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POLYNESIAN TATTOOING: THE TECHNIQUES, 
ICONOGRAPHY, PATRONAGE, PROFESSION, 
AND ESTHETICS

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE 
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT 
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF 
MASTER OF ARTS 
IN PACIFIC ISLANDS STUDIES 
JANUARY 1965

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to many people for assistance in the preparation of this paper. Bruce Biggs, Samuel H. Elbert, and Fuitatu Fauolo provided modern orthography for many of the Polynesian terms. Marian Kelly and Margaret Titcomb, both of the Bernice P. Bishop Museum, and Janet Bell and her staff at the University's Sinclair Library put much valuable research material at my disposal. O. A. Bushnell read most of the preliminary drafts and made many cogent suggestions. Masao Miyamoto and Faith Fujimura helped prepare the illustrations. To these people I wish to express my deep gratitude.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

An appraisal of the technical, social, and esthetic aspects of Polynesian tattooing is much needed. It is needed not only because tattooing shared iconographic elements with those arts more compatible with the Western art tradition but also because in at least three areas—Samoa, New Zealand, and the Marquesas—it was a major art form both in comparison with the other arts and in the proficiency achieved by its practitioners.

Wherever tattooing was performed to any extent in Polynesia its cultural status was usually equal to that of the other important arts. This is most clearly seen in the social rank of tattooers and the kinds of ceremonial connected with their practice, as well as in the forms of payment made by patrons and the importance placed upon their having a complete set of well-executed designs.

Nevertheless, the art has been neglected in the literature on Polynesia; indeed it has rarely been recognized at all as an art. There are three probable explanations for this neglect. First, tattooing has not been regarded as a significant art in Western cultures. Second, it does not lend itself to collection by museums (save for rare samples of desiccated skin and such unusual instances as preserved Maori heads). Finally, the traditional art declined rapidly in Polynesia after European contact.

The present study necessarily is confined for the most part to the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Records of voyages previous to
those of Cook offer only brief observations on tattooing; furthermore, it is often difficult to decide whether these accounts refer to a tattoo pattern or a design painted on the skin or an attached ornament. The rapid decline of tattooing everywhere in Polynesia except in Samoa during the latter half of the 19th century provides an unfortunate terminus ad quem for the art.

Polynesian tattooing was a male art in almost all instances. With the exception of the northwestern islands (Ellice and Tokelau), the practice was far more extensive among men than women, both with respect to the number of persons decorated in any one community and to the amount of body covered and the complexity of design. Moreover, the artists were males, except in a few areas where women tattooed simple designs on one another. In the Ellice and Tokelau islands the amount of skin treated on women was almost equal to that on men.

Geographical Distribution

Tattooing was practiced throughout the geographical range of Polynesia, from Tonga to Easter Island, from Hawaii to New Zealand. In general, however, it was confined to high islands and the atolls nearest them.

Because the patronage of tattooing was usually connected with wealth and status, the high islands with their more complex cultures and the possibility for greater contrasts in wealth and status were more likely places for the elaboration of tattooing, in terms of both design and social importance.

The three regions in which tattooing reached a peak--Samoa, New
Zealand, and the Marquesas—were culturally differentiated from each other and it is not surprising that each of these high-island groups developed a distinctive style.

There is no evidence of tattooing for the following islands: Niue, Tongareva, Manihiki and Rakahanga, Pukapuka, the Hervey Islands, Raivavae, Rapa, and the Tuamotus (except Anaa). Most of these are atolls distant from the main island groups; only Niue, Raivavae, and Rapa are high islands but they too are relatively isolated. For a short time during the early period of European travel through the Pacific, men from some of these islands adopted the tattooing of other areas, usually that of Samoa.

Tattooing was absent or rare in some parts of the main island groups. For example, the people of Mamu'a were forbidden to practice the art by Samoan chiefs (Buck, 1930:635); among some Maori tribes tattooing was not a common practice, but the reasons for this have not been recorded (Best, 1924:549).

For a few places there is no more information than that tattooing was done to some extent: Mauke and Mitiaro (Buck, 1944:129), Tubuai (Aitken, 1930:44; Ellis, 1853, v. 3:382), Rimatara and Rurutu (Stokes, MS).

The art of tattooing in Micronesia and in Melanesia, including Fiji, was significantly different from that practiced in Polynesia; the iconography, the place of tattooing in the culture, and its relationship to other arts require separate study. Tattooing in the Polynesian outliers in Melanesia—Tikopia, Rennell and Bellona, Sikaiana, Ontong Java—was distinctly similar to that in certain parts of Micronesia and,
except for the construction and nomenclature of the instruments, showed little resemblance to the Polynesian practice. The people of Kapingamarangi have no tradition of tattooing.

Rotuma, whose culture was related to that of Fiji, is included here because its tattooing appears to have been similar to that of Samoa.

Literature

Two kinds of sources have been used: descriptions and illustrations from published narratives of explorers, missionaries, and other early residents, and later studies by ethnographers.

Tattooing has been more or less systematically described for the three areas of its highest development: for Samoa by Marquardt (1899), Krämer (1903), and Buck (1930); for New Zealand by Robley (1896); for the Marquesas by von den Steinen (1925) and W. Handy (1922). A few studies have been published for some of the other islands: an important monograph on Hawaiian patterns and equipment by Emory (1946), and the brief reviews by Roth of the early literature on the subject for Tonga (1906), the Society Islands (1905), and also for New Zealand (1901). The works of Joest (1887) and Hambly (1925) are general surveys of tattooing throughout the world and do not discuss any area in great detail. No comprehensive investigation for all of Polynesia has been published.

Generally, the narratives of voyagers merely note that people of a particular island were tattooed and cursorily describe the patterns. The later residents offer considerably more information, especially on
technique and patronage. Some caution must be observed with both types of accounts, for the writers have frequently adopted information from previously published works and inserted it into their own texts.

The standard ethnographies for the separate island areas usually offer only summary descriptions of the art because its practice had already declined or ceased long before the account was written. Occasionally it is not clear whether the information on tattooing came from natives or from previous authors. Therefore, an attempt has been made to trace information on design and technique to its first published source, and the ethnographies have served primarily as references on social organisation and ceremonial behavior.

**Organisation**

The present discussion is divided into the following chapters:

**Equipment and Technique:** A description of the instruments and ink which the artist employed, and his method of using them. Details of the manufacture of the equipment are included only where they would actually affect the technique. For example, the number of teeth on a comb possibly influenced the intricacy of design and therefore is of importance here, but the various methods of attaching the comb plate to its handle would not affect the technique and are not discussed.

**Iconography:** An examination of designs from specific islands, including their native names and their location on the body. Emphasis is placed on the principal patterns rather than on the smaller details occurring within them.
Patronage: An investigation of the individuals who were tattooed, how they were ornamented, and at what age. The hierarchical, religious, and informal requirements are discussed, as well as the restriction of designs to social rank, sex, and place of residence.

Profession: A discussion of who practiced the art; the selection of apprentices and their training; the special relations between artists, and their ceremonial behavior; the forms of payment they received; and the ownership of designs by artist, family, or area.

Esthetics: An investigation of Polynesian aesthetic attitudes toward tattooing. Because esthetics is one of the most inaccessible subjects in Polynesian art, the method employed for finding these attitudes is discussed in some detail.

These are arbitrary divisions; they are not meant to imply that Polynesian ideas about tattooing fell into these same compartments. In the final chapter some of the significant relationships among these aspects of the art are discussed, and comparisons with the other major arts are made.
Knowledge of an artist's equipment and technique is essential for an understanding of what effect he has attempted to produce and what result his patrons have found, for both must discover their satisfactions within the limits of whatever achievement is possible in that particular medium. Throughout Polynesia, except in New Zealand, tattooing was done with essentially identical equipment and techniques. Where more extensive coverage of the skin was common, the basic practice was merely elaborated but not significantly altered. The only major innovation was the combining of tattooing with scarification in New Zealand.

The following sections discuss the entire complex of tools and methods used for the tattooing of males. For females, who were ornamented less extensively, the equipment and technique were in most cases simpler, in no case more complex. The terminology for both the technique and the equipment is given in the Appendix (Table III).

Basic Equipment

Three items were used: a comb, a tapper, and ink. The comb consisted of a blade attached transversely at a right or acute angle to a wood handle, 15 to 30 cm. in length (see Figure 1). The complete instrument resembled an adze, except for one type of Hawaiian comb, described by Emory (1946:263, fig. 13), in which the blade was attached near the center of its handle. Two types of blade were in general use:
Fig. 1. A set of Samoan tattooing instruments. Top, assembled comb; center, tapper; bottom, comb plates of various widths. (From Marquardt, 1899: taf. xviii.)

Fig. 2. A Samoan tattooer imprinting dorsal patterns. The artist, left, holds the comb in his left hand and the tapper in his right. The assistant is stretching the subject's skin to provide a taut working surface. (From Marquardt, 1899: taf. xix.)
a single point, usually a fish tooth; and a bone plate, usually triangular in shape, with serrations, or teeth, on the cutting edge. An unserrated cutting edge was used only in New Zealand. Plates made from tortoise shell, boar's tusk, and other materials have been reported for several areas; the use of these was a consequence of local tradition and sources of supply and did not affect the practice of the art.

The plate common to all islands was approximately 6 mm. wide and had 5 or 6 teeth (Table I). Combs of greater width, and therefore more teeth, were made by fastening two to four plates to the handle.

The tapper was made from various woods or the midrib of coconut fronds. On some islands it was paddle-shaped, on others it was a simple rod. The length ranged from 30 to 60 cm. In the literature this implement is often called a mallet or baton.

Pigment for the ink was soot collected above smoking coals, most often from kernels from the candlenut tree (Aleurites moluccana), although shells of the coconut and other kinds of nuts were used on atolls, where the candlenut did not grow. On Easter Island soot was collected by burning leaves of Cordyline terminalis (Métraux, 1940:238). Ground charcoal is occasionally mentioned in the literature, but this may be simply an inexact designation; however, charcoal can be ground to the fineness of soot and thus both kinds of material would yield similar pigments.

The Maori used a variety of substances: burnt and powdered resin from several kinds of trees, especially Agathis australis and Podocarpus
### TABLE I. DIMENSIONS OF COMB PLATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISLANDS*</th>
<th>WIDTH (in mm.)</th>
<th>NUMBER OF POINTS</th>
<th>REFERENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>5-50</td>
<td>4-46</td>
<td>Marquardt, 1899; Krämer, 1903; Buck, 1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>6-60</td>
<td></td>
<td>Martin, 1817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uvea</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Burrows, 1937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Futuna &amp; Alofi</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td></td>
<td>S. P. Smith, 1892a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellice</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kennedy, 1931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotuma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokelau</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society</td>
<td>6-40</td>
<td>3-20</td>
<td>Cook, 1955; Roth, 1905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td></td>
<td>3+</td>
<td>Buck, 1911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>4-9</td>
<td>4-13</td>
<td>Best, 1924; Phillips, 1948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuamotu (Anaa)</td>
<td>2-12</td>
<td>2-20</td>
<td>von den Steinen, 1925; Linton, 1923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marquesas</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Buck, 1938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangareva</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>Métraux, 1940; Heyerdahl and Perdon, 1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easter</td>
<td>4-39</td>
<td>5-40</td>
<td>Bishop Museum laboratory specimens</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The combs used in Samoa, New Zealand, and the Marquesas are discussed in the text.*
excelsium, a charred "vegetable caterpillar" (Cordiceps robertsii), and, later, gunpowder (Robley, 1896:57).

Water was the most frequently used vehicle for the pigment. In at least two areas plant liquids were used: juice from berries of Solanum nigrum on Easter Island (Métraux, 1940:238), and sap from various small plants such as species of Cordyline in New Zealand (Best, 1924, v. 2:354). Fish oil, coconut oil, and animal fat are reported in a few of the early accounts, particularly for New Zealand (Robley, 1896:58) and the Society Islands (Ellis, 1853, v. 1:263-264). The Maori combined soot with fat and fed this mixture to either a caged bird (Andersen, 1907:107) or a dog (Hamilton, 1896:311), then softened the voided feces with more fat and a small amount of water.

To summarize, the ink was generally a suspension of soot in water. The color of the tattooing was a blackish blue. None of the various ingredients mentioned would alter significantly the technique or the basic color.

Basic Technique

The artist sketched the designs freehand with charcoal on the skin of the subject. Then the principal outlines were tattooed. Details were added at later sessions; large areas of design were done in sections, several parts of the body being worked on during any one period. The amount of continuous work depended largely on the stamina and health of the subject. Small, simple patterns were always done in a single session.

The artist held the comb in his left hand, inked the cutting edge,
and placed it on the skin (see Figure 2). With the cutting edge at a right angle to the skin, he then struck the comb near its blade end with the tapper, which was held in his right hand. Blood was wiped off with tapa or other absorbent material to keep the developing design clear.

A different technique, common in Micronesia, has been reported for the Ellice Islands (Kennedy, 1931:300-301) and the Tokelau Islands (Macgregor, 1937:143). The artist painted the design on the skin with pigment, then tapped the comb through the ink into the skin.

In addition to these two techniques, a third method for various parts of Polynesia is mentioned in the early literature. The skin was first scratched and then tattooing pigment was rubbed over it. This is the only method described for New Zealand by Croset (1891:39) and for the Marquesas by von Krusenstern (1810:168) and von Langsdorff (1810:118), and they imply that in these islands it was used in the professional practice. According to Robley (1896:45-46), the Maori used this method for making only small, crude, self-inflicted marks, and W. Handy (1922:11) does not mention it in her discussion of the Marquesan technique.

On most islands the artist was assisted by apprentices whose principal duties were to keep the subject from moving and to stretch his skin to provide a taut working surface.

Tattoos usually were inflamed for several weeks after each session. The scars often became purulent, and various dietary restrictions were employed in the belief that they would control the infection and relieve suffering. On islands where persons were extensively tattooed,
the infection was sometimes fatal.

Relationship of Technique to Equipment

The equipment and technique for tattooing were extremely practical, as was true for most of the other Polynesian arts. There was no needless complication of instruments and the artist did his work with dispatch.

The instruments—the plate, the single point, and the Maori unserrated blade—imprinted only dots and lines of dots, and with these two simple kinds of marks a great variety of designs was made. This economy of implements and method allowed a great flexibility for devising new designs.

The precise manner in which patterns were built up from lines and dots is not described in the literature. In view of the similarity of the instruments it seems probable that essentially the same technique was used throughout Polynesia. I have inferred the following method from an analysis of some of the principal components in Polynesian tattoo designs, such as stripes of varying width, solidly inked squares and rectangles, and small elements added to the edges of these shapes. This hypothetical method would seem to be supported by the comments of Buck (1930:637-638) and von den Steinen (1925:83) that narrow combs were used to make fine lines and wider combs for wider lines.

When tattooing pigment was implanted in skin the dye seeped into the surrounding area to some extent. Thus, a comb with closely spaced teeth actually printed a solid line approximately the width of the comb. Squares, rectangles, and stripes of this width were made by tattooing
successive lines close together, until the desired pattern had been achieved. A comb with more widely spaced teeth made a row of dots. The single point was used for single dots and for small details added to the edges of previously imprinted shapes.

Although tonal gradations would have been possible by adjusting the spacing between the dots, only one pattern has been recorded which may have been produced by this method (see Chapter III, Mangareva). In view of this, it seems likely that Polynesians perceived tattoo patterns as a simple contrast between color of skin and color of ink.

Precision of outline and regularity in repeated motifs is mentioned throughout the early literature for all Polynesian islands except Hawaii. However, there is no conclusive proof that Hawaiian designs were always less accurately made. A review of the descriptions and illustrations (see Emory, 1946:235-249) suggests, rather, that the skill of the artists varied greatly.

Throughout Polynesia no color other than blackish blue was achieved; even the gunpowder used for a short time by the Maori produced this hue. There is no evidence that the artist deliberately varied the dilution of his pigment to produce significantly different shades of the basic color. Other colors were applied to the skin by painting and staining. Body painting is described only briefly in the literature, but one of its purposes may have been to heighten the effect of the tattooing. Color from turmeric, in yellow to orange hues, was frequently rubbed on the skin both for its own decorative qualities and to increase the contrast of the tattoos; this custom was prevalent in the Marquesas particularly (E. S. C. Handy, 1923:221). There is no record of any
attempt to use body paint or turmeric as a pigment for tattooing. Apparently, blackish blue was regarded as the only correct color, possibly because soot was the only recognised source of permanent pigment.

At present no more precise chronological connection can be suggested between instruments and styles beyond the generalisation that most of the instruments recorded were used in the same period in which the designs were recorded.

A few blades used in earlier periods have been recovered in archaeological excavations on Easter Island, the Hawaiian Islands, and New Zealand. For those found on Easter Island, the earliest date that can be ascribed is A.D. 1400, based on radiocarbon dating of the site (Heyerdahl and Forde, 1961:247-248). These blades show no significant variation from those in use at the time of European visits to the island (Metraux, 1940:237-238). Among the Hawaiian material one comb with four plates was uncovered, the first multiple-plate set recorded for these islands (Emory and Sinoto, 1961:73-74, fig. 70). No carbon date for the site (Makaniolu shelter) has been published. This comb was not necessarily used in a style that was later abandoned, because large solid areas of inking are mentioned by the early European visitors and such patterns were made elsewhere in Polynesia with multiple-plate instruments. The archaeological material from New Zealand is discussed in the following section on elaboration.
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Elaboration of Equipment and Technique

The most complex tattoo patterns in Polynesia were developed in Samoa, New Zealand, and the Marquesas, and each of these island groups had elaborated the basic equipment. In Samoa and New Zealand the basic method for imprinting the ink was augmented to increase control over accuracy. Although no similar extensions of the technique have been recorded for the Marquesas, the intricate designs probably required some kind of extra care.

