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Cover image: Captain Korent at his home in Majuro, looking at a wave map prepared by physicist John Huth. Photo courtesy of Mark Peterson/Redux, 2015.

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AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

CONTENTS

Notes and News 139

Antony Bramston Hooper (1932–2016)
Obituary by Judith Huntsman 141

Articles

STEVEN WEBSTER
Māori Kinship and Power: Ngāi Tūhoe 1894–1912 145

SUSANNE KUEHLING
“*We Die For Kula*”—*An Object-Centred View of Motivations
and Strategies in Gift Exchange*..... 181

JOSEPH H. GENZ
*Without Precedent: Shifting Protocols in the Use of
Rongelapese Navigational Knowledge* 209

Reviews

Hooper, Steven: *Fiji: Art & Life in the Pacific*. Exhibition and
Exhibit Catalogue. RICHARD WOLFE 233

Edvard Hviding and Cato Berg (eds): *The Ethnographic Experiment.
A.M. Hocart and W.H.R. Rivers in Island Melanesia*.
JOHN E. TERRELL 237

Wassmann, Jürg: *The Gently Bowing Person: An Ideal Among the Yupno
of Papua New Guinea*. DAVID LIPSET 239

Publications Received 241

Publications of the Polynesian Society 243



The Nayacakalou Medal is presented to Associate Professor Judith Hunstman by Professor Michael Reilly (on behalf of The Polynesian Society Council) prior to her medal lecture entitled “The Treasures of Tokelau”.

NOTES AND NEWS

Article Contributors

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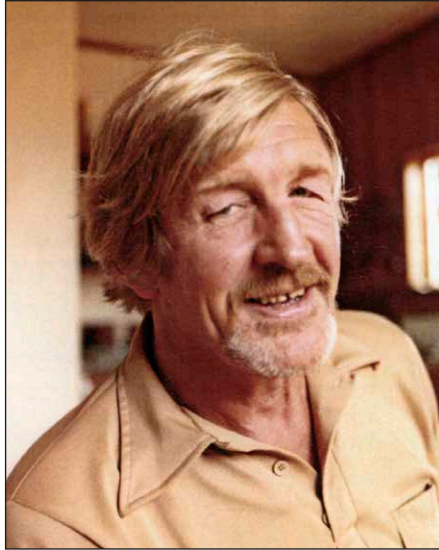
Susanne Kuehling, a German anthropologist, is Associate Professor at the University of Regina in Canada. She received her MA from Göttingen University, Germany. For her doctoral research she conducted 18 months of fieldwork on Dobu Island, Papua New Guinea. Her PhD thesis (The Australian National University, 1999) was titled “The Name of the Gift: Ethics of Exchange on Dobu Island”. She has published a book (*Dobu: Ethics of Exchange on a Massim Island*, University of Hawai‘i Press, 2005) and journal articles on *kula* exchange, value, personhood, morality, gender, emplacement and teaching methods. Her current project on the revitalisation of *kula* exchange was developed during a number of visits to Dobu Island, Papua New Guinea (2009, 2012, 2015) and is funded by the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). She taught for five years at Heidelberg University before moving to Canada in 2008.

Steven Webster is an Honorary Research Fellow in Anthropology at the University of Auckland. He completed his PhD in cultural anthropology at the University of Washington, Seattle, immigrated with his family to New Zealand, and taught social anthropology and Māori studies at the University from 1972 to 1998. His research interests are Māori social organisation and ethnohistory, political economy, ethnicity and treaty rights.

Other News

The Polynesian Society awards three medals for outstanding achievements in Pacific research: The Nayacakalou Medal, The Elsdon Best Memorial Medal and The Te Rangi Hiroa Medal of the Royal Society of New Zealand. The Nayacakalou Medal honours the late Dr Rusiate Nayacakalou for his outstanding ethnological writing on Fijian and Polynesian society and culture. The Medal is considered (but not necessarily awarded) annually for recent significant publications on Pacific Island research relevant to the aims and purposes of the Polynesian Society, and the interests and concerns of Dr Nayacakalou. The recipient is typically asked to present a paper on the occasion of receiving the Medal, which is subsequently published in the *Journal*. This year the Nayacakalou Medal will be awarded at the May AGM to Associate Professor Judith Hunstman, long-standing Honorary Editor of the *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, retired University of Auckland academic staff and currently Honorary Academic of Anthropology in the School of Social Sciences.

ANTONY BRAMSTON HOOPER (1932–2016)



Photograph by Marti Friedlander, 1983.

Antony (Tony) Hooper was member of the Polynesian Society for at least 60 years (first as a student of Anthropology at the University of Auckland in the 1950s) and a constant contributor to the *JPS*. His first publication, in the early 1960s, was a two-part article based on his MA research among Cook Islanders in Auckland; his last, in 2010, was a text on Tokelau fishing with English translation and commentary. In between he authored or co-authored at least a dozen articles and reviews. As well, Tony was Honorary Co-editor of the *JPS* from his return to Auckland in 1967 to 1971 and he co-edited Polynesian Society Memoir 45, *Transformations of Polynesian Culture* (with the author).

Tony was born just outside Suva, Fiji. His father was also born in Fiji; his mother was from New Plymouth. He was sent to New Zealand, aged 10, to attend boarding school at New Plymouth Boys High and be educated as his father had been. He grew up to be a golden haired formidable figure, who played rugby in the National First XV Championship (the Premier Rugby Union competition for Secondary Schools and Colleges in New Zealand) for three years; he also excelled in discus and shot put.

In 1950 Tony entered the University of Auckland. A new world opened up to him: new friends—many lifelong—in the literary and art worlds, sparking his love of literature and particularly poetry. Among them was Robin McFarland, whom he

married in 1955. It took him some time to decide on his vocation, but Anthropology finally won. He received an MA in 1958 for a thesis on the Auckland Cook Island community, for which one of his primary sources was Albert Henry (founder of the Cook Islands Party and first Prime Minister), back then working in the shipping section of Farmers, a department store chain.

A scholarship for doctoral studies at Harvard University followed; Tony and Robin arrived in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1958. This again was a new world and again another bunch of lifelong friends, but it was also a very intense and serious time, despite the sometimes offhand character of his supervisor, Douglas Oliver, who was heard to refer to Tony as his “blond Fijian”. For his PhD research he joined Oliver’s Society Islands project team. Oliver had wisely selected Tony to undertake comparative ethnography on Taha’a and Maupiti, remote Leeward Islands of the Society Group. For Tony and Robin the field was a pleasant change from the intensity of Cambridge, and here they learned Tahitian and spent 18 months in 1960–61.

1964 was a big year: Tony and Robin moved to Providence, Rhode Island where Tony took up a lecturing position at Brown University and their son Matthew was born. Also in that year, I began a friendship with them, which propelled me in directions I had not anticipated.

After two years at Brown, Tony was appointed to a Senior Lecturer position at Auckland University. Tony, Robin and Matthew set out for Auckland, returning briefly to Maupiti along the way. Their second son, Julian, was born three months after their arrival in Auckland.

Before the Hooper family left for New Zealand, Tony and I hatched a plot for collaborative Polynesian research. I was about to launch into further postgraduate studies, which would prepare me for field research after a year. Tony wanted to establish another field site in Polynesia. So the plan was for him to choose the site and the two of us to start research there in 1967. As the story goes, Bruce Biggs counselled Tony to choose someplace in which New Zealand had interests and Tony discovered that an Epidemiological Research Group would be visiting Tokelau in 1968 to survey the peoples’ health status. Furthermore, he had connections with relevant NZ Government officials from his earlier research with Cook Islanders. So it came to pass that when I arrived at Auckland Airport in July 1967, Tony greeted me with the question: “How would you like to go to Tokelau?” I quickly said: “Yes”.

So began our long, fruitful and diverse research in Tokelau’s three atolls. Tony insisted that he would go to Fakaofu (something about the name attracted him); I did my PhD research in Nukunonu and then got further funding to do comparative research in Atafu. The situation was perfect, we each had our separate research places; later I too was lecturing in the Anthropology Department at Auckland.

After a preliminary visit in late 1967 to early 1968, Tony, this time with the whole family, had returned to Fakaofu in mid-1969. I was back in Tokelau in late 1969. Quite suddenly, we were summoned back to NZ by the late Ian Prior, head of the nascent Wellington Epidemiology Unit, for a World Health Organization (WHO) Conference. WHO had taken an interest in the Unit’s Tokelau epidemiology research

in both the atolls and NZ, and Ian had organised the Conference. Suddenly we were involved in a whole new enterprise with quite generous funding that would allow us to continue our own research among Tokelauans while we contributed our part to the health research project. The Tokelau Island Migrant Study, as it was called, continued for 20 years, culminating in an Oxford University Press publication, *Migration and Health in a Small Society: Tokelau Case Study*, of some 450 pages with five authors.

The periodic returns to the atolls, and the extension of our research to Tokelau migrants to NZ, expanded our research in new and interesting directions, as did our accumulation of published and unpublished materials on Tokelau's past and our regular monitoring of later changes. Tony, after considerable lobbying, persuaded the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (by then responsible for Tokelau) to provide support for a Tokelau dictionary to be compiled by a former Tokelau teacher—that took ten years. Then we advised, edited and arranged the publication and translation of a Tokelau-authored book, *Matagi Tokelau: History and Traditions* (1991)—that too took ten years. From 1978 we were writing a book, drawing upon our extensive ethnographic and historical research, which was published in 1996 as *Tokelau: A Historical Ethnography*. Then too, we each pursued our own interests; Tony's was fishing. He wrote several articles on aspects of Tokelau fishing, but his major contribution was in facilitating the publication of *Papa o Tautai* (2008), a Tokelau-language account of fishing knowledge and practices written by Atafu elders. The enhanced publication and English translation of that account, funded and distributed by UNESCO, was entitled *Echoes at Fishermen's Rock: Traditional Tokelau Fishing* (Hooper and Tinielu 2012).

From the time he embarked on his MA until his death, Tony promoted and supported Pacific study and research, and Pacific students' and scholars' pursuit of them. In the 1960s he had joined with others at the University of Auckland advocating for more attention to and support for research in the Pacific, though without much success. He taught about Polynesian societies and cultures, and supervised numerous postgraduate students. By the 1980s more and more of these students were NZ-born of Pacific heritage, many struggling with their studies. Tony became leader of a group of scholars and students who successfully called for the establishment of the Centre for Pacific Studies to provide courses and promote scholarship. To highlight this development, Tony and a number of colleagues conceived, organised and convened a four-day Conference on Pacific Studies subtitled "Issues and Directions" in August 1985, "intended to give impetus and direction to the diverse range of Pacific interests in both the University and wider community". Prominent scholars from the Pacific attended to present papers; workshops provided venues for further presentations and discussions on the themes of political economy, and the arts and cultural identity. At least 400 people attended and Pacific Studies at Auckland was on the map (see a fuller account of the conference in *JPS* vol. 94 [4]: 302-03). In the years that followed, first, two courses—addressing the two themes of the conference—were available annually at the Centre. Then housing was found, a Centre Director was appointed, and the courses offerings expanded, and finally Pacific Studies became an academic

subject at Auckland. Tony had given up his Professorship at Auckland to take up a research position at the East-West Center's Pacific Island Development Programme in Honolulu, before the Pacific Studies dramatic *Fale* and office/teaching building were constructed in the early years of the new century—both adornments to the University. His role in their coming into being was pivotal.

In many ways the trajectory of Tony's life—from Fiji to New Zealand to Harvard to Tahiti, to Harvard again and then Brown, back to Auckland, to Tokelau and so on—was a continuous path of his personal humanistic commitment to the peoples and cultures of the Pacific, much in line with the aims of the Polynesian Society of which he was an engaged life-member.

Judith Huntsman

MĀORI KINSHIP AND POWER: NGĀI TŪHOE 1894–1912

STEVEN WEBSTER
University of Auckland

Inspired by Eric Wolf's classic *Europe and the People Without History* (1982), in 1998 I published an essay arguing that between 1840 and 1860 Māori *hapū* 'cognatic descent groups'¹ were already changing "not as a whole traditional way of life somehow outside that history, but rather as a whole way of struggle integral to differentiation in capitalism ..." Among the changes detailed, I suggested that some *hapū* were "breaking up into alliances or assimilation with more successful others" or "breaking up in merger with such established class interests as merchants, labour agents, peasants, rural and urban proletariat" (Webster 1998a: 31-32). In these examples I had raised Wolf's conclusion that the power developed by leaders in kin-ordered modes of production influenced by tributary or capitalist colonisation was liable to reach "a limit that can only be surpassed by breaking through the bounds of the kinship order" (Wolf 1982: 94). While the first example may be only a break-up of the kin-order of one *hapū* to join in the kin-order of another—not unusual for *hapū*—the second example can be seen as the more radical historical change that Wolf had in mind: the undermining or immobilisation of the traditional kin-order itself, either by its leaders or by the new forces they are dealing with, or some combination of the two. Wolf later applied his theory of the kin-ordered mode of production to the Kwakiutl, focusing on the role of ideology in political economic power and calling it the "kin-ordered mode of mobilizing social labor" to stress the inherently social nature of production in Marx's sense (1999: 275; see also 69-131).

I have recently been drawn back to Wolf's insights regarding the forms of power developed by leaders in a kin-ordered mobilisation of social labour, but this time among one particular *iwi* 'tribe' of Māori: *Ngāi Tūhoe*.² Although my fieldwork in New Zealand had begun among the Tūhoe in 1972, most of my research had focussed generally upon Māori *hapū* or ethnic politics (Webster 1975, 1998b, 2002). In 2003, prompted by my unpublished 1984 essay on Tūhoe and the 1921 Urewera Consolidation Scheme (Webster n.d.a), the Waitangi Tribunal asked me to research and report more extensively on that era for their ongoing Urewera investigation. Since then, working in the archival data accumulated in that exciting return to my fieldwork roots, I have now completed two ethnohistorical volumes spanning Tūhoe in colonial history 1894–1926 (Webster n.d.b., n.d.c). The first volume deals with the investigation and establishment of the Urewera District Native Reserve

(UDNR) 1894–1912, and the second volume is a revision of my report for the Waitangi Tribunal on the subsequent Crown purchasing campaign and Urewera Consolidation Scheme (UCS) 1915–1926 (Webster 2004).

Together, these two volumes examine the negotiated establishment by Tūhoe, supported by statute and a Crown commission, of virtual home-rule over the Urewera District Native Reserve (Figs 1, 2)—and its subsequent betrayal by the Crown. Just over a century later, this betrayal and the earlier unjustified confiscation of their coastal lands has been admitted by the Government and redressed by the Te Urewera Act of 2014, returning to the Tūhoe a new form of hopeful home-rule over the extensive mountains and valleys of what was previously the Urewera National Park (Tūhoe Claims Settlement Act 2014, Te Urewera Act 2014).

The first part of the volume dealing with the earlier period 1894–1912 examines the negotiation of the 1896 UDNR Act (The Urewera District Native Reserve Act, 1896) between Tūhoe leaders and Prime Minister Seddon; the procedures and legitimacy among Tūhoe of the UDNR Commission, which was largely under the control of Tūhoe commissioners (and the amateur ethnologists Percy Smith as chairperson and Elsdon Best as secretary); the difficulties the Commission encountered in laying out the reserve into 34 blocks in the name of particular *hapū* with relative shares of ownership among particular descent groups; and a detailed examination of one large *hapū* branch headed by the war-leader Tamaikoha regarding its organisation in sibling groups, marriages and *hapū* affiliations. My primary objective in this ethnohistory, as it has been since my earliest publication on the Māori in general, is to understand the structure and organisation of *hapū* as cognatic descent groups. I had planned to conclude this volume with one or two chapters attempting to understand *hapū* “clusters” (Ballara 1995) among Tūhoe at this time by examining a few of ten proposed groupings or amalgamations of the 34 blocks of the reserve (Fig. 3). These ten amalgamated titles were suddenly proposed in May at the end of the 1902 season, but aborted (probably by the Native Minister) when the Commission reconvened the following October for its final deliberations. Although neither the proposal nor its withdrawal were satisfactorily explained, it is clear that Tūhoe leaders supported or even proposed it. In anticipation of fulfilling it, the 1901 survey plan had even been modified accordingly.

However, improvement of my method to reconstruct descent group genealogies including spouses, especially by cross-indexing Elsdon Best’s 130-page genealogical census of Tūhoe (1898) enabled me to stumble upon two strikingly extensive marriage alliances between four or five descent groups in two of these proposed amalgamations: Parekohe at the north end of the reserve (amalgamating seven blocks; see Fig. 3) and Ruatāhuna-

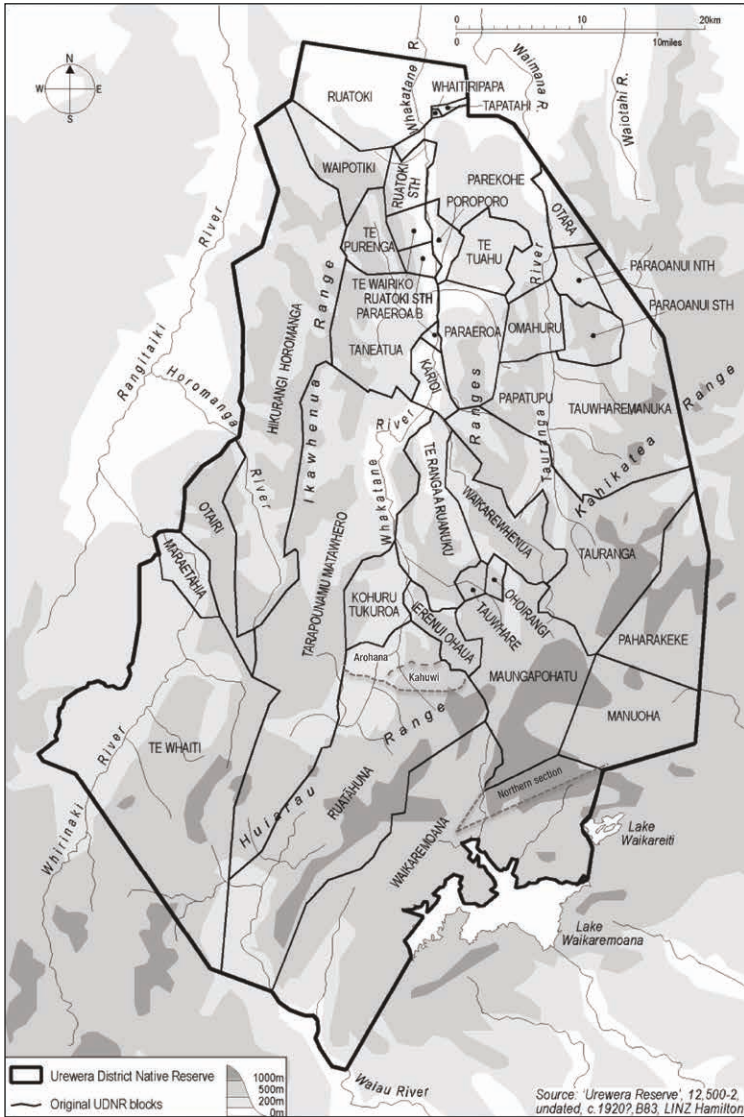


Figure 2. Urewera District Native Reserve showing topography and original blocks (1907).

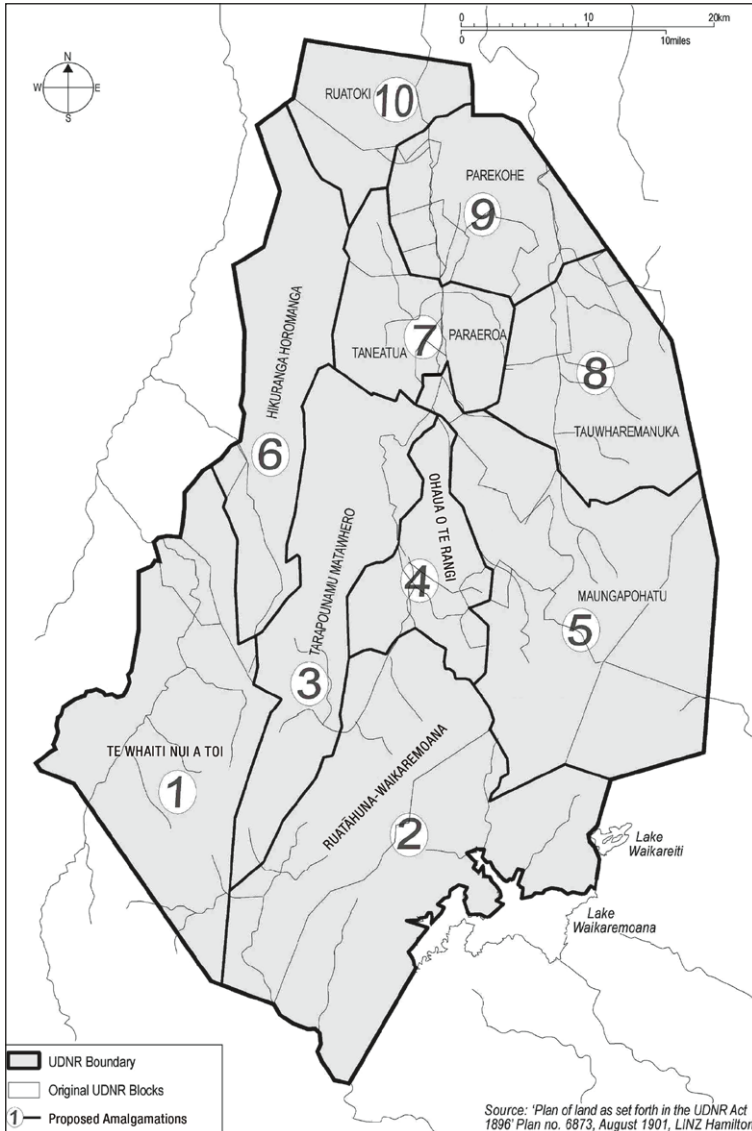


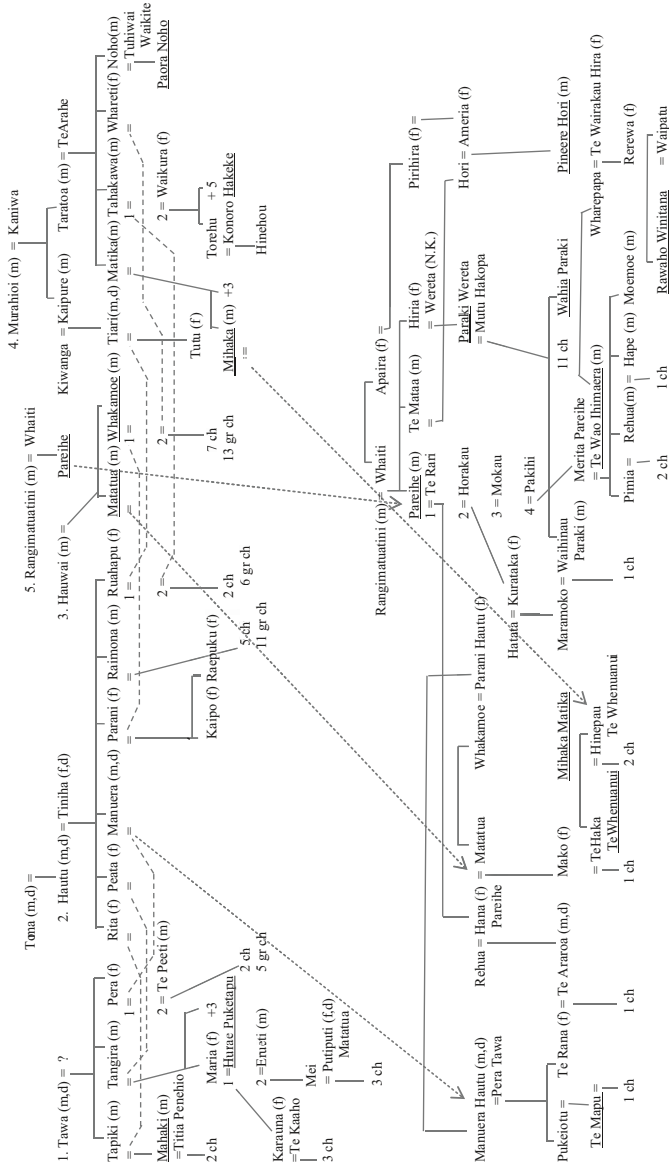
Figure 3. Proposed amalgamations of Urewera District Native Reserve blocks (1902).

Waikaremoana at the south end (amalgamating two large blocks). In each of the two cases, there were seven or eight intermarriages between a few sibling groups in one generation, four or five in the next, and two or three in the third generation: clearly a growing alliance between *hapū* or *hapū* branches pursued over a half-century. A diagram depicting the intermarriage of five descent groups in the proposed Ruatāhuna-Waikaremoana amalgamation is presented here (Fig. 4). The regular decrease of intermarriages was probably because the increasing solidarity of the alliance was slowed by widening overlap of ancestry and consequent incest restrictions.³ Also in each case, the marriage alliance was consistent with historical events that may have motivated them: land lost through Crown confiscation in the 1860s, and continuing migrations following a Tūhoe “conquest” of Waikaremoana in the early 1800s, respectively.

Understanding what I call the Ruatāhuna-Waikaremoana migrant marriage alliance (Fig. 4) and its relationship to three Tūhoe leaders of enduring *mana* ‘prestige’ enabled me to gain insights into otherwise opaque confrontations between major descent groups that extended at least from 1900 through 1912. These confrontations alone took several more chapters to unravel and explain. The key leaders and descent groups can be introduced here: Te Whenuanui II, a leader of Te Urewera *hapū*; Numia Kereru Te Ruakariata, a leader of Ngāti Rongo *hapū*; Tutakangahau Tapui, a leader of Tamakaimoana *hapū*; and several leaders of the migrant marriage alliance (underlined names in Fig. 4), many affiliated with Ngāti Ruapani or other Tūhoe *hapū*.

