NOTICE OF ORDINARY MEETING

The next meeting of the Society will be held in the Museum Education Building, North Terrace Adelaide, at

8.00 p.m. on Monday 23 June, 1975

AGENDA

1. Apologies

2. Minutes of meeting held Monday 26 May, 1975 to be confirmed. (Copies of these minutes are attached)

3. New Members

   The following papers and journals will be tabled at the meeting.

   Ecos No. 4. May, 1975
   Stuart Highway Improvement
   Dept. of Aboriginal Affairs, Newsletter, Vol. 1 No. 10, March, 1974
   The Anthropological Society of W.A. Vol. 12 No. 4.

5. Business.


   DR. ITHI STEPHENS of Adelaide will give an address to the Society entitled 'ETHIOPIA PAST and PRESENT'.

7. July Meeting.

   The July meeting will be held, Monday 28 July, 1975.

VERN TOLCHER
Honorary Secretary,
213 Greenhill Road,
EASTWOOD S.A. 5063
THE LAU ISLANDS:
A PROGRESS REPORT ON AN INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH PROJECT

The Lau islands are a part of the Fiji nation, since 1970 an independent member of the British Commonwealth, but their geographical and historical significance is central to many of the problems of the Pacific Islands generally, problems which have been the concern of specialists working within a number of different disciplines. They are located some 200 miles east of Suva, and about the same distance from the chain of islands which forms the Kingdom of Tonga to the west, and they form part of a frontier zone between the traditional, but increasingly meaningless racial and cultural divisions of the Pacific Islands: Polynesia and Melanesia.

Any investigation of the past of this group of islands is likely to cast considerable light on a number of related problems; the origins of Polynesian culture (1), the nature of primitive imperialism (2), the use and validity of oral traditions (3), and the reaction of island society to successive waves of western contact from the first castaways to the most recent tourists, and, in more recent times, the effect of population pressure on limited resources and the community response to the lures of metropolitan life and attempts to foster economic development along western lines (4). The population of the Lau group is relatively small (5), yet Lauans appear to play a dominating part in government and in such fields as education and medicine. It may be that remoteness and a relatively poor environment are conducive to ability and ambition. It is no coincidence that the Present Prime Minister of Fiji, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, is the Tui Nayau, the paramount chief of Lau.

The Lau group therefore provides an opportunity for collaboration between a number of disciplines: archaeology, history, geography, anthropology, and economics are merely the most obvious. A further convenience is the existence and survival of a sense of Lauan identity, based on the ancient state of Lakeba, which pre-dated European contact by several centuries. It was a state which reached its greatest extent and influence shortly before the cession of Fiji to Britain in 1874 and after cession it continued to be an important and in some ways independent Province. This means that the various bodies of evidence, oral traditions, archaeological remains, missionary, naval, commercial and administrative records, relate to the same geographical and political entity and invite cross-references which may lead to an unusual degree of finality.

The problems involved however, in taking advantage of these opportunities and in avoiding the obvious pitfalls of cultural bias and the use of only the most easily accessible evidence, are physical and organisational as well as intellectual.

The virtues of an interdisciplinary approach to Pacific Studies have recently been much discussed, (7) with the result that there has been an increasing tendency for researchers to adopt the techniques and approaches of subjects hitherto unfamiliar to them. Historians now normally undertake fieldwork; they often seek to apply 'models' to historical problems, while anthropologists, geographers, and economists, have begun to include a significant historical dimension in their analysis of contemporary situations and to utilise documentary sources for the purpose. (8) There have been studies, too, of individual historical events, utilising all the available evidence of every category, but so far there has been little practical cooperation between people with different kinds of training working on the same subject. Archaeological interest has so far centred, in the Pacific, on the period of earliest human occupation - between 2500 and 1000 years ago, rather than on recent population movements, political consolidation, and cultural adaptations. (9)
Lau itself has been the subject of a number of reminiscences and missionary accounts and some geographic and ethnographic description. The work by the anthropologist, A.M. Hocart (11) is the only academic treatment of the group as a whole, and gives explicit recognition to a sense of Lauan identity, pre-dating and independent of European contact.

My own interest in the Lau group arose from an earlier study of European settlement in Fiji in the 1860's and 1870's (12). This revealed a marked contrast between the attitudes and fortunes of the settlers on Viti Levu, and of those who settled in the Lau groups. The former were disappointed to find that the authority of the chief whom they presumed to be King of Fiji; Cakobau, was insufficient to protect their special interests. The settlers in the Lau group, on the other hand, accepted the existing authority of the Ma'afu, the Tui Lau and were content to become his subjects and to identify their interests with his.

Their security, and in consequence, their prosperity, was therefore much greater than that of their compatriots in the west, who wasted their substance and energies in launching futile punitive expeditions against the Fijians and setting up a series of political experiments based on varying degrees of racism; (13). This suggested that Lau was a region worthy of separate historical study and that the situation of the 1870's could not be explained adequately from the conventional documentary sources alone.

The first step seemed to be to visit the islands themselves, and this immediately revealed a major practical problem. The islands are remote and the only normal means of communication is by copra boats. The longer, and more regular of these have a poor survival record, the smaller and less regular have no worse a record of survival, but they visit the smaller islands perhaps once in every five weeks. This is adequate for certain kinds of research on individual communities, and for gaining a superficial impression of a number of islands within a fortnight, but not for the systematic study of the group as a whole. Even a superficial impression, however, was enough to demonstrate some of the possibilities. Each island possesses numerous sites of archaeological interest, including extensive fortifications of considerable antiquity and other settlement sites which are referred to in the oral traditions, and also in the sparsely documented period of European exploration and early commercial contact. Hence was an opportunity for the correlation of at least three kinds of evidence.

