

Kia ora, gday and welcome to the History of Aotearoa New Zealand. Episode 32: Pākehā and Moko. This podcast is supported by our amazing Patrons. If you want to support HANZ go to patreon.com/historyaotearoa. Last time, we talked about the tohunga tā moko, the people doing the tattooing, along with the women who were being tattooed and some of the tapu elements of the whole procedure. This time we will talk about what Europeans thought about moko, given it was something entirely different to what they had ever experienced before, as well generally the sort of things they recorded about moko and how it was captured visually. To finish, we will discuss those Europeans and Pākehā who ended up receiving moko themselves, some against their will.

The first Europeans who potentially saw someone with tā moko would have been the Dutchman Abel Tasman, who sailed for a bit around Aotearoa in 1642, the same year the English Civil War began. However, according to H. G Robley in his book on moko, which is one of the best early sources we have on the subject, Tasman didn't make a mention of it at all. In fairness, Tasman never engaged in any sort of discussions with Māori like Cook and his crew did but even in the brief encounters the Dutchman did have, it is pretty natural to think one of the things he would have noticed and taken note of would be the fantastically decorated faces of Māori men. From what I can tell though, Tasman never really got close enough in a peaceful situation to actually notice any markings on anyone's face. Whatever the case, Tasman didn't record anything about tā moko and given Cook and his crew did mention it a number of times, it has been suggested that between their expeditions, that is 1642 and 1769, is when the moko we have been talking about first arose. Part of this was what potentially came before the chisel type method that resulted in deep grooves on the face sometimes called te whakairo tangata, the carving of people. There was the thought that a technique where the chisel was dragged across the skin to pigment it but not leave the deep grooves is what came before. A slight variation on this hypothesis was that the whakairo method became popular around the Musket Wars though this idea seems to hold less weight. Another thought though, which was initially noted by Cook, is that Māori painted their faces and bodies rather than tattoo them. What is cool about that hypothesis is that it is also supported by the stories told through the oral tradition, the ones we talked about in the same chisels episode.

The practice of painting was clearly present at the point Cook arrived in Aotearoa, otherwise he wouldn't have written it down and it makes sense that temporary painting could precede permanent tattooing, but it is something that we may never fully know. He noted that painting of the body was widespread among various hapū he encountered and between both men and women. Common colours included white, yellow black and red, the same sort of colours used for dyes when weaving, if you can remember back to those episodes. Red clay was said to have been used to make red pigment, with the story going that the clay deposits were the blood of Rangi and Papa when their limbs had to be severed to separate them in the Māori creation story. The clay was often combined with oil from either animals or berries to make the paint and depending on what kind of oil was used, it could give the paint insect repellent properties and some measure of protection from the cold, such as in the case of shark liver oil. Other colours came from similar sources that you might expect such as white clay for white, charcoal for black and pollen for yellow. Blue was a bit of a weird one though, it is thought that it possibly came from deposits of decomposed moa bones, which would have been quite numerous across the country. All of these colours were used with a variety of motifs, such as on the face people could paint horizontal stripes across the forehead or diagonal stripes from the corner of the forehead, over the eye to the cheek. There could also be circles, crosses, that is Xs rather than Christian crosses, smaller lines or dashes, solid blocks of colour or even just smearing it, particularly on the body. Some Europeans also wrote that they saw some Māori whose noses and chins were bright yellow but the rest of their face was bright red.

Cook and his crew also wrote a whole bunch of other stuff in regards to tā moko, as well as many other topics. Such as when he landed at Tūranga-nui-a-Kiwa, modern day Gisborne, he met with people belonging to Rongowhakaata and Ngāti Kahungunu, a couple of iwis that called the area home. Cook noted that there was a difference between the moko of those who lived around the bay of Turanga, which you might know today by its super terrible name, Poverty Bay. Not only did he notice this difference on each side of the large bay, he noticed it on either side of the Turanganui River inlet. People on the southern side tended to tattoo their whole face, whereas on the northern side they only seemed to tattoo their lips. This seems to have been indicative of regional variation across the country as to what was tattooed, in what style and using what kind of motifs, a lot of information for which we get from people like Cook, Joseph Banks, Jean de Surville and Marion de Fresne, all famous European explorers of New Zealand. This point is somewhat countered by the fact that people tended to travel to get their moko done by famous artists they resonated with so regional variation, although it probably did exist, is somewhat more blurry than it may initially appear.

