

Henry Williams-Karuwhā: the Shaping of a 19th Century English Missionary and His Te Tiriti Legacy

Samuel D. Carpenter. Email me with feedback at scarpenter@laidlaw.ac.nz

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Mihi

Me timata ahau pēnei... Hei tā te Karaipiture: He hōnore, he kōroria ki te Atua, maungarongo ki te whenua, whakaaro pai ki ngā tangata katoa.

Tēnei te mihi ki te Atua...

Tēnei te mihi ki te hunga mate...

Ka huri ki a tātou te hunga ora i tēnei wā, tēnā koutou, kia ora mai tātou katoa.

Ka nui te mihi hoki ki te kaikarakia me te kaikōrero i te wā nei.

I acknowledge the karakia and welcome this morning. My thanks also to Tanja and the National Library “E Oho, Waitangi” series team for this opportunity to share some whakaaro and rangahau about Henry Williams, aka Te Wiremu or Karuwhā/Four Eyes – who, whichever way you look at it, is a significant figure in our NZ story.

I have re-titled, or perhaps subtitled my talk from that advertised: *Henry Williams-Karuwhā: the Shaping of a 19th Century English Missionary and His Te Tiriti Legacy*, but I will certainly be exploring the idea of contested ground, as it was the sort of ground Williams occupied in his own time and in a sense is still the arena in which one of his legacies, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, is situated. But more on legacy towards the end.

Henry Williams: the portraits

Now I am interested today mostly in what Henry Williams thought and did. But most people are also interested in what he looked like. Frustratingly we only have portraits from the 1850s and a photo or two from the 1860s, when he was elderly. Various sketches from earlier on – the one of him wielding a taiaha facing Hone Heke during mid-1840s debates is highly suggestive of his personal style – including his wide brimmed hat and trenchcoat.

But anyway – at the risk perhaps of a little sacrilege – why not ask AI to ‘youthify’ his 1850s existing portrait??

Well, I inputted both the original Baugniet and an impression by artist Mr G of this from 2021 and what they produced of a teenager Henry Williams is, well, startling – if somewhat too 21st century! ¹

So a quick timeline:

Williams was born in 1792. He joined the navy at age 14 (about the age of the AI portraits perhaps?!). He was retired on half-pay in 1815 at the end of the Napoleonic Wars. In 1823, when he was 31, he arrived in the Bay of Islands with his wife Marianne and 3 small children as missionary with the Church Missionary Society (CMS). In 1828 he was asked to mediate in a Hokianga-Bay of Islands intertribal crisis. In 1840 he translated the Treaty: he was about 48/ yrs old. He baptised the rangatira Kawiti at Pākaraka in 1853. He was a minister throughout the North, especially the wider Bay of Islands, until the almost the day he died in 1867, aged 75.

