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Agents of Change or Changed Agents?

Early Missionary Landscape Translations through Knowledge, Culture and Biota at Bay of Islands Missions, New Zealand

Transfer implies moving knowledge or objects through space or time - inevitably creating change in the translation process. Vectors facilitate transfer or spread - either as organisms that are agents of change or as a force of influence.

In the Bay of Islands, the Maori village of Rangihoua was the location of the first permanent European settlement in Aotearoa, New Zealand (Oihi Mission). Lay missionaries sent out by the Church Missionary Service were selected firstly for their transferable skills, vital in the establishment of a colonial society. 200 years on, excavation of Mission sites, such as the one at Oihi show it is peppered with the translation of these events. For example, building evidence (including the first school in New Zealand), remnant cropping areas and gardens (including Maori agricultural ditches, heritage rose varieties), and a legacy of non-native species introduced by early settlers. Crowning the site is a memorial to Reverend Samuel Marsden who conducted the first Christian service on New Zealand soil in 1814, with translation by Ruatara, the local Maori chief. With the bicentennial approaching it is an ideal time to consider the role of missionaries, notably James Shepherd, as a vector of alien knowledge, culture and species, in translating the landscape of this site. The paper will also investigate how the site conditions may have resisted or altered the colonial efforts, in a re-translation of the translator.

In summary, using primary data from sites and accounts of the life of James Shepherd the authors will construct a history of early missionary life, as viewed through the competing lenses of colonial and indigenous influence on landscape morphology and practices.

Introduction

The first missionaries, chosen by the Church Missionary Society (CMS), which was based in London, sailed for Aotearoa, New Zealand to set up Missions amongst Maori tribes. The Reverend Samuel Marsden, based in Sydney, had befriended a number of Maori and was instrumental in organizing the early missionaries, who were frequently artisans, selected primarily for their transferable skills (that is: lay preachers rather than ordained ministers).¹ Practical skills were necessary for survival and were vital in the establishment of a colonial society to teach the arts of civilization, while setting a Christian example. In this case the transfer of knowledge, skills and inevitably organisms (for example: plants and diseases) led to profound and reciprocal change of both people and place.

It is well documented that on Christmas Day, 1814, Reverend Samuel Marsden preached the first Christian service on New Zealand soil in a bay called Oihi in the Bay of Islands.² Ruatara, the local Maori chief translated the sermon. This setting was adjacent to the pa and marae at Rangihoua and it was here, under protection of the local iwi, that the first mission station was formed (fig. 1). Today crowning this site is the Marsden Cross; one of several commemorative memorial markers to those who worked lived and died on the site (fig. 2). On the cusp of the bicentennial, this paper focuses on the translated landscapes³ of the Bay of Islands Missions in the period until 1830, through the work of a less known missionary, James Shepherd. It will investigate how the missionaries acted as a vector in the transfer of knowledge, culture and species.



Fig. 1. View of Rangihoua showing Nga Puhi chief Ruatara's village on the hill with Oihi Mission station depicted as an ideal English village on the bay. Artist unknown: London, W.E. & F. Newton [1850s]. Used with permission of Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. Ref: Curios-021-008.

James Shepherd came from a family of nurserymen in Parramatta, Australia and was recruited for his horticultural knowledge.⁴ At Mission stations he was based, he planted, with his wife Harriet,

1 Angela Middleton, *Te Puna - A New Zealand Mission Station: Historical Archaeology in New Zealand*. (New York: Springer, 2008), 55.

2 Middleton, *Te Puna*, 55.

3 Where 'landscapes' is taken to include land and people.

4 Majorie Shepherd, "James and Harriet Shepherd: The Story of a Missionary Family," *New Zealand Historical Association Journal*, 1982, 12.

non-native species sourced from Shepherd's Nurseries and taught European agricultural and horticultural techniques to local Maori. In return, James had a directive from Australia to investigate *Phormium tenax* (New Zealand flax) for export potential as fibre.⁵



Fig. 2. Oihi Mission site, 2012, showing lines of old agricultural ditches and Marsden Cross Memorial in distance. Photo: J. M. Leather

