

New Zealand

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28.1 Introduction

Among the many beautiful New Zealand Maori objects held in the Pitt Rivers Museum (PRM) are outstanding, rare and remarkable examples of almost all major artefact forms, alongside some unique, unexpected treasures. There are objects of stone, bone, wood, metal and a variety of other organic materials, which range in date from the prehistoric period (from *c.* 600 years ago) through to items manufactured in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The collection consists of approximately 1,719 objects, of which 227 are currently recorded as 'archaeological', 1,124 as 'ethnographic' and 368 as both. In a very few cases, the possibility of some form of archaeological fieldwork is suggested by the Museum records. For example, an assemblage of three ground stone adzes, a fragment of a basalt *mere* (club), and natural stone 'closely resembling a stone adze' is recorded as having been collected by 'Miss Rogers', 'dug up on a farm, Great Barrier I., Hauraki Gulf, N. Island, New Zealand - about 60 miles from Auckland' (1932.13.1-5). But overall – as elsewhere in Oceania (see Chapter 27 above) – the division between 'archaeological' and 'ethnographic' objects is almost completely arbitrary. For the purposes of this chapter, all those items made of stone and bone are considered. There are *c.* 896 of these objects. Items in wood, metal and other organic materials (for example carvings or textiles) are only considered if they are forms commonly recovered archaeologically, such as fish-hooks.

The vast majority of objects have little or no information about their original location, other than being from New Zealand. But again, there is detailed information for some. There are *c.* 79 objects from the Chatham Islands, although none of these has more specific locations. Of the *c.* 156 objects recorded as being from the North Island at least 73 have more specific place or site locations listed, and almost all of the 102 objects recorded as from the South Island have some further details about their original locations. In many cases, however, a bit of background research on the collector or their notes might establish a more specific place of origin.

28.2 The Collectors and Collections

In contrast with what is currently known about their geographical provenance, the connections between the New Zealand Maori objects and specific collectors and collections are very strongly documented. For some items there are fascinating accounts detailing chains of ownership, as objects moved through numerous hands – such as beginning on a remote New Zealand sheep farm and eventually coming to rest

in a glass case in Oxford. These interwoven object, collection, and collector narratives are delightful in their unexpected turns and serendipity. They also involve some very famous figures such as E.B. Tylor and H.D. Skinner, and famous collections such as Joseph Banks' collection from James Cook's first voyage (1768–1771) and Reinhold and George Forster's collection from Cook's second voyage (1772–1775). Other objects were acquired from other institutions, including from the Ashmolean Museum and Oxford University Museum of Natural History (OUMNH), and from a large cast of ordinary people, who include among their number the occasional rogue and scoundrel.

Almost 200 individuals and institutions have donated New Zealand objects to the PRM. The largest of the donations – those from Charles Christie, Abner Clough, Sydney Gerald Hewlett, Charles Smith and James Frank Robieson – each consist of more than 100 items, while the smallest comprise only one or two objects. Many of the larger collections are actually collections of collections: where objects have moved repeatedly between owners, so there are many more collector stories to be learnt than just those immediately apparent at first glance. Although these collections have come to the PRM through a tangled mix of accident, serendipity, curiosity, the pursuit of economic goals and simple generosity, they can each lay claim to some kind of collective integrity. The research potential of the New Zealand material relates in part to the individual character of each collection.

The earliest of the New Zealand collections was made by Joseph Banks, during Captain Cook's first voyage in 1768–1771. This material includes a whalebone club (1887.1.387), a basalt club (1887.1.714) and a fish-hook (1887.1.379), which were originally donated to Christ Church, Oxford, only later to be transferred to the OUMNH (Coote 2004a, 2004b). From James Cook's second voyage in 1772–1775 is the Forster collection from Johann Reinhold Forster and his son George. Originally part of the Ashmolean Museum's collection, these were transferred to the PRM in 1886, shortly after its foundation (Coote *et al.* 1999). The 34 New Zealand objects in the Forster collection consist mainly of non-durable materials (wood, fibre, and textile). The collection does, however, also include 5 nephrite (stone) artefacts: a cleaver (1886.1.1150), an adze (1886.1.1159), a *tiki* (carved figure, 1886.1.1167), an ear ornament (1886.1.1319) and a bodkin (1886.1.1318), one basalt club (1886.1.1334) and 3 whalebone pieces (1886.1.1146–1147, 1886.1.1162). The non-stone and bone elements of this collection are not considered in this chapter (but see Coote *et al.* 1999, 2000).

