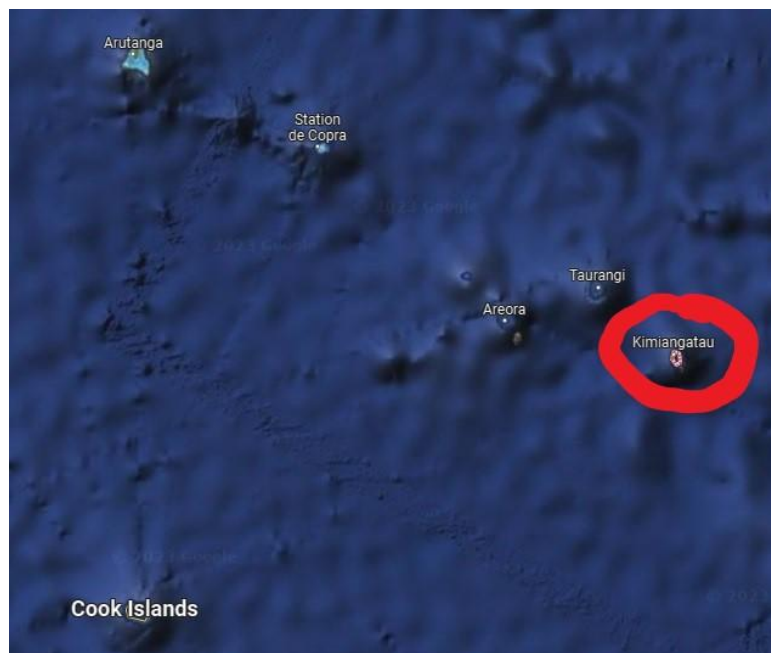


Waioeka River. Linus Kranz, Nov 2025.ⁱⁱⁱ

This *kaitaka* originates from the township of Ōpōtiki, in the Bay of Plenty, Te Ika a Maui (The North Island), Aotearoa New Zealand. The town takes its name from the longer, Ōpōtiki-mai-tawhiti; which refers to the *puna* (spring) above Waiotahi Beach. These are the ancestral lands of the Te Whakatōhea *iwi* (tribe), including the Ngāti Ira^{iv}, Ngāti Ngāhere, Ngāti Ruatakena, Ngāti Patumoana, Ngāi Tamahaua, and currently in contention, Te Ūpokorehe, *hapū* (subtribes).

The people of Te Whakatōhea, trace their *whakapapa* (genealogy) through those who arrived on the Mātaatua *waka* (canoe) with notable *tupuna* (ancestors) being: Toroa, Puhi, and Muriwai; the Nukutere *waka* captured by Tautūrangi, which arrived nine generations earlier; and possibly the Te Arautautā *waka* captured by Tarawa and his brother Tuwharanui, which arrived during the Great Migration from Hawaiki.

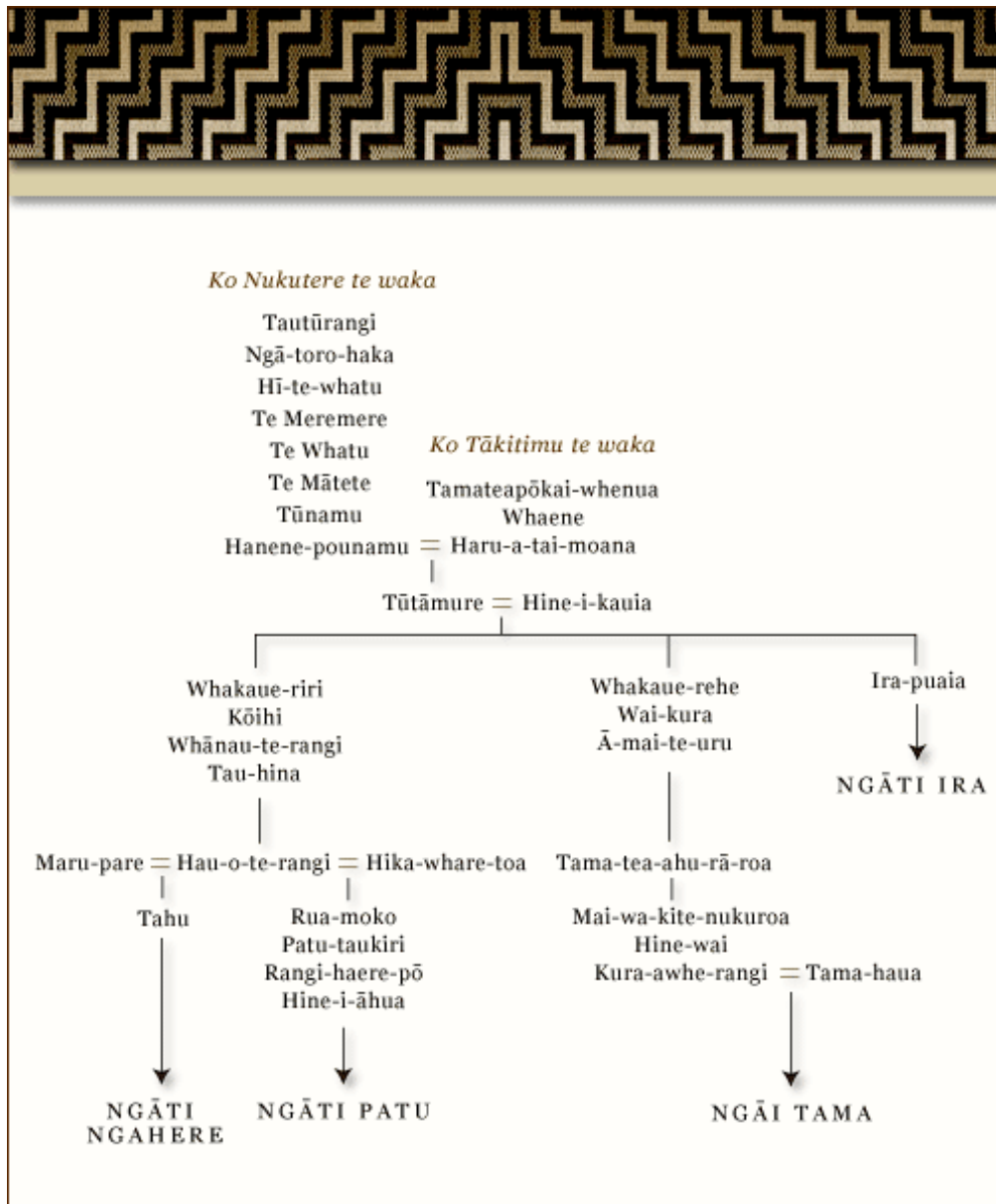
Uri (descendants) of the Mātaatua, believe that their *waka* departed from Hawaiki (some believe this to be the Cook Islands) to bring *kumara* (sweet potatoes) to Te Ika a Maui (The North Island), Aotearoa New Zealand; however, precisely which island group is yet to be ascertained. Cook Island Māori historian, Tinokura Auru Tairea, makes this connection,^v as does Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Tuwharetoa historian, the late Hamiora Tumutara Pio (1814-1901);



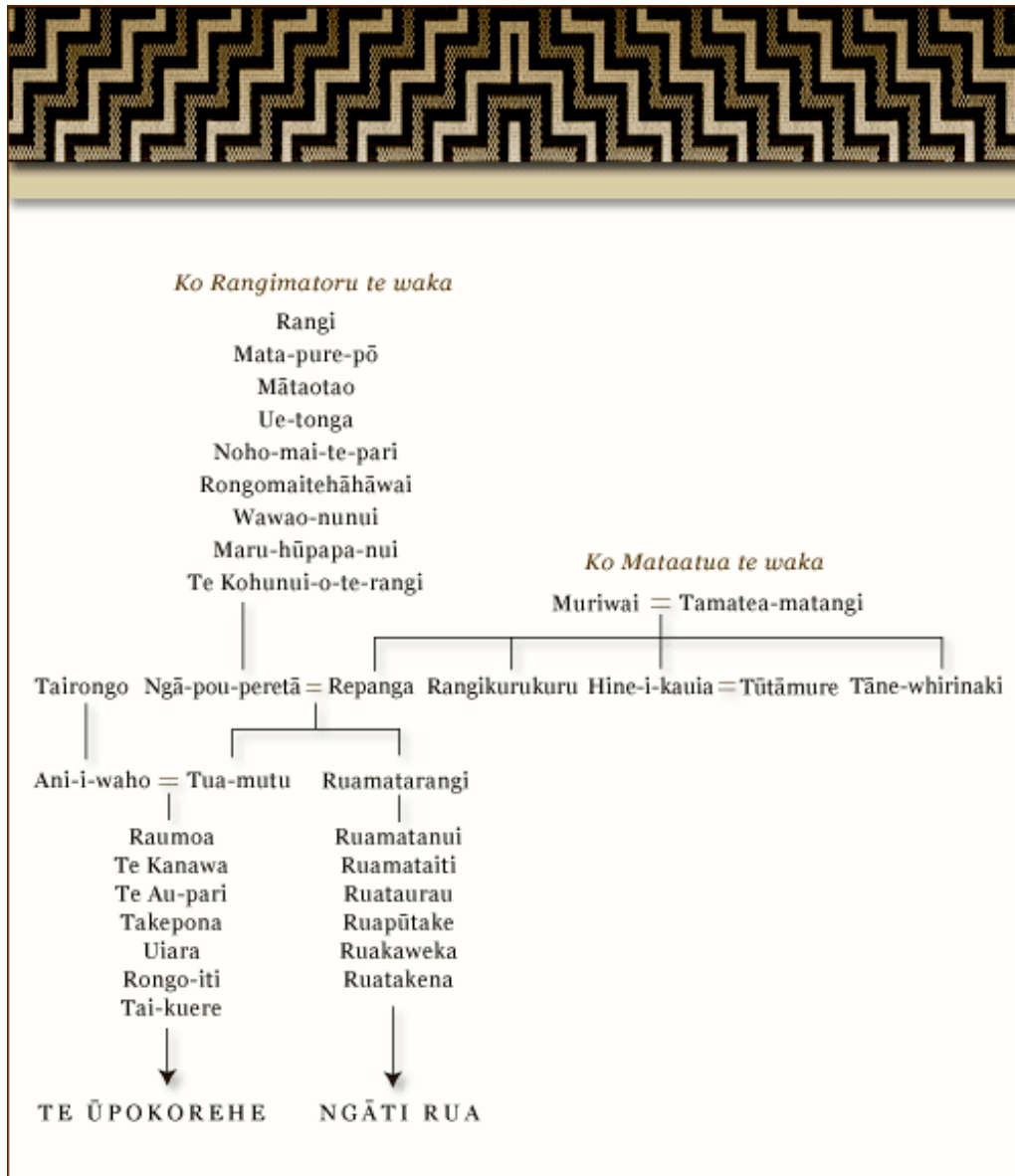
Kimiangatau, on the island of Ma'uke, within the Cook Islands.^{vi}



