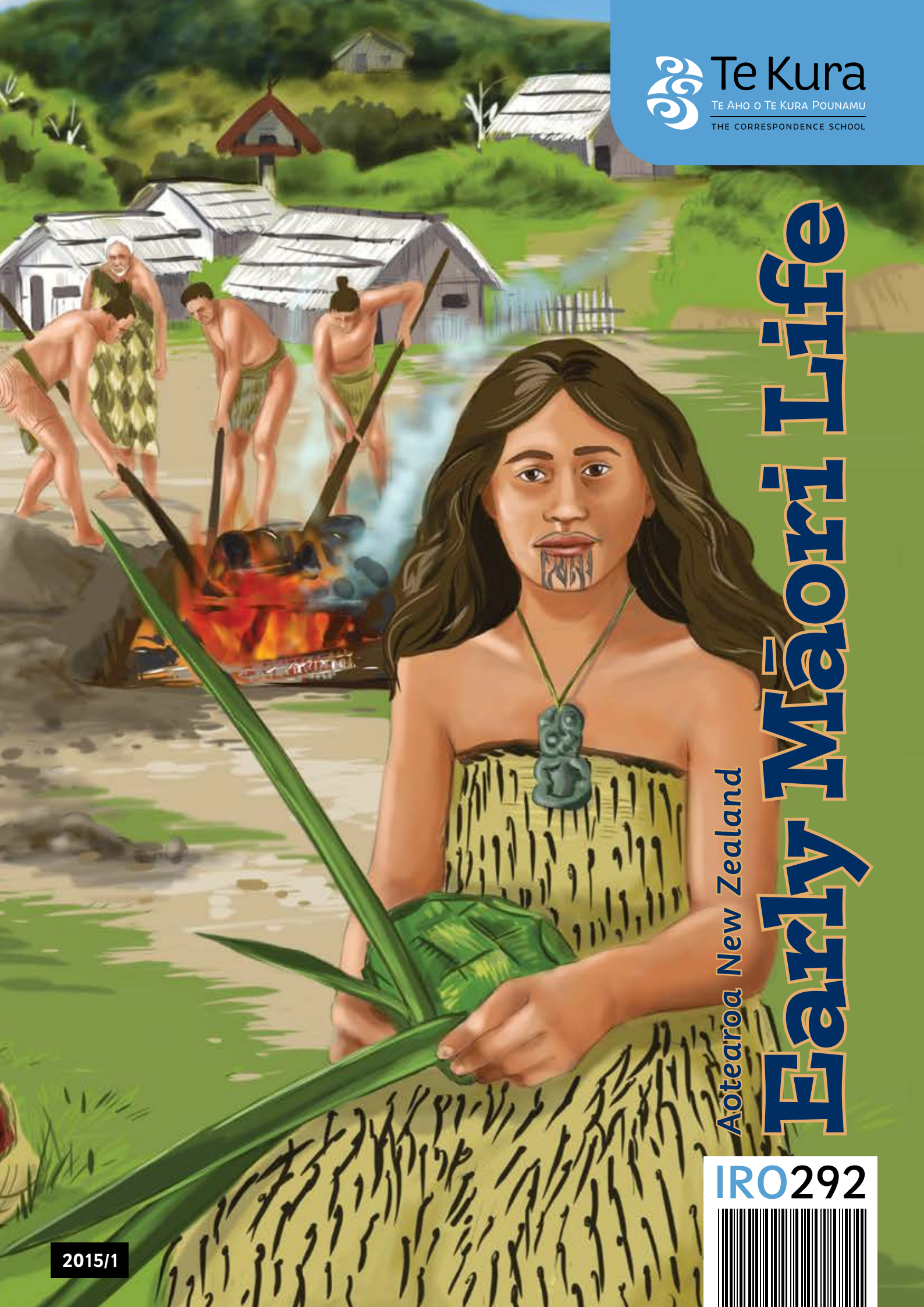




Te Kura

TE AHO O TE KURA POUNAMU
THE CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL

