THIS IS NOT A GRASS SKIRT

On fibre skirts (liku) and female tattooing (veiqia) in nineteenth century Fiji

KAREN JACOBS

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Notes

Note on illustrations

There is a long tradition of objectifying and stereotyping indigenous Fijian women, which influences the way nineteenth century visual depictions of Fijian women are interpreted. While staged studio images of anonymous Fijian women have generally been avoided in this book, several illustrations are included that show bare-breasted women. Although this might potentially offend some readers, the point to be made about these images is that these women were considered locally to be fully dressed. The images have been chosen as they illustrate well how fibre skirts (liku) and tattooing (veiqia) were closely associated with the female body – an association that is lost in the museum and archive. The reason for showing veiqia on female bodies is to show the variety of patterns (weniqia) to Fijian communities who do not necessarily have access to the museums and archives where these are stored.

Note on Fijian Orthography

Within the two closely related Fijian languages are many regional differences, referred to as 'communalects' (Geraghty 1983; Hooper 2016). While nowadays Bauan has been adopted as the official Fijian language, this book deals mainly with nineteenth century sources, which recorded Fijian words in various regions and following various spellings. In the nineteenth century two systems of orthography were used, one that was adapted to English speakers and one devised by the Wesleyan missionary David Cargill, which is now universally accepted. Following this orthography, some English letters are pronounced differently in Fijian.

B: tabua is pronounced tambua (mb as in number)
C: civa is pronounced thiva (th as in these)
D: Adi is pronounced Andi (nd as in tender)
G: siga is pronounced singa (ng as in singer)
Q: yaqona is pronounced yanggona (ngg as in hunger)

Throughout this book inconsistent spelling from various sources has been standardised to the official orthography. In quotes, however, the author(s)'s original anglicised spelling of Fijian names and words has been respected in order to keep the historical character of the sources, followed by the suggested current Fijian orthography. Fijian (and other non-English) words have consciously not been italicised – a process that often alienates these words rather than treats them as equal to English terminology.

Glossary

Adi	Female chiefly title, ‘Lady’
bati	Tooth; 2. Warrior clan or group, protectors of a chief
bitu	Bamboo
bure	men’s meeting house, temple
bure kalou	Pre-Christian temple; literally ‘spirit house’
civa	Pearl shell
liku	Skirt
kuta	A swam sedge, *Eleocharis dulcis*
lotu	Christianity, to practise Christianity
magimagi	Coconut husk (coir) cordage
malo	Loincloth made from masi; 2. Barkcloth
Marama	Lady, woman
masi	Barkcloth; the tree from which it is made, *Broussonetia papyrifera*
matai	Skilled; 2. Carpenter clans
matakau	Carved (ancestor) figure
mataniva-nua	Herald, spokesman
mataqali	Clan, type
qato	Armlet, bracelet, usually of Trochus shell
qia	Female tattoo
Rada	Female chiefly title
Ratu	Male chiefly title, ‘Sir’
Ro	Chiefly title used for men and women in some parts of Viti Levu
Roko (Tui)	Senior provincial administra-tor, also a traditional Fijian title
rubu	Rectangular flat basket, made on Nairai Island
sau	To repay; 2. A high chief; 3. An ear ornament
seru	Comb
sevusevu	Presentation of yaqona
siga	Day, sun
solevu	Large-scale exchange
isulu	Clothing; cloth; wrap-around skirt or apron
tabua	Presentation whale’s tooth
tanoa	Circular wooden yaqona bowl
itaube	Neck pendant
Turaga	Chief, gentleman
ulumate	Wig
vasu	Maternal lineage
vau	Hibiscus tree, *Hibiscus tiliaceus*; inner bark used for making string and adornments
veikau	Forest, bush
veiqia	Indigenous Fijian female tattooing
voivoi	Pandanus, *Pandanus caricosus*, synonymous for kie
vulagi	Guest, visitor, foreigner
Vunivalu	Title of war chief in some places
weniqia	Tattoo patterns
yalewa	Woman, female
yaqona	Drink made from the root of the pepper plant, *Piper methysticum*
iyau	Valuables, wealth

1

Fibre Skirts, Tattooing and the Museum

July 2012, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts, USA. Lying on the table of the museum stores was a large sealed plastic bag. Cutting open the bag with scissors released smells of shrubs and dust. It enabled me to unpack a rather heavy bundle of fibre, ingeniously knotted, woven and tied together. I was struck by the vibrant colours, red, yellow, brown and black, and the pristine condition of this creation – only the stale and musty smell betrayed that it was made in the 1830s. The plastic bag may have confined and trapped the fibres that would have rustled and swished around someone's body, but it also preserved them. I put the garment carefully on the table and was captivated by my encounter with another nineteenth century liku or Fijian fibre skirt.[1] I had spent the previous year researching liku in the British Museum and Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Cambridge, UK. This

Figure 1: Watercolour of a Fijian woman wearing a liku se droka, a necklace and several armlets, which is the standard body adornment depicted in nineteenth century pictorial sources; from the journal of William Clark written aboard *Vincennes* in 1840 during the US Exploring Expedition (Clark 1838-42: between pages 121-22).

1 Fijian (and other non-English) words have consciously not been italicised – a process that often alienates and differentiates these words rather than treats them as equal to English terminology. In fact, in this study it will be shown how difficult it is to appropriately translate these terms, hence why they should not require translation but readers should be educated about their meaning. However, official titles of art works, ships and scientific botanic names have been italicised.

Figure 2: liku se droka, made of dyed vau (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*), kuta (*Eleocharis dulcis*) and masi (*Broussonetia papyrifera*) fibre strips. Consisting of a double waistband in between which vau, kuta and masi fibre strips have been tied and cut in varying lengths in order to create a layered effect. Collected by Captain Benjamin Vanderford, it entered the Peabody Essex Museum as a gift in 1823 (E5367; skirt part, width 96.52cm, length 20.32cm).

Figure 3: *Liku 2016*, made by Joana Monolagi of vau (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*). *Mana liku 2016*, made by Margaret Aull and her relative Ata Kopa (Raukawa ki Wharepuhunga, Aotearoa New Zealand) combining Margaret's Māori and Fijian ancestry (Vasu Rewa and Te Rarawa, Tūwharetoa) through heritage and materials: magimagi (coir, Fiji) and harakeke (flax, Aotearoa New Zealand). On display in The Veiqia Project exhibition in St Paul St Gallery, Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand, March 2016.

Figure 4: *Nai Qia 2016*, made by Joana Monolagi of bamboo, lemon thorns and hibiscus fibre. On display in The Veiqia Project exhibition in St Paul St Gallery, Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand, March 2016.

example in Salem was made of a combination of vau (hibiscus fibre) and kuta fibre (a swamp sedge), tied together and cut in varying lengths to form layers that would have been wrapped around female hips. Attached was a long bundle of coiled-up hibiscus fibre. I did not unravel it as I did not want to alter the current impeccable state of the liku. Handling the bundle too much might cause damage. I measured the skirt part, described it in my notes, took photographs and returned the liku to its plastic bag. Some tiny fibres remained on the table. The store conditions were perfect according to museum standards, but this liku had become dry and brittle over the years, lacking close contact with an oiled body. I checked the museum information: initially catalogued as 'girdle', at some time in its museum history a museum staff member had crossed out this classification and renamed it 'waist band'. An additional pencil note written by Fergus Clunie in the 1980s identified it as a woman's liku. These layers of classification testify to a varying sense of dress. What was considered a full garment by Fijians in the nineteenth century was interpreted as a form of belt in nineteenth century Salem, only to be reclassified later, restoring its indigenous name.

March 2016, St Paul St Gallery, Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand. The Veiqia Project exhibition showed works made by five female artists who started the journey of reawakening the knowledge of the Fijian practice of veiqia, female tattooing, that was closely associated with the wearing of liku (fibre skirts) in nineteenth century Fiji. At the core, The Veiqia Project unites seven women of Fijian heritage (two curators and five artists), who began a journey of creative and cultural enquiry inspired by veiqia and this exhibition showed artworks in response to this journey. On the gallery wall was a liku of vau (hibiscus fibre) made by Joana Monolagi in the style of liku worn by indigenous women in the nineteenth century. Adjacent to the work 'Liku 2016' was Monolagi's work 'Nai Qia 2016', a batiniqia, tattooing tool set consisting of a bamboo mallet and a tool of lemon thorns attached with vau to a bamboo handle; exhibited on a Perspex display mount. Displayed rather than used, these works illustrated how The Veiqia Project

members noticed that liku and veiqia are now treated as museum objects which have lost the connection with the human body – something they wanted to change through their project. The works therefore also reflected the longing for a Fijian woman to pick up the tools again and become a daubati, tattooing specialist (Joana Monolagi, interview 10 March 2017). Monolagi's works, together with the other art works in the exhibition, invited reflection on memory and loss of cultural knowledge, the preservation, museumification and classification of culture in museums and archives and the search for this knowledge by Fijians today in order to make it their own.

Liku and veiqia

Both vignettes described above refer to encounters that were crucial to the development of this book on liku. Liku is a general Fijian term that refers to a wide range of garments in the form of skirts or aprons worn around the waist and hips by both women and men. However, the primary focus of this book is the nineteenth century liku worn exclusively by women as part of their distinguishing dress. First worn about the time of puberty, after a young woman had received her veiqia (tattooing), women's liku were closely associated with the female body and its adornments and modifications. Throughout her life a woman wore distinctive liku and received body adornments that indicated the stage she had reached in her life. These liku were also important gifts and the hundreds of liku in museums today testify to the multitude of relationships that were formed through these skirts. This book is therefore about more than just liku. It is about the link between clothing and the adorned human body, the collecting of liku and veiqia, their representation, their place in the museum and archive, and their ongoing relevance to people today. This book deals with liku and veiqia made and worn by indigenous Fijians and it is important to point out that whenever the term 'Fijian(s)' is used, this should be understood as the indigenous people of Fiji – while also acknowledging the term iTaukei, literally 'owner' or 'guardian', which is now preferred by some indigenous Fijians (Vunidilo forthcoming).

The visit to the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, was conducted as part of the UK-based, Arts and Humanities Research Council-sponsored research project, *Fijian Art: political power, sacred value, social transformation and collecting since the 18th century*. This three-year project (2011-2014) was a collaborative endeavour of the Sainsbury Research Unit (SRU) at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, and the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA) at the University of Cambridge. It aimed to unlock the potential of collections of Fijian art, material culture and associated photographs and archives held in museums in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. During this project and follow-up projects (ongoing in 2019), I had the privilege to closely observe, touch and investigate indigenous Fijian cultural heritage in a wide variety of museums. Each time, stories were imagined about who made them, whether they were made in public or private, why things were made in a certain way, who used them and on what occasions, who added the labels to them, and was a repair done in Fiji or in a museum context? Potentially conflicting questions also arose as to how and why these valuables arrived in museums and why was I looking at them? I respect and acknowledge the role these creations have for the makers' and users' descendants and consider it an important responsibility to share the privilege of handling them. This book is the result of researching liku made and/or worn by nineteenth century indigenous Fijian women that are now stored in museums and of studying their associated sources. Therefore, liku

are treated as museum objects. This raises important questions as liku in particular were made to indicate who the wearer was; they were made to be worn and, perhaps, even to be flaunted – but in museums, usually in the stores, they have become static objects, disassociated from their original uses and connection to veiqia, and often catalogued by non-Fijian people. While opinions may vary about whether these valuables should be in museums or not, objects in museums are the result of dynamic interactions and relations, and continue to have the potential to connect people with shared interests but different backgrounds in stimulating ways.

While studying liku for the Fijian Art research project, I not only learned about the crucial association of these skirts to veiqia, I also encountered the women associated with The Veiqia Project. Following their aim to reawaken the practice of veiqia which had been suppressed during colonial times, these women were adapting veiqia to the present and in doing so were decolonising the current state of knowledge of the practice. Discussing Native American Indigenous historiography Susan Miller (2008: 15) states that 'decolonizing activities are sometimes misunderstood as a futile effort to return to the past', but in fact they are processes that allow recovery from the negative consequences of colonisation. She considers 'service' to indigenous communities as the main characteristic of decolonising scholarship, encouraging her readers to think about how scholarship can be of benefit to indigenous communities. In her book on decolonising museums, Amy Lonetree (2012: 8) argues that 'service' should be the goal of museums as well, so that they can become places for understanding and healing from the ill effects of colonisation. I believe that service includes making what is hidden in museums and archives accessible, particularly to those indigenous communities for whom it matters. Although this book collates information that has previously been hidden for over a century, it will not treat liku and veiqia as a 'lost' tradition. Instead it will follow a 'trace ethnographic' approach (Geiger and Ribes 2011, Marsh 2016) and will thus show the gradual uncovering of data. Information on liku and the associated veiqia seems sparse at first, but research uncovered a wealth of information by considering the museum and archive as a site of fieldwork.

This is not a grass skirt

The title of this book is an obvious allusion to the Belgian artist René Magritte's work 'The treachery of images' (*La Trahison des Images*, 1929) which shows a painted pipe with the words 'Ceci n'est pas une pipe' (This is not a pipe). Magritte was referring to the fact that the drawing of a pipe added another level of interpretation: the drawing was a representation of the pipe, but not the actual pipe depicted. By acknowledging that the painted pipe was not a physical pipe (or an apple as in 'Ceci n'est pas une pomme'), the distance between the painted depiction and the material object was emphasised; the distance between the illustration and the illustrated or the representation and the represented was accentuated. However, this distance should not be conceived as a gap: the representation and the represented were not necessarily separated, but remain related. It was in this relational space that Magritte felt the art of painting could be developed. For example, he could make an apple fill the whole space of a room – a characteristic of the representation that does not correspond to the represented, yet he still painted an apple. Similarly, he could make a stone float in his painted version of a stone. Magritte appeared to enjoy pushing the boundaries of this relational space between the representation and the represented. He further challenged the authority of representation by questioning the use of language

as a signifier. Even the word 'apple' or 'pipe' was not the actual thing but merely a representation; thus a disparity existed between words and things. In his work 'The treachery of images', Magritte created a three-way paradox out of the conventional notion that objects correspond to words and images. This idea of the representation of an object adding more levels of meaning and interpretation is instructive. Representations are not unconditional or without engagement and, particularly in anthropology, the 'accuracy' of representation has been debated. Accordingly, besides documenting liku (fibre skirts) worn by women in nineteenth century Fiji as well as the associated practice of veiqia (female tattooing), examples of which have been 'collected' in the form of drawings, this book will focus on how liku and the women who wore them have been represented in a range of sources: texts, drawings, photographs and museum collections.[2] It will also show how former (mis)representations of veiqia in particular have inspired members of The Veiqia Project to create their own representations.

At another level of interpretation, the title of this book is meant to be taken literally: a liku is not a grass skirt. Firstly, it is not made of grass but of a variety of fibres such as vau (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*), kuta (*Eleocharis dulcis*), masi (barkcloth made from the paper mulberry tree, *Broussonetia papyrifera*), and voivoi (*Pandanus caricosus*), amongst others. Secondly, the term 'grass skirt' is too generic, ignoring the complex use and meaning of the garments themselves. Locally liku were used to emphasise gender differentiation and to indicate the stages in a woman's life. Thirdly, the term 'grass skirt' reminds us too much of misrepresentations and stereotyping of Pacific women. While liku might not have been much studied, they were the subject of commentary. Liku worn by women were frequently described by non-Fijian observers as 'short', 'slight' and 'scanty' dress (Seemann 1862: 351; Wilkes 1845, 3: 355). The shortness of the garment in particular was mentioned regularly in nineteenth century sources – often in a disapproving vein, but sometimes accompanied by an admiring comment about how elegantly and modestly Fijian women managed to move around in these short garments. These largely negative views, together with increasing adherence to Christian perceptions of modesty, led Fijian women to gradually replace their liku with cloth garments. Liku of the kind worn by nineteenth century indigenous Fijian women now mainly exist in museum collections since they are no longer made and worn – a result of missionary and colonial influence, and of the strategic use of western dress by Fijian elite.

Skirts, clothing and the body in the Pacific

Fibre skirts were, and still are although in different ways, abundant throughout the Pacific region and continue to play multifaceted roles. Yet they have been little studied, perhaps due to their nature as quotidian objects intimately associated with female bodies. A few anthropological studies have been conducted. During the six years between 1911 and 1916 that Ethel Prisk, an Australian Methodist missionary, spent in the Trobriand Islands, Papua New Guinea, she distinguished sixteen distinct types of fibre skirts. Made of banana leaf, pandanus and coconut fibre, they were used in mortuary ceremonies (Prisk 1919). In the 1970s anthropologist Annette Weiner studied the manifold significance of these fibre skirts, some of which were no longer made. In her study *Women of Value, Men of*

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2 The word veiqia refers to the noun, tattooing, while qia refers to the verb, to tattoo. Weniqia are the tattoo designs.

Renown (1976) she discussed how women exchanged banana leaves and decorated banana leaf-fibre skirts, doba, during sagali mortuary rites on the Trobriand island of Kiriwina, showing the close connection between women and the products of 'wealth' they make. Weiner noticed how, following a person's death, bundles of banana leaves and fibre skirts were distributed in order to reciprocate and return (in)alienable property that helped the deceased to develop over his/her lifetime. These objects were made by women and highlighted the important matrilineal power which secured regeneration after death. The quantity of distributed bundles and skirts revealed the strength of the lineage. For Weiner, these bundles and skirts stood for 'womanness' (Weiner 1976: 119), as she wanted to challenge Bronislaw Malinowski's (1922) emphasis on men in the exchange of kula shell valuables by emphasising the equally prominent role of women in Trobriand exchanges. Weiner has been applauded for her focus on women's wealth, but also critiqued for an overemphasis on a universal woman who is considered out of time. She has been criticised for her neglect of the time difference, and therefore historical changes, between Malinowski's and her own fieldwork (Strathern 1981; Jolly 1992, 2017a; see also Hermkens and Lepani 2017). What is important for this study is how Weiner drew attention to the local importance of fibre skirts. In addition to banana leaf skirts, Weiner (1976: 94-100) noted how mourning skirts (sepwana) were made and worn in Kiriwina by the clanswomen of the deceased's father and spouse (if the deceased was married) and how these sepwana were assessed and presented. Today, sepwana are made of cotton rather than fibre. In general, cloth in the form of cotton fabric and cotton sewn garments is a significant addition to banana leaf bundles and fibre skirts in sagali ceremonies – this material change is an expression of the importance of Christianity in the region, though the time and effort in preparing these valuables is similar to the past (Lepani 2017: 50-51; Mosko 2010; McCarthy 2017). Interestingly, in the 1980s , Weiner and Schneider (1989) considered fibre skirts as cloth: a term that, apart from textiles, encompassed fibre skirts, lacework and embroidery, clearly widening the concept of cloth.

Similar to Weiner's approach, Nancy Munn (1992: 167-68, 178-90, 307) discussed the important role fibre skirts played in mortuary ceremonies in Gawa in the Massim region of Papua New Guinea during the 1970s. The wearing and exchange of various fibre skirts expressed social relationships and status, and acknowledged women's contributions to the ceremonies. Barbara Lawson (2001) highlighted the close connection between women and layers of numplat (skirts) in nineteenth century Erromango, Vanuatu, by analysing the writings of the missionary H.A. Robertson (1902), resident on the island between 1872 and 1913.[3] The skirts were made from a variety of raw materials, such as pandanus, hibiscus fibre, coconut leaves, banana bark and tampoli (native cabbage) stem, which were bleached, dyed, shaped and patterned. Skirts were kept short for young girls, while married women wore longer versions covering their entire legs, sometimes forming a train at the back. Women also received (mainly facial) tattooing to further indicate their status. Numplat were clearly a sign of married status, as widows 'emerging from their prescribed seclusion during mourning, cut their skirts short, thereby proclaiming their unmarried status and availability for marriage' (Lawson 2001; Robertson 1902: 231, 367-68). Women in the Loyalty Islands wore fibre skirts that appear to have been similar to Fijian liku (Erskine 1967 [1853]: frontispiece), but the use

3 See also Bolton (2003).

of fibre skirts gradually declined when a different sense or interpretation of modesty was introduced by missionaries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, fibre skirts were not always represented as a sign of immodesty to be replaced by western clothes. In the Kamoro region of West Papua, fibre skirts were introduced in the twentieth century by missionaries to replace the barkcloth covering that was considered to be too scanty (Jacobs 2017). Since then, these skirts have become an important product made by women, expressing the significant role women play in male initiation rituals. Before the permanent establishment of the Roman Catholic mission in 1927, young Kamoro boys used to undergo an initiation ritual that involved piercing the nose. Under missionary influence this practice was adapted and transformed into the cutting short of the ankle-length tawri, fibre skirt. By cutting their tawri, ties with the maternal world are openly severed and the young boys are transformed into men, ready to commence their own relationships (Zegwaard 1995: 309; see also Jacobs 2012). Erna Lilje (2013a, 2013b) focused on fibre skirts formerly used and made by women from Central Province, Papua New Guinea, now stored in various museum collections. Lilje's analysis showed how these fibre skirts in museum collections might be considered to have lost their connection with the human body, yet provide a tangible link with the original makers and users. Her study of the skirts' materiality informed her about women's changing practices as well as general social, economic and political change (Lilje 2013a: 19).

Beyond these academic studies, fibre skirts have remained important throughout the Pacific and their use and meanings have transformed over time. Fibre skirts are still regularly worn on significant occasions and are re-interpreted by Pacific artists for whom their various layers constitute and reflect layers of transformation and interpretation. Papua New Guinea artist Wendi Choulai chose to create a grass skirt as her wearable art submission for the Commonwealth Festival of Arts in Edinburgh (1984):

> My first significant contemporary design was inspired by a grass skirt; not just any PNG grass skirt, but a combination of the Papuan coastal region West of Port Moresby, the area inhabited by my extended family. … I had the opportunity to give creative modern expression to an item of clothing that was part of my identity, a part of the Gumahoro (dance) in which I have participated since being a small girl and from which I draw so much of my creative inspiration. I created a modern grass skirt without in any way insulting the traditional grass skirt of my family group. (Wendi Choulai in Tenenbaum 2009: 86)

In her artistic work Choulai often returned to the grass skirt, which she considered as a multi-layered metaphor that 'incorporated traditions and, through interaction with her clan, provided opportunities for legitimate innovation, the past and the future, inseparable and cohesive' (Kinnear in Tenenbaum 2009: 11). She aimed to draw on these traditional cultural expressions without 'devaluing' them, and therefore actively incorporated and indigenised cultural change and transformations (Tenenbaum 2009: 103).

Despite these complex local uses, the term 'grass skirt' prompts misrepresentations. A search on the Internet results in adverts for so-called Hawaiian fancy dress, tiki culture and depictions of grass-skirt-clad 'Hula girls' in paintings, photographs and as plastic dolls, where the grass skirt is often the only moveable part of the doll allowing the hips to sway.

Yet kahiko regalia for female Hawaiian hula dancers consisted of kapa (barkcloth) skirts. In fact, the 'grass skirt' appears to have been introduced in Hawai'i around the 1880s. Its detailed origin is unclear, but it is likely to have been adopted from visiting Tahitian dance troupes together with the hip-rotating dance, or from Kiribati labourers in Hawai'i after restrictions associated with ancient hula were relaxed due to its commercial exploitation (Barrère, Pukui and Kelly 1980; Balme 1998). This shows the flexible adaptation of hula as a part of Hawai'i's living tradition (Stillman 1998, 1999), but it also led to a range of stereotypical representations of hula dancers by non-Hawaiians. Multi-media Samoan artist Angela Tiatia explored these in her exhibition *Foreign Objects* (2011) at Fresh Gallery Otara, a community gallery in South Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand. Tiatia created a museum of objects and imagery sourced from the Internet after searches using words such as 'Pacific' and 'Polynesia'. The 'Hula girl' with her 'grass skirt' came up in abundance, compelling Tiatia to exhibit the objectification and commodification of the Pacific female body in the forms of photographs and kitsch curiosa made outside of the Pacific.[4] In her quest to demonstrate the representation of Pacific Islanders in popular culture, she showed the stereotypical (ab)use of grass skirts by depicting Hawaiian and other Pacific women as 'Hula girls'.

The Pacific body has long been misrepresented – in particular the female body has been sexualised in the works of European artists such as William Hodges, John Webber and later studio photographs and the work of Paul Gauguin (Jolly 1997; Kahn 2003; O'Brien 2006; Tamaira 2010; Taouma 2004). The gifting of cloth by wrapping it around the bodies of young women who subsequently divest it from their bodies to present it to the recipients (as described in Tahiti by Captain Cook and Joseph Banks in 1769 and Captain Bligh in 1789) was not necessarily understood as a significant gift but misjudged as a sexual invitation (Tcherkézoff 2003b). These misinterpretations brought about a long trend of stereotyping Polynesia as an idyllic paradise filled with sexually alluring women (Smith 1985, 1992; O'Brien 2006). Rather than acknowledging the agency of Pacific women in cosmology and ceremonies, Tamaira argues that 'Western artists literally and figuratively painted over the agency and power of Polynesian women by representing them not as the genealogical descendants of powerful goddesses, but as exotic, vulnerable maidens' (Tamaira 2010: 6; see also Taouma 2005; Stevenson 2008). From the late nineteenth century onwards, a booming market developed in postcards based on studio photographs. These often showed Pacific, mainly Samoan, women who were asked to pose in studio settings as 'South Seas Belles' (Engelhard and Mesenhöller 1995; Nordström 1991). Photographers such as John Davis, Thomas Andrew and Alfred John Tattersall operated studios in Apia to take photographs of Samoan people for the thriving postcard market (Webb 1998: 133, 135). They were not necessarily concerned with accurately representing Samoan culture, instead they used a set of profitable themes that were regularly repeated, including portraits of 'exotic' belles and people of high status such as matai (chiefs) and taupou (chiefly daughters) (Blanton 1995; Quanchi 2006). In Fiji too, privately printed pictorial postcards became popular from 1889 onwards, recording landmarks and people. In her overview of Fijian postcards, Elsie

4 One of these items was the 'Hula chair', which offers a work-out through imitating swaying hula movements. For more information on the exhibition, see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A33Wa6gnh7c, accessed November 2017.

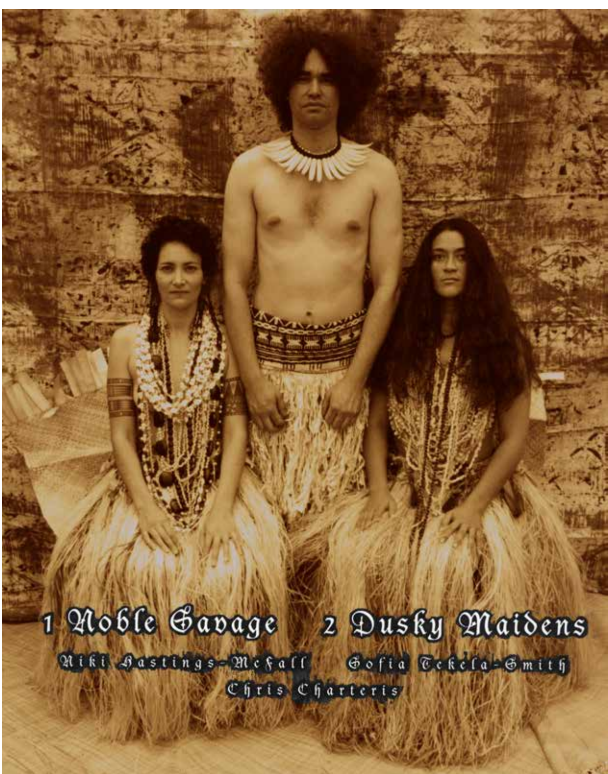

Figure 5: *1 Noble Savage 2 Dusky Maidens* (2000). Exhibition promotion material for Chris Charteris, Niki Hastings-McFall and Sofia Tekela-Smith.

Stephenson noted that the portraits of Fijian women reveal how the 'traditional lack of clothing above the waist was exploited to some extent by some postcard photographers…. the artificiality and sometimes suggestiveness of the demanded poses no doubt reflected the existence of a market catering for the prurient' (Stephenson 1997: 217). Similarly, the tattooed Pacific body has been the subject of considerable misinterpretation. From the late eighteenth century, European mariners, mutineers and beachcombers were captivated with the Pacific tattooed body and they collected it in the form of sketches and drawings or by having their own bodies tattooed. In early records, tattooing was interpreted variably as a sign of aggression (Aotearoa New Zealand) or of a libertine sexual nature (Tahiti) due to the nature of the early encounters, while in reality tattooing constituted and reinforced the body, providing a second skin (Douglas 2005a; Gell 1993; Thomas 1995; Wendt 1999). Since that time there has been a high level of mutual influence and cultural exchange in terms of tattooing, with the result that Pacific tattoo patterns are now recognised globally, even though tattooing was suppressed for a while in many regions of the Pacific under Christian missionary influence (*cf*. Thomas, Cole and Douglas 2005; Mallon and Galliot 2018).

Pacific artists have challenged earlier misrepresentations of fibre skirts, bodies and tattooing in various ways, often using their own bodies – with or without fibre garments. Sophia Tekela-Smith, Chris Charteris and Nicky Hastings-McFall present themselves dressed in fibre skirts and ornaments against a barkcloth backdrop in their work *1 Noble Savage 2 Dusky Maidens* (2000). Historically, the self-portrait has been used as a vehicle for exploring issues of identity and it has been an effective tool for self-fashioning and

Figure 6: *Fa'afafine: In the Manner of a Woman* (2005). Yuki Kihara. Triptych 1-3.

cultural re-presentation (Pinney 2003: 219). The work's title directly alludes to the trope of representing the Pacific as an exotic paradise peopled with noble savages, close to nature, and beautiful maidens. In using an obvious studio backdrop, the artists draw attention to the artifice of early photographic representations of Pacific people. Appadurai describes the use of backdrops by indigenous people in modern photography as a 'visual decolonisation' (1997: 6): 'The backdrop resists, subverts and parodies the realist claims of photography' (Appadurai 1997: 5). The artists wear fibre skirts in response to stereotypical colonialist representations of Pacific Islanders, while paying respect to their cultural heritage. They subvert the Western gaze by the way in which the characters are presented. The fibre skirts cover their legs and feet, and neck ornaments cover the women's breasts. In contrast to early photographs, the artists are fully covered, challenging the way in which Pacific bodies have been voyeuristically consumed. Their hands are placed on their legs – not in a sexually alluring manner, but showing them as being in control. These dusky maidens and noble savage are not anonymous; their names are recorded in nineteenth century typography. They look into the camera with a defiant and confrontational facial expression making viewers aware of their own gaze and provoking them to re-evaluate their perceptions and preconceptions.

In her triptych *Fa'afafine: In the Manner of a Woman* (2005) Yuki Kihara mimics and reframes colonial images of Samoan people to interrogate Western imposed classification systems of gender and sexuality. A resemblance to the work of nineteenth century photographers who operated studios in Samoa is no coincidence. In the triptych, Kihara presents herself in three almost identical images reclining on a Victorian-style couch with her hair flowing loosely past her bare breasts. In the first image, Kihara appears as the dusky maiden of European fantasies, wearing a fibre skirt. The disappearance of the skirt in the second image draws the viewer's eye to her nudity. Kihara's body language and dead-pan facial expression appear to be confrontational, expressing the subject is secure and empowered in her sexuality, gazing provokingly back at the viewer (Wolf 2010: 28). In the third image, Kihara untucks her penis from between her legs to reveal her identity as fa'afafine, a gender-liminal person (*cf.* Besnier 1994: 287). In three steps, Kihara uses her identity as fa'afafine to critique Western representations of Pacific women and impositions of binary gender constructs. The way in which Kihara reframes the same image three times with minor changes not only reveals the artificial nature of the staged studio image, but also exemplifies the multiple meanings of the photograph that can be found beyond the surface appearance if one interrogates the 'points of fracture' within the frame (Edwards 2001: 12). A fibre skirt only appears in one part of the triptych but plays a significant role.[5] Without the fibre skirt, Kihara could be any nude, but with it her Pacific identity is emphasised. Wolf (2010: 27) compares Kihara's work with the eroticised depiction of a Turkish harem woman in Ingres' *Grand Odalisque* (1814) as both works depict the main figure on European furnishings with 'exotic props'. Kihara's fibre skirt performs a similar role to the Turkish harem woman's feathered fan; both props enhance a sense of exoticism and authenticity. Through the fibre skirt Kihara is designated a Pacific

5 In pre-Christian Samoa, women's daily wear consisted of an apron made of ti leaves (*Dracaena terminalis*) that reached from the waist to below the knee (Turner 1861: 202-03).

Dusky Maiden, similar to many anonymous Pacific, including Fijian, women in studio photographs whose Pacific identity and difference is constructed with the aid of artefacts.[6]

While not involving the use of a fibre skirt, it is equally important to point out Kihara's work *Siva in Motion* (2012) in which Kihara's body is contained by the corsetry and buttons of her black Victorian mourning dress. It is generally acknowledged that under nineteenth century missionary and colonial influence, Pacific bodies were clothed differently. Clothing acted as a significant visual signifier of the acceptance of European colonisation and missionisation, even when Pacific Islanders adopted and appropriated dress for their own strategic reasons (Colchester 2003; Thomas 1999). In *Siva in Motion*, Kihara references the Taualuga, a Samoan dance, but Kihara's version relates to the devastating tsunami which affected Samoa, American Samoa and northern Tonga in September 2009. Her choreographic movements mirror the impact of the waves and the duration of the video at eight minutes and sixteen seconds reflects the duration of the tsunami's impact. Kihara's unrestricted flowing movements challenge the confinement of the Victorian mourning dress that she is wearing.[7] As a source of inspiration for the dress, Kihara cites the depiction of an anonymous Samoan woman dressed in a similar dress photographed by Thomas Andrew (1886, Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand). Kihara used the dress in later work, both in live performance and still photography. Her 2013 black-and-white series of photographs, *Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?*, was made at several locations in 'Upolu, Samoa, shortly after the 2012 Cyclone Evan caused severe damage. When announcing a forthcoming presentation of her work to be held at the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne (5 May 2016) on Facebook, she added the comment: 'It's so funny having Samoans tell me that I mock Samoan culture by dressing up in a Victorian mourning dress (the name of the dress) photographed in Samoa, until I show them a portrait photograph of a Samoan woman taken in 1886 as evidence of what Samoan women were actually wearing back in the day, which is a stark contrast to the popular belief that Samoans supposedly only wore grass skirts' (Facebook comment Yuki Kihara, 27 April 2016). The different manners of dress continue to be a source of discussion, much as they were during the early encounters between Europeans and Pacific Islanders. Kihara's contrasting use of fibre skirt and Victorian dress, and the comments those elicited, show how clothing needs to be understood in its cultural context as much as on an individual basis.

Clothing has long been studied in terms of semiotics. Clothing was theorised as an innocent signifier, a symbol of individual identity. Yet clothing expresses the individual self as well as social customs and guidelines. There is a close connection between clothing and its wearer; clothing is a visual expression of identity, but one that goes beyond semiotics. The materiality and the agency of the clothing itself is important too (Miller 2005, 2010). A body of literature on clothing has developed (see Hansen 2004; Eicher 2000, 2010; Küchler and Miller 2005) providing a holistic view of clothing and a focus on what clothing does rather than what it means. Clothing infuses the human body with meaning and determines, and sometimes even controls, its behaviour. Through

6 Other contemporary Pacific artists challenge the notion of Dusky Maiden in their work (Rosanna Raymond for instance, see Jacobs and Raymond 2016) but the focus was here on artists using hibiscus fibre skirts.

7 For more information see: http://unframed.lacma.org/2014/03/26/shigeyuki-kiharas-siva-in-motion, accessed February 2017.

its materiality, clothing has a significant impact on its wearer's movements and body behaviour (Banerjee and Miller 2003; Summers 2001). This book's approach builds on previous studies of clothing which focus on the close relationship between clothing and its wearer – a methodology which has proved successful in relation to clothing in the Pacific (Colchester 2003, Küchler and Were 2005, Küchler and Miller 2005).[8] These analyses in turn have been inspired by studies that aimed to overcome the dichotomy between object and subject, such as Marilyn Strathern's work on body adornments (1979, 1988), which she considered as extensions of the self. For her 'objects are created not in contradistinction to persons but out of persons' (Strathern 1988: 171). She argued that categories such as 'person' and 'object' are relational, and this is particularly useful when considering objects connected to the human body (clothing) that create social boundaries, transformations and opportunities. In his study of body adornments in the Waghi valley of Papua New Guinea, O'Hanlon considers body adornments as a second skin, both to indicate the close association with the human body, and also to reflect that body adornments reveal the status of the social relations of their wearer (1989, 1992). Küchler and Were (2005) follow Web Keane's view (2005) that clothing is not just a superficial layer that signifies social relations. Instead they stress the material and agentive aspects of clothing, while also analysing the role of clothing in relation to Pacific studies of personhood and exchange. In her study of tapa (barkcloth) among the Maisin of Collingwood Bay, Papua New Guina, Hermkens (2013, 2015) argues for a suspension of the subject-object dichotomy since Maisin identify themselves so closely with tapa (barkcloth). Tapa engenders a Maisin body and is linked to a woman's life-stage (Hermkens 2010). This close connection between barkcloth and women is also written about in the context of Fiji and Tonga (Hooper 1995; Sahlins 1981; Veys 2017). Küchler and Miller (2005) look beyond the Pacific and consider clothing as material culture, aiming to overcome the disjunction between the material and social life of clothing.

Furthermore, the manipulation of the body by, for example, tattooing, can be considered as an active practice with which people engage in self-identification and positioning in their relationships with others – similar to clothing (*cf*. Schildkrout 2004). Pacific tattooing also has a long tradition of being interpreted as a form of writing, but is more than a visual language to be read from the body.[9] Generally, tattooing reinforced and constituted the social body, marking a transformation in the wearer's status (Allen 2005; Thomas, Cole and Douglas 2005; Gell 1993; Thomas 1995). Samoan novelist and critic Albert Wendt (1996: 15-29) reminds us of the need to view Samoan tatau (tattooing) holistically: 'tatauing is part of everything else that is the people, the aiga [wider family], the village, the community, the environment, the atua [god/s], the cosmos'. Through tatau an individual is linked to an entire community and tattooing continues to play a crucial role in expressing Pacific values and identity (Adams *et al*. 2010; Kuwahara 2005; Te Awekotuku 2007). As a result, clothing is no longer merely restricted to clothes but includes

8 This brief literature review has consciously been restricted to Pacific-related sources. However, there is a plethora of relevant anthropological literature on clothing (*cf*. Hansen 2004 for an overview).

9 Interestingly Simon Schaffer points out that Pacific Islanders too initially regarded European writing as a form of tattooing: during the 1792 voyage of the *Daedalus* to the Marquesas Islands young British astronomer William Gooch took notes and made observations of the coast. Seeing the pen and ink, apparently one of the Marquesans aboard lay down and asked to be tattooed. Gooch later recorded this in his diary "On seeing me write, deem'd it tattooing" (Schaffer 2007: 90-91).

body adornments and body modifications. Rather than 'clothing' the word 'dress' has been used inclusively by Eicher and Roach-Higgins (1992) and Hansen and Madison (2013) to include body modifications, body ornaments and body behaviour. Dress or clothing, the terms are used interchangeably here, is therefore a complex social object (MacKenzie 1991) that equally involves multifarious local uses and that can show the intricacies of intercultural encounters and the transformation of meanings and perceptions.

The museum and the archive

The Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI) and the British Museum hold a collection of photographs taken by Captain Francis R. Barton in Central Province, Papua New Guinea, between 1899 and 1907. A large number show young tattooed women, whose bodies are staged and objectified resembling anthropometric studies. In order to differentiate and enhance the markings on the women's skins, Barton painted over the tattoos with a mixture of soot and oil to make them stand out 'to create an artificial contrast more suitable for photographing' (Wright 2003: 146-49, see also Wright 1997). There is a lot to be said about the circumstances in which these photographs were taken, but the reason for mentioning the photographs in this context is that, in the name of ethnographic collecting, the emphasis was limited to the tattooed patterns. For women in Central Province, tattoo markings were not merely about celebrating the 'individual' self, but about situating her in a community of relationships that were materialised in her markings (Wright 2003: 164). Barton, however, treated these tattoos as patterns only, forgetting the important link with the body and fibre skirts in Central Province. In his late nineteenth century account of the life cycle in Hood Bay, Guise (1899: 207-15) describes an annual Hula celebration called the kapa, during which young girls were initiated into womanhood in a fascinating interplay of concealing and revealing their tattoo marks with special fibre skirts. Having been tattooed on the back and buttocks during the first part of the ceremony (iropi) the girls wore a fibre skirt that covered their front but revealed their back. Then during the kuiriga part of the ceremony when girls were tattooed on the front, they untied their skirts in front of a mainly female audience who admired their markings. The close association between their markings and skirts continued. Before marriage girls and young women could wear a series of fibre skirts (rami and nikeve) that left an opening on the right side of the body exposing their tattooed markings and a range of ornaments. On marrying, women took off their ornaments and wore a longer skirt, without such an opening, that reached below the knees. The fibre skirt of a widow, whose body was blackened, reached to her feet and she wore another one over her shoulders. This relationship between fibre skirts and body markings got lost in collection. Clothing and the body operate dialectically; clothing imbues the body with social meaning, while the body gives life and fullness to dress (Entwistle and Wilson 1998; Entwistle 2000: 326-27). The close link between clothing, body adornments and the body becomes less clear when clothing is collected and enters museum or archival collections. As Entwistle (2000: 326) states: 'the importance of the body to dress is such that encounters with dress divorced from the body are strangely alienating'. In costume museums, mannequins might be used to give form and presence to dress, but these replica bodies often draw attention to the absence of the living human body (Wilson 1985). Equally, once collected, liku and veiqia designs lost their connection to the human body. Liku was no longer clothing to be worn but became a museum object, veiqia were no longer patterns on the skin, but on paper stored in the archive. Once in

museums and archives, liku and veiqia became objects without subjects. As museum objects, they also became raw material for new knowledge making.

Both the museum, particularly the ethnographic museum which is at the centre of this study, and the (colonial) archive have undergone scrupulous investigation and critique since their inception and, as ultimately western institutions, have been challenged to be more inclusive of indigenous voices or have been subject to processes of decolonisation. Euro-American collections have included objects from other parts of the world for as many centuries as these powers had been exploring, trading with and conquering peoples around the world. Initially the collections obtained during these voyages were displayed in cabinets of curiosities, or in royal collections and national museums. Specialist ethnography or anthropology museums were established after anthropology became more formally defined from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. The scientific value of ethnographic collecting was acknowledged and objects were important tools in the framework of anthropological and material culture studies. Vast collections thus found their way to the newly established ethnographic museums. Ethnographic collections in particular were built on a 'salvage paradigm' – the premise that many of the cultures studied were 'dying out', a fate that prompted the preservation of their material traces in the museum (Cole 1985). Equally, the salvage paradigm or the notion of loss is implied in the act of collecting as only a selection has been collected (*cf.* Moutu 2007).

Initially established as technologies of power closely related to the formation of the colonial state (Anderson 1991; Stocking 1985), museums, and the presence of ethnographic objects in Euro-American museums, began to be critically questioned from the 1980s onwards. Ethnographic museum collections were often assumed to be a problematic and uncomfortable legacy of dubious colonial enterprises that continued to misinterpret the cultures from which they were collected. Some material had been seized or taken as loot, thus had not been obtained with the originating culture's consent. This acknowledgment continues in calls for the repatriation of certain collections (*cf.* Ames 1992; Clifford 1988; O'Hanlon 1993; Barringer and Flynn 1998; Karp and Lavine 1991; Lonetree and Cobb 2008; Sleeper-Smith 2009; Turnbull and Pickering 2010). Together with the discussion on the future of ethnographic museums, the status of museums in the Pacific based on western models was called into question. In 1983 Sidney Moko Mead argued in his article 'Indigenous models of museums in Oceania' that Western museum models were inappropriate to the region because they were designed for an anonymous urban audience by highly trained specialists concerned above all else to conserve the items in their collections. Mead contended that an important requirement of indigenous museums is that indigenous people should be the guardians, protectors and advocates of their own cultures and cultural heritages (*cf.* Eoe 1990; Kaeppler 1994; McCarthy 2007; Message 2006; Stanley 2007). From the 1990s onwards, scholars re-evaluated the potential of studying museum collections and revealed, by looking beyond the Western motives of collecting, that ethnographic collections incorporate a considerable amount of indigenous agency. It was acknowledged that often these collections told us more about the collectors than about the people who made these valuables but also that much could be learned from trying to acknowledge the role of all parties involved in the collecting process (Thomas 1991; O'Hanlon and Welsch 2000; Schildkrout and Keim 1998; Keurs 2007; Jacobs 2012, 2014). The processes that led to the creation of museum collections were studied in a more nuanced manner, with attention being paid to the continuing social life (Kopytoff 1986) of these

museum objects. It was emphasised that museums have ongoing relationships with, and responsibilities toward, those communities and stakeholders with whom their histories are intertwined (Clifford 1997; Peers and Brown 2003; Basu and Modest 2015; Golding and Modest 2013; Lonetree 2012). Rather than considering museums as the final resting place for collections, the museum life of collections is now considered as well. Within the museum, objects move between stores, display areas, study spaces and conservation labs. They are loaned, deaccessioned, reaccessioned, repatriated or exchanged with other institutions. In this way, museum objects can reveal and create new knowledge and be the focus of new relationships. Museum objects do not just move physically, but they move people emotionally too (Jolly 2017b: 78). Museum collections might have lost their physical connection with the people who made, used, and even collected or looked after them, yet they enable people to connect with the original makers and users, collectors and other involved parties. In other words, museum objects continue to form the core of constantly renewing networks, including source communities, museum staff, researchers, artists, curators, collectors and auctioneers. The notion of a relational museum (Gosden and Larson 2007) has been proposed to allow the charting of relations that helped compose a museum before, during and after the point of collection, rather than viewing museum collections as sets of static, decontextualised objects. Byrne *et al.* (2011) aimed to 'unpack' the museum collection by considering the agents, such as collector(s), institutions to which collectors might be attached, community, curators, source communities, etc., as single nodes in the network. Harrison *et al.* (2013) 're-assemble' the museum collection by considering it as an archaeological assemblage and by analysing the relationships between these heterogeneous things brought together in a collection. The authors move beyond the representational role of museum objects and consider their affective qualities in past and present engagements between various stakeholders. Museum documentation is increasingly studied in order to understand the history and nature of museums, as knowledge producing sites, and the development of musealised thinking (Marsh 2016; Thomas 2010, 2016; Turner 2016). Recent studies explore the scope of museum catalogues (especially digital databases) to include various interpretations of cultural heritage of indigenous communities (Christen 2008; Christie 2005; Geismar and Mohns 2011; Hays-Gilpin and Lomatewama 2013; McChesney 2015).

As with museum objects, archival documents are a result of collecting and cataloguing processes. In a similar manner to the ethnographic museum, the (colonial) archive has been subject to critical scrutiny over the years (see Basu and de Jong 2016 for an overview). However, writing particularly about the photographic archive, Edwards suggested looking beyond this critique. She fully acknowledges that the archive has silenced indigenous voices, but also points out that this does not mean those indigenous voices have not spoken (Edwards 2003: 83, 98). She invites archive users not to deny the unequal power relations from which the archival documents stem, not to deny the colonial and objectifying gaze involved, but also to consider 'the possibility of parallel realities and indigenous agency'. Only then can we look beyond the archive as 'a stereotype of its own, a dead controlling space' (Edwards 2003: 92). Stuart Hall (2001) considers the archive to be a 'living' institution with which people have interacted over the years and continue to do so – that the work of these people, similar to people involved in museum catalogues, impacted the archive in ways worthy of study. Rather than reading the archive 'against the grain', as was done in the critiques of the archive, Laura Ann Stoler (2009) offered to read the archive 'along the

grain', *i.e.* she proposed paying attention to the quality of the paper, the handwriting, the formulae and tone used in such sources – what she called the 'pulse of the archive' (Stoler 2009: 35). This implies not just a textual but a material approach to understanding the archive. The archival process deserves academic attention as much as museum processes of collecting, preserving and cataloguing.

Figure 7: *A Fishing Party. Natives of Angau* [Gau], *Feejee*. Drawing by James Glen Wilson, 1854.

Figure 8: Liku se droka, collected by Captain Denham in Gau in 1855.

Liku and veiqia: sources

Returning to specific consideration of the subject of this book, the British Museum holds a multi-layered and multi-coloured liku made of vau (hibiscus fibre) strips tied onto a vau waistband (Figure 8). The strips have been folded over the waistband and carefully divided into bundles of varying thickness which have been twisted to create a decorative effect. Attached to the liku is a handwritten label in pencil that identifies the object as a 'woman's girdle' and tells us when it was collected: 'H.M.S. Herald's Voyage Oct 1855' and 'Island of Angau' [Gau]. As the Captain of HMS *Herald*, Henry Mangles Denham carried out major survey work around Australia, New Caledonia and other parts of the Southwest Pacific during the period 1852 to 1861. In October 1855, Denham called at the island of Gau for the second time. During the first visit, between September and November 1854, a brisk trade had been carried out with the local Fijians. They seemed to have found a routine: at noon they hoisted a flag to indicate that Fijians could come on board with their provisions and trade goods; taking down the flag at 1pm was the signal for the ship to be cleared. This usually happened again at supper time (David 1995: 92). We do not know what was obtained during these specific exchanges. What we do know is that, during their fifteen-day stay, naturalist John MacGillivray and naval artist James Glen Wilson went for a walk and met a group of two or three men and about twenty women and girls who were going fishing. The friendly contact between them enabled Wilson to create a sketch showing two women in the foreground carrying a fishing net and baskets (Figure 7). Again, we do not know how much artistic licence was involved in this drawing, but we do know that Wilson had a good eye for detail and many of his landscapes and canoe sketches are reliable. The young women in the drawing wear a liku similar to the one described above. The women have slit earlobes and elaborate dyed hairdos, and one young woman has tattooed marks on her arm and mouth. The following year, in October 1855, Captain Denham returned to Gau with his crew to continue his survey of the waters around the island. This is when the liku in the British Museum would have been collected. Apparently, the population had by then 'wholly converted to Christianity under the Wesleyan influence' (Denham in David 1995: 205). This might have been one of the reasons why the liku was collectable, seeing as it was not considered to be a suitable dress for Christians.[10]

While we have no specific details on the exchange of the liku in the British Museum, this is nevertheless a rare example of the uncovering of an object's collecting circumstances by linking it to written records and pictorial sources. Information on the provenance of a museum object, such as data on the collector and the place and time of collection, increases its value in a museum as it allows more in-depth research. However, this liku is clearly associated with a European collector, not with the original Fijian maker or wearer. We only get a singular, biased perspective on the liku's provenance. European men inform us that there was a clear interest in trade, which benefitted them as they relied on good relations with the local population in order to be able to obtain fresh produce and water. What was not recorded was what Fijians gained from it. The only Fijian voices we have are evidenced by the objects themselves. The liku that were collected on Gau – the one

10 In 1854 Ratu Seru Epenisa Cakobau, Vunivalu of Bau and at that time the most powerful Fiji chief, converted to Christianity. This led to others to follow, especially in islands in Lomaiviti such as Gau, which were subordinate to Bau. However, conversion to Christianity was not the only reason why liku were collected, as will be pointed out later, and conversion was a gradual process that varied regionally within Fiji.

described above is one of three collected on Gau and currently in the British Museum – are in excellent condition, suggesting that they were newly made at the time of their exchange.[11] Fijians did not just give up their old dress, but used a newly made liku as an exchange item to establish relationships. The majority of liku in museum collections are in remarkably good condition – poor condition appeared to be a consequence of ineffective storage in museums rather than an original feature. This indicates their local value as exchange items as well as forms of dress. In the 1840s Methodist missionary Thomas Williams (1858: 40-41) recorded liku as 'head of tribute', as significant presentation items (iyau, valuables), during solevu, exchanges of varying scale that occurred (and still occur) during important life events. At a solevu different social groups, usually formed into two 'sides', would present gifts to each other. These were then distributed amongst all participants. Solevu often had a competitive edge, meaning the best material was often presented and distributed. Solevu gifts were products that were usually specially made and kept pristine for their presentation. In the 1840s, liku were considered of significant value for solevu presentations, similar to other female products such as barkcloth, mats and baskets. In this context liku embodied female relationships that were crucial to large-scale gift presentations and rites of passage. Solevu still take place today but liku no longer form part of them, though numerous bolts of Western cloth are exchanged from which clothing is made. The people of Gau, by presenting new liku to non-Fijians, were strategically integrating the European visitors into an existing exchange system.