Several further collections were acquired during the 19th century. The earliest are artefacts from the PRM founding collection, which includes 137 New Zealand artefacts (see for example Lane Fox 1870), and from the John Wickham Flower collection, which includes 14 New Zealand stone implements. These collections are uniquely valuable to anyone interested in the way object forms change, because they offer small glimpses into how Maori were choosing to take up European ideas and materials. Another large and important 19th-century collection is Abner Clough's collection of Chatham Islands artefacts, purchased from H.C. Palmer, donated to the PRM in 1893 (1893.78.1–73), and briefly described in a paper by Henry Balfour (Balfour 1918). The c. 71 artefacts consist almost entirely of stone adzes. What stands out after even the briefest examination is the variety of stone materials and the range of adze types represented, including examples of almost all kinds of cross-section. Combined with another eight adzes collected by Charles Christie (1913.59.1–8) the PRM Chatham Island adze collection is impressive and would definitely repay closer scrutiny.

The largest 20th-century group, the Sydney Gerald Hewlett collection, was acquired in 1912 and consists of some 74 items. It is interesting for its focus on nephrite working. A large part of this assemblage was purchased through the Stevens Auction Room sale of Struan Robertson's collection (3 December 1912). Along with the requisite array of adzes, the core of the collection consists of unfinished or partly re-worked nephrite

(e.g. 1912.73.30–38) and variously described saws, knives, files (e.g. 1912.73.26–29), jade cutters (e.g. 1912.73.7–17) and polishers (1912.73.18–25). Interestingly, many artefacts are burnt and broken. Although these items have no stated provenience beyond New Zealand they appear to have considerable integrity as a collection suggesting that they form an archaeological assemblage from a single site. It is possible that a bit of background probing would shed light on from where and by whom these artefacts were originally dug up. Among the other pieces are three worked bone pieces (1912.17.4, 2008.24.1) from Shag Point (see Anderson *et al.* 1996).

The New Zealand component of the large E.B. Tylor collection (1913.35.1–28) consists of 28 pieces, which he acquired from then Director of the Canterbury Museum, Frederick Wollaston Hutton. All these pieces, except one from Shag Point (1913.35.28; see Anderson *et al.* 1996), are large flake blades, knives and saws – up to 18 cm in length – from South Rakaia.

The Charles Smith collection of some 370 artefacts (mostly ‘ethnographic’) is of particular importance because he acquired most of his objects directly from Maori, rather than through auction rooms or other collectors, and sent these back to his family in the UK, who later sold the collection to the PRM. Born in Wiltshire, UK, Charles Smith immigrated to New Zealand in 1859 where he acquired a sheep farm at Te Korito, near Kaiwhaiki on the Whanganui River of the North Island. Shortly after he arrived local fighting broke out between Maori and European settlers, although Smith himself was on good terms with the local communities and counted the Kaiwhaiki chief, Te Oti Takarangi, amongst his closest friends. Through his social networks he acquired many objects whose biographies are still entangled with named Maori individuals (e.g. 1923.87.5, 1923.87.77, 1923.87.121). Tracing the movements of heirlooms and stolen pieces through the generations before their removal from Maori hands and their eventual deposition in the PRM could prove fascinating. The Whanganui Museum in New Zealand also holds a collection of objects donated by Charles Smith.

James Frank Robieson is another of the collectors associated with the PRM material. Among a group of *c.* 207 large flake tools, adzes, nephrite saws/cutters, worked nephrite, fish-hooks and sundry other items bought from the Stevens Auction Rooms in 1930, and mostly coming from sites around Otago, there are a group of at least eight forged bone objects (1930.75.17, 1930.75.19–21, 1930.75.65–67, 1930.75.72). Skinner (1974: 181–7) discusses Robieson and his career as a forger of Maori antiquities illustrating the group of bone items from the PRM (Skinner 1974: 12.1–12.10). These forgeries are a fascinating small collection in their own right, and there is no doubt more to their story than we currently know. When examining them one is immediately struck by a subtle inauthenticity – they just don’t feel quite right – but one could not help but admire the quality of workmanship in the bone carving. In this sense they are anything but fake.