The largest body of oral evidence is contained in the Tukutukuraraba. These documents originate from a commission which was set up in the early 20th Century by the Colonial Government to investigate Native Titles to land throughout Fiji. The work of the Commission was repeatedly interrupted and became very protracted, reaching the Lau group only in the last few years before World War II. (14). Large scale meetings were held over a long period, at which representatives of each community related and often debated at length, their origins, conquests, migrations, and hence their claim to the land they lived in. The meetings were continued until a satisfactory consensus had been reached, after which the sworn testimony of which the Tukutukuraraba are composed were written down by scribes in the Fijian language, thus transforming oral traditions into official documents.

These documents, however, are not only of historical value, but of great contemporary importance, and they are not freely available for academic research. The project has been extremely fortunate in gaining the collaboration of Mr. A.C. Reid, C.M.G., C.V.O., who has recently retired from a long career of Colonial Administration in Fiji and lately, from the post of British Consul to the Kingdom of Tonga. As a former Secretary for Fijian Affairs in the Colonial Government, he has been able to gain access to the Tukutukuraraba and was able to spend six months of 1974 in Suva transcribing and summarising the testimony relating to Lau.
His notes are now in the Pacific Collection of the Barr-Smith Library under conditions of restricted access. They contain not only notes and transcriptions of the community narratives, in the Fijian language, but lists of village sites in their chronological order of occupation. (15)

What the oral tradition, thus transcribed, does not provide, is an accurate chronology. There is one early cross-reference, however, which may help. Tongan genealogy, which is often in a better state of preservation than the Fijian, provides a reference to a marriage between a Tui Tonga Fefine (the female Tui Tonga) by the name of Sinaita I Langileka, with a chief of the island of Lakeba whose personal name was Tapu'osi. (16) The offspring continued to use the title of Tui Lakepa - though as members of the Tongan rather than the Fijian nobility. One of Tapu'osi's sons, in turn, was the founder of the Ha'atu line of chiefs on the Tongan island of Niutoputapu (17) and was probably the chief who was given the name 'Latau' in 1616 by the earliest recorded European visitors to Tonga - Schouten and Le Maire (18). This assumption would place the marriage between Sinaita I Langileka and Tapu'osi in perhaps, the 1580's and the lives of the earliest individuals whose names are recorded in the Tukutukuraraba around the end of the end of the fifteenth century. (19).

Most of the traditions relating to Lau mention earlier inhabitants on the larger islands, thought not on the smaller limestone islands and not on Lakeba itself. These early inhabitants were apparently either exterminated or assimilated by the conquerors, who came either from the Tulevu coast of Viti Levu - in the case of what is now the Kabara district or from the older state of Vuna, with its base on the island of Taveuni. It would be surprising therefore, if popular history did not reflect the ideology of the conquerors. This presents a historian with a further problem. It is a paradox of the attempt to connect cultural bias by using indigenous sources, that oral traditions concern only the doings of the great, the chiefs and warriors who won battles and founded matagalis or the love-affairs of the high-born women. This is apt to produce the equivalent of the kind of history of western society which is written mostly from official documents, documents which give what has been called, in the Australian context - the 'Government House Verandah view of history'. (21) To write 'inside' history of western type societies, we go beyond evidence of the way Governors saw things to evidence of the way people saw the Governor and their views of the society and problems in which they lived, and so we go to newspapers, private accounts, and letters, often of humble individuals. Direct evidence of this kind can be rounded out and supplemented by the use of oblique evidence such as art, popular music or oral traditions. In Lau, however, as in most aristocratic military societies, oblique evidence also reflects the ideology of the conquerors as much as Elizabethan drama reflects the ideology of the Tudors.

For the more recent period, it is true, 'inside' history, about how ordinary people lived and died, how they responded to change, and what they believed in, is recorded in the records of the church, the Colonial administration, and the records of commercial enterprise. For the pre-literate-period it is likely to be found, along with the confirmation or refutation of much else besides, in the ground.

Archaeology, is thus an essential partner of History to provide the kind of depth which makes it possible to analyse and to understand. As it is, the traditional and genealogical material stands as a kind of skeleton, lacking the flesh and blood of reality. Matagalis move from one site to another but for no apparent reason other than that a leader took them there. There is no suggestion in the Tukutukuraraba of changed conditions such as population expansion or political consolidation, no suggestion either that some sites were impregnable fortresses and others agricultural or reef-based settlements on coastal flats.
It therefore seemed likely that even a detailed geographical knowledge might well indicate likely causation factors. Best of all, as a prerequisite for systematic archaeological work would be an attempt to map, on a large scale as many of the old inhabited sites as possible. The Lau islands are archaeologically untouched except for a preliminary survey carried out in 1965 on the island of Kabara (22). This means that even a surface collection of materials is likely to provide valuable evidence if accurately mapped.

To accomplish this within six months study leave was impossible without an independent means of transport. This was provided by a small yacht, the Leofleda. The Australian Research Grants Committee provided the necessary finance to ship her to Nuku'alofa in Tonga and back again to Australia from Suva. This made it possible to spend several months of the trade wind period in the Lau group itself (28).