All over the world, museum stores, if not museum displays, contain hundreds of liku.[12] Made of a variety of materials, liku are of varying length and depth, some with one longer tie, some with a long bundle of ties attached. The skirts are finely made and are testimony to the highly skilled women who created them not only as valuables with visual impact, but when worn, the rustling fibres would have impressed aurally too. Liku have been little studied and few collections have been referred to in publications. Fergus Clunie examined liku in the Fiji Museum in particular, but also wrote generally about liku based on his observations of a range of Fiji material in museums (Clunie 1982b, 1986b). Rod Ewins studied liku at the Tasmanian Museum (Ewins 1982) and the South Australian Museum as part of general collection overviews.[13] Jane Roth (1988) provided technical drawings of liku stored in the Canterbury Museum in Christchurch, Aotearoa New Zealand. Isaac and Isaac (2016) focus on the collectors of liku during the US Exploring Expedition visit to Fiji in 1840. This book is based on extensive research of liku themselves. Each time liku in museums were examined and photographed, materials and production techniques were noted and measured. When possible, liku were laid out flat in order to measure the length of the waistband, the length of the ties and the length of the skirt (waistband to hem). This straightforward measuring method allowed an understanding of how liku were worn and to relink them with the human body.[14] For example, one type of liku was made by tying fibre strips of equal length to a simple waistband. These strips were left plain or dyed red, but there was no variation in

11 The three liku collected in Gau have identical labels as described above. The liku described first had the museum number: Oc1857,0318.23. The other museum numbers are: Oc1857,0318.22 and Oc1857,0318.24.

12 This book is based on a sample of 337 liku.

13 For Rod Ewins' work on the South Australian Museum collection, see: http://www.justpacific.com/fiji/sam/SAMinfo.htm.

14 This methodology is similar to Lilje's research – the latter also came to interesting conclusions about how skirts in Central Province, Papua New Guinea, were worn (Lilje 2013a, 2013b).

Figure 9: Liku dradra collected by Baron Anatole von Hügel in Narokorokoyawa, Viti Levu, in 1875.

colour. The length of the waistband of this type was constant (c. 74cm) indicating that these skirts were not worn around the hips but around the waist (even allowing for different body shapes). The length from waistband to hem was equally invariable (c. 12cm) and these were the shortest examples of liku. An example at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge, (Z 4002, Figure 9) consists of red dyed strips of hibiscus fibre (vau) attached to a vau waistband of which the ends are plaited to form ties. The liku bears a label which provenances it to 'Narokorokoyava [Narokorokoyawa], Viti Levu 1875 – Kaicolo [Kai Colo] woman's fringe dress'. This corresponds with von Hügel's visit to that village in interior Viti Levu on 2 July 1875, when he wrote in his journal: 'Girls wear a peculiar liku, sometimes of a bright red colour, which is stiffer and much shorter than that of the married women' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 54). Many liku in collections consist of a broad, intricately woven band with a multi-layered fringe (c. 20cm in length). Vau is the main material for these liku, but other materials such as kuta (swamp sedge) and masi (barkcloth) were also incorporated. The length of the waistband of these liku varies between 84cm and 96cm, which means that they could be worn lower than the type described above. As with other liku, these could not have been tied around the body more than once. Significantly, these types of liku correspond to their function of indicating a particular stage in girls and women's lives. This close examination of liku in museums has been crucial in unravelling the significant role liku played in constituting female gender identity.

The fact that liku collections, assembled during an intense period of exploration and colonial settlement, formed the starting point of this research means that this book does not provide a full overview of the exploration and settlement of Fiji by non-Fijian traders, explorers, missionaries and colonial officers. The focus is on those parties who collected liku between about 1810 and 1890. This specific timeframe is determined by the museum collections, since this is when most collections of liku, the raw data informing this study, were assembled. After 1890 liku were produced and collected less and it is likely that manufacture ceased in the early twentieth century, though information on remote areas is hard to come by. The Peabody Essex Museum (PEM) in Salem, Massachusetts, holds liku acquired by several American traders between the 1810s and 1840s (Captain W.P. Richardson, Captain B. Vanderford, Captain J.H. Eagleston and Captain B. Wallis). Liku were also collected (both in terms of descriptions and in terms of physical examples) during two expeditions under the command of Frenchman Jules Sébastien César Dumont d'Urville in 1827 and 1838. In 1840 four vessels from the original six-ship fleet of the US Exploring Expedition, under the command of Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, spent three months in the Fiji archipelago (6 May – 11 August). During this time, the largest surviving collection of liku was assembled, which is currently housed at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of

Natural History. Additional liku were collected in 1840 by Captain (later Sir) Edward Belcher, in command of HMS *Sulphur* during a hydrographic survey expedition (1835-1842). These are currently in the British Museum together with the liku collected during the visits of HMS *Herald* in 1854-57. Methodist missionaries, including Reverend Thomas Williams (1858) and Reverend Richard Lyth, also provided information on liku (and veiqia) in the 1840-50s; one liku collected by Reverend Lyth is in the Fiji Museum. Botanical information about liku was collected by Dr. Berthold Carl Seemann (1825-1871), a German botanist who studied at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew where some of the liku he collected in 1860 are stored; others are in the British Museum. Julius Brenchley assembled a collection during his brief visit to Fiji between 26 July and 3 August 1865 aboard HMS *Curaçoa*. This includes a series of liku that are currently stored in the Maidstone Museum and Bentlif Art Gallery. Baron Anatole von Hügel, son of an Austrian diplomat and Scottish mother who travelled to the Pacific for his health, collected extensively during his travels in Fiji between 1875 and 1877. He established close links with the Governor Sir Arthur Gordon and other residents at Government House at Nasova, near Levuka on Ovalau (including Private Secretaries Arthur J.L. Gordon and Alfred Maudslay, Lady Gordon and Constance Gordon Cumming). Mostly acquired in a period of competitive collecting lasting just over two years (1875-77), the majority of material obtained by von Hügel, the Gordons and Maudslay ended up in the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA), University of Cambridge. At a later stage, some liku were sent from Cambridge to the Australian Museum in Sydney. Constance Gordon Cumming's collection ended up mainly in the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh. While the latter contains only a few liku, the MAA collection includes the largest collection assembled in the 1870s, the majority of them collected by von Hügel. After the collecting fever of the mid-1870s, fewer liku were collected and entered museums. First-hand information on liku then becomes scarce after the 1880s, as the garments were gradually made and worn less. The American Museum of Natural History in New York holds liku that were collected by John William Waters, a photographer who lived in Fiji towards the end of the nineteenth century.[15] The large miscellaneous Sturgis Collection from the Pacific in that museum, assembled around 1890, also contains liku, but data is lacking about their collection circumstances.[16] These form the most representative collections of liku globally which have been studied through detailed observation while analysing the genealogy of classification, storage and display.[17]

Literature on liku made, exchanged and worn by women in nineteenth century Fiji is patchy. Brief descriptions which exist are rarely based on first-hand accounts. The term 'liku' itself was recorded early (in 1808) – albeit in varying spellings, such as 'leeky' (Patterson 1817: 92), 'leko' (Osborn 1833-1836: 237), 'leekee' (Belcher 1843, 2: 53), 'lego' (Lawry 1850: 70) and 'leku' (Wallis 1851: passim) – even by visitors who only stayed briefly. John Erskine, for instance, wrote: 'the usual dress of both sexes, being, as mentioned before, only a maro

15 After a career as a seaman, John William Waters ended up in Fiji where he had various jobs. His photography firm was probably established in 1886 and he appeared to have been active as a photographer until the early 1920s. He also served as a member of the Fiji Museum Committee (Stephenson 1997: 85-90).

16 Another important Fijian collection, assembled by Adolf Brewster Brewster between 1870 and 1910, is in the Torquay Museum, United Kingdom (see Chandler 2007). While Brewster provides information on liku (see chapter *Liku, Veiqia and the Adorned Body*), no examples of liku are in this collection.

17 Smaller collections of liku without clear provenance data have been excluded from this study.

[malo] for the men, and a narrow petticoat, called "liku," for the women' (Erskine 1967 [1853]: 264).[18]

Veiqia: 'collecting' tattooing

Veiqia, the tattooing that adorned Fijian women, was noticed in Tonga in 1777 during Cook's third voyage (Beaglehole 1967, 3(2): 958-59) and described by traders such as Joseph W. Osborn (1833-1836: 234). One of the earliest drawings of veiqia made by a non-Fijian was produced during Dumont d'Urville's 1838 visit. During the US Exploring Expedition in Fiji in 1840, expedition leader Wilkes recorded the word qia, which 'is only performed on the women, and is chiefly confined to the parts which are covered by the liku' (Wilkes 1845, 3: 355). Particular observers developed a specific interest in veiqia by the late nineteenth century. In the early 1870s, Adolf Brewster Joske, later known as Adolf Brewster Brewster (henceforth shortened to Brewster), went to grow sugar cane in Fiji with his father. After a subsequent short stint as a coffee planter, Brewster joined the colonial Fijian Administration (1884-1910) for which he served mainly in the interior of Viti Levu.[19] He developed an interest in veiqia, even though he noted that it was a difficult subject to research as it applies 'to "those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable." (i Corinthians xii. 23.)'. Also, he continues, unless a woman was marked around her mouth, veiqia was often concealed by liku and was thus not a publicly available image that could be investigated (Brewster 1922: 176). Brewster consulted two Fijian men on the subject. Malakai Navatu, who was Buli of Naboubuco,[20] interior Viti Levu, and Joseva Bebe Tubi, one of Brewster's clerks who became Buli of Yalatina in Ba Province. Each wrote down what they knew and Brewster claims that he reproduced their work 'verbatim' in his 1922 publication (Brewster 1922: 176, 178, 185). While Brewster received his information on this female matter from men, in the mid-1870s the young Baron Anatole von Hügel asked Fijian women about veiqia, resulting in notes and drawings of weniqia (tattoo patterns). At the same time, John Archibald Boyd, a planter of Waidau, Ovalau, travelled with Theodor Kleinschmidt to the interior of Viti Levu and provided in his diary a first-hand account of mouth tattooing in Nalaba village in 1878. Theodor Kleinschmidt also made descriptions and drawings of women with liku and veiqia (Kleinschmidt 1984). Basil Thomson, colonial officer in Fiji intermittently between 1883 and 1893, showed an interest in qia but mostly repeated second-hand information (Thomson 1908). In the 1930s George Kingsley Roth actively researched veiqia, a practice he labelled

18 As senior officer on HMS *Havannah*, Erskine visited Fiji in 1849 and briefly called at several places including Lakeba, Ovalau, Viwa and Bau.

19 Initially he worked as Stipendiary Magistrate and assistant to the resident Commissioner of Colo East and Deputy Commandant of the Armed Native Constabulary. Afterwards he acted as Governor's Commissioner in the mountain region of Viti Levu (Chandler 2007: 79). The Fiji Museum and Cambridge University Library Archives hold some of his notes and genealogies.

20 Naboubuco, often Boubuco in older sources, is often not marked on maps of Fiji, but was also visited in 1875 by young Arthur Gordon, Private Secretary of Governor Gordon, during his trip with Walter Carew to the interior of Viti Levu. Gordon's description reveals that Naboubuco is about 1000 feet above the valley through which the Wai Loa River ('one of the heads of the Wainamala') runs (Gordon 1986 [1875]: 72).

‘extinct’ (Roth 1973: 81).[21] Roth published his notes in the anthropological journal *Man* (Roth 1933) but this represents only a small fraction of the information that he accumulated. His notes in the Cambridge University Library archives reveal how he began with asking men about the female practice of veiqia. For example, in 1929 he asked Ratu Jemesa Bonawai, a retired NMP (Native Medical Practioner) of Nairukuruku, about his knowledge of qia (dated 1 October 1929). In 1930 he made a record of a conversation with the photographer John William Waters in Suva, who had seen veiqia while photographing women. These glimpses of information left him with more questions than answers. Roth then decided that he should ask the women themselves and gave a list of questions to Mrs Suckling from New Zealand, the first welfare nurse in Fiji.[22] Roth sent her a questionnaire based on the *Notes & Queries on Anthropology* handbook (see Urry 1972). Mrs Suckling’s line of work facilitated access to intimate information and her notes on veiqia are mainly based on conversations with older women in Tailevu district and up the Wainibuka River in 1933-34. She also spoke with a woman in the mountains at Nadarivatu, and one in the Sigatoka Valley nearby (Suckling 1934: question 33, 1). In addition to these accounts of Viti Levu, more recent narratives were recorded in Vanua Levu. In his capacity as Director of the Fiji Museum (1969-87), Fergus Clunie conducted research on a wide variety of Fijian topics. In 1981 he completed a Fiji Museum fieldtrip with his colleague Walesi Ligairi to Wailevu, southern Vanua Levu, and Saivou, central Vanua Levu, and interviewed women about veiqia.[23] Together these accounts provide some insight into the role of liku and veiqia in a Fijian woman’s life.

Limitations and aims

This book originated in an awareness that information on nineteenth century liku worn by Fijian women was mostly hidden in museum stores and archives. The process of uncovering this information involved encountering a range of misrepresentations and misclassifications both in text and image form. It is a widely known fact that any attempt to challenge misrepresentations and misclassifications has the potential to perpetuate these stereotypical images, as such contradicting its original purpose. This raises the question whether a colonial gaze can be contested when one depends on colonial sources. While the sources here are, to an extent, sources of knowledge, they have also been read between the lines looking for traces of indigenous agency and countersigns (Douglas 2006) in order to show that there are different ways of understanding the body. For this reason text has been quoted, not to reinforce it, but to question it. For the same reason, images of Fijian female bodies and their intimate and individual veiqia have also been included. While acknowledging the intimacy of such patterns, including them helps in sharing the growing contemporary search for knowledge with the indigenous communities to whom the patterns belong. In recent decades, historical sources – material, textual and

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21 George Kingsley Roth worked as District Commissioner for the Colonial Service in the hills where Brewster had worked before. After study leave and a colonial post in Zanzibar (1933-40) Roth returned to Fiji where he became chairman of the Fiji Society, and helped reorganise the Fiji Museum. He retired as Secretary for Fijian Affairs in 1957, after which he became Honorary Keeper of the Fiji Collection at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge, until his death in 1960 (Snow 1962: 822-823).

22 Mrs Suckling (first name not known) from New Zealand was appointed as the first welfare nurse in Fiji in 1927. Based in Tailevu, she and two Fijian assistants trained a small women’s health committee in each village (MacNaught 1982: 131-32).

23 See chapter *On Separations and Connections.*

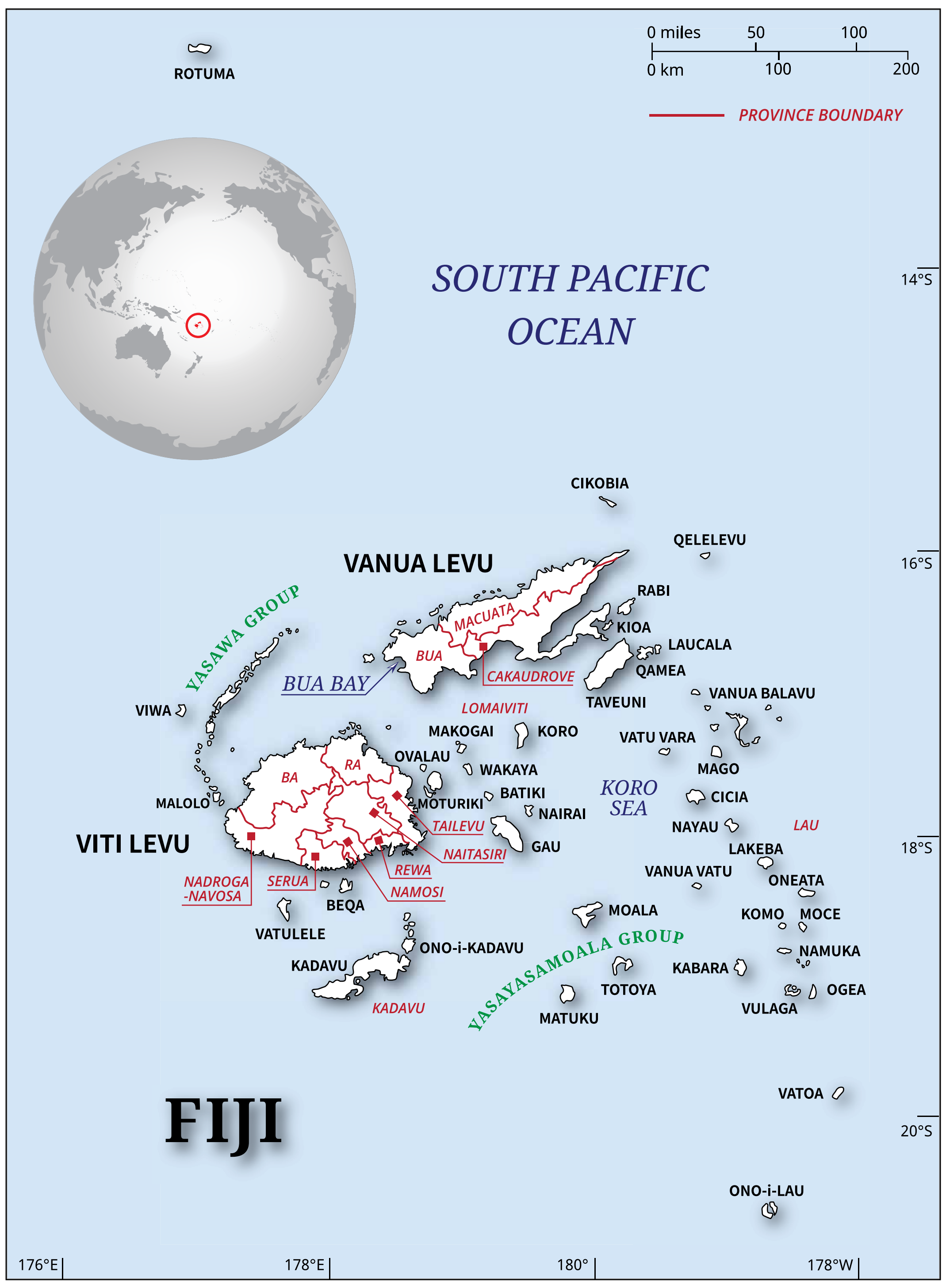

Figure 10: Map of Fiji.

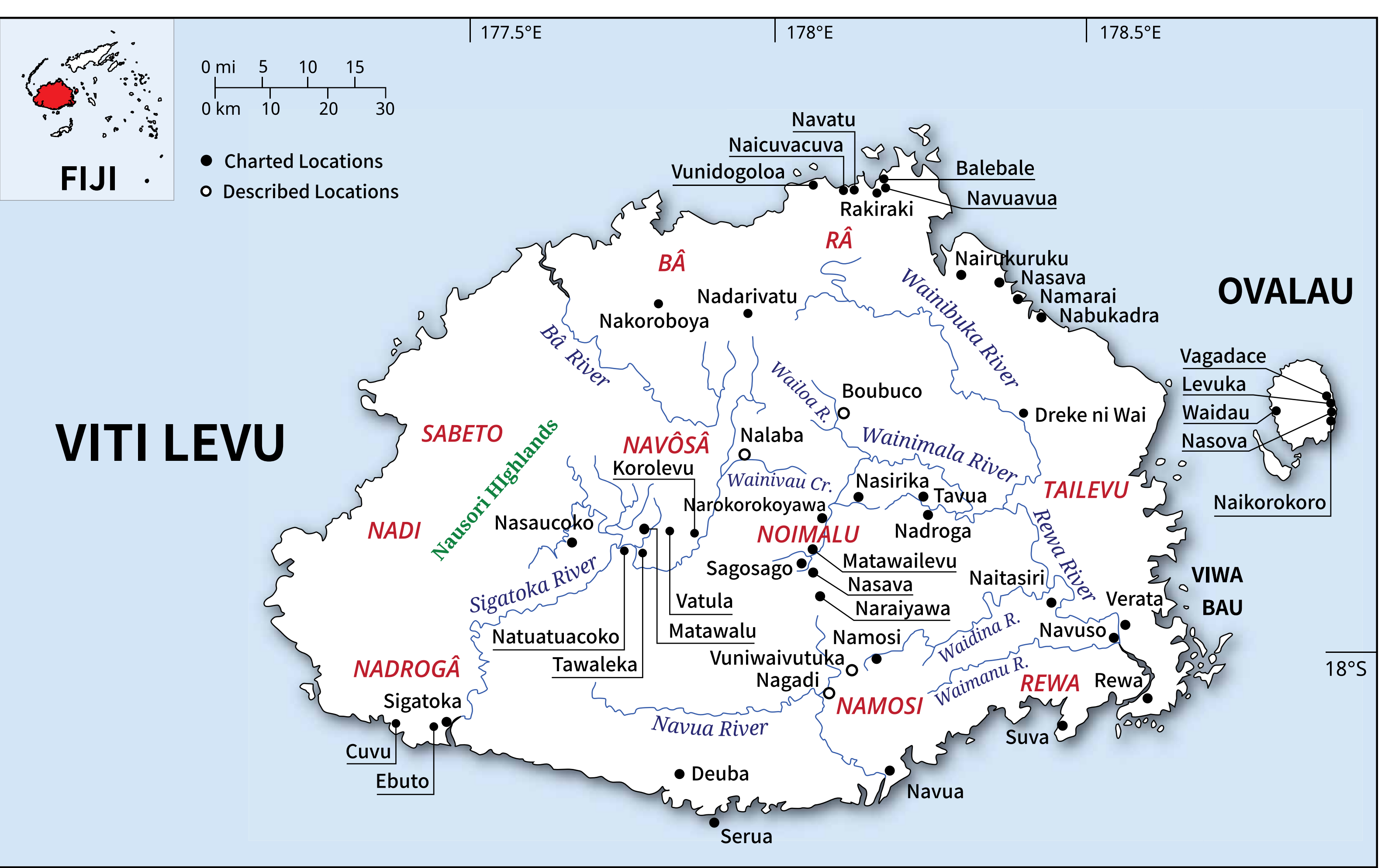

Figure 11: Map of Viti Levu and Ovalau.

pictorial – have been reinterpreted by scholars to achieve more profound and multifaceted representations of historical encounters that aim to include an indigenous voice (Douglas 2006; Thomas 2010; Salmond 1991, 1997; Thomas and Losche 1999; Jolly, Tcherkézoff and Tryon 2009; Teaiwa 2007). Most information on liku and veiqia dates from a dynamic time of cross-cultural interaction when colonial officers, missionaries and travellers were establishing their presence in Fiji. Different parties bring their own perceptions and knowledge to cross-cultural collecting encounters. This confrontation of pre-existing understanding can result in distinct reactions, which emphasises the need to study these encounters as multidirectional and resulting from mutual influence and negotiation. While these encounters might be treated for the purposes of description as bilateral, they should not be misunderstood as points of contact between two static, separate cultures (Fijian versus non-Fijian), but as dynamic ongoing engagements.

Priority has been given to (textual and pictorial) first-hand accounts, but even these are often regionally unspecific. Most area-specific information stems from interior Viti Levu, Vanua Levu, Rewa and Bau, rather than from parts of Fiji where Tongan cultural influence was greater. Most information thus relates to 'Vitian Fiji' rather than Tonganised Fiji. This is important to note since historically the inhabitants of eastern Fiji and some coastal regions of Viti Levu were in certain key respects socially and culturally different from the people of the interior of Viti Levu. Viti is the indigenous name for Fiji. The term 'Fiji' was adopted by Europeans from the Tongan pronunciation of Viti (Herle and Carreau 2013: 8). While it has been argued that the name 'Fiji' refers 'to the recently colonized country and its Christianized inhabitants' (Clunie 1986b: iii), the general name Fiji is used in this book – not to make value statements but because the majority of liku in museums were collected in now unknown locations and have generically been classified in museums under the denominator 'Fiji'.

When working with ethnographic collections, one should be aware of the shadows of colonial terminology and the perspective and position from which one writes. While acknowledging that this book offers another subjective and European (Belgian) perspective on the subject, I hope that I have been able to challenge the existing misrepresentations of the Fijian wearers of liku and veiqia. As a woman I was drawn to the topic and these skilful creations made and worn by women who often had been ignored in the records. This book aims to open the pathway for new epistemologies and to bring the makers and wearers (old and new) into the crux of the conversation. As well as considering the materiality of liku and their intimate relationship to female bodies, liku will be analysed as museum objects, and drawings of veiqia as archival documents. This allows for tracing the representation of liku and veiqia through different regimes of value. Chapter 2, *Liku, Veiqia and the Adorned Body*, will demonstrate that there was a close connection between liku, veiqia and other body adornments in the process of gendering a female body. This chapter focuses on the role of liku in rites of passage, in as far as this can be understood from the literature and from the liku themselves. Chapter 3, *Collecting Liku and Veiqia*, provides an analysis of the collecting encounters, divided into three sections – 'difference', 'domesticity' and 'curiosity' to indicate changing perceptions on liku and veiqia – that led to the presence of liku and veiqia accounts in museum collections and archives. While in this chapter the focus lies on transforming representations of liku in the field, Chapter 4, *Classifying Liku and Veiqia*, deals with transformative assessments in the museum and archive and will focus on two lists drawn up by Baron Anatole von Hügel once he became

the founding curator of the Cambridge museum in the 1880s. The first list consists of von Hügel's museum typology of liku, the second list classifies weniqia, tattoo patterns. The work with museum collections of liku and veiqia is explored further in the final chapter, Chapter 5, *On Separations and Connections.* Museum collections might have lost their connection with the human body, but they can provide a tangible link with the original makers and users. However, liku and veiqia are mainly stored in museums and archives outside of Fiji. The focus in the final chapter is on these separations but also on connections by focusing on The Veiqia Project.

2

Liku, Veiqia and the Adorned Body

> I saw my *liku*-ed beauty smiling at me in the distance and thought of kissing my hand to her, but remembered that *that* might not be understood. (von Hügel in Roth and Hooper 1990: 62, original emphasis)

Between 1875 and 1877 the young Baron Anatole von Hügel spent time in Fiji exploring, meeting people, collecting natural history specimens and material culture, and mingling with friends in Government House. He had embarked on a journey to the Pacific for his health and was likely inspired by his father, Karl, who collected botanical specimens in Asia and the Pacific between 1831 and 1836. When visiting Matawailevu in interior Viti Levu on 3 July 1875, von Hügel became charmed by a young Fijian woman and he wrote about their farewell. The quote above from von Hügel's journal emphasises cultural distance and potential misunderstandings that can be at play during cross-cultural encounters. He was aware that throwing a kiss might not have been appropriate. The variation in cross-cultural perceptions can be extended to liku, a garment that has often been misunderstood. What is fascinating for now is what preceded the quote. Earlier that day von Hügel had obtained ten liku from a group of women in return for as many 'fathoms of cloth'. A young unnamed woman decided to demonstrate how the liku that he collected would have been worn during 'festive occasions' by women of rank. She carefully selected six liku, which she put on, one overlapping the other 'like thatch on a roof'. As a result, the liku worn on top was completely visible around the waist, while only the fringes of the five others underneath were discernible. This act taught von Hügel that wrapping the female body and layering it with liku was important.

Before these liku became museum objects in Cambridge, United Kingdom, where von Hügel became the first curator of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology and where the majority of his Fiji collection is housed, his 'liku-ed beauty' reminded him of the liku's connection with the female body. Liku also played an important role in rites of passage. Together with oil, turmeric, veiqia patterns (weniqia) and other body adornments, liku were wrapped around the female body at crucial times in a woman's life. They were therefore garments that were not only closely associated with the female body, but with the adorned female body. Von Hügel used liku in the form of a qualifier adjective: '*liku*-ed beauty' – a qualifier adjective attributes particular qualities to the noun with which it forms a phrase, and therefore acts to transform it. By considering liku as valuables with agentive properties, attention is paid to processes rather than products. Among the

principal aims of this chapter is to examine and 'reconstruct' the role of liku and veiqia in the construction of female personhood. The use of the term 'reconstruct' acknowledges that the available liku and their associated written and pictorial sources were produced or collected throughout the nineteenth century. The term therefore gives recognition to the gaps in information and the use of more recent information to help understand older records. This overview thus provides a (still partial and translated) general picture of the role of liku and veiqia spread over almost a century while acknowledging regional and temporal differences and variations.

Gendering the body

Before puberty, young girls were not required to wear a liku. If they wore any clothing, they opted for a small liku ni gone (child's liku), made of shredded vau (hibiscus fibre) that left the buttocks bare, or a more ephemeral type that they often made themselves of leaves or feathers. When a young woman reached puberty, she was dressed in her first proper liku after receiving her veiqia, her tattooing.[24] There was a close connection between liku and veiqia in the process of gendering a female body – as much as there was correlation between male circumcision and wearing the malo (male loincloth), which similarly occurred around the time of puberty.[25] After circumcision young men were entitled to wear the malo, a long strip of masi (barkcloth) that was passed between the legs, wound round the hips and knotted at the front.

Joseva Bebe Tubi noted in Yalatina: 'When an old woman saw a girl growing up, she would say to her: "It is time you were tattooed before you grow old; it is better to get it done whilst you are young and your body supple"' (Brewster 1922: 186). In 1934 Nurse Suckling was told that a girl received her veiqia soon after her first menstruation, if she was strong enough. If not, she would receive it after her parents had selected a husband for her (Suckling 1934: question 33: 1-2). Nonetheless a set of restrictions and proscriptions had to be followed, which varied in different regions and the different time frames during which information was collected. For example, in Naboubuco in the late nineteenth century the girl to be tattooed could not menstruate, had to fast for a whole day followed by a night of fishing for freshwater prawns and had to bring lemon thorns to make up the tattooing instrument (Brewster 1922: 185). In the 1930s, in the region of Tailevu, Nurse Suckling was told a girl had to rest for four days before the procedure, preferably by lying down as much as possible with her legs elevated. She was given a mixture of the root and bark of the Rewa tree (*Cerbera manghas*) and the green vegetable Boro (of the *Solanaceae* family), which acted as purgatives. Her body was further cleansed by drinking large amounts of

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24 Clunie (1982b: 5) refers to the first proper liku as liku levu (large liku). Wilkes noted in 1840 that girls reached the aged of puberty around fourteen years of age and were isolated with peers in a house where they anointed themselves with turmeric and oil until they came out ten days later, went fishing and were supplied with provisions by men (Wilkes 1845, III: 93).

25 The circumcision ceremony usually took place during the loloku ni mate or mourning time after the death of an important chief. Brewster (1919, 1922: 174-76) provides an account of the boys' equivalent ceremony. A description of the vakamasi ceremony after circumcision, the wrapping in 1835 of the nephew of the Tui Nayau at Nasaqalau on Lakeba in 1835 as providing a 'badge of virility' (Cargill 1841: 115), resonates with descriptions of wrapping the female body in liku after tattooing.

coconut milk. On the day of the procedure, she was fed a baked yam in order to cause constipation and was bathed (Suckling 1934: question 33: 2-3).[26]

The tattooing itself took place in remote forest locations, in a vacant house or the mouth of a cave near the exit to make the most of the light, or in the vale ni veiqia, a special shelter on the outskirts of the village (Brewster 1922: 185; Clunie 1980: 7; Suckling 1934: question 33, 5-6).[27] It was a strictly female business. The veiqia was applied by a mature specialist woman – referred to as daubati (bati meaning tooth, referring to the tattooing tool), dauveiqia, dauveisau or matainiqia. Matai and dau can both be translated as 'expert' or 'specialist'. Brewster's informant, Malakai Navatu of Naboubuco, notes that in the Viti Levu hills the 'Lewa vuku, the wise woman' (a term also used for midwife) collaborated with the 'Lewa dau bati, the woman operator' (Brewster 1922: 186). Other sources mention three women operators: two to hold the young woman, while the third marks her body (Thomson 1908: 218). Quain (1948: 242-43) explains that in central Vanua Levu there were few specialisms for which women 'can gain fame for wisdom', but the knowledge of applying veiqia was one of them. While he notes that 'these skills require no special caste affiliation', Clunie was told in the 1980s that women in Wailevu were all marked by one daubati who was a member of the mataisau clan, whose men were hereditary woodworking specialists (Clunie and Ligairi, 1981: 2, Source Fergus Clunie). This is an interesting detail as obvious similarities could be seen between the art of veiqia and woodcarving (as its male counterpart), but unfortunately we do not have information from beyond Vanua Levu about daubati always belonging to this clan. Generally, other female relatives were present to support the young woman undergoing the process: they supported her body, distracted her from the pain by recounting stories and they fed her. They provided a female support network that helped her through this transitional process (Suckling 1934: question 33, 6).

Women were tattooed using a batiniqia, an adze-like tool consisting of a gasau reed handle (usually between 12-22cm in length) to which one or more thorns of a lemon tree (*moli karokaro*), or a comb of turtle shell or bone, was lashed with coir strands. In some instances, barracuda or shark teeth, a number of sokisoki porcupine fish spines, rat's teeth (used for a Nadarivatu woman) or sewing pins were used. The batiniqia was tapped with a small light stick or a small mallet (wau) made of light wood, such as Beta (*Zingiber Zerumbet Linn*.). In some Viti Levu hill districts vasili (*Cordyline terminalis*) wood was used, whereas in Lau, where mallets were known as jitolo, hibiscus wood served the purpose. Clunie (1980: 7) also recorded the use of a spoon or a stingray tail spike to tap the tattooing tool into the flesh. The variety in materials indicates regional differences, as well as the daubati's resourceful flexibility and creativity, while being bound by functionality (Clunie 1980: 7; Kleinschmidt 1984: 162; Suckling 1934: question 33: 3-4, Roth 1933: 163; Suckling 1934: additional question 13, 1, UL Roth archive; Wilkes 1845, 3: 355).

26 Similar proscriptions were followed before and after childbirth. Nurse Suckling collected information on midwifery for Roth and was told that a pregnant woman who is about to give birth had to be bathed and fed by female relatives. She had to avoid salty food or anything that came from the sea and her lips were not allowed to touch the drinking vessels for ten days (Suckling n.d.c. [1930s], questions 4, 7 midwifery, UL Cambridge).

27 Nurse Suckling writes: 'I have been told this week from a grandma who lived on the Wainimala many years ago that a house was always built in the bush away from the town and was only used for this purpose and it was not done in the towns at all' (Suckling 1934: additional question 17, 10).

The tattoo pigment was obtained by burning shelled candlenuts (lauci or sikeci, *Aleurites moluccana*) and mixing the soot with candlenut oil in a bilo (coconut cup). In Rewasau in Viti Levu the soot was made from burning makadre resin from the Kauri pine (dakua; *Agathis vitiensis*) – this was the same pigment used for painting barkcloth in that area (Kleinschmidt 1984: 162; Clunie 1980: 7; Roth 1933: 163). The daubati's assistants prepared the area to be tattooed by washing, oiling, massaging and kneading to make the skin as supple as possible. Usually the batiniqia was dipped into the pigment and then used to puncture the skin. However, in some Viti Levu hill districts (further down the Wainimala River, at Nairukuruku, Matailobau district), Roth was told that punctures were made first, which were then rubbed with pigment obtained from the gumu (*Acacia richii*) tree (Roth 1933: 163).[28] The length of the procedure was dictated by how much pain the girl could bear. Tattooing was done in stages with the pubic area done first, then the hips and buttocks. Periods of rest, at home or supervised by the daubati, allowed the girl to recover from swelling and inflammation. She was told not to bathe and could not be seen by men. Some weeks later, or months depending on the inflammation and possible suppuration, tattooing was continued. While the whole process could take months, each sitting seems not to have exceeded three to five days (Clunie 1980: 2, 8; Kleinschmidt 1984: 159; Clunie and Ligairi 1981: 3; Suckling 1934: question 33, 6-7, 9; Thomson 1908: 218).

There was regional variety in tattooing. Constance Gordon Cumming noticed that women from the interior of Viti Levu were more elaborately marked than women of the coast, who in her view 'happily indulge in an exceedingly small display of tattooing. Some have slight patterns on the hands and arms, which are considered attractive, but the majority only submitted to so much as was compulsory' (Gordon Cumming 1883: 161). In the east, in places such as Rewa and Bau, tattooing was confined to the part of the body that was covered by the liku. Tattooing was more elaborate in the interior of Viti Levu, where the pattern covered the lower abdomen, the genital area, encircling the hips, wrapping the buttocks downwards from just below the cleft of the buttocks, and ending on the upper thighs (Kleinschmidt 1984: 159). The patterns resembled 'interlacing of parallel line and lozenges' covering the skin completely (Thomson 1908: 217). Brewster (1922: 186) compares the markings with patterns applied on barkcloth in Nairukuruku.[29]

During the tattooing process the woman's intended future husband or his relatives were responsible for the payment of the tattooing specialists and for providing a feast upon completion of veiqia (Brewster 1922: 186; Kleinschmidt 1984: 159). Nurse Suckling was told that a big solevu (presentation) was organised during which mats, masi and other things were presented to the tattooed woman's father and daubati (Suckling 1934: additional question 12, 5). Whether these presentations were made by the girl's future husband's clan is not clear, though likely as solevu were usually between two sides, often intermarrying clans. In other descriptions, the payment was more subtle. In any case, four nights after completing the tattooing process women would gather to observe the shedding of the scabs caused by tattooing: 'It was shown to them, like you set a bait for a dog, to make them also want to be tattooed' (Brewster 1922: 186). Joseva Bebe Tubi

28 Roth double-checked this with Mrs Suckling, who was told by her informants 'that they prick and dip the instrument into the paint. They say that they never rub the paint into the puncture – if they do not see enough paint in the puncture they put the needle again into the hole' (Suckling 1934: additional question 14, 9, UL Roth archives). This could be due to regional differences.

29 See Chapter 4 for a full discussion of designs.

Figure 12: Ra Enge, a chiefly woman of Tawaleka, Namataku, wearing a white shell or ivory necklet, a shell armlet and a liku that partially shows her qia. Drawn by Theodor Kleinschmidt, 1877.

mentioned that this feast was named ‘the shedding of the scales’ – referring to the flaking of the scabs and the revelation of the tattoo design underneath, but it also reflects the role of Degei, the snake-god who is said to have instituted tattooing, and the manner in which a snake sheds its skin (Thomson 1908: 218; Williams 1858: 160). This reference to renewable skin, and thus rebirth, clearly reflects the transition from girl to woman.

The passing of four nights, bogi va, after the veiqia was completed is significant in many Fijian rites of passage. In the 1930s Nurse Suckling was told that the number four carries weight in a wide variety of female matters due to its original relationship with menstruation and women being tabu (restricted) for four days and nights every moon. As such, bogi va, the four nights, were important throughout a woman’s life.[30] Examples range from the four nights after birth until the husband sees the child, the

30 Fijians count passages of time in nights (bogi), not days (siga). Bogi va (four nights) was, and continues to be, important in many rites of passage for men and women and possibly has a deeper origin. Bogi va is also significant in more general matters, such as taking medicine for four nights to ensure its effectiveness. Bathing in the sea or in a river is also a frequent conclusion to a bogi va sequence.

feast that was held four nights after a girl's first menstruation, the feast held four nights after receiving qia, the feast after the four nights a couple was left alone after marriage to its implication in pregnancy, weaning a child, in sickness and after death (Suckling 1934: additional 9, 2-4). Each of these instances dealt with a life-changing experience. After revealing her veiqia after the fourth night, the young woman would be invested with the liku – 'the name of the dress being the *Vorivori ni Sususung-i Tiko* [vorivori ni sususugi tiko] (the debut or coming out)' (Brewster 1922: 187). There is thus a clear connection between liku and the tattooed female body. From then onwards, veiqia are being 'seen' by being hidden by a liku, displayed but not necessarily revealed. The liku was described as the 'badge of womanhood', thus completing the transition from girl into young woman (Brewster 1922: 187).

Rite of passage

The tattooing process and the entitlement to wear a liku was an important rite of passage indicating a change in the young woman's status. She was in a 'liminal' state (Turner 1969) when she was secluded during the tattooing process. She had to follow prescribed restrictions that had practical but also symbolic connotations protecting her from the potentially dangerous effects of her new condition (*cf*. Lutkehaus 1995b). She was then required to suffer an ordeal that transformed her body.[31] Kleinschmidt (1984: 159) noted for interior Viti Levu that marking the 'mouth, thighs, breast, arms and back is compulsory'. The tattooing tool was kept by the young woman after the veiqia was completed: 'The instrument is never used again, it is treasured, put into a place with the cord (umbilical), the first tooth and any other things the mother of the girl treasures' (Suckling 1934: additional question 8, 3, commas added). In 1981, Fergus Clunie was told by a woman on Vanua Levu that the masi used to wipe off her blood and excessive ink during the procedure was then given to her mother. After healing, the girl was taken on a fishing trip with her relatives, during which the blood-soaked piece of masi was thrown in the water with some words of blessing from her grandmother. The fish caught during that trip were presented with other iyau, valuables, to her daubati (tattooist), named Rabali (Clunie and Ligairi, 1981: 9-10). This process is in Rappaport's terms (1971) a ritual that communicates information about a girl's physical and social change indicating that she is ready for marriage. By strict definitions of initiation rituals (Allen 1967) the process would be labelled a puberty rite and not an initiation because of the focus on the individual rather than a group of girls and because there was no apparent initiation into secrecy (Townsend 1995: 168; see also Grimes 2000: 87-148). Nancy Lutkehaus (1995a: 4-5) argues against a distinction between female puberty rites and initiation as she found the latter too narrowly defined in scholarship. Terminology aside, there are clear similarities between the veiqia and liku process for girls and the boys' circumcision which took place around puberty.[32] Malakai Navatu described to Adolf Brewster in September 1894 that the boy had

31 These are only a few aspects highlighted to indicate the importance of liku and veiqia in rites of passage, which will have differed regionally and temporally. As Grimes (2000: 98) reminds us, too often scholarship on rites of passage produces an abstract and idealised image of the initiation process that ignores changes.

32 Or later in case of chiefly youth – see below.

Figure 13: Batiniqia, tattooing tools made of a blade of bone, turtle shell or a metal pin which is lashed to a bamboo handle. Collected in Fiji by A. von Hügel, 1875-77.

Figure 14: Tattooing ink container, Fiji Museum.

to take tabu proscriptions into account and after his circumcision, usually by a stream, the used bamboo tool and barkcloth bandage were buried, while the boy's adornments were presented to the operator (Brewster 1894). The transformative practices of circumcision and veiqia (with the donning of the malo and liku

Figure 15: *Painting of a Polynesian Woman* showing a Fijian woman with elaborate hair wearing a liku se droka, armlets, shell necklace while carrying a noke, fishing basket, by Charles Pickering, US Exploring Expedition, 1840.

Figure 16: Unnamed woman from Vanua Levu with qia gusu, mouth tattooing. Photographed by the anthropologist Arthur Maurice Hocart in Vanua Levu between 1910 and 1912.

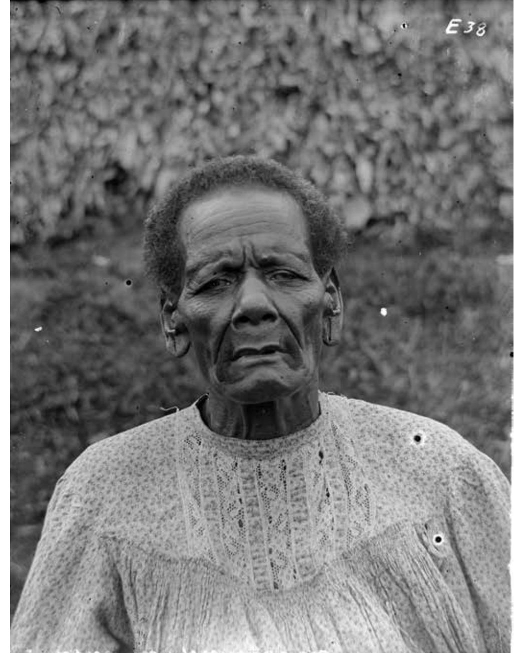

Figure 17: Litiana. Photographed by Arthur Maurice Hocart in Nakorosule, Viti Levu, between 1910 and 1912.

respectively) created gendered identities.[33] In some regions young men and women were even given new names after circumcision and veiqia.[34]

Initiation does not mark a transition to adulthood in a single event, it is a process that continues throughout a person's lifetime. Nurse Suckling recorded in the 1930s that:

> Two old ladies told me that in the olden days there was [sic] no weddings – they told me that a young man's choice was made early in life for him and generally his mother saw to the picking of the young lady. So when she was tatued and the mouth finished the mother of the young man came and gave her the liku. This was called as far as I can remember "Vaka buku dina liku" and then after the 4 days a feast was made and the girl was the man's wife (Suckling 1934: n.p.).

Nurse Suckling probably refers to the expression vaka buku liku taka, to tie the liku on, which was considered the equivalent of a marriage contract (Capell 1973: 121). Joseva Bebe Tubi explains that in Yalatina the young bride's female relatives would go and bind a red liku round her waist the morning after the wedding was consummated. After four

33 The creation of gendered identities does not necessarily imply a strict distinction between men and women and the emphasis should be on gender complementarity rather than gender dichotomy (Roscoe 1995; Strathern 1988).

34 See Brewster (1919: 311) for a description of the naming ceremony.

nights, the young couple would bathe together and a feast was held (Brewster 1922: 187). Brewster (1922: 193-94) argues that the binding of the liku around the married woman was the most important of all ceremonies and was a woman's marriage certificate. The union of husband and wife was binding if the liku had been duly tied. The knot of the girdle, from which the fringe hung, was made on the right side, and this was considered a public acknowledgment of her married status.

This new chapter in her life was not just visible in a woman's change of dress, but was similarly reflected on her body as she received her qia gusu, tattooing around the mouth. In his journal John Archibald Boyd, a planter of Waidau, Ovalau (who came to Fiji in 1865), provides us with an eyewitness account of mouth tattooing in Nalaba village, Wainivau tributary of the Wairoro (Sigatoka) river, Viti Levu, on 22 January 1878:

> Saw a girls mouth being tatoed. Patient laid on back her mouth was stuffed with Vau [*Hibiscus tiliaceus*] leaves a cloth put over her eyes & her head held steady by a woman. The operator on left side holding the instrument made of 3 lemon thorns fastened to a reed & heavier piece of reed about a foot long being used as a hammer. Near her was a coconut shell contg a black paste made from makadri [*makadre,* the gum of the Fiji kauri, *Agathis vitiensis*] into which the lemon thorns were dipped when needful. The outer edge of the pattern was done first then perpendicular ones to the lip & after other horizontal ones. But little blood came yet from the groans & struggles of the patient the operation was evidently painful. (Boyd 1878: n.p.)

There is confusion in the literature about the timing of tattooing around the mouth. Suckling, in the quote above, was told mouth tattooing was done before marriage, whereas von Hügel noted that women were tattooed around the mouth when married (Roth and Hooper 1990: 384). Thomson (1908: 218) and Williams (1858: 160) remarked that a woman was tattooed around the mouth after child-birth. Perhaps it was not about the timing but about the degree of completion. Roth (n.d.: 140) noted: 'When the tatuing is complete the whole of the area round the mouth is tatued as an outward and visible sign of the fact (me kenai vakatakilakila); when only the front (matane) and the back (muna) and not both the calves or the thighs (temo), then only the extremities of the lips are tatued'. The confusion also stems from the introduced term 'marriage'. In any case, qia gusu indicated sexual maturity. Here, too, there was regional variety: in the interior of Viti Levu the circular patches around the corners of the mouth were joined by narrow lines around the lips (Thomson 1908: 218, Roth and Hooper 1990: 384). As Seemann (1862: 205) noted in 1860, when he visited Vuniwaivutuka: 'The women about this place, as well as about Nagadi, were tatooed around the whole mouth, not merely around the corners, as is customary on the coast'. This regional variety corresponds to the elaborateness of the earlier-applied veiqia around the loins. What type of liku was given at this stage also seemed to differ according to the region. While Thomas Williams generally notes that 'On marrying, they put on a broader dress, which entirely surrounds the body, and the depth of which is increased as the wearer grows older' (Williams 1858: 171), Gordon noticed that in the

interior of Viti Levu the length of liku did not change.[35] In 1875, during his trip with Walter Carew, he noted that girls near Dreke ni Wai wore liku 'not more than nine inches deep'. The married women had qia gusu, tattooing round the mouth: 'They are also tattooed all over the lower part of the stomach and high up round the thighs. The liku, no longer than that of the girls, is worn low down on the hips' (Gordon 1986 [1875]: 80).

When considering the tattoo patterns around the mouth of mature women, Thomson (1908: 218) imposed his own aesthetic judgment rather than considering it as an acknowledgement of their achievement, stating that 'The wife who has borne children has fulfilled her mission, and she pleases her husband best by ceasing for the remainder of her life to please other men'. However, it has also been recorded that these tattoo spots around the mouth were applied in order to conceal wrinkles (Williams 1858: 160). Malakai Navatu noted: 'Tattooing was the revered and beautiful ornamentation of the women to which great weight was attached both by men and women … It was also done for the sake of the woman's husband, that when he went to sleep with her that he, too, when he undid her liku (grass dress) might see the beautiful tracery' (Brewster 1922: 185). From a Fijian perspective, the markings would have beautified a person and enhanced her sexual attractiveness, but they were not just patterns for patterns' sake (*cf.* Thomas 1995: 103). Observers often stated that veiqia was only applied in order to attract men, but the reality was more complex. As Thomson (1908: 219) writes: 'If untattooed, her peculiarity would be whispered with derision among the gallants of the district, and she would have difficulty in finding a husband'. Similarly, Nurse Suckling recorded that women received their veiqia so that they could find a husband, hence 'the girl would do anything to be in favour with "His Majesty Mr Man" for it was thought to be an ornament as they say "Ke nai uku uku" [kena iukuuku, 'the decorating of it'] and they also knew that a man would not look at them unless they were tatued' (Suckling 1934: additional question 9, 2). In his conversation with Vatureba, chief of Nakasaleka in the Colo hills, Viti Levu, Thomson (1908: 219) was amazed how the chief, who was usually 'plain-spoken' declared how 'the idea of marriage with an untattooed woman filled him with disgust'. In Vatureba's view, not only was there a physical difference between being intimate with a woman without or with veiqia, the latter would also be more passionate. These remarks could be interpreted as a portrayal of women as man-pleasing subjects, but they equally show how veiqia rendered a girl into a woman who could form relationships of her own or be a suitable partner for kinship objectives and alliances.

Historically tattooing has been misunderstood as sexual deviancy. Ellis (2008: 27) describes how in late nineteenth and early twentieth century America a man who wanted to be tattooed was attributed with suppressed homosexual urges which were sought in the tattoo's needle penetration. Correspondingly, a tattooed woman was deemed to be sexually experienced – in a rape case in the 1920s the female victim was declined a Boston court trial as her tattoo markings were considered to have taken her virginity. In his book *Wrapping in Images*, in which he analyses Polynesian tattooing practices, Alfred Gell draws out analogies between tattooing and defloration. He treats the public rupture of the hymen of a Samoan bride as being equivalent to pre-marital tattooing in Fiji. However, in

35 Fijian scholar Ratu Deve Toganivalu, Roko Tui Bua, wrote (specifically about Bau): 'And when the time has arrived when they have slept together, the woman then goes to her mother and tells her to provide her with a large skirt dress' (Toganivalu 1911: n.p.[1]).

Figure 18: Sketch of Adi Samanunu, a tabusiga. Drawn by A.J.L. Gordon at Nabulibuligone in the highlands of Vitilevu in 1875.

Fiji, tattooing was a private, not public event that was strictly reserved for women. Nurse Suckling was told that if a man walked in during a tattooing procedure he would have 'to soro [offering something to ask forgiveness] to the family. However, it was very rare that a man would attempt to come near' (Suckling 1934: additional question 17, 10). The application of veiqia was a process that ideally occurred before defloration (a process that was then observed with a different liku), it was not a form of intercourse. The application of veiqia was also a time during which sexual intercourse was to be avoided: 'should a man or a woman – who has had sexual intercourse the night before pass the door one sickness would come to that man or woman and also the girl would receive great pain during the operation and the work would have to be put off till the pain had ceased' (Suckling 1934: question 33, 5-6). Similarly the female assistants who prepared the tattooing tool and ink or who helped the girl during the veiqia process were required to refrain from sexual intercourse the night before in order not to cause inflammation of the punctures. Even a pregnant woman should stay away as she would not only cause inflammation, but could possibly harm her unborn child by witnessing the veiqia process (Suckling 1934: question 33: 2-6). Women undergoing the process and the practitioners were in a tabu state, hence the reason why sexual relations had to be avoided.

