

MUSEUM OF NEW ZEALAND TE PAPA TONGAREWA

Information below compiled by Dr Te Herekiele Herewini

Head of Repatriation

Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Programme

11 April 2024.



Please find below an overview of the repatriation of 11 Māori ancestral remains (ten hair samples and one skull) and two life busts from Grassi Museum Leipzig in Germany to Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga of Ngāi Tahu in September 2023.

In mid-2019, the State of Saxony in Germany via the Grassi Museum, Leipzig, agreed through a memorandum of understanding to repatriate Māori and Moriori ancestral remains as well as six life casts of Māori ancestors housed in their ethnographic collections.

At the request of Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga of Ngāi Tahu, the Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Programme confirmed an agreement with the Grassi Museum for the return of 11 Māori ancestral remains and two life busts that were provenanced to Ngāi Tūāhuriri and Ngāi Tahu to be uplifted from Germany in September 2023. I can confirm these ancestral remains and life busts have returned to Ngāi Tūāhuriri and Ngāi Tahu.

The hair samples belonged to Ngāi Tahu family members, and the skull was provenanced to Waimakariri. The two life casts are associated with 'Takatahara' and 'Heroua'. Details concerning these ancestral remains and the life casts and their physical return are highlighted below.

Staatliche
Kunstsammlungen
Dresden



GRASSI Museum für Völkerkunde zu
Leipzig
Johannisplatz 5 bis 11 • 04103 Leipzig,
Germany

Registration Number/s	Description	Accession information	Provenance
1607	Hair sample, Female	Dr. von Haast, Christchurch October 1880	Māori
1608	Hair sample, Female	Dr. von Haast, Christchurch October 1880	Māori
1609	Hair sample, Male	Dr. von Haast, Christchurch October 1880	Māori
1610	Hair sample, Male	Dr. von Haast, Christchurch October 1880	Māori
1611	Hair sample, Male	Dr. von Haast, Christchurch October 1880	Māori
1612	Hair sample, Male	Dr. von Haast, Christchurch October 1880	Māori
1613	Hair sample, Girl	Dr. von Haast, Christchurch 8. March 1881	Māori
1614	Hair sample, Girl	Dr. von Haast, Christchurch	Māori
1615	Hair sample, Girl	Dr. von Haast, Christchurch 8. March 1881	Māori
1616	Hair sample, Girl	Dr. von Haast, Christchurch 8. March 1881	Māori
1654	Skull	Dr. von Haast, Christchurch May 1881	Māori
A01421	Plaster cast Bust	Tramond, Paris Bought between 1877-80	Māori
A01414	Plaster cast Bust	Tramond, Paris Bought between 1877-80	Māori

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Ihr Zeichen

Ihre Nachricht vom

Aktenzeichen
(bitte bei Antwort angeben)
2-7002/28/5-2023/50108

Dresden,
07. September 2023

Safe Passage Document

Rückführung von menschlichen Überresten von elf Individuen, darunter ein Schädel und zehn Haarproben, die nicht als Kulturgüter zu klassifizieren sind sowie von zwei Gipsabgüssen (Büsten)

Ich bestätige, dass es sich nach der Rechtsauffassung des Freistaates Sachsen bei der o.g. Rückführung der menschlichen Überreste von elf Individuen um keine Ausfuhr von Kulturgut im Sinne von § 2 Kulturgutschutzgesetz (KGSG) handelt.

Bei den zwei Gipsabgüssen handelt es sich zwar um Kulturgüter nach § 2 Abs. 1 Nr. 10 KGSG, diese sind allerdings nicht von der Genehmigungspflicht nach § 24 Abs. 1 KGSG umfasst.

Die Ausfuhr bzw. der Rücktransport dieser Objekte nach Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington (Neuseeland) ist daher nicht nach § 24 Abs. 1 KGSG genehmigungspflichtig.

