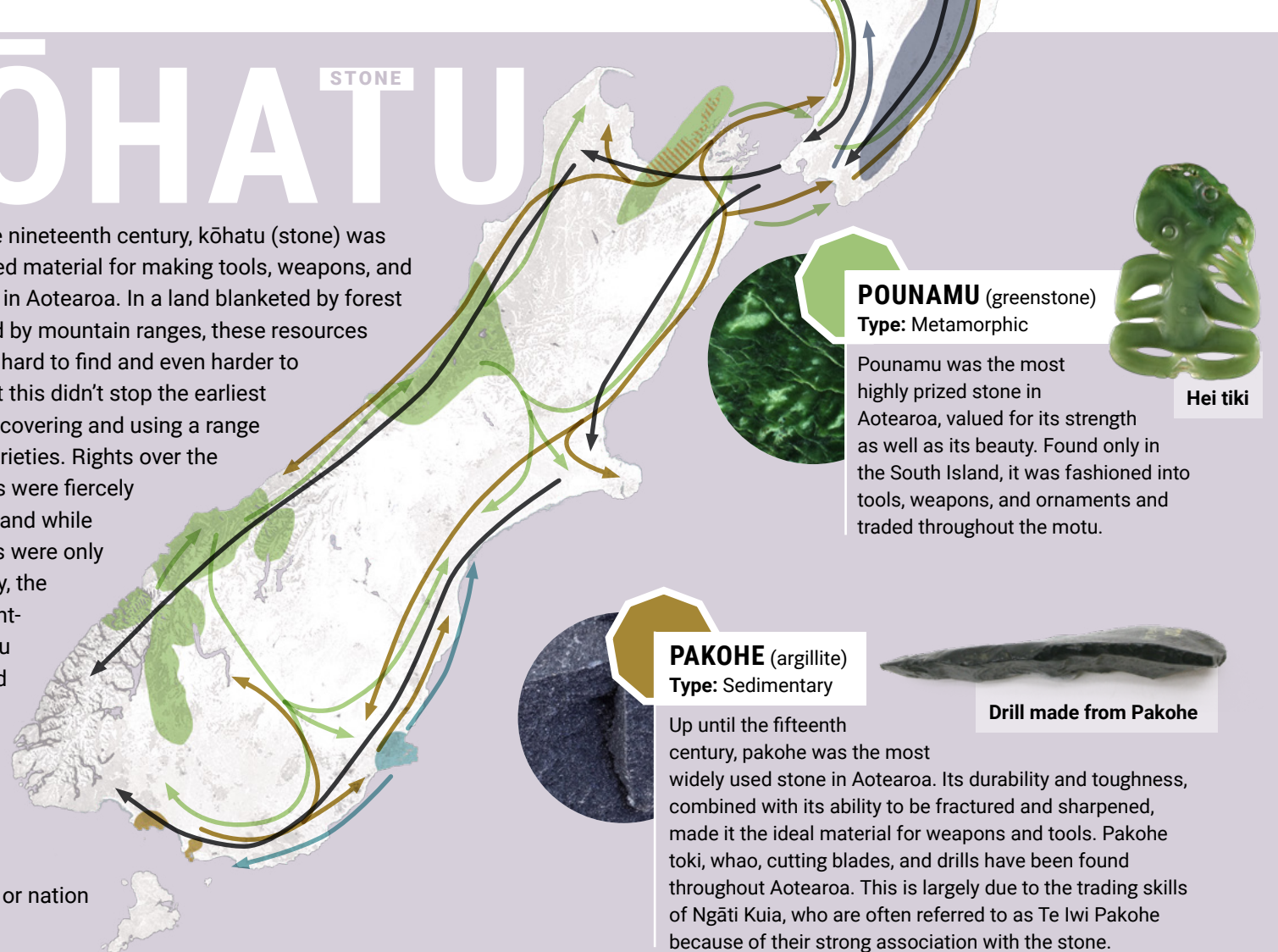


KŌHATU STONE

Up until the nineteenth century, kōhatu (stone) was the preferred material for making tools, weapons, and ornaments in Aotearoa. In a land blanketed by forest and divided by mountain ranges, these resources were often hard to find and even harder to extract. But this didn't stop the earliest settlers discovering and using a range of stone varieties. Rights over the best stones were fiercely contested, and while some types were only used locally, the most sought-after kōhatu were traded across the motu.

motu: land or nation



POUNAMU (greenstone)
Type: Metamorphic

Pounamu was the most highly prized stone in Aotearoa, valued for its strength as well as its beauty. Found only in the South Island, it was fashioned into tools, weapons, and ornaments and traded throughout the motu.



Hei tiki

PAKOHE (argillite)
Type: Sedimentary

Up until the fifteenth century, pakohe was the most widely used stone in Aotearoa. Its durability and toughness, combined with its ability to be fractured and sharpened, made it the ideal material for weapons and tools. Pakohe toki, whao, cutting blades, and drills have been found throughout Aotearoa. This is largely due to the trading skills of Ngāti Kuia, who are often referred to as Te Iwi Pakohe because of their strong association with the stone.



Drill made from Pakohe

MATĀ/TŪHUA (obsidian)
Type: Igneous

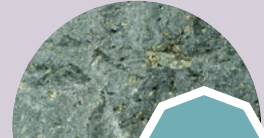
This hard and brittle volcanic glass was made into flake tools like knives, scrapers, and whao, as well as a saw-like weapon called a matā kautete. The volcanic island Tūhua in the Bay of Plenty was the largest source of matā in Aotearoa. When Ngāi Te Rangi took control over Tauranga in the eighteenth century, the Whanau-a-Tauwhao hapū were given the island to live on. They built pā on nearly every hill and headland to defend their matā from invading iwi.



Kota (scraper)

KARĀ (basalt)
Type: Igneous

Karā is a versatile stone that was made into a range of weapons and tools. Fine grained karā from the Coromandel was highly valued for making toki. Like pakohe, it could be flaked and sharpened, but it was still hard enough to withstand strong collisions.



Toki (adze blade)

ŌNEWA/WHATUAHO (greywacke)
Type: Sedimentary

Ōnewa is the most common rock in Aotearoa. This hard grey sandstone was made into patu, toki, and fishing equipment like anchor stones.