Veiqia, and the liku (partly) covering it, were also permanent evidence of a woman's ability to endure pain, which was a way to prepare her for life as an adult woman and

the associated tasks and duties.[36] Malakai Navatu of Naboubuco told Brewster that the pubic area, the most painful part, was tattooed first and was called 'the extraction of the spear' (Brewster 1922: 185). The emphasis was on the suffering that transformed the girl into a woman. Nurse Suckling was told that a woman without veiqia was 'vakasisila', worthless (Suckling 1934: question 33, 8). 'The girl who cannot endure the pain is scoffed at and told she will not make a good wife and will not be a comfort to her husband' (Suckling 1934: question 33, 6). Interestingly, Williams (1858: 175) recorded that men celebrated a woman giving birth to her firstborn by 'imitating' her tattoo patterns, presumably by painting each other's bodies; this is a public affair that 'seems to regard the woman rather than the child'. Her achievement and responsibility was celebrated as well as the fact that she had continued the ancestral genealogy. Veiqia were therefore a source of pride: 'the ones who are done [tattooed] do not seem to mind how they expose the area amongst themselves. I expect they have lost all modesty after the long exposure' (Suckling 1934: question 33, 9). Nurse Suckling misread the pride in having a veiqia as a lack of modesty – something that was repeated from the earliest descriptions of veiqia onwards. These women would not have considered themselves naked with their veiqia. In 1981, Fergus Clunie and Walesi Ligairi were told of the recent passing of a fully marked old woman who took off her clothes to walk to the village tap each evening to wash. This was considered to be 'perfectly decent and in no way exhibitionist, she being clad in her qia, so not naked' (Clunie and Ligairi 1981: 4).

Wrapping in status

In July 1808 sandalwood trader William Lockerby wrote, while based in Bua Bay: 'The children of the King, both male and female, are an exception… they do not use the mossy [masi, barkcloth used for malo] or petticoat [liku] until they are 10 or 12 years of age but go quite naked, and this is considered as a distinguishing mark of their royalty' (Lockerby 1925: 84, note xiv).[37] Chiefly girls indeed received veiqia and the associated liku at a later age (Wilkes 1845, 3: 355-56) – as much as chiefly boys were circumcised and given the malo (loincloth) at a later stage. Thomson observed that the daughter of the chief of Sabeto (western Viti Levu) 'was thus still unclad till past eighteen, and the unfortunate girl was compelled, through modesty, to keep the house until after nightfall' (Thomson 1908: 217). However, it was not modesty that kept chiefly girls in isolation, but the need to follow restrictions. Particularly in Vanua Levu, chiefly women were not tattooed until their marriage was arranged. Until then, they were confined to the house as 'tabu siga', kept from the sun [tabusiga = "forbidden sunlight"] (Williams 1858: 134; Clunie and Ligairi, 1981: 1-2). Until she married, she had to abide by the strict rules of remaining tabusiga, otherwise, according to Thomson (1908: 201), 'if the betrothed whom she thus dishonoured was a man of rank her own relations would not scruple to put her to death, as was done by the great chief Ritova in 1852, when his sister thus disgraced him'. The tattooing of chiefly women at a later age was a practice that also occurred in other parts of the Pacific. In

36 In their discussion of Maisin female tattooing, Barker and Tietjen (1990: 228) note that it was a transition ritual that gave women the 'strength' necessary to perform their tasks as adult women, such as childbirth, raising children and providing for her family, working the gardens and gathering and transporting food and water.

37 In this case, the term 'King' may refer to Tui Bua, or to chiefly men generally. Earlier Lockerby (1925: 21) writes: 'On this island there are four persons who call themselves Kings'.

Aotearoa New Zealand, for example, keeping a chiefly daughter for marriage with another chief could bring her father higher status. Therefore his daughter was tapu (restricted), she was not allowed to become intimate with a man prior to marriage and therefore, could or would not be tattooed.[38] This shows that not just the presence, but also the absence of tattoos could indicate a special status (Gell 1993: 121, 263-64). Tattooing chiefly daughters was also an occasion for tattooing other girls. A chiefly daughter was accompanied by her vada (maid-servant) who went through the ordeal as a sacrifice (me kenai loloku) (Roth 1933: 163; Suckling 1934: additional question 11, 4). Receiving veiqia in a group added peer pressure: 'Should the chief's daughter make a great fuss, she is laughed at because the commoner's daughter would not make the fuss' (Suckling 1934: question 33, 7).

Status was not just expressed in the presence/absence of veiqia and liku, but also in the materiality of the veiqia ink and liku itself. While the dye of the burnt resin of the dakua (*Agathis vitiensis*) tree served for tattooing women of 'the lower classes', for high-ranking women the soot of the lauci candlenuts (*Aleurites moluccana*) was used. Similarly, liku for 'common women' consisted of one row of fibres of the same colour, but liku for chiefly women were especially elaborate and were composed of several layers of differently coloured fibres (Seemann 1862: 359, 354). Attorney General of Fiji (1875-76) James Herman De Ricci compares it to what is familiar to him:

> As in those good old times … when it was possible to distinguish a lady of rank from other *ladies* by her dress, so it is at the present time practicable in Fiji to discern a native lady from the plebeians of her sex by the style of her "liku". While with the former two, three, or more flounces, or layers of fibres – each one of which should be a different colour – is of necessity à la mode, with the latter barely one layer is deemed sufficient. (De Ricci 1875: 39-40, original emphasis)

The multi-coloured and multi-layered chiefly liku often had a long tie, which would be worn as a train (yara). The train was proportional to the rank of the wearer, similar to maloyara, the dangling train of the men's malo worn on formal occasions, the length of which was indicative of the wearer's rank. Status could thus quite literally be read from the dressed body. Wedding ceremonies for chiefly daughters were equally more substantial, with alliances being established at an early age. These engagements were materialised when the girl's mother took a small liku to the future husband's relatives, who, in turn, would reciprocate gifts when the young woman joined his family (Williams 1858: 168). Not only did a liku represent her relationship to her future husband at a young age, during her wedding ceremony liku symbolised how the young woman became part of a network of relationships. Malakai Navatu described two chiefly weddings in the 1870s in the interior of Viti Levu, in the districts of Noimalu and Naboubuco respectively. The descriptions show how various ceremonial customs were followed, but the focus here will be limited to the use of liku during these weddings. In both cases, when the bride joined the groom's family, she was anointed in turmeric by her female birth-clan relatives and presented on a mat with folds of masi (barkcloth) and tabua (whale's teeth) placed on her. In both cases, these gifts were reciprocated the next day by the groom's family with a baked pig, also

38 Unlike in Fiji, in Aotearoa New Zealand men are traditionally more elaborately tattooed than women (see Te Awekotuku 2007).

wrapped in masi. The young woman's turmeric was washed off and new oil and turmeric was then applied by women of her future husband's family. While in Noimalu the future groom untied the masi from the girl, this was not the case in Naboubuco. There, the girl was tied with layers of liku, one on top of the other, until they reached from her waist to her throat.[39] These liku came from female relatives and were hers to keep and distribute. The difference between the groups is important to note, particularly because Brewster notes that the wedding party in Naboubuco was considered 'a purely Melanesian clan' (Brewster 1922: 195).[40]

In Fiji, wrappings were both the insignia of mana, divine power/efficacy, and a means of managing it. As Marshall Sahlins (1981: 118) points out, during key ritual moments male chiefs in particular were bounded by the 'barkcloth of the land' in order to channel and control mana. Sahlins considers barkcloth an embodiment of the women (and their life-giving potency) who produced it. It was through their agency that divine power could be managed.[41] With respect to liku, the bride-to-be was wrapped with a range of liku. The various layers represented the various women who contributed liku to form the assemblage – layering manifested relationships with other women, both in the natal clan and in the husband's clan.

Mary Wallis (1851: 239-42) gives an account of the wedding she attended between the daughter of Ratu Tanoa Visawaqa, Vunivalu of Bau, and the Lasakau chief Gavidi, which took place in Bau on 25 December 1846. When the bride was brought by her clan relatives and presented to the groom's family, the latter provided a feast and layers of mats for the house in Bau where the wedding took place. The majority of participants were women, apart from the men who exchanged tabua and speeches. The Lasakau women sat in the house, covered in scented coconut oil, wearing flower garlands and 'old likus' – a remarkable fact as other descriptions always emphasise the newness of the liku during public events. The women on the bride's side were all wearing new liku and had flowers in their hair. The bride was arrayed in a new liku with a train and a bundle of barkcloth attached to it. She was oiled and adorned with a band of 'bula-leka' shells [buli leka, a small white cowry] around her head, bracelets and a necklace of small whales' teeth. She also carried two large whales' teeth. As a formal part of the exchange between women of both sides, the bridegroom's mother, together with two female relatives, divested the bride of her ornaments, wiped the oil from her and exchanged her new liku for an old one. The Lasakau women also exchanged their liku with the Bau women, who took these together with the mats from the house. What is wrapped can be unwrapped. As Douny and Harris (2014: 15) point out, 'To unwrap is not

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39 Interesting analogies could be drawn with the way in which chiefs wrapped in layers of barkcloth presented this cloth by divesting it from their body in front of the chiefs they were presenting it to and the way in which military ties were reaffirmed by replacing their malo with the one presented by their allies (personal communication, Fergus Clunie February 2019). However this lies outside the scope of this book.

40 As Thomas (2010: 244) writes: 'It has long been a cliché of the anthropological literature that the Viti Levu interior was 'Melanesian' in character, as opposed to the 'Polynesian' coastal kingdoms, and though the observation often underpinned nonsensical theories of racial mixing, it did reflect real social and cultural differences'.

41 As Jolly (2017a: 267-69) notes 'many of the objects Pacific women create and exchange, and which evoke the value of their maternity, are botanical and organic products that emanate from the land'. Weiner (1976, 1992) referred to these products as 'female wealth', but recently both the term 'wealth' and the gender of objects has been queried in favour of contextual fluidity (Hermkens 2017; Jolly 2017a; Lepani 2017; Veys 2017).

simply to reverse the wrapping; the act of unwrapping is significant in itself and has its own outcomes'. This exchange can be analysed as an expression of the conclusion of old relationships and the commencement of new ones. It was important that the liku had been worn by the clan the bride was joining. The bride's body was being used as a vehicle to conduct exchanges between intermarrying clans. Wallis' description of old and new liku is unique in the literature and it is unclear whether her description of old liku refers to worn and damaged liku or just less colourful and plain liku.

Generally, several sources make clear that the putting on of new liku was important during all rites of passage, including death. In May 1852, when Ratu Tanoa Visawaqa, Vunivalu (war chief) of Bau, passed away, the Fijian custom of loloku required that his wives were strangled and buried with him. Reverend John Watsford of the Methodist Mission travelled to Bau in order to prevent this human sacrifice – something the mission had attempted in the past (see Weir 1998). When Reverend Watsford arrived, he observed the wife of Ratu Cakobau (Ratu Tanoa's son) and other women 'preparing the dresses for the others to wear on the day of their death, whereby he knew that some were to be sacrificed'. One of the women who was strangled was described as 'a fine woman, of high rank, and wore a new liku' (Williams 1858: 463).

There seemed to be no clear ontological distinction between a liku and a woman. A sketch by Mary Ann Lyth in 1841 of the tomb of a chiefly woman in Somosomo, reveals that a liku had been put in her tomb – her clothing still there after her death (Clunie 1983c). Likewise veiqia was considered as a 'passport to the other world' (Wilkes 1845, 3: 355). When an un-tattooed girl died, she was painted with tattoo patterns around the loins to avoid being punished by 'the gods' or the 'tattooed ghosts' yalewa sagu i lou [yalewa: woman, lou: vine]. The gods would punish the girl by slashing her with qanikai (bivalve shells) and qa ni icibi (shell of the big icibi, seed of the walai vine) (Clunie and Ligairi 1981: 1; Williams 1858: 247). Liku, and the associated veiqia, were so closely entangled with the female wearer that they could also be used maliciously. Fison (1904: xxxi) wrote that 'Nothata, literally "to place evil upon," is to infect the dress of an enemy by means of sorcery. An end of the malo, or waist-clout, if the victim be a man, or of the liku, or waist-fringe, if it be a woman, is thus infected; and, unless a counterspell be used, certain death is said to befall the wearer'.[42] For example, in 1845 chief Nalela of Viwa poisoned the 'native dress' of a young Bauan woman. However, the dress never reached her as his plans had been exposed, which partially led to his own killing (Wallis 1851: 83). In addition to cast evil over someone by infecting her or his dress with sorcery, removing a person's dress had equally serious implications. While wrapping a girl with liku indicated becoming a woman, a whole person, stripping a woman of her liku meant an attack on her integrity as a person. It denigrated a woman, leading to madua (shame). Mary Wallis recorded:

42 On his trip to the interior of Viti Levu with Walter Carew in 1875, Gordon wrote: 'A superstition exists among Fijians, that if any person evilly disposed towards them, finds anything lying about, left by the person he wishes to injure, the object so found forms a charm, with the aid of which, either some horrible disease or even death itself may be made to fall upon the unhappy victim. … In the interior of Viti Levu this superstition is called "Noca-ta," and in the Bau dialect "Vakadraunikautaka." (Gordon 1875: [21]).

> [7 June 1845, Vesoga] Yesterday the Marama [lady] became angry with her for some offence, and threatened punishment. The girl attempted to run away, but was caught and brought to the town. The "Marama" attempted to take off her dress, or "leku." When this is done, it is like passing sentence of death upon the victim. (Wallis 1851: 100).

Assemblage

Captain John H. Eagleston, a bêche-de-mer trader in the 1830s, provided one of the earliest written descriptions of a chiefly liku with train worn by Adi Qoliwasawasa of Bau. He depicts her daily routine of bathing, being rubbed with scented coconut oil, putting on her liku with train, painting her face with patterns such as half-moon shapes and dots, and wearing a whale's teeth necklace (Eagleston in Clunie 1982b: 6-7). This passage demonstrates that clothing did not just consist of liku and veiqia, but also involved body ornaments (necklaces, application of oils and paint, and hairstyles), which should be considered together. For example, Williams described how he was in Tui'ila'ila's house in Somosomo on 15 November 1845 when a young woman was presented to him before being sent to Bau in an attempt to solicit Bau's support for Tui'ila'ila's war with Natewa (Williams 1931: 329):

> I saw a young girl of good family, who was given to…Tuikilakila [Tui'ila'ila], brought in form to that Chief. As she was presented in the way usually observed in giving a [chiefly] bride, I will describe the ceremony. She was brought in at the principal entrance by the King's aunt and a few matrons, and then, led only by the old lady, approached the King. She was an interesting girl of fifteen, glistening with oil, wearing a new *liku*, and a necklace of carved ivory points, radiating from her neck, and turning upwards. The King then received from his aunt the girl, with two whales' teeth, which she carried in her hand. When she was seated at his feet, his Majesty repeated a list of their gods, and finished by praying that "the girl might live, and bring forth male children". (Williams 1858: 173, original emphasis)

In this instance, the liku was closely associated with other body adornments such as oil and a whale-teeth necklace which formed an assemblage. The term assemblage is used intentionally as a reference to Marilyn Strathern's work (1979: 245) where she demonstrated that in the New Guinea Highlands decorations 'are not costumes, sets of clothing to be donned in entirety, but assemblages painstakingly arranged and rearranged for each major event'.[43] The decorated body is arranged and displayed. In this way, social identity is dramatically constructed through ornaments worn on the body. Since these body adornments are coverings of the skin, they are easily seen as intrinsically superficial, but Strathern argues that among the Hageners in the New Guinea Highlands these forms of dress reveal the inner self. These ornaments are not restricted to the outer skin, but mediate relations between the individual and the community. Clothing the body thus

43 I am aware that by using the term 'assemblage' I am referring to a wide anthropological debate which lies outside the scope of this study (Ong and Collier 2005). I use the term in a Strathernian sense as a grouping of body adornments that are closely associated with the human body.

implies more than dress and comprises body ornaments and body modifications that do more than superficially cover the body. Through an understanding of the intricate processes of layering body adornments, body modifications and clothing, the construction of the self or the person becomes apparent. In Fiji too, the female body remained in a fluid state and was applied with wrappings, ornaments or modifications representing a woman's life changes. Liku, veiqia, oil, turmeric and other body adornments all form part of an assemblage contributed by kin to form a complete person.

Even a liku itself can be considered as an assemblage. Consisting of individual fringes, strips and stems, a liku is more than merely a homogenous creation. Wrapping a female body in more than one liku was done during special occasions. When von Hügel met his liku-ed beauty in Matawailevu in the interior of Viti Levu on 3 July 1875, she showed him how liku were layered in formal circumstances: 'First came white, next black, then three shades of orange, ending at the waist with yellow. She put them together again for me afterwards that I might keep them in their proper order. I understood that only on festive occasions would these composite dresses be worn' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 60). Layering the female body in volume was important, showing how the liku wearer herself was part of an assemblage, of a tightly woven web of Fijian social relations. During wedding ceremonies wrapping in clothing was directly, as well as metaphorically, connected with emphasising relationships, since the liku were given to them by someone else, representing an elaborate network of reciprocal relations.

These relationships went beyond the living community. Brewster mentions that the veiqia specialist, in this case possibly the Lewa vuku, prepared the tattooing ink in a coconut shell and 'blessed the liquid and prayed to the spirits of the dead to soften the skin of the girl so that the operation should not pain her too much' (Brewster 1922: 185). The ancestors were invoked to support a process that made young women ready to establish relations of their own. It has already been mentioned that receiving veiqia was deemed necessary as a 'passport to the other world, where it prevents them from being persecuted by their own sex, numbers of whom, by command of the gods, would meet them, if not tattooed, and, armed with sharp shells, would chase them continually through the lower regions' (Wilkes 1845, 3: 355). Wilkes received a considerable amount of his information from Methodist missionaries, some of whom had spent several years in Fiji by 1840. Reverend Thomas Williams too recorded that un-tattooed women were chased by their own sex and cut with sharp shells or 'scraped up, and made into bread for the gods' (Williams 1858: 247). This ordeal was avoided by painting patterns on women who had passed away before having received their veiqia. The application of veiqia was thus a custom that was 'commanded by Degei, their supreme god' (Seemann 1862: 113). From Fiji, the custom was said to have been adopted by men in Samoa and Tonga, as Williams recorded in Fiji in the 1840s:

> Fijians account humorously for the Tongan practice of tattooing being confined to the men instead of the women. They say that the Tongan who first reported the custom to his countrymen, being anxious to state it correctly, repeated, in a sing-song tone, as he went along, "Tattoo the women, but not the men ; tattoo the women, but not the men." By ill luck, he struck his foot violently against a stump in the path, and, in the confusion which followed, reversed the order of his message, singing, for the rest of

Figure 19: The process of scarification by pinching the skin and inserting a fine sasa or wood splinter in the raised part which was burned. Photograph taken by F.W. Caine in the 1930s.

> his journey, “Tattoo the men, but not the women.” And thus the Tongan Chiefs heard the report; and thus it came to pass that the smart of the *qia* tooth was inflicted on the Tonga men, instead of their wives. (Williams 1858: 126-27)

Seemann (1862: 113) recorded a slightly different version in 1860 in which the Tui Tonga, then King of Tonga, sent a mission to Fiji to determine which gender was tattooed. On the island of Ogea, in the eastern part of Fiji, the Tongan party were told that in Fiji the women were tattooed. They felt they could only remember the answer by repeating it continuously, but when the sea became rough in the Ogea passage they stopped their chant. By the time they reached Tonga the words had become reversed and they told the King that men were tattooed. As a result, Seemann was told, the Ogea passage in Fiji became known as ‘Qa na tagane’ (men are tattooed). In Samoa, a narrative recounts how two goddesses, Taema and Tilafainga, swam from Fiji to Samoa and muddled up the words after diving under water. Taema and Tilafainga are therefore considered the presiding deities that instigated tattooing (Turner 1861: 182).[44] No similar narrative appears to have been recorded in Fiji that states that the tradition originated elsewhere and Brewster suggests that it might indeed be an older practice in Fiji than in neighbouring groups. Fijian tradition states that the first woman to receive veiqia was Adi Vilaiwasa, Degei’s daughter (Brewster 1922:

44 Gell (1993: 67) states that there is a similar story in Fiji (and he refers to Rivers’s *History of Melanesian Society* (1968 [1914], 2: 437), but it is unclear where and how this story was collected. The origin and adoption of tattooing in Fiji and Western Polynesia, and its subsequent spread with settlers to Eastern Polynesia, is not a topic that can be covered here.

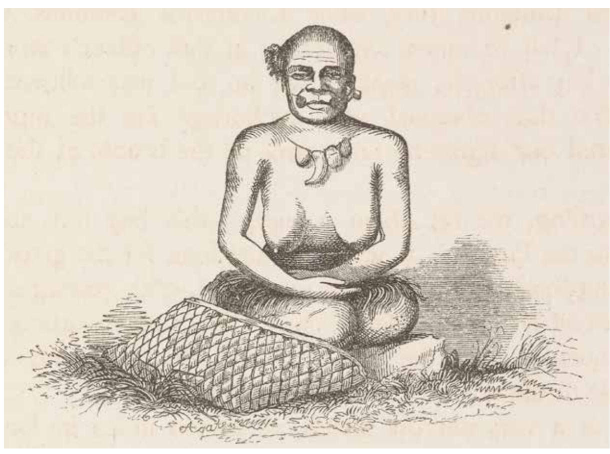

Figure 20: *Asaua woman* (Wilkes 1845, 3: 257).

83).[45] She received her markings in a hollow boulder, virtually a small cave, near the source of the Wainibuka River, Viti Levu, where many women followed in her footsteps. Through veiqia women linked themselves with their female ancestors.

In addition to those forms of clothing that were part of rites of passage and constituted a woman, other adornments showed a woman's life experiences. Girls' ears were slit with a bamboo blade by the daubati. For boys this was done by the male specialist who had completed the circumcision. The location expressed status as the right lobe was slit for people of high status while others had the left earlobe slit. Only children born of two chiefly parents could have both lobes slit (Clunie and Ligairi 1983: 27-28, 32). The hole was widened by inserting rolls of barkcloth or pieces of wood or shell (Wilkes 1845, 3: 356).[46] Much attention was paid to hair in general. Tobe or hair locks of young women were cut after marrying and joints of the small toe or little finger were cut off in mourning (Wilkes 1845, 3: 101). Both men and women were painted at times. The focus here will be mainly on other forms of tattooing and scarification. Apart from veiqia, many women had other less formal markings, generally known as samuqawe, on the fingers, shoulders, arms, hands and legs. As Williams (1858: 160) wrote in the 1840s: 'The command of the god affects but one part of the body, and the fingers are only marked to excite the admiration of the Chief, who sees them in the act of presenting his food'. In addition to tattooing, rows of ornamental raised cicatrices or blisterlike keloidal scars often adorned both men and women (Kleinschmidt 1984: 162; Osborn 1833-1836: 234). This scarification was formed by pinching the skin and inserting a fine sasa, wood splinter, in the raised part which is burned. In Jane Roth's archives a series of photographs was found, taken by Caine in the 1930s,[47] which show a process that Nurse Suckling had documented for George Kingsley Roth at that time:

45 Brewster (1922: 83) notes that the existence of the narrative of Taema and Tilaifainga who swam to Samoa with the report that tattooing was practised in Fiji might reference that Degei came from Samoa. That would imply that the practice of tattooing is considered as foreign throughout western Polynesia (Gell 1993: 66).

46 See Osborn (1833-36: 234) for an early description of the process.

47 Caine's original plates were damaged by a hurricane in 1952. The copies in Roth's archive are therefore rare. A letter from Jane Roth to Fergus Clunie (24 March 1981) explains how Roth had made copies of all the Caine photos he was interested in (Jane Roth archives, SRU; see also Stephenson 1997: 40-44).

> The arm was scraped to get rid of the hairs, then the sasa were broken and the sharp ends were stuck into the arm on the top side of the arm and the pieces were about ½ in long or a little longer. This was then set fire to and it burned into the skin. After this was done they put cocoanut oil on it and it generally healed leaving a scar. The more the women could endure the more she was thought of by her friends and if the man did not show signs of pain she would consider him very strong. (Suckling [nd.b, 1930s])

The process was known as vakayavusasa and was done by a man on a woman and vice versa to make themselves strong. The marks created a distinguishable and permanent bond between them. Nurse Suckling also made notes on the cicatrisation process in Tailevu and Bau, which she recorded as sonisoni kaki, or leili. By means of a piece of split bamboo or the sharp end of a kai shell, boys were cut on the arms and backs and girls round the neck and down both sides of the spine. However, a drawing in Dumont d'Urville's Atlas (plate 98) shows a young man from Viti Levu with round cicatrices in a double row on his chest and arms. The process appears to have been performed by specific people only as Nurse Suckling mentioned that in Nasilai everyone had been marked by Laisani, a woman from Nadroga 'to take out all the bad blood' (Suckling, n.d.a [1930s]). These methods resulted in concentric circles or crescents of raised scars or a series of dots and straight long lines (Clunie 1980: 7, 12-13). In March 1874, the traveller Max Buchner (1878: 201) commented on the high number of cicatrices on people in Wailevu, where he reported he could not find anyone without them. He described oblong and round scars, the size of a bean. On people's backs, he noticed, on either side of the spine, simple or double rows of scars arranged regularly at intervals of the width of the fingers. Women's arms, shoulders and back were also burnt with smouldering barkcloth during mourning. Mary Wallis (1851: 73) witnessed this on 30 March 1845: 'A few sticks of sandal wood were burning near and one of the women was employed in rolling up pieces of native cloth which she would light at the fire and hand it to the other woman, who applied it to the back of the mourner, who sat perfectly quiet under the operation'. These customs were gradually abandoned, with Thomson mentioning in the 1880s that the practice of scarification was 'dying out', but was still widely visible on people (Thomson 1908: 220).

The multiple adornments and body modifications described above need to be considered together. As a collection or assemblage they make up a woman's dress, which is an accumulation of relations, shifting identities and sociality. This idea of dress and person being an assemblage of materials and relations comes markedly to the fore in a drawing made by Alfred Agate in 1840, as part of the US Exploring Expedition's visit to the Yasawa islands in north-western Fiji. Entitled 'Asaua woman' (Figure 20), it shows the wife of the chief in her full assemblage (Wilkes 1845, 3: 257). As Wilkes describes:

> She was about forty years of age; her head and sidelocks were nearly of a scarlet colour; her necklace was composed of a whale's tooth, shells, and a few beads; the corners of her mouth were tattooed in circles of a blue-black colour. She was sitting modestly after the fashion of her country, and had a peculiar cunning look, through eyelids nearly closed. Altogether she furnished the most characteristic specimen of the appearance of this people, of any I had seen; but the imagination must supply the place of a bright red lock on the side of the head (Wilkes 1845, 3: 256-57).

3

Collecting Liku and Veiqia

It was noon on Saturday 2 July 1774 when they saw land. The latitude was 20°3', longitude 178°2' west. The following day, Captain James Cook noticed that he had reached a small island, which, after seeing several turtles, he named Turtle Island (locally known as Vatoa). The inspiration to (re-)name places, a powerful act, sometimes originates in trivial incidents. Hindered by Vatoa's reef to anchor HMS *Resolution* and *Adventure* nearby, a small boat was sent ashore. Cook and his crew sighted a group of Fijians carrying clubs and spears, who retired to the forest when the boat approached. Once ashore, the British officer left 'some Medals, Nails and a Knife, which they undoubtedly would get as some of them some time after appeared again on the Shore near the place' (Beaglehole 1969, 2: 452). No women were seen. Cook's crew learned more about Fiji during their visit to neighbouring Tonga in 1777, as recorded by William Anderson, surgeon on HMS *Resolution*. Tongans described Fijian people as fearsome, undoubtedly influencing the early European impressions of Fiji. The crew also encountered Fijian men and women and remarked that 'Contrary to the practice at Tonga the women of this place are punctur'd but not the men'. Other physical differences from Tongan people were observed, such as the 'frizzled' hair and slit earlobes. Above all, Tongan respect for Fijian people was noted and an admiration for their artistic ingenuity as expressed in 'clubs and spears, which were carv'd in a very masterly manner; their cloth which is beautifully chequer'd; variegated mats; their earthen pots, and some other things which have all a cast of superiority in the workmanship' (Beaglehole 1967, 3(2): 958-59).

In July 1808 sandalwood trader William Lockerby, first officer on board the *Jenny* of Boston under the command of Captain Dorr, remained marooned for three months at Bua Bay, Vanua Levu, when his ship sailed on to China without him and five other men. During his three months at Bua Bay, he describes the 'dress of the women' in Bua in his journal: 'the belt or petticoat is made of grass about four inches broad, is tied in a knot before and hangs down to the ground' (Lockerby 1925: 23). The description emphasises the supposed enigma of the shortness of the liku itself, which he reduces to a belt or petticoat, as opposed to the long ties which reach to the ground. He noted that the men dressed in a malo, a barkcloth loincloth – a style of dress he decided to adopt during his stay:

> Thus influenced I endeavoured to acquire the good-will of the natives, and in particular that of the King. I adopted their manners and customs as much as possible; went naked with only a belt made from the bark of a tree round my waist. The islanders were also dressed in this way. (Lockerby 1925: 23)

Initially his adaptation led to painful sunburn and exposure to sand-flies and mosquitoes to an unexpected degree, but he learned to apply coconut oil and turmeric to protect his skin. Having embraced local customs and local dress, Lockerby continued: 'My body was sometimes painted black, sometimes white, according to their different rites and ceremonies. My hair was at times painted black, at other times red; in this way I was apparently metamorphosed sometimes in an African negro, and then to a native of Bengal' (Lockerby 1925: 23). His words might demonstrate the local significance of body paint as part of dress and identity-making; it is also clear how Lockerby read race from the skin.

These descriptions show that early written records of liku and veiqia were made by European and American men. This became standard for the majority of nineteenth century written sources on this topic. Above all, these vignettes show the power associated with wearing the correct type of dress and the (racial) differentiation according to the dress worn. In the plethora of potential misunderstandings in cross-cultural encounters, clothing, body adornments and associated perceptions of the human body are usually highlighted. Throughout the nineteenth century, a century during which the practice of wearing liku as daily wear and the application of veiqia steadily declined, non-Fijian depictions of liku ranged from wonder to denigration and appreciation. Throughout the nineteenth century Fijians equally observed the visitors' clothing traditions. Examples of dress were also collected – both by visitors and Fijians. In what follows, the focus is on the representation and collecting processes of liku and veiqia – in the form of artefacts, drawings, photographs or impressions – which are analysed more or less in chronological order. James Clifford points out that the history of collecting, whether of artefacts or in the form of ethnography, is concerned with what specific groups chose to value and exchange at a given historical moment (Clifford 1988: 221). Not only does this reasoning allow space to uncover the collector's intentions as well as indigenous agency in the collecting process (O'Hanlon 1989; O'Hanlon and Welsch 2000), it also emphasises the processual and relational conception of collecting (Moutu 2007; Byrne *et al.* 2011; Jacobs 2012). Collections are selections that are the result of complexly intertwined relations between objects and people who created, used and exchanged them, as well as the institutions, places and time periods to which they relate. This chapter's division into sections entitled 'Difference', 'Domesticity' and 'Curiosity' reflects how representations developed over time. Very often the encounters during which these representations were formed were collecting encounters and the collecting circumstances will be highlighted, explaining how liku and veiqia ended up in museums and archives. The section 'Difference' deals with the era of 1810-40s, while the section 'Domesticity' is about the period 1830-60s and 'Curiosity' the 1860-90s. This chronological sequence does, however, not correlate to a complete historical overview, but highlights the processes during which liku collections were assembled.

Difference: liku, veiqia and early visitors

On 22 April 1808, the American brig *Eliza* under Captain Correy set sail for Bua Bay on the southwest coast of Vanua Levu, where she would meet with another ship, the *Jenny*,

under Captain Dorr to collect sandalwood. In June 1808 the *Eliza* was shipwrecked on a reef near Nairai Island. Samuel Patterson, a survivor of the wreck, was the first non-Fijian to collect the indigenous term for female dress, while on a visit to the nearby island of Batiki: 'The dress of the women, is a band about six inches wide, and long enough to pass around the waist, curiously worked of grass and bark of different colours, called leeky [liku]. This they fix around their middle, with a lock of grass about six inches long hanging down before' (Patterson 1817: 92). He also describes how he was disrobed by Fijians when he was stranded in Fiji: 'They then took from me my jacket, trowsers [*sic.*] and shirt, but I could not see what they wanted them for, for they were all naked, and never wore any clothes of consequence. I now was left naked, but was not much ashamed, for all around me were in the same condition' (Patterson 1817: 84). Wrecked and thus dependent on the goodwill of locals, Patterson had to cross boundaries by 'going native' and clothes were a crucial element in this process. While he writes that he did not feel 'ashamed', he seemed to have felt different on his return from Fiji. In the preface to his book, which he would have written at home having resumed his own clothes, he wrote: 'The account given of the miserable state of the heathen on a part of this continent, and the islands, is quite affecting. While we like rational beings are plenteously clothed and fed, millions are in the most abject state of uncivilization, naked, and nearly so, and many considering the flesh of their fellow beings a most delicious morsel' (Patterson 1817: iiii). Once Patterson returned, he needed to readjust to differing conceptions of dress that associated nakedness with cultural poverty and a lack of civility, even though he felt he had to assume this 'immoral' state in order to survive. Unable to understand that nudity is understood differently in distinct cultural contexts and that seemingly naked bodies could be fully dressed, from a Euro-American, mainly male perspective, clothing was conceptually opposed to nakedness and nakedness was wrongly associated with a lack of morals and with sexuality (Tcherkézoff 2008: 160). Reading between the lines of these interpretations, it becomes clear that early visitors rarely encountered completely undressed people – except, perhaps, during intimate liaisons. The clothing worn was just not considered adequate dress. In a context of trade, which will be explored in this section, it was not only the exchange of goods that was central; Fijians and non-Fijian visitors were observing each other, yet the interest was not necessarily in equality but in difference. How this difference was interpreted was fuelled by contemporary cultural preoccupations. Patterson, for instance, was ill during his stay and was looked after by Fijian women who remarked on his difference: 'While confined in my hut the women would come and examine me, to see if I was circumcised, and when they found that I was not, they would point their fingers at me and say I was unclean' (Patterson 1817: 96-97).

Clothing, or the lack of clothing, was certainly a topic of discussion and of collection. While no liku were collected in Fiji during Cook's voyages, at least one appears to have been collected by Cook's crew in Tonga in 1777, confirming the close exchange relations between Tonga and Fiji (Kaeppler 2009: 202).[48] No physical liku seem to have been collected by Lockerby or Patterson, or have survived in museums, but Fijians collected Patterson's clothing. The early 1800s was a time when non-Fijian traders visited the area often to procure the valuable yasi (sandalwood) on Vanua Levu, particularly around Bua Bay. Traders were dependent on Fijians to cut the wood and supply them with provisions.

48 Currently housed in the University of Göttingen (Ethnological Collections, 150).

They therefore had to establish partnerships with local chiefs, notably Tui Bua, and rely on local market prices. Early visitors to Fiji felt they had to balance the constant tension between exerting control over, and dependence on, the goodwill of locals. The exchange of goods was of central importance; hence why Lockerby compiled a list of trade items together with an estimate of recommended quantities to bring to Fiji to prepare future visitors. While the usual iron tools, cloth and beads were considered appropriate trade items, products already known to locals were suggested as most valuable, particularly tabua (presentation whale's teeth) and other whale ivory and white shells (Dodge 1972: 187). Shipwrecked sailor Charlie Savage, stranded on a reef near Nairai in 1808, is said to have introduced muskets as another valuable trade items (Derrick 1950: 44; Sahlins 1994). Traders might mostly have been men, but they did not only barter with Fijian men. Fijian women were also involved in exchanges and used their charms to trick the male traders into giving up more than they had anticipated. Lockerby describes in detail how a gentleman had been misled by a young woman to give a whale's tooth for a small quantity of her relatives' sandalwood, a trade article normally reserved for much larger quantities of wood than she offered: 'In this manner he was coaxed out of articles which would have bought fifty tons of wood, without getting five. When she had obtained everything from him that she could get, she went along with him, and when he thought she was going to step into the boat, the jilt ran from him with the swiftness of a hare, and disappeared in the woods' (Lockerby 1925: 72-73). All parties in the collecting encounter had their own strategies.

Trading encounters: 1810s-1830s

Liku began to be collected regularly once the predominantly American traders established their presence in Fiji. The earliest surviving liku obtained in Fiji was collected by Captain William Putnam Richardson, who commanded the Salem brig *Active,* which operated in the Pacific between 5 June 1810 and 27 March 1812. He traded for sandalwood in Fiji in 1811 and is likely to have obtained his collection of liku and other Fijian artefacts in the western part of Vanua Levu, where most sandalwood cargoes were gathered. He will have offered the trade items he listed as stock, such as whale's teeth, ivory, iron, axes and hatchets (Dodge 1972: 182, Malloy 2000: 68-69, Leclerc-Caffarel 2013: 121-22).

After 1815 when sandalwood became scarce, traders turned to a flourishing commerce in dri (bêche-de-mer). Bêche-de-mer, a delicacy usually described in English as sea cucumber and scientifically known as *Holothuria*, could be harvested beyond western Vanua Levu, so the traders extended their search to the coasts of the whole island and to central parts of Fiji. This commerce required traders to remain longer in the region in order to arrange with the local chief for the employment of men to harvest the bêche-de-mer and to build a house on shore in which to dry it. In these arrangements, local exchange valuables were highly significant, as one whale's tooth, for example, bought a 'hogshead of bêche-de-mer' (Dodge 1965: 92, see also Clunie 1982a; Dodge 1966: 3; Routledge 1985: 47).[49] American sailors, most of them from New England, dominated the trade, which peaked between the 1820s to mid-1830s.

49 A hogshead, a cask of liquid used in British and American colonial times, equalled 63 US gallons or 238.7 litres.

Figure 21: Liku se droka made of vau (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*) and kuta (*Eleocharis dulcis*) (49 x 11.5cm). Collected by W.P. Richardson (1810-12).

Benjamin Vanderford had already been in the Fiji archipelago as Master of the *Indus* and then joined the Salem East India Marine Society in 1820. In this position he commanded the brig *Roscoe*, which was in Fiji between 1 April and 24 July 1822, mainly at Bua Bay, where he gathered a cargo of sandalwood and bêche-de-mer.[50] Bartering and exchanging gifts were integral aspects of trade relationships and Vanderford's collection, currently held at the Peabody Essex Museum (PEM), consists of iyau, valuable objects, such as civa (pearl shell breastplates), a saunidaliga (ivory ear ornament) and elaborate liku, amongst which is what appears to be the earliest example of a liku with a long tie bundle, reserved for women of high status (E5367).[51] This liku bears an old label identifying it as the 'entire dress of the Feejeean woman' (Figure 2). PEM museum myth now states that the label might have been a way of enticing young men to become sailors, since the liku was displayed in an institute where young sailors were trained (pers. comm. 2012). What it mostly indicates is that, judging from the collection, Vanderford obtained valuables during encounters with people of high status and that liku functioned as a trade item during these exchanges.

Indeed, the nature of the trade required good local relationships with people of authority. Obtaining the goodwill of chiefs was a better way to gain labour than the alternative: keeping hostages in the ship in return for work (Dodge 1965: 98; Dodge 1966: 12, 15; Eagleston 1833-36: [46]). John Henry Eagleston made several voyages to Fiji trading for bêche-de-mer and turtle-shell between 1830 and 1840. Commanding the ships *Peru* (1830-33), *Emerald* (1833-36), *Mermaid* (1836-37) and *Leonidas* (1839-40), he sailed for the wealthy ship owner Stephen C. Phillips of Salem. While the random acquisition of objects

50 See http://www.vanderfordfamily.com/html/2004.htm, accessed July 2017.

51 Captain Vanderford assembled various collections and this particular one entered the East India Marine Society (now in Peabody Essex Museum) in 1823, shortly after the *Roscoe* had returned to Salem. Vanderford returned to the Fiji Islands as Master of the *Clay* in 1830. It might have been during this trip that he picked up the liku made of kuta (*Eleocharis dulcis*) (E5137, PEM – 40.8 x 6.8cm), which is believed to have entered the Peabody Essex Museum around that time.

was a usual sideline of trade relations, Eagleston consciously collected Fijian valuables. Phillips encouraged his employees to document their voyages and gather artefacts that have since mostly found their way to the Peabody Essex Museum (PEM) (Clunie 1982a). As an example of such documentation, Joseph W. Osborn, aboard the *Emerald* with Captain Eagleston (1833-1836), provides us with an elaborate description of female tattooing:

> The young women often have some light-blue lines imprinted upon their hands and arms. The married women are tattooed round their middle & some of them have a spot at each corner of the mouth. The women in one district of the Fegees [Fiji] called Rah [Ra] tattoo the whole upper lip – which ornament gives them anything but a pleasing appearance. The instruments used in this work is a piece of tortoise shell of a triangular shape having two small teeth like the teeth of a saw at one angle. To this is attached a handle. The dye is made of a burnt nut, with this they moisten a place upon the skin & then with a piece of wood for a mallet commence ornamenting or rather tormenting. (Osborn 1833-1836: 234)

While Osborn characterised veiqia as a form of torment rather than ornament, descriptions of liku and veiqia were generally more neutral records of difference instead of critique. For traders, commerce was the main occupation – difference was noted but had quickly to be overcome as collaboration with locals was key. Amongst Eagleston's collection at PEM, consisting of clubs, ulumate (wigs), combs and other body adornments, were two liku (E5372, E5374). Because Eagleston described Adi Qoliwasawasa of Bau's daily routine of bathing, oiling and getting dressed, a rather intimate affair, it is possible that these liku were obtained during personal encounters rather than solevu, gift presentations (Eagleston in Clunie 1982b: 6-7). From Eagleston's unpublished writings, we get an idea of some of the objects used for barter, such as muskets, gunpowder, looking glasses, red paint, axes, hatchets, beads, knives, scissors, chisels and fish hooks, but ultimately a whale's tooth 'was principally the article they wanted' (Eagleston 1833-36: [44b]).[52] The drawing up and circulation of lists of trade items was an attempt to understand the local market and to keep informed about going rates. The lists were also used to avoid the feeling of being exploited by Fijians. Regular remarks were made about the so-called greediness and fraudulent character of Fijians and trade was therefore considered to be a careful balancing of power relations. Eagleston often writes about presenting gifts to chiefs, such as Ratu Tanoa Visawaqa, Vunivalu (war chief) of Bau, whose political authority within Fiji was increasing. It was Eagleston who christened chief Ro Cokanauto of Rewa 'Phillips', after his employer. These close relationships with high-ranking Fijians, whom Eagleston called friends in his writings, played into local politics and strategies. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, there had been two leading chiefdoms in eastern Fiji: Verata, on the Tailevu coast of Viti Levu, and Rewa, in south-east Viti Levu. During the first decades of the century Verata's power was eclipsed by that of Bau, whose chiefs, with their wives, became the most effective people to contact for visitors (Derrick 1950: 56-58).

52 For more on the (historic and contemporary) use of tabua in Fiji, see Hooper (2013).

Scientific exploring expeditions: 1820s-1840s

The voyage by the Russian Captain Thaddeus Bellingshausen in 1820 claimed affiliation with eighteenth century naval expeditions, such as Cook's, and thus focused on the scientific gathering of botanical, zoological and ethnological information. Sketches and drawings were made of the men who came aboard at Ono-i-Lau, illustrating their body adornments and weapons, but no information on women and their dress was revealed (Bellingshausen 1945, 1: 308-09, Hooper 2016: 6, 49, 50). Hence, until the 1820s, it were not explorers who recorded early information on and provided representations of liku, but traders.

During two visits by the Frenchman Jules Sébastien César Dumont d'Urville in 1827 and 1838, the focus was not on trade but on charting the archipelago and obtaining ethnographic and physical anthropological information. Dumont d'Urville had already sailed to the Pacific in the *Coquille* under the command of Duperrey (1822-25), but had not visited Fiji at that time. In April 1826 the *Coquille* was renamed *Astrolabe* and began another exploratory voyage to the Pacific, now under the command of Dumont d'Urville. They reached Lakeba on 26 May 1827, but due to poor weather no landing was made. However, the crew acquired artefacts from Fijians who visited the ship in their canoes and came on board. The *Astrolabe's* sudden departure from Lakeba, forced by deteriorating weather, meant a group of Fijians and Tongans were still on board when she sailed on to Vatu Vara, Taveuni and neighbouring Qamea. Dumont d'Urville was particularly impressed by the young Fijian Tubuanakoro ('Tomboua-Nakoro', Figure 22). As the eldest son of Ratu Tanoa Visawaqa of Bau, he provided the crew with significant information both politically and geographically. The fact that Tubuanakoro was described as wearing European clothes (which he had received from the crew) indicates how European trade items were easily appropriated by high-status Fijians. Bad weather made survey work difficult, so Dumont d'Urville altered course. He sailed to Moala on 2 June and the islands of Totoya and Matuku. Then Dumont d'Urville sighted the island of Gau and went to Viti Levu, where the dangerous reef and a storm prevented landing. Later, the *Astrolabe* crew bartered with locals in their canoes off the south coast of Nadroga, Viti Levu (8-9 June 1827). Chief 'Ounoung-Lebou' was eager to trade, supplying food and local artefacts, including pieces of barkcloth. 'Ounoung-Lebou' knew what he wanted in return. Not tempted by glass beads or fabric, he asked for guns, gunpowder and metal tools, probably to help him in his conflict with Bau, since trade with Europeans was motivated by local strategies. The following day, 'Ounoung-Lebou's' offered a pig and a woman in exchange for a gun. Dumont d'Urville explained that he did not need a woman on board and paid for the pig with a kilogram of gun powder (Dumont d'Urville 1830-1835, 4: 447-52; Duyker 2014: 227-28; Leclerc-Caffarel 2013: 145-46, 151-52). During Dumont d'Urville's first visit to Fiji, the expedition members did not cross into Fijian space. Because of bad weather conditions, only brief encounters took place on board the ship or with people in canoes, thus on sea, not on land. The resulting descriptions and collections cannot be anything but a cross-cultural constructions of difference, which were presented as 'scientific' and therefore objective realities.

This difference was voiced most clearly in Dumont d'Urville's creation of geographical and racial subdivisions of the Pacific. In his publication of 1832, Pacific people were

Figure 22: Portrait of Tubuanakoro in the Atlas of Dumont d'Urville's voyages.

placed in one of three regions: Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia.[53] These were not merely geographical subdivisions but implied a long-standing racial and cultural hierarchy predicated on a presumption of the superiority of European races and cultures. Placed on a socio-evolutionary scale, Dumont d'Urville ranked the Polynesians (from the Greek, 'many islands') at the top, followed by Micronesians ('small islands'), with Melanesians ('islands of the black people', the only region named after the skin colour of its inhabitants) at the bottom. Fijians were placed highest within Melanesia due to their close relations with the Polynesian inhabitants of Tonga (Dumont d'Urville 1832:

53 He also included Malaysia in his writings, which for reasons of clarity and focus, has been omitted here. The legacy of Dumont d'Urville's classification and the related notion of 'race' has been researched widely (Clark 2003; Tcherkézoff 2003a; Douglas 2005b, 2006). For a Melanesian perspective, see Kabutaulaka (2015).

13). Dumont d'Urville's thinking was influenced by phrenology, a pseudo-science that maintained human psyche could be read by studying the skull; phrenologists supposed that the brain consisted of organs which could be trained. The expansion of these brain organs through exercise thus influenced the topography of the skull. In other words, it was believed that social conditions influenced people's psychological development. Evidence was obtained by measuring the skull (Rochette 2003). The cephalic index was considered as an index of advancement.

Dumont d'Urville invited the famous French phrenologist Pierre Dumoutier, to accompany him on his second Pacific voyage on the *Astrolabe* and Zélée (the latter commanded by Charles Hector Jacquinot). They visited Fiji from 12 to 28 October 1838.[54] After a quick stop in Lakeba to deliver mail to the resident missionaries, Dumont d'Urville set sail for Viti Levu on 12 October. Four days later they anchored off the small island of Viwa, close to Bau, to carry out a punitive assault, setting fire to the village as retribution for the killing of Captain Jean Bureau and two officers of the brig *L'Aimable Joséphine* in 1834. Afterwards, the ship was visited by two canoes with a chief of Ovalau on board. Dumont d'Urville explained to him why he had sought revenge on Viwa, the home of the purported miscreants, and stressed they were otherwise friends with Fijians. He presented him with two tabua, which he knew were a highly valuable gift ('cadeau très-précieux', Dumont d'Urville 2012 [1841-1846], 4: 203). Other canoes followed and a brisk trade was carried out between the crews. No provisions were brought by Fijians, but valuables such as barkcloth, pottery, liku, spears, clubs and yaqona bowls – items that indicated a wish to establish reciprocal relationships. Lieutenant Dubouzet, second in command on the *Zélée*, wrote in more detail about the transactions that took place. Fijian men offered bows, arrows, spears and clubs, 'The women, on the other hand, saw our desire to have artistically made belts [liku], that constituted their only clothing, and came from all places to exchange them, against necklaces and other trifles' (Dumont d'Urville 2012 [1841-1846], 4: 383).[55]

In Bau Dumont d'Urville met with Ratu Tanoa to justify his punitive act at Viwa. An elaborate ceremony of drinking yaqona (kava, a drink made from the pepper bush *Piper methysticum*) followed, after which Dumont d'Urville bestowed Ratu Tanoa with gifts of white cloth, yellow handkerchiefs, knives and expedition medals. It is exchanges such as these that led to an ethnographic collection of over 700 objects (including two Fijian liku), which was assembled during the course of a voyage that lasted nearly four years.[56] French Naval officers were not permitted to create private collections and were under strict instructions to hand expedition collections over to the King and Nation. However, sailors still brought home souvenirs, which explains how two other liku collected during this second visit of Dumont d'Urville to Fiji made their way to the Museum of Natural

54 Charles Pickering, the naturalist who was part of the US Exploring Expedition was also influenced by phrenology (Joyce 2001).

55 Author's translation of: 'Les femmes, d'un autre côté, voyant notre désir d'avoir ces ceintures artistement faites, qui constituqient leur unique vêtement, en offraient de tous côtés en échange de colliers et d'autres bagatelles' (Dumont d'Urville 2012 [1841-1846], 4: 383).

56 The collection entered the Musée de la Marine in Paris, which had been established in 1827, and is currently in the Musée du quai Branly – Jacques Chirac.

History of Toulouse, which is where the collection of Gaston de Rocquemaurel (second-in-command on the *Astrolabe*) is kept (Leclerc-Caffarel and Zanco 2013: 123-25).[57]

Women and their dress were further collected in the form of drawings and observations, but also in plaster casts. In line with the prevalent discourse on racial hierarchy, phrenologist Dumoutier produced more than 50 plaster busts of living models during the voyage. For example, there are busts of 'Bouna-Bouna' and of 'Liké-Liké', two women from Levuka, in the Musée de l'Homme in Paris (with photographs of the busts in MQB). Knowing these women's names encourages a reading of the busts as portraits, yet the busts mainly give evidence of the urge to produce 'scientific detail' in the form of disembodied heads, which resemble death masks. Dumoutier had been encouraged to link his phrenological measuring with observations of people's customs and he seemed impressed with Fijian material culture and the friendly character of Fijian men. Fijian women were a different matter and Dumoutier dismissed them by describing them as 'ugly' (Rochette 2003: 254, 265).[58] It is difficult to repeat these demeaning accounts and much easier to completely reject and dismiss them, but as Douglas (1999: 194) reminds us, to merely condemn colonial texts is to re-empower them. It is more significant to read between the lines and realise that there are different ways of understanding the body.

Records often rely on misunderstandings. On 22 October 1838 Dumont d'Urville observed a group of about fifty women who were fishing near Levuka. Noting their fits of laughter and cries of joy, he concluded that these women seemed happy and were able to enjoy a high degree of freedom. His initial emphasis on the simplicity of life for Fijian women was followed by a statement that the position of women was miserable; they were inferior to men and treated as property. Suddenly the seemingly innocent depiction of the scene of fishing women becomes an interpretation of a rare occasion of freedom. Misunderstanding the importance of gifts in order to establish alliances, he objectified Fijian women as property. Dumont d'Urville noted that the dress of women in Levuka consisted of a simple fibre belt that shows the lower part of their abdomen, which did not show any trace of tattooing (Dumont d'Urville 2012 [1841-1846], 4: 224-25, 252-53). This statement shows that he knew about women's tattooing, and one of the first drawings of veiqia was made during this expedition. Plate 93 of the *Atlas Pittoresque* of d'Urville's *Voyage au Pole Sud et dans l'Oceanie,* which is entitled *Interieur de la Maison des Esprits a Lebouka,* shows a woman with veiqia in a bure kalou in Levuka in 1838, drawn by one of the artists accompanying Dumont d'Urville. There seems to be a high degree of artistic license involved, because women were not allowed in the bure kalou [men's meeting house, temple], let alone without liku, and it is therefore likely that this drawing was a later reconstruction based on a sketch of veiqia by Ernest Auguste Goupil (currently in the Musée du quai Branly – Jacques Chirac).[59]

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57 Dumont d'Urville's personal collection was given to the city of Caen in his native Normandy but was destroyed during the Second World War (Leclerc-Caffarel and Zanco 2013: 123-25). For more information on Rocquemaurel's collection, see also Leclerc-Caffarel (2013).