A section of the Ma'uke coastline.^{vii}



Whakapapa (genealogy) chart showing the descent of Ngāti Ngahere, Ngāti Patumoana, Ngāi Tamahaua, and Ngāti Irapuaia hapū to the Nukutere waka.^{viii}



Whakapapa (genealogy) chart showing the descent of Ngāti Ruatakena and Te Ūpokorehe hapū, from the Mātaatua waka..^{ix}



Images of *pou* (carved posts) which depict the arrival in the area by the Arautauta and Te Tohorā *waka* (canoes), and the later arrival of European settlers.^x Photos courtesy of Shirley Williams.

The boundaries of the Te Whakatōhea *rohe* (area) cover over a 35-km stretch of coastline in the eastern Bay of Plenty, from Ōhiwa Harbour to Ōpape. The western boundary is Maraetōtara at Ōhope, and the eastern boundary is at Tarakeha, a fortified ridge *pā* (defensive position) between Ōpape and Awaawakino. The coastal boundaries run inland, south-east through mountainous country, and join just south of Matawai.



Map of Te Whakatōhea lands, spanning from Maraetōtara to the West, Tarakeha to the East, and Matawai to the South.^{xi}



An aerial view of the coastal portion of Ōpōtiki, showing the harbour, and the Waioeka River to the left, and the Ōtara River to the right. These lands were a highly fertile and productive farming region.^{xii}

Prominent Rangatira

Prominent *rangatira* (chiefs and nobility) of the Te Whakatōhea *iwi* during the estimated period of this garment's manufacture included, Te Āporotanga (Ngāti Ruatakena), Mokomoko (Ngāti Patumoana), Hira Te Popo (Ngāti Irapuaia), Rangimātānuku (Ngāti Ruatakena), and Wīteria Taawhi Moka (Ngāti Ira). Consequently, it is highly plausible that this *kaitaka* was originally commissioned by, or belonged to, one of these preeminent tribal leaders.

PŪRONGO KUPU Ā-KAUPAPA TECHNICAL REPORT

Pūrongo Tīariari/Existing Report

Existing documentation held by the Fowler Museum



At the Fowler Museum we are interested in expanding our knowledge of the objects in our care. If you have any information, images, or stories related to an object in the collection that you would like to share, you may do so at the link below.

[➕ Click here to contribute your information](#)

Request an image of this work. A fee may apply.

OBJECT DESCRIPTION	
COLLECTION	Fowler Museum at UCLA
OBJECT ID	X65.8014
OBJECT NAME	CHIEF'S CLOAK , KAITAKA , KĀKAHU
CULTURAL GROUP	MAORI
GEOGRAPHICAL AREA	WHAKATOHEA , NEW ZEALAND
MATERIALS	NEW ZEALAND FLAX , WOOL
TECHNIQUES	TWINNING
DIMENSIONS	L: 155.00 cm, W: 114.00 cm, D: 1.00 cm
OLD NUMBER	199332A
DATES	Former Collection 2-1934 From collection of Thomas Bryan Clarke-Thornhill, Esq. Sold by order of the Executors
CREDIT LINE	Auction Date 9/24/1934-9/25/1934
	Purchased for Wellcome from Glendining & Co, Ltd., lot 151.
	Gift of the Wellcome Trust.
RELATED DOCUMENTS	

PUBLICATIONS	
Author	Simmons, David R.
Citation	Simmons, David R. Catalogue of Maori artifacts in the museums of Canada and the United States of America. Auckland Institute and Museum. 1982.
Pages	plate 18; page 32
Notes	Plate 18 color photo is of X65.8014, but caption uses X65.12081. Page 32 information also uses X65.12081, but other information matches that for X65.8014. The other objects listed on pages 32-39 do not appear to include X65.8014, so it is not a simple substitution error. Most likely there was some kind of listing mixup - X65.12081 is not a comparable object, but X65.10281 is. There are multiple mis-numberings in this publication; caution is advised.
Author	Ralph C. Altman
Citation	Ralph C. Altman. Masterpieces from the Sir Henry Wellcome Collection at UCLA. Museum and Laboratories of Ethnic Arts and Technology. December 1965.
Pages	18
Caption	No. 27. MAORI. ROBE. Flax. Entirely covered with horizontal bands of finger woven, dyed flax with some wool threads. Taniko border. Once property of "Chief Opotoki."
They have been at ucla since 1965 and have never been exhibited, in part because of their fragile condition but also because the Museum deemed it essential to enlist Māori guidance in interpreting and displaying these revered objects. For the past year, a team of four Māori advisors has participated in the development of this exhibition. Some of their responses to the cloaks of their ancestors are presented in the accompanying video and as quotations in the gallery. These Māori voices can help us better understand the deep meanings the cloaks have for Māori peoples. Today in Aotearoa, the textile arts are undergoing a strong revival and cloaks old and new rank high among the most prized objects in Māori culture. Cloak (kāhahu) Te Whakatōhea Māori peoples, Ōpōtiki, Aotearoa 1880–1910 Harakeke, wool; double-pair weft twining, tāniko weft twining Fowler Museum X65.8014; Gift of the Wellcome Trust This cloak was accompanied by a tag saying that it belonged to a chief in Ōpōtiki, in the East Cape region of the North Island. The bold zigzag patterning is considered consistent with that attribution. It is extremely rare, however, for so much of the surface of the cloak to be covered with tāniko patterning. This suggests that the cloak belongs to the so-called "transitional" period when Māori culture was rapidly absorbing new ideas due to extensive European influence.	
Notes	Maori Cloaks, Maori Voices October 13, 2013 – March 2, 2014 Curated by Tharron Bloomfield (Ngāti Porou), Mellon Fellow, UCLA/Getty Conservation Program; Michelle Erai (Ngā Puhī, Ngāti Whātua, and Ngāti Porou), Assistant Professor, Gender Studies, UCLA; Roy W. Hamilton, Senior Curator of Asian and Pacific Collections, Fowler Museum at UCLA; Karl Rangikawhiti Leonard (Te Arawa, Ngāti Awa, and Ngāti Raukawa), Fulbright Fellow, Flathead Valley Community College; and Rangī Te Kanawa (Ngāti Maniapoto), Textile Conservator, Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand
Label	When the ancestors of the Māori people sailed to Aotearoa (New Zealand) roughly nine hundred years ago, they became the first Polynesians to settle outside the tropics. Previous generations of Polynesians had little need for clothing and made thin beaten barkcloth more for ceremonial purposes than for warmth. In the colder climate of Aotearoa, however, the Māori turned to a resource they found in their new homeland, the harakeke plant (New Zealand flax, <i>Phormium tenax</i>). When scraped with a piece of shell, the leaves of this plant yield strong fibers. Māori women developed new twining techniques to fashion these fibers into warm cloaks by hand without benefit of a loom. The finest cloaks, sometimes meticulously decorated with the feathers of Aotearoa's colorful endemic birds, transcended practical needs and became treasured markers of prestige. According to Māori oral tradition, for example, the great war canoe Te Toki-a-Tāpiri was exchanged for a fabulous cloak named Karamaene. Most of the garments on view in this gallery were purchased by Sir Henry Wellcome at auction in London between 1906 and 1934.

Object - Collections: ID Order, Synopsis, Remarks, Thumbnail			
Object ID	Synopsis	Thumbnail	REMARKS
X65.8014	CHIEF'S CLOAK KAITAKA KĀ KAHU MAORI WHAKATOHEA NEW ZEALAND NEW ZEALAND FLAX WOOL TWINNING		DESCRIPTION: Chief's cloak, vernacular name may be KAITAKA (see X65.8012 for classification as KAITAKA). Tag says cloak belonged to Chief Opotohi. Man's garment denoting prestige - worn by leading chiefs. MEAD: 112. Hiroa, 1926: pp. 61-70, 76, 79-95, and Passim. Mead, 1969: fig. 32 b. See more notes about date and type in cataloging tab

