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**The Tu'i Kanokupolu Matai Establishment**  
*and*

*Why would Tu'i Tonga Fuanunuiava have vied to become one?*  
(A genealogical analysis of post 1550 AD new political hegemony in Tonga)

By

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Declaration

Except where otherwise indicated  
this thesis is my own work.

**Siaosi L. 'Ilaiu**  
**November 2007**

## Glossary

### *Sāmoan Terms:*

***ali'i*** – Sāmoan high chief.

***ali'i - pa'ia*** – Sāmoan sacred chief.

***ao*** – paramount chiefly title.

***aualuma*** – council of virgins.

***aumaga*** – council of young untitled men.

***feagaiga*** – a sacred covenant between brother and sister.

***fale'upolu*** - Council of advisors for the Ali'ipa'ia.

***Gatoa'itele*** – paramount title of Afega.

***pule*** – orator groups who control the conferment of high titles of Savai'i.

***matai*** – a family title bestowed on chiefs and orators at different social levels starting from the rank of tulafale at the bottom to tulafale-ali'i in ascending order to ali'i and then ali'i pa'ia at the very top.

***sa'o*** – chosen leader for young women and young men's village organisation.

***sa'o aualuma*** – taupou's office in women's village organisation.

***sa'o aumaga*** – mana'ia's office in men's village organisation.

***sa'o tama'ita'i*** – title for the highest ancestress title of a district.

***tulafale ali'i*** – orator chiefs who hold more than one title/ with dual prerogatives as chief and talking chief whenever it is required.

***tulafale*** – talking chief.

***Tamasōali'i*** – paramount title of Safata.

***tafa'i*** – a pair of protectors (titled high chief) for each of the four paramount papa titles.

***tafa'i-fa*** – a status given to any individual who holds all the four paramount papa titles to which he/she is recognised as tupu (titular ruler/ king of Sāmoa)

***Tu'i A'ana*** – paramount title of A'ana.

***Tu'i Atua*** – paramount title of Atua.

***Tu'i Fiti*** – Paramount title of Bau.

***Tu'i Manu'a*** – royal title of the king of Manu'a.

***Tu'i Samau*** – orator group in Afega who have the right to confer the royal title of Gatoa'itele.

***Tu'i Sāmoa*** – a title from Poutasi village which originated from Fiji.

***Tumua*** – two orator groups who have the right to confer the titles of Tu'i A'ana and Tu'i Atua. One in Leulumoega in A'ana and the other one in Lufilufi in Atua. The two tumua control who they confer the titles on.

***Tupu*** – titular ruler or king.

**Tongan Terms:**

- ‘eiki* – a Tongan chief.  
*‘eiki lahi* – a Tongan high chief.  
*‘eiki toputapu* – a Tongan sacred chief.  
*falefā* - House of four. The four ceremonial attendants of the Tu’itonga.  
*feangai* – a sacred covenant between brother and sister.  
*faleha’akili* - Group of titleholders in the court of the Tu’ikanokupolu  
*falekanokupolu* – Tongan equivalent of Sāmoan faleupolu.  
*falefisi* – descendants of unions between tu’itonga-*fefine* and Fijian high titled chiefs.  
*fatongia* - A hereditary profession assigned to every ha’a.  
*ha’a* - The largest social group in Tonga.  
*hau* - A designation ascribed to a ruler of the second order.  
*pule* – orator groups who control the conferment of high titles of Savai’i.  
*hingoa* - A traditional title.  
*hingoafakanofa* - A hereditary chiefly title.  
*hou’eiki* - chiefly class.  
*kāinga* - blood connection/relation.  
*kauhalalalo* – lower side of the road, Tu’ikanokupolu tradition.  
*kauhala’uta* – upper side of the road, Tu’itonga Tradition.  
*mana* - Supernatural power/attribute.  
*ma’itaki* – Principal wife of the Tu’itonga, (Sāmoan Taupou).  
*matapule* – Tongan ceremonial attendant.  
*mohefo* – The principal wife of the Tu’itonga, (Tu’i Kanokupolu’s daughter).  
*tu’i* - King, ruler or emperor.  
*Tu’i Tonga fefine* – female Tu’itonga  
*Tu’i Ha’atakalaua* – Secular Ruler, name for the second dynasty in Tonga.  
*Tu’i Ha’apai* – King of Ha’apai group.  
*Tu’i Vava’u* – King of Vava’u group.  
*Tu’i ‘Eua* – King of ‘Eua.  
*Tu’i Niua* – King of Niua.  
*Tu’i hihifo*- paramount title of hihifo district in Tonga.  
*Tu’i ha’amo’unga* - another version of Tu’i hihifo title.  
*Tu’i Kanokupolu* – recognised title of the rulers of Tonga’s third dynasty.  
*Tu’i Tonga* – royal title of sacred king of Tonga.  
*tamahā* – daughter of the Tu’i Tonga *fefine*, Sacred being.  
*tamatauhala* – the most sacred/extraordinary being.  
*tapu* – Taboo, sacred, complete out of bound.  
*tu’a* – Commoners, untouchable class.

**KEYS:**

- TA* – Tu’i A’ana.  
*Tt* – Tu’i Atua.  
*TT* – Tu’i Tonga.  
*TH* – Tu’i Ha’atakalaua.  
*TK* – Tu’i Kanokupolu.  
*TMA*- Tu’i Manu’a.

- TM*-Tamahā.  
*TTF*-Tu’i Tonga Fefine.  
*THT*-Tu’i Ha’ateiho.

## Preface

This thesis is part of an ongoing project which aims at rethinking Tongan history in such a way that some sense of historicity could eventually be restored to both ‘oral tradition’ and the works written by Tongans and non-Tongan observers, thinkers and scholars alike.

The earliest commentaries on Tonga were recorded in journals written by navigators, missionaries, European travellers, beach combers and war captives who directly met indigenous leaders and were involved in local affairs. These records begin with the journals of the Dutch explorers Schouten and Le Maire who located the northern islands in 1616. Scholarly works on Tongan history surfaced in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when Dr Moulton established the Wesleyan college in 1866.

The present history of Tonga is cumulative only of sources provided by oral tradition and works generally written by non-Tongan commentators. The validity of such sources has been questioned in a number of studies for more than a decade and a half now. Even though criticism of folklore and other oral traditions is well founded and appears logical in a number of ways, it appears somehow that revisions made (as I will show later on) are as ahistorical as the ones they tirelessly endeavour to correct. This thesis argues that although information regarding pre-contact times has provided uncertain conclusions, the works of revisionist historians are even more doubtful and some rethinking needs to be done.

The topic and area of study I am pursuing here is not new but I have chosen to tackle it on the basis of my strong conviction that the present literature on Tongan history has had a wrong approach from the beginning. A fresh look at Tongan History must start from a serious examination of methods used and theoretical agendas involved in the historian or researcher’s mind. One of the common errors appears to be ‘anachronism’ (where history is written out of time); its presence frustrates productive efforts to underpin facts in a more scientific way.



There are organisations and institutions that I am indebted to for harnessing, refining and processing the course of my early academic life. I must begin by thanking my teachers at Tonga College and ‘Atenisi University who were instrumental in the initial stages of my progress as a student and especially my lifetime teacher Professor Futa Helu for instilling lasting thoughts and knowledge that have formed the basis of my entire academic career. I wish also to acknowledge my former mentor at Auckland University the late Dr Garth Rogers.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of a number of individuals who were generous enough to give me their time during the production of this work: Hon. Fusitu’a and Lady Fusitu’a, Hon. Fiamē Mata’afa, Hon. Lupepau’u Fusitu’a, Kioa (Tomu) of Ha’utu, Makamapu-’o-Ha’a Havea Lahi, Faleafa-’o-’Atalanga, Kieteau Topui, Soane Tone, Tevita Folau Mahu’inga, Tevita Ovalau Fifita, Tuala Tominiko, Sa’ena, Fonoti, Tevita Valahulu Kanongata’a, ‘Aisake Tu’iono, Saia Moe hau, William Edwards, Semisi Panuve, Ngatu Lui, Sione Tupou Tu’ifua, ‘Ahau, Laugatasi ‘Ahio, Joe Tu’ilatai Mataele and last but not least my special thanks to the ‘Kaunanga ’o Petani’ for all spiritual advice and guidance.

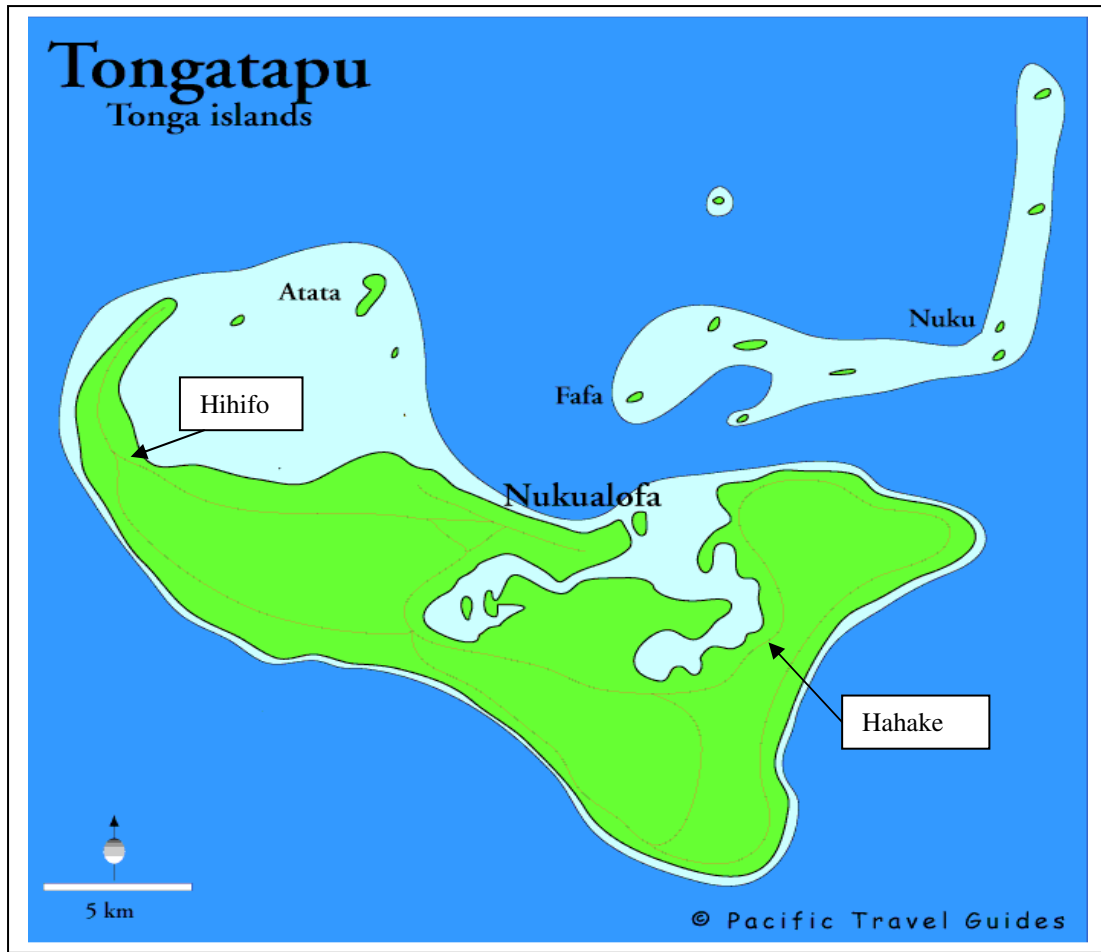
In the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Massey University (Albany Campus) I would first like to thank my supervisor Dr Graeme Macrae for enduring the hardship of keeping me on track over the years, during which his encouragement and constructive advice facilitated the completion of this work. I also acknowledge my debt especially to Dr Eleanor Rimoldi and Professor Paul Spoonley for their patience and strong belief in my ability. I would also like to acknowledge the support, friendship and positive contribution given to me by my colleagues: Nalesoni T. Tupou, (The Late) Finau Kolo, Vakaola Helu, Failo Taufā, Rev. ‘Aminiasi Vuki, Taniela Vao, Inoke Hu’akau, Heamasi Halasili, Siaosi Kei, Lemeki Helu, Penisimani Finau, ‘Opeti ‘Ofamo’oni, Taniela Mo’ale, Paula Vi junior, Ungia ‘Ofa, Sione Hafoka, Manisela Sitake and all my peers who have helped me but are not named here.

Special thanks are due to Tu’uta Pome’e who drew the genealogical figures and Manase Lua who helped with proof reading, for their support and friendship throughout the thesis.

I wish to thank my aunties Finaulilo and Mele'ana, my sister Lupeha'amo'a, cousins Va'inga and Falefehi for their unending patience, and support. Finally, I wish to thank especially my wife Lucy Anna for her interminable belief in me, for without her prayers, incessant guidance and encouragement this work would not have materialised in this present form, and last but not least, I wish to acknowledge our children's contribution in struggling together with us during this project.

## WESTERN SAMOA - ISLAND OF UPOLU





## Abstract

This work examines some issues relating to specific social, political and ideological developments that have shaped the pre-contact history of Tonga especially the puzzling ideas that revolve around the co-existence of the three kingly lines that survived into the era of written record. There are competing versions of how each dynasty came about and what kinds of contribution they accomplished. I endeavour to go further than what current research has brought to light so far. In fact, current research on Tongan history is stagnant due to some great lack in research methodology whereby easy problems cannot be logically deciphered. I believe this is because present disciplinary guidelines limit the scope for attaining a deep understanding of things not to mention the failure of comparative method (comparing chronologies in neighbouring islands) to underpin the historical realities on offer. One of my main concerns in this study rests on how well the contact period reflects the reality of what we may refer to as Tongan *tradition* or what is really traditional about Tongan ways of life prior to the seventeenth century.

This thesis is designed to use Tongan genealogy as a guide in attempting to make sense of what the European records can offer to our understanding of post-contact Tonga. Historical documentation in this context refers simply to post-contact recording of events, whereas traditional history, ordered by genealogy, gives us access to a more distant past. This work argues further that genealogy unravels an ever-presence of conflicting tendencies that existed even in times where Tongan society was perceived to enjoy long-term peace.

This thesis is aimed at a complete rethinking of political transformations in ancient Tongan polity and how such transformations introduced new patterns of social, political and ideological realities that current scholars have not yet recognised. I also show how genealogy is useful in determining the course of Tongan political history, especially the major changes that took place a few centuries before contact with Europe came about in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century AD.

In Chapter one, I introduce an alternative theory about the political history of Tonga since the inception of the TK dynasty<sup>1</sup>. I also delineate how genealogy reflects major changes in all aspects of life in both pre-

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<sup>1</sup> I use TK as abbreviation for Tu'i Kanokupolu.

contact and post-contact Tonga. In the light of this better understanding of Tongan political history I employ Antonio Gramsci's dialectic to harness and clarify matters relating to social processes in the past that have remained unexplained up to now. I discuss here the hegemony of the Tu'i Tonga dynasty i.e. how it was achieved and maintained for over a thousand years from 450 AD until around 1500 AD when there was an unsuccessful counter-hegemony by the *Tu'i Ha'atakalaua* line. In 1550 shortly after the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua *failure* every commentator of Tongan society has overlooked another counter hegemony by the third dynasty. The Tu'i Kanokupolu hegemony will be critically discussed with reference to a further counter-hegemony by the Tu'i Tonga by which strategy the old dynasty managed to survive a bit longer.

Chapter 2 then, offers a critique of old notions about Tongan society in works written mostly by the so-called Polynesianist revisionists who have constantly revisited Tongan history for the past two decades. I also show why Tongan traditionalists and scholars alike could not understand what had been happening in Tonga's past.

This work focuses on the creation of the third dynasty in Tonga around 1550 AD. There are a number of issues relating to this event that have not been discussed by any commentator of Tongan society so far. These include the indirect but significant importation of a quasi-Sāmoan matai system that eventually formed the basis of Tongan polity encountered by European explorers starting from Souten and Le Maire in 1616 during the reign of the third Tu'i Kanokupolu (Mataeletu'apiko), when the matai system was locally practised in the narrow confines of Hihifo<sup>2</sup>. It had gained momentum at the time of Captain Cook's last visit in 1777. The system grew stronger and spread to all corners of the Tongan archipelago within the duration of only two centuries.

It is the growth of this system that this study determines to underpin, as it will provide a more lucid explanation for a number of important puzzles that still confuse contemporary historians. First, the reason why and how the Tu'i Kanokupolu came into existence, the odd nature of Tu'i Kanokupolu political practices, and the secrets behind the mass production of titles as family and extended family gifts plus how these gifts determined the outcome of social, political, and religious activities that all three dynasties engaged in, in their tensely unavoidable coexistence especially in the eighteenth century.

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<sup>2</sup>Hihifo is a narrow point at the western end of the main island of Tongatapu where the seat of the Tu'i Kanokupolu dynasty was established in space 1550 AD.

Chapter 3 - offers a general discussion of Ama's possible schemes and plots. I argue in this part that Ama was determined to recapture and rule Safata. In Sāmoa I identify a connection between a political struggle (civil war) that took place in Upolu around 1500 – 1520 AD with the creation of the Tu'i Kanokupolu in Tonga about 1550 AD. This war is discussed here for two reasons. First, it was an attempt by Sāmoan high chiefs to create a centralised in Upolu state to be headed by a Sāmoan monarch for the first time in their history. Second, the end result of this war affected Tonga more than Sāmoa since the vanquished Ama fled from his district Safata to Tonga. This chapter concentrates on discussing the major players in the said war.

Chapter 4 – This part discusses Sāmoan politics at the time of Ama's exile. I also unfold here the structure of Sāmoan polity by discussing the matai system and how it generates political, social and religious responsibilities among Sāmoan lives in general. This chapter discusses significant principles of Sāmoan social and political organisation such as matai (title system), tafa'i (royal protector), faleupolu (political advisors), 'aiga (extended family), sa (family – royal lines), ali'i-pa'ia (sacred chief/district monarch), ali'i (high chief), tulafale-ali'i (minor chief), and tulafale (chief's attendant). These organisations will be compared with the Tu'i Kanokupolu political system so that the resemblance is not confused with the Tu'i Tonga and Tu'i Ha'atakalaua systems.

Chapter 5 - discusses with critical analyses the real characters of the Tu'i Kanokupolu political establishment. Such discussion includes TK status, the conception of 'ulutolu (chief's protector), hingoa – fakanofu (title system), falekanokupolu (political advisors), kāinga (extended family), ha'a (titled chiefs related to an original royal line), 'eiki lahi (paramount chief), eiki (high chief), 'eiki si'i (minor chief), matapule (chief's attendant). I argue in this part, that the TK political organisation is essentially structured in Sāmoan fashion both in theory and in practice and I will show the basic difference between this system and the quintessential Tu'i Tonga organisational principles described in the next chapter.

Chapter 6 – This chapter depicts the basic structure of the Tu'i Tonga political organisation and how it countered the powerful hegemony of the TK expansion in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries when there was an internal struggle for political supremacy among the three ruling dynasties. I discuss here counter hegemony by the Tu'i Tonga, which resulted in the creation of several new statuses such as the *Tu'i Tonga fefine* (female Tu'i Tonga), *tamahā* (sacred being – female), *falefisi* (sacred house of Fiji). This chapter also highlights the collision between the old political system and the new and also shows how the new system

paved its way to an undisputed status in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century after the last conflict of 1852. I discuss the new Tu'i Kanokupolu ha'a system and the kind of impact it propagated in the dominions of Tu'i Tonga and Tu'i Ha'atakalaua.

Chapter 7 – My main concern in this chapter rests on a case where a highborn female Tupou mohefo successfully usurped the Tu'i Kanokupolu title and became the first female titleholder in this dynasty. She was very ambitious and pried into politics on a number of occasions when she made attempts to revolutionise the norm of Tongan tradition such as her well known move to dethrone her husband Tu'i Tonga Pau in favour of their son Fuanunuiava and also her desperate instigation to abolish the office of the TK in the 1770s.

Chapter 8 – Discusses how TT Fuanunuiava aspired to obtain political authority and his strange ambition to be named Tu'i Kanokupolu after the death of TK Mumui in 1798. Why should a Tu'i Tonga vie to be named TK will be discussed here in great detail.

Chapter 9 - Conclusion – general summing up of debates and arguments.

## Chapter 1

### Introduction:

Tonga and its Political History begin in tandem with the reign of the sacred ruler Tu'i Tonga around 350 or 450 AD<sup>3</sup>. It is not certain when this sacred royal line actually came to existence. According to genealogical sources there were ruling lineages in Tonga's past prior to the rise of 'Aho'eitu from the Tangaloa line which most records agree to be the first Tu'i Tonga.

Most scholars of Tongan society have dated the rule of the first in this line, 'Aho'eitu, to about 950 AD based on a common view that each monarch rules at least on average for 25 years<sup>4</sup>. Accordingly, such calculation would conclude that in every hundred years there were at least four rulers ruling successively from father to son. One might wonder how I came up with a date that is almost five hundred years earlier than the accepted dating we already have. It is actually a question of common sense and being realistic about what history has offered since contact with Europe began especially during the early stages of the Wesleyan mission in Tonga. Missionaries did record a number of genealogies including that of the Tu'i Tonga line.<sup>5</sup> Notwithstanding the difficulty of extracting proper genealogical continuity from father to son at least in the pre-contact era, it is far from impossible to make a reasonable calculation based on recorded generations by working backward from names of known Tu'i Tonga that lived during the contact period.

Apparently, there were only two to three Tu'i Tonga at the most who ruled within the period of 1750 and 1850 AD which suggests that the average of four ruling *Tu'i Tonga* in every hundred years is hardly likely to be the case at all. There are 39 Tu'i Tonga named in the official genealogy of the sacred royal line. By cutting down the number of reigning Tu'i Tonga from four or five to three in every hundred years we will arrive at a more realistic date for the reign of TT 'Aho'eitu. That is by working backward from 1850 with an average of three Tu'i Tonga in every hundred years we would go back by fourteen hundred years which would be to exactly 550 AD but my best bet would be the year 450 AD or even earlier. This new dating must apply to genealogies of Pacific societies which were based on this common calculation.

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<sup>3</sup> This date differs greatly from Wood's and Collcott's calculations.

<sup>4</sup> A. H. Wood, 1932. *A History and Geography of Tonga*. Nuku'alofa: Government Printer.

<sup>5</sup> Entries from John Thomas Dairies.



