Re-excavating Wairau:
A study of New Zealand repatriation and the excavation of Wairau Bar

By Shaun Hickland

Supervised by Associate Professor Lyndon Fraser

This dissertation is submitted in part fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of BA Honors in History at the University of Canterbury. This dissertation is the result of my own work. Material from the published or unpublished work of other historians used in the dissertation is credited to the author in the footnote references. The dissertation is approximately 9,900 words in length.
Abstract

Repatriation is an increasingly significant issue in the museum world. It is concerned with the return of cultural artefacts that have been previously traded or sold into foreign countries or institutions, either at the behest of the indigenous people or the initiative of the institution holding them. This dissertation explores the role of repatriation in modern New Zealand museums and its role in furthering the often contentious relationship between Māori and museum staff. It has a specific focus on the excavation and repatriation of human remains at Wairau Bar in Marlborough. It critiques an unpublished history of the Bar written by independent historian David Armstrong, which was commissioned by Rangitane in 2009. My overall argument disputes Armstrong’s portrayal of Roger Duff, ethnologist at the Canterbury Museum, as the leader of a surreptitious excavation who was consistently underhand and secretive in his dealings with Rangitane. I counter Armstrong’s claims to demonstrate that Duff valued an open and transparent relationship with Rangitane and respected their cultural attitudes to ancestral remains. I conclude that these remain core values in both modern repatriation policies and museum relations with Māori. My contextual discussion draws largely on secondary scholarship and journal articles while my conclusions about Wairau Bar are largely based on primary archives and Armstrong’s report.
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Glossary

- Aotearoa……………………………………..New Zealand
- Hapu………………………………………..Sub-tribe
- Iwi………………………………………………..Tribe
- Kaitiakitanga……………………………..Guardianship or trusteeship of Māori cultural heritage
- Koiwi tangata………………………………Human remains
- Māori………………………………………..The indigenous people of New Zealand
- Marae…………………………………………..Māori meeting house
- Ngai Tahu…………………………………..Māori tribe that traditionally occupied much of the South Island
- Pākehā………………………………………Māori term for New Zealanders of European descent
- Rangitane o Wairau………………The tribe most affiliated with the Wairau region
- Taonga………………………………………..Treasure, applicable to any tangible or intangible objects of cultural significance
- Tapu………………………………………………..Sacred; holy
- Tikanga taonga……………………………..Traditional Māori protocols of heritage management
- Tipuna……………………………………………..Ancestral remains
- Toi moko…………………………………..Common name for a preserved and tattooed Māori head
- Urupā…………………………………………….Māori burial ground
- Waitaha………………………………….Historical Māori tribe inhabiting the South Island, associated with Ngai Tahu
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Introduction

The practice of repatriation has achieved increasing prominence in academic museum and cultural studies. It raises thorny questions about cultural preservation, control and ownership, and is consequently among the most contentious issues of heritage in the twenty-first century. The cultural complexities surrounding the return of cultural artefacts have necessitated the creation and maintenance of new relationships between museum curators and indigenous peoples.

This dissertation examines how these issues played out in the excavation and repatriation of the human remains unearthed at Wairau Bar, a gravel bar in Marlborough on the north-east coast of New Zealand’s South Island. The site was excavated from 1939-1964, and the artefacts discovered during this time have made it one of the richest sources of information about the social and cultural history of South Polynesian society. Consequently, it has become the most archeologically significant site in the Pacific region.¹ Wairau Bar has received renewed attention in recent years following complex negotiations between the Canterbury Museum, Ngai Tahu and Rangitane which led to the repatriation of the human remains in 2009. The Bar is distinguished among New Zealand archaeological sites by a scrupulously chronicled history of excavation and the intergenerational discourse between museum staff, archaeologists and Rangitane o Wairau, the local iwi.² The relationships between these parties were contentious and marked the excavations as an early example of genuine efforts by the Canterbury Museum to further relations with Māori iwi and integrate cultural traditions and beliefs into the preservation and care of koiwi tangata.³ Both the excavations and subsequent repatriation have recently provided New Zealand scholars with an opportunity to examine the development of New Zealand scholars with an opportunity to examine the development of New Zealand

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² Tribe
³ Ancestral remains
Zealand’s policy in domestic repatriation. The narrative of the Bar will be prefaced by an examination of this historiography and a discussion of how museums have integrated cultural traditions into policies of heritage conservation in New Zealand museum practice.

The following study is divided into two main chapters. The first will provide a broad review of the academic scholarship surrounding the practice of domestic and international repatriation. This chapter examines issues of cultural ownership, Māori self-determinism, the curatorial role of museums and the value in relationships between iwi and museum staff. This will provide the context for my second chapter, where I will present my case study of the archaeological excavations at Wairau Bar from 1939 to 1964. This will be divided into two subsections; a narrative of the original excavations followed by an analysis of the 2009 repatriation. Finally, I will conclude by considering the shifting attitudes to repatriation and its role in creating and maintain the relationship formed between archaeologists and the local iwi at Wairau Bar.4

Part 1: Current policy and scholarship surrounding repatriation

For the purposes of this dissertation, repatriation is defined as the return of cultural artefacts, including human remains, cultural objects and works of art to their original country or people. Scholarship surrounding repatriation analyses the international and domestic return of artefacts to New Zealand heritage institutions and challenges the nature of museums, their relationship with indigenous communities and their role in repatriating human remains. Historian

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4 The primary sources of this dissertation include extant field-books and excavation notes written by Roger Duff and James Eyles, and their correspondence with Rangitane and other members of the excavation. The narrative of the second section largely draws on a report entitled ‘Wairau Bar Koiwi Tipuna and Tonga’ commissioned by Rangitane and written by independent historian David Armstrong. The secondary scholarship includes works by historians including David Butts, Conal McCarthy, Rodney Harrison and Cressida Fforde.
Shane Jones identifies four issues currently challenging how museums chose to relate to Māori: ownership of taonga;\(^5\) the institutional authority over Māori heritage; empowerment of Māori communities through museum resources; and creating an indigenous-focused vision for the future.\(^6\) The following overview will explore how New Zealand repatriation and associated scholarship addresses these issues in policy and practice.

Current repatriation policy

New Zealand’s current policies governing repatriation in the South Island draw on the guidelines of the Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Programme.\(^7\) This is a government mandated programme that Te Papa, New Zealand’s national museum, developed to locate and retrieve remains from domestic and international collections, research their provenance and facilitate their repatriation in consultation with the relevant iwi.\(^8\) The programme is the first of its kind in New Zealand and, since its inception in 1958, has repatriated at least 87 koiwi tangata.\(^9\) The programme’s policy explicates that domestic repatriations are ‘led entirely by iwi [who] determine the place, time and details for the repatriation and burial and funerary rites involved’.\(^10\) Consequently the role of museums is minimal and often amounts to simply supporting and facilitating iwi wishes for the interment. Cressida Fforde has examined the impact that repatriation has on race relations in Australia, and observes that repatriation is primarily in aid of reconciling two cultures with a history of

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\(^5\) Māori cultural treasures
division. Alternatively, the initial repatriations in New Zealand were prompted by a pre-existing cultural revival that began in the 1970s. The number of repatriations began to soar in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries and continues to grow today.

**International repatriation**

New Zealand’s most publicised repatriations involve the return of Māori taonga from international museums. Toi moko are the most common type of Māori remain held in international museums, and there are currently over 200 specimens in museums around the world, including collections in France, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Toi moko were collected as curios in the nineteenth century by European traders who were motivated by profit and a scientific fascination with non-European indigenous cultures. This fascination fostered an interest among early ethnologists who studied the physical and racial distinctions of indigenous peoples to better understand their social and cultural evolution.

The early years of the twenty-first century witnessed a wave of successfully repatriated toi moko and other taonga which began in the early years of the twenty-first century. According to Michael Brown, this wave was part of a wider international movement that incorporated consultation with indigenous communities as an important element of repatriation. It also drew support

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13 Tattooed and preserved Māori head
15 Ibid., 7.
from the creation of legislation to preserve and repatriate culturally significant artefacts, and was spurred on by indigenous activist groups, like Survival International, which advocated for indigenous heritage protection. These groups were again part of a global trend in creating organisations that highlighted cultural grievances in international forums like the United Nations. These groups argued that they possessed an inherent right to care for their cultural heritage which transcended legal interpretations of ownership. Legislation surrounding heritage ownership was also a response to outright opposition to repatriation from museum curators who, according to Jane Hubert and Cressida Fforde, claimed ownership of human remains on the grounds that their preservation did not become an issue until advocacy groups gained publicity. Paul Turnbull refutes this argument and demonstrates that indigenous populations, especially Aborigines, already possessed a genuine desire to preserve ancestral remains before such groups were established.