Samoan

Samoans distinguished four widths of combs by the number of their teeth and thus their function. These instruments are described and illustrated by Buck (1930:636-639, figs. 327, 328, pl. lvi-b). Marquardt (1899:8-9, taf. xviii), Krämer (1903:74-75, bild 25), and E. S. C. and W. Handy (1924:23-24, fig. 5) also discuss the instruments, but in less detail. A set of comb plates which were in use during the late 1800's is shown in Figure 1.

The *su fa'atela*, or *su mono*, had 4 to 6 teeth which were spaced slightly farther apart than those on the other sizes of combs; it was the narrowest plate (5-7 mm.), and was used for making lines of dots and other small elements.

Two sizes of *su sonoci sono* were used. The *laitiiti* had 10 teeth, a width of 9 mm., and was used for making fine lines. The *tatale*, which was the size most used, had 14 to 20 teeth, and its width ranged from 15 to 20 mm. It was used for making the wider lines.

The *su tanulu* had 41 to 46 teeth and a width of approximately 50
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Two sizes of su monai ano were used. The lairiiiti had 10 teeth, a width of 9 mm., and was used for making fine lines. The tetele, which was the size most used, had 14 to 20 teeth, and its width ranged from 15 to 20 mm. It was used for making the wider lines.

The su tapulu had 41 to 46 teeth and a width of approximately 50
mm.; it was used for filling in solid areas.

Any one set of instruments contained several combs of each of these sizes. A complete set had 6 to 12 combs.

The point on the lower back at which the tattooing began was of great importance to the artist and to the subject and his relatives. This starting point had to be at the "correct" height or the entire tattooing would be regarded as too high or too low. No specific anatomical position was prescribed; possibly the artist decided where to begin from an appraisal of the subject's height and general proportions.

The first six lines were sketched on, and were then judged by the subject's father and other witnesses. If they thought the marks too high or too low the matter was argued with the artist. When agreement had been reached the actual tattooing began. A complete set of designs usually required 4 to 6 weeks of almost daily sessions.

For tattooing on women, only the *su fe'atea* and the *su sonei aeo* were used. The *su tapula* was not used because women did not receive large areas of solid inking.

**New Zealand**

The Maori were the only Polynesians to have developed a significant innovation in the basic equipment and technique. In addition to the serrated plate, they used a blade with a plain chisel-like edge. The instruments and technique are described by Robley (1896:48-49, figs. 46, 47), Best (1924:552, illus.), and Phillipps (1948:113, 118, pls. 1, 2).

The plain-edged instrument, *ubi kobiti*, cut the skin rather than punctured it and, in effect, made a continuous incision. This blade
was used for the principal lines of a pattern, particularly scrollwork, but it was also used for some of the fine detail. The serrated instrument, *uhi matarau*, had 4 to 13 teeth; it was used for all patterns not imprinted with the *uhi kohiti*.

Robley (1896:50) is of the opinion that the later use of metal blades made finer details possible. He had seen almost all the extent preserved Maori heads, but he does not indicate whether he knew which kind of blade had been used for any specific head.

Each set of instruments included several sizes of both the *uhi kohiti* and the *uhi matarau*, ranging from 4 to 9 mm. in width.

At least one tribe, the Tuhoe, developed a further classification of these instruments (Best, 1904:166-167, illus.). In addition to the *uhi kohiti*, another plain-edged instrument, the *uhi whaka-tataremoa*, was used uninked for cutting the skin before an inked *uhi* was applied. Best does not state whether this inked *uhi* was plain or serrated. Two kinds of serrated instruments were used, the *uhi matarau* and the *uhi puru*. The *uhi matarau* was used for lines called *kaha māro*, a term not explained by Best, nor does he describe the specific use of the *uhi puru*.

The Maori distinguished two slightly different intensities of ink color, according to Hamilton (1896:310) and Andersen (1907:107). Soot derived from tree resins made the darker pigment and was used for facial tattoos. Soot from the "vegetable caterpillar" made a somewhat lighter ink and was used on the rest of the body. The actual difference in depth of color between the two pigments was apparently very slight for none of the descriptions of the patterns by Europeans mention it.
The Tuhoe added resin from the hinu tree (*Rheocarpus dentatus*) to their ink in the belief that it would lessen the fading of the patterns (Best, 1924:552). This is the only record in Polynesia of an attempt to preserve the original intensity of color in tattooing by adding an ingredient to the ink.

Ordinarily, the Maori artist first drew the design on the skin with charcoal, but for some parts of a design the lines were first lightly scratched into the skin because charcoal would have been washed away by the blood (Robley, 1896:80-81). This may have been the actual function of the Tuhoe *uhı whaka-tataumoa*.

According to Monkhouse (1935:385-386), the chisel-edged blade was used only for designs on the face. None of the authors cited states whether or not this blade was restricted to male tattooing. Occasionally, the chisel pierced the cheek, but whether the Maori regarded such mishaps as seriously impairing the quality of the work has not been recorded.

Robley (1896:50) believes that chisel work was the earlier method and that puncturing with toothed blades was a later introduction, although he gives no evidence in support of this view. The chisel-edged instrument was used in the basic Polynesian technique, and according to Buck (1958:298) was a later, local elaboration of the basic instruments brought to New Zealand. No chisel-edged blades, only serrated ones and single points, were found in the Moa-hunter sites on South Island described by Duff (1950:225-227). The Moa-hunter culture flourished sometime before A.D. 1350.

From one of these sites a serrated blade was recovered which was
considerably wider (40 mm.) than any comb recorded for the historical period. The proximal end was rounded and both sides of the shank were indented (Duff, 1950: fig. 58). Because of its shape and size Duff believes this object was probably an ornament derived from hair combs. However, it may have been a tattooing blade and, if it was, suggests that Moa-hunter designs made use of wide stripes or large solid areas.

When a man's tattooing began to fade it was retouched. According to Best (1924:557), the process was called *tarna* or *purua*, but he gives no details of the actual method.

**Marquesas**

Several widths of combs were used by Marquesans, but no author has stated how many sizes there were, or whether or not the different widths were given specific names, as was the case in Samoa. The equipment is described and illustrated by von den Steinen (1925:83-84, figs. 37, 38), Linton (1923:417, pl. lxxv-A), W. Handy (1922:10-11), and Rollin (1929:121, fig. 12).

The narrowest plate (2.5 mm.) was used for making fine lines and other small details. The widest (12 mm.) was used for filling in solid areas. Within this range of plate widths the number of teeth varied from 2 to 20, the usual count being 5 to 7.

In *Typee* Herman Melville mentions a comb whose teeth were attached so as to form a complex design which was then imprinted in a single application.¹ Although other writers refer to Melville's description...

¹Neither *Typee* nor *Omoo* can be considered primary sources. In his preface to *Omoo* Melville states that he had not kept a journal during his voyages in the Pacific and that he used his memory and earlier writing to supply details of native life.
none of them mentions having seen the instrument itself.

Summary

The differentiation of equipment and technique among these three island groups was related to the general kind of patterns commonly used in each of them. Samoan artists used the greatest range of plate widths in Polynesia (5-50 mm.), and their tattooing employed large solid areas of inking and small designs with fine detail. In New Zealand an unserrated blade was used in addition to the comb and the single point, and the range in widths of all blades was comparatively slight (4-9 mm.); patterns were composed from relatively thin lines, some of which were continuous colored scars. Marquesan blade widths (2-12 mm.) varied slightly more than those of New Zealand, and Marquesan patterns were built up from stripes of approximately the same width as the blades.
CHAPTER III

ICONOGRAPHY

The authenticity and amount of material available for study determine the validity and comprehensiveness of an iconographic investigation. Reliable and reasonably complete descriptions and illustrations of tattooing designs have been published for Samoa, New Zealand, the Marquesas, and Easter Island. For those other islands where the art was practiced, the references allow only an approximation of the entire range of patterns usually. The most accurate examples for the latter areas are found in the ethnographic texts published since 1920. However, as has been noted in the introduction, much of this information was collected long after tattooing had been abandoned and the informants were able to recall but a few of the designs. This incomplete record can be augmented to some extent with descriptions from the literature by explorers and missionaries.

These early sources must be read with caution. Most of the authors had little understanding of the native culture, and they varied greatly in their descriptive abilities and their interest in the art. Many of their accounts of tattooing are merely brief summaries of the total visual effect of the marking, and these observations are sometimes misleading. For example, inhabitants are often described as being tattooed "from head to foot," which may mean that the designs were continuous or almost so over the entire body, or that discrete marks were applied to the head, trunk, and limbs.

Another comment frequently made is that the residents of one
island were tattooed in the same fashion as those of another. This observation may refer either to an actual similarity in patterns or to the mere fact that the art was practised in both places. Mention of the use of coconut trees, human faces, dogs, and so forth, among the designs may be the visitor's assumption that such subjects were intended, or they may be translations of the native names for the patterns, or they may actually refer to conventionalized representations of these objects.

Also, the illustrations published in the early literature must be examined with care. The entire subject is itself a special field of study, and only the more pertinent considerations are presented here. The illustrators of the voyages were not so much concerned with ethnographic accuracy as with showing exotic beings, or, as Bernard Smith in his study of these drawings remarks, the artists "cast an unfamiliar world into the pictorial conventions of the time."¹ The styles of portraiture prevalent in Europe during this period did not require a detailed fidelity to the original. The careful draftmanship applied to plants and animals was not considered necessarily appropriate to human subjects.

The manner in which plates were prepared during this period introduced further distortion into the published illustrations. During the voyage the artist usually made only sketches which he later expanded into full drawings for the printer, and in this process he frequently combined several of his drafts. Thus, isolated renderings

of tattoo patterns were sometimes applied to the wrong part of the body or to the wrong sex as, for example, occurred in the published drawings of Choris which Emory (1946:239-241) checked against some of the original sketches. Those designs which the artist had not copied from life were deduced from entries in the journals of the voyage. When the engraver transferred the drawing to the press plate he often added embellishments in his attempt to clarify the artist's delineation. Smith discusses these alterations and additions throughout his book. They are most evident when successive editions of the record of a voyage are compared with each other, because customarily the engravings were remade for each edition and new distortions crept in.

To evaluate the reliability of the illustrations I have compared whatever man-made objects occur in them with extant examples, a method which provides some basis for judging the relative validity of other details, namely tattoo patterns.

Wherever these early accounts and illustrations are the major source of information on tattoos, only a general description of the designs can be attempted. On those islands where early, intense, successful missionary activity took place the practice of tattooing died out quickly, and consequently only a few patterns have been recorded for Tonga, the Society Islands, the Cook Islands, and Hawaii.

Method of Study

For this investigation of tattooing the most important iconographic aspects are: the differences in patterns between the sexes, the parts of the body which were ornamented, the sequence in which the designs
were applied, the descriptions and names of principal patterns, and the change from one type of design to another. In the following sections devoted to each island group these topics are discussed as completely as the literature allows. However, some of these subjects require preliminary comment.

The primary purpose of learning the order in which each mark was added to the body is to discover how the larger patterns were built up. In addition, these sequences show that much of the variety reported for at least some islands was actually the result of the visitor having seen different individuals in various stages of acquiring a complete set of tattoos.

The dominant patterns used in each group of islands are discussed in greater detail than are the smaller motifs which were interspersed among these larger forms. A study of stylistic differences requires that the same kind of differentiation be assessed throughout; the principal designs, together with the parts of the body to which they were applied, are the most significant visual features in this art. A discussion of the smaller marks is of only secondary interest, and for this reason the occurrence of simple geometric forms (triangles, squares, circles, etc.) is not at all emphasised. These small elements have been studied by Greiner (1923) for the major Polynesian arts, including tattooing. Because her research was concerned with the diffusion of designs her method employed both these simple geometric shapes and a few of the more complex patterns.

The names of designs are significant not only because they indicate what objects were associated with the marks but also because they show
what was recognised as a single pattern. The modern orthography for
most of these names has been used here and all translations into
English given in the original texts are included.

In the following discussion the main groups of islands are listed
according to the general direction in which Polynesian culture appears
to have been diffused in the Pacific, that is from west to east.

**Samoan**

The tattooing on males was bilaterally symmetrical, and most of
the designs were rectilinear. The ornamentation was continuous from
a few inches above the waist to just below the knees. This surface was
divided into wide bands of solid inking. Most of these bands were
horizontally distributed, and each had its specific kind of detail.
The generic term for male tattoos was *tatau*.

The patterns were applied in a definite sequence. To insure
symmetry, one side of each section of the body was completed before any
work was begun on the other side. The first designs to be imprinted
were the dorsal bands which reached from just above the waist to midway
on the buttocks; after these were finished the tattooing on the
buttocks was completed. The remainder of the tattoos were applied to
other parts of the body in this order: from the abdomen to the pelvis,
the pubic area, and finally the thighs, first on the dorsal surface and
then on the ventral. This general sequence was followed throughout
the period for which records exist (Kramer, 1903:71-73, 76-84; Buck,
1930:643-655), but within any one anatomical area each artist used his
own judgment to decide which lines should be made first.
The following discussion of the bands and other major units of design is based on Marquardt (1899:13-15, taf. i-vii), Krämer (76-84, figs. 2, 4, 8), and Buck (1930:641-655, figs. 329-336). The shapes of these patterns remained essentially unchanged during the thirty or more years accounted for in this literature, and they are shown in Figures 3 and 4.

Each principal part of the tattooing had a specific name, as did the small motifs placed in and around these parts. The Samoan names and their English translations given below are taken from Krämer and Buck. Marquardt's terminology is not complete and, according to Krämer's informants, not always correct.

The uppermost three dorsal patterns, the tua (back), the pula tema (pula, to shine; tema, small), and the pula teie (teie, large), were solidly inked, or nearly so. The tua, which Buck refers to as va'a (canoe), and the pula teie had square and rectangular openings, usually rhomboidal, which contained small geometric motifs. These openings were called fa'a'ilea. This term is an important one for an understanding of the way in which Samoans perceived their tattoo patterns. The original meaning of the word was "like a birthmark," and by extension it was used to mean any mark which broke an otherwise plain surface; by 1930 fa'a'ilea had come to mean also "window," and tattooers now compared their fa'a'ilea to windows set in a dark wall (Buck, 1930: 641).

2 Several of the legends for the illustrations in Marquardt and Buck give the names of these motifs, not those of the principal parts as might be assumed.
Fig. 3. Dorsal patterns on Samoan males. (Drawing from Marquardt, 1899; additional nomenclature from Kramer, 1903, and Buck, 1930.)
Fig. 4. Ventral patterns on Samoan males. (Drawing from Marquardt, 1899; additional nomenclature from Kramer, 1903, and Buck, 1930.)
The top margin of the tua continued around each side of the waist for a few inches, then each end divided into two lines to make the fa'afulufo (like a spearhead). The T-shaped space between the pula tama and the pula tala was often ornamented with the fa'aatualoa (like a centipede) and goao (tern) motifs (see Figure 5). Krämer (1903:fig. 2) shows this area decorated with a wide line broken into segments which is labeled 'aso e tasi (isolated rafter). Aso is translated by Krämer as "rafter" and by Buck as "line."

On each of the buttocks, below the pula tala, were two wide bands of nearly solid inking, the tafani (cut off), and three narrower bands, the see mutu (cut off); only the tafani were ornamented with fa'a'ila. A very tall subject required an extra see mutu so that the designs below it could be imprinted at their correct height. Between each of these bands, there was a set of narrower lines, whose number and complexity varied with the artist, and each set terminated in a fa'a'ila near the line separating the buttocks.

A vertical solid band, the ivihi (ridge of roof), extended down the gluteal cleft to separate bilaterally the sets of horizontal bands.

The pattern called 'aso talitu (rafter supporting the side) was put below the last see mutu and completed the buttock tattoos. The 'aso talitu had two parts: the upper one was a narrow panel almost as long as the see mutu and contained a linear motif, the lower was a solid band perforated with fa'a'ila.

The uppermost ventral patterns were four or five lines termed fa'aifo (low rafter) which began at the outer end of the pula tala and arched downward toward the pubic area. All the dorsal bands (tafani,
Fig. 5. Small motifs used in Samoan tattooing on both sexes. (After Kramer, 1903, and Buck, 1930.)

Fig. 6. Patterns on Samoan females. Left, dorsal surface; right, ventral surface. (Drawing from Marquardt, 1899.)
sae mutu, 'aso talitu) and the sets of lines between them continued around the ventral surface and terminated at the fa'aifo or the groin.

The designs spanning the pubic region were called collectively the punialo (close space). As its name would imply, this set of marks traditionally was tattooed only after the surrounding patterns had been imprinted. However, by 1930 the punialo was frequently the first tattooing undergone and served as a test of endurance.

The dorsal surface of the thigh was highly ornamented on its inner side. There a set of vertical lines began just below the buttocks and ended just above the knee joint. Marquardt and Krämer both give the name atigivae (toes) to these lines; Buck, however, does not provide a name for them. A row of triangular designs, each termed fa'amuli'ali'ao (like a trochus shell), ran parallel to these lines.

At the end of the row of fa'amuli'ali'ao, and just above the knee joint, was a horizontal rectangular panel which was named for whatever small motifs had been put in it. The back of the knee joint was covered with a wide band containing several linear motifs. Buck refers to the entire strip as the atigivae, while Marquardt and Krämer do not name it. The base line connecting the fa'amuli'ali'ao extended down through this band, dividing it into two parts. On the inner side was a set of ornamented horizontal lines, on the other side was a set of diagonal lines and a fa'a'ila.

The lateral area of the thigh was covered with solid inking and was termed lausae (shining surface). On the ventral surface one or two salu (comb) completed the 'aso talitu pattern. The general region below this design was known as 'auaea and contained three or four
ornamental panels which curved downward and outward. Marquardt and Krämer call these panels fa'a'ava, but Buck does not name them.

The top and bottom margins of the band covering the back of the knee joint curved around forward and upward into the crotch, forming a tapered diagonal band, the fusi (belt). The upper portion was decorated with a series of fa'a'ila. The area between the fusi and the vertical lines on the inner thigh was named u'lu manu (bird's head). In this space, horizontal ornamented panels alternated with fa'a'ila.

