

AN EXAMINATION OF THE WORD “MĀORI” IN *TE PAIPERA TAPU*, THE MĀORI LANGUAGE BIBLE

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Ka takoto au te kupu a te Atua i runga i to mabunga
*I will place this Bible upon your head.*¹

INTRODUCTION

The intention of this paper is to show the richness of what is possible using *Te Paipera Tapu* as a research text by exploring the use of the word *māori* within *Te Paipera Tapu*. In this paper we focus on the words ‘*atua māori*’ and ‘*tohunga māori*’ and paint a picture of these words before providing an analysis of why these specific words were included in the biblical text. Our primary goal is to discuss some of the uses and associations of the word ‘*māori*’ in *Te Paipera Tapu*. Additionally, we hope this paper gives an example of possible research projects that are based on *Te Paipera Tapu* as the primary biblical text. In Biblical Studies there is a triangle of relationships between the Old Testament Hebrew, New Testament Greek and the English translations. In Aotearoa New Zealand the missing factor in this equation is *Te Paipera Tapu*, the Māori language Bible, which is seldom, if ever, considered in Biblical Studies and the Hebrew, Greek, English triangle. Bringing *Te Paipera Tapu* into this relationship opens up a new, untapped world rich in meaning for biblical interpretation.

In this paper we will provide brief highlights of some important points about the translation of the Bible into *te reo Māori*, followed by an exposition of the use of the word ‘*māori*.’ The paper will then provide a few concluding remarks and suggestions about future projects which have *Te Paipera Tapu* at the centre.

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¹ These words were said by Wiremu Tamihana to King Pōtatau at his investiture as Māori King. In full, the words were: “Your ancestors in the olden days were wont to be anointed with oil, but, since the advent of Christianity, they have been anointed with the Word of God. Therefore I place the Word of God upon your head.”

TE WHAKAMĀORI ME NGĀ KAIWHAKAMĀORI: THE TRANSLATION AND THE TRANSLATOR(S)



Te Manihera / Robert Maunsell.
N.d, photographer unknown, John
Kinder Library Archives, Archives
reference KIN 265-265-1-246.

The first tracts of the Bible were translated and published in te reo Māori in 1827, a little over a decade after Ruatara extended the invitation to Samuel Marsden to introduce Christianity to Northland. It would take another forty-one years for the Bible to be translated and published in its entirety in te reo Māori. Central to the translation was Robert Maunsell who worked as part of a translation syndicate, under the oversight of Bishop George Selwyn, that included William Williams, W G Puckey, James Hamlin and John Hobbs.

Right from the outset the translators were aware of the importance of the task confronting them. The only publications in te reo Māori were biblical tracts of chosen verses and chapters, creeds, the Book of Common Prayer, some hymns, and the Lord's Prayer. A purely oral language was being transformed into a written language.

Aware of the importance of their task and its effects on the language the syndicate created translation policies that guided their

work. These canons of translation included:

- The purity of the original spoken Māori language must be preserved with a preference for the pure native words rather than foreign words.
- In unimportant cases, the native word that most clearly expressed the idea was to be admitted. Only when no such native word could be found were English words to be allowed.²
- Existing Māori equivalents, or near equivalents for as many words as possible, must be used even if there were some quite significant differences of meaning involved: for example, 'atua' for 'god', 'tapu' for 'sacred', 'wairua' for 'spirit'. When there was no equivalent, a transliteration of the English word was generally used – 'hipi' for 'sheep', 'hoiho' for 'horse' and 'kau' for cow, 'glory' become 'kororia'.³

The intention of the syndicate was to discover precisely the right word in every case and avoid creating a situation of the Māori language dressed in ill-fitting English clothing.

Of the seven Māori dialects throughout the country to choose from, the Waikato dialect was the preferred language for translations. First, the Waikato dialect was used more widely throughout the country, transgressing its own tribal borders as far as; Northland, Taupō, Tauranga, Thames, Taranaki, Manawatū,

² Helen Garrett, *Te Manihera: The Life and Times of the Pioneer Missionary Robert Maunsell* (Auckland: Reed Publishers, 1991), 69.

³ Ibid., 129.

Horowhenua and Wellington. Second, the Waikato dialect was influenced less by foreign understandings, unlike its northern Ngā Puhī counterpart which had significant Pākehā contact and influence.

As the work progressed syndicate members fell away until only Maunsell and Williams were left. Maunsell agreed that he would focus on the Old Testament using the Hebrew text while Williams focussed on the New Testament using the Greek text. The work of translation does not consist solely of finding the most appropriate word that fits well into the translation. A spoken language changes much faster than a written language, therefore the Bible had to be revised every five or six years to keep pace with the changing language.⁴ In the translation and revision, every word was robustly contested according to William Williams.