Figure 1A

## Genealogy of Kings and Queens of Samoa

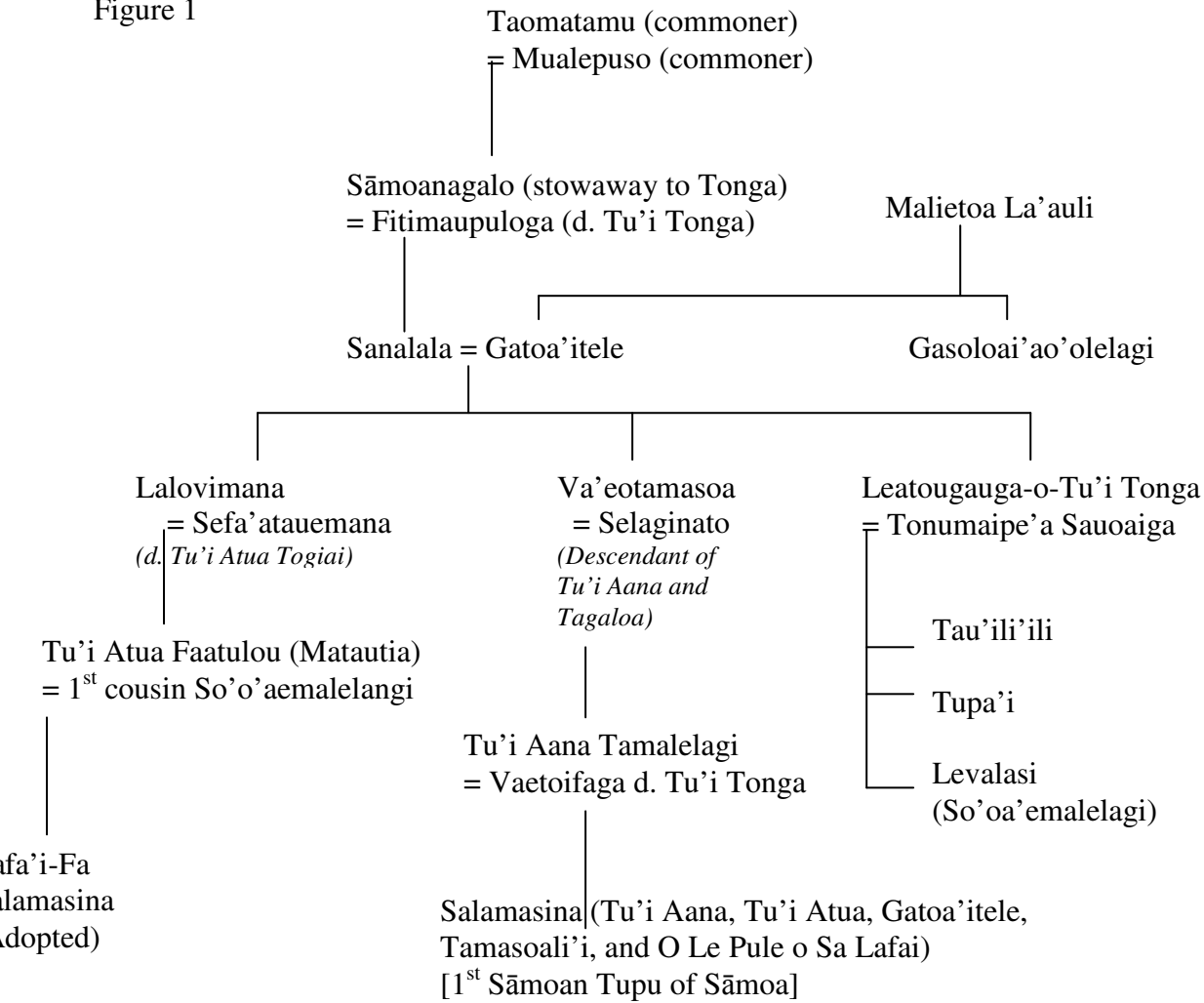
<i>No.</i>	<i>Malietao</i>	<i>Tuiaana</i>	<i>Tuiatua</i>	<i>Tagaloa</i>	<i>Tonumaipe'a</i>
1.	.....	Malamagaga'e	.....	.....	.....
2.	.....	Lupe	.....	.....	.....
3.	.....	A'alua	.....	.....	.....
4.	.....	Papafoagia	.....	.....	.....
5.	.....	Papaele	.....	.....	.....
6.	.....	Papamavae	Tt. Moso	.....	.....
7.	Siuseia	Salasala	Tt. Tuloutele	.....	.....
8.	Siutaulalavasa	Tupufua	Tt. Malaetele	.....	.....
9.	Ata	Leopili	Taepipitele	.....	.....
10.	Siufeia	Tn. Pilisosolo	Taemoomanaia	.....	Savea Siuleo
11.	Siulefuaelau	Tn Nifosili	Tt. Leuteleite	.....	Suaifanau
12.	Feepo	Tn. Fuaoletauloo	Tt. Aumualeluaialii	Lealali	Latuivi
13.	Leatiogie	To	Tt. Fepuleai	Tupaimatuna	Taigalugalu
14.	Malietao Savea	Sinatafua (G)	Tt. Tologatuaia	Vaasiliifiti	Foalo
15.	M. Uilamatutu	Fulisaiilagi (G)	Tt. Aumua Tagafa	Funefeai	Maisina
16.	M. Uitualagi	Faasiliailagi (G)	Tt. Muaitete	Tagaloaega	Leanui
17.	M. Laauli	Faalulumaga (G)	Tt. Polailevao	Tagaloatetula	Mooui
18.	Gatoaitete	Fitimaula (G)	Tt. Momoeiufifatu	Tagaloasefaatau	Tp. Sauoaiga
19.	Vaetamasoa	Selaginato	Sefaatauemana (G)	Tagaloasefaaofonuu	Tauilili
20.	Tn. Tamalelagi	Tn. Tamalelagi	Matautia	Tagaloasauniifanau	Tp. Saumaipea
21.	Tuitogamaatoe	Salamasina T.4	Salamasina T.4	Maisagamai (G)	Tapumanaia
22.	M. Taulapapa	Fofoaivaese Tn.	Fofoaivaese	Tgaloafesulu	Tn. Fofoaivaese
23.	Taiaopo	Sina	Taufua T. Tt.	Fatumiti	Sina
24.	M. Tuilaepa	Faumuina	Tupuivao	Toomata	Tn. Faumuina
25.	M. Toaluilaeapa	Fonoti T.4	Luamanuvae	Amituanai	Vaafusuaga
26.	M. Aeoainuu	Muagututia	Falanaipupu	Leotatoga	Tolefoaiolo
27.	M. Lauluaafolasa	Tupua. T.4	Togafua	lealamanua	Nonumaalo
28.	M. Ia Ti'a	Galumaleemana	Ilimatogafua	Lealamafua	Levaopili
29.	M. Fitisemanu	Nofoaefa Tn. -- Tusoloimalie	Tuimavave	Loavaegogo	Gisa
30.	Vainuupo T.4	Leasiolagi	Mf. Faasumaleaui	Lealamanua	Lulualeseve
31.	Moli	Moegahoho	Mf. Filisounuu	Vaamoleana	Tiovaitafe
32.	M. Laupepa	Tamasese T.4	Vaailua	Tagaloa-ile Vaaiga	Paovale
33.	Tanumafili	Tamasese	Mf. Tupua	.....	Malaitai Faumuina

If we look at the official Tu'i A'ana genealogy (see Br Fred Henry, as reproduced above Figure 1A) there are thirty three listed and the conventional date for the first ruler in this line Malamagaga'e is 850 AD, which is one hundred years prior to the date for the first TT Aho'eitu (950 AD). To use my method of calculation in determining the approximate date for Malamagaga'e, we could start from Tafa'ifā Tupua Tamasese Titimaea the thirty second in line who ruled around 1880 and the result would be 750 AD, which makes the old dating one hundred years off or we can round it up to at least 700 AD but that is still a big margin. However, the discrepancy of over a hundred years in the Sāmoan case and four hundred years in the Tongan case remains a lot of time. Ascertaining a still better approximation for the dates at which rulers ruled would require laying out different versions of the existing histories of both Sāmoa and Tonga.

There is a basic difference expressive of the status hierarchy of Tonga and Sāmoa and it is well reflected through the study of their ancient rulers. While royal families in both Tonga and Sāmoa claim descent from the gods, Sāmoan society in particular seems to allow exceptions with regard to achieving royal status.

Let's examine the genealogy of the first *Tafa'ifā* of Sāmoa who was also the first Sāmoan *Tupu* (supreme Queen) *Salamasina*. She is believed to be the only real *tamasa* of Sāmoa due to her illustrious ancestry which includes the Tu'i Tonga through her mother Va'etoifaga, Tu'i A'ana through her father Tamalelagi, Tu'i Atua through her adopted parents So'oa'emalelagi and Tu'i Atua Mata'utia, Malietoa, Tu'i Sāmoa, Gatoa'itele and Tamasōali'i through her paternal grandmother Va'eotamasoa and great grandmother Gasoloai'ao'olelagi, and Tu'i Manu'a and Tu'i Fiti through her paternal great-great grandmother Tu'i Tonga Fitimaupuloga. The only other person who has connections equal to Salamasina is her aunt Levalasi who is also known by her Sa'o Tama'ita'i title So'oa'emalelagi.

Figure 1



This family connection was the highest anyone could have at the time but there is a minor addition to it, for Salamasina's great-great grand father was a commoner Sāmoa-na-galo. He was a son of Taomatamu and Mualepuso. They were of no consequence, and their son was forgotten in a boat that sailed to Tonga. The boy was good looking and the daughter of the Tu'i Tonga married him and their son Sanalala returned to Sāmoa as a man of Status. He married daughters of Malietoa La'auli and his son Lalovimama became Tu'i Atua through his wife, his daughter Va'eotamasoa married a descendant of the Tu'i A'ana and the issue is Salamasina's father TA Tamalelagi. Sanalala's youngest daughter Leatougauga-o-Tu'i-Toga married Tonumaipe'a Sauoaiga and their daughter So'oa'aemalelagi was Salamasina's adopted mother. We can see here a case where the highest ranking person in Sāmoa was a descendant of a person who could be considered as standing at the lowest level of the Sāmoan status hierarchy.

The Tongan case is different as social status in the Tu'i Tonga lineage is a matter that has nothing to do with achievement, it is ascribed and it has to be a rare exception for a low born Tu'i Tonga to be accepted. In fact there were two exceptions<sup>6</sup> and they occurred in Tonga late in the pre-contact era as a result of Sāmoan political influence in Tonga via the creation of the third kingly line, the Tu'i Kanokupolu around 1550 AD.

There is a huge difference between the political structure of Tonga and that of its *Sāmoan* counterpart. Basically, the central mechanism that propels the continuity of power and authority in *Sāmoan* society is 'titles'. This is the 'spirit' of the whole livelihood of all *Sāmoans*. *Tuagalu* (1988) discusses the difficulties that persistently disallowed any possibility of unifying Sāmoa under a centralised polity. According to *Tuagalu* the political history of Sāmoa exemplifies the fact that 'title system' or *matai* always played a great part in fostering disunity at all levels of governmental bodies, that is in *itu* (national), *nu'u* (district) and *aiga* (family).

As a matter of fact, it is *Tuagalu's* discussions of Sāmoan politics and title systems that throw light on the successful linking of the oddity of the *Tu'i Kanokupolu* political system in Tonga with its historical origin in *Safata*. However one must fully understand the dynamic to which Sāmoan politics is anchored and the natural fluidity of its political system to realise the compelling resemblance exhibited by the organisational pattern of the *Tu'i Kanokupolu* political establishment in Tonga. The *Sāmoan* origin of *Ngata's* followers is no secret to leading historians of Tonga but what they have consistently and constantly overlooked is the uncommonness of the political bodies formed under the dictates of 'title' hierarchy in the *Kanokupolu* chieftainship in contrast to that practiced by the *Tu'i Tonga* and the *Tu'i Ha'atakalaua*.

The said *Sāmoan* influence did in fact bring a whole set of (foreign) cultural connections to Tonga creating pluralities which have sparked great confusion about the meaning and practice of a number of institutions like *'eiki*, *ha'a* and *kāinga* to name a few. These three in particular have troubled most Tonganologist revisionists for more than a decade now and the current debate highlights the underlying problems faced by these scholars. The best I can do, to improve our knowledge with regard to the confusion surrounding the

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<sup>6</sup> The first case occurred when Halaevalumohefo the principal wife of TT Tu'i Pulotu-'i-Langitu' ofefafa successfully adopted a secondary wife's son Fakana'ana'a who succeeded his father only because his adopted mother, who was barren, did not want to accompany her sacred husband to the underworld right before the burial, as tradition prescribed that a childless principal wife must be buried alive with her husband. Second, the case of Tu'i Tonga Paulaho and his high ranking elder brother Ma'ulupekotofa i.e. even though their mothers were cousins it is Ma'ulupekotofa's mother who was the principal wife but he chose to break tradition by not marrying TK Tupoulahi's daughter Tupoumohefo. She married Paulaho eventually and he was duly appointed Tu'i Tonga.

meaning, practice and reality inherent in the institutions and concepts mentioned above, is to employ realism for solving these problems. Realism, in this sense, refers to a general theory of existence, which examines 'ways of beings', rather than 'ways of knowing'. In short, realism as a philosophical doctrine insists on 'how things are' rather than 'how things are supposed to be'. Lastly, realism as opposed to other philosophical doctrines such as rationalism and idealism among others, contends that everything exists on the 'one level of existence', and that things – be they social, mental or natural – exist independently of our knowing them (Anderson 1962).

As a theory of independence, realism takes 'conflict' to be the fundamental character of human society. That is, society is a multiplicity of interests, made up of groups or 'ways of life' which are as complementary in nature as they are opposed in character. In this context, a realist view of the human situation is opposed to solidarism, voluntarism and social atomism, and in place of these problematic ideologies are put pluralism, determinism and social dynamism (Baker 1979: 11-23). Moreover, 'solidarism', 'voluntarism' and 'social atomism' are not only essentially 'asocial' but they are also over and above history or 'matters of fact'. Such notions systematically conceal the true character of society, which is essentially 'conflicting' in nature. From the realist point of view, 'order' and 'change' is one and the same thing, for 'order' is in itself a form of change. That 'order', 'harmony' or 'solidarity' is an expression of 'conflict' in essence. To say that society is 'harmonious', for example, is simply to say that different interests are well represented in the social scene. That is really to say, that such different interests do not simply disappear into the undefined arena of 'harmony' or 'cooperation', but that they come to arrange themselves in a social context such that realist notions like 'pluralism', 'determinism' and 'social dynamism', are meaningfully understood as actual human phenomena.

Within the realist scope of my discussion and argument I will dwell on unearthing the real characters of things rather than what they are supposed to be. In dealing with the pluralistic nature of Tongan society, which is comprised of many traditions and cultural variations from different sources, one has to identify traits and customs by measuring differences not on the basis of supposition but through the difficult process of characterising what is traditional as opposed to what is not. This work insists that the Tu'i Kanokupolu title system in Tonga is a subset of a larger Sāmoan system called matai to which other systems such as kāinga (extended family), ha'a (people who claim descent from an original founder), and 'eiki (people with sacred heritage and those honoured with prestigious titles) are linked together as one. Pinpointing special Tongan characters within the overarching Tongan social and political networks is not easy, since the character of Tongan polity has become widely Sāmoanised without acknowledgement. There are other

cultural traditions still in circulation today that were neither Tongan nor *Sāmoan* in origin. This hidden variety of cultural systems in Tonga has its origin further back in history when waves of migrating foreigners established themselves in Tonga as their final residence. As *per se* practices have been interchangeably shared in the process of cohabiting closely together, concepts (kāinga for instance) have come to be used in a number of contexts.

Since my central ‘hypothesis’ links major changes in pre-contact Tonga with historical events that took place in Sāmoa around the same time, it is significant to keep in mind that these Polynesian societies have developed ways of life that could be modelled differently. Although historians and anthropologists who study the Pacific have proposed that these ancient societies have been inaccurately compared<sup>7</sup>, there are areas that still indicate failure on the part of these professionals to realise that given models may nevertheless be sustained by strong evidence. The basic technique we could use to analyse scholarly misinterpretations of Polynesian social systems is to look at the wealth of information provided in genealogical records whether they be oral or written.

If we take the Tongan case to start with, records show that there had been one ruling Dynasty (Tu’i Tonga) in the history of Tonga for twenty four generations before a second Dynasty (Tu’i Ha’atakalaua) sprang into existence (see genealogical list in Campbell 1992 and 1989: 31 and 32) and six generations after the inception of the second then a third ruling Dynasty (Tu’i Kanokupolu) came into existence. This pattern certainly reflects the fact that every social system does change over time including Tonga’s but it simultaneously suggests that a single kingship line who ruled for twenty four generations before a second one came about can only tell us that such polity was built on a centralised foundation. Albeit, the fact that a second and a third Dynasty came about as a product of change does not negate the remembrance of a homogeneous tradition that had existed and continued to coexist with the two later ruling dynasties.

In theory and also in practice the only characterisation that is befitting for ancient Tongan society is ‘political centralisation’. This particular character is always coincident with characteristics like ‘strict hierarchy’ and ‘rigid stratification’. Oral traditions in Tonga do identify the existence of these societal characteristics, and this in some way justifies reference being made to the homogeneity of the Tongan elite

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<sup>7</sup> Huntsman 1995 et al. [Tonga and Sāmoa; Images of

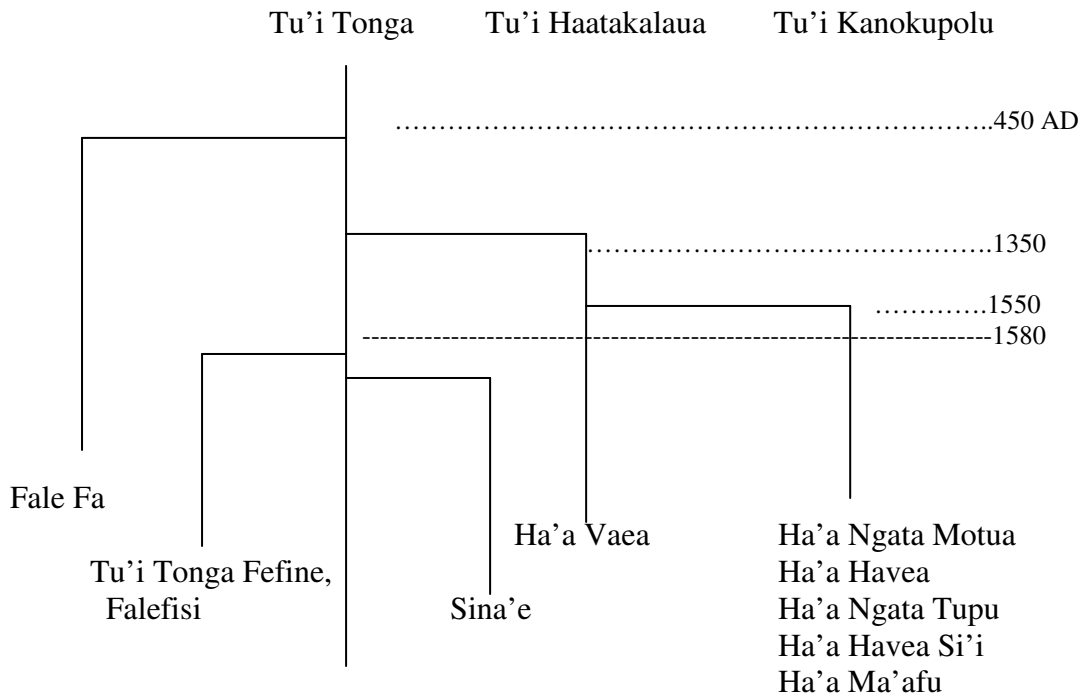
traditions. These characteristics have been disputed as being mere assumptions based on uninformed readings of Tonga's past<sup>8</sup>. A detailed critique of this view is discussed in the following chapter.

Sāmoan genealogical records, on the other hand, show a very different pattern of polity. Right from the very beginning Sāmoa had at least three ruling dynasties contemporaries with each other in the island of Upolu, while a few more seemed to exist in Savai'i and possibly in Tutu'ila also. In Brother Fred Henry's list, Kings and Queens of Sāmoa are bracketed in five royal lines i.e. Malietoa, Tu'i A'ana, Tu'i Atua, Tagaloa and Tonumaip'e'a (1992: 134).

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<sup>8</sup> Huntsman 1995, Herda 1995 and James 1995 (in Huntsman et al 'Tonga and Sāmoa': Images of Gender and Polity. )

Figure 2



Major changes in the political history of Tonga occurred first around 1250 AD or most probably took place a century later 1350 AD when a new kingly line (Tu'i Ha'atakalaua) was created to look after the mundane responsibilities that traditionally had been part of the task carried out by the sacred Tu'i Tonga. This particular change was caused by an assassination of a Tu'i Tonga Takalaua. His son and successor Kau'ulufonuafekai avenged the murder of his father and then he installed his younger brother Mo'ungamotu'a as hau<sup>9</sup> and his offspring became Tu'i Ha'atakalaua for six following generations<sup>10</sup>.

The next major change occurred around 1550 AD when a son of TH Mo'ungatonga was created Tu'i Hihifo a title that was later known as Tu'i Kanokupolu, the third kingly line in Tonga. But this particular change was the mother of a whole lot of changes that happened in a continuous way at all levels of Tongan society from about 1570 until 1852. These changes ranged from the establishment of new institutions, restructuring of traditional hierarchy, creating new independent rulership in different political centres, and fragmentation of traditional and centralised polity. As shown in fig. 2 the first effect of the creation of the Tu'i Hihifo/Tu'i

<sup>9</sup> Hau means a ruler or literally understood as a champion. It really means ruler of the second house. Hau cannot be equated to a lesser monarch.

<sup>10</sup> This is how I argue about who was the first to be installed as Tu'i Ha'atakalaua. Tongan tradition named the first hau as Tu'i Ha'atakalaua but I believe that it was Mo'ungatonga the sixth in line who elevated the hau office into a kingship status.



Kanokupolu was the creation of a new office the Tu'i Tonga fefine by the Tu'i Tonga, which gave birth to the establishment of a sacred house called the Falefisi. The Tu'i Kanokupolu instated a political institution called *sa* in Sāmoa (lineages comprised of titled chiefs), a development that the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua line had adopted without success when the legitimacy of its authority was threatened at the time. By comparison, the Tu'i Kanokupolu successfully established five major lineages of the Sāmoan *sa* type called in Tongan ha'a.

It must be mentioned at this juncture that the connection with Sāmoa can be traced to the establishment of the first Tu'i Tonga 'Aho'eitu but there was no sign of any significant influence until the infiltration of Tonga by the Sāmoan followers of the well known Sāmoan chief Ama whose daughter Tohu'ia was married to TH Mo'ungatonga. The first Tu'i Tonga Aho'eitu had four kingly lineages (fale Fa) whose function was to look after the sacred rituals prescribed for enhancement of the mana of Aho'eitu. This practice was unknown in any of the political practices in Sāmoa at the time of TT Aho'eitu's reign in both Tonga and Sāmoa. The matai title system is uniquely Sāmoan and there is no other known place in pre-contact Polynesian islands where there was such an obsession with the production of titles and at so many levels. There were no known lineages with titled chiefs in Tonga prior to the creation of the Tu'i Kanokupolu political system approximately one thousand years after the reign of the first Tu'i Tonga. The question is why we should assume that the Tu'i Kanokupolu political system is a matai system.

The crux of the matai system rests on families or group of families who constantly search for good leadership qualities amongst their members. This process is quite a therapeutic exercise as it creates competition at the highest level while at the same time it produces excellent statesmen who could be used to complete other tasks for their family. Elected able members are bestowed with family honours to represent the family in the village council called fono. This fono is comprised only of title holders whose level of rank varies from high chiefs to chief's attendants. This is where the strength of Sāmoan society lies. Local village councils provide quality members to the fale Upolu of each district, as advisors to the paramount chief Ali'i pa'ia who in turn has his own personal advisors (as protectors). This is exactly what the Tu'i Kanokupolu system replicates. The absence of succession by primogeniture in the system established in Hihifo, Tongatapu was due to an election process where able chiefs superseded their senior members in most cases.

A better illustration of the matai influence in Hihifo is shown in fig. 5 where Vakalepu (Ahio) was the eldest son but the successor to the title of Tu'i Hihifo was his younger half brother Atamata'ila. It appears that TK Atamata'ila had one son Mataeletu'apiko recorded in the genealogy books but we have no way of knowing

whether he was the eldest or not. He succeeded his father as the third Tu'i Kanokupolu but his successor was his third son Mataleha'amea, although an elder brother Vuna became Tu'i Kanokupolu also, perhaps for only a short period. Mataleha'amea's son Ma'afu-'o-tu'itonga succeeded his uncle Vuna. The only time in the official succession of Tu'i Kanokupolu where we can see an eldest son become king is Ma'afu-'o-tu'itonga's son Tupoulahi but the tide changes in this generation whereby Tupoulahi's younger full brother Maealiuaki and half brother Mumui also succeeded to the title. After a period of handing over the title amongst Tupoulahi's offspring and his full brother's descendants the title ended up with Mumui's descendants in which line it has continued to the present day. This is how the Sāmoan system operates and this is why it is significant to conceive ancient political practices in Tonga as manifold. Only in this way can historians successfully underpin the reality of what the case is as opposed to what the case is supposed to be with regard to Tongan oral history.