A simple rectilinear pattern, the pute (navel), covered the umbilicus. This mark was not applied until all the other tattoos had been finished. The use of one design to indicate that all others had been completed was unique to Samoa.

One of Marquardt's illustrations (1899:taf. iv) shows a nongga motif midway between the pute and the punialo, but the use of isolated marks on males is not reported elsewhere in the literature.

The small motifs used in the fa'a'ila and the larger open areas of the tattooing were composed from dots, lines, and arcs. The most simple ones were: 'aso, a single line; 'aso moelu, two parallel lines; 'aso laitiiti, several thin parallel lines; toritogi, a row of dots; 'aso toritogi, a line with slight serrations along one edge. These names merely describe the basic marks, i.e., lines, dots, and so forth.

The more complex motifs were named for their resemblance to animals, plants, and man-made objects: fa'a'upeea (like a net), a set of cross-hatched lines used only in the punialo; fa'avaetuli (like the knee of the leg) and fa'avae'ali (like the legs of a headrest), a row of chevrons; 'aso fa'avaetuli (lines, like the knee of the leg), a row
of chevrons between two parallel lines (see Figure 5 for this design and the following); fa'alaupono (like a pandanus leaf), a row of equilateral triangles arranged along a base line; fa'asigano (like a male pandanus flower), a row of isosceles triangles arranged along a base line; fa'a'alii (like a headrest), also called fa'aeae'alii, a row of U-shaped marks set along a base line; 'aao fa'atala (lines, like thorns), a row of short oblique lines added to one side of a base line; fa'a'amufe (like a caterpillar), a zigzag or wavy line with a finial stroke at each end; fa'aatualoa (like a centipede), a row of short oblique lines added to each side of a base line or pair of lines, with a pair of curved lines at each end of the design; sogo (tern), an M-shaped motif. The prefix fa'a, which occurs in most of this terminology, means "like" or "resembling." The distinction between calling a design "centipede" and "like a centipede" is slight but does suggest an appreciation for literalness.

An important stylistic development affecting all of the bands occurred sometime before 1930. Traditionally, the more complex designs were put on the inner sides of the thighs, which were displayed when the subject sat cross-legged. According to the artists interviewed by Buck (1930:644), the number and complexity of the fa'a'alii in all the bands had been greatly increased lately, and the motifs filling the spaces between the bands were more elaborate than before. The reason for this increase in detail was said to be a growing preference among the tattooers and their patrons for more intricate ornamentation and a lighter overall effect.

In addition to the tattooing on the trunk, small and simple marks
frequently were put on the hands and wrists. Bougainville (1772:281) claims that the chest was also tattooed, but this is not confirmed in the rest of the literature.

The tattooing on females also was bilaterally symmetrical, but less area of the body was treated than on males. There were no bands of solid inking, and only discrete simple linear motifs arranged in rows were used (see Figure 6). The following discussion is based on Marquardt (1899:20-21, taf. viii-xvii), Krümmer (1903:84-85, figs. 5-7), and Buck (1930:656-660, figs. 337, 338).

The generic term for female tattoo was malu, the name of the first and most important of their patterns, which was made at the back of the knee joint. Within the general losenge shape of the malu there was a considerable choice of design. Both the dorsal and ventral surfaces of the thigh and knee were ornamented with a variety of motifs arranged in vertical, horizontal, and diagonal rows. Similar marks frequently were applied to the abdomen from the navel to the pubic region. The hands were tattooed in the same fashion as those of the men, that is with small discrete markings. Neither the lower back nor the buttocks were decorated.

The motifs most frequently used on women were the fa'astualoa (sometimes without legs), fa'a'amua, rongo, and fa'ayastuli (see Figure 5) also used on males. In addition to these, there were two marks which were used only on women: a set of four crossed lines termed 'alua'alu (jellyfish) or 'aueau (starfish), and a star having four or five points called fa'afatu (like a star), the last of which Buck believes was a post-European introduction.
Island Areas with Similar Style

Tattooing on males in the following islands was bilaterally symmetrical and appears to have been somewhat similar to that on Samoan men, especially with regard to the area of the body treated. The general information on the art in these places is meager, and almost nothing has been written about the actual designs.

Tonga: Males were tattooed from the waist to about the knees, according to Cook (1961:267), Forster (1777:433), and Hale (1846:39). La Pérouse (1798, v. 3:141) observes merely that the ornamentation resembled that of Samoa. Martin (1817, v. 2:266-267) states that the tattooing ended just above the knee and included the glans penis and the verge of the anus. Dumont d'Urville (1836, atlas, v. 1:pl. 76; see Figure 7) published a side view of the marking on the lower trunk and thigh which shows the inking arranged in horizontal panels, one of which on the upper thigh is inset with rows of triangles. Two of the patterns shown in this illustration closely resemble Samoan designs: the parallel serrated lines on the abdomen, which appear to be quite similar to the Samoan fa'aifo, and the sets of several parallel lines on the upper thigh. In addition to these, the irregular shape imprinted across the small of the back above the main panels somewhat resembles the Samoan tua, which was put in the same location. However, the Tongan pattern is much thicker and has a deeply notched edge. A similar shape is shown indistinctly on the abdomen.

The principal patterns were named and they were applied in a definite sequence (McKern, MS). Only two of these names have been recorded: a design across the small of the back was called peka.
Fig. 7. Patterns on Tongan males. (From Dumont d'Urville, 1836, atlas v. 1.)
(flying fox), and one on the front of the leg was termed pulu. Later in life some of the men had simple patterns applied to the arms and the upper torso. The latter design is the only marking for males actually described in the literature. It was called matahema and consisted of a stripe which began on the lower spine, then bifurcated into branching lines which ran under the arms and curved up toward the nipples (McKern, MS).

The tattooing on Tongan women is described by these authors as slight and confined to the arms and hands. A pattern for the upper arm was composed of several concentric ovals encircling a solid center (Labilladière, 1799, atlas:pl. 30). This ornament was imprinted also as a band in which the oval figures overlapped.

Uvea: Males were tattooed from the waist to just below the knees, and women had a few marks on the hands and arms (S. P. Smith, 1892b:111; Burrows, 1937:56).

Futuna and Alofi: According to S. P. Smith (1892a:36), males were ornamented from the hips to just above the knees, and there were some marks on the arms. Women had lines on their hands and forearms. An informant of Burrows (1936:196) said he remembered seeing only a few lines between one man's eyebrows.

Ellice Islands: The descriptions of designs for the separate atolls vary considerably. The males on Nukufetau, according to Wilkes (1845, v. 5:38, 41-42, illus. p. 39), were marked from the waist to sometimes as far as the knees (see Figure 8). The upper margin of this ornamentation arched up toward the navel, in contrast to the Samoan style where the border curved downward toward the groin. The entire pattern was
Fig. 8. Patterns on an Ellice male. (From Wilkes, 1845, v. 5.)

Fig. 9. Face and chest patterns on a Tokelau male. (From Wilkes, 1845, v. 5.)
composed of vertical zigzag lines. From the shoulder to the wrist the arms had small motifs and zigzag lines. An irregular-shaped patch was imprinted below the armpits. A few of the men had several lines across their backs. The patterns described for Koch (1961:98) by his informants vary somewhat from those recorded by Wilkes. The entire back was ornamented with a network of intersecting horizontal stripes and vertical lines named fale vaka, and the abdomen was imprinted with a set of three horizontal stripes which was called tau. The lower part of the thighs and the entire length of the arms were decorated with ringlike marks, mea fakapukupuku, or X's, kakaulepule. A small star-shaped motif, the safetu, was put on the cheeks. Only one woman with tattooing is mentioned by Wilkes. She had much the same markings as the men, but her designs continued down her legs as horizontal stripes. Koch was told that women had the same designs as men.

On Funafuti, Hedley (1897:237, figs. 1-3) saw only six elderly people with tattooing. Both sexes were ornamented to the same extent and with the same designs, but no mention is made of patterns from the waist to the knees. The patch below the arm was a simple linear design, and the arms from the end of the deltoid muscle to a few inches above the wrist were imprinted with sets of straight, zigzag, and segmented lines, most of them arranged vertically. According to Hedley, certain of the arm marks represented holothuria (probably sea cucumbers), but he does not identify the specific designs.

From the people on Vaitupu, Kennedy (1931:301) was unable to obtain descriptions of the patterns that had been used. He was told that most males had designs on each side of the back at the dorsal
curve, and on the arms and each side of the chest. The chest design was called kalukalu, and the pattern on the back was termed fale vaka, which was also the name of a dorsal pattern on Nukufetau. Women also had these two designs, as well as others on the lumbar region and the legs.

On Nanumanga, according to Koch’s informants (1961:98), a starlike motif and a striped pattern were put on women’s arms, while on Niutao both these patterns were more commonly found on men.

From the descriptions of tattooing for these atolls it would appear that there was some pattern differentiation among them. However, considering the close proximity of these islands to each other, and also the different dates of the reports, the variations may be the result of the gradual dying-off of tattooed persons and a fading memory among the living of what the designs had been like. With respect to the amount of marking on each sex, women in the Ellice Islands, in contrast to the general custom in Polynesia, received as much ornamentation, or almost as much, as did the men.

**Rotuma:** The patterns extended from the navel to just above the knees, and the arms were also marked (Hale, 1846:104; Lucatt, 1851, v. 1:178-179). Possibly these descriptions refer to male tattoos only. An elderly woman in photographs taken by Macgregor in 1932 (Bishop Museum negatives 16736, 16737) has on her arms horizontal rows of small geometric marks.
Tokelau Islands

In contrast to the Samoan style, tattooing in the Tokelauans was applied to most parts of the body and no large areas of solid inking were used. Males were marked on the face, the upper arms, the chest, the lower torso, and the lower legs with discrete simple designs, often arranged in rows. The patterns are described briefly by Wilkes (1845, v. 5:7, 11, illus. pp. 12, 34) and Lister (1892:55-56, pl. 11). Macgregor (1937:143-145, fig. 23) obtained a few native accounts of the designs, but none of the people he saw were marked.

Two styles of facial ornamentation were used. In the first, as described by Lister, a narrow band, termed "se1," ran diagonally across each cheek from near the ear lobe to almost the corner of the mouth. This band was made of either a single line or two parallel ones separated by a row of X's. Wilkes reports the latter design as a continuous band which ran across the nose to the tip of each ear. Some men also had a horizontal line of dots between the eyebrows, according to Macgregor. In the second style, recorded by both Wilkes and Macgregor, the forehead and cheeks were imprinted with sets of two or three short arrows (see Figure 9). None of the authors identifies the atoll on which he collected his information and thus this reported variety of facial patterns may mean either that some atoll populations employed different markings, or that several styles were in use throughout the Tokelauans.

The shoulders and upper arms of males were ornamented with rows of triangles and lozenges, or with sets of three or four spearheads or
fishlike shapes. A band similar to that on the face was imprinted around the wrists, and several interrupted ones were put around the lower forearm.

On the chest were tattooed anthropomorphic figures, which Lister's informants said were memorials to near relatives who had died. In these designs the body was a rectangle, the head was a triangle rising directly from the body, and the limbs were short lines extending out from each corner. On some figures the arms were L-shaped, and both the arms and legs were terminated with three short lines. Some of the motifs had a small triangular mark projecting from the body between the legs which probably represented male genitalia. To commemorate children who had died very young, simple arrowhead shapes were put around the larger figures; sometimes two arrowheads were imprinted point to point, resulting in a somewhat hourglass-shaped design.

Two horizontal bands crossed the gluteal region. A fishlike shape was tattooed above the hip joint, and a circular design was imprinted at the crest of the ilium. According to Macgregor, a band passed around the small of the back and curved up to the chest, similar to the matahena design reported for Tonga (McKera, MS). On the lower leg, a horizontal band with segmented lines above and below was made across the calf, and a single line encircled the ankle.

Females had designs around the lips, the waist, and the wrists. The lip pattern, nifo ika (fish teeth), consisted of sets of five or more triangles both above and below the mouth, their bases touching the lips; occasionally those on the upper lip extended to the septum of the nose. A horizontal band, termed luna, was tattooed below the
waistline at about the level of the iliac crest and was continued around to the sides. Two parallel lines, the tau line, were put around the wrists.

Society Islands

In these islands the body was more extensively ornamented than in the Tokelasus, and many of the patterns covered larger areas of skin. One band of solid inking somewhat similar to those of Samoa was in common use.

Almost all of the descriptions of tattoos were recorded on the main islands, usually Tahiti. The exact locality is rarely identified, but the majority of the authors visited longer on these islands than on the smaller ones. Their accounts of the designs are among the most confusing in the literature on Polynesian tattooing. Although at least some Tahitians were extensively ornamented, it is impossible to infer what combination of patterns was found on any one individual, except for certain marks which were used to distinguish rank in the arioi organization. Furthermore, very few of the actual designs have been pictured, and none of the illustrations show a complete set of tattoos.


The tattooing on both males and females employed lines and stripes extending over sections of the body, and small discrete marks, some of which represented humans, animals, and implements.
Men were tattooed on the lower half of the face, on the ears, the neck, the arms and hands, the chest and the back, around the hips, and on the legs and feet.

An illustration by Parkinson (1773:pl. vii) is the only example of a design on the face. His drawing shows a set of horizontal parallel lines, the first of which reaches from near the ear lobe to the corner of the mouth. The lines are repeated to midway on the neck, and rows of triangles and dashes are imprinted between them. No pattern for the ear has been described.

The arms were ornamented with circles and crescents, and each of the finger joints was marked with a Z, according to Cook. Ellis refers to clubs, spears, muskets, swords, and pistols on both the arms and the chest. Also for the chest Ellis lists goats, dogs, fowl, fish, coconut and breadfruit trees, boys gathering fruit, men in battle, and other human activities.

On the back a number of straight, wavy, or zigzag lines rose up the spine and then curved outward toward the shoulders. Darwin compares this design to the crown of a palm tree. This marking may have been the taputu used in the arioi society (see below).

The buttocks were covered with a band of solid inking which curved and narrowed around the sides of the body. Above this pattern rows of small geometric motifs, such as Z's and notched lines, began on each side of the spine and arched over to the sides of the body (Roth, 1905:fig. 1, a drawing from the Cook Expeditions). Forster gives avara as the name for the arches, and toumarro for the band.

The legs were ornamented with circles and crescents, and Ellis
adds that some of the men had a "seam" tattooed up the side of the leg. Also, he describes a design which he says was a coconut tree on the lower leg. The roots spread over the heel, the stalk rose up the tendon, and the fronds curved around the calf. Sometimes two such trees were intertwined.

Most commonly, the feet and ankles were marked with a design which both Ellis and Darwin compare to a stocking. According to Cook, a Z was put on all the joints of the toes.

Each of the grades in the arioi society, a stratified organization of traveling entertainers, had its specific pattern. Men and women holding the same rank were given identical marks, and with each higher position more of the body was ornamented. There were eight orders, according to Henry, and her text suggests that except for the highest of these the grades were named for their tattooing (Ellis mentions only seven orders).

In the following, the ranks in this society are listed in succession from the lowest to the highest. Tara tutu (pointed thorn), small marks on the back of the knee joints; ohe mara (seasoned bamboo), a line around each ankle; atoro (stripe), a small stripe down the left side of the body; hua (small), two or three small points on each shoulder; otiore (unfinished), small marks on the knuckles and wrists and larger ones on the shoulders and arms; tapatu, or haaputu (pile together), diversified curves and lines beginning at the lower end of the spine and arching up toward the sides of the back; harotea (light print), "filigree bars crosswise" on both sides of the body from the armpits downward toward the navel; the highest rank, the arioi maro'ura
(maro'ura, red belt), used the *suae parae* (basmirred legs), solid inking from the feet to the knees, although most persons of this grade had the tattooing extended up to the groin.

A different style from those used on the main islands has been recorded for at least one of the smaller islands. The men of Tetiaroa were ornamented with wide stripes and rectangles of solid inking. A stripe was put on one side of the chest, and the arms were ornamented with a stripe across the deltoid muscle and with pairs of rectangles down to the forearm (Roth, 1905:fig. 3, a drawing from the Cook Expeditions).

On the main islands the females, other than those who were *aroci*, were decorated less than the men. The face was rarely marked. The arms, wrists, and fingers were encircled with simple lines. The hips and buttocks were imprinted with arched lines, which Forster terms *toto house*. The ankles and feet were tattooed in an openwork pattern, perhaps similar to that of the men. According to Cook, all joints of the fingers and toes were marked with a Z, similar to those on the males.

**Cook Islands**

In contrast to the Tahitians, few persons on any of the Cook Islands were extensively ornamented. Furthermore, fewer designs were used and the inhabitants of a particular island usually were marked with the same motifs.

Male tattoo patterns have been recorded for Aitutaki, Atiu, Rarotonga, and Mangaia, but little has been written on the ornamentation
of females. The art was practiced on Mauke and Mitiaro also, but none of the marks has been described.

The tattooing on both sexes employed simple linear designs discretely applied to the body. Only a few of the motifs were used on more than one island, despite the close proximity of these to each other.

Aitutaki

Bligh (1792:148) states that the people (only men?) were tattooed across the arms and legs but not on the hips or buttocks, while J. Williams (1837:52) generalises that some of the people were marked from head to foot. The following designs, described and illustrated by Gudgeon (1905:217, illus.) and Back (1944:129-130, fig. 70), were associated with lineages and thus only one kind of pattern was used on any one person.

A design named tatatao on the face closely resembled the principal lines of the male Maori facial tattooing. In this, sets of three curved lines were imprinted over the eyebrows, around the mouth from the chin to the nostrils, and across the chin. There is no information as to how long this pattern had been used on Aitutaki.

Several parallel zigzag lines, termed pa mauna (range of mountains) or papa yoro, were put on the ventral surface of the body from the thigh to the abdomen, and sometimes on the back and on the neck and wrists. The parepare, several curved lines with attached bladelike shapes was applied to the shoulders, chest, and wrists. A series of arcs surmounted by curved triangles, called ruru, was imprinted on the wrists and forearms. The manu ta'li pattern consisted
of a pair of lines running up the spine, with pairs of short lines branching upward toward the sides of the back. For the following marks the locations on the body have not been recorded. *Punanua inana* (male pandanus flower), a lozenge shape; *komua* (forward thrust of spear), a triangular motif; *peako*, a triangle, two lozenges, and a triangle, all in a row; *puna rua*, an hourglass shape.

