

Exploring ‘the Rock’: Material culture from Niue Island in Te Papa’s Pacific Cultures collection

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ABSTRACT: The Pacific Cultures collection of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa) holds around 300 objects from the island of Niue, including textiles, costumes and accessories, weapons, canoes and items of fishing equipment. The history of the collection is described, including the increasing involvement of the Niue community since the 1980s, key items are highlighted, and collecting possibilities for the future are considered.

KEYWORDS: Niue, material culture, collection history, collection development, community involvement, Te Papa.

Introduction

The Pacific Cultures collection of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa) comprises objects from island groups extending from Hawai‘i in the north to Aotearoa/New Zealand in the south, and from Rapanui in the east to Papua New Guinea in the west. The geographic coverage is immense and, since the opening of the Colonial Museum (Te Papa’s first predecessor) in 1865, the collection has grown to around 13,000 objects. Since 1993, it has been separated from the Foreign Ethnology collection, of which it was previously part in both the Dominion and National museums, successors of the Colonial Museum (Davidson 1991). This was in recognition of the growing population of Pacific Islands people in New Zealand, and the need for the museum to represent their cultures and history in a significant way.

A long-term project to survey the Pacific Cultures collection began in 2007. This involves upgrading catalogue records, and describing, measuring and photographing each collection item for public access via the Internet through Te Papa’s Collections Online.¹ The survey of the Cook Islands collection has recently been described by Hutton *et al.*

(2010). Here, we take the opportunity to document and publish some of the rich and untold stories resulting from the Niue collection survey, offering a new resource for researchers and the wider Pacific community.

The Niue collection comprises 291 objects. The survey has revealed an interesting history of collecting and provided insight into the range of objects that make up Niue’s material culture. This paper surveys this small but significant collection, and identifies key objects and acquisitions over the 145 years of the museum’s history.

From 1865 until the mid-twentieth century, acquisitions of artefacts from Niue were passive and largely consisted of donations. Niue material was not systematically sought until the 1970s, when a scientifically focused expedition to the island resulted in a major collection of natural environment specimens and a few cultural items. By the 1980s, Niueans themselves were beginning to contribute to the collection, and to their own representation within the museum context.

Objects in the collection represent different aspects of Niuean life and culture from more than 150 years ago to the present, and from fishing to warfare and dance. The collection, from various sources, consists mainly of katoua



Fig. 1 Maka (throwing stone), Niue, c. 1800s, stone. Artist unknown. Gift of Reverend John Inglis, 1869 (Te Papa FE002241).

(clubs), kato (baskets), lei (necklaces) and tao (spears). Hiapo (tapa cloths) and tiputa (ponchos), both made from the beaten inner bark of the paper mulberry tree (*Broussonetia papyrifera*), also called hiapo, are significant rare examples of textiles. Historically, research interest in Niuean objects has centred mainly around such textiles.

The acquisition of Pacific objects by explorers, visitors, missionaries, officials and traders was part of the documentation of cultures in the region, which began in the eighteenth century. The amount of information about individual objects in the collection varies considerably. For the most part, we are fortunate to have information about the previous owner(s), how and where the object was acquired, and whether it was sold or donated to the museum. The earliest documented Niuean object in Te Papa's collection is a maka (throwing stone), a weapon that was historically used in warfare (Fig. 1). This was presented by Reverend John Inglis (1808–91) in 1869, four years after the opening of the Colonial Museum in 1865 under the directorship of Sir James Hector (1834–1907).

Most of the Niuean objects are made from natural materials that are also present in other Pacific Islands, such as pandanus (*Pandanus* spp.) leaves, paper mulberry bark, wood and bast fibre from the fou, or hibiscus (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*). However, some items are uniquely Niuean and have important cultural associations and functions. Although some objects are ordinary in composition and their value is not always recognised by collectors, it is important to explore their functions and value within Niuean culture. As this paper will show, Te Papa's Niue holdings present stories of people, places and intersecting histories.

Geography and history of Niue

Niue is an elevated coral atoll with fringing coral reefs encircling steep limestone cliffs (Kinsky & Yaldwyn 1981: 7). It has a landmass of 259 km² and its coast is peppered with many caves and beautiful chasms (Lay 1996: 23). The small island nation lies 2400 km northeast of New Zealand in a triangle between Tonga, Samoa and the Cook Islands (Fig. 2). The name Niue translates as 'behold the coconut'. The island was formerly known as Niue fekai (Savage Island) as a result of an acrimonious meeting in 1774 between Captain James Cook and local people. It is now popularly called 'the Rock of Polynesia'.

Niueans are Polynesians whose language is most closely related to Tongan. Archaeologists believe the island was first settled about 2000 years ago, probably from Tonga, although place-names and traditions suggest some arrivals from Samoa as well, perhaps a little later (Walter & Anderson 2002: 119).

Reverend John Williams of the London Missionary Society (LMS) visited Niue in 1830 and attempted, unsuccessfully, to introduce native teachers from Aitutaki (Smith 1903: 83). After several further unsuccessful visits, Niuean Peniamina returned to the island in 1846 to begin work after training at the LMS school in Samoa, and was joined in 1849 by Samoan missionary Paulo (Lange 2006). The first resident European missionary, Reverend William Lawes, arrived in 1861. A year later, Peruvian slave ships descended on the small island and kidnapped 109 people to work in guano mines and on plantations in Peru (Lal & Fortune 2000; Scott 1993: 24).

Between 1888 and 1889, King Fata'aiki and King Togia, fearing annexation by other colonial powers, petitioned Queen Victoria three times for Niue to be declared a British protectorate. The offer was formally accepted in 1900 but was short-lived, and in 1901 the island was placed under New Zealand rule (Thomson 1902; Scott 1993). In May 1900, Premier Richard Seddon and some of his family had visited several Pacific Islands, including Niue (Tregear 1900: 93), where he met King Togia (Fig. 3). His visit was carried out to draw support for the anticipated annexation of Niue and the Cook Islands in 1901.

Though Niue had been grouped with the Cook Islands for the purpose of administration, this was not acceptable to Niueans. A Council of Representation of the 11 villages of the island was established in 1901 and passed Niue's first draft ordinances. The first Resident Commissioner arrived

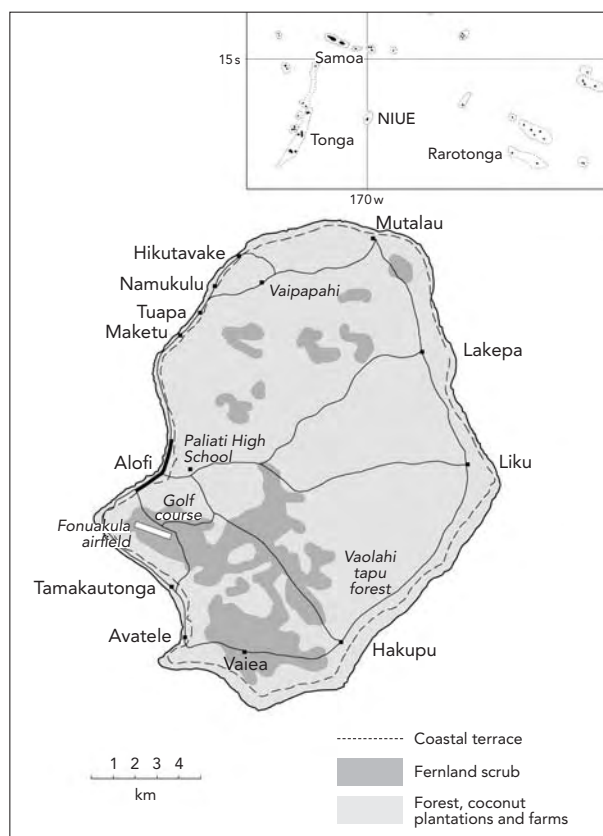


Fig. 2 Map of Niue (sourced from Kinsky & Yaldwyn (1981)).

in 1902 (Scott 1993) and became President of the Island Council.