There was a sombre tone of retreat among the leading descendants of TK Tupoulahi when Tuku'aho defeated TK Tupoumohefo in the 1780s or 1790s. And this same tone seems to echo within TK Mumui's sons when Tuku'aho succeeded his father. TK Tuku'aho was not Mumui's eldest son but the chiefs of "ha'a Ngata motu'a" elected him at a formal meeting attended by a number of contenders including the heir to the Tu'i Tonga title Fuanunuiava. This obvious support for Tuku'aho's cause definitely created ill feeling towards him on the part of his elder half brother Tangata-'o-Lakepa whose mother Tu'imala was a daughter of Vave the high priest of a god Taliaitupou possibly worshipped by the descendants of TK Ma'afu-'o-tu'itonga.

Bott 1982 suggested that Tangata-'o-Lakepa would have had a hand in the assassination of TK Tuku'aho by not avenging his death but on the other hand Tupouniua (who actually clubbed Tuku'aho to death) was married to Tangata-'o-Lakepa's sister Veiongo. That connection must tell us something new about the original motive for killing the King. The official version sums up a different cause which can be traced back to the utter disrespect directed towards Tupoumohefo when Tuku'aho removed the title from her. It is said that 'Ulukalala and Tupouniua looked after Tupoumohefo under their own protection in Vava'u. But, I do believe that the real reason for the assassination of TK Tuku'aho was an attempt to make Tangata-'o-Lakepa Tu'i Kanokupolu.

Mumui's sons did not create new lineages for themselves although two other sons Tupoumalohi and Aleamotu'a became kings later on. It was Tuku'aho's line that succeeded in establishing its claim to the

Tu'i Kanokupolu title. This is the ultimate goal that Sāmoan politics is all about, that each lineage does not rest until they have a firm grip on whatever title they aspire to have and once it's theirs they will defend it with every inch of might they can produce for as long as they could manage. As such Tuku'aho's son Tupouto'a became Tu'i Kanokupolu himself and his son Taufa'ahau, who preferred for himself the name King George, finally legitimised the title for his lineage after his long military campaign to re-unify Tonga under the control of his family. After the defeat of the strongest fortress of Pea in the final civil war King George did everything in his power to end any further contest for his title, not even from his own lineage.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

Ancient Tongan polity is usually discussed with regard to the coexistence of three ruling dynasties the Tu'i Tonga, Tu'i Ha'atakalaua and Tu'i Kanokupolu. The apparent coexistence of these royal lines brings to the fore a number of puzzling views about Tonga's past. Oral history for one offers a variety of images about ancient Tonga where some views point at homogeneity as the true character inherent in social and political practices carried out by the Tu'i Tonga and Tu'i Ha'atakalaua systems. Academic commentators have constantly typified the Tongan social system as strictly stratified, rigid and hierarchical<sup>11</sup>. In addition to that ordered social structure, Tonga is also said to have had a highly centralised political system that was characteristically unique in terms of its organisational principles<sup>12</sup>. These images of Tongan society have been used as a yardstick for measuring degrees of stratification, hierarchy and rigidity in other neighbouring societies like Sāmoa and Fiji, which then appear to be representing the other extreme end of the continuum. It is also believed that the tripartite relationship between the titular rulers was based on hereditary recognition of the senior and most sacred line Tu'i Tonga by the two junior lines. In this scenario the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua and Tu'i Kanokupolu were both descendants of the former<sup>13</sup>.

It is very clear that the textbook model given to both social and political systems in Tonga has been based on accounts written by early explorers and navigators mostly in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries but what is interesting here is once those foreigners had their first glance at Tonga they quickly learned hierarchy and ranking system through meeting with native dignitaries. Captain James Cook was puzzled by being introduced to a number of paramount chiefs and '...no fewer than four chiefs were presented to him as "king": TL Latunipulu, TT Pau, TK Finau and TH Maealiuaki'<sup>14</sup>. What surprises him the most is the fact that there was no dispute over who is higher than the other, and indeed the four leading figures did show Cook in special ways their proper rank. This unique manner among high chiefs fostered the idea that Tongan society was strictly rigid, highly stratified and politically centralised. Such perception of Tongan

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<sup>11</sup> Irving Goldman (1970: 21; see also Latukefu 1974 and Bott 1982)

<sup>12</sup> Kirch, (1984: 217; see also Sahlins 1958).

<sup>13</sup> Herda (1995: 46; in Huntsman *et al* Tonga and Sāmoa 'Images of Gender and Polity').

<sup>14</sup> Bott (1982: 49).

polity remained unchallenged until a number of Pacific historians and anthropologists in the first half of the 1990s questioned the validity of this notion.

A seminal work titled **‘Tonga and Sāmoa: Images of Gender and Polity’** published more than a decade and a half ago and edited by Huntsman, insists that Tonga has been badly misconstrued due to the apparently homogeneous nature of its social elite and to an uninformed reading of its homogeneous traditions. This finding marks a step forward in the study of Polynesian societies at least. The book places its emphasis on a closer look at Tonga and Sāmoa’s past. This work is a collaborative effort that includes two Tonganist experts Dr Phyllis Herda and Dr Kerry James, two Sāmoanist specialists Professor Malama Meleisea and Dr Penelope Schofield, plus the editor Professor Judith Huntsman who is well read in Polynesian culture and history. The whole work represents earlier concerns<sup>15</sup> but it certainly broadcasts a better critique of issues than has been often assumed.

The authors corroborate their findings and draw a general conclusion that the unique characteristics of ancient Tongan society have been wrongly modelled as hierarchically stratified and politically centralised. They also agree that rigid social stratification and strict hierarchy in Tonga were assumptions propagated by the homogeneity of its oral traditions. For them, Tonga was in fact a divided polity like Sāmoa. However, the division can be traced to a historical event: the feud between TH Vaea and TK Mataeletu’apiko around 1640 AD. This particular conflict developed into inevitable feuds among various factions of the Tu’i Kanokupolu lineages, and persisted until the last civil war of 1852.

Central to the arguments raised by these scholars is their misapprehension that the chiefly systems and political organisations of Tonga and Sāmoa were more or less the same rather than being different: “Given the undeniable evidence of common heritage and long term contact, we assume that there should be many similarities and, therefore, have no need to account for them” (Huntsman 1995:16). This quotation sums up nicely the intention that the authors had set out to accomplish. **Their attack on Polynesian homogeneity is justified in areas where evidence relating to particular comparisons is presented, but in most cases the authors tend to dwell more and more on unexamined assumptions. The best example of these unexamined assumptions is an inability on the part of the authors to include genealogical analyses in their critiques. Had**

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<sup>15</sup> Kaepler 1971, Campbell 1982 and Gailey 1987.

they consider genealogy as significant in their endeavour, important issues like the disparity between the number of ruling dynasties in Sāmoan and Tonga would definitely have assisted them in making a better analysis. I wonder what would be their answer to this question - would it be right to say an equation can be made between a single line of sacred dynasty in Tonga, called the Tu'í Tonga, who ruled the whole island group for twenty three generations during which time only the eldest son of the principal wife succeeded his father as ruler, and the Sāmoan reality of having five kingly lines who ruled different parts of that country as absolute monarchs during which time successors to each throne were elected from able persons rather than being picked on a primogeniture principle?

The homogeneity of Tongan polity is echoed by tradition but is dismissed unwarrantedly by these scholars due to post-contact images of fragmented politics. In failing to explore why images of homogeneity were predominant in chiefly traditions the authors have certainly detached themselves from the issue of 'historical events' where evidence that relates to the validity of homogeneous characters rests. I am suggesting that it is true that the earlier Tu'i Tonga tradition did centre on homogeneous realities, while the later Tu'i Kanokupolu tradition equates the divided polity to which the authors identified in their studies. My contention is that homogeneity in Tongan polity existed for a long duration before the creation of the Tu'i Kanokupolu political system which was created during the 16<sup>th</sup> Century through the importation of the Sāmoan matai system that replicates the so-called 'open', fragmented polity. Furthermore, during the sixteenth century the two different polities co-existed in different parts of the Tongatapu landscape.

According to professor Meleisea Sāmoan chiefly hierarchy was as stratified as the Tongan social system and it is a mistake to overlook the similarity pertaining to each respective title system. This is of course true in Sāmoa but only as a historical episode when the search for *Tafa'ifā* was achieved around 1500 AD when all

kingly titles of Savai'i and Upolu were united under Salamasina's reign as Tupu of Sāmoa. The political centralisation of Sāmoa took place just before the decentralisation of Tongan polity around 1600's AD when the root of the matai system bit deeper into political power in Tonga at a national level.

One of the most confused notions in Hunstman 1995 and other studies too is the concept of '*eiki*. It is advisable at this stage for the reader to put aside the thought that '*eiki* and *ha'a* and also *kāinga* can be defined with regard to a single system since in the Tongan case a fusion of different systems exists (Sāmoan, Fijian, and Tongan are all possibly recognisable). A perfect starting point here is to pose a few questions that form the basis of arguments raised by Huntsman *et al.*

“On what basis has Tonga been consistently categorised with Hawai'i as two of the most centralised, hierarchical or ranked Polynesian societies, as in the classic comparative studies of Sahlins (1958) and Goldman (1955, 1970), and more recently by Ortner (1981) and by Kirch (1984, 1990), the last classing them together as “two of the most elaborated Polynesian chiefdoms” (1984:p. 262)? [Huntsman in Huntsman et al (1995: 9)].

The general issue conveyed by this question is directly inherent in a whole lot of questions aimed at a complete dismissal of the idea that differentiation exists between Tonga and Sāmoa on the grounds that they are Western Polynesian societies who are supposed to share more likenesses due to their common origin and close contact for centuries. This concern is only logical to a certain degree especially to the extent that they can be regarded as one people. But there is one significant thing that must be remembered as far as truth is concerned, and this is no matter how logical a situation might appear it is the 'matters of fact' that are paramount above anything else. Goldman categorised Sāmoa as an open society while underlining Tonga as one of the most stratified societies in Polynesia.

It is true that Tonga and Sāmoa do share a historical past and they are geographically closer to each other than any of their Polynesian neighbours but that would not be enough to draw a single conclusion that they must therefore have similar political systems unless facts could support such claim. As far as facts are concerned Goldman and Ortner are correct to distinguish these ancient Polynesian societies. My thesis has identified the coexistence of two socio-political systems in ancient Tonga to which oral history has reference: a Tu'i Tonga system that is often referred to as *kauhala'uta* and a Tu'i Kanokupolu system that is more recently known as *kauhalalalo*. Anthropologists and historians have failed to recognise that these two traditions have different types of political organisation. While the Tu'i Tonga system practiced what could be referred to as quintessentially Tongan in style the Tu'i Kanokupolu practiced something that is unmistakably Sāmoan. It is the invisibility of these unrelated systems that has distorted the reality of the Tongan socio-political system for so long and Huntsman 1995 is based on an 'unexamined reading of Tonga's past' to paraphrase Huntsman's own statements.

Examples of this confusion about Tonga's past is evident in works written by George Marcus (1980), Elizabeth Bott (1982), Ian Campbell (1992), Phyllis Herda (1995) and Kerry James (1995) to name just a few. All these authors failed to recognise the establishment of the Matai system in Hihifo through the creation of the Tu'i Kanokupolu about 1550 AD. Marcus for example came up with an idea that 'eiki in Tonga can be understood in terms of combining three significant elements i.e. authority (chief), body (status), and title (power). 'Title' (*hingoa-fakanofu*) in his discussion applies to all traditional Tongan polity but the fact is that historically titles beside kingly titles are traceable to the matai establishment. In my thesis, we can safely remove title as a vital element of authentic Tongan chiefly attributes. In *Kauhala'uta* tradition 'eiki was only attributed to body and authority as described by Mariner (in Martin 1816) and title was not a factor there. The only thing that was required of the 'eiki' status was to maintain its existence in each generation. One of the common practices used for the maintenance of *kauhala'uta* status was arranged



marriage. That there were unknown descendants of the Tu'i Tonga himself as the most sacred ruler is evidence of failure on the part of individual Kauhala'uta chiefs to maintain high status and mana in every generation. Marcus makes an interesting statement that is worth highlighting;

“The origin and uses of formally appointed titles are obscure. Before the rise of the Tu'i Kanokupolu line of kings, they were clearly of less prestige significance and appear to have conceptually contrasted with the qualities of *sino'i 'eiki*. The hereditary title was perhaps a means of honouring those without *sino'i 'eiki* or an addition to the honour of those who were possessing *sino'i 'eiki* status. The *sino'i 'eiki* themselves distained titles (despite their occasional possession of them through conferral by the kingship), preferring to use their personal names in both reference and address. They were secure in their status as aristocrats through their recognised blood associations with the Tu'i Tonga descent line.” (Marcus 1980: 19)

This rather long quote shows how puzzled Marcus was when dealing with concepts that are not tied to the same anchor (so to speak). He is right about one thing, the obscurity of origin and uses of formally appointed titles are certainly a factor in the present state of historical and anthropological research. But since there have been no critical works undertaken in the right direction aiming at ascertaining more information about possible origin and consistent practice to which 'formally appointed titles' could be confidently linked then the chance of unearthing the real facts about status and titles will always be slim. Obviously, Marcus is unable to conceive of the fact that an ancient (Tongan) 'status system' and the newer (Sāmoan) 'title system' do not correspond and he has not separated the two systems first before he discusses areas where the two systems appear to overlap.

Elizabeth Bott on the other hand had tirelessly worked out the difference between ha'a as lineage oriented and ha'a as kinship relation. She recognised the ha'a which comprised titled individuals who grouped themselves under the name of an original founder. This is of course the Sāmoan *sa* system. On the other hand, the other ha'a system that Mariner described is based on professional occupation and titles were not present and this is typically kauhala'uta social organisation. Ian Campbell made reference to Sāmoan

influence with regard to the matapule system in Hihifo which in my words is a matai title system. He referred as sources to Gunson and Bott and others but he did not explain what the Sāmoan influence was and its extent.

Neil Gunson has repeatedly mentioned that titles in the Tu'i Kanokupolu tradition are somewhat a Sāmoan influence and yet he has not elaborated further on how such influence was introduced or whether or not the Hihifo title system was a complete Sāmoan system or even partially established in the *fono* organisation. But towards the end of his discussion on the issue of Sāmoan influence it becomes clear that Gunson was just reporting the fact that the creation of the Tu'i Kanokupolu was successful only because of the mass involvement of Ngata's Sāmoan supporters. He has also referred to a possible Sāmoan influence in the Vava'u group meaning that Sāmoans had political control over that dominion (1977: 93, in Rutherford et al).

What Gunson has overlooked is, even though the Sāmoan supporters single-handedly propelled Ngata's political foundation, they actually established the matai system in Hihifo, by making Ngata *ali'i pa'ia* through the establishment of his *tafa'i* (official protectors), his *faleupolu* (fale Kanokupolu), his *fono* (faleha'akili) and the marking of his *itu* (district) as a separate kingdom. This is the complete matai system where titles were the building blocks of Ngata's new polity. One might argue that there was no matai system *per se*, but only a few Sāmoan cultural elements and traditions appearing to be in practice at the time. The problem with such argument would be that when cultural elements and traditions are identified one by one the result would be equalled to a complete system and the best example of this is demonstrated above. No one can argue that the matai characteristics shown above, which formed the structure of the Hihifo government, have any similarity at all to the Tu'i Tonga socio-political structure which featured only the

*Tu'i Faleua*, the *Falefā* and the *Sina'e* below the Tu'i Tonga. (See Bott 1982, Latukefu 1974 and Rutherford 1977).

The invisibility of the Matai political structure in Tongan Polity is obvious in Cummins' writings especially in his study of Tongan society at the time of European contact. The best examples are;

“TRADITION maintains that, from the earliest times, Tonga was ruled by a high chief who was absolute monarch in religious and civil affairs. Known as the Tu'i Tonga this chief traced his ancestry to 'Aho'eitu claimed to be the offspring of a divine father and a Tongan mother. With the passage of time a hierarchy of chiefly control developed with the close relatives of the Tu'i Tonga assuming the rule of clans and families in various districts throughout the group. A pattern emerged, traces of which can be seen in Tonga today, in which a number of chiefs exercised effective control over their people, while paying allegiance to the overall spiritual and secular head of the country, the Tu'i Tonga. In Cook's time there were thirty 'district chiefs' in Tongatapu, and fifty years later Captain Beveridge of the mission ship *St Michael* listed twenty four more towns and villages in Tongatapu which were ruled over by chiefs. Among these chiefs were Vaea of Houma, Ve'ehala of Fahefa, Ata of Hihifo and Tu'i Vakano of Nukunuku.” (1977: 64, it's in Rutherford *et al*)

This is an image of 1827's Tonga, following Captain Beveridge's account, which portrays for us direct reporting of events during the contact period, the picture of Sāmoan matai establishment in full control within Tongan society by the sixteenth century. The profusion of title production through the *sa* system is evident in the ever growing number of new settlements with leading chiefs in control over their subject, and interestingly all named chiefs belonging to ha'a Ngata and ha'a Havea both of which sprang from the Tu'i Kanokupolu line. Yet, Cummins could not see through the pattern he describes anything unusual.

“There was, nevertheless, a hierarchy among the chiefs and by the seventeenth century a tripartite system of government had emerged. The foundations of this were laid towards the close of the fifteenth century following the murder of the Tu'i Takalaua.” (Cummins 1977: 64, in Rutherford *et al*)

This is an example of a monolithic view of society whereby the social system is conceived not as a dynamic entity but as an atomistic framework in which the process of change cannot be thought of as coming from outside. Cummins generalises ranking among the chiefs as though it expresses a single hierarchy that they all fit into. While mentioning the emergence of a tripartite system of government he failed to account for the distinct characters that formed the structure of each government. Here again the issue of atomism arises in the basic assumption that the three kingly lines were under the authority of one system. Dynamism projects plasticity as an essential component of every social situation where 'change' is recognised as the fundamental character of every human society.

“The choice of successor to the two most important titles, the Tu’i Tonga and the Tu’i Kanokupolu, was based to a large extent upon birth. The heir to the Tu’i Tonga was, by convention, the eldest son of the ruling Tu’i Tonga with the mohefo. The Tu’i Kanokupolu was chosen from among the members of a family who, by the beginning of the eighteenth century, was known by the name Tupou after their patron god Taliaitupou. It was the responsibility of the powerful leaders of Tongatapu, the ha’a Havea led by Ata of Hihifo to select the Tu’i Kanokupolu from among eligible claimants. The eldest son of the previous incumbent was often chosen, but this was by no means a strict rule. Consideration of age, physical fitness and, above all, of power, influenced the final choice”. (Cummins 1977: 66, in Rutherford *et al*)

This paragraph is a gold mine in historical terms even though the writer does not realise its true value.

Again, Cummins did not build any case on why the succession of the Tu’i Tonga based on primogeniture by convention should be in direct contrast to the selection process that determined who was going to become Tu’i Kanokupolu. This is the very picture that attracted my attention some thirteen years ago to dig deeper into the wealth of oral history in search for an answer that could explain why these two kingly lines have different traditions with regard to succession rights. In fact, it was ‘Eveli Hau’ofa’s critique of the homogeneity of traditional Tongan kingship - where he argues that succession tradition in ancient Tonga was not based on primogeniture but on the selection of the most able person, quoted by Helu in an

unpublished paper<sup>16</sup> - that prompted the idea that there must be more than one organisational system practiced in ancient Tongan polity.

The idea that kings in Tonga were selected by families is consistent with the tradition practiced by the Tu'i Kanokupolu line, whereas the primogeniture system fits in well with the hereditary tradition practiced by the Tu'i Tonga line. That very distinction convinced me that the hereditary traditions practiced by these kingly lines were of different origin. My familiarity with the Sāmoan political system made it easier for me to identify its direct resemblance to the Tu'i Kanokupolu tradition. Genealogy is clear in showing primogeniture as a tradition which produces only one Tu'i Tonga per generation (see figure 7) as opposed to the Tu'i Kanokupolu tradition in which more than one king is produced in some generations (see figure 5). The Tu'i Ha'atala line also practiced primogeniture as shown in figure 6. Both genealogies (figure 6 and figure 7) show a hereditary pattern of Tu'i Tonga and Tu'i Ha'atala successions being transmitted from father to son, until a historical moment around 1700 when brothers actually succeeded to the titles in both lines, that is, Maealiuaki and Mumui each held both TH and TK titles. Such irregularities were brought about by the total eclipsing of the senior kingly lines by the Tu'i Kanokupolu quasi-Sāmoan political influence.

Phyllis Herda and Kerry James are well read in Tongan oral history and they rightly identify the fragmentation of 16<sup>th</sup> century polity in Tonga but do not realise that there was a Sāmoan system that caused all the major changes at the time. Tonga at that period resembled the Sāmoan polity at the same period 1600 AD. According to Herda in particular homogeneity of Tongan elite tradition is just a myth because 1600's AD Tonga did not exhibit rigid stratification, strict hierarchy or centralised polity. This is why recent

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<sup>16</sup> "Traditional leadership in Tonga." 1992. A paper read in a conference that promoted human rights and pro-democracy movement in Tonga.

historians have felt justified in ignoring any images that have their roots in oral history. Huntsman 1995 has been chosen because this is the most up to date critique we have in circulation so far. However, Herda failed to examine genealogy closely enough to see that obvious differences between the succession practices of the Tu'i Tonga and the Tu'i Kanokupolu can be clearly demonstrated. For instance, the rarity of a Tu'i Tonga being succeeded by his own brother is by comparison common practice in the Tu'i Kanokupolu political organisation. The practice first occurred in the third generation where Mataeleha'amea was succeeded by his elder brother Vuna. Then in the fifth generation Tupoulahi was succeeded by his brother Maealiuaki and later on another half-brother Mumui became Tu'i Kanokupolu. The sixth and seventh generations produced unbelievable numbers of holders of the TK title. There were seven holders of the Tu'i Kanokupolu title in the sixth generation alone. Should Herda have looked at this strange practice especially how and why it was possible she would have had to rethink her own position?

