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Page numbers should be reordered:- 51, 52, 53, 56, 57, 55, 54, 58, 59 etc., so that each group of sites designated by a letter follow in sequence.

Also the following was omitted from the bibliography:- Jefferson, C. 1956. Dendroglyphs of the Chatham Islands. Moriori Designs on Karaka Trees. Poly. Soc. Mem. 31.

AN OUTLINE OF KABARA PREHISTORY

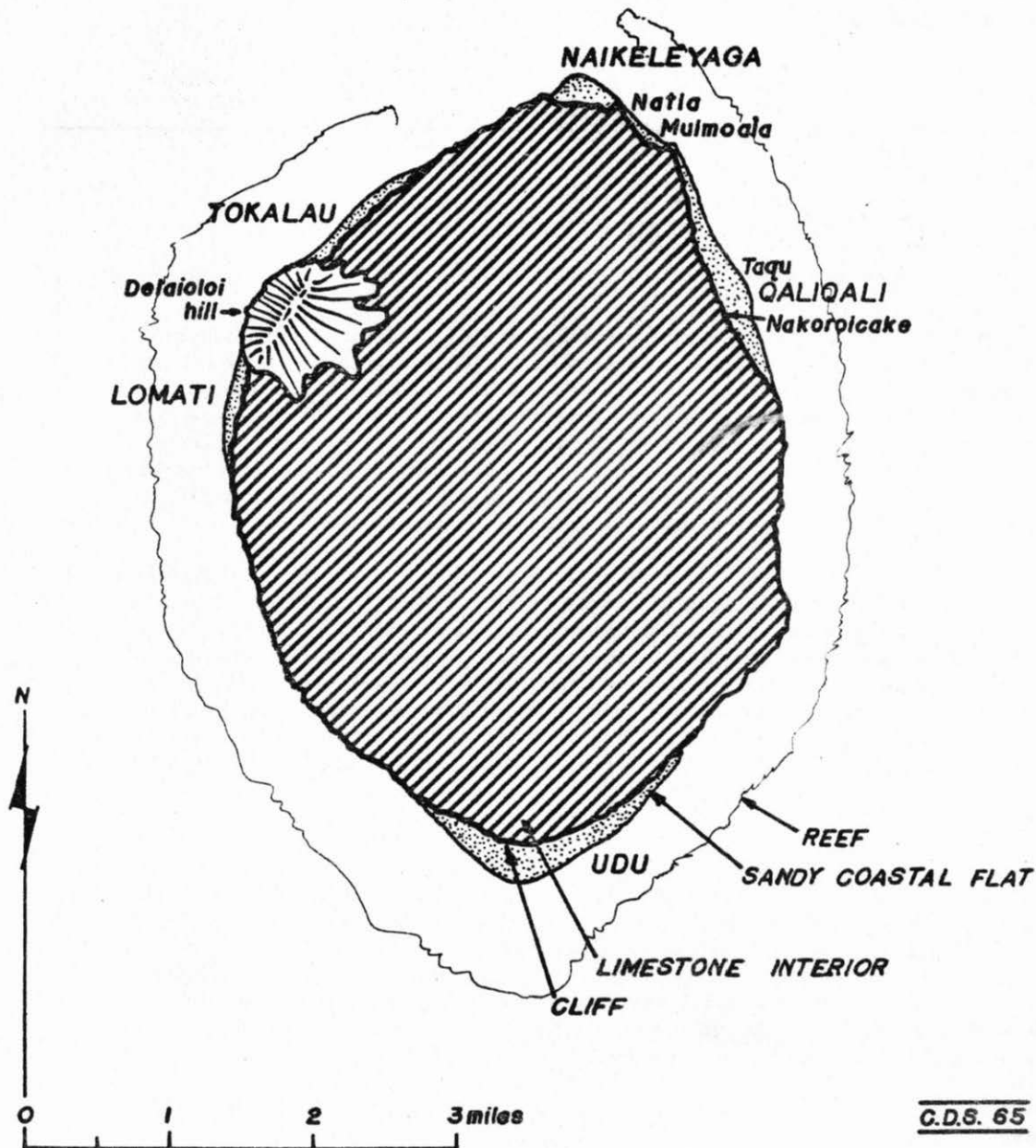
Colin D. Smart

The Lau islands form the eastern fringe of Fiji. Included are many small islands spreading north-south over an area of 44,000 square miles almost halfway between the main Fiji islands (Viti Levu, Vanua Levu and the Tonga group). Kabara, the administrative seat of five smaller islands, three of which are now uninhabited, is one of the principal and largest southern Lau islands. Direct contact with the rest of Fiji remains infrequent, but smaller boats and a number of canoes continue to travel throughout the islands of southern Lau, maintaining a cultural similarity which has probably existed for several centuries.