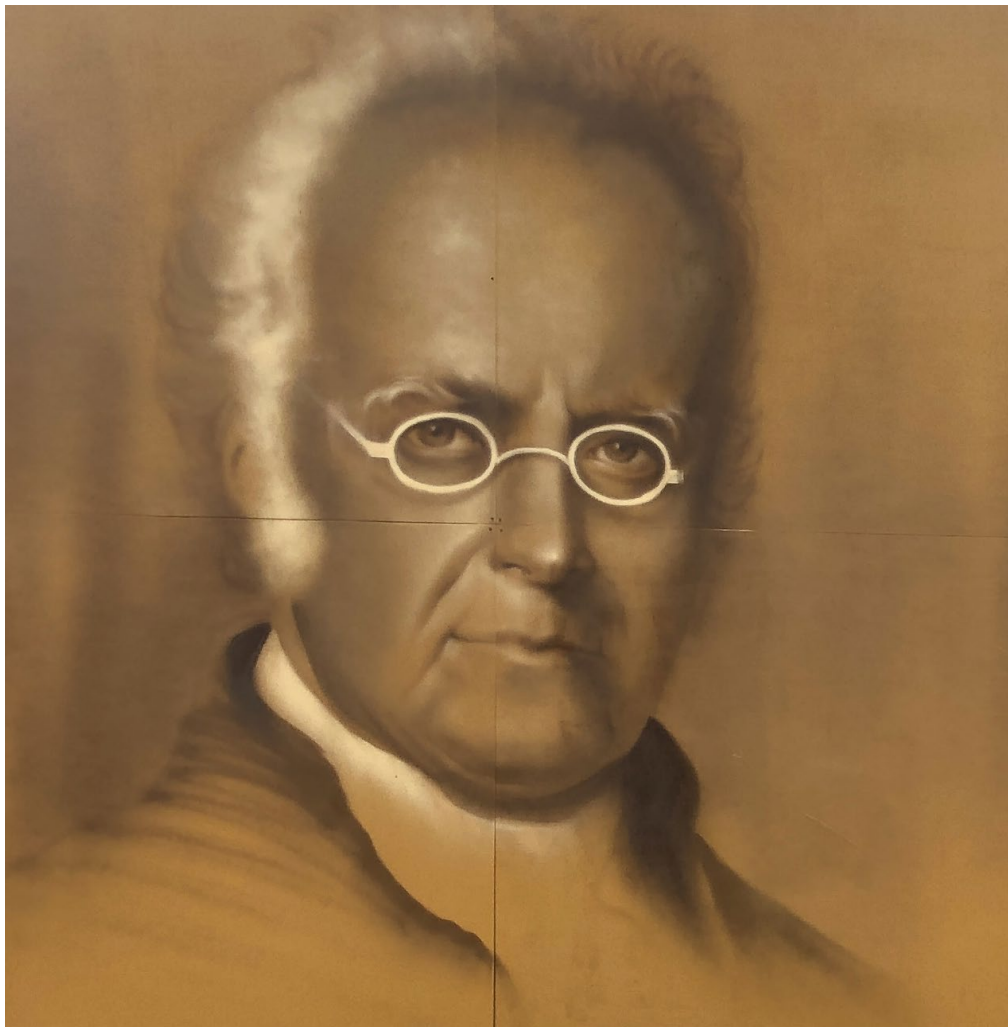


Figure 1. Henry Williams (spraypaint on board), by Mr G, 2021 (based on Baugniet, c.1854, ref. C-020-005, Alexander Turnbull Library)

¹ Using <https://www.maxstudio.ai/>.

Introducing Henry Williams: the Tea Party and the Political Rally

Two events give insight into the social and intellectual worlds that shaped a young Henry Williams. In 1796, Henry's uncle, John Marsh visited his sister's family in Nottingham, the town where Thomas and Mary Williams (nee Marsh) were now raising their young brood of Dissenting and middling class English people. (*Dissenters means here, in the first instance, non-Anglicans, or Nonconformists from the Established Church.*) On this visit Marsh recorded that one evening:

the Williams's had a large party to drink tea, play at Cards & stay Supper, consisting of Mr Walker, a Dissenting Minister, & his Wife, Mr & Mrs Attenburrow, the Mr Coldhams & several others, all of whom went away before 12, except Mr Walker (who seem'd to be a very sensible Man) & another Gent[leman] who (altho' it was Saturday night) staid to smoke a snug Pipe [after the women were gone]...²

Even the more Anglican uncle John – composer of organ music and English pastoral symphonies – perhaps considered that smoking in the early hours of the Sabbath showed a certain lack of Christian piety. The average Dissenter would have agreed with that judgement.

So this was a tea party in which a bunch of friends and business colleagues from the Nottingham Corporation were enjoying some convivial activities and no doubt discussing the politics of the day. The Nottingham Corporation, like other town councils of their time, were small oligarchies of typically the leading business interests of the town. Since Nottingham was an important centre of cloth or textiles manufacturing – the trade of Henry Williams' father – those controlling the Corporation were mostly Nonconformist manufacturers and merchants ranging from more orthodox, evangelical Congregationalists (the Williams family among them) through to the Presbyterian, even Unitarian end of Dissent. (*Another footnote here: Unitarians believed God was a Unity not a Trinity – a big issue for Anglicans.*) But here's the main thing for my purposes: their politics, for the time, were on the radical end of the spectrum. This radicalism was not at the height it was at the beginning of the French Revolution a few years earlier when the Unitarian Richard Price preached his famous 1789 sermon, *A Discourse on the Love of Country* – put into the shade by the response that became the archetypal conservative statement, Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* – but it was a politics that still held to a definite version of English rights and liberties: still loyal to monarchy but verging on an American Revolutionary version of loyalty – in which English liberties were seen as congruent with the best form of Constitutional Monarchy: no

² John Marsh, Journals, 1 Oct. 1796, vol. 18, 31, mssHM 54457, Huntington Library, California; also cited N. H. Williams, 'Williams Family', 47.

taxation without representation; freedom of person and property; and, perhaps especially, freedom of conscience and religion.