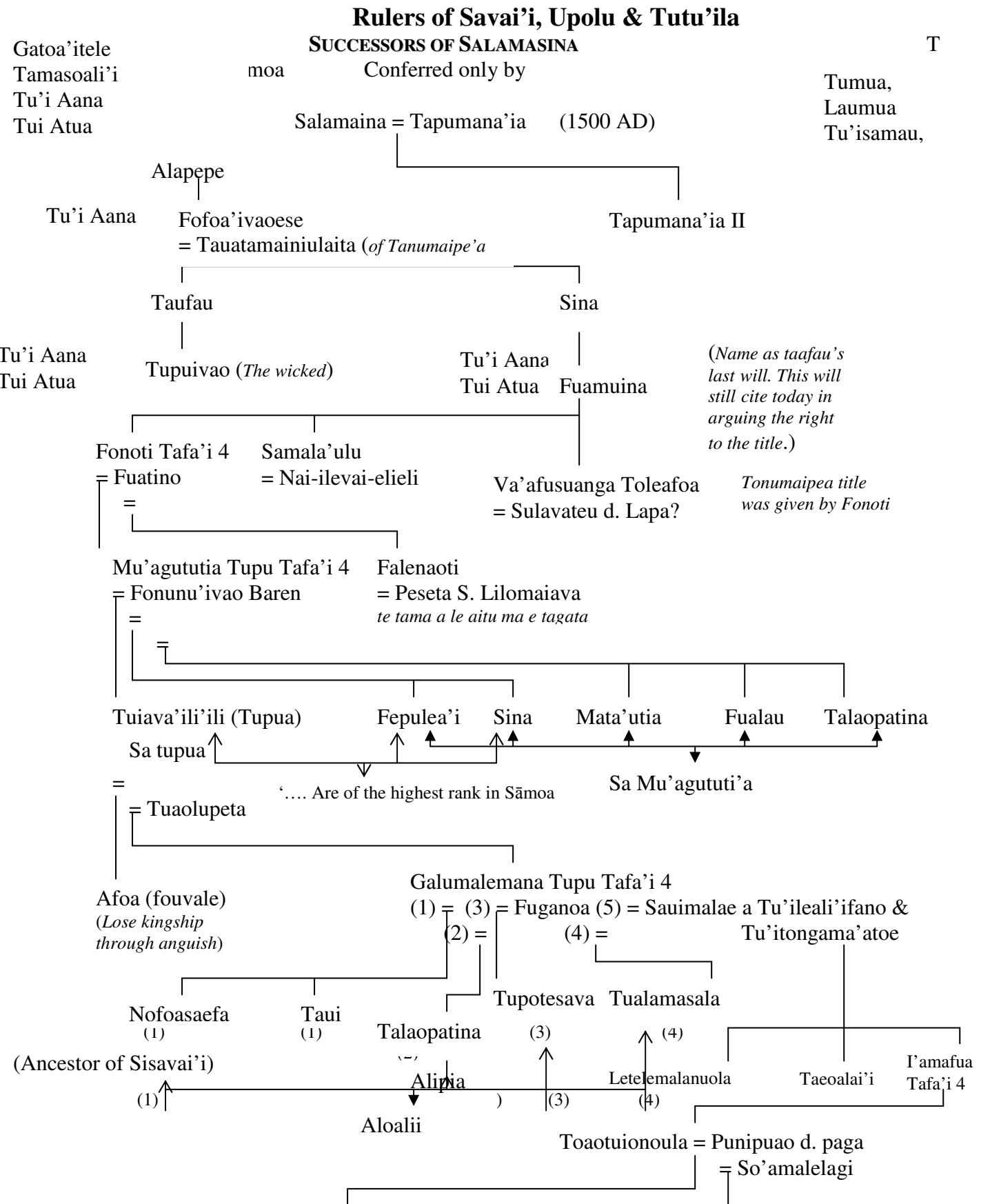
### **Ama's Plot**

Ama's sojourn in Tonga between 1500 and 1530 AD was more than a routine search for a powerful spouse for his daughter Tohu'ia. Oral tradition speaks of this particular visit as a massive migration in which about a thousand attendants accompanied the high chief to Tonga. It breaks a record in terms of numbers for Sāmoan guests to be welcomed in Tonga in a single voyage at the time. Perhaps there are other reasons that coincided with this historical visit but Ama's defeat in the Safata war suggests that he was aiming at something that could assist in restoring his former glory as ruler of Safata once again.

Assuming that Ama was looking for military assistance from Tonga then the idea of marrying his daughter to the Tu'i Tonga would be the best solution under the circumstances as the *taupou* would definitely become the 'principal wife' and her son would certainly be the next Tu'i Tonga. If this was Ama's plan then he had to confront two sets of unforeseen problems when he reached Tonga. The first set of problems lies in the fact that the Tu'i Tonga had relinquished all his mundane responsibilities to be handled by a junior line known as Tu'i Ha'atakalaua. This second royal line was established around 1350 AD and the first five holders of such title were said to have ranked lower than the sacred Tu'i Tonga but things did change after that.

The most powerful person in Tonga at the time of Ama's arrival happened to be the sixth Tu'i Ha'atakalaua Mo'ungatonga. This person is said to have had high ambition and the most notable of all was his direct elevating of his dynasty into having equal rank with the sacred office of the Tu'i Tonga. In view of this particular political change that had actually been carried out for six generations, Ama had no choice but to offer his daughter to Mo'ungatonga as his principal wife. This marriage was a significant and historical event in the rule of the second dynasty the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua. It marks the first time for any ruler of that dynasty to take a Sāmoan *taupou* as principal wife, a prerogative that had been reserved for the Tu'i Tonga only. This event also marked the heralding of Mo'ungatonga as another sacred king.

Figure 3





Fa'anunu (*Slain in 1850'Aana War*)

Safeofafine d. 'Aana War

The second problem that Ama would have had to face was the fact that Tonga under the sacred Tu'i Tonga was a unified state and military assistance from him would have been an easy task. The Tu'i Ha'atakalaua was a newly created dynasty and he definitely had no authority over the people under the Tu'i Tonga not to mention his personal army and naval forces. It is evident that at the time of Ama's arrival Tonga was divided between the two dynasties and although the Tu'i Tonga was undoubtedly revered as the highest and most sacred figure in all of Tonga, his authority was less political in nature. Still another difficulty in pursuing the support of the Tu'i Tonga was the fact that a treaty had been sealed between Tu'i Tonga Talakaifaiki and the chiefs who overthrew his reign in Sāmoa about 1200 AD. The treaty stipulated that Tuamasaga in Sāmoa should not ever be invaded by a Tu'i Tonga.

The most difficult problem for Ama was that the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua had no influence in Sāmoa and Tonga's neighbouring island states. Ama's expertise in political strategies enabled him to waste no time but to give Tohu'ia as principal wife to the TH and then to await his chances. There is no way of knowing whether or not Ama was in exile from Sāmoa. But there are reasons to consider exile as really the reason why Ama and his strong Safata followers came to Tonga. First and foremost is the fact that they lived in a place called Tatakamotonga for over a decade before they made up their mind to return to Sāmoa. The fact that Ngata was of leadership age at the time when TH Mo'ungatonga instructed his Sāmoan attendants to take the boy and make him ruler of Hihifo implies that they had lived in Tonga for more almost two decades. This is a long time to feed the Tongan ruler with a possible plot.

After the ousting of TT Talakaifaiki as Tupu and supreme ruler of Sāmoa, in 1470 Tonga had never again directly involved itself in Sāmoan political affairs. The treaty agreed between Talakaifaiki and Tapuloa<sup>17</sup> (son of Tu'i Atua) was a sacred oath that successive Tu'i Tonga and Tu'i Ha'atakalaua had observed for over a hundred years at least, as records show that Sāmoa or Tuamasaga in particular had not been invaded by the Tongans. I believe that Ama, like any other wise-orators of the day, would have worked on weak spots left unattended by special advisors of both the Tu'i Tonga and the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua. My idea seems to be supported by the decision to create a new title for Tohu'ia's son, Ngata. In considering the political climate in Tonga at the time, it was unnecessary indeed to create a dynasty just to look after a district that often disobeyed and objected to the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua's choice of their leader. The Tu'i Ha'atakalaua could have easily marched in with his warriors and destroyed Hihifo with no difficulty then again he hesitated for quite some time.

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<sup>17</sup> Fred Henry 1989, and Interviews with Tuala 'Auali'itia Tominiko 2000.

Hihifo and its people could have been playing a significant part in TH Mo'ungatonga's life for him not to treat them with contempt every single time they disapproved or killed a person he had sent as their high chief. According to tradition, the people of Hihifo could have been of different origin and perhaps TH Mo'ungatonga's mother was a woman of Hihifo. Neil Gunson suggests in a recent article about Valu of Utulau that cannibalism was practiced there and such trait is traceable only to Hihifo<sup>18</sup>. This Valu could have been a brother of TH Mo'ungatonga. If this is the case, then I would argue that the cultural origin of the people of Hihifo could have been predominantly Fijian for two reasons. First, cannibalism was not practiced in either Tonga or Sāmoa at the said period while records of such practices are characteristically central in sacred Fijian rituals. Second, the sacred Koka tree in the village of Kolovai that the Tu'i Kanokupolu must lean his back against in order to be accepted as King and ruler of the people of Hihifo is characteristic of the Fijian way of installing local high chiefs in the same period.

It is rather strange for TH Mo'ungatonga to send his own son to rule in a place where previous intended rulers were executed. Tradition has it that a possible plot was set up to satisfy a Sāmoan demand, possibly pushed through by Tohu'ia, for Ngata to be honoured with a title equivalent to that of the Tu'i Ha'atalaau. The assumed plot would be a winner on two counts for Mo'ungatonga, for one - should Ngata succeed in Hihifo it would definitely lift the heavy burden imposed upon him in naming a successor and on the other hand, the other - should Ngata fail, losing his life like the ones sent before him then he would be off the hook once and for all. Obviously, Mo'ungatonga would have entertained the idea of assisting the cause of his father in law (Ama) and of making a mark in history for himself both as a warrior and eventually as ruling Sāmoa much as the Tu'i Tonga had manage to enjoy before. I believe that Mo'ungatonga must have assessed the possibility of military engagement in Sāmoa with his close advisors for an extended period of time. This must have included sending moles to Sāmoa to inspect strengths of military progress in Safata and other important political centres and reports thereafter would have indicated overwhelmingly that such as task was unachievable. I have a feeling that the counter plot to create Ngata high chief or to eliminate him through the hands of the Hihifo people was a result of the Tu'i Ha'atalaau's inability to proceed with the wish and hope of his father in law Ama.

**A number of traditions mention that before the Sāmoan party set sail to Hihifo they had a final meeting with a view to deciding their future once and for all, whether to go ahead with the plan to install Ngata as high**

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<sup>18</sup> Journal of Pacific History (in progress).

chief of hihifo or to return to Sāmoa. It is said that they reached a decision to go back to Sāmoa and find a place there for their high chief. As a result, they sailed north to Sāmoa but before they lost sight of Tongatapu all the boats (kalia) changed course and headed for hihifo. They had a change of heart and what made them go back to hihifo remains a mystery but that abrupt decision had steered the course of Tongan history around with it.

Ama's vision could have turned the course of Tongan history anywhere with him. Had his plan to reinvade Sāmoa been successful it would have seen either a triumph or a humiliation on the part of his Tongan allies but whatever may have happened Ama was still a determinant factor in the process. As I mentioned above, he came to Tonga with a view to luring the interest of its ruling families to provide support for his political ambition in Sāmoan politics. It did not happen according to plan but his dream turned out bigger than what he could have imagined when Tonga was ruled by his descendants after only four hundred years from his defeat in the Safata war.

Shortly after Ama's departure from Sāmoa, Salamasina was pronounced *Tafa'ifā* and declared Tupu of Sāmoa. That means all political centres in Upolu and Savai'i conferred their highest titles on TA Tamalelagi's daughter due to her illustrious ancestry which connected her to the Tu'i Tonga, Tu'i Manu'a, Tu'i Fiti, Tu'i A'ana, Tu'i Atua, Malietoa, Gatoa'itele, Tamasōali'i, Tagaloa and Sa Lafai (see figure 3). The genealogy of Salamasina is handpicked for this study as it exhibits the essential characters of the Matai system in pre-Christian Sāmoa, keeping in mind that the Matai system underwent great changes in the post-contact period especially from influences brought in through missionary teaching. The assumption that Tonga and Sāmoa should have similar political organisations due to geographical closeness and constant contact over hundreds of years is disproved by the characters of political life in pre-1550 AD Sāmoa (see figure 3) and the characters of Tongan polity in pre-1600's Tonga (see figure 7).

Apparently, *Tafa'ifā* Salamasina was the first Sāmoan Tupu of Sāmoa. This is also as far as we know the very first time to observe political centralisation as a reality in Sāmoan soil. During Salamasina's reign Sāmoa enjoyed a peaceful time only to be disrupted by political turmoil when her successor was named. The death of Salamasina was a big blow to the new found centralised polity of Sāmoa. The old 'Pandora's box' that Sāmoa knows best is political division reopened once more. Her daughter Fofoa'ivaese was given the paramount title of A'ana, while Atua, Afega and Safata took back their high titles to be bestowed on their choice candidates. But the honour of a Sāmoan chief ruling Sāmoa did get into the veins of high chiefs who

were in contention for all the papa titles through the illustrious ancestries they shared. What has become the norm then is for an able candidate who is ambitious enough to usurp the four papa titles. Once that task is achieved he or she then becomes *Tafa'ifā* of Sāmoa.

The process of accumulating the four *papas* is time consuming and it was kicked off by a dual for the Tu'i A'ana title around 1560 between Tupuivao and Faumuina both of whom were grandchildren of TA Fofoa'ivaese. Their mothers Sina and Taufau were sisters but Taufau had in her possession the Tu'i A'ana and Tu'i Atua titles and instead of naming her son Tupuivao her successor she appointed Sina's son Faumuina to succeed her for he was more able than Tupuivao. As a result a war broke out which Faumuina won decisively. Faumuina's sons Fonoti and Toleafoa who were half brothers took the matter to the battle field to decide who would be the next *Tafa'ifā* and in the end Fonoti was victorious and became the second *Tafa'ifā* of Sāmoa. Fonoti's successor was his son Mu'agututi'a who was installed *Tafa'ifā* unopposed. His successor was an adopted son Tupua who held only the Tu'i A'ana and Tu'i Atua titles. Mu'agututi'a's children formed two of the most important families in Sāmoa the Sa Tupua and Sa Mu'agututi'a. Tupua's sons Afoa and Galumalemana, both eligible for all the papa titles, ended up doing battle to decide the fate of kingship in Sāmoa. Galumalemana won the war and was duly installed by all the Faleupolu as Tupu around 1750 AD. This king made an interesting choice for his successor; instead of leaving the title to one of his elder sons he named the unborn child of his last wife as his successor. So war evidently broke out again years after his death between the supporters of the eldest son Tupu and those of the unborn child which I'amafana the son of the last wife won and so I'amafana become the last *Tafa'ifā* in the line of Sa Tupua. Later holders of the *Tafa'ifā* were Lei'atauafaiga of Manono and Malietoa Vai'inu'upo the first Tupu from the Sa Malietoa line to achieve such honour. Long before the *Tafa'ifā* wars, great families in Upolu and Savai'i have contenders waged war against each other in order to obtain and control one of the highest titles in Sāmoa. Even though recent wars were for a new national honour (*Tafa'ifā*) contention and divisiveness remained intact as basic ingredients for political decentralisation. This image of Sāmoan polity is consistent throughout the history of Sāmoa right from the very beginning at all levels of authority from the lowest title right to the most paramount ones. (Henry 1992, Meleisea et al 1987, Davidson & Scar/Editors 1973, Tuagalu 1988 and Meleisea 1995, in Huntsman et al)

Ama would have dreamed of engaging the Tongans with a view to defending his own interests in Safata and he would have anticipated the Tongans remaining in Sāmoa to guarantee that his rule would not be short lived.



## Chapter 4

### Sāmoan Polity at Ama's time (1500 AD)

Sāmoan Polity around 1500 AD was based on a system of government laid down during the time where Pili (son of Tu'i Manu'a) had moved to the island of Upolu. According to oral history, Pili had great influence over the Upolu people when he arrived from Manu'a especially when he became married to a local woman who was a daughter of the leading family of Upolu. Oral tradition speaks of him as a very strong, yet clever and skilful leader who is greatly remembered for establishing a new and better political organisation for the people of Upolu. Being accepted and revered by the people as a demigod he managed to execute various tasks with ease especially helping people indulge in greater freedom. He also divided Upolu into three main districts and thereby appointed three of his four sons to each of these districts as rulers<sup>19</sup>. The eastern part was given to his son Tua and the name of that district was called after him Atua. Likewise, 'Ana was sent to the eastern end then the district was named after him A'ana. The central district was called Tuamasaga after the name of Pili's third son. So Tuamasaga was supposed to make sure that Tua and 'Ana did not quarrel with one other. The youngest son Tolufale was appointed to go and settle in Manono, one of a group of islands called *aiga-i-le-tai*.

Each son was given a special task (tofiga) according to his father's last will (mavaega). As such, Tua was given a 'planting stick' a symbol of his task to cultivate the land. 'Ana was trusted with a 'club' and a 'spear' a symbol of his duty to provide military forces and to train warriors and look after defence when there was need. Tuamasaga was honoured with a 'staff' and 'fue' a symbol of a true politician for he was expected to solve problems, provide guidance and most important of all to offer good advice for the betterment of all the governments of Upolu. The fourth son Tolufale was not given any object significant for his new office as ruler of Manono but instead appointed to supervise the development of all the governments of Upolu. His supervisory function is unclear but quarrels between Ana and Saga occurred occasionally and Tuamasaga often sought Tolufale's assistance when he thought necessary as Ana and Tua always teamed up against him. This is the political division of Upolu and Manono. Savai'i and Tutu'ila were indirectly influenced by the political organisation of Upolu.

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<sup>19</sup> Henry, (1992: 27).

Sāmoa is traditionally seized of five political centres, Savai'i to the west, then Aiga-i-le-tai, A'ana, Tuamasaga and Atua with Tutu'ila to the east, an independent ally of the district of Atua. There is also the Manu'a group, which was never a part of Sāmoa then. Sāmoa was ruled for five hundred years by the Tu'i Tonga and in around 1450 AD<sup>20</sup> a successful rebellion took place, which put an end to the Tongan rule over the island group. Since then Sāmoans had not been able to fill in the vacuum of absolute authority left behind by TT Talakaifaiki after his dethronement by four rebel leaders Tuna, Fata, Ulumasui and Tapuloa. The victors treasured his parting words and they created a paramount title out of it – *Malietoa*, a title that has remained prominent in Sāmoan history up to this day.

This victory proved problematic for the Sāmoans in so many ways. First of all, political centralisation was never a part of the Sāmoan equation of government, which happened to be a district affair. The departure of TT *Talakaifaiki* brought pride back to important political centres like A'ana and Atua respectively as their paramount titles *Tu'i A'ana* and *Tu'i Atua* were reinstated and used once again. A major change that happened after the Tongan occupation of Sāmoa was the birth of another kingly title *Malietoa*. This new kingly line had its seat originally in *Sapapaali'i* (*Savai'i*) but the creation of the title made an impact on the old government of the district of *Tuamasaga*. As traditionally happened in the past, any honour given by a sacred king like the *Tu'i Tonga*, *Tu'i Manu'a*, *Tu'i A'ana* or *Tu'i Atua* was often taken as a sacred gift. In this case the parting words of TT *Talakaifaiki* “*Malietoa, Malietau...*” was a gift that two of the victors *Tuna* and *Fata* vied to obtain as a title, for that title would be an insignia of the most memorable victory that Sāmoans had ever achieved in their known History.

The two brothers fought over the title and they both ended up dead. It is said that without their cousin's mystical power they would not have regained their lives. After reviving them from death their father *Atiogie* gave the title to their eldest brother *Savea*. He then ordered *Tuna* to settle in *Faleata* and look after the running of the government of Malietoa Savea in Malie. Fata was sent to the south to provide military provisions should they be needed. Fata settled in a place that bears his name Safata as a result.

Tuamasaga became the official seat of the new kingly line Sa Malietoa about 1230 AD. The rise of the Malietoa government did not do much to resolve the political reality that Sāmoa had faced after the end of Tongan rule. Its existence added unexpected difficulties to any hope of centralising Sāmoa under one king.

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<sup>20</sup> Brother Fred Henry (1992: 29, 30); Malama Meleisea (1995: 20) in Huntsman et al 'Tonga and Sāmoa: Images of Gender and Polity'.



The Pili political organisation of Upolu was no longer there as Tuamasaga had a new paramount chief who was not related to the royal house of A'ana, Atua and Manono. Worse still was the pronouncement of Malietoa La'auli's dying wish (mavaega) in about 1450 AD whereby he instructed his advisors to create two royal titles for his daughters Gatoa'itele and Gasoloai'ao'ilelagi and for them to rule as monarchs like the Tu'i A'ana and the Tu'i Atua. Since Malietoa was only recognised as a warrior king he therefore was seen as inferior in rank to the rulers of A'ana and Atua whose ranks are traceable to the Tu'i Manu'a a person that was revered as a living god like the Tu'i Tonga.

The Tu'i A'ana and Tu'i Atua titles are called *papa* (sacred title) and in particular these titles are referred to as *papa tane* (male paramount titles). Malietoa's mavaega was a direct attempt to gain national recognition throughout Sāmoa and also to be respected like the Tu'i A'ana and Tu'i Atua. The new titles of Malietoa's daughters Gatoa'itele and Tamasōali'i are referred to as *papa fafine* (female paramount titles). Gatoa'itele was installed paramount ruler of Afega and Tamasōali'i was duly made paramount ruler of Safata. This historical event signalled a turning point that affected the political history of both Sāmoa and Tonga. Malietoa must have had a vision of unifying Sāmoa under a single ruling monarch. Shortly after the establishment of the *papa fafine* in their respective offices as rulers in the north and south of the Tuamasaga district a wave of long lasting wars spread to all corners of Sāmoa as feuds among paramount chiefs escalated over issues relating to defining district boundaries and contention over political supremacy within some districts, all of which were fuelled by jealousy.

What really ignited these wars is not known but it does seem that the thought of unifying Sāmoa was an agenda shared by the paramount rulers in Sāmoa at the time. The most interesting fact about the feuds that provoked the first war (the A'ana war) was that it had to do with the succession to the Tu'i A'ana title. There were two contenders at the time who were Sagate a direct descendant of the Tu'i A'ana line and Tamalelagi a young chief favoured by the electoral college of the district to be made Tu'i A'ana. Some sources mention that Tamalelagi already held the title and likewise Sagate held the title at one stage<sup>21</sup>. Tamalelagi won the war but the title was taken from him as a result of a term agreed before the war took place because he was requesting military assistance from a war goddess who lived in Falealupo (Savai'i), who was in turn a relation of the husband of Tamalelagi's aunt. The title Tu'i A'ana was removed from A'ana and it is now in the possession of the warrior goddess Nafanua. A'ana now is a district without its *papa* and its paramount chief became high chief without a title.

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<sup>21</sup> Henry (1989: 71, 72)

In the mean time another feud developed between Afega and Malie (Tuamasaga) and it was sparked by another plot instigated by Malietoa Sagagaimuli who gradually became jealous of the status of his cousin Gatoa'itele the ruler of Afega. He demanded that lesser chiefs of Afega and Malie should give highest honour to him rather than to the papa title of Gatoa'itele. Such a demand was not well received by the political advisors of Afega who instead vowed to oppose Malietoa. Supporters of each faction settled on deciding their fate in the battlefield. *Gatoa'itele* sought help from *Nafanua* the goddess of war from *Falealupo*. Her request was granted but under the terms agreed before the war took place her title was to be surrendered to *Nafanua*. *Tonumaibe'a* and high priest *Tupa'i* were sent to assist *Gatoa'itele*. Evidently, *Malietoa* was badly defeated in the war but the title of *Malie* was taken in the same manner that A'ana faced the loss of its title. Having sealed the victory, *Tupa'i* established the government on the “*mala'e Tanumafili*” in *Tuana'i*. *Afega* became the new capital of *Tuamasaga* as a result.

Another war broke out in the district of *Atua* and it was caused by a hot dispute over the royal title *Tu'i Atua*. It was between two claimants *Fogaoloula* of *Lufilufi* and *Foganiutea* of *Fagaloa*. The latter sought help from *Nafanua* as it seemed that *Lufilufi* the capital of *Atua* had a lot of support from other parts of the district for their contender. *Nafanua* gave help on the same term that had been agreed by the *Tu'i A'ana* and *Gatoa'itele*, which *Foganiutea* had no choice but to accept reluctantly. The generals of the goddess of war *Tupa'i* and *Auva'a* brought enough forces from *Falealupo* and won the war easily for *Foganiutea*. The royal title of *Atua* suffered the same fate as did the other three *papas*. *Foganiutea* at the end of all the troubles he encountered lived as a high chief without a title<sup>22</sup>. *Tupa'i* as usual established the seat of the new government at *Pulema'ava* in the eastern part of *Lufilufi*.

The most important war in the so-called ‘*O Taua i Papa*’ (war of succession) was the war between *Ama* the high chief of *Safata* and the newly installed *Tamasōali'i* ruler of *Safata*. In fact *Safata* had long been divided into two parts *Alataua* and *Satunumafono*. *Alataua* did not welcome the new ruler and they showed their complete distaste for the idea of being ruled by anyone other than their beloved chief *Ama* by preparing for war. *Satunumafono* dispatched a messenger to *Nafanua* to secure them victory over the rebellious *Alataua*. She accepted the application upon total agreement to her set terms. The war goddess sent *Tupa'i* with orders for *Tonumaibe'a* and *Tamalelagi* to take up *Satunumafono's* cause. *Alataua* were overwhelmingly defeated. As had already happened in the previous wars in *A'ana*, *Malie* and *Afega* and

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<sup>22</sup> Henry (1992: 75, 77)

*Atua* representatives of the war goddess established the government for the victorious claimants before taking the title away with them to *Falealupo* to the court of *Nafanua*. In the case of the *Safata* war, *Tupa'i* established the government of *Safata* for the victor at *Togamau* while *Tonumaipe'a* took the title *Tamasōali'i* with him to be confided to *Nafanua*.