Preoccupied only to understand the more demonstrable ethnohistorical implications of the extensive documentation of the Commission’s investigation, none of this brought me explicitly back to the issue of Wolf’s theory of kinship and power that I had applied more generally to Māori in my 1998 essay. However, by the time I had proposed plausible explanations of these confrontations between Tūhoe leaders, their *hapū*, and the migrant marriage alliance, I realised that it was an exemplary case of kinship and power, and perhaps also of leaders “breaking through the bounds of the kinship order” (Wolf 1982: 94). My realisation led to this essay, a recapitulation of the first volume of my ethnohistory in terms of Wolf’s thesis of kinship and power.

Throughout the first volume I focus on the demonstrable implications of the documentary record which, although rich in information, were nevertheless usually focussed narrowly on the work of the Commission. Of course, the cultural, social and especially the sensitive political and economic implications of what was going on behind the public scenes of the Commission’s work were usually obscured or even suppressed. In the present essay I have relied upon plausible explanations of gaps and inconsistencies in the documentary record that reveal confrontations and strategies between



All five descent groups are contemporaneous; group 5 has been extended into the lower part of the figure to save space; solid lines connect sibling groups and descendants; sibling groups are in order of birth; = (numbered) mark marriages; heavy dotted lines connect marriages and spouses between groups 1-4; light dotted lines connect same leading persons, marriages, and spouses to continuation of descent group 5; gender is marked (f)female or (m)male; if reported by Best, deceased are marked (d) and Ngāi Kahungunu origin is marked 'N.K.'; to save space, siblings or children may be represented by + (number); most leading persons are underlined.

Figure 4. Ruatāhuna-Waikaremoana migrant marriage alliance (original descent groups 1-5, c. 1800-1898). Sources: Best 1898; author's index in Webster n.d.b.

Tūhoe *hapū* and their leaders operating behind the official scenes of the Commission. I am aware that my conclusions are necessarily tentative, that they will be challenged, and that some will be found to be wrong or misleading. On the other hand, I am reassured by the fact that my approach here is comparable to the search for historical truth the Tūhoe themselves have always pursued. One *rangatira* ‘chief’, Hikawera Te Kurapa (a great-grandson of Te Whenuanui I; see Fig. 5 and Temara 2000), is said to have put their respect for the historical facts this way: “Well ... if you don’t tell the truth, it comes back and bites you on the ass.”

TŪHOE KINSHIP AND POWER 1894–1912

Below are telescoped criteria of Wolf’s thesis of the kin-ordered mode of mobilising social labour, as it appeared in 1982 (Wolf 1982: 92-96; my selection, ellipses, brackets, and emphases; spelling as in Wolf). He developed it to focus on food-producers rather than food-gatherers, distinguishing the latter in two ways: as tending to expend social labour directly on natural resources rather than transforming them for further use, and inclined to base their kinship simply on filiation and marriage rather than extending it in systems of consanguinity and affinity. Although at the turn of the century Tūhoe straddled this distinction in some ways, they had long been primarily food-producers. By the 1870s they had lost control over their best agricultural lands nearer the coast, due to Crown confiscations in the land wars of the 1860s (Fig. 1). However, they continued to cultivate and herd domestic animals along the remaining valley bottoms extending from the Urewera foothills high into its recesses, as well as hunting and gathering throughout these uplands.

1. In [a food-producing] society, social labor is distributed in social clusters that expend labor cumulatively ... accumulating at the same time a *transgenerational corpus of claims and counterclaims* [emphasis mine, here and below] to social labor.
2. Where conditions tend toward ecological closure, relations among these clusters need to be more closely defined and circumscribed. ... Under these conditions the idiom of filiation and marriage is used to construct transgenerational *pedigrees, real or fictitious*. *These serve to include or exclude* people who can claim rights to social labor on the basis of privileged membership.
3. The “extension” of kinship [in consanguinity and affinity] is therefore not the same as kinship on the level of filiation and marriage [as is typical of gatherers of natural resources]; it is concerned with *jural allocation of rights and claims, and hence with political relations between people*. ... [M]arriage ... becomes a tie of *political alliance between groups*.

4. [M]anagerial functions [and authority are distributed] unevenly ... whether this be as elders over juniors, as senior over cadet lines, or as lines of higher over lower rank.
5. Such groups are typically equipped with mythical charters defining culturally selected and certified lines of kin connection. ... *mythological charters* ... allow groups to claim privileges on the basis of kinship ... permit or deny people access to strategic resources.
6. The persistence of *the idiom of kinship in the jural-political realm, however, poses a problem.* ... The fact that leaders can rise to prominence in this way constitutes one of the Achilles' heels of the kinship mode. ... For as a chief or other leader draws a following through judicious management of alliances and redistributive action, he reaches a limit that can only be surpassed by breaking through the bounds of the kinship order.
7. [T]hese tendencies toward inequalities ... are greatly enhanced when kin-ordered groups *enter into relationships with tributary or capitalist societies.* ... Chiefs can ... employ these external resources to immobilize the workings of the kinship order.
8. In practice, the term [chief] was usually bestowed by Europeans upon any native person of influence *who was in a position to forward or to hinder their interests.*

Tūhoe kinship and power, especially in confrontation with the colonial power of the Crown, is implicit in my ethnohistory of the Crown's betrayal of the UDNR Act in its predatory purchase campaign and subsequent Urewera Consolidation Scheme between 1915–1925, which took more than 70% of the reserve for the Crown (Webster 2004). However, the earlier investigation of the UDNR occurred under a relatively benevolent administration and, until about 1908, remained largely under control of Tūhoe leaders. Consequently, the kin-ordered mode of mobilising social labour and the political economic power derived from it, between Tūhoe leaders as well as between them and the Crown, is less obvious in the records but can nevertheless be made explicit.

A preview of the following argument suggests that the situation in the Urewera and the UDNR at the turn of the century fits Wolf's thesis closely. The first four criteria above are substantiated especially in the first part of Volume I (Webster n.d.b) examining the difficulties of the Commission defining Urewera blocks by *hapū* and analysing the social organisation and *hapū* affiliations of one large and influential *hapū* branch. Substantiation of the last three criteria above can be drawn from the last part of the volume, reconstructing what I described above as the Ruatāhuna-Waikaremoana migrant marriage alliance and its relationship to Tūhoe leaders and their *hapū*. Evidence of criterion 5 dealing with mythological charters of power,

although only implicit in the records of the Commission, can nevertheless be exemplified. Throughout this recapitulation the power of the Crown, although generally benign, can be seen as integral to the deployment of power between Tūhoe leaders themselves, and finally raises the question of “breaking through the bounds of the kinship order” (criterion 6 above).

The operations of the Crown Commission were intended, by its five Tūhoe commissioners as well as by the 1896 Act and its two Pākehā ‘European’ members, to focus upon the “jural allocation of rights and claims” (criterion 3) to the Urewera lands. In the second chapter of Volume I I discussed the array of Tūhoe leaders, *hapū* identifications by them, and claims and counter-claims to specific areas of land in the name of these *hapū*; the rapid emergence of subordinate descent groups aspiring to independent *hapū* status; the subordination of some *hapū* or their branches to others in a particular block while dominating in other blocks; and the allocation of relative shares of ownership reflecting these relative rights in different blocks. These descriminations were usually negotiated between Tūhoe themselves, and can be seen as “jural allocation of rights and claims” in *hapū* “clusters” (in sense of Ballara 1995). These will be explored later in terms of the proposed amalgamation of Ruatāhuna and Waikaremoana blocks as well as the relative rights of descent groups within and between blocks.

Although leaders’ claims were for areas of land rather than social labour itself, the claims were made in the name of specific *hapū*, established or aspiring, with the implication that they could demonstrate recent ancestral occupation or use of the land in question as well as descent from the founding ancestor of that land. The “transgenerational corpus of claims and counter-claims to social labor” (criterion 1) laid before the Commission took the form of oral evidence regarding founding ancestors; *whakapapa* ‘ancestral genealogies’; place names, buildings or their remains; past or continuing occupation or use; rights through conquest or gifting if not by direct ancestry; unchallenged cultivation or hunting and gathering of specific resources from specific locations; and procreation, births, nurturance, marriage, deaths, burials and battles on the land. All this evidence implied the mobilisation of social labour by the claimants or their recent ancestors in the maintenance of these rights.

Again in terms of the criteria drawn above from Wolf, the central jural role of “pedigrees” or *whakapapa* and oral tradition in adjudication of claims for every part of the Urewera reflected its “ecological closure”, just as early colonisation found that every piece of land in New Zealand had previously been claimed by Māori. The jural basis upon which claims would be adjudicated and compromises found was exhaustively and probably independently worked out by the Tūhoe commissioners for Te Waipotiki, the

first block examined (Fig. 2). The first season's sittings were followed by the chairman's despairing report to Government that, contrary to the misled ideals of the UDNR Act, *hapū* claims could not simply be aligned with discrete blocks of land but instead overlapped widely throughout the Urewera and were stubbornly contested between claimants. These claimants' *whakapapa* were accepted or challenged as "real or fictitious", serving "to include or exclude people who can claim rights to social labor on the basis of privileged membership" (criterion 2). Although in the following season of sittings (1900) four of the five Tūhoe commissioners agreed to the chairman's resolution to expedite investigations by merging "minor" in "major" claims, the meticulous procedure established for Te Waipotiki continued to be followed. Expedience was actually achieved by routinely deferring to a consensus of Tūhoe leaders settled outside of formal hearings, which were then devoted to unresolved claims, objections or simply to approvals. Although one or another of the five Tūhoe commissioners was officially stood down from cases in which they had claimed an interest, they clearly participated with other Tūhoe leaders in these informal preliminary settlements, as well as behind the scenes in hearings.

The influences of colonial power were more than the benign UDNR Act and its Commission. Although the Tūhoe may have been relatively free of the struggle for control over the social relations of production that had affected Māori nearer urban centres by the time of the 1860s Land Wars, many Tūhoe were directly affected by the struggle for control over Māori land itself (Webster 1998a: 23). The investigation of Te Waipotiki showed that contested ancestral rights had probably been aggravated by the Crown's confiscations of the Tūhoe's more productive agricultural lands to the north, resulting in contested use rights to seasonal foraging that could not be dismissed in favour of occupational rights. By 1890 the operations of the Native Land Court had led to loss of potential Tūhoe rights in other *iwi* domains, rendering the Urewera "encircled lands" (Binney 2002). By 1900 as many as 10% of Tūhoe were living outside the UDNR, perhaps many due to the resulting shortage of more arable land. The subordination or demise of some previously established *hapū* (such as Tamaikoha's war-time *hapū* Ngāi Tama), especially those dependent on the confiscated lands, probably also accelerated the individualisation of social labour as commodities on the local or itinerant market, as well as increasing reliance on trade. The ownership of local retail stores by the war leader Tamaikoha's two senior sons in 1897 indicates that this early integration in the capitalist mode of production had probably been a factor in the development of an "uneven" distribution of "managerial functions" (criterion 4) in the otherwise kin-ordered mode of mobilising social labour.

Details of *hapū* organisation were examined in terms of one extensive *hapū* branch, the four-generation *kāwai* 'branch' of Tamaikoha, in the Tauwhare

Manuka block owner list where they appeared most prominently (Webster 2010). In terms of the criteria drawn from Wolf, successful claimant *hapū* appeared in the 1903 provisional block orders as potential or actual social labour under the management or leadership of elders and senior ranks. Block lists for most blocks displayed careful discriminations of uneven status between *hapū* members, including ranking in each descent group by seniority of generation, sibling birth order including *mātāmua* ‘first-born’ status by primogeniture and *tuakana/teina* ‘older/younger’ status by seniority (both regardless of gender), and seniority between wives and consequently between half-siblings. These rankings were furthermore often recognised to continue through several generations regardless of gender, first-born sibling groups sometimes over-riding the rank of a previous generation of cousins. A descent group’s recognised rights varied widely from one to 24 of the 34 blocks in the reserve, reflecting the relative *mana* of that descent group in each block. Comparison between block lists including the same descent group showed that most block lists were furthermore ranked with regard to the relative *mana* or status of each descent group recognised to have ancestral and occupational rights in that particular block. As well as ranking the status of a descent group relative to others in a block, the allocation of relative shares within each descent group usually ranged from one to 20 shares per person depending on the generation of the individual or sibling group in the descent group, again regardless of gender.

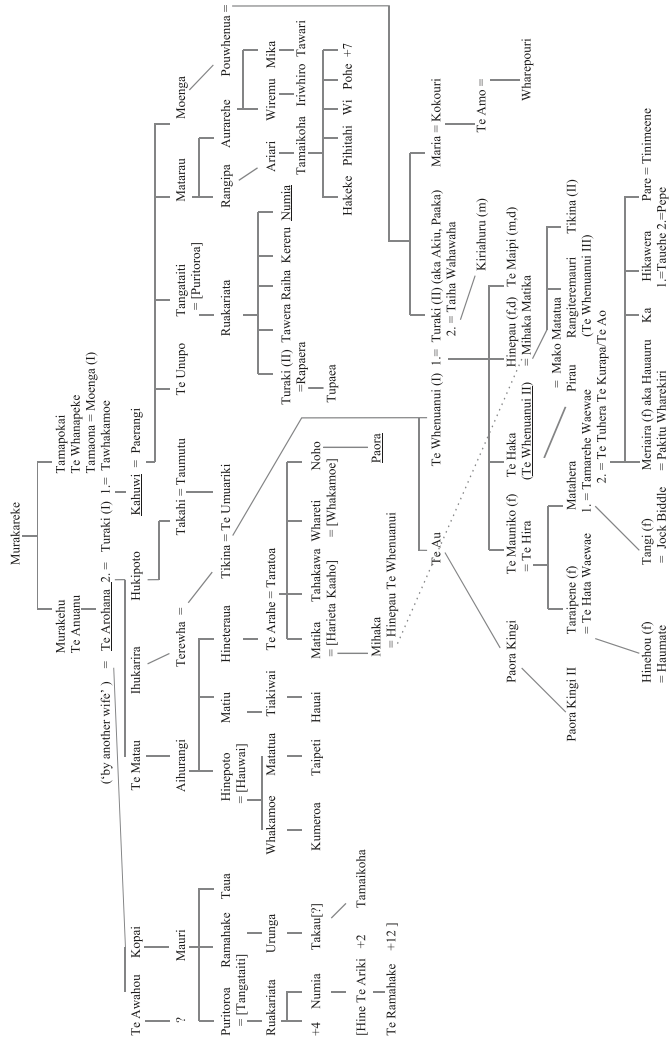
The strict cognatic descent group structure of *hapū* or *hapū* branches (as distinct from *whānau* or extended families) in the block lists was displayed by the succession of sibling groups or individuals in each generation, while one parent or spouse was usually listed elsewhere in the list or other block lists with their own descent group. The parent through whom the sibling group held their rights in that block appeared separately along with his or her siblings or individually. If the other parent of a sibling group had rights in the same block, their placement in the list usually reflected the differing rank of their descent group in that block, and the shares allocated to their children reflected this advantage or disadvantage. In these manifold ways most block lists consistently served not only, in Wolf’s terms, to include or exclude people who can claim rights to social labour on the basis of privileged membership in a given block, but also to rank individuals or sibling groups as well as descent groups according to their differing rights within the block.

Examination of the Tamaikoha descent group was continued with regard to its wider affiliations with *hapū* and rights that were recognised in other blocks of the UDNR. In Wolf’s terms, these affiliations are significant especially in terms of Tamaikoha’s and his childrens’ relative *mana* or leadership in the mobilisation of social labour through these *hapū*, for instance in maintaining

rights to gather from, cultivate, or occupy their various Urewera lands. As indicated by Best's genealogies and the marriages earlier identified, *hapū* affiliations of Tamaikoha's children and grandchildren added by spouses married into the descent group, as well as those gained through his own parents, reflected the potential influence of their leadership in mobilisation of the social labour of innumerable Tūhoe *hapū* of which ten or fifteen were identified. Evidence of *active* affiliations drawn from claims submitted, evidence presented, informal as well as formal recognition of leading rights by the Commission, and block committee appointments of its members, indicated that the influence of the descent group had been narrowed in practice (that is, in terms of their own social labour as a *hapū* branch) to four relatively strong and six relatively weak active affiliations. Divergence or specialisation of *hapū* affiliation was also detected between some of the second generation, specifically Tamaikoha's children by one of his three wives. In contemporary terms, the extent of these affiliations is extraordinary, even given Tamaikoha's personal *mana*. However, some of these ten *hapū* were probably actually subordinate to others but were trying to use the opportunity of the UDNR investigation to establish their independence.

The capacity of such ambiguities of *hapū* affiliation to resolve a stubborn confrontation was illustrated by the compromise between Ngāti Rongo and Te Urewera *hapū* claims to the coveted Whaitiripapa block just southeast of Ruatoki (Fig. 2). Although Numia Kereru's claim for Ngāti Rongo had earlier been dismissed upon appeal to the Native Land Court, in 1900 before the UNDR Commission it was magnanimously accepted by Tamaikoha, as well as the claims by two closely allied *hapū* apparently arranged by each side as proxy claimants. The *whakapapa* that Tamaikoha submitted traced descent from a founding ancestor in such a way that most claimants from Ngāti Rongo as well as Te Urewera *hapū* could be included (Fig. 5; see the descendants of Te Whanapeke extended through Kahuwi on the right side of the genealogy). Award of the block in the name only of Te Urewera *hapū* implied that Numia Kereru had accepted subordination of his *hapū* to Te Urewera *in that block*. Insofar as this compromise was stable, it constituted a mobilisation of the combined social labour of these two (or four) *hapū*, or at least those branches included in the list of owners, under the newly combined leadership of that block.

On the other hand, the on-going confrontation between these two major *hapū* in their other branches will be examined more closely later with regard to the Ruatāhuna and Waikaremoana blocks. There, Te Whenuanui II and the migrant marriage alliances' rejection of Kahuwi and assertion of Arohana's exclusive rights for Te Urewera *hapū* (favouring the left side of Fig. 5) held off the claims of Ngāti Rongo until 1912.



This *whakapapa* is the author's composite of Paora Noho (Urewera Appellate Court MB 1 1912: 223, 228, 231); Numia Kereu (Urewera Appellate Court MB 1 1912: 235-6); Tamaikoha Te Ariari (UMB 5 1901: 355, 357); Rangiwahaitiri Wharekiri (personal communication 1975); Paora Kruja (personal communication 1983); Best 1898: 2, 5, 106; Best 1973 Vol.2: plate 27 p.2; Binney 2002: 21-23; Temara 1993, 2000.

Figure 5. Descendants of Arohiana and Kahuiwi according to Te Urewera, Ngāi Rongo and migrant marriage alliance leaders 1900–1983.

The structural difference between *whānau* ‘extended family’ and *hapū* was emphasised in discussion of the Commission’s difficulties in defining blocks by *hapū*. Wolf’s careful distinction between kinship in terms of *filiation and marriage*, and kinship in terms of *consanguinity and affinity* (criteria 1–3), is exemplified in the distinction between *whānau* and *hapū*. The “extension” of the former familial or domestic level of kinship to the latter “transgenerational” level was typically assumed to occur in the development of hunters and gatherers into agricultural societies. But Wolf emphasises instead that this extension beyond simple parent-child and marriage bonds “is concerned with jural allocation of rights and claims, and hence with political relations between people”, and that marriage in the anthropological sense of “affiliation” “becomes a tie of political alliance between groups”.

Like most Māori at this time, among Tūhoe the “social clusters” that lived and worked together accumulating “a transgenerational corpus of claims and counterclaims to social labor” (criterion 1) were actually *whānau*, domestic groups or extended families rather than descent groups. While members of a *hapū* lived dispersed across different localities reflecting their rights by common ancestry and intermarriage (that is, by consanguinity and affinity), *whānau* affiliated with that *hapū* were the groups that actually occupied and cultivated, herded, hunted or gathered on the land. Nevertheless, the transgenerational claims and counterclaims to the social labour of occupation or use of the land that *whānau* worked constituted the basis of their *hapū*’s right to this land. The strength of this right relative to claims by other *hapū* was what was tested and decided before the UDNR Commission.

However, as the block lists showed, the *hapū* descent groups recognised to have maintained these ancestral rights through occupation or use at least since a great-grandparent’s generation did not include among them spouses or other members of the *whānau* who were not considered members of the same descent group. If these *whānau* members could also claim descent from the same or another ancestor recognised to hold the *hapū* rights to that block, they might appear in the same block list, but along with their own siblings and descent group rather than that of the *whānau* with whom they lived and worked. In the case of spouses, insofar as these two descent groups could usually be no more closely related than fourth cousins, the different ranking of relative rights recognised in the block made it likely that their descent group would be located and ranked quite differently in the block list.

As well as the fact that it is *whānau* not *hapū* that live and work together in a locality, the popular and official misconception that Māori *whānau* were simply the bottom tier of a hierarchical organisation of *iwi*, *hapū* and *whānau* (that is, that *hapū* are composed of *whānau*) leads to confusion between them. *Whānau* necessarily straddle different descent groups due to the incest taboo,

and often straddle different *hapū*. Significantly reflecting this confusion between *whānau* as extended families and *hapū* as descent groups, the legal order drawn up by the UDNR Commission chairman to accompany the 1903 block lists misleadingly identified sibling groups bearing the same surname as “family groups” or “*ropu whanau*” in the accompanying translation). This was further confused because neither parent was included in these “*whanau*” and the father bore a different “surname” (following Native Land Court practice, the European convention of patronymic surnames was imposed by the Commission, requiring that as well as their “first” name, all claimants be additionally identified by their father’s *first* name; only later did this personal name come to be generally accepted by Tūhoe as a family “surname”). I argue that the conflation of *whānau* with descent groups is central to Jeff Sissons’ case that Māori *hapū* are organised like medieval European “houses” rather than cognatic descent groups and categories (Sissons 2010; Webster 2011, 2013).

The organisation of *whānau* was probably inherently ambivalent (as it often still is) insofar as in its social labour a *whānau* tends to extend its filial/marriage roles across the consanguineal/affinal roles of *hapū* to which it was affiliated. The key role of its social labour might over-ride formal requirements of common ancestry. Ethnographic accounts of Māori kinship in the 1960s assumed *hapū* were defunct partly because “bilateral descent” or *taha rua* ‘two-sided’ filiation originating from the perspective of *whānau* tended to recognise kin as an ego-centred kindred rather than an ancestor-centred descent group. In 1975 I argued that this bilateral structure is normal to the straddle of a *whānau* between two or more *hapū* or *iwi* (1975: 148–49, 144, 130), and that *hapū* were not defunct at all. As *whānau* become more extended through their social labour in support of *hapū*, this affiliation through parents on both sides tends to become more selective among potential *hapū* affiliations, and a more exclusive ancestor focus of one or a few *hapū* come to over-ride the bilateral perspective of a two- or three-generation *whānau*. Among Tūhoe I have seen spouses and other members not closely related to the local *hapū* having to split their holiday visits to two different parts of the country and, when at the Tūhoe *hapū* homestead, they were excluded (as was I and my family) from *hapū* meetings about lands and other internal *hapū* issues.

On the other hand, the strong Māori ethic of inclusion even of strangers demands that such *whānau* members be included at least peripherally in *hapū* activities, and residence along with commitment in social labour for the *hapū* increasingly establishes practical if not formal membership. In the case of a resident spouse married in from another *hapū*, the children of a mature marriage (full members, of course) as well as other forms of “accumulated” social labour (criterion 1) ensure such honorary membership and nominal rights of their non-member parent. Occasionally the accepted leader or

kaumātua ‘elder’ of a *whānau* and even the *rangatira* ‘chief’ of a *hapū* will be a spouse who has married in from another *hapū* (almost always a husband). In formal genealogical debate such rights are distinguished (or stigmatised) as relying on *whakapapa whakamoe* ‘claiming inclusion in a descent group by marriage into it’ (Webster 1975: 140-41). As will be described later, in the 1912 subdivision of the Manawaru area of Ruatāhuna block the Ngāti Rongo *hapū* leader Numia Kereru successfully—but misleadingly—challenged on this basis land rights claimed by Te Urewera *hapū* and migrant marriage alliance leaders. Ironically, the same stigma was sometimes raised against his own ancestor Rongokarae, the founding ancestor of Ngāti Rongo *hapū* (and after whom their Ruatoki meeting house is named), because he had married two Ngāti Rongo sisters but himself had immigrated from another *iwi* entirely.

As described in the introduction above, the second part of my study of the UDNR pursued the implications of the aborted 1902 proposal to amalgamate the 34 blocks of the reserve into just ten titles (Fig. 3). In terms of Wolf’s thesis regarding kinship and power, this proposal was probably supported or may even have been proposed by influential Tūhoe *rangatira* (including the Tūhoe commissioners) seeking to extend their control over the mobilisation of social labour beyond *hapū* in nominal control of each block. Since 1899 the Commission had struggled with increasing numbers of claims and counter-claims of subordinate *hapū* aspiring to independence from other *hapū*, and these resulted in mounting appeals that would have to be settled by an unpredictable Appeals commission with no Tūhoe representation before the reserve could finally be formally established. By 1902 the advantages of subsuming these impending confrontations by amalgamating groups of blocks under more centralised leadership of fewer and more dominant *rangatira* would have appealed to the Pākehā as well as the Tūhoe commissioners.

This strategy probably took advantage of established “clusters” of *hapū* that could control each amalgamation through the dominance of one or two *hapū* in each cluster (Ballara 1995; see also see Ballara 1998: 279-301). In the four cases that were examined closely (Fig. 3: Te Whaiti Nui a Toi, Ohau te Rangi, Parekohe, and Ruatāhuna-Waikaremoana) it became clear that *hapū* clusters straddling the proposed amalgamations were controlled by a few dominant sibling groups or their descendants who, furthermore, usually had established rights in adjacent blocks. As outlined earlier, in two of these cases an extensive marriage alliance between several descent groups was discovered which included these leading sibling groups. The extent and duration of these marriage alliances suggest that over several generations their leaders had been able to extend their power through mobilisation of the social labour of their widening descent groups, weakening the claims of some established *hapū*, while strengthening others.

