

Fergus Clunie, *Fijian Weapons and Warfare*. Suva: Bulletin of the Fiji Museum No. 2, Fiji Times and Herald Ltd., 1977. Pp. 121. Fijian \$6.50.

Some years ago, when I was examining some weapons at the Fiji Museum the late Director, Bruce Palmer, made the comment that he hoped he would be able to contribute something significant to the understanding of Fijian warfare which he was then researching. Two years later, while hosting him to some events at the Polynesian Cultural Center's tenth anniversary in 1973, I noted with interest that his research in this area was continuing. Unfortunately he was to die suddenly in 1974, his warfare research incomplete. It was thus with interest that I noted this new title for sale in bookshops in Fiji last year.

Fergus Clunie, acknowledging Bruce Palmer's initiating role, began the present work as "a weapons section" for the overall work on Fijian warfare envisaged by Bruce Palmer. He has, however, developed a valuable reference work (which largely fills the lacuna Bruce had himself intended to fill) by bringing together the scattered references and related works which already exist discussing aspects of these subjects. While Mr. Clunie would be the last to claim this as a definitive, exhaustive study, it does the great service of clarifying the philosophy behind Fijian warfare dispelling the many misconceptions and what he calls, "moralistic nonsense" which has hitherto been written about the nineteenth-century Fijians and their generally warring society.

Apart from performing this service, Mr. Clunie hopes to stimulate the Fijian public--particularly the elderly--to clarify further, correct, or otherwise supplement his efforts. To accomplish this, he proposes a Fijian language version which would certainly be read by more Fijians than would one in English only. (Indeed, were it a standard practice to publish vernacular versions of all researches, the process of our learning and knowing might well be greatly hastened.)

Part I, humbly entitled "Background Notes on Fijian Warfare," actually provides us with rather detailed annotated information which has obviously taken some effort to gather. Subjects he considers include the causes of war, fortification, man traps, naval warfare, ceremonial, training, and he spends over six pages discussing the relationship of cannibalism to warfare, using contemporary European accounts with great effect. I would, however, like to have seen more than the bare two pages spent on "Training in Warfare and the Use of Arms," some space also being spent on exploring the relationship between the *meke* with various weapons and actual training drills, as well as weapon "etiquette."

Part II is an annotated cataloging of weapon types which will, no doubt, prove invaluable to the curators of various collections of Fijian weapons. Not only are the drawings by Kolinio Moce and others explicit enough for use for identification of artifacts and their types, but they have also (in good academic manner) been drawn to scale so that some realistic conception of the actual artifact's size is possible to the general reader. An especially good, but hitherto neglected, feature of this study is the inclusion of all the known past European contact weapons also used by Fijians, namely cannons, shotguns, pistols, revolvers, and the ammunition employed for them. Mr. Clunie's comments and quotations regarding the effect of firearms upon Fijian culture are enlightening. One I must quote: ". . . certain Europeans . . . followed up the retreating and beaten enemies of Thakombau, and with muskets, powder and lead purchased the lands from which they were being driven." [A.H.C. Gordon, *Fiji. Records of Private and of Public Life*, Vol. I (Edinburgh: 1897), p. 232.]

Warfare being such a significant part of the nineteenth century Fijian life, there are literally multitudes of extant Fijian clubs of all types in many museum collections. The irony is, as Mr. Clunie observes, that some types are not represented in the Fiji Museum collection which is quite limited as far as many Fijian artifacts are concerned. Nevertheless, this has not prevented the comprehensive cataloging for the first time of all known Fijian weapons.

I would be remiss not to mention the fine plates (some hitherto unpublished) which include reproductions by Thomas Williams, Sir Arthur Gordon, Percy Spence, and especially interesting, J. Glen Wilson whose 1850s period sketches are in Mr. Clunie's opinion, "the most accurate and reliable."

Written in an easily-read style and clearly illustrated, *Fijian Weapons & Warfare* is a very useful contribution to our understanding of nineteenth-century Fijian culture and the role of warfare in it. Although a fairly considerable amount can yet be said on this subject, I feel Bruce Palmer himself would commend the result of that research he himself initiated. The pity is that he did not live to see it through. Fergus Clunie in carrying it to this point has thus made a fine tribute to Bruce Palmer's memory.

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