The *Safata* war had been proved significant in the end as it was an event that led to a major change that propagated uncontrollably in a foreign land (Tongatapu) a century later. The political organisation, social structure and religious order in the once rigid, hierarchical and highly centralised centre of the Tongan empire were to face discord of immeasurable proportions so that it gradually crumbled until nothing was left in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. The vanquished families from the *Safata* war set sail to Tonga with a dream of avenging their defeat without realising that their flight would be the beginning of a chapter in the future history of Tonga that has been overlooked by historians of the Pacific up to this day.

One might wonder why *Nafanua* took an interest in possessing the four royal papa titles which in so many ways had no significance to her as she was aloof and invincible in her own right as a living demigod, a prerogative that no other honour could enhance or surpass. But, there is an interesting fact that floats around her plot that Sāmoan oral traditions could not have discerned. The goddess of war was actually the wife of a Tu'i Tonga at the time known in Sāmoa as Tu'i Tonga Mana'ia. There are possibilities that I can think of with regard to the scheme that *Nafanua* had been stimulating in the cause of Sāmoa's divided polities. It is possible that *Nafanua*'s husband would have had a hand in cooking up with his mighty wife the unification of Sāmoa. There are two good reasons for this theory. First, since Sāmoa's independence from Tongan rule, *Malietao* had slowly fostered his rule in Tuamasaga and part of Savai'i. Springing out of his dynasty were two more royal title-holders appointed to rule as independent monarchs in Upolu and intentionally established as rivals to the ancient paramount royal titles of Tu'i A'ana and Tu'i Atua. This particular move by *Malietao* would further perplex the already existing political divisions in Sāmoa.

Furthermore, A'ana and Atua had indulged in bestowing their high titles for the first time after centuries of avoiding their responsibility for this privilege. Their governments had been reorganised to the fullest and their strengths had grown stronger than ever. Further, Atua and A'ana were old allies and each had exhibited signs that should there be any threat to the welfare of one or the other their combined power would be a force to be reckoned with. The rebuilding programme in each polity in Sāmoa after 1450 AD could be translated as the equivalent of what we would call today 'the arms-race'. There was eminent danger in this

process because chiefs were now regaining real power to govern their own territories and once a dispute over boundary lines arose no matter how tiny the cause of action may appear it would trigger a violent show of force. A'ana is said to have had a well organised political system with a strong military force under the command of their paramount chief Tamalelagi<sup>23</sup>. It is also said that Tamalelagi had at his disposal the best political advisors his dominion could offer. He also had in his court a female first cousin So'oa'emalelagi as *taupou* of his district who happened to be a close relation of Nafanua. This kind of strategy could only be executed successfully through the wisdom of the ruler's advisors and this pattern of political manoeuvring was the norm throughout every district in Sāmoa.

Nafanua would have sensed the great danger that hung over Sāmoa as a country comprised of newly independent polities, a reality which had scarcely been enjoyed by its high chiefs for a long time. To do nothing about the new found freedom that had been placed in the hands of paramount chiefs would definitely put the future of Sāmoa's independence at great risk. Likewise, to ignore the fact that 'the arms race' was a living time bomb that was ready to explode in a matter of time would have prompted Nafanua to unveil an alternative that could maintain long-term peace at least. During the lengthy Tongan occupation of Sāmoa the Tu'i Tonga had established a form of hegemony in which even Sāmoans felt proud and safe under his rulership. A number of traditions agree that the Tongan masters treated their subjects well and one would feel that the relation between the ruler and the ruled was more like a family affair. The Manu'a masters of Sāmoa would have suppressed the conferment of paramount titles on high chiefs but the title of Tu'i Atua was in use during Tongan rule, which implies that the Tu'i Tonga was generally ruling fairly apart of course from Talakaifaiki 'the Cruel' who was driven out of Sāmoa. The Tu'i Tonga lived and ruled Sāmoa for a long time and the warriors who guarded him there were definitely outnumbered by the indigenous population but there was no record of rebellion against any of them, a point that has constantly convinced me the Tu'i Tonga did rule fairly and wisely also over his subjects.

There is no doubt in my mind that Nafanua would have envisioned Sāmoa as having been accustomed to centralised rule under the Tu'i Tonga and it would be beneficial to continue that tradition not by a foreigner again but by a Sāmoan who could be agreeable to all district rulers. This theory again poses a real difficulty in that the search for a suitable candidate would be doomed before the selection process had begun. This was due to a historical alliance made right after the resettlement of Upolu by the sons of Pili. According to oral tradition Ana and Saga entered into conflict with each other right after their appointment as rulers of

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<sup>23</sup> Henry (1992: 67 – 68)

their own district. Ana was badly wounded in the process and he sought Tua's support with a view to putting an end to Saga's hostility towards him, to which Tua complied without hesitation. Knowing that his two elder brothers were joining forces to attack him Saga approached their youngest brother Tolufale to help him in his cause. It was a long and fierce war and there was no definitive winner in the end. Since then A'ana and Atua had declared Tuamasaga and Manono their lifetime enemies and troubles between the two factions had become a tradition that would be hard to dismantle throughout many centuries.

Should divisions in Sāmoa be left unsupervised, traditional rivalries would be easily revived as each polity now was well prepared militarily and would therefore be willing to extend influence over its boundaries when the time was right. Nafanua's vision of usurping the four *papa* titles was indeed a master stroke that, in my view, could only spring out of a mind that fully understood the nitty gritty stuff about Sāmoan political realities. There was none other than Nafanua's husband Tu'i Tonga Mana'ia who could possess such wisdom. To the question - Is it possible that this was really the case, my answer could be 'no' but to the question - is this possibility logical, I would say 'yes' because in theory holders of the *papa* titles were sacred and all connected to the Tu'i Tonga line and in their sacred statuses also they were revered as gods. In practice the centralisation idea was nothing but a great experiment, as the simple fact was that no Sāmoan paramount chief ever before had exercised such honour, and this duly unfolds another fact that no Sāmoan could, in his right mind, consider or vie to obtain all the paramount titles. Not to mention that the best bargain they patiently dreamed of getting was for their own title to be restored back to them.

The fact that Nafanua had been calling all the shots whenever it pleased her suggests that whatever she wished would be what people will do. Brother Fred Henry mentions that former holders of each *papa* title constantly made attempts through indirect channels, to reinstate their honour but to no avail<sup>24</sup>. Nafanua finally unveiled her wish that all four paramount titles would be bestowed on her highborn niece So'oa'emalelagi the *taupou* of A'ana. This choice was due primarily to the illustrious lineages of her parents' heritage. She was well connected to all the sacred lineages of Tonga, Manu'a, Sāmoa and Fiji. The announcement was a great satisfaction to the high chiefs and government of A'ana. As for Tamalelagi he may not get his title back but his cousin will and it is a glory worth waiting for. As for the other three political centres Nafanua's announcement did not provide them with full honour as such but the fact that each government would have its traditional rights to confer their high titles would certainly restore their pride, something that they could settle for at any cost. The path to unify Sāmoa had now been paved

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<sup>24</sup> Henry (1992: 102)

carefully and Nafanua had made an interesting choice for So'oa'emalelagi is the only descendant of the Tonumaip'e<sup>25</sup> line to have had strong links to all the royal families of Sāmoa and abroad.

It is instructive at this stage to simplify the chiefly system in Sāmoa at the time of Ama's political demise. I have addressed ideas that pinpoint the developments and origins of the four royal titles *papa tane*, and *papa fafine* in Sāmoa around 1500 AD. I have also discussed how Nafanua removed these titles from their rightful owners' right after the Tongan rule came to an end. But, there is more to understand about the complex structure of the chiefly title system in Sāmoa. In fact, all titles in Sāmoa at the said period were generally termed or known as *matai*. Titles are therefore structured into a special hierarchy based on a divine/mundane dichotomy to which ranks are appropriately ordered.

Matai titles are classed into four main categories. The first and highest is referred to as *ali'i pa'ia* (sacred paramount titles), which is further divided into *papa* (royal titles) and followed in descending order by *ao* (paramount district titles). The second category is *ali'i* (chiefly titles) a subcategory within the chiefly class. Thirdly, there is a group called *tulafale ali'i* (chiefly talking chiefs) that has dual function: the original function is to be a talking chief and on some occasions where a high chief is not present one can act on behalf of his superior's position. The last category is *tulafale* (talking chiefs); these titles are honours bestowed by families or a group of extended families on male members that have proved to be trustworthy, hard working and also to possess leadership qualities. This is the basic structure of the pre-contact Sāmoan chiefly system and it suggests a strict distinction between *ali'i* and *tulafale* respectively. As such *ali'i* is best described by Malama Meleisea as "...the conduits of supernatural power", who "attracted" intangible but greatly desired phenomena, such as success in war, fair weather, good health, fecundity, political support and other favours of the gods."<sup>26</sup> In short, *ali'i* are divine in essence and they are the earthly embodiment of the gods by whose names they were titled. In direct contrast *tulafale* "...were associated with all that was mundane, worldly and secular."<sup>27</sup> The role of *tulafale* was to plan political strategies and war and also to organise the production of food and the building of houses, and so on.

In about 1500 AD levels of political organisation, rank and kinship were not only different from their present equivalents but were more complexly ordered. The basic political unit was *nu'u* and this term is

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<sup>25</sup> Tonumaip'e'a is the paramount chief of Falealupo and father of So'oa'emalelagi. Nafanua 'goddess of war' is a descendant of that ruling line. Since this title originated from a Tongan connection it has no high stance in the Sāmoan chiefly hierarchy.

<sup>26</sup> Meleisea 1995: 23 (in Huntsman et al: Tonga and Sāmoa: Images of Gender and Polity).

<sup>27</sup> Meleisea (1995: 21), see also Ella 1895, Dyson 1882:306, Turner 1884: 173)

often loosely translated as village. It is really a group of extended families that share common history and their connections are engraved in a local charter called *fa'alupega*. This charter is an honour board in which ranks of individual titles are ceremonially greeted in descending order from the most senior to junior. This honour board records the historical origin of each family and it is also used as the constitution of the village (council) *fono*, which comprises all titled heads of every family.

In accordance with the above hierarchy of chiefly titles, the first category of *ali'i pa'ia* is comprised of only *papa* and *ao* titles. As discussed above, the original *papa* the *Tu'i A'ana* and *Tu'i Atua* are perceived as *papa tane* and the new ones *Gatoa'itele* and *Tamasōali'i* are attributed as *papa fafine*. The basic difference between the two sets of *papa* is their origin. The origin of the *Tu'i A'ana* and *Tu'i Atua* titles is traceable to sons of *Pili* (*ana* and *tua*) whereas *Gatoa'itele* and *Tamasōali'i* derive their origin from daughters of *Malietoa La'auli*. The existence of two paramount male titles and two paramount female titles appears to fulfil the necessary ideal requirement for a complete traditional Sāmoan family<sup>28</sup>. By the year 1530 AD the war goddess *Nafanua* had at her disposal all the *papa* titles. Perhaps the idea of conferring the four titles on someone to become *Tupu* of Sāmoa comes from the basic family value of securing male and female members. The two paramount *papa tane* and the two sacred *papa fafine* rule as monarchs in four different districts and those independent polities all agree on a single contender on whom to confer their highest titles to create the first Sāmoan *Tupu* of Sāmoa. The contender of course must have amongst his/her credentials connection to all the illustrious families at the time namely, the *Tu'i Tonga*, *Tu'i Manu'a*, *Tu'i fiti*, *Tu'i A'ana*, *Tu'i Atua*, and *Ole pule o sa lafai* (of Savai'i). The one whose heritage fulfils the above requirement would assume the status of *tafa'i fa* and would therefore be installed as *tupu*.

*Tafa'i fa* literally means four sides, but the term derives directly from the name given to protectors of each individual *papa* title. Protectors of a *papa* title are called *tafa'i* and comprise two persons. So, each *papa* has a pair of *tafa'i*. *Nafanua's* wish to confer all papas on *So'oa'emalelagi* was constantly refused on grounds that she had no intention of letting go her adopted child who was the daughter of her cousin *Tamalelagi*. The real reason was that she had had enough of the constant pressures of political life since she was the *Sa'o tama'ita'i* of *A'ana* and had other political responsibilities that she was heavily engaged by. But, *Nafanua* attempted three times to convince her niece *So'oa'emalelagi* to accept the titles and to become *tupu* and *tafa'i fa* of Sāmoa and her answer was that her daughter *Salamasina* would not be allowed to have physical

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<sup>28</sup> The ideal Sāmoan family must have a boy and a girl at least. A family without one or the other is seen as incomplete so to make a family complete one would resort to adoption.

contact should she become Queen as her body would be tapu. She instead, as tradition has it, asked Nafanua to confer the titles on Salamasina so that they could continue their life as mother and daughter for her body would also be tapu after her child was installed tupu of Sāmoa.

Both So'oa'emalelagi and Salamasina are related to the Tu'i Tonga: the mother of the latter is a daughter of a Tu'i Tonga and the grandmother of the fore is a daughter of a Tu'i Tonga also. The proposal was accepted and Tupa'i the high priest of Nafanua summoned tumua of Le'ulumoega and Lufilufi as well as the faleta'ita'i of Afega and the Alataua of Safata to confer their respective titles on Salamasina and declare her tafa'i fa and tupu of Sāmoa. Details of the coronation ceremony are discussed in Henry and Tuagalu. Salamasina was installed Tu'i A'ana, Tu'i Atua, Gatoa'itele and Tamasōali'i and duly declared tafa'i fa and tupu of Sāmoa in a single ceremony held in Le'ulumoega the capital of A'ana. This ceremony was completed by the bestowal of 'Ole tupu o Sa Lafai' the designated honour of Savai'i. Salamasina became the first ever Queen and ruler of Sāmoa. Manu'a was never a part of Sāmoa although it is said that the Tu'i Manu'a ruled Sāmoa. In fact, the very word Sāmoa was first used when TT 'Aho'eitu conquered Savai'i Upolu and Tutu'ila around 950 AD<sup>29</sup>. It is said that 'Aho'eitu named the island group after Tu'i Manu'a Moa i.e. 'the family of Moa'. The term tu'i was also imported into Sāmoa by 'Aho'eitu (Aso'aitu in Sāmoan)<sup>30</sup>.

Sāmoan oral tradition centres on division and such division is traceable to political developments, which are directly linked with the settling of Upolu by the four sons of Pili (son of the Tu'i Manu'a)<sup>31</sup>. According to some sources, the divisions existed long before the Tongan rule and according to other sources the Tu'i Manu'a also ruled Sāmoa before the Tongans. So, there is no recorded ruler of Sāmoa who was a Sāmoan in its entire history. There was now a rare opportunity for anyone to launch a claim for the vacant authority left behind by the Tu'i Tonga but in order to consider such an idea one has to hurdle a number of difficult obstacles. At the time there were two royal lines Tu'i A'ana and Tu'i Atua in Upolu who were generally recognized all over Sāmoa but each monarch ruled only in his marked territory.

The creation of the Malietoa title earned a glory of its own by making the holder king in a particular district Tuamasaga that is situated in the middle between the Kingdoms of A'ana to the west and Atua to the east;

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<sup>29</sup> Henry, 1992.

<sup>30</sup> see Meleisea, 1995, Henry, 1989: 27, Kramer



all three kingdoms are neighbours in the island of Upolu. Although kings and paramount chiefs in Sāmoa are related by blood in which case such ground provides a sound foundation for negotiating the possibility of forming a centralised government to be headed by one leader, it was an issue that could not be easily agreed on, as each political centre claimed superiority.

## Chapter 5

### The Tu'i Kanokupolu

And

#### The entrenchment of a quasi Sāmoan Polity

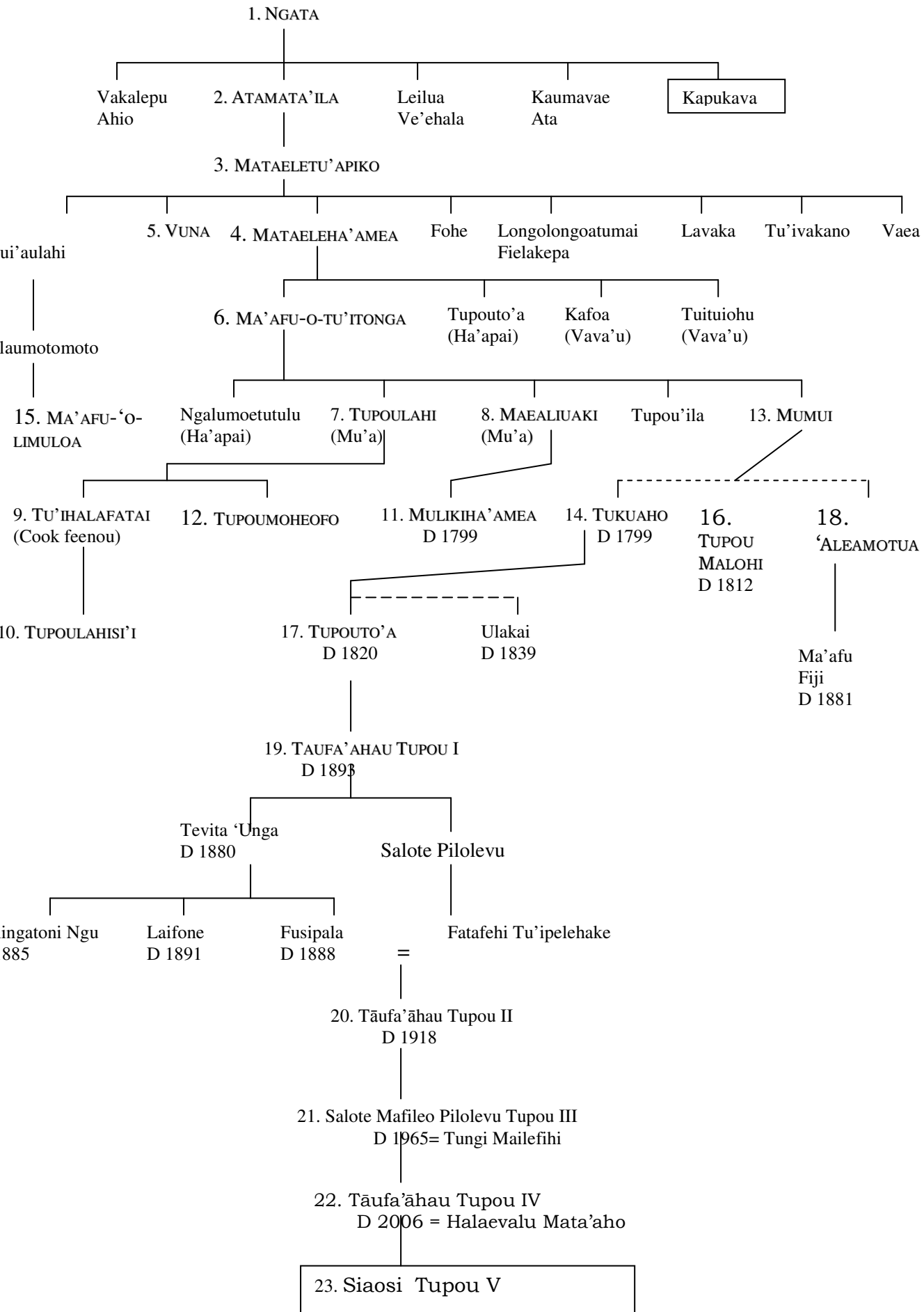
In Tongatapu, around 1550 *Tu'i Ha'atakalaua Mo'ungatonga* managed to sanctify his title as sacred and equal in status to the *Tu'i Tonga Ngata* was installed *Tu'i hihifo* almost immediately<sup>32</sup>. Shortly afterward the *Tu'itonga* fefine title was created. One would ask why these developments came about. In my view, there has to be a major threat to cause changes of major proportions to happen in a short period of time and this threat is possibly that TH *Mo'ungatonga* became another sacred ruler. Although Bott 1982, Herda 1988 & 1990 and Campbell 2001, just to name a few, mention that he was sacred at the time they do not tell us why he would have attained such honour that even tradition would not allow. The answer would be traceable to a historical voyage from Sāmoa where an exiled high chief called *Ama* from *Safata* arrived with many of his followers (according to oral tradition, over a thousand). All that we know about that voyage is that *Ama* gave the hand of his daughter *Tohu'ia* to *TH Mo'ungatonga* as his principal wife.

What is missing from the story is the fact that there was a war that drove *Ama* and his followers out of *Safata*. Evidently, *Malietoa* created high royal titles for his two daughters to become rulers in his district of *Tuamasaga*, which is situated right in the very heart of the island of *Upolu*. As such, *Gatoa'itele* was made paramount chief of *Afega* and *Tamasōali'i* was sent to become ruler of *Safata*. Apparently, *Ama* was defeated and his hope of being restored to his former glory rested on the shoulders of his son in law, TH *Mo'ungatonga*. The full story of this development is discussed in great detail in chapter 3 but the design of TH *Mo'ungatonga's* ambitious plan to elevate his own status is obvious in that if he becomes sacred then the possibility of asserting his authority in Sāmoa like the *Tu'i Tonga* in yester-centuries is greatly enhanced.

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<sup>32</sup> Campbell 1989 and 1992 has suggested that the approximate time for the creation of *Ngata* as *Tu'i Kanokupolu* was 1550 AD

**Figure 5**



The marriage of Mo'ungatonga with Ama's daughter Tohu'ia, and the creation of Ngata as paramount chief as *Tu'i hihifo* is another sign that he as *Tu'i Ha'atakalaua* had already been elevated in status. According to Tongan tradition *Ngata* was made *Tu'i hihifo* because his elder half brother *Fotofili* would inherit their father's title but the fact that Tohu'ia would have insisted upon recognition of her own son in accordance with the *Tu'i Tonga* tradition that the Sāmoan *taupou* was always made principal wife and her eldest son would automatically succeed his father did put some pressure on *TH Mo'ugatonga*. Whatever happened, *Ngata* was recognised after all and his new office brought a new beginning to a number of things in the end. What do I mean by that remark? Obviously, the conferment of the new title on Ngata delegated the mundane responsibilities that the *Tu'i ha'atakalaua* looked after in conjunction with all his secular roles as *hau*<sup>33</sup>. There was a problem though; the Sāmoan followers of Ama had resigned their dream of securing their stance in Safata to a more demanding task of making Ngata a Sāmoan paramount chief on Tongan soil. This is the central argument I maintain throughout this work and the detail of this process is discussed in chapters 4, 5 and 6; but for now it suffices to claim that the establishment of the *Tu'i hihifo* or *Tu'i Kanokupolu* marks the indirect importing of a Sāmoan political system known as *matai* into Tonga. The *Matai* system was 'Trojan-horsed' to Tonga through a limited liberty indulged by the Sāmoans *without* careful supervision during the process of incubating Ngata's future.

There are statements that we need to digest temporarily while I sketch the real picture of Ngata's investiture. First, Ngata was installed as a Sāmoan *ali'i pa'ia* (a sacred chief). Second, his title *Tu'i Kanokupolu* was probably a reference to a future venture as it points at Tuamasaga – the heart of Upolu – of which Safata is part. There were only four Tongans sent with Ngata to Hihifo, his half brother Halakitau'a, and an uncle Vaoloa and two ceremonial attendants Lauaki and Kioa. Gifford says little about the roles and functions of Lauaki and Kioa but it is possible that their present roles are the exact duties assigned for them to perform. The installation of a Sāmoan *ali'i pa'ia* at the time of Ngata's investiture was a sacred event in which the paramount chief must be accompanied by a pair of *tafa'i* (personal protectors) to his/her seat at the kava circle to accept the kava that officiates the bestowal of the given title.

