

The Hauraki rohe encompasses the entire Coromandel Peninsula, the Hauraki plains, the land bordering Tikapa Moana-o-Hauraki (the Hauraki Gulf) as far north as Cape Rodney, and the gulf islands including Rangitoto, Waiheke, Hauturu and Aotea. Bordered by Tāmaki in the north, Waikato to the west and Tauranga in the south, Hauraki is rich in natural resources on account of a great diversity in the landscape. The high mountain ranges of Te Paeroa-o-Toitehuatahi (the Coromandel Range) and Te Hapū-a-Kohe (the Hapuakohe Range) which delineates the south-western boundary were (prior to extensive logging initiated by European settlers) cloaked in virgin forest. Kauri, kahikatea and other big timber species predominated the forests and fruiting species such as puriri and miro attracted birds like kereru, kokako, korimako and tui (Monin 2001:9).

The flat swamplands of the Hauraki plains, with its many waterways, provided uninterrupted passage to the southern inland reaches of the rohe, as well as extensive stocks of eels and other fresh water and estuarine fauna and fertile tracts of land ideal for cultivation. In addition, Hauraki comprises some 500km of irregular coastline, boasting vast fishing grounds, as well as bays, inlets and headlands providing a variety of situations for pā and kāinga. Owing to the ready access by water, temperate climate and abundance of available resources, Hauraki was one of the first areas to be settled by the Polynesian voyagers some thousand years ago (Monin 2001:10). Indeed, the legendary explorers [Kupe](#) and Toi-te-huatahi were visitors to Hauraki and conferred their names on geographical features such as Te Paeroa-o-Toitehuatahi (the long mountain range of Toi) and Te Whitianga-o-Kupe (the crossing of Kupe). According to [Tūroa](#) this is interpreted as 'the arrival place of [Kupe](#) after having crossed over from Hawaiki' (2000:185)).

[Tūroa](#) relates the histories of Hauraki iwi, their origins and settlement patterns, the alliances formed and the wars fought both among themselves and with iwi of other districts. According to the narratives, Ngāti Hako were the earliest of the extant Hauraki peoples, and are believed to be the remnants of the tribe Te Tini-o-Toi, formed of Toi-te-huatahi's people intermarrying with the aboriginal Maruiwi (Tūroa 2000:48). Following the expansion of these 'Toi-tangata' peoples in Hauraki, came new settlers from Hawaiki following the course set by [Kupe](#). The Arawa and Tainui canoes, believed to have arrived in new land in

the 1300's, came in close succession and were destined to play major roles in Hauraki history (Monin 2001:12). Arawa peoples, from their strongholds in Te Moana-a-Toitehuatahi (Bay of Plenty) ventured north and carved out niches for themselves in Hauraki, forming the once powerful Ngāti Huarere, and Ngāti Hei.

These early Arawa peoples are believed to have coexisted fairly peacefully with the Toi-tangata, intermarriage leading to their eventual absorption by the Arawa lineage. Some Toi-tangata survived by withdrawing to the southern parts of the Hauraki domain such as Te Waitangi-o-Hinemuri, Te Aroha and Wai-hīhī, there forming the modern Ngāti Hako line. Tainui peoples too, established a small presence in Hauraki from initial landings of the Tainui waka; the Ngāi Tai in Tāmaki and Ngā Marama at Whakatiwai. Later, from their base in Waikato, Tainui people began extending their territory into Hauraki. Te Uri-o-Pou was established early on the western shores of Tīkapa Moana by intermarriage with, and assimilation of Toi-tangata there. Ngāti Tara, from the South-Waikato followed, moving into Ngāti Hako territory and challenging them at Te Waitangi-o-Hinemuri pā.

Then, in the 17th century, Marutūahu, a Tainui descendent based at Kāwhia, began a campaign for personal revenge on the Te Uri-o-Pou for their disrespectful treatment of his father, Hotunui (Tūroa 2000:59-60; Monin 2001:12). The fierce and unrelenting assault on Hauraki people continued over several generations, Marutūahu's descendents, the Marutūahu confederation, rising to almost complete domination in Hauraki (Tūroa 2000:31). The major tribes of the confederation are Ngāti Rongo-u, Ngāti Pāoa, Ngāti Whanaunga, Ngāti Maru and Tūroa's own Ngāti Tamaterā (Tūroa 2000:60). Their 200 year long campaign of the Marutūahu confederation is perhaps the most well known episode in Hauraki history. The descendents of Marutūahu had interests in all corners of the Hauraki rohe on the eve of European contact (Monin 2001:13).