58 O'Brien (2006: 197) points out that in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century representations of Pacific women, beauty was expressed by 'an orderly body, a body that was minimalist, childlike, and "close to the bone"'.

59 The expedition members' writings on this event do not mention the presence of women in the bure kalou. Dumont d'Urville writes about seeing the bure or 'maison de l'Esprit' and visiting it to have a rest, accompanied by Europeans who live in the village from whom they found out the latest news (Dumont D'Urville 2012 [1841-1846], 4, 226). Jacquinot only mentioned Europeans and 'natives', most probably men (2012 [1841-1846], 4, 396). For Goupil's sketch, see http://www.quaibranly.fr/en/explore-collections/.

Figure 23: Plate 93 of the *Atlas Pittoresque* of d'Urville's *Voyage au Pole Sud et dans l'Oceanie,* which is entitled *Interieur de la Maison des Esprits a Lebouka* showing woman with veiqia.

While drawings and sketches were made, not much was said about female tattooing in the written voyage records. This seems surprising, though perhaps the concept of tattooing was not seen as a significant topic given the crew were familiar with Marquesas Islands' tatau (tattooing). While veiqia was not commented upon, Fijian female skirts were compared to forms of garments in other Pacific Islands, often in a degenerative manner. Dubouzet deemed the Fijian female garment 'too simple' stating that women from Nuku Hiva in the Marquesas Islands, whom he had also observed, were 'prudes' in comparison, because they wore more clothing (Dumont d'Urville 2012 [1841-1846], 4: 384). It was thus the lack of clothing or the perceived nudity that was emphasised, rather than the clothing itself. This state of nudity was not associated with an innocent, artistic state of undress, but was considered to be the result of a cultural incapacity to dress adequately. In the eyes of some non-Fijian visitors, morals and (lack of) clothing were inseparable (*cf.* Eves 1996). Kenneth Clark (1956) famously distinguished between nakedness and nudity, whereby nudity was considered an artistic state, while nakedness was associated with an uncivilised state resulting from a lack of morals. Following this theory, Fijian women were considered naked rather than nude. Liku were considered scanty and immodest as a result of conflicting cultural attitudes to modesty and nudity. As Richard Eves writes (1996: 98), in the eyes of western visitors 'the outward bodily form must be congruent

with the interior morality'. However, there were differing non-Fijian views, even amongst the same expedition crew. That you had to be entitled to wear a liku was understood by François Edmond Eugene de Barlatier de Mas, Lieutenant on the *Astrolabe.* He wrote that young girls wore nothing until puberty and were then given a liku (Dumont d'Urville 2012 [1841-1846], 4: 388). Second-in-command on the *Astrolabe*, Rocquemaurel, refers to the full assemblage that constituted Fijian female dress by describing how the women wore liku consisting of plaited fibre in different colours, a necklace, some shell bracelets and how they were glistening with coconut oil (Dumont d'Urville 2012 [1841-1846], 4: 386).

America was also willing to fund a major global scientific expedition, and between 6 May and 11 August 1840 the large-scale US Exploring Expedition (1838-42) spent three months in the Fiji archipelago with four vessels from its original six-ship fleet: the sloop of war *Vincennes*, under the command of expedition leader Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, the sloop of war *Peacock*, the brig *Porpoise* and the schooner *Flying-Fish*, which was intended for inshore surveying. With an original crew of 346, the objective of this expedition was to explore Antarctica, map and collect from uncharted territory in America and the Pacific and establish the options of trade treaties for American commerce. On 6 May, the expedition arrived at the island of Ovalau and encountered people willing to trade, as William Clark aboard the *Vincennes* describes:

> Thousands of natives assembled on the beach to witness the operation of furling the sails; and when the men went aloft and lay out on the yards, the natives on shore raised the loudest shout that I ever heard. Shortly after our arrival the principal chief of the village paid us a visit, with a number of white men who reside on shore. The natives flocked in great numbers alongside with yams, fish and other things of this kind to trade, and in a few moments a brisk business was underway. Our South Sea pilot and interpreter [Benjamin Vanderford] was overwhelmed in business, and the jargon he used, and that of the natives, might with propriety vie with that of Babel. (Clark 1847: 132)

Two days later, Clark wrote in his unpublished journal how in the harbour of Levuka, Ovalau, they were met by Fijians with coconuts, bananas and breadfruit to barter for fish hooks and vermillion, amongst other trinkets (Clark 1838-42: 117). Again trade was the main means of establishing initial contact with Fijians. The US Exploring Expedition team was helped by Nantucket sailor David Whippy, who resided in Levuka, which was under Bau's political influence. A beachcomber 'gone native', Whippy had acted as interpreter for many visitors before. He had assisted Fijians in Bua to sell bêche-de-mer to Vanderford's *Clay* in 1827 and then became more and more involved in Fijian politics. Known by the Fijian title Mata ki Bau (Envoy to Bau), he principally became an ambassador of the Levuka community to Bau. This was a significant position, as from the late 1830s Ratu Tanoa Visawaqa of Bau had become the most powerful chief in the region (Campbell 1998: 64). Wilkes, who wanted to secure the support of chiefs, invited Ratu Tanoa on board the *Vincennes* on 8 May 1840. The encounter between two men who each wanted to show their authority is interesting. Wilkes invited Ratu Tanoa to explain his presence, purpose and power. For his part, Ratu Tanoa demonstrated his tactical skill by insisting on following Fijian protocol, being willing to communicate only through proper channels. Even though Ratu Tanoa understood Whippy's Fijian perfectly well,

Whippy was not allowed to act as a direct translator between Wilkes and Ratu Tanoa. He had to address Wilkes' words to the chief's matanivanua (herald) (Wilkes 1845, 3: 55). This shows how adept Fijians were in their dealings and negotiations with visitors. They asserted their position of authority, implying that visitors depended on the goodwill of Fijians. Midshipman on the *Porpoise* Colvocoresses (1855: 136) writes that Ratu Tanoa 'remained on board upwards of an hour, and received a number of presents from the officers; among others, a whale's tooth, than which nothing can be more valuable in the estimation of a Fejeean'. Lieutenant William Reynolds adds: 'Presents were then made to Snuff [Ratu Tanoa's nickname] and his Chiefs, the most valuable of which was a patent rifle that loaded at the breech and the like of which had never been seen in Fegee' (Reynolds 1988: 168). These were indeed valuable gifts, significant in securing bonds between the participants. After six weeks on the island of Ovalau, the expedition proceeded via Bau to Rewa, where Captain William Hudson worked with Ro Cokanauto, known to American sailors as Phillips. Charles Pickering and William Rich collected botanical specimens and ethnographic information. The crew then travelled and collected further amongst most of the archipelago. The crew then spent time elsewhere on Viti Levu and travelled to the Yasayasamoala group, Vanua Levu and the Yasawa Islands.

Not all contact was positive. In July 1840 Lieutenant Underwood and Midshipman Henry were killed at Malolo. Their deaths were avenged by the American crew who attacked and killed many Fijians in Malolo while burning down villages and food supplies (Wilkes 1845, 3: 270-79). Not all transactions were positive either, some were confusing as Americans violated Fijian taboos or did not act appropriately. On 10 June, Purser of the *Peacock* Spieden visited 'Muthuata' [Macuata, Vanua Levu] to stock up on provisions 'and notice was given that all produce they would bring would be purchased' (Wilkes 1845, 3: 216). An abundance of yams, taro, pawpaws, shaddock fruit [pomelo] and lemons was brought and exchanged for the usual trade items such as hatchets, knives, scissors, beads, fish hooks, looking glasses and red cloth and paint. Spieden collected as much as he could take to the ship and then concluded the trade. But that was not taking the Fijians into account: 'As Mr. Spieden was not able to carry away all they had collected, their expectations of a market were not realized, and they threw the remainder into the river, saying that they had been told, "the white men never told lies, but they now saw they had two faces"' (Wilkes 1845, 3: 216). Officially, there was an embargo on trade except for necessities and curiosities (Wilkes 1845, 1: xxviii). Trading from the ships of the squadron was strictly regulated. Fijians were only allowed to come when a white signal flag was raised. A designated trade master, usually an officer on each vessel, regulated the transactions and set exchange rates, for which trader Eagleston's list of trade items was useful (Wilkes 1845, 2: 419). Lieutenant William Reynolds writes:

> The natives were now permitted to come alongside to trade… For bottles, we could get cocoa nuts, yams, bows and arrows, and other trifles. Red paint was highly valued, and hachets, plane Irons, knives, razors, scissors, fishhooks, looking glasses, calico, beads were a stock with which you could buy anything in Fegee. Muskets, powder,

> lead, whales' teeth, and chests with locks were the things most valued, but these are only used as presents, or given in payment for Tortoise Shell or for the hire of those engaged in gathering *bich le mer*. (Reynolds 1988: 164)[60]

While supposedly strictly regulated, in reality, trade occurred all the time: 'It was an everlasting source of amusement to witness the traffic that was continually going on: every man and boy in the Ship was busy from morn till night in procuring edible things, as well as such articles as would be deemed curious at Home' (Reynolds 1988: 164). Reynolds continues by stating that their Fijian trade partners expressed confusion as to why they would want so many things, 'Museums and Lyceums not being established among this people, they are not touched with the passion of collecting curiosities' (Reynolds 1988: 165). However, it was the mutual interest in each other's goods, in each other's 'curiosities', that drove these transactions. The sheer number of objects collected (around 1200 objects from Fiji) during the US Exploring Expedition exceeded those of other scientific expeditions of the period. What was acquired was to a large extent dependant on what Fijians were willing to make available at this time.

The Fijian female body and its comportment

'They are still no better than slaves', writes William Clark about Fijian women in his unpublished journal written aboard the *Vincennes* of the US Exploring Expedition. The fact that women could be 'purchased from their parents for a whale's tooth or an old musty muslin', made him state that they were 'bought and sold like cattle' (Clark 1838-42: 121). Similar to his French explorer colleagues, Clark could not understand the significance of establishing alliances. In his eyes, these women were not clothed either. William Clark described his arrival on the Island of Ovalau on 6 May 1840 where he was met by a large group of Fijians: 'In some of the canoes were women and children as naked as our first parents, when inhabitants of the garden of Eden' (Clark 1847: 132). 'Slight and scanty dress' (Wilkes 1845, 3: 355) rarely passed as dress in the eyes of non-Fijian visitors and the emphasis was on the supposed absence of dress. Similarly, Lieutenant William Reynolds wrote in a letter to his family: 'The women were monstrous ugly; instead of the tappa [tapa, barkcloth] round the loins, they wore a girdle of grass woven into a belt about three inches in width, from which fell a fringe of the same. This was of various Colours, very neatly made, and the only covering in vogue among the dames of Fegee. They were very good natured, however, and were very curious in examining us from top to toe' (Reynolds 1988: 163). The latter part of Reynold's quote indicates that there was a mutual interest in each other's appearance; Fijians were as much assessing the way non-Fijian visitors dressed. As Wilkes (1845, 3: 338) indicates in his more insightful, if over-dramatised, view: 'Though almost naked, these natives have a great idea of modesty, and consider it extremely indelicate to expose the whole person. If either a man or woman should be discovered without the *maro*, or *liku*, they would probably be killed' (Wilkes 1845, 3: 356). This statement was based on what had happened to a party of French sailors who were part of Dumont d'Urville's expedition and had filled their casks of water in the stream that passes through Levuka. They had removed all their clothes, which was strongly

60 Similarly, Passed Midshipman Colvocoresses (1855: 181) recorded muskets and gun powder, whales' teeth, cotton cloths, hatchets, knives, scissors, razors, glass bottles and red paint as good trade items.

condemned by Fijians: they 'were seen in a state of nudity by the chiefs and people, who sent off a deputation immediately to Captain D'Urville, to represent the indelicacy of it, and to request that he would not allow his men to appear so' (Wilkes 1845, 3: 356).[61] William Clark too added to his portrait of 'naked' Fijian women, that 'many of the females seemed quite modest and sensible of their destitute situation' (Clark 1847: 132). It is in this climate of mutual misconception that perceptions of clothing and the associated body were formed. The above descriptions do forcibly remind us that the idea of nudity in itself is always produced. Who is dressed and who is not in these statements is very much in the eye of the beholder.

A similar argument can be put forward when it comes to representations of veiqia. In 1840, Assistant Surgeon Silas Holmes of the US Exploring Expedition recorded in his unpublished journal: 'I have seen no tattooing among the Fijis except about the female pudendum, which is always surrounded with deep blue lines, drawn with great care and disposed in every case I examined in precisely the same way. The lines extend completely around the mons veneris about half way to the umbilical, usually the labia and nympha are also tattooed'. He added that 'These decorations the women never object to displaying in the frankest possible manner' (Holmes 1838-42: n.p.). Not understanding that veiqia was part of dress, the forwardness of these women puzzled him. During the same expedition, Passed Midshipman George Sinclair, in command of the *Flying Fish,* described in his journal on 22 June 1840 that during his visit to Makogai island, which was at that time occupied by 'a few families from Lavuka [Levuka], he:

> Had a visit from all the women of the Island. Made them all some small presents. I can't say much for their modesty, as it only required the bribe of a small piece of tobacco to induce them to "Sarra sarra" [sarasara, look at] or take off the slight fringe [liku], that only half conceals those parts which the sex usually desire to cover. (Sinclair 1838-42: n.p.)

Women were proud to show their veiqia and Sinclair realised that this was not 'immoral' behaviour. In his general notes on Fiji, compiled subsequent to the *Flying Fish*'s departure on 15 August 1840, he noted that:

> As soon as a girl arrives at the age of Pubert[y], or has had intercourse with the other sex, she undergoes the process of being tattooed about the genital organs. This may be considered as part of their dress, as it would be considered much more immodest to be without this work, than for them to take off the waist girdle. The tattooing is extended inside the vagina for several inches, and causes very great pain, and frequently, severe indisposition. (Sinclair 1838-42: n.p.)

The personal relationships established during the US Exploring Expedition not only led to more elaborate descriptions of veiqia, but also to an understanding of local

61 It is impossible to ignore Wilkes' distinguishing terminology; in the above quotes he used 'naked' to refer to Fijians and 'nude' to refer to the French sailors. However, in Wilkes' case, the differentiation seems to be a grammatical choice as he only uses nudity in the phrase 'state of nudity', which he generally used to denote Fijians and non-Fijians alike.

conventions of wearing liku: 'Before marriage the liku is worn short, but after the birth of the first child, it is much lengthened' (Wilkes 1845, 3: 355).[62] Sinclair gave more detail in his unpublished journals: 'Their dress consists of a fringe worn round the hips and barely long enough to cover certain parts. In the young girls the whole girdle is about four inches in breadth, the fringe at the lower edge not being over an inch and generally white in colour. With the older women the fringe is about three inches long, and when they are in the straw [pregnant] they daub this over with Turmeric' (Sinclair 1838-42: n.p.). The different stages of wearing liku and veiqia, and the association with the female body, began slowly to enter the written record.

Wrapped in liku, veiqia and other forms of dress, Fijian female bodies were infused with meaning and status, but these equally defined women by restricting or predicting the way they could behave and move. In the account of the US Exploring Expedition, Wilkes published a vignette of a young lady in a liku, accompanied by the caption 'mode of sitting'. There are indeed not many other ways to sit with dignity in a liku. The seemingly loaded term 'dignity' is used on purpose because liku could be considered as a protection of dignity, a wrapping of dignity. In Samoa, for example, the female tattoo that covers the thighs, which resembles Fijian tattooing, is termed malu, which means to be protected, sheltered. 'Dignity' in Samoan is mamalu, 'effective protection' (Gell 1993: 84-87). This dignity was not always understood in written descriptions, but is perhaps the key to unravelling the importance of liku and veiqia related to Fijian women in nineteenth century Fiji: they expressed efficacy, offered protection and reinforced the female body during significant life cycles. From the moment a girl reached puberty, liku smoothed a girl's passage through life, initiating her into womanhood and acting as a binding tie between kinship groups.

It appeared hard for visitors to make sense of the cultural importance of liku and veiqia, resulting in a wide variety of written interpretations. Royal Navy Officer John Erskine, commander of HMS *Havannah*, visited the fortified village of Levuka in 1849 and wrote: 'All [women] were scantily clothed, generally in a petticoat of the fibres of the hibiscus, reaching to the knees, the use of cloth being denied to women; but several of the younger ones had only a narrow fringe' (Erskine 1967 [1853]: 217). Similar to other visitors, he described the dress as scanty, but he did acknowledge that from a Fijian perspective the liku was considered a decent covering: 'the wearing it [liku] is as much insisted upon as a matter of decency as if it were composed of the many garments of civilized life; nor would such a spectacle as a perfectly naked man or woman be tolerated for a moment' (Erskine 1967 [1853]: 264). Erskine's writings reveal the tension between Western and indigenous perceptions and validations of clothing. While most of the representations made by temporary visitors remain at the level of describing this difference with regards to clothing and dress, some vistors also demanded change. For example, Sir Edward Belcher, who commanded HMS *Sulphur* during a hydrographic survey expedition in 1835-1842 and arrived in Fiji in late May 1840, urged visitors to his ship to 'dress up'. Understanding that the transaction of goods was an expected

62 These kinds of personal relationships were no doubt established during earlier encounters, but were not as obvious in written records.

Figure 24: *Mode of sitting.* Sketched by Alfred T. Agate (Wilkes 1845, 3: 353).

part of encounters with Fijians, which influenced the market price,[63] Belcher required the Rewa chief Ro Cokanauto to be onboard to guide the transactions. He expected the chief to assume European dress when visiting him: 'The chiefs who possess European finery, seldom exhibit it, excepting Phillips, (Thokanauto) who generally made his appearance in white trowsers [*sic.*], shirt, waistcoat, and surtout. Indeed, I would not permit him to visit the ship in any other costume' (Belcher 1843: 50). Belcher's visit occurred at a thime when more non-Fijians had settled themselves in Fiji. As may come to no surprise, they influenced Fijian clothing customs considerably.

Domesticity: clothing transformations, 1830s-1860s

In a letter to her mother written from Lakeba on 20 October 1835 just after her arrival in Fiji, Mrs Margaret Cargill, wife of the Wesleyan missionary David Cargill, wrote:

> Many of the people are quite naked; and those who are clad have only a small piece of native cloth brought up between their thighs and tied round their loins. Many of them have their faces blackened, and their hair is dyed two or three different colours. These things give them an uncouth and forbidding aspect. But we trust the time is come when all these things shall cease. (Cargill 1841: 103-04)

For expedition members and traders, the emphasis was on recording difference, but Margaret Cargill wrote that the time had come to change the customs of all Fijian people – even though she only described men in the quote above – with a view to facilitate conversion to Christianity. By the 1840s a decade of intense exploitation had depleted the bêche-de-mer population in shallow water, resulting in the need for longer stays in order to procure

63 Two liku collected by Belcher are currently in the British Museum (Accession numbers Oc1842,1210.47 and Oc1842,1210.48). The British Museum also holds a liku (Oc1842,0126.9) donated in 1842 by Richard Brinsley Hinds, who accompanied Belcher on his voyage (see http://livesonline.rcseng.ac.uk/biogs/E002231b.htm).

cargo. Sandalwood and turtle shell had also become extremely rare. Colvocoresses of the US Exploring Expedition concluded in 1840 that 'foreign trade with these islands is much more limited than it was some twenty years ago' (Colvocoresses 1855: 181). There were political rumbles too. Son of Ratu Tanoa Visawaqa, Ratu Seru Epenisa Cakobau of Bau, was extending his influence. In 1841, he consolidated the support of Cakaudrove, an important chiefdom in the north-eastern part of the archipelago, but tensions developed with the other leading political confederation of Rewa. These conflicts escalated into the Bau-Rewa war (1843-55), exacerbated by the increased availability of trade goods and muskets.[64] In addition, British Wesleyan Methodist missionaries had arrived and had received support from visiting traders when trying to spread their influence. In this section attention will be paid to non-Fijians who made Fiji their home between the late 1830s and the 1860s. Representations by and the significance of clothes to selected Euro-American women will be emphasised, as they had a different kind of contact with Fijian women in comparison to the male visitors. Their promotion of novel models of female domesticity influenced local perceptions of dress. However, the notion of 'domesticity' – as the notion of 'difference' – conceals the complexity in place. The non-Fijian women in this chapter might have fostered Victorian domestic ideals, but were themselves transgressing boundaries of domesticity by travelling away from home (Choi and Jolly 2014; Huber and Lutkehaus 1999). The aim is to focus on female Euroamerican-Fijian relationships and the importance of clothing (whatever that means in the eyes of the beholders) in these relationships.[65]

Female domesticity

The Wesleyan Methodist Church originated in the United Kingdom as a religious renewal movement within the Church of England and was propagated through the preaching and teaching of John Wesley (1703-1791) and his brother Charles (1714-1770) (Carey and O'Brien 2015). Initially, home and church were considered to be spiritually equal, John Wesley accepted women preaching and esteemed the role of women as educators in the home. Yet the movement became less open to women's preaching after his death in 1791. Attitudes shifted during the course of the nineteenth century and late Georgian and Victorian notions of domestic virtue developed. The home became particularly seen as the female domain (O'Brien 2015: 211-12). Even confined to the domestic realm, the role of Wesleyan missionary wives was significant (*cf.* Choi and Jolly 2014). The Wesleyan Missionary Society expected its missionaries to remain in the field for long periods, only returning early in the case of ill health. The fact that a single male missionary was allowed to return to England for a year to find a wife after completing ten years of service indicates how clergy wives were considered to be part of the missionary team, even though they were not financially rewarded (Warren 1827, 1: 194-95). Their presence particularly enabled closer relationships with local women.

In September 1832 Margaret Smith of Aberdeen married David Cargill, who had just received a Wesleyan missionary posting. The following month, Margaret and David Cargill left for Vava'u, Tonga, where they spent almost three years. In October 1835 they began

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64 For more information on the Bau-Rewa war, see Derrick (1950), Routledge (1985) and Sahlins (2004).

65 While I write about some Methodist missionary wives, the aim is not to study missionary influence on Fijian dress per se. The influence of Roman Catholics and of native preachers would also have to be taken into account together with a wider study of the Methodist mission.

their placement in Fiji until Margaret's death due to ill health in 1840.[66] This was a trying time in Fiji's mission history since not much success was booked until the conversion to Christianity of Ratu Cakobau of Bau in 1854, which prompted the mass conversion to Methodism of many different vassal states in Fiji, often for politically strategic reasons. Missionary families were expected to maintain exemplary behaviour. The mission household had to demonstrate the advantages of Christianity, to be copied by the local people (Heath 1987: 143). On arrival in Fiji, the heavily pregnant Margaret took her responsibility seriously. She learned the Fijian language from those who came to barter or ask for medicine. Missionary wives generally engaged in exchanges, as they had to rely to a certain extent on local produce. Margaret had regular contact with Fijian women; she visited them at home or invited them to sewing classes, all 'for the amelioration of their circumstances' (Cargill 1841: 108). In his memoirs of her life, her husband admired his wife's devotion: 'Often has a group of interesting females been seen before her, having their hands employed in plying the needle, whilst their ears were listening to the instructions which her lips communicated to them' (Cargill 1841: 107). The setting up of Christian homes became the signature goal of missionary wives. European material goods and European manners were promoted, but this was not always straightforward. The supplies brought by the mission ships, *Triton* and *John Wesley*, provided different barter goods which could be used in exchange for indigenous goods and services, but supplies were sporadic. In a letter to Mrs Tucker in Tonga dated 27 December 1836, Margaret wrote from Lakeba about her first year in Fiji: 'Provisions are very scarce and dear; and our stock of trade has been very far from being plentiful. When 'The Victor' arrived, I did not know what to sell to purchase firewood. I had to sell some of my own dresses and the children's frocks, and David's shirts, for food and firewood' (Cargill 1841: 137). Having to part with the limited amount of clothing they had was an ordeal. With little time for sewing, missionary wives were grateful for gifts of clothing. Methodist Missionary James Calvert, who had arrived in Fiji with his wife Mary (née Fowler) in March 1838, often asked in his letters to England for ready-made clothes for his wife and children, as he worried about Mary's 'constant and hard work' (James Calvert to Philip Fowler, 5 August 1843).[67] Mary sent her brother specific dress orders for which the waist should be about 25 inches, skirt length 36 inches, with no lining in the sleeves or front: 'We generally wear the full high bodies [bodice] lined in the back only, with a collar stitched on. I admire your choice much, I think al will wash. These dresses will save me a great deal of work' (Mary Calvert to Philip Fowler, April 1843). The warm climate led to a slight adaption in dress, but generally clothing was a means by which good Christian standards were demonstrated – local alternatives were not deemed to be suitable.

Missionary work also took them beyond the domestic realm. In October 1838 the Cargill family toured some of the adjacent islands and it was Margaret who particularly established links with women. On Moce, the 'curiosity of the people to see her and the children was great. In a short time the house was crowded with women, who came to shake hands with the Marama ni vavalagi, "the foreign lady and the children"' (Cargill

66 David Cargill then briefly returned to London with their four daughters, who were all born in Fiji. He remarried in 1841 and returned to Tonga. The fact that a missionary felt he could not stay without a wife shows their importance.

67 This and the following letter are stored in SOAS, London: Personal Papers James Calvert MMS M156.

1841: 196). Then, local people 'who were married and baptized gave their new dresses [most likely liku as Mrs. Cargill distributed cloth rather than received it] to Mrs. Cargill' and she provided them with books in return (Cargill 1841: 197). The exchange of dresses between missionary wives and Fijian women was standard practice.

More Methodist missionaries followed with their families, including John Hunt, Thomas Williams, Richard Lyth and James Calvert, and missions were later established in Somosomo and Rewa. Tui Cakau, paramount chief of Cakaudrove, asked the Methodists in 1837 to establish a mission in Somosomo: 'He believed that a Missionary would bring axes, &c., for his support; and that his safety under his protection would induce the Captains of vessels to frequent Somosomo; and that hereby his property would be increased, and he would become rich and great' (Cargill 1841: 150). The mission was set up, but eventually failed and was abandoned in 1847. Tui Nayau of Lakeba only converted in 1849, five years after the arrival of Catholics on Lakeba. The mission story in Fiji is thus a slow one, as missionaries initially achieved little success.[68]

In her letters from Fiji to her relatives in Britain, missionary wife Mary Ann Lyth often included an acknowledgement for received cloth and clothing, which was not just destined for the Lyth family and other Europeans but also for converted Fijians. Mary Ann Lyth (née Hardy) married Richard Burdsall Lyth in 1836, the year her husband was ordained a minister of the Methodist Church. In September Richard Lyth was elected to serve as a missionary in the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. The following month they sailed to Tonga to take up the post. In 1838, they were transferred to a new appointment in Fiji, where they stayed for fifteen years (1839-54). During her early days in Fiji, Mary Ann Lyth wrote to Mrs John Jackson in York, England:

> We are now my dear sister in Feejee. In Feejee in the midst of Heathens – and barbarians… Our situation is very different to what it was in Haabai [Ha'apai, Tonga] – shall have great need of your prayers that we may be preserved from all fear and danger – and that our spirits may not droop. The people are fearful to look at – as near naked as it is possible to be – great thieves and seem to have no fear of man or anything else. But I feel much encouraged that the Gospel of Jesus Christ will do great things for them. (Letter Mary Ann Lyth from Rewa to Mrs John Jackson, 16 July 1839).[69]

Fijians were considered frightful and their 'near naked'-ness fitted this perspective.[70] Mary Ann Lyth consciously aimed to influence clothing customs by asking her servants to cover up. Six years later she wrote to Mrs Jackson again: 'Will you be kind enough to beg for me soiled thread gold or white. I have to part with a great deal here for sewing native dresses' (Letter Mary Ann Lyth from Lakeba to Mrs John Jackson, 13 June 1845). In her letters, written over a fifteen-year timespan, clothing remained a significant topic. In 1844,

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68 There is a plethora of literature on the establishment of Christianity in Fiji. For more recent studies, see Thornley (2000, 2002).

69 All the letters quoted here were compliled by Lyth's descendants, see Crawford and Beard (2010).

70 This interpretation was linked to other Fijian customs such as widow-strangling which the Lyth family tried to stop. When they first arrived in Somosomo Ra Bici, Tui Cakau (paramount chief) of Cakaudrove, had died and a number of his wives and female relatives were strangled in order to accompany him. The Lyth and Hunt missionary families tried in vain to prevent this (Heath 1987: 5).

Figure 25: *Likus* (Williams 1858: opposite page 67).

Mary Ann asked Mrs Jackson for clothes for her husband and expressed her gratitude for the gift of gloves, collar and lace (Letter Mary Ann Lyth from Somosomo to Mrs John Jackson, 4 July 1844). She thanked 'Miss Ellen Taft for 2 parcels of dresses for the Feejee Islanders' (Letter Mary Ann Lyth from Lakeba to Mr John Lyth, Foss Bridge, 2 September 1845). Providing clothing was a priority.

In return, Fijian valuables were sent to England as curiosities. A letter written by Richard Lyth and addressed to 'My dear Father' reveals that a case was sent with 'curiosities' such as yaqona dishes, a flesh fork, barkcloth, headrests and combs (Unaddressed letter from Richard B. Lyth, Viwa, August 1850). Richard Lyth also collected a liku (currently in Fiji Museum), but in general not many liku have become part of missionary collections. Liku were gradually disappearing under missionary influence and were sent to bazaars to raise funds, as Methodist missionary Lawry described on 18 October 1847:

> An elderly woman has just called here to exchange her native dress, about eight inches wide, made to wrap round the middle. For this she wished to obtain some calico to cover her person; as she began to *lotu* [convert to Christianity] yesterday ... Of course, we gave her the calico; and I shall take her *lego* [liku], or garment, to the bazaar at Auckland, to assist us, by its sale, in building the house of the Lord. (Lawry 1850: 70)

The Lyths had nine children, most of whom were born in Fiji, but three of them died at a young age (John Conway, Richard Burdsall, and Elizabeth Ann). The children lived a rather isolated life in Fiji. It was likely that the children were only allowed to play with the children of Fijian converts. Similar to other mission children, the Lyth children were sent to school in Auckland from 1849 onwards to get them away from what were considered the undesirable influences of Fijian children (Lawry 1850: 45-46; Hooper 2015). The Lyth children played with European toys – building blocks, dolls, hoops, balls and their favourite toy, a Noah's ark (Heath 1987: 174). The family also possessed a set of three European

Figure 26 (left): Doll, collected by Reverend Richard Burdsall Lyth. H: 25.7cm, wood, metal, hibiscus fibre, trade beads and paint. Fiji Museum 58.18.

Figure 27 (right): *Bau Woman*. Pen and ink drawing by Mary Ann Lyth of a Bauan woman wearing a liku and sovui necklace (made of spondylus shell) while carrying a water pot (1839-54).

dolls dressed in Fijian clothing, which are currently in the Fiji Museum after they were returned to Fiji by descendants of the Lyth family (Jacobs 2015). Two dolls are wrapped in sheets of bark cloth (masi and gatu, made of the inner bark of the paper mulberry, *Broussonetia papyrifera*) – one to resemble 'a chief' as the museum's register reveals, the other is dressed as a 'woman of rank'. The third doll is clothed with a liku made of vau (*Hibiscus tiliaceous*), a necklace and armlet made of trade beads, so is therefore wearing almost a full assemblage – there is no trace of veiqia markings. One can only wonder why the family possessed these dolls which seemingly contradicted their mission to transform clothing habits. Mary Ann Lyth certainly had strong opinions on local forms of clothing:

> For the dresses from the Ladies Sewing Association we are very thankful. We have divided them amongst the District these are what our natives very much prize and in paying the women for washing or our servants there is nothing they like better. When we have them the women who live with us, we expect them to wear them continually,

else they are naked to the waist – a most disgusting sight for us. But I am thankful to say that some of them Andi [Adi] Vatea /the chiefs wife for one/ begin to feel ashamed to be uncovered and seldom appear without a dress of some sort or other. (Letter Mary Ann Lyth from Viwa to Mrs John Jackson, 26 November 1847)

Bodily exposure was not only disturbing to Mary Ann Lyth, it was also 'disgusting'. For her, outward appearances mattered; a good body was a covered body. Missionary wives felt they had to provide a general domestic example, not just in terms of clothing, but in terms of behaviour. In Methodist thought, understandings of the body were closely associated with bodily behaviour and manner; morality was conflated with physicality and proper clothing implied a moral change into proper conduct (Eves 1996; 2006). Recent research has shown that conversion and evangelism was not limited to transforming religious beliefs, but also implied changing family and gender roles, transforming work practices and body politics (Eves 1996; Jolly and Macintyre 1989; Jolly 1991; Choi and Jolly 2014; Thomas 1992; Thomas 1999).

Travelling domesticity

Missionary approaches to behaviour and self-presentation were promoted by Mary David Cook Wallis, who supported the mission. As the wife of American bêche-de-mer trader Captain Benjamin Wallis, she accompanied her husband on three trading voyages between 1844 and 1853.[71] She too was a woman who crossed boundaries and had diverse roles. Not only was she a Captain's wife, she actively associated herself with the mission and spent much time with Methodist missionary John Hunt and his wife Hannah. Mary Wallis lived on 'the mission premises' in Viwa while her husband was procuring bêche-de-mer (Wallis 1851: 34). In addition to her voyage journals (Wallis 1994), she published a 422-page book, *Life in Feejee, or, Five Years among the Cannibals* (Wallis 1851), based on a six-year voyage in the *Zotoff* (1844-49). Her book was published anonymously 'By a Lady' but her identity is revealed in the preface written by Wesleyan Missionary Reverend James Calvert who added that 'she has been one with us' (Calvert in Wallis 1851: iv). Although she developed friendships with many Fijians and her relationships with them are commemorated in the name Merewalesi (Mary Wallis), she was also capable of causing offence. She wanted to record Fijian customs and wrote in a quasi-anthropological manner about her experiences. In the latter role, she even ignored gender boundaries. In Bau, she wanted to enter the bure [men's meeting house, temple]:

> When we reached it, several of the aristocracy were about the place, and seeing that we were going to enter, looked quite displeased, and said that no woman had ever been inside of a "*buri*," [bure] and it was a very great "*tambu*." [tabu] Mr. Hunt stopped to talk with them, and try to gain permission for us to go in, as was proper for him to do, knowing as he did the rank of the parties. While this was going on, I quietly slipped my arm from that of Mr. H., and thinking my offence might be attributed to my ignorance, I hastened into the sacred building. On seeing this, the natives left talking, and looked astonished at so unheard of a thing in Feejee. Mr. and Mrs. Watsford and Mr. Hunt followed. We met, however, with but little to reward our perseverance. If we

71 Captain Benjamin Wallis was active in the Pacific between 1833 and 1853.

may judge of the devotion of the people by their offerings, their religion is certainly at a very low ebb. The temple contained nothing save one solitary roll of cinnet, and a small quantity of native cloth. (Wallis 1851: 173)

In her journal (12 April 1852) Mary Wallis voiced strongly how hard she considered it was to be a missionary wife: 'Now, let us look a little at the duties which a missionary's wife must perform in a country like this' (Wallis 1994: 87). She described how, at home, a woman had tailors, dressmakers, hatters and milliners at her disposal. However, a missionary wife needed to rely on sending orders home. Often clothes got lost, were damaged during the journey or did not fit and needed altering – let alone needed regular washing due to the heat. Missionary wives were dependent on people selling them food throughout the day. The kitchen needed to be away from the dwelling due to being a fire hazard, which meant a missionary wife needed to face the burning sun to make use of it. On top of that, Wallis continued, missionary wives helped out the sick, taught sewing and provided women with religious lessons twice a week. She did not spare the indigenous servants, whom she described as idle and who were seen to be making too many mistakes, even using a dress to wipe up dirt (Wallis 1994: 86-87).

Mary Wallis provided her own 'ideal' domestic example by holding sewing classes for Fijian women and by taking a Fijian girl of about ten years old, whom she named Phebe, back to New England. When asked to take Phebe with her in order that she could learn how to cook, sew and read, Mary 'put a dress on the child' and sailed for Manila and eventually to Salem, Massachusetts, where Phebe stayed for four months before returning to Fiji (Wallis 1851: 289). Phebe joined Mary on another trip to the US in 1850 during which she stayed almost a year. When they returned to Fiji, Mary described a visit with women of 'Namula' in Viti Levu and felt the need to compare Phebe with the local women: '[Sept. 5] 'We have been visited by some of the females of this place, none of whom can boast of more personal beauty than our Phebe'. Mary was obviously proud of her domestic influence on Phebe as beauty did not merely seem to concern physical appearance, but depended on the women's preoccupations. The women in Namula were said to engage in more 'masculine employments': 'They assist in cultivating the lands, in building the houses, and sometimes follow the warriors to collect the slain of the enemy, and afterwards cook them'. She even compared the state of dress, as these women wore 'grass lekus' [liku]. Together with the apparent lack of other activities such as mat making, cloth manufacture and the braiding of coir, she deemed the women of Namula 'far behind the other portions of Feejee that we have visited, in their *arts* and *sciences*' (Wallis 1851: 391, original emphasis). As a potential reason she mentioned the small number of people who had converted to Christianity but particularly the lack of mission representatives ('there is no one to instruct them in the precepts of the true gospel; and without instruction they are little better than before') (Wallis 1851: 391).

Mary Wallis also presented Fijian chiefs with her own domestic handiwork, which she describes as 'embroidered girdles'. These proved popular among the chiefs and Mary seemed to have used them to her advantage, stating that she presented the chief Retova [Ritova] with a white muslin turban with the message that she had 'commenced embroidering a girdle for him, but if his anger continued, I would finish it and present it to Thakombau [Cakobau, his rival]' (Wallis 1851: 392). The embroidered girdles were so well-liked that they were further exchanged: 'When I first visited Mathuata, I presented

Retova with an embroidered girdle, which pleased his fancy much. He took it with him to Bau, where it was begged from him' (Wallis 1851: 392). Misinterpreting this act as a lack of appreciation of her work, Mary initially insisted that she would not make another one, but eventually gave in. Chiefs were thus reminding her of their part of the exchange relation and of their authority as hosts. Mary, on her part, seemed to have understood the importance of gift giving and acknowledging local political authority.[72]

Mary Wallis' writings reveal that Fijians gradually wore more western dress. Her account of a gift presentation to Methodist Missionary Lawry in Viwa emphasised the dress Fijians were wearing: 'All were dressed in their Sunday costume, and each could boast of some "*papalagi*" [European] article of dress.[73] Some wore a shirt, some a hat or cap, and some of the females wore a dress, while others wore native cloth around their persons with a "*papalagi*" cape. The queen was decorated with a scarlet blanket, and Elijah with a large, heavy pea-jacket, lined with red flannel, and buttoned close to his throat, – the thermometer standing at 95° in the shade' (Wallis 1851: 284). For Mary Wallis, the desire of chiefly women for papalagi dresses and gowns might have indicated the possibility of a transformation of Fijian women, but western clothing was generally in demand by high-ranking Fijians, male and female. Chiefly women expressed their positions of power through their clothes. High-status women appeared to appreciate the gifts of clothes and wore them at important functions, but seemingly felt no obligation to wear them in the papalagi-prescribed manner: 'Our old grandmother, as she calls herself, was arrayed in an old muslin dress, which I had presented to the queen on my first arrival at the islands. The right side had been worn out, and it now figured wrong side out' (Wallis 1851: 284).

Transitions

On 30 April 1854, Ratu Cakobau converted to Christianity. In a much-quoted letter, King George of Tonga advised Ratu Cakobau to lotu, to convert to Christianity. Enclosed with the letter was a clipping from a Sydney newspaper quoting American 'consul' John Williams's appeal to destroy Bau (Waterhouse 1866: 244). Williams demanded Ratu Cakobau pay a debt of $43,000US which he had incurred by making various promises (Scarr 1984: 27-34; Morell 1960: 129-30). The timing of this advice was strategic, as Ratu Cakobau had asked for support in his campaign against Rewa from King George, who was himself an enthusiastic Methodist. Ratu Cakobau's conversion was part of his attempt to consolidate his power over the whole Fijian archipelago and to avoid paying Williams' debt. His conversion encouraged other chiefs to follow. Not long after these events, the Captain of HMS *Herald* Henry Mangles Denham visited Fiji between 3 September and 24 November 1854. Denham landed on Moala, north of Matuku, where local dress at that time was described by naturalist John MacGillivray:

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72 Benjamin and Mary Wallis assembled a collection of Fijian objects (currently in the Peabody Essex Museum), which includes only one liku. It appears that the Wallises mostly received their Fijian objects during formal exchanges. For more personal transactions, they had a supply of small glass beads, which were fashionable at the time in wool embroidery on purses and jewellery and which Fijians incorporated in local products such as combs (Hellmich 2006: 164). The Wallises collected such a comb (E30525). The museum also holds a waloa fibre liku with trade beads (E5139), which was collected by J.B. Williams, who acted as US Consul in Fiji ca. 1847-59.

73 Earlier 'vavalagi' was quoted, which is the same as 'papalagi', referring to Europeans/white people.

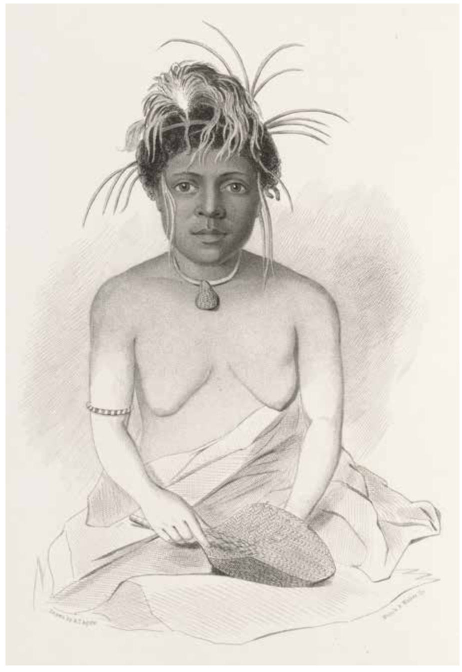

Figure 28: *Queen of Rewa*. Drawn by Alfred T. Agate. Engraved by Welch and Walters (Wilkes 1845, 3: 127).

> Tattooing also appears to be practised but not to any great extent. The dress worn by the males was very simple, generally consisting of a maro [malo] or girdle of tapa… or sometimes consisting merely of some banana or other leaves or even grass twisted into a waistband above, & constituting a rude kind of petticoat. A piece of calico or tapa may also be used. This last is also at Moala the only female dress. (David 1995: 87)

The Tongan style of clothing women in barkcloth (paper mulberry cloth), which was previously reserved for men, had been introduced in addition to calico. Records of 1840 show that chiefly women wore Tongan-style gatu (barkcloth) to show their status – even though George T. Sinclair, Acting Master aboard the *Flying Fish*, wrote that 'the women are not allowed to wear cloth in any shape or form' (Sinclair 1838-42: n.p.).[74] Wilkes describes the visit of the queen of Rewa to the ship: 'The queen was observed to have paid more attention than is usual to the decency of her dress, being enveloped in the pareu, after the Tonga fashion. She is a fine-looking woman, with an intelligent countenance' (Wilkes 1845, 3: 127). This general clothing adaptability was continued with western clothing. Clothing transformations, especially to show high status or to establish strategic alliances with people of authority, thus had a longer history.

74 The Fijian way of writing gatu has been followed (rather than ngatu in Tonga). Denham visited Fiji again between 25 June 1855 and 3 February 1856 and 27 June 1856 and 26 February 1857 (see *Liku and veiqia: sources*). During the third visit to Fiji, the crew not only stopped at Vatoa and Matuku islands, but travelled in the interior of Viti Levu, something that had not yet been done by non-Fijian visitors. Until then, only a small part of eastern Viti Levu had been explored by members of the US Exploring Expedition, who had hiked up the Wailevu or Peale's [Rewa] River.

In 1860-61 Sarah Maria Smythe visited Fiji for ten months with her husband, Colonel William James Smythe, the Commissioner investigating possible annexation of Fiji by Great Britain together with the German botanist Dr. Berthold Carl Seemann. Smythe was asked to consider Ratu Cakobau's offer of cession of Fiji to Great Britain and Seemann, who studied at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew, needed to assess the viability of growing cotton.[75] During a visit to Bau in August 1860, Sarah Smythe described in detail the European clothes worn by Ratu Seru Cakobau and his wife Adi Litia Samanunu, daughter of Roko Tui Bau:

> Andi Lydia [Adi Litia] is a handsome woman, very large and stout, (a great beauty in Fiji). She was dressed in a black satin gown, in which she looked extremely well; she wore nothing on her head except her own short hair, and all the et ceteras of dress were dispensed with. I do not know whether she had any shoes or stockings on, as she was seated when we went in, and remained so. Her toilet, simple as it was, had given her so much consideration that she had applied to Mrs. Collis for the benefit of her advice in deciding between her black satin, lilac silk, and a barege; and as if still uncertain whether she had made the happiest choice, the two latter were laid out over a box behind her. (Smythe 1864: 29-30)

Adi Litia consciously used her dresses as symbols of wealth and status – particularly by draping them over a box behind her, clearly still in view. While the act of layering liku around the body was not necessarily understood by non-Fijians as an expression of prosperity, wealth was displayed in different ways. Adi Litia wanted to show off her wealth and network of relationships by showing a variety of dresses that had been given to her. She was ensuring her authority, a position that could not be underestimated by missionary and colonial powers. We cannot forget that missionaries had struggled a long time to achieve any significant success. It was, for instance, Adi Litia who converted to Christianity first, and her husband Ratu Cakobau followed her (Brewster n.d.: 314; Smythe 1864: 30). The following day, Ratu Cakobau and Adi Litia expressed their importance and wealth again through the imported clothes they received through various channels. Ratu Cakobau looked 'very dignified', 'dressed in a naval officer's blue coat with brass buttons, item a blue silk waistcoat, a white shirt, black cravat and trousers, and coarse shoes and stockings' and Adi Litia 'was dressed in the lilac silk, over which she had put a black silk mantle; and as a finishing, though not improving, touch to her toilet, an old bonnet at the back of her head' (Smythe 1864: 30-31). Both Ratu Cakobau and Adi Litia were classing themselves on a par with the European elite through the assumption of their clothing.

Later in August, Colonel Smythe travelled with Seemann and William Thomas Pritchard, the British Consul[76], through southern Viti Levu and up the Wainikoroiluva River to Namosi, which was the seat of the chief Ro Kuruduadua, Roko Tui Namosi. During their trip, Seemann recorded and collected Fijian flora and objects, amongst which is

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75 While Seemann was positive about the prospects for a cotton-planting colony, Smythe argued against Britain taking on Fiji as a colony. Smythe thought that the unhealthy climate, the lack of discipline amongst Fijians and European settlers, and the high number of people not converted to Christianity were all unfavourable factors (Thomas 2010: 242-43).

76 In 1858 William T. Pritchard became the first British Consul to Fiji; he was succeeded by Captain Henry Jones in 1863.

a series of liku. He identified the particular hibiscus fibre varieties used for liku: vau dina (*Paritium tiliaceum,* Juss.), vau dra (*Paritium tricuspis,* Guill.), and vau damudamu (*Paritium purpurascens,* Seem.) (Seemann 1862: 353). The bark of these hibiscus trees was stripped off, soaked in water to render it soft and easy to separate into fibre strips. These were left natural or dyed yellow with turmeric, black with mud and tavola leaves (*Terminalia Catappa,* Linn.), red with the bark of the kura (*Morinda citrifolia,* Linn.) and tiri tree (Seemann 1865, 1: 18). Seemann also identified the black creeper waloa, which was used to make liku known as sausauwai or liku waloa.[77] He also recorded the high value of these liku:

> Both on account of the scarcity of the materials of which it is composed, and its being unaffected by water, especially when greased with cocoa-nut oil, the Sausauwai is highly valued by fishermen, and all people living on the coast of Fiji; they will give twenty fathoms of white Tapa, and the Tonguese and Samoans as much as £1 sterling, for a single one of these elegant articles of dress. (Seemann 1862: 252)

After this excursion, Sarah Smythe joined her husband on a visit to 'Vatia' (Ba, Viti Levu) in September 1860. She painted an idyllic picture of their encounter with chief Vakabua who sat alongside her husband and Methodist Missionary Waterhouse: 'It was quite a picture – W. in uniform, the chief in the *undress* costume of his country, Mr. Waterhouse dressed as a missionary, the dark-coloured natives, their different attitudes and wonderful head-gear, the beautiful light-green leaves of the young cocoa-nuts overhead, and the blue sky above all' (Smythe 1864: 95). While her representation might have been an innocent portrayal of common humanity, clothes, or the lack of them, as the words '*undress* costume' (original emphasis) illustrate, were once more at the centre of judgment. When she decided to sketch the scene, she was soon surrounded by an audience of curious onlookers who complimented her on her clothes. One of the Fijian men featuring in the sketch decided to adorn himself with a large shark's tooth necklace [probably whale's teeth], which made Smythe realise that much attention was paid to clothes.

This happened before, even in areas that were only gradually opening up to non-Fiijans. In 1856 John Denis MacDonald, Assistant Surgeon of HMS *Herald*, led an expedition with botanical collector William Grant Milne, Leading Seaman Joseph Dagwell and Wesleyan missionary Reverend Joseph Waterhouse and other locals, including John Henry Danford, better known as Harry the Jew, an Englishman who had deserted his ship in the early 1840s and settled in Namosi. The interior of Viti Levu had not been explored by non-Fijians, with the exception of a trip up the Rewa River in 1840 by members of US Exploring Expedition. MacDonald and his team followed the Rewa River and its tributaries as far as Namosi. During their trip inland they followed protocol, establishing alliances with chiefs, while Waterhouse conducted Christian services and discouraged practices such as cannibalism and widow strangling (MacDonald 1857: 253-54). Fijians were aware that they were being recorded and this influenced their self-presentation: [in Soloira] 'Having

77 Initially Seemann (1862:352) identified *waloa* as a *Rhizomorpha* species. Parham (1941:125) notes that Seemann identified *waloa* as *Rhaphidophora vitiensis (Aroideae*), while she identifies the *waloa* creeper as *Epipremum vitiensis*. Graeffe (1868: 12) notes that waloa fibres were buried in mud and then polished with a stone, before being made into liku sausauwai. See the chapter *Classifying Liku and Veiqia* for an example.

made a sketch of the chief in ordinary attire during our last visit, he now appeared on the bank of the river to greet us, enveloped in folds of white masi, with a large pearl oyster-shell, handsomely bound and inlaid with ivory, after the manner of the drawing [which MacDonald made of it], and expressed a desire to have these things added to his portrait' (MacDonald 1857: 257). This shows the importance of dress in expressing status. European clothes were worn by Fijian elite in addition to Fijian high-status clothing. New clothes for chiefly Fijians were not merely a signifier of Christianity but also an expression of power and the ability to build up networks with European 'chiefs' – particularly in comparison with the introduced Christian dress worn by the majority of Fijians.