Of note was the context in which translations took place. On occasions work was halted while Williams or Maunsell attended to tribal disputes over land in Northland or Waikato. On other occasions they worked through rising tensions as Governor Fitzroy moved naval ships and ground troops to into the Bay of Islands to counter the threat of Hone Heke.⁵ Another difficulty was negotiating Church politics and the varying priorities of Bishop Selwyn who, while remaining supportive, allocated his time and resources to other projects.

Maunsell was the workhorse of project revising Williams's translation of the New Testament while attending to his own Old Testament translation. Although some of Maunsell's earlier translations were lost in 1843 owing to two fires, he rewrote these translations, presumably with greater accuracy.⁶ In May of 1856, Maunsell announced that the whole word of God was written in te reo Māori.⁷ Revision work continued over the following six-years with corrections while some of the Māori transliteration of names were harmonised and the use of single or double vowels were debate on certain words.⁸ Maunsell's approach to the translation of *Te Paipera Tapu* was meticulous. The sheer quantity and quality of translation work by Maunsell is amazing with his dedication, commitment and expertise in translating the Bible into te reo Māori. It was and is a remarkable achievement.

TE KUPU MĀORI I TE PAIPERA TAPU: THE WORD MĀORI IN THE MĀORI LANGUAGE BIBLE

In 2020, while considering the different meanings of the biblical text in te reo Māori, Greek, and English, we became intrigued by how *Te Paipera Tapu* functions as a semantic domain. In the analysis of the Greek biblical text, we notice how particular words are given specific meanings in the biblical text and ignore other aspects of their meaning which are contained in broader Greek literature. We have also noticed how the specific meaning invoked in a word can vary between the authors of the biblical texts. These specific

⁴ Ibid., 149.

⁵ Ibid., 133.

⁶ Peter Lineham, *Bible & Society: A Sesquicentennial History of The Bible Society in New Zealand* (Wellington: The Bible Society in New Zealand; Wellington: Daphne Brasell Associates Press, 1996), 137–38.

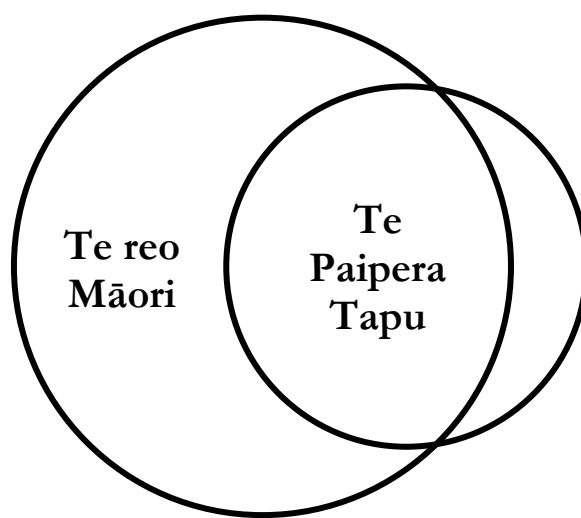
⁷ Garrett, *Te Manihira*, 197.

⁸ Ibid., 230–231.

meanings given to the words in their particular contexts creates a specific semantic domain for the biblical texts and the collection of text written by a single author.

In studying *Te Paipera Tapu* more closely, it become evident that this text possesses it own unique semantic domain. Similarly to the biblical text in Greek, while this domain is not alienated from the common or broader semantic domain of the language and other literature in that language, the specific domain is not a perfect overlap of the common domain. The specific domain does not draw on all the ideas contained in the common domain, and it introduces other ideas from other domains outside the language.

Diagram 1: *Overlapping domains of te reo Māori and Te Paipera Tapu*



We can demonstrate this imperfect overlapping of the domains in how tauīwi is used throughout *Te Paipera Tapu*. In the common semantic domain, the word refers primarily to someone of another iwi. Tau is a prefix denoting difference and iwi meaning tribe. In the modern domain, the word has taken on a specific meaning referring to people who are not of Māori descent in Aotearoa. In *Te Paipera Tapu*, tauīwi has taken on yet another specific meaning because of the way it is consistently applied by the text's translators. Hence, as far as *Te Paipera Tapu* is concerned, tauīwi refers to gentiles, non-israelites, and people outside the covenant of God. While it does not follow that this meaning is directly imposed onto the common domain of the language, these meanings are not completely alienated from one another; there continues to be a relationship between the common and this specific meaning of the word which have the potential to influence one another. This notion of *Te Paipera Tapu* as a unique semantic domain comes into focus as we consider the leading issue of this paper, the meaning of "māori" according to *Te Paipera Tapu*.