A small but very intriguing group of artefacts are the 8 adzes (1923.76.1–8) (*Figure 28.1*) and 2 stone beaters or *paoi* (1923.76.9–10) purchased by the PRM from Maggie Staples-Browne and her son (cf. Neich 2001: 340–1). The adzes all carry labels describing them as ‘Dug up on D. MacFarlane’s sheep-run (site of Maori *pa* near HAMILTON, WAIKATO DIST. NEW ZEALAND (N. I.) 1908’. All these adzes are exceptional in some way and appear to be early ‘archaic’ forms that went out of production before the first *pa*, or fortified villages, were built. Furthermore, if ‘dug up’ they could only have come from burials. The donor, a well-educated Maori woman by the name of Makereti, who married an Englishman, was a person of some considerable social standing in her local Maori community in New Zealand. The materials that she used to write her book *The Old-Time Maori* (Makereti 1986 [1938]) survive in the PRM’s manuscript collections. How she came to have the eight



Figure 28.1 Eight stone adzes donated by Mrs Staples-Brown (Makereti), said to have been 'dug up on D. MacFarlane's sheep-run near Hamilton, Waikato District, New Zealand' (PRM Accession Numbers 1923.76.1–8).

remarkable adzes from the MacFarlane sheep-run is unknown.

28.3 Artefact Types

28.3.1 Overview

Some 896 objects in the PRM collections from New Zealand are made of bone or stone, and these are the primary focus of this survey. The remaining objects are made of wood, various plant fibres and animal products, such as feathers and skin. These are only considered here where they are of a conventional 'archaeological type', such as adzes and fish-hooks.

In general the PRM database significantly under-represents the number of objects present of any specific type or material. This is due to lack of information or inconsistencies in the entry of information. Since most objects have not been studied, even basic information such as material

type has not been systematically identified. The characterization offered here therefore is a simple survey intended to give a flavour of what can be found in the collection – it is not a systematic analysis.

28.3.2 Stone Adzes and Chisels

The PRM's adze and chisel collection is substantial, and includes many unusual and potentially early examples. It consists of more than 200 examples, of which a high proportion, possibly 30% or more, are unbroken primary adzes – meaning that have not been reworked or modified since initial production. By comparison, less than 7% of the adzes in New Zealand collections are in their primary form (Furey 2004: 50). The adze collection includes a wide variety of materials including argillite, basalt, gabbro, greywacke, quartzite and nephrite. They range widely in size with the largest adze measuring approximately 34 cm in length and the smallest adzes and chisels less than 5 cm. Most, if not all, of Skinner's ten and Duff's four cross-section types are present, even a possible example of an asymmetrical side hafted adze (1923.76.7) (Duff 1977: 191; Skinner 1974: 113). For the purposes of this general characterization the collection can be divided into four broad groups, each containing some 50+ examples: Chatham Islands adzes, archaic or early adzes, classic or later adzes and chisels, and nephrite adzes and chisels.



Figure 28.2: Slate mata from Chatham Island, New Zealand purchased by Abner Clough from H.C. Palmer (PRM Accession Number 1893.78.66).

The Chatham Island adzes comprise most of the Cough (62 examples) and Christie (8 examples) collections. They range in size up to about 20 cm – there are no very large examples, and have been made in a number of different kinds of stone. The collection includes adzes with many different cross-sections, and there is at least one tanged example (1893.78.56). Of particular interest are 2 steeply bevelled examples, which may be reworked adzes like those illustrated in Furey (2002: 96), or they may be quite different kinds of artefact. One, made in slate, is described by Balfour (1918: 146) as a *mata* (1893.78.66) (Figure 28.2). There are also a number of flaked roughouts (1893.78.60–62).

