

1859: Unknown Maori for F. von Hochstetter and Julius von Haast

An unknown Maori drew a map of Lake Rotokakahi for F. von Hochstetter and J. von Haast between March and May 1859. The map was traced in sand with the blade of a knife. Hochstetter comments:

From the natives, who received us with a most cordial welcome, I inquired the names of the most note-worthy points on the lake. Their zeal to serve me was so great, that, as a whole crowd were speaking at the same time, there was no possible chance to understand anything at all, until one of them hit upon the excellent plan of tracing with his knife, after his own fashion, the outlines of the lake upon the sand, and thus to fix the various points of it. Although these outlines did hardly correspond with the real shape of the lake, such as it resulted from my own subsequent observations; yet the primitive sketch at the hands of a man, who had perhaps never in all his life seen a map, appeared to me noteworthy enough to copy and present it here.⁴⁵

Summary

The maps drawn for Cook, Thomson and Hochstetter were in non-permanent media. The map drawn for King by Tuki Tahua using chalk can be regarded as similar to a charcoal drawing. Tuki Tahua would be using a new writing/drawing tool, but the thickness of a stick of chalk can be likened to a burnt twig or thin piece of wood used for drawing.

Charcoal, chalk and lines drawn in sand or dust can only be approximations because the lines are so thick and the size of the map drawn has to be correspondingly large. Maps drawn in sand or dust would not be restricted by the size of the material on which they were drawn, but the surfaces on which charcoal might be used would be most restricted. None of the Europeans comments on the size of maps drawn using charcoal, chalk or in sand or dust. Only outlines of coasts, lakes and rivers were recorded and no other details of topography are shown or mentioned.

Maps were drawn in pencil for King, Godfrey and Shortland by Tuki Tahua, Tuhawaiki and Huruhuru respectively. Tuki Tahua and Korra-Korra drew their maps on paper. The materials on which Tuhawaiki and Huruhuru drew their maps are not stated. All of these Maoris had been exposed to European contact by missionaries, traders, explorers, etc. and they probably knew about the use of pens, pencils and paper although the use of these writing implements and materials was still strange to them. Tuki Tahua would probably find pencil and paper even more strange having probably had less exposure to them.

Spink and Moodie's remarks have relevance to Maori maps:

The remaining maps, of which over fifty have been published, have survived because they have been drawn for, and collected by, Westerners. Such maps, though they form the bulk of the surviving Eskimo representations of their