Some of the other things Cook notes is that middle aged and old men were more often the ones tattooed, which he theorises is due to how much pain the whole thing causes. Though, we now know that a moko was started at a relatively young age, around 14 or 15, especially given that regardless of sex, a person would need some sort of moko to not only be considered an adult but also eligible for marriage. When Europeans brought metal to Aotearoa, steel was used to substitute for the usual bone in chisels, which resulted in less deep grooves on the face but also less pain, meaning that younger teens could handle the process and as such moko was started at a younger age.

In general, Cook is one of our first really good European sources on tā moko and is one of the few sources we have on earlier forms of moko that aren't as often seen later in Aotearoa's history and not often seen today. Such as in the case of where he noted people with puhoro, or negative moko, that is instead of the pigment being used to make a pattern, the whole area of skin was darkened except for the part that they wanted to show with the desired motif. There are famous sketches of this being shown on the face but Cook also mentions it being on the buttocks and thighs, though other evidence seems to suggest it was rarely used on the face and more on those larger surfaces of the body. Puhoro, or moko kiore as Cook recorded it, reflects the designs found on the base of waka taua, war canoes, and seems to have been a much earlier style, as I mentioned before, it seems to have become less popular for whatever reason and disappeared entirely.

Moving a bit forward in time, we get some Europeans that have, shall we say, interesting ideas in relation to moko and what it means for Māori and their origins. We have mentioned in a previous episode about Alexander Majoribanks, who believed that the presence of moko in Māori society meant that they were descended from the same people as Jews, having branched off at the point where God made them his chosen people and implies Māori rejected His teachings. This of course says a lot more about Majoribanks than it does about Māori, as it is pretty clear he was not trying to hide his own bias or was purposefully trying to paint them as pagan and base. Despite this though, he actually makes a pretty decent description of how the procedure is done and although we have talked about it at length already, I'll just quote the first part of his description which is on the preparation stage as I think it is always interesting to hear how these people actually spoke about what they were seeing, "It is both a tedious and a very painful operation, and is performed by the priest, who if not very skillful, has sometimes to delegate the task to people of skill among the different tribes. The higher the rank, the more they are tattooed, so that a king or chief, has scarcely any of his natural face or body left. They make a plan for the face, in particular, and occasionally for

the body, as a surveyor in this country would make out a plan for an estate. They commence the operation at an early age, about fourteen or fifteen, as it takes two or three years before the operation is completed, the pain being so great that they can do but little at a time, otherwise the patient would fever and die; and instances occasionally occur of its proving fatal". After this he talks a bit about how the actual tattooing itself was performed and then strangely launches into another religious piece about how the followers of Baal in the First Book of Kings also cut themselves as well as the fact that tattooing prevents wrinkles and other signs of aging. The weirdest thing about that whole page or so isn't the bit about Baal or the Book of Kings, it's actually the fact that his claim of tā moko preventing the signs of aging and thus making you look younger is basically refuted by most other European writers on the topic saying it makes younger people look older! Perhaps it did both at the same time, I have no idea but I just thought that was weird. It also seems that some Europeans just had this odd thing about the Bible and Māori. Although Robley also comments on moko in relation to a Leviticus verse like Majoribanks, he takes a slightly different angle in that he compares moko to Herodotus' and Plutarch's descriptions of the Thracians. According to the Big H himself, the Thracians used tattoos as a mark of nobility whereas Plutarch says it was also used as a punishment. The interesting thing about this is that Māori did actually use moko for both those purposes, more or less, so Robley does actually make probably a fair comparison here. He also references Pliny and his description of British woad, though I personally think that isn't quite as good of a comparison.