Kabara is a small oval island about $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles long and 4 miles across (see map). The bulk of the island is a raised limestone block rimmed by cliffs 150-250 feet high. Immediately within the cliffs the limestone falls away to an undulating surface around 100 feet above sea level. On the west side of the island the volcanic hill Delaioloi breaks through the edge of the limestone to rise 450 feet. Along the perimeter of the raised interior are sandy coastal flats sometimes extending to 1,000 feet from the base of the cliffs but usually forming narrow, ribbon-like beaches awash at high tide. On the larger coastal flats are located the present day villages of Naikelayaga, Tokalau, Lomati and Udu and the remains of the former village of Qaliquali destroyed by a tidal wave in 1938.

The limestone interior of the island is covered by a heavy growth of forest. Several forest trees were previously of great economic value, but within recent years copra production has induced the Kabarans to clear increasing areas of the forest for their coconut plantations. Small, peripheral areas of soil on the limestone interior, and the entire surface of the volcanic hill, are intensively gardened. The need for suitable gardening land is also causing inroads into the forested interior while even the sandy coastal flats are pressed into service though they produce sometimes inferior crops of the staple tubers.

SKETCH MAP OF KABARA ISLAND, SOUTHERN LAU, FIJI.



The Investigation of Kabara Prehistory

This brief account of Kabara prehistory arises from archaeological exploration of the island during October, November and December of 1964 (Smart, 1965). This work was financed by the Bernice P. Bishop Museum as the concluding project of the "Polynesian Prehistory program" (sponsored by the National Science Foundation). Additional assistance was provided in the field by the Fiji Museum.

The results presented below are based on a preliminary analysis of the collected evidence and must be subject to revision as the analysis continues. More important, however, is the qualification attached to much of the evidence by the limited size of the sample obtained. Excavations were restricted to small test pits so the information from these excavations may well be non-representative of the deposits through which they penetrated. In the field examination of sites there were few opportunities to remove the concealing growth of vegetation, so small but significant details could have easily passed unobserved. Nonetheless, it is possible to suggest a tentative outline of Kabara prehistory which should not be seriously modified by the final and detailed analysis of the evidence. Probably the final outline put forward from this evidence will have to serve for many years as more pressing problems, and the larger Pacific land masses, engage the attention of archaeologists.

The reasons for selecting Kabara as a venue for this small project were several, but there is no purpose in describing them here. Suffice to say that the islands in the Lau group, especially the central and southern islands, exhibit a mixture of Fijian and Polynesian cultural features.

The anthropologist Laura Thompson, after a period spent on Kabara and adjacent islands in 1933-34, described a Fijian culture in which a number of traits clearly belonged more properly in Western Polynesia, particularly Tonga (Thompson, 1940). On this basis Kabara could be proposed as a western extension of Polynesian culture or an extension of influence from the Western Polynesian area.

The work on Kabara was undertaken with an assessment of the available archaeological resources as its primary objective. From this it was hoped to establish several things:

1. The cultural affinities of Kabara in earlier times,
2. The general nature and pattern of settlement, and
3. A possible sequence or chronology for Kabara prehistory.

To a certain extent it is possible, even at this stage, to obtain some idea of these three aspects of Kabara prehistory. Full analysis of the evidence will advance them further largely through more substantial argument for the ideas discussed in the following account. Before discussing these three things, however, it is necessary to introduce the more important evidence upon which the outline is based.

Artifactual Materials

Only two forms of artifacts are available in numbers sufficient to make any useful assumptions. A small collection of adzes was made by Laura Thompson and a few additional specimens were recorded during this survey. All are surface finds. From Thompson's (1938a) description and additional records most adzes are of a form generally encountered in Fiji - of oval or rounded section, and tapering, rounded, unmodified butt. Some exhibit flattened faces and a few even possess clearly rectangular or trapezoidal sections (front narrower than back). That all adzes were from surface collections suggests that these adze forms might be correlated with the late pottery ware described below.

The major artifactual evidence is provided by pottery. From the preliminary examination of the surface collections and excavated sherds, two distinct wares emerge. A LATE ware, recovered from all surface collections and from the upper levels of the excavations at Muimoala and Taqu/Qaliquali, possesses the following characteristics. The paste is fairly hard and the sherds strong and well-preserved. Some variety in tempering is present but a temper of coarse white sand grains is generally lacking. Many sherds show brick-red outer layers and a black, unoxidised core. Decoration is in the form of incised lines and shell (serrated edge) impressions, with some appliquéd ribbons and nubbins. Few sherds bear carved paddle decoration - only cross-relief decoration is present in significant quantities. Vessel forms include spherical pots with large out-turned rims, and hemi-spherical bowls (the dari). A very few sherds indicate restricted vessel openings ('bottle' forms) or other special modifications. Lips are mostly thin and flattened or specially thickened and flat, the latter (from dari) with detailed decoration on the lip surface. Sherd thickness seldom exceeds about 10mm. and is generally less.