Return of ancestral remains from 11 individuals, including one skull and ten hair samples not to be classified as cultural assets, and two plaster casts (busts)

I confirm that according to our legal opinion in the Free State of Saxony, that the export of the ancestral remains from 11 individuals is not considered cultural property according to Section 2 KGSG (Cultural Property Protection Act).

Although the two plaster casts are cultural assets pursuant to Section 2 (1) No. 10 KGSG, they are not subject to the approval requirement pursuant to Section 24 (1) KGSG.

Their export to Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, (New Zealand) therefore does not require a permit.

Dagmar Friede
Leiterin des Referates
Allgemeine Kulturangelegenheiten,
Sorben, Erinnerungskultur



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Two Plaster Cast Busts of Life Masks to be Repatriated from Grassi Museum, Leipzig, Germany.



Report compiled by Susan Thorpe the repatriation researcher for the Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Programme.

12 May 2023

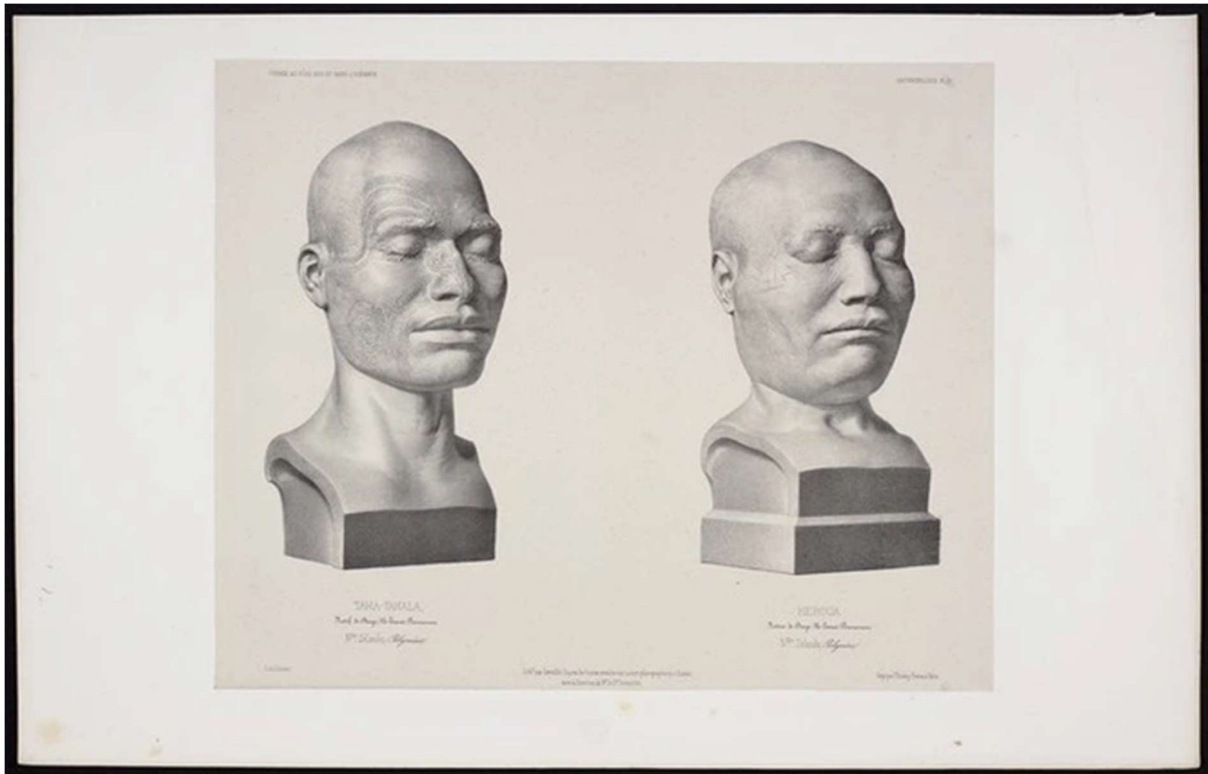
Summary

Two plaster copies of tūpuna Māori are to be repatriated from the Grassi Museum in Leipzig in June 2023. This paper sets out background information on each one with a view to assisting with provenance. The two casts being returned are said to be of two Māori: a woman named 'Heroua' (on the right in the image below) and a man named 'Taha Tahala' (thought to be Takatahara) (on the left). The Museum accession register has Otago as provenance but that is because it is the place where the casts were taken in 1840.