Object - Collections: ID Order, Synopsis, Remarks, Thumbnail			
Object ID	Synopsis	Thumbnail	REMARKS
X65.8035	CHIEF'S CLOAK KAHU HURUHURU K A KAHU MAORI NEW ZEALAND NEW ZEALAND FLAX FEATHERS WOOL TWINING		DESCRIPTION: Kiwi feathers and a few feathers of other type on flax cloth. TANIKO border and two tassels on top. Excellent condition. DOCUMENTATION: Usually worn by women of rank... (Hiroa: 59). Hiroa, 1926: pp. 61-70, 76, fig. 41, 141-2; pl. 44 d and passim. Simmons, David (Auckland Museum, Auckland, NZ): personal communication, Nov. 1973. Mead, 1969: pp. 131-3, fig. 51 a and passim. Pendergrast: 1987: 106-115. MANUFACTURE: See X65.10270. Shaping: at 7" down from neck 1 interpolated welt row; at 14" down a simple elliptical insert of 4 interpolated welt rows worked on a single welt row (Hiroa, fig. 41), at 8" up from hemline simple elliptical insert with 5 interpolated welt rows. For method of feather attachment and history see X65.8036 and X65.8046. For TANIKO technique of bottom border see X65.10280. Taniko design is AONUI (triangles w/ alternating bases; Mead: fig. 51 a). REMARKS by Karl Leonard, Maori weaver from Rotorua and Fulbright scholar, who visited the collection in Dec. 2012: Circa 1890-1930. The border is high quality taniko work. Shares an uncommon finishing technique (a knotted edge: not very well accomplished in this case) with X65.8035. May indicate that they are by the same hand or from the same group. Pheasant feathers are used in small quantity along the edges.. SOLD AT AUCTION, GLEN, 1/31/1929. BOX CW-1089. Axe with greenstone blade bound with encrusted fiber to carved wood handle. Traces of blue paint. BOX CW-1077.
X65.8033	AXE MAORI NEW ZEALAND CARVED BOUND GREENSTONE WOOD FIBER PAINT		
X65.8016	FISH HOOK MAORI NEW ZEALAND GREENSTONE		
X65.8014	CHIEF'S CLOAK KAITAKA K A KAHU MAORI WHAKATOHEA NEW ZEALAND NEW ZEALAND FLAX WOOL TWINING		DESCRIPTION: Chief's cloak, vernacular name may be KAITAKA (see X65.8012 for classification as KAITAKA). Tag says cloak belonged to Chief Opotoki. Man's garment denoting prestige - worn by leading chiefs. MEAD: 112. Hiroa, 1926: pp. 61-70, 76, 79-95, and passim. Mead, 1969: fig. 32 b. See more notes about date and type in cataloging tab

X65-8014 Chief's cloak | Kaitaka | Kakahu | Maori | Whakatohea | New Zealand.^{xiii}

X65-8014
W.H.M.M.

Accessions No.	<u>Classification</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Section</u>
199332		KIN	
<u>Description</u>		<u>CLOAK (CHIEF'S)</u>	
Woven flax, decorated coloured woolwork. 62" x 44" New Zealand. 61 60/-			
<u>Acquisition</u>	Glen. 24425/9/34 Lot 151		
<u>Placed</u>	OB	<u>Case No.</u>	
Srv. W 45			

Wellcome Card Accession No. 199332 X65-8014.

W.H.M.M.

Accessions No.	<u>Classification</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Section</u>
199332			
<u>Description</u>		<u>CLOAK (CHIEF'S)</u>	
Woven flax, decorated coloured woolwork. 62" x 44" New Zealand. 60/-			
<u>Acquisition</u>	Glen. 24425/9/34 Lot 151		
<u>Placed</u>	OB	<u>Case No.</u>	
Srv. W 48			

CANCELLED
11 MAR 1966

Wellcome Card Accession No. 199332 X65-8014 – Cancelled Mar 1966.
Transferred from the Wellcome Trust to the Museum and Laboratories of Ethnic Arts
(now Fowler Museum, UCLA).

Taipitopito tirohanga / Examination details

Initial Examination Date: 12th July 2023

Staff and researchers present at examination: Sylvia Forni – Director, Matthew Robb - Chief Curator, Isabella Kelly-Ramirez - Collections Manager, Jeanette Saunders - Registrar, Brent Kerehona (Pukepuke-Ahitapu), Delise Kerehona, Angel Niania, Kaelan Russell, and Ruby Rehu.

Secondary Examination Date: 10th – 12th July 2024

Staff and researchers present at examination: Sylvia Forni – Director, Isabella Kelly-Ramirez – Curator, Rachel Raynor – Director of Registration and Collections Management, Syona Puliady – Curator of Textiles of the Eastern Hemisphere Brent Kerehona (Pukepuke-Ahitapu), Tangimoe Clay – *kairāra*nga (weaver) and Maui Hudson – Iwi (tribal) representative and Traditional Knowledge Label (TKL) expert.

Tertiary Examination Date: 24th April 2025.

Staff and researchers present at examination: Sylvia Forni – Director, Isabella Kelly-Ramirez - Collections Manager, Jeanette Saunders - Registrar, Rachel Raynor – Director of Registration and Collections Management, Brent Kerehona (Pukepuke-Ahitapu) – *kairangahau/kaituhituhi* (researcher/author) and Angel Niania.

Taipitopito whakawhiwhinga / Accession details: X65.8014 (formerly 199332).

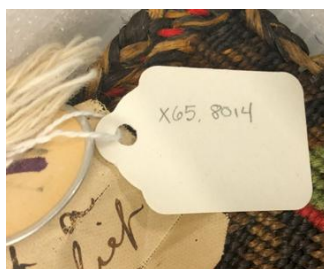
Momo Kākahu / Type of garment: *Kaitaka* (finely woven cloak with *tāniko* borders).

Kairāranga / Weaver: Unknown.

Date of creation: Circa 1870-1900

Place of creation: Ōpōtiki, Bay of Plenty, Aotearoa New Zealand.

Pinetohu / Labels and tags: An old paper tag affixed to the top right corner of this *kaitaka*, reads: *Kaitaka Cloak of a Maori Chief – Opotoki* which is written in black ink. A new, smaller, paper tag bears the following details: X65. 8014, which is written in pencil. There is also a circular-shaped, silver-coloured (probably aluminium) disk, with a circular paper sticker, which has a purple-black ink mark on the centre (with what appears to be the number 11 written inside the ink mark), with the reference number: X65-8014 written around the bottom edge in black ink.



Photographs courtesy of Ruby Rehu (July 2023).

Whakaahuatanga / Description

The *kaupapa* (framework) appears to be woven using natural (undyed) *muka*, and the weaving itself is relatively fine, as would be expected of a *kaitaka*.

Technically, this could be referred to as a *kaitaka* as this garment is constructed with *muka* (extracted *harakeke* fibre) with fine and intricate *whenu* and *aho*, with numerous *tāniko* borders; not only down each side and along the bottom, but an unusually high number of them covering the *kaupapa* of the garment. Textiles Conservator Dr. Rangi Te Kanawa, states that ‘it is very unusual to have *tāniko* in rows across the body of the cloak (normally it is just in the borders)’^{xiv}

The sheer volume and different patterns of each *tāniko* border, utilised in the one *kaupapa*; creates what one could argue is a contrasted image of beauty, with a bustling, and ornateness of design; however, *Kairaranga* (Weaver) Karl Leonard, when viewing this *kaitaka* prior to the *Māori Cloaks, Māori Voices* exhibition (October 2013 to March 2014), described it as ‘a somewhat garish transition piece’.^{xv}



The external face of the *kaitaka* showing the striking yet slightly faded *tāniko* borders.
Photograph courtesy of Ruby Rehu (July 2023).

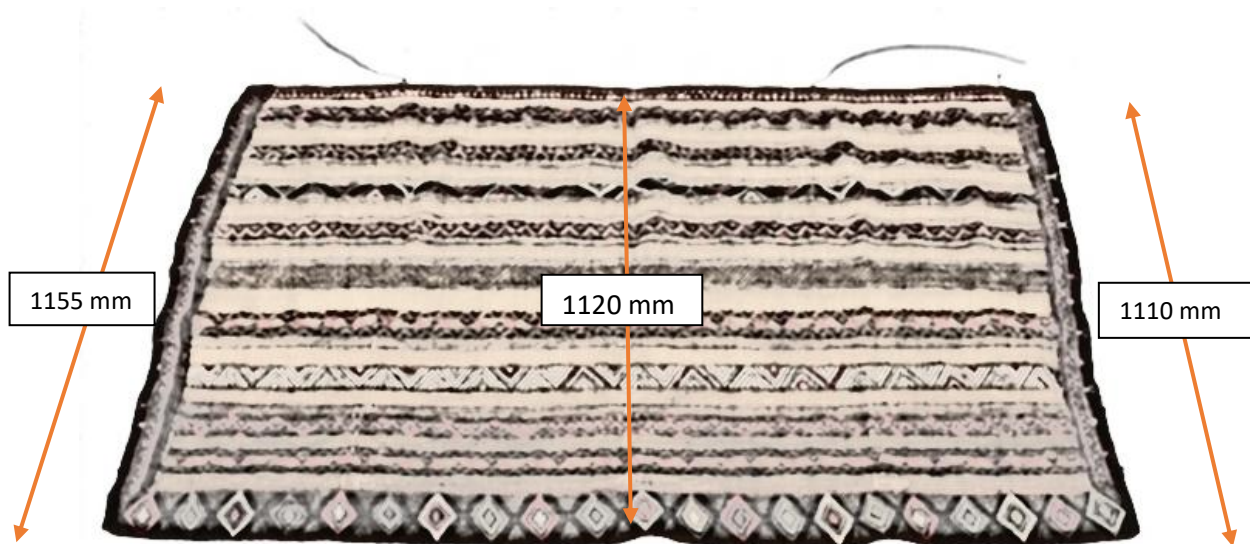


The internal aspect of the *kaitaka* showing the incredible contrast; the vivid woollen threads create such a striking, sharp definition against the natural tones of the weave.
Photograph © Brent Kerehona (July 2024).

