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


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Pacific, op intensivering van het archaeologisch onderzoek op de eilanden, en op het vasteland van Azië en op „long range studies” van de culturele anthropologie van Nieuw-Guinea.

J. VAN BAAL

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

* 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.