In 1914, Niue became involved in the First World War. Some 149 men of the Niuean contingent eventually became part of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, which served in Egypt and France (Pointer 2000: 29). In 1974, Niue became politically independent in free association with New Zealand, under the 1974 Niue Constitution Act. In 2006, the Niuean population was the fourth-largest Pacific Island group in New Zealand, numbering 22,476 (Statistics New Zealand 2006). There are now more Niueans living in New Zealand than on Niue itself.

Taoga Niue (Niue treasures) – key objects and acquisitions

Historically, research on Niue has involved a number of disciplines: botany (Yuncker 1943; Sykes & Yuncker 1970; St John 1976; Mabberley 1989), ornithology (Kinsky & Yaldwyn 1981; Watling 2001), terrestrial vertebrate biology (Wodzicki 1969), ichthyology (Rensch 1994), history (Ryan

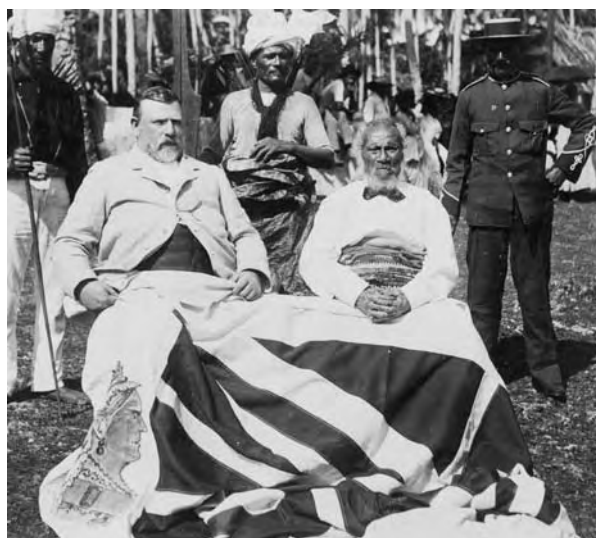


Fig. 3 Premier of New Zealand, Richard Seddon, and King Togia, Niue, 1900 (photo: Frederick W. Sears (active 1890s and early 1900s); Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, PA1-q-633-19-1).

1984), economic development studies (Haas 1977), human conflict studies (Pointer 2000), political science (Thomson 1902; Chapman 1976), archaeology (Trotter 1979; Walter & Anderson 2002), language studies (Tregear 1893; Tregear & Smith 1907; McEwen 1970) and ethnography (Smith 1903; Loeb 1926; Kooijman 1972). However, studies of material culture have been limited to some mentions in the ethnographic and archaeological studies, and in a recent study of hiapo by Pule & Thomas (2005). The present paper is the most recent survey of material culture since Loeb's study in 1926, although it is restricted to material culture as represented in Te Papa's Niue collection.

Te Papa's database records for the Niue collection are far from complete, thus cross-referencing with the museum archives and collection registers has been essential to ascertain as much information as possible about each object, person or institution. Fortunately, we have been able to find new information that has been added to the database records and provided invaluable insight into Niue's history, and its historical relationship to New Zealand and other Pacific Island countries.

As mentioned above, Niuean objects have made their way to the museum's collections since 1865 from various sources and by various means rather than through active collecting (see Appendix). In the early twentieth century, these sources included auction houses such as J.H. Bethune & Co. Ltd in Auckland and J.F. McKenna in Wellington.

The 1930s, when the museum was under the directorship of Walter R.B. Oliver, was a formative acquisition period, with many artefacts acquired from government officials working in the colonial territory of Niue, and in departments such as the Cook Islands Department and the Department of External Affairs. Between 1940 and 1965, there were five acquisitions, including Niuean objects sourced from private collector William Oldman (1948), T.W. Kirk from the Masonic Lodge in Paraparaumu (1950), the Wellcome collection (1952), William Perry (1955) and P. Bowman (1964).

In the 1970s, the Dominion Museum Niue Science Expedition resulted in new acquisitions of Niuean objects, when John Cameron Yaldwyn (1929–2005), a museum staff member and later Director in the 1980s, returned with a number of cultural items. In addition, local New Zealand schools donated items. For example, in 1973 Wellington College gifted several artefacts from Captain Seddon's collection, which included a small number of Niuean objects.

Since the late 1980s, the Niuean community has featured more prominently in the development of the museum collection, with donations from Niuean groups and individuals, namely the Newtown-based Sia Kata Niue Women's Weaving Group; Reverend Langi Sipeli² and his wife, Mokatafoou; Moale Etuata; Moka Poi; and the Auckland-based Falepipi He Mafola Niuean Handcraft Group Incorporation. A number of objects gifted to the museum in 1999 by the late Jock McEwen, former Niue Resident Commissioner, greatly increased the Niuean collection. More recently, in 2005, a set of garments was acquired from New Zealand fashion designer Doris de Pont, the product of her collaboration with Niuean/New Zealand artist John Pule.

The following sections discuss Te Papa's Niue collection according to object type, and highlight the most significant acquisitions within each category. Although some of the items have never been displayed, the histories behind their acquisitions and journeys to the museum add important context to their presence in Te Papa.

Tekesitaila (textiles)

Textiles in the Niue collection are made from a range of fibres that give an indication of changes in Niue's textile industry. For example, textiles made from the inner bark of the hiapo tree were produced following Samoan missionary influence from the 1840s until the artform declined at the end of the nineteenth century. Examples of garments in



Fig. 4 Tiputa (poncho), Niue, c.1800s, bark, dye. Artist unknown. Purchased 1914 (Te Papa FE000289).

the collection made from bast fibre of the fou (hibiscus), date from the early 1900s and 1970s. Although there is a continuation in the use of fou, subtle changes were introduced with the application of commercial dyes around the turn of the twentieth century. In the same way, potu (mats) made from pandanus and banana (*Musa* spp.) fibre have undergone subtle changes with the use of wool as applied decoration, examples of which were acquired sporadically in the 1930s, 1980s and in 2001. In New Zealand in the last 20 years, raffia has become a widely used material incorporated into the design of Niuean costumes. The variation in materials over time provides insight into the continuity and change in Niuean textile tradition and creativity.

Hiapo (tapa cloths) and tiputa (ponchos)

In the mid-nineteenth century, Samoan missionaries from the London Missionary Society are said to have taught Niueans Samoan methods of making tapa (Neich & Pendergast 1997: 69). Little is known about Niuean hiapo

before that time, although there are accounts of Niueans wearing hiapo as a loincloth (Erskine 1853: 26). Niueans made hiapo by felting and layering pieces of tapa cloth together. The Tahitian-style tiputa (Fig. 4), introduced to Niue by the Samoan missionaries, were worn as a form of modesty to cover the upper body (Thomas 1999: 10).

By the late 1800s, Niueans had created their own indigenous style of decoration, using a distinctive freehand approach in applying dye (Kooijman 1972: 288). Dyes were extracted from trees or plants, such as the soot of the tuitui, or candlenut tree (*Aleurites moluccana*). Hiapo makers incorporated motifs and designs representing shapes of plants and humans into their compositions, which invoked human interaction with the natural environment. There are also abstract designs comprising chevron and geometric patterning. Some hiapo were very large, as shown by an example from the Oldman collection, which measures 3650 mm long by 1820 mm wide.³ The use to which hiapo such as this were put is unclear, and they were virtually non-existent by the early 1900s. Following his visit to Niue in 1901, Percy Smith (1840–1922) attributed the decline in tapa making to the disappearance of the paper mulberry owing to the lack of cultivation of the tree, and to the introduction of European cloth to the island (Smith 1903: 64). Several attempts have been made in recent years to revive the art of tapa making, including an attempt by the University of the South Pacific in the 1970s, when a competition was held to encourage the revival of hiapo (Anonymous: 1979). In the 1990s, further attempts were made to revive hiapo and several pieces were made.⁴

Augustus Hamilton (1853–1913), Director of the Dominion Museum from 1903 to 1913, privately collected some important examples of Niuean hiapo and tiputa.⁵ These extraordinary pieces were acquired by the museum from his wife, Hope, following Hamilton's sudden death in 1913, although there is no record of how he had acquired them. They were probably created in the mid- to late nineteenth century, and although the natural materials are fragile, they have remained largely intact. It is possible that some of these examples were collected when Hamilton attended the New Zealand International Exhibition of Arts and Industries (1906–07) in Christchurch, because a Niuean group had travelled to New Zealand (along with Cook Islands and Fijian groups) to participate in the exhibition (Davidson 1997). Among the Niuean contingent was Frank Fata'aiki, whose father had been king of Niue (Anonymous: 1906).