The purpose in starting from Tonga was to take advantage of the trade winds which blow fairly consistently from an easterly quarter between May and October. The need to lighten the boat as much as possible for shipment meant that Nuku'alofa had to serve as a fitting out and provisioning base. As such, it was not ideal. The ship's company consisted of four people: myself, my wife Ruth and our two children Phillip and Susan. The boat was 23 feet long, a convenient size for shipment, and for the negotiation of even the smallest reef passages, but was just big enough to provide the necessary sea worthiness and accommodation. We made a preparatory voyage to Nomuka and back to Nuku'alofa and we were ready for departure by the end of July.

We eventually left for Lau on 4 August, 1974 and made our landfall, the island of Ogea in southern Lau on 6 August. Lakeba was our destination, but the approach to Lakeba is much more dangerous because of the Bukatafena or reefs, extending some twenty miles to the west. The Argo was wrecked there in 1800, possibly before the crew even sighted Lakeba. Ogea on the other hand stands on the outer edge of a cluster of islands and is visible, even in poor conditions, long before a vessel approaching from the south east, is in any danger.

We took shelter from a northerly gale in the Ogea lagoon and continued to Lakeba on the 8 August, arriving the following day. We had been given special permission by all the relevant government departments to make Lakeba our port of entry and we had elaborate instructions to remain offshore until we were approached by a medical officer and a representative of the department of Agriculture. (24). This information however, as we later discovered, had not been sent from Suva to Lakeba. After sailing up and down for a considerable time outside the reef, we began to suspect that this might have happened and so went in and anchored off the village of Tubou before the tide turned, which would have made entry impossible for another six hours or more.

Lakeba was our rendezvous with Kolinio Moce - a member of the staff of the Fiji Museum, and we had also hoped to be able to provide inter-island transport and assistance to students from the University of the South Pacific who had agreed to collaborate with us. Kolinio Moce did join us at Lakeba - but when we went to see the Tui Nayau, he refused to approve the participation of the University of the South Pacific in the project, and that part of our plan has had to be abandoned. (25) Approval was given, however for us to proceed with our plan of mapping as many sites as we could reach in the time available. I contacted A.C. Reid, who was then in Suva, and we met in Lakeba for a discussion, of the political problems which the project had created. His presence in Tubou as a returning celebrity and his association with the project was instrumental in regaining all that we had lost in the eyes of the local community and we were able to proceed with the benefit of enthusiastic local support. Since then there have been further discussions and the political difficulties now appear to be resolved.
The three sites we mapped on the island of Lakeba were Ulunikoro and Kedekede, two fortified sites, and Korovusa down on the coastal flat, only about half a mile from the present site of Tubou. This proved to be a typical sequence, a stage by stage movement, from an early fortified position near the coast to a central and more elaborate fort, coinciding with a period of political consolidation, and finally a move towards the coast, and the convenience of food supplies close at hand in the period either shortly before or shortly after the beginning of sustained European contact.

According to Tukutukurababa, the ancestors of the present inhabitants of Lakeba came from Vuna on the island of Taveuni and landed on the north west coast, between the present towns of Nasagelau and Vakano. Their leader already carried the title Tui Lakeba and after a period during which a number of settlements were established on the coast, the Tui Lakeba moved to the earliest fortified site on the island Ulunikoro. (26)

We had been delayed for some time sorting out our political problems on Lakeba and had already completed a survey of four sites on the Islands of Komo and Oneata before the time was ripe for a visit to this rather oppressive, almost frightening fortress. It was the morning of the 29 August when we set out on the walk of about five or six miles from Tubou past the site of the modern airstrip and finally a climb up some steep cliffs onto a jagged ridge. We found four distinct summits each surrounded by fortified platforms enclosed by extensive stonework where necessary. The maximum use had been made of the defensive advantages of the natural terrain, the stonework merely supplementing nature as required. At each end of the ridge was an area sufficiently large for several houses, indicating two quite distinct settlements. The whole area was heavily overgrown with large timber and undergrowth so that it was only possible to complete a traverse by going ahead a short distance at a time with the measuring tape in one hand, cutting a path with a cane knife in the other. It was here, that the Tui Lakeba was joined by two chiefs, called Pukuni and Qilaiso, who arrived from the island of Kabara and married the Tui Lakeba’s daughters. Hostility soon developed, however, and it is possible that the two platforms at either end of this fortified ridge which are large enough for habitation were occupied respectively by the Tui Lakeba himself and his rebellious sons-in-law. The eastern platform has on it what appears to be a large grave site. There were several conch shells in the vicinity, brittle and grey with age, last blown perhaps at the funeral of the last chief to occupy the site.

The Tui Lakeba eventually concluded that Ulunikoro was too small for two antagonistic dynasties and removed himself and his followers inland to the highest point on the island, Kedekede (27). He also strengthened his position by marrying a lady called Likucava, the daughter of the leader of one of the early coastal settlements, now at least known by the title of Tui Vutu. (28).

As at Ulunikoro, the Tui Lakeba and his retinue occupied a keep-like enclosure, called, in this case, Lomanikoro, while his new allies by marriage, the Tui Vutu, and his household, occupied ‘Kai Coke ni Koro’ which means the offshoot, or extension of the Koro or town.