In the years since repatriation has escalated in New Zealand, more countries have recognised indigenous expressions of this inherent value of cultural remains, which has reaped benefits for New Zealand repatriation. This has manifested in international heritage-based legislation which has both provided further opportunity for repatriation and helped maintain pre-existing cultural ties with other countries. A ceremony in England later this year, for example, will see the repatriation of a toi moko that had been kept in the Warrington Museum since it acquired the head in 1843. The head itself belonged to an unidentified Māori chief and was kept in storage, while a clay replica was displayed in deference to Māori beliefs that the public display of ancestral remains is insensitive. International heritage legislation that demands the

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19 Paul Turnbull, quoted in ibid., p. 110.
return of indigenous art or artefacts seeks to streamline international repatriations by removing or at least minimising any legal barriers that impede the return of indigenous ancestral remains. French museums are particularly well-versed in navigating legislative barriers that have previously barred attempts to repatriate their collections of toi moko to New Zealand. In 2007, for example, the French government passed legislation to redefine a toi moko that had been held by the Rouen Museum since the 1870s as unalienable. The head was returned in a ceremony that Māori representatives described as a symbolic act that ‘expresses the respect that [the French] owe to the beliefs of the people that refuse to allow them, their culture and identity to die’. This was a significant case in New Zealand repatriation, not only because the museum maintained a respect for Māori cultural traditions associated with ceremony, but also because the French curators actively sought permission from Te Papa to repatriate the head and campaigned to alter French laws that defined unalienability, thereby initiating the repatriation and furthering their cultural ties with New Zealand.

The cultural and diplomatic significance of these widely publicised repatriations has not gone unnoticed by other international museums that hold Māori artefacts. They have viewed successful repatriations as an incentive to build genuine relationships with New Zealand based on mutual historical and cultural ties. The initiative taken by countries like France to repatriate remains based on these ties reveals an attempt by source countries to intentionally strengthen their relationship with the nation of the indigenous people to whom the remains belong. Through responding to this initiative-based approach to repatriation, New Zealand’s own heritage professionals continue to demonstrate a genuine

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22 Unalienable objects are considered to have an inherent cultural value to their original country or people who have undisputed ownership.
24 Ibid., 371.
investment in their relationships with museums that hold items of displaced heritage. The increasing number of repatriations conducted under international initiative is a strong indication that these countries are beginning to prioritise their ties with New Zealand, and believe the diplomatic benefits of repatriation far outweigh the hurdles presented by restrictive heritage legislation.

**Domestic Repatriation**

Māori curios excavated in the early twentieth century continued to be traded among collectors, which had become an established practice between museums in the previous century.\(^{25}\) Many artefacts were eventually acquired by the directors of New Zealand’s first museums in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch who exchanged Māori taonga, especially toi moko, with both domestic and international museums in exchange for other curios.\(^{26}\) This acquisition was often interpreted by iwi during the twentieth century as an assumption of museum ownership, which consequently generated a perception that museums employed superior colonialist attitudes in their preservation and display of human remains. Iwi took issue with this attitude and often responded by seeking justice through government bodies, such as the Waitangi Tribunal, who they felt confident would uphold indigenous claims of ownership and cultural value.\(^{27}\)

Today, few substantial collections of human remains are discovered in New Zealand, largely because of the country’s relatively brief pre-European occupational history. Consequently, any significant finds are treated to great publicity, and their domestic repatriation becomes the subject of great scientific


\(^{27}\) The results of the claims made by Rangitane to the Waitangi Tribunal were summarised in the Te Tau Ihu Claims Settlement Bill and are outlined below on page 28.
interest and cultural controversy. The bulk of these repatriations are overseen by the Karanga Repatriation Programme. Attempts by smaller museums to facilitate repatriations are often hindered by a lack of time and resources which are necessary to process every request.\(^{28}\) This has led to a growing demand for sufficient institutional resources, in which Te Papa, the national museum, and the only institution in New Zealand to facilitate both domestic and international repatriations, sets the standard.\(^{29}\) Māori communities themselves have created interim solutions to relieve resourcing issues through establishing cultural centres, which house human remains before they are formally catalogued and repatriated by larger institutions.\(^{30}\) Sidney Mead argues that such centres are necessary, even as interim solutions, because they can adapt to bicultural ideological change that Pākehā institutions are unable to accommodate, because they are ‘too firmly welded into the past of Pakeha society to be amenable to radical change’.\(^{31}\) Caroline Phillips and Harry Allen have examined the broader trends of domestic repatriation and argue that it has enjoyed a success unparalleled by its international counterparts. This, they argue can be measured in the priority it has been given over liaising with international museums in North America and Europe that hold unrepatriated human remains.\(^{32}\) The most tangible cultural impact of this success is that by investing the necessary time and into domestic repatriations, museums give a greater acknowledgement of traditional iwi-based management roles that successive generations of Māori are obliged to fulfil.


\(^{29}\) O'Hara, ‘Repatriation in Practice’, p. 7.

\(^{30}\) McCarthy, *Museums and Māori*, p. 221.

\(^{31}\) Sidney Mead quoted in Butts, ‘Māori and Museums’, p. 91.

\(^{32}\) Caroline Phillips and Harry Allen, *Bridging the Divide*, (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2010), p. 221.
Māori Roles in Heritage Conservation

The significance and cultural necessity of these management roles was expressed during the 1970s through early attempts to repatriate ancestral remains and other taonga. These efforts encompassed broader campaigns by Māori communities to achieve cultural self-determinism by reasserting their traditional rights over ancestral land and cultural heritage. This was not a new battle, and according to Amiria Henare, it was an important element in early repatriation of human remains where it became ‘a tool in the in the fight for the recognition and redress of past wrongs, the self-determinism of colonial peoples’.33 This campaign drew on an emerging Māori cultural revival and manifested during land rights demonstrations such as those at Bastion Point.34 Self-determinism received increasing dialogue after the creation of the Waitangi Tribunal in 197535 which addressed historical indigenous land and cultural grievances.36 Repatriation was a way to address these grievances and had two primary acknowledgements. Firstly, that preserving taonga formed an integral part of honouring ancestral remains and Māori cultural identity, which was guaranteed by the Treaty of Waitangi.37 Secondly, it took responsibility for the theft and cultural appropriation of early collectors and, according to Michael Brown, enabled ‘the restoration of some degree of self-determinism’ among Māori.38 However, because public repatriation in New Zealand has been instituted so long after official apologies for historical grievances, it has lost its value as an apology and has the most value in strengthening the pre-existing cultural ties between Māori and Pākehā. However, admissions of historical cultural appropriation have allowed Māori to renew the identity that they

34 McCarthy, Museums and Māori, p. 56.
35 Butts, ‘Māori and Museums’, p. 84.
36 Ibid., p. 84.
traditionally placed in ancestral remains, while simultaneously strengthening their relationship with museums. This relationship will be examined in greater detail below.

Demands for self-determinism rose again during the 1990s and were analysed in historiographical debates in museum studies. These often emphasised a frustration among Māori over the lack of a bicultural presence within museums. Paul Tapsell, former Professor of Māori Studies, for example, observed that a remarkably low number of Māori staff were actively employed by museums. In light of this, he questioned the extent to which museums, which were managed largely by non-Māori staff and according to western academic traditions, can be considered legitimate stewards of Māori cultural heritage.39 The academic observations of the 1990s were therefore simply a later iteration of the demands for self-determinism from the 1970s, but focused on addressing the calls within Māori communities for more inclusive indigenous participation in museum management.