According to the latest edition of Williams' Dictionary of the Maori Language, the word 'māori' means "1. [adjective]. Normal, usual, ordinary. 2. Native, or belonging to New Zealand, Maori ... 3. [noun]. Person of the native race, New Zealander, Maori. 4. [adverb]. Freely, without restraint, without ceremony, without object."⁹ In *Te Paipera Tapu*, māori is only used as an adjective or an adverb. It is never used as a noun, a proper noun, or a proper adjective. Neither is it capitalised throughout the text. Hence, we would

⁹ William Williams, *A Dictionary of the New Zealand Language*, 3rd ed. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1871), 179.

be mistaken to interpret the occurrences of māori throughout *Te Paipera Tapu* in the second and third senses of the word according to Williams' Dictionary. However, we would also be mistaken to divorce the meanings from one another.

Unfortunately, Maunsell never created a dictionary listing his understanding of Māori words. Therefore, it can be difficult to interpret what Maunsell was portraying as he uses the word māori as an adjective and adverb throughout *Te Paipera Tapu*, especially in conjunction with *tohunga* and *atua*. We see a snippet of Maunsell's thoughts in his book, *Grammar of the New Zealand Language*, where māori appears in three of his translations (although the translation of māori is not point of the section). Maunsell writes,

Ka riro to kotiro i te kainga maori, *your servant girl will be taken away by (the people) of the native place.*

Ka riro to kotiro ki te kainga maori, *your servant girl will go to the native place.*¹⁰

Patua *maoritua*, *killed intentionally, in the common way, &c.*¹¹

The second and third senses from Williams' Dictionary are relatively modern connotations for māori which have arisen from the need to differentiate between the indigenous people of Aotearoa and those who arrived after the beginning of the 19th century. This specific connotation of māori reflects a new application of the denoted meanings of the word. The specific connotation reflected that in contrast to Pākehā, *tangata māori* were and are "normal, usual, ordinary" to the land and, in certain respects, their actions are free and without restraint in these lands. Professor Ray Harlow, in an email to the authors on 3 November 2021, argues for a similar understanding of māori in the biblical text to that which we read in Maunsell's final example above.¹² He believes the term māori throughout the biblical text portrays the sense of "normality" for those whom the word is describing.

In *Te Paipera Tapu*, māori occurs seventy-two times over the course of sixty-two verses. The word appears fifty-five times throughout forty-six verses in the Old Testament and seventeen times throughout sixteen verses in the New Testament.

Table 1: Occurrences, references, and KJV equivalent of words adjoining with māori in *Te Paipera Tapu*

Term	Occurrences	References	King James Version equivalent
Atua	15	Lev 20:27; Deut 18:11; 1 Sam 28:7, 7, 8, 9; 2 Kgs 21:6; 23:24; 1 Chron 10:13; 2 Chron 33:6; Ps 106:37; Isa 8:19, 19:3, 29:4; Acts 17:22	familiar spirit, devils, superstitious
Haere	3	Matt 14:25; Mark 6:48; John 6:19	walking [on the sea]
Hue	2	2 Kgs 4:39, 39	wild vine, wild gourd
Kanohi	1	Jam 1:23	natural face

¹⁰ R. Maunsell, *Grammar of the New Zealand Language*, 2nd ed. (Auckland: W. C. Wilson, 1862), 58.

¹¹ Ibid., 81.

¹² Ray Harlow, Email, 3 November 2021.

Karakia	3	Exo 7:11, 8:7; 2 Kgs 17:17	Enchantments
Karepe	2	Isa 5:2, 4	wild grapes
Mahi	2	Exo 7:22, 8:18	Enchantments
Mata	7	Lev 19:31, 20:6, 27, Deut 18:11; 2 Kgs 21:6, 23:24; 2 Chron 33:6	Wizards
Mate	7	Lev 7:24, 11:39, 17:15, 22:8; Deut 14:21; Ezk 4:14, 44:31	die, dieth of itself
Mea	2	1 Cor 15:46, 2 Pet 2:12	Natural
Moe	1	Lev 15:18	lie with (woman laying with a man)
Ngākau	2	1 Cor 2:14; Jam 3:15	"sensual, devilish"
Rapa	2	1 Sam 28:3, 9	Wizard
Tangata	2	Acts 28:2, 4	barbarous people (KJV), βαρβαροί (Gk - non-Greek)
Te ao māori o te kino	1	Jam 3:6	world of inequity
Tikanga	2	Rom 1:26, 27	natural use (heterosexual intercourse)
Tinana	2	1 Cor 15:44, 44	natural body
Tohunga	15	Gen 41:8, 24; Exo 7:11, Deut 18:10, 14; Josh 13:22; Isa 2:6; Dan 1:20, 2:2, 10, 27, 4:7, 9, 5:11, Mic 5:12	magician, sorcerers, enchanter, diviner, soothsayer
Whakaaro	1	1 Cor 11:14	Nature