Kedekede became of a developing political system based on the utilisation of kinship for purposes of defence. Friction eventually arose on the old Ulunikoro site between Pukuni and Qilaiso, the brothers from Kabara and Qilaiso ultimately left, reputedly because Pukuni, the elder brother, was a persistent cannibal, and persisted in eating his way through his younger brother’s household (29). Qilaiso moved from place to place but found no means of protecting his people from his brothers continuous demands until he was allegedly encouraged by the Bete or priest who had come with him from Kabara to come to terms with the Tui Lakeba and seek sanctuary at Kedekede.
It was from this incident that the name of this group, the 'Ce i Ke na' is derived. The name means 'Who is it for?' - the question asked by O'ila i so on hearing the request for one more body. He was told that it was for his brother Pukuni, and so he led his people to the permanent refuge of Kedekede. (33) Shortly after his ascent there was some kind of election at Kedekede to establish an overall leader of the several distinct groups now occupying the site. This resulted in the installation of O'ila i so as Sau or sovereign. According to tradition all the groups of people throughout the island of Lakeba were represented at this ceremony, a fact which would imply the political supremacy of O'ila i so and of the fort at Kedekede over the whole island, and the availability of the protection which the fort could provide in the case of attack from other islands. Each Yavusa on Lakeba was allotted the customary duties in relation to the Sau which form the basis of the present day social organisation, and it is from the leaders present on that occasion that the present occupants of the village sites on the coast trace their descent. It is also from this point in time, probably about 1500, that the names of the successive holders of the Tui Lakeba title are recorded. The interesting thing will be to discover; by stratigraphic excavation, for how long a period each successive site was occupied, and this should make it possible to achieve a reasonably accurate chronology to the whole group, subject to the evidence discovered by excavation on other islands.

Kedekede appears to have been the political centre of a regime which lasted for at least four generations, though probably a good deal longer, because traditional history tends to be episodic in character, dwelling on dramatic events or on outstanding personalities. During this period there is evidence of considerable intermarriage with the Tongan nobility - and the establishment of chiefly retinues from Lakeba on the islands of Vula i ga, O'gea, Vota i, and Ono i Lau possibly as a consequence of the continued coming and going of war parties and state visitors between the two kingdoms. (31) Other invaders - and therefore opportunities, for political consolidation by means of alliance and marriage who arrived from the west, by way of the islands of the Moala group. (32).

The Fortress of Kedekede itself was eventually sacked after an alliance between the Ce i Ke na and the most recent arrivals from the west, the people of Lavuka on the island of Ovolau, who in turn summoned help from the Vunivalu of Bau and a group of dark skinned warriors from the Ra coast of Viti Levu. Their invasion was known as the Poaka Loo, or black pig. (33) The successful Bauan leader sought to legitimise his conquest by seizing a wife from the Ce i Ke na people but failed to gain acceptance. This may be taken, perhaps, as evidence of a sense of Lauan identity sufficiently strong to reject the leadership of Bau. For three generations there was considerable anarchy, which, like the English 'Wars of the Roses' was resolved by an appeal to a new dynasty. The descendants of the original Tui Lakeba invited the chief of the neighbouring island of Naya u, Ratu Rasolo, to become their chief and thus the inheritor of what was now a tradition of almost sacred kinship. (34) Ratu Rasolo was in any case sufficiently well-connected to be able to assert a claim to legitimacy as Sau ni Vanua of Lakeba in his own right and was the first Tui Naya u to be installed in both capacities. As the Transcription reads:

He was given dominion over all the land and likewise the people of the land, and straightaway Roko Rasolo gave the land back to the people so that they could do what was required for the Sau. (35).

It was in Rasolo's time that the capital of what was now an island empire was moved from Kedekede to Korovusa, the site which lies about half a mile inland from the present village of Tobou. It was here that the court of the Tui Naya u was established at the time of first European contact. (36) John Twyning, a seaman, who survived the shipwreck of the whaler Minerva in 1834 and was eventually brought to Korovusa described the defence of the towns by means of 'several guns - of various sizes from a swivel to a carronade. These guns were mounted on a platform over each of the entrances to the town across the moat?' (37)
As the map shows, the moat is now a series of pools separated by patches of swamp, backed by a ruined wall surrounding a large enclosed area which is closely packed with house mounds. These are not shown because of the limited time available. It was to this closely packed, fortified township that William Cary, the Nantucket seaman, wrecked on remote Vaitoa, almost the outmost island of what was by then a considerable empire, was brought in 1824 as part of the tribute collected by the Lakeba fleet. In his narrative he describes a grand festival held at Korovosa, a precursor of the Pan-Pacific games of modern times, with an audience of two or three thousand spectators, seated around the large open square in the centre with the 'king' seated to one side on a stone platform. Mock club fights, using coconut timber stakes were followed by boxing contests, in which the contestants, from Tonga and Samoa had their fists bound in tapa cloth - a refinement which was lacking in the bare fisted contests of contemporary Britain. A bit of unfair play excited the crowd and a general brawl threatened, but the king, whose name was Malani, jumped from his throne and quelled the disturbance before it got out of hand. Cary had the good fortune to become the personal friend of Malani, the Tui Nayau and Sau ni Vanua of Lakeba whom 'they reverence as a superior being, guarded by the spirits of his forefathers.' (38)

From Lakeba we sailed in the wake of the tribute collecting canoe fleets of that period, south to the islands over which the authority of the Lakeba state had spread in the period from, probably, about 1600 to 1800, reinforcing as it did so, by means of alliance and warfare, its links with the potentially rival power of Kabara. By now it was 10 September, and there was little chance of visiting the whole of the Lau group before the beginning of the hurricane season. (39).

Given the choice of sailing north to Vanua Balavu or south, it seemed better to reach at least those islands which were most difficult to reach by copra boat and thus to take maximum advantage of having our own transport, so we went south.