His uncle Vaoloa and his brother Halakitau'a accompanied Ngata in the same manner prescribed by Sāmoan protocol and they were wrapped together with a mat (or in my view, a fine mat) so that they appeared to have one body with three heads in order to confuse the people of Hihifo and terrify them into submitting to

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<sup>33</sup> See Bott 1982, Campbell 1992, and Latukefu 1975.

their new ruler for there had been open opposition to chiefs sent before him (oral tradition suggests that they have always been murdered). This story suggests that people of Hihifo were warlike and even fierce in order to have succeeded in eliminating the lives of chiefs sent by the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua to rule over them. This kind of reputation may have been the real cause for the somewhat 'odd' charade of presenting a three-headed monster to scare the so-called fierce people of Hihifo into total submission so that they accepted the monster as their ruler.

The theory is fine like any other theories we can think of about the same event but we must be realistic in digesting myths such as this one. Of course people were not so stupid not to realise that such pretence was real. There has to be another way of working out what actually happened. I have a feeling that the people of Hihifo would have had bad experiences in dealing with the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua administration as tradition unfolds that this kingly line managed the mundane affairs of planting and harvesting of crops seasonally. He also managed demanding projects such as building new residences for the Tu'i Tonga when there was need and he generally oversaw the production of sailing and fishing vessels for the sacred Master among so many other tasks under his command. This role alone would have fuelled greater disobedience in the minds of Hihifo people since the gravity of engaging in national projects such as building tombs and public roads would be labour intensive tasks, and that means moving a great number of people away for quite a long time.

The announcement of Ngata as new ruler for Hihifo was not something for the people in that district to reconsider, as I have a gut feeling that they actually welcomed the idea with open hands. They anticipated that Ngata would be an ally and they were going to play a part in establishing his new government, and that the Sāmoans would have no interest in labour intensive programmes in Tonga apart from looking after the interests of their new district. These possibilities cannot be easily dismissed because there is no shortage of evidence that could support any of this. Let me sketch more images that would give a clearer picture of what I am trying to convey here. At the investiture of Ngata, he was invited to lean his back against a sacred tree that the Hihifo people made reverence to and reserved only for their leader of choice. My theory of the actual contact made between the Hihifo people and the Sāmoan attendants of Ngata is that they were discussing important issues such as power sharing, cultural integration, and compromised observation of peace and combined efforts in matters relating to defence. These factors had great influence in the establishment of the Kanokupolu polity.

Tradition maintains that the success behind the establishment of the Tu'i Kanokupolu can only be traced to the intimidating sham of the three-headed beast (see Bott, Latukefu, Gifford, Campbell to name a few) known as the *ulutolu*. I have a different view on this whole saga. The act of wrapping together *Ngata*, *Vaoloa* and *Halakitau'a* was not even meant to terrify and scare the people of Hihifo. Such act was an initial part of a sacred ritual in the event of conferring a sacred title on a Sāmoan ali'i pa'ia for the first time. There is reference to the same process conducted during conferment of the papa faine titles of *Gatoa'itele* and *Tamasōali'i*. These are the newest titles of the papa type to have been created in recent times. Their tafa'i were wrapped together with these sacred chiefs until they had drunk their kava and this is an excellent comparison with the investiture of *Ngata* in Hihifo. The points we cannot ignore here is that the practice has a precedent in Sāmoa, and that the only titles in Sāmoa to have a pair of tafa'i as part of the ceremonial honours were the four sacrosanct papas of the *Tu'i A'ana*, *Tu'i Atua*, *Gatoa'itele* and *Tamasōali'i*.

The two ancient papa tane titles were created around 950 AD and newer papa faine titles were created around 1500 AD. In my view the Tu'i hihifo/Tu'i Ha'amo'unga or Tu'i Kanokupolu was probably created as another papa title. The reason is this-- *Vaoloa* and *Halakitau'a* were made *tafa'i* of *Ngata*. In addition to that they were bestowed with the titles *Nuku* and *Niukapu* and those honours were sanctified as founders of a new lineage called *Ha'a Latuhifo*. This is the first lineage created in Tonga of the Sāmoan 'sa' type. It is said that *Ngata's* kava cup was held by the right hand of *Vaoloa* and the left hand of *Halakitau'a* before they served it to his mouth. Those who were assigned to sit in the Kava circle were also bestowed with titles with different levels of ranking significance. The main ceremonial attendants were seated on the right and left side of *Ngata* next to his *tafa'i* -- *Nuku* to the right and *Niukapu* on the left. As such the attendant on the right was titled *Motu'apuaka* and the one on the left used his traditional honour *Lauaki* as his title in the Tu'i Kanokupolu ceremony. *Ngata's* court was comprised of a number of orator groups that were ranked in accordance with Sāmoan hierarchy. Uppermost was the group of titles which comprise the *falekanokupolu*:

*Napa'a, Monu, Fa'oa, and Tovi* etc. This is called in Sāmoa *fale-upolu* which is formed of advisors exclusive to the office of the *ali'i pa'ia*.

### **Ha'a Systems in Tonga.**

Ha'a is an institution of great complexity. It has its roots in distant antiquity long before the contact with the Western world. It governs still the lives of thousands of people in Tonga, though not in the exact form as in the past. It is understood, in popular ways, as the division of society into a fivefold hierarchy with the Gods (including the Tu'itonga-not as demi-god as often thought to be) at the top level, followed in order by the chiefs (*hou'eiki*), chief's attendants (*matapule*), commoners (*tu'a*), and lastly at the very bottom the slaves (*popula*) who can be equated with the status of the untouchables. Latukefu saw it differently and his observations identified an extra stratum.

At the top of the social pyramid were the *ha'a tu'i* (kings). Immediately below this stratum was that of the *hou'eiki* (chiefs), then the *kau mu'a* (sons of a union between a chief and a *matapule*), the *ha'a matapule* (chiefs' attendants), and *kau tu'a* (commoners) in that descending order. At the bottom of the scale were the *kau popula* (slaves) (1968: 9).

Edward Winslow Gifford, the author of "Tongan Society" the most informed book ever written by an outsider on the history and culture of Tonga agrees with Latukefu that the division of society is sixfold instead of five (1929:111). Another view offered by William Mariner, a young clerk aboard a British warship *Port au Prince* captured in 1806 at the island of Ha'apai by a warrior named 'Ulukalala - who in turn adopted him as his son, suggested that there were at least four basic classes of people in Tonga during his four years residence in Tonga from 1806-1810. Accordingly, "...there was the 'eiki, or chiefly class, followed by individuals known as *matapule*, others known as *mu'a*, and at the bottom of the scale a group known as *tu'a*" (Martin, 1818: 78). And then, by at least the close of the eighteenth century, when civil wars erupted, "...a still lower class of slaves, comprising prisoners of war, known as *boobola* (that is *popula*) was reported, however, they must have been sufficiently few in number that Mariner did not see fit to include them in his rankings" (Ferdon, 1987: 25).

All the three models above are at least very clear about the specification of two main classes in the Tongan hierarchical order, that of the chiefs who occupy the top stratum and the commoners lower in the social

pyramid. Furthermore, an interesting implication comes to light here. William Mariner offered a ‘field-view’ of Tongan class system in the early nineteenth century which reflects a remarkable decrease in the number of ‘societal divisions’ at least from six or five to only four. Latukefu and Gifford put forward a scholarly opinion of their knowledge of history while on the other hand ‘oral tradition’ (views given by indigenous traditionalists) has something else to say.

Historically and perhaps ethnographically also, the fivefold division commonly suggested by oral traditions is closer to home in all of the three models but it does not mean that the other two could be dismissed easily either. Oral history evidence recounts that the earliest structure is expressive of a fivefold hierarchy but specific events in history that were in direct alignment with major changes have instigated significant results, at times so dramatic, that also warrant the increase and decrease in the number of social class divisions. For instance, by the time Mariner lived in Tonga a series of institutional changes had already occurred, at least four hundred years earlier, which were directly reflected in the pattern of hierarchy and stratification he duly witnessed. With the assistance of genealogical materials, I am proposing that the prevalence of four basic classes on the eve of 1800 AD is evidence of the major political change that is traceable to the rise of the Tu’ikanokupolu dynasty in the first half of the sixteenth century (1550).

Moreover genealogy also indicates manifold divisions prior to Mariner’s time, which actually reached seven or eight strata altogether that certainly doubles the number of social classes Mariner identified. As such, there were the Gods at the apex, then the Tu’i Tonga, and in descending order the *Falefā*, then the *Sina’e*, the *Mu’a*, the *Tu’a*, the *Popula* and at the very bottom the *Hopoate* (‘Ahio-Hopoate [deceased], the head of *Ha’a Ngata Motu’a* – personal communication in 1974). There is another class that was not necessarily fitted into the given structure, the *Muli* (foreigners). The point I am trying to make is that there are two hierarchical sets identified generally here that pertain to different eras in history. Gifford and Latukefu, for instance, suggest a sixfold division of society and attribute it to a social order that is consistent with a system that I regard as being prior to Mariner’s time in Tonga.

On the other hand, Mariner claims that the appropriate typification of class divisions in 19<sup>th</sup> century Tonga amounted only to four. However, I am inclined to believe, in light of new evidence, that ancient Tongan society was originally divided into a threefold hierarchy based on status ranking whereby the ‘*Eiki* class (chiefs) occupied the top level and were immediately followed by the *Tu’a* (commoners) and then the *hopoate* (the untouchables) were placed at the very bottom. In my opinion, these status levels represent a



celestial dichotomisation of certain values. As such, the attribution of ‘*eiki*’ status, as reflected in special languages and practices, designates heavenly qualities, whereas the *tu’a* were in direct contrast representing non-heavenly entities and the *hopoate* were simply viewed as ‘none of the above’ or if we seriously state the meaning associated with it, the *hopoate* are the untouchables.

The term *hopoate* is consistently referred to, according to oral tradition, as comprised mainly of people whose origin is unknown to the general population (mostly outcast criminals). The *mu’a* class and that of the *matapule* were later additions, which can be associated with major changes in the political history of Tonga. The latter came into existence around 1590 AD, a monumental contribution introduced by the Tu’ikanokupolu quasi-Sāmoan political system (the *tu’ulafale* class) while the former shared a common history with the actual formalisation of the royal *Kava* ceremony in about 750 AD.<sup>34</sup> Likewise *popula* (war captives) was also a new social class whose origin can be traced to the beginning of the great civil wars which began in 1799 and finally come to an end with the fall of the last stronghold fortress of *Pea* in 1852 (Latukeyu, 1974: 97, see also Thomas 1879). Failure to trace the possible origins of each social class would always lead to unnecessary generalisation by which, for example, the *matapule* class is normally perceived as a very ancient category confusing it with the offices of the *Falefā*. In fact, in my view, *matapule* was an element of the Sāmoan political development that was introduced through the establishment of the Tu’ikanokupolu dynasty in 1550 AD. Likewise, the *mu’a* class was originally a sub-class or in my view a sub-caste of the ruling caste of Tonga but as Mariner noted in 1808 this class was ranked under the *matapule* class. *Mu’a* now are classed as *tu’a* (commoners). I am currently tracing the origin of the new *mu’a* class because I have a feeling that the older version of that class may have ceased to exist due to the great decline in the power of ruling elite (Tu’i Tonga) to which it once belonged. So, my theory, then, is that the new *mu’a* class would have sprung out of the introduced Sāmoan system and that explains why *mu’a* are lowly and placed in a ‘common’ designation.

Gifford noted that one of the informants belonging to a *matapule* class insisted that the *ha’a* would apply only to the family of a chief but not to the family of a *matapule* or *tu’a* (commoner). That is a view that is supported by another informant, a high chief by the name of Tamale, who defined *ha’a* “as the people belonging to a great chief, all related by blood to him” (1929: 30).

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<sup>34</sup> The dates indicated here are my own approximations. They differ from the formally unexamined dating made given by Wood (1932).

I feel that the time is right for me to define *ha'a* in a more historical and critical way.

Initially, the structure of the Tongan class system in the fifth century was indicative only of two status levels. Dichotomies like '*eiki* and *tu'a* (chiefs/commoners), *ma'olunga/ma'ulalo* (high/low), *mu'a/mui* (front/back) and *mana/noa* (supernatural/nothingness) can be the starting point in this special venture. The two major status levels in question referred primarily to certain attributions which were believed to be a personal possession by heritage. In this respect, Tongan society can be divided into those who are '*eiki* (chiefs) and those who are *tu'a* (commoners). The charter that determines '*eiki* status is based on who possesses *mana*. Of course only those descended from the gods possess that kind of supernatural attribute and they are regarded as higher (*ma'olunga*) in vertical manner above the rest, a direct symbolism of their closeness to the heavens. Those without *mana* are regarded *ma'ulalo* (lower) and therefore equal in that context to nothingness *noa* (no content). This again symbolises the permanent association of the *tu'a* class with the dirt of the soil. They are ideologically regarded as worm eaters, which they surprisingly honour especially when they address themselves in formal ceremony.

The term *tu'a* means 'the back'; it also means 'the outer part' or 'outside'. But to use it with reference to a social category, one might ask why and in what context does the popular meaning of the word *tu'a* apply in the sense of a particular class of people. Since no reference is offered by the literature to guide us here, I will answer the question myself. It seems (likely) to be the case that hierarchy and stratification in Tonga before 1500 AD were realised in two major ways. First, it was hierarchicised in a ladder-like vertical manner in which social classes were viewed in light of 'high' and 'low' as its Tongan equivalents explicitly suggest. On the other hand a horizontal representation seemed to be in practice also. Only this time, the social boundary is perceived in empirical terms whereby the monarch and his descendants are separated in matters concerning residence and the like. The living quarters especially those of the king are still called today *loto'a* (within the [sacred] boundary, which means literally - inside the fence). So, on the ground level the area outside the kings' court is called *tu'a/tu'a* (outside or outer part of the fence-to loosely translate the term).

The name for the commoners is *tu'a* and it is both symbolic and practical in application. The fact that they do not have *mana* is symbolic of their being excluded from the recognised boundary of those who possessed '*mana*' because in theory if somebody of no supernatural origin made contact with anything that has been touched or occupied by a supernatural being the danger is so great that death is always the final outcome. This kind of ideology is welded into the psychology of the commoners and even the very ideal of 'equality'

is not encouraged among lower class members. Anti-equality almost appears to be a self proclaimed right invented by the commoners considering the effort made by parents in educating their offspring in the same thing from one generation to the other. What I have been sketching out here is that the *tu'a* have learned to accept that *inequality* is a fact of their social world and people today are still observing it in its most ancient form as though the 'might' of science is never heard of or, at best, means nothing at all.

### ***Ha'a and the problem of definition***

According to Latukefu, *ha'a* is a *class*, '...it is the largest socio-political unit in Tonga – a loose confederation of genealogically related chiefs and their peoples' (1974: Glossary list). Similarly, Gifford defines the *ha'a* as a patrilineage – that is, a group of people descended through men from a common ancestor – and such a lineage was organised around titles (1929:29-30). Elizabeth Bott (1982) also argues that 'Titles are grouped into *ha'a*'. She adds a very interesting statement in recognition of the confusion that revolves around the understanding of this concept "There has been so much controversy over this Tongan concept that it must be discussed in detail" (78). A giant step that she failed to monopolise to her advantage for if she had ever followed up critically this apparent confusion I have no doubt that something productive would have come out of it. In support of Gifford's definition, she emphasised his argument for *ha'a* as most appropriate in that 'lineages' were organised around titles.

These definitions seem clear enough and appear to be without puzzlement also in that they all suggest an image of *ha'a* as patrilineally organised on a grand scale. The key word here is 'title' or *hingoa-fakanofu*. Gifford in particular concludes in his study of political links between major lineages that commoners are more connected to titled chiefs than had been formerly anticipated.

The lineages are patrilineal. Each consists of a nucleus of related chiefs about whom are grouped inferior relatives, the lowest and most remote of whom are commoners. Some commoners are not aware of their lineage as such, but most are, and claim relationship to some chief, usually the one under whom they live. (1929:30).

According to Gifford, most Tongans render named lineages (*ha'a*) as *tribe*, *class*, and *family*. Among the informants Gifford interviewed were two noblemen both of whom held titles but belonged to different *ha'a*. What they have said is worth quoting here.

Tu'ivakano, the late premier of Tonga, equated *ha'a* with the Sāmoan *Sa* (Sacred). The high chief Ata said that *ha'a* is applied to blood relatives, and to people who have some attribute in common, as *ha'a eiki* (chiefs) and *ha'a matapule* (matapules or attendants). [1929:30].

In fact, what 'high chief' Tu'ivakano pointed out is probably the most crucial observation ever made by anyone in the whole literature on Tongan society but unfortunately Gifford failed to detect the exotic implication given by the 'comparison' Tu'ivakano attempted to address. To equate *ha'a* with the Sāmoan *Sa*, one must wonder why this is so and should therefore give serious thought to it at least. Equally important, had Gifford attempted to clarify the difference between these two interpretations he would surely have traced their origins with ease. Apparently, he might have already had fixed in his mind that the Sāmoan 'Sa' is not an issue worth looking at. Quite rightly so, because there is a degree of vagueness in Tu'ivakano's enumeration of *ha'a*, especially when he isolated only one of the basic meanings of 'sa' (the 'sacred') as applying, while the term stands also for 'lineage' or 'family' a meaning that is much clearer if so stressed in conjunction with his identification of 'titled' lineage/family. I have reason to believe that Tu'ivakano may have elaborated more on the subject but Gifford could have easily ignored this but somehow summed up only part of the whole story. The reason here is obvious enough in that the Sāmoan concept (*Sa*) also connotes something other than 'sacred' but the complex nature of its conceptual existence would often result in it being reduced to part of what it really stands for.

High chief Ata's definition indicates a sense of exclusivism, a general charter of *ha'a* membership, whereby all members must be related by blood and also possess common attribution in terms of group status. Obviously, the way Ata speaks of status here is directly referenced to some absolute fixation in which one's position is utterly unchangeable. In short, *ha'a* according to Ata is *birthright*, a view that certainly strikes a few chords about the reality of the pre-Tu'i Kanokupolu era. The one, according to my hypothesis, that 'titles' were not necessary and, indeed, were so insignificant in practical terms especially when people are labelled only by their *fatongia* (professional occupation or hereditary duty) alone. According to Ata blood relationship goes hand in hand with status and rank. That means, as a rule of thumb, a chief or an aristocrat cannot be related to a commoner and likewise a lowborn individual cannot be related to anyone whose rank and status is hierarchically higher. In this context, the truth behind the homogeneity of Tonga's past that is often put into question by contemporary scholars, as being rigidly stratified is vindicated by the marriage pattern that was indirectly suggested by Ata. The case of a 'fictive' kin relation was introduced by the quasi-Sāmoan '*aiga* system rather than the Tongan *kāinga* organisation. The Sāmoan '*aiga* conceptually refers to

social groups, large extended families, who are connected and linked to each other through political means. Politics here is defined by ‘titles’ and titleholders in various districts who do belong to the same ‘*aiga* hold equal voice in decision-making concerning the whole welfare of the group or *sa* as is the case of Sa Tupua, Sa Malietoa, Sa Levalasi and so on. The Tongan *kāinga* was never a political unit as such but instead a reference to people who are related by blood who observe marriage restrictions for up to four generations before the imposed *tapu* releases them. Such limitation is unequivocally explained by values adhering to the governing rules of *fa’ahinga*. This is the basic difference between the two senses of *kāinga* in pre-contact times.

In fact, what Ata has brought to our attention is quite consistent with the endogamous marriage arrangement practiced in ancient Tonga prior to the establishment of the Tu’i Kanokupolu. Accordingly, people did marry within the boundary of their own *ha’a* and cross-cousin marriages were becoming more common especially among the members of the upper classes. Social statuses and ranks were impossible to disrupt due to the complete non-existence of social mobility that was also due to the strict regulations imposed by the socio-religious and political interests of the dominant ideology (the Tu’itonga system) that gave rise to the practice of endogamy.

The information offered by these two chiefs has never been considered carefully or thought of by anyone as having any significant value since it was recorded, including Gifford himself. Apparently, ‘high chief’ Ata was no stranger to Tu’ivakano’s view, and *vice versa*, but as has been the case it is the chiefs (and chiefs alone) who could dispute ideas of great magnitude and indulge in the luxury of debating controversial issues such as this one. It also includes sensitive subjects such as matters concerning rank. This really shows how chiefs are moulded by tradition to be knowledgeable, if not all knowing, and well informed of every minute detail pertaining to culture and history. It is untypical of chiefs to be so ignorant of basic issues relating to the principles of social organization for one, among other things. They are the gatekeepers of ‘tradition’ and must therefore be more resourceful with the secrets in reserve at their disposal. Obviously, commoners would not openly contribute to such a debate due to basic cultural restrictions. Chiefs on the other hand are free (*ngofua*) from any restriction and even if a commoner knows that a chief is wrong about something he will never dare to make corrections; only another chief can do so.

To decide which one of the two definitions truly represents the conceptual reality of *ha’a* in Tonga would definitely, in both theory and practice, spin a lot of great brains out of their natural location for only one –

and I must stress - 'one' good reason. Why? Because they are both true evidence-wise, a reason so bizarre that it defies the general law of 'logic' for two claims, in which one seeks to falsify the other and *vice versa*, to be nonetheless both right. But this is really so because there are available facts and concrete evidence in support of both claims, not only superficially but evidentially warranted. And the obvious contradiction exposed here has never been critically examined at all. Let's look at the Sāmoan concept Tu'ivakano underlines as the central feature of *ha'a* and see how it directly fits the Tongan situation. In the first place, *Sa* as a concept functions as the 'identifier' of individual lineages mostly by specifying various titles as names of certain chiefly families (see (Fr) Fred Henry, 1979; Tuangalu, 1988; Kramer, 1902 and Meleisea, 1987). However, to be historically specific we must maintain that Ata's definition is truly the case with regards to the question of 'what *ha'a* is' in its authentic Tongan form. Tu'ivakano's enumeration is truly a Sāmoan import, which happens to be the undisputed reality around the contact period and thereafter.

How can this be so for the *ha'a* arrangement in Tonga? I guess the answer is crystal clear; there have to be two distinct *ha'a* systems in order to warrant the two counts of truth attached to each one of them. One is traceable to a pre-Tu'i Kanokupolu form of social organisation while the other was introduced later. In fact, there are seven great lineages, possibly more, that can be identified categorically as proof of what high chief Tu'ivakano asserted above. All are designated according to the name of each founder. The first sign of this categorical development is exhibited by the 'titles' conferred upon the sons of the first Tu'i Kanokupolu. As such, Ahio, Ata, Ve'ehala and Kapukava were collectively called the *Ha'a Ngata* or in Tu'ivakano's view *Sa Ngata* (See Bott 1982 for genealogical details). This *sa* organisation is a most untypical form of organised social grouping, which could not correspond to any form of pre-existing institution if traced back in time. *Ha'a* appears in this context to be identified with a particular person of special significance. For instance, *ha'a Ngata* suggests that the element of the 'sacred' (*Sa*) is present in that Ngata was not only the first holder of a newly established kingly line but he was as well a sacred chief (*Ali'i pa'ia*) in the eyes of the Sāmoan hierarchical ranking which, in my view, of course, was the very heart of the Kanokupolu political organisation. The other *ha'a* belonging to this Tu'i Kanokupolu line are *ha'a Ngata Motu'a*, *ha'a Havea*, *ha'a Ngata tupu*, *ha'a Havea si'i*, *ha'a Ma'afu* and *ha'a mohefo* (a general reference only to the titleholder of the Tu'i Kanokupolu Dynasty).