Having been present as a youngster at the first service at Rangihoua in 1814, Shepherd returned to New Zealand in February 1820, where he was based as a missionary at Okura (near Kerikeri).⁶ Following this, due to Chief Parroheeko's death, there were concerns for his safety so he was transferred to the Kerikeri Mission where he was already spending extensive time.⁷ The Okura and Kerikeri Missions were within walking distance of each other so he was able to continue his horticultural enterprise and preaching work among his people at Okura (Occhooler). Shepherd was then based at Rangihoua (Oihi) from 1826 until the Mission was disbanded in 1832, when he moved nearby to the replacement Mission at Te Puna.⁸

Through Shepherd's journals and other accounts of his life (obtained through the co-author of this paper being a descendant), this paper investigates how the relationships between landscape, species (endemic flora and the arrival of aliens), culture (Maori and pakeha⁹) and knowledge (in the form of religion and trade - that is: agriculture and horticulture) functioned to translate environments culturally and physically.

Transferable Skills

Following their arrival in Aotearoa, Maori gardened for food, medicines and fibres, for their families, and to trade with other tribes. They incorporated their own cultural beliefs into their garden

5 Proceedings of Church Missionary Society, Vol.IX: 346-48.

6 Majorie Shepherd, *The Shepherd Flock* (Auckland, 1983), 1.

7 Shepherd, "James and Harriet Shepherd: The Story of a Missionary Family," 14.

8 Majorie Shepherd, "James and Harriet Shepherd: The Story of a Missionary Family," 15.

9 "A person of European descent." Herbert W. Williams, *A Dictionary of the Maori Language*, (Wellington: Government Printer, 1975).

husbandry and became skilled at a subsistence gardening architecture that suited the crops grown, soils encountered and weather patterns.¹⁰ Land use in Maori culture was regarded as communal, spatially fluid and irrevocably linked to a system of sacredness involving tapu,¹¹ and its opposite noa.¹² Until the arrival of Europeans in the 1700s the four main food crops of Maori were the kumara, taro, hue (gourd) and yam.¹³ Maori gardens¹⁴ were characterised by a seamless valuing of both 'ex situ' and 'in situ' plants¹⁵ (so the European concept of 'weeds' was unknown to them), and a focus on communal ownership and co-operative labouring.¹⁶

Phormium tenax (flax, harakeke) held a central role in Maori culture, all parts of the plant being valued and utilised. Early European settlers were similarly struck by its properties and esteemed it as a fibre plant and for its medicinal qualities. In 1770, Cook's journal records:

"There is a plant that serves the inhabitants instead of hemp or linen, which excels all that are put to the same purposes in other countries... of the leaves they make their strings, line and cordage... From the same plant, by another preparation, they draw long, slender fibres... the finest clothes are made... a plant, with such advantages, might be applied to so many useful and important purposes."¹⁷

Marsden, on his return to Sydney in 1815, took, in the hold of the *Active*, a cargo of *Phormium tenax* and by 1830 a very considerable flax fibre trade existed.¹⁸ The Church Missionary Society gave clear directives for the missionaries. For example, the instructions for James Shepherd were:

"Your practical skill in gardening and agriculture will enable you to introduce into cultivation by the New Zealanders, wheat, barley, maize and other grains, vines, fruits-trees and useful vegetables. You will instruct them in dibbling of wheat by which two-fifths of the seed required in the broadcast way, suffices. You will direct a steady attention to the plant common to the country termed by the botanists *Phormium tenax*. Mr Marsden's late travels in New Zealand have brought to light the existence of seven varieties of that plant and further research will no doubt add to that number... while one variety may be superior for cordage, another may answer better for linen and a third for the use of a paper maker. You should therefore, have at least an acre of suitable land prepared and plant it in suitable roots of the different varieties. Specimens of fibre, of a silky lustre and softness are brought in from the Southward. You should endeavour to ascertain the place of its growth and obtain one or more roots from which to propagate it. The Society being desirous of a quantity of the

10 Helen Leach, *1,000 Years of Gardening in New Zealand*, (Auckland: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1984)..

11 "Under religious or superstitious restriction." Herbert W. Williams, *A Dictionary of the Maori Language* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1975).