Christian dress: taking the isulu versus throwing the cloth

> You could easily tell which were Christian families, and which were still heathen, even by the look of them. The boys and girls of Christian parents wear a little clothing, and they are taught to be clean and orderly, and to keep away from the old heathen doings and habits. (Missionary present n.d. [1870s]: 13-14)

Conversion to Christianity was read from the body – men who had cut their hair and women who were covered up had become Christians (Brewster 1922: 25). Many observations thus became focused on this contrast between the naked and the clothed body – the heathen and the converted body. The mission itself particularly relished in telling the classic 'before and after' story of indigenous conversion in which dress played a significant role (Jolly 2014: 429). This is also clear in a juvenile missionary book that was probably published in the 1870s and which includes the quote above. Juvenile missionary literature was obviously aimed at a younger generation to celebrate missionary work and its progress. The booklet is therefore written in typical 'save the children'-type language, while also aiming to be educational. Fiji's geographical location is explained, which emphasises equally the physical, and by implication the social and cultural, distance from England. Most of the booklet is dedicated to the description of clothing and the text is accompanied by a series of linocuts that feature young women wearing liku: 'You have heard that the children in these islands go without clothes until they are ten years old. At that age they generally begin to dress. But you must not think of them as dressing like you do. Indeed you would hardly call theirs dress at all' (Missionary present n.d. [1870s]: 18). The description of dress itself is quite accurate and inclusive. The girl's dress is described as a narrow fibre girdle, called liku, which is worn longer and fastened differently when she becomes older. Part of her dress is her shell armlet and other ornaments, often made of flowers and leaves, her elaborate hairdo, her pierced ears, and her tattoo which covered 'only a small part of their body' (no Fijian name for tattooing was mentioned, but the technique was described) (Missionary present n.d. [1870s]: 19-20). This representation is followed by the remark that 'it is now time to look at some of the changes brought about by Christianity', which focuses on the importance of education and the story of a sick boy Elijah who, before dying, begged his mother to bring an isulu (anglicised version: sulu):

> Now you must know, my dear children, that there was a meaning in this poor lad's thus asking for his *sulu*, or dress; for this *sulu* is the outward mark which distinguishes the Fijian Christians from their heathen neighbours, who go all but naked; so that they

> may know hereby that the little Elijah wanted to die with the "outward and visible sign" of Christianity about his body, as well as its "inward and spiritual grace" in his heart. (Missionary present n.d. [1870s]: 26)

In Fiji, conversion to Christianity was expressed by outward signs that were meant to imply an inner transformation. However, in reality, the story of conversion and dress alteration was not a clear-cut, black-and-white story. This booklet might imply a development from purported nudity to the clothed body and, implicitly, a development from the 'different' body to the 'domesticated' body – yet the reality was more complex.

In general, what missionaries called 'Christian dress' differed quite considerably from European clothing. Rather than a pair of trousers, two pieces of cloth that were sewn together and were fastened to the waist was the 'favorite dress of the men who have become Christians' (Wallis 1851: 284). Initially of barkcloth and later calico, the cloth wrapped around the body was known as isulu and conversion to Christianity was referred to as 'taking the isulu'. Women too wore an isulu together with 'an upper tunic, or what they call a *pinafo* [pinafore]' (Smythe 1864: 55). The missionary encouragement to wear European clothing thus led to a covering up of the body in what was deemed a more suitable substitute adopted from Tonga, where Methodist evangelism had proved successful earlier – Taufa'ahau, King George of Tonga, having converted in 1831. The Fijian barkcloth isulu was derived from the Tongan vala, a rectangular piece of ochre-stained barkcloth (known in Fiji as gatu vakatoga) that was reserved for high-ranking people during festive occasions and which was kept in place by means of a barkcloth sash. This Tongan garment was adopted at a time when Tongan native preachers, such as Joeli Bulu, were supporting the Wesleyan Methodist missionaries in Fiji (Bulu 1884; Colchester 2005: 34-35; Kooijman 1972: 337).

iSulu was a foreign form of indigenous dress, similar to the tiputa or barkcloth ponchos that had been adopted in Samoa from Tahiti. There too, missionaries delighted in Samoans' adoption of 'decent' coverings, but for Samoans the appropriation of a Tahitian garment was a manner of self-representation and self-empowerment in an imposed Christian context: 'These artifacts were not just expressions of a new context, but technologies that created that context anew' (Thomas 1999: 18). Similarly, the often written about missionary-inspired Mother Hubbard dress might have been introduced by nineteenth-century missionary wives in many Pacific places, but in Vanuatu the dress developed locally important meaning and significance (Bolton 2003, 2007). In Vanuatu, as in New Caledonia and other places, the Mother Hubbard dress gradually became appropriated as an expression of Pacific womanhood (Paini 2017). In Fiji too, the barkcloth isulu continued to have an important role in Fijian ritual activity long after European clothing became readily available (Colchester 2005).

The change of dress also occurred gradually. In contrast to the coastal people, the inhabitants of inland Viti Levu for some time consciously chose not to adopt Christian standards of dress, which is something the Swiss naturalist Eduard Graeffe noticed during his explorative collecting trips to the interior of Viti Levu. Having been employed in 1860 by the J.C. Godeffroy and Son shipping and trading empire to establish the Godeffroy Museum in Hamburg, Germany, Graeffe conducted several collecting journeys between 1861 and

Figure 29: Studio portrait of Adi Unaisi wearing a white off-the-shoulder bodice or vinivoa ('pinafore') with elbow length sleeves and a skirt potentially made from a fringed travel rug. Made by Dufty Brothers in their Levuka Studio, circa 1875.

1870.[78] While no specific collection of liku can be attributed to Graeffe, it is likely that some liku ended up in the collection that he assembled for the Godeffroy Museum in Hamburg or in Graeffe's wife's shop in Levuka. In July 1865, in Namosi Graeffe witnessed the early influence of Christianity in the form of dress. He described the people there as exhibiting 'a remarkable blending of age-old pagan and newly introduced Christian customs. Since the missionaries have imposed the wearing of cloth about the loins in place of the scanty *maro* [malo, loincloth], and these poor people have not been able to procure any, the men make do by wearing the female girdle [liku] over the maro' (Graeffe 1986: 116). Graeffe

78 In 1862 Graeffe travelled with American James Smith Dyer (who had lived at Toga Island on the Rewa River for twenty years) and Jacob Paul Storck, a German horticulturalist and Seemann's former assistant. Later in 1862 Graeffe conducted a second trip and with Dyer climbed Mount Nabukelevu in the Medrausucu Range. In July 1865, Graeffe embarked on another trip to the interior of Viti Levu with the British Consul, Captain Henry Michael Jones, German merchant resident in Fiji Frederick Hennings, Archibald Boyd and Jones' interpreter Charley Wise. They were the 'first party of Europeans ever to march across Vitilevu', crossing the mountains to Namosi, then to Munivatu by following the Wainikoroiluva, and on to Tavua following the Sigatoka River (Clunie 1986a: 47, Thurston 1924). For more information on the trips, see Graeffe (1868, 1986).

Figure 30: Photograph of an ink drawing of a woman wearing a cotton isulu with a liku overskirt, and with another liku draped round her shoulders. She is carrying an irimasei, a fan made from the leaf of the niumasei fan palm, *Pritchardia pacifica*, and has a qato, a bracelet made from sici (trochus shell) above her left elbow.

reasoned that these were merely physical changes as spiritual transformations could not be expected in the one year that the mission had been present in the Namosi region.

The adoption or rejection of Christian dress was an important statement to make. Both liku and veiqia were steadily being replaced and abandoned under Christian influence, which in the 1860s was still strongest in the coastal regions. More and more, dress and the acceptance of Christianity became entangled in local politics. In 1865, Ratu Cakobau's son, Epeli Nailatikau, had mounted a campaign along the north coast of Viti Levu, particularly the Ba coast, to suppress the 'heathen' people. Not long after, Graeffe visited the deserted village of Coimbra [Nakoroboya], where apparently only one man remained, 'but even he wore a tapa skirt about his hips as a safeguard. This skirt is seen as a symbol of conversion to Christianity, the independent Vitians only wearing the maro' (Graeffe 1986: 125).[79] However, attempts to spread Christianity inland at that time were still in vain. In July 1867, for example, the Wesleyan missionary Thomas Baker went up the Rewa River to spread Christianity inland but was killed (*cf.* Buadromo and Igglesden 2015; Tomlinson 2009: 81-82). Five years later, when Britton conducted a sixty-four day tour between May and July 1870, he noted that liku was still the main form of dress, except on Sundays 'when

79 Already in 1860 Sarah Smythe (1864: 222) reported on conflicts in the region of Nadroga, southwestern Viti Levu, whereby Christians forced non-Christians to take on lotu wear and vice versa.

the natives who associate morality with English dress and manners, turn out in their best attire' (Britton 1870: 37).[80] It was clearly a period of transitions during which Fijians chose appropriate wear for each occasion.

As much as putting on the isulu was a signal of the adoption of Christianity, taking off this dress was an outward rejection of the new religion. In 1871, Ratu Seru Cakobau proclaimed himself Tui Viti, King of Fiji (Derrick 1950). He revived the offer of cession to the British Crown in 1873, which was eventually agreed and signed in October 1874 by thirteen leading chiefs and the British representative Sir Hercules Robinson, then Governor of New South Wales. Soon after Fiji's cession to Britain there was an outbreak of measles, a terrible epidemic that cost many lives and led to many Fijians openly defying the religion that had not helped them during these traumatic times:

> You know that soon after annexation, when the mountain tribes were only half inclined to accept English rule, and still less friendly to the *lotu* (Christianity), the isles were swept by the terrible scourge of measles, which they assumed to be a judgment from their insulted gods. They therefore "threw off the cloth," which is a formula for expressing that, by returning to total nakedness, they utterly defy the *matanitu* or Government, and the *lotu*. (Gordon Cumming 1883: 222-23)

These people were returning to 'total nakedness'. However, it was not necessarily the state of undress that was seen to be radical but the actual act of stripping, of taking off the fabric of mission ideologies and colonial rule in an attempt to return to indigenous order. Constance Gordon Cumming, a Scottish traveller, writer and artist who accompanied the British Governor's wife (see below) compared these tumultuous times in Fiji with the state of the Northern Isles in Britain where Saint Columba had preached Christianity to the 'wild heathen tribes of Caledonia' 1300 years ago, and had come across 'painted men' dressed in wolf and deer skin and possibly wearing 'as their most treasured ornament, a wild boar's tusk, much as these people do' (Gordon Cumming 1883: 216). In her eyes, as much as the British situation improved under Christian influence, Fiji needed to endure the road to civility. The 1830-60s was a time of transitions during which the liku was gradually left behind and Christianity was consolidated. Domesticating the indigenous body was the missionary aim and its success was read from the (covering of) the body. Yet, Fijian women (and men) were exercising choice over what was appropriate to wear for particular occasions.

Curiosity: colonial bodies, 1860-1880s

During his brief visit to Fiji between 26 July and 3 August 1865 on the HMS *Curaçoa*[81], Julius Brenchley was astounded by how Levuka had become a trading centre for Fijian 'curiosities', which was mainly in the hands of non-Fijians. A visit to Madame Graeffe's

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80 Similarly Buchner (1878: 225) described how in areas where missionary influence was strong, people normally wore the isulu, but the fishing women still wore their liku.

81 Brenchley's brief visit on the HMS *Curaçoa* was conducted with Commodore William Wiseman whose task it was to survey the islands, whilst protecting British interests in the territories. Commodore Sir William Wiseman was the commander of the British ships that were stationed in the Pacific Ocean for 20 years between the 1860s and 1880s (Waite 1987: 9).

'curiosity shop' in Levuka seemed to have impressed him in particular. Brenchley described her as 'a very nice-looking French woman from Montpellier', who invited him to her shop, her small wooden house which was crammed with her husband's collection. In fact, Madame Graeffe's husband, naturalist Eduard Graeffe was travelling at the time through the interior of Viti Levu and collecting even more things. Seeing the wealth of molluscs in the collection, Brenchley asked Madame Graeffe to select some shells typical to Fiji that he would purchase. Madame Graeffe was 'lively and communicative' and Brenchley thought he 'should never get away'. She clearly knew how to bargain too, refusing to name a price, but asking him for an offer. His bid had to be increased from £3 to £5. The process certainly amazed Brenchley based on his elaborate description (Brenchley 1873, 1: 147-49). However, she was not the only one to ask what he considered excessive prices:

> I visited several vendors of curiosities who all set an exorbitant price on their articles; a notion of which may be derived from the sum asked me by an old sailor of the name of Russell for a root of sandal-wood weighing twenty pounds, for which he wanted fifty dollars, or about ten shillings a pound, because, as he said, this kind of wood was selling at the port from £50 to £65 the ton ; he also asked me £2 for a Pandanus mat from Rotuma, which I had reason to know was not worth more than ten shillings. I saw nothing in the business line could be done with this cunning, bronze-faced old tar, but when on the point of leaving him he asked me if I should like to see his two babies, to which paternal proposition I, of course, assented. He then, to my surprise, brought me two old wooden goddesses – native idols, dressed in long baby clothes, with very flat faces, mother-of-pearl eyes, with their sexual characteristics clearly defined and very remarkably developed. (Brenchley 1873, 1 146)

Brenchley also purchased from Fijians. During a walk in Ovalau he met a group of Fijian men and women who offered 'several articles' for him to buy. For a shilling, he bought a yaqona root, but he was charged more for drinking water (Brenchley 1873: 151). Acquisitions for cash thus formed the bulk of Brenchley's collection during his brief visit of a few days, not gifts. His collection includes several liku, but he did not specify their exchange in his writings.

Years of collecting Fijian valuables, which from the 1860s onwards were often referred to as 'curios' or 'curiosities' in written records, had influenced the market, which was no longer only in the hands of Fijians. Used to refer to things that were remarkable, unusual, strange or peculiar, the term curio(sity) indicates how certain things, such as liku, had become less easily available; they were treated as unique finds. The term is also used here in the sense of a commodity, exchanged by Fijians for western goods and purchased by collectors as a souvenir that represents a curious and perhaps unusual place.[82] Years of influencing clothing habits, and the mixture of Christian dress and liku, influenced perceptions of dress as well. On 11 November 1866, Lieutenant Meade described a young woman wearing a liku in Naduri, Viti Levu: 'The young lady who had boarded on the starboard quarter was just one's idea of what a regular wild island girl should be… her sole costume, a couple of wild flowers in her hair, and a "liku," or belt,

82 For more information on the difference between 'curio' and 'curiosity', see Jacobs and Wingfield (2015: 17).

with narrow streamers of orange-coloured tappa hanging nearly down to her knees' (Meade 1870: 327-28). He very much associates her appearance with a 'wild' closeness to nature – showing the changing perceptions of women and their liku, as well as their veiqia. When she went swimming with her female friends, he 'could not help observing that that portion of their persons which is supposed to be concealed by the "liku," is most elaborately adorned, both before and abaft all, with chaste designs in tattooing, and it is obvious that this operation must be long and painful, but "II faut souffrir pour être belle"' (Meade 1870: 328). Here is evidence that another perception of Fijian women wearing liku was gradually appearing, that of the beautiful island maiden who wears liku and veiqia, dress now openly discouraged by methodist missionaries as inappropriate. There is an obvious paradox (which occurred elsewhere in the Pacific as well): liku were almost exclusively described in negative terms by Europeans and were discouraged in daily life, while at the same time the popular trope of the 'grass skirt' became a widespread way of stereotyping women from the Pacific Islands. In 1870 Henry Britton, a British journalist based in Australia, conducted a sixty-four days' tour in Fiji (May – July) and noted that liku were part of the standard exchange stock in dealings with visitors. In Viti Levu Bay, he did 'a brisk trade for some time in *likus* (petticoats), clubs, necklaces, &c., but the young people were extremely shy, and handed these articles to us by proxy, refusing to come within reach themselves' (Britton 1870: 56).[83] Britton admired Fijian women and their liku and described them in an admiring, romanticising, yet patronising, manner as evidenced in his fictional book *Loloma* (1884). This was the climate before Fiji's cession to Britain in 1874 and the residents of Government House became the most avid collectors of the 1870s. In this section, the focus is on the collecting activities of these residents of Government House in the 1870s, which led to a large collection of liku and information on veiqia.

Government house: Dressing for the occasion

In June 1875 Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon, who had previously served as Governor of Mauritius, became resident Governor of Fiji. His cousin Arthur J.L. Gordon and George Le Hunte became his two private secretaries. Their main base was Government House at Nasova, near Levuka on Ovalau, from where they conducted trips on behalf of the Government. In July 1875, for instance, Arthur J.L. Gordon toured Viti Levu with Walter Carew, a former planter recruited as District Commissioner. It was during this trip that they met the young Baron Anatole von Hügel, who enjoyed travelling and collecting in Fiji. Initially mainly interested in ornithology, von Hügel had started collecting valuables during his first journey along the Rewa River to the interior of Viti Levu (18 June – 29 July 1875). On Tuesday 6 July 1875, he wrote in his journal: 'We called in at Nasava, a little town on the water's edge, almost opposite Sagosago hill and just below the bend of the river, and here I tried my luck with better success than at Sagosago, for I procured four good *liku*, three wigs, some *masi* and a club and made several people happy with cloth' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 66). On 21 July Gordon and Carew found von Hügel who had by then completely depleted his trade stock: 'He was half-starved on native food, had spent all his money, and had even cut the buttons off his clothes in exchange for native ornaments' (Maudslay 1930: 87). On 1 August, Governor Gordon met von Hügel in Nasova, showed an interest in his trip and invited him to become a resident of Government House (Roth and Hooper 1990: 100).

83 It is unclear where these collections ended up.

Figure 31: Adi Arieta Kuila and Adi Unaisi. Photographed by F.H. Dufty in the Levuka Studio, 1870-74.

In September 1875, Lady Gordon joined her husband in Government House with their two children, Rachel, known as Nevil (aged seven) and George, known as Jack (aged five), her personal companion Constance Gordon Cumming and Alfred Maudslay, a newly appointed Private Secretary to the Governor. The first encounter between Lady Gordon and Adi Arieta Kuila, two women of status, involved conscious clothing decisions. As the eldest daughter of Ratu Seru Cakobau and Adi Litia Samanunu, Adi Arieta Kuila had substantial influence amongst the political elite even though her husband, Ratu Timoci Vakaruru, Qaranivalu of Naitasiri, had died in 1874. During his time in Fiji, von Hügel established a close friendship with Adi Arieta Kuila, as he articulated to Gordon: ‘Of course I have got on first-rate with her, and we are on most affectionate terms; she calling *me* her “*Gone*,” [Child] and I *her* my “*Nau*.” [Mama]’ (Baron Von Hügel to Sir Arthur Gordon, 4 October 1875, Cuvu, Nadroga, in Gordon 1897: 278). Von Hügel admired Adi Kuila for her frankness, intelligence, great sense of humour and good looks. He regularly gave her presents such as silk, gauze and riband, while Adi Kuila gave Fijian objects in return (Roth and Hooper 1990: 153, 191-94, 309). When Adi Kuila was about to meet Lady Gordon for the first time, she consulted von Hügel for fashion advice. Von Hügel wrote: ‘The news of Lady Gordon’s arrival quite excited the old lady [Adi Kuila, who was thirty-five; Baron von Hügel was twenty-one], and necessitated the immediate unpacking of all her boxes.

Figure 32: Lady Gordon, Constance Gordon Cumming, Nevil Rachel Hamilton-Gordon and Arthur J.L. Gordon at Government House (1875-77), Nasova, Ovalau, Fiji.

I was taken into confidence and we held review of all her ladyship's "wardrobe." The number of dresses, sulus, likus, etc., she brought out quite astonished me' (Baron Von Hügel to Sir Arthur Gordon, 4 October 1875, Cuvu, Nadroga, in Gordon 1897: 278). Lady Gordon was equally impressed with Adi Kuila and wrote on Sunday 31 October 1875:

> Last week we had a visit from Andi Kuila, Cakobau's daughter. She is the widow of a great Chief in Viti Levu, and, after the Vunivalu, the greatest person here. … She has been very anxious to see me, and had consulted the Baron, who knows her very well, which of her dresses, (she has about a hundred,) she should wear on the occasion. She rather wished to come in an European dress, but he told her she had much better wear the native costume, as she would look horrid in anything else. She arrived at twelve o'clock – a large stout woman, rather dark in colour, with a beautiful smooth skin. Her hair was worn short and curly, and slightly and very carefully browned by lime. She had on a *sulu* of white tappa, fringed at the end, a good deal of white tappa

wound round her waist as a girdle, and a little body of white checked muslin with short sleeves, exactly like a shift cut short, reaching to the waist, loose, very neatly made, and trimmed with narrow lace with a ribbon run in round the neck. (Lady Gordon to Miss Madeleine Shaw-Lefevre, Nasova, October 22 to November 1, 1875 in Gordon 1897: 294-95)

Adi Kuila's example shows how people were adapting to the right 'suit' for the occasion.[84] For Lady Gordon too, appropriate clothing was important. We do not know what she wore during her first encounter with Adi Kuila, but for a woman of her social standing it was important to keep up standards and to dress as she would have at home, even though it involved discomfort: 'The heat has been intense lately. I don't think I have ever felt it so great in any place I have been in. I have not got half enough cool things. What I should *like* would be, everything clean twice a day, and nothing but white. I brought no white dresses, and always feel too hot' (Lady Gordon to Miss Mary Shaw-Lefevre, Fiji, 25 January 1876, in Gordon 1897: 402, original emphasis). In another letter to Mrs Ryan, Lady Gordon lamented the fact that she did not bring enough cool clothes, particularly white Tussores, and that she can get nothing locally made (Lady Gordon to Mrs Ryan, Fiji, February 10, 1876 in Gordon 1897: 406). However, she gradually adapted her clothing style to the climate and reported to her relative, Miss Mary Shaw-Lefevre, in June 1876 that she owned twelve print and picqué dresses, consisting of plaited full bodies and black silk sleeves, which she wore over a black silk petticoat. While still warm, she stated that it was manageable and that she never wore anything else (Lady Gordon to Miss Mary Shaw-Lefevre 6 June 1876 in Gordon 1901: 33-34). Lady Gordon did not approve of the style of dress of the colonial Levuka ladies. In December 1876 she attended a ball organised by the Royal Engineers. Because it had rained the whole day, she wanted to avoid her dress getting soaked when she landed at the pier in Levuka: 'so at the last moment I sent on my dress and Mrs. Abbey, and dressed in the cloakroom, in the midst of the Levuka "ladies," many of whom had waded there with mud up to their ankles. … I wore a certain old grey and red dress quite done for, which I could never have appeared in anywhere else, but which was enormously admired in Levuka!' (Lady Gordon to Mrs. Ryan from Auckland, 1 January 1877 in Gordon 1901: 382). However, later she wrote that she assumed her simple dressing style was frowned upon, as Levuka people's dressing style was 'absurdly extravagant' with 'showy hats' (Lady Gordon to Mrs. Ryan from Nasova, 23 May 1877 in Gordon 1901: 467).[85] Finding the appropriate dress was hard for everyone in these changing times.

For men such as von Hügel, female clothing issues were a matter for all women, Fijian or European. He noted: 'When entering or leaving a house, women keep their liku in place with their hands; a necessary precaution as they have to stoop in passing through the low doorways: the action is most ludicrous like that of a lady during the reign of the crinoline

84 Even in 1877, Governor Gordon describes his encounter with Ratu Ezekeli's wife (who previously was married to Cakobau's brother): 'The lady looked well last night in sulu and pinafoa, but to-day she thought fit to appear in a light-blue silk skirt and body, giving her the appearance of a dowdy French *bourgeoise*' (Gordon's journal in Gordon 1901: 616). Showing off her status and wealth through dress was clearly important.

85 Describing Mrs. Seed, the wife of the Superintendent of Police, Lady Gordon wrote: 'I only wish there were more of such people instead of the dressy, affected, silly, colonial ladies (?) who form the society here' (Lady Gordon to Mrs. Ryan from Nasova, 23 November 1877, in Gordon 1901: 642-43).

when passing through some narrow opening' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 59). While a cross-cultural comparison between a liku and crinoline might seem far-fetched, it expresses the way a woman was in constant dialogue with her garment. The crinoline petticoat, originally made from horsehair fabric (crin is French for horsehair), that created volume underneath the skirt, became a fashion from the 1840s onwards. However, by the 1870s the wide diameter of the hooped petticoat was considered too impractical. Often using spring steel (from the late 1850s onwards) to provide a supporting framework for the dress worn above, petticoats were lightweight, which meant that they could easily blow up in wind (Waugh 1954). Therefore crinoline had to be kept in place and had to be carefully arranged when sitting down, for instance. Fijian women wearing liku also maintained proper social appearances by adopting certain postures and moving their bodies in culturally appropriate ways.

Collecting fever

The residents of Government House developed an intense interest in Fijian valuables, which ignited a fierce and rivalrous collecting fever. About a week after arriving at Government House, von Hügel wrote in his journal:

> My collection was continually on the increase. There was not much to be had from the Ovalau natives themselves, but some of the Levuka storekeepers discovered that they could get from me a good price for articles of native manufacture and so made the sale of 'curios' a regular branch of trade. Sir Arthur keenly appreciating the scientific value of ethnological collections, and interest of this kind being contagious, it was not long before fresh centres of attraction were formed, round which samples of native art amassed themselves. Soon every room in Nasova had something of the Museum look about it, and the trade in 'curios' became so flourishing that one small general business at the farther end of the town expanded its premises, and blossomed forth as a 'curiosity shop' of fashionable resort. The prices too of 'curios' also rose tenfold in the short space of a few months. (Roth and Hooper 1990: 105)

Using Government House as a base during his two-year stay in Fiji, von Hügel made several trips around Viti Levu and assembled a large collection. Many things were acquired as a result of personal relationships with Fijians. While Constance Gordon Cumming was there to keep Lady Gordon company, she also travelled extensively in Fiji. In a letter written on 30 November 1875 she announced that she was 'going on a grand expedition with the Langhams'. She had met Reverend Frederick Langham of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society and his wife in Sydney and had been invited on a three-week journey on the Rewa River: 'We shall sleep every night in Fijian houses – large reed-huts – so we shall travel really in correct style, and yet quite comfortably. It is a great thing for me to have this chance, as none of our own set (Lady Gordon, Lady Hackett, Mrs de Ricci, Mrs Havelock, or Mrs MacGregor) ever care to leave their own roofs' (Gordon Cumming 1883:

68).[86] While travelling she noticed the regional variety in veiqia and liku wearing (Gordon Cumming 1883: 161) and the general variety in choice of dress:

> Nor was the amount of raiment worn in heathen days oppressive. A thick fringe of coloured grass, or hybiscus fibre, from three to four inches in length, was the full dress of a young lady in the mountains, – indeed is so to this day among the tribes who have not yet adopted Christianity, or who, since the scourge of measles, have returned to heathenism. Most Christians, men and women alike, now wear a cloth reaching from the waist to the knee, and over this such decoration as fancy prompts – whether gay fringe of coloured grass, delicate creeping ferns, or bright golden croton leaves, cunningly fastened so as to overlap one another, and form a close short petticoat, – and a very becoming dress it is, especially when worn by a group of pretty girls, perhaps standing beneath the shadow of a plantain-tree, or holding one of its broad leaves above their heads, to shield them from the burning rays of the sun, the rich tones of their brown figures standing out in strong relief against the vivid blue of the sky. (Gordon Cumming 1883: 101)

Having caught the travelling bug, she conducted several trips during which she produced watercolours and collected objects. From Gau, she wrote about her encounter with a Fijian albino woman who had tattooing round her mouth: 'She gave me a prettily woven basket, and seemed much gratified when I presented her with some bright green calico, evidently perceiving that it was becoming to her fair colouring' (Gordon Cumming 1883: 175). Later on, she wrote: 'Great was the excitement of unpacking my canoe-load of curiosities, for we are each trying who can make the very best collection – Sir Arthur, Mr Gordon, Captain Knollys, Mr Maudslay, Baron von Hügel, and myself. Our daily delight is to ransack the stores in Levuka, where the natives may have bartered old things for new, and great is the triumph of whoever succeeds in capturing some new form of bowl or quaint bit of carving' (Gordon Cumming 1883: 133).

Meanwhile, from 1875 onwards, Johann Theodor Kleinschmidt was engaged as a naturalist and collector for the Museum Godeffroy in Hamburg, Germany.[87] While details of Kleinschmidt's collecting activities in Fiji remain patchy, it is clear that he was soon moving about the islands. For instance, he worked in southern Vanua Levu and on Taveuni and surrounding areas between October and November 1875. In March 1876 he visited Viti Levu with his schooner, the *Bunako*. He followed this with trips to Vanua Levu in May, Kadavu and Vatulele in August, and Beqa and Kadavu in September (Clunie 1984: 140). In June of 1877, he travelled with John Archibald Boyd to the Highlands of Viti Levu. From Ovalau, Kleinschmidt and Boyd travelled up Viti Levu's east coast and round the

86 Lady Gordon, for her part, discusses in a letter to Miss Maria Shaw-Lefevre (23 July 1876) how Constance Gordon Cumming is off with the Langhams again and how she doesn't mind 'roughing'. She admits that she herself could not travel that way, but that this is the only way Constance can see Fiji, since it would not be appropriate for her to travel with the Governor unless Lady Gordon came along (Gordon 1901: 123).

87 Johan Cesar Godeffroy VI of the South Seas Trading Empire had founded the museum in Hamburg and hired Dr Eduard Graeffe of Zurich to establish it (in 1861 this role was taken over by J.D.E. Schmeltz) and to collect in Fiji for the museum (Clunie 1984: 140; Kranz 2005). Parts of the Godeffroy Museum collections, including several liku, ended up in museums in Leipzig, Dresden and Leiden. For more information on the Godeffroy Museum, see Kranz (2005).

Figure 33: Matakau with veiqia. Collected in interior Viti Levu by Herbert and Walter Chamberlain, 1877. Wood, shell, fibre. Height 55.9cm.

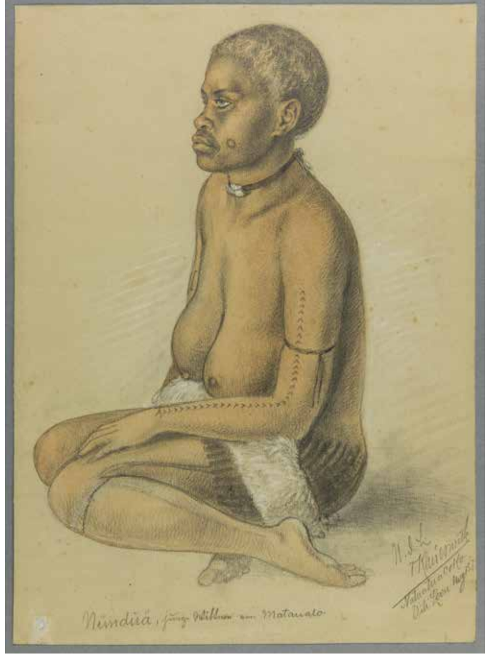

Figure 34: Nundua, a young widow from Matawalu. Drawn from life by Theodor Kleinschmidt, Natuatuacoko, 15 August 1877.

northern and western coast as far as Nadi. Then they went inland, crossing the Nausori Highlands on 10 July and reaching Fort Carnarvon at Natuatuacoko on the 12th, where they stayed as guests of the Commissioner, G. Ruthven Le Hunte, and Captain Louis F. Knollys. They received special passes from the Commissioner to travel from Fort Carnarvon to Namataku, Naqwaqwa and Noikoro regions to collect. These regions had remained closed to outsiders since Cession because of the hostility of the inhabitants. Le Hunte wrote to Governor Gordon on 23 July 1877: 'I have told Klinesmith [Kleinschmidt] that he is to keep to the towns on the river-bed, but I don't think he will do much injury anywhere. Birds and beasts are more in his line than "curios", though, of course, he does collect them too' (Gordon 1901: 543). The quote refers to a certain level of competition in terms of curio collecting. However, Le Hunte hindered some of their collecting practices of human remains: 'They are doing well in the skeleton business. … Boyd and Nagusudradra dug up one of the men who "lost their lives" at Vatula. I seized the skeleton (politely, of course) and ordered it to be reburied. … I told him and Mr. Klinesmith [Kleinschmidt] that I could not give them the skeleton of a criminal who had been executed by law without an order from you' (Gordon 1901: 543).

In October 1877 Governor Gordon travelled with Captain Knollys and Herbert and Walter Chamberlain, the owners of a cotton plantation on Naitauba Island in northern Lau, to the interior of Viti Levu. It might have been during this trip that the Chamberlains

collected a liku and a matakau (ancestor figure) with tattoo markings.[88] Several months later Kleinschmidt and Boyd crossed the central massif at Munavatu, worked down the Wainimala, reaching Narokorokoyawa in late May 1878 (Clunie 1984: 141-42). It was during this trip that Kleinschmidt made drawings of tattooed women wearing liku in Matawalu and Tawaleka, which show how veiqia was more elaborate in the interior of Viti Levu than on the coast.

Baron Anatole von Hügel initially had no specific interest in liku and veiqia. During his visit to Nasirika on 1 July 1875 he was particularly looking out for a club and mentioned: 'I did not get much else except a bundle of excellent tobacco leaves, and an *iula*, for that is the proper name for these throwing clubs, and two girl's *liku*' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 50). It was only later that his fascination for, and interest in, liku grew and he wrote on 3 July 1875, whilst in Matawailevu, interior Viti Levu, how he was offered liku by a group of women: 'The older ones, who were begrimed with dirt, wore soft fringe dresses that may have been white when new, and which were by long service so tattered that little of the dark blue-black tincture of tattooing remained hidden. All the younger women on the contrary looked fresh and clean. They were dressed in new, coloured *liku* (similar to those offered for sale) which varied from four inches to nine inches [in length]' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 59). He generally appreciated liku, calling them 'diminutive dresses, though in themselves pretty' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 59). He collected ten liku that day, all made of vau (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*) and very similar: 'The name of this variety of dress is *liku dradra* [*dradra* = menses], and it seems to be the distinguishing dress of girls from the time they have attained womanhood till they become mothers' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 62). Von Hügel noticed considerable variety in types of liku, which might have stimulated his collecting interest (Thomas 1991: 169). Liku were also readily available because Christian dress was being adopted. In Tavua, on 29 June 1875, von Hügel wrote that he explained what he wanted to collect, but a group of men 'only offered *liku* [fibre skirts] for barter. They were thinking of being *lotu* (christianised), and "then there would be no more use for them, but for *isulu* of cloth"' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 46). He exchanged beads and needles for liku: 'The price of an elaborately worked *liku* being about one needle and three little beads' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 211). Von Hügel's scientific approach to collecting differed from his peers and predecessors in Fiji. When collecting ornithology and labelling birds, he established a consistent method that he followed through with objects, attaching small hand-written labels to the objects which recorded the Fijian object name, a brief description of its form, use and function, followed by place and date of collection (Herle and Carreau 2013: 75). This methodology encouraged him to search a range of variants of object types. During a visit with James Byrne to Sigatoka on 15 November 1875, he wrote:

> Then Tioana, the wife of the Vunivalu, sent word that she had some *liku* to exchange for beads and needles, and when I went to her house, I found it full of women and girls, who each implored me to take off their hands their particular stock of dresses. I tried to explain that more than a dozen of the same kind would be perfectly useless to me, and that even if this were not the case I had no trade to give for them; but all was

88 Currently in the Birmingham Museum (liku accession number: 1918.A17.30, matakau: 1918.A17.24).

> in vain, they had made up their minds to get rid of the *liku*, and so a packet of needles, a reel of cotton and a thimbleful of beads (all I now possessed) were divided amongst the women and the dresses became my property. (Roth and Hooper 1990: 211)

Not only does this event show how Fijian women influenced the collecting process, it also demonstrates that for von Hügel it was important to have examples of each type rather than an array of similar liku. He followed a similar strategy when it came to collecting tattoo patterns, as will be discussed in the next chapter. For now, suffice it to say that he developed a real interest in tattooing. However, he could not appreciate qia gusu, mouth tattooing, and frequently remarked on how he felt the marking around the lips spoilt a women's good looks (Roth and Hooper 1990: 56, 60, 349).

Colonial bodies

The 1870s were a time when liku were worn less and some women became careful with openly admitting they had veiqia. In February 1876, von Hügel encountered a group of young women and recorded some of their tattoo marks, but they would not show him the patterns round their waists: "*Sa levu na lotu*" in this town – "great religiousness here" (Roth and Hooper 1990: 273). In fact, the practice of veiqia had become subject to legal regulation and fines. The [Sydney] *Evening News* reported on Thursday 26 October 1871 on a court day at the Ba River. Some offences dealt with activities on the holy Sunday, others with extra-marital love affairs, but 'five women had to pay ten shillings amongst them for tattooing a woman from the mountains, and were then dismissed with a caution'. These practitioners, the offenders, were tried by a Fijian judge dressed in a white isulu and a red military coat that used to belong to a soldier of the 18th Regiment. Accessories such as a black cheese-cutter cap and silk umbrella completed his look. The elaborate description of the judge's uniform in the newspaper article potentially served to emphasise the contrast with the offenders. Dressed in Western-style uniform, the judge symbolised modernity and the new order in which there was no place for the practice of veiqia. However, after Cession in 1874, the practice of veiqia was no longer regulated by legal measures. British Governor Gordon (see below) aimed to maintain a system of indirect rule by acknowledging chiefly authority. Consequently, behaviour judged as improper had to be stopped, but customs such as the exchange of tabua and drinking yaqona could be continued. From a letter written by Mr. Blyth to Governor Gordon it appears that veiqia should also have been tolerated:

> Sir – A report being current that the Buli Wailevu (Rokotovitovi) had used the influence of his position as a servant of the Government to give a compulsory character to missionary subscriptions in his district. … I have to call attention now to Rokotovitovi [Buli Wailevu] and his town-officers. It appears to me that he does not control them sufficiently, and that he shuts his eyes to things that he ought to abolish. For instance, when I was there (23rd ult.) some seven or eight women were brought to a town-officer from Tuvu to be fined for tattooing (*qia*). Being questioned by me, they said it was tabu'd by the missionaries. I told Rokotovitovi that the missionaries had better mind their own business, and leave the missionaries to mind their own also. It is not a punishable offence. (Letter Mr. Blyth to Sir A. Gordon, from Levuka, 16 March 1877 in Gordon 1901: 353)

Missionaries who wanted to interfere with women's qia practices were in danger of being charged with indecency. Basil Thomson, who served as a magistrate, reported how 'More than one [Mission] teacher was charged before my court with indecency for having returned to the village to admonish the tattooers while the operation was being performed' (Thomson 1908: 219-20).

Gradually, Christianity was accepted everywhere, including in the interior of Viti Levu. When Governor Gordon visited Nasaucoko in July 1876, he wrote in his journal how Christianity had been introduced six months earlier, which caused a change of female dress from liku to isulu. He attended a church service and wrote: 'The Vakavuvuli Buli preached on the parable of the grain of mustard seed. Christianity was but a small seed at first; it had developed very rapidly. … One good thing he told the people, that Christianity did not consist in cutting their hair and wearing "sulus" and coming to church, but in the works of their lives and thoughts of their hearts' (Gordon 1901: 73-74, 91).

Liku as curiosity? Government House and photography

The years of collecting had begun to affect the market. Lady Gordon explained to Miss Shaw-Lefevre (23 July 1876) how Fijians responded to demand by making things particularly for collecting purposes: 'We have a good many cannibal forks, but it is rather difficult to know whether they are genuine, for numbers of new ones are made and sold as curiosities' (Gordon 1901: 123). Fijians soon noticed what interested Euro-American collectors and began to approach them with examples. In addition, prices rose steadily: 'I have great difficulty now in procuring mats, I want to send home a roll, but they are getting scarce, and the price of them has risen enormously. What we used to give 1s. for are now 5s. or 6s., really not worth sending' (Lady Gordon to Miss Mary Shaw Lefevre, 10 December 1876 in Gordon 1901: 244). Together with Maudslay, Lady Gordon arranged these objects in symmetrical patterns to decorate the dining room. A photograph of the interior of Government House reveals an arrangement of clubs, canoe paddles, yaqona bowls, pottery and miniature bure kalou (spirit houses) in front of a large gatuvakaviti barkcloth. The other end was similarly arranged. Three glass-windowed doors opened onto the veranda on each side of the room, between which objects were also displayed. On the left of the photograph a liku is just about visible (Gordon 1901: 606). While the assemblage of the wall of Government House has been discussed as an aestheticisation of objects and an ordering of Fijian society while acknowledging local authority (Thomas 1991: 174; Herle and Carreau 2013: 104), it also seems to have reflected local customs. Maudslay wrote to his sister on 6 December 1875: 'The houses are made on a framework of large half-trimmed timber … The two shelves above the fireplace always hold curiously-shaped earthen vessels or wooden bowls; and hanging from the wall there is sure to be a bright-coloured *liku* or a *sulu* of tappa, or perhaps a bundle of white hibiscus fibre for straining *yangona* (*kava*)' (Maudslay 1930: 94). Liku were still a significant local exchange item as well. On Tuesday 15 August 1876 von Hügel was in Ebuto (near Sigatoka) during the preparations for a solevu between mountain and coast people. He describes the hustle and bustle these competitive exchanges create, with hundreds of people arranging heaps of abundance on the rara [village green, ceremonial ground]. He was guided into a house that had stored many of the objects that were now spread out on the rara. He was astonished by the wealth of baskets, dishes, pottery and barkcloth, mats and other items still to be distributed: 'The *liku* hung in festoons from the bamboos which support the roof

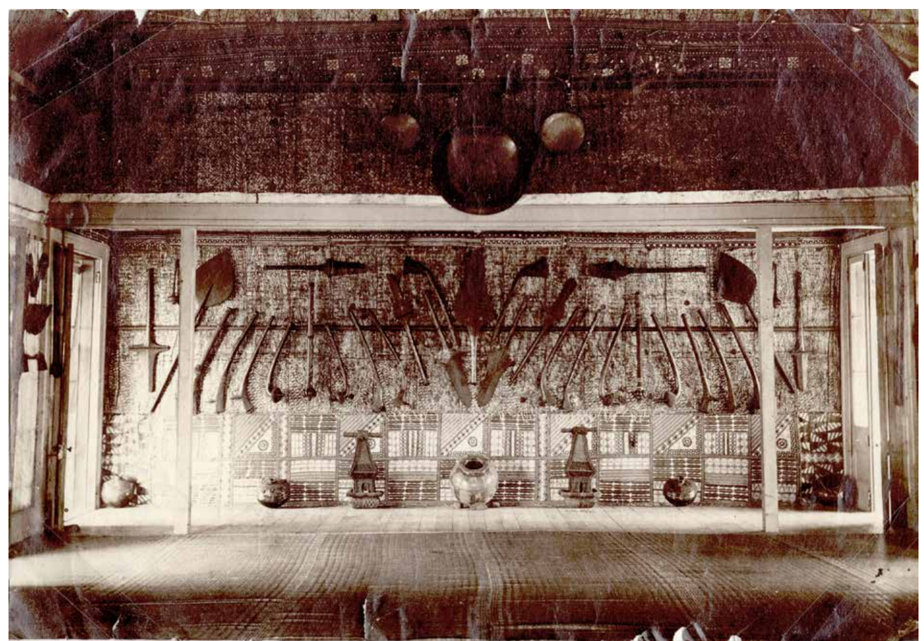

Figure 35: End wall of the dining room at Government House, Nasova, Ovalau, decorated with Fijian pottery, clubs, barkcloth, miniature spirit houses, canoe paddles and bowls, 1870s. Possibly photographed by F.H. Dufty.

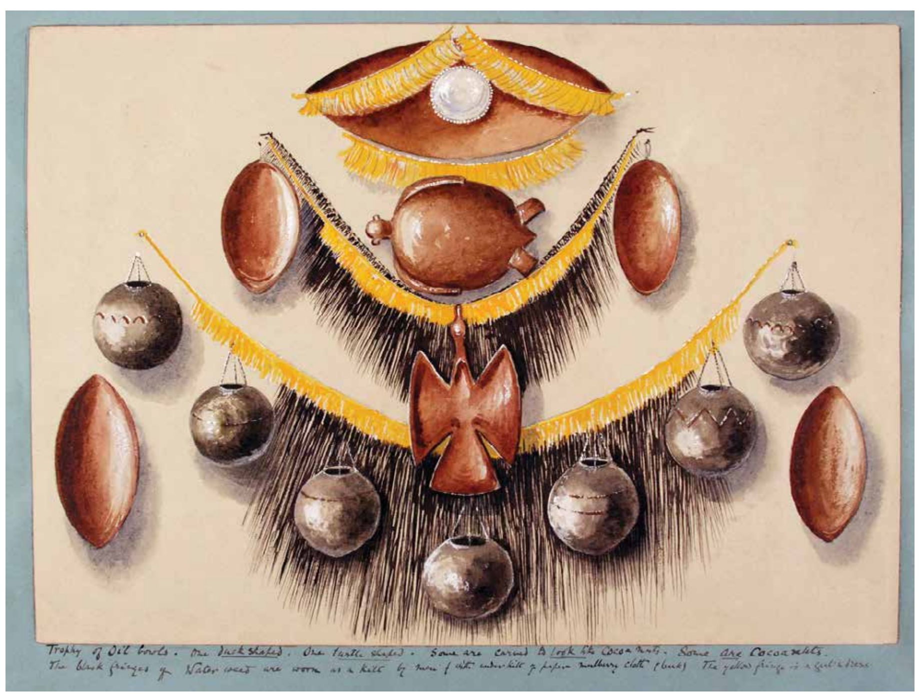

Figure 36: *Trophy of Oil bowls. One duck shaped. One turtle shaped. Some are carved to look like Cocoa nuts. Some are Cocoanuts. The black fringes of Water weed are worn as a kilt by men (with under kilt of paper rubbery cloth (bark). The yellow fringe is a girl's dress.* Watercolour painted in 1876-77 by Constance Gordon Cumming at Government House.

and I was told they quite covered the reeds walls; but besides these, hundreds more were rolled up in bundles and piled in heaps' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 413).

Meanwhile, the developing relationships between Lady Gordon and Fijian chiefly women were marked by gifts. Lady Gordon collected presents for the ladies of Bau, such as 'bottles of sandal-wood and other scents; six smart little boxes containing three cakes of scented soap each; some silk gauze, black with coloured stripes and spots, for *pinafoas* [pinafores]; very pretty striped muslin in different patterns, two yards of each, also for *pinafoas*; pieces of braid and cheap lace for trimming the same; … some pieces of Chinese silk; and prints of a variety of patterns, rather showy, two yards of each for sulus' (Lady Gordon to Miss Emily Shaw Lefevre, Fiji Easter Eve to May 10, 1876 in Gordon 1897: 447). Even when she stayed in Suva at the Joskes' family home, she received chiefly women, such as Adi Lusiana and the wife of Tui Tamavua in August 1876 and bestowed them with gifts of ribbon and pictures taken out of an English fashion book. Lady Gordon then gave them the pinafores she had made herself: 'they are made of a very pretty white muslin with very transparent patterns in lines, and one pink and the other blue stripes, trimmed with three rows of braid, and a very full frill round the neck, which gives them a jaunty air, reaching not quite to the waist. They took me a long time to make, for there is a good deal of work in them' (Lady Gordon to Mrs. Ryan, Fiji, 29 August 1876 in Gordon 1901: 148). For their part, Fijian female visitors returned gifts of food and 'curiosities'. Adi Kuila regularly presented gifts to the entire family, including the Gordon children. Not long after their arrival, Nevil received two mats from Adi Kuila – a fact that she recorded in a letter to relatives (Nevil to Madeleine Shaw-Lefevre, Fiji, 2 November 1875 in Gordon 1897: 299-300). Lady Gordon wrote on 31 October 1875 to Miss Madeleine Shaw-Lefevre:

> They [children] have each a mat of their own, given them by Andi [Adi] Kuila (Cakobau's daughter), and they spread them out and sit each on their own, surrounded by toys, and "pretend." Dr. MacGregor gave them each a new little *ula* (a throwing club) [sketch], with carving on the handles, which he thinks were made for some chief's children. Jack is very anxious to put on a *liku* that he may look like a "big chief." A *liku* is a fringe worn round the waist, made of leaves split and dyed most brilliant colours, or of a fibre that looks like black horse-hair. Sometimes it is the only dress. (Lady Gordon to Miss Madeleine Shaw-Lefevre, Nasova, October 22 to November 1, 1875 in Gordon 1897: 294-95)

The children's nurse did not approve. When Lady Gordon showed her the dining room that she had decorated with an array of clubs, spears, bowls, paddles and more, she said, apparently with a sneer: 'It's all very well to hang up their things, so long as you don't adopt their disgusting habits, and it looks like it'. Lady Gordon wrote to her friend that 'Jack and Nevil are becoming very Fijian'. She described how fond they were of dressing up in Fijian dress with clubs in their hands (Lady Gordon to Miss Madeleine Shaw-Lefevre, Nasova, October 22 to November 1, 1875 in Gordon 1897: 291). Dressing up as a local, pretending to be Fijian, was an act of mimicry that demonstrated an interest and fascination for Fijian life, but also highlighted the cultural difference and distance. The Gordon children were allowed to show an interest in Fijian culture, contrary to the children of the Reverend Richard and Mary Ann Lyth, who were kept away from any Fijian

Figure 37: F.H. Dufty photograph of matakau framed with liku. Circa 1875-76.

influence in the 1840s. Jack played with Fijian boys, ‘always rigging little boats together’ (Gordon 1901: 604). Lady Gordon was obviously not a missionary wife, but still comes across as a pious woman, lamenting that she could not go to church as often as she liked and only when she could be carried there (Gordon 1897: 293). ‘I hope you are not tired of hearing about the natives’, Lady Gordon wrote to Mrs. Ryan, ‘One has a curious feeling of equality with the ladies of rank, they are so different from the common people – such an undoubted aristocracy. Their manners are so perfectly easy and well-bred’ (Lady Gordon to Mrs. Ryan, Gordon 1901: 150). Lady Gordon disapproved of the nurse’s condemnation of her relationship with Fijian chiefly women: ‘I don’t like to tell her that these ladies are my equals, which she is not!’ (Lady Gordon to Mrs. Ryan, 3 September 1876 in Gordon 1901: 151). Of course, Lady Gordon’s different agendas from those of missionary wives might have led to more tolerance, but the status of Fijian objects had also changed. Liku in particular were becoming redundant and associated with the past. They were used as toys for the children or as props in Government House. Liku adorned the dining room, an aestheticised reference to the transforming world surrounding Government House.

As curiositites, liku were arranged in artistic displays before they entered museums. Lady Gordon wrote how ‘The Baron [von Hügel] and I have been arranging our curios

Figure 38: F.H. Dufty studio portrait of Adi Mere of Bau showing scarifications on her upper arm. Circa 1873.

and cataloguing them to send to British Museum. He has got four boxes of clubs, about eighty, packed, and I have got ready about ninety articles, oil bowls (…) and angona [yaqona] bowls (…), and priest's bowls'. Apparently, 'This is only about half of what we have got, besides spears, clubs, etc., pillows' (Lady Gordon to Miss Mary Shaw-Lefevre 13 May 1876 in Gordon 1901: 31). Another example of such an artistic collage as the dining room of Government House is a studio photograph (Figure 37) that shows two images: one matakau (figure) wearing a malo with cowrie shells (collected by Reverend William Floyd and now in the Fiji Museum), and a matakau/ilili (hook figure) flanked by clubs bound with magimagi or coir cordage. All these items are framed with liku and a long string of white cowrie shells. Again these items are shown as curiosities. The photograph was made by Francis Herbert Dufty, who had set up a studio adjacent to the *Fiji Times* newspaper office in Levuka on 24 May 1871. He was joined by his brother Alfred in December 1871, but the latter's young age of sixteen and his frequent long journeys to New Caledonia and Australia means that most of the Fiji photos can be attributed to Francis ('Frank') alone. The Dufty Studio thrived and his photographs of the Fijian and colonial elite and of mission representatives, all arranged in themed mosaics, promoted Fijian-European colonial and mission ideology and order (D'Ozouville 1997: 38-39). His studio photographs of Fijian chiefly men and women, with Ratu Cakobau being photographed the most, were circulated widely. For her portrait, Adi Mere of Bau, a good friend of Baron von Hügel, wore a barckloth shoulder sash and trade bead necklace. The raised cicatrices on her upper left arm are clearly visible. The neutral background makes it a genuine portrait, rather than a staged re-enactment, as was the case with later studio photographs, in which liku sometimes played a role.

Figure 39: Watercolour of woman in liku waloa with fishing net and noke (fishing basket). Circa 1876 painting in the style of Arthur J.L. Gordon.

The capital of Fiji moved from Levuka to Suva in 1882 and the Dufty studio followed a couple of years later. Competition with other studios, such as the one owned by John William Waters, was fierce and Frank Dufty left Fiji in 1892. In some studios, liku became a standard prop. A studio portrait, probably taken by J.W. Waters, shows a young woman positioned in a classical pose holding a large via leaf above her head. The backdrop of tropical foliage aligns her uncovered upper body to nature, only to be distracted by her trade bead necklace. Just above her liku, she shows a glimpse of her veiqia.[89] Unnamed and in a theatrical pose, she appears as the stereotypical island girl – a representation that was being promoted at the time. This kind of representation was also adopted in some textual sources. Anderson, one of the few authors who described young Fijian women as 'dusky maidens', depicted Fijian women as close to nature:

> The girls bestow great pains on their personal appearance. They deck themselves out with necklets formed of leaves fragrant with sweet-scented flowers or beans. They anoint their bodies with oil, to give the skin a smooth shiny look. With their

89 This image has not been reproduced here but can be found in the MAA photographic collections (amongst others); inventory number P.4084.ACH1 (http://maa.cam.ac.uk/category/collections-2/).