An EARLY ware, recovered in only two excavations and apparently absent in all surface collections, possesses a number of different features. Only a small sample of this material was recovered, from excavations at Natia and from the lower levels at Taqu. The paste is softer and the sherds fragile and crumbling. A temper of coarse white sand grains predominates in the Taqu material, while the black unoxidised core was not noted on any sherds of this ware. Decoration is primarily of carved paddle origin, including cross-relief, wavy-relief (Taqu) and spot-relief (Natia). Some appliquéd decoration is present but incised and impressed decoration is absent. The percentage of decorated sherds seem much higher than in the late ware. Vessel forms do not seem to have included the bowl (dari) with its characteristic thickened lip. Sherd thickness is slightly greater than in the later ware.

Although the description of the early ware rests upon a very small quantity of sherds, the distinctions between the wares seem very clear. The two wares are stratigraphically related in the excavations at Taqu and the early ware was not present in any surface collections, so that designation as late and early seems fairly safe.

Surface Remains

A total of 53 sites were recorded on Kabara - an island about 17 square miles in area. This cannot represent the entire 'population' of surface remains since intensive surveys were not possible in some places. Even so, it is obvious that a marked concentration occurs on the major coastal flats while sites were rarely encountered within the limestone interior.

Recorded sites include indications of three major functions or activities - occupation, disposal of dead, and quarrying. Occupation or habitation (more permanent occupation) remains were recorded at 36 sites (68 per cent of recorded sites) and comprise the major indication of prehistoric and historic activity. The various forms of evidence included here are: occupation refuse (35 sites), habitation structures (18 sites), defensive structures (12 sites), and a few less important forms. The predominance of occupation refuse in the form of cooking remains, food remains, sherds and other artifactual material, and its occurrence predominantly on the larger sandy coastal flats and on the cliffs immediately behind these, is striking. Habitation structures in the form of house mounds occur only with occupation refuse on the sandy coastal flats. In contrast, levelled areas and terraces, as well as the defensive structures, occur only with occupation refuse on the cliff crests overlooking these coastal areas. Traces of occupation refuse (mainly sherds or almost complete pots) occur in caves (dolines) deep within the limestone interior of the island. Though we recorded only four such sites it is certain that many more must exist and will be discovered by the Kabarans as they make further inroads into the forest for coconut plantations.

Sites indicating disposal of dead, of which 18 were recorded, include only a small variety of evidence. In the present villages or close by, as well as at Qaliqali, are small cemeteries of rectangular graves built up with brick-like walls of limestone retaining a sand fill. Another small group (six sites), located on the foredune along the edge of the main coastal flats, preserve traces of graves outlined with limestone blocks or slabs of lithified sand. These six sites are always identified by the Kabarans as of Tongan origin. Three burial mounds, each of different form, and two places of cave disposal (in the interior) complete the list of burial sites.

A final group (of seven sites) includes locations from which material has been (or is reputed to have been) quarried. In four places are preserved traces of the removal of strand-line deposits of lithified sands. This material is quite hard and can be removed in large rectangular slabs suitable for house mound facing, for the surrounding of burials, and so on. Two soil borrow pits, reputed to be the source of fill material for habitation terraces (Nakoroicake) on the limestone cliff immediately above, and a source of pottery clay on the southern slopes of the volcanic hill (Delaioloi), complete the list of surface remains.

At present only the sites yielding pottery materials can be directly related to any chronological or sequential arrangement of the Kabara evidence. It is possible, however, to relate a number of the other sites to the sequence through various indirect means, but a few sites will have to remain of unknown association. Further, since the functional origin of these sites is fairly obvious in most cases, their distribution is capable of suggesting the general nature of Kabara settlement patterns. That this is possible is largely the result of the small size of the island and its comparatively meagre resources of surface remains, as well as the limited range or variety of functional activities represented by these remains.

Coastal Stratigraphy

Although comments here are especially limited by the inadequate size of the sample of evidence obtained, the general similarity of the stratigraphy encountered in the test excavations, and observed in other exposures along the north-east coast of Kabara, calls for special attention. The observations apply to the sandy coastal area from Qaliquali to Naikoleyaga, a distance of about two miles. There are indications that this sandy coastal area is slowly advancing and, especially at Qaliquali, the coastal flat exhibits two distinct terrace levels. A prominent foredune, present for most of the two miles, is now partly stabilised under scattered vegetation.

