Traditional Māori Society

Tirohanga Māori

Looks at the spiritual concepts wairua, mauri, kēhua, aria, āhua, hau, manawa and tipua and the mental concepts hinengaro, ngākau and puku.

Best lived among the Tūhoe of the Urewera mountains from the 1880s, was the Dominion Museum’s Ethnologist from 1911 to 1931 and was president and editor of the J.P.S. 1922-1931. This book covers social life and customs, arts, agriculture, fishing, war, music, games, forest lore, buildings and scientific knowledge. 2 volumes.

Best, Elsdon. *The Māori as he was: A brief account of Māori life as it was in pre-European days.* 1934.
Post-humously published. Shorter than the previous work. Covers physical and mental characteristics, traditional history, mythology and folklore, fishing, agriculture, war, music, games. Forest lore, buildings and science. Best lived among the Tūhoe of the Urewera from 1890 to 1911, later becoming ethnologist at the Dominion Museum.

Firth, Raymond. *Primitive economics of the New Zealand Māori.* 1929.
Includes chapters on transport, gift exchange, land, property and wealth, hākari and work and production.

Hanson, F. Allan. *Counterpoint in Māori culture.* 1983.
Looks at tapu, noa, muru, war and conflict, cannibalism and slavery.

Kinship, the whanau and hapu, marriage. Birth and children, menstruation, massage. Food, agriculture, fishing and hunting. The author, from Te Arawa, was the first Māori woman to obtain an M.A. First published in 1938.

The bulk of the entries relate to famous ancestors, mythical figures and atua. There is also material on more general aspects of traditional Māori society including spiritual and mental concepts and natural phenomena. Sources are listed in an endnote.

Covers voyages of Tasman, Cook and earliest French explorers. Compares European and Māori society at this time.


Has detailed contents pages but no index.

Tikao was a Ngāi Tahu kaumatua. A compendium of Māori knowledge.

572 pp and index. Aims to be comprehensive.