We know this radical connection makes sense for several reasons, not least because of the way that Thomas Williams' old minister, at Gosport, Rev. David Bogue, wrote about the sympathy of the English Dissenters for the cause of the American Revolution.³ In addition, the Rev. Walker, mentioned prominently among the Williams tea party gathering, was a friend of Richard Price and other well-known Dissenters.⁴

We also know this connection makes sense – in direct, familial terms – because Henry Williams' father had to subdue his more radical or democratic views four years earlier. In December 1792, at a 'good Order & Government' meeting – as uncle John Marsh also recorded – Thomas Williams had placed himself conspicuously in the hall when the loyal declarations were made; he did so because he had previously voiced his 'democratic sentiments' and feared he might be a 'marked man'. In other words, he was self-correcting for context, to preserve his personal liberties at a time where the English regime was doubling down on dissent – civil or religious dissent especially, but any other shade as well. (It seems Thomas escaped censure from the authorities on this occasion.)⁵ After mass executions of the Reign of Terror began some 10 months after this (Sep 1793), Dissenters had additional reasons to moderate their regard for the French Revolution. But for them, a big issue remained that they were barred from civil and military offices and the ancient universities unless they conformed publicly to Anglican worship.

These two windows on Henry Williams' childhood – a tea party and a political rally – help us to measure the political opinions shaping the young Henry Williams: loyal to monarchy, yes, but tinged with a strong dose of conviction about constitutional liberties and rights. And, in which the temper of English Dissent holds firm to a general independence of thought on the issues of the day.

We might also ask about the Marsh side of the family – his mother's side – which seems on the whole a little less radical and perhaps more Anglican. At least, Rev. Edward Marsh, son of uncle John, was an evangelical Anglican clergyman by the time he became a kind of spiritual mentor for Henry Williams after he left the Navy in 1815. The Marsh family, Henry's mother's side, does indeed appear more establishment, at least via Royal Navy service: three of his mother's brothers were all sea captains or lieutenants, while his mother's father was – believe it or not – Captain of the Royal Yacht, HMS *Catherine*, for a period. In saying that, the Marsh family of Captain Henry

³ David Bogue and James Bennett, *History of Dissenters, From the Revolution in 1688, to the Year 1808*, vol. 4 (London: 1812), 152-53.

⁴ Rev. George Walker also led a petition for parliamentary reform (probably against civil disabilities of Dissenters), see <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1790-1820/constituencies/nottingham>.

⁵ John Marsh, *Journals*, vol. 15, 58.

appears for a time to have attended the Congregational (that is, Dissenting) Chapel at Gosport, where the Williams family were intergenerational members. This indeed is how Henry's parents, Thomas and Mary, knew each other.⁶



Figure 2. HMS Endymion v USS President in 1815, by Henry Williams [nd], ref. MS. 91/75, box 14, Auckland Museum Library (one of 4 paintings of this engagement by Williams)

Gosport, across the harbour from the Royal Navy base of Portsmouth, and the Royal Navy service of his Marsh whānau thus also constitutes an important formative influence on the young Henry Williams. And it remains an important part of his imaginative life as a young boy growing up in midlands Nottingham. We must remember that he was born in February 1792, when the French Revolution was heating up, and that England was at war for the whole of his childhood – in fact for the whole of his life until he leaves the Navy in 1815 at the close of the Napoleonic wars. So Navy service, which he pursued as a young 14 year old, after the death of his father a couple of years before, becomes also a tremendously shaping experience for a young man. But the Nonconformist politics of his seemingly strong willed and ebullient father surely left their mark. The Nonconformist or Dissenting milieu of the Nottingham political and business scene (one and the same) articulated a particular view of Constitutional Monarchy and English rights and liberties.

⁶ John Marsh says his mother was a Dissenter, hence presumably why the family attended Gospel chapel for a time.

Now, without digressing too much into early nineteenth century English political language, the following may give you a flavour of the type of language and concepts used in favour a Whig candidate for the Nottingham seat in Parliament in 1803.

... let every Elector, who is a friend to Civil and Religious liberty, who can feel the injuries and insults offered to the **independence of the town**, exert himself strenuously in favor of Mr. Birch. His political sentiments are well known to you, they are in unison with the **constitution of the country**, to every part of whose government he is alike friendly, whether it be the **prerogatives of the Crown**, the **privileges of the Peers**, or the **RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE**.⁷

A small excerpt perhaps; but you get the drift.

Since Thomas Williams was from the manufacturing or merchant classes of the Corporation it seems he was definitely more aligned with the Whig and Dissenting faction of the town.⁸ Tories, especially at that time, with war against Revolutionary France a going concern, emphasised law and loyalty to monarchy a little more than more independent Whigs and Dissenters would have. But contest generally over government and the constitution was staple fare in political discourse of this period.]