**Atiu**

Very little information on the designs has been published. Men were tattooed on the back and sides of the body, and the legs of some men and women were ornamented from the knee to the heel (Buck, 1944:127).

**Rarotonga**

A colored plate made from a painting by J. Williams (1837: illus. facing p. 503, but a frontispiece in some editions) shows a man tattooed with concentric rings from the neck to the ankles, including the arms. Buck (1944:127) is of the opinion that this pattern is suspect, but he does not give his reasons. Over each knee the subject has a simple outline of a turtle, somewhat indistinct in the edition I have seen. One man mentioned by Sunderland and Busacott (1866:42) was marked on the hands and arms to just above the elbows, and on the feet and legs to just above the knees.

The following designs were recorded by Buck (1944:131-132, fig. 72).

The *Rau tava* (leaf of arrowroot) was a horizontal row of four to six hourglass-shaped figures terminating at each end in a three or four-lobed motif. This design was imprinted across the back of the neck, the lobed element behind each ear. Two different patterns for the wrist were both named *ruru*. One of these was a rectangle containing
two intersecting zigzag lines, and the other was a double row of triangles imprinted to form a continuous band of lozenges. A solidly inked five-pointed star was put on the back of the hand.

Mamoa

The following designs were described to Buck by his informants (1911:95-97, illus.; 1944:130, fig. 71). Two face patterns were used. The *purasuti*, a solidly inked triangular motif, was applied to the cheek, the base toward the ear and the apex toward the nose. The *poe rasuti* was a large chevron pointing toward the ear. The *puyakawake*, a large zigzag line with tri-lobed motifs at each apex, was put on the shoulder, upper arm, and chest. A row of thick arcs, termed *manu ta'ii*, encircled the forearm. The *ruru* or *kau*, a row of solidly inked triangles rising from several rows of checkered lines, encircled the wrists. The *motupoki* was a pair of lines which curved from the thumb to the forefinger. Small crosses, called *mokora*, were put on the backs of the hands and fingers.

The *tua te'iti*, similar to the *manu ta'ii* of Aitutaki, ran up the spine. A five-pointed star, *msurua* (the name of a specific star), was imprinted on the abdomen and other parts of the body. The *pote*a, sets of four ovals, each containing three short lines, were put on the thigh. The *vava'anea*, a row of U-shaped motifs, was set just above the knee. Groups of vertical parallel lines crossed with short lines, the *pa'oro*, was put on the lower leg from the knee to the ankle. The *mokomoko* was a short curved line on either side of the heel tendon. On the upper lip of females, the *nenu* (lip), an elongated oval, followed the curve of the mouth.
Almost all of the literature on Maori tattooing deals with the people of North Island. The patterns employed on South Island have not been described with much detail; those which have been mentioned were composed of a few simple marks. For example, Cowan (1910: 192, illus. p. 193) observed several men with a pair of horizontal parallel lines running across the cheek to the nape. In contrast, the tattoos on the inhabitants of North Island were extremely elaborate, and the remainder of this section is concerned with their designs.

Although males usually were ornamented on only the face and the buttocks and thighs the designs were among the most ornate in Polynesia. Almost all of the tattooing was bilaterally symmetrical. The principal patterns were curvilinear, as were most of the small details, and the double spiral was the most prominent design.

Men were tattooed on the entire face, from the roots of the hair to the throat, and occasionally even the tongue was marked. The buttocks and the thighs also were imprinted. At Poverty Bay Monkhouse saw men with designs on the chest and arms (Cook, 1955, v. 1: 585-586). The Maori patterns have been described extensively by Robley (1896: 4, 72-73, 75-78, 84, illus. passim; 1931: 44-46), Best (1924, v. 2: 549-550, 557), and Buck (1958: 297-299). A set of some 50 annotated drawings made by Robley during 1860 to 1914, and now in the Bishop Museum, provide valuable information not available in the published records.

The facial tattoo had several dominant units which were always
used. Thus all faces ornamented were generically similar. However, an almost infinite variety of small details were inserted between these basic elements. Thus each man's pattern actually was unique.

The principal lines of the facial design were applied in a definite sequence, according to Cowan (1921: 242) and Polack (1838, v. 1:385) although they do not give the same exact succession. The general order is observed in the following discussion of the patterns. Each set of important lines had a specific name. Hamilton (1896:312-313) provides a comparative table of this nomenclature as given by six earlier authors, each of whom gives a somewhat different list of names and facial locations. Shortland (1851:17), one of the sources cited by Hamilton, provides a rough sketch with labels for some of the designs. The terminology collected by Robley (1931:44-46) is used here because he had investigated the names published earlier and then keyed his final list to a drawing of the actual marks.

The dominant patterns were applied to both sides of the face and they are shown in Figure 10. Around the mouth, three or four pairs of vertical lines, the rarea-a, curved from above the nostril to the chin. Pairs of horizontal lines began above the bridge of the nose and arched over the eyes; these were termed tīwhana, although the general name for all marking on the forehead was tono kai. The lower pairs of these lines curled in under each end of the eyebrow to form the rewha. On each side of the bridge of the nose a spiral was imprinted which, together with the short curved lines below it, was termed whakatara. A larger spiral, the pōngianga, was put above the nostril. Ngū was the general name for all lines on the nose. Two large double or triple
Fig. 10. Face patterns on Maori males. (Drawing from Hamilton, 1896; nomenclature from Robley, 1931.)
spirals, one above the other, almost covered the cheek. The upper one was named paeoae and the lower korowaha. Sometimes only one side of the face had both these spirals. The other cheek was decorated with a lower spiral and, in the space usually given to the upper one, a koru pattern (this motif is described below), or one cheek had neither of the spirals but two wide bands, from ear to nose, with a koru design inset between them (Robley, original drawings nos. 4, 6).

The spaces between the principal lines were ornamented with a variety of small designs. Two of these areas were large enough to allow considerable ornamentation, the titi, a triangular surface on the forehead above the taha, and the pu tarine, the area from the cheek spirals to the ear. These surfaces were covered with elaborate curvilinear devices. The main ornament was a curved stalk terminating in a bulb, which Phillips (1948:120) terms koru. Frequently two koru were given a common base line and this design was named kokoti.

The pu tarine area was usually bisected horizontally by the kohiri pattern, also called tore, in which a koru curved out from each side of a center stalk. In several other arrangements of the koru motif, shown in one of Robley's original drawings (No. 20), the device is also used in pairs. Each of the pu tarine on a man's face was always somewhat different from the other, according to Robley (original drawings Nos. 20, 21, and annotations). This variation consisted of slightly dissimilar arrangements of the koru motifs. Occasionally, the two sides of the titi were also treated asymmetrically (Nos. 28, 32, 39).

The remaining clear areas on the face were filled with simple linear elements. The kumikumi, under the eyes; the pu karu, at the
outer corner of the eye; the *wero*, between the *rarepehi* and the cheek spirals; the *hune*, beneath the nose (not shown in Figure 10); and the *kauwae*, on the chin. Both lips were marked with several horizontal lines, the *nautu āwha*.

The entire face itself was divided vertically into halves by a strip of untattooed skin about 1/8-inch wide which ran down the center of the forehead, over the nose, and down across the lips and chin. This space was termed the *waora*; usually it can be seen only in full or three-quarter views of the face.

Two earlier styles of face tattooing are suggested by Best. In one, the *kuri*, the entire face was covered with sets of three short straight lines, each set imprinted at right angles to the others, resulting in a basketweave effect. Robley, citing J. White's *The Ancient History of the Maori* (which I have not seen), also accepts this pattern and notes a small curvilinear design in the center of the forehead. This pattern is called *whakahoehoe* by W. Williams (1957), who believes that it was applied over the entire body. The other style was suggested in a portrait by Parkinson (1773:pl. 21). The lower two-thirds of the face, beginning at the level of the eyes, is covered by the *pūhoro* design which was characteristically put on the thighs (see Figure 11). Best accepts this pattern as a facial marking and states that Colenso saw it. Colenso (1875:356), however, refers only to Parkinson's drawing. The veracity of this illustration is quite doubtful, for his drawings were often composites of several small sketches (Beaglehole, in Cook, 1955:ccxiii-cclv) and this pattern suggests that the thigh design was erroneously applied to the face.
Fig. 11. Thigh and buttock patterns on Maori males. (From Dumont d'Urville, 1836. atlas v. 1.)

Fig. 12. Face patterns on Maori females. (From Robley, 1896.)
Each of the buttocks was covered with a large double spiral, which was often oval-shaped and extended around the side of the hip. From this spiral to the lower thigh the *punoro* design was usually imprinted. This pattern was composed of vertical stripes with short horizontal lines set between them; a large curvilinear triangle with *koru* at the corners was superimposed over this ground. One of the few distinct illustrations of these designs was published by Dumont d'Urville (1836, atlas vol. I:pl. 57; see Figure 11). Other marks for the thigh were made of sets of *koru* and *kokoti*.

Tattooing on females was also bilaterally symmetrical and curvilinear. Each woman's patterns were slightly different, but the general scheme is described by Robley (1895:33-47, illus.) and Best (1924, v. 2:550, 556-557); several photographs in color of elderly women with facial tattoos have been published by Dansey (1963: pl. 21-24, 34). Usually only the chin and upper lip were ornamented (see Figure 12). The chin design was composed of half-circles, slightly curved lines, and sometimes the *koru*. The upper lip was imprinted with several lines which followed the curve of the lip, and occasionally these lines were set immediately above the mouth and also on the lower lip. Designs similar to those used on the chin were sometimes put below the nose. Other parts of the face were less frequently marked. Best refers to crosses on the forehead and the cheeks, and Phillips (1948:120) mentions arcs named *Teka* around and over the eyebrows. Tattoos on the breasts were not common, and no designs have been recorded. Colenso (1875:356) states that the back of the leg from heel to calf and the hands and arms were sometimes ornamented. Occasionally, according to Best, the area
around the genitals was decorated with a triangular design called *tara whakairo*.

**Marquesas Islands**

In this group of islands the amount of ornamentation on both sexes was the greatest in Polynesia. Tattooing on males was applied to the face, including the eyelids, and to the neck, trunk, arms, both sides of the hands, and to the legs and feet. Occasionally, even the tongue and the insides of the nostrils were inked. The genitals were not ornamented. All of the principal marking was bilaterally symmetrical, but this was not always true of the smaller details. Both rectilinear and curvilinear designs were used. Most of the body was covered with wide bands of solid inking ornamented with intricate motifs. The bands were separated from each other by vertical and diagonal stripes of untattooed skin. As will be seen, there were some stylistic differences between the northwestern islands (Nuku Hiva, Ua Huka, Ua Pou) and the southeastern ones (Hiva Oa, Tahu Ata, Fatu Hiva).

The sequence in which the patterns were imprinted was determined by the social rank of the patron. On subjects of high status the process was begun on the feet and continued upward to the face, while on persons of lower position the marking was started on the face and carried downward. In the first operations on any individual only the groundwork of the main designs was applied. In later operations these patterns were filled in and others added.

The designs have been discussed at length by W. C. Handy (1922:13-25, pls. i, iii-v, vii, xii-xiv, xxix-xxxviii) and von den Steinen (1925:}
102-127, abb. 40, 53-55, 57, 58, 60-69, 71). Both of these authors provide valuable accounts, but their information was collected after the traditional practice had ceased and thus neither of them was able to present a truly comprehensive study of the art. Brief comments on the patterns have been made by de Quiros (1904, v. 1:16), Forster (1777, v. 2:14-15), Marchand (1801, v. 1:148), von Krusenstern (1810, v. 1:168-169), von Langsdorff (1813, vol. 1:122-123), and Porter (1815, v. 2:14).

Most of the bands were named for the part of the body on which they were put or for their decorative function, i.e., encircling, covering, and so forth. Each island used a slightly different terminology, largely the result of the dialect variations occurring among them. W. C. Handy lists more than 70 names of designs, but almost all those which are identified in her illustrations are for small motifs. Her informants said that many more terms had been forgotten. More than 175 names were recorded by von den Steinen, but as with W. C. Handy most of these are for small designs. Because von den Steinen provides illustrations of the more important patterns used on Hiva Oa his nomenclature from this island is used below (except where noted otherwise). Only a few of his names agree with those collected by W. C. Handy, and neither author always indicates which island a design name is from.

The most common facial style for the male was termed tiapu (encircle) and consisted of three bands of solid inking, the kokeka (crooked) across the forehead, the ya^ mata (tears) across the eyes, and the tianu te mutu (encircle the lips) across the mouth (see Figure
13). If only one side of the forehead was imprinted the band was called kokeka yaha (incomplete kokeka). These bands were often inset with small geometric motifs, which also were sometimes put between the bands. A variant style, called pakeka (crosswise), had a diagonal band from the center of the forehead across one eye and cheek, or across only the eye. Three earlier styles were described to W. C. Handy by her informants. In the first, spirals enclosed both eyes and also were put on both cheeks, there called koko ata. In the hue epe pattern a solid circle covered the eyes and the mouth. The third style employed solid vertical bands on each side of the face, their edges passing along the eyebrows, the nostrils, and the mouth.

The principal design on each side of the ventral surface of the torso was a wide perpendicular band called ti’i hake (patterns descending) or fau tai (pieces of bark). It began under the chin and terminated over the pubic region. This band consisted of four rectangles of solid inking, termed pape hinu, alternated with an equal number of rectangular sections of various motifs.

The dorsal ornamentation began on each side of the back of the neck with a rectangular patch (see Figure 14). Below this, on each side of the spine from shoulder to waist, were four large slightly curved rectangles of solid inking, the no’o (part). Small geometric elements were inset along the edges. Below the no’o was a wide, arching band, the koke ta, which followed the hip contour and extended onto the thigh. Each buttock was ornamented with a compound circular design of several small motifs. According to W. C. Handy, the overall pattern was on each buttock termed tifa (cover), while von den Steinen
Fig. 13. Ventral patterns on Marquesan males. (Drawing from von den Steinen, 1925; additional nomenclature from W. Handy, 1922.)
Fig. 14. Dorsal patterns on Marquesan males.
(Drawing from von den Steinen, 1925; additional nomenclature from W. Handy, 1922.)
names only the parts of the design. The side of the torso was decorated with bands containing intricate details.

The ventral surface of the shoulder and upper arm was imprinted with a panel called keheu (wing). The outer side of the arm was covered with five or six large motifs. The inner side was frequently decorated with a row of inu 'oto (inside of bowl) (see Figure 15). On both sides of the hand horizontal rows of repeated motifs were imprinted, and often a large single design was put on the back of it.

The leg was encircled almost three quarters around with four or five horizontal rectangular bands crossed with diagonal lines and ornamented with elaborate inserts. The remaining inside front quarter was filled with large triangles, the peka fatina. A variant style on Muku Hive applied all the leg patches in an oblique arrangement and inserted simple geometric shapes at only the edges. The foot was ornamented with small intricate repeated motifs.

The designs most commonly used to embellish the principal bands were: mata hoatu (brilliant eye), inu 'oto (inside of bowl), ka'ake (armpit), po'i'i (a coiled shellfish), poku (a legendary person), ka'e (woodlouse), and bikihiku atu (tail of bonite fish). Each of these motifs was given considerable variation, as can be seen from Figure 15, and none of them was restricted to any one part of the body. Other, more simple patterns were composed from sets of small geometric forms, i.e., crosses, chevrons, and so forth.

Tattooing on females also was bilaterally symmetrical. Less of the body was ornamented than on males and there were fewer large solidly inked areas. The designs were arranged usually in horizontal
Fig. 15. Small motifs used in Marquesan tattooing on both sexes. (From von den Steinen, 1925.)
rows and were generally more delicate than those on men, although the same motifs were used on both sexes. On women, the rows and other groups of patterns were named for whatever small designs they contained.

The patterns have been described by W. C. Handy (1922:13-25, pls. ii, vi-xi, xv-xxviii) and von den Steinen (1925:128-136, abb. 56, 72-78), and a representative set are shown in Figure 16.

Across the mouth were imprinted vertical lines, the honiho, which continued behind the lips to the gums. Simple motifs were put on the ear lobe and below it on the neck. The arm from the deltoid area to the hand was ornamented much like that of the men. The leg from the hip at the level of the pubis to the foot was decorated with horizontal rows of motifs. Occasionally the shoulder and the lower back were decorated also.

A stylistic development in the tattooing on both sexes has been postulated by W. C. Handy for the 180 years previous to the abolition of the practice by French law. Her hypothesis is based upon the illustrations and brief descriptions published in the narratives of the early voyages and on the designs and information collected during her field trip to the Marquesas. In summary, it proposes that the patterns used in the southeastern islands gradually changed from "naturalistic" motifs to "geometric" designs, while the northeastern group retained the "naturalistic" forms but adopted some of the "geometric" shapes. Those patterns which she terms naturalistic and which are illustrated in her text are actually highly conventionalized and are constructed from geometric elements, while the designs she labels as geometric might more appropriately be called abstract. The existence of truly naturalistic patterns during this period of Marquesan tattooing is doubtful.
Fig. 16. Patterns on Marquesan females. (From von den Steinen, 1925.)
Tuamotu Archipelago

Tuamotuan patterns show little similarity to those used in the nearby Society group. In the literature, tattooing has been described for only Anaa Atoll (Wilkes, 1846, v. 1:326, 333, illus. pp. 326, 329, 333; Hale, 1846:40; Christian, 1910:199). Christian suggests that the art was practiced on some of the other atolls but he does not name them nor does he discuss any of the patterns. Wilkes points out that the natives of Anaa frequently traveled to other parts of the archipelago, and consequently the tattooed persons seen on other atolls may well have been ornamented on Anaa.