Another possible source of Hamilton's pieces is the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition held in Dunedin in 1889–90, as Hamilton had moved with his family to the city in 1890 to take up his position as registrar of the University of Otago (Dell 2007). The catalogue of the South Seas Exhibition includes, amongst other objects from Niue, a 'Splendid piece of figured tapa, waist-belt made from human hair, coconut-leaf fans bound with human hair' from Reverend Frank E. Lawes (Hastings 1891: 245). Frank, brother of Reverend William Lawes, the first European missionary to settle in Niue, in 1861, himself arrived in Niue in 1868 (Garrett 1982; Lange 2006). Over a century later, at the opening of the Niue International Airport in 1971, a hiapo that had been presented to Reverend William Lawes in Niue during the 1860s was returned to the island, where it was presented to Niue Premier Robert Rex by Duncan MacIntyre, New Zealand Minister of Island Affairs (Anonymous: 1972, 29 January). The hiapo had been kept by a family in the Port Chalmers area and had been acquired by Roger Duff, then Director of Canterbury Museum, from an American working at the University of Otago. It is interesting to note that the hiapo had been sourced from Dunedin, and may well have been obtained at the South Seas Exhibition, where Hamilton might have also acquired some of his hiapo.

In 1988, the National Museum purchased a rare hiapo made in the 1860s from the London auction house Christie's (Fig. 5). This rectangular-shaped piece was collected by British politician Cecil George Savile Foljambe, 1st Earl of Liverpool (1846–1907), on 29 June 1865, when he was an officer on board the HMS *Curacoa*, the second British naval ship to visit Niue (Ryan 1994: 154). In his account of the visit, Liverpool recorded that, on returning to Alofi village, 'I had some calico and fish-hooks, and buttons with me, so I exchanged them for a fan, and some tappa [tapa] or native cloth, which is made from the bark of the paper mulberry' (Liverpool 1868: 148). This example shows what was important in terms of commodities at the time, and perhaps provides an explanation for the presence of a large number of hiapo outside Niuean shores. Distinctive chevron and cross-hatching designs feature on this cloth. Recurring signatures are also visible on one corner: Iakopo and Kile Maleta. These names offer a clue about the possible makers or people who were once associated with the hiapo.

Another stunning hiapo in the Te Papa collection, probably made in the nineteenth century, was collected in the early 1900s by James Mason (1864–1924), a New



Fig. 5 Hiapo (tapa cloth), Niue, c. 1860, bark, dye. Artist unknown. Purchased 1988, acc. no. 1988/37 (Te Papa FE008655).

Zealand medical doctor and public health administrator (Dow 2007). Eventually, it was acquired by the National Museum from Suzanne Duncan in 1987. This very fine hiapo, predominantly brown in colour, has a freehand decoration consisting of diamond-shaped motifs arranged in a concentric fashion. It is possible that Mason visited Niue on health duties for the New Zealand government.

These important examples of hiapo are inscribed with iconography that is now difficult to decipher. Nonetheless, Te Papa's small but significant collection has contributed to exhibitions and research on nineteenth-century Pacific textiles and clothing, such as Te Papa's exhibition *Traditional Arts of Pacific Island Women* (Davidson 1993). In 2005, hiapo from the museum's collection featured in *Hiapo: Past and present in Niuean barkcloth*, written by anthropologist Nicholas Thomas and artist John Pule, who refers to hiapo in his artwork (Pule & Thomas 2005). More recently, hiapo and tiputa were displayed in the exhibitions *Tapa: Pacific style* (September 2009–September 2010), and *Paperskin: The art of tapa cloth* (June–September 2010). Today, hiapo from

Niue are still some of the most rare and unusual examples of Pacific textiles and clothing.

Potu (mats)

In the nineteenth century, woven mats (generally called potu) had different functions, including use as sleeping and floor mats. There is very little documentation about the historical use of potu in Niue. However, from the early twentieth century Niuean weavers integrated wool into their work, as did mat weavers in Samoa. Over the years, the incorporation of woollen fringing has enhanced the aesthetic quality of the potu. For example, in 1936 Mrs S. Stirling gifted two mats to the museum. One is made primarily of banana leaf with sewn hibiscus-fibre attachments. The other, made from pandanus fibre, has double fringing of black, red, blue and purple wool.

In 1989, the Wellington Sia Kata Niue Women's Weaving Group presented to Te Papa a woven floor mat made of pandanus with blue, red, pink, and yellow woollen fringing. This was followed by more recent collecting from the



Fig. 6 Potu tanini (mat with a two-coloured pattern), Niue, 1997, pandanus leaf, wool. Artist Fasa Tongakilo. Purchased 2001, acc. no. HY2001/021 (Te Papa FE011676).

Niuean community, when four mats were purchased in 2001 from Mokatafoou Sipeli, wife of the late Reverend Sipeli, who had been a community advisor to the museum since the mid-1980s. Three of these are sleeping mats (Fig. 6) made by Mokatafoou's mother, Fasa Tongakilo, her sister Samoa Tohovaka, and her sister-in-law Fa'amatau Holo, while the floor mat was made by her sister Lapasi Paki. The most visually striking example is a potu tanini (mat with a two-coloured pattern) that was made by Tongakilo, with its array of blue and pink strips arranged in waves of colours. Mokatafoou had visited Niue in 1997 and received these mats as gifts. From these recent examples, it is clear potu continue to have an important use in Niue.

Tapulu (dance costumes)

The collection has several colourful Niuean costumes dating from around the turn of the twentieth century. Examples of titi (skirts) (Fig. 7) from the late 1920s were acquired from T.H. Cockerill in 1973. They had been collected by his father, H.W. Cockerill (Cockerill to National Museum, 30 May 1973), a telegraphic engineer for the General Post Office who helped install a wireless telephone station on

Niue (Anonymous: 1924). The titi he collected are made of natural hibiscus bast fibres dyed in pink, red and green, and decorated with rosettes. They indicate a preference at the time for dyeing natural materials. This is similar to Cook Islands dance costumes from the same period.

In the early 1990s, a child's female dance costume made of red-dyed hibiscus bast fibres was acquired. It had been made in Niue by Moale Etuata around 1970 (Fig. 8). A similar adult costume, woven from synthetic raffia by the same maker in 1993, was also acquired. Both costumes comprise a sleeveless, loosely woven bodice decorated with rosettes, to which are attached long tassels that cover the legs. Akele Etuata, Moale's daughter-in-law, described the process of making the tapulu in Niue:

it begins with the cutting of the fou (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*) branches, at about 2 metres in length. The bundle of sticks is then taken to the seacoast, where the sticks are placed in a deep pool to soak for two to four weeks. The fibre is then stripped and dried out. Once dry, each strip is rolled into a wheel. Natural or commercial dyes can be applied, after which the strips are dried before use, and made into a titi or used in combination with other materials for decoration. (Etuata to Hutton, 14 December 1998)



Fig. 7 Three titi (skirts) Niue, c. 1920s, hibiscus bast fibre, dye. Artist unknown. Purchased 1973, acc. no. 1973/39 (Te Papa FE006396, FE006397, FE006399).

The costumes are excellent examples of both the creative dyeing of natural materials and the incorporation of synthetic fibres by Niuean costume makers in recent years. With the increasing number of Niueans in New Zealand, weaving provides a chance to showcase creative work at events such as festivals, a source of income and a continued connection with home (Pereira *in* Mallon & Pereira 2002).

Fashion collaboration

Just as Pacific Islanders have incorporated western techniques and materials in their work, so Pacific designs and materials have also inspired European contemporary fashion designers and artists. In 2005, the museum purchased garments and accessories from the 2004 winter collection of Doris de Pont, a New Zealand fashion designer of Dutch heritage (Lassig 2010: 82). De Pont collaborated with artists John Pule and Margo Barton, using Pule's tapa print *Let's gather here* as the signature piece for the collection. Pule's print speaks of New Zealand's cultural mix and of the ingenuity and cooperation between artists. Now in Te Papa's collection, de Pont's garments and accessories provide a memorable example of high-end fashion with a contemporary Pacific artistic flavour.