National Library Lithograph

Below is an image of a lithograph held at the National Library of New Zealand of the two plaster busts. The lithograph was purchased by the National Library in 2014 from a private collection in England. The extended title of the work is: Extended Title - From: Dumont d'Urville, J.S.C. Voyage au pôle sud et dans l'Océanie. Paris, Gide, 1842-1847. Atlas. Anthropologie. Plate 13.

The National Library image description reads: "On the left is the tattooed head and neck of a Māori man, Takatahara, lithographed from a photograph, in its turn a plaster model of the subject taken from life, during Dumont d'Urville's visit to Dunedin in 1840. Similarly, on the right, is the bust of a woman whose name is given as Heroua. She is shown without moko, but with clear mourning scarification on her forehead and cheeks".



The French naturalist Pierre-Marie Dumoutier made the casts when Dumont D'Urville's ship *Astrolabe* was in Otago harbour sometime between 30 March and 3 April 1840 (McNab, 1913). According to notes made from the voyage and the subsequent *Atlas* (1846), Dumoutier made only four busts when in Aotearoa, three in Otago and one in Kororāreka (Russell), thought to be of Matoua Tawai. The Otago busts, according to Calman in Baker and Rankin (2011), are of Taha Tahala (Takatahara), Piuraki (John Love Tikao) labelled 'Poukalem', and 'Héroua'.

Takatahara (1772-1847) is said to be buried at Akaroa where there exists a monument to him at Wairewa. A copy of his bust is also in the Akaroa Museum (Calman, 2011 a).

Using Dumoutier's journal notes, Calman (2011 b) identifies the three tupuna Māori as coming from Banks Peninsula (despite having the casts taken in Otago Harbour). In a paper entitled 'Faces of the Ancestors', in response to the Pardington exhibition at the Govett Brewster Gallery, Calman states that Taha Tahala is almost certainly Takatahara, and 'Poukalem' a near relative of Takatahara's, possibly even his brother, whilst Heroua is thought to be Takatahara's wife by some, or his mother Rawa, by others. The name Poukalem is curious. It has no obvious connection to any Māori names, and according to Calman (2011) is not even close to the name Piuraki and Dumoutier makes no reference in his journal to the fact that Piuraki spoke English and French as well as te reo Māori.

Making Life Casts

Physical anthropology and a fascination with phrenology developed in the second part of the nineteenth century. Body measuring and typology gradually gave way to an interest in studying facial expressions in an attempt to categorise humanity. Photography and plaster casts became a new discipline and a highly sought after museum object for exchange and purchase.

In a 2015 paper (Sysling, 2015) notes:

In France the casting of faces was introduced into physical anthropology at about the same time as photography: between 1837 and 1840 the French physician on board of the expeditions of Jules Dumont D'Urville made about fifty casts in the Pacific. Paul Broca recommended the making of casts in his 1879 *Instructions générales* and other anthropologists and manuals followed. In Germany, according to Andrew Zimmermann, it was naturalist traveller Hermann von Schlagintweit who pioneered the technique in the 1870s. Otto Finsch became the most enthusiastic German anthropological plaster caster and sold his casts all over Europe in the 1880s.

In his visits to New Zealand in 1824 and 1840 the botanist and cartographer Jules Dumont D'Urville oversaw the making of life casts by the anatomist and phrenologist Pierre Dumoutier, which are now in collections throughout Europe including the Musée d'homme collection in Paris. Four of the Māori casts featured in the stunning work by Fiona Pardington (*Ahua: a Beautiful Hesitation*) and the book *Fiona Pardington: The Pressure of Sunlight Falling*, 2010.