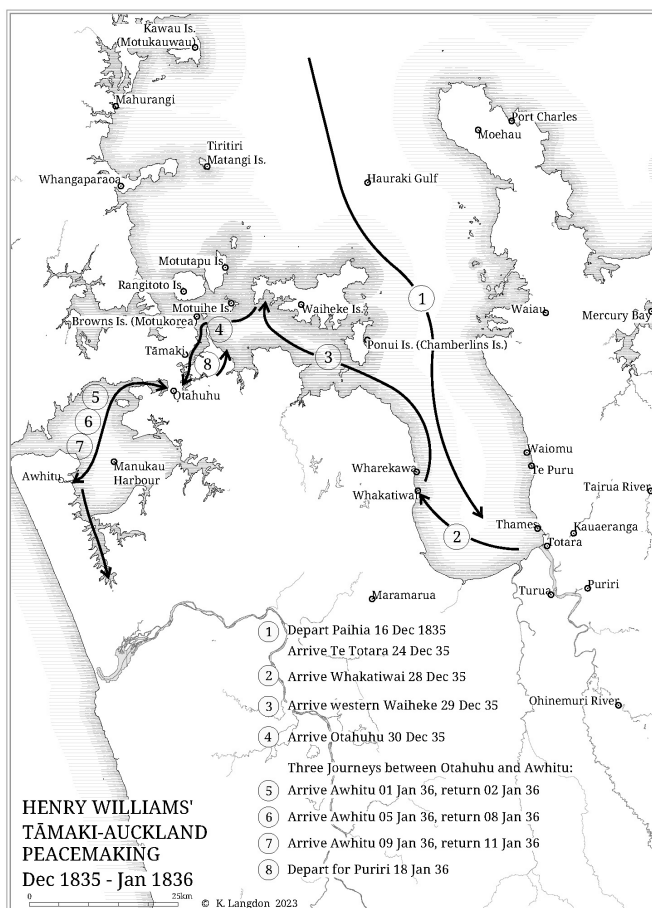
Williams' views on Te Tiriti o Waitangi

We need this background, I argue, to understand how Henry Williams viewed Te Tiriti o Waitangi, which he translated with his son probably into the early hours of 5 February 1840. What, however, seems foremost in Williams' mind is what was necessary on the ground in Pēwhairangi/the Bay of Islands and the wider tribal landscape of the late 1830s, just emerging scarred from the musket fuelled warfare of two decades and entangled – as Tony Ballantyne and others have argued – with multiple trade relationships and the evangelical missions. These relationships were shaped, especially since the 1809 conjuncture of Marsden and Ruatara, from the Antipodean political centre (can we call it “civic/civilised”?) of New South Wales. So, what was necessary or required in Williams' mind in 1840 was, in a phrase, *law and order*. Williams became a peacemaker, at Ngāpuhi invitation, from the late 1820s in tribal conflicts in the North and the immediate vicinity of the Bay. A striking image from Marianne Williams' dairy of 1837 has Henry running out the door in his dressing-gown to mediate up the Kawakawa River in the newly flared Kororāreka-Otūihu dispute, or Part II of “the Girls War”, in which wider Ngāpuhi groupings are competing for control of the

⁷ *Coke and Birch: the Paper War, Carried on at the Nottingham Election, 1803, Containing the Whole of the Address, Songs Squibs, &c. Circulated by the Contending Parties; including the Books of Accidents and Chances* (Nottingham: W. and M. Turner, [nd]), 18.

⁸ Thomas mentions being ‘anxious’ about a Nottingham petition in 1803 to wife Mary (Thomas to Mary, 22 Feb 1803), which was probably the petition by D. P. Coke to challenge the fairness of the election of his Whig rival, Joseph Birch; the House of Commons declared Birch's election void; the Nottingham Corporation openly supported Birch against Coke in the new election, but Birch was defeated in May 1803: see <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1790-1820/constituencies/nottingham>.

European trade.⁹ Here's the thing: Europeans are mixed up in these conflicts, as they are in more prominent and egregious affairs such as the blood-stained chronicle of Te Rauparaha and the brig *Elizabeth*, and the *Harriet-Alligator* debacle in Taranaki.¹⁰ You cannot separate the European world from the Māori world: they have become, in a word, “entangled”. And this is why I must dissent from the Waitangi Tribunal's recent articulation of a new (or recent) Treaty interpretation: that Governor Hobson was to become a governor of *the European settlers or traders only*. This is a category mistake, a misreading of context. The governor was needed especially to intervene *between* Europeans and Māori to keep the peace; and he might, also, be needed to intervene in inter-tribal warfare if things got too hot or out of control. Hobson had clarified with the Colonial Office that these were his instructions. Now, I doubt Henry Williams was privy to Hobson's instructions; but it was obvious to Karuwhā-Williams that the governor was needed to bring peace and good order to the now tortuous politics of Northland and further afield – made more tortuous by European intermeddling and military technologies – and to do something else, vitally: preserve Māori landed property.