Regarding the proposed Ruatāhuna-Waikaremoana amalgamation, in the second part of Volume I (Webster n.d.b) I argued that the marriage alliance (Fig. 4) had been developed among migrants between the two blocks since the early 1800s “conquest” of Waikaremoana lands by Tūhoe and allied Ngāti Ruapani *hapū* who occupied Waikaremoana but had been under the control of another *iwi*, Ngāti Kahungunu to the south. What the Tūhoe saw as a “conquest” was probably a prolonged assimilation through intermarriage with some friendly Ngāti Ruapani *hapū* and gradual annexation of some Ngāti Kahungunu land under their control. In terms of Wolf’s thesis, several generations of migrants moving between the “conquered” Waikaremoana and adjacent Ruatāhuna and Maungapohatu areas had been prevented from gaining wider Urewera rights due to stigma as migrants lacking long-term occupation. Nevertheless, through rising leaders who could mobilise the migrant marriage alliance’s social labour, they had gained increasing control over Ruatāhuna as well as Waikaremoana, probably best explaining the 1902 proposal to amalgamate the two blocks.

Most importantly, by late 19th century the Ruatāhuna-Waikaremoana migrant marriage alliance had been extended to the renowned war leader Te Whenuanui Te Umuariki (Te Whenuanui I), the *rangatira* of Te Urewera *hapū* with *mana* throughout the Ruatāhuna area, by way of marriages of two of his children (Figs 4 and 5). In the next section below, the series of confrontations involving leaders of this alliance, Te Whenuanui II, Numia Kereru Te Ruakariata, Tutakangahau Tapui, and the several *hapū* they led, will be reviewed in terms of Wolf’s thesis of kinship and power, especially criteria 6–8 above.

However, before returning to this issue, what can be said of the “mythological charters ... of kin connection” underlying and reinforcing Tūhoe leaders’ mobilisation of social labour (criterion 5)? The recognition of founding ancestors for each block was often contested but nevertheless treated almost mythically. Although founders were usually more recent, Best’s Tūhoe genealogies record *whakapapa* presented in evidence to extend through more than 30 generations (Best 1973 [1925], Vol. II). Strikingly suggesting “transgenerational” bodily *identity*, claimants would often refer to predecessors, even recent ones and sometimes claimants themselves, as if they personified the *hapū* itself or its founder him- (or her-) self. The *mana* of certain ancestors was often mythologised, merging with the demigod status of primal ancestors who had immigrated to New Zealand from legendary distant islands. As Binney’s careful research revealed, the identification of Te Whenuanui II and III with Te Whenuanui (I) Te Umuariki was so immediate that they have been frequently confused even by contemporary Tūhoe authorities (Binney 2002: 22 fn 38; Fig. 5). Some old leaders from

the 1860s Land Wars such as Tamaikoha and their successors such as Te Whenuanui II, were clearly deferred to by the Commission, and quietly allowed to circumvent the usual investigative procedures for some land claims that were apparently so highly respected that they went unchallenged. It turned out that Numia Kereru, as successor to his elder brother Kereru Te Pukenui, also exercised his growing influence behind the scenes but, perhaps because he was himself a commissioner, this was carefully kept out of the Commission's records.

Similarly, the Urewera landscape was mythically animated. Boundaries of the land areas were symbolically staked out and contested in terms of place names of mountains, hills, streams, trees, rocks or events said to have been bestowed by ancestral founders or explorers, and substantiated with oral traditions regarding these names, as well as the persons who bestowed them. Like the acts of ancestral demigods, the *mana* or power to bestow a place name sanctified it and its place (although this was sometimes contested between *hapū*). Accompanied by knowledgeable elders, the surveyors often had to deal with such "mythological charters" and noted them on sketch plans that were put before the deliberations of the Commission. As in Native Land Court investigations of original title, witnesses' ability to recite the iconic details of these traditions carried weight as evidence for claims.

The basic concepts underlying evidence presented for a claim to original title had long been established in the Native Land Court (Webster 1975: 133-35). Guided by one or more commissioners who were also judges of the Court, as well as Tūhoe commissioners experienced in that court, the UDNR Commission followed principles probably already widely customary among Māori: land rights transferred by conquest, gifting or *aroha* 'compassion', as well as ancestry; all these *take* 'reasons' requiring occupation within the last three generations as well as descent from a founding ancestor (discriminated as *ahi kā*, *ahi teretere* or *ahi mātaotao*; 'burning', 'flickering' or 'cold hearth-fires', respectively); and a distinction between rights to specific resources of the land and rights to the land itself. However, in accord with the home-rule intentions of the 1896 Act, as described above, the UDNR block owner lists went much further in deference to the Tūhoe leaders' informal negotiation of elaborate ranking of relative rights of descent groups between as well as within most of the 34 blocks of the reserve.

Although the Commission's hearings themselves were apparently not ceremonialised, there is little doubt that their reception and hosting at each sitting was carried out with elaborate *marae kawa* 'ceremonial protocol' and symbolism similar to what has often been described for contemporary Māori *hapū* (Salmond 1976; Webster 1975: 129-33). Generous hospitality would have been competitive between *hapū* controlling the various host *marae*. In

addition to the commissioners and their retinue, records and equipment, the host would be expected to feed and probably house many Tūhoe claimants and observers who had come from other parts of the Urewera for the scheduled cases. The heightened confrontation between *hapū* vying for independence, as well as counter-claimants, probably added considerable drama to these ceremonies, but would usually be carefully muted in the Commission's records. In any case, hosting the Commission was a burden upon *hapū* resources and clearly a display by their leaders of their power to mobilise social labour as well as marshal the needed food and materials derived from previous social labour.

DID TŪHOE BREAK THROUGH THE BOUNDS OF THE KINSHIP ORDER?

As summarised above in criteria 6–8, Wolf saw such competition or confrontation for influence or power over social labour as “one of the Achilles’ heels of the kinship mode” (criterion 6). Given the immediate context of the Crown’s patronage in the form of the UDNR Commission, as well as the wider emergence of *hapū* compromises with capitalism by the 1890s, did such displays of kin-ordered power threaten to break through the bounds of Tūhoe kinship?

This question can be approached through a closer review of the series of confrontations between Ngāti Rongo and Te Urewera *hapū* already mentioned. As detailed in the last part of Volume I, this situation emerged between 1899 and 1912 in a four-way confrontation (eventually revealed to be two-way) over rights in Ruatāhuna and Waikaremoana lands between the migrant marriage alliance, Te Whenuanui II as a leader of Te Urewera *hapū* and the migrant marriage alliance, Tutakangahau as leader of Tamakaimoana *hapū*, and Numia Kereru as leader of Ngāti Rongo *hapū*. The shifting but strikingly persistent confrontation between the migrant marriage alliance and Tamakaimoana *hapū* and their leader Tutakangahau over the northern part of Waikaremoana erupted before the Investigative Commission and then again the Appeals Commission 1901–1907 (see Fig. 2 where this northern part is marked out). Although it was not apparent at first, by 1903 it was clear that Numia Kereru and Te Whenuanui II were also implicated behind the scenes of the confrontation over rights to Waikaremoana block.

Numia Kereru’s persistent claims to the Manawaru part of Ruatāhuna block against the resistance of Te Whenuanui II and his supporters in the migrant marriage alliance appear to have been central to the wider confrontation (see Fig. 2, where the Manawaru part of Ruatāhuna is marked out as the Arohana and Kahuwi partitions established in 1912). Numia’s initiatives emerged before the Investigative Commission 1901–2, again in the 1907 Appeals Commission hearings, and still later in the 1912 partition of Ruatāhuna. His strategy revealed what is probably best understood as the advantage of a leader

confident in deploying the power of government patronage and his role in an official commission, along with his own rising mana, to wear down the more traditionally-based power of Te Haka Te Whenuanui II, successor to an old warleader of great mana. Although Numia's final gain in Ruatāhuna land and resources for Ngāti Rongo *hapū* may seem small, his and this *hapū*'s gain in *mana* or influence was probably considerable, and that of Te Whenuanui II and even the Te Urewera *hapū* was weakened, at least for a time.

Numia Kereru Te Ruakariata was influential in Prime Minister Seddon's dramatic tour through the Urewera in 1894 and became central as the following negotiations in Wellington developed. Seddon's tour was hosted on Tauarau Marae in Ruatoki by Numia's elder brother Kereru Te Pukenui and escorted subsequently to gatherings in several Urewera settlements and finally across Lake Waikaremoana by Kereru's first-born sister's son Tupaea Rapaera (Fig. 5), who is said to have rescued the Prime Minister there from an overturned canoe (Webster n.d.a). Tupaea's *mana* and extraordinarily extensive land rights throughout the Urewera probably also ensured the continuity of his uncle Kereru Te Pukenui's influence throughout the tour, Seddon's inspired support for Tūhoe home-rule and, along with Numia Kereru, the negotiations with Tūhoe leading to the 1896 UDNR Act. The *taiaha* 'wooden spear' named Rongokarae, gifted in 1894 by Kereru to Seddon in Ruatoki and recently returned by the Government in honour of the 2014 Te Urewera Act, bore the name of the Tauarau Marae's meeting house, as well as the ancestral founder of Ngāti Rongo *hapū*, and may have been the one used ceremonially by Tupaea Rapaera.

Soon after Seddon's tour Kereru Te Pukenui died, and Numia's (and Tupaea's) influence became central in the Wellington negotiations. Soon Numia took on his brother's name (hence "Numia Kereru") as a sign of his continuing leadership. He was also prominent in Native Land Court and Appellate Court cases of the 1890s, sometimes in confrontation with other Tūhoe leaders (such as Tamaikoha in the Whaitiripapa claim). A story still told among Tūhoe might have forecast his rising influence and even readiness to break through the bounds of the kinship order. In the 1890s Numia was widely criticised for having the Ruatoki block surveyed against the resolutions of the leading *rangatira* (including his brother Kereru) to allow no surveys anywhere in the Urewera. Numia furthermore confronted Ruatoki rebels who had pulled up surveyors' stakes and turned several rebel women over to the local Pākehā authorities, resulting in their imprisonment in Auckland until the survey was completed. Numia's actions were widely seen at the time as a betrayal of Tūhoe solidarity, although his actions were later supported in a visit to Ruatoki by the prestigious prophet Te Kooti Rikirangi. In the subsequent meeting with Prime Minister Seddon in 1894 Numia also adroitly defended Tūhoe interests.

By 1899 Numia Kereru (as well as Tutakangahau) had been selected by Tūhoe as one of their five UDNR commissioners. By the end of the following year the chairman urgently pressed for more expedient procedures by combining minor with major claims. Numia was the lone objector, warning that such a subordination of legitimate claims would lead to needless conflicts. Although such “minor” interests as that which he had gained for Ngāti Rongo in Whaitiripapa block against Te Urewera *hapū*—and would soon attempt to gain in Ruatāhuna—may have been a motive, his lone stand probably indicated a defence rather than a break from the kinship order of minor or subordinate *hapū* aspiring to independence. His election to membership in several *hapū* or block committees by 1902 reflected his rising *mana* among other Tūhoe leaders as well as the extensive land rights held by his descent group. After the reserve was finally established in 1907, Numia was furthermore elected chairman of the UDNR General Committee by other Tūhoe leaders, after having successfully insisted that followers of Rua Kenana the prophet (who was attempting to sell extensive Urewera lands to the Government) be banned from the Committee. As chairman of that committee he had statutory power over any alienations of Urewera land, and throughout 1908 he successfully evaded the Government’s mounting pressure to sell by offering only short-term leases. Finally, Apirana Ngata, acting for the Government, forced inclusion of Rua Kenana’s followers on the General Committee and Rua’s extensive sales began (Webster n.d.a). This was the onset of the Crown’s systematic betrayal of the 1896 Act.

Eight years later in 1916 Numia died, certainly in mounting frustration to defend the deviously circumvented home-rule of an inalienable reserve he had helped to establish for Tūhoe. By that time he was confronting the predatory acceleration of the Crown’s illegitimate campaign to bypass his General Committee and purchase from individual Tūhoe (Webster 2004: 143-213). His impressive career at least displayed the potential power of Māori kinship in the face of Crown power.

However, it might also be concluded that in other ways Numia’s rise to power broke through the bounds of the kinship order. His sometimes ruthless manner in pressing his claims against Tūhoe adversaries in Court as well as before the Commission, and through his sophisticated courtroom skills gaining the support as well as admiration of Court and Commission officers, might be seen as weakening or even transgressing the Tūhoe kinship order. Although he, along with other Tūhoe commissioners, were supposedly stood down in cases where they had claims to be heard, his influence behind the scenes was probably pervasive and sometimes even subversive of other Tūhoe claimants. Beginning with his elder brother’s reception of Prime Minister Seddon in 1894, he and his Ngāti Rongo *hapū* at Tauarau Marae in Ruatoki

were usually the hosts of Commission sittings in that part of the Urewera. Their quiet presence and generous hospitality could not have been overlooked.

It turns out that crucial hearings of the long-running cases of both Ruatāhuna and Waikaremoana were often heard in close succession at Taurau Marae, although Numia's role as presiding host remained muted in the records. Meanwhile, his and Ngāti Rongo's open campaign against Te Whenuanui II and Te Urewera *hapū* in the Ruatāhuna case contrasted dramatically with his relatively hidden role in the Waikaremoana case, where it turned out his support of Tutakangahau's persistent attack on the migrant marriage alliance's control of northern Waikaremoana was crucial. Numia had drawn up Tutakangahau's claimant list for Tamakaimoana *hapū* and even submitted it through a leader of the migrant marriage alliance (Te Wao Ihimaera; see Fig. 4), but Tutakangahau's case lost the 1901 decision, probably for lack of Numia's presence and advice. There is some evidence that Numia absented himself in retaliation for Tutakangahau's son's defeat of his claim to a small part of Maungapohatu block.

Nevertheless, by the end of the following year Tutakangahau's *whānau* and most of Numia's list of Tamakaimoana claimants had been included in the Waikaremoana block order despite the dismissal of their claim, probably due to Numia's intervention behind the scenes and the Commission's deference to him. The apparent disregard of this decision may have been in compensation for the Commission's earlier decision to include the northern portion of Waikaremoana in Maungapohatu (see Fig. 2), probably to satisfy Tutakangahau and Tamakaimoana demands and punish Te Wao's exclusion of Tamakaimoana claimants contrary to previous agreements. Although this earlier decision was ignored in the final boundaries (leaving the northern portion in Waikaremoana block), it was never formally rescinded.

Numia's overt role in the quite different Ruatāhuna case nevertheless had revealing similarities with his covert role in the Waikaremoana case. In 1902 his apparently respectful but insistently repeated request to Te Whenuanui II to accept Kahuwi along with Arohana as founding ancestors of Ruatāhuna (Fig. 5) was pre-emptorily settled by the Commission in what appeared to be naively presented by them as a compromise. However, instead of a compromise, the decision was certainly an insult to Te Whenuanui II's *mana* over the Ruatāhuna block, insofar as it granted Kahuwi equal rights with Arohana over the whole block, as well as its Manawaru part. Probably alerting Te Whenuanui II to the threat behind Numia's requests, Kahuwi was the same ancestor through whom Numia had won Tamaikoha's compromise of Te Urewera *hapū*'s rights in the Whaitiripapa case in 1900, reviewed above. Numia was not even required by the Commission to meet Te Whenuanui II's argument that Kahuwi was adopted by Arohana and therefore had no rights

in Manawaru at all other than those given in *aroa* ‘compassion’ (see Fig. 5: Kahuwi’s birth-father Tawhakamoe had died in battle and was found *kahu wi* ‘dressed (covered) in reeds’). A decade later, after Te Whenuanui II’s death, this oversight was to give Numia the decisive advantage in his strategy to claim part of Manawaru.

Between the likelihood of Numia’s influence behind the scenes in the admission of Tutakangahau’s claim to the Waikaremoana title despite dismissal of the latter’s case, and Numia’s successful public challenge to the *mana* of Te Whenuanui II in Ruatāhuna, by the end of 1902 the leaders of the migrant marriage alliance and Te Whenuanui II had found common cause in the defence of both Ruatāhuna and Waikaremoana lands against Numia’s incursions. Several appeals by or in support of Te Whenuanui II in 1903 were signed by members of all five of the original descent groups of the migrant marriage alliance (Fig. 4). This dramatic closing of ranks against Numia’s incursions in both blocks can be seen as Te Whenuanui’s and his supporters’ mobilisation of control over the social labour of Te Urewera *hapū* and the migrant marriage alliance, as well as their extensive land resources, which would have been reinforced by the amalgamation of Ruatāhuna and Waikaremoana.

Nevertheless, Numia Kereru’s personal influence, power, or *mana* was not to be stopped. As well as by 1907 gaining significant if largely symbolic rights in Waikaremoana for Tutakangahau’s *whānau* and many others of Tamakaimoana *hapū*, by 1912 Numia had forced his (or rather, the ancestor Kahuwi and Ngāti Rongo *hapū*’s) way into Manawaru and a prized area of Ruatāhuna block. Te Whenuanui II’s unexpected death by the time of the 1907 appeals hearings probably finally opened the way for Numia and Ngāti Rongo’s triumph against him and the migrant marriage alliance in Ruatāhuna as well as Waikaremoana.

Although the several 1903 appeals reflected the mobilisation of the migrant marriage alliance and Te Whenuanui II against Numia’s initiatives in both blocks, even that early they had carefully avoided reference to the adverse or ambiguous decisions as well as Numia’s role in them. This restraint was probably in fear that his courtroom skills would set the Appeals Commission further against them. However, when the Appeals Commission was finally convened, the 1907 hearings on Waikaremoana and Ruatāhuna were strangely muted, with none of the key issues in either block being raised by either the appeals commissioners or the appellants, defenders or participants. Although the dismissal of Tamakaimoana *hapū*’s claim to Waikaremoana was raised by the spokesperson for the migrant marriage alliance (Mahaki Tapiki, Fig. 4), the ambiguous status in which its northern portion had been left was overlooked even by the commissioners. Compounding this ambiguity, they

appeared to ignore the appeal against the inclusion of dismissed claimants, instead insistently asking who had drawn up the list in the first place. When it was finally revealed that it was Numia who had written out the dismissed list, the Appeals Commission simply concluded that they could not believe there had been any mistake in including it in the Waikaremoana title, ignoring its dismissal by the Investigative Commission.

The appeals commission's decision with regard to the unexplained changes of shares in Ruatāhuna appealed against by Te Whenuanui II and the migrant marriage alliance was even more pre-emptory. The key issue of Numia's demand that Te Whenuanui II recognise Kahuwi as well as Arohana as founding ancestors of the block was never raised by either the Commission or the appellants, let alone the questionable grounds of the previous Commission's decision that share allocation should treat them equally while neglecting to require Numia to answer Te Whenuanui II's defence that Kahuwi was adopted by Arohana and therefore had no rights at all beyond token shares in *aroha*. Instead, when Numia finally admitted that he himself had reduced the final share allocations and offered to resolve the appeals outside of the hearing, the settlement was simply turned over to him and results approved with no questions asked.

The apparent conspiracy of silence between the Appeals Commission, appellants and participants in these cases, and the Commission's casual deference to Numia Kereru's interventions in both cases, are best explained by their concurrence soon after the sudden death of Te Whenuanui II on 2 January 1907 from being thrown and dragged by a horse (Temara 1993, 2000). Binney's discovery of correspondence clarified the frequent contemporary confusion between Te Whenuanui I (Te Whenuanui Te Umuariki) and II (Te Haka Te Whenuanui) and, furthermore, succession to Te Haka's title by a Te Whenuanui III (Rangiteremauri Mahaki) (Fig. 5; Binney 2002: 21-23). Benefitting from Binney's ground-breaking evidence, I was able to argue that it also suggested Numia took advantage of Te Whenuanui II's sudden death to elaborate his strategy for gaining Ngāti Rongo rights in Ruatāhuna.

Perhaps during the hearing of both Waikaremoana and Ruatāhuna appeals 1-5 February 1907, Numia had arranged wide Tūhoe agreement that Te Whenuanui II's sister Hinepau's son Rangiteremauri would succeed as Te Whenuanui III regardless of other perhaps more appropriate successors (Fig. 5). A few months later, on 27 April 1907, Numia announced this arrangement in a letter to the Native Minister "Timi" (James) Carroll, reassuring him in candidly personal terms that he Numia could act as Te Whenuanui's III "counsellor". Insofar as leaders in Ruatāhuna were known by the Government to be among the most troublesome of Tūhoe *hapū*, the Native Minister as well as Numia would have known this arrangement might be to

their mutual advantage, putting Numia “in a position to forward or to hinder their interests” (criterion 8). Furthermore, I learned from a contemporary descendant of Numia’s that he had gained Ngāti Rongo rights in Ruatāhuna through an agreement with Ngāi Te Riu, one of the several *hapū* recognised by the Commission to have established rights there (primarily in Waiiti and Huiarau areas, immediately south of Manawaru).

This information clarified Numia’s probable motives in his 27 April letter to the Native Minister for tracing the new Te Whenuanui III’s descent from his father’s mother’s brothers Ahikaiata and Tupara Kaaho. Strikingly, in doing this Numia ignored Rangiteremaui’s descent—and actual right to the title—from his mother Hinepau’s (and her brother Te Haka’s) father Te Whenuanui (I) Te Umuariki (Fig. 5). While the Kaahos were leaders of Ngāi Te Riu *hapū*, by not mentioning Hinepau’s husband Mihaka Matika and Mihaka’s father Matika Taratoa (see Fig. 4), Numia was also probably avoiding implication of major leaders in the migrant marriage alliance. Although having lost the protective *mana* of Te Whenuanui II, the alliance was the surviving source of resistance to Government’s rising interest in Waikaremoana as well as Numia’s plans for Ruatāhuna. While Matika Taratoa’s wife and Mihaka’s mother Hariata Kaaho, sister of the leaders Ahikaiata and Tupara, could give Numia influence in Ngāi Te Riu *hapū*, Matika himself was the *mātāmua* of the Taratoa sibling group whose mother was Te Arahe, the great-great-granddaughter of the founding ancestor Arohana (see dotted line in Fig. 5). Whether or not the Native Minister appreciated it, as counsellor to Te Whenuanui III Numia had placed himself at the intersection of both a source of Te Urewera *hapū*’s *mana* in Ruatāhuna and key leadership in the migrant marriage alliance, as well as Ngāi Te Riu *hapū* leadership.

The confluence 1–5 February 1907 of both the well-attended Waikaremoana and Ruatāhuna cases (although in Whakatane rather than at Tauarau Marae), Te Whenuanui II’s death, and Numia’s opportunity to negotiate increased shares for leaders of the migrant marriage alliance in Ruatāhuna was probably the turning point in Numia’s strategy. By the time of the Ruatāhuna partition in 1912, the loyalty of most of the leaders of the migrant marriage alliance in support of Te Whenuanui II’s refusal to admit Kahuwi and Ngāti Rongo rights in Ruatāhuna had been quieted. The extensive case was heard before the Native Appellate Court and conducted entirely by Numia Kereru. His (and Ngāti Rongo *hapū*’s) new influence at the intersection of Ngāi Te Riu *hapū*, Te Urewera *hapū*, and the migrant marriage alliance, as well as Te Whenuanui II’s death, probably accounts for his success in finally gaining the Kahuwi partition of Manawaru for Ngāti Rongo, as well as facilitating his role in the whole partition case. At the conclusion of several weeks of hearings, the Chief Judge, obviously impressed by Numia’s skills inside as well as outside the Court, publically complimented him for his efforts.

It was probably not coincidental that the Taratoa sibling group (and thus Mihaka Matika and his son Te Whenuanui III; Fig. 5) were the major beneficiaries of Numia's increase of Ruatāhuna shares in 1907. Perhaps also because of the dominant *mana* of the Taratoa cousins (Mihaka Matika, Whenua Tahakawa and Paora Noho) among the other four descent groups of the migrant marriage alliance, they were left with the responsibility of defending Te Whenuanui II's refusal to accept Kahuwi's descendants' rights in Ruatāhuna against Numia's demand. Nevertheless, Numia's tactics against their case were ruthless.

Numia's appeal to partition Ruatāhuna block was made in terms of *hapū* boundaries and relative interests by which Ruatāhuna could be partitioned into five divisions, but his own personal interest in the Manawaru division was played down by treating it as an internal boundary dispute. In the event, Numia was soon able to announce settlement of all other boundaries excepting this boundary dispute internal to Manawaru. The Chief Judge apparently heard nothing of the history of the confrontation and little about Ngāti Rongo, Te Urewera *hapū*, and Te Whenuanui II's previously central role in opposing Numia. This history, probably silenced by Numia's control of the proceedings, was represented only by the case to be made by the Taratoa cousins.

Numia's offensive strategy led with his complaint that the "others" (that is, the Taratoa cousins) had been tardy in their preliminary meeting with him, and announced that the boundary between the disputed portion of Manawaru and the adjacent Waiiti part of Ruatāhuna had been agreed between himself and the Waiiti leader (Fig. 2; Manawaru is comprised of subdivisions Kahuwi and Arohana). The Taratoa cousins would have been aware that this agreement, if accepted by the Court, would pre-empt their intention to claim the whole boundary between Manawaru and Waiiti. They would furthermore have been aware that the leader for Waiiti was Te Iriwhiro, Numia's ally in their 1902 demand to Te Whenuanui II that ended in the Commission's compromise decision to recognise rights for descendants of Kahuwi equal to those of Arohana. The Waiiti division was recognised to be controlled by Ngāi Te Riu and Ngāti Kuri *hapū*, so the pre-emptory agreement between Numia and Te Iriwhiro may have been part of Numia's arrangement with Ngāi Te Riu to back his demand that Kahuwi be recognised as a founding ancestor in Manawaru. Te Iriwhiro was among the leading descendants of Kahuwi (Fig. 5, to right of Numia).