Four of these occurrences in the Old Testament were introduced by the 1952 Māori Bible revision committee to replace the terms whakananakiā (Exo 7:22, 8:18), kaimakutu (Josh 13:22), and a unique usage of nakahi (Deut 18:10). In the 1952 revision of *Te Paipera Tapu*, the committee (particularly Sir Apirana Ngata) were as obsessive over their revisionary work as Maunsell and Williams were in their initial translation.¹³ Owing to a multitude of mistakes in the 1924 revision of *Te Paipera Tapu*, the committee was commissioned and spent many years reading through the text meticulously, line by line, identifying mistakes

¹³ "Four-Year Job Revising Maori Bible" (N.D.) in "Revision of Maori bible" in *Bible Society in New Zealand: Records* (Record Number: 80-179-17/3; Wellington: Alexander Turnbull Library, N.D.); Letter from Sir Apirana Ngata to Mr Chisholm (24 February 1947) in *ibid.*; Letter from Mr Chisholm to Sir Apirana Ngata (21 January 1948) in *ibid.*; Letter from David Calder to Mr Chisholm (10 December 1948) in *ibid.*

and offering corrections.¹⁴ In an email to the authors on 4 November 2021, Ven Dr Lyndon Drake asserts that the result of their labour is often a superior translation of the Hebrew than the contemporary English counterparts.¹⁵

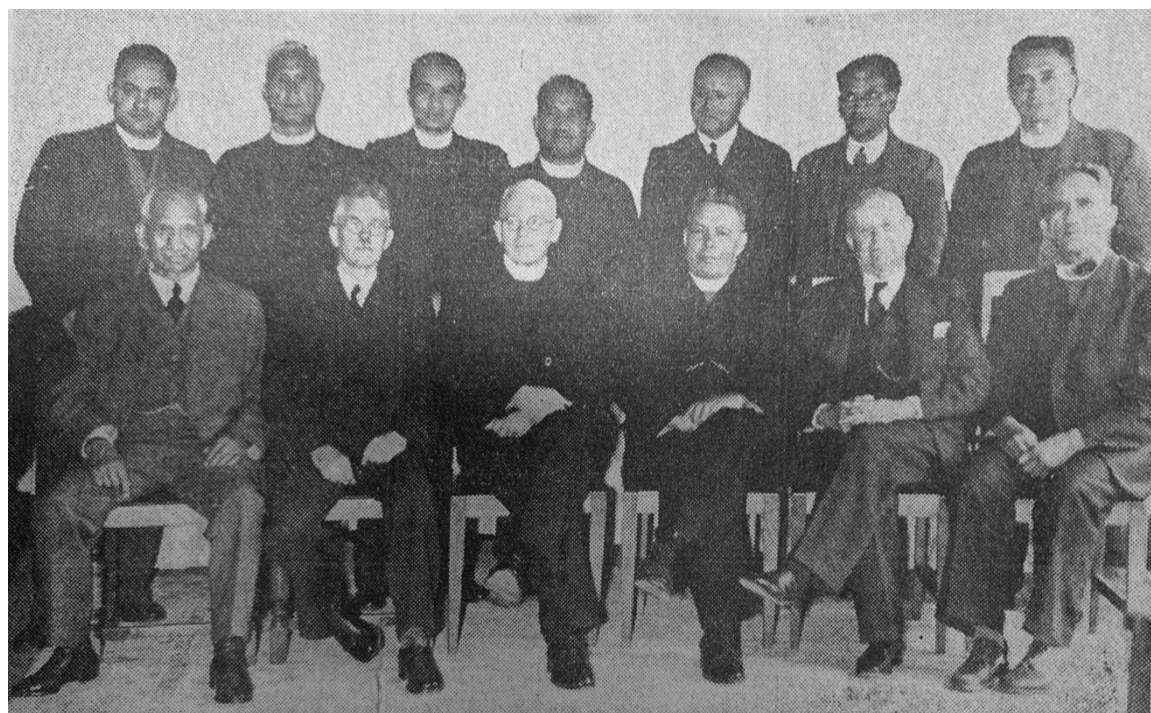


Photo 1: *Māori Bible Revision Committee: front row, from left, Hon. Sir Apirana Ngata, Very Rev. J. G. Laughton, Rev. David Calder, Bishop Bennett of Aotearoa, Mr. W. W. Bird, Rev. E. Te Tubi. Back row, Revs. Te Hibi Kaa, Paora Temuera, Hobeapa Taepa, H. Potatau, Paahi Moke, H. R. Nikora, W. N. Panapa.*¹⁶

As we come to *Te Paipera Tapu*, as collated in Table 1, māori most often occurs in conjunction with ‘tohunga’ (tohunga māori) and ‘atua’ (atua māori). These noun phrases will become the focus of our study. Furthermore we will be limiting our discussion of tohunga māori to its use in Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, and Daniel and atua māori to its use in Deuteronomy, 1 Samuel, 2 Kings, and Isaiah.