In the New Zealand collection there are at least 20 archaic adzes, defined as being very large (more than 25 cm in length), as having a tang or other butt-end thinning, or otherwise probably falling into Duff's cross-section Types 1, 3 and 4 (Duff 1977). However, if following Furey (2004: 51–52) we broaden the definition of potentially early adzes to include all those made in fine-grained stone with extensive evidence of flaking, the number increases to as many as 50 or more. Most of these potentially early examples are also primary adzes. Among them are some truly stunning artefacts. There are the 8 remarkable and varied examples in the Staples-Brown collection (1923.76.1–8) discussed above; at least 4 examples in the PRM founding collection (e.g. 1884.126.62); 3 argillite adzes, an unusual quartzite flaked adze and a large basalt example in the Flower collection (1892.67.747); the Stow and Batt argillite adzes (1887.1.8–9); a heavy, tanged basalt adze from Wanganui (1923.87.41); an exceptionally large (34 cm long), finely flaked adze from Farewell Spit (1919.17.7); a flaked adze from Blind Bay (1912.66.46–8); and 2 exquisitely finished adzes from the Robeison collection (1930.75.2–3). Perhaps the most stunning of all is a large (27 cm), beautifully-finished basalt adze with a carved poll (1914.31.1). The carved design is quite different to that on the Hawkes Bay example included in the *Te Maori* exhibition (Mead 1984: 215). Unfortunately, it has no more detailed provenance than 'New Zealand'.

The collection also includes at least 50 later-style adzes, which are smaller, made in coarser-grained stone, and manufactured by hammer dressing and polishing rather than flaking (Furey 2004). Most would fall into the Duff Type 2B category. A few examples are present in almost all collections, and there are 6 from Hokianga in the Leeds collection (1919.17.8–13), but the largest numbers are found in the Hewlett and the Robeison collections.

Finally, there are at least 50 nephrite adzes and chisels in a bewildering array of shapes and sizes. Very few are primary examples. The vast majority show evidence of some reworking and many have evidently been chosen for collection because they are in the process of being manufactured, rather than being intact. The PRM founding collection contains 11 nephrite examples, including a fragment of an adze partially cut into 2 small chisels, and a chipped reworked adze (1884.140.1045); the lovely 'Rose' adze collected on Banks Peninsula by Henry Rose of the ship *Mermaid* 1886.1.1160); and several adzes reworked as pendants (e.g. 1892.67.786, 1923.87.239).

28.3.3 Patu (*Clubs*)

The PRM database currently identifies 38 clubs of stone, bone, and wood. The core of the PRM collection is a group of at least 14 standardized, late-style, complete basalt clubs, *patu oneva*, with the conventional ribbed carving on the butt of the handle. At least 14 bone clubs of various kinds are listed including a complete whalebone club in the Forster collection (Coote *et al.* 1999).

Of particular interest are three *mere* (nephrite clubs), collected in the late 18th or early 19th century, all of which have been substantially remodelled. Object 1886.1.1150, described as a cleaver, but initially thought to be an adze, is part of the Forster collection and referred to by Coote *et al.* (1999: 61). One object (1886.1.1148) was initially purchased in London in 1834 by J. Bigge. It has been sawn in half, but left without further reworking or finishing. Most curious of all is a *mere*/amulet from the PRM founding collection (1884.140.1046). It is 15.5 cm long and has a suspension hole at the butt end. One side is very straight and blade-like while the other side is broken at the tip, blade-like around the curve and notched or serrated around the tapered handle end. It too seems to have been made from a larger *mere*-type artefact, which was sawn in half then further reworked, possibly several times.

In addition, there are two schist clubs from the Chatham Islands. One is a fairly conventional shape while the other is a rare example of *patu okeva* or bird-shaped club (1893.78.65). It is about 28 cm long and similar to those described in Skinner (1974: 166). Both clubs were described and illustrated by Balfour (1918: 145–146).

28.3.4 Ornaments

The personal ornaments in the collection include 12 stone *tikis* (carved figures), all of nephrite (Figure 28.3), and c. 25 straight, curved, hockey-stick and chisel-style pendants or ear drops in nephrite. Each is unique, but with similarities and differences complementary to those of more extensive collections such that of The British Museum (Starzeck, Neich and Pendergrast 2010). There is also a large fish-hook pendant and a *manaia*, both of nephrite. A pendant of bone inlaid with haliotis shell, with metal socket and ring for suspension (1923.87.229) is amongst the Charles Smith collection said to have been made by Takarangi of Kaiwaiki, while older still is a necklace with multiple strings of dentalium and brown shell that is part of the Forster collection (1886.1.1574).