Either discouraged by such indications of Numia's aggressive strategy or refusing to expose his *mana* to further insults, the senior Taratoa representative Mihaka Matika did not speak again, apparently turning the rest of their case over to his junior cousins Whenua Tahakawa and Paora Noho. Again, Mihaka was the son of Hariata Kaaho, husband of Hinepau, brother-in-law of Te Whenuanui II, and father of Te Whenuanui III, so his leading role

in the Taratoa cousins' case may have already been compromised in all these ways by Numia's strategy. On the other hand, there is evidence that Whenua Tahakawa may have been considered in 1900 to lead the case for Te Whenuanui II and Te Urewera *hapū* in their defence against Numia and Ngāti Rongo's claim for Whaitiripapa block, which had finally been successful on the grounds of Kahuwi's founding ancestry there.

Although Paora Noho confidently laid out the alternative *whakapapa* that supported the ancestor Arohana's but not his adopted son Kahuwi's rights to Manawaru (Fig. 5, left side), his own case and responses to Numia's questions were apparently weak and increasingly defensive—so far as can be assessed from the Chief Judge's casually fragmentary minutes. Numia's case rested primarily on an argument that although Kahuwi was adopted by Arohana and therefore had no birthrights to Manawaru, Arohana had gifted a large part of the area to Kahuwi and this had been accepted among Arohana's birth-children (Kahuwi's adoptive siblings). In 1902 when Te Whenuanui II had finally sprung the adoption as his defence, Numia had not attempted to rebut it—nor had the Commission required him to. However, by 1912, with Te Whenuanui II dead and his supporters in disarray or compromised, Numia clearly had a rebuttal well-planned.

An unexplained but important issue must be raised here regarding the implication that Kahuwi's rights in Manawaru were limited insofar as he was only a *tamariki whāngai* 'adopted child' or step-son of Arohana. Although I have made it clear in Figure 5 how Arohana was actually an "uncle" to Kahuwi (in Māori terms, being fourth or fifth cousins as descendants of Murakareke), for some reason Numia never raised this crucial fact. According to contemporary and probably traditional Māori custom (Milroy 2001), adopted children may be included in their adoptive siblings' birth-rights if they are close relations (usually within fourth cousins' range, as indeed they usually are in Māori adoption). One would suppose that this would have readily settled Numia's claim for Kahuwi's rights even in the 1902 confrontation with Te Whenuanui II as well as in 1912. Te Whenuanui II's reluctance to grant Kahuwi's descendants anything more than small shares in *aroha* suggests that he too was dismissing this custom. There must have been some compelling reason for Numia to have not raised it on either occasion.

Most demeaningly against his adversaries, Numia's carefully timed presentation of *whakapapa* segments charged that Te Whenuanui Te Umuariki's (Te Whenuanui I's) *own* right in the disputed portion of Manawaru—and even that Paora's own father's right—was owed to their *wives'* right from their ancestor Kahuwi rather than their own right from Arohana (as pointed out above, land rights enjoyed only through one's spouse may be relatively stigmatised as *whakapapa whakamoe*). Although

when Numia put these accusations directly to Paora he denied them, Paora apparently did not take the opportunity to point out that the *whakapapa* he had presented (which Numia had not challenged) made it clear that Te Whenuanui I's father was Te Umuariki, and that his own father's mother was Te Arahe, and that both these predecessors were direct and close descendants of Arohana (Fig. 5). Paora's apparent neglect to firmly rebut Numia's bold insinuations was a major oversight, and remains inexplicable unless the minutes omitted such crucial evidence—or unless Paora had not intended to mount a strong defence against Numia's case.

Paora could also have countered Numia's tactics by pointing out that in 1902 Te Iriwhiro (Numia's ally then, as he was now in co-opting the boundary issue between Manawaru and Waiiti) had himself accepted Te Whenuanui II's claim that he had a "dual right" to Manawaru from both Arohana and Kahuwi. Numia made several other questionable claims, but most were apparently left unchallenged by either Paora or Whenua. Among other opportunities to humble Numia, his own (repeated) claim to such a dual right was apparently never challenged and left unsubstantiated. Given the recency of the ancestors Arohana and Kahuwi, subsequent intermarriage between Arohana's descendants by Kahuwi's mother Turaki I and Kahuwi's descendants would have been sufficiently rare to insist on substantiation of any claim to such a dual right, although the facts might be sensitive. As shown in Figure 5, Puritoroa was probably the wife of Numia's grandfather Tangataiti, and may have been the source of Numia's dual right; insofar as she was descended from "another wife" of Arohana's (Paora's evidence Fig. 5), this marriage may not have been sensitive to an incest restriction.

Finally, Whenua Tahakawa's concluding cross-examination of Numia appeared weak or hesitant, instead giving Numia further opportunity to emphasise the most favourable points of his own case. Even more so than Paora, Whenua apparently left Numia's reiterations of his own case unchallenged. Although the minutes taken of this exchange were too fragmentary to be certain, it is likely this reflected a foregone conclusion by the Court.

The decision of the Chief Judge was a triumph for Numia's strategy as well as for Ngāti Rongo *hapū* against Te Urewera *hapū*: settling two issues with one decision, the Court first accepted the boundary arranged by Numia and his old ally Te Iriwhiro between the disputed portion of Manawaru and Waiiti partitions of Ruatāhuna, and then declared that the weight of evidence was in favour of the boundary given by Kereru between the northwestern and southeastern subdivisions of Manawaru, thereafter called Arohana and Kahuwi (or Kahui). Te Whenuanui II's and the migrant marriage alliance's long effort to stem Numia's patient determination had finally failed. A case

can also be made that their resistance had long been compromised, either by Numia's rising *mana* or by his subversive strategy, weakening opposition from the other four surviving decent groups of the alliance and, finally, even the Taratoa cousins supposedly in support of Te Whenuanui III.

* * *

In view of Numia Kereru's tactics between 1900 and 1912, as reviewed above, had his rise to power reached "a limit that can only be surpassed by breaking through the bounds of the kinship order" (criterion 6)? One could conclude such adroit use of the resources of capitalism (in this case, Crown support of Tūhoe's claim to the Urewera, and the Commission's support Numia's skills or *mana*) necessarily subverts the resources of kinship; or that such cynical use of kinship knowledge against itself undermines the whole kin-ordered mode of production. On the other hand, it could be argued that Numia's deployment of power was itself fundamentally kin-ordered; or that only some leaders but not their *hapū* had broken ranks; or that the kinship mode of mobilising social labour had only been selectively reinforced by the resources of capitalism. Perhaps the Taratoa cousins' apparent weakness was actually deference to the kin-ordered power of Numia's rising *mana*?

Tracing the details of the confrontation between Te Urewera *hapū* and Ngāti Rongo *hapū* between 1899 and 1912 led me to a clearer understanding of my own family's involvement with both *hapū* since 1972. In an effort to help us understand the array of distant kin we were meeting, our hosts (in Fig. 5, Pakitu Wharekiri's daughter or Paora Noho's son) sometimes sat us down and sketched out fragments of *whakapapa* in my notebook. Now it is clearer to me that we were being made familiar with a series of prominent marriages between about 1900 and the 1950s that we only dimly realised to be alliances between the two *hapū*. These alliances had spanned the valleys of the Urewera just as they had spanned these *hapū*.

A double marriage between the two daughters of Te Mauniko Te Whenuanui (*mātāmua* daughter of Te Whenuanui I) and two sons of Waewae Te Roau (*mātāmua* Te Hata and his *teina* Tamarehe, Fig. 5) probably occurred around the turn of the century. This was around the time of the UDNR Commission's settlement in 1900 of the confrontation over Whaitiripapa block between Ngāti Rongo and Te Urewera *hapū* that had been in contention since the 1860s, and decided but then reversed before the Native Land Court in the 1890s. Now, finally, I have come to realise the fuller significance of this double marriage: because Te Roau and his *mātāmua* son Waewae (Te Kotahitanga) were the leaders of Ngāti Rongo at Ohaua, midway in the Urewera between Ruatāhuna and the other centre of Ngāti Rongo in Ruatoki, the two marriages of *mātāmua* descendants was seen to join Te Urewera *hapū* and Ngāti Rongo

hapū regardless of the Whaitiripapa confrontation. It may even have marked the settlement as a *pākūhā* ‘marriage gift’ such as was said to have occurred in the 1860s. Furthermore, regardless of the bitter confrontations between these two *hapū* that continued over Ruatāhuna through 1912, several later marriages between their leading families continued at least through the 1950s. Perhaps these had even reached the point that now, as one Ngāti Rongo leader put it, Ngāti Rongo *hapū* was “just part of Te Urewera *hapū*”! Perhaps the two *hapū* have achieved what the Tūhoe call their *tātou pounamu* ‘our greenstone’ peace-making.

Far from supporting Wolf’s (1982) thesis of the vulnerability of power based on kinship, might this confrontation instead confirm Anne Parsonson’s thesis that the Māori were a “competitive society” successfully using colonial venues in their traditional “pursuit of *mana*” (Parsonson 1980, 1981; see also Ballara 1982)? Following Ballara’s 1982 critique I had long been dismissive of Parsonson’s thesis. However, my belated appreciation of the power of Tūhoe marriage alliances and the ethnohistory reviewed above has given me pause in my scepticism. Nevertheless, although the 1894–1912 era can be seen as partly the traditional pursuit of *mana* between Tūhoe leaders, I must emphasise that this was inseparable from the specific context of a relatively benevolent administration, the 1896 UDNR Act, and a Crown Commission largely deferential to Tūhoe leaders in accordance with the spirit of that statute.

This integral role of Crown power in Tūhoe kin-based power was furthermore reversed within a few years, when Government policy toward the UDNR became systematically predatory, explicitly intended to weaken Tūhoe kinship organisation as well as taking most of their reserved lands. Indeed, the Crown tried hard to take all their lands and would have, had it not been for the surviving resistance of Tūhoe power based in their *hapū* or surviving descent groups (Webster 2004: 279-90). Although by 1907 Numia’s form of leadership had won *he mana motuhake* ‘an independent *mana*’ for Tūhoe home-rule of their Te Urewera lands, already by 1908 he and his supporters were being marginalised. By 1912 when he triumphantly overcame the resistance of Te Whenuanui II and the migrant marriage alliance in Ruatāhuna and Waikaremoana, much of the UDNR, including those blocks was under grave threat from the same Crown that had worked with Tūhoe to establish it. Whether or not Numia had been breaching the bounds of the kinship order in his rise to power, by the time of his death in 1916, the power of Tūhoe kinship was being relentlessly suppressed or perverted beneath the power of the capitalist mode of mobilising social labour.

The over 200 *mōrehu* ‘remnants’ of their ancestral lands that through Tūhoe resistance had survived the Crown purchase campaign and Urewera Consolidation Scheme were relocated to make way for Crown pre-emptions

or to be near promised roads, finally to lie scattered throughout what soon became the Urewera National Park. Although much of Ruatāhuna survived, virtually all of Waikaremoana was taken, both in bitter resistance (Webster 2004: 116-40, 554-96, 305-16; see also O'Malley 1996). Many of these small blocks remained occupied by their owners for a few more years, but by the 1930s their lack of economic viability, aggravated by the Government's failure to build the promised roads, forced most occupants out to surrounding towns for work and education of their children. Thereafter these blocks, scattered through the wilderness of the Park, continued to be visited by Tūhoe crossing between the towns, hunting and gathering, remembering their dead buried in these places, and passing what memories of this chaotic history they could on to their children.

Since the 1950s various efforts have been made to bring the scattered remnants back to life, documented in Stokes, Milroy and Melbourne (1986) and later by voluminous research sponsored by the Waitangi Tribunal and the Crown Forestry Rental Trust to investigate the justice or injustices of that history. Again, the power of Government and the power of Tūhoe kinship, whether in cooperation or confrontation, remain inseparable. The resulting Tūhoe mobilisation suggests that the efforts of their ancestors, and perhaps especially those of Numia Kereru, Te Whenuanui II, their supporters and their opponents, had not broken through the bounds of their kinship order. Now, six generations after the Crown's betrayal and Numia's death, it remains to be seen if the seasoned power and solidarity of Tūhoe kinship can regain the home-rule over Te Urewera that had been promised it in the 1896 UDNR Act and, perhaps, finally restored in the 2014 Te Urewera Act.

NOTES

1. *Hapū* are descent groups that trace their ancestry from a favoured ancestor cognatically, that is, through genealogical links of either gender. *Hapū* are often named after their favoured ancestor. A *hapū* includes a wider category of members who trace their affiliation from the same ancestor, but whose active participation with the *hapū* may be less strong, and whose primary affiliation may be with other *hapū* (Webster 1975).
2. The *iwi* 'tribal' designation "Tūhoe" has probably always been controversial due to the sensitivity of associated *hapū* (so-called "sub-tribal") independence (Ballara 1998: 290-301). Currently and in the past, several large descent groups especially on the peripheries of the Urewera have insisted upon their recognition as independent *iwi* while some Tūhoe may instead consider them to be *hapū* of the Tūhoe *iwi*. Thus my general references to "Tūhoe" must be taken to include other Urewera descent groups that may see themselves as independent *iwi*. This essay deals specifically with what I call the Ruatāhuna-Waikaremoana migrant marriage alliance that straddled several Tūhoe, Ngāti Ruapani and Ngāti

Kahungunu descent groups and developed since the early 1800s. Tūhoe have traditionally considered this straddle to be a “conquest” rather than simply the result of intermarriage and political alliances. For this reason, I cautiously put the word in quotes. Members of this alliance usually affiliated with several Tūhoe *hapū* as well as Ngāti Ruapani, which has often considered itself a separate *iwi*, as does Ngāti Kahungunu further to the southeast.

3. These and other genealogies, and several specific cases, have convinced me that Tūhoe recognised an incest taboo or avoided (and continue to avoid) marriage between relatives closer than fourth cousins. Joan Metge (1967: 26) reported that “Within the *hapū*, there were strong sanctions against marriage between first and second cousins”. However, probably in 1929, citing his own East Coast *iwi* Ngāti Porou, Apirana Ngata contested the common assumption of such a restriction, claiming that close-inbreeding, even marriage of first cousins was “extremely common” and “the rule rather than the exception” especially within “highly prized lines” of descent (Ngata n.d.). Bruce Biggs’ study of traditional Māori marriage found some evidence that first-cousin marriages were disapproved (Firth 1962: 193). His finding that local descent group endogamy was encouraged to keep conflict limited to relatives may explain what Ngata identified as “close in-breeding”.

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ABSTRACT

The large Urewera National Park of New Zealand, recently returned to control of the Tūhoe (and other Urewera) Māori, was originally established (1896–1907) as the Urewera District Native Reserve under their virtual home-rule. Discovery of extensive marriage alliances between clusters of Tūhoe *hapū* ‘ancestral descent groups’ involved in the 1899–1903 investigation raises the relationship between kinship and political economic power in the context of New Zealand colonisation. Guided by Eric Wolf’s exploration of the kin-ordered mode of mobilising social labour, a detailed ethnohistorical study of the establishment of the reserve is reviewed here in terms of Tūhoe leaders’ exercise of power in relation to one another, as well as the colonial government. In order to consider Wolf’s conclusion that especially in the context of colonisation such leaders are likely to break through the bounds of their kinship

order, confrontations from 1900–1912 between several well-known Tūhoe leaders, an extensive marriage alliance, and three *hapū* are reviewed in some detail. It is hoped that an ethnohistory of this example of Tūhoe kinship and power at the turn of last century can complement the current resurgence of Tūhoe (and other Urewera) control over their original reserve.

Keywords: Māori kinship, political economy, Tūhoe, Urewera District, land claims ethnohistory, colonisation and resistance

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“WE DIE FOR *KULA*”—AN OBJECT-CENTRED VIEW OF MOTIVATIONS AND STRATEGIES IN GIFT EXCHANGE

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In 1993, during my doctoral field research on Dobu Island in southeastern Papua New Guinea, in a region often referred to as “The Massim”, I accompanied my local mentor from Dobu Island, Joseph,¹ on a *kula* expedition to Bwaiowa, on East Fergusson Island. We spent an afternoon on the veranda of his *kula* partner, while his wife was busy preparing our food. Since I was already into my second year of fieldwork, fluent in the Dobu language, and well aware that I was privileged to witness this confidential conversation, I listened attentively while chewing betel nuts and taking notes.

After some friendly exchange of standard information, about the state of gardening, the weather, and the valuable *mwali* ornament that our host was showing us, Joseph asked a question about their partner in the Trobriands. “How is Peter?” Our host responded “Ah, he is already getting weak”. “Oh, good!” said my mentor, and our host uttered an agreeing sound. I was perplexed. Why would it be “good” if a partner further up the chain was getting weak, probably on the verge of death? How could these friendly old men be so matter-of-fact, even seemingly pleased, about this? (Extract from field notes, 17 October 1993)

For almost a century, the Kula Exchange System, involving the exchange of valuables in Southeastern Papua New Guinea, has been famous in Anthropology as an example of gift exchange with delayed reciprocity, built on trusting relationships of partners between some 20 islands that are part of the of the Massim region (Malinowski 1920,1922; Mauss 1990 [1923–24]). Hundreds of texts and museum objects are documented (Macintyre 1983a). A recent internet search yielded thousands of sources based on a handful of ethnographies from the northern *kula* region, specifically research on Woodlark (Muyuw) Island by Frederick Damon, Gawa Island by Nancy Munn and the Trobriand Islands by Shirley Campbell, Bronislaw Malinowski and Annette Weiner.² Two conferences have contributed to a comparative perspective of *kula* (see Leach and Leach 1983, and subsequently Damon and Wagner 1989). Apart from these two volumes, the southeastern *kula* regions are under-represented in the comparative literature because Martha Macintyre’s (1983b) and Carl Thune’s (1980) excellent PhD theses remain unpublished (see Kuehling 2012: 23).



Figure 1. *Mwali* and *bagi*. Photos by the research team.

The aim of this paper is to offer new research material from the Dobu-speaking area of the southern *kula* region and Dobu language terms are used throughout unless otherwise indicated. My focus is on the two ornaments used for *kula* exchange today, *mwali* and *bagi*. *Mwali*, white sections cut from *Conus* shells, are often referred to as armbands.³ The necklaces, which are called *bagi* in the southern *kula* region, are made from strings of fine red discs crafted from the inside layer of *Chama*⁴ oyster shells. For *kula* exchange, both *bagi* and *mwali* are elaborately decorated with glass beads, shells, black banana seeds and other available materials.

The material side of *kula* exchange, *mwali* and *bagi* as a category of valuables (*'une* or *kune*; see Kuehling 2005: 98-113) provides an answer to the old anthropological question of how and why *kula* objects circulate—and continue to move today—in the Massim region. In this article I represent the voices, experiences, reflections and opinions of *kula* participants (or “players” as they say in English), which I was privileged to hear and share during fieldwork on Dobu Island and while on *kula* visits with neighbouring *kula* communities of East Fergusson Island (Bwaiowa) and North Normanby Island (Duau) (1992–94, 1997, 2009, 2012, 2015; see Kuehling 2005: 184).

Based on this research, I posit that it is the connection of *bagi* and *mwali* to life and death that causes the islanders of the *kula* network to be resilient in maintaining their unique and complex exchange system until now. The

special value of *kula* shells is constructed in emotional and personal terms and the desire for *bagi* and *mwali* is a morally appropriate opportunity for demonstrating *paisewa* ‘hard work’ (see Kuehling 2005: 27, 281-83). I have previously argued that the importance of *kula* ornaments goes beyond what Reo Fortune called a “love for exchange” which, as he argued in *Sorcerers of Dobu* (1932: 193, 205-06), drove the voyages and interactions of *kula* among Dobuans (Kuehling 2005: 87). To give Fortune some credit, *kula* relationships (between pairs of partners as well as between pairs of objects) are often likened to love relationships: they are delightful and desirable yet difficult to maintain, fraught with conflict and betrayal, requiring hard work and affected by the uncertainties of life and death (Kuehling 2005: 182-224, 2012).

I begin by briefly discussing previous *kula* analyses that address the importance of history, memory and names as markers of value. I will then focus on the current generation of *kula* masters and their pragmatic perspective that *kula* valuables are crucial for “solving problems”: in building, repairing and maintaining relationships both within island communities and between *kula* partners on different islands. Fred Damon (1983a) and Nancy Munn (1990) have published articles that use a single *kula* object for related arguments, although these accounts present *kula* exchange as causing rather than solving problems. I will refrain from deeper analysis of spatio-temporality (Munn 1986) and related concepts of personhood (Damon 2002), as my interlocutors were not thinking about their *kula* activities in these terms. While it is certainly possible that “through the stored bits of persons that are the ranked valuables, people convert their bodies into names realized in others’ knowledge of them” (Damon 2002: 130), none of the *kula* practitioners in the southern Massim region who I talked to would describe it this way. The literature on Massim valuables cannot be done justice in this short paper but most recently, John Liep’s (2007) monograph on Rossel Island valuables emphasised that personalised exchange does not mean partners are on equal footing and that transactions may be messy as “social obligation and personal pressure influence the decision of agents in exchange” (p. 18). While this is certainly the case in *kula* partnerships, the moral obligation of generosity and the mutual desire of *kula* partners to maintain a safe track for their valuables have strongly factored in, keeping the *kula* moving until this day.

I was told many times that the value of all *kula* objects as a category, together with the other two major items of exchange (pigs and yams), stems from their symbolic power to compensate a person’s work and commitment, suffering and grief, in short, their capacity to solve local conflicts, fulfil obligations and to provide food in times of need. This is why the most capable islanders are involved in *kula*, distributing large amounts of their garden

produce, providing a shelter for relative strangers in the hopes of receiving *kula* objects in the future, braving the seas on their travels to visit partners, teaching their smartest children the rules and magic, names and tricks of the trade, enduring the envy of their neighbours, and dealing with the demands of their elders. *Kula* is a valuable activity because its objects are endowed with the “spirit of generosity and hospitality” (Trevor Timoti, from Dobu, pers. comm. March 2016). For more junior participants in *kula*, its capacity to provide quality time away from the village, and to give an extra purpose to life are a bonus, but the main incentive to engage in *kula* is the knowledge that *bagi* and *mwali* are needed because “we love, marry, fight, get sick, and, ultimately, die” (Kaibado Joel, from Dobu, pers. comm. December 1993).

HEIRLOOMS AND THE QUESTION OF NAMES

The famous anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski told us in his classic study of *kula* exchange, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, that the value of *kula* objects is based on their history, much like European heirlooms:

The analogy between the European and the Trobriand *vaygu'a* (valuables) must be delimited with more precision. The Crown Jewels, in fact, any heirlooms too valuable and too cumbersome to be worn, represent the same type as *vaygu'a* in that they are merely possessed for the sake of possession itself, and the ownership of them with the ensuing renown is the main source of their value. Also both heirlooms and *vaygu'a* are cherished because of the historical sentiment which surrounds them. (Malinowski 1922: 89)

Ever since, most anthropologists have accepted this statement. Fred Damon, however, based on his field research on Woodlark (Muyuw) Island, learned that physical size, rather than transactional histories creates the value:

[...] in the legacy of Bronislaw Malinowski, which the most recent ethnographers reproduced (e.g., Campbell 1983a, 1983b), *kula* valuables gained in stature or prestige as they accumulated history, through their travels around the islands. But this is not what my informants said. For them the ranks for valuables were more or less fixed by the sizes they had when they were produced. (Damon 2002: 114)

Indeed, according to my informants from Dobu, size matters. The transactional history however determines the highest ranks of valuables, those with a well-known name. About 100 famous names would be in the repertoire of most *kula* masters, and of these only 30 or so are regarded as the highest-ranking ornaments of *kula* exchange, paired in “married couples” of *bagi* and *mwali*⁵, passed around on relatively stable routes between people

of the same, or matching clans. While their value is based on more than “historic sentiment”, details of their journeys around the exchange system are fragmentary and vague, as Damon learned on Woodlark. Similarly, Dobu *kula* players look at size and patina if they are not clear about the rank of a valuable. They count the circles (*ulai*) that *bagi* and *mwali* have successfully completed around the system and they recount the pairings that have successfully been made on these journeys, the persons and places that have seen the objects, as well as the errors and conflicts that affected their moves. For the top-ranking *bagi* named Teleiponi, for example, I learned that “at the first round it came to halfway and it hit Nanowana, the second hit it made was Atuidamana. So when it went around, it came to Wale-ana-duudu, it met Youya, it met Bwaluwada, and it came back to Atuidamana and is with Atuidamana now” (Synod Timoti, from Normanby Island, pers. comm., February 2016).

Knowing such “histories” (*tetela*) is like knowing the story (also *tetela*) of a plot of land or the ancestresses of a matrilineage—it counts as proof of legitimate ownership. *Tetela* are consequently not told in public settings unless required in a mediation or court case, and only by authorised members of such an object’s route around their ring of partners. I was nevertheless privileged to record Mr. Synod Timoti’s *tetela* of the *bagi* Teleiponi, which begins as follows:

This is the story about Teleiponi, where it comes from and why it came. The original name of Teleiponi [telephone] is Waialesi [wireless]. One of our *bubus* [grandparents], his name is “KW” [pseudonym, here and below]. He lives at Ware Island and he got married there, a village called “G”. He had many children, about twelve, so when he was there and he grew old, the children decided to give us that *bagi* for their *pwaoli* [compensatory gift to the father’s matrilineage], and we call it *pwaoli kalakalawa* because the old man is still alive but they want to pay *pwaoli*. So, our *bubu*, mother’s father, by the name of “LK” and our mother, “SP”, from our place went to Ware to visit the family there, that’s where they presented the *bagi* to our *bubu* and brought it to Duau to our place at “M” [on the Duau coast of Normanby Island]. So when it was there, our *bubu* was still keeping the *bagi*, in the *kula* ring they heard that *mwali* Nanowana is with “M” at “D” [Woodlark Island]. And that was his *kitomwa* [free-of-debt *kula* valuable]. So our old people from Dobu decided to come to our *bubu* and get this *bagi* so they can get Nanowana.

