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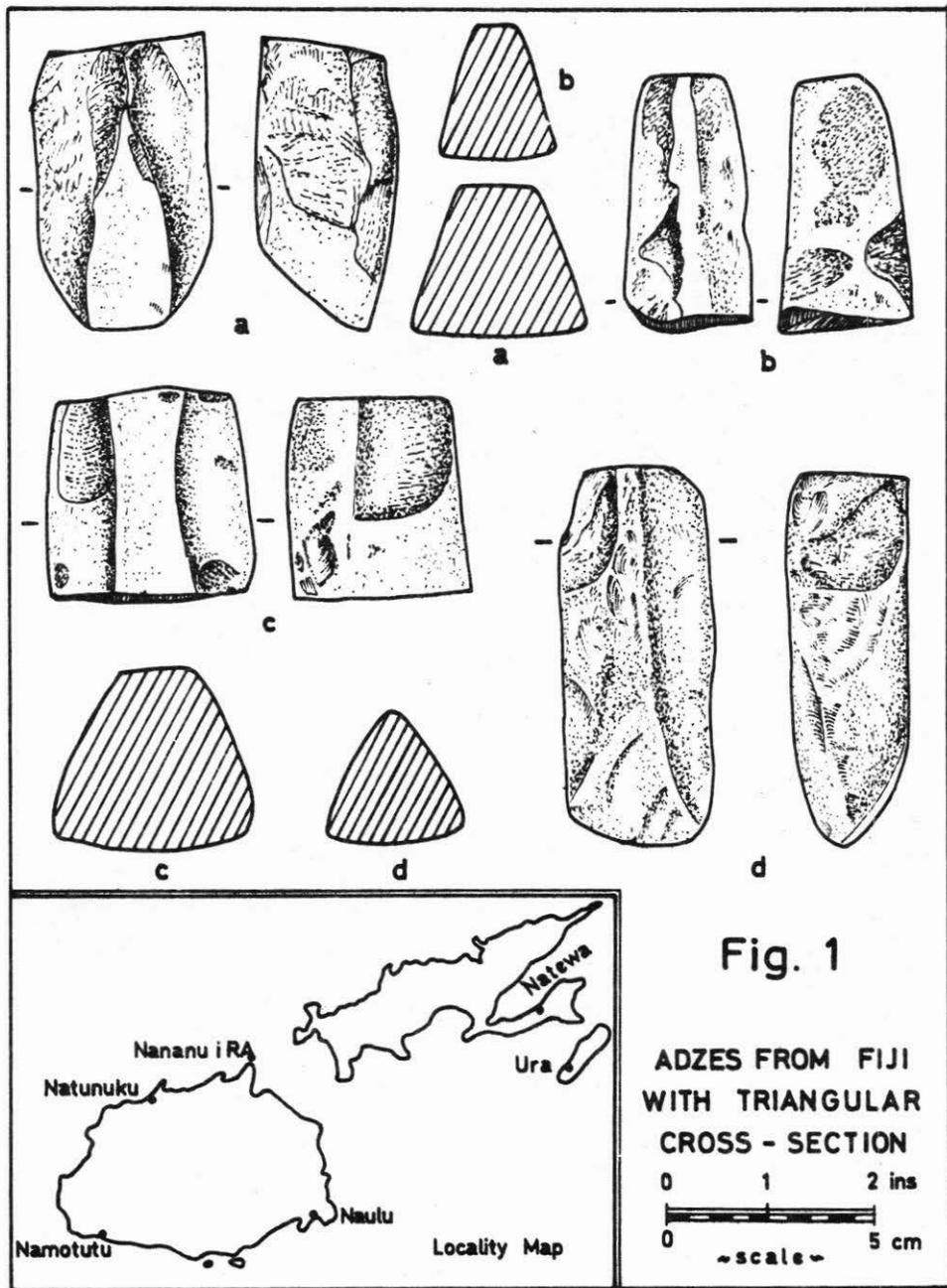
ADZES WITH TRIANGULAR CROSS-SECTION FROM FIJI

Bruce Palmer,
Fiji Museum.

These notes record the occurrence within the Fiji Group of untanged stone adzes with a triangular cross-section, apex to the front. Although these are known from various levels in Samoa and from generally late contexts in Tonga (Green 1968: 103), there has been no previous attempt to document their distribution in Fiji, mainly because the majority have only recently been collected as a result of current fieldwork.

That they are distributed over a wide area of Fiji (see map) supports the view that continuous two-way voyaging probably took place throughout the prehistory of Tonga and Samoa and later between these major areas and Fiji (Green 1968: 105-6). It is not suggested at this point that adzes of the form under discussion were initially derived from Fiji but, rather, that their occurrence in six widely distributed Fiji localities might be consistent with intermittent voyaging, whether intentional or not. A significant factor in the distribution seems to be that the two most easterly find spots both produced the massive variety as shown in Fig. 1.