At the time of European arrival, or at least when Europeans were arriving in larger numbers, the way they were documenting basically everything was changing. By that I mean, up to this point images were recorded on canvas, frescoes, tapastries and the like but at this period in time they now had the camera to capture exactly what was being seen through the human eye. Naturally when Europeans saw people with these fantastic moko, they absolutely wanted to get pictures of them. This was particularly so since the arrival of the camera in Aotearoa specifically coincided with the New Zealand Wars of the mid to late 19th century. European settlers were keen to see the faces of chiefs and other Māori nobles, even those they were fighting against as they saw them as savages and odd curiosities. Overall, Māori seem to have been perfectly fine with showing off for the camera, most being very happy to show off their whakapapa and exploits in their tattooed form. Especially as some knew that they were for distribution around the country and beyond, perhaps thinking it would garner them more fame, mana and instil a sense of fear in their enemies. This was not always the case though, as we have talked about, lots of moko was on the body and people naturally weren't always keen to get naked for a photographer. The main problem with cameras though was that the technique used to capture still images during this period actually didn't show up moko very well. Pretty much the only way you knew it was there was due to the deep grooves on the persons face, the actual pigment itself was pretty much invisible. This meant that as tattooing headed more towards techniques that incurred less scarring, moko slowly started to fade from the record. A recent interesting exhibit actually used this technique, called wet plate, taking pictures of various important Māori figures with moko using wet plate and modern techniques. It really is an astounding difference and an amazing exhibit so I'll put a link in the show notes for you have a look. Adding to this issue was the fact that after the photos were taken and developed they were touched up to emphasise the moko, often extremely poorly.

Given the issues with cameras, paintings were generally a much better way of capturing moko and there are quite a few that are very famous. For anyone familiar with New Zealand history the names that likely jump out at you are Lindauer and Goldie. Charles Frederick Goldie was born in 1870 in Auckland and is probably New Zealand's most well known Pākehā artist of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He was really the first Pākehā to show tā moko, and Māori in general, in a more romantic

and human light, somewhat showing what European settlement had done to Māori and their future on canvas. Goldie's paintings of tā moko are really amazing and really show the detail on the faces. They are highly regarded and I would very much recommend looking at some if you can, I'll put a couple on the website too if you're kinda lazy. One of Goldie's subjects, Te Aho o Te Rangi Wharepu of Waikato was a quite renowned tohunga tā moko in his time and may have actually given Goldie pointers on how to best portray the moko in his paintings, perhaps especially his own moko. Where Goldie took an approach to really capture the human element in his subjects, Gottfried Lindauer, a Czech born in 1829, took an approach that was far more regal. What I mean by that is he tended to paint rangatira and other nobles in a style that could kinda be reminiscent of kingly and queenly portraits of old. Looking at his pieces, it does seem that he wanted to portray the mana and majesty of his subjects as they are often wearing kakahu, have feathers in the hair, are wielding a pounamu weapon and have elaborate moko, all items and symbols of a rangatira. Lindauer was also lucky enough to paint a portrait of Tawhaio Potatau Te Wherowhero, who was the second Māori King.