Fig. 8 Tapulu fou (dress), Niue, c. 1970, hibiscus bast fibre, dye. Artist Moale Etuata. Purchased 1998, acc. no. HY1999/013 (Te Papa FE011197).

Tau kola fakamanaia sino (accessories)

Examples of accessories include the highly valued kafa lauulu (belts of human hair) that were made prior to European contact in the eighteenth century. There are also examples of kato (baskets), iliili (fans) and pulou (hats), dating mainly from the twentieth century. In 1960, the Niue Weavers' Association was established, involving a network of women in Niue and businesses in New Zealand through which the woven items they made were sold (McBean 1961). Since then, various Niuean community groups have been established around New Zealand, particularly in the main urban centres of Wellington and Auckland.

Kafa lauulu (belt of human hair)

Nineteenth-century accounts indicate that kafa lauulu (Fig. 9) were worn in Niue by toa, or warriors, as a sign of status (Loeb 1926: 93). These were highly valued items (Smith 1903: 63), displaying intricate work by their makers, as the plaited strands of hair fibre are extremely narrow. Kafa lauulu were also used to carry maka, as observed by missionary John Williams in 1830 (Moyle 1984: 40). The most valued belt was the kafa palua, made with feathers twined into the hair, which could take years for a skilled woman to complete (Smith 1903: 63). Kafa lauulu were wound tightly around the wearer, and for a more elaborate design, egg cowrie (*Ovula ovum*) shells were attached as a sign of status. Te Papa has four examples of kafa lauulu; two are from the Oldman collection, one of these (Fig. 9) measuring 800 mm in length. Another kafa lauulu, which belonged to Alexander Turnbull (1868–1918), comprises 180 strands of plaited hair (a single strand is just under 2 mm thick).⁶ Although their condition is delicate, the association of the kafa with battle and their skilful construction make these taoga significant pieces in the collection.

Kato (baskets)

The collection has around 30 kato, each with a specific function and its own distinctive design. Some are cylindrical in shape while others are oblong or rectangular. Two baskets that are unique in design were collected by Captain John Peter Bollons (1862–1929), whose extensive collection was purchased by the Dominion Museum from his widow in 1931 (McLean 2007; Hutton *et al.* 2010). Most likely made during the early twentieth century, one of these kato is circular in shape with a lid and is made using the tia (open-weave) technique from pandanus strips and coconut-leaf



Fig. 9 Kafa lauulu (belt of human hair), Niue, c. 1800s, human hair. Artist unknown. Oldman collection. Gift of the New Zealand government, 1992 (Te Papa OL002138/1).



Fig. 10 Kato (basket), Niue, c. 1930s, pandanus fibre. Artist unknown. Purchased 1931 (Te Papa FE007907).

midrib (Cole *et al.* 1996: 38). The other kato is narrow, elongated and oval-shaped, with red designs (Fig. 10).

During the 1970s Dominion Museum Niue Science Expedition, J.C. Yaldwyn acquired 13 kato, which are great examples of the style of that time (Fig. 11). Most of these baskets have price tags attached, indicating that they were acquired from a market in Niue. Some are Niuean-style



Fig. 11 Three kato (baskets), Niue, 1970s, pandanus, coconut midrib, hibiscus bast fibre. Artist unknown. Purchased 1971, acc. no. 1971/44 (Te Papa: left, FE006150; middle, FE006156; right, FE006157).

kato tupe (money purses), while others are oblong in shape with a folded-over lid. There are also strong oval ribbed baskets with 'V' handles for carrying heavy goods. In 1997, two unique kato laufa baskets were acquired, made by Elena Ikiua and Eseta Pati'i using harakeke (New Zealand flax; *Phormium* spp.) in a twill weave design.⁷

Iliili (fans)

Eleven of the 12 Niuean iliili in the collection are leaf-shaped in form, and were most probably made in the nineteenth century. These are made of coconut-leaf midrib and young coconut leaf. Braided human hair interwoven with fine pandanus strips has been lashed into the handle and base of the fans. Although Niuean in style and composition, iliili like these are very similar to those made in Samoa, probably because, as Loeb stated, the modern weaving of baskets had been taught by Samoans (Loeb 1926: 94).

In the 1970s, the Dominion Museum was involved in reviving the weaving technique of the old style of iliili, when an example from the Bollons collection was rediscovered by ethnologist Christine Mackay (Mackay 1972). At the time, that particular style of weaving no longer existed in Niue but, through a photograph shown to several Niuean villagers,



Fig. 12 Iliili (fan) replica of an old style, Niue, 1970s, coconut-palm leaf, wood, hair. Artist unknown. Gift of John Yaldwyn, 1972 (Te Papa FE006210).

an elderly lady recalled the forgotten skill. Subsequently, several replicas were made of Bollons' iliili, and Te Papa has one of the first of these in the collection (Fig. 12). The skilful preparation of the plant material to obtain the white colour is a lengthy task that involves drying the leaf over several weeks (Cole *et al.* 1996).

In 1999, the museum acquired a slightly different iliili, very similar to the Samoan style, made by Molima Pihigia, a member of the Falepipi He Mafola Niuean Handcraft Group Incorporation based in Otahuhu (Auckland). The circular fan is ornamented with feathers and is made from coiled coconut midribs lashed together by strips of dark brown pandanus. Falepipi was set up in 1993 as a way of reviving Niuean culture. In 2009, the group was awarded the Creative New Zealand Arts Pasifika Awards for its contribution to Pacific heritage arts (Anonymous 2010).

Pulou (hats)

A highlight of contemporary Niuean objects in the Te Papa collection is a pulou that often features in public talks given by museum staff. The panama-style pulou, made of woven plastic bread bags (Fig. 13), was acquired in 1999 from maker Moka Poi, who is based in Auckland. Poi designed the pulou using the flexible weave known as lalaga. She had worn the hat for many years before it was acquired by the museum. However, the development and introduction of biodegradable bread bags and their subsequent deterioration in storage has restricted the purchase of similar objects in recent years. As this example shows, the durability of modern materials can impact on acquisitions, and will require ongoing negotiation and further research by museum conservators.

Palahenga (feather adornment headpiece)

George Forster, in his account of Captain Cook's second voyage (1772–75), observed a toa wearing a feather ornament: 'His body was blackened as far as the waist; his head was ornamented with feathers placed upright, and in his hand he held a spear' (Forster 1777: 164). Percy Smith published the first ethnological survey of Niue, shortly after its annexation by New Zealand. Following his four-month stay on the island, he donated a palahenga to the museum,⁸ describing it as:

a sort of plume worn at the back of the head, and kept in position by a band of *hiapo* round the head. They are made with a core of dried banana bark, round which is wound strips of *hiapo* having scarlet feathers of the Hega parrot fastened on to them, and at top and bottom the yellow feathers of the Kulukulu dove are lashed on with



Fig. 13 Pulou (hat), Auckland, 1990s, plastic, nylon. Artist Moka Poi. Purchased 1999 with New Zealand Lottery Grants Board funds, acc. no. HY1999/030 (Te Papa FE011299).

