

# THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF PREHISTORIC FIJIAN CHIEFDOMS

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## OVERVIEW

- ◆ This research investigates the hypothesized rise of ancient Fijian chiefdoms by comparing changes in the organization of ceramic production in eastern, central and west Fiji.
- ◆ Ethnohistoric evidence shows the existence of social and political hierarchies which would likely affect the conveyance of ceramics and plausibly agricultural products or other manufactured items.
- ◆ Based on these facts, this research makes two predictions and suggests how to address them respectively:

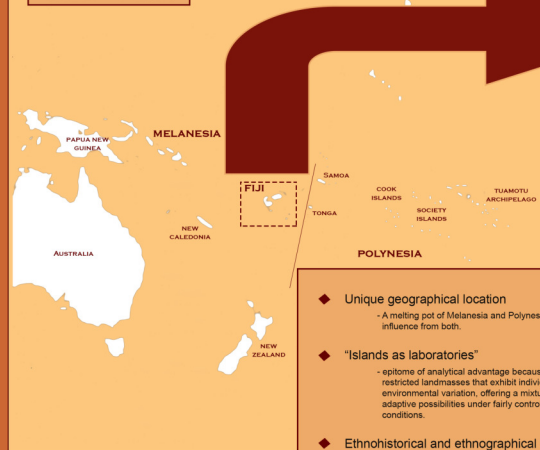
1. A social and political hierarchy with some control over ceramic manufacturing and distribution originated sometime in the past and would encompass a population at a larger spatial scale than formerly separated ceramic-making populations.

Examine variation in the spatial, temporal, and/or functional extent of transmission-defined networks or ceramic lineages that may be correlated with changes in ceramic production (e.g., ceramic surface decoration, raw material variation, vessel form diversity, firing temperature, and forming techniques).

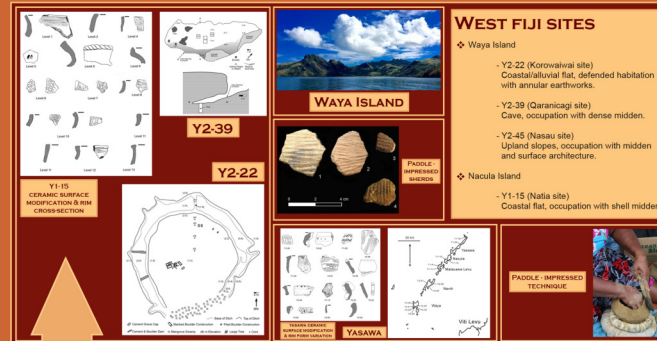
2. The origins of chiefdoms corresponds with a change in ceramic manufacturing and distribution processes in which raw materials and manufacturing process will be hierarchically organized in contrast to a less hierarchical distribution of raw materials and production practices prior to chiefdom origins.

Examine variation in ceramic raw material provenance that is spatially or temporally correlated with the presumed rise of Fijian chiefdoms approximately 1000 B.P. in the eastern half of the archipelago.

## WHY FIJI?



- ◆ **Unique geographical location**
  - A melting pot of Melanesia and Polynesia with influence from both.
- ◆ **"Islands as laboratories"**
  - epitome of analytical advantage because of restricted landscapes that exhibit individual environmental variation, offering a mixture of adaptive possibilities under fairly controlled conditions.
- ◆ **Ethnohistorical and ethnographical data**
  - quantity and quality of historical documents and ethnographical data from the late 18- and early 19-century which assist in the interpretation of archaeological materials even more so for the study of prehistoric chiefdoms.



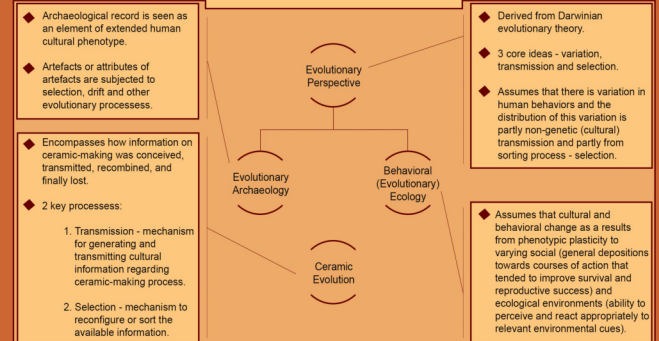
## FIJI, CERAMIC SAMPLES AND SITES



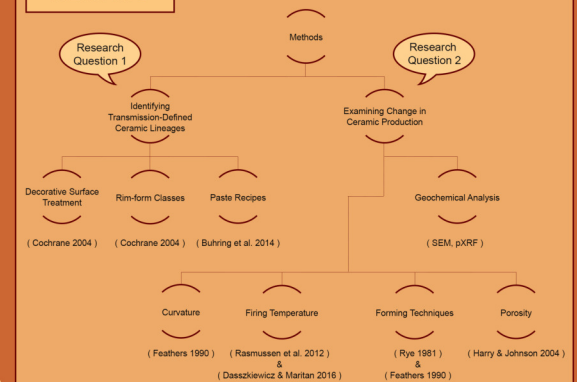
- ◆ Samples represent the period approximately before and after 1000 B.P. (Clark & Anderson 2009).
- ◆ Samples are selected from sites that have wide range of activities (e.g., coastal settlements, fortified sites, rock shelters).
- ◆ Sampling strategies:
  1. 10-20% for big sites with considerable amount of ceramics. May take all/individual assessments for smaller sites with less ceramics.
  2. Samples for geochemical analysis will be generated from pre-selected sample from step-one.



## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



## METHODS



## SIGNIFICANCE

- ◆ Will confirm if there was economic integration in ceramic manufacturing as a part of chiefdom organization in ancient Fiji.
  - ☑ Able to explain the geographical scale of Fiji's ancient-economic integration.
  - ☑ Will question the fundamental assumption of chiefdom socio-political organization world-wide.
- ◆ Will address the Polynesian-Melanesian distinction in term of socio-political complexity.
- ◆ Evaluates the proposal that chiefdoms arose predominantly in east Fiji compared to west Fiji.