⁹ Fitzgerald, *Letters from the Bay of Islands*, 236-41.

¹⁰ “The *Harriet* affair”, <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/culture/maori-european-contact-pre-1840/the-harriet-affair>, (Manatū Taonga — Ministry for Culture and Heritage), updated 14-Oct-2014.

The protection of landed property is what makes sense of article two of Te Tiriti: “te tino rangatiratanga o ō rātou whenua, ō rātou kainga, me ō rātou taonga katoa”. The way this is expressed I think carried real insight into Māori society – a hapū based society of chiefs and people; but this translation of the English draft by Williams was also, in a sense, a fairly obvious or straightforward encapsulation of what needed to be protected and how: the whole tribal matrix of land and the chiefly privileges and status inscribed in it. In Māori terms, this was the world of mana and tapu. In addition, this tribal matrix was still a native, or indigenous matrix of custom, even though this custom was evolving with the influence of Christian morality and new ideas of law/ture and the adjudication of disputes. In other words, tribal custom or social mores were implicitly protected by this phrase, “te tino rangatiratanga o ratou whenua...”.

It is here we can see the intersection with the British imperial world – explored ably by Ned Fletcher – and with British constitutional history and assumptions about the way *things should be*. For the imperial picture, Fletcher has shown, in line with recent imperial historiography, that British empire governed effectively only with the consent or *modus vivendi* of local authorities. That is to say – the *realpolitik* of empire required British governors to work with the picture of local, indigenous authority. This picture is supported by Hobson’s instructions in which he was explicitly directed to preserve or not interfere with Māori custom except for inhumane custom and intertribal warfare.

Williams’ English Political (Constitutional) Imaginary

The other part of the *political imaginary* of the empire (the way empire was imagined to be), and of our treaty translator Henry Williams, has largely been forgotten about or ignored in the treaty literature and NZ historiography in general. This is what I termed in my 2009 research report for the Tribunal, “the domestic constitutional context”.¹¹ This British, or English, political imaginary revolves around, as I have already alluded to, monarchy and the constitution. These things protect the rights and liberties of subjects. The Glorious Revolution of 1688-89 delivered a constitutional monarchy for England, reaffirming the common Englishman’s belief in the more ancient Magna Carta as a great charter of subject’s rights. Here is the intersect with Henry Williams’ own political imaginary: in 1847, he described the treaty as the Magna Charta of the Māori when treaty rights were suffering their first government policy attack with a new Colonial Secretary instructing Governor Grey that all ‘waste lands’ (so called) in New Zealand might become automatically Crown domain.¹² The missionaries and home mission societies reacted vehemently against this notion, and it was in this context that Williams described Te Tiriti as a Magna Carta protecting Māori landed property.

¹¹ Samuel D. Carpenter, ‘Te Wiremu, Te Puhipi, He Wakaputanga me Te Tiriti/ Henry Williams, James Busby, A Declaration and the Treaty’, Waitangi Tribunal research commission, 2009, #A17, Wai 1040.

¹² H. Williams to Selwyn, 12 July 1847, in Carleton, *Henry Williams*, vol. 2, 155-57; also MS. 1991/75/1147, AML; see also Selwyn to H. Williams, 30 Jun. 1847, [MS. 1991/75/459, AML](#).

Another customary, constitutional aspect to this political imaginary is significant. This is the idea that the law of the realm was ancient custom and that the monarchy itself was



Figure 3. Sketch of English parliament, c. early 19th Century

subject to law (*Lex Rex – the Law is King*).¹³ This was a key argument of the Commonwealth lawyers and radicals in the era of the 17th century English Civil War. Custom in the broadest sense involves the social matrix of landed property, kingly law and local custom: what might be called the rights and privileges of Englishmen – which are possibly being referred to in article 3. But article 2 of Te Tiriti can, I think, more especially be seen in this mould: *the rights and privileges of rangatira are the representative legal customs of the realm*. This is why, I believe, Williams emphasises the “Rank, Rights and Privileges” of chiefs – alongside the Great Charter – when Te Tiriti is under attack in the mid-1840s.¹⁴ He is clear in his mind that chiefly rights, as the main

¹³ According to online sources, the phrase was first used by Samuel Rutherford in *Lex, Rex* (1644); but there are strong medieval traditions of “natural law” or God’s law in which such thinking was sourced.