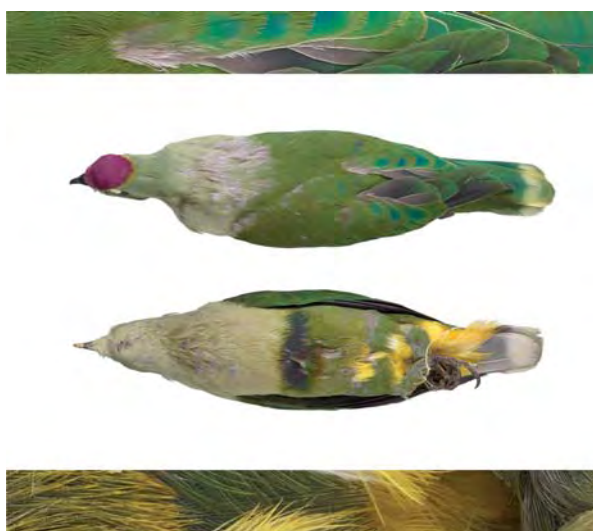


Fig. 14 Skins of kulukulu, purple-capped dove (*Ptilinopus porphyraceus porphyraceus*) from Niue, held in the Te Papa bird collection (photo: Jean-Claude Stahl; Te Papa: top, OR.016392; bottom, OR.015827).

hair braid. From the top springs a plume of red and white Tuaki and Tuaki-kula feathers, making altogether rather a handsome ornament. (Smith 1903: 64)

The combination of feathers from the kulukulu (purple-capped dove, *Ptilinopus porphyraceus porphyraceus*; Fig. 14), henga (blue-crowned lorikeet, *Vini australis*) and tuaki (tropicbird, *Phaethon* sp.; Fig. 15, top left) would have made a striking headpiece (Kinsky & Yaldwyn 1981: 10). We were unable to locate this palahenga during the survey, but much of Smith's collection was presented to the Puke Ariki Museum in New Plymouth, where he lived until his death in 1922.⁹ Apart from Smith's 1903 description, not much else is known about the function of the palahenga in Niuean society, although it does appear to have been worn by men of rank (Kooijman 1972: 296).



Fig. 15 A selection of bird skins from Niue, held in the Te Papa bird collection. Left case, bottom left to top right: buff-banded rail, *Gallirallus philippensis goodsoni* (OR.017764, OR.017763); tuaki/tavake or white-tailed tropicbird, *Phaethon lepturus dorotheae* (OR.017773, OR.017778); purple swamphen, *Porphyrio porphyrio samoensis* (OR.016387, OR.016388). Top right case, upper: kulukulu or purple-capped dove, *Ptilinopus porphyraceus porphyraceus* (OR.017747, OR.017744, OR.017745, OR.017743, OR.016392, OR.016391, OR.015827); top right case, lower: white tern, *Gygis alba candida* (OR.016396, OR.016397). Bottom right case: Pacific pigeon, *Ducula pacifica* (OR.017749)(photo: Jean-Claude Stahl; Te Papa).

Lei (necklaces)

There are 15 lei in Te Papa's collection. Three, all made from dyed fou, were part of the Cockerill collection. The remaining lei are more contemporary in design and are made from a combination of plastics. These were acquired from the Sia Kata Niue Women's Weaving Group in 1996. On some of the lei, the women have incorporated plastic drinking straws using a variety of brightly coloured plastic strips. One lei in particular has intricate petal designs, made of white plastic.

Kanava akau (weapons)

The Niuean warfare collection consists of hand-held weapons that are made primarily from wood and stone. These objects suggest that in the nineteenth century Niue was a complex society familiar with warfare. When he visited Niue in the 1850s, Admiral John Erskine observed weapons that were 'ornamented with a few feathers, the arrangement

of which ... represented the owner's name, and enabled him to claim the credit of a successful throw in battle' (Erskine 1853: 27). Loeb (1926: 131) states the feather decoration was made after the weapon had been used to kill someone. During the survey, similar ornamentations were discovered on a number of the Niuean weapons.

Maka (throwing stones)

When Captain Cook and his crew landed briefly on Niue in 1774, a stone thrown by a Niuean struck Swedish botanist Anders Sparrman on the arm:

At last a young man, to all appearance without a beard, stepped forward, and joined the first. He was like him blackened, and had a long bow, like those of Tonga-Tabboo, in his right hand. With the left he instantly flung a very large stone, with so much accuracy, as to hit Dr. Sparrman's arm a violent blow, at the distance of forty yards. (Forster 1777: 164)

Sparrman described the stone as 'a large lump of coral' (Sparrman 1953: 129). It was most probably a *maka*, which were usually made of stalactite material found in caves, and thrown without the use of a sling (Smith 1903: 60). These lemon- and oval-shaped stones were made in Niue prior to European contact, and were painstakingly polished to be used as effective weapons. *Maka* were the first weapons used against an enemy, followed by *katoua* (clubs) at close range (Loeb 1926: 130). Names given to *maka* depended on the material used and/or the place of extraction, such as the forest or caves (Loeb 1926: 129).

The Te Papa collection includes 12 *maka*. Eleven were collected by New Zealander Sir Joseph Kinsey, who was a member of the Polynesian Society in the early twentieth century. On his death in 1936, his collection was gifted to the museum by his wife, Lady Sarah Kinsey. The twelfth *maka*, described above (Fig. 1), is made of highly polished calcite. It was probably collected during Reverend Inglis' brief visit with Reverend George Turner to several Pacific Islands, including Niue, in 1859 (Turner 1861: 516). Inglis and his family were from Scotland and worked in New Zealand for the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland in the 1840s, before moving to Vanuatu in 1852 (Inglis 1887).

Tao (spears)

Te Papa's Pacific spear collection totals 1074 items, not all of which are identified and attributed to island groups. The Niuean collection of *tao* ranges from points to full-length spears. Captain Cook narrowly escaped injury when a *tao* was thrown at him during his encounter with Niueans (Forster 1777: 166). At least by the early twentieth century, the spear point was often made of a different piece of wood from that used for the shaft, and each *tao* had its own name (Loeb 1926: 129). Usually made from heavy dark wood (Fig. 16), the *tao* could measure up to 2 m long, and at times barbs were attached to the tapering point (Montague 1921: 82). During warfare, *tao* were hurled at the enemy, this requiring tremendous skill and accuracy (Loeb 1926: 131). If the thrower missed his target, the spear point would sometimes break off, thus making the weapon ineffective and preventing the enemy from reusing it (Edge-Partington 1996: 64).

In 1935, G.O.L. Dempster, a medical doctor who worked in Niue in the early 1930s, gifted five *tao* to the museum (Oliver to Dempster, 19 September 1935; Dempster to Oliver, 21 September 1935). In 1973, eight spear points and two full-length *tao* were acquired from Wellington College, some of which National Museum Director Richard K. Dell



Left Fig. 16 Tao (spear), Niue, c. 1800s, wood, feather, sennit, hair. Artist unknown. Oldman collection. Gift of the New Zealand government, 1992 (Te Papa OL002092/1).

Right Fig. 17 Katoua (club), Niue, c. 1800s, wood, sennit, human hair. Artist unknown. Gift of William Perry, 1955 (Te Papa FE002988).

noted were 'of high quality' (Dell 1974). The collection had been donated to the college at the turn of the twentieth century by Richard John Seddon (1845–1906), New Zealand's Premier from 1893 to 1906 (Hamer 2007), in memory of his son Thomas Edward Youd Seddon, who had been a pupil at the school (National Museum 1973–74).

Katoua (clubs)

In recent times, the katoua, a long club or cleaving club, has become an iconic symbol representing identity and culture for many Niueans. Used in festival and school performances, it is a Niuean object unique to the island (Fig. 17). These weapons measure between 900 mm and 1800 mm in length and were used like the Māori taiaha (Smith 1903: 60). Miles (1938: 19) described the katoua as a 'formidable' weapon, though he questioned how 'one could cleave a man's head' with it. According to Loeb (1926: 130), the katoua was a piercing weapon, used after the initial throwing of the maka. Made from brown wood, katoua have a central sharp ridge along the length of the blade on both sides; the butt end is pointed, with a collar on the rounded shaft (Montague 1921: 82). Shark teeth were often inserted into the katoua (Loeb 1926: 130), although we have not observed any examples of this type.

In 1948, the New Zealand government purchased a number of important Pacific objects from English collector William Ockelford Oldman (Neich & Davidson 2004; Waterfield & King 2006), including four Niuean katoua. Although provenance details associated with the objects are sketchy, the name 'Lavakula' is legible on one of them. Lavakula was a noted Tongan warrior, probably a descendant of Tongan invaders to Niue, who was alive at the beginning of the eighteenth century (Loeb 1926: 144). This particular katoua may have been associated with his family or village. Another of Oldman's katoua was associated with 'the giant chief Tareka', who was described as being 'seven feet' (2.1 m) tall. A label on this weapon specifies that it had been presented to 'General Wynyard',¹⁰ which may refer to Robert Henry Wynyard (1802–64), a soldier, administrator and provincial superintendent (Rogers 2007) who may have travelled to the island.

