



NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

ARCHAEOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND



This document is made available by The New Zealand
Archaeological Association under the Creative Commons
Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

To view a copy of this license, visit
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>.

NOTES AND NEWS

At the 1993 New Zealand Archaeological Association Conference held in May in Kaikoura a painting by Fatu Feu'u, which had been commissioned by the Association, was presented to Professor Roger Green in recognition of his great contribution to New Zealand archaeology. On July 24th the painting, **Pulemalama**, was unveiled by the artist at a gathering in Roger's house to honour the homecoming of the painting. The following is from the speech given by the artist about the elements of the painting and an open letter of appreciation from Roger Green. **Pulemalama** is reproduced on the cover of this issue so that all members of the Association, but especially those who so generously contributed towards the purchase, can share in its vibrant beauty.

PULEMALAMA

Pulemalama is a contemporary statement depicting *mana* or 'authority'. Its composition consists of the following elements:

On the left-hand side male and female elements from Polynesian *tapa*; above these the children, image of a new generation; the spirit of the past ancestors utilising the Lapita mask; the seven spiritual ancestors depicted by the frigate birds.

The seven fish images of bonito or tuna signify the abundance of the earth and sea resources to supply our physical needs. The seven tattoo designs, stars embedded in black (nocturnal) background, with tears, signify the watering of plants to grow; the affinity of the human spirit to the land.

The right-hand side of the painting with blue and ochre carving designs are the reflection of a buried house or Samoan *Fale afo'olau*, (upside down), with the long nose mask design of Lapita. The white light of the seascape of the Manukau Harbour signifies the '**Pulemalama**', the authority of light, which is the owner of the painting.

Dear Roger, I thank you and Valerie and Nigel for this opportunity. I hope with my humble ability and energy I was able to convey my feelings onto a 'painting' to honour your contribution to the Pacific and the rest of the world.

I feel proud to call you my friend and teacher. May you enjoy writing all the books about the Pacific for our world to see that we were artists too from thousands of years ago.

Ia Soifua, Ia Manuia,
Fatu Feu'u



Roger Green holding a kava stick presented to him by the artist, and Fatu Feu'u at the unveiling of **Pulemalama**, Titirangi, July 24th, 1993.

A NOTE OF THANKS FROM ROGER GREEN

Some gifts just seem more right than others, often because of their source.

In 1958 and 1959, as a very young Fulbright Scholar, I was conscripted (there was no better word) by Jack Golson into the affairs of the New Zealand Archaeological Association. In his 1993 article, published in 'A Community of culture', Les Groube catches the flavour of the youthful society under Jack's aegis; members interested in the association's roots should consult it. The NZAA, with members drawn from almost every segment of Kiwi society, has been for me a source of valued and enduring friendships. Its conferences have been events I missed only when overseas. Through associated field trips, I have seen parts of New Zealand, often little known to other residents. On countless visits with members throughout the country I have come to know more of this land and its people than many. The members and activities of NZAA have helped to make New Zealand a home for most of my adult life.

By day I can look through our windows and see the harbour and heads of the Manukau. Now I look on our wall and also see this as part of my home, but in addition, the painting **Pulemalama** is peopled by all those who contributed to such a wonderful gift. I am truly grateful.

The other source that somehow makes this gift just right is its creator, Fatu Feu'u. As a struggling artist, prompted I believe by the late Tony Fomison who was a friend and association member of longstanding, Fatu called me some number of years ago. He wanted to meet and talk about Lapita. At this point I had not seen any examples of Fatu's art and I learned that Fatu had seen only glimpses of Lapita decoration. It had been just enough, however, to convince him that it contained motifs employed in his Samoan background. Those of you who know my article, 'Early Lapita art from Polynesia...continuities in ceramic, barkcloth and tattoo decorations', will realise why we hit it off from the beginning. Over the years my very formal and analytical perspective on Lapita, seldom daring to venture into the realms of symbolic meanings, has been expanded, because to Fatu each design, each motif, carried particular meaning and often a Samoan name as well. What had been a Lapita anthropomorphic face design on a sherd recovered in the Reef Islands of the Solomons, became, in Fatu's art, one of the many mask faces of the Pacific. From him I learned to see that face as a long-nosed god, often appearing as the most minimal and abstract of elements, along lines explored by Matthew Spriggs in a 'Lapita Design, Form and Composition (1990).

On one occasion I participated in a pottery workshop Fatu organised for people of Pacific descent. Using slides, I demonstrated how the motifs of barkcloth, tattooing, woodcarving and weaving also occurred on Lapita pottery and had an antiquity of 3000 years. I took along experimental wooden tools some of the archaeology students had fashioned to reproduce Lapita designs on pottery. Fatu soon had the workshop participants making pottery vessels, and I watched in amazement as modern versions of Lapita pottery emerged. The relationship had to be demonstrated only once: designs from their ethnic backgrounds were in their heads and soon appeared on their pots.

Out of that workshop another treasure of mine was created: a pottery kava bowl with legs. Having listened to a theory about the ceramic origin of wooden kava bowls with legs, Fatu performed a little exercise in what we would call experimental archaeology, with satisfying results. Yes, we have tested it with Kava. should it ever be broken, its rim and body sherds might easily be lost among the Samoan thickware pottery from Vaialele and the legs among the plainware assemblages of Tonga. They would not be strangers!

I could go on, but this should be enough to convince you that **Pulemalama** and will always hold, a deep significance for me because of its creator and its givers. Now you will know why, at its unveiling in Kaikoura, I shrieked with instant recognition "Its a Fatu Feu'u", and why it could not just be hung on our wall without a proper ceremony of homecoming. I only wish all of you who contributed could have been present on these occasions.

Fa'afetai lava to all.