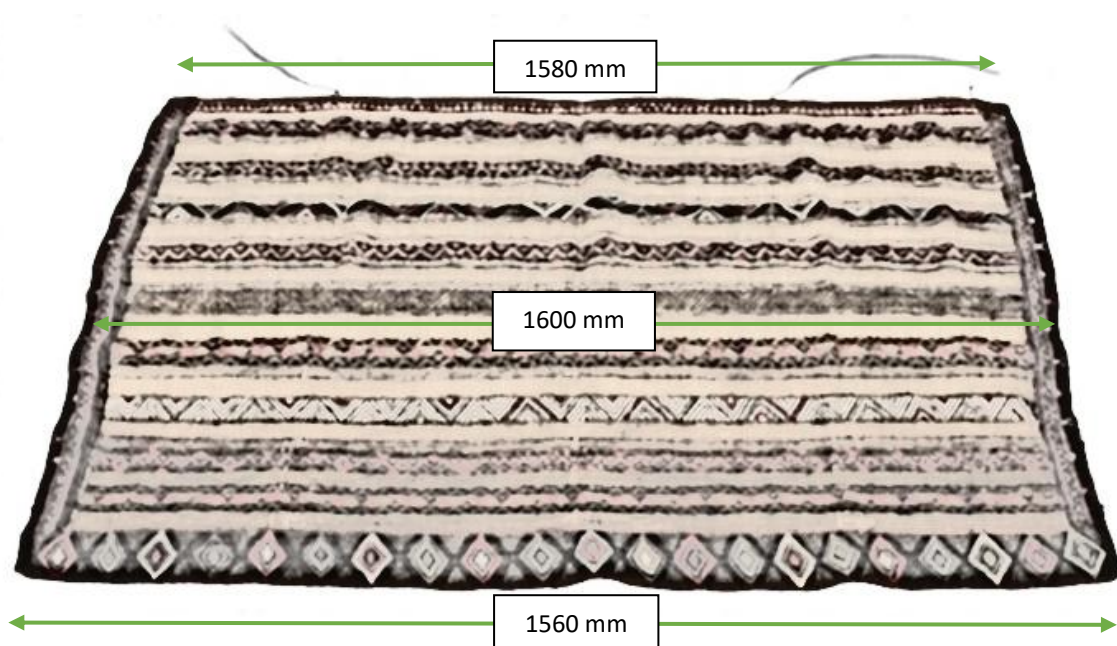
Inenga / Dimensions

The visual perspective of the photograph introduces a degree of spatial distortion, causing the *ua* (neckline) to appear disproportionately narrower than the *remu* (inferior edge). In reality, the physical dimensions of the *kaitaka* conform to a more uniform, rectangular geometry than the camera angle implies.

The length of the left *kauko* (lateral edge) measures 1155 mm, whilst the length down the centre measures 1120 mm, and the right *kauko* measures 1110 mm in length.



The width of across the *ua* (neckline) measures 1580 mm, whilst the width across the middle measures 1600 mm, and the *remu* (inferior edge) measures 1560 mm.



Tukanga / Process

The *whenu* appear to have been through the *kōmuri* (softening) process, and the coloured wool has also been utilised to create *tāniko* borders, in addition to dyed *whitau* thread.

Dr. Hirini (Sydney) Moko-Mead, when visiting the then *Museum of Cultural History* (17 October 1983) said of this piece, ‘that it is transitional’.^{xvi} The use of term ‘transitional’ refers to the gradual change from traditional materials to modern materials; usually introduced as a result of increased contact with European society i.e. coloured wools instead of dyed *whitau* thread. Te Kanawa (2014) refers to this garment as possibly being ‘a sampler-like experiment with taniko patterning.’^{xvii} The mention of a ‘sampler’ could indicate that it was a practice piece, to experiment with a new material, or used as an example for others, displaying several *tāniko* patterns.

Taimaha / Weight

Unknown, as the *kaitaka* has not been weighed.

Rauemi / Materials

The *kaupapa* (framework) consists of *muka/whitau* (Phormium tenax) fibre. The *tāniko* bands/borders are created with coloured polychrome woollen thread. It appears that various *tae* (pigments) have been used to dye some of the *muka/whitau* threads.

Kaupapa / Framework

Ua – Neckline

The *ua* (neckline) was completed and secured using the *whiri* (plaiting) technique.



Photograph courtesy of Ruby Rehu (July 2023).

***Kaupapa* – (external surface)**

The *kaupapa* of this *kaitaka* is woven with *muka*, with approximately 7 *whenu* per centimetre, and fine *whatu aho rua* at 9 mm intervals for the majority of the *kaupapa*; apart from the *tāniko* borders. There appears to be no *aho poka* (shaping inserts).

The *kaitaka* comprises of approximately 1100 *whenu*, and 165 *aho* rows, and there are 10 rows of horizontal *tāniko* borders, and a pair of vertical *tāniko* borders, one of which runs down each edge.



A section of the external surface of the *kaupapa* showing *whatu aho rua* weft threads.
Photograph © Brent Kerehona (July 2023).

***Kaupapa* – Framework (interior surface)**

Due to the delicate material state of the garment, the interior surface was excluded from the preliminary physical examination (2023) to prevent mechanical strain. The potential risk to the *kaitaka* outweighed the immediacy of data collection at that juncture. However, a comprehensive analysis of the interior face was achieved during a secondary examination (2024) via non-contact digital imaging protocols.



X65 12081 (Plate 18). *Kaitaka*. Wellcome No. 1084. Old tag “*Kaitaka* cloak of a Maori chief Opotiki”.

Cloak with bands of *taniko* over the whole body 5.5 cm wide each 6.5 cm apart. Width of weft 5 mm with no shaping. Many coloured wools used. A style of *taniko* similar to basket patterns of Opotiki area. Width top 155.5 cm, width bottom 157 cm, depth centre 110.5 cm.

Tāniko / Decorative borders

‘*Tāniko* is a traditional and highly sophisticated Māori weaving technique used primarily to create intricate, geometric borders for prestigious garments, such as *kākahu* (cloaks)’.^{xviii}

Far from mere ornamentation, the geometric taxonomy of *tāniko* borders serves as a repository for historical oral traditions, a visual marker of distinct tribal identities, and a medium for conveying spiritual and physical safeguards for the wearer.

It is highly regrettable that a profound disconnect exists between the rich narratives inherent in traditional *tāniko* patterns and contemporary comprehension. This cultural rupture stems primarily from the historical interruption of intergenerational knowledge transmission, a crisis exacerbated by the fact that countless significant cloaks were acquired by Western collectors for museums and private collections over two centuries ago. Because these ancestral weavers and cultural custodians belonged to eras past, and their textiles were physically separated from their communities of origin, these complex visual languages and their associated oral histories were not continuously passed down through uninterrupted lineages. Consequently, the vital contextual link between the weaver, the community, and the object was severed, leaving modern researchers and descendants to reconstruct the profound socio-political, philosophical, and genealogical meanings that these patterns were originally woven to communicate.

The textile is morphologically distinctive, deviating from conventional typologies through the deployment of dense, multi-row *tāniko* registers spanning the entirety of the *kaupapa*. Quantitative analysis of these decorative bands indicates a dimensional breadth of approximately 55 mm, separated by structural gaps of approximately 65 mm.

These *tāniko* borders are comprised of many coloured polychrome wools and have black borders down each *kauko* (lateral side edge); with both bearing two thin, vertical, red, lines, and small triangles toward the outer edges. These borders measure 70 mm on both the left and right edges (except for the centre of the right edge) which is 60 mm. The zigzag like designs woven into the *kauko* are known as *Aonui* or *Aronui*, which represents the pursuit of knowledge, looking outward at the environment, and understanding the natural world.



Sections of the *kauko* (lateral edges) showing the *aronui* or *aonui* (zigzag) designs and pair of parallel red lines that run down both *kauko*, from the top corners of the garment to the lower, larger section of *tāniko*.

An enlarged *tāniko* border is situated at the inferior hem of the textile. At 100 mm in depth, its scale is roughly twice that of each of the ten smaller registers above it. The field is primarily composed of black dyed *muka*, serving as the background for 21 elongated, concentric diamond configurations. These motifs traverse the entire horizontal breadth of the cloak, showing diverse colour progressions. The peripheral boundaries of the largest diamonds measure 90 mm by 55 mm, contracting to 25 mm by 15 mm at the inner core. The structural integrity and aesthetic finish of this panel are reinforced by two decorative borders: a twisted cord of black *muka* and red trade wool running along the lower perimeter, and a plait of blue and red wool securing the upper interface.



The *pātikitiki* or *pātiki* design is explicitly based on the diamond shape of the Sand Flounder fish (*Rhombosolea plebeian*). Because the flounder provides sustenance, this diamond variation represents hospitality, prosperity, abundance, and a good future for the family line.



The lower-left corner of the *kaitaka*, displays the vividly coloured, concentric diamond patterns. The black and red coloured plaited cord can be seen running along the bottom of the *tāniko* panel.

Photo © Brent Kerehona (July 2023)



An analysis of the initial three diamond motifs—focusing specifically on the second geometric configuration—reveals structural variations in the superior trim. The red and blue woollen plaited cord exhibits a high degree of twist density at its sinistral terminal. Conversely, as the structure progresses horizontally toward the dextral margin, the ply tension diminishes significantly, culminating in a distinctly looser compaction near the right lateral edge.

Photograph © Brent Kerehona (July 2023).



The third, and fourth diamonds, with a focus on both diamond patterns.
 Photograph © Brent Kerehona (July 2023).



The fourth, fifth, and sixth diamonds, with a focus on the fifth diamond pattern.
 Photograph © Brent Kerehona (July 2023).



The sixth, seventh, and eighth diamonds, with a focus on the seventh diamond.
 Photograph © Brent Kerehona (July 2023).



The eighth and ninth diamonds, with a focus on both.
 Photograph © Brent Kerehona (July 2023).



The tenth and eleventh diamonds, with a focus on both.
 Photograph © Brent Kerehona (July 2023).



The twelfth and thirteenth diamonds, with a focus on both.
 Photograph © Brent Kerehona (July 2023).



The fourteenth and fifteenth diamonds, with a focus on both.
 Photograph © Brent Kerehona (July 2023).



The sixteenth and seventeenth diamonds, with a focus on both.
 The red and blue woollen plaited cord becomes looser, especially
 after the sixteenth diamond, and toward the right edge.
 Photograph © Brent Kerehona (July 2023).



The eighteenth and nineteenth diamonds, with a focus on both.
 Photograph © Brent Kerehona (July 2023).



The twentieth and twenty-first diamonds, with a focus on both. There is noticeable loosening and damage to the red and blue plaited cord above the last two diamonds. The photograph © Brent Kerehona (July 2023).