Figure 40: Making liku. Studio photograph, probably taken by J.W. Waters late nineteenth century.

Figure 41: *Woman braiding*. Wood-cut. Sketched by A.T. Agate. during US Exploring Expedition in 1840. From Wilkes (1845, 3: 358).

> hair nicely trimmed and ornamented with red flowers of "hibiscus," with a girdle of leaves, or of thin Fijian cloth, or of ordinary clean print cloth, or "liku" of large grass dyed yellow and red, their appearance forms a very fair compromise between nature and ornament. (Anderson 1880: 136)

When looking through nineteenth-century photographs of Fijian women wearing liku, it becomes clear that 'fishing' was a favourite topic. Whether an anonymous young woman holds a paddle or a fishing basket or is surrounded by fishing equipment, she poses bare-breasted and wears a simple liku in front of a backdrop of plants, which render the photograph anomalous rather than an authentic re-enactment. These photographs do remind one of earlier sketches made of women wearing liku, such as a watercolour

Figure 42: *Four unidentified women in traditional dress, Fiji*. Photograph taken in 1881. Copy negative from Ansdell (1882, plate 27).

which was probably produced by Arthur J.L. Gordon in 1876 (Figure 39). It is as if there was a desire to record a past way of life. Note, for example, the photo (held in Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University) of a woman making a liku. Her stage is provided by a backdrop of luscious plants and she is sitting on a bed of fibre. Apart from the flowers in her hair, she shows remarkable similarities to the drawing in Wilkes (1845, 3: 338) captioned 'Woman braiding', which is one of the only early drawings showing how liku were made by stretching the waistband with the toe while attaching fibre strips to them (Figures 40 and 41). The photograph also resembles a series of J.W. Waters studio photographs that show Fijian women making, or at least, posing and pretending to make a variety of things, such as baskets.[90] The return to past practices at a time when it was felt these were disappearing reminds us of salvage ethnography, but mainly resulted in timeless representations, portraying Fijian women out of time. The return to past clothing or 'nudity' emphasises innocence and a closeness to nature in these images, but particularly demonstrates how nudity is a layered construct. During early nineteenth-century encounters, the associations between nudity, sexuality and sin that dominated Western attitudes led to a rejection of liku, only for them to return at a later stage as a nostalgic objectification of undressed women.

90 See a photographic copy of a "Making baskets" postcard, itself taken from a J.W. Waters studio photograph. P.45523.ACH2, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge.

In reality liku and veiqia were still around, but liku were worn layered with other materials. Some of the earliest photographs of liku, not taken in a studio setting, were made by Gerrard Ansdell in 1881, when he and his brother left Melbourne for Fiji to search for an elder brother who worked as a coffee planter. Their quest eventually led them up the Wainibuka River into the central highlands of eastern Viti Levu. Throughout their journey Gerrard took photographs, one of which shows a group of women wearing a variety of liku over barkcloth (Figure 42). The women clearly dressed up in full assemblage for the photograph, wearing wasekaseka (whale teeth necklaces), pearl shell or boar's tusk necklaces, and flowers in their hair. This image, and the ones described above, taken by male European photographers, were staged – either by the Fijian women themselves or directed by the photographers, While all these photographs virtually 'testify to the creative ways that bodies are used as both sites of individual agency and instruments of social control' (Masquelier 2005: 18), their staged nature also emphasises the status of liku and veiqia as curiosities.

Fijian female bodies have been represented in differing ways through time. From a non-Fijian perspective, as 'different' bodies they were objectified and measured, as 'domestic' bodies they were transformed to then become 'colonial' subjects who continued to show their authority and agency throughout these developments. The transformation of liku and its representation did not signify a simple change from liku, seen as scanty dress and therefore indicating immorality, to Christian dress and/or curiosity. A closer look at how women and their liku and veiqia were portrayed shows that it was a time of fluctuating interpretations of the (un)clothed body – some condemning, others not, some wanting to interfere, others merely to describe. Temporary early visitors, such as traders and scientific expedition members, described and noted differences, which were compared to their own state of dress and cultural practices. Missionaries and supporters aimed to influence and change these differences with their aim to domesticate the Fijian woman through change of dress. Residents of Government House collected liku as curiosities in these changing times, either to be displayed at Government House or to be sent to friends – all to eventually end up in museums. Liku were allowed on walls or in studio setups, but discouraged in daily life. What binds these varying representations is their complexity, which is a result from alliances made between local people and foreigners. In other words, representations are multifaceted – the remnants of these representational encounters ended up in museums and archives, contexts that influence their further representation.

4

Classifying Liku and Veiqia

In this chapter, the focus lies on the transformative process that liku and veiqia have gone through when becoming part of museum collections and thus becoming museum objects. The museum object was not made as such, but is created the moment it enters the museum. If it was collected by a museum representative or with the intention of becoming part of a museum collection, it is created at the moment of collection. A collection is created by a collector who extracts the object(s) out of context, equally implying a sense of salvage and loss (Belk 2006; Moutu 2007). A collection is always a selection – made by the collector or the donor or trade partner who gave or traded the object(s) away. Each collection represents a moment in time, providing a glimpse of what was exchanged at a certain point in time and including the agency of the original owners or traders (Jacobs 2012: 213). Therefore the act of collecting is a collective process: a plethora of relationships and interactions contribute to the making of the collection. Once in museums, collections are conscripted into documentation systems. However, museum documentation is not fixed, but changes over time as objects engage with a potentially infinite number of human and non-human actors. As museum objects are moved, studied, displayed, assembled or compared with other objects, new interpretations are developed. Museum objects continue to be at the centre of social relations between varying groups, including source or host communities, museum staff, researchers, artists, curators, collectors and auctioneers. These relationships have been recorded or materialised in museum registers, labels and database entries. Museum records are therefore not static, but in a state of 'becoming' (Krmpotich and Somerville 2016: 178). Museum staff continuously update museum catalogues realising that 'words matter' and the various layers of object documentation show the complexity of classifying objects (Modest and Lelijveld 2018; Stewart 1993; Baudrillard 1994; Elsner and Cardinal 1994; Pearce 1994; Bennett 1995, 2004; Byrne *et al.* 2011; Harrison *et al.* 2013). The recent trend to allow for audience comments and participation in digital museum catalogues allows for alternative voices, which again can create new forms of knowledge (Geismar and Mohns 2011; Parry 2007; Turner 2016: 104).

Liku: lost in translation

When an object enters a museum collection, it needs to be translated into the institution's documentation system, which, by nature, requires answers to a specific set of questions that match the standardised documentation record. Indeed, a first question that needs to be raised before an object can enter any museum classification system, is 'what is it?'

This is a simple question in itself, but can become challenging when the answer needs to correspond to a set entry in a database thesaurus. Take, for example, the bayaloyalo, a composite trolling fishing lure made of whale bone, turtle and pearl shell with accession number Z 3322 in the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA), University of Cambridge. The bayaloyalo was presented by the Tongan chief Enele Ma'afu'otu'itoga (Ma'afu) to Sir Arthur Gordon in August 1875, when he had just taken up the post of Governor of Fiji. Von Hügel recorded that Ma'afu presented a 'fish hook' with the words 'You have got the land. I bring you the water, as land without water is useless. Here it is with all the fish and living creatures in it' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 120). The Tongan chief Ma'afu had established a base in eastern Fiji where he was perceived as a threat by Ratu Cakobau. Therefore the bayaloyalo was a significant and strategic gift to Governor Gordon. The bayaloyalo first appears in the MAA accession register in 1918, after it has been in Gordon's collection (Stanmore collection). It was recorded as a 'fishhook' that had been given to Governor Gordon by Ma'afu. As often happens in museum documentation, the bayaloyalo lost its connection to this entry and was rediscovered in 1933 by Honorary Keeper F.J. Hayter based on what a colleague remembered (MAA Catalogue Card Z 3322). While the background story has been recorded on the catalogue card, it is harder to discern in the current online MAA database, where the bayaloyalo is classified as 'fish hook' – a logical denomination as it is a fish hook or high status fishing lure used by Tongan chiefs to troll for dog-tooth tuna after all. The only hint we get of Ma'afu's role is in the 'source' entry, where Ma'afu is listed as a potential collector and Sir Arthur Gordon as the donor. Entering it into a database as 'fish hook' singles out one of its uses while bayaloyalo were important valuables and exchange items too. The complexity of objects' various roles often unavoidably disappears in translation. Museum database systems inevitably reduce the range of potential uses and meanings entangled in one object to one that exists in the system. We do not know who specifically made the bayaloyalo, but we do know that their manufacture was done by Tonga-Samoa canoebuilding specialists, who also had the hereditary right to make other whalebone and ivory valuables (Clunie 2013). The makers' category in a database often remains blank because they were rarely recorded by visitors, let alone added to museum classification. Teresia Teaiwa (2008: 12) highlights two reasons for this anonymity: 'first is the general reluctance among Pacific people to award individuals any special recognition (…); second is the colonial tendency to fetishise the exotic object over its producer'. Who made the bayaloyalo was probably never conveyed to Governor Gordon when it was given to him as it was probably an old valuable made by a clan of hereditary craftsmen serving a particular chiefly lineage.[91] The bayaloyalo's regional origin is also complex. It was probably made in Tonga, as similar examples have been recorded and were even collected during Captain Cook's visits to Tonga in the 1770s (Kaeppler 2011: 178-79). Yet it was collected in Fiji as the Tongan chief Ma'afu was based in Vanua Balavu. In museum terms, though, the provenance of this particular object is well known, which significantly increases its monetary and academic value – it provides an association with known people, a time frame and it allows comparison. Good provenance makes objects appealing for research and for

91 Personal communication Fergus Clunie, February 2019.

display when different stories about the object can be emphasised and the bayaloyalo has featured in several exhibitions (*cf.* Herle and Carreau 2013: 84; Hooper 2006: 262; Hooper 2016: 244-45). MAA has a long history of taking various viewpoints on their collections into account, based on collaborations with indigenous source or host communities and other stakeholders (Herle 1994; Herle and Rouse 1998; Raymond and Salmond 2008; Geismar and Herle 2010; Elliott 2017). While these relationships are acknowledged in publications, research and curatorial work, museum catalogues tend to be standardised systems that impose consistency and therefore reduce the layerdness and complexity of museum collections.

Determining an object's limits and confines is a complex issue implied in museum classification. This is something that Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1991) raised in relation to the display of ethnographic objects. When the purpose is to show the custom of tea drinking in England, she wondered, do we just show a cup, or do we show a cup with saucer, spoon, tea, milk and sugar? Similar questions can be asked from the moment an object is collected or classified. Should a tattooing adze and spatula that were used together and were collected together be classified together, as they form a totality, or do these become separate entities in a collection? Similarly, a liku is an object that was not only closely connected with a human body, but that formed an assemblage with a range of body adornments. Even if collected together, each ornament would usually be catalogued independently – ready to be combined with other objects collected in different time frames or from other regions. The museum documentation process involves various acts of selection and translation. For liku, this involves a process of singularisation. In museum catalogues, liku are necessarily classified as single objects, thus isolated from the veiqia that they are closely associated with. Finding the most appropriate translation of the Fijian term liku to record it in the museum catalogue, which is required for a non-specialist audience, is not straightforward either judging from the variety of translations in museum catalogue systems.

The collections amassed in Fiji in 1840 by members of the United States Exploring Expedition, under the command of Charles Wilkes, were immediately 'musealised' in the sense that collections were sent to the National Institute straight after the expedition, but also during the expedition. The sheer volume of objects assembled during the expedition meant that some material was already shipped to the US at the time of the expedition via American ships. Initially, the US Government distributed these collections to scientists who had a personal interest in them, but Joel Roberts Poinsett, US Ambassador to Mexico and the outgoing Secretary of the Navy, offered a home to the growing collection. Having founded the National Institution for the Promotion of Science in 1840, Poinsett housed the US Exploring Expedition collections in the newly completed Patent Office building. From 1842 onwards, some of the expedition's scientific members, such as naturalist Charles Pickering, botanist William Brackenridge, philologist Horatio Hale and geologist James Dana, went to the National Institute to carry on the work of cataloguing the material that they had already labelled and listed in the field. This resulted in a handwritten catalogue, entitled *Collections of the United States South Sea Surveying and Exploring Expedition, 1838, 9, 40, 41, & 42*, which lists a total of 2,516 ethnological and archaeological specimens

(Evelyn 1985: 234; Walsh 2004).[92] The catalogue lists over a hundred liku, for which the corresponding entries read:

- 922 to 925: Cinctures from Tongatabu, made in imitation of the Figi "liku" or girdle worn by the women.
- 1285 to 1393: Sign. Cinctures made of Bark, and worn by the women of the Figi Islands; commonly the only article of dress.
- 1394 to 1405: Fishing dress, made of fibrous roots, worn around the waist by women of the Figi Islands.
- 1406: Dress made of Seeds, worn by Girls of the Figi Islands
- 1407: D°.

Even though the term liku was known by expedition members, it was not officially included in the catalogue. Part of the US Exploring Expedition collection was on display at the National Institute and the catalogue entries were adopted in the exhibition catalogue. For example, display case 04 held 'Cinctures worn around the middle' (accession numbers 1400-1405). Also in the case were 1406-1407 'Fashionable dress of the Fegee girls, worn as an apron around the loins' and 'Cinctures worn by the women' (1380-98) (National Institute 1855: 14).[93] In 1857 the collections in their entirety were transferred to the Smithsonian Institution (with ethnographic material being kept in the National Museum of Natural History). The liku received specially designed Smithsonian US Exploring Expedition labels on which liku are invariably identified as either 'girdle worn by Fejee women', 'female cincture' or 'female girdle'. Over time, more labels and more translations were added to the NMNH classification system. Only one liku in the collection (E4624) bears a recent label identifying it as a 'grass skirt', indicating that initially liku were seen as 'cinctures', 'girdles' or 'belts'. Because the term liku was known, this term was used in the Smithsonian classification system to denote liku subsequently brought to the museum. The object with accession number E23989, collected by T.M. Brower, US Consul between 1860 and 1874, bears an old Smithsonian label identifying it as 'liku or female girdle Fiji Islands'. Today, all of the liku are catalogued under their Fijian name, followed by 'Woman's skirt' (in the Object Name entry) in the online catalogue.[94]

In the British Museum the term liku was recorded early in the documentation. Liku with accession number Oc1842,0126.9 was donated by Richard Brinsley Hinds in 1842 and was described in the *Extracts from the British and Medieval Register 1757-1878* (page 38) as: 'Petticoat of shaggy fibre with broad neatly plaited band of hibiscus bark, coloured red, black and white, worn by the women of Fijis, "liku": New Guinea'. The registration slip classifies it as 'Fiji Islands "Liku" or dress worn by women…' (BM registration card). Liku +4664, which entered the collection on 4 November 1889, was recorded as 'liku –

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92 The catalogue did not travel with the collections to the Smithsonian Institute, where the collections are currently housed. It was only in 1877 that ornithologist Titian Peale presented his copy of the catalogue to the United States National Museum. Now known as the 'Peale Catologue', it continues to be a useful resource for museum staff (Walsh 2004).

93 The display did not change when the second edition of the catalogue was published (National Institute 1857: 12). By the time of the third edition in 1859 the Wilkes material is no longer listed as it had moved to the Smithsonian Institute.

94 See http://collections.nmnh.si.edu/search/anth/, accessed October 2017.

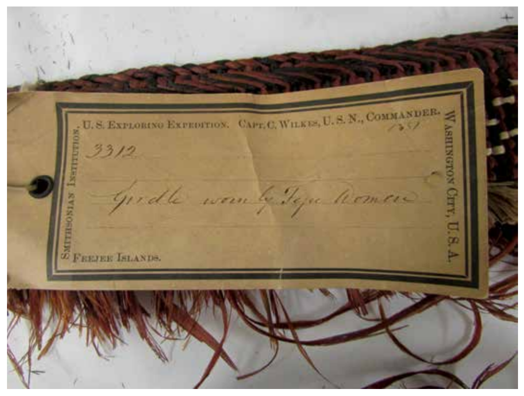

Figure 43: Labels on liku in the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington. From left to right, and from old to new: label probably attached during expedition on liku E4638 showing it was collected by seaman D. Smith; label with the 'Peale number', attached when the US Exploring Expeditions were catalogued by the expedition's scientific members from 1842 onwards in the handwritten catalogue *Collections of the United States South Sea Surveying and Exploring Expedition, 1838, 9, 40, 41, & 42* on liku E3258; US Exploring Expedition/Smithsonian label, attached when the collections entered the Smithsonian Institution in 1857 on liku E3312; 'Grass skirt' label on liku E4624.

made of inner bark of hibiscus', based on the original label attached to the object that mentions: 'leku, Feejee Islands, no. 41' (BM registration card). Similarly, in 1890 Edge Partington presented an object that received the number +4752 and was registered as a 'Woman's girdle (liku) obtained in Fiji'. Thus the term liku was used early on in British Museum documentation, but, as elsewhere, there is no consistent translation of the term. Early records tend to use 'Woman's girdle' or 'Petticoat', while more recent labels identify liku as 'grass skirt' (42.12-10.47), 'grass belt' (1930.4-9.39), or 'frill' (1928.71). Some labels attached to liku admit confusion stating: 'Apron? Girdle?' (95.491) or 'petticoat? Girdle? Skirt?' (95.470). The British Museum online catalogue generally uses 'skirt' as object name, with 'liku' in the description field.[95]

The Peabody Essex Museum in Salem holds a liku collected by Captain Richardson (E5135) that was classified on the catalogue card as 'girdle, girl's'. At one point, this

95 https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/search.aspx, accessed October 2017.

Figure 44: Liku ni gone made of masi and vau. Skirt part: width 18cm, length 7cm. Peabody Essex Museum (E30,507).

Figure 45: *Feejee Girl*. Sketched by J. Drayton during the US Exploring Expedition in Fiji in 1840.

classification was deemed less relevant as it was put between brackets. The denomination 'waist band' was added, indicating the new preference. The crossing out of terms and designating new denominations show the layers of interpretation throughout time. Another liku at the PEM (E30,507) consists of a hibiscus fibre braided waist cord and brief fringe which covered only the lower abdomen, leaving the hips and buttocks bare. Perhaps it was the small size that led to its registration in the Peabody Essex Museum as 'necklace'. This initial classification on the catalogue card was crossed out and replaced by 'apron-skirt' with a note written by Fergus Clunie in 1982 'NOT A NECKLACE but a *liku-ni-gone* apron-skirt for a young untattooed girl'. A liku ni gone was a liku worn by young girls (between 7 and 11 years old) before they received their veiqia and their first proper liku. These subdivisions, designating the specific type of liku, are rare in museum databases. If the term liku is used at all, it is used generically. Similar to textual descriptions, detailed variety in liku is rarely acknowledged.

However, in the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA), University of Cambridge, liku variety is shown in the cataloguing system in the form of pencil notes on catalogue cards that identify the item as 'liku dradra' or 'liku se droka' or other types

of liku that were recorded by von Hügel. Again, finding a translation for the generic term 'liku' was difficult. The liku with accession number Z 2813, which in museum history has been on display in the gallery, was initially catalogued as 'dress', but this was corrected and 'skirt' became the preferred term. The explanation given was: 'Fringed is a necessary adjective to qualify all these skirts, dresses connote a covering for body and limbs which skirt does not' (catalogue card Z 2813).[96]

There was a desire to be as objective and precise as possible in the museum documentation, which has led to discrepancy. The aim of showing these examples is not to point out the inaccuracy of museum administrators. To the contrary, it demonstrates the difficulty of finding a suitable translation to fit neatly in museum boxes of classification. Walter Benjamin in his seminal essay 'The Task of the Translator' (1968) argued that, like representation, it is impossible to provide a precise equivalent when a concept or thing moves to another cultural context. Intercultural translation is often fraught and considered as interpretation, displacement and value judgment (Silverman 2015: 4). Translation of the term liku, however, is not necessarily a case of taking ownership; rather it is an attempt to do justice to the garment when it appears to be understood a little more over time (*cf.* Turner 2016). It shows attempts at political correctness, even though these might not always be accurate. For example at MAA the catalogue card of a 'liku dradra', a liku that was given to a girl when she reached puberty, has a pencil note that states that dradra [menses] is 'better left unsaid for good and sufficient reasons' (catalogue card Z 3991). Rather than seek an appropriate translation, which is deemed necessary for museum audiences, an alternative is to use the term liku and educate audiences about it.

Typology

> Had my *liku* box (the fifth packed) soldered up, so that's done, thank God. One more (bowls) and I am finished. (Von Hügel in Roth and Hooper 1990: 326)

Von Hügel's journal entry on Monday 22 May 1876, written in Nasova, reveals how he packed the valuables that he had collected per type when shipping them to England.[97] The existence of different types of liku had been noticed by Williams (1858: 171) and Wilkes (1845, 3: 355) in the 1840s, but they did not record different names. In the 1870s, Kleinschmidt distinguished younger girls by their "vau lingu" [liku vau] from older women who usually wore a liku made of a longer fibre, called 'Sa-Sa' [sasa]. He noted that the outfit for fishing was the 'Sa-Sa-Wai' [sausauwai] liku, while during meke dancers wore liku made from strips of voivoi (Pandanus leaves) (Kleinschmidt 1984: 154; 1879: 267, 274). Von Hügel was the first non-Fijian who made a conscious effort to systematically record liku variety. On 23 January 1876 whilst in Balebale, he wrote: 'Got some girls up to tell me the names of the *liku* and gave them needles and *kula* (red wool)' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 269). This research resulted in a five-page list in von Hügel's hand, currently in the MAA archives, that concludes that, 'though they vary greatly both

96 Of course, what was considered a skirt and what not also changed in a Euro-American context. Recently Rod Ewins, in his discussion of liku, referred to liku as 'girdles' and added: 'they can hardly be called skirts, but nor were they "belts" as they have sometimes been called' (Ewins 2014: 52).

97 Lady Gordon writes more elaborately about this event, see Gordon (1901: 31-32).

Name	For who	Where	Material	Technique
Se droka	Married women's state dress	Still [1870s] much worn over the isulu in Viti Levu and Vanua Levu	Vau dyed various colours	The band attains its maximum width in this variety
Siti	Married women, occasionally by men	Common dress of mountain women, Wainimala and also still much used on the Tavua (Viti Levu) coast	Bleached vau	Simple fringe of ca. 9 inches, which hangs from a thin cord
Vau/dradra	Unmarried girl, but occasionally worn by married women	Sometimes on state occasions several vau are worn together. The dradra is now only worn by mountain people and will soon disappear	Vau left natural, bleached or coloured	A closely set fringe of strips of fibre
Sasa	The usual dress in Wainibuka, Ra Coast. Sometimes worn by men	Widely spread like siti. Both in use in inland and coastal districts	A kind of rush, beaten flat	Simple, full fringe. Usually tinted black by maceration in mud. Occasionally coloured yellow with turmeric
Yaka [von Hügel unsure of this name]	Worn by men in Nadi, February 1876	Rare form, only seen about half a dozen in use	Blackened yaka fibre	Thick neatly formed fringe of a number of very fine double stranded strings
Sausauwai or waloa	Used by both sexes. Also much worn by young men		Waloa	Much prized on account of its durability and water resisting properties
Kuta vatu	Worn by both men and women	Only seen in Tavua and Ba districts	Grass	A small strong fringe
Kalolo	Much worn in these districts	Tavua and Ba districts	Roots of a grass (waruwaru) [?wavuwavu]	Small dress, very tough and durable
Kiekie	Worn by both sexes on state occasions and by women when they bring food to the chief		Voivoi, coloured strips of dried pandanus leaf	More an ornament than a dress. Mostly worn over other liku or isulu
Drau ni ulu [?]	Worn by a girl of ca. 14 years of age	Wainimala town	Human hair	Rare
Lawa ni toa [Lawe ni toa]	Children often amuse themselves by making temporary fringes of feathers		Cock's hackles	
Temporary leaf liku	Worn by both sexes		A variety of leaves are used	

Table 1: Overview of information on von Hügel's list [Note: the information was collected by von Hügel and temporal references therefore need to be read as 1870s. The distribution over subcategories (such as 'name', 'for who?', 'where', etc.) was done by the author].

in size and finish, there is a limited number of liku types based on material, technique and use' (Von Hügel n.d.: 1). The list (Table 1) distinguishes 12 different types of liku ranging from the 'married women's state dress', liku se droka, to so-called 'temporary' liku. A record of where the liku was observed and by whom it was worn is followed by a brief description of the liku. Most of the subdivisions show that locally liku were distinguished by material or to indicate an important stage in life. Von Hügel also noted whether a certain type of liku was in decline: 'The liku is the dress of the women, but men occasionally also wear some of the varieties (the sasa and the siti) but this practice is probably a modern innovation' (Von Hügel n.d.: 1). The liku sausauwai or liku waloa, made of rhizopmorphoid fungus (*Rhizomorpha* spp) was also recorded as being worn

Figure 46: Liku typology as catalogued by Baron von Hügel: (a) liku se droka (Z 3994); (b) liku siti (Z 4031); (c) liku dradra (Z 3990); (d) liku kiekie (Z 2824); (e) liku sasa (blackened) (Z 4012); (f) liku yaka (Z 4010); (g) liku sausauwai/waloa (Z 4011); (h) liku kuta vatu (Z 4016); (i) liku kalolo (Z 4018); (j) liku sasa (Z 4000); (k) liku drau ni ulu (?) (Z 4020); (l) liku lawa ni toa (Z 2784); (m) temporary leaf liku (Z 2780).

k.

l.

m.

Figure 46 (continued): Liku typology as catalogued by Baron von Hügel: (k) liku drau ni ulu (?) (Z 4020); (l) liku lawa ni toa (Z 2784); (m) temporary leaf liku (Z 2780).

by both men and women. He continued: 'The former narrow fringe [liku dradra] is now almost a thing of the past, but in 1875 it was yet the dress of the young women in the interior of Viti Levu, and forty years ago it must have been used all along the coast and inland' (Von Hügel n.d.: 2). The materials and some information on the technique are specified providing a snapshot of liku production in the 1870s.

While von Hügel's list was a useful attempt at classifying liku, a significant issue complicating its interpretation today is that the list lost its connection with physical liku over time. Apart from compiling a list, von Hügel had attached identifying labels to the various liku types. However, these have been retrieved in the museum archives, detached from the physical objects. Even in 1934, when Colonel Hayter drew up a catalogue of the Fijian collections during his work at the MAA, he copied notes from von Hügel's list but did not clearly connect these to liku in the collection (Hayter 1936, MAA archives). Mrs Lock did not discuss liku in her unpublished manuscript *Mrs Lock's research on Baron von Hügels notes regarding Fiji collections circa 1875*, but stated that generally 'card indexes had the necessary additions made to them and as noted in red ink on them' (note by F.J. Hayter on 25 June 1935 on the frontispiece in Lock's manuscript). Indeed, some catalogue cards have pencil notes that help with identifying the type of liku. These notes, together with an analysis of liku in MAA and in consultation with Fijian botanist, Suliana Siwatibau, enabled me to re-connect physical liku to von Hügel's textual typology and to add additional information and scientific names for materials. The materials were not always clearly identified by von Hügel, a cause of confusion, but the main material for liku se droka was vau (*Hibiscus tiliaceous*), sometimes with kuta fibre or barkcloth added. Liku siti and liku dradra were made of vau (*Hibiscus tiliaceous*). What von Hügel referred to as liku sasa is made of the kuta fibre, a swamp sedge (*Eleocharis dulcis*).[98] The liku yaka was made of yaka fibre, a

98 *Eleocharis dulcis* in Fiji is variously *taria/sasa/kuta.*

Papilionaceous creeper.[99] Liku sausauwai was made of waloa (*Rhizomorpha* species).[100] The scientific name for what von Hügel referred to as kuta vatu is unclear, but the fibre of the liku kalolo, which von Hügel called 'waruwaru', was likely to be wavuvavu (*Erigeron sumatrensis*). Finally the liku kiekie was made of kiekie or voivoi (pandanus).

Von Hügel noted that liku variety is 'owing to the material they are made of, the use they are intended for and the district they are made in, for costume varies considerably in different parts of Fiji' (Von Hügel n.d.: 1). Regional variety is difficult to confirm using existing museum collection data. A few liku in the Cambridge collection still have regional identifiers: some liku dradra were from 'Na Rokoroko Yava [Narokorokoyawa], Viti Levu, Tholo [Colo] East Province' (Catalogue cards Z 2814, Z 3991-Z 3993). In other cases, this information has been detached from the object. The number of clearly provenanced liku in other museum collections is small, even when the collector is known. Most collectors visited a wide range of places in Fiji and no records were made of what was acquired where. Only a few liku that were collected during the US Exploring Expedition have regional information, such as Lakeba in the Lau group (E4628, E4658), Malolo Island (E1511), Ovalau (E4517, E4522) – all of these are liku se droka that show similarities. An exception is the liku collected in Macuata (E4646), which is unusual in its use of long kuta strips as a waistband. Other regionally identified liku are those collected in Gau in 1855 by Captain Denham during the voyage of the HMS *Herald*, currently in the British Museum.[101] A series of liku waloa collected by Brenchley in 1865, currently in Maidstone Museum, bear a label stating 'from Mbau' [Bau]. However, Brenchley purchased most of his collection in Ovalau, either from Fijians or in Madame Graeffe's shop.[102] Naturally, the place of collection does not necessarily correspond to the place of production. Liku collected during formal presentations came from a variety of places, since solevu brought people together from different areas. In other words, establishing stylistic regional variety is difficult. What is clear, though, is that between 1810 and 1840 liku were mostly collected in Vanua Levu, while the majority of later collections were assembled in Viti Levu and offshore islands (and from 1860s onwards from the interior). Time-wise there were collecting peaks in the 1840s and the 1870s.

Selections

Compared to liku collections in other museums, von Hügel's collection is unusual in its makeup – it being the only collection holding liku yaka, liku kuta vatu and liku kalolo. For reasons of comparison, it is useful to have a closer look at the largest collection of liku, assembled during the US Exploring Expedition in 1840 from all over Fiji. The collection contains what von Hügel called liku dradra, liku sausauwai made of waloa fibre, liku sasa/kuta, liku kiekie and is the only other collection that contains liku 'drau ni ulu', von

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99 According to Roth and Hooper (1990: 289) the yaka *[Pueraria lobata]* 'a creeping ground plant with gourd-like leaves and an unbeatable stringy root' is used to make string. It was used for making fishing nets and cords on bayaloyalo and other trolling hooks, and cords of breast plates.

100 Initially Seemann (1862: 352) identified *waloa* as a *Rhizomorpha* species. Parham (1941: 125) noted that Seemann identified *waloa* as *Rhaphidophora vitiensis (Aroideae)*, while she identified the *waloa* creeper as *Epipremum vitiensis*.

101 Accession numbers: Oc1857,0318.23; Oc1857,0318.22 and Oc1857,0318.24 (see also chapter *Collecting Liku and Veiqia*).

102 It concerns liku waloa with accession numbers: 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, and 947 in Maidstone Museum.

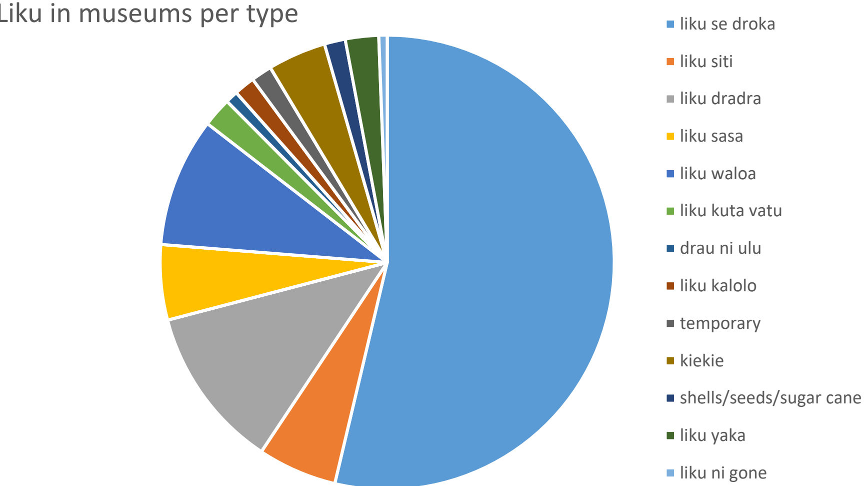
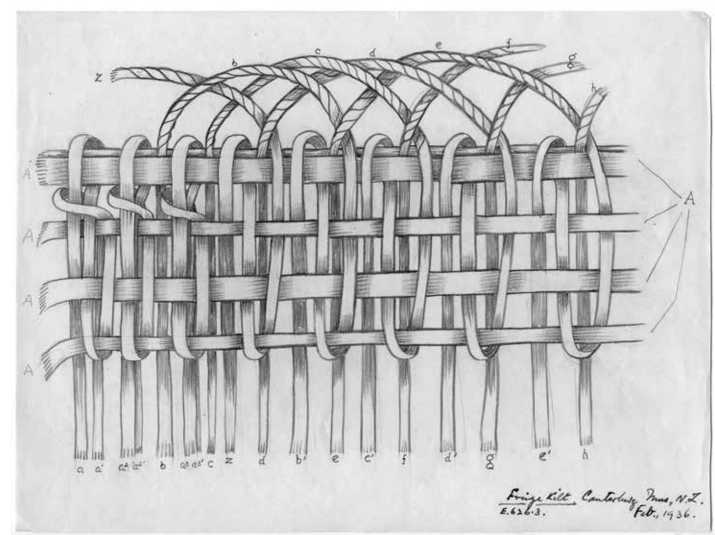


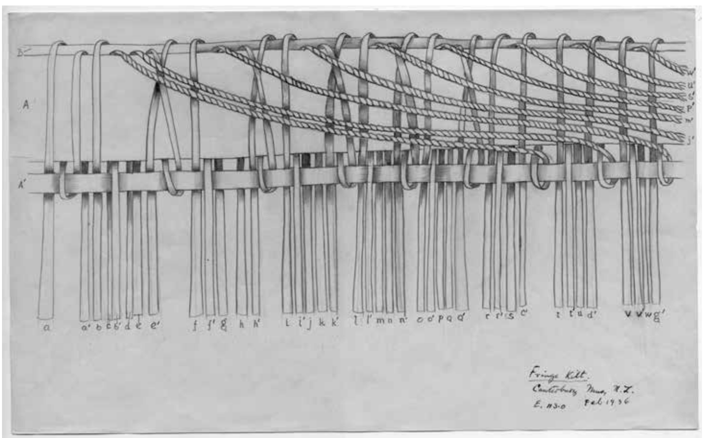
Table 2: Typological division of liku (following von Hügel) in various museums.

Hügel's denomination for liku made of feathers. While the number of liku se droka in von Hügel's collection is small compared to other types, the largest number of liku in the US Exploring Expedition collection is what von Hügel called liku se droka. This corresponds to the majority of liku in museum collections. When looking at a representative sample of liku in various museums (Table 2), most liku are liku se droka; it often being the only type in the collection.[103] These were made following two main techniques. One type consists of a double vau waistband in between which several strands of fibre have been tied and cut at varying lengths in order to create a layered effect. The other type is made by weaving together strips of fibre which are then folded over the waistband (a type of upside down weaving also seen in Maori textiles). Various effects are created by dividing the strips into small twisted bundles or by criss-cross weaving. The drawings made by George Kingsley and Jane Roth in 1936 show the latter technique and some of its variations more closely. The drawings are based on liku in the Canterbury Museum in Christchurch and Jane Roth used some of these for her article on liku (Roth 1988) (Jane Roth Archives).

Liku se droka are always multi-coloured and multi-layered; characteristics that, according to textual sources were described as making them liku for chiefly women (Seemann 1862: 354). Von Hügel described liku se droka as the 'Married women's state dress'. The fact that liku se droka are numerous in museum collections is conceivably due to their association with public events and presentations. Liku se droka were not only worn during formal occasions, but also gifted. It is likely that it was the liku se droka

103 The pie chart is based on research on liku in the following museums (the number of liku included in the sample included between brackets: American Museum Natural History New York (3), Australian Museum (18), Birmingham Museum (5), British Museum (38), Cologne (2), Kew (3), Leiden (8), Maidstone Museum (18), National Museums Scotland (6), Peabody Essex Museum (13), Leipzig and Dresden (3), MAA (76), Fiji Museum (9), Torquay (1), Royal Albert Memorial Museum Exeter (2), Smithsonian (107), Musée du quai Branly – Jacques Chirac (2), Museum of Natural History Toulouse (2), Världskulturmuseerna Stockholm (8), Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (10), Christchurch Museum, Canterbury (5). Priority has been given to liku with clear information and provenance.





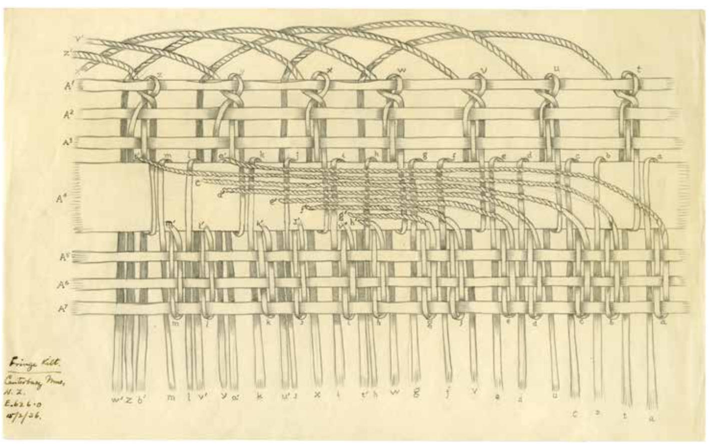


Figure 47: Drawings showing liku techniques of making, made by George Kingsley Roth in 1936 based on liku in the Canterbury Museum in Christchurch, Aotearoa New Zealand.

Figure 48: 'Child's liku', collected by seaman G. Rogers during the US Exploring Expedition in Fiji in 1840. Made of masi and vau, with long tie. Skirt part; width: 33cm.

that was given during solevu presentations (Williams 1858: 40-41). However, liku se droka were also transacted as personal gifts – a fact that becomes clear by looking more closely at the US Exploring Expedition collection. A number of liku collected during the US Exploring Expedition bear the original label attached by the US Exploring Expedition team identifying who collected it (see Table 3). Of all the liku with an identified collector, only one is not a liku se droka. Taking into account the methodological difficulty that only a small number of all the collected liku have an identified collector, one important aspect that we can learn from these labels is the amount of liku se droka collected by sailors as opposed to officers or the scientific expedition members. Even liku se droka with a long tie, a sign of chiefly status, were collected by ordinary men. In terms of materials, there also seems to be no distinction between liku collected by ordinary men and officers or scientific crew members. Liku se droka might have been more common than we think; 'state dress' is not to be confused with chiefly dress and liku se droka might have been worn by all women during formal occasions. As mentioned previously, it might have been more a question of dressing appropriately for the occasion than about expressing status. Or it could mean that liku se droka were made by 'common' women for chiefly women and these makers exchanged them with sailors instead. There is hardly any information on who made liku, or even on how they were made, but the specialist skills involved in making liku se droka might make it plausible for these to be made by a specialist group of women.

A number of small and narrow liku se droka in the US Exploring Expedition collection have been described as 'probably for a child' (Catalogue entries E3258, E4603, E4607, E4633, E4643, amongst others). This was not an original description, but has been added over time. Children generally did not wear a liku. Some girls wore a liku-ni-gone which left the buttocks bare. The small size of the so-called child liku does mean that these liku would not have covered the buttocks, but the elaborate technique involved does not correspond with textual and pictorial depictions of liku ni gone (Figure 44). Perhaps these small liku se droka were not meant to be worn (and most of the liku in museums were probably never worn) but were meant to be exchanged. As Williams (1858: 168) wrote: 'When betrothed in infancy, as the daughters of Chiefs usually are, the mother of the girl, in some cases, takes a small liku to the future husband, as a pledge that her child shall hereafter be his wife'.

Accession number	Type of liku	Identified collector	Collector category	Materials	Particular characteristics
E1512	Liku se droka	Smith, D. & Smith	Men	Vau, masi	
E3253	Liku se droka	Peale, T.	Scientifics	Vau, masi, kuta	Long tie
E3309	Liku se droka	Peale, T.	Scientifics	Vau, kuta	
E4514	Liku se droka	Stearns, S.	Men	Vau	
E4515	Liku se droka	Rogers, G.	Men	Vau	
E4516	Liku se droka	Sheaf, J.	Men	Vau	
E4517	Liku se droka	Pulley, R.	Men	Vau	
E4518	Liku se droka	Robinson, R.	Officer	Vau	Long tie
E4519	Liku se droka	Ray, White & Brown	Men	Vau	
E4522	Liku se droka	Peale, T.	Scientifics	Vau	
E4523	Liku se droka	Sinclair, T.	Men	Vau	
E4524	Liku se droka	Peale, T.	Scientifics	Vau	Long tie
E4602	Liku sausauwai/waloa	Brown, J.	Men	Waloa, vau	
E4603	Liku se droka	Brown, J.	Men	Vau, kuta, masi	'Child's liku'
E4607	Liku se droka	Letourno, G.	Men	Vau	Long tie, 'child's liku'
E4611	Liku se droka	E. Richardson	Men	Vau	
E4626	Liku se droka	Sheaf, J.	Men	Vau, masi	Long tie
E4628	Liku se droka	Johnson, R.	Officer	Vau	
E4631	Liku se droka	Burk, T.	Men	Vau, kuta, masi	Long tie
E4633	Liku se droka	Rogers, G.	Men	Vau	Long tie, 'child's liku'
E4638	Liku se droka	Smith, D.	Men	Vau, masi	Long tie
E4643	Liku se droka	Case, A.	Officer	Vau, masi	Long tie, 'child's liku'
E4646	Liku se droka	Peale. T.	Scientifics	Vau, pandanus	Long tie
E4647	Liku se droka	Roberts, O.	Men	Vau	Long tie
E4658	Liku se droka	Wilkes, C.	Officer	Vau	Long tie
E4659	Liku se droka	Sheaf, J.	Men	Vau	Long tie
ET15296	Liku se droka	E. Richardson	Men	Vau, masi	Long tie

Table 3 (in order of accession number): Wilkes distinguished between the 'Scientific Corps', the 'Officers' and the 'Men', terminology that has been used to identify the status of the identified collectors in this table.

It would make sense for these 'small liku' to resemble liku se droka, which were reserved for married women. The fact that these were given to expedition members not only emphasises their exchange characteristics, but highlights the personal relationships that were formed during these exchanges. They might even have been given to secure bonds, which were not necessarily understood by the American crew. The fact that the number of liku se droka in von Hügel's collection is small is probably the result of a number of reasons, including the fact that liku se droka were less available at the time of his visit, his wish to collect a variety and the fact that he collected mainly in the interior of Viti Levu, where several liku dradra were worn together during festive occasions.

It is important to remember that the analysis above is based on what is in museum collections. There were more types of liku being used than were collected. Toganivalu (1911: [1]) reported on the installation of a chiefly woman, one of the wives of the Vunivalu, who was installed as Radi [ni] Levuka [Radi: principal wife of high chief; queen] by being wrapped in a well-made and elaborate liku that incorporated small whales-teeth, fish-teeth and small cowry shells. No such liku were found in museum collections. Moreover, there appear to be no banana, vudi (*Scitamineae*), or masawe/ti (*Cordyline* sp.) leaf liku in museum collections despite descriptions of their frequent use. Peter Bays, who spent ten days on Vatoa Island in the Lau group in September 1829 after the Australian whale ship *Minerva* was shipwrecked, mentioned: 'The women have a kind of apron made of the plantain, banana, or cocoa-nut leaf; and, on certain occasions, they appear with garlands of sweet scented flowers and beads, (if they have any) hanging loosely round the neck, and an apron made of a sort of creeping small leaved vine intermixed with garlands of flowers' (Bays 1831: 66). In the 1870s, Kleinschmidt noted that 'Men, women and children often wear a loincloth of green banana leaves when working in the bush or gardens' (Kleinschmidt 1984: 154). Perhaps these were not considered collectable enough or, more likely, these were not offered as gifts as they would have been worn immediately after manufacture and discarded after use.

Both von Hügel (n.d.: [4]) and Seemann (1862: 352) distinguished 'permanent' from 'temporary' liku – which corresponded to the local division between liku made from dried fibre as valuables and liku made for short-term use. In his list, von Hügel mentioned that children made temporary liku out of cock's hackles or a variety of leaves. Seemann gave the sausauwai liku made of waloa fibre as an example of a permanent liku, while temporary liku were made of banana or coconut leaves, or the scented leaves of the vono climbing plant (*Alyxia bracteolosa*) (Seemann 1862: 352). Yet Seemann made a temporary liku 'permanent' by collecting it. His collection at Kew contains a liku made of *Apocynaceae, Alyxia stellate,* vono leaves, which is preserved in a wooden frame that can be hung as a painting. Classifying a garment made of organic material as permanent is thought-provoking as the very nature of the material and the type of object contradicts its eternal label. The fact that this specific liku is framed particularly emphasises that liku became static museum objects.

While von Hügel's list is the most elaborate attempt at recording liku types, it is not complete. There is a wide variety of liku in von Hügel's collection that are not covered in this typology. Equally, there is a broad range of liku in other collections that are not mentioned on von Hügel's list, which is logical when taking cultural change, geographical location and the selectiveness of the collection process into account. Von Hügel did not mention the use of masi or barkcloth strips from the paper mulberry tree (*Broussonetia papyrifera*) in liku, of which there are many examples in other museums.[104] Nor did he mention liku made of coix seeds (*Coix lachrymi*, Job's tears) as collected by Seemann (British Museum, Oc1960,11.30). The question should be raised whether this is important? An explicit focus on taxonomies of types and their origins has the danger to fixate liku in time and space, while the emphasis should be on creative adaptability. Although there

104 Examples are, amongst others, in Peabody Essex Museum (E5367), Birmingham Museum (1953A806), which is one of the few liku that is completely made of masi, and the Smithsonian (E4593, E4606, amongst others).

are clear 'categories' of liku, the individual variety in each category is immense using numerous techniques, patterns and colours. A great deal of energy and ingenuity was dedicated to the making of these intricate garments, indicating that, while bound by obligations to choose styles in accordance with collective aesthetics and uses, the makers were able to add individual characteristics. These individual features were not necessarily understood in museum terms.

Duplicates

In 1858, when the US Exploring Expedition collection was catalogued in the Smithsonian Institution, a series of objects were categorised as duplicates. By embracing the concept of 'duplicate' it is implied that there are many examples of the same type. Yet, an overview of liku museum collections demonstrates the enormous variety of liku, even by nineteenth-century standards. The status might be based on the use of the same materials, the same form, indeed ultimately typological and classificatory principles, which are a consequence of rendering liku into museum objects. To categorise an object as a 'duplicate' reduces its level to that of mere copy; spare and additional to an implied more suitable original (*cf.* O'Hanlon 2000: 28). The duplicate is an alternative, but its status implies it is of lesser value than the similar example that will be kept in the museum collection, which can be labelled the original. It also renders a museum object, which is generally acknowledged as no longer alienable, into a disposable commodity. A surplus for one museum, these objects filled gaps in other collections. For the Smithsonian Institution, creating a duplicate series fitted the institutional policy of using duplicates to further (political) relationships and strengthen the collections. Duplicate exchanges and distributions were a means of advancing scientific knowledge among a range of communities. Objects from the duplicate series were sent as gifts, in the form of starter kits, to domestic museums, universities and other educational institutions that applied to receive them and that would use them as educational tools (Nichols 2014: 146; Smithsonian Institution 1862: 41-44, 63; Walsh 2002: 203-05). In the 1980s Jane Walsh retracted some of these duplicate exchanges by contacting museums in the US, Canada and Europe and was surprised by the striking similarity of the 1867 museum starter kits. Besides North American material, most starter kits contained material from the Pacific, such as fish hooks and bow and arrows, with the majority originating from Fiji. There was usually a selection of Fijian clubs, a Fijian liku, a Fijian shell bracelet, a Fijian basket and a section of a larger piece of barkcloth from Fiji or another Pacific region (Walsh 2004). Fijian liku were thus part of the standard packs of duplicates. The original official collection listed 120 liku, of which 35 were exchanged with 28 museums – a fact that led Walsh (2002) to describe liku as 'currency'.

Similarly, von Hügel identified a range of liku at MAA as 'duplicate'. Once liku were classified in museums, von Hügel treated them as objects, specimens almost, enabling him to give some the label of duplicate. The creation of duplicates was a result of the museum classification system with its requirement for the standardisation of categories such as locality, function, material – which, once a representative was found, rendered other similar examples into repetitions and thus duplicates. The Australian Museum (AM) in Sydney had lost all of its ethnographic collections on 22 September 1882, when the Sydney International Exposition building burnt down. From then onwards, the museum rebuilt its collection through exchanges. In response to von Hügel's letter of 20 August 1884, Sinclair of the Australian Museum wrote:

> In reply I am desired to say that the Trustees will be very glad to enter into Exchanges of Ethnological Specimens with your Museum. We can send you specimens from New Britain, Solomon Islands, and adjacent groups in the Western Pacific, and a few from New Guinea – but I am sorry to say almost none from Australia. In return I am desired to say that all the Fijian specimens, as well as many others of great value, were destroyed by fire in 1882, and cannot now be easily replaced, so that the Trustees would be glad to receive a collection of these from you – and if you have duplicates from any of the other islands of the Northern and Eastern pacific I will be glad to hear from you. (Letter no. 259 S Sinclair to A von Hügel, 13/10/1884, Australian Museum archives)

A range of liku sent in several shipments between January and March 1885 entered the Sydney Australian Museum as a result. The duplicates sent were liku dradra, liku sasa, liku sausauwai and a few liku se droka. Von Hügel wrote that he had 'endeavoured to send as typical specimens as the means at my command would permit but I need not remind you of the scarcity of Fijian native goods or assure you that to form [added *now*] an absolutely complete collection from Fiji is quite a hopeless task' (letter von Hügel to Trustees of the Australian Museum, 5 March 1885).[105] Today, some of the liku in the Sydney collections still bear a label with the word 'duplicate' in von Hügel's handwriting (B6394 and B6395) – their exchange potential became part of the liku's museum life.

Liku were also exchanged by von Hügel with the British Museum. Augustus Franks, as curator in the British Museum, and von Hügel, representing the Cambridge Museum, sent sketches of duplicates back and forward until both parties were happy with the exchange (Letter Franks to von Hügel, 26 December 1884, MAA archives). This is a sign of the time as the nineteenth century is when the 'exchange industry' (Philp 2011: 271) in the museum world thrived, which Jude Philp considers the result of the professionalisation of the museum and its focus on science and public education. While initially liku had become museum objects as a result of intercultural and colonial relationships, subsequently they were used to strengthen further relationships between institutions.

Veiqia as museum objects

Upon his return to the UK from Fiji, von Hügel first based himself in London before moving to Cambridge to become curator at the museum there. In London, he began to work on his notebooks and Fijian collections with the aim to increase his understanding of these collections. For this reason, he drew up lists such as 'My wants', itemising the hiatuses in information he encountered. Some of these 'items' were crossed out with pencil, suggesting further research had helped him solve his query. One section that is not crossed out is 'VIII Any particulars about tattooing'. In a letter, he listed specific questions he had regarding veiqia such as:

> …origin, ideas in connection with it, Was it always restricted only to the women? Were the Kai si [kaisi, lower status] tattooed with the same pattern as women of rank? Did the patterns vary in different districts? Were any marks distinctive of tribes or families? (for instance as the "We ni ga" [duck track motif, see table 5] which some

105 Collection archives of the Australian Museum, Sydney, 1885/3-69.

Drawing	Motif name	Info: motif number and description
	We ni ga [track of duck]. Often von Hügel also wrote we na ga.	[1 and 1a] 'Female mark, noticed on Ra Coast, which has been cut with a piece of bamboo. On cheeks, one on each'. Von Hügel wonders whether it is a tribal or family mark, indicating the association with a particular social identity. This drawing ('specimen' as von Hügel refers to it) was taken from Saulo of Navuavua, Ra Coast. VH 20: '"weni ni ga" track of duck. Family marks (natural size) produced with bamboo ("Bitu")'.
	Vaka vonovono ? [in the way of being together, von Hügel translates it as 'formed of different pieces'] Vaka vonu vonu [in turtle's style]	[7 and 2] Von Hügel added a question mark to this name indicating he was unsure at the time of the motif's name. Later he writes [VH21] 'vaka vonu vonu, in turtle's style. The motif appears on the arm of both women and men and was generally distributed'. Von Hügel collected examples from Nakorotubu. He drew an example of Saulo's arm, a woman from Navuavua, Ra Coast (VH20).
	Gisigisi	[3 and 3a] 'A common mark on arms. Sometimes the circles themselves are formed by a number of small circles being placed close to each other' (VH 31). He drew an example of Saulo's arm, a woman from Navuavua, Ra Coast (VH20).
	Digilo (Kalokalo), star	[4 and 4a] 'Not uncommon single or strung together in rows. My specimen was drawn in Rakiraki' (VH 31).
	[unnamed]	[5] 'On calf of leg (upper part) not very uncommon. Specimen 2 inches across taken from woman at Navolau, Rakiraki' (VH 31).