Three patterns were used. The largest was a checkered design applied over the chest and abdomen from the sternum to the pubic region, and carried over the shoulder to the deltoid area (see Figure 17). Along the midline the pattern was edged with a stripe of solid inking which divided at the base of the neck and terminated under each ear. Wilkes saw a native on Aratika with only one side of the body so ornamented. Sometimes several narrow stripes were put on the lower back. The hips and thighs were ornamented with rosettes, which Christian states were sea urchins and other zoophytes.

Mangareva

Compared with the Tuamotuan style, more of the body was ornamented in Mangareva and a greater variety of designs was used. Tattooing on males was bilaterally symmetrical and employed large circles and groups of stripes. Most of the patterns covered large areas of the body from
Fig. 17. Patterns on Tuamotuan males. (From Wilkes, 1845, v. 1.)

Fig. 18. Patterns on Mangarevan males. (From Beechey, 1831.)
the lower half of the face to the feet. They have been described by Beechey (1831:189-191, illus. facing pp. 142, 178) and Laval (1938:237-238). Buck (1938:177, 180-182, fig. 7) reviews the accounts by Beechey and Laval.

At least three of the patterns were applied in sequence. Shortly after birth the hair of a chief was marked with several dots on the dorsum of the foot. On all other males the first design to be imprinted was a set of lines around the neck. The second was a pattern under the armpit.

Two styles are noted by Beechey. The names for some of the elements are given by Laval and they are used below, but much of this terminology merely refers to parts of the body. In the first style, "checkered lines," starting from a stripe which ran ear to ear over the bridge of the nose, extended down to the ankles, except on the chest which either was undecorated or had some other pattern on it. Beechey does not state whether this design was also applied to the dorsal surface. The second style consisted of sets of vertical stripes which ran from the waist to the ankles, and from the upper arm to the finger tips (see Figure 18). The pattern on the upper arm was termed kaukau, that on the forearm keva rima (elbow), and the two on the wrist moko'e (frigate bird) and 'ono (turtle). The lines on the back of the hand were named rure and several parts were distinguished: rau (leaves) on the back of the hand, para akairau on the fingers, and pare'e, a line running from the forefinger to the thumb. Some men had stripes which extended from the armpits and curved forward to the waist. It is not clear from the literature whether the four lines termed kaki (neck)
which curved over the upper chest to each shoulder were used in both styles. Sometimes the kaki were embellished with small details and were then said to resemble insects and were called kaki 'aka manumamu (manu, bird, small animal, insect).

Two circular patterns were in general use. The pakuivi (shoulder) on the shoulder was a quadrate circle having each quarter solidly inked, the radii forming an uninked cross. The other design, the mau pae, was put below the armpit and was essentially the same as the pakuivi with one important exception. Sometimes each quarter of the circle was further divided into halves, both solidly inked but the one more lightly than the other. This is the only record in Polynesia of a deliberate use of two distinct tones in one pattern. The elaboration was termed 'akamanara varu (varu, eight).

Laval lists additional design names and their body locations but does not indicate what the patterns looked like. The 'akamago'ia (like a shark) was set above the navel, and the pori (rotund) below it. At the groin the koaro (groin) was imprinted. On the back the taragonoponoa (spines between the shoulders) was applied to the upper area, te mako (the lizard) to the middle, and the tuaka'i (backbone) to the lower back. The pori on the lower abdomen was connected with the tuaka'i. On the side of the body from the waist to the knee a line called poupolo (post) was imprinted. The 'iua (thigh) was put on the upper leg, and the turuturu (legs) on the (lower?) legs.

Only a few of the women seen by Beechey had any tattooing. Their marking was bilaterally symmetrical and consisted of vertical stripes
around the ankles or bands around the arms.

Easter Island

Tattooing on Easter Island, like the ornamentation used on Mangareva, covered less of the body than it did in the Marquesas. Ornamentation on males was bilaterally symmetrical and was applied to the face and neck, the torso, and the forearms, hands, and legs. The principal designs were paddle-shaped forms and sets of lines or dots.

These patterns have interested several authors. The account of Thomson (1891:466-467, illus.) deals primarily with female tattoos. Stolpe (1899) is concerned with male facial designs, although he includes some of the body marking found on the small human effigies made from tapa. The information gathered by Routledge (1919:214, 219-220, fig. 88) is largely cursory, and her illustration is more schematic than literal. Métraux (1940:238-247, figs. 30-36), in summarizing these accounts, supplements them with many designs found on the tapa figures because this ornamentation, according to native tradition, imitated human tattooing. However, the tapa images were painted in several colors; perhaps only the black marking represented tattoos and the other colors were intended to show body painting and other kinds of decoration. These figures require separate, detailed study based on the extant specimens or colored illustrations of them, before the various kinds of ornamentation can be deciphered. Wherever Metraux's only evidence for a pattern is based upon these images that pattern is not discussed here.

The face and neck were the most elaborately marked parts of the
body (see Figure 19). On the forehead two parallel horizontal stripes were imprinted just below the hairline. They continued down the side of the temple and at about the level of the eye curved back into the hair. Large solid dots, the hump or puraki, were set below the lower stripe. Ten heavy fusiform lines extended vertically between the dots and the eyebrows. The second and ninth lines were joined to the dot above each, to form an anthropomorphic shape in which bent lines were added as arms. Either the entire forehead design was named retu or this term was applied to only the parallel stripes outlining the forehead. A stripe followed the arch of the eyebrow, then curved in near the bridge of the nose and ran along the eyelid. This design was called matapea. Down the front of the nose the outline of a slender isosceles triangle was imprinted. Flanking it on each side, solidly inked triangles extended over the nostrils and onto the cheek. At the tip of the nose was a circle enclosing a dot. The cheek proper was ornamented with a solid triangular shape; both below it and between it and the ear were two irregular patches. Above the upper lip was a stripe with tapered ends, the retu rika. The lips themselves were often decorated with either solid inking or vertical lines. Three stripes ran from the edge of the lower lip to the bottom of the chin.

Each side of the neck had four pairs of wavy vertical stripes, and between each pair dots or lozenges were imprinted. A bird motif, the makohe (frigate bird), was put head down on the larynx.

The forearm was tattooed with vertical lines. The entire back of the hand was solidly inked except for two narrow bands of untreated skin near the wrist. Routledge was told by her informants that
Fig. 19. Face and neck patterns on an Easter male. (From Stolpe, 1899.)

Fig. 20. Patterns on a Hawaiian male. (From Cook, 1784. atlas.)
several large triangles were applied to the inner arm.

On the upper ventral surface of the body two stripes or rows of dots followed the line of the clavicle. At the midline a motif representing the vulva was set. Each side of the upper chest was ornamented with a spearhead shape, the matas (knife). Below the nipples were put paddle-shaped designs termed go (dance paddle). Sometimes the go were embellished with eyes, nose, and mouth.

The back was ornamented on each side of the spine with nine vertical lines which turned sharply toward the side of the body at approximately the bottom of the rib cage.

Both surfaces of the thigh to just above the knee were covered with vertical lines. Occasionally this pattern was made of extended zigzag lines.

The most explicit description of tattooing on females is given by Thomson. Ventrally, below each breast, there was an go. Below the waist a "girdle" made of a network of cross-hatched lines curved up toward the navel. On each side of the upper edge of this design rose two hook-shaped motifs. The thigh to below the knee was covered with curving horizontal lines, while the lower leg was ornamented with cross-hatched or vertical lines. Dorsally, the "girdle" curved up on each side of the spine and terminated on the upper back in a single large go which was decorated with brows, eyes, and nose. The thigh had a stalk and leaf pattern, and the lower leg was ornamented like the front of it.
In contrast to the rest of Polynesia an asymmetrical style was used in these islands. Tattooing on males was not bilaterally symmetrical and often one side of the body was more ornamented than the other. The face, chest, and limbs were the areas most frequently treated, although sometimes the abdomen was marked. There is no record of designs on the back.

The most common tattoos were angular geometric patterns constructed from straight or dentate lines and other simple shapes such as triangles and circles. Pictographs of humans, fans, and other objects were used also. Few, perhaps none, of the designs were restricted to any one part of the body.

Many of the journals of the early European visitors to Hawaii contain comments on the tattooing. The most reliable and useful are those of King (Cook, 1784, v. 3:135) Arago (1823:76, 92, 149; 1840, v. 2:75, 102), and Krämer (1906:92). The accounts and illustrations by Arago and Krämer were made during the last years of the practice of the art and many foreign elements had been introduced such as outlines of goats and representations of rifles and other European objects. Arago mentions that he was persuaded to draw pictures on the skin which were then tattooed.

Malo (1951:70-72, fig. 1) discusses briefly the use of tattoos as marks for a class of pariahs, the kauwai. The most informative publication on Hawaiian tattooing is by Emory (1946). He reviews and evaluates the early literature, supplementing it with descriptions of
unpublished drawings from the voyages, and discusses the ornamentation found on pieces of dessicated skin. His study is especially valuable because of his extensive knowledge of Hawaiian culture. The patterns described below are those which from his presentation seem to be the most authentic.

Three styles are frequently mentioned by the early travelers. In the first, one half of the body, face to ankle, was almost completely tattooed. This form, called pā'ele kūlani, was most prevalent on the island of Maui. With the second, designs were applied to alternate sides of the body, e.g., right side of face and left side of chest, or right arm and left leg. In the third style, both arms or both legs were ornamented but each limb was given a different pattern. An engraving of a drawing by Webber (Cook, 1784, atlas:pl. 62) is reproduced as Figure 20 to show the general effect of the second and third styles. The designs and their position on the limbs agree in general with other accounts, although the motif applied to the legs is shown in one of Webber's original sketches as being imprinted on the face (Emory, 1946:235-236, figs. 1, 2a). As stated before, none of the Hawaiian designs appear to have been restricted to one part of the body. The bilaterally symmetrical distribution of all the patterns on the body, however, is not supported by other sources. Very likely only one arm and the opposite leg would have been decorated (second style) or each pair of limbs would have had different motifs (third style).

The following designs, when used as the principal marking, were applied to only one side of the body, and on any one area only one of the designs was used.
The face: solidly inked panels through which ran a zigzag line of untattooed skin, imprinted in vertical or horizontal groups; cross-hatched lines; rows of M-shaped motifs, especially on forehead. The kāne, or pariahs, were branded on the face with one of several simple marks: a solid dot in the middle of the forehead, or a curved line between the eyebrows, or curved lines like parentheses near the outer corners of the eyes.

The arms: rows of concentric semicircles and scalloped lines on the upper arm; bands of solid inking around upper arm and wrist; from wrist to at least elbow a double row of triangles, their bases turned inward; parallel to this pattern a pair of stripes with solid rectangles set at intervals between them.

The chest: four solidly inked vertical panels each containing a row of triangles of untattooed skin; checkered lines, which were also applied to abdomen; a diagonal row of M-shaped motifs.

The leg: panels with zigzag lines, as on face; cross-hatched lines on thigh; solid triangles on upper leg sometimes in a checkered pattern; a set of dentated thin lines down front of leg; stripes on front of leg, sometimes with a row of triangles down one side; a herring bone pattern on lower leg; ankle encircled with a wide band.

Tattooing on females, like that on males, was not bilaterally symmetrical and less of the body was marked. Generally, only the face, tongue, hands, arms, and legs were ornamented. Apparently the patterns were similar to those used on males but few of them have been reliably reported.

The hand designs of females, as recalled by Mrs. Mary Kawena Pukui
were composed principally of lines imprinted across the fingers and the wrists, although triangles, spear shapes, and other linear figures were used. A sample of dessicated skin from an arm found by Emory was ornamented with a double row of triangles, similar to that recorded for men, with a row of M-shaped motifs along one side of the pattern. Lines of double triangles were found on each side of all fingers of a hand. Dried skin from a pair of legs showed that one of them from just below the knee to the ankle was encircled with a checkered pattern. A solid band with a dentate lower border encircled the other leg just above the ankle. A stripe of double triangles ran up the middle of the inner side of this leg.

Discussion

Tattooing in Polynesia was not merely the random application of designs to the body. A study of the principal marks used in each group of islands shows that the patterns were carefully adjusted to fit the contours of the human physique. Most of these large patterns were not representations of objects but rather were the division of the skin surface into workable areas. In general, the body was treated according to its functional parts. The arm, for example, was given one set of designs, it was not used to continue patterns from the chest. This attention to the structural divisions of the body is most clearly seen in the Samoan bands, the designs used by the Maori, and the Marquesan panels, patterns which covered relatively large areas of skin.

The bilateral symmetry of the body was reflected in the tattooing, except in Hawaii and the Tuamotus. But even in these archipelagoes the
larger structural parts of the physique were observed.

In addition to stressing bilateral symmetry some of the larger designs undoubtedly heightened the visual impression of the body's natural movements; no Polynesian opinion on this effect has been noted in the references reviewed. This emphasis probably was most clearly seen on the face. The Maori tīwhana over the brows and the reroeheit around the mouth would have increased the ferocity of grimaces which were important in the culture. Even when the features were relaxed the tattooing would have still conveyed the effect of aggressiveness. The Marquesan facial design formed a dark background for the eyes and mouth, and any facial expression would have been accentuated.

The smaller motifs interspersed among the larger patterns were most often simple geometric marks which contrasted greatly with the more massive solid inking. In the Tokelau, Cooks, Tuamotus, and Hawaii these marks comprised most of the tattooing and were applied over large areas of the skin.

On all islands more complex designs were made by combining several of the elementary geometric motifs. Occasionally rather elaborate patterns were composed from essentially discrete marks. One of the most striking examples is the Easter Island facial design in which the separate elements were extremely simple but the total effect was quite ornate.

The large patterns usually were named for the part of the body to which they were applied. Most of the small motifs were named for actual objects, but the great majority of these designs bore merely a
very general resemblance to the object. They did not attempt to reproduce precise details. For example, the chevron in Samoa was named for the feet of both birds and headrests, but was not elaborated to show specific characteristics.

Realistic representations of actual objects were quite rare. None have been recorded for Samoa, New Zealand, the Tuamotus, or Mangareva. The arrowhead shapes and anthropomorphic figures used in the Tokelau and the dance paddle designs on Easter Island were merely slightly modified geometric shapes. Stick figures of humans were used in Tahiti and Hawaii, and the Tahitians also had developed a few conventionalized plant designs. In both of these island groups, during the period of initial contact with Europeans, some representations of foreign objects were added to the traditional tattoos, but there was no increase in designs based on objects in their own cultures. The Marquesas showed the greatest development of complex designs based on actual objects, but the figures were highly conventionalized rather than realistic.

Except in the Klice and Tokelau islands, women were ornamented considerably less than the men. Throughout Polynesia their tattooing was not a different kind of marking but merely a diminished version of that on the men.

Many of the studies of tattooing in Polynesia have been concerned with tracing the diffusion of particular designs. This is not the primary purpose of my investigation. Nevertheless from the foregoing descriptions of the tattoos it is apparent that, even in those islands
where tattooing was a minor art and comparatively little of the body was treated, almost all of the larger patterns had been developed locally. The only designs which can be traced from one island group to another are simple geometric motifs which are found in art throughout the world, i.e., checkered lines, triangles, and so forth. It is the larger patterns themselves which are unique to each island group, strongly suggesting the high degree of local innovation in culturally isolated communities.
CHAPTER IV

PATRONAGE

Under this rubric will be discussed not only the role of the patron, but also the contributions of his relatives and other persons who in some way participated in the tattooing process, if only to provide payment to the artist. The ceremonies conducted by the patron and his associates will also be treated as an aspect of patronage. The term patron is used here for the person who was tattooed, even though he himself was frequently too young to reimburse the artist.

The forms of male patronage for tattooing in Polynesia can be set forth rather explicitly. Throughout the islands the clientele were of the same social grades, and all the rituals accompanying the operation were similar, varying in complexity rather than in essence. The amount of ceremony can be used as an indication of the importance of the ornamentation to the patron and his society. However, a detailed comparison of the ceremonies themselves would require an intensive study of the various levels of formality occurring in each island's culture.

Relatively little has been recorded about female patronage, undoubtedly because women were less extensively marked, but also because considerably less formality was observed during their tattooing.

As is evident from the preceding chapters, males were the principal patrons of the art. In most cases, their first tattoos were applied during adolescence, usually between the ages of 12 and 18. When the son of a man of high rank reached the appropriate age his
father arranged for his first tattooing, and at this time the other unmarked boys of lower rank in the community also were ornamented. These "secondary" patrons were decorated while the "principal" patron was resting between sessions; often their designs were imprinted by the tattooer's assistants, who actually were apprentices gaining experience in this fashion. The ornamentation on the principal patron was more ornate and generally better executed than that on the secondary patrons.

The entire operation was surrounded with taboo, the most common of which was the seclusion of the patron. Probably most of the restrictions were employed because the process involved bleeding, and blood was regarded by Polynesians as both a source of contamination and a conveyor of mana. Usually special houses were constructed for the operation and they were destroyed when the marking was completed.

Everywhere in Polynesia the amount of tattooing on an individual, in comparison with other persons of the same sex and age, was for the most part a reflection of his or his family's wealth. Thus, as far as wealth and social rank were coordinated, the intensiveness of an individual's tattooing also indicated his place in the society. Frequent mention is made in the early literature of certain motifs being used as insignia for each of the higher social grades, but, as will be noted below, only a few societies reserved specific designs to mark chiefs, superior warriors, etc. Furthermore, such marks as were used for this purpose were quite small in proportion to the rest of the patterns, except in the case of the arioi association in the Society Islands. In this stratified organization all the designs, both large and small, that a member could acquire were determined by his rank.
In three island groups certain marks were used by the wealthy to commemorate the death of a relative. Anthropomorphic figures, described in Chapter III, were used in the Tokelasus. Ellis (1853, v. 1:262) believes that some of the Society Islands markings had this purpose, but he does not specify which ones. In Hawaii the tongue and other parts of the body were tattooed as memorials to the dead.

A summary of the different forms of patronage in the separate island groups will illustrate both the variety of customs and the similarities underlying them. As would be expected, the more complex tattooing ceremonies occurred in those societies in which there was an emphasis on formal behavior and in which extensive and elaborate marking was practiced.