The apparent sequence of stratigraphy, cultural and non-cultural, is as follows. A prominent, thick surface deposit appears to be present on all coastal flats behind the foredune, or beyond a range of 200 to 300 feet from the shore. It is in fact this material which provides the limited fertility of the coastal flats and, as a consequence, the deposit is always thoroughly disturbed by the cultivation of its upper 9-12 inches. It was encountered in all test excavations and observed in a number of other stratigraphic exposures (see note on Natia site below). The black, compacted matrix contains quantities of shell, remains of cooking ovens, sherds of late ware, as well as some glass, metal, or other European materials in the upper parts of the layer.

Immediately below this deposit, at Taqu/Qaliquali, is a thin and generally lighter layer of brownish colour. Occupation remains and indications of structural activity are present but the sherd material is the early ware and there are no objects of European origin.

The deepest levels observed in excavations at Taqu/Qaliquali, Muimoala, and Natia contain little cultural material. Thin layers of black, compacted deposits, containing occupation refuse but virtually no artificial materials, were encountered to $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet at Muimoala and almost 5 feet at Qaliquali. Between these thin cultural deposits are thick layers of clean white sand. The sand layers bear indications of rapid deposition, perhaps at a time when the coastal flats were less extensive than at present.

Only the excavations at Natia produced a stratigraphic sequence which does not obviously accord with this general pattern. The thick, black surface deposit bears a superficial resemblance to those recorded elsewhere, but the sherd material recovered from this deposit belongs exclusively to the early ware (described above). There is good reason to believe, however, that this upper level at Natia is not stratigraphically comparable to the upper levels in the other excavations and that the general Natia sequence can, in fact, be related to those encountered elsewhere.

Traditional Evidence

Some reference must be made to the considerable body of traditional evidence available for Kabara. Much of this was collected and presented by Laura Thompson (1938b) but additional details, especially particular people connected with specific sites, were collected during this survey. The information forms a lucid and coherent picture of Kabara prehistory, complete even to approximate dating for several sites.

Three periods are evident. The earliest period, starting at an unknown point in time, is that of 'the people of the land' (Thompson, 1938b: 182-184), with simple social organisation, living in small villages, and dependent upon food gathering and collection for their subsistence. The beginning of the second period is marked by the arrival of the 'warrior-hero, Daunisai' (Thompson, 1938b: 185-189) from Nakauvadra in northeast Viti Levu (cf. Derrick, 1963: 7-8), perhaps about a dozen generations ago (middle 17th century). Daunisai and his followers assumed social control of the island (and indeed much of southern and central Lau), introducing a complex social organisation, horticulture (though not of manioc and the sweet potato, introduced in historic times), and stimulated the production of sufficient food to support a group of specialists attached to the court of the chief. This second period continued until Tongan influence (late 17th century) and European influence (early 18th century) began to seriously modify the indigenous way of life (Thompson, 1938b: 189-196) and introduced the third 'historic' period.

The neatness with which this traditional evidence correlates with the archaeological evidence is quite distressing. The traditions concerning Daunisai are but part of a migratory tradition widespread throughout the Fiji islands (Derrick, op. cit) which, under close examination (Peter France, pers. comm.), appears to be of very recent origin and spread, perhaps under stimulus of a commission on native land titles. The similarity to the New Zealand situation serves due warning against the uncautious acceptance of such traditional evidence.

Kabara Prehistory - A Tentative Outline

From this evidence it is now possible to suggest an outline of three major aspects of Kabara prehistory. The cultural affinities of Kabara clearly lie with Fiji proper. The artifactual material accords well with that of Viti Levu. Of special importance is the correspondence of the two Kabara pottery wares with

those described for Viti Levu: '...an earlier relief decorative pottery which employs a wavy relief style along with crossed, ribbed, and gouged decorations, . . . the other a . . . plain pottery tradition which uses a minimum of incised decorations, . . . ' (Green, 1963:243).

There remains, however, considerable evidence of Polynesian contact in adzes and other items of more perishable material culture, but much of this contact must belong to a comparatively recent period - probably since about 1800. Traditions suggest contact earlier than this time but there is insufficient archaeological evidence to determine its nature or age.