To understand such stories, a complex set of background knowledge is needed: of persons, places, and the top-ranking *mwali* and *bagi*. Most *kula* masters would generally agree on the list below that features some of the best-known *kula* objects.

Table 1. Names of highest-ranking *bagi* and their *mwali* “spouses”, as known in Dobu. Italics indicate undisputed partnerships.

<i>Bagi</i>	<i>Mwali</i>
Dilimeya Tubetube	Tukava (or Tamagwali)
<i>Dilimeyana 40</i>	<i>Tomanuboi</i>
<i>Kasabwaibwaileta</i>	<i>Kepou</i>
<i>Kasanaibeubeu</i>	<i>Manuatasopi</i>
Likudomdom	Waleya ana duu (or Nanowana)
Senibeta	Bwaluwada
<i>Teleiponi</i>	<i>Atuidamana</i> (but according to <i>tetela</i> cited above, it should be Nanowana, its first “marriage partner”)
Tukanibwalala	Bwaluwada
Tukawa	Kabwaku Tamagwali
<i>Bagiduudu</i>	<i>Kepou</i>
Dokanikani	Inimoa (or Tomanugwali Tumanuboi, also Wabaleki)
Gomalakedakeda	?
Kibutokunuwesi	No specific “spouse” yet
<i>Lepoyata 1</i>	<i>Youya</i>
Malalana	Tomanugwali Tomanuboi
<i>Meiya</i>	<i>Tokulasi</i>
Senibeta 2	Kebulubulu (or Bwaluwada)

Table 2. Names of some second-ranked *bagi* and their *mwali* “spouses”.

<i>Bagi</i>	<i>Mwali</i>
<i>Magisubu</i>	<i>Kabisawali</i>
Tokanibwalala	Maikala (or Tokana)
Anoibutuna	Ulilaba
<i>Bagidudu</i>	No specific “spouse”
Siga	No specific “spouse”
Mwalubikina	No specific “spouse”
Lala	No specific “spouse”

These lists are neither complete nor do they represent total consensus; only the pairs in italics are undisputed as far as I know. The names have been spelled in different ways by locals and by anthropologists, adding to the complexity and occasional confusion. Yet whenever the ranking of *kula* objects was discussed, fragments of this list were reiterated by senior men, sometimes in the form of a rhetoric quiz: “Who is the spouse of Teleiponi? Atuidamana, of course!” As in a marriage, people say, things may go in wrong directions but “we try to bring them back to normal”. Life cycle exchanges are an opportunity to readjust the tracks of *kula* valuables; mortuary rituals especially intersect with *kula* in complex ways (Damon and Wagner 1989). The top-ranking *bagi* and *mwali* are well-known and their ideal tracks are linked to a complementary one that moves into the opposite direction—until one of them is taken off its route and instead given to someone from a different matrilineage. This happens frequently, through patrilineal inheritance or as a gift for exceptional service, causing the partners on its ideal track to scheme and plot until the circulations are correctly realigned. This may take decades, as in the case of Kibutokunuwesi, a large *mwali* that has never completed a tour around the chain of partners.

The case of this *mwali* shows that value can be independent of a long history of exchange. In 1975, Kibutokunuwesi was found on a reef near Kiriwina named Kibu (which is also the name of a star) by a man named Tokunuwesi. He cut, named and decorated it before passing it on to his partner in the Amphlett Islands. The late maternal uncle of its current owner, from Bwaiowa (Fergusson Island), received it there and he has held onto it ever since, for 37 years now, waiting for a Dobu man to offer the appropriate *bagi*. Many have tried to lure Kibutokunuwesi into their hands, but so far no-one has achieved this goal. Some complain that their “begging” gifts of *bagi* that were supposed to “loosen” Kibutokunuwesi were not returned with matching *mwali* at all, so they suspect that the current owner is using the *mwali* to attract *bagi* by using Kibutokunuwesi as a lure, or bait. The man himself, on the other hand, complains that Dobu men are not capable of “hitting” his *mwali* properly. In spite of being blocked and even hidden, as only a few people have actually seen it, the *mwali* was being talked about in the 1990s when I was doing my doctoral fieldwork; it was still a topic of discussion in 2017 and many men’s dream is to lay their hands on it. It has only been exchanged twice, the shell is scarred with rough grey marks, and yet it has a high value based on its physical qualities: the size of the *Conus* ring indicating its age. Kibu, its nickname, demonstrates Damon’s (2002: 12) point that “the significance of these valuables is not that they carry sums of human memory”.

High-profile *bagi* and *mwali* attract the most attention of *kula* masters and anthropologists, but there are hundreds of unnamed valuables that nevertheless fully qualify as *kula* wealth, in current circulation or in the hands of outsiders (individuals, art dealers and museums). These objects, mainly



Figure 2. The *mwali* Kibutokunuwesi. Photo by the author. N.B. an older picture by Jutta Malnic (1998: 82) shows a different decoration.

smallish *mwali*, typically give no indication of names in the documenting files. Over 2000 valuables are named but not famous, their names known only to a few individuals. One medium-ranked *mwali* stored in the National Museum and Art Gallery of Papua New Guinea is exceptional because its name is documented. It was recently identified by a man from Dobu called Jones, who recognised it as his missing *kitomwa* (debt-free *kula* valuable). He claimed that he himself had written its name, Lepaudi, on the shell with a carpenter pencil, sent it on a *kula* track many years ago and had not seen it since. According to rumours, it was sold on Gawa Island, intended as a gift for Prime Minister Michael Somare. Being from the Sepik, however, and not sharing *kula* notions of value, he was not interested in it and it ended up in the National Museum in Port Moresby. If the name had not been written on the *mwali*, it is unlikely that this story would have emerged, but somebody had remembered the name and passed word on to Mr. Jones who then came to see the photograph I had taken of it. He cried when he recognised Lepaudi and asked me to help him get it back. So far, the Museum has not responded to my request.



Figure 3. The *mwali* known as Lepaudi (Papua New Guinea National Museum & Art Gallery accession number M401). Photo by the author.

The carefully crafted decorations, seen as the “face” of the objects, are not important for the ranking of *kula* objects. Damon states that “although intentionally and repeatedly adorned and redecorated, and momentary objects of fancied gaze wherever they alight, *kula* valuables do not become famous by these names and decorations” (2002: 125). Yet, while the meaning of a name is irrelevant for its value, they are convenient to identify and to recognise a valuable. When I showed images of old and obviously well-travelled *kula* valuables to Dobu *kula* men, their first question was always “What is its name?” If I did not know, people’s interest in the object seemed to fade, as names serve as a mnemonic device, making it possible to talk about individual objects. Knowing these names is part of the specialist knowledge of *kula* as they distinguish specific *bagi* or *mwali*. The decorations can change without affecting the value and, except for famous ones, even a *kula* master cannot routinely tell one from another. Frequently, names are written on, or scratched into, *mwali* shells and the pearl-shell that is attached to a *bagi* string. However, these names do not necessarily refer to the object itself but temporary owners, serving as nametags that facilitate the valuables’ redistribution. In the Dobu-speaking part of the *kula* network, this ceremony, called *tanaleleya* ‘all the baskets are equal’, should take place at the end of a group’s *kula* expedition. The leader of the trip collects all the *kula* valuables and during a large and sumptuous meal that he sponsors, the valuables are hung up in a row (*sola*) and sorted according to rank. The most valuable ones are usually on the right-hand side and their value decreases until the least valuable one is on the far left (the order may also be reversed but the principle remains the same).



Figure 4. *Tanaleleya* with *mwali* at Sawa'edi, Fergusson Island, August 2015. Photo by author.



Figure 5. A row of *bagi*, not yet sorted by size at Asagamwana, Fergusson Island, August 2015. Photo by author.

Those *mwali* and *bagi* of lower value, without an individual name, are used for exchanges of the highest order within island communities (mortuary feasting, bride wealth, compensation, purchase of pigs, etc.) as well as being passed on in *kula* exchange. Such *kula* valuables may be “low-ranking” in comparison to others, but all of them are nevertheless regarded as “Big Gifts” (Kuehling 2017; see also Kuehling, 2005: Chapter 4), to be used for special transactions, admired and treasured, in short, as objects “to die for” (Damon 1983a: 54; Kuehling 2005: 113; Munn 1990). Together with pigs and large yams, they are the most precious things worth striving for as they “solve problems” related to life and death. Sometimes the transactions do not turn out as expected and my informants claim that nowadays misunderstandings and “bad” choices are frequent, deeply aggravating the concerned parties and often triggering sorcery retaliations, causing a chain of deaths. Even if there is no intentional cheating, difficulties of assessment are common. As Damon has pointed out, names can be misleading. He mentions cases in which valuables are talked about so much that people expect them to be very large:

I also heard people tell what they thought were funny stories about certain valuables over which there was a lot of dispute. They imagined these disputes going off down projected paths, the peoples there hearing the stories, and then imagining that the valuables must really be big if they generated so much talk. (Damon 2002:114)

In addition to such stories, there are other challenges to the use of names as identifiers. Sometimes, a famous name tempts a *kula* trader to tinker with its value by removing the decorations and attaching them to a different object. In this way, two valuables are created, one is “old” but newly decorated, the other one is “new” but adorned with a famous “face” (see Kuehling 2005: 205).

A widely practiced form of deception is to name a low-value *kula* object after a famous one. In Dobu this is called *esabala* or literally ‘passing a name across’ (or the English-derived word *beptais* in the northern Massim). While documenting *kula* objects as part of our current research project, the local research team from Dobu Island was surprised to find so many cases of this practice. *Mwali* namesakes include those named Masisi (11 examples), Taba (six), Lala (six) and Gudala Ikaya (six); among the *bagi*, Kenoliya (ten), Wayau (eight) and Weibitu (nine) are circulating and causing confusion. Only one of each has the value of *dagula*, the highest ranking category, or *bulubulu*, the second grade category. The others are of lower value. Thus when discussing future exchanges, a *kula* player may promise to pass on the *mwali* Masisi, and keep his promise, while upsetting the recipient who expected a high-ranking valuable and only received a mediocre one.



Figure 6. All six of these *mwali* are named Gudala Ikaya. Photos by research team, 2015 and 2016.

DEATH

The statement that “people die for *kula* ornaments” was familiar to me when I undertook my fieldwork, as I had read the anthropological literature on *kula* prior to my departure. And yet, the conversation paraphrased at the beginning of this article was an eye-opener, as it helped me understand that death affects *kula* in complex ways. I initially believed the statement referred only to the fact that desire for the ornaments is so intense that people risk their lives on overseas journeys, and face the jealousy of their peers after achieving their goal of obtaining a specific *bagi* or *mwali*. Any senior *kula* participant will confirm that death guides *kula* exchange, a fact that is somewhat at variance with the more publicly voiced role of *kula* to “promote respect, love and friendship, hospitality, status and adventure” (Hon. Michael Wapanapa, Bwaiowa ward member, September 2015). By enquiring further, I began to realise that death and life are at the heart of *kula* and that the health status of partners is highly relevant in various ways.

The question “How is Peter?” in the conversation I quoted at the beginning, referred to the flow of *mwali*. Since Peter was a senior *kula* man, his death was going to halt *kula* exchange in one direction for a while. This blocking of exchange, called *alau* on Dobu, begins a few days after a death, when local elders decide on the direction that will be blocked (*gatu* or *bubuli*). Either *mwali* or *bagi* may reach but not leave the location, so they accumulate over a period of some months. Only when the neighbouring *kula* community on the other side of the blocked zone organises a group expedition (*yawala*) (further details in Kuehling 2005: Chapter 7), bringing gifts and assembling for a meeting where meals are consumed and speeches are made, is *kula* traffic opened again. As a consequence, a great number of valuables flood to the visitors. In Dobu this movement around the network is called *ulai*; one circle around the chain of partners, one *ulai*, takes at least three to five years. The blockage, usually represented by a pole in the sea near the shore with a broken conch shell or an unhusked coconut on top, is removed at this event and *kula* exchange is open again for individual visitors and small groups. During the opening ceremony, the heir of the dead *kula* player, ideally his sister’s son, introduces himself and begins an exchange relationship, ideally with the orphaned partner, by passing a valuable. This is a good time to voice discontent about previous exchanges, to remind the new partner of the ethics of reciprocity, and to apologise if the deceased had left debts behind. Since these blockings occur all the way around the exchange system, a death can seriously affect the strategies of *kula* players.

Another event resulting from death in Dobu is the reintroduction of a principal mourner to *kula* exchange, the *kwausa* ritual. After the death of a

kula master, a group of close relatives is kept in a state of passivity that is step-wise removed in a series of mortuary rituals (*bwabwale*) until finally they can resume their ordinary lives (see Kuehling 2005: Chapter 8). *Kula* is one of the activities that requires formal reintroduction and the heir of the deceased is taken on a *kula* expedition (see Kuehling 2005: Chapter 7). In the past, the passive state of mourning often took several months, but nowadays people like to speed up the process, especially when the expedition is expected to move many valuables.

I witnessed such an event in September 2015. The Dobu man who came to Bwaiowa for the re-opening of *kula*, only ten days after the death of his maternal uncle, stood up and exclaimed: “My uncle did not tell me what had happened. He only told me I was his heir/replacement (*loepaelu*), so I am sorry but I don’t know what went wrong between you two.” Everyone in the audience had a good idea of what had actually happened; the dead man had failed to return at least one valuable in spite of his promise. Yet the hosting partner stood up and said “Let the old stories rest now, just make sure that we will have a good *kula* partnership. I will give you this *mwali* now, and next week we will come to you for *bagi*.” He could have scolded or reprimanded the heir by recounting the flaws in his uncle’s *kula* exchanges, because he was giving a *mwali* and such a “Big Gift” opens a window for accusing speeches. Yet by letting the opportunity pass, the partner signalled his benevolence and only hinted that when he was paying a return visit he did expect an appropriate counter-gift, preferably more than one, to compensate for the loss that had occurred in the past.

The question about Peter’s health, therefore, related directly to the future of *kula* exchange in general—will there be a group expedition on the horizon? Will his designated heir take over soon? How will it affect our chain of partnerships? Will there be a blockage and subsequent flood of *mwali* in the near future? Damon (1983a) describes the art of plotting and scheming in his brilliant article on the history of Woodlark (Muyuw) Island.

The inquiry about Peter’s health could also have referred to his conduct. Any death, as some people pointed out to me in private, may well have been directly caused by fraudulent *kula* practice, as sorcery attacks are still regarded as appropriate sanctions. Such suspicions are never expressed in public, however, and remain the subject of private conversations. When Peter’s health status was discussed, it could have been an allusion to his punishment for previous mistakes in *kula*, inflicted by an angry *kula* partner, in this case, quite likely, our host. In the past, I was told, *kula* was much more seriously sanctioned: “six feet” (the metaphor for a grave) was the expected outcome of cheating, procrastinating or wrongful exchange of any kind.

Nowadays, there are committees (*komitis*) in many southern *kula* regions (on Sanalowa, Fergusson, Dobu and Normanby Islands) that are aimed at

preventing such dire consequences. Based on the European model, *komitis* are elected by *kula* players of the locality, complete with a chairman, a secretary, a treasurer and a vice president. On Dobu Island, there are six such *komitis* (in Edugaula, Mwanomwanona, Enaiya, Egadoi, Wabuna and Balabala). They are supposed to mediate when wrongful exchanges cause anger, mistrust and envy. I witnessed a case in which the *komiti* on Dobu ordered a person to pass on a *mwali* to a specific partner, although he had planned on keeping the valuable as “village wealth”, as it was free of debt. *Komitis* have succeeded in moving valuables between men within their jurisdiction; they have stopped and reversed exchanges and imposed fines as punishment, although in some cases they are unable to find out the “true” story and cannot come to a decision. The trust in *komiti* mediation is therefore limited and an aggravated *kula* partner may well take the law into his own hands and apply pressure. The first level of showing anger is usually to refuse any food prepared by the partner. If that does not yield results, he may secretly use a curse that causes sickness, disease or even death, depending on the degree of rage and the capabilities of both partners for either effectively cursing or successfully protecting oneself from a curse. Nancy Munn (1990) shows the difficulties of being involved in the exchange of high-ranking *kula* objects like the *mwali* Manutasopi on Gawa Island. I have heard comparable stories but prefer not to publish them here as they are regarded as confidential, upsetting and even offensive to participants and, sometimes, for bystanders.

In the present case, certain major *kula* men, speaking about their shell transactions, asserted their lack of interest in obtaining a well-known, highly valued armshell called Manutasopi that the patient had transacted in an irregular manner that year. These speakers could have been in competition for Manutasopi because each had a separate partnership with John, the Boagis islander who had decided to give the much desired shell to Silas and to the latter’s exceptionally influential northern Kitavan partner. For instance, Thomas, a senior *kula* man and the most important witchfinder and curer on the island, pointed out that his own *kula* path (*ked*) with John was not one along which he could expect such high-standard shells as this one. Furthermore, he had warned Silas and the Kitavan not to make the irregular arrangement with John that allowed the shell both to bypass the Muyuw partner on their (Silas’s, the Kitavan’s and John’s) common path and, in addition, to be taken immediately to Kitava without coming first to Gawa. People felt that Gawans might be angry, since having Manutasopi on the island would have contributed to the Gawan name in *kula*. (Munn 1990: 4)

In this way, the brief statement that “Peter is already weak” and the response “Good” did not indicate a lack of compassion *per se*, but needs to be understood as part of the scheming, planning and anticipating of *kula*

exchanges of the future. The two Dobu-speaking men were working together on a long-term plan to strengthen their exchange relationship, as good *kula* players ought to do. A *kula* man’s death, as we have seen so far, can be interpreted as justified punishment, as the result of his *kula* malpractices and can open the way for his heir to straighten out the route and create better relationships. Death, it follows, can take “crooks” out of the game and give others the chance for a new beginning.

As the death of a “big man” may result in a series of feasting events, the response that “Peter is already weak” could also have meant that his lineage would be likely to receive many valuables in due course. These would effectively enable Peter’s heir to pay the debts that Peter had accumulated. This could also require Peter’s *kula* partners to bring a valuable, but they could provide either type (*bagi* or *mwali*) for the purpose, as local exchanges do not follow the clockwise-anticlockwise routes that are an essential part of inter-island *kula* gifting practices.

The statement also could have indicated that there was a chance to secure *mwali* from his affinal relatives and his children before his actual death. *Kula* is an opportunity for hiding valuables from lineage obligations, especially for the more junior members. The senior lineage members of a man’s in-laws and children are obliged to contribute to his mortuary feast, so when a death is likely to occur, younger *kula* participants of these lineages may be tempted to pass their valuables onto a *kula* path, rather than risk losing them to their seniors’ pressing demands to contribute them to the mortuary gift. In *kula*, a counter-gift can be expected within a short period of time; a mortuary gift is not returned until the next death requires it. In addition, the lineage seniors who manage mortuary gifts may or may not return a valuable to its donor; they may simply keep it as their “village wealth”, thereby depriving a junior *kula* player of opportunities for travel and adventure, complicating his aspirations and schemes, and even ruining his reputation if he is incapable of providing a return gift. It is disrespectful to demand such a gift back from one’s lineage elder and I have heard many times how people lost their *kula* valuables due to local exchange obligations following the death of a father or in-law. “I could not ask for another valuable, it is too embarrassing” was the typical response when I asked why they did not claim a *bagi* or *mwali* when it arrived after a death in their own family. To complicate such a situation further, mortuary gifts require either *bagi* or *mwali*, while *kula* partners can only receive one kind, depending on their location (positioned either clockwise or anticlockwise).

So, as Joseph and his partner were exchanging information about their partner Peter’s health status, and uttering satisfaction about his decline, they were really commenting on his qualities as a *kula* player (not very



Figure 7. A mortuary gift (*talo*) on Dobu, June 1983. Photo by author.

satisfactory), the prospect of his heir's qualities (likely more positive), the expected consequences of his death for major *kula* events (*bubuli ana so'o*—always exciting), and the resulting pulse that mortuary feasting triggers (which they could perhaps benefit from by avoiding the gift of a valuable or by luring *mwali* from his in-laws' or children's lineages). If Peter had been sick for a longer period of time, the woman who took care of him, typically his wife or one of her relatives, might have received a *kula* object to compensate her for her work. In this way, even highly valuable *mwali* and *bagi* can change their routes, crossing over to a different clan and complicating future exchanges.

Death, it follows, may impact the island community's exchange practice as a whole, by halting and then releasing the flow of valuables. This causes a pulse-like movement of valuables, brings about much excitement associated with group travel, feasting, oratory, reconciliation and re-creation of *kula* routes. The conversation between the two *kula* masters, as I have shown, was brief but highly relevant for their future exchanges.

LIFE

Mortuary gifts are also about life as they reconnect lateral relatives, reinforce kinship networks and represent the lifetime of work, love and care of a deceased (see Damon and Wagner 1989; Kuehling 2005). The contingencies of death are not the only risk to the plans of *kula* partners; the value of *kula* objects is also closely associated with life and love between affinal relatives. These gifts often occur between clans within an island community. Such gifts, as in the mortuary rituals mentioned above, are not bound by any clockwise/anticlockwise movements but by the idea of “Big Gifts”—assemblages of items such as *bagi*, *mwali*, large yams of specific types (cultivars known as *uma* in Dobu), pigs and decorative items, such as betel nuts, sugar cane, taro, banana bunches and store goods (Kuehling 2017: 231; see also Kuehling 2005: Chapter 4). A man’s gift to his bride’s matrilineage should contain at least one *bagi* or *mwali*, especially when the bride is beautiful, has no children as yet, and has demonstrated her skills in gardening and household duties. Today, a bride with an education (i.e., a nurse, school teacher or clerk) is regarded as a valuable asset and her parents can ask for a larger gift to acknowledge the money spent on her education, their sacrifice in raising the funds, and their loss of a worker in daily subsistence activities. Once she gives birth for the first time, the father of the child should give a *bagi* or *mwali* to her in a gift called *gwama ana loduwaduwa*, to acknowledge her pain and the risk she took in giving birth, “because blood was dripping”. These gifts are a token of love and respect, and are evidence that the lives of the bride and baby are appreciated. Similarly, the gift for a deceased father, mentioned above, is an acknowledgement of his love and work for his children, for his wife’s matrilineage and for her village in general.

Kula valuables can be given to “ask for” a plot of gardening land or permission to settle in a specific hamlet. They can pay for a canoe and, most importantly, they can acknowledge a gift of life-saving food. The story of the famous *bagi* named Dilimeyana may serve as an example. This is what I learned from Mr. Trevor Timoti, a Duau man and *kula* master, who currently lives on Dobu. The story begins sometime after World War II, when a severe drought challenged the people living on many low islands in the Massim. Kwaudi, a man from Tubetube Island, travelled by canoe to Duau to meet his *kula* partner, Trevor’s maternal grandfather. He asked him for help with food, as Duau (the *kula* region on Normanby Island) has mountains and rivers and did not suffer from a lack of rain. So a large gift of food was prepared, baskets of yams and a large pig, and Trevor’s grandfather brought it to Tubetube. This gift of food, called *atugalala* (literally ‘noise made with the lime pot’), was the reason why the *bagi* named Dilimeyana moved to him. Kwaudi had not yet finished its decorations, but brought it to Duau at a later time. The

bagi was named after Kwaudi's sister's daughter, Dilimeyana, at his request, as the food had saved the girl's life. In the 1970s, the *bagi* was halved by a Dobu man and so Dilimeyana 1 and 2, much shorter now, were circulating separately. Dilimeyana 2 is currently hidden and will not be discussed here, but Dilimeyana 1 had an interesting fate, that I was told about in 2015.

This *bagi*, of the highest rank, was held for 39 years by a man named Austin (now-deceased) on Woodlark Island. The tusk of the large pig that had been part of Trevor's grandfather's gift of food, played a significant role in moving it much later (in December 1994), reminding Austin of the original reason for the *bagi*'s route and justifying Trevor's demand to let it continue its *kula* travel on its original track. After almost 40 years with Austin, the *bagi* has now moved on and was on Dobu Island in September 2015, now travelling under the name Dilimeyana 40, held in Mwemweyala Village, waiting for the right *mwali*, named Tomanuboi, so that it can continue on its path. Dilimeyana 40 and Tomanuboi are regarded as a married couple, longing for each other, wanting to meet on the same route but in travelling in opposite directions (see Kuehling 2012). In fact, it was through Trevor's effort to bring Tomanuboi to Austin that Dilimeyana moved again. Austin died soon after passing Dilimeyana on, and many people told me that this



Figure 8. Dilimeyana 40 (front) and Lepoyata 1, two of the highest-ranked *bagi*. September 2015. Photo by author.

was his just punishment for holding onto it for so long. As an aside, Damon (2002: 124) writes that the name Dalmeyon is his Woodlark tutor’s name, very likely referring to the same *bagi*. I suspect that this is an example of alternative stories, a very common feature in the histories of *kula* valuables.

The detailed scheming and complex exchanges required to move Dilimeyana 40 are only known to some people, but the lives that were saved with the original gift of food certainly indicate and justify the high value of this *bagi*. The large pig (its tusks formed a perfect circle I was told, such as those which used to circulate in *kula* as *doga* or *dona*; see Malinowski 1922: 375), together with baskets of yams were a token of solidarity, of *kula* partnership at its best. As Dilimeyana 40 moves on, it reminds *kula* players of the obligations and opportunities that are open only to those who nurture their relationships by visiting, hosting, passing on *kula* valuables and keeping their promises for future exchanges. Such partnerships are inherited and are among a man’s greatest assets. These high-ranking *dagula*, literally ‘feather used as head decoration’, are supposed to be inherited within the matrilineage or at least within the clan, but in some cases they are passed on from father to son. If this happens, it causes ripples in the entire circle, as partners mourn the loss of their valuable and work on retrieving it, as Trevor did for Dilimeyana 40. The other half of Dilimeyana is likely hidden because of such a move into a different clan. “The *bagi* is sick” (*bagi i le’oasaya*), as Dobu people say in such a situation.