28.3.5 Other Stone Items

Stone items other than adzes, chisels, ornaments and clubs have yet to be fully described in the database and without a systematic examination of the objects themselves it is impossible to obtain an accurate account of just how many objects there are and what exactly they all are. However, there must be at least 100 other pieces and the following account gives a general overview. There are more than 50 obsidian flakes or flake tools including several groups of small sometimes unnumbered flakes: at least 22 in the Smith



Figure 28.3 Six nephrite tikis (PRM Accession Numbers 1884.77.6, 1884.77.8, 1924.66.2, 1926.75.1 and 1940.10.01-02).

collection (1923.87.47–62, 1923.87.369–374), and others in the Skinner (1921.52.7–8), Coltart (1932.42.68–69), Bell (1921.91.69–74) and Leeds (1919.17.4–5) collections. In addition there are two large multi-use flake tools (1914.31.4, 1923.87.46).

Several collections include groups of large quartzite flake blades or knives. Among these are at least five examples in the Skinner collection. The Tylor collection obtained from Frederick Wollaston Hutton at the Canterbury Museum consists of 27 flake tools, including saws and handaxe-like tools up to 19 cm in length tools from a South Rakaia ‘moa-hunter camp’ (1913.35.2, 1913.35.14) and an interesting flake tool from Shag Point (1913.35.28). Many collections include objects described as hammerstones, grinders, sanders, polishers and saws. In several cases these objects have been acquired alongside nephrite artefacts and worked pieces of nephrite, which are formed artefacts. Accession records indicate the associated artefacts are understood to be tools for working nephrite. Examples include those in the Hewlett and Robieson collections (1912.66.36–41, 1930.82.46–63).

One unusual object, possibly of argillite, comes from Murdering Beach (1930.82.29). It is now a pendant with grooves cut along the lower edge similar to those common on club handles, but it appears to have been reworked several times.

28.3.6 Fishing Gear

Most of the fishing gear consists of fish-hooks. There are some 200 Maori hooks, at least two stone sinkers and a number of possible harpoon heads. Paulin (2010: 27) puts the number of Maori hooks at 450, but this is in fact the total number of Polynesian ‘fishing accessories’ in the PRM collection. The fish-hooks comprise approximately 70 trolling lures, 120 two-piece fish-hooks, and at least ten one-piece fish-hooks, which tend to be rare in collections as they are a predominantly early hook form. Several are briefly discussed by Paulin (2010: 27–29)

Among the one-piece fish-hooks are five examples from Clough's Chatham Islands collection (1873.78.68–72). There are 2 very large broken bone hooks, one small complete bone hook, a large complete stone hook and a bone blank. From New Zealand there are 2 large, entirely wooden, hooks measuring 1.9 cm and 1.3 cm in length (1919.52.1, 1966.1.880.1), three incomplete bone examples from Purakanui, Otago (1930.75.11–13) and several other possible examples (1884.11.76, 1919.16.101).

Almost all the trolling lures are complete, fully hafted, and have short sections of cord attached. They are highly standardized and most are made up of a wood shank topped with *paua* shell lining and a bone point. These range in size from 6 cm–16 cm in length. Ten have one or more components replaced by metal, a post-contact form described by Smith (2007). Two exceptionally well-made lures are manufactured from the rim section of a *paua* shell and both are finely notched or serrated along both sides. More than half the lures are part of the Charles Smith Collection (1923.87.88–127, 1923.87.132, 1923.87.361), and letters from Charles Smith to his family, now in the related document file (RDF) for this collection, attest to some of the biographies behind these. One example, in an undated letter, reads as follows:

Takarangi the other chief at Kaiwaiki gave me a Maori fish hook which he took from a female prisoner in the campaign – a wife of Te Kooti's. This present among Maori is thought much more of than the others as it is an heirloom which has descended from a remote ancestor. I won't trouble you with a full account here, but will put it in when I send it. I mean it for Harry. These fish hooks are too large for enclosing in a letter, being wooden backs, as large as your middle finger with a sort of mother of pearl face and a bone hook attached. When drawn through the water they glitter like small fish. The natives tell me there would be great lamentation over the loss of this hook. It was name Te Pa o Hinematiaro from the name of the wife of the ancestor who was the great chief of the tribe. I explained to the warrior donors that I wished to send the thing home. As they were going to "the family" it was quite satisfactory to them, in fact rather a compliment.¹

The largest category of fish-hooks is the two-piece hook, a form which dominated during the later prehistoric period. These include 22 complete hooks with hafting and cords, and approximately 100 bone points. Complete examples included 10 very large V-shaped fish-hooks, all 20 cm or more in length, made entirely in wood. They have a one-piece bentwood shank and a wooden barb (1966.1.870–879). Six smaller examples, 8–12 cm in length, have a wooden shank and bone barb (1919.52.2, 1934.32.9, 1966.1.854, 1966.1.831–3). In the Collyer collection there are four large examples with wooden shanks and metal barbs (1924.62.10–13).