There was advantage too, in travelling as we did, subject to the same weather patterns and faced with the same problems and conditions, dependent on the same supplies of the necessities of life as the people who, over the centuries, have made up Lauan society. It was an attempt to develop some of the historical empathy which hopefully enables a historian to make sensible guesses about human motivation in the past and to understand the force of considerations which do not apply to his own contemporary environment.

As we made ground to the southward, close-hauled most of the time to the prevailing wind it was easy to appreciate the isolation of the communities on the limestone islands and the advantage to them which accrued from their close political relationship and subservience to the both powerful and plentiful island of Lakeba. It was a relationship in which the payment of tribute in the form of traditional products like the masi of Namuka, the canoes of Ogea and the Tana (40) of Kabara increased the wealth of the Lakeba chiefs and also their obligation to provide protection, and if needed sustenance to the outlying inhabitants of the state. The ceremonial activity which accompanied political activity - whether it was the arrival of an annual fleet from Lakeba or, after cession to the British Crown, the meetings of Provincial Councils, was of greater total significance than the substantive deliberations. The records of Provincial Council meetings, for example deal with routine matters of such things as vital statistics and sanitary improvements. The important activity is the accompanying social and ceremonial action, the presentation of gifts, feasting and yagona drinking which sustain the threads of which the Lauan social fabric is composed and to which Lauans cling in human reaction to the fragmentation which their scattered and remote environment seeks to impose.
We had already visited the island of Oneata, settled from Lakeba, and the site of the first successful Christian mission establishment in Fiji. It was here that Jacaro Atai and Kei Arue, two Tahitians working under the auspice of the London Missionary Society landed in 1830, thus anticipating the landing of Wesleyan missionaries on Lakeba by 10 years. (41). Here, and in the island of Komo we found the same chronological sequence of settlement from fortified positions which gave a commanding view of approaching forces, whether hostile of otherwise, to more convenient situations in the immediate hinterland of the present day villages on the coast.

Our next southward objective was Namuka, which we did not reach until Saturday 14 September, mainly because of the persistence of the South-east trade which made it difficult to cover the inter island distances within the hours of daylight. The negotiation of reef passages is only really possible between about 3.00 a.m., when the light becomes high enough to show up the coral and about 4 p.m. after which there is still plenty of light, but at too low an angle to be much use. We were obliged therefore to put in at both Oneata and Komo once again on the way up - up wind that is, and in Komo we were held up by a sudden strong gale, which we rode out anchored in the lagoon.

The passage into Namuka is a difficult one, because of a fast outgoing current which merely slackens a little at high water. We got in safety by steering well over to the outer side of the passage with the bilge of the boat over the reef itself in about three feet of water - as the canoes are able to do, in the slacker current. We mapped the usual major sequence of settlement from heavily fortified strongholds on the spine of the island to later settlements scattered along the southern coast. Korowaival was the first of these, now merely a swamp, as its name implies, possibly a promising site for excavation in view of the possible preservation of wooden artifacts.

Namuka specialises in the production of bark cloth - known generally in the Pacific islands as Tapa and in Fiji as Hasi. The stencils are characteristic of the island and the colours too are distinctive because they are produced from local materials. The red, for example, is produced by mixing the soil of the island with coconut oil. Each piece is usually the work of a group of women who, having beaten the wet bark out and dried the resulting material in the sun, sit around the edge, working on a section of the design with stencils such as the vertebrae of the snake, or domestic implements, such as the comb. Hasi used to be used for clothing, and this is the only area in which it has been superceded by mass produced textiles. It is now used, as it was in the past, within the island culture, for ceremonial purposes on occasions such as weddings or to form walkways for the visits of important people. Inside houses it is used for decoration. It has also become, recently, an important export to the tourist market of Suva.

For the early beachcombers like William Cary and John Twining who reached the Lau group in the 1820's the means of securing social acceptance was keeping firearms salvaged from the wrecks in working order. For us, times had changed but principles had not. We were asked to operate upon a Honda generator, a recent gift from the Tui Nayau to provide lighting for the church, which had stopped working. After cleaning and adjustment it went, and we received in return cooperation in our task and boundless hospitality.

From Namuka we sailed to Ogea, a limestone island with only small pockets of soil and no surface water. There has as a result, never been more than one village and the sizeable island of Ogea Drigi, within the same lagoon is uninhabited. Dalo, the staple food of the volcanic islands and of mainland Fiji will not grow and Ogea is partly dependent on other islands for food supplies.
To make up for this deficiency, however, Ogea produces a great deal of Vesi, hardwood, the material out of which the ocean going canoes of the past were built, and Ogea remains the home of the art of canoe building. When we were there six new canoes were under construction and there were plans for a grand regatta to be held at Christmas 1974 and to be followed by sailing matches with the people of Vulaga, their neighbouring rivals. Relations with Vulaga have always been close, and not always friendly. There is also a great deal of intermarriage between Ogea and Moce, a volcanic island about thirty-five miles north, which produces plenty of dalo. The people of Ogea exploit their kinship ties whenever they need food supplies and the people of Moce, who lack suitable timber, make similar demands to provide themselves with canoes.