Table 4: Transcript of Baron von Hügel's notes of tattoo patterns collated with his drawings. Note: the motif numbers were given by von Hügel but the author added page numbers, following the order in which the documents were found in the archives, resulting in VH1 (first page in the folder) to VH35. MAA Archives.

Drawing	Motif name	Info: motif number and description
	Na vonu [turtle]	[6] 'Mark on cheek (only seen it on one – never on both) of women. Smaller specimen figured is coupled with two indistinct we ni ga marks (see no. 1). Specimen taken at Na Korotubu [Nakorotubu]' (VH 31-32) He drew a specific example from the cheek of a woman at Nakorotubu (VH 22).
	[unnamed]	[8 and 9] 'Both marks are not infrequently met with on arm. I believe have some relation with sexual intercourse. [motif 9] This figure with no.s 2 were taken from the arm of a girl of Navuavua "Saulo" by name' (VH 32).
	Tauvo [tauvu: to have the same root, or spring from the same source; used for people who worship the same god (Hazlewood 1872: 128)].	[10] 'A sick mark, often used in leprosy and skin diseases. The affected part being tattooed round in this way. This figure was taken from the palm of the hand of a Ra coast woman' (VH 32).
	[unnamed]	[11] 'On the arm of a woman of Na Koro Tumbu [Nakorotubu]' (VH 32).
	Mata ni saqa [possibly referring to the spout and air hole of a small saqa or pottery water bottle]	[12] 'On arms: not infrequent. Specimen from Raki Raki' (VH 32).

Table 4: Continued.

Drawing	Motif name	Info: motif number and description
	[unnamed]	[13] 'Common man and woman' (VH 32).
	Na vana ni waqa, mast of canoe	[14, also on VH 9]
	[unnamed]	[15] 'Not uncommon' (VH 33).
	Dra[u] ni mole [leaf of a moli tree]	[16] 'Very common and universal both man and woman' (VH 33).
	Wawa ni rubu [rubu: small basket to contain valuable items]	[17] 'Common, varies much in design as in two following specimens. Good specimen drawn natural size from arm of a Togoloa [Vunitogoloa] (Raki Raki) girl by name "Leweni"' (VH 33).
	Wawa ni rubu [rubu: small basket to contain valuable items]	[18] 'Same as last: taken off woman's arm at Nakorotubu' (VH 33).
	Wawa ni rubu [rubu: small basket to contain valuable items]	[19] 'Same as last: taken off woman's arm at Korotubu' (VH 33).
	[unnamed]	[20] 'These bands in more or less number placed in different angles and distance for such are often not uncommon. They are frequently met with singly in women on the calf of the leg just below the knee. Specimen from the arm of a Rakiraki girl' (VH 33).
	[unnamed]	[21] 'This mark is I believe peculiar to the Yasawa group. It was taken from the arm of a girl belonging to one of these islands. (made with instruments)' (VH 33).

Table 4: Continued.

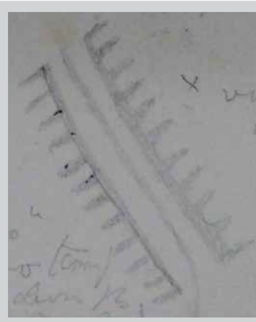
Drawing	Motif name	Info: motif number and description
	Doli manumanu, “Doli birds” [doli: wandering tattler]	VH 21: ‘birds flying’ (VH 33).
	Nai Mo (?)	[27b] ‘A well-defined but very faint figure so faint that it is only seen in certain lights. It stretches from the corner of the eye to the corner of the mouth across both cheeks. Specimen from a woman of Viti Levu, Rakiraki’ (VH 34). [VH 10: “Naimo”, woman Naso (town), Viti Levu Bay, Viti Levu. Very faint, only seen in certain lights. Both cheeks alike. [marked on top:] corner of eye, [on bottom of drawing:] corner mouth

Table 4: Continued.

> Ra women have tattooed on their cheeks). Was tattooing round the mouth universal and at what age and why was it done? In which districts were the corners of the mouth only and in which the entire mouth (a band round it) tattooed? What are the names of these marks? Any drawings of tattooing will be very valuable to me. (undated document written on letterheaded paper [4, Earls Terrace, Kensington] by von Hügel – Jane Roth archives)

While the above letter does not show an addressee, it seems that he was sending these letters to potential specialists; a letter was found from Colman Connolly Wall, curator of the Fiji Museum, in which he states that ‘I will try as soon as possible to send you some photos or sketches of the tattoo marks. Face marking is almost extinct, but in Vanua Levu they still tattoo from thigh to thigh below the navel, the missionaries have done their best to suppress the custom, and the only pair of tattooing sticks I have seen for years are in the Museum’ (Letter to Baron Anatole von Hügel, 16 June 1916, UL Roth Archives). The further trail of data collecting is unclear, but von Hügel collated all his information on tattooing in the folder ‘Fiji Tattooing: Original Drawings & M.S.’, dated (30 September 1921), which was signed by him (currently in the MAA archives). Apart from one full-page drawing of a tattoo mark from Vanuatu, the folder contains original drawings of tattoo patterns and associated information collected in the field and an overview in ink that von Hügel made based on the original drawings.[106] He added whether patterns were drawn in

106 The sketch was made aboard a ship moored near Nasova and von Hügel drew the ‘curious 18inch tattoo mark on the back of a Tanna native’ on 16 May 1876 (Roth and Hooper 1990: 321).

Drawing	Motif name	Info: motif number and description
	Wakolo (Sala) [path]	[no further information, drawing on VH 9]
	Na Tonu	[drawing from VH 10, where motif is called 'Na tonu' and is described as a 'mark/cheek mark woman Nikoroi, Koro Tubu, Viti Levu'] [note similarities with nai mo]
	Qia gusu [mouth tattoo]	Woman, Vaka Bau (Bau, Rewa, Koro tubu, Raki raki) (VH 11).
	Davilai (sea cucumber Holutharia)	'Native drawing' (VH 16)
	Wanadrose (Urchins)	'Native drawing' (VH 16)
	[Qia gusu/mouth tattoo, no further information]	[no further information provided]

Table 5: 'Additional Motifs' by Baron von Hügel and Fijian women.

natural size or a fraction of the natural size. The result is an overview of 22 tattoo patterns, some of which are variations of the same motif, and some scarification motifs (Table 4). The original pencil drawings in the folder reveal a few extra motifs (Table 5).

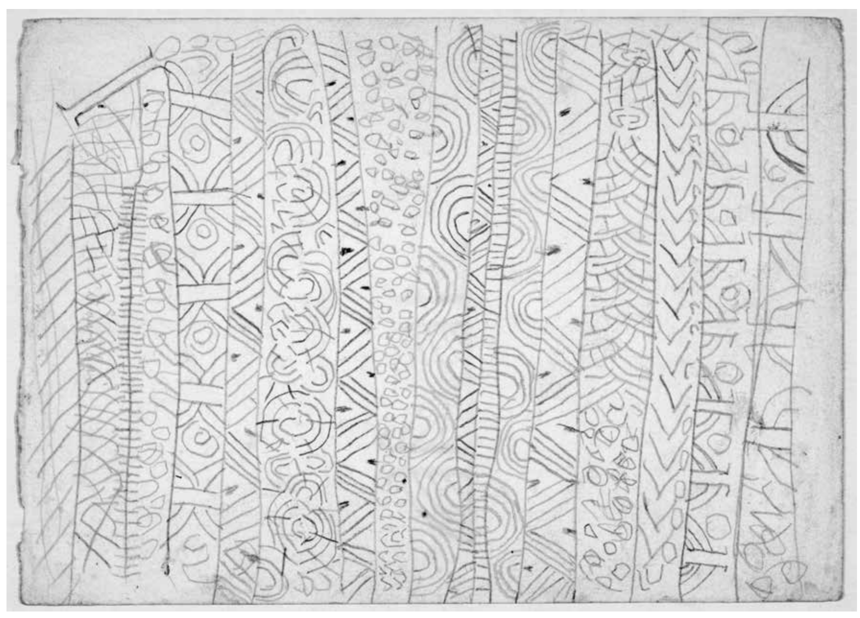
Von Hügel produced and collected the majority of these tattoo drawings during his journey to Nadroga and around Viti Levu via Ba and Rakiraki (1 November 1875 to 30 March 1876). Most drawings were specifically made at Nabukadra in Nakorotubu and Navuavua (with one pattern peculiar to Yasawa). That means that we only have a specific regional overview of a specific period of time. In other words, the patterns show a glimpse of veiqia in use around Viti Levu Bay in the mid- to late nineteenth century. The overview shows that weniqia (tattoo patterns) refer to the Fijian natural and cultural environment; they are stars, boat masts, pottery, and fauna such as turtles and ducks.[107] Patterns could also indicate sickness as the 'tauvo' motif was often used in leprosy. Or patterns had 'some relation with sexual intercourse' (motifs 8 and 9) and might have indicated the wearer's sexual maturity, as was the case in Tahiti (Gell 1993: 138). We also learn that some tattoos were applied on men (motifs 13 and 16).

Translated onto paper and stored in the museum archive, these drawings of qia are considered here as museum objects because, similar to artefactual museum objects, these archival documents were created through selection and classification processes. Von Hügel's drawings are remarkably different from the drawings made around the same time by Theodor Kleinschmidt. In 1877, Kleinschmidt produced a drawing of 'Ra Enge', a woman of Tawaleka, where Kleinschmidt and Boyd visited on 15 or 16 July and 17 July 1877 (Boyd 1986: 31) (Figure 12). The drawing shows her qia gusu, her veiqia and also the marking on her arms and chest (of which a detail is provided next to the drawing). 'Nundua', a young widow from Matawalu was drawn in Natuatuacoko on 15 August 1877 (Figure 34). Her elaborate veiqia extends sideways on her thighs, her qia gusu is similar to 'Ra Enge' and her arms are marked as well. While these drawings show us veiqia and other markings, these drawings of named women differ from the objectifying and fragmented pattern drawings that were produced for scientific purposes.

From von Hügel's folder of weniqia drawings, we learn not just about individual motifs, but their juxtaposition through the drawings of whole patterns around the pubic area and waist (VH 11, VH 19; Figure 49). These sketches confirm that veiqia predominantly consisted of rows of geometric designs. It is interesting that von Hügel did not ask the names of the majority of these patterns, morphologically resembling chevron motifs, zigzag lines, dots, crosses and concentric crescents (VH 19).[108] In his overview of individual motifs, he seems to have singled out specific, perhaps to him unusual, motifs, which might explain the note in his journal on Saturday 29 January 1876: 'Drew several curious tattoo marks' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 269). Kleinschmidt (1984: 161-62) wrote that 'The women choose whichever pattern appeals to them – straight, diagonal, circular and spiral lines and dot patterns.... Other tattoos may take the form of little star on the cheeks, legs or hands, depending on taste'. However, it is hard to get a sense of how Fijian women understood veiqia from von Hügel's taxonomy of patterns. While von Hügel's drawings mainly single out motifs of a network of designs applied as a totality on the body – a typology in strict terms – the drawings are the result of his encounter

107 In the Marquesas, where abundant tattooing was understood as reinforcing the body, turtles with their shells as protective skins were a frequently occurring pattern. Turtles were considered special animals, with their ability to travel between land and sea, which were occasionally used in sacrifices as a substitute for humans (Thomas 1995: 107).

108 The drawing of one woman's waist (VH 19) shows the wawa ni rubu motif and vaka vonovono amidst a range of geometric motifs for which von Hügel did not collect names.



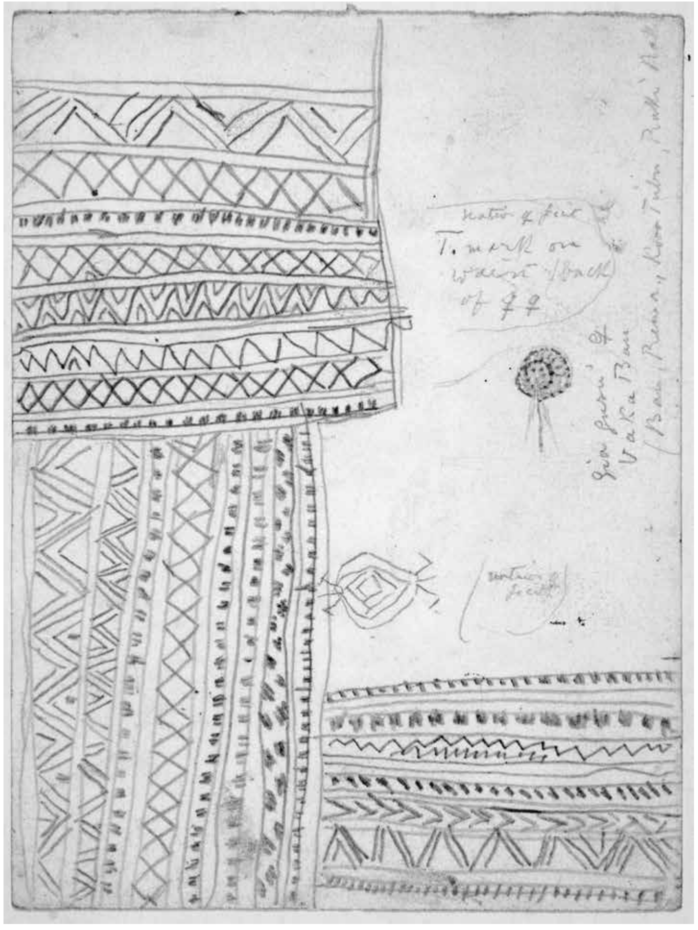


Figure 49: Two drawings of complete veiqia patterns, 1876.

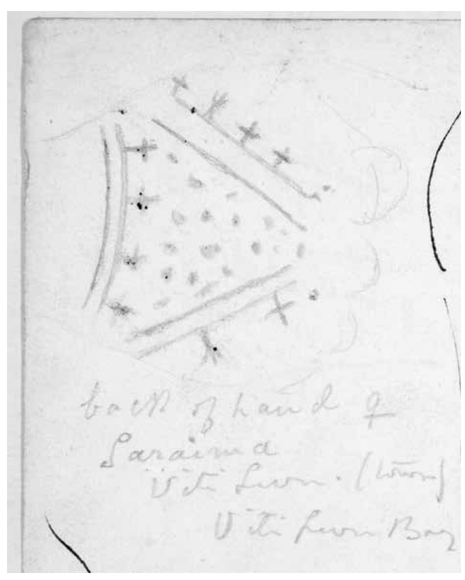


Figure 50: Drawing of Sereima's marked hand, Naraiyawa, February 1876.

with women who decided to show him patterns that were usually covered by a liku. These intimate and personal interactions are concealed in the classification of patterns, a classification that obsures the women who wore them.

Of some women, we only have drawings, which no doubt served as a personal identifier, but it is hard to find further information apart from noting the circumstances in which von Hügel produced the drawings. Motif 27b (Table 4) was collected from a woman from Naso who had it on her cheek. It is highly likely that this was the woman von Hügel described in his journal on 4 February 1876. Von Hügel looked in vain for a man to guide him from Naso to Nairukuruku, but he was told that all the men had died of measles. Therefore a woman with two small children accompanied him on the tough journey 'through water and mud and over steep rocks and boulders to another little dreary town right at the head of the bay' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 274). Of other women we have a name: Yasenati from Nakorotubu, Ra, Viti Levu, for example, had a navonu (turle) tattoo mark on her cheek (VH 22, motif no. 16, Table 4). Tikini, also from Nakorotubu, had prominent fire stick markings on her arms. There are also tattoo drawings of Saulo, a woman from Navuavua, Ra Coast. Von Hügel drew a pattern on her arm (motif 9, Table 4) and one that appears on each cheek of her buttocks (motif 1, Table 4). Similar to the other women mentioned, these intimate drawings are all we have of her, as Saulo does not appear in von Hügel's writings. We do know that von Hügel made tattoo drawings in Balebale, close to Navuavua on Saturday 29 January 1876, but we have no further details (Roth and Hooper 1990: 269). Von Hügel met Leweni in Vunitogoloa (which he described as Togoloa on the drawings) in Rakiraki and drew a wawa ni rube pattern from her arm. Leweni is not mentioned in von Hügel's journal, but he reached Vunitogoloa on Friday 21 January 1876 and spent time on the veitiqa (reed dart throwing) ground, watching the game with Mere, one of the chief's daughters, and other women: 'Some girls looked in to *sarasara* my *bulumakau* [look at my bag] and *kerekere vakalailai,* which latter means to ask for everything that is seen and often by pretty little winning ways to inveigle it out of you, and then instead of thanking, to turn round and laugh at you' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 267). Despite this account it is still unclear at what point Von Hügel made the drawing of Leweni's arm.

In some cases, von Hügel did write about the particular circumstances during which the drawings were made. When von Hügel was attempting to leave Naraiyawa in February 1876, he had trouble finding someone who could help him to obtain a canoe for his journey. While waiting for a canoe to be arranged for him, von Hügel filled his time with collecting: [Sunday 6 February 1876] 'Meantime I saw a girl with a well tattooed hand and began to draw it, and seeing me thus employed a lot of other girls came round and insisted on having

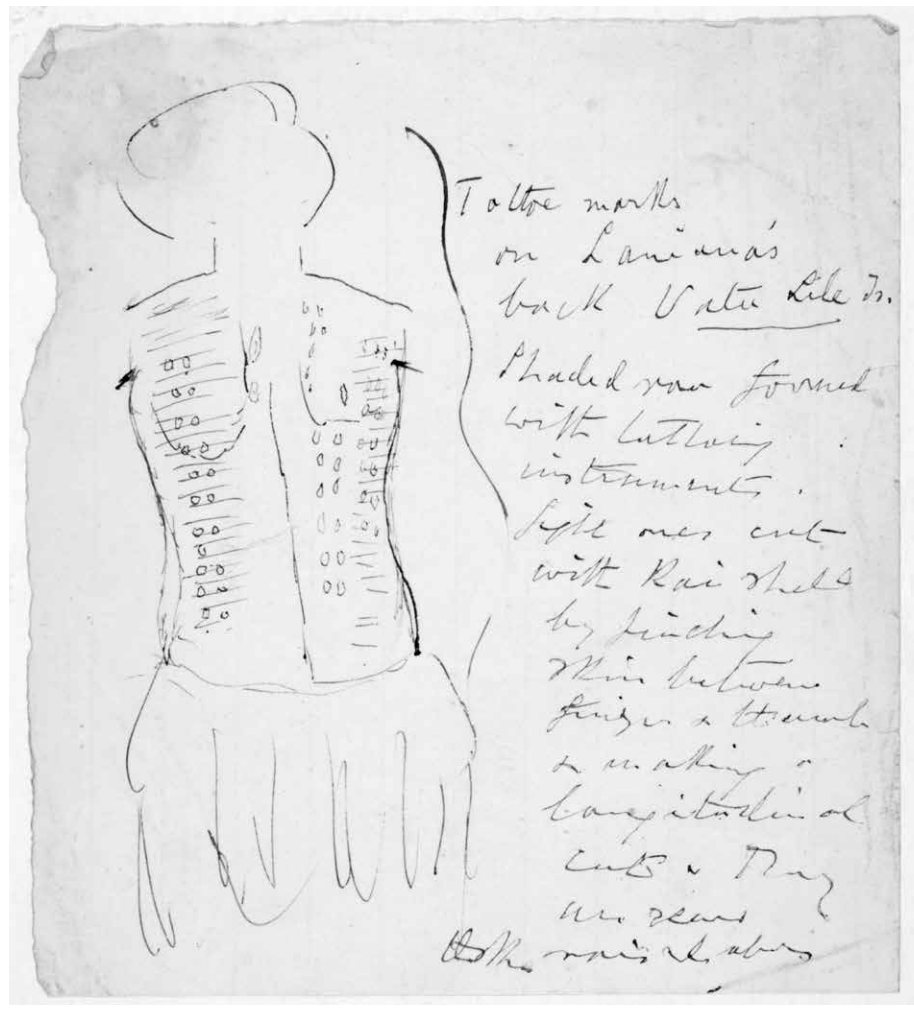


Figure 51: Laniana. Drawing by Baron von Hügel, 1875-76. Archives, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge.

theirs drawn too' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 278). One of these tattooed hands belonged to Saraima [Sereima] as von Hügel noted her name next to the drawing (VH: 9, Figure 50).

The most complete drawing of a person's markings is that of Laniana (Figure 51), who he met during his journey to Nadroga between 1 November 1875 and 30 March 1876. Von Hügel was keen to join James Byrne on his trip to Nadroga in Viti Levu, because some of the inhabitants of Nadroga were 'still openly heathen' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 191). Byrne and von Hügel left on Tuesday 2 November 1875 together with 'a fat, saucy looking native girl as passenger' – Laniana (Roth and Hooper 1990: 196). During the journey von Hügel developed a joking relationship with Laniana, particularly after she tricked him when they left Cuvu:

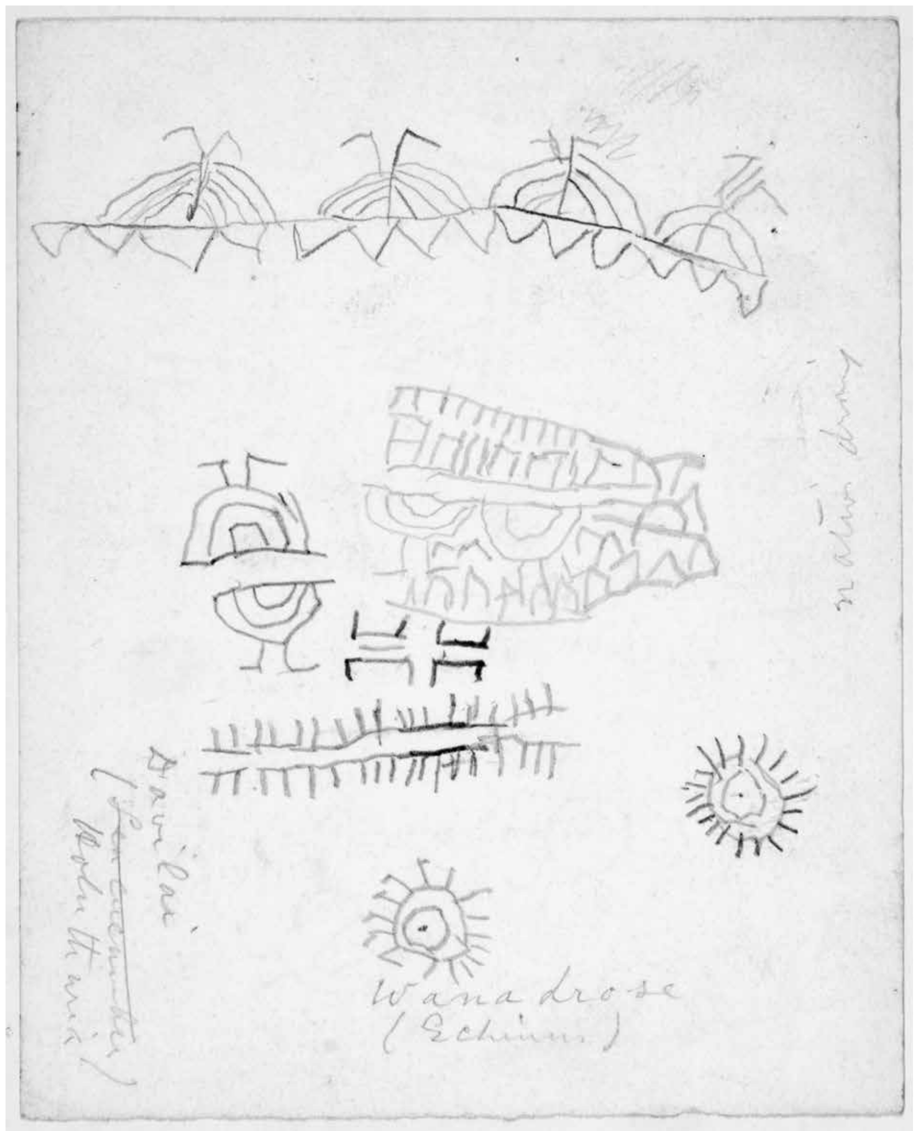


Figure 52: 'Native Drawing', 1876.

In leaving the house I went up to Mauwau, the chief's *marama* (lady), to wish her goodbye and to offer her the customary return for hospitality; Laniana, who had been talking to her, looked up at me with an angry half-perplexed glance and asked why I refused to shake hands *(lululu)* with her, as she was not going any further with us. I was surprised at this as I knew her village was higher up the coast, but she acted her part so well that I quite believed her and gave her my hand, on which she and her friend burst out into giggles and laughter' [Monday 8 November 1875]. (Roth and Hooper 1990: 202)

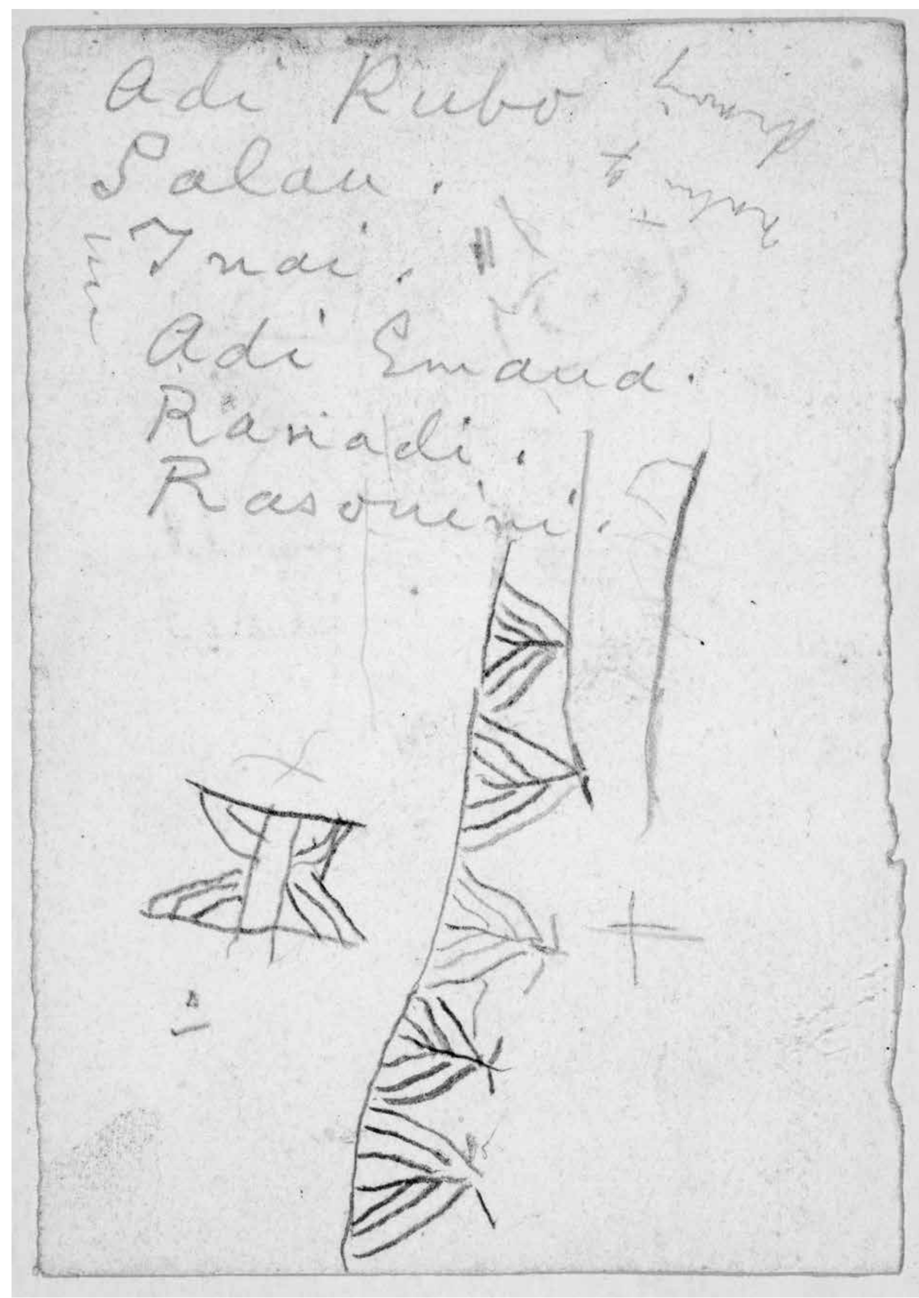


Figure 53: 'Native Drawing', 1876.

After a couple of weeks he nicknamed her 'Na Barracouta', which was also the name of the ship he had travelled in during a previous trip: 'I called her so from the way she pronounces 'very good', about the only English words she knows, and an almost impossible sound for native lips to form. She makes many attempts at it, but never with any better result, and she ends her lesson with a ringing laugh and, *"Sa vinaka, bara kuta;* that will do, *bara kuta*"'

[Saturday 4 December 1875] (Roth and Hooper 1990: 224). Laniana taught him to play the nose flute: 'I practised on a nose flute with Barracouta's instructions. I laughed more than I played, however, so I did not make much progress in the art' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 228, Thursday 9 December 1875). Later when the ovisa (policeman) came with the message that he had to bring Laniana back to Cuvu, von Hügel cheered her up with 'the present of a needle and also a mother-of-pearl button to hang on her bead necklace' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 231, Saturday 11 December 1875). Von Hügel drew Laniana's back and accompanied the drawing with the words: 'Shaded rows formed with tattooing instruments. Light ones cut with Kai shell by pinching skin between finger and thumb and making longitudinal cuts' (VH 6). These snippets of information, however brief they may be, do provide us with a glimpse of how relationships were formed that led to the drawings. Each drawing acts as a 'site of intersecting histories' (Edwards 2001: 83) and Fijian women appeared to have allowed a record of their markings to be made.

Not all the drawings were done by von Hügel; some were done by Fijian women. In Nadraunivau, on Sunday 6 February 1876, he wrote:

> Lots of women came to look at my drawings of the qia [tattoos] and after I had sketched a few new forms, a pretty girl asked me for the pencil and a piece of paper which she showed to the matai [expert], an old hag who I supposed would be called the tattooatic artist of the place. After a little while I went into the house to which the paper had been taken and there I found her hard at work, with some dozen girls round her looking over and criticising her work. She had drawn eight different patterns of the female tattoos, they were very good and well drawn. I was amused at the girl's shy excitement over them and at their eagerness to point out the patterns which were on their own waists. (Roth and Hooper 1990: 278-80)

In his folder of tattoo drawings, von Hügel labelled some drawings as 'native drawings', but he does not provide further information. Out of all the papers labelled as 'native drawings', page 16 comes the closest to the description of the drawing made in Nadraunivau as there are eight different patterns (Figure 52). Von Hügel must have asked for information on the meaning of the patterns drawn or what they represented as one pattern is accompanied with the words 'Davilai, sea cucumber [later crossed out], Holutharia' and another 'Wana drose (Echinis)'. However, the fact that only two motifs have an 'explanation' might mean that those were the ones that were freely offered by the female author(s). Curiously, these patterns are not listed in his summarising overview.

These are not the only drawings made by Fijian women. Some drawings were made in order to avoid physically showing the patterns. On Wednesday 2 February 1876, four days before the passage mentioned above took place, von Hügel described in his diary how he met two women, Lewatu and Raliku, in Nabukadra: 'the former [Lewatu] very funnily and coquettishly drew the tattoo marks for me which she said were *tabu sara,* forbidden for me to see. She was quite clever with her pencil and drew out quite an elaborate pattern' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 272). The following day, von Hügel 'Got several interesting tattoo marks, one particularly funny one from a cheek, but they would not draw me any of the patterns from round their waists' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 273). While this could be interpreted as the women not allowing him to draw their patterns, it is likely that the women were actually producing the drawings. The other papers labelled as 'native

drawings' also contain a list of names, highly likely referring to the women who made the drawings, their titles referring to their high status: Adi Rubo, Salau, Inai, Adi Emana, Ranadi, Rasonini (Figure 53). Only the name Salau is mentioned in von Hügel's journal. She was in the house in Namarai just before the other women described above came in: 'Miss Salau fanned the flies away. Roast *dalo* tops and fowl for supper- I bought the brute with a pair of scissors. Then all the other girls came to see me and what I had in my pockets' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 273). We can therefore deduct that these were drawings produced in Namarai by local women [VH17]. Rather than impregnating the skin with ink, the patterns were translated with pencil on paper.

Von Hügel's interest in recording body markings extended to using his own body to collect patterns. These were applied by two female friends, Viema and Sera, from Navuavua, Ra Province, who knew he had an interest in collecting. In fact, upon their first meeting on 29 January 1876, he persuaded a 'pretty fairskinned girl, Sera of Navuavua' to cut off her 'locks of maidenhood', known as tobe, for a piece of soap, a reel of cotton and a needle (Roth and Hooper 1990: 269). Von Hügel had met Viema on Tuesday 7 March 1876 in Balebale (near Navuavua) in the house of Police Superintendent, Mr B.H. Jones: 'Viema is a pretty fine-figured girl, very dark and native-like but with wonderfully good features. She says she likes *papalagi* [Europeans] as they are *tamata dodonu* [straight, honest people]' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 286). Several months later, on 28 September 1876, Sera and Viema tattooed his arm:

> It was done with a single thorn left on a small twig from a *moli* (lemon) tree. The pattern is first drawn out with a little splinter on the skin and is then punctured with the *bati* (the thorn tattooing instrument), the thorn being dipped each time into the *loaloa* (the black of the cooking pot) and driven through the skin by a tap of a stick (the *matau*). This is not a painful operation, but rather irritating to the skin as the pattern is gone over two or more times, the blood being wiped off each time. The black is prepared with spittle and turns blue in the skin. (Roth and Hooper 1990: 435)

By collecting a tattoo himself, von Hügel followed many Europeans before him who had obtained markings in other parts of the Pacific. Unrecorded in the naturalist Joseph Bank's journal of the first Cook expedition (1768-71) is the detail that he received a tattoo in Tahiti, thereby adopting marks he had termed 'absurd a custom' (Beaglehole 1963, 1: 337). The fact that he kept his marking quiet in his expedition writings might have been the reason why his aristocratic status remained untouched unlike others who received tattoos in the Pacific and who were disrespected once home or displayed their markings as curiosities in road shows (Ellis 2008: 154). Von Hügel followed in the footsteps of his father, who had received a tattoo in Aotearoa New Zealand in the 1830s. Naturally, von Hügel was tattooed by women as it was a female practice, but he was not necessarily crossing gender boundaries as he was not the only man to have been marked. Tattooing on Fijian men did occur and had been recorded. In 1792, Lieutenant George Tobin of HMS *Providence* observed a man with a tattooed heel at Moce. In 1820, the Russian explorer, Fabian von Bellinghausen, remarked that the chief of Ono-i-Lau had stars tattooed on his finger joints (Clunie 1980: 9). Joseph W. Osborn, on the ship *Emerald* under the command of Eagleston while in Fiji between 1833 and 1836, wrote that 'The men do *not* make a practice of tattoing. Now & then you see a man with a rude figure of a dog or some other animal upon his breast or arm. I think it oftener put on by some white than by

Figure 54: Tattooing tools (Z 2783) and bamboo case (Z 2852), collected in Fiji in 1870s by Von Hügel, Maudslay, Gordon or Dr Brady.

themselves' (Osborn 1833-1836: 233). Jean-René Quoy, naturalist on the *Astrolabe* commanded by Dumont d'Urville, provided a description of Fijian men in his journal: 'Their tattoos are in relief, that is, on their arms and chest they create wounds that develop into a cicatrice… We have only seen very little other black tattoos. It is a fact that on a skin that dark, these would

have little effect'.[109] In the 1870s, Kleinschmidt noted that men had small patterns on their arms or legs, but their markings were never elaborate (Kleinschmidt 1984: 159-61). Von Hügel collected drawings of patterns that were applied on men too (motifs 13 and 16, Table 4).

Even though men had tattoos, von Hügel's markings raised a lot of interest locally: 'It was amusing to see the delight of the girls at my having been operated on. I had about six of them at every *yaqona*' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 435). Back in Navuavua on 29 September 1876, he had many 'lady visitors, all anxious to see my *qia* (tattoo mark)' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 435). Immediately afterwards, von Hügel was marked again: 'Little Adi Lebaleba [a girl related to Ratu Vutoni of Navuavua] was very jolly, she insisted on my tracing my name on her arm, which was afterwards tattooed, and I returned the compliment by having hers done on my arm' [29 September 1876] (Roth and Hooper 1990: 435). Memorialising each other's names in ink on arms or thighs had become a practice for young men and women since the introduction of writing in Fiji (Thomson 1908: 220). It is in this context of mutual influence of Euro-American and Fijian practices that von Hügel received his markings. By getting marked, his time in Fiji became more than an important souvenir in his life; it became part of him. It is a rather literal illustration of Michel Foucault's known statement that the 'body is the inscribed surface of events' (Foucault 1977: 148). Foucault considered history as a writing instrument and the body as a surface that is consequently imprinted by history. Von Hügel could not exhibit his imprinted skin in the Cambridge museum, but did seem to have an urge to share his experience, since the tattooing tools used on him were displayed in the museum and mentioned in the accompanying catalogue:

> The bamboo receptacle …Z2852 in case 3, with set of tattooing sticks, bati ni veigia in case 2, were obtained by the Baron A. von Hügel 1875 from the professional woman tattooer, who, in spite of the missionaries prohibition, still plied her trade on the sly, and tattooed the Baron on the arm with some of these implements. From Na VuaVua, Rakiraki, district, Ra province. (Hayter 1936: 48)

Following museum practice, the bamboo case (Z 2852) and the associated tattooing tools (part of Z 2783) each received an individual museum number. The eleven batiniqia collected by von Hügel were united with tools collected by Maudslay, Gordon and Dr Brady to form nineteen in total grouped together under accession number Z 2783 but separated by individuals letters. These museum objects materialised memories for von Hügel. They refer to his body, which was a living, breathing collection in itself. Similarly, his drawings of weniqia are only fragments of a female body, expressing her specific life stage(s). She earned these markings, was proud of them while made to suppress them, yet she was willing to share them. Fijian bodies have been objectified in museums through the use of specialised systems of knowledge that classify and categorise their associated adornments. However, even though these museum collections might have lost their connection with specific human bodies and persons, they can bring people together in inspiring ways.

109 Author's translation of: 'Leur tatouage est en relief, c'est à dire que sur les bras et la poitrine ils se creusent des trous qu'ils avivent justqu'à ce que la cicatrice, se boursouflant, devienne grosse comme une petite cerise. … Nous n'avons vu que très-peu d'autres tatouages noirs par empreinte. Il est vrai que sur une peau si foncée, ils produiraient peu d'effets' (Dumont d'Urville 1830-1835: 696-98).

5

On Separations and Connections

Museums and archives are material and social assemblages of fragments – they involve selections made by people who have their own agenda indicating that no museum or archival collection is objective or neutral. Liku and veiqia were closely related to their female wearers, yet became alienated in museums where they were translated, classified and sometimes further exchanged. Separated from their original context they are potential connectors that have the ability to cross temporal and spatial separators and can express different ontologies (Tapsell 1997; Māhina 2010; Ka'ili 2005). One important project in this regard is the current Veiqia Project. Seven women of Fijian heritage (two curators and five artists) with a particular interest in veiqia, which continued even when liku were no longer actively worn, looked at, and beyond, archival and museum collections of liku and veiqia. Including personal stories and family connections, they have generated an indigenous archive driven by personal, artistic and relational connections as such emphasising that there are alternative epistemologies to what is currently recorded in museums and archives. Based on interviews with the artists during exhibition projects in Aotearoa New Zealand and Fiji, this chapter will illustrate the new artworks, video installations and sculpture they produced and exhibited.

Veiqia: not merely museum objects

Brewster (1922: 185) thought that the practice of veiqia had disappeared by 1910. Other sources recorded veiqia, but did not seem to contradict this view. Hocart photographed mature women in Vanua Levu and Viti Levu with qia gusu, mouth tattooing, between 1910 and 1912. Buell Quain mentioned, in his study on Vanua Levu in 1935-36, that 'Little Di Litiya', at the time about 35 years old, daughter of Bulisivo of Votua, was 'tattooed about the vulva' (Quain 1948: 90). Nurse Suckling interviewed women for Roth in the 1930s who had been marked at a young age. However, in the 1980s Fergus Clunie realised that the application of veiqia had in fact continued. During his time at the Fiji Museum, he focused on documenting the important Fijian collections as thoroughly as possible, in addition to acquiring new material.[110] While researching body modification practices, he gradually realised that veiqia was not a lost practice as was popularly believed, but

110 During his time at the Fiji Museum (1969-87), he published extensively on aspects related to the Fiji Museum collections and Fijian collections elsewhere (Clunie 1977, 1983a, 1983b, 1983c, 1983d, 1983e, 1985, 1986b, 1987).

that its knowledge had not been consistently conveyed down the next generations. He corresponded with Jane Roth, wife of colonial officer George Kingsley Roth, who actively researched the practice of veiqia in the 1930s:

> The Museum [MAA] sent me a couple of pages of the Baron's drawings of Fijian tattooing but they could well be different to the ones you know. They are at any rate poorly reproduced and I would certainly appreciate it if you could arrange for copies to be made of the drawings. Kleinschmidt also did some excellent sketches but I'm having the devil of a time trying to get decent reproductions of them from the Germans. It will be grand when we eventually have copies of most of the known manuscript material on Fijian ethnography assembled here as so much knowledge has been lost and needs to be retrieved. (Letter Fergus Clunie, Director of Fiji Museum to Mrs G.K. [Jane] Roth, 29 October 1980, Jane Roth Archives)

In subsequent correspondence with Jane Roth, Clunie asked her for the information Roth and Nurse Suckling had compiled in preparation for an article (Letter Fergus Clunie to Jane Roth, 3 March 1981).[111] Initially treating veiqia as a museum object, he realised that information was locally available which he collected during a museum trip to Wailevu, Cakaudrove Province, southern Vanua Levu, and Saivou in central Vanua Levu, with his museum colleague, Walesi Ligairi, in 1981. Walesi Ligairi made notes of interviews with marked women (annotated by Clunie), while Fergus Clunie photographed the women on the condition that none of the women concerned be identified by name in any publication and that only drawings based on the photographs can be used in publications rather than the photographs.[112] In a conversation about these notes and photographs, I asked Clunie to sketch the context a bit further in which these photographs were taken. He mentioned that 'The women were very proud of their markings. They thought I was strange for showing an interest, the last person who had shown any interest was 'Misi Ocate' [Mr. Hocart, anthropologist Arthur Hocart, c. 1910]. Once they realised it was a genuine interest, they were more than pleased to share. They just did not want to be named out of respect for their children and grandchildren, who might be scolded by the Minister' (personal communication, Fergus Clunie 7 November 2016). The photographs in conjunction with the interview notes are an amazing source, offering a personal and intimate record of the veiqia process. Each woman mentioned her name (which for the above stated reasons will not be disclosed; identifiers such as Woman A, Woman B etc. will be used), where she was from, her age and the year in which she received her veiqia (Clunie and Ligairi 1981). They were tattooed by Rabali, known as the 'last daubati' between 1908 and 1911, a time when veiqia was suppressed, yet they consciously chose to receive veiqia before getting married (personal communication Fergus Clunie 7 November 2016). Acquiring veiqia was still considered a prerequisite for marriage: 'Young boys would forever dislike and gossip about the grown up maidens if they were known to be *mu vulavula* [pale/untattooed buttocks], and their chances of marriage was next to nothing' (Clunie and Ligairi 1981: 4). In conversations with men in particular during the 1970s-80s, the sexual innuendo associated with veiqia and particularly with *mu loala* [black buttocks]

111 Letter part of the Jane Roth Archives, Sainsbury Research Unit, University of East Anglia.

112 I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Fergus Clunie for being allowed access to these files.

was strongly conveyed to Fergus Clunie. However, he noted that: 'Two old ladies who had avoided tattooing cackled when this was discussed at Wailevu, commenting sarcastically to one another sotto voce that it had never seemed to stop the men chasing after them!' (Clunie and Ligairi 1981: 4). The women interviewed express the process, the location, the length and their personal feelings involved in the process. The notes reveal how openly the women seemed to have spoken and how they were content to share, but their final remarks reveal perspectives on veiqia at the time. The notes end with the statement: 'What they said that RABALI was died without a child as her punishment for the bloodshed she made during her operations on the tattoo dates' (Clunie and Ligairi 1981: 12). The last daubati was said to have been punished for an act that had to be repressed.

Woman A of Wailevu village received her veiqia in Waisali in 1911 when she was 16 years old. The operation was performed by Rabali, who during three days marked her across her lower abdomen. Using black soot of lauci, a tool consisting of six lemon thorns which were fixed on to a duruka stem and another stick for tapping this tool, Rabali tattooed her under a tree by a stream while she was lying on mats covered with banana leaves. Because 'She could not bear the pain to go back for the other parts to be tattooed', her marks are incomplete and consist of horizontal lines in between which triangular and half circle shapes were added. These were chiefly designs as Woman A was a 'member of the mataqali Turaga of Wailevu [Turaga ni mataqali is the chief of a clan] so the chiefly designs was tattooed on her abdomen'. Two weeks following the procedure, her future husband and relatives presented valuables to Rabali in exchange for her work (Clunie and Ligairi 1981: 6-7). Her elder sister, Woman B of Wailevu village, was tattooed at the same time. She was eighteen when, during one week, her genital area and lower abdomen down to her thighs were marked. As the pain had been overwhelming, she also did not return to have her buttocks and hips marked. Her veiqia consists of horizontal rows of motifs that morphologically resemble squares, triangles of varying size and crosses.

Woman C from Dreketi village was eight years old when she was brought to daubati Rabali by her mother with gifts to seek permission to receive her veiqia.[113] She was tattooed the same day: daubati Rabali drew the designs on her with sasa, coconut leaflet midrib, that had been dipped into the black soot of lauci mixed in a coconut bowl. The six lemon thorns were tapped into her skin making the designs permanent. During five days her body was tapped and inked, and her blood wiped off with a piece of masi. Woman C's genital area and lower abdomen were marked with designs of her clan. Morphologically the design consists of rows of crosses and triangular shapes. Yet she chose not to go back to receive further marks on her buttocks and hips 'for she could not bear the severe pain of the needles up at the shade of the tree by the stream at Waisali'. 'But with pride and happiness she was tattooed with her front part and thought that it was enough for she can have a husband out of that part completed' (Clunie and Ligairi 1981: 9-10).

Woman D explained that she was marked in 1908 by daubati Rabali. She remembers lying down on a mat during the painful process and the daubati using a piece of masi to dab her blood. Three weeks later she was taken to the river to fish with her relatives, when plenty of fish were caught, which, together with other raw foods, prints, masi and

113 In 1981 she stated that she was 83 years old and had been tattooed in 1906. While she might have misremembered dates, as eight is very young to receive a veiqia, I wanted to keep her story intact, which I realise I only received through Waseli Ligairi who translated her Fijian story in English notes.

Figure 55: Barkcloth beater with weniqia. Z 3822, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge.

mats, were taken to Rabali. Another three weeks later 'a young chap was then to be her husband'.[114] Her husband's relatives organised a solevu to indicate the girl, referred to as mu loala [black buttocks], is to be married (Clunie and Ligairi 1981: 11). Out of all the interviewed women, Woman D was most elaborately marked, but did not have markings on her mouth. However, she stated that, even though she did not have a fully 'finished' veiqia, 'she is proud of been halfly tattooed and chosen to be a good wife'. As a member of the Bati (warrior clan), Woman D was tattooed with cross patterns, which are also depicted on warriors' club handles (Clunie and Ligairi 1981: 12). Veiqia patterns were not restricted to the human body, but transferrable to wooden objects, such as barkcloth beaters and clubs, to barkcloth, to bamboo nose flutes, to whale ivory tabua and to stone and several valuables have been encountered in museum collections with veiqia patterns. This shows how human and non-human actors can be personified through veiqia (and liku).

The women in Wailevu allowed their veiqia to be photographed. The photographs only captured the area covered with veiqia, while the women were holding cloth to cover non-marked areas. These photographs do not show the patterns clearly, but reveal the placement/location and the sequence of work due some of the veiqia's incomplete nature. Above all, these photographs, together with the interview notes, show the human aspect of veiqia – the pain involved, the ordeal, the pride and dignity. The passing of time visible on their bodies, these photographs testify the women's courage and bravery in a time when traditional cultural norms and values were being undermined and replaced by western ones. Fergus Clunie had arranged that these photographs would never be published, but that drawings could be made on their basis. It is for this reason that the photographs have not been reproduced exactly as a portrait but generalised drawings were made. The drawings (Figure 56) show weniqia, more clearly than on the original photographs, on a more unpersonal, general body shape – the latter was intentionally introduced to show the location of the weniqia.

These women chose to be tattoed at a time when these markings were frowned upon by outsiders, but were still considered locally significant and necessary to obtain

114 The fact that she married shortly after her tattooing indicates that she appears to misremember either the year that she was tattooed or her age. In 1981 she supposedly was 80 years old which means that she was tattooed at the age of seven. The fact that Women A and B, who were of chiefly status, were considerably older than Women C and D does correspond to the practice that chiefly women were marked later. In Vanua Levu chiefly girls often used to be confined to their chiefly house as tabusiga and they were only marked once their marriage was arranged (Clunie and Ligairi, 1981: 1-2).

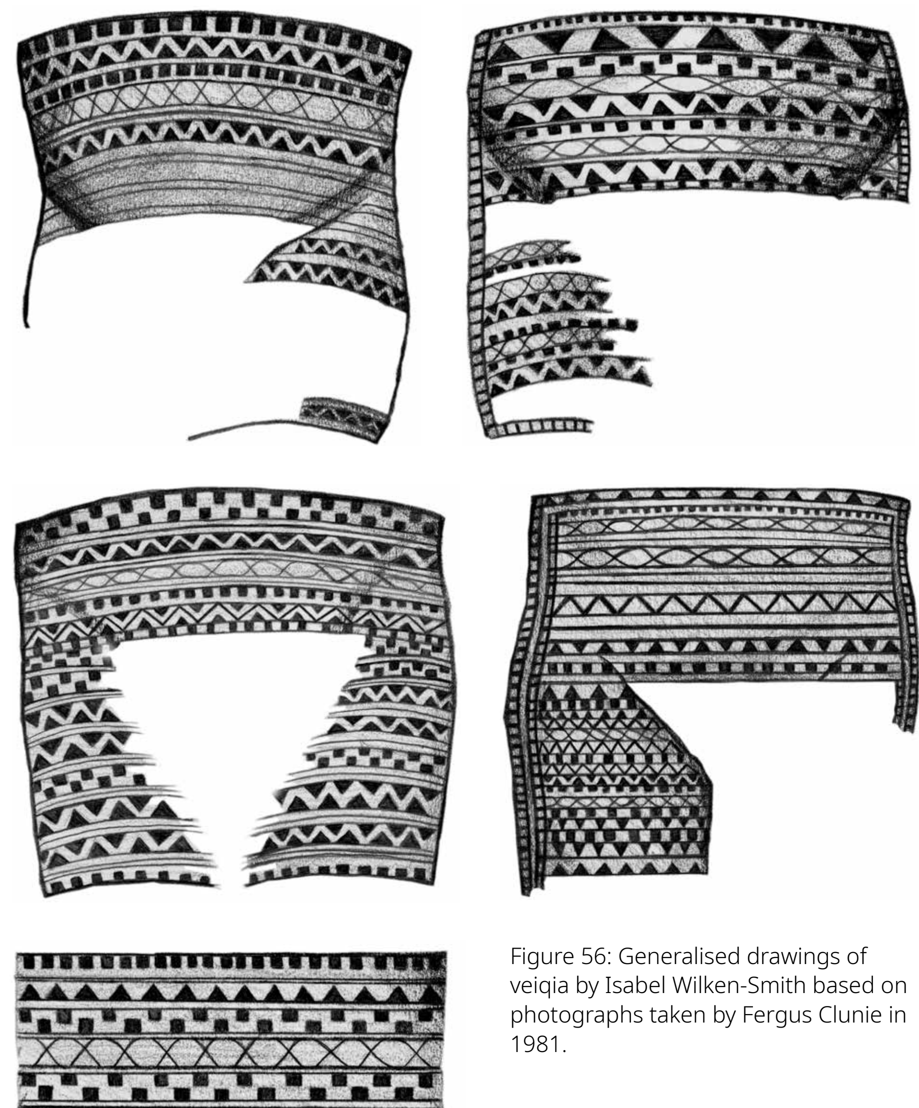


Figure 56: Generalised drawings of veiqia by Isabel Wilken-Smith based on photographs taken by Fergus Clunie in 1981.

womanhood and start relationships. These women considered veiqia culturally significant even in a time when cultural customs concerning transitions to adulthood and gender had changed. Acquiring veiqia was no longer done by all young women and it did not seem as culturally required as it once was. Not completing the veiqia process seemed acceptable as well. This was thus a time that veiqia became a personal choice, expressing growing individuality – acquiring veiqia was by now the result of an individual desire to enhance femininity and maturity rather than a marker of a new status (*cf*. Barker and Tietjen 1990: 226-28). Growing up in a time when veiqia was equally deemed necessary to acquire a husband, but at the same time needed to be covered up, these women wanted to remain anonymous, acknowledging the mixed perceptions of their veiqia at the time.