Māori weren't the only ones being tattooed though. European sailors around the time of initial arrival already had a bit of a subculture of tattooing, which we may get into in a later episode. However, for our purposes today all you need to know is that sailors took a bit of an interest in this cool new way of tattooing along with the awesome looking motifs. As far as I can tell though, they weren't going out there to be tattooed in the Māori fashion, presumably because it would make them stand out much more at home. No, it seems the only way a European got moko, at least at first, was involuntarily. That is to say, they were captured and marked through tattooing to indicate that they were slaves. As we will talk a bit about next time, it was not uncommon mark slaves via tattoos, usually on the back so it seems to have been par for the course for captured Europeans to endure the same treatment. The difference being of course that Māori slaves who under went this could have potentially undergone the procedure before and as such could be somewhat prepared for what was going to happen. Unlike Europeans, who were likely much less prepared. We actually get a first hand account from John Rutherford, a European on a whaling ship who was captured in 1816 along with a number of his fellow crewman. He says that they were tattooed on the back and that much blood was produced, which would be wiped away for the tattooer to inspect the cut and if it wasn't to his satisfaction then he would reapply it. It seems that standard practice of tapu wasn't as strictly observed either, as all these men were tattooed at the same time while being held down. Rutherford says that the whole operation took four hours and from his description it looks like they didn't stop due to swelling or loss of blood, like they would if tattooing someone of high rank. Whether this was because Māori held some sort of contempt towards either slaves, Europeans or both or whether they just wanted to get it done as fast as they could is unclear. It is also possible that they were trying to test the endurance of Rutherford and his crewmates. This intense and long session actually resulted in a huge amount of swelling as well as Rutherford saying he went blind for about three days with the moko on his back taking about six weeks to recover. As an additional side note Rutherford said that his crewmates "moaned dreadfully" during the four hours they were under the chisel whereas he said of himself, "I never either moved or uttered a sound". Yeah right, you keep telling yourself that mate! Rutherford, despite all this, actually did kind of alright for himself, eventually becoming free and marrying two women who were daughters of his rangatira

Rutherford wasn't the only one who met this fate though. There was a Jack Rutherford, no relation, who was captured, tattooed and forced to fight for Ngā Puhi and another, James Caddell, who was young man part of a sealing crew that was attacked and killed, except for him. He was captured as he, "touched the mat of a chief," the mat being his kakahu, which was tapu. He assimilated into the culture and eventually became a noble, gaining the needed status and mana to receive a moko, even

marrying a chiefs daughter. By Caddell's story, you can see not all Pākehā and Europeans were forcibly tattooed. George Bruce was one of the first Europeans to be tattooed in the Māori style in 1806. He also assimilated into Māori culture, marrying a rangatira's daughter and became a rangatira himself. In the case of Barnet Burns, he was a trader who underwent the procedure willingly, well sort of, knowing he would be seen as more trustworthy by Māori by showcasing his mana, whakapapa and exploits but also potentially down to the simple fact that humans will trust those who look similar to them. Burns would later come to somewhat regret this as he didn't spend long in Aotearoa before returning to Britain. There he was received with equal fascination and horror, as "strangers mocked his tattoos and made his life misery. Moko was a mark of mana in New Zealand but a stigma in England – especially on the face of a European." This quote showcases the experience of many of those Europeans who were tattooed, with their consent or otherwise. George Bruce was captured with his wife after being poorly treated by a ship's captain. His wife was sold in Penang before being released back to Bruce, where they disappeared from history in Bengal. Caddell was invited to New South Wales when he was 30 and was paraded through the streets of Sydney in Māori dress. Robley finishes his story by simply saying, "They returned by the first opportunity," One of the sadder cases though is of John Rutherford, who actually did kinda alright for himself, as mentioned, account of his skill with a gun. After a decade in Aotearoa he managed to board an American ship, where he was proclaimed to be "a white New Zealander", which is potentially where his other moniker comes from, that of The White Chief. Rutherford took offence to this and exclaimed that he was an Englishman. Anyway, he was taken back to England and travelled with essentially a circus, being one of the 'freaks' on display showing off his moko and telling his story, which was actually published. He was also sketched and painted, both of which I will leave images and links to on the website. Despite the minor fame and money though, he very much disliked being shown for cash but unfortunately he needed to pay for basic necessities. The story of Rutherford is something we will likely come back to as he is one of the most fascinating figures I have discovered in our history yet. Like all these men, Rutherford was referred to by a very specific name, Pākehā-Māori, which according Robley seems to have been understood as "white man blackwashed". Although this is quite racially charged term, if that doesn't sum up the experience of these men coming back to England, I don't know what will.

Next time we will take a closer look at moko itself in terms of what means. Both the motifs and designs themselves but what it meant to those wearing it as well. As we have already talked about, the process of having a moko done was not easy, it was horrifically painful, time consuming and sometimes fatal so as you might imagine there was a bit more to it than just trying to make yourself look cool.

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