Upon inspection, a number of katoua were discovered to have incised designs at the butt end of the shaft, and a few had wrapped sennit (coconut-husk fibre), feathers, egg cowrie shells,¹¹ and braided human hair wound around the lower part of the shaft. According to archaeologist Michael Trotter, egg cowrie shells were commonly found in burial caves on Niue and were also used for ornamentation (Trotter

1979: 14). As a result of close examination of the feathers, Hokimate Harwood (Te Papa's Bicultural Science Researcher) was able to identify some of the feathers attached to both katoua and tao as being from the belly of the kulukulu, or purple-capped dove (Fig. 14), the tail of the henga, or blue-crowned lorikeet, and the back of the lupe, or Pacific pigeon (*Ducula pacifica*; Fig. 15).

One important aspect of the collection survey is that it provides an opportunity to initiate remedial treatment on damaged items. Previously, the katoua were individually stored in plastic bubble-wrap as a result of two movements of the collection between different storage locations in the 1990s. As each weapon was unwrapped for surveying, it was discovered that a number of them appeared to have mould. Using a soft-bristle brush, SP removed the mould and swabbed the entire katoua with ethanol and deionised water to prevent further outbreaks. Once the treatment was completed, the katoua were returned to the Pacific collection storage area and mounted on mesh racking, which ensures good air circulation and allows visual monitoring.

Feua faofao sino (recreation)

Some examples of tika (darts) are in the Niue collection, the majority acquired from Jock McEwen in 1999, Resident Commissioner to Niue in 1953–56. According to Loeb (1926:117), historically the game of tika was a favourite sport in Niue, and Davidson (1936) states that darts were used in a game in many parts of the Pacific. In the nineteenth century, tika was played by men and was considered a test of strength and skill. The dart is propelled like a javelin at a relatively low trajectory, the aim being to make it slide when it hits the ground, and can travel up to 100 m depending on the throw. In the late twentieth century, the game was played on Niue when villagers gathered on special occasions such as Mother's Day. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, tika is slowly being introduced to New Zealand by the Niuean community in Auckland.

Palau (drum)

In 1995, a palau made from a British Paints tin was acquired from Reverend Sipeli. The drum had been made on Niue by Jo Saulo, where it was used by children in the village parade on New Year's Eve. Like Moka Poi's bread-bag hat (see p. 111), the palau and the non-indigenous materials from which it is made has been a popular and surprising item for public talks and display.



Fig. 18 Model vaka (canoe), Niue, date unknown, wood, shell, sennit. Artist unknown. Provenance unknown (Te Papa FE012240).

Takafaga ika (fishing)

Fishing in the Pacific region has ceremonial associations, but it is also key to survival. During his four-month stay in Niue, Smith observed the tremendous fishing skill and expertise of Niuean people (1903: 65). Objects in Te Papa's Niue collection associated with fishing include canoe bailers, paddles, fishhooks, fish arrows, a fish-killing knife, fishing spears, octopus lures, a *Ruvettus* hook and sinkers. Although these objects cover a wide range of fishing methods, there is room to collect more material.

The single *Ruvettus* hook, acquired from the Wellcome collection in 1952, is made from a wooden hook (about 23 mm long) lashed to the shank with sennit. Hooks such as these in Niue and Tuvalu were generally used for catching large fish like sharks (Koch 1983: 39). Netting traps are not included in the collection, although at the turn of the twentieth century Smith observed Niueans engaged in making fishing nets called kupenga, night fishing using hulu (torches) to catch flying fish, and fishing in deep water with a hook and line (Smith 1903: 65). The torches were made from kafika wood (Loeb 1926: 96). Ika (fish and sea mammals) caught in Niue reported by Smith comprised a great variety of important species, including whale, shark, swordfish and bonito, and turtles, land and sea crabs and shellfish were also abundant (Smith 1903: 25). During the Dominion Museum Niue Science Expedition in the 1970s, Alan Baker observed a range of fishing methods, including gill netting, spear fishing, reef fishing and offshore fishing, although at times fishermen were using modern technology (Baker to Resident Commissioner, 8 February 1973).

Vaka (canoes)

Niuean vaka were typically dugouts, with a hama (outrigger) attached, and very similar to Samoan va'a (Smith 1903: 65; Haddon & Hornell 1975: 278). European visitors to Niue in the mid-nineteenth century observed the use of the vaka heke fa, a canoe that seated four people (Erskine 1853: 26; Liverpool 1868: 147). According to Te Rangi Hiroa (Sir Peter Buck), the vaka hull was made from the '*moota*, a dark-red wood of strain grain, resembling *totara*', although a tree with a bend was preferred as it was less likely to split (Hiroa 1911: 91). Historically, canoes called vaka heke ono that could seat six people were produced, although they had become rare by the twentieth century (Loeb 1926: 91).

As described by Loeb (1926: 92), the torpedo-shaped Niuean vaka comprises a main body, hama, kiato (outrigger supports) and 12 tutuki (small sticks) that are fastened to the kiato (Fig. 18). Two fulinafi (sticks) form a platform on the kiato, and five puke (inside supports) were used to break the force of the waves (Loeb 1926: 91). Oral history tells us that these vaka were used for travel to Tonga, Samoa and New Zealand (Loeb 1926: 91). However, Haddon & Hornell (1975: 279) argue that a trip of that length would have required a double vaka in order to carry sufficient provisions for the duration of the voyage.

Te Papa has four full-scale Niuean vaka. According to J.D. Gray, then Secretary of the External Affairs Department, three were deposited in the Dominion Museum in 1926 from the South Seas Exhibition held in Dunedin in 1925–26. Two of these belonged to the department and one was Gray's personal property (Gray to Director of the



Fig. 19 Tuapa Landing, Niue, 1886–87 (photo: Thomas Andrew; Te Papa C.001516).

Dominion Museum, 28 July 1926). The department had exhibited Pacific objects from its Island territories – the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tokelau – at the exhibition. These included fruits, woven items, adornment pieces and canoes (Thompson 1927: 74). Of the three full-scale vaka, we have been unable to determine which was Gray's personal property and which belonged to the department.

Government officials based in the Pacific Islands often accumulate collections over time, an indication of relationships formed with the locals and their interest in the culture. The late Jock McEwen, former Resident Commissioner to Niue from 1953 to 1956, donated the greatest number of acquisitions of Niuean artefacts, first in 1972 and later in 1999. Author of the *Niue dictionary* (1970), McEwen was a respected member of the Niuean community. One of the items gifted was a full-scale vaka that McEwen had collected in 1953. The canoe measures 4160 mm long, 490 mm wide and 750 mm high,¹² and has an attached hama and two detached kiato. Originally painted light blue, and later painted red, the vaka is a modern version of the more customary style.

Apart from the full-scale vaka in the collection, there are 11 models of torpedo-shaped canoes, with incised designs on the main body of the hull. Often, small cowrie shells are

laced along the length of the vaka, a typical Niuean design element. However, one model appears to have nautilus shells attached to the hull.¹³ Two of the models were purchased at J.F. McKenna's auction sale held in Wellington in December 1929 (McKenna 1929). One surprise discovery made during the collection survey was a postage stamp, possibly from Niue or the Cook Islands, which was adhered to one model.

Niue-related material in other Te Papa collections

Although this paper is primarily concerned with the material culture of Niue in the Pacific Cultures collection, this is a useful opportunity to note other Niuean-related material in Te Papa's Art, Photography, History, Archives and Natural Environment collections.

Art

John Pule is a leading New Zealand artist of Niuean descent who, since 1988, has exhibited widely in New Zealand and overseas (Mallon & Pereira 1997). He is also a poet and writer, and some of his writing is incorporated in his artwork. Te Papa owns 13 works by Pule. The first of these works, *Tukulagi Haaku* (1994), was purchased by the museum in 1997 after it was showcased in the landmark



Left Fig. 20 Vaka making in Niue, 1972 (photo: Friedrich-Carl Kinsky; Te Papa CT.027508).