¹⁴ ‘Statement by Henry Williams re 400 Copies of Treaty’, 16 Sept 1844, vol G, p 104, MS 91/75, AML. A copy of te Tiriti in Williams papers (MS 92/3, C K Williams, folder 5) is probably one of the 1844 prints that

Māori representatives of Māori custom and landed property are those protected by Te Tiriti. In Māori terms – te mana, te rangatiratanga o te whenua.

By the 1830s, British policy had *also* become strongly influenced, through the conduit of James Stephen, Clapham man at the Colonial Office, by humanitarian or evangelical activist concern about the plight of indigenous peoples in empire and the need for British policy to contain settler activity and free-wheeling authority. In Stephen's mind, Crown Colony Government meant that the governor looked after the interests of the indigenous people while allowing some measure of self-government to the white settlers. This, of course, was nice in theory but often difficult in practice, in part because the theory of separation of populations (recently in a sense affirmed by the Northland Tribunal) that the missions also argued for, was in practice a pipe dream. Certainly, it became unrealistic with ever-expanding colonial populations that "escaped" the confines of coastal enclaves or settlements such as Auckland, New Plymouth and Wellington. The populations could not be separated, and this reality is what gave us the Treaty of Waitangi in the first place. Rangatira like Makoare Taonui and Waka Nene realised this in their treaty advocacy: "governor, preserve our lands" they said. The flip side of this coin is that they didn't believe they could preserve them by themselves or at least unaided by British imperial authority.¹⁵ This is how New Zealand got Kāwanatanga/Government.

Williams' Translation of the Treaty

And what of Henry Williams' translation of the Treaty? Historians mostly write with some regard for Williams and his evident courage and leadership of the mission. It is Te Tiriti, or rather the way Te Tiriti suffered the fates and fortunes of a post-1840 colonial history, that has caused Te Wiremu "reputational damage". It is true that Williams could have chosen other words to translate sovereignty in article one – Kingitanga (kingship), Arikītanga (overlordship/high chieftainship), rangatiratanga, and mana were possibilities. But mana was deeply problematic, in terms of the political imaginary I have just outlined: Te Tiriti was, in Williams' eyes intended to preserve Māori and especially chiefly mana, for Williams understood it was chiefs whose mana and tapu was intrinsic to their sense of chief-likeness. While he might differ from them as to the spiritual rationale behind this status, he treated them as "gentlemen", as chiefly or noble people in their own world. Other word choices have been argued, perhaps most forcefully from the use of "ko te kingitanga ko te mana" for "all sovereign power and

he had the Paihia mission press produce; see also, H. Williams to Lay Secretary, 22 June 1841, Paihia, CMS CM/M, vol. 13, 89, NLA.

¹⁵ See Judith Binney, 'The Maori and the Signing of the Treaty of Waitangi,' in *Towards 1990* (Wellington, 1989), 20-31; Binney cites the recording of Louis-Catherin Servant: 'The governor proposes to the tribal chiefs that they recognize his authority; he gives them to understand that this is to maintain good order, and protect their respective interests; that all the chiefs will preserve their powers and their possessions'.

authority” in the 1835 Declaration text, which Williams also had a share in translating. A brief response to this would be to say, first, there are no direct word equivalents of “sovereignty” in Māori – certainly if “sovereignty” means a European state-centred exercise of paramount authority. Secondly, the Declaration/ He Whakaputanga was seeking to declare a new form of Māori authority that reflected both European and customary ideas of power/authority; the situation of the treaty in 1840 was quite different: the question in 1840 was not the abstract noun “sovereignty” but what the purpose of Victoria’s sovereign authority was – what sovereignty was to “look like” or “do”.