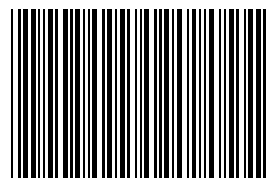


Early Māori Life

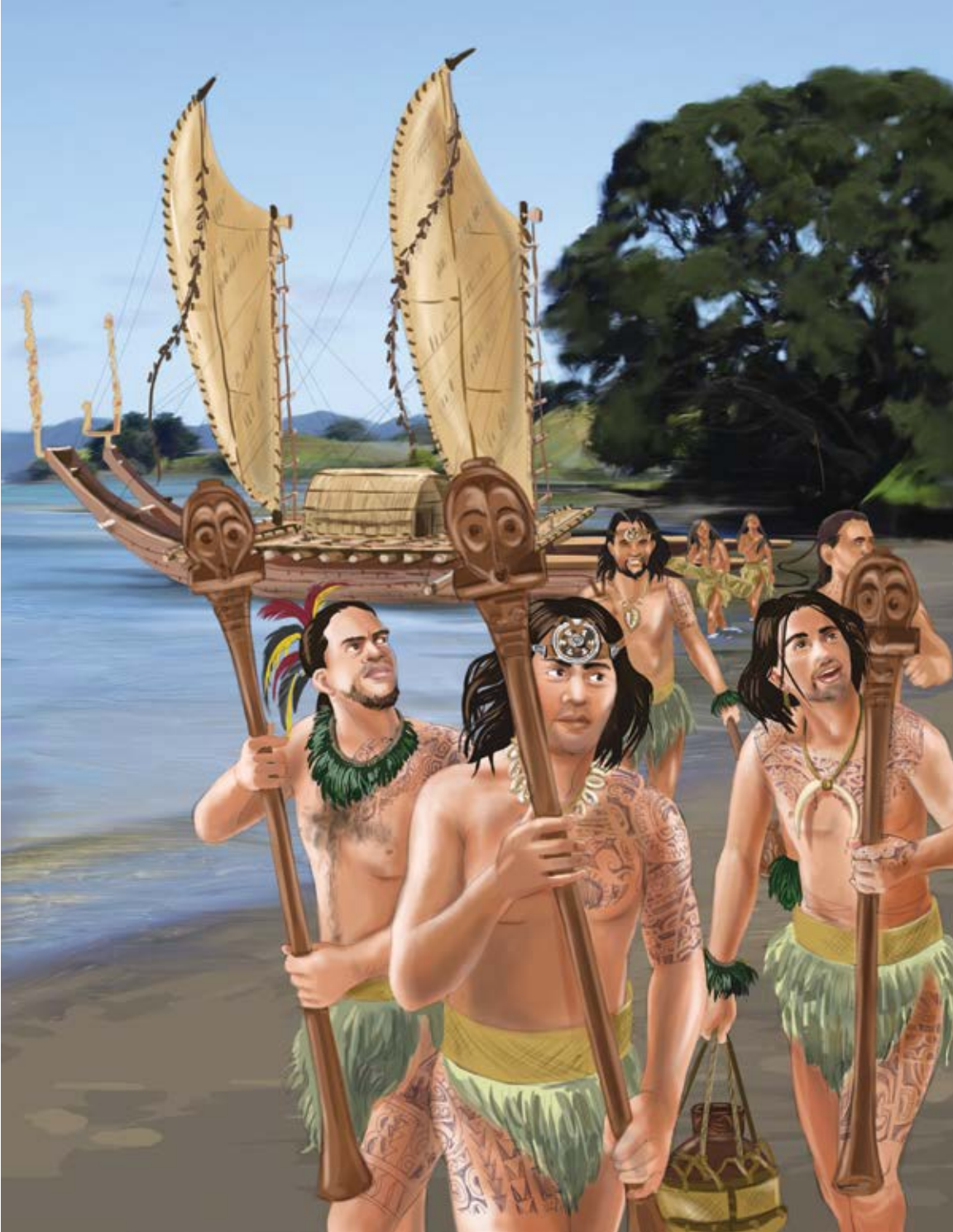
Aotearoa New Zealand

2015/1

IRO292



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Early Māori life before Europeans arrived

Māori did not always live in Aotearoa. They came to Aotearoa from Polynesian islands to the North and East. Aotearoa was colder and wetter than the warm island homes they had left. Māori had to use the plants they found in Aotearoa to build houses and to make clothes to keep them warm.

Aotearoa New Zealand

Early Māori Life

When Māori first arrived, nearly all the land was covered in bush. There were many different kinds of ngā manu (birds) and animals living in the bush. Māori had to learn what was good to eat in their new home.

They found food in the sea, in the bush and in the swamps. Birds were hunted for food and feathers. Reptiles, like tuatara, were hunted for food.

Ngā Whare – Housing

The wharepuni was the family sleeping house. It was made with a wooden frame and covered with raupō or nīkau leaves. The wharepuni had one room where all the whānau slept. To keep warm, people slept on fern leaves and whāriki (mats). They had flax covers and feather cloaks too.

The chief's family had a bigger whare with beautiful carvings on the outside. If there was no wharenuī (meeting house) in the kāinga (village), the people used the chief's whare for meetings.