The *kaupapa* (main body) of the garment is extensively covered by numerous horizontal *tāniko* borders that span its full lateral width, extending continuously from the left margin to the right margin. These linear bands exhibit a distinct lack of bilateral symmetry, with the majority demonstrating structural asymmetries and visible design irregularities across the textile plane.

Within specific panels situated between the horizontal *tāniko* borders, individual rows of black *whatu aho rua* (two-pair weft) threads are evident. Notably, these black wefts exhibit substantially less structural degradation than is typically documented in historical *kākahu* featuring elements dyed with *paru* (iron-rich mud). Elemental analysis during the secondary examination confirmed that the black threads on this *kaitaka* possess significantly lower iron concentrations than the *hukahuka* and *tāniko* components of alternative *kākahu* within the Fowler collection, which were recorded as between 3% to 5%.^{xix} This lower iron content (between 1.2% to 1.4%)^{xx} provides a plausible chemical explanation for the exceptional preservation and absence of visible tensile deterioration in these specific threads, as it would be less susceptible to ‘acid rot’.



A section of the exterior surface of the *kaupapa*, showing the black-coloured *whatu aho rua* weft threads. Photograph © Brent Kerehona (July 2023).

Description of *tāniko* borders:

A systematic, bottom-up description of each *tāniko* border is presented below, proceeding sequentially from the lower margin of the garment to its superior edge. The interior aspect of the *kaitaka* retains a substantially more vivid hue compared to its external counterpart. This pronounced disparity is an expected consequence of protracted light exposure on the outward-facing surfaces, occurring over a display history exceeding one hundred years.

First border

The first narrow *tāniko* border is framed by an interstitial zone of five independent black *aho* lines. The uppermost line forms the lower perimeter of the adjacent *tāniko* band, while the lowest line serves as the upper terminal for this specific border. The internal geometry of the *tāniko* work features three distinct horizontal bands. The upper band integrates brown and black zigzag motifs with micro-triangles of black hue. This is separated from the central field by a single red *aho* row. The central register introduces a multi-coloured palette, featuring brown *aronui* or *aonui* (zigzags) flanked by small red, black, and green triangles. A secondary red *aho* line delineates the boundary before the lower register, which repeats the decorative program of the upper band. The measurement between this *tāniko* and the next is 55 mm.



Second border

The second narrow horizontal *tāniko* border is preceded by five separate black *aho* rows, with the closest serving as an upper edge to the *tāniko*. Again, the *aronui/aonui* design appears to be utilised. The measurement between this *tāniko* and the next is 50 mm.



Third border

The third narrow horizontal *tāniko* border is preceded by two black *aho* rows, the closer one serving as the upper edge to the *tāniko*. The design is similar to the seventh *tāniko* border, displaying sets of narrow, parallel zigzags, predominantly of black and white, with inserts of red, green, and light blue. There are then two black *aho* rows, with the closest one serving as a lower edge to this *tāniko*. The measurement between this *tāniko* and the next is 45 mm.



Fourth border - The fourth narrow horizontal *tāniko* border does not have any black *aho* rows preceding it. There are three distinct bands within this border, the upper one consisting of yellow and black *aronui/aonui* (zigzags) with small black triangles. A single red *aho* row separates the upper band from the central one, which consists of alternating black, red, and green triangles. Another single red *aho* row separates the central band from the lower one, which consists of brown and black zigzags and triangles. A black *aho* row serves as the lower edge to the *tāniko* border, and there are another four separate black *aho* rows immediately beneath. The measurement between this *tāniko* and the next is 60 mm.



Fifth border

The fifth narrow horizontal *tāniko* border is preceded by three separate black *aho* rows. A single light blue *aho* row serves as an upper edge to this border, which consists of nine parallel, alternating sets of black, yellow, and naturally coloured *aronui/aonui* (zigzag) pattern. It is also possible that the *aramoana* design is also integrated within the design. A black *aho* row serves as the lower edge of this *tāniko* border, after which there is another three separate black *aho* rows. The measurement between this *tāniko* and the next is 50 mm.



These cropped details illustrate the left lateral section of the *tāniko* border; the left image captures the exterior aspect, while the right depicts the corresponding interior face. Photographs © Brent Kerehona.

Sixth border

The sixth narrow horizontal *tāniko* border is preceded by three separate black *aho* rows. A single white *aho* row serves as an upper edge to this border, and the overall design is similar to the second *tāniko* border on this *kaitaka*, with a single white *aho* row serving as a lower edge to this *tāniko* border. This is immediately followed by three black *aho* row beneath. The measurement between this *tāniko* and the next is 50 mm.



Seventh border

The seventh narrow horizontal *tāniko* border is preceded by three separate black *aho* rows. There is a light blue *aho* row which serves as an upper border, after which, there are zigzags of varying widths and colours (black, white, red, natural, and green). There is a single light blue *aho* row serving as a lower edge to this border and there are three separate black *aho* rows immediately below this *tāniko* band. The measurement between this *tāniko* and the next is 40 mm. An interesting feature identified by Margery Blackman who viewed this *kaitaka* in 1983, is that ‘some *aho* are carried across without working the twining into the reverse side’.



These cropped details illustrate the left lateral section of the *tāniko* border; the left image captures the exterior aspect, while the right depicts the corresponding interior face. Photographs © Brent Kerehona.

Eighth border - The eighth narrow horizontal *tāniko* border is preceded by three separate black *aho* rows, followed by a single red row of *aho*. There is then a narrow band consisting of yellow zigzags and black triangles, and this is separated from the central band by a naturally coloured *aho* row. The larger central band consists of naturally coloured and black coloured zigzags. There is then a naturally coloured *aho* row which separates the lower band, which again, like the upper band, consists of yellow zigzags and black triangles. There is a single white *aho* row, serving as a lower border to this particular *tāniko*. There are then three separate black *aho* rows immediately below. The measurement between this *tāniko* and the next is 50 mm.



Ninth border

The ninth narrow horizontal *tāniko* border is preceded by one single black *aho* row. It is 60 mm in height, and consists of one light blue *aho* row at the top, forming an upper border to this band of *tāniko*. There are three horizontal bands within this border, the first having brown zigzag patterns with small triangles; the majority of them black in colour, with a few red, green and light blue ones, and then a single red *aho* row separating it from the second, and central band. The central band, which is a little larger than the upper and lower bands, consists of only black and brown zigzags and triangles. Again, there is another single red *aho* row, under which the lower band consists of a similar pattern to the upper band, however, it has black, red, light blue, green, and white triangles. There is then one light blue *aho* row to serve as a lower border to this particular *tāniko*. There are then three separate rows of black *aho* immediately below the *tāniko*. The measurement between this *tāniko* and the next is 50 mm.



A section of the ninth *tāniko* border, showing lime green, red, and black triangles. These cropped details illustrate the left lateral section of the *tāniko* border; the left image captures the exterior aspect, while the right depicts the corresponding interior face. Photograph © Brent Kerehona (July 2023).

Tenth border

The tenth and final horizontal border, which runs parallel to the *ua* (neckline), is the narrowest of the borders, measuring 40 mm in height. The *kaokao* design, which represents the ‘ribs’ or ‘the side of the body’ consists of three colours, red, white, and black. *Whero* (red) represents the physical earth, life force, and vitality. The *pango* (black) represents the depiction of the natural physical world, darkness, and untapped potential, whilst the *mā* (white) represents purity, light, and spiritual enlightenment. The top of the arrows running from left to right. As it outlines a skeletal ribs structure, the design heavily symbolizes protection, sanctuary, and defence. It acts as a visual shield for the wearer or the community. The measurement between this and the next *tāniko* border is 35 mm.



This macro-photographic detail isolates a section of the exterior aspect of the superior *tāniko* border.
Photograph © Brent Kerehona.

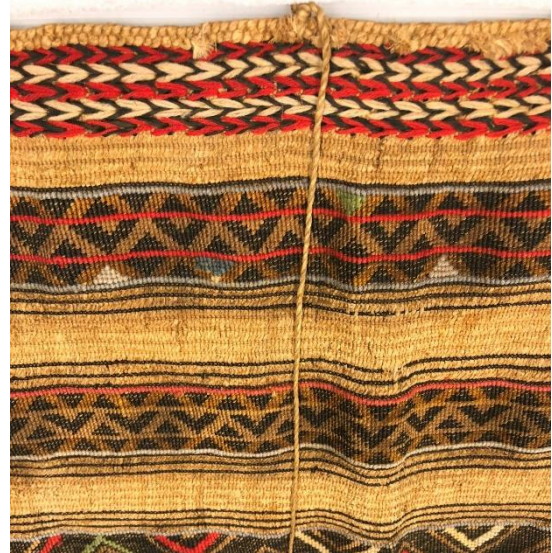
In Fowler records, David Simmons suggests that ‘the bold zigzag bands are Opotaki [sic] region *taniko* designs.’^{xxi}

From research conducted by the author, and from expert advice from *kairāra*nga (weaver) Tangimoe Clay (who traces her *whakapapa* to Te Whakatōhea); it has been determined that this style of *tāniko* is similar to basket patterns from the Ōpōtiki area – which supports the probable origins of this *kaitaka* to Te Whakatōhea.

Comparative material evidence from Tamarapa (2019, pp. 66–67, 106–107, 152–153) establishes that the incorporation of woollen elements is characteristic of late nineteenth-century *kākahu*. If these documented textiles are accepted as representative of this stylistic trajectory, the production of the present *kaitaka* can be chronologically situated between 1860 and 1900. The ultimate chronological threshold for its creation is bounded by 1934, marking its earliest known documented entry into British ownership archives.