In Samoa the son of a high chief was first marked when he was 14 to 18 years old, while sons of the talking chiefs who were ornamented at the same time might be several years younger or older. The sessions were initiated with speeches, a kava ceremony, a feast, and an exchange of gifts between the high chief and the artist (Buck, 1930:640-641). The operation itself took place in a house built especially for that purpose. The completion of the tattooing was celebrated with a feast, an exchange of gifts which included payment to the artist, and a ceremony called lulu'uga o le tatau (sprinkling the tattooed) (Buck, 1930:661). The cost of the marking and the ceremonies was borne by the high chief; the talking chiefs were said to have paid for their sons' tattooing by having them "share the pain" (tale i lona tea) of the principal patron (Buck, 1930:660).
If a boy were to be tattooed at too early an age his later growth would cause the lines to move apart (Krämer, 1903:63-64). Therefore, lesser chiefs with sons too young to be marked at the same time as the principal patron arranged for the imprinting to be performed several years later. On these occasions no ceremonies other than those involved with paying the artist were conducted.

All patrons received the same amount of tattooing. However, two distinctions between the designs applied to sons of high chiefs and those put on the sons of lesser chiefs were pointed out to E. and W. Handy (1924:21, pl. vii-B) by their informants. The former had a more elaborate ‘asa talitu and a different set of triangles down the back of the legs (see Chapter XIII for a description of these patterns).

Most Samoan girls were tattooed by apprentices. However, the daughter of a high chief, if she was to become a tāpu (the village ceremonial hostess), was ornamented by an artist of professional standing. Almost no ceremony was attached to the operation on females.

For the other island groups employing essentially the Samoan style of tattooing the following information is all that has been collected concerning patronage. In Tonga, according to Gifford (1929:127), chiefs and warriors were often tattooed in “eccentric manners” in contrast to the marking on commoners; for example, one chief was said to have had his penis imprinted. On Uvea the operation was celebrated with a feast (Burrows, 1937:56). At Futuna and Alofi the first marks were applied during adolescence (Burrows, 1936:196). Boys in the Ellice Islands were tattooed all together, although an informant of Kennedy (1931:299, 302) claimed that on Vaitupu no one was marked until after
30 years of age.

In the Tokales, neither men nor women were tattooed until after they were married, which usually occurred at 16 to 18 years of age (Macgregor, 1937:145).

The first tattooing on boys in the Society Islands was applied when they were 10 to 12 years old (Henry, 1928:287). Other patterns were added throughout life. Ellis (1853, v. 1:262) is of the opinion that the marks were imprinted to commemorate important events in the person's life, but this is not mentioned in later accounts. When a chief or a head of a family acquired new designs the instruments were destroyed at a marae (temple), according to Wilson (1799:355).

Although few details on patronage have been recorded for the Cook Islands, this is the one area in Polynesia where specific designs were used to indicate residence on particular islands. The patterns themselves are described in Chapter III. According to tradition, each island had adopted as its principal tattoo design a motif carved on the canoe of the founding party (Buck, 1944:489).

In New Zealand, tattooing was begun in late adolescence, but no exact age has been recorded. The operation was performed in a special house and was surrounded with many taboos (Robley, 1896:57-58; Best, 1904:167, 168, 170; 1924, v. 2:555). The completion of each stage of the marking was celebrated with a feast. The site where an important patron had been ornamented remained taboo often for generations. One group of high-ranking persons, the priests, were not tattooed anywhere on the head because this part of their bodies was so sacred that no one else could touch it (Cowan, 1921:244).
A distinctive feature of patronage in New Zealand was that the pigment for the ink was prepared not by the artist but by the patron's father. The Maori considered the pigment to be sacred, and sometimes it was stored in the ground for several generations. During the operation the patron was kept secluded, and neither he nor his associates was allowed to touch his face because of the presence of blood (Robley, 1896:58). All food and drink were conveyed to his mouth by funnels and other implements.

A man's facial designs, being uniquely his and not exactly duplicated on any other face, served as personal insignia. In fact, many Maori signed land contracts with Europeans by drawing the principal lines of their facial tattoos (Robley, 1896:11-16, figs. 5-9).

The variations among Maori designs, especially those on the face, are believed by early writers to have shown tribal membership (e.g., Polack, 1838, v. 1:386, 387). Ellis (1853, v. 3:355-356) is of the opinion that specific marks also showed rank within each tribe. Native informants deny that the patterns indicated either tribal affiliation or specific rank (Best, 1924, v. 2:545-546). The designs were owned by the artists, and famed tattooers often were commissioned to work in villages other than their own. Each patron selected his particular set of designs in consultation with the artists he had employed.

The tattooing of a Maori girl's mouth and chin was done in one operation and was an "important" occasion, according to Best (1924, v. 2:553), but he gives no details of the ceremonies beyond noting that sometimes when a girl of high rank was marked a human sacrifice was made.

The preservation of tattooed heads, mokomokai, of male relatives
and enemies was unique to New Zealand. The heads of relatives were carefully kept and were very taboo. An enemy head was retained both to taunt the head itself and to exchange it eventually for the head of a captured relative. On an enemy head the lips were stretched wide apart and sewn into that position, while the mouth of a relative was sewn tightly shut. These heads have been described erroneously as "shrunken," but they were smoked with the skull intact and thus retained their original size. The entire subject of *mokomokai* was of great interest to Robley (1896:129-208) and he describes various results of the trade in heads with Europeans. However, this commerce began during the decline of the art and so is discussed in the final chapter.

In the Tuamotus, all the men with tattooing seen by Wilkes (1846, v. 1:326, 333) were of high rank. No other information about patronage in this archipelago has been recorded.

Throughout the Marquesas Islands the eldest son of a wealthy man received his first tattoos when he was 15 to 20 years of age. The operation was surrounded with considerable ceremony and taboo (W. Handy, 1922:3-5, 7, 8, 10, 12-13; E. Handy, 1923:39-42, 78, 89; von den Steinen, 1925:85). W. Handy was told by her informants that tattooing was performed in the dry season (October—December), during which breadfruit, the staple item in the diet, was not harvested. The significance of this season was not explained to her, but it may have been involved with avoiding the contamination and mana of blood during a harvest.

For the operation a special group of houses were built near the
ma'ae (temple) or the tohua (public meeting ground). The principal building was the oho'au tiki (special house for tattooing) where the designs actually were imprinted. Near-by was a house for sleeping and one for cooking. These buildings were constructed by the ka'ioi, a group of usually 18 to 40 persons of the same general age as the principal patron. The male ka'ioi were ornamented while the principal was resting between his own sessions. All of the subjects and the tattooer and his assistants lived in the complex of houses during the operation. The houses were extremely taboo and the residents could neither bathe nor have any contact with females.

As in New Zealand, the patron's father prepared the pigment for the artist. This process also was taboo and the parent could have no contact with women while it was in progress.

The tattooing of a wealthy man's eldest son was begun on his lower legs and then carried upward to his head, while that of the supporting ka'ioi progressed in the opposite direction, that is, from the head to the feet. W. Handy's informants told her that if the face became infected the operation would be stopped, but they gave no reason as to why the ka'ioi were treated in a reverse fashion. She believes that this may have been an expression of their lower rank.

At some time during the operation the principal patron was given a nickname, his pe tiki, which did not refer to his patterns but to some physical defect of his own or of his parents. Just why the nickname was derived from an imperfection and not from the designs has not been explained.

When the marking was complete the houses were burned and the new
ma'ae (temple) or the rohua (public meeting ground). The principal building was the oho'au tiki (special house for tattooing) where the designs actually were imprinted. Near-by was a house for sleeping and one for cooking. These buildings were constructed by the ka'i'oi, a group of usually 18 to 40 persons of the same general age as the principal patron. The male ka'i'oi were ornamented while the principal was resting between his own sessions. All of the subjects and the tattooer and his assistants lived in the complex of houses during the operation. The houses were extremely taboo and the residents could neither bathe nor have any contact with females.

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When the marking was complete the houses were burned and the new
designs were celebrated with a ko’ina tuhi tiki (tattooing festival). The principal’s father and others of his relatives bore the cost of the operation and the festival.

Marquesan tattoos have been often reported to be insignia of various kinds. For example, von Krusenstern (1810, v. 1:159-160) and von Langsdorff (1818, v. 1:117, 122) were told by a European resident that the patterns indicated membership in banqueting societies, but W. Handy’s informants denied this. As is noted below, there were dining restrictions based on the amount of tattooing each person had and this may have led foreigners to assume that a more formal arrangement existed, or they may have noticed the taboo surrounding the occupants of the special tattooing house and assumed that this was a permanent association. Literally dozens of motifs are reported by early visitors as having been restricted to different tribes or to classes within tribes (e.g., Porter, 1815, v. 2:124). The following designations are the only ones confirmed by W. Handy’s informants: a large solidly inked circle covering the eyes and mouth was used only by a tribe (undesignated) in Tai o Hae Valley on Muku Hiva; spirals around the eyes denoted warriors; spirals on the hips and on the cheeks of the face and tiny dots on the inside of the left ankle were put on chiefs only.

Certain restrictions on eating were based on the amount of tattooing a person had acquired (W. Handy, 1922:5). A male with any tattooing at all could not eat with a woman. No person of either sex with unmarked hands could share pono, a paste made of breadfruit, from the same bowl as a person with tattooed hands. A man with a complete set of designs could not eat with another whose designs were unfinished.
Marquesan girls were tattooed at 7 to 12 years of age (N. Handy, 1922:6, 8; E. Handy, 1923:78). Sometimes a special house, the fa'a po'a, was built by the girl's family for her tattooing, and the entire family lived in it during her sessions, the main house being held taboo.

In summary, tattooing in the Marquesas was not confined to any one class. But the operation required either wealth or assistance in the process as a ka'inci. The choice of designs, with the few exceptions noted above, was made by the patron on a personal basis in consultation with the artist. As in New Zealand, Marquesan artists of great repute received commissions from outside their own villages, and the use of their designs were not restricted to one community.

In Mangareva, although little information has been found on patronage, extensive tattooing was associated with wealthy warriors (Buck, 1938:177, 180, 181). Only the more ferocious of these could have the chest tattooed, and the most famous were ornamented over the entire body, including the lips, eyelids, and forehead. When a man's forehead was tattooed he was called marapa 'akatore (marapa, fully tattooed; 'akatore, to dispute). The marks most specifically restricted to rank were the small dots imprinted on the feet of the heir to the highest-ranking chief.

On Easter Island the first tattooing was put on a child's leg at 8 to 10 years of age, according to Métraux (1940:248), but he does not indicate to which sex this statement applies. Geisler (1883:35) believes the age was usually 12 to 17. Two designs were associated with sexual intercourse. The vulva pattern put on the male chest showed that the
patron had watched sexual intercourse (Stolpe, 1899:10), and the anthropomorphic motif imprinted between a female's shoulder blades indicated that she had experienced such intercourse (see Chapter III).

In the Hawaiian Islands, tattooing was not confined to those of high rank and, furthermore, not all persons of high rank were ornamented (Emory, 1946:256-258). Emory believes that warriors, athletic champions, and dandies probably were the most tattooed. He is of the opinion that there may have been styles restricted to families or to islands, and cites as evidence for the latter the half-body marking which apparently was found only on the island of Maui. Sometimes tattooing was used as a punishment for people defeated in battle. It was used also as a sign of protest.
CHAPTER V

PROFESSION

The important features of the tattooer as a professional which we shall consider here are: how he was selected to become an apprentice, the kind of training he received, his relationships with others in his vocation, what ceremonies he observed in connection with his practice, to what extent he had exclusive rights to particular designs, and, finally, how he was paid.

In each island group the complexity and content of these features of the profession were determined both by the importance in the society of tattooing itself and by their general development in the culture. For example, in Samoa, where the art was highly developed and the tattooer was regarded as an important expert, his profession observed the kinds of formality characteristic of this particular society. Conversely, in Hawaii, where tattooing was of little importance and the practitioner was not especially esteemed, his role as a tattooer was confined to mere practice of the art. He observed few or none of the formalities characteristic of the more respected professions, such as that of canoe builder.

The term professional, as used here, does not refer to men who earned their entire livelihood by tattooing or even spent the greater part of their working time in the practice of the art. In Polynesia such intensity of specialisation was almost entirely restricted to some priests and high-ranking chiefs on high islands who could be said to perform their official roles every day. As applied to an
artist the term means that in a specific locality he was recognised by other people as an expert who had received adequate training and was entitled to whatever status was accorded the practitioners of the art. (The various Polynesian names for tattooer are shown in the Appendix.)

As with the forms of patronage, the main elements of the tattooing profession show a common pattern, at least on those islands where virtuosity had been developed. To begin with, only men practiced the art professionally. While it is true that on some islands women occasionally imprinted a few simple lines on each other, it required no lengthy training, and no woman specialized in performing this service. The profession of tattooer was often passed from father to son, as was the custom with other important occupations. Nevertheless, aptitude and interest were considered to be of great importance, and if the son was not a promising pupil the tattooer chose someone else as his apprentice. On islands where tattooing was practiced extensively, as in Samoa, the artist often instructed several neophytes at the same time.

The apprentice received his training by assisting the artist in various ways. His principal duties were to ready the equipment, hold the patron in the correct positions, and fill in solidly inked areas of patterns whose outlines the artist had previously imprinted. His practice in tattooing complete designs was performed on persons who could not afford the services of a professional.

As will be noted below, formal associations of tattooers have been reported only in Samoa. Elsewhere, as in Samoa, the artists showed great interest in examining each other's work, and in the Marquesas even entered into competition with one another.
Few details of the ceremonies performed by tattooers in the course of their practice have been reported. Most accounts state merely that some kind of rite was conducted. The rituals observed during the actual process of tattooing sought to ease the patron’s pain and prevent infection. On a number of islands where the art was believed to be under the protection of one or more deities, some of the ceremony may have been directed toward these tutelary spirits.

The variations of design occurring within the general style employed on each island group were owned by individual artists. The first European travelers frequently claim that certain patterns were used as tribal or familial insignia. They arrived at this conclusion after noting that most or all of the tattooed persons of a particular locality had much the same marking. Furthermore, the inhabitants themselves were aware that persons from other villages had designs different from their own. Later, more intensive contact by Europeans with the Polynesians revealed reasons for this supposed restriction on patterns. Most or all of the tattoos in each village had been imprinted by the resident tattooer, and each of these artists had developed his own set of variations on the basic designs, and thus the marking on all his patrons was more or less similar.

The ownership of designs by tattooers led to an interesting development in connoisseurship. Wealthy men imported famed artists and their retinues from other villages to imprint designs on them or their sons which were, of course, different from those exhibited by other people in the village. A more economical way to achieve this distinctiveness was for the patron to visit another village and be marked by its leading tattooer.
Payment to the artist was made with food, implements, clothing and ornaments, and other forms of property. As was true for other kinds of services, there was no exact price for any of his work. From the local traditional scale of payments the patron decided how much property to give him; in general the tattooer was reimbursed according to the amount of imprinting he had done. On islands where virtuosity had been developed the skill and reputation of the individual artist determined to a great extent how much he would be paid.

An examination of the occupation as it was practiced in the separate island groups will illustrate the various local systems of maintaining professional control of the art. As would be expected, the more complex systems existed where the art itself was highly developed and where virtuosity was emphasised.

In Samoa, tattooing was a highly respected profession. The artists were counted among the *eua e tuou* (companions of chiefs), a class of people which also included carpenters, another greatly esteemed group of craftsmen. The occupation of tattooer has been discussed by Krämer (1903:67), E. and W. Handy (1924:22), and Buck (1930:636, 641, 654, 658, 660, 661).

The artist was assisted in his work by younger aides, sometimes as many as six. Often one or more of these helpers were relatives of the tattooer, but not necessarily so. An assistant with aptitude was encouraged by the artist to become an apprentice and study the technique and patterns. During his apprenticeship he was permitted to tattoo the sons of men of low rank and also girls.
There were several guilds of tattooers in Samoa and every artist belonged to one of them. Each guild examined the work of its members' apprentices to determine whether the novice should be allowed to begin professional practice. These guilds may have had other functions, but they have not been described.

The patron deities of tattooing were Taema and Tilafaiga, but no rituals connected with them have been reported. The chants recited during the tattooing process were intended only to calm the patron, and consequently were secular in nature.

The reputation of an artist depended upon three kinds of skill: (1) his ability to imprint designs with precise edges, (2) his judgment (mafahefa) about how to proportion the various principal patterns to the physique of the patron, and (3) his inventiveness at embellishing the principal patterns. As noted above, some artists of great skill were well known outside their own community and were commissioned to work on patrons in other villages.

The scale of payment for a tattooer's services was based upon his reputation and ranged from a small feast and presents of minor value to an elaborate celebration and highly valuable gifts, such as the ceremonial mats called fusi.

For those other islands where essentially the Samoan style of tattooing was employed almost no information has been collected on the profession of tattooer. In Tonga we know that the vocation was not always passed on from father to son (Martin, 1817, v. 2:94). Some occupations on Uvea were hereditary; however, no data specifically pertaining to tattooers are available (Burrows, 1937:72). On Vaitupu,
in the Ellice Islands, all that has been reported about the artists is that they were paid with food (Kennedy, 1931:301).

In the Society Islands available information regarding the profession is concerned only with the patron deities. Tattooers were under the tutelage of the gods Matamata-arahu and Tura 'i-po (also called Ti'iti 'i-po) (Henry, 1928:287). Ellis (1853, v. 1:262-263) believes that the artists kept images of these two deities and prayed to them before every tattooing session so that the patron's wounds would heal quickly and his patterns would be attractive. Tohu, according to Henry (1928:234), was another tutelary god of tattooing, and was responsible also for painting designs on fish.

In the Cook Islands, the artist was fed throughout the period of imprinting. When he had completed his work he was given a feast and gifts of food and other material property (Buck, 1944:129).