THE PULSE OF *KULA*

As I have outlined above, the movement of *bagi* and *mwali* is affected by death, distracted by local events, and halted for decades if a temporary owner decides to wait for the “right” counter-gift. *Kula* valuables do not move steadily and local events derail even high-ranking *bagi* and *mwali*, complicating the future routes that they are supposed to follow. Such “sick” objects can get stuck, as currently is the case with the *mwali* named Kabisawali that was passed on by a man to his own son, thereby changing its clan-based track. Recently, in 2016, that man died, adding to the long chain of dead bodies related to holding this particular “witchcraft” *mwali* (Malnic 1998: 47; Annette Weiner in Myers and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2001: 299).

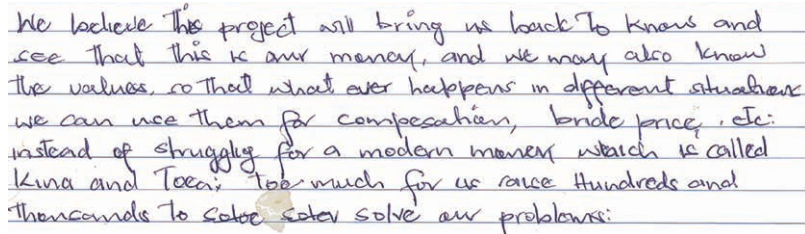
There is always a great risk involved in passing on one’s *kula* valuables, as the contingencies of life and death counter the scheming, planning, organising and persuasion work of *kula* masters. Return gifts may take so many years that two generations are left waiting, deprived of their valuable counter-gift. Today, there are at least 2000 valuables moving in and out of *kula* exchange, and in and out of local exchanges. The large number of objects in circulation calls for some general remarks, I believe, as from a distance they do form a pattern that can be observed and to some extent anticipated.



Figure 9. Kabisawali; the *mwali* shell at the centre is named Teganiu. September 2015. Photo by the author.

High-ranking objects move slowly as a series of preparatory exchanges are required before they change hands (Kuehling 2005: Diagram 13). These gifts are all reciprocated and so it often takes a number of expeditions before a high-ranking *bagi* or *mwali* moves. *Kula* dynamics are driven by the thousands of small objects that attract partners to visit each other, to re-open a *kula* province after death, to aspire and plan, provide hospitality, and practice magic and rhetoric. The partnerships of most *kula* participants are not aiming at moving an ornament of the highest rank, yet *kula* remains one of the most exciting, dangerous and manly things to do. I have argued elsewhere that *kula* is the only way to go on a vacation (2005: 220), and it is one of the most complex mental exercises. It is not only the desire to compete, to achieve, to gain a name, as Munn (1986) has famously argued, it is also the need for *kula* objects to deal with the tensions and emotions resulting not only from death, but also from the problems of everyday life. *Kula* ornaments “solve

our problems”, as a *kula* master from Duau (Normanby Island) wrote to me in a letter (Fig. 10). Their relevance for today’s life in the island region is characterised by his statement that it is “our money”.



We believe this project will bring us back to know and see that this is our money, and we may also know the values, so that what ever happens in different situations we can use them for compensation, bride price, etc. instead of struggling for a modern money which is called Kina and Toga. Too much for us raise hundreds and thousands to solve solve solve our problems:

Figure 10. Extract of letter from *kula* master to the author, March 2013.

The pulse of smaller *bagi* and *mwali* rushes through the veins of the *kula* networks, *ulai* by *ulai*, expedition by expedition, moving between 100 and 500 *mwali* or *bagi*. Occasionally it pushes the high-ranking objects along, creating fame for the few lucky ones who succeed, who are links in the right chains of partnerships, who are cunning and ruthless enough to attract them, and resilient enough to sustain the competitive reactions of their peers who may enviously plot revenge. To be one of these few is certainly a motivation for the ambitious, risk-taking individual—but most *kula* participants do not feel competent or courageous enough to go for the “jackpot” and are satisfied with moderate gains. Without these average exchanges, I would argue, *kula* could not have survived the last century.

* * *

Kula value is based on the notion that *bagi* and *mwali* are moved by the flow of life-circle events and empowered by the social values of generosity, self-discipline and respect. Practicing *kula* provides opportunities to learn and to demonstrate one’s worthiness to receive precious knowledge, as only the best players are chosen to inherit the paths and objects. For aspiring leaders of matrilineages where top-ranked objects circulate, fame is a product of the object’s rank. The names of high-ranking *kula* objects, and of those persons who circulated them, become legends in local lore, increasing in value while being narrated in time and space, as Munn (1986) has demonstrated so well in *The Fame of Gawa*.

One of the *kula* masters from Dobu likened the ranking of *bagi* and *mwali* to the fruits of a betel nut palm. The infructescence or “branch” on top, with ripe nuts, is called *alana*. The ones below are, in descending order, almost ripe,

unripe, tiny, and at the bottom there are only the flowers. The lower “branches” (*pwehisina*) are distinguished from the top ones (*alana*) and it is the same with *kula* valuables. Their ranking takes place when many *kula* objects are displayed and sorted according to their value after a group has returned from a *kula* expedition (*tanaleleya*), as described above. Most lineages do not belong to the top level circles: “most men will never touch *dagula*” (Trevor Timoti pers. comm., 2015) and never reach the highest level of fame. He explained that holding those “ripe” *bagi* and *mwali* can generate hard feelings that are expected to cause death by sorcery, which only knowledgeable people can deflect. This is why a beginner needs a powerful mentor to survive and build a career as the heir of a top-ranking player. Ideally, the heir is the smartest and best-behaved sister’s son, but without a suitable candidate, a man’s sister is also a strong contestant to continue the inherited track that follows clan lines around the islands.

Fame, to my understanding, or what Trevor considers social “ripeness”, is the reward for being a regular participant in *kula* expeditions and an excellent host to *kula* partners, and building a reputation as someone who is trustworthy, generous, intelligent and resourceful. Senior men also find fame by organising successful *kula* journeys, bringing home a large number of *bagi* or *mwali* and losing no participants. Their investments of time and resources, the social skills necessary to see such a group enterprise through with all the required meals and speeches, and the communal memories of such a trip create the leader’s “big name” or *ale sinabwana*. It is through participation in such journeys that most of the skills of *kula* are transmitted; the prospect of joining such an exciting event works as a pedagogic tool for teenagers who compete for the honour. The aspiration to be picked as the “golden boy” of a *kula* master reportedly still motivates teenagers to display admirable attitudes, such as obedience, generosity and respect.

Recently netball competitions have been initiated between *kula* stations, with the aim of providing an introduction into *kula* during the visits of teams for tournaments. In September 2015, Sawa’edi youth from Ferguson Island visited Vakuta Island for such an event and brought back about two hundred *mwali*. Various speeches that I heard praised the teenagers for their respectful behavior (*alamai ita*) and explained it as a result of *kula* values of love and hospitality (*oboboma*). Methodist pastors in the Massim region strongly support *kula*, as Jenevieve Sailon, minister of Sanaloa Island, put it: “We can see these youths are better villagers when they engage in *kula*.”

To nurse teenagers’ interest in *kula*, by providing the first-hand experience of a group expedition, is regarded by local leaders as a strategy to ensure that they understand that at home, outside the inter-island *kula* track, all *kula* objects are highly valuable, comparable to pigs. On an intimately personal level, the emotional element of personal narratives contributes to their value

as *kitomwa* or ‘village wealth’ (*kitoum* in Kiriwina), not as official origin stories that list previous exchanges (*tetela*) but as relational accounts that explain a person’s reason for crying when seeing a specific *bagi* or *mwali*: “My son is named after this one”, “I gave this for my aunt’s funeral”, “This was used as an engagement gift for so-and-so”, etc. Such histories, like the ones concerning gifts of pigs, may be recounted in village courts at times, but they are used as evidence and not to rank the object. Pig skulls or tusks are often kept as mementos, as well as evidence for exchanges of the past, and can dramatically be held up publicly during a mediation; just mentioning the name of a *mwali* or *bagi* serves the same purpose, even if the object itself has already moved on. Their value empowers these objects’ capacity to bring peace and friendship, to demonstrate moral qualities, to provide travel opportunities and to rationalise death. According to my research, this makes them infinitely valuable to the islanders.

NOTES

1. Names in this initial story are pseudonyms.
2. These include publications by Damon (1980a, 1980b, 1983a, 1983b, 1983c, 1990, 1993, 2000, 2002) for Woodlark (Muyuw) Island; Munn (1983, 1986, 1990) for Gawa Island; and Campbell (1978, 1983a, 1983b, 2002a, 2002b), Malinowski (1920, 1922, 1926, 1929, 1935) and Weiner (1976, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1988, 1992, 1994) for the Trobriand Islands.
3. These are often misidentified as *Spondylus* shell (see Liep 1983: 86).
4. I have never seen them worn on the upper arm as documented by Malinowski (1922, plate XVII) because, I was told, the inside of the shell “bites” the biceps when flexed. Moreover, both decoration and rope prevent their use as armbands. They are typically carried by the rope or in a basket.
5. See Kuehling 2012 for a critique of the supposed gender of *bagi* and *mwali*.

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the value of *kula* objects by focusing on the perspectives of islanders from the southern *kula* region. By linking *kula* practice to death and life, I argue that the objects' value is complex: material, sentimental and personal, created by partnerships in time and space. *Kula* valuables are valuable because they are managed by the most respected elders, occupy the minds of the those considered the most intelligent people of the region, and serve to build relationships, as well as test the honesty and integrity of individuals. They are also valued for their capacity to provide hospitality and solidarity, to repair conflicts and to express love and grief.

Keywords: Kula Ring valuables, accumulated histories, *kula* exchange, material culture, Dobu Island, Papua New Guinea

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WITHOUT PRECEDENT: SHIFTING PROTOCOLS IN THE USE OF RONGELAPESE NAVIGATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

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At the onset of light winds characteristic of the traditional voyaging season known as *rak*, in June of 2015, the protégé of one of the last reputed navigators in the Marshall Islands attempted a canoe journey under extraordinary social conditions. The elder, who had trained secretly in his youth on the northwestern atoll of Rongelap, had only recently (in 2006) received permission from his chief to attempt a trial at sea to become a navigator and to pass on his knowledge to an apprentice.¹ This sharing of navigational knowledge extended beyond direct family lines of inheritance for the first time in the Rongelap community. Complicating an already delicate balance between, on the one hand, the imperative for cultural revival of an art on the brink of being lost forever and, on the other hand, respect for chiefly authority and maintenance of family prestige, the navigator became severely ill just a few days before the 2015 voyage. His protégé made the bold decision to set sail without his teacher. I contend that an apprentice navigator demonstrating his prowess without his teacher was unprecedented under traditional chiefly protocols, which restrict the use of traditional specialist knowledge in the Rongelapese community. Nonetheless, such a shift in etiquette might have been the only viable path to ensure cultural survival amidst encroaching environmental and social impacts.

RESTRICTIONS

Specialised voyaging knowledge was especially powerful in the Marshall Islands during the pre-contact era and early historic times. After settlement approximately 2,000 years ago, building and sailing the lateen-rigged voyaging outrigger canoes, predicting the weather and strategising the timing of voyages based on astronomical observations, and navigating by sensing disrupted wave patterns enabled widespread communication within and beyond the two main island chains. This resulted in the greatest geographical extent of a single linguistic group in Oceania (Rehg 1995). Inter-island voyaging connected island communities, making life on these resource-poor coral atolls possible. The first Western contact with the Marshallese was chronicled by the Spanish explorer Álvaro de Saavedra Cerón, who sighted several northern atolls—including Rongelap—in 1528 and then went ashore at either Bikini or Enewetak in 1529 (Fig. 1). This moment, and occasional

brief visits in the 16th century by other Spanish explorers along the galleon route, did not significantly alter these traditional patterns of voyaging (Hezel 1983). Observations from the early historic period suggest that the highly specialised proprietary knowledge and techniques remained tightly held by members within lineages, such that village elders or hereditary navigators controlled their use and transmission. Synthesising this information, D'Arcy (2006: 94-97) argues that throughout Oceania the restrictions and tight controls on the dissemination of navigation, weather forecasting and astronomy, and to a lesser extent canoe-building, contributed to a fragility of seafaring institutions that made the voyaging cultures vulnerable to sudden catastrophic events. For example, natural disasters and introduced Western epidemics could annihilate a community's seafaring expertise very quickly.

A glimpse into the pre-contact social structure and regulations of proprietary seafaring knowledge in the Marshall Islands comes from the German Catholic missionary and long-time resident August Erdland (1914: 99-101) who documented four levels of hierarchy, mostly pertaining to land tenure. The *kajur*, or commoners, were effectively serfs with rights to some

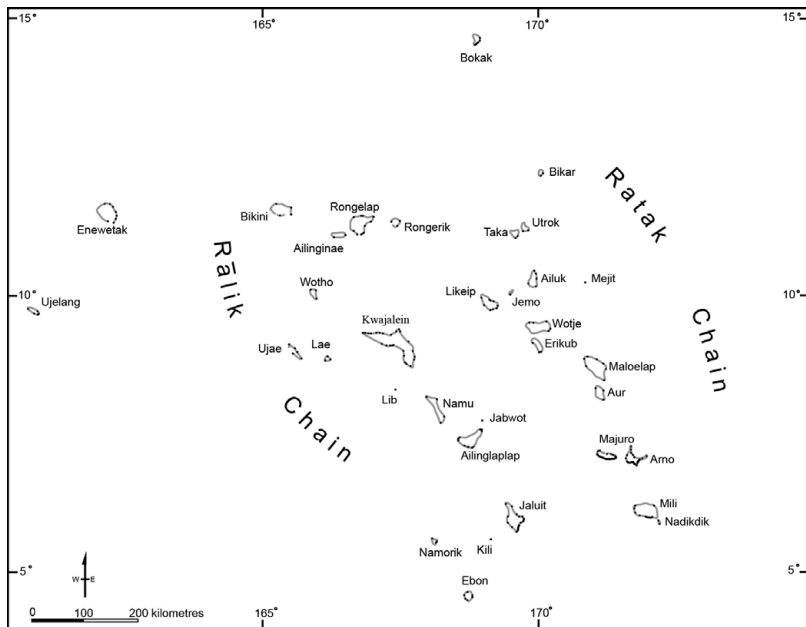


Figure 1. Map of the Marshall Islands.

of the resources on a single allotment of land; the *ledikdik* were commoners with elevated advisory status to the chiefs, with rights to a single allotment of land inheritable by their descendants in perpetuity; the *buirak* of low chiefly lineages held rights to more than one allotment of land; and the *iroij* of the highest chiefly authority maintained rights to land on the same atoll and occasionally on other atolls. The advisory *ledikdik* also had a class of *atok*—“strong and powerful” individuals with specialist skill, knowledge and wisdom, including male and female warriors, medicinal healers, sorcerers and navigators. Their positions were hereditary—the title and associated knowledge were passed on to the eldest skilled child after the death of his or her *atok* parent.

Erdland’s (1914: 99-101) description suggests that the distinct yet related cultural domains of inter-island voyaging—canoe-building, weather forecasting, astronomy and navigation—were tightly controlled within this tiered social and political system. The voyaging specialists of the *atok* class worked with their *iroij* in a reciprocal relationship—in return for providing the *iroij* with the means of inter-island transportation and communication, the specialists were taken care of by their chiefs. According to a narrative collected by Tobin (2002: 388), canoe-building specialists received special gifts for their services such as mats, rope and food, while the regular workers—hundreds in numbers—received food during construction of the canoes. Given that inter-island voyaging facilitated cultural survival, navigators were held in the highest regard—for their knowledge, technical expertise, and personal fortitude. Among the neighbouring Carolinian atolls, for instance, skilled and intrepid navigators could attain status and prestige greater than that of a chief (Alkire 1965; Peterson 2009: 115).

The system of reciprocity between the *atok* voyaging specialists and *iroij*, as documented by Erdland (1914: 99-101), resonates with descriptions of ancient cosmologies. According to Carucci (1997: 207), *iroij* served as living intermediaries between their people and ancient deified chiefs. Intercessory prayers by the *iroij* helped the commoners obtain productivity of land and marine resources, and in return, the commoners offered a portion of that food abundance to their chiefs. Just as these exchanges were ritualised, the seafaring specialists of the *atok* class worked for their *iroij* under strict protocols of knowledge use and transmission. The *iroij* permitted their navigators and weather forecasters and, to a lesser extent, their canoe builders, to impart the specialist knowledge to only a few apprentices. Usually the voyaging specialists passed on their knowledge to their children. Only a select number of individuals within a few lineages (*bwij*) held these specialised forms of knowledge. Alson Kelen,² the navigation apprentice introduced above, spent part of his childhood listening to elders’ stories from Bikini and describes the enduring power of this lineage-based seafaring knowledge:

Bwij is the family lineage that holds the power on land. Things come down through the *bwij*. The elders will sit around the fire and consider who will be the next in line, even if the parent of the unborn child is still a child himself! They all focus on that unborn child. Once born, he will absorb the stories of his grandparents so the navigational skills from the whole lineage and broader clan will transfer to him. It is a big decision that is only shared among a few people. Sometimes this might involve two or three children. Some may be selected to learn canoe-building and others medicine. Navigation is more sacred than canoe-building and weather forecasting. It involves higher training. And you train from the time you are a baby with the motion of a basket floating on the water until you grow up. Canoe-building can be learned later, but navigation you learn from the moment you lay down in that basket as a baby. That is a lot of commitment from the *bwij*. The chiefs own the knowledge. (Kelen 2015)

The restriction in the transfer of voyaging knowledge, especially navigation, reinforced a professional secrecy and rivalry between navigators of different chiefly authorities, which led to the development of distinctive lineage-based schools of navigation (Davenport 1960: 23; Erdland 1914: 77; Krämer and Nevermann 1938: 215) where, as Kelen succinctly states, “the chiefs own the knowledge”. Unlike the descriptions of the culturally distinctive, formal schools of navigation among the neighbouring Carolinian atolls, there has been little ethnographic attention to regional differences in the Marshall Islands. Many of the early studies conducted by German ethnologists in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were centred on Jaluit in the southern region of the western Rālik chain. The so-called stick charts acquired during that time largely map the southern Rālik chain, and it would thus not be surprising if a particular school of navigation once characterised this region. Krämer and Nevermann (1938) recorded the name of this area as Rak in Meto ‘Southern Ocean’ and other quadrants in the archipelago as En in Meto ‘Northern Ocean’ for the northern part of the western chain, Ratak En ‘Northern Sunrise’ for the northern area of the eastern chain, and Ratak Rak ‘Southern Sunrise’ for the southern atolls of the eastern chain. These and other named seas likely developed their own variations in navigation. Unfortunately, there is very little information to reconstruct regional or smaller scale lineage-based variations in navigation. This paucity of information may reflect the Jaluit-centred early ethnographic research, the state of decline of voyaging at the time of that German research, and the limited ability of the ethnographers to engage active navigators. It appears that one navigation school in the northern Rālik chain went unnoticed by these early ethnographers and remained somewhat intact through the first waves of colonial disruptions.

DISRUPTIONS

Societal changes wrought by successive waves of foreign influences and administrations greatly contributed to the decline of traditional voyaging culture in the Marshall Islands. Starting in the mid-19th century, periods of missionisation, economic development, militarisation and nuclear testing resulted in radical transformations in lifestyle and customary practice. Among the myriad social changes were the waning of spiritual meanings associated with navigation and a decrease in the power of the chiefs to regulate the use of navigation.

The embracing of Christianity with the arrival of American Protestant missionaries on Ebon in 1857 undoubtedly resulted in the loss of some of the deep spiritual beliefs and associated rituals of navigation. Nonetheless, some enduring or remembered connections between navigators and the spirit world were ethnographically recorded in the early 1900s. For instance, navigators and their sailing crew in the northern Rālik chain were prohibited from using particular words when sailing to Rongelap (Krämer and Nevermann 1938: 221). Navigators also described how spirits (*ekjab*) residing in marine and bird life, as well as in reefs and waves, benevolently guided disoriented navigators safely toward land (Erdland 1914). Other traditional beliefs regarding voyaging and navigation remain largely hidden from the ethnohistoric accounts but were likely shaped or further eroded through the direct impacts of colonisation.

The German colonial administration, established in 1885 to acquire and export copra, altered the traditional hierarchical power of the chiefs in several ways. It prevented warfare, which precluded *iroij* from exerting their influence through military prowess. It also created a tax in the form of copra and, as the German officials collected the copra from the *iroij* rather than directly from individuals, they essentially strengthened and formalised the power of a select set of *iroij*. It also terminated the customary ability of commoners to depose of despotic chiefs. This led to the collapse of the social structure, as recorded by Erdland (1914), into the three levels of *ri-jerbal* ‘commoners’, *aḷap* ‘lineage head’ and *iroij* ‘chief’. New interactions between the elevated, divine-like *iroij* and the German colonial authorities and their secular interests in commerce led to different relationships between the chiefs and the commoners (Carucci 1997). The German Administration began securing the exclusive use of the harbour at Jaluit and special trading privileges in the western Rālik chain. The Germans also elevated the status of some Marshallese navigators to that of a “real captain”, so that they could sail throughout the islands to collect copra and other forms of tribute for their chiefs (Knight 1999: 109).

The most immediate and direct colonial impacts on seafaring during this time period were prohibitions and bans on the use of voyaging canoes and traditional navigation. The German Administration placed clear restrictions on inter-island canoe travel. They discouraged voyaging because of its presumed inherent dangers, the costs of searching for and retrieving shipwrecked and adrift islanders, and lost revenues with their trading companies (Alkire 1978: 141; Hezel 1995: 108). The colonial German Administration's discouragement of traditional navigation was not unique to the Marshall Islands. David Lewis (1994: 17) for instance reported that a canoe captain from Ninigo in the Bismarck Archipelago specifically attributed the loss of traditional navigational knowledge on that atoll to the effect of the regulations imposed by the German Administration.

The Marshallese developed a distinctive cultural response to the new forms of knowledge introduced by Westerners. In many contexts, scholars have observed that the Marshallese have often rejected, or acted ambivalently towards, their cultural traditions, while valorising the "other" (Carucci 2001; Walsh 2003). This inversion of tradition (Thomas 1992) began in the late 19th century when the chiefs expanded their economic power through control of European maritime technologies. They used their wealth to begin purchasing European designed schooners from German and British trading companies, starting with the few wealthiest *iroij* in 1885 and ending with nearly every *iroij* owning at least one small schooner by 1910 (Spennemann 2005: 33). The chief of Jaluit, for instance, extended his sphere of influence northward to Rongelap and Bikini with sailing vessels that had been given to him by Europeans in exchange for extending copra production (Carucci 1997: 203).

The newly acquired European schooners had a strong impact on the collapse of the social infrastructure behind canoe voyaging. The increased carrying capacity of the European vessels was immediately apparent to the chiefs. Since they tightly regulated the use and transmission of voyaging knowledge within lineages, they monopolised this new maritime technology. The shift from traditional canoes to European schooners was accelerated by the chiefs' perception of the prestige derived from owning this novel European maritime technology. Marshallese mariners, influenced by their chiefs, readily adopted or adapted Western boat construction and design. Generally, the lack of chiefly motivation and support for the traditional canoe-building skills and knowledge threatened community support for the building, maintenance and sailing of traditional canoes (Spennemann 2005).

Still, some patterns of inter-atoll communication continued toward the end of the 19th century during the time of the German colonial administration and were in part shaped by the principles of traditional chiefly ownership and reciprocal obligations. Spennemann (2005) argues that chiefs maintained rights to land, people and resources on more than one atoll, and chiefly forged

inter-atoll alliances provided relief from natural calamities. For instance, in 1909 a chief on the southern Ratak atoll of Maloelap exercised his right to collect birds and turtles on the far northern uninhabited atoll of Bokak. By the early 20th century, traditional sailing in the Marshall Islands was for the most part limited to voyages between closely spaced atolls and within lagoons (Giesberts 1910); however, some seafaring traditions within the archipelago persisted amidst the colonial impositions.

At the end of World War I in 1919, the Marshall Islands were given to Japan as under a League of Nations mandate, and Japan's influence on the Marshallese culture in general, and voyaging in particular, was considerable but not absolute. The Japanese aimed to "civilise" the Marshallese through their doctrine of assimilation. The Japanese altered the local political structure through the creation of government chiefs, positions that were not legitimised in traditional village-based or community authority. The Japanese also introduced the Marshallese to the practical benefits of formal education and health care, as well as continuing restrictions on the use of canoes and traditional navigation that had been initiated under the German Administration to minimise search and rescue operations (Alkire 1978: 141).

During World War II, the Japanese war effort had a transformative influence on the Marshall Islanders' lives, one that was highly variable from atoll to atoll (Carucci 2004). Some Marshallese faced extreme hardships under an increasingly violent Japanese occupation, conditions that actually encouraged a resurgence of local sailing practices. They suffered physical danger, exhaustion, ongoing air raids and shortages of food and shelter as the war continued, especially on those atolls that were by-passed in the initial invasion. With dwindling food supplies, starvation was particularly acute on atolls with heavily garrisoned Japanese bases, including Jaluit, Mili, Maloelap and Wotje, and some Marshallese feared Japanese threats of extermination (Falgout *et al.* 2008: 95, 141). Some Marshallese made the daring decision to escape on their canoes by sailing or drifting on the ocean to distant atolls. After invoking traditional kinship ties for nurturance and seeking sacred protection through a combination of traditional and Christian beliefs, they sought refuge via the sea. By doing so, they risked dying at sea, being killed by Japanese forces, facing the unknown treatment of the Americans and leaving behind family members who might be killed for retribution (Falgout *et al.* 2008: 159-65). In another case, the Japanese on Enewetak actually used their canoes to transport their soldiers between islets (Carucci 1989).