TOHUNGA MĀORI

Although tohunga was initially omitted from the first edition of the Williams’s Dictionary (1844), tohunga was defined in the second edition as “A priest.”¹⁷ The definition of tohunga was then revised over the next few editions to mean “[noun]. 1. skilled person. ... 2. wizard; priest.”¹⁸ This definition continues to the

¹⁴ Letter from H J Fletcher to David Calder (18 June 1931) in *ibid.*; Letter from David Calder to Mr Chisholm (10 December 1948) in *ibid.*; David Calder, “The Maori Bible: A New Revision: Work of Early Translators,” *Evening Post* 139, no. 4 (Date 1945); 4.

¹⁵ Lyndon Drake, Email, 4 November 2021.

¹⁶ “Four-Year Job Revising Maori Bible” (N.D.) in “Revision of Maori bible” (Record Number: 80-179-17/3). Used with permission from The Bible Society New Zealand.

¹⁷ William Williams, *A Dictionary of the New Zealand Language*, 1st ed. (Paihia: C. M. Society, 1844), 144–45.

¹⁸ William Williams, *A Dictionary of the New Zealand Language*, 3rd ed. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1871), 172.

present edition of the Williams' Dictionary (8th). However, *tohunga* is now classified as having derived from the term *tohu* (meaning: "mark, sign proof, point out, show, look towards").¹⁹ While we should be cautious not to conflate Williams's Dictionary with Maunsell's comprehension of Māori words, we also must consider that Williams is a contemporary of Maunsell and they both worked on the initial translation of the biblical text, albeit Maunsell on the Old Testament and Williams on the New Testament. If we look towards *He Pātaka Kupu*, a Māori Dictionary published by Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (*The Māori Language Commission*), we receive a more nuanced understanding of *tohunga*,

Ka eke (te tangata) ki te taumata teitei o tētahi mahi, i te mea kei a ia ngā pūkenga, te mātauranga rānei e pērā ai.

He tangata kei a ia ētahi pūkenga, ētahi mātauranga hōhonu e pā ana ki tētahi kaupapa.

He tangata kua tau ki runga i a ia te mana o ngā atua, ā, māna ngā karakia nui e whakahaere.²⁰

The noun phrase *tohunga māori* appears at various times throughout Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Daniel and Micah.²¹ Primarily, it is the Māori phrase used to translate ,סוֹחֵם roughly meaning soothsayer, priest, or sorcerer. However, the two occurrences of *tohunga māori* in Deuteronomy translate two further terms. In Deut 18:10, *tohunga māori* is used to translate the term ,נִחֵשׁ roughly meaning a diviner or a person who gives omens and foretells the future. As mentioned above, this specific translation was changed from "nga nakahi" (*the snakes*) to "tētahi tohunga māori" by the translation committee. In Deut 18:14, *tohunga māori* is used to translate ,מְסִיחַ meaning diviner or one who consults the spirits of the dead.

The use of *tohunga māori* in Genesis 41:8 and 24 describes Pharaoh's magicians and wise men, who he consults to interpret his strange dream ("Ā, i te ata; nā, ka pororaru tōna wairua; ā, ka tono tāngata ia ki te karanga i ngā tohunga āori katoa o Īhipa, me ngā mea mōhio katoa o reira"). In Exodus 7:11, it is strange to read the phrase *tohunga māori*, since the passage could just as effectively convey the message using *tohunga Ihipa*. Similarly, in this verse we see the translation *karakia māori* which is cast in a similarly negative manner ("Nā, ka karanga hoki a Parao i ngā tāngata mōhio, i ngā tohunga māori; nā, ko rātou, ko ngā tohunga o Īhipa, i pērā anō rātou ki ā rātou nei karakia māori"). What is of note in this passage is the *tohunga māori* is contrasted with Aaron, the spokesperson for Moses who would become High Priest of Israel.

Tohunga māori takes on a slightly different focus in Deuteronomy. The phrase is no longer referring to the Egyptians but the Canaanites. In Deuteronomy 18:10 and 14, *tohunga māori* is used among other Canaanite paganistic practitioners to forbid the Israelites from adopting their detestable practices ("Ko ēnei iwi hoki, ka riro nei i a koe, e whakarongo ana ki ngā tohunga tāima, ki ngā tohunga māori; tēnā ko koe, e kore a Ihowā, tōu Atua, e tuku i a koe kia pērā"). These practices apparently include human sacrifices, fortune-telling, sorcery, interpreting omens, witchcraft, or communicating with the spirits of

¹⁹ Herbert W. Williams, *A Dictionary of the Maori Language*, 7th ed. (Wellington: Government Printer, 1957), 431.