Here - Ties

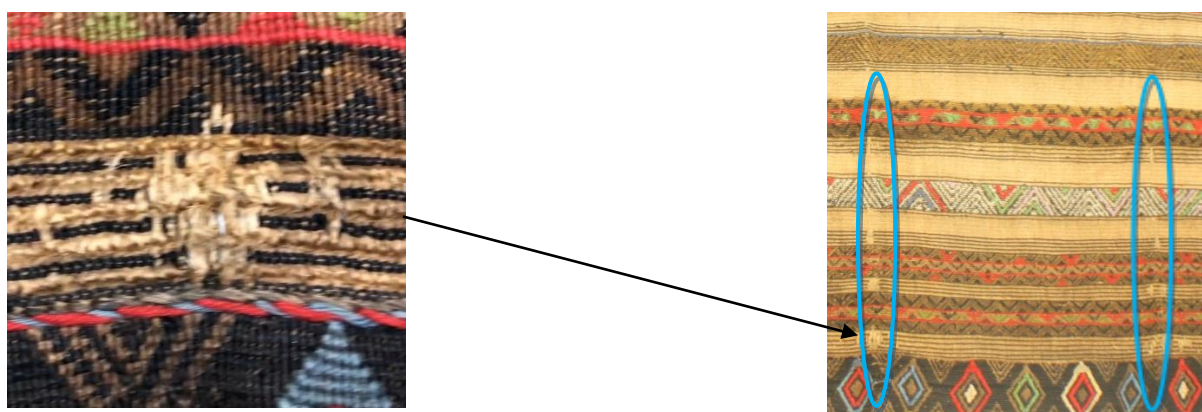
There appear to be a pair of *here* attached to the neckline of the *kaitaka*. These are *miro* (2-ply twisted cordage), measuring approximately 320 mm long, and 500 mm respectively, from left to right; and attached 330 mm from the left corner, and 440 mm from the right corner.



Pakarutanga / Damage

In a pre-exhibition examination conducted by Objects Conservator, Elizabeth Drolet, on 12th June 2013; small portions of staining or fading were discovered on two small areas of the body of the garment, and there were several small areas along the proper right, proper left, and bottom borders which were fraying, causing the outer border to become separated.^{xxii} The required repairs were made on 25th June 2013, by Drolet; who secured the fraying sections with Mettler silk-finish mercerized cotton thread, using a couching stitch.^{xxiii} There is some measure of damage to the red and blue plaited cord along the top edge of the bottom *tāniko* panel toward the right side, with what appears to be a tear in the red thread directly above the twentieth diamond.

During the preliminary examination, the author noticed that the textile exhibits localised degradation along prominent fold lines, characterized by the deterioration of several black *aho* (weft) rows and the subsequent separation of the *whenu* (warp) elements in these areas. While the structural degradation of *paru-dyed* fibres is well-documented due to their inherent susceptibility to long-term deterioration, the absence of comparable decay across other *paru-dyed* regions remains anomalous and warrants further investigative analysis.



Pānga Āpiri / Additional Information

As recorded earlier in this text, this *kaitaka* is quite unique, in that, almost the entire *kanohi* (face) of the *kaupapa* is covered with several horizontal *tāniko* borders. This is the first *kaitaka* which the author has viewed, which bears so many *tāniko*, especially spanning the majority of the *kaupapa*. Te Kanawa (2014) stated ‘I have never seen another like it’.^{xxiv}

Tiakitanga / Preservation

Preservation of any *paru-dyed tāniko* borders (and *hukahuka* on *korowai*) is of the highest priority, as they have lost their flexibility, and there is a genuine risk of further damage any time the garment is moved, hung up, or draped over anything. Through her research, textiles conservator Rangitautahi Te Kanawa, has discovered that the most common black dye, being *paru* (mud rich in iron salts, especially iron tannate) is very acidic. In her article *Conserving textiles* on the Te Papa Tongarewa website, she elaborates by stating ‘When exposed to the air, they begin to break down the muka, turning it powdery. In particular, this damages the black tassels that decorate cloaks...’ A similar pattern of degradation is observable within the black regions of the *tāniko*, where fibre embrittlement and subsequent pulverization lead to complete structural failure, ultimately leaving the *whenu* (warp) elements unsupported, unanchored, and exposed.

Although, Te Kanawa and Prof. Gerald Smith have ‘engineered a zinc-alginate consolidation treatment designed to neutralize the corrosive acids eating away at iron-mordant (paru) dyed flax fibers (muka) in traditional Māori taonga (treasures). Because the treatment chemically binds the fibers together, it remains a final-stage conservation measure due to its current irreversibility.’^{xxv}

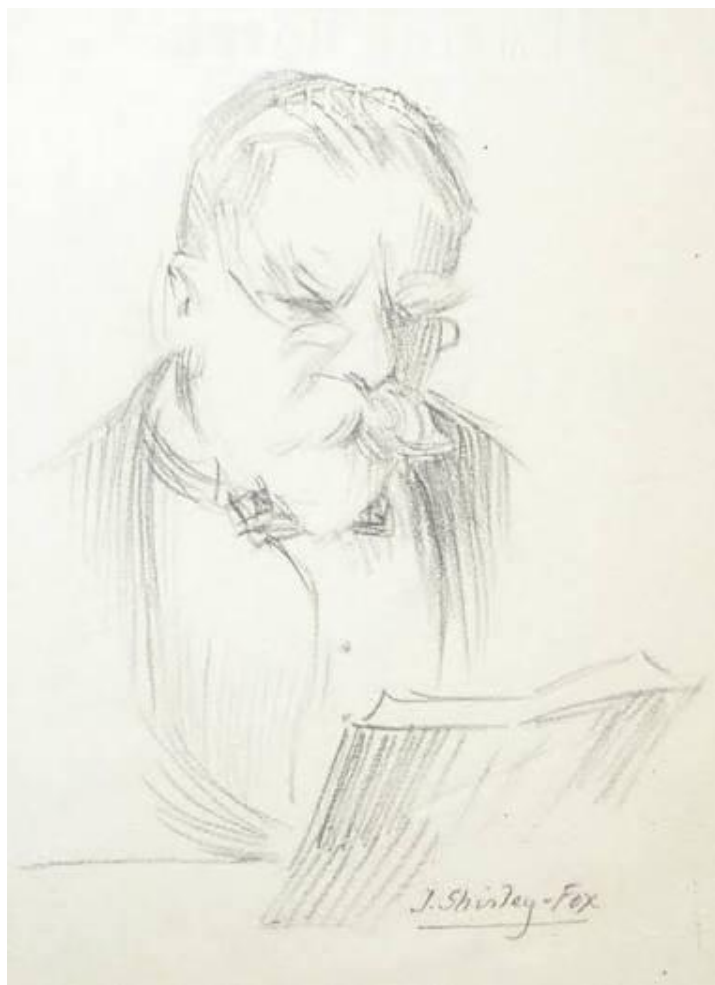
Standard institutional frameworks dictate the preservation of cultural artifacts, yet conservation interventions are strictly bounded by finite material funding and highly specialised human resources. Consequently, museums must balance these resource constraints against specific institutional priorities, including historical provenance, typological rarity, and future exhibition viability. This pragmatic approach frequently intersects with indigenous frameworks; *taonga* (cultural treasures) were historically conceptualised within a paradigm of dynamic exchange and re-gifting rather than indefinite preservation, moving fluidly through social networks until reaching the natural end of their material lifespan.

To ensure the legacy and associated historical narrative of this *kaitaka* endure, robust digital preservation and comprehensive documentation—such as this technical report—must be prioritised. This digital record-keeping serves as a critical safeguard against the inevitable baseline where material conservation and physical stabilisation are no longer viable. Additionally, constructing a contemporary replica presents a compelling path forward for physical continuity; however, executing such an initiative strictly necessitates a rigorous, culturally grounded consultation process with both the affiliated Te Whakatōhea *iwi* (tribe) and prospective weavers to ensure appropriate *tikanga* (protocols) are maintained.

Whakapapa / Provenance

The old tag attached to the top right neckline of the *kaitaka*, which was attached during its time at the *Wellcome Ethnography Collection*, reads ‘Kaitaka cloak of a Maori chief Opotiki’; which if accepted at face value, links this *taonga* (cultural treasure) to the town of Ōpōtiki, and the people of the Te Whakatohea *iwi* (tribe).

Kaitiaki (Unknown - 1934) Thomas Byran Clarke-Thornhill.



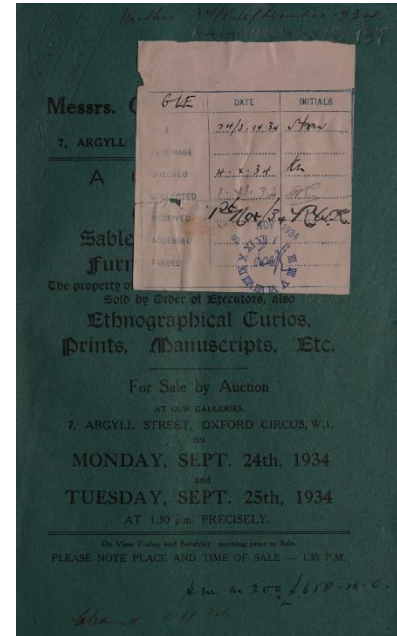
Thomas Bryan Clarke-Thornhill, Esq. (1857–1934)^{xxvi} was a prominent British diplomat, wealthy landowner, and prolific ethnographic artifact collector. He is best remembered today for his extensive travels and his large collections of world textiles, coins, and cultural objects, which he bequeathed to major institutions like the British Museum, the Pitt Rivers Museum, and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The first date which was able to be verified, regarding the provenance of this *kaitaka*, was in a Glendining Auction catalogue^{xxvii} (dated 24th & 25th September 1934); where it was listed under ‘Ethnographical Curios’ (page 10), as ‘Lot 151 A finely woven chief’s cloak in many colours’. The items in this auction had been ‘Sold by order of Executors’ after the passing of the late Thomas Bryan Clarke-Thornhill, Esq; who passed away some six months earlier. Clarke-Thornhill was educated at Eaton and Merton College in Oxford, and joined the diplomatic corps in 1881, serving in the British Legation in Tokyo in the 1880s. While

he was stationed there, he developed a keen interest in far-eastern culture and began collecting items (especially textiles) from Japan, and further afield. He gifted over 70 East Asian textiles and other objects, as well as ‘Museum textiles pieces from other parts of the world, presumably acquired as a result of his extensive diplomatic travels’^{xxviii} to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London,^{xxix}

Kaitiaki (September 1934) Harry Stow

Handwritten pencil notations on the catalogue show that this *kaitaka* was purchased at auction, at 7 Argyll Street, Oxford Circus, on 24th September 1934, at a cost of £3. Further research determined that the *kaitaka* was purchased by Harry Stow, on behalf of Sir Henry Wellcome. Oral history of W.J. Britchford describes Stow as a 'right hand man' to Henry Wellcome when Wellcome was in London, dealing with his personal needs and purchases. According to Symons (1987): 'He would go to the salerooms and bring back catalogues for Sir Henry to study and mark anything which interested him. He also went to the salerooms to bid for such items.' The notated sales catalogue shows Stow's name and the amount which secured the auction win.