Building methods were of necessity traditional, though adaptations of European implements must have speeded up the process. One such adaptation was an axe head lashed to a step in a suitably shaped angle in a grown handle to form an adze for trimming down a split log into a plank for the topsides. A 2" gauge blade had been similarly mounted to make a hand-adze for finishing the hollowed out interior of the hull. The modern finished product is called Camakau about 30 feet long. The Drua or Kalia (the Tongan word) of the early nineteenth Century were up to ninety feet long (42). Their potential speed can be estimated from the performance of the smaller Cama-kau, which sails at about twelve knots in a good wind. Another yachtsman John Baraclough from Auckland, New Zealand, had a race against a Camakau at Ogea in his 32 foot Cavalier class offshore racing yacht. He came off second best by quite a bit although he confessed to using his engine as well as his sails. What he could do was to keep his crew much drier, and also sail closer to the wind than a Camakau though not so fast. Canoes of this kind are in everyday use for interisland travel within what is now the Kabara district (43), to Moce, and we came across one such canoe which had come from Ogea at Ono I Lau, over 100 miles to the south. They have the advantage of being built and therefore the ability to be maintained, entirely from local materials, and without recourse to modern technology. Metal fastenings such as roof nailing are sometimes used instead of sinnet lashings, and one canoe had a sail made of jute bags sewn together instead of pandanus matting, but there were no design modifications which would create dependence on supplies of such materials or even on steel tools.

Vatoa, our next objective, lies in the grip of a south-westerly flowing branch of the south subtropical ocean current caused mainly by the prevailing winds and deflected southwards by the coral barrier of the Lau chain. It has both a difficult entrance and an adjacent reef which is littered with the wrecks of vessels whose navigation has been insufficiently accurate. There were some new ones, not yet marked on the charts, standing up on the reef when we arrived (44). One consequence of this is that although Vatoa is an island of minor importance in the Lauan political system, it has a long and continuous history of early European contact, beginning with Cook (who avoided shipwreck) and including the visits of both Cary and Twining (45) authors of the two most famous books of the beachcomber period. We were shown the beach where Cook's party landed, leaving some medals, nails and a knife ashore (46) in 1774 and mapped the two main settlement sites. The earliest Pulupele is shortly going to be excavated in any case as the site of a much needed Tighthouse. The other, Koromatua which like Korovusa is a common place name simply meaning 'the old village' was probably the site occupied at the time of Cook's visit. We found a 7" x ½" copper boat nail bent into the shape of a hook with one end flattened out like a screwdriver. It may have been one of those left by Cook - or perhaps not - there were many other visitors who could have brought it and plenty of opportunity for the Islanders to acquire marine hardware. James Lyth, an early missionary records a visit in July, 1841:-
The landing place is a beautiful sandy beach and the town is situated a little distance inland. The first objects that attracted our attention were some of the broken fragments, the remains of the shipwrecked Shylock (47) and when we came to the town, scarcely an object met out eye but served to remind us of the wreck. Her boards were made into partitions and into shelves, her tasks were converted into water casks .... the pieces of the broken up casks were used as the outer fences of some of the houses and as fences for fowls etc. (48)

So it was in 1974 only the riches yielded by the Shylock and her wooden successors had been succeeded by the equally versatile hardware recovered from the ships of the twentieth century including two 'Liberty-ships' wrecked during the second world war. The latest acquisition was a wrecked yacht, which came to grief on the less experienced island of Moala. The resourceful people of Vatoa heard about it, went to Moala and repaired the hull, towed it to Suva, equipped it with a marine engine and now have the use of her as a fishing boat and general purpose vessel.

We took on two passengers from Vatoa to Ono because the passage into the Ono lagoon is described in rather fearsome terms in the Pacific Islands Plot (49) and there are no specific directions for finding it. In fact this didn't help. The passengers whom we relied for pilotage couldn't remember where the passage was when we arrived off the reef on a rather windy morning and we had to sail up and down as close to the reef as we dared to look for it. It runs in a zig zag across the reef and has a strong current so there were a few anxious moments until we were through and lacking across the lagoon to the most remote islands of the whole group.

One is much closer to Tongatapu than it is to Suva, and a combination of accidental and deliberate voyaging from Tonga has produced a rather lighter-colouring than in the rest of Fiji. On both Ono and Vatoa Tongan words of greeting are used rather than Fijian ones, and I suspect that the dialect shows further Tongan influence. Ono, with its three volcanic islands and three small limestone islands within the same lagoon and its two outliers, Tuvana and Colo and Tuvana i Ra, twenty miles to the south, came under the at first rather uncertain political influence of Lakeba probably about the beginning of the 18th Century.

Niumatuvalu was a member of the Lakeban nobility of Bauan ancestry, connected by marriage with the Tui Tonga and the Tui Nayau. He was called Nui, the Fijian word for coconut, for short, and was something of an adventurer. It was during the interregnum which preceded the establishment of Ratu Rosolau's new regime of Koruvusa that Nui visited Bau and became involved in an affair with the wife at the Vunivalu the chief of Bau (49) Some years later, he was sent on an expedition to collect tribute from Ono - a test perhaps of the power of the new dynasty, as Ono was nominally a tributary of Lakeba, but with a persistent tendency to turbulence and the support of itinerant Tongan warriors. Niu's voyage south was preceded by a canoe from Bau carrying a tapua of black stone (50). Nui was to be killed in vengeance for his affair with the first lady of Bau. He was clubbed at a Keva ceremony as he stooped to drink, probably in the fortified town of Dalailoa which occupies the highest point of Ono Lau. He was still conscious however and being extremely large and strong fought his way out and ran down to the shore. There he was overtaken by four warriors, who overpowered and killed him. His grave is still recognised by the southern shore of the Yao Lagoon which separates the three main islands.
Nui’s assassination rankled for half a century, and Malani, the Tui Nayau who held power at the time of first European contact was the man who avenged it. The large and potentially independent island of Cicia, thirty miles north west of Lakeba launched an attack on the kingdom, but set out in their canoes against the prevailing south east wind which grew so strong that they were forced to take shelter half way at Nayau. It must have been possible for a man with good eyesight to see the canoes ducking into the lee of Nayau only twelve miles away, from the heights of Lakeba, and Malani sailed down wind to Nayau immediately and trapped them in a state of exhaustion. The Cicia forces were crushingly defeated at a site whose name is grimly expressive. So soi wai danudamu 'the swamp of blood red water' (51).