²⁰ New Zealand Māori Language Commission, *He Pātaka Kupu: Te Kai a te Rangatira*, 955. Translation: *A person ascended to the highest summit of a particular skill because they have the skills or the knowledge. A person with skills and deep knowledge pertaining to a certain matter. A person upon whom the power of the atua has settled upon, and they can conduct important karakia.*

²¹ Gen 41:8, 24; Exo 7:11; Deut 18:10, 14; Dan 1:20, 2:2, 27, 4:7, 9, 5:11; Mic 5:12.

the dead. Breaking tohunga māori down into component parts as tohunga whakaaro ki ngā tohu, tohunga makutu and tohunga whaiwhāia puts the text into language and concepts that the readers would clearly understand. Verse 14 gives a divine decree forbidding these practices and possibly challenges the practices of tohungaism as being against biblical and, therefore, Christian practices.

The book of Daniel uses the phrase, tohunga māori, repeatedly to refer to Babylonians. The tohunga māori are described as kaititiro whetu, tohunga mākutū, ngā karari, Babylonian magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers who are shown as having limited ability to understand and interpret the King's dreams in contrast to Daniel who is shown as being ten times more capable than those referred to as tohunga māori in the text. Daniel's skills are directly attributed to his God who reveals secrets and the future. Interestingly, the translation committee have maintained Daniel (an Israelite) being referred to as a tohunga māori by the Babylonian King and Queen (Daniel 4:9, 5:11), since he was appointed chief of the Babylonian magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners. Daniel is the only Israelite in *Te Paipera Tapu* to be referred to as a tohunga māori. Nevertheless, the characterisation is from the perspective of the Babylonian King and Queen.

Finally, the book of Micah uses the phrase to refer to purifying the remnant of Israelites and putting an end to witchcraft and fortune-telling ("ka hātepea atu hoki e ahau ngā mākutū i roto i tōu ringa, ā, ka kore ngā tohunga māori i roto i a koe"). This final reference in Micah once again reinforces the strongly negative connotation attached to tohunga māori throughout *Te Paipera Tapu*. This negative connotation continues to maintain the tohunga māori as diametrically opposed to the Israelite God.

The picture that *Te Paipera Tapu* gives from the use of tohunga māori is a careful distinguishment between Israel's prophetic leaders and religious officials and their practices in contrast to Egyptian, Canaanite, Philistine and Babylonian religious leaders and their practices. At various stages the Egyptians and Babylonians were overlords of the Israelites and the Canaanites and Philistines were enemies of Israel. In spite of the unequal power dynamics their religious practices were forbidden to be practiced by Israelites. Secondly, the various texts show the God that was behind the Israelite leaders and their practices who granted them their office and skills.

Te Paipera Tapu uses tohunga māori to contrast between the Israelite prophetic leaders and religious officials and their practices and the Egyptian, Canaanite, Philistine and Babylonian religious leaders and their practices, i.e., those who are not among the people of God. Hence, the prejudice in the text against their overlords and enemies is a very human attribute of the text and the attempt to contrast between the Israelites and non-Israelites using specific words is understandable. However, in considering overlapping semantic domains of the original use of māori and the post-Pākehā connotation ('tangata Māori,' 'tikanga Māori,' 'mātauranga Māori'), we wonder if it would be more beneficial to move away from tohunga māori in the biblical text as a magician who is outside the people of God and practices outside of the practices ordained by the God of Israel.

ATUA MĀORI

The word *atua* often has been poorly interpreted by Pākehā translators. The evidence from the first three editions of Williams' Dictionary demonstrates his evolving perception of the word. In the first and second editions, Williams' Dictionary merely defines *atua* as "God."²² (Williams, 1844; see also Williams, 1852). In the following edition, the definition is revised, "[noun]. 1. god, applied also to any object of superstitious regard. 2. the moon at 15 days old."²³ (Williams, 1871). However, as Graham Cameron has pointed out, this glossed interpretation of *atua* misses much of the real meaning of the word.²⁴ (Cameron, 2015). Once again, if we turn to *He Pātaka Kupu*, our perception of *atua* changes. It reads,

He mana wairua whāioio tuauriuri nō te wāhi ngaro, kei reira te ora, kei reira te mate.

Te wairua o te tangata kua mate, ka kitea, ka rangona rānei e te tangata ora.

He taniwha weriweri, he taniwha whakamataku, he taniwha whakatūpato.²⁵

Interestingly, Maunsell appears to capture some of this nuance, demonstrated in the definition in *He Pātaka Kupu*, in his use of the word in conjunction with *māori*.