During this period, the Marshallese began to implicitly devalue their traditional practices in favour of powerful ideas of development and progress (Walsh 2003). The US military and subsequent administration of the region, first under the command of the US Navy and later in 1947 as the US Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, left strong impressions of American power,

wealth and knowledge on the Marshallese. The Japanese had expected the Marshallese to assimilate into their expanding empire during the initial colonial era, but then treated them inhumanely during the military era as the tide of the war shifted in favour of the Americans. Witnessing the defeat of the Japanese through American military might, the Marshallese drew a quick contrast between the power of the Americans, manifested also in their generosity and benevolence, and that of the Japanese.

With favourable impressions of the US, the Marshallese began to refashion Americans as chiefs by attributing the source of American intelligence and military power to their mythological trickster, Letao (or Etao) (Carucci 1989). Stories describe how Letao escaped southward from his pursuers in Mili after tricking their chief into roasting himself alive in an earthen oven. Then after escapades in Kiribati and other island groups, Letao was finally captured and trapped in a bottle by the Americans. According to the stories, the US military tapped into Letao's extreme powers, as evident to the Marshallese in the destructive capabilities of the American bombs during the war (Carucci 1989: 91-92; McArthur 2000: 92). The mythological connection to Letao further contributed to a growing cultural valorisation of non-traditional knowledge and practices in the post-war era. In 1946, and for several years thereafter, Marshallese from a few atolls witnessed considerable power that only make sense in terms of Letao's destructive force—a power that would have far reaching consequences for the Rongelapese navigation traditions.

FALLOUT

The sea of Adjoklā 'Our Northern Wind', as described by Rongelapese elders, encompasses the atolls of Rongelap, Rongerik, Ailinginae and Bikini. Through *bwebwenato* 'stories, oral traditions', the descendant communities trace their ancestry to Lainjin, whose mother Litarmelu first learned to read the surface of the ocean from two foreign navigators hailing from distant westward islands. Captured in primordial narratives of Litarmelu is her learning of navigation: lying prone in a canoe, she was towed around a circular reef to feel water movements that simulate island-induced waves, like those used in the remote sensing of land from ocean-going canoes (Tobin 2002: 117). Although not formally named, a derivative school of navigation developed in the region of Adjoklā, centred on a similar reef formation on Rongelap.³ The atoll of Rongelap is almost circular, with most of the atoll's islets concentrated along the eastern side. Since the western side is mostly void of islets, swells flowing from the west enter through a deep pass and travel across the lagoon. At one of the tiny eastern islets, navigators apparently noticed the intersection between the westerly swell that had travelled across the lagoon and waves that had dissipated greatly from the breaking of the easterly trade wind-driven swell.

In about a metre of water, this small circular reef simulated how ocean swells transform in the vicinity of islands. This natural wave simulation became the focus of what was to develop into a regional school that attracted navigation apprentices from Rongerik, Ailinginae and Bikini, as well as Kwajalein far to the south. According to my Rongelapese consultants, eight students were actively learning wave navigation there in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Over the course of a year in 2005 and 2006 I had the opportunity to talk to three elders who had learned navigation at the reef on Rongelap: Isao Eknilang, who was born in 1941; his younger sister by five years Lijohn Eknilang; and their cousin Willie Mwekto, who was born in 1948. The Adjoklā traditions, as remembered by these three stewards of navigational knowledge, endured despite the overall decline in Marshallese voyaging during the first half of the 20th century. These northern atolls were geographically distant from the colonial administrative centres and this relative isolation likely fostered the perpetuation of the navigation traditions. However, such a remote place was ideal for US military strategists to plan the testing of advanced weaponry, the fallout from which directly impacted the lives of the remaining stewards of Rongelapese navigation.

Between 1946 and 1958, the U.S. Government detonated 67 atomic and thermonuclear bombs on the atolls of Bikini and Enewetak as part of its post-World War II nuclear weapons program. The 1954 Castle Bravo test was particularly devastating. The unprecedented explosion, equivalent to the force of 15 megatons of trinitrotoluene (TNT), vaporised islands on Bikini and the surrounding sea water and formed a giant mushroom cloud of coral debris that released radioactive fallout. The Rongelapese were not evacuated until two days after the Bravo test, despite a westerly wind shift observed in advance of the blast. They suffered acute radiation sickness due to direct exposure and subsequently through contamination of their terrestrial and marine food resources. Told it was safe to return in 1957, the Rongelapese remained living in a nuclear contaminated world until their self-exile in 1985. The consequential damages of the Bravo test severely undermined their health and subsistence, as well as their community integrity; their psychosocial well-being was further damaged by their treatment as human subjects in biomedical experiments (Barker 2013; Johnston and Barker 2008).

In an instant, the Bravo test prevented the Eknilang siblings and Mwekto, then in their early childhood, from continuing their instruction in navigation on Rongelap. Another Rongelapese child, six-year old Korent Joel who would come to be known as Captain Korent in the maritime community, retained clear impressions of the blast that he witnessed from Kwajalein some 190 km to the south. After returning to Rongelap in 1959, Joel began quietly learning from his ailing grandfather Hemmerik Lewia. He took Joel

to the simulation reef, sailed across the lagoon of Rongelap and voyaged to nearby Ailinginae and Rongerik. Starting at the age of eleven, Joel studied navigation for five years until his grandfather succumbed to severe radiation sickness. Feeling that Rongelap was still contaminated, Joel's family sent him to Honolulu. When the rest of the Rongelapese relocated to Mejjatto and Ebeye on Kwajalein and various locations on Majuro in 1985, they became, in their own words, "nuclear refugees", living in exile from their ancestral homeland.

Joel describes the missed opportunity for him and others to become navigators of Rongelap (Genz 2011: 12-13). Not only did he and the others lose their teachers to the effects of radiation exposure, but they also lost the requisite community infrastructure to build and sail voyaging canoes once the community became displaced and relocated to distant islands. In particular, the fragmented Rongelapese community described the poor sailing conditions on Mejjatto (Barker 2013: 66-67). Ultimately Joel and other aspiring Rongelapese navigators lost the chance to *ruprup jōkur*. This nautical expression and proverb, literally translated as "to break the shell", connotes a ritualistic process of initiation. Demonstrating their navigational prowess at sea under test conditions would entail a simultaneous intellectual growth, social transformation and chiefly sanctioning of becoming a *ri-meto*, 'person of the sea' or navigator.

Complicating Joel's ability to take his *ruprup jōkur* navigation test while living in exile was the fact that the teachings of his grandfather had not been sanctioned by his chief. Shame would have come to his grandfather if the chief had learned of this unauthorised teaching of navigation. Joel eventually became a ship captain, working on large government transport vessels using sextant-based celestial navigation. For the next 30 years Joel was unable to share with anyone what he had learned on Rongelap for fear of heightening the shame from having stepped beyond the chiefly authority that owned his knowledge. Joel feared a threat of exile from the Rongelapese community if he had acknowledged that he knew how to navigate.

The social fallout from the forced relocation of the Adjoklā communities and resulting termination of the navigation training on Rongelap was profound. Traditional voyaging in this last Marshallese stronghold of navigation was completely abandoned. Pronounced societal changes in the post-nuclear era introduced by the administration of the U.S. Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands compounded the loss of traditional canoe use and navigation. The "motor-boat revolution" of the 1960s introduced a new technology that was symbolic of prestige, modernity and success in a newly monetized world (Marshall 2004: 62-65; Miller 2010: 99). Joel describes how elder Toshiro Jokon ran out of fuel while motoring between Maloelap and Majuro. Joel, who by now had moved up to commanding the search-and-rescue missions, was called on to locate Jokon. Ironically, Jokon had previously captained a

traditional voyaging canoe from Aitutaki to Rarotonga in the Cook Islands during the 1992 Festival of Pacific Arts (Finney 2003: 47-48). But even after Joel saved him, he could not share with anyone that he knew how to navigate by the waves. With Jokon's passing in 2003, Joel still could not publically claim expertise as a *ri-meto* despite his reputation, quietly spoken in the maritime community, as one of the last traditional navigators in the Marshall Islands.

REVIVAL (PHASE 1)—THE NAVIGATOR

In 2003, prior to the maritime community's perception of Joel as the "last navigator", the protocols on sharing voyaging knowledge had shifted in two distinct ways. These changes enabled Joel to call for a concerted effort to document wave navigation as the first phase of the voyaging revitalisation project (2005–2009). The first shift involved a democratisation of canoe-building and sailing, where the knowledge essentially escaped the strict chiefly regulations of lineage-based traditions and became open to everyone (Miller 2010). What had started out as a salvage documentation project of canoe designs and the construction process on a few atolls in the late 1980s shifted to a training program for youth to build their own canoes through the community organisation Waan Aelōñ in Majol (literally Canoes of the Marshall Islands) (Alessio and Kelen 2004). As a result, the restrictive chiefly protocols of canoe-building had thoroughly loosened. This enabled a second shift that involved the possibility of sharing Rongelapese navigational knowledge beyond family lines of inheritance. To restore the social and cultural health of their fragmented community, the Rongelapese discussed the construction of a community centre on Majuro in the late 1990s. They envisioned that Rongelapese elders would instruct the youth about their customs, history, land rights and traditional knowledge, especially canoe-building and navigation (Johnston and Barker 2008). Plans to build the community centre stalled, but in 2003 Joel, as the presumed last navigator, accepted the responsibility of resurrecting the nearly lost art of wave navigation.

Joel faced a paradox in the use of his Rongelapese knowledge. At the start of the revival project in 2005, Joel faced a paradox relating to his use of Rongelapese knowledge (Genz 2011). Any attempt to document and revitalise navigation ran the risk of re-contextualising his traditional knowledge and eroding its relationship to chiefly authority, and it is precisely such chiefly regulation that had continued to give navigation its particular cultural significance. They needed other Marshallese, in addition to Rongelapese, to build a voyaging canoe and they recognised my ability as a researcher to facilitate the documentation—two outside entities that could disrupt the secrecy of Rongelapese knowledge. While ancient chiefly potency had been undergoing substantial change over the past 150 years (Carucci 1997), the

tight link between navigation and chiefly power that constrained Joel's ability to share his knowledge in 2005 seems to have been in place at least half a century earlier when he began learning on Rongelap. Nonetheless, for nearly five decades he felt an obligation to maintain the navigational knowledge within his family in deference to his *iroij*; he would not risk damaging his relationship to his *iroij* by violating the chiefly protocols. In response to Joel's dilemma, the chiefs gave Joel and others from Rongelap permission to share their navigational knowledge with Kelen, an extended family member from Bikini who would serve as Joel's apprentice navigator and who was already trained in ethnographic documentation. Kelen would thus retain the knowledge, while also serving as a conduit for sharing information with other Marshallese and academics.

Even with Kelen's unique positioning, the knowledge has remained highly secretive, carefully hidden and strategically linked to the power of the *iroij* (Genz 2011). The virtual cessation of long-distance canoe travel in the Marshall Islands has not automatically fostered the impetus to share the extant knowledge. In fact, it has worked to maintain and possibly elevate the prestige of navigation from earlier times precisely because it is so rarely used today. The biggest challenge Joel, Kelen and I faced was the enduring value placed on navigation, as demonstrated by a concealment of knowledge. For instance, sentiments of losing one's identity as a navigator were so strong that some elders preferred, against the directive of their chief, to not share their knowledge. Retaining the knowledge affords the prestige of elite navigator status for one's lineage, clan and atoll community. The offset of this is that the knowledge is clearly at risk of being lost forever with the passing of its last custodians.

A tension exists between respecting chiefly restrictions on who can share navigational knowledge with whom, and the diminishing or elevating of status and prestige. Kelen and I worked with Joel who, after nearly half a century of waiting, finally received chiefly permission to prepare for his inaugural sea trial. Yet Joel's Rongelapese elders showed various degrees of reluctance to share their knowledge with him. Amidst this somewhat tense atmosphere, Joel continued his shore-based learning over the course of a year. He sought to finalise his understanding of wave navigation, which included learning about the waves from a Western scientific perspective (Genz *et al.* 2009). His growing comprehension led to a voyage at sea after 2006, which served as his *ruprup jōkur* test to finally "break the shell" and become a formally recognised navigator.

In preparation for this voyage, Waan Aelōn in Majol built a 11 m outrigger voyaging canoe named *Jitdam Kapeel*, which translates as "searching for experiential knowledge" and proverbially means "seeking knowledge guarantees wisdom" (Stone *et al.* 2000). The canoe would serve as an

experiential learning platform for the navigator apprentice and his sailing crew, allowing them to begin to absorb the embodied knowledge of wave movements under Joel's direction. This sea-based training would be a fundamental step to pass on Joel's knowledge. The canoe, however, required substantial repairs to its hull and outrigger complex at the time of the voyage. We enlisted the help from two sailors stationed on Kwajalein, who allowed Joel to navigate their sloop-rigged 11-m yacht 190 km directly westward to the small atoll of Ujae, with the requisite condition that we cover the compass with duct tape and stow the other navigational instruments.

The 2006 voyage between Kwajalein and Ujae served as Joel's belated *ruprup jōkur* test to become a navigator, and a research opportunity for Kelen and myself to learn about the rhythmic motions of the sea (Genz 2014). Constrained by U.S. military clearance for entry onto the Kwajalein base, our only opportunity to sail was during the remnants of a severe storm. A strong wind-driven swell from the west masked the more subtle wave patterns. While knowledge of storm-generated wave patterns typically comprises part of the navigational toolkit among surviving Pacific navigation traditions (Lewis 1994), Joel had not received formal training about such conditions. Midway to Ujae Joel vainly searched for the expected island-induced wave patterns, but an inadvertent spotting of the tops of the coconut trees of the tiny atoll of Lae close to our target destination indicated to Joel that he had navigated correctly despite not detecting any of the wave signatures. The fact that this moment was his intellectual transformation of *ruprup jōkur* became clear a few days later, after his newfound sense of confidence and direct return route to Kwajalein (Genz 2015).

Joel had just “broken the shell” to become a recognised expert on navigation (*ri-meto*) throughout the Marshall Islands. Headlines in the local newspaper confirmed with the sailors and broader community what they had long suspected—that Joel could navigate by the waves and that he was among the very last of the “real captains”. The only other titled *ri-meto* was an elderly navigator on Ujae who recognised that Joel alone had both the knowledge and physical stamina to traditionally navigate at sea. With Joel attaining the chiefly-sanctioned title of navigator, he was now in a position to formally train Kelen as his apprentice. However, Kelen knew he was not yet ready for his own *ruprup jōkur* test. We had already talked at length with elders about their interpretations of their stick chart models (Genz 2016), but what Kelen really needed was sea experience under Joel's guidance. Kelen and I began planning a northern trip of 100 km from Majuro to Aur as a navigational exercise, one we attempted in 2007 and 2009. Unfortunately, these planned voyages were precluded by Joel's diminishing health. Kelen, as the apprentice navigator, found a way to undertake this voyage, which involved an unusual and unprecedented shift in how navigational knowledge is used and passed on.

REVIVAL (PHASE 2)—THE APPRENTICE

Lacking precedent, the second phase of the revival project (2010–2015) involved an apprentice acquiring and demonstrating navigational knowledge without the guidance of a master navigator. This started for Kelen in May of 2010 when *Jitdam, Kapeel* made her first open-water crossing from Majuro to Aur and back under sail with strong winds. The crew faced high wind-generated seas that were part of the normal ending of the windy *añōneañ* season. With 30-knot winds blowing from the east, the canoe could track northward to Aur on an ideal beam-reach without the need for shunting. Joel, with recovering health, did not feel up to the task of sailing on the canoe. In fact, a wind advisory for all crafts was in effect, but Kelen was intent on making the journey. His team of canoe-builders had coated the hull with fibreglass for extra strength and built airtight compartments in the bulkheads to produce a virtually unsinkable vessel. Despite Kelen's confidence in the structural integrity of the canoe, Joel cautiously decided to stay aboard the escort vessel while Kelen commanded the canoe with six experienced sailors. Kelen suggested that Joel audibly guide the canoe through VHF (very high frequency) radio communication.

The 2010 Aur voyage, however, did not unfold according to the plan. Shortly after departure Kelen's handheld VHF radio on board the canoe malfunctioned as a result of depleted batteries. Despite the lack of communication between the vessels, Kelen successfully guided *Jitdam, Kapeel* to Aur and back to Majuro:

Captain Korent [Joel] was still very weak from his sickness, and had to be helped on board the escort vessel. The plan was for Captain Korent to radio directions to me on board the canoe. We got to the pass leading out of Majuro around midnight, with blowing winds and white capping seas.

I radioed to Captain Korent to give me the swell to Aur, and he said, "No. It was too rough and the trip should be aborted." I told Captain Korent that I wanted to test the canoe, as it had never before sailed in the ocean. I reminded the crew that it was reinforced with fiberglass and had airtight bulkheads, so that it could not sink.

The distance between Aur and Majuro is 60 miles [100 km], and we would have made it to Aur by sunrise but we had to repeatedly wait for the escort vessel during the night. At about nine o'clock in the morning we spotted the first signs of Aur.

This trip strengthened Captain Korent. He had to be helped on board the escort vessel by hand, and I told the other captain to not let him do anything. But by the time we had completed the trip, Captain Korent's health had returned and he was doing some of the work, such as dropping the anchor. I couldn't believe it, but then I realized that Captain Korent was a person of the ocean, and that is where he belonged. If such a person stays on land too long, their health begins to deteriorate. (Kelen 2014)

Kelen was now on his way to being the link between the ancestral knowledge, embodied in Joel, and the future generations of sailors under his tutelage at Waan Aelōñ in Majol. But Kelen's journey toward becoming a recognised navigator faced yet another setback involving, once again, illness and a shift in the protocols of using navigational knowledge.

Kelen and I invited John Huth, a particle physicist at Harvard University, and Gerbrant van Vledder, a wave modeller from Delft University in the Netherlands, to accompany Joel on a voyage to better understand an enigmatic island-induced wave transformation. We planned a return voyage from Majuro to Aur, with Joel remaining on the escort vessel to radio navigational information to Kelen on board the canoe. Kelen and the sailing crew would gain experience, while Joel would demonstrate to the scientists the waves he was using to pilot the escort vessel toward Aur. Heightening the significance of this journey was coverage by the *New York Times* magazine. A writer and photographer came to document this collaborative, interdisciplinary search for the waves that would finally, in Joel's mind, validate the idea of wave piloting. Days before their arrival in Majuro, however, Joel developed an infection in his leg, which, complicated by diabetes, later resulted in amputation (Fig. 2). Without Joel, Kelen's options narrowed. We considered Eknilang, but he downplayed his abilities by stating he "would get us lost."



Figure 2. Captain Korent at his home in Majuro, looking at a wave map prepared by physicist John Huth. Photo courtesy of Mark Peterson/Redux, 2015.

Without a navigator, one emerging option was to conceptualise the voyage as a training exercise for Kelen and the sailing crew on how to handle the canoe on the open ocean. Kelen decided he would lead the canoe as the navigation apprentice, absorb as much information from the ocean as possible, and relate this to Joel upon our return. Three independent GPS (Global Positioning System) units aboard the escort vessel would provide navigational help if he needed it.

This breach of protocol in the use of navigation had no precedent. This was certainly not Kelen's *ruprup jokur* navigation test. If pushed, he would admit to others that he was a navigation apprentice, but he preferred to avoid any suggestion of his growing knowledge of the waves. When talking with the community, he prefaced the discussion with the notion that he would be "guessing" along the way. Taken at face value, it would appear that he would in fact be trying his best to work it out. But being humble when discussing one's knowledge is a distinctive Marshallese form of communication. By telling others that he would be guessing the location of the canoe, the elders in the community might conclude that he did in fact know how to navigate. Since this was not meant to be Kelen's moment, he would simply tell people, when asked, that he and the sailing crew were on a fishing trip, and "guessed" their way to Aur.

The canoe left the protected lagoon waters of Majuro on 17 June 2015, with 20-knot easterly winds generating a strong easterly swell (Fig. 3). As we continued to sail a northern route, the stars were clearly visible, with sightings of Limanman (Polaris) ahead and, facing astern, the southern position of the kite asterism Limaaakak (the Southern Cross). The stars remained visible throughout the journey, but the waves became so steep that Kelen could not discern the more subtle patterns that would have indicated the path toward Aur. He steered the canoe as close-hauled to the wind as possible, estimating that the canoe would arrive just windward of the atoll.

Just before dawn, Kelen described our position over the radio, which was the exact position displayed on the GPS map in the cabin of the escort vessel. We were about 15 kms southeast of Aur. We sighted the atoll mid-morning and ultimately made landfall on the islet of Tabal on the northern part of the atoll. With no discernible wave patterns, Kelen had impressively determined his location from a solitary focus on back-sighting Limaaakak and maintaining a tight angle to the wind. Compared to the outbound voyage, the sea and wind during the return voyage to Majuro afforded excellent sailing. Gently rolling swells from the east with light winds under 10 knots characterized most of the voyage, and Kelen guided the canoe in a slight arc back to Rongrong, the farthest northwestern islet of Majuro. Aboard the canoe, the sailing crew began quietly referring to Kelen as "captain," the adoption of the English word that means Marshallese navigator. And while the residents on the island of Tabal on Aur admired Kelen for guiding *Jitdam Kapeel* to their shores, in



Figure 3. *Jitdam Kapeel* departing Majuro. Photo courtesy of Mark Peterson/ Redux, 2015.



Figure 4. Apprentice navigator Alson Kelen speaking at our ceremonial welcome to Tabal, Aur, with (from left to right) oceanographer Gerbrant van Vledder, physicist John Huth and author Joseph Genz. Photo courtesy of Mark Peterson/Redux, 2015.

his public speech at our ceremonial reception he downplayed his navigational accomplishment with humility. Reflection on his navigation as guesswork likely cemented for the sailing crew that he was in fact their captain (Fig. 4).

Without Joel, we were still not that much closer to understanding an enigmatic wave pattern that extends between atolls, although the accompanying physicist and oceanographer gained adequate experience to begin to revise their computer models and simulations. These paths of waves may be the result of concentrations of reflected wave energy that often link pairs of islands (Huth 2013; see also Genz 2016 for a synthesis of the techniques of Marshallese wave piloting). Importantly, Kelen began the process of internalising the feeling of these wave patterns. While he expressed his own doubts, the sailing crew placed trust in his ability to find the way:

In comparing the voyage of 2010 and this voyage of 2015, I tell people that the voyage now is way better than the first one. Before I had guidance from a captain. This time I was very scared because lives depended on me. I was trusted by many to guide us safely to Tabal and I cannot thank them enough for trusting me with their lives. As we sailed, there were a lot of obstacles and many dangers—dangers with the sea and with the rain, but they still trusted me. (Kelen 2015)

* * *

This story highlights the ways in which Captain Korent Joel and his apprentice navigator Alson Kelen symbolically embody both the century-long decline and the recent resurgence of traditional open ocean navigation. Joel's quest to relearn his Rongelapese ancestors' methods of navigating by the waves is a testament to the resilience and adaptability of tradition. The US nuclear testing distanced Joel and his relatives from "breaking the shell" for nearly half a century. While the Rongelapese continue to live as exiles from their irradiated home islands, Joel's journey to becoming a titled navigator has strengthened the community's ancestral identity as a "people of the sea." In the process of imparting tightly held knowledge to Joel, the Rongelapese custodians of navigational lore lost some of their prestige; however, some of that has recently been recouped with the interest of outside scientists. Complicating these dynamics of the enduring power of navigational knowledge is the unprecedented shift in the protocols of navigation. The 2010 voyage of *Jitdam Kapeel* did not breach the chiefly protocols since technically radio contact afforded Joel the ability to relay directions to Kelen; however, the 2015 trip voyage was undertaken by an apprentice with no teacher present—the only time this has happened in the Marshall Islands in living memory. Kelen's justification for this shift centred on cultural survival.

The ability to deftly negotiate the waning but still powerful traditions in the face of emerging environmental and social issues is paramount for the continuation of this wayfinding knowledge; such knowledge, grounded in a deep ancestral past, can also be invoked to confront those challenges. The Marshall Islands are projected to be among the first nations in the world to experience the synergistic impacts of climate change: the effects of sea-level rise on coastlines and the quality and quantity of freshwater resources; coral reef degradation; diminished agricultural sustainability; and various impacts on human health (Australian Bureau of Meteorology and SCIRO 2014; Campbell 2014; Nurse *et al.* 2014). The Marshallese are examining ways to stay on their island, options to relocate, and legislative measures to mitigate global emissions and concentrations of tropospheric greenhouse gases. In particular, the Majuro Declaration of 2013 captured the political commitment of Pacific Island nations to transition to renewable and sustainable energy in order to keep global warming below a 1.5 °C threshold (Majuro Declaration 2013). The Marshallese government is looking for ways to reduce its national energy expenditure, 70 % of which went to sea and air transportation in 2013.