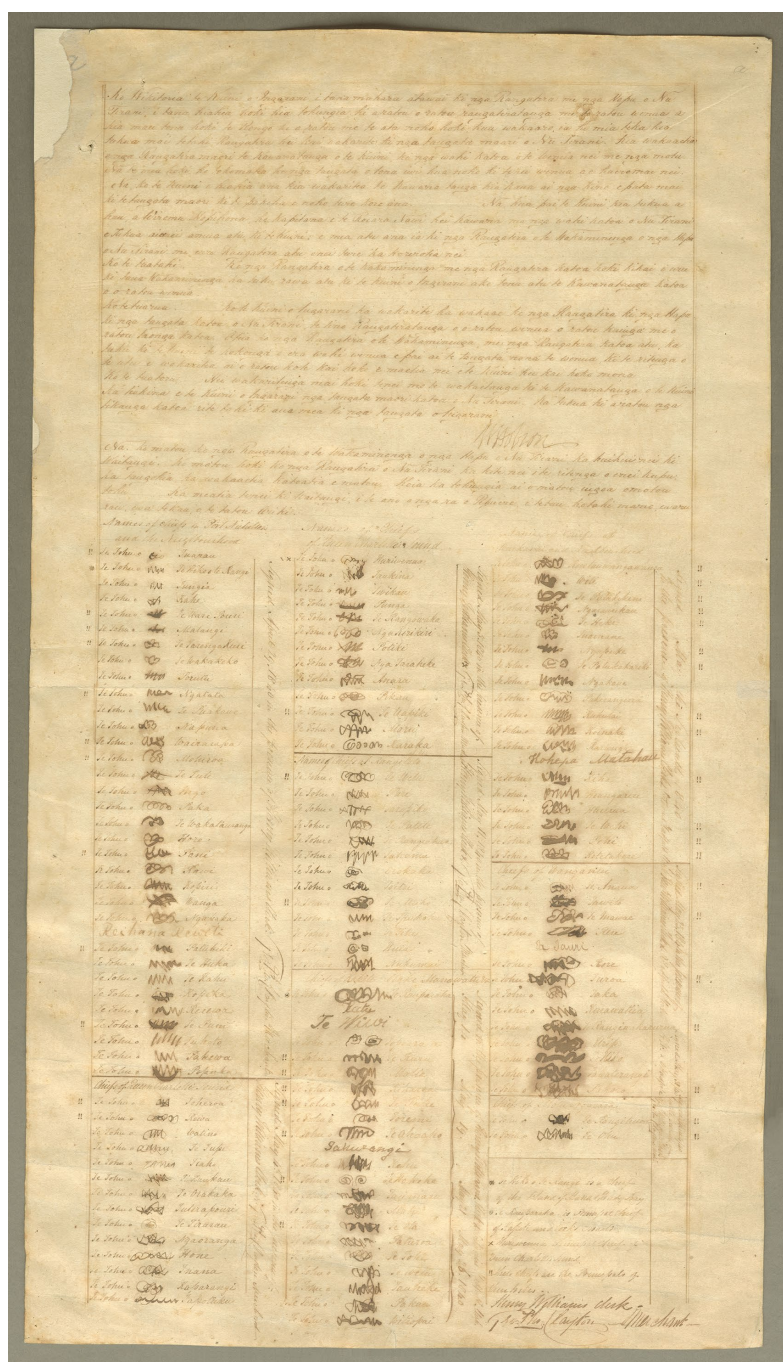


Figure 4. Cook Strait (Henry Williams) treaty sheet, Archives New Zealand

We need, therefore, to step back from all those debates on translation of the text that really post-date the significant Ruth Ross article of 1972. Before then, there is little evidence that people were concerned about the issue of translation. Ross was right to argue that the Māori text should be central in our treaty discourse. What she wasn't right to argue is that Kāwanatanga was not a fair representation of the power to be exercised by Queen Victoria in New Zealand. Williams' Te Tiriti text represented that power or authority exactly: a power of Kāwanatanga – government or governorship. It was a governor that Victoria was sending to represent her authority in establishing what exactly?: a new *civil government* in Nu Tirani/New Zealand. Williams, as argued above, was focussed on this essential purpose or intent of the Treaty: to establish civil government for Māori and Pākehā who were living “e noho ture kore ana”, as the Tiriti preamble states – in a lawless state, or without an overarching authority to maintain law and order.

For the chiefs, what did they understand? I think the debate – or historical inquiry – ought to continue on that score but I think it is clear from the recorded speeches that chiefs understood their hapū based authority would continue – their rangatiratanga – while the Crown would exercise kawanatanga to protect that rangatiratanga, including especially their landed property. Rangatira at Waitangi and elsewhere also used the kinship term ‘matua’ or ‘father’ to identify this protecting authority of the governor. This is all consistent with the political imaginary of English constitutional history that I am saying Williams brought to the task of translation – including the idea of a constitutional Sovereign being akin to a governor who would protect rights. **[slide]** At the raising of the memorial to Te Wiremu-Karuwhā in 1876 at Paihia, the chief facilitator of the memorial, Rev. Matiu Taupaki summarised the position this way:

Ko te kupu a Te Wiremu ko te Tiriti o Waitangi, ko te mana o te whenua kei te Māori, ko te mana o te Kawanatanga kei Te Kuini. ¹⁶

[*my translation*: The word of Williams concerning the Treaty of Waitangi was that the authority of the land would rest with Māori, while the authority of the Government would lie with the Queen.]