LOT		10
148	Various native dresses, basket work, etc., in box	20/-
149	A large box of various native curios	8/-
150	A large bundle of tappa cloth, various designs	2/-
151	A finely woven chief's cloak in many colours	2/-
152	Four New Zealand chief's flax coats, and two others	3/6
153	Two Kiwi skins, a flax cloak, and two grass cloaks	2/6
154	Seven Hawaiian polished wood bowls, and two ditto platters	6/-
155	A Tibetan double skull drum for priestly use	7/-

BUYER		AUCTIONEERS		Date 24/9/34
Lot	Amount	Lot	Amount	
25	2 10	171	65 8	
132	1 15	172	2	
133	2	173	1 14	
134	2	174	2 12 6	
135	1 10	178/2	9 9	
136	1 14	191/4	7 10	
137	1 10	196/200	13	
138	1 14	204	2 12 6	
139	1 17	205	3	
140/1	7 10	206	2 12 6	
142	2 10	207	1 10	
143	4 4	211	2	
150	2 3	213	3	
151	3	215	4 10	
153	2	216	5	
156	3 3			

All images were sourced from the Wellcome Collection: Glendinning Sales catalogue, 24th-25th September 1934. Images include the Argyll Gallery, Glendinning Sales catalogue, Lot description (151), Buyer name (Stow), and price paid (£3).

Kaitiaki (October 1934 to 1936) Sir Henry Wellcome



Handwritten pencil notations on the catalogue show that this *kaitaka* was purchased at auction, at 7 Argyll Street, Oxford Circus, on 24th September 1934, at a cost of £3. Further research determined that the *kaitaka* was purchased by Harry Stow,^{xxx} on behalf of Sir Henry Wellcome, and it then became part of the *Wellcome Ethnographical Collection*. This unequivocally places the *taonga* in the United Kingdom no later than this date. It is important to note that it was previously part of Clarke-Thornhill's collection, and so, as he began collecting objects from the 1880s onward, one can presume that its arrival in the United Kingdom could be within the window between the late 1880s to the early 1930s. The *kaitaka* was allocated the following accession number (199332) once entered the *Wellcome Ethnography Collection*. The Wellcome Historical Medical Museum and Library (W.H.M.M) card bears the following information: Description CLOAK (CHIEF'S) Woven flax, decorated coloured woolwork. 62" x 44" New Zealand. 60/- Acquisition

Glen. 24&25/9/34 Lot 151 Placed CB'. This card had been stamped in red, diagonally across the word Description, with 'CANCELLED 16 March 1966'.

Kaitiaki (1936 to 1965) Wellcome Trust

After 1936, the Wellcome Trust acted as the western *kaitiaki* (custodians) of the *taonga*, maintaining physical stewardship over the garment until its relocation to UCLA.

Kaitiaki (1965 to Present) Fowler Museum

This *kaitaka* was gifted to the *Fowler Museum* (then known as the *Laboratory of Ethnic Arts and Technology*) in 1965; from the substantial collection of the late Sir Henry Wellcome, who had passed away nearly 30 years earlier. A letter from Dr. Williams to Richard de Peyer (dated 7 January 1982) states that 'The collections were sent in a series of consignments from February 1965 until early 1967.'^{xxxi} Once transferred into the collections at the Fowler Museum, the accession number was changed to X65.8014; with this reference being handwritten onto a facsimile copy of the W.H.M.M. card, the number being located at the top right of the card.

Although the institution has undergone successive renamings over the past seven decades—evolving from the *Laboratory of Ethnic Arts and Technology* (1963–1971) to the *Museum of Cultural History* (1971–1992), the *Fowler Museum of Cultural History* (1992–2006), and ultimately, the *Fowler Museum at UCLA*—this *kaitaka* has been consistently preserved and safely curated under the continuous *kaitiakitanga* (guardianship) of museum staff throughout the decades.

Whakawhanaungatanga / Establishing relationships and relating to others

The deep gratitude felt by the *uri* (descendants) of Te Whakatōhea for the enduring stewardship of their *taonga* within the Fowler Museum is grounded in a mutual understanding of *kaitiakitanga* (guardianship). Rather than viewing these historic treasures—including precious *kāhahu* and ancestral remnants—merely as static museum artifacts, the museum’s staff have treated them as living extensions of Whakatōhea *whakapapa* (lineage), *mana* (prestige), and *mauri* (life force). This respectful preservation has laid a vital foundation for a transformative partnership. By actively dismantling traditional institutional barriers, the Fowler Museum has demonstrated a profound willingness to work openly, transparently, and genuinely with the *iwi*. This collaborative approach ensures that Te Whakatōhea descendants are not merely passive subjects of research, but active partners who are welcomed to access, examine, and reconnect with their ancestors' material legacy. Through this shared commitment to cultural transparency, digital repatriation, and *kanohi ki te kanohi* (face-to-face) dialogue, the museum has set a benchmark for ethical curation, transforming a distant repository into a living sanctuary where the specific voices, historical narratives, and enduring *tinorangatiratanga* (sovereignty) of Te Whakatōhea are genuinely honoured.

Tāhuhu kōrero o ngā whakaaturanga / Exhibition history

This *kaitaka* has been displayed on two occasions to date, and at the time of writing, is scheduled to be exhibited in October 2026.

Masterpieces from the Sir Henry Wellcome Collection exhibition

There was the very first showcase of selected pieces from the former Wellcome Collection, which was held shortly after the collection arrived in California. In 1965, the two-year-old UCLA museum received a monumental gift of 30,000 ethnographic objects from the Wellcome Trust in London. Outside of a few elite UK institutions (like *The British Museum*), UCLA received the largest chunk of Henry Wellcome's global material culture holdings. ‘The gift to the Fowler included artworks, material culture, and archaeological objects from Africa, the Pacific Islands, Australia, New Zealand, and Indigenous/Native North and South America.’^{xxxii} The objects were received in several consignments between 1965 – 1967, and the exhibition (curated by Ralph C. Altman) opened on 5 December 1965 and ran until 13 May 1966, though its historic impact, academic legacy, and accompanying catalogue continued to reverberate across the campus well into 1967 and beyond. Organised by UCLA’s newly formed *Museum and Laboratories of Ethnic Arts and Technology* (which would later become the *Fowler Museum* at UCLA), this exhibition was a major milestone celebrating what was dubbed the ‘Wellcome Year’ in California.



Haines Hall, the site of the *Museum and Laboratories of Ethnic Arts and Technology* prior to the museum’s present location.^{xxxiii}

Despite not viewing any documentation regarding this exhibition, the author was able to ‘photo match’ this *taonga* from one of the photographs regarding this exhibition, identifying it from a section of the *kaitaka* on the left edge of an image of the Polynesia section.



Māori Cloaks, Māori Voices exhibition

Cloaks, Māori Voices was the second time the *kaitaka* had been exhibited and this project exemplified an indigenous-centred approach to institutional curation. The project was co-curated by an interdisciplinary team that integrated museum sector expertise with academic research, featuring Tharron Bloomfield (Ngāti Porou; UCLA/Getty Conservation Program), Dr Michelle Erai (Ngā Puhi, Ngāti Whātua, Ngāti Porou; UCLA), Roy W. Hamilton (Fowler Museum), Karl Rangikawhiti Leonard (Te Arawa, Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Raukawa; Flathead Valley Community College), and Rangi Te Kanawa (Ngāti Maniapoto; Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa).^{xxxiv}



A cropped view of the *kaitaka* in the top-left case.^{xxxv}

Uhengaparaoa: Taonga Tuku Iho / Ancestral Gifts / Contemporary Māori Art exhibition

Uhengaparaoa was a skilled Whakatōhea weaver who was gifted to the Ngāti Porou *iwi* (tribe) to share her *rāranga* (weaving) specialist knowledge. Under Uhengaparaoa the arts flourished. Although the specific maker of this *kaitaka* (finely woven cloak) is not known, they would have attained similar skills and knowledge as Uhengaparaoa.

The inception of the collaborative art exhibition stemmed from the author's initial research visit to the Fowler Museum at UCLA in July 2023. This foundational engagement was consolidated in July 2024 by a formal site visit from a Te Whakatōhea delegation comprising Tangimoe Clay, Maui Hudson, and the author, which catalysed preliminary curatorial dialogues. Although originally scheduled for July 2026, the resulting exhibition—entitled *Uhengaparaoa Taonga Tuku Iho / Ancestral Gifts / Contemporary Māori Art*—is set to open on Saturday, 10 October 2026 and run through the Summer months. Jointly curated by Tangimoe Clay and Gina Matchitt, the showcase features a diverse corpus of work contributed by several prominent Te Whakatōhea artists including: Rihari Campbell, Tangimoe Clay, Anahera Alixene Curtis, Anna Gedson, the late Ruka Hudson, Tutangiora Mafi, Gina Tawhai Matchitt, Ross Wesche, Toiroa Williams, and Whakatōhea Collective. An updated report will be produced at the completion of the exhibition. When unveiled during the private opening for Te Whakatōhea and select guests on the morning of Saturday, 10th October, the name of this *taonga* will be revealed.