This adze from Ura on Tavemui (Reg. No. 3014) is a boldly flaked specimen with polishing on the face and bevel only. The face is merely a narrow zone except where it expands towards the cutting edge. In profile the Ura adze differs from those shown by Green and Davidson (1969: Plate 1). It has neither the slightly concave face of the Lotofaga variety nor the more even line of Luatuanu'u Type VII adzes, the latter also differing in their narrow cutting edge. The Ura specimen shows an even curve for both the expanded zone of the face and the bevel, and in this respect it is clearly distinct from the Samoan varieties. Like the Lotofaga type VI adzes, however, the Ura adze is large and heavy. An adze of similar form and size is in the possession of Hon. Ratu Edward Cakobau, and was found on a ridge behind Natewa Village in Natewa Bay, Eastern Vanua Levu.



DIMENSIONS

Ura

Width at poll	60 mm
Width at bevel shoulder	73 mm
Width at cutting edge	60 mm
Maximum thickness	67 mm
Length	345 mm

A fragment (Reg. No. 66.78) collected by Mr A. L. Parke and more like the Lotofaga variety is seen in Fig. 1a where there is a suggestion of a concave face before the median ridge expands to the cutting edge. The Naulu example is notable for its very steep bevel and polishing on all surfaces. This adze was found on a ring-ditch site near Suva and is the second fragment in this collection to come from such a fortified site. The second example (Fig. 1b) is from a site called Namotutu in the Sigatoka district. Boldly flaked and hammer dressed, particularly along the median ridge, this fragment (Reg. No. 66.14) has been partially ground on the base. It appears that the finished profile would be closer to the Ura specimen than to the Naulu one.

Another fragment of what would originally have been another large and heavy adze is seen in Fig. 1c. Collected by Mr L. E. Thompson on Nananu-i-Ra Island, this fragment (Reg. No. 66.8) shows extensive finishing by polishing on all surfaces, especially along the face and sides. The fragment was a surface find in an area of scattered pottery and midden material.

The last fragment to be described (Reg. No. 66.13) is that seen in Fig. 1b and is one of four with triangular cross-sections from Naturuku, Ba. This site is an eroded village which was excavated by Elizabeth Shaw but, unfortunately, all specimens from an extensive range of adze and flaked material came from eroded debris fronting the site and was evidently in occupational deposit cut away by the sea. The figured specimen has flaking scars on all surfaces which have been partially removed by polishing. There is a well-defined and polished narrow face, the profile of which shows an even slope or thinning towards the poll. The fragment is markedly thick in relation to width and in this respect is the one Fijian fragment suggestive of an adze rather like the Samoan Luatuanu'u Type VII, i.e. an adze with a narrow cutting edge in relation to its length. The other three fragments from Naturuku are not figured here but one of them (Reg. No. 66.28) also tends to be thick in relation to width with a thinning towards the poll, while the other two (Reg. Nos. 66.51 and 66.44) tend to be broader with more rounded margins to the face in each case.

In summary, it could be said that there are nine known examples from Fiji of the adze form under discussion, four of which come from the one site while the others are distributed over a wide area. Two of the massive varieties are from the eastern part of Fiji and two other examples were found on ring-ditch sites. All are surface finds but, in view of the presence of rectangular sectioned adzes from Natunuku and surrounding areas, there may eventually turn out to be a centre within Viti Levu itself for the local diffusion of what can be regarded as more typically west Polynesian adze forms. Such a possibility does not resolve the problem of prime origin, although it suggests that intrusive contact from islands to the east of Fiji might have been more influential than would be supposed. At the present state of knowledge, however, we can only draw attention to the distribution of triangular-sectioned adzes and record details of the specimens themselves. It could be noted that the adze with trapezoid cross-section figured by Thompson (1938: Plate A, 4 and Fig. 7) has not been included here. From the Lau Islands, a Fiji Group close to Tonga, this adze has a profile which is, in some respects, similar to the massive Fijian adzes discussed earlier. The main difference, however, is in the width of the face which shows no marked narrowing of the zone away from the cutting edge to form a median ridge. The cross-section thereby remains trapezoid rather than forming a triangular section. Although Duff included the Lau adze in his 1956 Type 4F which he saw as diffusing from Samoa (Duff 1956: 184) and later in his Type 4E (Duff 1959: 137), it is clearly a different but closely related form.

Spasmodic contact from the east to Fiji does not necessarily signify that adzes of triangular section represent the totality of adze forms of the ceramic horizon with which they are associated in Fiji. They might simply be an intrusive feature from a non-permanent community adopting the pottery current in the contact area at that particular point of time.

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