Williams as Missionary and Mediator – & in Māori Tradition

I return to Williams himself for a minute before closing. Ultimately, I believe, we need to create some distance – even in our treaty discourse – between Williams and the Treaty-Te Tiriti. Williams was first and foremost a messenger of the Gospel of Peace-Te Rongopai to Māori. That was the primary reason he was in the country. In that capacity he was called upon to act as mediator in inter-tribal conflicts, and sometimes he acted in that role simply because he saw it as his Christian duty. When Hobson turned up, he naturally turned to the CMS leader on the ground to assist him with interpretation.

¹⁶ Rev. Matiu Taupaki, *Te Waka Maori o Niu Tirani*, 21 Mar. 1876, 65-67.

Williams performed this role as a form of mixed Christian and English duty. He believed that Her Majesty's Government was necessary, as the CMS Northern committee had put it in 1838, to "become the guardians of this interesting people".¹⁷ The Treaty was needed to preserve Māori as a distinct people or nation.¹⁸ (*These ideas of nationality are very significant new political ideas on the New Zealand scene, and were to become increasingly so in later decades.*) In his translation of the English draft into the Māori text, his Christian and English duties and political imaginations were fused. As he recollected some years later, this treaty was to unite Māori and Pākehā under one law, human and divine.¹⁹ *This phrase does not mean one set of laws, but rather one overarching legal order of protection for all the laws or customs of the realm.*²⁰ This vision very soon came under serious attack – in the wastelands controversy of 1847 and especially once the Taranaki and Waikato wars flared up. During these later wars, in the twilight of his life, Williams' letters express an existential crisis: war threatened the prosperous future that the CMS had envisioned for a Māori New Zealand and the Māori Church (te Hāhi Mihinare). However the church did somehow survive the wars, though bruised and battered.

In local Ngāpuhi and, more especially, Ngāti Rahiri/Ngāti Kawa tradition, Williams is remembered for his dual roles in Te Tiriti and in preserving the land where Te Tiriti o Waitangi whare nui now sits – recently, magnificently refurbished. When the whare was first carved in the late 1980s, the master carver, Te Wārihi Hetaraka, was specifically instructed by the elders to put Karuwhā/Williams into the carvings. Te Wārihi decided to put Karuwhā at the base of the poutuarongo – the central back pillar of the house – beneath Hone Heke, Hongi Hika and Rahiri. (And one needs little knowledge of Northland history to note the significance of those names.) And there Karuwhā remains today – woven into the hapū's own story.²¹ The land story requires a separate telling (which will be in the biography!), but Williams' legacy on that site is one about preserving the Te Tii land for the hapū as a fishing and cultivation spot and so they could remain close to the Paihia church. This story therefore returns us to Williams the messenger of the Christian message, which he believed was both for spiritual and material benefit of the people.

Closing: Williams' Te Tiriti Legacy

In closing, I wish to comment on *the legacy* of the Te Tiriti translation by Williams. New Zealand, or Aotearoa New Zealand (*somewhat problematically expanding "Aotearoa" into the realm of Te Wai Pounamu and Rakiura/ South Island and Stewart Island*), has

¹⁷ G. Clarke to D. Coates, 16 Nov 1838, Waimate, CMS CN/0 101.

¹⁸ H. Williams, "Recollections", [nd]: "to preserve them as a people", in Carleton, *Henry Williams*, vol. 2, 14.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ James Stephen at Colonial Office makes this point.

²¹ Interview with Te Wārihi Hetaraka, Whangarei, 2 November 2024.

become, or is certainly becoming, a political community defined by its allegiance to some interpretation of the treaty document that Henry Williams produced – in common parlance, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, or the Māori text in particular. As I have written elsewhere, the Māori text prepared by Henry and son Edward in the late hours of 4 February and, quite possibly, the early hours of 5 February 1840 – with a lieutenant governor and chiefs assembling for a whakaminenga/ great assembly even as they found the words in both Māori custom and the Māori New Testament – has become a defining mark or “moko” on the face of the nation. With 300,000 submissions on Treaty-Te Tiriti principles overwhelming the New Zealand Parliament in January 2025, it appears, despite the vicissitudes of history – and the vagaries of the Treaty’s own survival story – that the Treaty-te Tiriti has become *the* defining political or constitutional document shaping our body politic today. In other words, te Tiriti o Waitangi, to quote Henry Williams, has indeed become a “Māori Magna Carta”.

Closing Mihi

Nō reira, ka nui te mihi ki a rātou ngā tupuna, ngā rangatira o Te Tiriti o Waitangi, te kawenata o Nu Tirani. Ka huri ki a tātou te hunga ora, tēnā tātou katoa.