The phrase *atua māori* occurs several times throughout Leviticus, Deuteronomy, 1 Samuel, 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Psalm, Isaiah, and Acts.²⁶ In these instances, *atua māori* is the translation of a single Hebrew term, אֱלֹהִים. Unlike a more natural rendition of *atua māori* that might mean 'natural god' or 'ordinary spirit,' *atua māori* in *Te Paipera Tapu* refers to a person who practices communication with the dead or a necromancer.

In Leviticus 20:27, *Atua māori* is used in the sense of 'speaking to the dead' ("Me whakamate rawa anō joki te tangata, te wahine rānri, he *atua māori* tōna; me te mata māori hoki"). However, verse 6 offers alternative words for spirits of the dead, 'waka *atua*' and 'mata māori' as people who consult with the dead. In Deuteronomy, the phrase is used as a warning for Israel not to get involved in 'pagan practices'.

The theme of spirits of the dead as *atua māori* becomes quite consistent with 1 Samuel following Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Mediums are also introduced as people who speak to *atua māori*. In order to speak to *atua māori* Saul had to leave Israel to find a person who could speak to *atua māori* as the practice had been outlawed in Israel by Saul who is disobeying his own law in these verses ("Rapua māku tētahi wahine he *atua māori* tona kia haere ahau ki a ia ki te rapu tikanga i a ia. Anō rā ko āna tāngata ki a ia, "Tērā tētahi wahine he *atua māori* tōna, kei Eneroro" (v. 7)).

²² William Williams, *A Dictionary of the New Zealand Language, and a Concise Grammar*, 1st ed. (Paihia: C. M. Society, 1844), 7; William Williams, *A Dictionary of the New Zealand Language, and a Concise Grammar*, 2nd ed. (London: Williams Norgate, 1852), 9.

²³ William Williams, *A Dictionary of the New Zealand Language*, 3rd ed. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1871), 11.

²⁴ Graham Bidois Cameron, "That You Might Stand Here on the Roof of the Clouds: The Development of Pirirākau Theology from Encounter to the End of Conflict, 1839–1881" (Master's Thesis, University of Otago, 2015), 52–4.

²⁵ New Zealand Māori Language Commission, *He Pātaka Kupu: Te Kai a te Rangatira*, 42. Translation: *The innumerable spiritual powers in the spiritual realm, where there is life and death. The spirits of the people who have died, but can be seen or felt by the living people. A horrible guardian, a frightening guardian, a cautionary guardian.*

²⁶ Deut 18:11; 1 Sam 28:7, 8, 9; 2 Kgs 21:6, 23:24; Isa 8:19, 19:3, 29:4.

This practice of atua māori is consistently perceived as unfaithful and paganistic by the authors of the texts. In 2 Kings 21:6 and 23:34, the theme of spirits of the dead is consistent and continues to focus on divination and consulting with fortune tellers. In 23:24 these practices are against the Law and are characterised as whakapakoko, that is, pagan (“Nā, ko te hunga i whai ki ngā atua māori, ki ngā mata māori, ki ngā terapimi [ngā atua o te whare], ki ngā whakapakoko, ki ngā mea whakarihariha katoa i kitea ki te whenua o Hūrā, ki Hiruhārama, whakakāhoretia iho e Hōhia”). 1 Chronicles 10:13 declares that following atua māori practices is an act of unfaithfulness to the Lord. This is the main thrust of this verse (“Heoi, kua mate a Haora mō tōna hē; i hē ai ia ki a Ihowā, mō te kupu a Ihowā kīhai nei i puritia e ia; mōna hoki i ui ki tētahi, i a ia nei te atua māori, he rapu whakaaro”). 2 Chronicles 33:6 describes King Manasseh as a person who followed the practices of other nations; practices such as human sacrifices, divination, fortune-tellers and mediums (atua māori). In Psalm 106:37, the English text details Israel’s unfaithfulness to the Lord because they sacrificed to ‘demons’ (atua māori), these demons are named as the idols of Canaan (ngā whakapakoko o Kanaana).

In Isaiah 8:19–20, the word matakite is used alongside atua māori. Although the practices are still negatively cast, matakite is a more appropriate word to describe the practices of fortune-tellers and mediums than the word atua māori. In Isa 19:3 the atua māori practices are associated with the Egyptians while in 29:4 a voice speaks from under the ground which is identified as atua māori (“ka rite tōu reo ki tō te tangata i te atua māori, he mea puta ake i te whenua”). This use in Isa 29 is unusual because it conforms with a more normative understanding of atua māori as spiritual beings with influence in te ao mārama. Finally, in Acts 17:22, *Te Paipera Tapu* uses atua māori when Paul is speaking to the Athenians about their devout religious practices (“E ngā tāngata o Atene, i gā mea katoa ka kite ahau he āhua nui kē tō koutou wehi ki ngā atua māori”).