12 "Free from tapu or any other restriction." Herbert W. Williams, *A Dictionary of the Maori Language*.

13 R. P. Hargreaves, "Changing Maori Agriculture in Pre-Waitangi New Zealand," *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, Vol.72 (1963), 101.

14 These gardens were food gardens.

15 Ex situ plants are those deliberately planted by humans; in situ plants are naturalised.

16 R. P. Hargreaves, "Changing Maori Agriculture in Pre-Waitangi New Zealand," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 72 (1963), 102.

17 Esmond H. Atkinson, *Phormium Tenax: the NZ fibre industry* (Wellington: Govt. Printer, 1922).

18 J. Hector. *Phormium tenax as a fibrous plant*, (1872), Colonial Museum and Survey Department, New Zealand.

raw material being sent home you may encourage the natives to bring it for sale and draw on the storekeeper for articles to barter for it... for many reasons the Committee recommend your moving from place to place visiting various chiefs".¹⁹

The horticultural focus on growing and trading plant material was explicit. However, not forgetting the primary rationale of religious indoctrination, he was further instructed as follows: "Your principal attention should be directed to the acquisition of facts calculated to throw light on the means of civilizing the people among whom you to reside, and introducing among them the Gospel of Salvation."²⁰

James Shepherd was somewhat of a protégé of Marsden, being singled out by him at a young age and taken on early voyages, owing to Marsden's acquaintance with James' parents. James and his wife Harriet were particularly valuable to Marsden due to their highly practical and transferable skills - James as the son of a farmer and nurseryman and Harriet (whom he married in 1821 on a trip home to Australia) for her nursing skills.²¹ While Marsden knew Shepherd's background well, he also clearly regarded James as less academically able than ordained missionaries, writing that he was: "...a young man devoted to the cause, and will soon speak the language well. He possesses considerable natural abilities... is the son of a pious man and has had to work for his bread from a child. I have no doubt that but he will be a complete master of the language, though he will not be able to prepare it for the press for want of education."²² Ironically, a descendant, Eileen Warth (great-great-grand-daughter), pointed out in an unpublished manuscript revision²³ that Shepherd's command of Maori became so polished he translated sections of the Bible. A printed copy of his translation of the "Book of Ruth" has been recently displayed at Te Papa, Museum of New Zealand, Wellington. This is evidence of translation flowing reciprocally between missionaries and Maori.

In February 1820 Shepherd was appointed as lay missionary of the Okura Mission.²⁴ From the following quote from James' journal for 17 April 1821 it is clear that he was able to go some way with the directive regarding flax, although there is no evidence in the journal of the setting up of trial plots. "Visited Ocoola [Okura] and found my men busily employed, afternoon returned - met on my way some natives who told me they had been brought from Tyrenake [Taranaki] by Timarangi the last time he was at war [that is: slaves], a story of which I have heard Mr Marsden tell. Made some enquiry to their part of the country. Was told that their land produces plenty of food also that much flax is growing there."²⁵

19 *Proceedings of Church Missionary Society*. Vol.IX: 346-48.

20 Shepherd, "James and Harriet Shepherd: The Story of a Missionary Family," 13.

21 Shepherd, "James and Harriet Shepherd," 15.

22 Samuel Marsden, *Letter and Journals of Samuel Marsden 1765-1838*. (Dunedin: Coulls, Sommerville, Wilkie, 1932). Accessed: <http://www.enzb.auckland.ac.nz/docs/Marsden/PDF/mars1000.pdf>.