These calls have received a mixed reception in recent scholarship. David Butts warns that changing the perception of museums as monocultural institutions is not as simple as employing Māori in curatorial positions. He identifies a potential danger that Māori may simply be employed to fill a token role to assuage calls for museums to embrace bicultural equality, and thus fulfil a hollow bicultural rhetoric.40 He insists that Māori who are employed in museums must make a meaningful contribution towards recognising their indigeneity.41 Elaine Gurian, takes an optimistic approach to Māori, and argues that it has not fallen to such tokenism because ‘the involvement of indigenous peoples in the business of museums goes much deeper than mere

40 Ibid., pp. 94-95.
41 Butts, ‘Māori and Museums’, p. 95.
presentation’. Their overt employment in museums and other heritage institutions, in addition to breaking down a bicultural rhetoric, represent a radical departure from the colonial power structures that once characterised New Zealand museums. Indeed, many Māori are engaged in New Zealand museums and fulfil important cultural functions at all levels of museum management. All core members of Te Papa’s Karanga Repatriation Programme, for example, are of Māori descent, and are employed exclusively to facilitate repatriation.

The Role of Museums in Repatriation

The scholarship of repatriation has a prominent focus on the role of museums as custodians of human remains. It primarily critiques the changing role of museums in light of recent demands for repatriation and examines if they can be considered genuine curators of indigenous heritage. Conal McCarthy has examined the issue of self-determinism as expressed in policies of twenty-first museums. He observes a change in museum management from a ‘conventional ethnological framework to tikanga taonga, or traditional protocols and practices’. This challenges museums to incorporate Māori concepts of guardianship and management into their practices of conservation, preservation and repatriation. In essence, it asks museums to define the line that, if crossed, trespasses on Māori cultural values. Some New Zealand museums have fully embraced these cultural values in repatriation. In 2012, for example, Māori representatives from Te Papa accepted twenty toi moko repatriated from France.

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which were moved into the museum’s marae as the centrepiece of a cultural ceremony. Entrusting these artefacts to a museum with such ceremony enhances the status of the museum as an institution and it becomes a place where Māori can regain a sense of identity and self-determination. To this end, similar cases of highly publicised repatriations are accompanied by displays of cultural ceremony and act as a visible and public affirmation of cultural values.

However, an extensive use of Māori ceremony in repatriation has been criticised as overcautious by some museum professionals, who argue that Museums should remain first and foremost as institutions for preserving cultural heritage. Anthony Wright, Director of the Canterbury Museum, says that New Zealand museums have allowed themselves to become increasingly politically correct about the way they preserve objects of cultural significance to Māori. He argues that preserving and repatriating human remains in New Zealand has become ‘all about kowtowing and it’s not actually about standing up for what museums have done and having some pride in the fact that we have cared for and ensured the survival of material culture’. However, this is only representative of a museum’s public role. Most domestic repatriations are private affairs and do not receive formal public recognition and therefore do not receive the same level of cultural ceremony. Māori have been consulted on every detail of these private domestic repatriation since they began working in partnership with the Karanga Repatriation Programme, and the number of successful domestic repatriations, more than anything, demonstrates that iwi remain confident that museum partnerships produce a mutually beneficial relationship that guarantees respectful care of their heritage. This is not to say that the culturally abstract elements of Māori heritage, such as traditional management practices, don’t have a place in museums. They have the greatest value in providing additional

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46 Maori meeting house
48 McCarthy, Museums and Māori, p. 220.
cultural context in which remains can be appropriately displayed or repatriated. Their use in public displays of heritage preservation, like repatriation, should therefore not be seen as kowtowing, but an extension of the roles of twenty-first New Zealand museums. Furthermore, incorporating indigenous practices into public heritage preservation engenders a greater public understanding of the significance of Māori artefacts. It is, therefore, in the best interest of museums, as a cultural authority to their visitors, to retain these practices which furthers their relationships with Māori and the public, and can in turn generate opportunities for research.

**Museum relationships with Māori**

All successful repatriations are ideally characterised by a working relationship between museums and local iwi. Rodney Harrison identifies knowledge of indigenous practices and discourse about issues of ownership, the social and political context underlining heritage, and the moral and ethical responsibilities towards indigenous communities as important elements in this relationship. These elements have always been central to partnerships; a 1999 Te Papa bulletin entitled ‘A Guide for Guardians of Iwi Treasures’ states that a museum’s ‘acceptance that iwi must be involved in the interpretation, exhibition and care of all taonga’ is a vital element. In repatriation, this acceptance manifests during repatriations in frequent and transparent discussions of the value of human remains to each party, and their possible repatriation in a way that respects Māori cultural beliefs. On a cultural level, Merata Kawharu argues that relationships between Māori, non-Māori and physical artefacts should be

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guided by what she terms the ‘ethic of reciprocity’.\textsuperscript{51} This encapsulates Western principals of sustainable management but includes the sense of timelessness of Māori principals of preservation which are inherited by successive generations. According to Kawharu, this principal is beginning to take hold in both domestic and international repatriations.\textsuperscript{52} However, this marriage of differing values of heritage management is, for the most part, dependant on museum staff recognising the inherent spiritual value that human remains have to Māori, an understanding best reached through culturally transparent dialogue.

Many cultural historians have identified this communication, on both public and private levels, as the measure of a successful relationship. Private communication forms necessary connections with individual members of indigenous communities with whom frequent liaison is mutually beneficial. Historian Michael Brown explored the direct impact of this discourse on museum staff and concluded that ‘although they sometimes regret the politicisation of their chosen field, most enjoy the increased contact with indigenous people that had characterised museum work since the 1980s’.\textsuperscript{53} This communication is equally necessary in public forums, especially on a global stage, which facilitates discussion of the ethical roles of heritage professionals like archaeologists. The 1986 World Archaeological Congress, for example, saw a shift in the new role of archaeologists ‘as one of the ideological props of colonisation’.\textsuperscript{54} This marked an increasing recognition of professional fields, like archaeology, as having a significant and direct contribution to the knowledge of indigenous cultures, but for the first time accepted the moral and ethical responsibilities that had become associated with their field, which

\textsuperscript{52} Kawharu, ‘Indigenous Governance in Museums’, p. 294.
\textsuperscript{53} Brown, \textit{Whose Culture?}, p. 150.
\textsuperscript{54} Phillips and Allen, \textit{Bridging the Divide}, p. 13.
deepened their understanding of, and relationship with, indigenous communities.

Paul Tapsell has observed that this relationship can become contentious due to differences in styles of management between Māori and Pākehā. Māori ideologies of cultural management are couched in the concept of kaitiakitanga, which loosely translates to guardianship or trusteeship. It defines the continuous responsibility and obligation of the members of an iwi to honour their ancestral remains, which transcends individual responsibility.\(^{55}\) For this reason, Māori largely oppose practices of western museum management, namely assuming custody of the remains because museum staff do not possess ancestral connections to the people of the land. Alternatively, Merata Kawharu believes that Māori practices of caring for taonga are quite similar to western practices of sustainable management, because artefacts of both cultures are more often than not cared for by the descendants of the societies to which the remains belong.\(^{56}\) Kawharu says this is an ideal practice and that ‘the management of all cultural heritage should ultimately rest with its communities of identity in any case, whether managed by themselves or in partnership with mainstream institutions’.\(^{57}\) However, it should be noted that Māori have a more personal obligation to preserve taonga, especially koiwi tangata, because of their direct familial ties to the heritage they preserve.

Finally, historians have identified a genuine understanding of and respect for the reverence in which Māori hold their ancestral remains as a significant element in their relationship with heritage researchers. Paul Tapsell credits a lack of comprehension about the very real and intimate connection Māori have with their ancestors as a factor in misinterpreting the intentions in relationships between Māori and museums. Tapsell insists this will change when museums

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\(^{55}\) Tapsell, ‘Partnerships in Museums’, p. 294.

\(^{56}\) McCarthy, Museums and Māori p. 294.