In New Zealand, tattooing was a greatly esteemed vocation. General features of the profession have been recounted by Robley (1896:98-101) and Best (1924, v. 2:555). The extent to which the occupation passed from father to son has not been reported, but in view of the high level of virtuosity achieved it seems likely that aptitude was a more important criterion than familial connection. An expert tattooer was assisted by several aides, one or two of whom were his apprentices in the art. These novices practised the imprinting of complete patterns on patrons too poor to afford the services of a professional artist.

According to Maori traditions, a mythical being named Mataora introduced tattooing from the underworld (Buck, 1938:296), but it is
not known whether he was actually regarded as patron deity of the art. None of the ceremony possibly observed by the tattooers has been described.

Artists of great reputation received commissions from wealthy patrons outside their own villages. A patron who could not afford the expense of importing a famous artist and his retinue but nevertheless desired to be imprinted by him went himself to the artist's residence. A few Maori artists were of such high repute that all their patrons, regardless of wealth, had to travel to them. The names of a few of these very prominent tattooers have been preserved, such as Aranghie, who flourished around 1827 (Earle, 1832:136-138). Unfortunately, none of the preserved heads or the published illustrations of tattooing can be ascribed to any specific artist. According to Bieffenbach (1843, v. 2:33) the tattooers in the Waikato tribes of the Waikato and King Country districts on North Island were especially famed for their skill.

The Maori artist was reimbursed in accord with his reputation, the extent of skin he had imprinted, and the amount of detail he had used. Payment was made with slaves, canoes, ornaments, and clothing. After European contact, rifles became an important item in this exchange. Firth (1959:299, 303), in his discussion of the exchange of goods for services, is of the opinion that the tattooer was the outstanding "economic specialist" in Maori society. The extreme importance to men of high rank of possessing the finest marking they could afford undoubtedly promoted the development of virtuosity and its adjunct, payment according to skill and reputation.
In the Marquesas, also, tattooing was a highly respected occupation. Since the society was not as rigidly stratified as on the other high islands of Polynesia, a Marquesan's vocation, depending on the wealth it brought him, affected his social position considerably more than was usually the case elsewhere. The profession of tattooer has been described by W. Handy (1922:4, 9, 11, 15, 17), E. Handy (1923:36-39, 143-145), and von den Steinen (1925:59-62).

Here the artist was assisted in the tattooing process by younger aides, usually four or five. Generally, these helpers were relatives of the tattooer, but not necessarily so. An assistant with aptitude and interest was encouraged by the professional to apprentice himself to the art, and he was allowed to fill in solidly inked areas of designs whose outlines had been previously imprinted by the artist. Novices practiced also on persons who could not afford the cost of a professional, according to von Langedorf (1813, v. 1:120). When the tattooer was satisfied that his apprentice had achieved sufficient skill the latter was accepted as a professional.

On Ua Pou, in the northwestern group, tattooers confined their practice to one or the other sex. This is the only instance reported in Polynesia of this kind of restriction for the profession. Because many of the same designs were imprinted on both sexes this limitation of patronage was possibly based upon some general attitude concerning the sexes rather than differences in technical skill.

In the Marquesas none of the different kinds of artisans were organized into associations. As with other experts, each tattooer
practiced his art independently. Occasionally, two or three artists arranged to compete with each other during a single session when each tried to outdo the others in imprinting patterns with the greatest speed and fineness of detail.

Marquesan experts in various arts were under the protection of the god Tahu. The only deity reported specifically for tattooers was Hamatake'e for those resident on Nuku Hiva. No ceremonies have been described. During the tattooing process secular chants, whose purpose was to calm the patron, were recited in rhythm with the tattooer's strokes.

Each artist developed his own variations on the basic patterns used throughout the Marquesan islands. Some tattooers became especially skilled in imprinting precise outlines and in embellishing the designs with intricate detail. Artists of great reputation were commissioned to work on wealthy patrons in other villages and even on other islands. W. Handy's informants on Nuku Hiva, in the northwestern group, said that Hiva Oa, in the southeastern group, had been considered the center of tattooing and that artists from there had journeyed as far as Nuku Hiva.

The artist was paid according to his reputation, the extent of body area ornamented, and the amount of detail used. Pigs, barkcloth, ornaments, war clubs, and, later, rifles were used for payment.

No information on tattooers in the Tuamotu Archipelago has been reported.

In Mangareva, none of the craftsmen formed a distinct grade in the society (Buck, 1938:149, 166, 177). Tattooers in different
districts developed their own designs which became associated with the families living there because the artist did not practice outside of his own community. The patterns, however, were considered to belong to the artist rather than to the district. Some kinds of craftsmen had tutelary gods, but none have been reported for tattooers. Experts were paid with food, barkcloth, and other property.

The only information reported from Easter Island concerning the profession is that tattooers were of the commoner class and that their work was "supervised by the king" (Metraux, 1940:237). Considering the elaborateness of Easter Island tattooing, the artists undoubtedly were specially trained and their profession probably included at least some of the general features found on other islands where virtuosity had been developed, namely, recognition of some artists as more skilled than others, and a scale of reimbursement based partly on reputation.

In the Hawaiian Islands, the occupation of tattooer was not included in the special group of experts and the vocation was not "highly esteemed" (Emory, 1946:265). Probably for these reasons, and because the art was abandoned shortly after European contact, no detailed information concerning the profession is available.
CHAPTER VI

ESTHETICS

In the preceding chapters tattooing has been described and discussed according to those categories which have evolved as useful and significant divisions for research on Western art. This method of study also regards esthetic ideas as a logical unit for investigation, although they could be discussed as merely an aspect of technique or of patronage or of the profession.

Before examining Polynesian esthetic values concerning tattooing the word esthetic itself and some of its connotations should be considered. Of the several possible definitions for this term the following appears the most pertinent for a Polynesian art: a purposiveness perceived in an object, i.e., tattoos, which is admired for itself rather than its uses. This definition, although a paraphrasing of Kant's formulation, is used here only for its own meaning and not for any of the Kantian explication.

In studies of Western art a discussion of esthetic values is often concerned with whether a particular art should be considered "fine" or "applied." But Polynesian culture had no museums or collectors in the Western sense and the distinctions between fine and applied art can be attributed only to an observer's special interest, not to the objects themselves. For example, a motif may convey a religious meaning, but its execution by the artist is influenced by his esthetic ideas, and the viewer may thus regard the motif from either
a religious or an esthetic viewpoint, or even from an interplay of both.

To what degree tattoo designs were viewed esthetically by Polynesians we do not and cannot now know from direct observation. Each set of designs was selected by both patron and artist from those patterns which the latter was prepared to imprint. If the artist alone had chosen the marks we might expect esthetic motives to be among the most prominent ones. That the patron took part in the selection suggests that other than esthetic considerations probably influenced the decision, namely the sets of designs already imprinted on his associates and how much work he could both pay for and endure.

Another topic—systematic esthetics—is commonly encountered in theoretical discussions of Western art and requires comment. This type of formulation uses both deductive and inductive reasoning to arrive at a series of postulations which are intended to be logically consistent with each other. However, a people's esthetic ideas may not have been organised into rigorous codes of principles. Art objects have been created in many cultures which, as far as we know, have not developed formal sets of esthetic rules. In fact, intensive analysis and codification of esthetic attitudes is almost entirely a product of Western culture. But even here the investigation is largely an endeavor to describe the values found in great art, not to dictate what they should be. There is no evidence that Polynesians had developed a highly systematized esthetic code, and the want of such a formulation indicates merely the absence of professional critics and theorists, not the absence of esthetic ideas.
The present investigation is concerned with those esthetic ideas about tattooing which can be derived from the accounts of traditional Polynesian culture. Most of the information on these attitudes is contained in the oral traditions, that is, the myths, tales, and chants. In addition to this material a few opinions by artists and patrons have been reported by field workers. Almost all of this evidence was collected on those islands where virtuosity in the art was most highly developed and where consequently the greatest potential for an esthetic awareness of tattoo designs probably existed. In view of the general homogeneity of Polynesian culture, it seems likely that these same kinds of evaluation also were used to some degree on the islands where less elaborate patterns were employed.

With these observations in mind the specific esthetic attitudes may now be examined. The most certain claim that can be made is that technical skill in applying the tattoos was much admired and sought after. The esthetics of an observer who has no technical knowledge of an art are liable to be influenced by what he imagines to be difficult. In a Polynesian community, even the people who were not tattooers understood the basic techniques of the art and knew what was truly difficult to achieve. Both artist and patron accepted the same canon. Therefore, it was not enough simply to have a complete set of marks--they also had to be well made. One of the reasons, of course, that emphasis was placed upon having finely executed designs was because they became a permanent part of the patron's physical appearance. Other kinds of personal ornamentation might be lost, or could be replaced by specimens of better workmanship, but a man's tattoos were his for life, as a Samoan chant
E isia le 'ula, isia le fau
'A e lē isia siu tatau,
'O siau 'ula tutumau
E te alu ma 'oe i le tu'ugamau.

The necklace breaks, the cord breaks,
But your tattooing does not break into pieces,
This necklace is permanent
And goes with you to the grave.

In Samoa, New Zealand, and the Marquesas the clarity of outline—the precision and regularity with which each pattern had been made—was of utmost importance. The most convincing evidence that precision was highly valued is that in all groups of islands where tattooing was practised to any extent artists were appraised and paid according to this skill. (This aspect of payment is discussed in Chapter V.)

In Samoa, at least two grades of precision were deliberately employed. The sons of high chiefs were tattooed with somewhat greater meticulousness than were the sons of talking chiefs; this distinction was formally recognised, as is evidenced by the phrase 'o le ta tulafale (talking chiefs' tattooing) which referred to the less precise kind of marking (Buck, 1930:660).

A chant used by Maori artists, reminding the patron that generous payment is expected, indicates that in New Zealand good tattooing was made with lines that were regular and set close together.

Te tangata i te whakautu,
Kia ata whakanakonako;
Tangata, i te whakautu kore,
Kokia, kia tatahi,
Patua i te whakatangitangi . . .

He who pays well,
His marks will be remembered;
He who does not pay well,
His lines will be far apart
And like a profusely growing vine . . .

(Maori text from Taylor, 1870:322)
The appreciation among Polynesians for regularity in composition is seen also in the patterns themselves. The designs, with the exception of a few small motifs, were constructed with bilateral symmetry. Furthermore, the symmetry was presented most frequently in a horizontal fashion; this kind of arrangement, according to the Gestalt theory of perception, allows symmetry to be more easily perceived than when it is organized vertically because human vision tends to see most of the natural world as arranged on horizontal planes. Only during the decline of the art, which is discussed in the final chapter, was there a great increase in the number of asymmetrical patterns, and in all of these were depicted foreign objects that had been recently introduced into the traditional culture.

Additional evidence of a preference for regularity in composition may be found in the bilaterally symmetrical treatment of the body itself which was characteristic of Polynesian tattooing except in Hawaii. Furthermore, the designs, including those used by Hawaiians, were fitted to the more or less distinct natural divisions of the human physique, e.g., the face, the limbs, the chest, and rather than mechanically imprinting patterns in an unvarying size, the artist adjusted them to the proportions of each patron so as to both show the total design as clearly as possible and to enhance the patron's physical appearance.

Although tattooing was regarded as an embellishment of the human physique, the excellence of the tattoos themselves was judged apart from the owner's personal endowments. In eastern Polynesia the new tattooing on young people was exhibited and appraised in more or less
official ceremonies. Whether the actual judging was done by the entire audience or by specialists has not been reported.

In the Marquesas, after a chief's heir had received his principal tattoos, both males and females in his age group displayed their own patterns at the ko'ina tahi tiki (tattooing festival), and eulogistic chants celebrating the scion's tattooing were performed (W. Handy, 1922:12-13; E. Handy, 1923:221-222, 336-337).

On Easter Island, the chief held special ceremonies for criticizing the tattoos. Those who had good tattooing were sent to the side of one hill and those with less well-executed designs were ridiculed and sent to another hill (Routledge, 1919:243). Métraux (1940:134-135) was told by his informants that each group was directed to an ahu (temple) rather than a hill, which suggests that there was a religious meaning to the judgment.

In his study of Mangareva, Buck (1938:127-128) refers briefly to "beauty shows" of young people, but he does not mention specifically whether their tattooing was included in these appraisals.

Well-executed designs were so admired that in a few instances some men "collected" the tattoos of others. For example, among the Maori expertly tattooed skin from slain enemies was sometimes used to cover boxes and calabashes (Hamilton, 1896:308). The preservation of heads of relatives and enemies was based upon the importance of the deceased, not upon the excellence of particular specimens of tattooing. In the Hawaiian Islands, a chief was said to have had a man's arm amputated and brought to him because the tattooing was better done than his own (Ellis, 1853 v. 4:365), but possibly he was prompted by jealousy.
rather than connoisseurship.

The one epithet commonly applied to good tattooing in widely separated parts of Polynesia was "shining" or "brilliant." In a Samoan tattooers' chant the patron was told that his marking would be comparable to the bright surface of a fresh leaf (a tilotilo i au molofia 'ua nei ni, quoted in Kramer, 1903:68). In New Zealand the tattoos of Maui, a demigod, were compared to the scales of a mackerel (Grey, 1885:35). Marquesans said that the patterns on the body of Kena, a culture hero, shone brilliantly (umu o ko to ia tiki) (E. Handy, 1930:45).

In central and eastern Polynesia, the shining quality of the tattooing was increased by rubbing the skin with oil and a yellowish stain extracted from turmeric (W. Handy, 1922:12-13; E. Handy, 1923:221-222; Métraux, 1940:158). In the Marquesas even the tattoos on corpses were treated to make them shine. The body of the deceased was oiled both to preserve it and to make the designs brilliant; sometimes the skin was even scraped so that the markings would show more clearly (E. Handy, 1923:110).

In summary, the important criteria for judging tattoos were: precision of outline, regularity of composition, and a quality called "shining" or "brilliant." Possibly there were other esthetic ideas which have either not been recognized as such or simply have not been preserved. Research into the esthetic attitudes of Polynesians is comparatively new. Not only are we confronted with a culture which only recently acquired a written literature, but also with an art which
has not been practiced for almost 100 years except in Samoa. If more productive methods for discovering such evaluations can be developed, a more complete description of the esthetics of tattooing may be possible.
CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In the preceding chapters the tattooing of Polynesians has been examined according to the categories of information which have proved instructive in studies of Western art. The isolation of what were in practice integral parts of the art—equipment, iconography, etc.—has required these topics to be investigated more or less freed from their actual relationships with each other and with other arts. This final chapter will attempt to indicate some of those relationships. In addition, the causes and effects of the decline of Polynesian tattooing will be reviewed.

Before taking up these discussions, however, some indication of the antiquity of tattooing in Polynesia is relevant. The occurrence of the art throughout the geographical extent of Polynesia, and the presence of tattooing equipment in early strata of archaeological sites (see Chapter XI), suggests that the art was practiced before the people dispersed into the central and eastern Pacific, known today as Polynesia. This hypothesis does not imply, of course, that the tattooing in Samoa or Tonga reported in the 19th century was an older style than that of, for instance, the Marquesas. All the styles had evolved from earlier forms.

The achievements realised in an art are most comprehensively recognized from a study of its highest development. For this reason, the following discussion of various relationships within the practice of tattooing and with other media is concerned primarily with those islands where virtuosity was evident, i.e., Samoa, New Zealand, and the
A brief comparison of the basic Polynesian tattooing implements and methods with those employed elsewhere in the world will illustrate the achievement of Polynesians in this art and also indicate some of the techniques possible which they did not develop. The literature on tattooing practiced in different parts of the world is of varying accuracy and thoroughness, ranging from rather superficial accounts by hasty travelers to detailed studies such as that by Joest (1887). A summary of the art in various cultures throughout the world was attempted by Hambly (1925); his discussion is somewhat disorganized and the veracity of some of his sources is doubtful.

In tattooing, as in other arts, there always has been a strong tendency to use instruments no more complex than the technique requires. It is not surprising then that throughout the world the equipment for imprinting tattoos was and is essentially similar. The artist uses only three items: a pointed implement for inserting ink into skin, a tapper to drive the points into skin, and an ink. The first of these consists of either a single point or a row of points attached to a handle. The points are inked, then placed immediately above the skin at a right angle, and the proximal end of the handle is struck with the tapper, which drives the teeth into the skin. By tapping the points into the skin rather than simply jabbing them in, the artist has greater control over the accuracy of his patterns and the evenness of ink penetration.

The only certain advantage of the comparatively modern hollow
needle with its syringe-like inkwell is that the artist can work
uninterruptedly because he does not have to apply ink to the points.
Most present-day tattooers in America, Europe, China, and Japan employ
the electric hollow needle, which does not require the use of a tapper.
The implement allows even greater speed but its use has not resulted in
any other significant development in the art. The Polynesian single
point and multitoothed comb could achieve all the effects possible with
the hollow needle. Indeed, the only significant variation in the
imprinting instruments of Polynesians was developed in New Zealand,
where the Maori artist used a chisel-like scarifying blade in addition
to tattooing combs.

The development of inks, the third item of equipment, has resulted
in more significant changes in the art than has the modernization of the
imprinting instruments. While monochromatic tattooing has been
practiced throughout the world since the Upper Palaeolithic period,
polychromatic designs are of great antiquity on the Asian mainland and
in Indonesia.

We have seen that all Polynesian tattooing was monochromatic.
There is no evidence that any color other than a bluish black was ever
used. However, other colors may have been experimented with, for
polychrome was employed in other Polynesian arts, namely barkcloth
dyeing. Furthermore, on ceremonial occasions the skin was painted with
various colors, most usually white, brownish red, and yellow.

The major requirements for a satisfactory tattooing pigment are
that it be nonpoisonous, soluble in a liquid of low viscosity, and that
it does not fade after it is imprinted. A number of pigments used in
the other arts were both nonpoisonous and easily soluble, and thus the
evidence suggests that the bluish black pigment obtained from charcoal
was the only one found to be permanent.