23 Eileen Warth, *Harriet Shepherd 1800-77* (Northland, 1983).

24 Shepherd, "James and Harriet Shepherd," 13.

25 Shepherd, *Journal*.

From his journal it is clear that James, along with his wife, Harriet had a strong work ethic. Harriet is described by Warth²⁶ as one of New Zealand's "first working women in the modern day context", and James, alongside his passion to preach, could turn his hand to most things. For example, bartering for land, cutting and sewing trousers, killing and dressing pigs, building structures. It could be speculated that the rigors and demands of colonial life imposed by the native land and people, left little spare time, as Shepherd wrote on 20 April 1820, soon after arriving in New Zealand to live:

"I began the day by clearing a piece of land for wheat, however I was soon called away to other business - I was opportuned by Parroheeko and Wiriah who came to the settlement the day before to go with them and pass my opinion on a piece of timber he had for sale, accordingly after much entreaty I consented to go, which cost me the whole day - I am sure in this place a person will not be able to do much as it respects in the cultivation of lands, their being so many things to call the attention away..."²⁷

This is perhaps a reason why the flax trials he was directed to set up, were not further mentioned. James' journal details frequent examples of colonial translation. On 25 April 1821 James wrote of working nearly all the day in the winery.²⁸ By this time he is making daily trips to Okura from Kerikeri where he, with help of local natives, was breaking in ground for corn, wheat and potato. His conversations with natives are wide-ranging, including spiritual. For example, on 23 May 1821, he wrote:

"Went to Ocoola and found Timarangi with whom I had a great deal of conversation. I made enquiries of him relative to the flax and he told me there are 6 sorts and also their names which are as follows 1) korade mowre, 2) para ti nue, 3) tooawetoo 4) korade mow, 5) kwkowprowa, 6) warareke. These sorts of flax have all different qualities and will likely suit different purposes. Finding myself with an intelligible man I took the opportunity of conversing with him on various subjects...Timarangi told me that they came from the sea which seems in accordance with our own ideas respecting the South Sea Islands and that their forefathers said that large canoes brought them here... I asked Timarangi where our spirits go when dead. He said that there is a place at the North Cape where spirits go. I then explained to him our ideas of them and their place and he seemed a little astonished..."²⁹

The reference to Shepherd working in the winery and tending grape vines is a significant translation of plants and land use since Kerikeri is currently emerging as a wine region, with a vineyard being even named "Marsden Estate". The Shepherd Nursery Plant Catalogue lists grape plants so it is entirely possible plants were sourced from there.³⁰ Similarly, Shepherd's nursery connection has been linked to the introduction of a vigorously growing variety of berry fruit, *Rubus rugosus* variant

26 Warth, *Harriet Shepherd 1800-77*.

27 Shepherd, *Journal*.

28 Shepherd, *Journal*.

29 Shepherd, *Journal*.

30 Shepherd Nursery Plant Catalogue, (Parramatta: Australia, 1829).

thwaitzii, present in Northland. His descendant, Stella Leather verifies: "Shepherds' have always had these boysenberries on the farm."³¹ Ken Nobbs, rose breeder, wrote:

"It is fitting a new subtropical fruit, the Keribery, *Rubus rugosus* var. *thwaitzii*, should have been located on land once part of James Shepherds property south of the Whangaroa Harbour. A Mr L. R. Hansen, who purchased the land and found this unusual winter fruiting blackberry there, has developed and demonstrated the value of this plant...The only references I could find in the D.S.I.R library in Mt. Albert were to two Bombay Journals in the middle of the 19th century. Roy Hansen found...plants here and there...south of Kaitaia...James Shepherd was probably the one to introduce it but there seems to be no known documentation relating to its introduction".³²

These were pioneering days, before the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act of 1996 imposed regulations on importation of new plant material into New Zealand. And just as missionaries such as James Shepherd introduced plants to New Zealand and Maori, Maori introduced their plants and cultural techniques to missionaries, which influenced the way land was shaped and managed. One significant crop was kumara, a staple dietary item for Maori as well as being valuable for trade with pakeha in return for muskets, household items and gardening equipment.³³ The co-author recalls stories being swapped between her great-grandfather Stan, direct descendant of James Shepherd, and an elderly Maori couple at Mahinepua on how to plant the kumara tubers on the 'flat' (fertile area of land) on the Shepherd farm in Northland. In addition, as previously mentioned, growing kumara was steeped in the spiritual observance of *tapu* for Maori, which meant they resisted changes in husbandry techniques, much to the frustration of the missionaries. On Oct 14 1821, James wrote:

"...We went the way of Wymatee [Waimate Mission] on our way we overtook Hone... On our arrival we found that his people were all tabooed having begun to plant the Koomerah [kumara]. It is curious and entertaining to hear them talk of their superstitious notions relative to the planting of koomerah. The labourers are first set apart by a certain ceremony for the purpose of planting the koomerah they are then separated from the camp. They must not eat anything unclean, perform certain ceremonies and prayers to the god that the koomerah may grow well and are preserved from insects. They do not come back to the village until all the koomarah are planted then they have a feast."³⁴

It was anathema for missionaries like Shepherd to accept spiritual significance of a crop but they did, with time, adopt some of the Maori horticultural techniques such as stone walls and agricultural ditches to provide drainage and wind protection in order to grow Maori crops.³⁵ In reciprocation,

31 Personal communication, 8 February 2014.

32 K. L. Nobbs "New Zealand's First Horticulturalist." *Bulletin of the Royal NZ Institute of Horticulture* (c. 1985): 11-12.

33 Patricia Bawden "The Years Before Waitangi" A Story of Early Maori/European Contact in New Zealand. Self, Auckland.

34 Shepherd, *Journal*.

35 K. B. Cumberland "Aotearoa Maori: New Zealand about 1780," *Geographical Review*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (1949): 401-24.

Maori were initially very resistant to the translation of European gardening techniques. Aside from the unclean and, therefore, *tapu* nature of manures favoured by pakeha for fertiliser, gardening was seen as the work of women and slaves (war booty).³⁶ However, they slowly saw the advantages of growing popular pakeha crops for trade, like potatoes and corn. Shepherd recorded on 6 April 1826:

“...A good deal of corn was brought to the settlement for sale, but me not having hoes, the articles they required they took the corn elsewhere. It is very pleasing to see the natives have a good abundance of corn...Hoes are now in great demand a true sign that the natives are convinced of their utility as well as showing the intention of the natives to work the land.”³⁷

Translation of Gardens

Gardens provided a means for colonial translation since plants were frequently brought out from the home country to provide aesthetic or culinary reminders and to mix with local species. As a skilled horticulturist James Shepherd actively involved himself in garden planning and planting at all the Mission stations he worked in. This included helping lay out the garden at the Kerikeri Mission for Reverend John Butler, the first ordained missionary in New Zealand. His descendants continued his example. For example, James’ son, Henry George, grew taro, which a later descendant, Stella Leather (another great-great-grand-daughter), recalls being grown on the family farm when she was a child.³⁸ The garden of Kemp House (as the Kerikeri Mission is now known - fig. 3) recalls the Mission period, being New Zealand’s oldest European residence (located adjacent to the Stone Store, which Shepherd also ran for some years).³⁹ In May 1820, a plough and team of bullocks turned the soil here for the first time and it has been cultivated as a garden ever since.⁴⁰

Remnant gardens at the abandoned Oihi Mission site are a legacy of the early missionaries, which gives legibility to prior gardening practices and demonstrates both colonial and Maori influence on landscape morphology at the Rangihoua site. For example, taro and fruiting trees such as an old lemon with vicious spikes called *Teremana* by Maori, plus European heritage roses can be found. In turn these species have survived and been transplanted into contemporary gardens, such as those owned by descendants of missionaries. For example, Shepherd’s garden at Kemp House (now restored) and the co-author’s garden has a seed-grown lemon tree from Rangihoua. According to Stella Leather, the old wild rose, *Rosa eglanteria*,⁴¹ still grows on the terrace at Rangihoua, both where the dwellings had been and just beyond the fence line (fig. 4).⁴² Shepherd also took the same rose species to the farm he later

36 Shepherd, *Journal*.

37 Shepherd, *Journal*.

38 Personal communication, 12 February 14.

39 Shepherd, “James and Harriet Shepherd,” 16.

40 Kerikeri 175th Anniversary Trust Organisation, *Kerikeri 175th Anniversary 1819-1994*. Keri Print, 1994.

41 Daphne Whitfort-Smith, *Heritage Roses New Zealand* 29, nos. 1 and 3 (2008).

42 Personal communication, 12 February 2014.

purchased in Northland (which remained in the family) and Stella remembers her mother asking her to collect hips from it for her baby brother's rose hip syrup.⁴³ On 23 June 1821, James Shepherd noted in his journal that he: "...made a present of a peach tree to one of the natives who requested it".⁴⁴ Thus species were transferred between stations and across the landscape.