\(^{57}\) Ibid., p. 221.
‘acknowledge and recognise that the *taonga* or prized treasures are not merely objects that are interesting, fascinating and providers of research primarily for museum professionals. *Taonga* to the Māori people are living and real’.\(^5^8\) This recognition is growing, particularly among archaeologists who seek to reconcile their academic and scientific aims with the sanctity and customs with which Māori view their heritage. According to Margaret Rika-Heke, archaeologists ‘view *tapu* as just one factor they have to consider in working in a Māori environment’.\(^5^9\) This conflicts with Māori attitudes towards their buried dead, whose remains are imbued with *tapu* and are important in reaffirming cultural beliefs. To disturb these remains is therefore considered spiritually detrimental, a principal that remains central to Māori opposition to disturbing koiwi tangata from the land in which they are buried.\(^6^0\) Consequently, archaeologists have historically experienced a contentious relationship with Māori. Caroline Phillips argues that the extent to which iwi are willing to cooperate with archaeologists will ‘often depend on particular circumstances and the degree to which any archaeologists, whether academic or consultant, has established a face-to-face relationship with the tribe or *hapu*.\(^6^1\) The value of this personal relationship was recognised by Roger Duff, who frequently invited iwi representatives to survey the progress at several archaeological sites at which he worked, including Wairau Bar. His attempt to construct a working relationship with the Rangitane iwi in particular was well documented in his excavation of the Bar. This project brought the relationship between Māori and museum staff to the forefront for the first time and initiated changes that would define this relationship in New Zealand museums for years to come.

\(^{59}\) Margaret Rika-Heke, ‘Archaeology and Indigeneity in Aotearoa/New Zealand: Why do Māori not engage with Archaeology?’, *Bridging the Divide* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2010), p. 201.
Part 2: Wairau Bar

The Wairau Bar is a seven kilometre long gravel bar in Marlborough on the north east coast of New Zealand’s South Island. The Bar is located near Boulder Bank, which was used by Māori as a site for pa and urupā. Nearby canals fed into the Wairau River, providing fertile ground for flax, an important natural resource, and were used as vital transport routes. Te Runanga a Rangitane o Wairau are the iwi most affiliated with the area, and have continually occupied it since the sixteenth century. It was excavated from 1939 to 1964 under the leadership of Roger Duff, an ethnologist from Canterbury Museum, who was assisted by a number of archaeologists and local volunteers. The following section provides an account of these events.

History of Excavation

Archaeological activity began at the Wairau Bar in 1939 with a chance discovery by James Eyles, a thirteen year old schoolboy whose family lived on the Bar. Eyles’ step-father, Charles Perano, encouraged him to investigate the land surrounding their home on the Bar, and he began fossicking for moa bones. Finding a cavity in the ground, Eyles unearthed what he initially believed to be a water gourd but was identified by his step-father as a complete moa egg. Returning to the site, Eyles unearthed a skull and ornaments including a sperm whale tooth necklace and a number of moa bone reels, all of which were

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63 Māori house
64 Māori burial ground
65 Ibid., p. 7.
70 Blundell, Where it All Began’, p. 20.
thought to pre-date Rangitane occupation of the site (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: The skull, egg and bone necklace discovered by James Eyles in 1939. (Eyles James, Wairau Bar Moa Hunter: The Jim Eyles Story (Dunedin: River Press, 2007, p. 62)).

In his 2009 report on the history of the excavation, independent historian David Armstrong identifies Perano’s treatment of the skull as evidence of deception by archaeologists and land owners against Rangitane, and argues the iwi’s ignorance of the site was exploited to undermine any opposition to the excavations.\footnote{Armstrong, ‘Wairau Bar Koiwi Tipuna and Taonga’, p. 39.} After the skull’s discovery, Perano grew concerned about the implications of digging at a potential Māori grave site and showed the skull, which had been displayed in a fish shop window, to Rangitane elder Manny MacDonald who assured him “‘It’s nothing to do with us’”\footnote{Eyles, Wairau Bar Moa Hunter, p. 64} and “‘He’s not one of us’”.\footnote{Ibid., p. 64.} Despite this reassurance, Perano reburied the skull, claiming it was a concession to Māori wishes. However, W. J. Elvy, an archaeologist who later worked extensively at the site and knew Perano’s family well, rejected this motive, arguing that if the skull genuinely pre-dated Rangitane occupation, the
iwi should not ‘have cared a damn as they wouldn’t know who it belonged to’.\(^7^4\) Armstrong therefore presents a dual account of the skull and, by siding with the latter version of events, interprets it as a case in point of archaeological deception.

Eyles’ finds became the subject of a number of articles published in the *Marlborough Express*. They quickly caught the attention of staff in Wellington’s Dominion Museum who offered to purchase the collection including the widely publicised skull which Perano quietly re-excavated.\(^7^5\) The museum asked Perano to confirm that his step-son would be the only claimant of ownership over the artefacts\(^7^6\), but Armstrong notes he did not mention that the skull had been reburied; doing so would concede that the artefacts were tribal articles and imply Rangitane had an interest in the site.\(^7^7\) Nor did he inform Rangitane about the skull’s second disinterment because ‘it might have upset the local Māoris’,\(^7^8\) a claim which Armstrong cites as cause for doubting MacDonald’s dismissive attitude towards the skull.\(^7^9\) Armstrong offers the possibility that MacDonald’s view did not represent that of the whole tribe and concludes that because he kept the skull, Perano took MacDonald at his word and did not feel obliged to consult Rangitane elders.\(^8^0\) Armstrong interprets this as an opportunistic act based on borderline claim for possessing the skull. However, he does not make any effort to interview any Rangitane members present at the digs or their descendants who can verify this claim. His conclusion of opportunism is therefore based on assumptions from a single source which he does not place in a wider tribal context and therefore

\(^{74}\) W. J. Elvy to Dr Robert Falla 7 April 1942.
\(^{75}\) Armstrong, ‘Wairau Bar Koïwi Tipuna and Taonga’, p. 34.
\(^{76}\) W. Oliver to E. C. Perano, 27 June 1940.
\(^{77}\) Armstrong, ‘Wairau Bar Koïwi Tipuna and Taonga’, p. 34.
\(^{78}\) W. J. Elvy to Dr Robert Falla, 7 April 1942.
\(^{79}\) Armstrong, ‘Wairau Bar Koïwi Tipuna and Taonga’, p. 35.
\(^{80}\) Ibid., p. 38.
MacDonald’s response cannot be interpreted as dismissively as Armstrong presents it.

Perano subsequently sold Eyles’ collection of artefacts to the Dominion Museum for £130, an act that Armstrong cites as characteristic of the opportunism which archaeologists employed against Rangitane. This claim typifies Armstrong’s attitude towards archaeologists throughout his report, frequently characterising the excavations as underhand and surreptitious. He asserts that any genuine academic curiosity was marred by dishonesty and misdirection as archaeologists perused their own interests. This, he argues, set ‘a pattern characterised by a failure to disclose facts and, at times, downright deception’. I agree that the archaeologists’ actions can, from a purely academic perspective, be interpreted as self-interested because they had access to resources to best preserve the artefacts. Their enthusiasm reflects a desire to fill a void in New Zealand archaeological scholarship about pre-contact Māori society. I am, however sceptical about the extent to which Perano deliberately misled Rangitane elders. Legislative restrictions to governing New Zealand archaeology did not exist in the 1940s. Consequently there was nothing to prevent Eyles from fossicking for, and claiming ownership of, artefacts found on his family’s land. It is therefore unfair to accuse Perano and Eyles of transgressing any formal requirements that required full disclosure of any remains they found. Above all, I would credit any informal arrangements that Armstrong interprets as lax to the equally informal and unprofessional practice of archaeology at the time. If any miscommunication did genuinely occur, it simply reflects a limited but growing of cultural understanding and awareness of the traditionally inherent sanctity and reverence with which Māori treated the remains of their ancestors.

