

Observations on the Authority of the New Zealand Chiefs  
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possess in New Zealand.

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There are Chiefs who hold large Tracts of Land in New Zealand as their hereditary right; yet their authority over the Persons and property of those who live within their Jurisdiction is very circumscribed, and confined to their own Family, Domestic, and Slaves, over whom they have the most absolute power. Upon their Lands a number of inferior Chiefs generally reside by permission, who may be called in some way or other to the principal Chief by Family Connections, Intermarriages, or Friendships. Each of these Chiefs carries on their own Cultivation, have their own Domestic and Slaves over whom the principal Chief has no authority whatever. Besides these there are free Persons who are poor, and who possess neither Land nor Slaves; and whose Families have probably been reduced by war or other Calamities. over these also the Chief has no authority whatever. They go where they please, and live as they please, without interruption from any one. As the Chief is generally of Military Character those who live within his Jurisdiction look up to him in times of common danger for protection, and range themselves under his Barrier from motives of personal safety; he also on his part conciliates their Esteem, and ensures their obedience more by Courtesy and kindness than by Command. Knowing that he has no authority to command them. Many of the inferior Chiefs with their domestic and Slaves as well as the poor freemen will readily join the principal Chief in his wars, in order to indulge their natural disposition for fighting, and in hopes of sharing the spoils of war. Was the principal Chief to call upon any Class of free People within his Jurisdiction to labour they would pay little attention to his Commands. He has no authority over them in this respect, nor any means to enforce their obedience. The principal Chiefs as well as the inferior ones are all extremely jealous of the Authority they possess tho' individually it is very small. The most of the Chiefs with whom I have conversed upon the moral and political State of their Country, are