Kelen, as the director of Waan Aelōn in Majol, envisions a return to sustainable sea transport as a way to lessen dependence on fossil fuels. As part of an emerging broad initiative called the Micronesian Sustainable Transport Center, Kelen aims to construct a fleet of wind-propelled canoes that could transport materials and people throughout the archipelago rather than rely on government transport ships. Also, gasoline costs on the outer atolls reached \$10 per gallon in 2015. Waan Aelōn in Majol has helped some of these local communities build traditional outrigger sailing canoes and modern catamarans to transport copra locally across the lagoons without the prohibitively expensive fuel costs (Alessio and Kelen 2004). Consistent with the 2013 Majuro Declaration and other regional policies, inter-atoll traditional voyaging canoes, along with innovative technologies would assist the Marshallese government in achieving its policy target of reducing its transport emissions (Newell *et al.* 2016; Nuttal 2015; Sustainable Sea Transport Research Programme 2015). Canoe transport would reduce socio-economic vulnerability to external rises in oil prices and direct the nation toward increasing energy independence, as well as lowering carbon emissions in the global mitigation of climate change (Sustainable Sea Transport Research Programme 2015). Kelen's explorations of traditional voyaging with modern technology—fibreglass hulls, internal buoyancy devices, radio-assisted navigation and GPS—are well suited to contemporary Marshallese society with its selective invoking of the past. Other initiatives throughout the Pacific are more symbolic. For instance, the Polynesian Voyaging Society's current Mālama Honua Worldwide Voyage is using *Hōkūle'a* to raise

global awareness of nurturing sustainable environmental practices based on indigenous principles (Polynesian Voyaging Society 2016). But deploying a fleet of traditional voyaging canoes might give the Marshallese an edge as they confront the emerging realities of climate change.

Such a cautiously optimistic glimpse into the future of voyaging in the Marshall Islands must recognise the continuing power and prestige of voyaging and navigation. With Joel's recent passing, a question arises about the enduring but shifting value of chiefly protocols in the use of Rongelapese navigational knowledge. To what extent can traditional chiefly knowledge and ownership of knowledge accommodate the new reality that the revitalisation of Marshallese voyaging and navigation now rests with an untested apprentice who no longer has the guidance of a titled navigator? Local celebrations and chiefly support of the unprecedented 2015 Aur voyage suggest that it is possible to strike a balance between honouring the traditions of chiefly authority and recognising the innovative capacity of Waan Aelōn in Majol leadership. This may in fact be the only viable path toward the cultural revitalisation of Marshallese voyaging.

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NOTES

1. I use the older spellings of place names for ease of recognition but follow the new orthography as reflected in the Marshallese dictionary (Abo *et al.* 1976) for the spellings of Marshallese terms.
2. Here and throughout the article I use the real names of my Marshallese collaborators in accordance with their expressed wishes.
3. Here and throughout the article I recognise the problematic nature of inferring demonstrable occurrences from narratives. It is possible that these narratives may be highly politicised renderings of the world, and many factors impact the memories and retellings of events such as how collective memory may influence an individual's recollections (Yow 2015). However, my key Rongelapese consultants have remained quite consistent over time in their narrations of Litarmelu and the Rongelap training school, and other consultants grounded in geographically distant navigation traditions in the Marshall Islands similarly recognise the importance of the Litarmelu and Rongelap-centred traditions.

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ABSTRACT

The cultural revitalisation of voyaging in the Marshall Islands is gaining momentum under extraordinary social conditions involving shifting protocols in the use of navigational knowledge. The first phase of the project (2005-2009) facilitated an elder from Rongelap in achieving the social status of a titled navigator, a process that involved delicate negotiation between chiefly permission to share knowledge and the resulting loss of meaning and prestige. For the first time, the sharing of the Rongelapese knowledge extended beyond direct family lines of inheritance to an apprentice navigator. The second phase of the project (2010-2015) involved the apprentice undertaking a voyage without the guidance of the master navigator. I contend that an apprentice navigator demonstrating his prowess without the teacher is unprecedented under the enduring chiefly protocols on the restricted use of specialist knowledge in the Rongelapese community, but that such a shift in etiquette might be the only viable path to ensure cultural survival amidst encroaching environmental and social impacts.

Keywords: traditional navigation, Pacific voyaging, indigenous knowledge protocols, cultural revival, nuclear test effects, Rongelap Atoll, Marshall Islands

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REVIEWS

Steven Hooper (Exhibition Lead Curator): *Fiji: Art & Life in the Pacific*, Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia, Norwich, United Kingdom, 15 October 2016 – 12 February 2017. (See also <http://scva.ac.uk/art-and-artists/exhibitions/fiji-art-and-life-in-the-pacific>)

Steven Hooper (Exhibition Catalogue): *Fiji: Art & Life in the Pacific*, University of East Anglia, Norwich, and Fiji Museum, Suva, 2016. 288 pp., illustrations. £25.00 (softback).

RICHARD WOLFE

Auckland War Memorial Museum

A text panel at the entrance to the exhibition *Fiji: Art & Life in the Pacific* asks visitors to look at the objects not as ethnographic specimens, but “as things made with care and respect which were fundamental to the Fijian way of life”. Most of the 253 objects on display may have been originally collected in the name of ethnography, but here they are free of any such associations. Presented in simple and uncluttered surroundings, and mostly in unobtrusive glass cases, each object is shown to advantage against a plain white or black background and supported with informative labels. This is promoted as “the largest and most comprehensive exhibition about Fiji ever assembled”, and the introductory panel also advises that Indigenous Fijians were responsible for “the greatest variety of artworks of any Pacific Island group”.

Fiji: Art & Life in the Pacific—the exhibition and the accompanying eponymous publication—are outcomes of the three-year research project “Fijian Art: Political Power, Sacred Value, Social Transformation and Collecting Since the 18th Century”, based at the Sainsbury Research Unit for the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas at the University of East Anglia, and the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Cambridge. The Principal Investigator of the project was Steven Hooper, Professor of Visual Arts and Director of the Sainsbury Research Unit.

Just over 100 objects in the exhibition are from the collection of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, the largest single lender. Apart from 24 objects from the Fiji Museum, Suva, all others are from either public institutions in the United Kingdom (with 26 from the British Museum) or private collections. *Fiji: Art and Life in the Pacific* is heralded in the main gallery of the Sainsbury Centre by three recent commissions: a spectacular *drua* ‘double-hulled sailing canoe’, a large painted *masibolabola* ‘barkcloth’, and a pair of *lali* ‘gong drums’. The exhibition proper, on a lower floor accessed by a spiral staircase, begins with an overview of Fijian art and its distinctive forms, covering sculpture (wood and ivory), textiles, pottery and basketry. Throughout the exhibition the objects are interspersed with historic photographs, paintings and drawings by Europeans, which present another contemporary perspective on Fiji’s natural environment and artistic traditions.

The oldest objects in the exhibition, dating from c. 900-800 BC, are four small sherds of Lapita pottery from southwest Viti Levu, Fiji. Found throughout the western Pacific, such items provide a means of tracing the early history of Fiji, first settled about three thousand years ago by ocean voyagers from the west. The historical importance of canoes to Fijian life is acknowledged here with the inclusion of several 19th-century models of *drua*, which contrast with a film of outrigger racing on Suva harbour in 2014. The *drua* form also serves as an oil dish, while traditional canoe-building skills are ably demonstrated by a sample of planking, collected by a missionary in the period 1840–53 to show how adjacent panels were formed and tightly bound with coir cords. A similar method is also apparent in the assembly of elements used for making breast ornaments of pearl-shell (*civa*) and whale-bone (*civatabua* and *civavonovono*).

Early sections of the exhibition, the largely chronological sequence of “Voyaging and the Sea”, “Fiji—Viti: A Tropical Environment” and “New Relationships and Arrivals—Europeans”, occupy a corridor-like space, but next in the sequence, “Fiji in the Nineteenth Century”, benefits from a much larger and more open exhibition gallery. In particular this allows several barkcloths—among them a 15-m *masibolabola*—to be shown in their entirety. Eleven examples are on show, illustrating the Fijian mastery of bold geometric patterning using a limited range of natural pigments. The fineness of this natural material is also demonstrated by a copy of the *Polynesian Gazette* of 27 October 1885, which is printed on barkcloth and clearly legible. This collusion of Pacific tradition and Western technology records further instances of foreign influence, such as an advertisement advising that Henry Cave and Co. have been appointed sole agents in Fiji for the Victorian Confectionary Company. The stencilling of barkcloth patterns is specific to Fiji, and the exhibition acknowledges the adoption, post-World War II, of X-ray film for this purpose, it being a more durable material than traditional banana and pandanus leaves. The versatility of barkcloth, and the important part it continues to play in Fijian cultural life, is also recognised with the inclusion of an *isulunisoqo*, a three-piece costume for a wedding or other important occasion, acquired in 2012 at the Suva Flea Market.

The majority of the objects on exhibition here date from the 19th century, while there are some two dozen from the previous century and earlier, and a smaller number from the 20th and present centuries. This selection represents a bringing together of Fijian treasures that have, over time, entered museums and private collections around the world, and is therefore a record of Western presence in the Pacific and the impact of explorers, missionaries, settlers and others. Of the large collection of objects from the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, half were either gathered by or otherwise associated with Baron Anatole von Hügel, who visited Fiji in 1875–77 and became that museum’s first curator in 1884.

An infinite variation of forms is suggested by these Fijian artworks. The 34 clubs, for example, range from maces to spiked battle-hammers, and have heads reflecting such shapes as paddles, fans, mushrooms and helmets. In contrast to the intricate engraving on a paddle-shaped *kinikini* ‘ceremonial club’ and a colossal *siriti* club is the exploitation of natural growths by the *vunikau* ‘root club’ for its skull-crushing

effect. Less intimidating is the *pakipaki* ‘mace/club’, decorated with inlaid ivory and whale-bone motifs, and whose form is similar to that of the Maori *taiaha*.

The background stories are as varied as the objects themselves. Two have Captain James Cook associations; an engraving tool of shark tooth, wood and coir, and a shallow wooden bowl were collected on the great navigator’s second or third voyage, in 1773–74 or 1777, and are now in the collections of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery, Exeter, and the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich, respectively. The second of French explorer Dumont d’Urville’s two visits to Fiji, in 1827 and 1838, is represented here by a triangular wooden *yaqona* ‘bowl’, now in a private collection. And among the objects loaned for the exhibition by the British Museum are a coir, wood and reed *bure kalou* ‘portable temple’ originally commissioned in 1860 for the Museum of Economic Botany at Kew Gardens, London, and a large *kinikini* presented by a missionary to the Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society in 1864. This mobility between institutions is further illustrated by a 1.4-m *matakau* ‘male figure’ which, apart from the commissioned *drua*, is the largest sculptural object in the exhibition. It was collected by an Anglican missionary based at Levuka and in 1877 given to the Canterbury Museum, New Zealand, which presented it to Fiji Museum in 1974.

In addition to being a unique assemblage of Fijian treasures, each with its own story, this collection emphasises both the persistence of traditional art forms and how they have adapted to outside influence. At the same time Fiji is presented as a dynamic society, maintaining its historic cultural interactions and exchanges with peoples from Tonga, Samoa and other neighbouring Pacific islands.

Steven Hooper, the force behind *Fiji: Art & Life in the Pacific*, first “visited” Fiji in 1970 in the home of his grandfather, James Hooper, a collector of Pacific art. Thus inspired, the younger Hooper made the first of his many trips to Fiji in 1977–80. In his prologue to the book, which accompanies and provides a background to the exhibition, Hooper writes that through personal experience he soon realised that a full understanding of Fijian material culture and manufactured objects demanded an appreciation of their social context. A primary aim of this project was to celebrate the richness and diversity of Fijian art, recognising that early European visitors had noted the ingenuity and skill of local artists working with a limited range of materials and tools. Another aim was to explain the roles and significance of these objects in their indigenous contexts, such as the use of those made from whale ivory and shell for maintaining social relationships.

Contact between Fijians and Europeans began in the late 18th century and resulted in the distribution of Fijian objects to museums and collections around the world. Hooper notes that prior to this project many such objects had lain “dormant” and “hidden” in institutions. The artworks selected for this exhibition are those of the indigenous Fijians and their near neighbours in Tonga and Samoa; cultural groups who arrived in the last 150 years are not represented, primarily for reasons of space, while further considerations were the quality and condition of objects, and their provenance.

Hooper refers to the recognition of the concept of embodiment as a means of understanding the power and significance of objects. For example, the *tabua*

'presentation whale tooth', considered the greatest of all Fijian valuables, can be seen as the embodiment of divine chiefly power. In fact, the first eight objects catalogued in the exhibition publication are *tabua*, all dating from early to mid-19th century, and they include the specimen presented to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at Suva, on 17 December 1953.

British colonialism brought a "collecting zeal" to Fiji. Sir Arthur Gordon, Governor from 1875–78, was asked to acquire local artefacts for the British Museum. This exhibition includes an enlarged photograph of the dining room of Government House at Nasova, near Levuka, from this period showing Fijian objects displayed in a style termed "almost Scottish Baronial", a symmetrical arrangement of some 30 clubs against a barkcloth background. Under colonial influence the making of pre-Christian ritual equipment ceased, whereas other activities—such as the building of houses and canoes and the carving of bowls by men and the production of barkcloth, mats, baskets, fans and pottery by women—were able to continue. At the same time, a growing tourist market encouraged the production of portable souvenirs and "ethnic" objects that may have borne little resemblance to traditional artworks.

Despite voracious collecting by outsiders, the Fiji Museum today has what is described as "perhaps the finest Fijian collection in the world". Hooper acknowledges the value of these other accumulations, such as the large number of *liku* 'skirts' collected during the US Exploring Expedition's visit to Fiji in 1840 and which survive in the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. Such garments were made of hibiscus fibre and under normal circumstances would have been worn and discarded, leaving no record of their variety or technique.

The first half of the book consist of a series of wide-ranging and accessible essays in which Hooper examines aspects of Fijian art, its cultural context and the history of its collection by others. He notes that the term "art" has no direct translation in Fijian, for the reason that art objects are an intrinsic part of the country's culture. His expressed aim is to show the important place that such artworks and valuables continue to occupy in Fijian life, and the hope is that this exhibition will encourage an interest in the subject among both Fijians and non-Fijians.

The catalogue section of the book details 276 objects, 23 of which are not included in the exhibition itself. These additions represent further variations on themes, and are drawn from institutions in Germany (Leipzig and Dresden), the United States (Washington, DC and Salem, Massachusetts) and the Pacific region (Auckland War Memorial Museum, Whanganui Regional Museum, and National Museum Victoria, Melbourne). All 276 objects are generously illustrated in colour, and supported with full provenance, where known, and other relevant background details. Also included is an informative appendix listing over 80 individuals and institutions associated with the collecting and holding of Fijian material.

A foreword contributed by the Acting Director of Fiji Museum, Adi Meretui Ratanabuabua, stresses the importance of preserving Fiji's heritage, both natural and cultural. To that end, this publication is a permanent record of a remarkable collection of artworks. Brought together in a timely and landmark exhibition, they celebrate the extraordinary achievements of people from one section of the vast Pacific.

Edvard Hviding and Cato Berg (eds): *The Ethnographic Experiment: A.M. Hocart and W.H.R. Rivers in Island Melanesia, 1908*. Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2014. 336 pp., biblio., illustrations, index. £22.00 (cloth).

JOHN E. TERRELL

Field Museum of Natural History

The eight essays by nine authors in this contributed volume are a collective effort to resolve a mystery by bringing “to the forefront of anthropology’s history a poorly known and often ignored, but in our view ground-breaking, instance of early anthropological fieldwork”. What mystery is this? The editors tell us it is “somewhat surprising” that the fieldwork done together by A.M. Hocart and W.H.R. Rivers in 1908 on the Percy Sladen Trust Expedition to the southwest Pacific has been largely ignored by historians of anthropology and biographical writers.

Why is this a mystery worth resolving? Because both men, the editors tell us, are “in distinct and different ways, recognized as prominent and influential scholars in the development of twentieth-century anthropology”. Hence the historical neglect of what they did then would seem to be “all the more remarkable given that the early work in the Solomon Islands by Hocart and Rivers constitutes one of the first, if not *the* first [their emphasis], examples of modern anthropological fieldwork employing methods of participant observation through long-term residence among the people studied.”

There is no disputing taste. Perhaps this is a mystery, but what should be made of it? This is not an easy matter to decide. Readers unfamiliar with what anthropologists generally do to keep themselves employed may not realise that writing insightfully about other people is not an easy job. Doing field anthropology is more than just a routine journalist’s assignment. Truth be told, you need to get to know the people you are trying to write about first-hand and as intimately as you can to do the job well. Similarly, maybe many readers are unaware that *not* having direct knowledge of what other people actually do, say and think has rarely ever stopped anyone from voicing strong opinions about other people on earth—although perhaps the current sorry state of modern social media as a reliable news source may now be giving at least some of us in the here-and-now pause when it comes to assuming internet news is inherently trustworthy.

On the other hand, academic readers of this volume are unlikely to be as naïve as the so-called “general reader”. Hence how historically disturbing it is that Hocart and Rivers have evidently not been properly lauded for what they did in the Solomon Islands in 1908 is not self-evident, even granting that these two gentlemen were among the first would-be anthropologists to visit island Melanesia who were not otherwise employed as Christian missionaries or colonial government worthies.

All readers of this book, of course, are free to decide how much they want to make of the academic mystery around which it turns. Speaking personally, one of the weaknesses of this collection is that insufficient attention has been given to locating Hocart and Rivers in the broader practice of science and scholarship more generally speaking, at the turn of the last century. You learn nothing here, for example, about

how at the same time this investigative duo was in the Solomons, anthropology was also being increasingly “professionalised” in the United States by Franz Boas and his students. Surely these North American contributors to the growth of anthropology as a learned discipline cannot simply be dismissed as being just old-fashioned “survey ethnologists”? Even Boas?

Similarly, not enough attention is given to the perennially thorny issue both then and now as to what exactly it is that constitutes sufficient “anthropological knowledge”, although contributors Christine Dureau and Thorgeir Kolshus touch upon such matters, and what Hocart and Rivers accomplished in the Solomons comes across throughout this volume as being more or less deficient in this challenging arena.

Therefore, it is not easy to decide as a reviewer what to say about this collection of essays. Although more tantalising than fulsomely explicit, Edvard Hviding’s chapter on the inherent inter-island complexity of life back then in the Western Solomons—seen, for example, in “New Georgian world-views of spatial connectivity”—is well worth a read. So, too, is Tim Bayliss-Smith’s analysis of River’s efforts to see population decline in the islands as something more than disease-induced demographic collapse. And Judith Bennett’s chapter on depopulation in the Solomons and Vanuatu is one of her characteristically fine contributions that could easily stand on its own merits as a more readily accessible journal article.

As a museum curator, I found Tim Thomas’s inventory of the objects acquired and photographs taken in 1908 to be welcome and informative. Thomas notes that the collecting practices of Rivers and Hocart have completely escaped scholarly notice largely because of how poorly both men published the results of this particular “expedition” to the South Pacific. “Indeed, if we were to rely on the published texts alone there would only be scattered hints to suggest that such collections were even made.” He has identified nearly 400 objects at the Cambridge Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology in the Rivers Collection there attributable to 1908. There are also over 600 glass-plate negatives and prints suggesting that over 320 photographs were taken by Rivers and Hocart that year. Therefore, although collecting “things” had long been common practice since the earliest days of foreign visitations in the Pacific, Thomas underscores that for these two scholars, collecting was “part of a much broader ethnographic endeavour, designed to show (and produce) facts—it was never an end in itself”. Instead, for both, collecting was an essential part of fieldwork.

The hauntingly beautiful photograph of Mule Hembala taken on Simbo by Hocart in 1908 appearing in Thomas’s text and on the cover of this book speaks eloquently about this particular individual, this place, and this time more than a century ago, that many readers may find themselves longing to return to so they, too, can participate first-hand in life back there and then.

Wassmann, Jürg: *The Gently Bowing Person: An Ideal Among the Yupno of Papua New Guinea*. Heidelberg Studies in Pacific Anthropology 4. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, 2016. 321 pp., biblio. illustrations, index. US\$44.52 (paperback).

DAVID LIPSET

University of Minnesota

This book is about the Yupno people, a relatively remote, Lutheran community of horticulturalists and coffee growers who live in the hills two days walk from the Rai Coast. Jürg Wassmann has put together revised articles by himself and six other members of his research group. In doing so, Wassmann has compiled 30 years of fieldwork-based observations, interviews and data elicited from an ingenious battery of tests that he and the team improvised to elicit Yupno temporal and spatial orientations.

Although in large measure *The Gently Bowing Person* is meant as a contribution to cross-cultural cognitive anthropology, I would argue that in a way that goes unrecognised in the book—it epitomises Durkheim's well-known concept of mechanical solidarity. It will be recalled, or really it can hardly be forgotten, that for Durkheim, economic production in societies like the Yupno was relatively unspecialised and unmediated by states. As a result, its solidarity was based on, or resulted in, tropes of uniformity, homogeneity and likeness. Durkheim contrasted the division of labour in societies like our own as being highly specialised and mediated by neutral third parties. Work, identity and society were embedded in tropes of difference. In these latter, I would add, "the problem" for sociomoral order is the integration of self and other. Families are small, funerals are a nuisance, science, bureaucrats, the mall and other things. In the former, it is one of boundary maintenance, or the separation of self from other. Demanding kin are everywhere, there are so many ways to die, and then mourning goes on and on. Now, Wassmann's Yupno book beautifully illustrates cognitive dimensions of mechanical solidarity, dimensions that perhaps make "the problem" of boundary maintenance all the more difficult.

The story he tells of the Yupno people begins with their ethnohistory, pre-contact social structure and colonial experience, all offered largely without comment, except to validate the historical accuracy of Yupno narratives about their origins. Wassmann then turns to the book's central project—to evoke the great extent to which Yupno personhood is reckoned, not outside or on the margins of the other, but in the middle of a single spatial framework—one which ultimately refers back to the river that bisects the hilly region. Thus it is that the human body, the house and concepts of time are each attributed uphill/downhill dimensions and a lineal axis. In the male body, that axis runs from nose to genitals, in the house, it runs from the fireplace to the front door and in time, it runs from downriver, where Yupno ancestors came from, to uphill, the river's source. The past, in other words, is said to be downhill, while the future is uphill. By contrast to what is assumed in the West, the past is in front of the person while the future is to the rear. In the ideal moral posture in Yupno society, respectful persons bow and listen attentively to the other.

This is a rich book. Wassmann reports on the pre-contact counting system, which goes to 33, each number being associated with hands, feet and other body parts.

He discusses many other aspects of the person, such as the concept of two spirits, conception theory, the life-cycle and the notion of the vital energy that sustains the person. Substantial attention is also given to the cultural construction of moral status: the person is assessed according to three mystical temperatures, hot, cool and icy. A cool person does not draw attention to himself, or work in front of others. Such a person avoids the expression of raw emotion. A hot person, by contrast, is headstrong, superior and dangerous. But usually, such an individual is sickly because of involvement in an illicit affair or because of an outstanding bride wealth debt. A cold person, meanwhile, is stuck on the margins of society, ashamed, weak and quiet. Each of these three classifications are deployed during debates about illness and wrongdoing, about which Wassermann offers lengthy, extremely intricate, verbatim narratives, often in multiple versions, and again, without analysis.

Meanwhile, the self does manage a brief expression or two of boundaries that distinguish it from the other. Yupno communities are soundscapes, Wassermann allows, in which persons sing distinctive melodies (*kongap*), created in a dream or consciously invented, that are performed by way of announcing their arrival in the gardens of kin or when passing by a kinsman's house. The little songs, which last no more than a couple of seconds, fill the everyday air in the villages, and are constantly audible. After a death, when a young man may marry, or during a first pregnancy, men have the occasion to sing their melodies all night and feel, not the uniqueness of their being, but connected to their ancestors as they do. Songs are recognised by both men and women and well-known people, needless to say, have well-known songs.

The Yupno, and Wassermann's brilliant exposition of them, certainly demonstrate Durkheim's organic solidarity *par excellence*. Such is the weight given to likeness in the concept of the Yupno person and culture, expressions of the boundaries of a self apart from others are fleeting and faulted. The songs, as I say, are ever so momentary and sung only to kin. And mystical heat is essentially a vernacular construction of the id, and it is censured by society while being imagined in its terms. To recall Norman Maclean's wonderful 1976 novella, a river runs through the Yupno social environment, and the moral person, slightly bowed, should look down towards its mouth, towards the past, rather than backwards towards the future.

In addition to its ethnographic riches, Wassermann has made a great effort to discuss relevant literatures. Nevertheless, *The Gently Bowing Person* is not a particularly satisfying or very accessible book. Published as it is in a series that Wassermann himself edits, its organisation feels like a self-published work, or that of a vanity press. Although most chapters end with summary conclusions, beyond the goal of defining Yupno personhood, the book broaches no wider argument. And, as I say, some narratives go on for nearly ten pages without offering a reader anything at all by way of analytic support. The book is far too dense at times to be taught in any effective way to undergraduates. Perhaps excerpts about the creative use of cognitive tests might be helpful in graduate seminars focussed on field methods in cognitive anthropology.

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February 2017 to May 2017

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McRae, Jane: *Māori Oral Tradition: He Kōrero Nō Te Ao Twhito*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2017. 260 pp., biblio, index, notes. \$45 (softcover).

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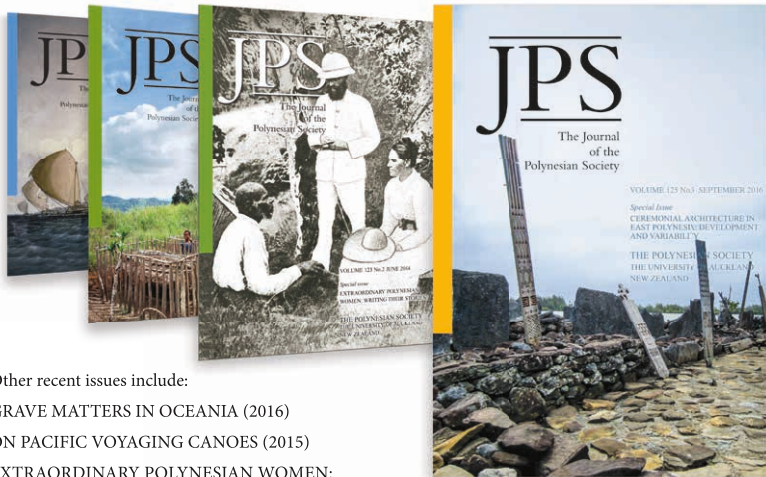
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