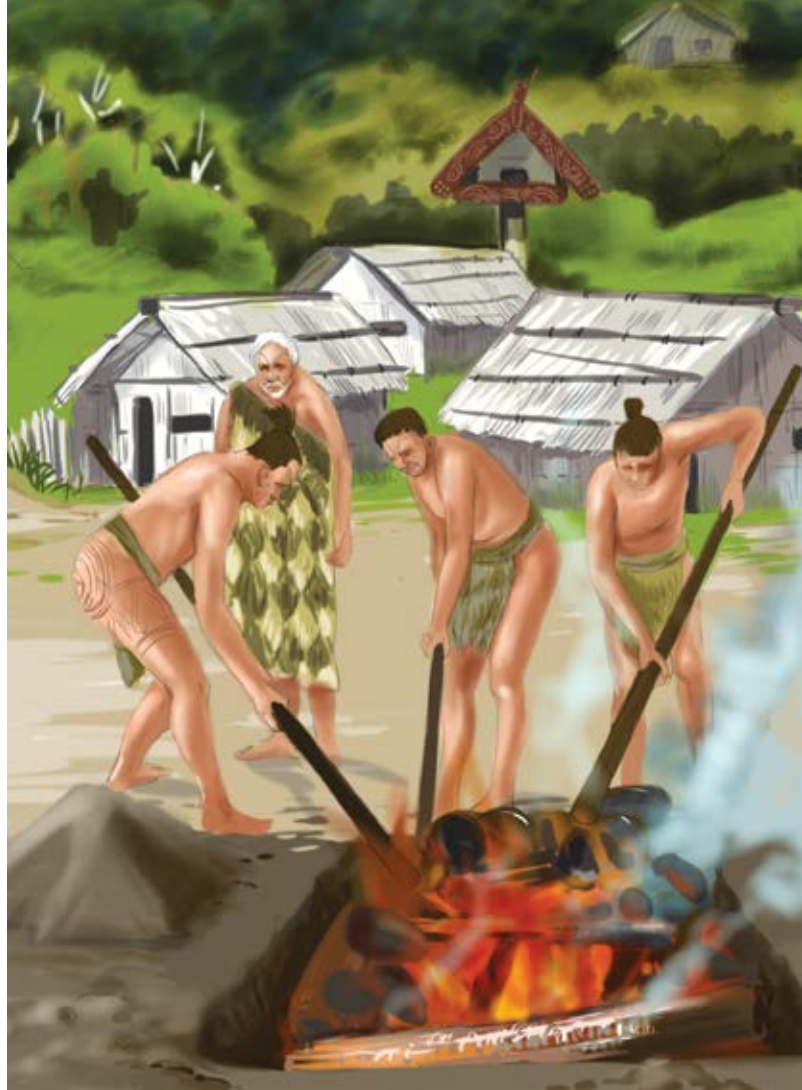


Cooking and eating was always done outside. Māori had no stoves or metal pots. They had kete (flax baskets) and kumete (wooden bowls) to gather and cook the food in.



Sometimes Māori cooked over the embers of a fire or they made a hāngī or umu (earth oven) to cook their food.

In some places like Rotorua, kai was cooked in pools of hot water from hot springs.





Nga Weru – Clothing

In the early days, most of the clothing was made from harakeke or flax. Both women and men wore flax skirts. When it was cold or wet, they wore flax cloaks called kahu. They also wore clothes made of woven leaves and feathers.

Chiefs wore cloaks made with dog skin and dog hair. Birds' feathers were used to decorate the cloaks.

Māori often wore earrings and necklaces made of shells, bone and pounamu. Men wore their hair in a topknot and often wore birds' feathers or combs in their hair. Women sometimes kept their hair short. Men had moko (tattoos) on their face and parts of their body. Women were tattooed on the lips and chin.



Kaimoana – Hunting for food in the sea

Kaimoana means food from the sea. There was plenty of good kaimoana to be found in the sea.

The men were good at fishing. They learned how to catch many different fish like: tāmare (snapper), tarakihi, kahawai and barracouta. Women also helped collect kina, cockles, pipi, tuatua, pāua and kuku (mussels) from the beach. Kōura (crayfish) and tītī (muttonbird) were caught.

The kaimoana was carried in kete or flax baskets. Kete were used to carry many other things like vegetables and shells.



Hunting for food in the bush

Māori found that the berries of some trees in the bush were good to eat. They liked the hīnau, karaka, miro, tawa and mataī berries.

The roots of some ferns were ground into a type of flour and made into little cakes.

Manu (birds) like kererū (wood pigeon), kākāpō, tūī, kiwi, moa, whio (blue duck), weka and pūkeko (swamp hen) were caught or trapped for food.

The men hunted with dogs and spears. Sometimes they made traps.



Working together

The men worked together:

- hunting
- fishing
- making nets and traps
- digging the garden.

The men dug the garden with a kō. This tool had a long wooden handle.

They chanted as they worked. These chants were called pātere and they had different names for different occasions. Each place had their own patere (chant).

Māori women in the village worked together too. They wove baskets, mats and capes. They made dyes for clothes from berries and bark. They used the dirt from the ground to make dyes for the piupiu (skirts).

The women looked after crayfish pots and collected food like shellfish, fern roots and parts of the tī kōuka (cabbage tree).

In some places Māori grew plants and vegetables like:

- kūmara
- yams
- taro
- gourds.



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