The resources of Kabara, especially the water resources, must have severely limited the extent of settlement. The recorded sites indicate that most settlement was restricted to the sandy coastal flats. Important exceptions to this are the defended settlements on the ridged cliff-crests behind the main coastal flats and the evidence of habitation in the interior caves. The defended settlements indicate pressures upon the Kabarans either from outside or locally, and perhaps small groups of fugitives found retreat in the interior caves. Both traditional evidence and the sherd material (exclusively late ware) relate the coastal settlements, the defended settlements and the inhabited caves in the same cultural period, and traditional evidence suggests internal strife resulting from pressures upon land resources as the most likely explanation of this settlement pattern.

Indications of earlier settlement were recovered in the excavations and limited to the coastal sandy flats. The close contact, with no apparent unconformity, of the deposits of late ware and early ware suggests continuity of settlement though a change of culture (at least pottery tradition). But the change between these two deposits and the underlying deposits of thin cultural layers, interspersed with thick beds of clean sand, may reflect a change from occasional or intermittent settlement, involving small numbers of people, to the more permanent settlement of larger groups. The absence of artifactual material in the deeper cultural deposits prevents any comparison with later Kabara evidence.

With one exception the location of settlement in late prehistoric times seems to have continued to the present. The single exception is the movement of the inhabitants of the Qaliqali area to the previously uninhabited area of Naikeleyaga. Population has continued to increase but food resources are now drawn from two neighbouring islands, Waqava and Marabo, one of which (Waqava) is known to have been inhabited during prehistoric times, but both of which are now uninhabited. New water resources are available in the form of large concrete rain-water tanks, thus avoiding dependence upon wells of brackish water subject to severe reduction during dry years.

Finally, it is now possible to outline the Kabara prehistoric sequence with some degree of optimism. The very earliest indications of settlement, probably of an impermanent nature, cannot yet be related to later cultural manifestations on Kabara (or outside Kabara for that matter) since they contained no artifactual material. It is hoped, however, that a C.14 sample may serve to date the deepest cultural deposits encountered (at Muimoala).

After this came more permanent settlement restricted to the coastal areas. The early pottery ware of this period bears direct comparison with that of Viti Levu where a similar ware has been assigned to a period from about the 1st century BC. to around 1100 AD. (Green, 1963: 244). There is no reason to expect exactly comparable dates for Kabara. Although there is at present little evidence other than the general nature and location of settlement during this period, the remains of structural activity encountered during the excavations at Taqu and Natia suggest that further information is available for recovery. An anomaly exists in the continuation of the early ware in a thick cultural deposit, just below the surface, at Natia. This site is reputed to have had surface remains (? house mounds) within living memory and was regarded by several informants as the location of a Tongan settlement. Even if surface remains were present, the cultural deposits just below the surface may have had an entirely separate origin from a village on their surface in recent times. But there remains the possibility that a group of people using the early relief ware persisted during a period when Kabara was populated by people of different cultural affinities. Such a situation may well have become rationalised in tradition as of Tongan origin.

Subsequent to this period is a sound representation of change in the pottery material. This change corresponds well with that described for Viti Levu, and has been provisionally dated around 1100 AD. (Green, 1963: 242). Again we cannot expect the change on Kabara to have occurred at exactly the same time but there seems little reason to expect it to have taken place any earlier. Major coastal settlement, the defended villages and the inhabited caves of the interior, have all yielded pottery of the late ware and can be associated through this in the same period. Several of the sites included here are referred to in tradition. Indeed it was Daunisai himself who constructed the first defended settlements on the cliff crests, while it is said that descendents of Daunisai constructed several of the others. This presents the possibility of linking the Daunisai migration with the late period and thus dating its beginning at about 1750 AD, considerably later than the dating suggested by pottery alone. It seems certain, however, that settlement during this period involved the whole of Kabara and a large population, perhaps large enough to strain the subsistence resources to a point where internal warfare resulted. Subsequent expansion required new water sources and the use of adjacent islands for gardening.

The onset of the concluding period of Kabara prehistory is marked by the arrival of the Tongan traders and adventurers in the late 17th century, just prior to the arrival of European influence. Much of the information on this period can be drawn from documentary sources. It seems likely that a great deal of the Polynesian (Tongan) influence described by Laura Thompson can be assigned

to this period since there is little archaeological evidence to suggest its earlier arrival on Kabara.

The general pattern of Kabara prehistory is probably applicable to most of the islands in southern and central Lau. Evidence from neighbouring islands indicates a general cultural similarity at the time of European contact and, although the evidence is often meagre and second-hand, the late period of Kabara was probably the same as that of the southern and central islands as a whole. But in spite of close affinity with the major Fiji islands, Lauan culture almost certainly differed in some important respects. The nature and origin of these differences, however, must await further definition.

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