81 Eyles, Wairau Bar Moa Hunter, p. 66.
Three years later in 1942, while digging a bomb shelter on the family farm, Eyles unearthed further burials. These also contained a moa egg and artefacts including adzes and moa bone necklaces.83 These subsequent discoveries were also highly publicised in the *Marlborough Express* and soon attracted the attention of Canterbury Museum Director Dr Robert Falla and Roger Duff, the Museum’s ethnologist. Duff had studied anthropology at Otago University and gained an interest in Polynesian culture from his employment in the Samoan Public Service. He was appointed as the Museum’s ethnologist in 1938 and had been engaged in North Canterbury excavations of moa skeletons at various sites throughout New Zealand.84 Duff arrived at Wairau Bar on 10 April 1942 to examine the site and meet Jim Eyles with whom he was to form a long lasting personal and professional relationship. Over the next 22 years they unearthed what would eventually become the most extensive Māori burial ground in New Zealand (see Appendix 1). Duff gave the teenaged Eyles rudimentary archaeology lessons, encouraging him to continue excavating after he returned to Canterbury. Eyles did so, unearthing more stone implements and adzes, relaying all his findings to Duff in regular letters.85 These discoveries sparked Eyles’ lifelong interest in archaeology. This later grew into a career as he became an assistant ethnologist at the Canterbury Museum, working under Duff. Duff himself continued to visit Wairau itinerantly in between other digs and his work at the Canterbury Museum. In 1943 he and Eyles excavated fourteen burials and in 1945 Eyles uncovered eight more.86 In total the pair unearthed nearly 50 burials and over 2000 ornaments, most of which were

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83 Michael Trotter, ‘Further Excavations’, *Asian Perspectives*, vol. 18 (1975), 75.
85 J. Eyles to R. Duff, 1 August 1942.
86 Trotter, *Asian Perspectives*, p. 75.
buried as grave goods and often included moa eggs, bone fragments, pendants, necklaces and adzes.\textsuperscript{87}

**Archaeological methods and scientific discoveries**

Unfortunately for historians, much of the fieldwork of these findings was unsystematically recorded and lacked the standards of preservation demanded by modern archaeology.\textsuperscript{88} This is evident in Duff’s own field-books, letters and plans which do not systematically categorise the remains, analysing each burial separately.\textsuperscript{89} The physical archaeology during the initial excavations utilised haphazard sampling methods but represented a step towards professionalising New Zealand archaeology.\textsuperscript{90} Early excavations at Wairau Bar utilised a pair of horses to plough fields which led to the discovery of burial 19.\textsuperscript{91} These methods later became more cautious and precise as archaeologists loosened the top layer with a pick and fork, exposing several inches of middens\textsuperscript{92} which were pulled down with a trenching tool. This exposed a layer of sand and clean shingle in which most artefacts were found.\textsuperscript{93} Duff often cleaned these burials and photographed them \textit{in situ} to record the position of bones for posterity.\textsuperscript{94} Research priorities also changed in later years as excavators redirected their focus from burials and artefacts to structures, stratigraphy and midden analysis in response to both advances in technology and the discovery of structural post holes.\textsuperscript{95}

\textsuperscript{87} Thomas Higham, Atholl Anderson and Chris Jacomb, ‘Dating the First New Zealanders’. \textit{Antiquity}, (Gloucester: Antiquity Publications, 1999), 422.
\textsuperscript{88} Brooks et. al., ‘History of the Excavations at Wairau Bar’, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., p. 15.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., p. 15.
\textsuperscript{91} Eyles, \textit{Wairau Bar Moa Hunter}, p. 95.
\textsuperscript{92} Small remains of shell or bone
\textsuperscript{93} Duff, Field-book 2, 10-20 May 1945, p. 49.
\textsuperscript{94} Duff, Field-book 2, 23 October 1945, p. 81.
\textsuperscript{95} Brooks et. al., ‘History of the Excavations at Wairau Bar’, 49.
The discoveries made at Wairau Bar have made New Zealand one of the few countries in the world to have a conclusive site of the landfall of their indigenous people, which provides a baseline from which the development of their culture can be traced. Even during its excavation, the site achieved national significance and commanded international attention. Major S. F. Markham, former President of the British Museums Association, recognised the ground-breaking contribution that Wairau Bar made to world archaeology. Visiting Marlborough in 1944, he asserted that the finds were "of tremendous significance in relation to the general problems of the Pacific. This importance will be recognised by the world after the war".  

Wairau first later achieved scholarly prominence when Duff recorded his revolutionary conclusions about the evolution of Māori material culture into his 1950 book *The Moa-Hunter Period of Māori Culture* which became the seminal book on New Zealand archaeology. Duff had an exclusively scientific interest in the site, namely in the human and moa skeletal remains. A range of ages were represented in the human remains, which included the skeletons of both fully grown males and children. He noted grave goods were more likely to be found in the graves of males, and that most of the human remains came from a shallow stratigraphy and thus confidently rejected theories that the Bar was once a village settlement or even a site of long term occupation. He argued that these human remains represented one of the earliest Māori fleets to arrive in New Zealand, and were so culturally distinct from their ancestors in Hawiki that their cultural origin in Eastern Polynesia is scarcely recognisable. His claim, while disputed by Rangitane at the time and other archaeologists later on, must be looked at in the context of a period when there were no formally recognised

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96 Blundell, 'Where it All Began', 19.  
97 S.F. Markham, quoted in *Marlborough Express*. 26 July 1944.  
98 Ibid., 422.  
institutions to perform scientific analyses on remains. The museum was the only place that was both interested in the remains and had access to technology that provided the level of scientific proof necessary to definitively date and ascertain the provenance of the remains. In his field-book, Duff recorded his conviction that the remains represented a ‘string of evidence for continuous occupation of site since Moa’. Examining the rich sources of middens of shells and animal bones, Duff concluded that there was a rapid depletion of ‘big-game resources’, especially the moa, the most versatile natural resource. Analysis of bones and ornaments confirmed that this community was at least culturally distinct from the population encountered by Captain Cook and other colonial explorers. This dispelled earlier theories that credited the Melanesian Muruiwi of the North Island with having a greater influence of elements of contemporary Māori culture than the Polynesians, from whom analysis verified Māori were descended.

Adzes and weapons were prominent among the tools discovered with grave goods, and comparison to artefacts from other Pacific civilisations assisted in Duff’s estimation of their arrival. In 1942 Duff refined his theory of settlement, proposing that the Wairau Bar inhabitants represented a first wave of migration from East Polynesia between 500 and 950 AD, but radiocarbon dating in the 1940s suggested this wave arrived between the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries AD. In any case, scientific analysis during excavations verified they predated the initial Māori fleet of circa 1350 AD. This subverted previous theories that the Māori were late arrivals to New Zealand who displaced an earlier population. Despite Duff’s confidence that he had

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103 Christchurch Press. 11 January 1943.
104 Taranaki Herald. 25 September 1954.
pinpointed the period of arrival, the broader chronology remains a contentious subject in New Zealand archaeological scholarship as new paleo-environmental evidence is presented and reinterpreted each year.\textsuperscript{108} For example, archaeologists like Richard Walter have recently disputed Duff’s characterisation of the peoples of Wairau as ‘Moa Hunters’. Walter argues that the finds at Wairau Bar ‘demonstrate clearly that moa hunting was simply an early phase of activity adopted by some Māori ancestors shortly after arrival in New Zealand’.\textsuperscript{109} However, while details of Duff’s work continue to be critiqued, it’s continued use among scholars shows the lasting impact of scientific methods which were, at the time, at the forefront of archaeology.

**Disputes in land occupation**

Many of the artefacts found during the excavations were uncovered in land belonging to Charles Perano, Eyles’ step-father, who permitted the museum to dig under informal agreements.\textsuperscript{110} The Museum’s occupancy was disputed during the 1940s as archaeologists, Rangitane and the Wairau River Harbour Board all vied to preserve the land for their own intentions.

Perano had long-recognised the historical worth of the site, and contacted the Minister of Lands to support an appeal for Crown reservation but had subsequently lost his lease.\textsuperscript{111} Museum access to the site had always based on an informal arrangement between Perano’s family and was based on Eyles’ family connections; thus the excavation was not regulated by any formal guidelines or restrictions.\textsuperscript{112} The possibility of a new tenant therefore presented a significant threat to the museum’s occupancy of the site as it did not guarantee they would

\textsuperscript{108} Higham et. al., ‘Dating the First New Zealanders’, 420.
\textsuperscript{111} Duff, Field-book 3, 3 October 1949, p. 49.
\textsuperscript{112} Armstrong, ‘Wairau Bar Koīwi Tipuna and Taonga’, p. 51.
be freely allowed to access the site. This obstruction to occupancy was compounded by reservations about the integrity of the excavations from the Wairau River Harbour Board. Conscious of the Museum’s precarious position, Duff wrote to R. A. Vaughn-Jones, the Harbour Board’s secretary, and assured him that despite initial misgivings, the archaeologists remained on good terms with Rangitane and that they could ‘count on the goodwill of the Wairau Māori community’. Duff also appealed to Vaughn-Jones to guarantee Museum access to the site, claiming that accepting a new tenant was not in the interest of the public or the museum, and assured him that the latter was entirely neutral in any land negotiations.