The picture that *Te Paipera Tapu* gives of atua māori in these texts is one of being associated with fortune-tellers, mediums and speaking to the spirits of the dead. Atua māori tends not to refer to a God figure or the spirits of those who have passed on but is mainly used as a general descriptor of ‘paganistic practices’. The texts clearly assert that these practices are not Israelite but have come into their society from outside influences. The texts repeatedly purge and outlaw these practices from the religious practices of Judaism because they are not considered to be pleasing to the God of Israel.

CONCLUSION

The translation of the Holy Bible into te reo Māori was a mammoth task. It was essentially the life work of one person who had very limited resources if any at his disposal. The fact that his text has remained largely unchanged for 158 years is a testament to the quality of the work by Te Manihera. The quality of his work was acknowledged by the 1952 Māori Bible Revision Committee who contained some of the finest native speakers and second language speakers of te reo Māori. The Revision committee was overseen by Sir Apirana Ngata, acknowledged at the time as the finest speaker of Māori and English in this country. Today’s

understanding of language prompts us to be more aware of the influence of racial prejudices upon the connotations of words. Hence, while the use of māori in *Te Paipera Tapu* may be jarring to a contemporary ear, we must note that under the leadership of Ngata the Revision Committee did not delete any of Maunsell's translations of *tohunga māori* or *atua māori*, in fact they added 'māori' to *tohunga* in Exo 7:22, 8:18, Deut 18:10, and Josh 13:22. This paper has offered some observations about who is being talked about in conjunction with the term māori and what is being portrayed by the terms, but further research into both *te reo Māori* and *Te Paipera Tapu* is required to understand what is meant by the word māori within the semantic domain of *Te Paipera Tapu*.

Our intention in researching and writing this paper is to give an example of the richness that can come about in research and writing that has *Te Paipera Tapu* at its heart. One such insight is the common perception that *Te Paipera Tapu* was written in the northern Ngā Puhī dialect. Our research has shown this is not the case with the Waikato dialect the preferred language of *Te Paipera Tapu* which could be used as a written resource text for Waikato reo experts in their reo wānanga.

We would also like to acknowledge the current work by the Bible Society New Zealand to produce a new translation of the biblical text in *te reo Māori*. We hope that the questions raised by this paper will encourage further thought and discernment on the choice of language in this next translation.

Nevertheless, there are still many questions left unanswered and to uncover the answers is the task of future scholarship. Questions that arise include:

- Is *tohunga* and *atua māori* referring to indigenous practices and beliefs?
- In using the terms *tohunga māori* and *atua māori*, what were the reasons and intentions of the translators?
- Associating *tohunga māori* and *atua māori* makes these diametrically opposed to biblical teachings, how would these texts have been received and understood at the time by its Māori audience?

The readers of *Te Paipera Tapu* would certainly have understood what and who was meant by; *tohunga māori*, *tohunga whakaaro ki ngā tohu*, *tohunga makutu*, *tohunga whaiwhāia*, *mata māori* and *matakite*. To examine these terms theologically using *mātauranga Māori* would make an excellent wānanga topic.

Both the Māori and English language have evolved since 1868 and so has society and academia. What was not a problem in 1868 and during the 1952 Revision can become problematic now. *Mātauranga Māori* has become a significant factor within academia, and theology programmes in this country. There is a wider understanding of *atua māori* and *tohunga māori* today that would challenge the usage of those terms in *Te Paipera Tapu*. There is in our opinion a need for more scholarship that has *Te Paipera Tapu* at the heart.

As the researchers and writers of this paper we conclude by issuing the following aspirational challenges:

1. That ministry training schools in this country include *Te Paipera Tapu* alongside the English language Bible in their training programme as a compulsory and primary text.

2. That tertiary theological providers develop and include a paper on *Te Paipera Tapu* as a compulsory paper in biblical languages alongside the Hebrew and Greek papers.
3. That tertiary theological providers also offer a research paper based on *Te Paipera Tapu*.
4. That tertiary theological providers and ministry training schools include in their curriculum the history of *Te Paipera Tapu* when teaching Church history in Aotearoa New Zealand.
5. That Churches, tertiary theological providers, the New Zealand Bible Society and ministry training schools work collaboratively on creating fully funded research projects that have *Te Paipera Tapu* at its core.
6. That an annual symposium be held on *Te Paipera Tapu* and its interpretation.
7. That a *Te Paipera Tapu* roopu/society be established to work towards achieving these aspirational challenges.

These challenges are something that we are prepared to lay our professional reputations on.