

superseded an earlier geometric style, though this might explain the other more striking deviations from the typical eighteenth and nineteenth century designs. More relevantly to this particular discussion, might one ask whether, in view of these recorded exceptional cases, Rutherford's might not be another?

On the evidence of reliable illustrations, however, Rutherford's bodily tattooing—and specifically those circular designs on his chest and the closely woven pattern on his forearm—correspond very nearly with some in Karl von den Steinen's great work on Marquesan tattooing.<sup>37</sup> Exact correspondence is not to be looked for. No two tattoo patterns, anywhere in Polynesia, seem ever to have been precisely identical. The general style and the use of particular features distinguish the tattooing of one island group from another. The specific application of this style and these features, and their arrangement on different parts of the body, distinguished one man from another. Individuals might be recognised as well by their distinctive tattoo patterns as by their facial and bodily features. But if details of Rutherford's tattooing match details to be found in the Marquesas, in one general respect his differs conspicuously. A remarkable feature of Marquesan tattooing was its density, often covering the whole body—like a coat of mail, as a note in Cook's journal put it.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, those flowing lines, stemming from the discreetly concealed base of Rutherford's belly, or from his thighs, do not match the usual Marquesan style. Thus, by a process of elimination, the inquiry was driven back to explore the most likely source of all: Tahiti.

At this point a word of apology is due. A devious approach to the obvious was not embarked on voluntarily. It became necessary only when a search of Tahitian material in the Turnbull Library disclosed that despite the vast output of books on this other Cythera, references to Tahitian tattooing were few and reliable illustrations even fewer. Those referred to by Sparks in his thesis are, as he rightly remarks, among the most confusing in the literature of Polynesian tattooing.<sup>39</sup> One painting, purporting to depict the cession of Matavai to the missionaries, does indeed include tattooing on the bodies of some Tahitians with circular designs highly reminiscent of Rutherford's. Sparks, properly, makes no mention of this picture: it was painted by a Royal Academician, and even its inclusion in an otherwise reputable book by the Rev. William Ellis can hardly be taken as authenticating its details.<sup>40</sup> Other illustrations, from Cook's first voyage, are no more conclusive. Many Tahitians, it seems, appeared to be wearing black pants and one of Banks's artists sketched this particular form of tattooing.<sup>41</sup> But whether Rutherford had been decorated in like manner we have no means of telling. The head of a Tahitian by Parkinson, on the other hand, with a tattooed collar not so unlike Rutherford's armlet, comes to us only in the form presented by an engraver who used the broadest of hatchings.<sup>42</sup> One would like to see