Sysling explains, in detail, the method of making the casts:

In a manual for scientific travellers, Serrurier (1891) gave detailed instructions. For a face about one and a half kilos of burnt plaster was needed. Before application it was to be mixed with (hot) water and stirred 'like you would an egg' until it was smooth. To prevent a painful burning sensation on the skin when the plaster was taken off, faces, hands and hair were rubbed with oil. Goose quills were to be put in the nose so that the subject could breathe. Then the plaster was applied, set and removed. For the person subjected to the treatment, the plaster sometimes felt hot but not painful, according to Serrurier.

In his academic work on Nias, Kleiweg (1914) described the procedure he followed to make the casts. He and his assistant each first greased hair, eyebrows and beards, but not the face because this would make facial furrows less visible in the plaster. Ideally, Kleiweg wrote, they cut a person's hair short, but in practice only very few allowed them to do that. After cutting the hair, they put the subject on his back on the floor with his head on a pillow and applied plaster to the face. The faster they worked the less plaster dripped into the hair. Kleiweg emphasised that he had been careful to keep the nose holes free from plaster so breathing was possible. Taking off the plaster was the most difficult part of the operation and needed to be done slowly and carefully.

1. Plaster Cast Bust of Life Mask of a Woman (A 01414)



1414 . Héroux Néé Zélandaise d'Otahi

Figure 1 Grassi Museum accession register

This mask is of a woman named as Héroua according to the plinth she sits on, but it is assumed that this is a French transliteration of her name. Her provenance, according to the Grassi Museum accession register is Ōtakou as the inscription reads: “Héroua“ Néo Zélandais d’Otago”. She was one of the four Māori life casts made by Dumoutier during the voyage of the *Astrolabe* in 1840.

The two Leipzig casts (of Heroua and Taha Tahala) are copies, as their catalogue states it was made by the Tramond Vassur firm. Their catalogue entries are identical and read:

The mask was acquired between 1877 and 1880 by the Museum für Völkerkunde Dresden and made by the anatomical model making firm ‘Fabrique Tramond Vassur’, Paris. Anatomical modelmaker Monsieur Pierre Vasseur worked at No. 9 Rue de l’Ecole de Médecine (Road of the School of Medicine). Monsieur Guy Ainé’s waxworks was located at No. 4 Rue de l’Ecole de Médecine in Paris. It is not clear whether Ainé’s and Vasseur’s studios existed at the same time. Vasseur established his waxworks in the mid-19th century, but as an exact date is not known, it could have been slightly later than Ainé’s. His son-in-law Gustave Tramond joined the firm in the late 1870s, and the studio Vasseur – Tramond became well-known for the quality of their work.

2. Plaster Cast Bust of Life Mask of a Man named 'Taha Tahala' (A 01421)



Figure 2 Plaster bust of 'Taha Tahala' showing face forward and right profile, Grassi Museum collection

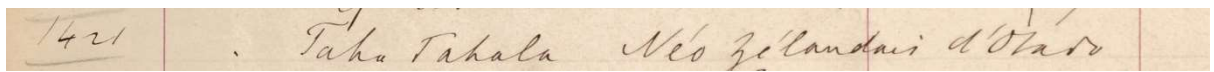


Figure 3 Grassi Museum accession register, with a variation in the spelling of his name as 'Tahu Tahala'

Karanga Aotearoa has sought comparative information from Göttingen University about the identity of this plaster cast, as they also hold one in their collection with the same inscription on the plinth. The Göttingen copy has not been tinted (see following page) but the mataora patterns are identical.



Figure 4 Copy of the cast of Taha Tahala showing face forward and right profile, Gottingen University collection

Takatahara also featured in Fiona Pardington's book and exhibition on the casts made by Dumoutier. Her profile portrait of him is below:



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