Hītoritanga / Publication history

Former Chief Ethnologist at the Auckland Museum, David Simmons included this image of the *kaitaka* in his publication *Catalogue of Maori artefacts in the museums of Canada and the United States of America*. Auckland Institute and Museum 1982. Bulletin 12. pl. 18. As the image is quite dark, and the pixel quality is poor, it is unfortunate that Simmons couldn't capture the true beauty of this *kaitaka*.



Plate 18. Los Angeles. X65 12081 Kaitaka.

Margery Blackman provides a brief description of this *kaitaka* in Tamarapa's (2019) text, *Whatu Kākahu l Maori Cloaks*, writing:

‘Tāniko makes a fairly stiff fabric that is not suitable for a full garment, and its use is consequently limited to the borders. A *kākahu* in the Fowler Museum at the University of Los Angeles, California, has nine bands of tāniko across the width of the garment, as well as on the lower and side borders.’ – Margery Blackman^{xxxvi}

There is a colour image of the entire *kaitaka* on the top-right portion of page 83 of Tamarapa's text.

Ngā tuhinga a te kaituhituhi / Author's notes

In July 2023, I initiated research into the *kaitaka* during a family trip to the Fowler Museum, accompanied by my wife Delise and grandchildren Angel Niania, Kaelan Russell, and Ruby Rehu, who assisted with documentation. Following Māori custom, the team acknowledged the Gabrielino-Tongva Native American community before building productive relationships with the Fowler staff to study the textile. During the physical examination, I initiated a real-time correspondence with *kairāanga* (weaver) Tangimoe Clay. This remote consultation facilitated the digital transmission of high-resolution macro-imagery of the *kaitaka*, while concurrently establishing a collaborative dialogue between Clay and the Fowler Museum's curatorial and conservation staff. The visit also allowed me to connect my research with a personal milestone, visiting the UCLA campus to see the home of the original Bruins, recalling my time playing for the Bankstown Bruins in Australia. As with UCLA, our mascot was 'Bruin' the bear.



Kairāanga (weaver) Tangimoe Clay, Ruby Rehu, Director Silvia Forni, Angel Niania, Delise Kerehona, Kaelan Russell and the author.

In July 2024, a delegation representing Te Whakatōhea travelled to Los Angeles, situated on the ancestral and unceded territory of the Gabrielino-Tongva peoples. The delegation was formally received by traditional custodians at Kuruvungna Springs—a site of profound ecological, historical, and spiritual significance to the Tongva community—where they participated in a traditional welcoming ceremony that established a reciprocal cultural exchange between the two indigenous groups.

The next day, our delegation visited the Fowler Museum at UCLA, marking a significant moment of cultural connection and academic exchange. During this visit, our delegation gifted a *poi tāniko* that Tangimoe created as a companion for the *kaitaka*, I undertook a detailed secondary examination of the *kaitaka*, closely analysing its intricate construction and historical craftsmanship. Accompanying our study, Tangimoe Clay generously shared her deep, generational knowledge of traditional weaving techniques, bringing the textile's cultural narrative to life. Complementing this focus on heritage preservation, Maui Hudson delivered an insightful presentation on Traditional Knowledge Labels (TKL), sparking vital discussions around indigenous intellectual property and data sovereignty in museum spaces. Traditional Knowledge Labels (TK Labels) is a digital tagging and metadata system developed by the Local Contexts initiative to protect and manage Indigenous cultural heritage, data sovereignty, and intellectual property. Because Western copyright and legal frameworks usually grant ownership to the person who recorded, photographed, or collected an artifact—rather than the Indigenous community it came from—TK Labels serve as a non-legal, educational intervention to restore cultural authority to digital collections, databases, and museum archives.

This research visit served as the catalyst for preliminary consultations concerning a prospective contemporary art exhibition at the Fowler Museum. Institutional dialogues progressed into 2025, culminating in the initial scheduling of the exhibition for July 2026.



Our Te Whakatōhea delegation of Tangimoe, Maui and I arrive at Los Angeles International Airport, the invitation from the Gabrielino-Tongva community to attend Kuruvungna Springs, and with members of the Gabrielino-Tongva community.



Tangimoe with her *poi tāniko* ‘Whaiao ki te Ao Marama’, a companion for the *kaitaka*, and Maui placing the *taonga* alongside the *kaitaka* as he chants a *karakia* (incantation).

In April 2025, I returned to the Fowler Museum to conduct a third, confirmatory examination of the *kaitaka*. Following this material analysis, where I focused on the black coloured *aho* and the interior surface of the *kaitaka*; I participated in an in-person curatorial meeting regarding the prospective exhibition, the timeline for which had been strategically rescheduled to October 2026, a decision driven in part by Los Angeles serving as a host city for the FIFA World Cup during June and July.



A section of the *kaitaka* showing rows of black *aho*, Registrar Jeanette Saunders joins our meeting, and the Fowler exhibition team with the author and his granddaughter, Angel Niania (who served as research assistant) after our meeting.

This research process facilitated a meaningful collaborative framework with *whanaunga* (relatives) from Te Whakatōhea, serving as an effective vehicle for the identification, physical examination, and material analysis of the *kaitaka*. Furthermore, the initiative generated valuable institutional and cross-cultural capital by establishing enduring, reciprocal relationships with the Fowler Museum’s professional staff, representatives of the local Native American host community, and diplomatic personnel from the New Zealand Consulate.

Ngā tuhinga a te kairārangā / Notes by weavers:

Tangimoe Clay: Believes that this style of design work may originate from the Harris family of weavers from Tōrere.

Veranoa Hetet: Stated that she could not speak to it as weaving from another iwi, but she did write ‘It’s exquisite.’

Makareta Jahnke: Was aware that this *kaitaka* existed, as her *kaiako* (tutor) Toi Te Rito Maihi, had done some research on it (date unknown), and these notes and colour slides were currently in Jahnke’s possession, having been left to her on Maihi’s passing. *The author has since learnt that it may have been both Margery Blackman and Toi Te Rito Maihi who visited the Fowler Museum in 1983 and examined the *kaitaka* at that time.

Karl Leonard: It is his opinion that this is ‘a somewhat garish transitional piece.’

Awhina Tamarapa: wrote that ‘It’s an incredible *kaitaka*, very unique.’

Isaac Te Awa: Informed me that ‘Awhina Tamarapa was all over this’, and I subsequently located an image of this *kaitaka* in Tamarapa’s text *Whatu Kakahu / Maori Cloaks* p. 83.

Dr Rangi Te Kanawa: has never seen a *kaitaka* like this.



Slide collection originally belonging to Toi Te Rito Maihi, with some images from Margery, viewed by the author at Kaikohe in May 2023.^{xxxvii}

As mentioned on page 52 of this report, Margery Blackman writes about this *kaitaka* in her chapter 'Whatu - enclosing threads' in Tamarapa's text (2019).^{xxxviii} An excerpt from Blackman's personal research notes (below) titled 'Some notes on the collection of Maori cloaks in the Fowler Museum of Cultural History, University of California Los Angeles'^{xxxix} provides additional insight into her observation of this *taonga*.

X65-8014 Labelled in Simmons Plate 18 as X65.12081
Kaitaka? - An unusual cloak with extensive
taniko worked over complete cloak.
Hatakeke coloured wools, some of
the black dyed hatakeke has bled into natural
hatakeke. Whenu 12 per inch 4.75 per cm. over
cloak and side borders. Lower taniko border
finer with whenu 16 per inch 6-6.5 per cm.
There are some unusual features of the
taniko and the way some aho are carried
across without working into the twining on
the reverse side.
10 photos

A reference to the *kaitaka* in Margery Blackman's personal research papers, recorded during her 1983 visit to the Fowler Museum, UCLA.

Rārangi pukapuka / Bibliography - Endnotes

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- ⁱⁱ All Trails website. 'Best trails near Ōtara River'. <https://www.alltrails.com/poi/new-zealand/bay-of-plenty/opotiki/otara-river> (accessed 8 August 2026).
- ⁱⁱⁱ All Trails website. 'Waioeka River'. <https://www.alltrails.com/explore/trail/new-zealand/bay-of-plenty/tauranga-loop-track> (accessed 8 August 2026).
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- ^{vi} Screenshot from GoogleMaps. Mauke, Cook Islands. (accessed 5 May 2023).
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- ^{xi} Map. Te Whakatōhea tribal area. *Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*. <https://teara.govt.nz/files/m379enz.jpg> (accessed 4 May 2023).
- ^{xii} Te Ao Maori News. *Ma'u ke connects with their Mataatua kin*. Piripi Taylor. 8th June 2019. <https://www.teaonews.co.nz/2019/06/08/mauke-connects-with-their-mataatua-kin/> (accessed 19 October 2023).
- ^{xiii} Fowler Museum register 'Maori treasures at the Fowler Museum', provided by Isabella Kelly-Ramirez by email 19 September 2023.
- ^{xiv} Comments attributed to Rangi Te Kanawa during her visits to the Fowler Museum during May 2014. ARGUS Record. Object ID X65.8014. Accessed by Matthew Robb on 12 May 2023. Fowler Museum, UCLA.
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- ^{xvi} Comments attributed to Moko Mead during a visit to the Museum of Cultural History (Fowler Museum) on 17 October 1983. ARGUS Record. Object ID X65.8014. Accessed by Matthew Robb on 12 May 2023. Fowler Museum, UCLA.
- ^{xvii} Comments attributed to Rangi Te Kanawa during her visits to the Fowler Museum during May 2014. ARGUS Record. Object ID X65.8014. Accessed by Matthew Robb on 12 May 2023. Fowler Museum, UCLA.
- ^{xviii} Tamarapa, A. (2019). *Whatu Kāhahu | Māori Cloaks*.
- ^{xix} Elemental analysis using a PXRF Spectrometer, conducted by Dr Patrick Polk – Senior Curator of Latin American and Caribbean Popular Arts (witnessed by the author) occurred on 12 July 2024.
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Tūtohu / Sign off

Ingoa / Name:

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Rā / Date: 18th August 2026