In October 1943, Duff approached C. Beaglehole, the Historical Advisor to the Internal Affairs Department, and recommended that the site be made an archaeological reserve. He outlined the site’s history and elucidated the Museum’s precarious position, emphasising that its current occupation was based on Perano’s goodwill which could be revoked if the application failed and Perano found out. This would engender Perano’s suspicion and mistrust which would be difficult to rebuild. It is important to note that Duff ultimately had no control over the site, either personally or as a museum staff member and knew Perano could plough the land at any time. He therefore genuinely believed legislative preservation was the best way to preserve any uncovered artefacts, and his actions were not an attempt to appropriate the land for exclusive museum use. Duff was therefore convinced that the site must be preserved from future ploughing for the sake of preserving the artefacts that may still be buried.

113 Christchurch Press. 27 March 1947.
115 Marlborough Express. 28 March 1947.
117 Ibid., p. 51.
The Harbour Board shared Duff’s concerns and argued in 1947 that it should be ‘legally and irrevocably preserved to the nation’\(^{118}\) because it was prone to flooding. However, the Museum was reluctant to hand control of the site over to the Government-controlled Harbour Board, and would prefer to independently manage the site’s preservation through Crown control of Bolder Bank.\(^{119}\) To this end, Duff applied to the Minister of Lands to have the site declared a Crown-controlled historic reserve. This permitted the museum to retain access to and authority over the site, thus securing its preservation. It also allowed Duff to maintain his personal involvement in the site, which could not be undermined by any unsympathetic landowner. Upon learning about this application, the Harbour Board informed Duff that it had frustrated Board members because the Museum had already applied for digging rights.\(^{120}\) However, they assured Duff the Museum had been granted exclusive digging rights, and would make no claim over the product of the excavations. The Board’s concession to the Museums demands demonstrates a genuine interest in the site’s historical value and was not limited to Duff, who was prepared to go through legal channels to ensure the Museum legally occupied the site. Rangitane more recently raised the issue of preservation in their land claim to the Waitangi Tribunal, resulting in the ‘Te Tau Ihu Claims Settlement Bill’.\(^{121}\)

**Roger Duff and Rangitane**

The relationship between Roger Duff and Rangitane was fraught with difficulties that persisted long after the remains were taken to Canterbury

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\(^{118}\) *Christchurch Press*. 27 March 1947.

\(^{119}\) *Marlborough Express*. 29 March 1947.

\(^{120}\) Duff, Field-book 3, 3 October 1949, p. 49.

Museum. In his report, Armstrong strongly criticises Duff’s objectives and claims that he intentionally misled Rangitane about his intentions and sought to distance Rangitane from the site by disassociating the remains with their ancestors. He interprets the excavations as a covert operation to uncover remains that Duff surreptitiously spirited away without Rangitane’s knowledge or consent. Armstrong’s interpretation of clandestine activity is partly based on his observation that the removal of the remains to Canterbury Museum in 1942 and 1943 were not described in press reports of the *Marlborough Express.*

Armstrong interprets this omission as an attempt limit any knowledge of the excavations to the archaeologists, thus intentionally misleading Rangitane and inhibit any opposition to the excavations. However, press reports aside, Armstrong blatantly ignores other articles which, since Eyles’ initial discovery, reported the fruits of the excavation. Photos and field-book entries from the time also show that many volunteers worked on the site (see figure 2). Between

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**Figure 2:** Members of Rangitane watch archaeologists excavate at the Wairau Bar in 1959. (Blundell, Sally, ‘Where it All Began’, *The New Zealand Listener*, vol. 293, no. 3812, p. 18-24, 2013).

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123 Ibid., p. 48.
1951 and 1952, for example, Duff enlisted volunteer help with which he unearthed seven further burials.\textsuperscript{124} Davis Perano, James Eyles’ family friend, was among these volunteers and frequently helped Duff by cleaning uncovered remains to prepare them to be arranged and photographed.\textsuperscript{125} Additionally, Duff and other archaeologists published numerous journal articles and other publications during and after excavation, scientifically analysing the contents each burial in detail. There was, therefore, no attempt to conceal the archaeological activity at Wairau Bar from either Rangitane or the wider public. The notable absence of any opposition to the digs in newspapers at the time demonstrates that Rangitane were at least tolerant enough to appreciate the care the archaeologists had for the remains. It also further validates Duff’s relationship with Rangitane, which was not founded on manipulating their ignorance of the site’s archaeological significance. Instead, it points to a wider public transparency of accounts of the Wairau excavations that Armstrong’s report fails to cover.

Nevertheless, Armstrong maintains that Duff’s personal communication with Rangitane was ‘far from transparent, and that he did not honour his agreements’.\textsuperscript{126} He specifically references Duff’s failure to honour a 1955 agreement with Rangitane that gave the museum excavation rights. Duff conceded that some remains had been removed in the 1940s, but assured Rangitane his interests lay solely in middens, and would in future inform them of any removals of human remains.\textsuperscript{127} Despite this agreement, Armstrong insists Duff continued to excavate without permission, unearthing fourteen further grave sites between 1950 and 1959, and concealed the results from Rangitane.\textsuperscript{128} Additionally, Rangitane elder Peter MacDonald accused Duff

\textsuperscript{124} Trotter, \textit{Asian Perspectives}, p. 176.
\textsuperscript{125} Duff, Field-book 2, p. 77, 21 October 1945.
\textsuperscript{126} Armstrong, ‘Wairau Bar Koiwi Tipuna and Taonga’, p. 141.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., p. 89.
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., p. 90.
outright of subverting cultural values, arguing that ‘you [Duff] are endeavouring to justify your actions of sacrilege and desecration of graves hallowed and made sacred by human beings who have since passed over.’\textsuperscript{129}

However, Armstrong’s takes Duff’s interactions with Rangitane out of context, using his excavations after the 1955 agreement as representative of Duff’s dismissive attitude towards Rangitane wishes throughout the excavation. Historian Lyndon Fraser has criticised Armstrong’s interpretation Duff’s determination to keep Rangitane in the dark about the site’s significance. He argues that Armstrong presents Duff as ‘a one-dimensional figure, inhibiting a shadowy world of dark conspiracies’\textsuperscript{130} but was in fact extremely transparent in his interactions with Rangitane. Duff himself recorded many positive interactions with the iwi, and even occasions of expected opposition became opportunities for reasoned discussion. In January 1950, Duff confessed that he expected a protest when Manny and Tangi MacDonald, Detective Sergeant Johnson and Constable Pearce visited the site, but ‘[w]hat seemed likely to develop into a bitter difference of opinion, concluded as an amiable cup of tea at the hut’.\textsuperscript{131} Similarly, in 1955, Duff recalled preparing for ‘expected opposition from Rangitane [but the] dreaded meeting with the Rangitane section of the Wairau Pa community proved pleasant anti-climax’.\textsuperscript{132} Duff’s continual anticipation of opposition from Rangitane does not confirm he knew his action were culturally unacceptable, but demonstrates a recurring willingness to engage with them in reasoned discussion and negotiation. This willingness was also expressed in Duff’s written correspondence with Rangitane, especially with Manny MacDonald, the primary liaison between Rangitane and the museum. Duff wrote to MacDonald after he had visited the site, thanking him for the

\textsuperscript{129} P. MacDonald to R. Duff. 6 May 1947.
interest in the project and stated ‘I am sure you and your people will understand if a request is made for permission for a further operation’133 and ‘I know you can count on our understanding of the Māori point of view’134. Duff’s confidence the Rangitane would grant the Museum permission to excavate on multiple occasions indicates their relationship was mutually respectful, while his reassurance of indigenous understanding reflects a level of respect from both himself and the other archaeologists.