Fig. 3. Heritage rose at Kemp House, 2013.
Photo: J M Leather



Fig. 4. E. Warth with James' Shepherd's journal and Heritage rose plant at Oihi, 2012.
Photo: J M Leather

Landscape Resistance to Translation

In early 2012 and again in 2013 a team from DOC and the University of Otago undertook an archaeological investigation at Oihi Mission station.⁴⁵ In a telling depiction of two cultures colliding, the landscape morphology reveals cultivation lines (agricultural ditches) running down the slope, which is a distinctive Maori technique. Terraces intersect these, where the missionaries' homes and New Zealand's first schoolhouse sat. However, in this case it was the landscape that determined the survival of this settlement since it refused to submit to the colonial cultural overlay. Oihi Mission was

43 S. Leather, Family Roses. *Heritage Roses New Zealand* 34, no. 4 (2013).

44 Shepherd, *Journal*.

45 Hamish MacLean, *Unearthing the Past*: The Bay Chronicle, 7 February 2013.

chosen due to its proximity to the pa at Rangihoua for protection under Chief Ruatara (who died five months later),⁴⁶ however it contained few flat areas for pakeha-style cropping and these areas were poorly drained. Locally sourced kahikatea timber (*Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*) used for houses, rotted in the wet conditions and the bleak south-facing hillside resisted successful cropping, while distance from other establishing missions necessitated difficult travel and isolation for missionaries.⁴⁷ Despite missionaries digging numerous agricultural ditches to drain water away from their houses (still visible on the site today - fig. 1), the site remained resistant to permanent habitation, with the missionary William Williams writing, "It is indeed a disconsolate place", and later, "With great difficulty and circumspection we moved from one house to another, their situation is so bad."⁴⁸

Ironically, even after the mission was closed in 1832 and a new one opened nearby at Te Puna, there was a stubborn refusal by outsiders to acknowledge the unsuitability of the mission site, as illustrated by the painting (fig. 2), which shows a tidy 'English village' and nearby Maori pa, which Middleton describes as hopelessly idealistic.⁴⁹ Even today, with the site envisioned as a world heritage park, the landscape continues to resist with community disharmony over the telling of the story via a visitor centre and pilgrimage pathway. The archaeological dig has unearthed a poignant reminder of previous efforts to inhabit this site.⁵⁰

Cultural Transfer

Throughout this early colonial period in New Zealand there was an exchange of cultural beliefs and behaviours between Maori and pakeha. In contemporary circles it is widely believed that pakeha culture dominated, at the expense of Maori, a travesty that, as a nation, we are continuing to pay for. However, as Middleton points out, in these young days of pakeha habitation as missionaries, Maori were in control of trade, which gave them significant power.⁵¹ They were also considerably greater in number and war-like tendencies, which drove the missionaries to seek protection from a particular chief. Missionaries needed to understand and speak Maori to have any chance of achieving their goals of civilising Maori and bringing them around to Christianity. In this cultural skill, James Shepherd proved himself to be especially adroit, as well as earning a reputation as a fair and tolerant man - open to Maori concepts of life spirit and values, and popular among them. The following quote from his journal of 23 June 1820, illustrates his receptiveness to cultural transfer:

46 Middleton, *Te Puna*, 58.

47 MacLean "Unearthing the Past," 7 February 2013.

48 Shepherd, "James and Harriet Shepherd," 15.

49 Middleton, *Te Puna*, 66.

50 <http://www.gospel2014.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Marsden-Cross-Planning.pdf>.