Contrary to this very pattern is Ata's view that *ha'a* refers to permanent, yet exclusive, class membership. People are born to a particular class whether they are chiefs, chief's attendants or commoners. There is nothing other than status adhering to such a form of organised social grouping. William Mariner (in Martin

1817) identified social groups in Tonga as organised according to principles of hereditary specialisation and they are hierarchicised in terms of the nature of duties or professions each group performs (pp 294-295). He also made specific remarks that some professions are not hereditary, an element that seems to contradict what Ata had argued for, but it is in fact not necessarily so because Mr Mariner could not have told the difference between what was authentically Tongan from the introduced Sāmoan elementary form. Among the specialised professions that are hereditary were the ‘canoe builders’, ‘cutters of whale-tooth ornaments’, ‘superintendents of funeral rites’, ‘stone-masons, or makers of stone vaults’, ‘net makers’, ‘fishermen’, ‘large house-builders’, ‘cooks’ and ‘peasants’ while duties like ‘club carvers’ and ‘barbers and shavers with shells’ can be both hereditary or not. The issue of untouchability is also highlighted and those people are placed apart who perform any duties regarding the preparation of food, or who are employed as barbers or in any profession in which close personal contact was involved, whether in a direct or indirect manner (p305). Hereditary specialisation in Mariner’s time had dramatically changed from original practice, when, in fact, hereditary professions were in the hundreds. At the present time people are naming their town and bush allotments after the duties that were traditionally performed by their families in the past (Gifford, 1923). And, in most occasions they claim exclusive right in terms of identifying with such honour.

On the other hand, Adrienne Kaeppler, a renowned ethnographer of Tongan society, defines *ha’a* as ‘the abstract ranking of titles that derive through collateral segmentation within the societal structure, which emphasizes patrilineality’ (1978: 175). She reached this conclusion through a thorough study of the activities accompanying the funeral of Queen Salote in 1965. Still, it does not excuse Tu’ivakano’s failure to recognise Ata’s view as representing some realities that correspond to other existing typologies of social groupings that differ from the ‘Sa’ type. Ata on the other hand is also guilty of overlooking the validity of Tu’ivakano’s notion of *ha’a* as having originated from the Sāmoan *Sa*. However, the fact that neither of the two enumerations identifies the difference of each other’s distinctiveness is ‘really’ the case at hand.

A theory of *hierarchy* and *stratification* must offer a way of ordering the facts in such a manner that it does not diminish the significance of some or ignore others. It must therefore be *comparative* and ‘*refractive*’ also. Most of the studies regarding the structure of Ancient Tongan society have either diminished or ignored the significance of *history* in particular and that of *change* in general or at times both. Moreover, I argue that the apparent difficulty faced by contemporary anthropologists, in their recent attempt to historicise written ethnographies, has largely to do with methodological failure. To be comparative is not at present reliable enough as far as method is concerned, although it is *really* a theoretical necessity, but to be

‘refractive’ is certainly a historical necessity.<sup>35</sup> That statement requires qualification because *scientific* research method, especially comparative method, sometimes tends to exhibit failures untypical of scientific discourses.

The very same thing must apply to the study of *social classes* in ancient Tonga. The understanding of hierarchy and stratification in Tonga has been challenged, debated and rethought in recent years due particularly to, and in the last decade and a half and in particular, for our purpose here, the ‘*ha’a system*’ or, in my view, the Tongan *ha’a systems*. This plural emphasis is very significant to the task pursued in this work; it holds the key to the greatest riddle behind the whole business of misconceiving hierarchy and stratification in pre-contact Tongan society. As far as we can see, anthropologists and historians have led us to believe that there is no real danger in speaking of ha’a as a quintessential ‘singularity’ despite the fact that indigenous informants are quite divided in defining the concept, and even members of the chiefly classes do offer competing views also with regard to the question of what ha’a *really* is. That is, to assume that a society has only one system in operation is certainly a mistake as there is more than one complexity inherent in every social situation and unless one considers that logical possibility such historical facts would remain hidden. To speak of two ha’a systems in Tonga is almost impossible to accept unless a more informed reading of history is conducted, as I have done here, critically. The ‘refractive’ analysis now has rescued us by opening up alternative avenues to which the other ha’a system could be traced. It is safe to say at this point that such a system (*ha’a*) does exist in various Polynesian societies but it cannot be perceived as having the same content and form. Take Sa, for example, as a way of organising people in Sāmoa – it differs in principle from the Tongan ha’a but is similar in many ways to the *haapu* of the New Zealand Maoris.

Hierarchy in Tonga is a very complex state of affairs and likewise the issue of stratification is equally the same. Such complexity is attributed to the arbitrary nature of its traditional ‘ranking system’ and as well as the *cardinal* principles inherent in it. However, the real issue that needs special qualification here is whether or not such complexity is evidenced by the constant profusion of theories offered regarding the ‘*true*’ nature of traditional class structure in ancient Tonga. Early accounts on the subject commonly depict early Tonga

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<sup>35</sup> The term *refractive* is my own coinage; it is devised as an alternative method in contrast to that of ‘comparative’ measurement. This method takes society as a prism in which the colours refracted from it are representative of different cultural traditions that have originally not pertained to the host culture but have been already part of the integrated social network. That is of course if there is an existing foreign influence, which has survived the test of ‘time’, it could still be identified as distinct in a number of ways from other traditions that exhibit features of the same origin. Refractive method functions to harness any comparative task in terms of identifying changes in the light of historical development. In contrast with the bold result typical of comparative enterprises, refractive method-as an extension of comparative method, manages to remedy the ahistorical stagnancy inherent in comparative tradition.



as one of the most hierarchical, stratified and highly centralised societies in Polynesia (see Kirch 1984, Sahlins 1958, Goldman 1970 and also Latukefu 1974).

There is only one way to understand the logic behind the Tu'i Kanokupolu social and political practices. That means we have to take a short detour to *Upolu* in order to learn the background of those who accompanied Tohu'ia and Ngata to Tonga. The national search for a centralised ruler in *Upolu* around 1500 AD (the "tafa'i fa" movement) was instigated by an ambitious demigod *Nafanua* of Falealupo. Safata and other political centres in the Tuamasanga district were given newly created sacred chiefs to serve. At the said period, there were only two sacred beings (kings) in the Upolu dominion, i.e. the Tu'i A'ana in Le'ulumoega and the Tu'i Atua in Lufilufi (both are referred to as Papa Tane – sacred male personage). Holders of the Papa Tane titles are designated Ali'i Pa'ia a socio-religious status that was comparable only to that of the Tu'i Tonga as imperial ruler and previously Tupu of Sāmoa.

Tuamasaga situates itself at the heart of Upolu between A'ana to the west and Atua to the east and its ruling chief is the warrior king Malietoa who was by tradition ranked lower than Ali'i Pa'ia. The title Malietoa is classed as "ao" by contrast to that of the Papa type. It is for this reason that Malietoa La'auli pronounced in his *mavaega* that from his daughters, Gatoa'itele and Gasoloai'ao'olelagi, the status of Papa Fafine would spring up to be recognised as great mothers (Queens) of all Sāmoa. In fulfilling the (final) wish of Malietoa, Tuamasaga created new Ali'i Pa'ia; as such Gatoa'itele was made a Papa Fafine title at Afega and the other at Safata with the title Tamasōali'i. That means the former high chiefs of these places were forced by the situation to hold secondary roles under their new sovereign. Following the traditional protocol prescribed for the office of Ali'i Pa'ia, Afega chose a pair of tafa'i, Fata and Maulolo (ceremonial protector) for Gatoa'itele and likewise i.e. Fuga and Mauava were chosen as tafa'i of Tamasōali'i in Safata. On the other hand, Umaga and Pasese served as tafa'i of the Tu'i A'ana while Tupa'i and Ta'inau were the protectors of the Tu'i Atua. In short, the four-ali'i pa'ia of Upolu each had a pair of tafa'i, a faleupolu (political advisors formed of titled chiefs) and a fono (comprised of all titled chiefs in the district).

Evidently, Ama the former high chief of Safata made an effort to avoid this political transition but he was well defeated by the Alataua (supporters of the new sovereign). It is therefore possible to conclude that Ama's vision was to get support from Tonga in order to restore himself to his rightful place in Safata.

For the sake of analytical clarity, and to avoid continuous repetition of earlier suggestions about the infiltration of the Tu'itonga political system by the alien structure of the Sāmoan 'Matai' system, I must specify some of the elements that distinguished the authentic Tongan political practices from the unique features of the Tu'ikanokupolu quasi-Sāmoan practices. Let's concentrate on the structural formation of the Tu'ikanokupolu polity first. Ngata (the first Tu'ikanokupolu) was installed, as a sacred Sāmoan Chief (Ali'i Pa'ia) by his strong Sāmoan constabulary. In fact, the Tu'i Kanokupolu was hierarchically understood, in the eyes of the two senior Tongan kingly lines (TT & TH), as a *hau* whose rank was that of a prince. But, since the Tu'itonga and the Tu'iha'atakalaua had no special involvement in or major contribution to the establishment of the new *hau* there was a great autonomy for Ngata and his Sāmoan followers to indulge in a great measures of independence in wielding their political statement in their own way.

Strong evidence (sketched above) suggests that the elements involved in Ngata's investiture had nothing of Tongan origin in them. He was given two ceremonial protectors *Tafa'i* (*ha'a Latuhifo of the 'ulutolu*), a council of titled chiefs *Fale'upolu* (*Falekanokupolu*) and a set of 'titled' talking chiefs who formed a village government *Faleha'akili* (*fono*). None of these offices are characteristic of the political makeup of the other two royal lines in the ancient polity of Tonga. As a result, a Sāmoan political system was beginning in Tonga and it gradually developed into full maturity in a very short period. That is, by the time of the 4<sup>th</sup> Tu'i Kanokupolu (1680) the Sāmoan political system of the Tu'i Kanokupolu had spread its wings all over Tonga and things have never been the same again to this day. There is a huge difference between the political structure of Tonga and that of its Sāmoan counterpart. Basically, the central mechanism that propels the continuity of power and authority in Sāmoan society is 'titles'. This is the 'spirit' of the livelihood of all Sāmoans. Tuagalu (1988) discusses the difficulties that persistently disallowed any possibility of unifying Sāmoa under a centralised polity. According to Tuagalu the political history of Sāmoa exemplifies the fact that the 'title system' or *matai* always played a great part in fostering disunity at all levels of governmental bodies, *itu* (national), *nu'u* (district) and *aiga* (family).

As a matter of fact, it is Tuagalu's discussion of Sāmoan politics and title systems that really led me to successfully link the oddity of the Tu'ikanokupolu political system in Tonga with its historical origin in Safata. However, one must fully understand the dynamics in which Sāmoan politics is anchored and the natural fluidity of its political system to realise the compelling resemblance exhibited by the organisational pattern of the Tu'i Kanokupolu political establishment in Tonga. Again, the Sāmoan origin of Ngata's followers is no secret to leading historians of Tonga but what they have consistently and constantly

overlooked is the uncommonness of the political bodies formed under the dictates of ‘title’ hierarchy in the Kanokupolu chieftainship in contrast to that practiced by the Tu’i Tonga and the Tu’i Ha’atakalaua.

Ama’s Sāmoan influence did in fact bring a whole set of (foreign) cultural tradition to Tonga which in the end has sparked great confusion about the meaning and practice of a number of ancient institutions. ‘*Eiki*, *ha’a* and *kāinga* in particular have troubled most Tonganologist revisionists for more than a decade now and the current debate highlight the underlying problems faced by these scholars. Historians and anthropologists are divided in conceptualising and defining the aforementioned concepts but let’s look first at the term ‘*eiki* because it is by far the most debated concept which still confuses a great number of Tongan traditionalists let alone the misconceptions offered by their European counterparts on the other hand. At the risk of repeating earlier arguments, differences of opinion among Tongan traditionalists and non-Tongan commentators with regard to these concepts have vindicated the fact that evidence provided in defence of one view or the other are not at all irrelevant but necessary for there exists two socio-political systems within one society: the authentic Tongan social system and the Sāmoan Matai ‘title-system’

Bott (1982), speaks of ‘*eiki* in the context of the Sāmoan *Ali’i* ranking so typical of the Tu’i Kanokupolu structural political organisation though she does not even know that very fact herself. Likewise, Kerry James addresses some issues central to the current debate regarding the true meaning and definition of ‘*eiki*. She has quoted Bott’s description of the qualitative nature of ‘*eiki* as she literally translates *Sino’i* ‘*eiki* as ‘chiefly in body’ which really corresponds with the Tu’i Tonga caste ranking. Again, like Bott, James does not know that her position truly represents the Tu’itonga socio-religious system. As such, Tongan informants have suggested that *Sino’i* ‘*eiki* can be better rendered as ‘intrinsic ‘*eiki*’ or ‘chiefly essence’. Although these definitions pinpoint what I consider to be the authentic Tongan ‘*eiki* which is not attached to the significance of ‘title’ or any designated label, it amazed me really to see that such emphasis like “intrinsic” and the like is attached to status of this kind where there is no need to distinguish one ‘*eiki* from the other.

Once one is born into the ‘*eiki* class it is unnecessary to emphasise status but it appears to be the case that such emphasis was made as a natural reaction to the status of its ‘titled’ counterparts [the Sāmoan produce] when in so many ways some of them were low born individuals. In the case of understanding the concept of *Kāinga*, Latukefu (1968) pointed out that the term in one sense refers to all the people who are living in a chief’s estate a meaning that directly coincided with the quasi-Sāmoan socio-political organisation. The

term in its authentic application refers only to people who are related by blood. We can see here the unusual ability of the Tongan social system to sustain the coexistence of two entirely different systems at one time.

## Chapter 6

### Responses of the Indigenous Polity

I have suggested that the strength of the Hihifo government grew at a pace that the *Tu'i Tonga* and the *Tu'i Ha'atakalaua* could not have ignored as time went by. The numerous titles conferred during *Ngata's* investiture as *Tu'i hihifo* definitely constituted a significant revolution in its own right, since it was the first time in Tongan history for a foreign protocol to be formally conducted on Tongan soil unopposed. Furthermore, the bestowal of new titles on four of *Ngata's* sons was a direct sign that the matai system was worming its way slowly into the root of the new political system. As mentioned earlier, this was the first leg of a continuous process that proved uncontrollable after the first hundred years.

*Tu'i Tonga Uluakimata* must have foreseen what was going to happen should they just knowingly loosen their grip on the sacred status that they had striven to maintain for centuries by doing nothing about the hihifo matai establishment. I have a feeling that the traditional wisdom that had buttressed the survival of the *Tu'i Tonga* line for centuries was instrumental in *Uluakimata's* counter-hegemonic manoeuvre to create the new title *Tu'i Tonga fefine* for his daughter. It is evident that the *Tu'i Tonga* realised that the *Tu'i Ha'atakalaua* had unleashed a 'deadly virus' to roam the unassailable 'Troy-like' wall that had always withstood the test of time. Tonga had had a centralised state ever since *Aho'eitu* created his maritime empire around 450 AD. The next nine *Tu'i Tonga* had residences in Sāmoa and actually lived there for centuries. Sāmoan politics were no secret to the *Tu'i Tonga* and after the less experienced *Tu'i Ha'atakalaua* out-muscled him in competing for the Sāmoan taupou *Tohu'ia*, he found himself to be politically powerless but remained wittingly superior towards his counterpart.

The *Tu'i Tonga* now resorted to arming ideology as a weapon to counter the possible advances of the Matai development. It is more than obvious that the *Tu'i Tonga* could not have direct influence on hihifo politics and I believe that he had no interest in repairing the damage that the *Tu'i Ha'atakalaua* had caused either, but history itself shows that *Uluakimata* went beyond politics to achieve a counter hegemony that was well camouflaged and indeed bloodless. His daughter *Sinaitakala-i-langileka* was given a special rank which entitled her to *Tu'i Tonga fefine* status. Such status was ideologically harnessed to outrank the *Tu'i Tonga* himself and after she had become so high in rank, no Tongan was permitted to marry her (Rutherford, 1977: 38). I believe that *Uluakimata* had also foreseen that titled high chiefs of hihifo would seek the hand of his daughter as wife which would have produced for them issues that would have outranked his sacred office in

the near future. For Uluakimata, the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua could not dismantle the grown organism that was carefully incubated by the matai system in hihifo and to dispossess the matai chiefs of highborn heirs was the only means that could weaken its powerful advances. Genealogy shows that the successions of Tu'i Tonga fefine married Fijian chiefs instead because they were free of the tapu imposed on Tongan subjects especially the hihifo chiefs. The Tu'i Ha'atakalaua could marry those daughters of the Tu'i Tonga who were not restricted by the high title of Tu'i Tonga fefine and whose offspring would be lesser in rank.

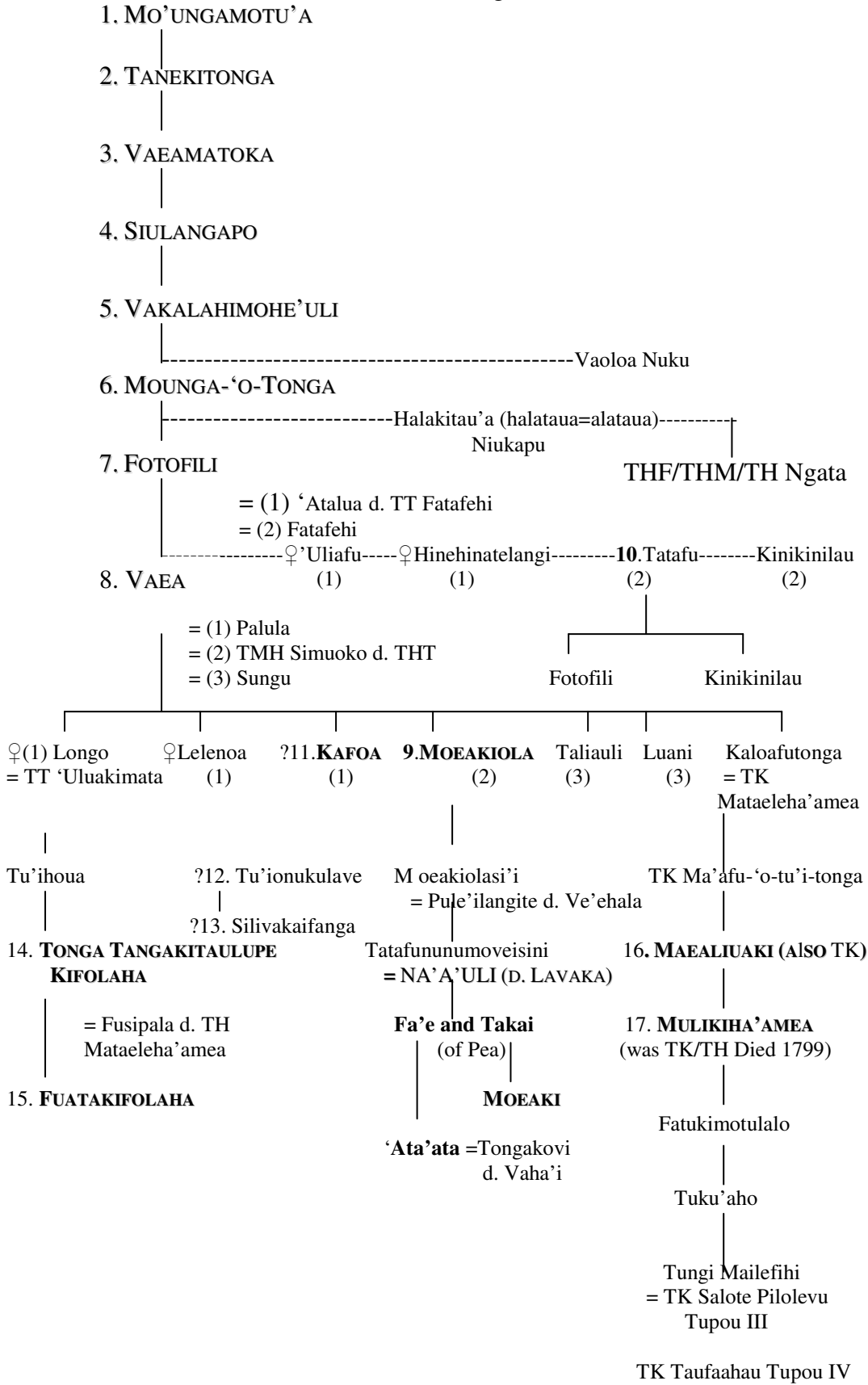
One of the schemes that the Tu'i Tonga forcefully executed later on was to put an end to any formal connection with Sāmoa especially marriage arrangements. Sinaitakala's marriage to the Fijian chief Tapu'osi was the beginning of a new tradition where the issue of that union would marry the next Tu'i Tonga fefine. After four generations of this practice descendants grew in numbers and maintained high status that even the hihifo chiefs recognised and revered. It is said that the first-born male of such union was conferred with a high title Tu'i Lakepa (Tu'i of Lakeba of the Lau islands, Fiji) an honour inherited from the founding father of that line. Members of this foreign house are referred to as falefisi (house of Fiji). As this house has multiplied it has born a number of new titles known today as Tu'i Ha'ateiho and Tu'i Afitu and together with the Tu'i Lakepa they still top the ranking hierarchy as demonstrated in Queen Salote's Lo'au taumafakava in 1959 and the taumafakava for the coronation of HM Siaosi V in 2008.

The creation of the Tu'i Lakepa and later on the Tu'i Ha'ateiho and Tu'i Afitu was not as argued by Bott (1982) in order that such titles would represent the presence of an exclusive group of foreigners whose ultimate purpose was to provide spouses for the Tu'i Tonga fefine. The practice of marrying the Tu'i Tonga fefine to descendants of the original union of Tapu'osi and Sinaitakala-'i-langileka was to avoid repeating the complex marriage arrangements practiced by Tu'i Tonga with so many high families in Sāmoa, which in the long run would bring the same irreversible situation that was confronted by TH Mo'ungatonga. By keeping kinship close through first cousin marriages, challenges would be easier to control. The Tu'i Tonga managed to control the possible advances exhibited by the Hihifo matai development towards his status and rank by dispossessing them from gaining a Tu'i Tonga fefine to enhance and catapult their status even more. I can see that the Tu'i Tonga was using the same principle to control the extent to which the status hierarchy springing from the foreign Falefisi could reach. The Tu'i Tonga fefine's eldest child would become sacred and if she was a girl she would rank higher than both the Tu'i Tonga and the Tu'i Tonga fefine if she were a girl.

This basic equation does not guarantee that a *tamahā* (the sacred child of the union between the Tu'i Tonga fefine and the Falefisi) would be borne in every generation. In that sense, the Tu'i Tonga would not be troubled with performing certain required rituals when the *tamahā* was present. Furthermore, the *tamahā* was the ultimate ranked status within the same equation, which automatically restricted her offspring from inheriting the same honour she had as a sacred being. Apparently, the highest being in the Tongan ranking hierarchy was allowed to marry the Hihifo high chief-Tu'i Kanokupolu. This is an unusual formula, which has the logic of denying the Tu'i Kanokupolu access to marry the Tu'i Tonga fefine who is considered lower than her sacred child while on the other hand her sacred child is then lowered by bringing Tu'i Kanokupolu to father them. Only in this *modus operandi* did the Tu'i Tonga manage to maintain his status unchanged by outranking both the hihifo chiefs and also the descendants of his extraordinary niece the *tamahā*.

This counter hegemony devised by the Tu'i Tonga may not have had a great impact in achieving political supremacy of any kind and may not even have earned him access to actual power *per se* but it certainly was an accomplishment in balancing out tendencies that could have threatened the status and rank of his sacred office, the epitome of Tongan society, on an ideological level.

Figure 6







Likewise, the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua eventually sensed the threat of being challenged during the rule of TH Vaea around 1630. Apparently, there was a showdown for political supremacy between the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tu'i Kanokupolu *Mataletu'apiko* and the 8<sup>th</sup> Tu'i Ha'atakalaua *Vaea*, which would have been taken as a clash between two independent polities but the fact that both contenders were married to *tamahā* suggests a different cause for the said conflict. *Mataletu'apiko* married *TM Tu'imala*<sup>36</sup> and *Vaea* eventually married *TM Simuoko*<sup>37</sup>. The alleged war mildly represents major changes that have been overlooked for so long. Such changes occurred almost simultaneously and were caused by a single event, i.e. the establishment of the *Tu'i hihifo*.

