J. Roth
Fijian studies. (Met naschrift van S. Kooijman)


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FIJIAN STUDIES.* I have read a review by Dr. S. Kooijman of K. E. Larsson's *Fijian Studies* in vol. 117, 2, of the Bijdragen (pp. 295—6). I should be very grateful if you could find space to print the following comments:

In my opinion the most important and valuable feature of this monograph is that for the first time a detailed and accurate study has been published of the human figures, in several materials, which are known to originate from the Fiji-Tonga area.

In Mr. Larsson's work the figures have been grouped for consideration according to the material used in their manufacture. Where a similarity has been established on the basis of stylistic features, those are given in detail and differences are also carefully noted. From these comparisons the following conclusions have been drawn.

There is a definite degree of Tongan influence in some Fiji figures, though there are also others which are quite distinct and apparently do not show Tongan influence, as is clearly stated on page 114: “We know that images were found in Fiji and a style analysis of them shows common traits with Tongan figures but at the same time there are some characteristics which can be regarded as peculiar to the figures found in Fiji,” for instance fig. 14, p. 45 (CUMAE no. Z 3775) and fig. 6, p. 20 (USNM 2996) while the two Cambridge suspension hooks (nos. 55.247 and Z 2740) are as stated on p. 117: “...the twin figures... are so similar to Tongan images (that) it would be absurd to deny some kind of affinity.”.

Surely these statements alone are important conclusions. One should remember that in the case of many of the figures there is little or no documentation and when one is working with so few specimens conclusions are more difficult to reach.

The publication of this monograph has however opened up a wider field of investigation and a start might, for instance, be made with a study of “joints in the Pacific Islands” (p. 116).

Apart from the main subjects covered in this monograph (human figures and shell trumpets) there is a great deal of other information, both of an historical and religious nature which was not generally accessible before and which represents an important addition to published material on this area. It is only as a result of Mr. Larsson's painstaking and lengthy research in several countries that it has come to light.

Dr. Kooijman seems to consider that there are not enough photographs of specimens in the book, but with the detailed tables on pages 33—37 any one interested can obtain all the information necessary for further study of the subject. The reviewer appears to have made a slip in stating that the Cambridge suspension hook no. 55.247 came into Sir Arthur Gordon's possession around (±) 1870; but the latter did not arrive in Fiji until 1875.

This monograph was published just after my husband's death. A few months later R. A. Derrick, curator of the Fiji Museum in Suva, also died, there are therefore very few people alive to-day who could claim to have made a special study of the

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*Hoewel de *Bijdragen* in het algemeen geen antikritieken op boekbesprekingen opnemen, meent de Redactie in dit bijzondere geval van deze stelregel te moeten afwijken, door de brief van Mevrouw Roth overeenkomstig haar verzoek te plaatsen.
material culture of Fiji, and it would seem particularly important that Mr. Larsson’s monograph should receive careful consideration. I know my husband would have wished to record his appreciation of this valuable material which at the very least does provide ethnologists with a useful basis for further investigations.

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Mrs. Roth’s strictures on my review of Larsson’s Fijian Studies do not affect the fundamental part of my criticism, as my two principal objections to the book are not even mentioned. For in the first place I criticised the fact that the published material does not bring us any closer to the author’s goal, viz. a characterization and delimitation of the various culture areas in the Fiji Archipelago. I also demonstrated that what was apparently the writer’s principal purpose: presentation of the material, was carried out in a somewhat haphazard fashion.

This by no means implies that the presentation is of no value. I should say explicitly that the material collected and published by the author, and not least the ethnographical data obtained from his study of the primary sources, are interesting and useful for everyone who is interested in the material culture and history of this part of the Pacific.

One of Mrs. Roth’s main objections to my criticism, if I understand her rightly, concerns my remark that apparently Larsson’s data did not enable him to make a clear distinction between the human figures of Fiji and Tonga. It may be as well to say that the stress must be laid on the adjective “clear”. Larsson does indicate differences between both art styles, but the border-line remains vague. On p. 85, for example, he says: “The Tonga-Fiji figures are an interesting field of study from the artistic point of view of the relations — and sometimes mixing — of two art forms . . . .”

Dr. T. T. Barrow, curator of the Dominion Museum at Wellington, N.Z., and one of the best experts on Polynesian material culture, draws a clearer boundary in his article in Man, to which I referred in my review. As a case in point, he says that the whale tooth suspension hooks with the twin images were made on the Haapai Islands of the Tonga Archipelago, while Larsson leaves open the possibility of Fijian provenance (p. 117). I still regret that the author did not discuss Barrow’s statement.

Finally, as to the illustrations, my objection was not what Mrs. Roth expresses in general terms: “there are not enough photographs of specimens in the book,” but rather that photographs of certain important specimens were omitted; in particular, of the suspension hook carved out of whale tooth which was acquired by Sir Arthur Gordon — not around 1870, but some five years later.

S. Kooijman

SUPPLEMENT OP DE LIJST DER GESCHRIFTEN VAN RÀNTRI. In het elders in dit nummer besproken proefschrift van Mej. Tudjimah is de in deel 111 van dit tijdschrift gepubliceerde lijst der geschriften van Ràntrì in Indonesische vertaling weergegeven. Dr. Tudjimah heeft twee verbeteringen aangebracht: het onder no. 7 (Asrâr al-insân) vermelde handschrift A is geen Arabische versie, maar een afschrift van de Arabische zinnen uit een Maleis handschrift, en het onder D vermelde fragment is niet aan de Asrâr al-insân ontleend (Tudjimah stelling 5). Als no. 20 is toegevoegd een werk dat zou heten Mu‘ammadât al-istikâd, maar dit is hetzelfde als het onder no. 13 B genoemde handschrift van het werk dat ten rechte ÊUmdat

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