Right Fig. 21 Vaka making in Niue, 1972 (photo: Friedrich-Carl Kinsky; Te Papa CT.027510).

exhibition *Bottled Ocean* (1994). Subsequently, in 1998, 10 prints titled *Burn my Head in Heaven* (1998) were acquired, which link to Pule's novel of the same title. More recently, in 2001, Te Papa acquired *I was Born in the Pacific Equinox* (2001) to document a shift in style in Pule's practice, in which the artist used new colour, composition and imagery. In 2010, a large-scale work was acquired for the collection titled *Shark, angel, bird, ladder* (2008). Pule's work continually references his heritage, which plays a key part in his art practice.

Recently, print works by Sale Jessop (an early contemporary of Pule, now based in Niue) were obtained as part of the Auckland-based Muka Studio archive acquisition. At the time of writing, these were undergoing processing.

Photography

Te Papa's collection of Niue-related photographs covers about 100 years, from the 1880s to the 1990s. Some of these images were taken by recognised New Zealand photographers who were residing in the Pacific. One of the foremost of these is Thomas Andrew (1855–1939), who was largely based in Samoa (McCredie in McAloon 2009: 85) but travelled to Niue, Swains Island, Lukunor, Manihiki, Majuro and Ponape on the voyage of the schooner *Southerly Buster* in 1886. The trip was documented by Moss (1889). Andrew's black and white photographs of Niue date to 1886, and include the landing at Tuapa (Fig. 19), the interior of a

church, a plantation area, and a large group of people in front of a Niuean house. In 1903, New Zealand photographer Henry Winkelmann (1860–1931) accompanied members of the General Assembly who were visiting Pacific Island territories while he was working for the *Auckland Weekly* (Edwards 2007). His images include a photograph of King Togia.

In 1954, five black and white slide images of Niue were gifted to the museum by medical doctor Alex Rutherford. The slides had initially been acquired by his father, D.A.R. Rutherford, between 1918 and 1936 while he was working in Samoa.

During the 1970s Dominion Museum Science Expedition, coloured images were taken of vaka making by J.C. Yaldwyn, F. Kinsky (Figs 20 and 21), and A. Baker at Lalokafika on the Alofi–Hakupu road. Some of these photographs are now part of Te Papa's photography collection and can be viewed on the museum's Collections Online. They include the cutting down and shaping of the mooto tree (*Dysoxylum forsteri*) in thick bush by local Niueans, including Piavale and Dr Harry Nemaia, formerly Director of Health in Niue and a respected vaka maker. There is also an image of food being prepared in the bush area, which Te Rangi Hiroa observed was an important Niuean custom (Hiroa 1911: 91). Food for the workers was placed on the ground to the right of the bow (mata ono vaka) and had to be eaten straight away so as to forecast a successful fishing

expedition. These images are a useful documentation of a process that has not hitherto been captured visually.

In 1999, Glenn Jowitt sold to the museum photographs relating to his documentary work with the Niuean community in Niue from 1982 to 1996. Some of these images were published in a book titled *Polynesia: here and there* (Jowitt 1983). Jowitt's images capture a number of places and special ceremonies in New Zealand and in the Pacific Islands. In 2001, images taken by renowned photographer Brian Brake (1927–88) were gifted to Te Papa by Raymond Wai-Man Lau (McCredie 2010). Brake *et al.* (1979) published the book *Art of the Pacific*, which includes images of Niuean hiapo from Auckland War Memorial Museum's Tamaki Paenga Hira collection.

History

Significantly, Te Papa's history collection holds two examples of the Proclamation of British Sovereignty over Niue, written in English and Niuean, and dated October 1900 and April 1901.¹⁴ Both documents were acquired from the Cook Islands Department in September 1931, as Niue was administered under that department until official separation in 1903. Made of paper and wood, the documents are fragile but remain important archival reference material.

Archives

Te Papa's archives section holds important documents, particularly about the 1970s Dominion Museum Science Expedition to Niue, and later work associated with another trip in the 1980s. A small exchange between Te Rangi Hiroa and Augustus Hamilton about possible Niuean acquisitions in 1913 is also documented in the archives, and there are documents and drawings relating to a Niue postage stamp design by Robert Conly (1920–95) from the 1970s.

Natural environment

The Dominion Museum Science Expedition to Niue in 1971–72 was organised by Dr John C. Yaldwyn, Assistant Director of the Dominion Museum (Baker to Resident Commissioner Niue Island, 8 February 1973; Anonymous 1972, 18 August). The team consisted of a number of scientists who, over a three-week period, collected biological specimens that were shipped back to New Zealand. Later research carried out on Niue was published in *The bird fauna of Niue island* (Kinsky & Yaldwyn 1981) and provided the Niue government with some recommendations on the local ecosystem.

The Natural Environment collection holds an extensive range of specimens from Niue, some of which were gathered

during the 1970s expedition: fishes (713), birds (167), crustaceans (150), fossil vertebrates (119), insects (6), land mammals (6), marine invertebrates (95), molluscs (675) and plants (2).

Engaging with the Niuean community

This survey of Te Papa's Niue collection has assessed objects relating to various aspects of Niuean life since the nineteenth century up to the present, such as textiles, fishing tackle, weapons, household goods and clothing. A Samoan influence seems evident in the design of vaka and in the development of mid- to late nineteenth-century tapa-cloth production. Although the collection has slowly expanded in each decade since the annexation of Niue by New Zealand in 1901, this paper reveals some noticeable gaps. One of them is material relating to the Niuean contribution to the First World War. Objects associated with this important event and the experiences of Niuean soldiers will be the focus of future acquisitions.

As we have seen, Te Papa's engagement with the Niuean community has influenced the collection. It began in the 1980s, with the acquisition of items such as costumes and mats. Wally Ranfurly and then Reverend Langi Sipeli made possible some collecting activity undertaken by museum staff following their roles as cultural advisors in the late 1980s. This engagement was further enhanced in November 2008, with the Nuku Tu Taha/Niue community day held at Te Papa to celebrate Niuean art and culture. The Te Papa events team, with the help of representatives from the Niuean community, organised the day's programme, which included a performance and workshop by the renowned Tau Fuata Niue dance group based in Auckland (Fig. 22). In the *Signs of a Nation* area of the museum, an arts and crafts village was organised for stallholders to sell goods and demonstrate some of their weaving. In order to reconnect the Niuean community with objects of the Niue collection, a community discussion panel was coordinated, involving elders who recalled the use and making of some of the items from the collections. It also provided a rare opportunity to display a full-scale vaka for visitors to view.

In 2009, the inaugural Niue Arts and Culture Festival was held on 'the Rock'. The organisation committee's hope is that the festival will continue an important dialogue between the homeland and the extended populations of Niueans abroad. Such festivals will provide an opportunity



Fig. 22 Tau Fuata Niue dance group performing at Te Papa, 2008 (photo: Jo Moore).

for the museum to collect and document contemporary changes in Niuean material culture. For example, in 2005 a complete Niuean female dance costume was acquired from Auckland Girls' Grammar School in Auckland. It had been worn in the ASB Bank Auckland Secondary Schools Māori and Pacific Islands Cultural Festival, the largest Polynesian dance festival of its kind in the world. Although not made in Niue, the costume is a significant representation of Niuean cultural practice and identity in New Zealand.

Conclusion

Te Papa's collection shows that Niue was, and is, far from being an isolated island. The survey has revealed the multiple relationships formed between people and the island in the last two centuries, some of which continue today. As we explored the Niue collection and the museum's stories, many surprises surfaced, showing that the survey has been a pivotal way of rediscovering history.

An interesting discovery was the lack of toki (adzes) in the Niue collection, but for one example, a toki ngenge (*Tridacna*-shell adze blade) donated by former Premier Robert Rex in 1972.¹⁵ According to Walter & Anderson (2002), toki in Niue were also fashioned from stone imported from places such as Samoa, while origins of other imported volcanic stones found in Niue archaeological sites are unknown. Although some of the material culture of Niue as represented in Te Papa's collection have links to Tonga and Samoa, this paper has highlighted that some material, such as the katoua, are uniquely Niuean.