This level of tolerance was not confined to Duff’s interactions with Rangitane at Wairau, but reflected a wider tolerance of all Māori that he exhibited throughout his career. Armstrong does not consider Duff’s career outside the Wairau Bar excavations, and limits his analysis of Duff’s treatment towards Rangitane on this project. Consequently, he insinuates that Wairau was Duff’s sole archaeological endeavour. In fact Duff worked with Māori at archaeological sites in Nelson, Kaikora, Taranaki, Pyramid Valley135 and the Waitara Swamp among others.136 Duff was also on good terms with many Māori outside of archaeological circles; his interest in Māori art led him to have strong relationships with many museum staff, including wood carver Charlie Tuarau.137 Consequently he recognised the value of maintaining personal relationships with Māori both on the field and in correspondence, which granted him a greater understanding of and respect for Māori culture.

Duff and Rangitane in print

132 R. Duff to M. MacDonald. 10 February 1964.
133 R. Duff to M. MacDonald. 10 February 1964.
136 McCarthy, Māori and Museums, p. 38.
Letters and journals recording the events at Wairau have never been made publicly available, which has limited knowledge of the excavations to newspaper reports and Eyles’ biography. Newspapers and letters in particular directed strong criticisms directly towards Duff, and often spawned claims of theft and desecration. Consequently, these are both biased sources and present a limited viewpoint of Duff’s actions. However, their candid approaches provide critical evidence that has never been analysed in published scholarship and dispel myths that the actions of Wairau archaeologists can be defined as cultural theft. The Marlborough Express was prominently used as a public forum by both Rangitane and archaeologists where accusations of cultural theft and defences of the excavation’s legitimacy were made. Peter MacDonald, for example, repeatedly claimed that that remains of his ancestors were removed as ‘so called curios for commercial and similar purposes’. However, archaeologist Owen Wilkes, who worked extensively at Wairau Bar, defended the archaeological intentions, asserting that the excavation’s primary purpose was not to unearth curios but to establish the geographic extent of the ancient habitation.

This printed dialogue reignited more recently as part of the campaign to repatriate the remains to Wairau Bar. Editorials dating from 2005, four years prior to the repatriation, alternately sought to defame and defend the original members of the excavations. Many of these articles were written by Richard Bradley, Rangitane’s Development Manager and great-grandson of Manny MacDonald, who was Duff’s liaison with Rangitane. In these articles, Bradley remains adamant in his view of the Museum as a ‘receiver of stolen goods’ and that three generations of Rangitane had ‘grown up with the sense of

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139 Marlborough Express. 4 January 1964.
whakama or embarrassment that our ancestors were stolen from under our noses’.141

However, recent editorials have also defended Duff’s actions, and contend that encounters between him and Rangitane were far from bitter accusations of cultural appropriation. After Duff’s death in 1978, members of his family continued to vouch for the integrity of his actions and disputed claims that he was knowingly guilty of cultural theft. Roger Duff’s son, Ian, felt that his father’s contribution had been misrepresented and even neglected in later accounts of the Bar. He wrote several letters to the Press in which he took issue with the way the Museum had been represented in accounts of the excavation. He countered claims that it had played the part of ‘a licensed receiver of stolen property’, labelling this as a ‘grossly defamatory slur’ on the museum itself and ‘on [Duff’s] integrity as director’.142 Ian Duff also defended the scientific interest of the archaeologists, claiming that Bradley ‘should express his gratitude, as until this work was carried out, nothing was known about ancient Māori occupation of the Wairau Bar’.143 Their strongest assertion from Duff’s family was that permission had been obtained from Rangitane, namely Manny Macdonald, an iwi elder.144 Doris Holdaway, Eyles’ half-sister who assisted at the digs, corroborated this claim and asserted that that the archaeologists encountered no further opposition after they gained permission from Rangitane.145 Additionally, Ian Duff argued that the consultation sought for the digs was a ‘totally transparent process’ and all agreements ‘were, or course, essentially verbal between men of honour’.146 A 2005 editorial in The Press objectively summarised the matter, admitting that while some members of

142 Christchurch Press. 29 September 2005.
143 Armstrong, Wairau Bar Koīwi Tipuna and Taonga, p. 141.
144 Christchurch Press. 29 September 2005.
145 D. Holdaway to Director, Canterbury Museum, 18 July 2005.
146 Christchurch Press. 28 September 2005.
Rangitane had objected to Duff’s practices, ‘without the majority of the tribe’s support it is difficult to see how Duff could have continued his excavations for more than 20 years’. In light of this support from Rangitane, it is difficult to maintain Armstrong’s argument that Duff and his colleagues were consistently underhand in their dealings with Rangitane. Claims that Duff did not respect Māori customs and beliefs can therefore not be applied to the entire excavation. These articles and items of correspondence therefore demonstrate that Duff was much more willing to engage with Rangitane than Armstrong credits him as, a conclusion that only gained traction among Rangitane during the repatriation at Wairau.

2009 Repatriation

From 1998, Rangitane initiated attempts to repatriate the koiwi tangata. They made multiple requests to the Canterbury Museum which were patiently denied. Armstrong states that Rangitane were annoyed that the Museum delayed the repatriation because it ‘was adamant that it must consult other iwi – including Ngai Tahu and Waitaha – before it could contemplate a return’. This was not, as Armstrong suggests, an attempt to delay negotiating with Rangitane, or even an outright objection to repatriation itself, but was because the Museum required permission from their Ngai Tahu advisory group. Armstrong notably omits from his report and subsequently presents the Museum as a less-than-willing partner in the repatriation than they actually were. Rangitane later considered creating a visitor centre to hold iwi artefacts that ‘re-connects Rangitane to their past, provides employment for their people and lifts their

149 Lyndon Fraser, email correspondence, 27 September 2013.
profile in the community’. This was viewed as an acceptable compromise that reflected the Museum’s recognition that there were conflicting desires between obtaining scientific knowledge and respecting the cultural integrity of the remains. In 2003 Rangitane made formal claims to repatriate the remains through the Waitangi Tribunal, asserting they had been stolen. However, the Tribunal made no mention of the remains in its 2008 report and were unwilling to be drawn into discussions about their alleged theft or possible repatriation. The issue was considered again in 2006 by the Ohaki Māori Advisory Board which acknowledged the significance of Māori spiritual beliefs and their significance within their cultural history. It conceded that the remains predated the arrival of Rangitane, but recommended a scientific study be undertaken in consultation with Rangitane, a decision which the iwi criticised, claiming it was a delaying tactic.

Rangitane achieved the repatriation of the tupuna when, in June 2008, a joint memorandum was signed between the Canterbury Museum and Otago University to return 53 human remains from 44 burial sites. The repatriation was finalised later that year in an agreement signed by Rangitane, Te Puni Kokiri, the Canterbury Museum, Otago University and the Department of Conservation, the site’s current landowner. The agreement had several conditions. Firstly, it stipulated that the repatriation applied exclusively to the kōwai but not the artefacts, which included tools, weapons and ornaments and were said to be worth ‘tens of millions of dollars’. The Canterbury Museum retained many of these ornaments which are still on display. Secondly, the site of a proposed geophysical survey was to be investigated ‘to ensure that any intact archaeological deposits disturbed during the process were properly

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152 Christchurch Press. 18 July 2006.
154 Christchurch Press. 8 November 2008.
documented and that no further burials were disturbed’. The Crown simultaneously offered to transfer an area of land from the Bar to the iwi as part of the repatriation agreement.

The following year, the Museum employed a Pākehā project manager to liaise with Rangitane representatives and facilitate discussions with a mandated iwi group. This discourse resulted in the negotiated return of the remains and provided an opportunity for the Wairau Bar Research Group to conduct extensive scientific research on the tipuna and the site. Further research projects on the skeletal remains were led by Otago University and permission was granted for further work on the site to and was spearheaded by the Department of Conservation and the Historic Places Trust. Archaeologists, like Rick McGovern-Wilson of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust, have embraced the opportunity to apply twenty-first century archaeological techniques to such a significant site. McGovern-Wilson notes that changing technology transforms the role of archaeology, insisting that it has expanded far beyond simple excavation because techniques like ‘DNA and isotope analysis…tells us so much more than we were ever able to learn in the past.’

The detail available to archaeologists has allowed scientists to engage with a richer quality of research and better communicate the historical and scientific significance of the site to iwi.