Two unusual examples warrant special comment. One is a very large, robust hook with a carved wooden shank and a beautifully detailed long serrated bone point. The carving is of a human figure and has inlaid *paua* shell eyes (1884.11.47). Paulin (2010: 28) suggests this hook is a fake, in the sense that it was probably made for trade purposes rather than for fishing. The second unusual example is a set of three hooks lashed together to form a set. Each hook consists of a straight wooden twig and a length of lashing twine, which ends in a metal hook (1924.62.14.1).

Almost all of the incomplete examples consist of bone points rather than shanks and are part of the Moir collection (1919.16.20–90), which are mounted for display in two wooden, glass fronted boxes so they are difficult to examine closely. Many of these points are broken or show evidence of burning and wear indicating they

¹ PRM Related Documents File for 1923.87.121. There is no date associated with this letter.

probably came from archaeological sites, (e.g. 1919.16.5–8, 1930.82.69–71). Three bone barbs are listed as from Purakanui (1930.75.8–10) and another three in the same collection are made from dog jawbone and are similar to examples illustrated in Furey (2002). It is unclear whether these points are also from Purakanui but this would seem likely (1930.75.14–16).

28.3.7 Other Bone and Shell Items

The collection contains many other important bone items including: 3 flutes, of which 2 are listed as forgeries (1908.8.1, 1951.6.2–3), a tattooing chisel (1919.16.1), needles of various sizes and styles including large ‘thatching’ needles (1911.3.1, 1919.16.2, 1930.75.6, 1930.82.76), cloak pins or fasteners (1886.1.1316–1317, 1934.72.22); various small spear points, barbs or harpoons (1893.78.67, 1930.82.65–71, 1930.75.7), and awls (1930.82.72).

Incomplete items include several bone tabs: a bird bone tab from Shag Point (2008.34.1), a moa bone tab from Long Beach (1921.52.12), a possible needle blank (1930.82.71) and an albatross bone tab identified as from Otago (1921.52.10). There are also a number of ‘unmodified’ items including three large complete *pana* shells, a bird humerus (1912.17.4.2), and a pig skull (1914.31.5). Finally, there are several pieces of human bone (1985.49.251, 256, 1919.17.1) and five preserved heads (1887.33.5–8, 1904.53.1).

28.4 Conclusions

A separation of objects into ethnographic and archaeological categories seeks to distinguish between on the one hand those objects that have been recovered from the ground, and were made before the arrival of Europeans, and on the other those that were made in the 19th and 20th centuries, which must be in some way affected by the presence of Europeans in New Zealand. This is of course a critically important distinction. However, in order to study the changing form, context and meaning of Maori material culture, the chronological ordering needs to be both more systematic and more contextual. This characterization has demonstrated the need for more detailed artefact-based collections research that would start to fulfil the research value of the collection, by enhancing the database records and the accessibility of the objects. For example, basic measurements of size, records for the composition of the object and type of bone, wood, fibre, stone or other material of manufacture, and an indication of probable period of manufacture – early prehistory, later prehistory, and 18th, early 19th, late 19th, and 20th centuries – would make it possible for researchers to identify objects of potential relevance to their specific interests. Such a characterization is most acutely needed for the stone objects as they are currently much less well described than most other objects.

As will be apparent from this brief review, there are many fascinating biographies of objects, collectors and collections waiting to be investigated. It is also possible that bone from some items could be useful in future DNA studies. There are many possibilities. In particular, however, the PRM collection is well placed to accommodate the shift in Maori material culture research from typology-based approaches, to questions concerning artefact manufacture (Furey 2004). The unusually large number of primary adzes, combined with an extensive array of manufacturing tools, especially those understood to have been used for working nephrite, are a likely source of significant new insights in this area of research.

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