What these photographs and narratives emphasise most is the ‘before and after’ process that veiqia entails. What is highlighted is that being tattooed signalled a radical change in the tattooed character’s place in the world and indeed the world itself, which was a world in which Christianity and other cultural customs were combined. The first lines of Clunie and Ligairi’s notes state: ‘Tattooing in Fiji was regarded as something sacred and of chiefly custom. It was a belief and indicates that the art was started by the great God Degei who began the operation on her two granddaughters up at their home Namolikilagi in Nakauvadra’ (Clunie and Ligairi 1981: 1). In the notes, it is described how the art of tattooing has gone out of practice throughout Vanua Levu ‘because of Christianity and it was strictly taboo by the government officials who visited villages twice a month. There are still women living today who had been tattooed about their loins, buttocks and thighs’ (Clunie and Ligairi 1981: 4). With women still practicing veqia despite the religious prohibitions, women actively resisted this change. Instead of publicly showing their agency and objections against cultural interference, they did this in secrecy, hiding their signs of womanhood and pride. For decades after it was proclaimed abandoned, veiqia continued to exist under the imported clothes that had replaced the liku. Yet the stories and knowledge associated with qia were unevenly conveyed to the next generations.

Re-awakening: The Veiqia Project

It is these stories, albeit fragmentary, that kept the tradition of veiqia alive but dormant – only to be re-awakened by The Veiqia Project. At the core, The Veiqia Project unites seven women of Fijian heritage (two curators and five artists), who began a journey of creative and cultural enquiry inspired by the Fijian practice of veiqia. All team members are artists and curators in their own right with a wide range of valuable experience. A passion for creativity, Fijian heritage and community work are only a few characteristics that unite these women. Tarisi Sorovi-Vunidilo, from Natokalau, Yawe and Kadavu, completed her PhD on the trafficking of cultural property at the University of Auckland after obtaining degrees at the University of South Pacific, the University of Waikato and the Australian National University. In pursuing these degrees she was driven by an urge to understand indigenous knowledge and share this knowledge amongst Pacific communities, as such following her mother’s footsteps whose talanoa or storytelling skills on any aspect of Fijian heritage during her childhood in Suva, Fiji, inspired her. She put this into practice in her work at the archaeology department at the Fiji Museum, the Waikato Museum of Art & History, Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand and her work for the Pacific Island Museum Association (PIMA) in addition to publications and community work for numerous projects, involving membership of museum and cultural advisory committees, teaching Fijian language and organising events for Vosa Vakaviti/ Fijian Language Week and as knowledge holder for the Pacific Collections Access Project (PCAP) at the Auckland War Memorial Museum (Vunidilo forthcoming). She is one of the curators on The Veiqia Project, together with Ema Tavola. Born in Suva, Fiji, Ema Tavola has lived and worked within the creative sector in South Auckland since 2002. She holds a Master of Arts Management and a Bachelor of Visual Arts (Auckland University and Manukau Institute of Technology). She was the founding curator of Fresh Gallery Ōtara, South Auckland, and through numerous exhibitions put Pacific artists firmly on the map in an Aotearoa New Zealand context. In 2012 she received the Creative New Zealand Arts Pasifika Award for Contemporary Artist, which recognised her curatorial work as a contemporary art practice.

She writes, talks, teaches and blogs frequently on community engagement projects and grassroots curating. Most recently, as the University of Canterbury Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies Artist in Residence for 2017, she wrote a manifesto exploring modes of decolonising Pacific art curating (https://pimpiknows.com/).

In addition to these curators, five artists were officially attached to The Veiqia Project when it received funding from Creative New Zealand. After Joana Monolagi (Serua) had moved from Fiji to Aotearoa New Zealand in the 1970s, she felt she did not pay enough attention to her female ancestors' knowledge of Fijian heritage, but when she tried to make crafts herself, her memories of seeing them at work supported her in her work. She realised the importance of sharing her knowledge of Fijian heritage with her children and fellow Fijians. While making her children's meke (dance) costumes, for instance, she learned that not all local materials were available and she began to creatively source non-traditional materials to make salusalu (garlands) and print masi (barkcloth) with stencils she made herself. She established herself as a contemporary artist in addition to running regular workshops for women's groups in the Fijian community. She is also the Fijian coordinator for the Fiji village at Auckland's annual Pasifika Festival, was awarded the Creative New Zealand Pacific Heritage Arts Award in 2015 and advised the Auckland War Memorial Museum as knowledge holder for the Pacific Collections Access Project (PCAP) (http://garlandmag.com/article/te-moana-nui-a-kiwa/; https://theveiqiaproject.com/artists/; interview Joana Monolagi 10 March 2017).

Donita Hulme describes herself as the proud daughter of English and Fijian migrants and a creative industries champion. She has been active in the cultural sector for more than 20 years and, for the last ten of those, specialised in community art and cultural development (CACD) and artist development. She worked with the Australia Council for the Arts for a decade, spent two years in Fiji working with the visual arts sector through Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID) and four years with the arts organisation, Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE) in Parramatta, Australia. Her current work with Penrith City Council's award-winning Neighbourhood Renewal programme focuses on culture and placemaking with communities (Hulme, email January 2018).

Dulcie Stewart has Fijian (vasu Bua, Kadavu, Rewa and Bau), Danish, Spanish, Filipino, American, Irish, English, and Chinese ancestry with connections to Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. Her ancestry influences her art and research interests: 'My mixed heritage has influenced my arts practice. My creative works have tried to understand, embrace, accept and acknowledge my "otherness". I explore my journey as a minority, and the experiences of migration and diaspora' (https://fragmentedidentities.wordpress.com/author/cieart/). Born in Suva, Fiji, and currently based in Brisbane, Australia, Dulcie Stewart is a library assistant by profession, and an artist, blogger and family historian specialising in Fiji research. In 1998 Dulcie co-founded the Red Wave Collective, at the Oceania Centre for Arts, Culture and Pacific Studies at The University of the South Pacific (USP), which was set up by Tongan scholar Epeli Hau'ofa based on his vision of an Oceania that considered the Pacific Ocean as an ocean of connection between the Pacific Islands rather than an assemblage of colonial partitions. Dulcie's arts practice celebrates Fijian symbols, motifs and iconography as found in the urban (Australian) landscape as such evoking a sense of home, identity, memory and belonging – concepts that are important in all her work

(http://fiji.spla.pro/en/file.person.dulcie-stewart.39444.html; https://dulciestewart.com/about/; https://theveiqiaproject.com/artists/).

Margaret Aull (Te Rarawa, Tūwharetoa, Fiji) received a Bachelor of Media Arts from Te Wānanga o Aotearoa and Waikato Institute of Technology and won the Waikato Museum ArtsPost Award for excellence in Academic Record in 2006. In 2013, she graduated with a Master of Fine Arts degree with honours from Whitecliffe College of Arts & Design. She is a noted painter but has started working in sculpture and installation too. Since 2005 Aull has exhibited her artwork extensively in solo and group exhibitions throughout Aotearoa New Zealand and Fiji and she has works in private and public collections. Before her current position as the Curator for Te Puia /New Zealand Māori Arts and Crafts Institute in Rotorua, she was the national art collection curator for Te Wānanga o Aotearoa based in Te Awamutu. Aull's work reflects the tensions of culture and identity between her Fijian and Māori ancestry and particularly explores the relationships of whakapapa, faith and politics (https://theveiqiaproject.com/artists/; Aull email January 2018).

Last but not least, Luisa Tora (Naqalotu, Yawe, Kadavu, and Lawaki, Nakasaleka, Kadavu) is an artist, activist, and writer. Before moving to Aotearoa New Zealand in 2009, she obtained a Bachelor in Journalism and Pacific History & Politics from the University of the South Pacific and worked in human rights. In Aotearoa New Zealand she received the degree of Bachelor of Creative Arts (Visual Arts) from Manukau Institute of Technology in 2009. Her multidisciplinary practice uses cultural references and codes to question power dynamics and values. She has appeared in several group shows and curated exhibitions highlighting feminist, LGBQTI+, and indigenous themes. Her artwork can be found in private and public collections throughout Aotearoa New Zealand. In March 2018, she curated the WANTOK exhibition for the Māngere Arts Centre – Ngā Tohu o Uenuku's 2018 programming marking the 125th anniversary of suffrage in Aotearoa New Zealand. For this exhibition she called on artists of Melanesian descent to unburden their hair of colonial baggage and focused on bodily integrity (http://garlandmag.com/article/te-moana-nui-a-kiwa/; https://theveiqiaproject.com/artists/).

The Veiqia Project team members had collaborated in various ways before. For example, Luisa Tora, Dulcie Stewart, Ema Tavola and Margaret Aull all participated in the 2008 exhibition *Vasu: Pacific Women of Power* at the Oceania Centre for Arts and Culture, University of the South Pacific (24-27 September 2008) and the Fiji Museum (October 2008). Featuring the artwork by 46 artists based in Fiji or neighbouring Pacific countries, the exhibition aimed to reclaim the notion of vasu, maternal lineage (a term that also came to stand for people of mixed heritage), and the concept of women's power, which has the potential to transcend national and ethnic boundaries (Koya and Tora 2008: 10). In 2015 Ema Tavola also designed a tattoo motif that Margaret Aull had marked on her arm 100 nights after her grandmother passed away in order to acknowledge her Fijian ancestry. The design mainly references the domodomo, the mast head of a Fijian canoe, as a symbol of strength and leadership in navigation and the knowledge that you can always go home (Tavola n.d.).

In 2015 The Veiqia Project members travelled from their bases in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia, where life had taken them, to Fiji, where they spent time in the iTaukei ministry offices, the National Archives and Fiji Museum to find information on veiqia, and thus liku, with the aim to produce new artwork for an exhibition for the Auckland Arts Festival that would coincide with the 2016 international conference of the Pacific

Figure 57: Dr Tarisi Vunidilo, Mereula Buliruarua, and Donita Hulme of The Veiqia Project looking at batiniqia (tattooing tools) from the Fiji Museum's collection, March 2016. Photo: Sangeeta Singh.

Arts Association. Their journey, photographically documented by Sangeeta Singh, would be one of personal rediscoveries and recoveries. When Luisa Tora heard about veiqia as a student at the University of South Pacific, she enquired amongst her own family about the practice and discovered that she had family members who had been marked. When she asked why her relatives had never told her, she received the reply 'Because you didn't ask' (Luisa Tora, interview 10 March 2017). Luisa Tora now urges fellow Fijians to ask their families about veiqia, to remind them that there are other archives than the ones that hold tangible objects or paper trails – archives can indeed be personal, oral and temporal. Each Project member has a different story about how she discovered veiqia and it is something that they share with the audience during presentations, encouraging other Fijians or Pacific Islanders to uncover unwritten stories. The question 'how did you hear about veiqia?' is thus a driving one in all Veiqia Project members' research. While asking the question, they realised how this knowledge was often deeply burried, particularly as they realised that even the word 'veiqia' did not belong to the standard Fijian vocabulary of today. Donita Hulme, remembering a 2015 talanoa session on veiqia for interested artists organised by Ema Tavola at the CPA (Contemporary Pacific Arts Festival) conference in Melbourne, mentioned:

> [Ema Tavola] said I've got this project, that I've been wanting to spark and we're waiting to hear about money and what do you reckon. I was like 'there was female tattooing in Fiji?' and it went from there. I went back to Sydney and I mentioned it to my friends who are Samoan; they were like 'Oh yeah, we know that, we got it from

> you, we have a song – what did they say? – we got a legend.[115] I'm on the board for the New South Wales Council for Pacific communities and when I went to my next exec meeting a colleague brought this book with Samoan folk songs and there was the song in Samoan and Fijian! I got really cranky when I found that out. How did it happen that all these other people know something about us and we don't? What else have we lost? … there really was that sense of loss, of something being forcibly removed from our culture, which is I think was what powered me to really want to find a way of connecting to something real and alive. (Donita Hulme, interview 10 March 2017)

Joana Monolagi similarly recounts: 'my mum didn't know anything about it; or even at school nobody knew, it was not in the books… For me participating was about connecting with my roots, with my people back in the old days. Such a rich tradition we have as Fijians. All these things they went through with different ceremonies and one of them was the tattooing ceremony which was our rite of passage' (Joana Monolagi, interview 8 March 2017). Other Project members came with different motivations. Margaret Aull was interested in joining the project because she felt the time had come to work on veiqia after she had, in earlier artwork, been inspired by Bui ni Kauvadra, a female ancestor figure (matakau, Figure 66) marked with veiqia in the Fiji Museum which was collected by Methodist missionary Lyth in the 1840s:

> The moment my grandfather died, this idea of what cultural loss was became real to me. It was the first time I realised that the connection back to Fiji, part of that, was leaving, so I came to Fiji on a family trip. I came to the Fiji museum and I found the matakau [Bui ni Kauvadra] which I decided to paint. This is in 2007-2008 and it appeared in my first solo show. I was really drawn to the matakau and I started to paint her and I would paint the markings on her, around the groin area. So I had seen veiqia, but not really recognised it. So what I'm trying to say is that there is a correlation between that and starting The Veiqia Project. (Margaret Aull, interview 8 March 2017)

For Dulcie Stewart, veiqia was part of her family history. Her great-great-grandmother Bu Anaseini Diroko was marked at the turn of the twentieth century. Dulcie Stewart's mother and grandmother's generations therefore grew up seeing or hearing about weniqia (tattoo patterns) on their female family members from Bua and it became part of their family narrative. In 2015 Dulcie decided to be marked herself with weniqia based on patterns from her grandmother's yavusa (lineage) by Julia Mage'au Gray (Stewart 2017). Born in Port Moresby with roots in the Mekeo region of Central Province, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Julia Mage'au Gray moved to Australia at the age of ten. As a dancer, choreographer, photographer, film-maker and tattoo artist, she explores her Papuan, and particularly Mekeo, heritage within an urban Australian and now Aotearoa New Zealand context. Her work through Tep Tok (literally 'talking tattoo') led her to direct a documentary and to become a tattoo practitioner. The documentary *Tep Tok: Reading Between Our Lines* (Sunameke Productions, 2015) follows four women of PNG and Australian descent, who explore tattooing traditions through personal journeys to Papua New Guinea and across

115 See chapter *Liku, Veiqia and the Adorned Body*.

the Pacific. On the journey, Julia Mage'au Gray and Natalie Richards, with Ranu James and Paia Ingram, pay homage to their grandmothers by visiting their homes in Mekeo and Hula in PNG's Central Province, where women were elaborately tattooed in the past. Their grandmothers still bear the markings, but the younger generations are unmarked. The documentary viewer can witness how Julia and Nata ask questions, how they aim to revalue the beauty and significance of the patterns. This journey is further contextualized through interviews with tattoo specialists across the Pacific as Julia decided to pick up the tattooing tools herself. She learned the art from established tattoo practitioners such as Inia Taylor, Croc Coulter and Tihoti Mataura.

> Today, I choose to practise the hand poke tattoo method. In my experience, this is the least painful way to apply permanent marks to skin. Our bubu (grandmothers) were marked but our mothers were not and becoming a tattooist was the best way to ensure that our generation and the next would wear our marks again so that our old people's thinking would not be totally lost. (Mage'au Gray in Simmons 2017)

The documentary highlights the transforming values and meanings attached to tattooing in Central Province, and the Pacific generally, while gradually reawakening the patterns that are still visible on their grandmothers' bodies. One of the people Julia interviewed in the documentary is Ema Tavola, who spoke about her knowledge and understanding of Fijian veiqia from an artist's and curator's perspective. The conversation continued beyond the documentary and led to The Veiqia Project team inviting Julia on their research trip to Fiji in 2015:

> The most amazing thing about the Veiqia Project for me has been the connections made while searching for documents, artefacts, and stories. Discovering the Fiji version of the Samoan Legend of the origins of tatau in Samoa; understanding the multifaceted relationships between our islands; accepting the loss of knowledge and yet holding on to the hope that the relationships between our Islands will help revitalise that which has been "preserved". (Mage'au Gray in Simmons 2017)

Dulcie Stewart approached Julia with the question to be marked; it is an ongoing process that emphasises Dulcie's Fijian roots. Through veiqia Dulcie acknowledged her vasu (maternal lineage), which had been ignored in the past: 'My earliest non-indigenous ancestor to arrive in Fiji was an Irish man via Australia in 1808 and since then my family have been politically and socially denied our indigenous heritage, to a point where we now identify ourselves as non-indigenous in our own vanua/land' (https://dulciestewart.com/practice/reconnecting-the-v/). As she mentioned during the Fiji Museum Family Open Day: 'This is our oral history and our heritage. We passed that knowledge down. Growing up in Suva as afakasi, to me the question 'Where are you from?', which is usually asked, is a complex question. When I got marked with lost markings from my mataqali, it grounded me' (Dulcie Stewart, 9 March 2017). Joana Monolagi created her own weniqia, which was marked on her by Julia, to reflect her heritage and her life journey. In our conversation she explained how the art of veiqia is a living art form that she is passing down to her own daughters. Pointing at the markings on her lower arm, she explained that the lines refer to her husband and her two daughters. Central is a cross symbol referring to the strong role

her Christian faith plays in her life, the lines of dots signify the family's life journey. 'I have two daughters. They have started their own markings and my husband understands what veiqia is and when he saw the markings on my daughters, he is very supportive. He is so proud to tell his friends where I'm gone, what I'm doing. It's about shifting that mentality, the barrier' (Joana Monolagi, interview 8 March 2017). Her patterns represent Joana's beliefs and values, which are relevant today, while acknowledging her female relatives in the past. Ema Tavola was marked by Julia Mage'au Gray in Auckland in 2015:

> She marked both my arms and hands with qia motifs and symbols we encountered in Fiji. For me, the meaning of these marks is related to revival and memory, Fijian art history and the power and prestige of an artform reserved exclusively for women and girls. These tattoos are part of my identity as a Fijian woman, as an artist, as a Melanesian. The meaning of my marks in 2015 is mine; they sit between you and me, perception and reality, art and context… I woke up yesterday thinking, of all my tattoos, these are my most important marks. They challenge ideas about beauty and aesthetics, history and colonisation, gender and power; they visualise my position, and galvanise my love and loyalty for Fiji. (Tavola 2015b)

Since then, Ema Tavola, had patterns tattooed around her mouth and chest and, at the time of writing, Luisa Tora is in the process of being marked by Julia. These processes underline how The Veiqia Project is about more than creating individual art works; it is a personal journey that aims to share and spread knowledge, and reawakens a past that has been dormant. During their 2015 trip to Fiji, The Veiqia Project team shared the drawings of weniqia collected or drawn by von Hügel in the 1870s as much as possible. They were often asked about the patterns' meanings. However, as Ema Tavola wrote in her blog entry: 'Whilst some notes were made on what the motifs represented (from the perspective of the non-Fijian author), it feels as if meaning associated with this visual language is not something we will ever fully understand. The artists are working hard, excavating the social, cultural, artistic contexts of the practice of veiqia / Fijian tattooing. And it's here, meaning is made; they will each interpret their experience of uncovering knowledge about our cultural heritage as Fijian women into new work' (Tavola 2015b). New meanings are made that incorporate and reflect current principles and ideals, while aspiring to awaken or re-awaken the celebration of young women.

Making visible, making heard, making sense

Produced by Luisa Tora, the video performance entitled 'Vorivori ni susugi tiko', the name of the first liku given after marriage in Yalatina, shows how dancer Mereula Buliruarua gracefully moves in and out of a fixed spotlight. The label informs exhibition visitors that 'Luisa Tora's collaboration with Mereula Buliruarua offers a public invitation into a private, contemplative space. It captures the moment a Fijian girl transitions to womanhood on receiving the qia. … It signifies their debut into Fijian society. Tora references a cultural sphere where women's knowledge and conversations are prioritised and amplified'.[116] The continuous contrast between light and darkness casted on Mereula's moving body reflects the visibility and invisibility of Fijian women over time. Celebrated through initiation

116 This text derives from the label when the work was on display at the Fiji Museum in March 2017.

rituals in the nineteenth century, Luisa Tora wants to show that Fijian young women became invisible in recent times: 'What the veiqia research made clear was the centrality of women in ceremonies. When we were planning this exhibition, a report had come out about the rates of sexual assault. The statistics were just ridiculously high and the victims were all quite young. They were in that pre-adolescent age group and it just struck me that we moved from that age group being the centre of ceremonies to now being the most abused group' (Luisa Tora, interview 10 March 2017). The difference between being in or out of the spotlight can be stark – from being visible to invisible, from being celebrated to being abused. Mereula is fully dressed, she does not show any obvious markings, as such avoiding any potential unease or voyeurism associated with a state of 'undress'. Mereula mainly shows the importance of the living and surviving body rather than the existence of decontextualized weniqia, without body, in archives. The spotlight in the video installation was fixed, it did not follow Mereula, it was thus for her to move in and out of the light. Luisa Tora aims to transform abuse into self-empowerment.

The occasion for showing this work was the Veiqia exhibition at St Paul St Gallery in Auckland in March 2016.[117] While Luisa Tora makes young Fijian women visible by bringing their celebration in the spotlight, Dulcie Stewart does so by reclaiming them. In her work 'O kemuni mai vei? / Where are you from?' (2016), Dulcie recovers nineteenth and twentieth century portraits of anonymous Fijian women that she found in cultural institutions and private collections by placing them next to photographs of her own relatives. Studio photographs of anonymous Fijian women have travelled ubiquitously. This wide circulation makes us forget that the women portrayed on these wandering images are someone's daughter, mother, sister, wife or aunt, not merely 'a' prototypical Fijian woman. Dulcie Stewart's research into her own family history also made clear that her 'European and American male ancestors were well documented, while her Fijian female ancestors remained nameless' (Label Fiji Museum 2017; Stewart 2018: n.p). The photographs are not exhibited as art works in a white cube, but in a living room that was created in the gallery space complete with side table, mat, sofa and plant. Defying curatorial convention, the photographs were thus displayed as family heirlooms, showing their connection to real people and lived memories and experiences. The photographs of anonymous Fijian women then take on a different, active, meaning rather than being a passive expression of a male, non-Fijian gaze.

The story of veiqia and liku is indeed written from the perspective of non-Fijian mainly male authors, which leads not only to a biased, but also a fragmented representation. Veiqia Project members call for the re-authoring of the narrative of Fijian female bodies. In her work 'Talanoa (2016)', Margaret Aull highlights the importance of talanoa or story telling in Fijian culture. Margaret organised her own talanoa session to restore the stories of veiqia and create her artwork for The Veiqia Project exhibition. Bringing together the important women in her life, they shared stories and worked with clay to create fragmented body parts – some with veiqia, others not: 'We created the work in clay and when I say we, I mean that I had to think of the idea of veiqia and a matriarch and her liku, this communal way of celebrating, so because I was away from my family, I had to think about my own community, so I invited the women in my life that mean a lot to me

117 The Veiqia Project exhibition was part of the Auckland Arts Festival and its opening coincided with the international conference of the Pacific Arts Association (14-17 March 2016).

Figure 58: Dulcie Stewart. *O kemunimaivei? / Where are you from?* (2016), St Pauls Gallery Auckland. Photo: Sangeeta Singh.

to come and help me make this work. So we did' (Margaret Aull, interview 8 March 2017). These creations made by Margaret Aull, Waimihi Hotere, Katarina Tamaki, Judy Ripia, Riria Hotere-Barnes, Aisha Roberts, Olivia Violet Robinson, Hiria Anderson, Ema Tavola and Leilani Kake were then placed to form a weniqia, particularly a vaka vonu vonu, a pattern in the style of a turtle, and reflect the fragmentation of memory through the historical hindrance of talanoa, which is now being reclaimed.

In her video artwork 'Isa lei gauna moni lesu tale mai', Donita Hulme aimed to find a way of connecting – connecting women generally, connecting the past with the present and connecting diaspora Fijian women with Fijian heritage. Bearing the narrative of the two sisters who brought Fijian tattooing to Samoa in mind, which she learned of at the start of The Veiqia Project, she wanted to interview women with Fijian heritage living in Sydney to discuss the universal experience of female puberty because receiving veiqia was a rite of passage connected to puberty. She wanted to speak to sisters – not only because the narrative refers to sisters, but also because she wanted to make people feel more comfortable to speak up by being in group. One set of sisters became involved: 'What I was really going for was what their reactions were going to be when I showed them the veiqia photos and told them what we know of the process. But I asked them how they remembered the experience of hitting puberty and whether they marked the occasion' (Donita Hulme, interview 10 March 2017). The sisters had a very different experience. The eldest sister was presented on mats, an event that had not been explained to her beforehand and which she consequently remembers as rather intimidating and serious. The youngest sister recounted randomly that they just went for dinner. As Donita Hulme recounts:

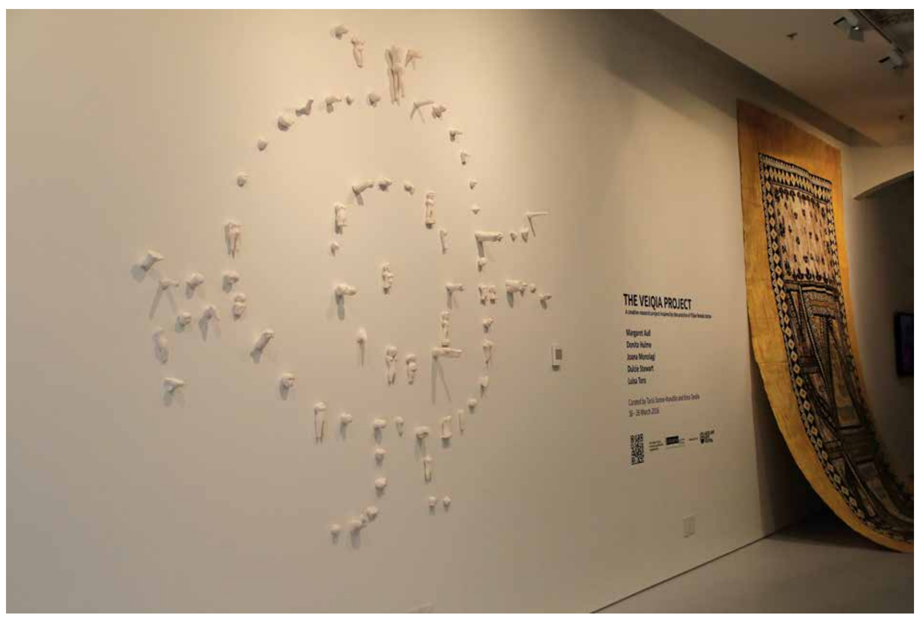


Figure 59: *Talanoa (2016).* Margaret Aull with Waimihi Hotere, Katarina Tamaki, Judy Ripia, Riria Hotere-Barnes, Aisha Roberts, Oilivia Violet Robinson, Hiria Anderson, Ema Tavola, Leilani Kake, 2016. St Pauls Gallery Auckland. Photo: Sangeeta Singh.

> I thought that would be a good way of entering into getting them comfortable by talking about girls and that shared experience and then showing them the veiqia images on the Ipad. So in my video artwork what you hear are their stories of what it was like at the marking of the occasion when they got their periods but what we're seeing are their reactions to the veiqia. I really liked the idea of the tension between that. Of all the things that really struck me was the difference in their reactions. The eldest sister shows a lot of awe and amazement. The youngest sister was kind of interested, but kind of like 'oh my god, we did that? Really?' And also I could see that we really live in a modern world, I could sense the modern embarrassment of periods, like that dirty women business sort of thing and the contrast between that and the past when you get your periods you are about to start this incredible journey and when you get at the end of it we're presenting you as a woman. There's no pretending, there's no sanitary napkin; this is what happens. (Donita Hulme, interview 10 March 2017)

While viewing the images of veiqia, the eldest sister expressed wonder, curiosity and longing; the youngest sister conveyed disdain. While expressing differing reactions to veiqia, what the sisters had in common was a sense of embarrassment to discuss puberty. This, Donita Hulme explained, was a more modern response, which led her to raise the question through her artwork whether it is possible or even desirable to return to the past and she highlights how re-awakenings need to adapt to transforming times.

In her work 'Reconnecting 2016' (Figure 60), Joana Monolagi stencilled weniqia (tattoo patterns) and batiniqia (tattoo tools) on masi (barkcloth). The 'reconnecting' referred to in the work's title reflects the project's reconnection with the Fijian women who were

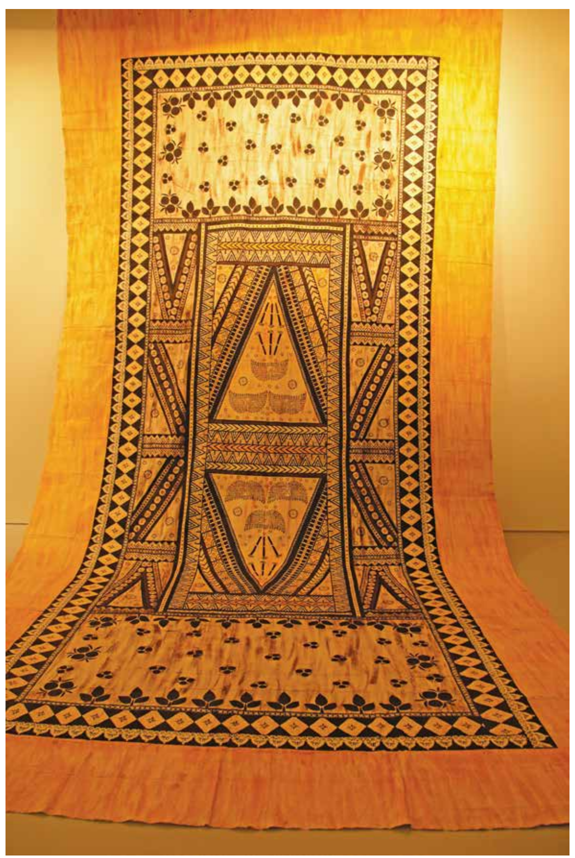


Figure 60 (left): Joana Monolagi. *Reconnecting*. 2016. St Pauls Gallery Auckland. Photo: Sangeeta Singh.

Figure 61: Joana Monolagi and Selai Buasala. *Creating the new, to complement the old 2017*. Fiji Museum, Suva. Photo: Sangeeta Singh.

Figure 62: Dulcie Stewart and Laurel Stewart. *Veikau 2017.* Fiji Museum, Suva. Photo: Sangeeta Singh.

celebrated through the tattooing of their bodies. 'It is a journey that is close to my heart. When I was stencilling tattoo patterns on masi, I felt the connection with ladies, us as women, and our grandmothers' (Joana Monolagi, 9 March 2017, USP presentation). The connection between veiqia and liku is expressed in the new liku made by Joana Monolagi and Margaret Aull. Joana Monolagi made 'Liku 2016', a liku of vau (hibiscus fibre), and 'Nai Qia 2016', a batiniqia set consisting of a bamboo mallet and a tool of lemon thorns attached with vau to a bamboo handle (discussed above, see Figure 3).[118] The thorns came from a tree in Ema Tavola's garden – connections are made on different levels. 'Mana liku' (2016) made by Margaret Aull and her relative Ata Kopa (Raukawa ki Wharepuhunga, Aotearoa New Zealand) combines her Māori and Fijian ancestry (Vasu Rewa and Te Rarawa, Tūwharetoa) not just through heritage but also in the materials used: magimagi (coir, Fiji) and harakeke (flax, Aotearoa New Zealand).

Project curator Tarisi Sorovi-Vunidilo, artists Joana Monolagi, Dulcie Stewart, Luisa Tora and Donita Hulme, together with project collaborators and supporters Mereula Buliruarua, Molly Rangiwai McHale, Salote Tawale, Waimihi Hotere and Official Project Documenter, Sangeeta Singh, travelled to Fiji in March 2017 to set up an exhibition at the

118 See Chapter *Fibre Skirts, Tattooing and the Museum*.

Fiji Museum in order to share their research, fulfill cultural protocol, but predominantly to bring their acquired knowledge and new creations back home. Bringing the exhibition home was the main goal, but, as curator Tarisi Sorovi-Vunidilo explained, there were additional aims. With Mereia Luvunakoro and Jotame Naqeletia of the Fiji Museum, she curated a case in the exhibitions that included veiqia-related objects from the Fiji Museum collections, including liku and batiniqia. The juxtaposition of these historical museum objects with the new creations reflects continuity and endurance. Another aim was to set up collaborations with local artists and continue the dialogue of veiqia amongst artists in Fiji. The team organised workshops at the Fiji Museum to explain how they set up the exhibition. Leaving a lasting legacy in different ways was important: 'We did not just want to do an exhibition and leave, but show how you do it' (Tarisi Sorovi-Vunidilo, personal communication 10 March 2017).

> Margaret Aull: Yes, so this time around, during this trip to Fiji, there has been the merge of customary exchange, I don't want to say teaching because it is more of an exchange, and unlocking the things they have already seen but not recognised. Like me and the matakau. (interview 8 March 2017)

'And here we are, back again. And just being among our treasures, it is just so… for me being an older person, I guess, on this trip I'm just so attached to this place. There's a big pull, in my heart, to the museum', were Joana Monolagi's words when describing her experience of displaying her work in The Veiqia Project exhibition at the Fiji Museum (interview 8 March 2017). In addition to her work *Reconnecting 2016*, *Liku 2016*, and *Nai Qia 2016*, which were on display in Auckland as well as in the Fiji Museum, she also installed a new work. *Awakening 2017* is a masi (barkcloth) that resembles *Reconnecting 2016*, but takes it a step further. In *Awakening 2017*, the majority of patterns are weniqia. Central is the silhouette of a woman whose back, arms and buttocks are marked. The batiniqia tools that marked her surround her. This work expresses a desire to awaken the practice itself. The label leaves no space for doubt as the only description of the work that is mentioned is: 'Awoken from a long sleep, waiting to be embraced by all' (Label Awakening 2017, Fiji Museum). During her time in Suva preceding the opening of the exhibition, Joana Monolagi also collaborated with masi maker Selai Buasala from Moce, Lau, to create a new artwork. The resulting piece of masi has a stencilled border that effectively creates a frame for the weniqia patterns in the centre of the masi, which were painted freehand (Figure 61). The work's title *Creating the new, to complement the old 2017*, shows how patterns can be reinterpreted today. The interplay between old and new is central in Joana Monolagi's work. Joana Monolagi also wrote a chant *Vucu-Veiqia* – a chant that was sung at the opening of the 2016 exhibition in Auckland and continues to be sung by Veiqia Project members to activate their work, during presentations, exhibition openings, and community events. This new chant unburdens the language of veiqia and the Fijian female bodies that it adorns from colonial interpretations. The narrative of veiqia is re-authored and open-ended: 'the more I sing it, the more I know there's another verse to go. When we go back to Auckland, I'll sit down in my spiritual corner and write it down. … Imagine all that tattooing… and somewhere along there it is about us, our journey, we came to Fiji, our first trip, the research. So it needs to end, it needs another piece' (Joana Monolagi, interview 8 March 2017). Joana's chant also featured in Donita

Hulme's new artwork, *Me'u talanoa 2017*, that stemmed from a collaboration in Fiji with Elizabeth Edwards (Nakaile, Totoka, Tailevu). In the video piece, veiqia-related valuables in the Fiji Museum, such as the liku se droka collected by Reverend Lyth in the 1840s, an ink container, several batiniqia, are filmed while the chant is sung by The Veiqia Project team:

> The second video artwork I made is a collaboration with Elisabeth Edwards and we did a lot of footage of artefacts including the liku which were just fascinating. I think what jumped out was the texture of everything, of all the artefacts that we were seeing, either through carving or through layering of material, that's what I took away with me and I remember saying to Elisabeth: 'the thing that jumped out at me was the texture of everything'. Elisabeth is a documenter and was not sure when I said that jumped out at me. Then the next day or even the same day, she said 'well, ok, but what's the story'. And I said 'I don't know, everything is the story, isn't it?' and then Tarisi said that we had to practise our chant tonight and I went 'Elisabeth, that's the story!'. And the next day they showed us the veiqia-related artefacts and that was just wild, being able to be so close to them, to really zoom in on parts of them. (Donita Hulme, Interview 10 March 2017)

The result is a true conflation of old and new; looking at valuables that had been in storage for a long time, while listening to the contemporary chant. The video work celebrates women's strength: 'How strong and determined our great-grandmothers must have been then to wear weniqia (tattoo patterns) across their bodies. Such strength. The select treasures held by the Fiji Museum – bone-toothed batiniqia (tattoo combs), intricately woven liku (skirt) and drawings of weniqia (tattoo patterns) by the Fijian women who wore them – whisper loudly to the strength, power and grace of veiqia. And these treasures promise reconnection to what was our shared history, an empowering rite of passage into womanhood' (Label Fiji Museum). This collaborative video piece was followed by Donita Hulme's 2016 video work of two sisters, 'Isa lei gauna moni lesu tale mai'.

Dulcie Stewart also showed her work 'O kemuni mai vei? / Where are you from?' (2016) again, but rather than a sofa and sidetable, a side cabinet with standing photograph mounts juxtaposed the arrangement of photographs on the wall. Her second work 'Veikau 2017', digital colour photographs, was created in Fiji in collaboration with her sister Laurel Stewart. The work references the story of their great-great grandmother Bu Anaseini Diroko who ran and hid in the forest (veikau) when the time had come to receive her veiqia. She was eventually marked, ensuring that Dulcie and Laurel's female relatives grew up with a knowledge of veiqia. Laurel Stewart photographed Dulcie with the marks she received from Julia Mage'au Gray in the forest. The photographs communicate her pride to wear these marks, which are shown in fragments in an act of deliberate self-exposure. These photographs show her agency and self-possession, her identity – elements that are missing from past photographs or drawings of marked Fijian women. Dulcie only looks to the audience in one photo, the other photographs highlight her marked body, but what is being conveyed is how these marks act as identifiers in themselves – something that is forgotten when people discuss how patterns are collected in disconnected body parts. What Dulcie is emphasising is her grounding, her Fijian connection.

Margaret Aull displayed her ‘Mana liku 2016’ that she made with Ata Kopa in addition to collaborating with pottery specialist Katarina Lesumai in the Fiji Museum. Together they created *Talanoa Redux* (2017), which is an amalgamation of Margaret’s work in the Auckland exhibition (‘Talanoa 2016’) and what Margaret and Katarina created together. *Talanoa Redux* consists of two works, matakau figure sculptures (2016) and clay beads (2017).

> I asked Katarina what her thoughts were about veiqia and what she wanted to make. She answered ‘beads’. When I asked her why beads, she explained that they are used to create a necklace that makes a woman beautiful. To me that was the link, the art space, connecting us. Beads are a form of adornment and I understood the connection with veiqia. So she and all the women came out and helped to make beads. We just sat on a mat and we made it with her. I decided to also make the matakau (human bodies, in part and full) because I just felt it had to come through. And Katarina made them with me. I showed her some of the sketches from the von Hügel weniqia drawings and Katarina chose to display her beads in the domodomo (upper part of canoe mast) pattern and I arranged mine in the dunilo (star) pattern. (Margaret Aull, interview 8 March 2017)

Together their work refers to the importance of the body and the fragmented veiqia history while acknowledging the beauty of veiqia. The contrast between the white stone clay from Aotearoa New Zealand used in Margaret’s work and the dark local Rewa clay used by Katarina unintentionally illustrates the contrast between light and darkness – a reminder of Luisa Tora’s 2016 work ‘Vorivori ni susugi tiko’, which was on show again in the Fiji Museum exhibition. In addition, Luisa Tora collaborated with Mereula Buliruarua and dancers from the Fiji-based contemporary dance collective VOU to create ‘Na Veiqia Vou (2017)’. In 2014, Luisa Tora had been involved in the collaboration between VOU and the Auckland War Memorial Museum. During Fiji Language Week 2014, VOU had brought spoken word and dance to the Auckland Museum to activate the collections. Mereula Buliruarua was particularly involved in the work ‘Postcard girls’, during which the high number of photographs of Fijian and other Pacific women in the museum’s photograph collections were activated and reclaimed. The fact that these travelled widely made Ula Buliruarua feel like a ‘exotic whore’, which she addresses in her performance while wearing a liku and painted marks on her body (http://www.aucklandmuseum.com/your-museum/about-us/blog/2015/vou-dance-company-ignite-fiji-collections). For ‘Na Veiqia Vou (2017)’, the activation created for the 2017 Veiqia exhibition at the Fiji Museum, Mereula and the VOU dancers, Mere Rosi Navuda, Elizabeth Tanya Sidal, Bernadette Kaulotu Suiqa, Koleta Dravuni Tobeyaweni and Ta’arei Weeks wore painted weniqia and yellow liku made of plastic raffia, referring to the turmeric-dyed liku dradra. Luisa Tora sensed a lack of humanity when considering the veiqia markings that were found in archives during her work with The Veiqia Project, which she wanted to overcome in her artistic work: ‘Seeing markings on the body is very different from seeing the patterns on photocopies, clubs, masi, pottery etc.’ (Luisa Tora, Fiji Museum workshop 10 March 2017). Through these new works and the connections made with other artists, relatives and the audience, the body is brought back into these body adornments.

Figure 63: Left to right: Margaret Aull and Katarina Lesumai. *Talanoa Redux* (2017); Donita Hulme. *Isa lei gauna mo ni lesu tale mai*. (2016). Fiji Museum. Photo: Sangeeta Singh.

Figure 64: Luisa Tora, Mereula Buliruarua, and Mere Rosi Navuda, Bernadette Kaulotu Suiqa, Koleta Tobeyaweni, Ta'arei Weeks, and Elizabeth Tanya Sidal of VOU Dance Fiji. *Na Veiqia Vou* (2017). Fiji Museum. Photo: Sangeeta Singh.

The opening of The Veiqia Project exhibition was accompanied by a severe thunderstorm, a favourable sign for Fijian events. The Veiqia Project team sang Joana's vucu veiqia and Mereula Buliruarua and the VOU dancers activated the exhibition by leading the audience in. The Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Mereseini Vuniwaqa, officially opened the exhibition on International Women's Day with the words: 'I went to a few functions today to mark International Women's Day and this is such an exciting way to end the night, an exhibition of women, of Fijian women'. She followed by addressing

the Project team and acknowledging that she was one of these people who was unaware of veiqia, which she describes as a symbolic artform that evidences strength, resilience and creativity of women, until this exhibition: 'It is in exhibitions like this which in some ways contribute to the revival of those traditions and cultures which are so important in identifying where we come from as an individual and therein lies another important role of the woman as a custodian of traditional knowledge and art' (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rzH9-vlVCE). Contemplating the exhibition opening, Luisa Tora felt that 'a shift has taken place'; a feeling that Margaret Aull called 'the ripple effect' (interviews 8 and 10 March 2017). The Project triggered a palpable enthusiasm in Fiji, and beyond, and paved the way for a productive future for veiqia.

> The Veiqia Project has been grounded and expanded, it has become a catalyst and a trigger, a call to action and a gentle reminder that this particular approach to creative research is tangible and social, genuine and emotional, intersectional and multidimensional… and not at all academic. (Tavola 2015a)

Beginnings

Methodist missionary Lyth made a sketch in November 1848 of an upright consecrated stone wrapped with liku, near Cokova, Viti Levu, named Lovekaveka. Reverend Lyth encountered it near a river and noticed that food had been offered. He noted: ''This stone appears to be more reverenced by the natives than anything I have seen' (Williams 1931: 67). For missionaries at the time this led to discussions about whether Fijians worshipped idols or not, a discussion which will not be repeated here as the example is raised to emphasise that the western conceptual dichotomy between persons and things is irrelevant. Objects can be personified and people objectified (Gell 1998; Strathern 1988; Leach 2002; Keane 2006). Similarly Bui ni Kauvadra, a female ancestor hook figure collected by Methodist missionary Lyth in the 1840s, is wrapped with veiqia and liku. The holes in her earlobes were probably filled with ear plugs. In other words, she was wearing her full assemblage.[119] While there is much more that could be said about the significance of this figure, the purpose of mentioning her here is to indicate that this 'object' was wrapped and fully 'assembled' to be animated and completed.

In 2008, Rosanna Raymond created an artwork (*Eyeland Part II: Welcome to da K'lub*) for the exhibition *Pasifika Styles: Artists inside the Museum*, held at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA, Cambridge UK) between 5 May 2006 and 23 February 2008 (Raymond and Salmond 2008). Raymond created an assemblage of images and things that documented the emerging Pasifika art movement in Aotearoa New Zealand. Photographs, magazine covers, posters, personal items and museum objects together visualised the presence of Auckland-based Maori and Pacific Islander artist communities and documented their creative expressions since the 1990s. Amongst the MAA museum objects incorporated in the collage was a Fijian female figure (Z 2869) that had been

119 Other examples are the matakau collected by the Chamberlains (Figure 33) and another tattooed female figure currently housed in the Victoria Museum in Melbourne. Bui ni Kauvadra is currently in the Fiji Museum (FM 86.65), see Clunie (1986b: 83, 167-68), Larsson (1960: 42-44) and Hooper (2016: 191-94) for more information on these figures.

Figure 65: ***Sacred Stones*** [with weniqia and liku] (Williams 1858: 220).

Figure 66 (left): 'Bui ni Kauvandra – A Fijian Godess'. Matakau/ililili (female hook figure) collected by Reverend Lyth (1839-54). Wood, fibre, metal. Height 46cm. Fiji Museum: 86.65.

Figure 67 (right): Matakau adorned by Rosanna Raymond. Collected by Baron von Hügel in Fiji, 1870s. Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge.

collected by Baron von Hügel on Bau in the 1870s. According to the catalogue card, it was 'given to the collector by ?Ninona, a pretty half caste Kai Loma girl at (Bau) Mbau as her portrait'. Ninona's name is queried because von Hügel's original note must have been illegible and the uncertainty of the person copying information on the catalogue card is expressed through the question mark preceding her name. While the matakau (human

figure) probably was not a portrait per se, the reference to its possibility expresses that it was intended to be a personal gift to von Hügel. There is no mention in von Hügel's journal of a figure being gifted to him in Bau, but what is known is that he met Mereoni's mother there: 'My little Mereoni came and introduced me [to] her mother – a nice pleasant looking half-caste(?) whom I had already seen at Bau' (Roth and Hooper 1990: 183). Throughout his stay in Fiji, von Hügel was charmed by the fifteen-year-old Mereoni Tokalau, who mostly accompanied Adi Mere, and he developed a friendship with her, which might have led to her mother presenting him with the matakau in question.[120] Von Hügel brought the matakau to England, where she was on display in the Cambridge Museum at the beginning of the twentieth century. She was exhibited in a display case with other Fijian adornments, such as liku and combs (Hayter 1936: 59). Some time after, she was moved out of the public museum space, was packed in a wooden box, and stored with other Fijian valuables. When Rosanna Raymond encountered her in the museum store, she felt that the figure had been disregarded and neglected because she was unadorned. She therefore chose to dress her with a miniature plastic skirt and a feather and shell anklet that she made herself and a whale-tooth necklace from the collection. Rosanna Raymond moved the matakau out of the museum store, because she felt a connection with her, thereby illustrating that the western conceptual dichotomy between persons and things is not relevant, but it is one that is often emphasised by museological classification processes, even in a time when museums are trying to encompass the plethora of relationships that were, and continue to be, formed through their collections. Raymond felt that she enlivened and activated the object, or more appropriately, subject – the point being that wrapping her in body ornamentation made the figure complete and enlivened her. After the exhibition, Raymond's skirt and anklet entered the MAA collection. Following museum practice, each separate item received an individual museum number and was stored separately.

This brings us in a kind of circle. Each liku is stored individually in a museum store, divested of the adorned human body that enlivened it with meaning. The many liku in museums today bear witness to the relationships that were formed through them. The nineteenth century was a time when liku were collected in considerable numbers by non-Fijians. Initially mostly collected in Vanua Levu and later in Ovalau and Viti Levu, the collectors depended on Fijian goodwill and agency. Liku were readily available at the time and were an important means of establishing contact and alliances with non-Fijian visitors. Collected for a variety of reasons, and given away for distinct purposes, everyone had their own agenda in the collecting process. The non-Fijian visitors brought liku home as souvenirs, symbols of difference or conversion, as gifts to loved ones or as scientific data. A large number ended up in museums, thereby making this study possible. A series of liku currently stored in the Maidstone Museum and Bentlif Art Gallery remained coiled up, as they would have been presented, and will probably never be unrolled as that would cause too much damage – their exchange properties have been eternalised in the museum context.

Today nineteenth century liku worn by Fijian women are mainly stored in museums outside of Fiji; they are 'in diaspora' (Basu 2011), emphasising their status as gifts. The liku was a lifetime companion for Fijian women. Fitted around puberty and kept

120 The name Ninona on the catalogue card is likely to be a misreading of Mereoni as von Hügel's handwriting is not the easiest to decipher.

after death, a liku was perpetual – alterations and adaptations through marriage and maternity indicating its multiplicity of social functions. Liku were made to wrap, cover, decorate, protect and contain the female body and to form an assemblage with veiqia and other body adornments. By considering the agentive properties of liku and the associated adornments, a range of insights about female personhood became visible. Simultaneously the state of (un)dress was viewed differently in different contexts. Usually described in negative terms by Europeans, liku were discouraged, while at the same time the popular trope of the 'grass skirt' became a widespread way of stereotyping women from the Pacific Islands. Once collected, liku were collated, packed and prepared for private collections or museums. Time passed, academic and public interests shifted and changed, and liku were accordingly brought in or out of museum stores. With each shift in location – moving from the living body to the museum store to public display – the meanings ascribed to liku and veiqia transformed too. Each of these moments may cast the liku assemblage in a certain light, but the meanings remain open-ended. In museums, liku might have lost their connection with the human body, yet they are certainly not isolated and vanished items, but provide a potential link with the original makers, users, collectors and other interested parties. Liku and veiqia in museums became a vital inspiration to contemporary Pacific artists. The Veiqia Project women are now bringing the body back into veiqia, and to a lesser extent liku, as such reflecting transforming worlds, inside and outside of Fiji. Over time, liku, and the associated veiqia, simultaneously signified nudity, clothing, exoticism, difference, body reinforcement, femininity and motherhood, protection and social identity. Liku were connected and separated from and sometimes reconnected with the female body, even in the context of the museum as Raymond has shown. Rosanna Raymond's act and the words of The Veiqia Project members inspired me to end this book not with 'endings', but with 'beginnings'. This book aimed to collate information on liku and the associated veiqia. Yet this has always been considered a beginning only. Rather than write the final word on liku and veiqia, the aim was to show that there is a wealth of information available and scope for different, disparate or shared, epistemologies and ontologies – meanings are constituted in different, inspiring, and sometimes discordant ways.

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THIS IS NOT A GRASS SKIRT

The Pacific 'grass skirt' has provoked debates about the demeaning and sexualised depiction of Pacific bodies. While these stereotypical portrayals associated with 'nakedness' are challenged in this book, the complex uses and meanings of the garments themselves are examined, including their link to other body adornments and modifications. In nineteenth-century Fiji, beautiful fibre skirts (liku) in a great variety of shapes and colours were lifetime companions for women. First fitted around puberty when she received her veiqia (tattooing), women's successive liku were adapted at marriage and during maternity, performing a multiplicity of social functions.

This book is based on a systematic investigation of previously understudied liku in museum collections around the world. Through the prism of one garment, multiple ways of looking at dress are considered, including their classification in museums and archives. Also highlighted are associated tattooing (veiqia) practices, perceptions of modesty, the intricacies of intercultural encounters and the significance of collections and cultural heritage today.

The book is intended for those interested in often neglected women's objects and practices in the Pacific, in dress and adornment more generally and in the use of museum collections and archives. It is richly illustrated with rare and previously unpublished paintings and drawings, as well many examples of liku themselves.

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