51 Middleton, *Te Puna*, 62.

"Typical day gardening, negotiating with Maori and studying the language...I asked some natives who had come from Wangaroer [Whangaroa] who made the earth, they told me that Mouway [Maui] did - that it was once a fish and that he pulled it out of the sea with a line - I asked where Mouway came from they said from the earth I asked how that could be and they were not a little put out to it for an answer, however said their parents before them knew this. It seems they have some curious ancient stories amongst them - they wondered at me having such a knowledge of their language and asked had I not been living amongst them before?"⁵²

On certain cultural tendencies, however, there was no crossover. When Shepherd first arrived at Okura Mission in 1820 he was offered a woman from Chief Parroheeko's household. About this he wrote: "I met with great temptation during the day, however I was preserved by the strong Lord, to Him be the glory."⁵³ As time passed, however, colonial culture became more inculcated, at the expense of Maoridom, as referred to in the following quote from Shepherd's journal of 8 January 1824:

"Engaged in writing and copying a first book for the New Zealand children according to the present adopted plan ... I am quite pleased with our new adopted plan of spelling the New Zealand language according to the English orthography. The English scholar will be able to spell and read the language with ease and facility."⁵⁴

Perhaps one of the most significant and valuable cultural translations between Maori and pakeha missionaries was due to the nursing work of Harriet Shepherd. Assisted by her daughter Isabella (known by missionaries as "the apothecary boy") she was in demand within the Maori Mission communities for her medical expertise, as well as being greatly respected by Maori.⁵⁵ Ironically, she sometimes had to deal with disease outbreaks that were brought to New Zealand by the missionaries and other pakehas - which Maori had little resistance to. In 1828 a whooping cough outbreak claimed her three-year-old daughter, Harriet, and many Maori died.⁵⁶ Another difficulty for nursing missionaries to overcome was the Maori tradition of declaring a sick person to be tapu or 'unclean', so no one was permitted to tend them.⁵⁷

Conclusion

Early missionaries sent to Aotearoa, New Zealand (who were pre-Treaty of Waitangi, in 1840), were given Herculean tasks of 'civilizing' the land and local people according to a Christian doctrine and a European sensibility. This paper has focused both on the impact they had on the physical and cultural landscape through the importation of plants and techniques at the early Mission sites and

⁵² Shepherd, *Journal*.

⁵³ Shepherd, *Journal*.

⁵⁴ Shepherd, *Journal*.

⁵⁵ Shepherd, *Journal*.

⁵⁶ Shepherd, "James and Harriet Shepherd: The Story of a Missionary Family," 16.

⁵⁷ Middleton, *Te Puna - A New Zealand Mission Station: Historical Archaeology in New Zealand*, 56.

through the work of James Shepherd. He was chosen particularly for his horticultural skills - seen as desirably transferable by his employers, the Church Missionary Society. Shepherd worked at four Bay of Islands missions, Okura, Kerikeri, Oihi and Te Puna. At each he gardened and grew crops, endeavouring to teach Maori 'efficient' methods of growing and introduce 'useful' plants. Alongside him, his wife Harriet also gardened as well as raising their eleven surviving children and working tirelessly as a nurse, sometimes in efforts to combat diseases that were devastating cultural imprints upon vulnerable Maori. Both therefore acted as vectors of alien organisms and influence, which benign though it seemed at the time, was inevitably to grow into huge and negative impacts for the indigenous landscape and people. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss this, but the topic of accumulated European gardening indoctrination on Maori is discussed more fully in an earlier SAHANZ paper by Wake and Adams.⁵⁸ The seeming small translations made by early missionaries such as James Shepherd therefore set the scene for transformative events to follow. However, it is important to acknowledge that the evidence on the landscape (for example: buildings, plants and cropping remnants) remains our most tangible reminder of a weaving of cultures that variously enhanced one or the other, or none. Maori adopted new crops, were felled by disease and developed new beliefs. Pakeha missionaries also grew new plants (for example: kumara, taro and flax), they learnt a new language in order to teach and preach and they understood more widely about other belief systems. In addition to this they introduced plants, which moved out into new areas. In all this the marks on the land remain to remind us that landscape has the final say on translation. Now designated as "Department of Conservation Reserves", the mission sites have a new role alongside their historic ones - as areas of biodiversity for the future. So the translation continues.

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⁵⁸ Sue Wake & John Adam "Digging the dirt: Cultural discord and the architecture of gardening." In *Cultural Crossroads. Proceedings of the 26th Annual Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand*, ed. Julia Gattley (Auckland: SAHANZ 2009).