A complete coverage of material culture from Niue in the collection is impossible, as museum collections are often influenced by staff interests and those of the wider community. Some gaps in the collection relate to the representation of examples of men's clothing, and musical instruments such as nose flutes and dance costumes. A challenge for curators and communities will involve finding ways to represent the Niueans living in New Zealand, whose cultural identities are often connected and expressed through school performance groups, church groups and sports clubs. The material culture of these associations will be an area of future collecting for the museum. Aspects of intangible culture are another important area where museums can improve their documentation. The Niue community day held in Te Papa in 2008 demonstrated that Niuean culture can be vividly expressed in intangible as well as tangible forms in the museum environment. The museum is a venue that can facilitate expressions of intangible culture, whether it is dance and song, story-telling or oral history, as well as displays of weaving and craft making. These activities will require an ongoing relationship with the Niuean community, including discussions around the recording and documentation of the events for future generations.

Although the main focus of collecting at Te Papa is on Niueans in New Zealand, it is important that the museum continues to track cultural events in Niue, which remain a rich source of history and culture for Niuean people. This survey of material culture reveals a long-term and well-documented relationship with Niue that bodes positively for the future. Further research could be extended to surveying Niue collections within other institutions in New Zealand and abroad, which would help to expand on the histories presented here and provide a better understanding of Niue and its people.

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Notes

- 1 See <http://collections.tepapa.govt.nz>.
- 2 The late Reverend Langi Sipeli was involved in consultations relating to the Museum of New Zealand development project in the 1980s. Later, he became a member of Te Papa's Wellington-based Pacific Advisory Group. During this time he facilitated some acquisitions of Niue material culture.
- 3 Hiapo (tapa cloth), Niue, nineteenth century, bark cloth. Artist unknown (Te Papa FE007754).
- 4 Examples of hiapo from a late 1990s revival were exhibited at the Arch Hill Gallery in Grey Lynn, Auckland, New Zealand (Cross to Mallon, 17 June 2010).
- 5 One of Hamilton's tiputa, made from the inner bark of the paper mulberry tree, featured in 2010 on *Tales from Te Papa*, a TVNZ6 documentary on selected items of the museum collection.
- 6 Kafa (belt), Niue, human hair, c. 1800. Artist unknown (Te Papa FE000861).
- 7 Kato laufa (bag), Wellington, 1997, flax, Elena Ikiua (Te Papa FE010938); Kato laufa (bag), Wellington, 1990s, possibly synthetic material, flax, Eseta Pati'i (Te Papa FE010939).
- 8 Palahenga (feather adornment headpiece), Niue, c. 1800s, feathers. Artist unknown (Te Papa FE000078).
- 9 During the research for this paper, contact was made with the Puke Ariki Museum, New Plymouth, New Zealand, about the possibility of viewing Smith's collection. However, the collection was inaccessible as an audit was in process.
- 10 Katoua (club), Niue, wood, c. 1800. Artist unknown (Te Papa OL000169.S/8).
- 11 Shells identified by Bruce Marshall, Collection Manager

Mollusca, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, New Zealand.

- 12 Vaka (canoe), Niue, wood, date unknown. Artist unknown (Te Papa FE006240).
- 13 Model vaka (canoe), Niue, wood, date unknown. Artist unknown (Te Papa FE002276).
- 14 Proclamation, October 1900 (Te Papa GH003144); proclamation, April 1901 (Te Papa GH003145).
- 15 Toki ngenge (*Tridacna*-shell adze blade), Niue, date unknown, shell. Artist unknown (Te Papa FE006233).

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Appendix: A timeline of 'documented' acquisitions of objects from Niue

Name	Year	Accession number	Number of Niue objects	Person/role/institution/location
Reverend John Inglis	1869	—	1	Missionary
New Zealand Philadelphia Exhibition Commission	1876	—	1	Wellington, New Zealand
Stephenson Percy Smith	1902?	—	1	Resident agent and scholar on Niue culture
Augustus Hamilton (purchased after his sudden death in 1913)	1914	—	3	Director, Dominion Museum
Hope Hamilton (gift of E. Vickery 1880)	1914	—	1	Wife of Augustus Hamilton
J.H. Bethune and Co. Ltd	1916	—	3	Auction house, Wellington, New Zealand
Alexander Horsburgh Turnbull	1918	—	1	Administrator, collector
Ellen Hutchin	1919	—	1	Wife of Reverend John Hutchin
Sir Francis Rose Price	1927	File 10/2/11	2	Unknown
J.F. Mckenna's Sale	1929	—	7	Auction house, Wellington, New Zealand
Cook Islands Department	1929	—	3	Government department, New Zealand
Otago Museum (exchange)	1930s?	—	11	Dunedin, New Zealand
Mrs Lilian Bollons	1931	1931/55	6	Wife of Captain John Bollons
Edward Ellison (deposited)	1931	—	9	Medical doctor
G. Dempster	1935	1935/103	5	Medical doctor
G. Dempster	1935	1935/112	2	Medical doctor
Lady Sarah Kinsey	1936	1936/113	2	Wife of Sir Joseph Kinsey
Mrs S. Stirling	1936	1936/19	2	Unknown
Department of External Affairs	1938	1938/42	5	Government department, New Zealand
W. Bell	1939	1939/23	1	Probably Captain William Bell, a military officer who was Resident Commissioner for Niue in 1931–41
William Oldman	1948	—	12	Collector, England
T.W. Kirk (Masonic Lodge, Paraparaumu)	1950	1950/123	1	Biologist, scientific administrator
Wellcome collection	1952	1952/193	1	Collection of Sir Henry Wellcome, pharmacist and collector
Ian Reid	1954	—	1	Unknown
William Perry	1955	1955/168	2	New Zealand politician
P. Bowman	1964	1964/174	1	Unknown
Wellington City Council (loan)	1968	1968/78	1	Wellington, New Zealand
John C. Yaldwyn	1971	1971/44	21/23	Museum curator

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Name	Year	Accession number	Number of Niue objects	Person/role/institution/location
John C. Yaldwyn	1971	1971/80	2	Museum curator
John C. Yaldwyn	1972	1972/31	1	Museum curator
Robert Rex	1972	1972/65	1	Former Niue Premier
Jock McEwen	1972	1972/92	1	Former Niue Resident Commissioner
Thomas H. Cockerill	1973	1973/39	16	Son of H.W. Cockerill
Wellington College	1973	1973/82	12	Wellington, New Zealand
Gisborne Art Gallery and Museum	1975	1975/22	2	Gisborne, New Zealand
Lady Celia Rowley	1980	1980/4	3	Daughter of Viscount Galway, former Governor General of New Zealand
Erskine College	1986	1986/13	4	Wellington, New Zealand
Suzanne Duncan	1987	1987/28	3	Unknown
Christie's Auction House	1988	1988/37	1	Auction house, London, England
Niuean Women Weavers	1989	1989/21	1	Newtown, Wellington, New Zealand
Reverend Langi Sipeli	1995	HY1995/028	3	Cultural advisor to Te Papa
Flagmakers	1996	HY1996/042	1	Company, Wellington, New Zealand
Sia Kata Niue Women's Weaving Group	1996	HY1996/049	12	Newtown, Wellington, New Zealand
Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary	1996	HY1996/052	1	Nukualofa, Tonga
Akele Etuata	1996/1999	HY1999/013	2	Daughter-in-law of Moale Etuata
Government House	1997	HY1997/065	4	Wellington, New Zealand
John C. Yaldwyn	1997	HY1997/064	4	Museum curator
Pacific Craft Centre	1997	HY1997/063	1	Porirua, Wellington, New Zealand
Moka Sipeli	1997	HY1997/067	5	Wife of Reverend Langi Sipeli
Reverend Langi Sipeli	1999	HY1999/012	1	Cultural advisor to Te Papa
Falepipi He Mafola Niuean Handcraft Group Inc.	1999	HY1999/020	3	Auckland
Moka Poi	1999	HY1999/030	1	Weaver, Auckland
Jock McEwen	1999	HY2000/011	26	Former Niue Resident Commissioner
Moka Sipeli	2001	HY2001/021	4	Wife of Reverend Langi Sipeli
Doris de Pont	2005	HY2005/004	11	Fashion designer
Mitchell Estate	Unknown	—	1	Unknown
Unknown	Unknown	—	53	Unknown
? Moore	Unknown	—	1	Unknown
L. Taylor	Unknown	Cross-reference 2695	1	Unknown
G. Dowling	Unknown	—	1	Unknown
Total			291	