Gradation of tone is possible in monochromatic as well as
polychromatic tattooing by either diluting part of the ink or spacing
some of the ink impressions farther apart. In Polynesia only the latter
technique has been reported, and that only for one design used on
Mangareva (see Chapter III), which was not one of the areas where the
art was most highly developed. In New Zealand the Maori tattooing
virtuosos recognized two intensities of ink, based not upon dilution but
upon pigment materials, i.e., soot from tree resins yielded a darker ink
than soot from other sources. Each ink, however, was restricted to
different parts of the body and therefore no one motif could possibly
exhibit both intensities.

Everywhere else in Polynesia the patterns were imprinted in simple
contrast to the skin color. This method is characteristic of tattooing
throughout the world except where highly realistic effects are sought,
such as in Asian representations of animals, drapery, etc., which make
extensive use of gradated tones.

In summary, the equipment and techniques used by Polynesian
tattooers were comparable in all important aspects to those employed
elsewhere in the world with two exceptions: polychrome was not used,
and tonal gradations were almost completely absent. As far as the
historical development of tattooing throughout the world can be traced,
polychrome and tonal gradation have been associated with the development
of highly realistic representation.
The two basic Polynesian tattooing instruments, a single point and a comb with varying numbers of teeth, were used to imprint single dots, rows of dots, and solidly inked stripes and irregular-shaped patches. From these simple elements the tattooers developed an immense variety of patterns, as can be seen from the illustrations in Chapter III. Even curved lines were common in Polynesian tattooing, although to do this with straight-edged blades would seem to be a difficult task. This achievement was most pronounced in New Zealand, where all the principal designs were composed solely of curving lines (see Figure 10), and in the Marquesas, where many parts of the small ornate motifs have rounded edges (see Figure 15).

The Polynesian tattooer was able to imprint a great range of widths, from lines a few millimeters wide to very broad panels, the most extensive of which was the Samoan lausae covering the entire outer surface of the thigh. Wherever the stylistic development included large expanses of solid inking together with small detailed motifs, as in Samoa and the Marquesas, a considerable range of comb widths was used. However, virtuosity did not depend upon such a range, for the Maori in New Zealand achieved an extremely complex style using only narrow blades. It should be noted that the Maori chisel-edged instrument was of the same width as the combs and thus the parts of a design produced by inked scarification differed from the rest of the pattern only by the depth of the scars.

As was noted above, Polynesian tattooing was monochromatic and unvaried in tone. Both of these limitations of technique significantly
affected the development of patterns. Without polychrome or gradated tones, either of which allows all parts of a design to be imprinted contiguously, the Polynesian tattooers had the problem of distinguishing the separate elements of a pattern. They solved the problem with considerable ingenuity. Three techniques were used: (1) an untattooed space separated the elements, (2) at the point of junction the width of the inking was modified, (3) the elements met at a sharp angle. The most common solution was to leave an untattooed space between the parts, as well as around the entire motif.

The styles employed in the three localities of greatest virtuosity can be differentiated according to their methods of providing contrast between separate patterns. Samoan tattooers imprinted wide areas of solid inking relieved by small openings containing simple linear designs. The Maori, who did not employ large expanses of solid inking, contrasted large spirals and curves with small, more intricate curvilinear motifs. Each line of the designs was separated from the next by unmarked skin. In the Marquesas, artists balanced solidly inked panels, considerably smaller than those used in Samoa, with equal areas of intricate designs.

Influence of Artists and Patrons on Designs

In any society the relationships between artists, patrons, and the art itself can be extremely complex. Detailed appraisal of these interactions requires a comprehensive history of all influences on the art. Unfortunately, such complete information does not exist for Polynesian tattooing and therefore only the more apparent aspects of these relationships can be discussed.
The principal innovator in tattooing was, of course, the artist. Working within the general style of his locality, he was permitted to develop new designs and variations of older ones. A virtuoso attempted more and more difficult patterns to demonstrate his dexterity and control of the inking technique, and also to distinguish himself from his colleagues. In the three island groups where the art reached its highest development—Samoa, New Zealand, and the Marquesas—an artist's reputation determined to a great extent the number of commissions and the amount of payment he received. These rewards undoubtedly were incentives to develop greater technical skills and at least new versions of standard motifs if not entirely new designs.

The most completely documented evidence of innovation is from Samoa, where various parts of the tattoos became increasingly complex within the period during which the art was reported (Buck, 1930:644, fig. 332; see also Chapter III). Examples of patterns imprinted by several contemporaneous Marquesan tattooers, collected by von den Steinen (1925:abb. 53-55, 60-64), show that considerable innovation developed within a few generations.

The influence on design which can be attributed to patrons was of two kinds. First, from the inventory of motifs which a tattooer was prepared to imprint the patron selected those which he felt were most suitable. It is not beyond conjecture that within the general style of a locality fashions for particular kinds of designs and particular combinations of them did develop among the patrons, and that such fashions or modes influenced to some extent the kinds of innovation an artist pursued. Even the development of a general style, which
ordinarily endured for a longer time, was to some extent a consequence of patronal preferences.

The second influence arose from the importation by wealthy patrons of renowned tattooers from other localities. The visiting artist received his commission not only because of his skill but also because his designs differed from those of resident tattooers. These new patterns were undoubtedly viewed with interest by the local artists and probably influenced their own work to some degree.

Esthetic ideas which influenced the development of motifs came from both artist and patron. Essentially the same values were held by both, which is not surprising, for an artist participated in the culture to the same extent as others of his general social position, and the patron, from his side, understood the basic requirements of the tattooing technique. Furthermore, public judging of tattoos was performed by both artist and patron. The tattooer, nevertheless, exerted the greater influence on the art because he was its technician and more direct innovator.

Relationships with Other Graphic Arts

A number of graphic arts other than tattooing were practiced in Polynesia. The most common were designs incised in wood and stone and patterns printed or painted on barkcloth. In some localities, other types of rather unique ornamentation had been developed which employed an essentially linear kind of design, namely perforated turtle shell work in the Marquesas and feather work in Hawaii. Body painting was also practiced by Polynesians but little information on it is available.
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Before examining the relationships between these arts and tattooing one of the techniques—decoration of barkcloth—needs be considered no further. In this art, patterns similar to tattoos were used only in Hawaii, and there the designs consisted of simple arrangements of lines and triangles; these elements were also used in other Hawaiian arts. On Easter Island, many of the designs painted on the barkcloth-covered effigies were deliberate representations of tattoos rather than motifs simply shared with tattooing. The fact that everywhere else in Polynesia none of the patterns used in barkcloth decoration were similar to tattoos is not surprising when we recall that tattooing was primarily a male art and barkcloth manufacture and decoration was entirely a female occupation.

Equipment and Techniques

The implement for imprinting tattooing ink was constructed in a manner similar to that of the adze used for carving wood. The adze, however, was used in a cutting action while the tattooing point and comb were employed in a perforating technique. Only in New Zealand was an instrument, the chisel-edged blade, used in a manner similar to that employed in carving designs on wood.

Many of the inks and paints used in the decoration of barkcloth and in body painting were mixtures of pigment and fluid, similar to the ink used for tattooing. However, the bluish black color of the latter was not, to my knowledge, used in the other arts.

Iconography

Several students of Polynesian art have attempted to trace the use of certain designs among the different graphic arts, including tattooing.
The research by Greiner (1923) is one of the most extensive of these investigations; it is discussed in Chapter III. Each of these studies deals for the most part with simple geometric marks which are found throughout the world. None of the marks are restricted to one locality or one art. The following discussion is concerned only with the more complex designs, those which required some degree of virtuosity for their execution.

Each of the graphic arts practiced in one locality usually employed patterns different from those used elsewhere. Therefore, contrasts and similarities between tattooing designs and those in the other arts are more clearly seen when comparisons are made within each locality rather than according to the separate arts.

In Samoa the total visual effect of a complete set of tattoos was not found in any of the other media. Nor were any of the principal patterns employed in other techniques. On the other hand, the small motifs composed of short straight lines were similar to those incised on wood objects and painted on barkcloth. Among the different styles of Polynesian tattooing that of Samoa was an outstanding example of specialized design.

In New Zealand, double and triple spirals, which were some of the principal designs in facial tattooing and also imprinted on the buttocks, were prominent motifs in wood carving, especially on prow and stern ornaments of canoes and on house panels (Hamilton, 1896:pl. I-V, VII, VIII, illus. p. 131). The koru pattern, which was tattooed in various arrangements on the face and consisted of a stalk terminating in a bulb, was frequently applied in painting house rafters (Hamilton, 1896:7
The ouhoro design imprinted on the thigh (see Figure 11) was used also in painting the rafters.

On a number of maskoids and images, particularly those used on canoe prows, house gables, door panels, and boxes, the face was carved with imitations of facial tattoo (Hamilton, 1896: illus. p. 16, 41, pl. XVII, XVIII, XXI). Occasionally, even the buttock and thigh patterns were represented, especially on small supporting figures.

The ornate appearance of Marquesan tattooing can be seen on some of the objects fashioned from wood, especially bowls, clubs, and bamboo containers. However, the total effect of the tattooing—solidly inked panels alternated with sections of complex detail—was not duplicated in wood carving. Some of the motifs used in tattooing (see Figure 15) were applied to objects of wood but usually in simpler versions. Of these designs, the ipu 'oto was possibly the most common (von den Steinen, 1928:abb. 37, 209, 210). It was also used on a single barkcloth-covered image, the only such effigy reported from the Marquesas (Linton, 1923:pl. LXXXIV-A).

The mata hoata and po'i'i'i patterns were also frequently executed in wood (von den Steinen, 1928:abb. 152, 179, 210). Often the turtle shell discs used as ornaments were perforated with either the ipu 'oto or po'i'i'i motifs (von den Steinen, 1928:abb. 155-157).

The only explicit imitation of tattooing made in wood was applied to rather realistically shaped legs (von den Steinen, 1925:abb. 70). Linton (1923:legend to pl. XLI-A) is of the opinion that these legs, which often had complete sets of leg tattoo, were used to support beds. If this was the case, the legs were either an innovation borrowed from
Western culture, since the traditional bed had no legs, or they originally had some other function.

**Profession and Patronage**

Most of the Polynesian crafts were practiced by many people on each island. In this sense, the products can be appropriately termed anonymous or folk art, even though in each locality some persons were considered to be more skilled than others in making the objects. These arts—barkcloth making, plaiting, net making, simple carpentry, etc.—were primarily utilitarian. The items were required in such quantity that their production could not be confined to the specially skilled. Other arts, especially on the high islands, were practiced only by persons considered to be experts. These specialists were trained by mature artists, their work was commissioned by others, and they were reimbursed for their labor. Often they achieved such skill that their work was known beyond their own village and their own generation. The two most prevalent arts practiced by experts in Polynesia were elaborate wood working and tattooing.

The principal patrons of tattooing were also the persons who most often commissioned the complex kinds of carpentry, house construction and canoe building. An important distinction existed between these two forms of patronage. The wood structures, although commissioned by one man, were usually intended to be used by groups of people. Furthermore, the construction could be replaced later should the need arise. Tattoos, however, were a personal and permanent acquisition and, therefore, the contact between patron and tattooer was more intimate than that involving a carpenter. It is difficult to infer what influences on the
art resulted from this closer relationship. Probably more than in any other Polynesian art the patron and the artist mutually decided what the artist's work should achieve.

Decline of Tattooing

The decline and eventual disappearance in Polynesia of the practice of tattooing began in the first decades of the 19th century. By 1890 the art had virtually ceased everywhere but in Samoa (see Table II). The principal cause for this termination was disapproval of the practice as expressed by Christian missionaries and other Western residents. From their viewpoint, a person thus marked did not look civilized.

The missionaries regarded Western customs as an integral part of Christianity, and an individual's physical appearance was Christian to the extent it met Western criteria. In response to this attitude, Polynesians generally first omitted tattooing on those parts of the body which were seen when the person was clothed, especially the face and arms (W. Handy, 1922:13).

Another reason for disapproval by missionaries was that tattooing was a part of the old Polynesian culture which they wished to supplant with a more Western way of life, and continuation of the art involved what Ellis (1853, v. 3:217) termed "idolatrous practices" and "abominable vices." In their writing, remarkably few missionaries refer to the Biblical injunction against tattooing, "Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you..." (Leviticus 19:28). Rather, they mention most often its barbarous appearance and its association with the traditional culture.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Island(s)</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>ca. 1840</td>
<td>Gifford, 1929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uvea</td>
<td>ca. 1840</td>
<td>Burrows, 1937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Futuna &amp; Alofi</td>
<td>ca. 1840</td>
<td>Burrows, 1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellice</td>
<td>ca. 1860</td>
<td>Hedley, 1897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotuma</td>
<td>ca. 1870</td>
<td>Eason, n. d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokelau</td>
<td>ca. 1860</td>
<td>Macgregor, 1937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society</td>
<td>prior to 1850</td>
<td>Ellis, 1853, v. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>ca. 1850</td>
<td>Buck, 1944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>prior to 1835</td>
<td>Robley, 1896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marquesas</td>
<td>1884</td>
<td>W. Handy, 1922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangareva</td>
<td>ca. 1835</td>
<td>Buck, 1938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easter</td>
<td>prior to 1868</td>
<td>Palmer, 1869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>ca. 1830</td>
<td>Emory, 1946</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The mission-inspired prohibitions were written into many of the emerging constitutions and law codes of Polynesian groups as they came under European political control. The punishment of offenders was frequently quite severe. In the Society Islands a male who became tattooed was required for his first offense to clear 10 fathoms of road, and if he persisted in acquiring more tattoos the severity of the punishment increased with each new offense (Ellis, 1853, v. 3:186-187).

As the structure of the old culture weakened and Polynesians began to adopt Western views, the necessity of being tattooed disappeared. New forms of wealth display were developed, most of which involved the use of foreign goods. One of the initial changes was the substitution of Western clothing and ornaments for traditional garb. Persons of high social position were among the first to attempt to emulate the appearance of a Westerner, and these people had been the principal patrons of the art.

In the Society and Cook islands and in New Zealand tattooing was revived for a short while soon after it had been prohibited (Ellis, 1853, v. 3:217 ff.; Williams, 1837:381-382; Robley, 1896:124-125). The marking was an emblematic rejection of the new laws and missionary influence, and it was particularly encouraged by chiefs attempting to reassert their leadership. During the Maori Wars in the 1860's facial tattooing was again revived to some extent (Best, 1924, v. 2:549).

Before the final disappearance of the art several developments took place in the kinds of designs which were used. During the first years of the change and before missionary prohibitions became effective representations of foreign objects were introduced, especially goats,
rifles, and Western ships. The appearance of these patterns suggest the beginning of a new style because they were considerably less stylized than the traditional motifs. The new designs were most prevalent in islands where tattooing was not one of the major arts, as in Hawaii. In these localities the new patterns, and Roman lettering, almost completely replaced the older motifs. On islands where tattooing was an important art, the new designs usually supplemented rather than replaced the traditional ones.

In New Zealand the custom of preserving tattooed heads resulted in one of the few authentic examples of a deterioration in tattooing technique (Robley, 1896:167-190). To understand this development, some discussion of the use of these heads as trade objects is required. In the early years of European contact, the tattooed heads of enemies became an important item of exchange for rifles. The export became so common that the customs house at Sydney, Australia, listed "Baked Heads" as a separate entry. The trade lasted from 1770 to 1831, when their import at Sydney was officially prohibited and, shortly after, their export from New Zealand. The extant heads in museums and private collections were obtained within this period, most of them after 1820.

As the traffic in heads increased, the Maori ceased to preserve the heads of relatives and friends lest they fall into the hands of others and be sold. In the last years of the trade, when the supply of heads was scarce and the need for rifles was even greater than before, several abuses developed which caused the art to deteriorate before it was finally prohibited. Slaves, who customarily would not have been allowed facial tattoos, were hastily imprinted and then beheaded. The unmarked
heads of enemy dead were given post mortem marking, or if they had incomplete tattoos other designs were added so that the face would be covered with patterns and bring a better exchange. Europeans were apparently either unaware or indifferent to the lower quality because the trade flourished until the time of its prohibition. Robley states that the post mortem work is easily recognized when it is compared with patterns which were imprinted during life. In post mortem tattooing there is no ink in the subcutaneous layer of the skin. Although Robley mentions that a difference can also be seen in the appearance of the incising performed on live and on dead persons, he does not say explicitly what this contrast was.

Tattooing survived in Samoa largely because of certain developments in the first decades of Western contact. The islands were never as heavily missionized as other parts of Polynesia. During the period of concentrated mission activity in the Pacific in the first half of the 19th century a number of Samoan chiefs were each attempting to establish their rule over the entire island group. The almost constant fighting discouraged extensive proselytizing. The colonial governments established later by America and Germany did not attempt to Westernize the inhabitants to any extent. The American naval administration pursued a deliberate policy of interfering as little as possible in Samoan affairs. Consequently, Samoans were able to retain more of their customs and social structure than any other people in Polynesia. A further reason, however, for the retention of the practice of tattooing may be that the marking is almost entirely hidden by the traditional clothing and totally so by trousers and shirts. Whatever the reasons
for its preservation, the art is still practiced in some parts of Samoa, principally in villages remote from the large towns.

Wood carvings and stone objects can survive the effects of time. Tattoos disintegrate with their owners, and when the art itself disappears, as it did almost everywhere in Polynesia, the student must rely, as I have, on secondary sources. Despite this limitation, it seems evident that tattooing was a major art in Polynesia. The virtuosity achieved by tattooers, particularly in Samoa, New Zealand, and the Marquesas, is matched only by some of the accomplishments of wood carvers. Future comprehensive investigations into the other important Polynesian graphic and plastic arts will permit a more detailed appraisal of the relative significance of tattooing. When thorough examinations have been made of the art in Micronesia, Fiji, the Polynesian outliers, the Philippines, and Indonesia, a comparative study of tattooing throughout the Pacific will be possible.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISLAND(S)</th>
<th>COMB</th>
<th>TAPPER</th>
<th>INK</th>
<th>TATTOOING (verb-noun)</th>
<th>TATTOOER</th>
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