Malani sought to make permanent political capital out of this victory in the manner characteristic of his ancestors, using the strategy of absorption which had enabled Lakeba to establish and then retain its political lead over its rivals. He made the Tui Cicia his major ally in an expedition to Ono, the ostensible reason was of course to avenge the murder of Nui but its effects was to establish the permanent hegemony of Lakeba. The Tui Cicia took a major part in the campaign and in recognition of his valour he was granted special privileges on Lakeba (52). The remembered facts, symbolised in this particular fashion are thus the historical record of an astute piece of statesmanship, which extended the Lakeba state in one direction and consolidated it in another.

By the time William Cary arrived in Lau, in 1824, the power and influence of the Lakeba state was considerable. He records a dispute over himself between a brother of 'the head chief of Lakeba' and an English speaking Tongan, who wanted to take Cary to Tonga with him. Cary seems to have sensed the superior authority of Lakeba and elected to go there instead. He soon learned that 'these people were collecting tribute for the chief of Lakeba from the islands which were tributary' and the fleet continued south, with Cary now as a passenger, to Ono i Lau now contentedly subservient to the Tui Nayau, some 160 miles away.

'The natives were expecting us, it being the time for their annual visit to collect tribute, and had large quantities of provisions cooked and all things prepared for their annual feast.' (53)

The festivities however, like the political relationship, were reciprocal. The visitors opened the ceremonies by making presentations of tapa to their hosts, and the annual visit was clearly something anticipated with pleasure as the social and cultural highlight of the year rather than an imposition.

Though we came to collect no tribute and brought few gifts we were treated with the same hospitality. We saw Niutatuwala’s grave and mapped the two major fortifications, one on each of the two main islands. We made the village of Dol our base and for a time experienced the weather known as Bualwatu, when the trade wind blows from the south east with almost gale force so that it was inadvisable to leave. This was followed by squalls and northerly winds, signs that the hurricane season was starting, so I thought it best to take advantage of the next spell of settled south-east winds to get to Suva.
We left Ono after a few jobs had been done—we ferried a bride to her wedding on the other side of Ono Lau and returned a group of young men to Lovoni who had been marooned for a year on Tuvalu Colo the remote southern outlier of the Ono group, to cut copra. They told us it had been the best experience of their lives, living off the reefs and the island resources as their ancestors had done, without the proximity of either religious or secular authority to restrict them, responsible only as we had been to the demands and prohibitions of sea and wind, night and day, reefs and deep water. Like them we were now freed from a period of exile and able to return to the society to which we were accustomed.

Back in Suva, which we reached in three days, we contacted the museum and the University of the South Pacific and explained the fruits of our labours. The maps and artifacts which we had found on the sites were taken to the museum and I repeated the results of the expedition to Mr. Charles Hunt, the incoming Director. Once more we had to deal with problems of arranging for transport of the boat back to Adelaide. It proved impossible to arrange in advance for her shipment and it looked as though we would be sailing her back, but we eventually shipped her aboard the Arcadia to Sydney and back to Adelaide in an empty returning wine transport.

My remaining responsibility in Adelaide is to research the documentary sources which are mostly assembled in Adelaide either in note form or on microfilm. I also approached Professor Jack Golson and Professor Mulvaney and asked their advice on initiating archaeological activity. They directed my enquirers to Auckland and a second research assistantship granted this year by the A.R.G.C. was used to invite Dr. Garth Rogers, an Auckland Archaeologist to join us. He was in Adelaide until the end of April and has now left to go to Northern Lau to complete the preliminary site survey which I began in the south. Further discussions took place between A.C. Reid and Ratu Mera, with the result that the project now has the full support it needs. Mara wrote in January:

'....I am glad that there are prospects of getting a qualified archaeologist to work on the sites of Ulunikor and Kedekede. Doubtless your colleague will make the normal official approach to the Research Committee and Ministry of Labour, but subject to their being satisfied you may rest assured that there will be no difficulty about an archaeologist working at Lakeba!' (54)

Accordingly, on Professor Golson's advise, I approached Professor Roger Green of Auckland University, who is a specialist in the central Pacific area. He plans to visit Lakeba to see the sites and consult with the Prime Minister on 15 August, and if all goes well, two of his Ph. D. students will start work on Kedekede and Ulunikoro in October. One of them I hope, will also tackle Korovusa and undertake additional type site excavations throughout the group.

This should provide an opportunity for a large number of people to do some digging in a fascinating part of the world, and provide answers, in the end to some of the major factual problems about the past in the Pacific. It may also show what can be achieved by dismantling the conventional organisational partitions which have grown up between kinds of knowledge about the past and between ways of seeking to understand it.
FOOTNOTES

(1) L.H. Groube, in his 1971 article summarising the work of the previous 75 years on the subject, concludes: 'The Polynesians, therefore, did not strictly come from anywhere; they became Polynesians and the location of their becoming was Tonga.' *Journal of the Polynesian Society* Vol. 80, P. 313. 'Leu, has, at times, been as much under the influence of Tonga as of Fiji.'