Finally, on 16 April 2009, seventy years after they had been removed, the remains of 41 people from the Wairau Bar were finally reinterred amid

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159 This research was conducted in January 2009 by Southern Pacific Archaeological Research under the direction of Richard Walter and Chris Jacomb, who worked in partnership with Rangitane and the Canterbury Museum.
widespread media coverage in an emotionally charged ceremony.\textsuperscript{161} Richard Bradley credits the success of the eventual repatriation to the way Rangitane incorporated appeals for the repatriation in the iwi’s Waitangi Tribunal settlement negotiation. This was unique because it was both initiated by Rangitane and backed up by an outspoken media campaign that highlighted their demands.\textsuperscript{162} In light of their contentious relationship with the Museum, such initiative indicates that Rangitane are willing to forgive past grievances and create a working partnership to sustain a growing public interest in Māori heritage. This commitment supports Tapsell’s observation that Māori today accept that museums are prepared to care for ancestral remains without undermining the sanctity in which Māori hold dead ancestors.\textsuperscript{163} He argues that past conflicts with museums were not universal, and in fact amounted to a willingness to work with museums, concluding that ‘many tribes unconsciously felt that museums could be legitimate if they respected and honoured the cultural processes that needed to happen’.\textsuperscript{164} This attitude points to a recognition that, in order to create a relationship based on reciprocity, an external party, like the Karanga Repatriation Programme, exclusively for maintaining relationships and facilitating repatriation in a way that satisfies both cultural values and scientific curiosity. Most importantly, the programme does not have the simultaneous pressures of preserving artefacts which the Museum faced during the excavations, resulting in miscommunication about respective values and intentions from both parties.

Museum director Anthony Wright had conceded that the potential scientific benefits were a cause of both enthusiasm and conflict at Wairau Bar and although it remains a core motivation of modern archaeology, academics must be aware ‘there is always the Māori spiritual side of it to be looked at as

\textsuperscript{161} McCarthy, \textit{Museums and Māori}, p. 220.
\textsuperscript{162} Le Pla, ‘The Homecoming’, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{163} Tapsell, ‘Partnership in Museums’, p. 287.
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid., p. 160.
Richard Walter summed up the significance of the repatriation process, commenting that ‘an important goal of the current work has been to development a sound partnership between iwi and the science community through which past difficulties can be reconciled in a constructive approach to protecting and understanding the various cultural and scientific values of this unique site can emerge’. Māori initiative and partnership have therefore been instrumental in facilitating the advancement of archaeological methodology and providing a more refined knowledge of the site and its people. Consequently, Māori attitudes towards archaeologists are no longer defined by the hostility and constant wariness that once characterised the historical binary relationship between Māori and settler.

**Conclusion**

The domestic repatriation of koiwi tangata is a core aspect of modern heritage preservation in New Zealand. It originated during the 1970s with campaigns for cultural self-determinism from Māori communities. It grew to encapsulate demands for cultural heritage to become subject to traditional systems of cultural management. International repatriation flourished during the early twenty-first century as New Zealand constructed relationships with other nations who took genuine initiative to repatriate items of Māori heritage in their possession. Though sometimes hampered by restrictive legislation, consecutive successful repatriations testify to the genuine desire to form working relationships with Māori communities. This relationship continues to be defined in a domestic context in light of an increasing comprehension among heritage professionals of Māori concepts of guardianship and the sanctity of ancestral remains. The cultural traditions associated with repatriation ceremonies, while

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criticised by some critics as overcautious, represents a major step forward in incorporating Māori cultural traditions into practices of repatriation. As a result, relationships between Māori and heritage professionals are increasing cooperative because their mutually beneficial relationship grants each party opportunities to become more scientifically and culturally educated about ancestral Maori communities.

Duff’s pursuit of this education was his primary drive during the excavations at Wairau Bar. David Armstrong’s presentation of Duff in his independent report as an opportunistic thief who had no regard for Māori or their culture is both unsubstantiated and unconvincing. Armstrong uses selective evidence from a number of unverified sources to discredit Duff’s integrity as an archaeologist. He makes unfounded claims that the excavation was an exclusively scientific and covert endeavour, the results of which were kept privately between Duff and his colleagues. Most significantly, Armstrong characterises Duff’s dismissive interactions with Rangitane as representative of his attitude towards Māori in general, when in fact he enjoyed positive personal and professional relationships with many Māori, and had great respect for their culture. The cooperation that Rangitane offered, especially during the repatriation in 2009 is a strong indicator that the iwi were beginning to accept genuine offers by the Canterbury Museum to acknowledge the significance and value of their cultural traditions, and integrate them into what were previously entirely westernised models of heritage preservation and ownership. Although the success of repatriation in New Zealand is ultimately credited more to programmes created expressly for that purpose, its academic legacy is most keenly felt in the cultural knowledge of a past society, generated through open discourse and mutual respect, in which both Māori and heritage experts can share.
Appendix 1. Timeline of Excavations at Wairau Bar.167

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920s</td>
<td>Paddock ploughed. Large bones found that were thought to be cattle but probably moa. Fossickers active.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1939</td>
<td>Jim Eyles discovered Burial 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1942</td>
<td>Eyles excavated Burial 2. Roger Duff visited site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1942</td>
<td>Eyles located Burial 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1942</td>
<td>Eyles located Burials 4. Duff returned and Burials 5, 6, 7 excavated. Duff assisted by Eyles and Baughan Wisely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1942</td>
<td>Eyles and Wisely excavated one of the hollows on the seaward ridge (G on Duff plan).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>Paddock reploughed and many artefacts surface collected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1943</td>
<td>Eyles excavated possible house site on lagoon edge (Point 8 Duff plan).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1943</td>
<td>Duff returned with G.E. Anstice. Trench across two small ovens excavated (location unknown). Trench on ridge (Point F on Duff plan) excavated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1943</td>
<td>Paddock reploughed with ploughshare set at 9 inches to a foot. Burials 8-11 located.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1943</td>
<td>Paddock 3 ploughed and Burials 12-16 located.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1943</td>
<td>Duff and Eyles located and excavated Burials 17-20. They also carried out further excavation of Eyles possible house site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1944</td>
<td>Duff and Eyles excavated a trench near the lagoon edge (Point 7 on Duff plan).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1944</td>
<td>Eyles told Duff he had been doing further work near Point 8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1944</td>
<td>Eyles told Duff he had excavated Burial 21. Duff and Eyles excavated trench through two adjoining hollows on seaward ridge (Point 27 on Duff plan).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1945</td>
<td>Duff excavated trench through midden, location unknown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1945</td>
<td>Eyles dug near “Pit 4”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1945</td>
<td>Paddock 3 ploughed again. Burials 22-30 located and excavated by Eyles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>Eyles excavated midden-rich area, location unknown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1950</td>
<td>Chain grid established. Duff and Eyles excavated Quadrate XI, the first formal excavation unit at the site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1950</td>
<td>Eyles excavated Quadrate XII.3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1950 - January 1951</td>
<td>Eyles and volunteers excavated in southern burial area. Located seven more burials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1959</td>
<td>Duff returned with volunteers from the Canterbury Museum Archaeological Society (CMAS) and extended 1955 excavation area as well as excavating an area south of Burials 39 and 40. Eyles reported to Duff he had carried out his own excavations since 1956 and had found Burials 41-43. Wellman excavated two trenches on lagoon edge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This bibliography is arranged under the following headings.

Primary Sources

I. Unpublished official papers
II. Archival manuscripts and correspondence
   a. Field-books
   b. Wairau Bar correspondence and notes
   c. Personal correspondence

III. Contemporary books
IV. Reports
V. Contemporary newspapers

Secondary Sources

VI. Books
VII. Articles
VIII. Theses and other papers
IX. Electronic sources

Primary Sources

I. Unpublished official papers

II. Archival manuscripts and correspondence
   a. Field books
i. Wairau Bar/JR Eyles collection: boxes B27/F157 – B27/F163A

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   i. Canterbury Museum collections: boxes B13/F37 – B13/F40
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      5. Peter MacDonald to Roger Duff, 6 May 1947.
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VII. Articles


VIII. Theses and other papers


IX. Electronic sources

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b. Le Pla, Ruth, ‘The Homecoming’,

c. ‘Maori head repatriated by Warrington Museum 170 years on’,

d. ‘Te Tau Ihu Claims Settlement Bill’,