(2) There is a tradition of a twelfth century Tongan empire which included Samoa, Lau, Wallis, and Rotuma & Niue as well as Tonga (A.H. Wood, 'History and Geography of Tonga,' Auckland 1952 p. 8).


(6) Na'afu, the Tui Lau at the time of cession, consented to support the Cakobau government 1871 – 74 on condition that he became 'Viceroy.' After cession he drew a private salary, and his high status continued to receive recognition.


       Laura Thompson *Southern Lau: Fiji An Ethnography* Bishop Museum Bulletin 162 Honolulu 1940.


(13) The 'British Subjects Mutual Protection Society' was perhaps the most racist the Cakobau Government, which ruled effectively from 1871 to 1873 the least.

(14) A.C. Reid, now working on this material, was District Officer at Loma Loma during this period.

(15) They are catalogued as 'A.C. Reid, Field notes, 1974.' and are available subject to the author's approval.

(16) Reid notes, card 32. Yavusa Ko Lakeba

(17) Ibid
(18) Australian Navigations discovered by Jacob Le Maire etc. Hakluyt Society Publications Second Series Vol. XVIII P. 202. For identification see A.M. Wood History and Geography of Tonga P. 15

(19) The Present Tui Nayau is able to trace his ancestry back for sixteen generations. (Reid notes Card 32 Yavusa Ko Lakeba Koro Ko Tubou)

(20) Ibid

(21) D.R. Hainsworth. Builders and Adventurers : The Traders and the Emergence of the Colony 1788 - 1821 Cassell 1968 P. 1


(23) The leave period began on 17 June, 1974 the date on which the P & O Vessel Himalaya was due to leave Adelaide for Nuku'alofa Tonga, and points between. In the event the yacht had to be transported at short notice overland to Sydney and shipped from there on 23 June. The cost of shipment from Sydney to Nuku'alofa was $234.00 and from Suva back to Sydney $224.00.


(25) I had written to the Tui Nayau, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, through the Prime Minister's office in Suva to seek his approval of the project and the inclusion in it of participation by U.S.P. students. I received a formal acknowledgment from the Secretary to the Cabinet and subsequently I obtained full approval from the Research Committee of my application for a Research Permit.

(26) A.C. Reid Notes Card. 32. 32A Yavusa Ko Lakeba Koro Ko Tubou.

(27) Ibid. At this stage, thought individuals like Pukuni and Ollaiso are remembered by their personal names, the Tui Lakeba and other chiefs are known by their titles, not as individuals. Many generations may in fact have passed since the Kabara invasion Ulunikoro certainly has the appearance of a site which has occupied the constructive energies of several generations.

(28) Reid notes Card 32A Yavusa Ko Lakeba

(29) Ibid Card 41, Koro Ko Nasagalau

(30) Ibid Card 32, Yavusa Ko Lakeba

(31) Ibid Card 41 Koro Ko Nasagalau see also Yavusa Ko Lomanikoro Koro Ko Wacivaci

(32) Ibid Card 34 Yavusa Ko Dësaikoroleva Koro Ko Levuka

(33) Ibid Card 32 Yavusa Ko Lakaba Koro Ko Tubou

(34) Loc. cit.

(35) Transcribed and translated A.C. Reid, 1974

(36) A.H. Hocart Lau Islands

(37) J.P. Twynning Shipwreck and Adventures of John P. Twynning etc. London 1850

(38) W.S. Cary Wrecked in the Feejees Nantucket 1928 p.22

(39) Kolinio Mocco had returned to Suva to procure some much needed supplies, but had been taken ill and was unable to return to Lakeba. We were therefore forced to continue on our way without him, and without the supplies. My twelve year old son Philip helped with the mapping, as did many of our hosts on the islands which we visited.
(40) Each island in Southern Lau specialises in particular products determined in part by their natural resources. Supplies of Vesil timber on the limestone islands facilitate the production of Tanoa or Kava bowls on Kabara and canoes on Ogea and Vulaga. The partly volcanic soil of Namuka i Lau and Moea produces food crops such as dalo more easily, and the raw material for the production of Masi or Tapa cloth.

(41) There is a monument to these two men erected on the site of their graves in 1930, close to the present village of Dakuilla, to commemorate the centenary of Fijian Christianity.

(42) R.B. Lyth, a Wesleyan missionary, recorded in his diary, on 23 August 1839 'Uilame Lajike arrived this morning [at Somo Somo] having sailed from Lakeba with a fleet consisting of his canoes two of which are from Vavau and three others belonging to the King of Lakeba. The last mentioned is of an extraordinary size and perhaps the largest in Fiji: it is 90 feet long and requires 100 men to work it well.'

(43) The islands of Kabara, Namuka, Wagava, Vulaga and Ogea.

(44) The most recent was that of the Labasa Princess wrecked in 1973 after dragging her anchors outside the reef. The wreck lies about 150 yards north of the passage into the lagoon north west of the island.

(45) W.S. Cary. J.P. Twyning op. cit.


(48) Lyth Journals 28 July, 1841


(50) A tabua is usually a whale's tooth, which places the recipient of the gift under a specific obligation.

(51) Reid notes card 27 27A Yavusa, Ko Lomanikoro, Cicia.

(52) It is the present custom for the Tui Cicia when on Lakeba to have his Yagona pounded with two stones instead of one — a privilidge otherwise preserved for the Tui Nayau.


(54) K.K.T. Mara to A.C. Reid. 10 Jan, 1975. Prime Ministers Office. 1107/14