The creation of Ngata as Tu'i hihifo led to the establishment of a political system that historians have not thought of as an alien form of social and political organisation. On the contrary, as I will demonstrate, it differs a lot from the traditional politics practiced on Tongan soil by the older Tu'i Tonga and Tu'i Ha'atakalaua lineages. First, the bestowal of titles on TK Ngata's sons had made an impact on both social and political organisations in Tonga. The eldest son Vakalepu was given the title 'Ahio, a Fijian name for the beautiful shell that was used as the main decoration for a double hulled canoe (*Kalia*) called the *Hifofua*, which was brought as a gift to Ngata. On the second son Leilua was bestowed the title *Ve'ehala*, while the third son *Atamata'ila* became Tu'i Kanokupolu and his title is no longer remembered. *Kaumavae* was the fourth son and he was bestowed with the title *Ata* and the youngest son's name is no known but he was titled *Kapukava*. These titled sons of TK Ngata started to divide hihifo under their control. *Ahio* is said to have established himself as paramount chief of 'Eua. This is the first time in Tongan history where we can find a record of people and land being divided into estates where titled persons ruled as landlords.

The crystallising of titled authority on particular estates like *Kolopelu* (that become known later as *Kolovai*) under *Ata*, *Fahefa* under high chief *Ve'ehala*, and 'Eua under 'Ahio must have been, in the eyes of the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua, a direct undermining of his authority. TK *Atamata'ila* is said to have expanded the interests of the *ha'a Ngata motu'a* into central *Tongatapu* (Campbell 1992 and 1995). Obviously, the ambitious advances made by the titled chiefs of hihifo in dividing up the Western districts of *Tongatapu* would have been monitored carefully for three generations by the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua.

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<sup>36</sup> TMH *Tu'imala* was the first *tamahā*, her mother *Sinaitakala-i-langileka* happened to be the first Tu'i Tonga *fefine*.

<sup>37</sup> TMH *Simuoko* is the daughter THT *Tungimana'ia* and TTF *Sinaitakala-i-Lotunofu*. She is the first *Tamahā* from the Tu'i Ha'ateiho line of the *Falefisi*.

Campbell stated that it was TK Mataeleha'amea who fought TH Vaea. He may have got his information from a reliable source but there are different versions of what actually occurred at the time and genealogy suggests strongly that it was TK Mataeletu'apiko who fought TH Vaea. There is a single piece of evidence that is significant for us to look at in determining who Tu'i Ha'atalaua Vaea confronted in the said war. It is true that TK Mataeleha'amea was a very ambitious young chief, which is evidenced by his success over his elder brothers in claiming the Tu'i Kanokupolu kingship but then again it was his father's ambition that attracted TH Vaea's attention. Because TK Mataeletu'apiko created a new ha'a (the Ha'a Havea lineage) for his sons does this mean more territory will be occupied by titled chiefs of this new lineage should they succeed? As such, Mataeletu'apiko bestowed titles on ten of his sons that really outnumbered the titles created by the 'ha'a Ngata Motu'a: i.e. ha'a Havea-lahi = Ma'afutuku-i-'aulahi, Vuna, Fohe, Vaea, Tu'ivakano, Lavaka and Fielakepa, and ha'a Havea-si'i i.e. Ika, Maka and Tu'ihalamaka. Instead of naming this lineage after the founder it is named after a Tu'i Tonga Havea (ua) who undertook the difficult task of fetching stones from Uvea to build a tomb for his father TT Lomi'aetupu'a.

According to Kioa, high chief of Ha'utu in Tongatapu, Haveaua was a son of the Tu'i Tonga and a daughter of the Tu'i Uvea and in the process of transporting stones from Uvea the navigators used twin stars (ongo Ma'afu i.e. Ma'afulele and Ma'afutoka) as guide for the continuous journey they had to make. His first son was born during this time and he was duly named Ma'afutuku'i'aulahi after the guiding stars and after the way the great kalia 'Lomipeau' bashed through the huge waves of the ocean. This legendary boat is said to be higher than the two highest volcanic mountains in the Tonga group. Ancient songs in Uvea describe the size of 'Lomipeau' in the same way it is told in Tongan folk traditions. Kioa also mentioned that other sons of TT Haveaua were named after the main parts of the kalia i.e. Fohe (refers to the rudder), Vaea (refers to the breaking of huge waves), Tu'ivakano (stands for the commander or captain of the boat), Lavaka (stands for the lateen shaped sail) and Fielakepa (sea water collected inside the boat). He believes that TK Mataeletu'apiko used these names as titles with a view to overshadowing the rank of the 'ha'a Ngata motu'a' titles; naming the new lineage after a Tu'i Tonga who had made a mark in history would elevate the status of his line over and above the status of the original line of Tu'i Kanokupolu. And what is more appropriate than borrowing the names of TT Haveaua's sons as titles for his male children<sup>38</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> Kioa Tomu of Ha'utu believes that TT HaveaII's sons were in this order of seniority, Ma'afu was the eldest and then Fohe, Vaea, Tu'ivakano, Lavaka and Fielakepa 1995, 1998, 2003, 2008 (Personal interviews).

TH Vaea must have been more intimidated than annoyed by the creation of the new hihifo lineage, which was the second in only three generations among TK Ngata's descendants. It is said that there was another lineage (ha'a) created by the second Tu'i Kanokupolu Atamata'ila but it must have been unsuccessful in view of the failure to maintain titles that were created (or not) as there are no known titles traceable to the 'ha'a Atamata'ila' which is still mentioned in the traditions of the royal kava ceremony of the Tu'i Kanokupolu. Whatever happened TH Vaea responded to this matai development by conferring titles on his sons possibly to hold on to the dominion that he ruled. His eldest son Kafoa did not succeed him and it appears also that he was not titled. Perhaps there was a thought that his senior position would make him automatic choice for his father's title, a practice that was consistent with the kauhala'uta tradition, but in the event his younger half brother Moeakiola was appointed before him.

Some traditions assert that Kafoa waged war against Moeakiola in a bid to acquire the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua title for himself and his descendants, but Kafoa was badly defeated and perhaps that was the reason why he was left without a title. The rest of TH Vaea's sons were bestowed with titles: Talia'uli, Luani and Falekaono. This lineage (Ha'a Vaea) is the first case in the line of the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua. Bott (1982) suggests that there were ha'a Vakalahimohe'uli descendants of the fifth Tu'i Ha'atakalaua; a ha'a Mo'ungatonga, which is believed to be the first title used by TK Ngata; and a ha'a Fotofili named after the seventh Tu'i Ha'atakalaua (a half brother of Ngata), but I doubt that very much for two reasons. First, there was previously no lineage formed in the Sāmoan tradition by the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua since the inception of this royal line five generations prior to the creation of the Tu'i Hihifo that later became Tu'i Kanokupolu. Second, the ethnic origin of the population that was scattered around the hihifo district was predominantly Fijian and it is impossible to imagine these people practicing something that had no root in their cultural tradition i.e. a lineage comprised of titled chiefs.

The fact that earlier leaders of the hihifo community were ritually required to lean their back against the body of a sacred koka tree (as the most significant part of the installation ceremony by which the legitimating of his authority as ruler was finalised) is a practice found only in Fiji. In view of these reasons I would argue that the possible existence of a ha'a Vakalahimohe'uli, ha'a Mo'ungatonga and ha'a Fotofili could only be late developments which are likely to have coincided with TH Vaea's response to the matai establishment. It is also possible that these assumed Ha'atakalaua lineages were created in tandem with TH Vaea's lineage but their efforts proved futile as no known titles have survived to this day from those lineages.

Suffice it to say that Campbell's identification of TK Mataeleha'amea as TH Vaea's opponent in the alleged war between the junior dynasties in Tonga is highly unlikely indeed. The best supporting evidence for my argument here is the fact that TH Vaea's younger brother Tatafu had a son Fotofili with the daughter of Tu'i Uvea and he was summoned back to Tonga by his father with a view to fulfilling duties that were asked of his lineage, quite possibly to make a useful contribution towards the conflict with TK Mataeletu'apiko. According to Bott (1982), Tatafu's many requests were utterly refused by the Tu'i Uvea. Bott also mentions that the Tu'i Tonga ordered the Tu'i Ha'atakalalua to send one of his people to Niuafou'ou with the purpose of levelling constant uprisings there and also to remain as ruler of that island. Tatafu asked his people to summon his son Fotofili again because he is useless for their cause in Tonga and if he is to lose his life in Niuafou it is no loss for them. This time the Tu'i Uvea did not hesitate to accept the proposal from Tatafu. Oral tradition describes Fotofili's success in his campaign in Niuafou'ou as nothing less than a fierce warrior and a cruel ruler, which earned him the nickname Fotofili fekai (the ferocious warrior).

According to the hihifo tradition, the Tu'i Ha'atakalalua's success in Niuafou'ou was not welcomed by the ha'a Ngata motu'a faction of the Tu'i Kanokupolu. It was an opportunity for them to make a mark for their lineage since the ha'a Havea had already stretched their might in testing the authority of the Tu'i Ha'atakalalua in Tongatapu. Evidently Ve'ehala the son of Leilua, one of the senior high chiefs of the ha'a Ngata Motu'a, sent his son Kaufusitu'a to challenge Fotofili. According to Honourable Fusitu'a (Alopea'ulu), the first Kaufusitu'a was the brother of the second holder of the Ve'ehala title and since he was also titled the Kaufusitu'a title is referred to as tehina (younger brother) of the Ve'ehala title only because of their sibling rank. However, Kaufusitu'a headed to Niuafou'ou to execute the order from ha'a Ngata motu'a but he ended up marrying the daughter of Fotofili and he remained there to monitor any further attempt by the Ha'atakalalua to assert their authority over the territory he won for his lineage.

The responses made by the Tu'i Tonga and the Tu'i Ha'atakalalua against the quasi-Samoan political influence unleashed through the matai system have had different results. The Tu'i Tonga was more creative in improvising with what tradition had on offer in time of need. His unparalleled wit had always surpassed every threat towards his authority and he answered the advance of the Tu'i Kanokupolu's political development with a *magnum opus* wherein status proved to withstand the test of time. The Tu'i ha'atakalalua on the other hand had no real success in dealing with the growing strength of the hihifo political expansion.



## Chapter 7

### Tupoumohefo and her political scheme

The *Sāmoan matai* model can be applied to provide a cogent explanation for events in Tonga's political history which have appeared "unnatural" to Wesleyan missionaries (John Thomas). These events have left historians "in the dark" as to motivation, and anthropologists in disagreement over the definition of institutions. The creation of *Ngata* as *Tu'i hihifo* has led to the establishment of a political system that historians had not thought of as an alien form of social and political organisation. On the contrary, as I will demonstrate, it differs a lot from the traditional politics practiced on *Tongan* soil by the older *Tu'i Tonga* and *Tu'i Ha'atakalaua* lineages.

*Tupoumohefo* is perhaps the most popular female figure in the post-contact history of *Tonga* for a number of reasons. She was a daughter of a *Tu'i Kanokupolu* and a wife of a *Tu'i Tonga*. Her father was TK *Tupoulahi* and her husband was TT *Paulaho* but these paramount chiefs were not the reason that made her popular. She catapulted her way into fame through the part she played in meddling with affairs that were traditionally assigned to men as discussed by most Historians especially Bott (1982). Most observers believe that she dethroned her father's full brother *Maealiuaki* as 8<sup>th</sup> *Tu'i Kanokupolu* in favour of her full brother *Tu'ihalafatai*. It is said that *Tupoumohefo* bestowed the less potent *Tu'i Ha'atakalaua* title on *Maealiuaki* instead.

TK *Tu'ihalafatai's* son *Tupoulahisi'i* succeeded his father as the 10<sup>th</sup> *Tu'i Kanokupolu* but he did not last for long and the Ha'a Havea bestowed the title on TK/TH *Maealiuaki's* son *Mulikiha'amea* and first cousin of *Tupoumohefo* but such a move seemed to anger her to the extent that she launched another hostile protest with which she dethroned *Mulikiha'amea* as she had done to his father before him, and likewise bestowed on him the *Tu'i Ha'atakalaua* title instead. This time she made her mind up to assume the *Tu'i Kanokupolu* title for herself. Apparently, she marched with her own forces comprised of warriors from her father's side to hihifo and demanded the presence of orator groups - who have the authority to confer the *Tu'i Kanokupolu* title - to conduct her investiture.

Tradition has it that she was approached to name her cousin *Mulikiha'amea Tu'i Kanokupolu* but she ultimately named herself (Herda, 1988: 99). Whatever the case might be she became the first female holder of the paramount title of *hihifo*. It appears that *Tupoumoheofo's* action was an attempt to exclude her father's lower ranking half brothers especially her aging uncle *Mumui* who had offspring that possessed undisputed leadership qualities that could not be ignored. The thought of loosing the *Tu'i Kanokupolu* title to a rival faction within her own family would have been a damaging blow and it remained a direct threat to another plot that she had instigated in her capacity as *Moheofo* of TT *Paulaho*.

*Tupoumoheofo* had status by an office that is not mentioned in either oral or written history. Apparently, the *quasi-Sāmoan* traditions of the *Tu'i Kanokupolu* would have been completely instilled in Hihifo during the reign of the first five generations from TK *Ngata* to TK *Ma'afu'-o-tu'itonga*. That therefore would have included the bestowal of status on a village maiden as the highborn virgin *taupou*; and it would have included the (itu) high district office of the *Sa'o Tama'ita'i* as the supreme head of the women's community *aualuma*. This Sāmoan practice is indicative of the high regard given to *Tu'utangahunuhunu* the daughter of TK *Atamata'ila* the second *Tu'i Kanokupolu* when she was taken to be wife of TT *Kau'ulufonua* whose principal wife was *Takala* the daughter of TH *Fotofili* (Bott 1982: 12). Although *Takala's* son succeeded his father as *Tu'i Tonga*, *Tu'utangahunuhunu's* son *Tafolo* was given a special status that distinguished him over and above the rest of the male descendents of the *Tu'i Tonga*, which were at the time called the *Sina'e*. He was given the honorary distinction of *Sina'e 'eiki* (the highest *Sina'e* status) a status that he alone has possessed to this day with his personal name as title.

As mentioned before, the *Tu'i Tonga* line had been copying every significant development produced in the court of the *Tu'i Kanokupolu*. There were known male offspring of various *Tu'i Tonga* in the past that are today bestowed with titles like *Tamale* of *Niutoua*, *Manumu'a* of *'Eua* and a few others but while their status as *Sina'e* may be traced to an ancient origin the titles were in use for the first time right after the establishment of the *hihifo* title system.

Two generations after the creation of *Ngata's* office, a surprising change took place in the *kauhala'uta* traditional hierarchy system when *Tafolo* was elevated to the highest *Sina'e* status. This of course was unheard of at the time especially for the *Sina'e* who were themselves *'eiki* in essence to be lowered in status by the creation of an extraordinary status for one of them as their leader. My gut feeling is that *Tafolo's* mother was seen as the highest lady of the Hihifo district in her capacity as ceremonial head of the women's



community (*Sa'o tama'ita'i*) and furthermore her son was also given a personal *toutai* title (navigator/fisherman) a privilege that was reserved only for holders of the three kingly lines. Apparently, *Tu'utangahunuhunu* was also taken as wife of a prominent *Tu'i Ha'atakalaua* leader *Tatafu* and it was their son *Paku* that became Tafolo's *toutai*. None of the other Sina'e is known to have had a personal *toutai* navigator/fisherman.

Gunson has suggested that *Tupoumoheofo* actually outranked her husband TT *Paulaho*. This is a very interesting point, as we can tell from the family background of *Laumanukilupe* (*Paulaho's* mother) that she is a daughter of *Tupouto'a* a younger brother of TK *Ma'afu-'o-tu'itonga*. It is not only that *Tupouto'a* was not a *Tu'i Kanokupolu* but also his descent is junior in line and status to the direct offspring of TK *Ma'afu-'o-tu'itonga* whose son and successor TK *Tupoulahi* was in turn *Tupoumoheofo's* father. This is a sound reason for suggesting an inferior side in TT *Paulaho's* heritage by comparison with *Tupoumoheofo's* *Tu'i Kanokupolu* genealogical lineage. However, the fact that TT *Paulaho* was not a son of a *moheofo* does not count once he holds the sacred office of the *Tu'i Tonga*. As *Tu'i Tonga*, *Paulaho* outranked the holders of the *Tu'i Ha'atakalaua* and *Tu'i Kanokupolu* titles and that principle was applied to everyone else other than the *Tamahā*, *Tu'i Tonga fefine* and *falefisi* title holders. This basic principle would invalidate Gunson's argument. Then again, the fact that the *Tu'i Tonga* title had been controlled by the *Tu'i Kanokupolu* is another matter that most historians have not been able to grasp in reading *Tongan* history.

The best example for this new development is laid out in the case of *Ma'ulupekotofa* and *Pau*. While *Ma'ulupekotofa's* mother '*Anaukihesina* was in my view the *moheofo* of TT *Tu'ipulotu-'i-langitu'oteau* it did not guarantee him the succession to his father's title. Instead, it was *Pau* the younger half brother whose mother was only a *fokonofa* who was appointed by the *Tu'i Kanokupolu* as *Tu'i Tonga*. The answer to this puzzle (that is, why *Pau* managed to eclipse his older brother) may lie in *Ma'ulupekotofa's* choice to marry the high-ranking lady *Mo'unga-'o-lakepa* from the *Tu'ilakepa* line of the *falefisi* clan. I have a gut feeling that *Ma'ulupekotofa* would have felt that the *Tu'i Tonga* office was at risk of being out powered or even abolished by the *Tu'i Kanokupolu* administration in the long run and the only way out of the apparent threat therefore was to upgrade the status of his lineage so that the *Tu'i Kanokupolu* influence over their family could be lessened or at best ended. It is possible also that *Ma'ulupekotofa* hoped to instigate a new tradition of acquiring *moheofo* for the *Tu'i Tonga* from the *falefisi* lineage in order to maintain the prestige and sacred status of that office and also to distance the connection with the *Tu'i Kanokupolu*. Whatever the reasons for *Ma'ulupekotofa's* motives in marrying for rank, the strategy proved to be his own downfall. He had the

perfect credentials to succeed his father as his mother was a *moheofo* and her brother *Tupoulahi* was the current *Tu'i Kanokupolu* at the time. *Tupoumoheofo* as the high-ranking lady of *Kauhalalalo* was the best candidate for *Ma'ulupekotofa's moheofo*. In *Paulaho's* case, his connection to the *Tu'i Kanokupolu* ruling line was not strong as his mother belonged to a junior line whose influence could not have been recognised. But it was *Pau* who married *Tupou Moheofo*, and *Pau* who became *Tu'i Tonga*.

Suffice it to say that the only conclusion that can be drawn from the relationship between the *Tu'i Tonga* and the *Tu'i Kanokupolu* is that the former was no longer allowed the liberty to change or modify tradition as he pleased anymore while the latter was truly in control of every facet of political matters in society. In this respect, the eldest daughter of the *Tu'i Kanokupolu* cannot be conceived of as becoming a secondary wife to a contender to the *Tu'i Tonga* title especially when the first wife utterly outranked her. So the idea of marrying *Tupoumoheofo* to *Ma'ulupekotofa* with a view of becoming *moheofo* when he was installed as *Tu'i Tonga* is quite a huge gamble to undertake in view of *Mo'unga-'o-lakepa's* superior status. I therefore argue here that the reason for conferring the *Tu'i Tonga* title on *Paulaho* was that he had no wife of superior rank and *Tupoumoheofo* was without doubt going to be his *moheofo* and ultimately the mother of the next *Tu'i Tonga*. It is clearly apparent that the *Tu'i Kanokupolu* would have preferred the heir to the *Tu'i Tonga* title to be a son of a *moheofo*, not from a different lineage but from the ruling *Kanokupolu* line.

That can be the only explanation for the break in primogeniture tradition inherent in the succession of the *Tu'i Tonga* line. *Paulaho's* appointment was indeed a surprise but the outcome is most revealing, as whoever married *Tupoumoheofo* would certainly be the next *Tu'i Tonga*. *Tu'i Tonga Paulaho* was the victim of power play in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Tradition speaks a little about *Paulaho's* appointment and especially the harsh treatment given to him by his wife. Bott, Campbell, Latukefu, Rutherford, Herda and James have discussed how *Tupoumoheofo* attempted to install her son *Fuanunuiava* the title of *Tu'i Tonga* while his father *Pau* was still alive. In the eyes of tradition her actions were seen as utter disregard for the sacred office of the *Tu'i Tonga* by trying to elevate someone as co-regent or worse still to de-throne the current holder in favour of his own son who was still a young boy. Traditionally, there is sacred knowledge that must be passed on to every *Tu'i Tonga* and to have a boy installed to the office without achieving all necessary credentials expected of a ruler would be a joke for the *Falefā* and certainly for the whole of society. But what could be the reason behind *Tupoumoheofo's* action. ?

There are some obvious reasons that could explain this mystery. The possible theory that *Ma'ulupekotofa* had instigated a plan to acquire the *moheofa* from the *falefisi* had surely gained some kind of support undoubtedly from *Kauhala'uta* and part of his mother's family, amongst whom may have been *Maealiuaki* the younger brother of TK *Tupoulahi*. There must have been divisions among *Ma'ulupekotofa's* mother's lineage when *Paulaho* was appointed ahead of him. It must be mentioned here that the eldest son of TT *Tu'ipulotu-'i-langi-tu'o-teau* and '*Anaukihesina* was not *Ma'ulupekotofa* but *Manumataongo* but he was of no significance as far as history is concerned and this apparent irregularity in the *Tu'i Tonga* practice of primogeniture has to do with the *matai* influence propagated by the *Kanokupolu* political administration at the time. The *moheofa* tradition had been in place for only two generations and major changes abruptly appeared in the third generation.

It is more than possible that *Manumataongo* would have been objected to the idea of marrying his first cousin *Tupoumoheofa* or he just fell into the trend of following his heart which in most cases utterly erased his existence from the political scene altogether. *Ma'ulupekotofa's* choice of wife on the hand did keep his political ambition alive but not in a comfortable zone in the process. *Paulaho's* submission to the oppressive expectation of the *Tu'i Kanokupolu* regime earned him the sacred title by marrying the chosen *moheofa* i.e. TK *Tupolahi's* daughter. TK *Tupoumoheofa's* last toss of the dice to secure her son *Fuanunuiava's* future was skilfully executed by marrying him with *Tupoufalemei* the daughter of her own brother TK *Tu'ihalafatai*. This would settle the question of *moheofa* when her son is eventually appointed as *Tu'i Tonga*. As skilled schemer herself, *Tupoumoheofa* have to look for an acceptable backup *moheofa* should her niece would be forced by any political means in the process as the *Tu'i Kanokupolu* title at the time has uncertain future. She then brought TK/TH *Mulikiha'amea's* daughter *Palulongoteme* as secondary wife or *fokonofa* of *Tupoufalemei* (the intended *moheofa*).

These marriages could have been much secured in terms of having a *moheofa* and a spare from (her) immediate line as sons from these high ranking wives could one day become *Tu'i Tonga*. However, the unstoppable tide of *matai* politics would break anything that stands on its way no matter how solid its foundation is - if, of course, the method is also formidable in essence. *Tupoumoheofa* had sensed a possible counter to her plan and her guess was right her cousin *Tuku'aho* deposed her of the *Tu'i Kanokupolu* title and bestowing it on his father *Mumui*, who in turn happens to be *Tupoumoheofa's* uncle. Her ultimate fear became a sad reality on her part as *Tupouveiongo* the daughter of TK *Mumui* was married to *Fuanunuiava* and she overshadowed the other daughters of previous *Tu'i Kanokupolu*, two of which were *Mumui's* half

brothers. The intended mohefo and the spare both had no chances when the incoming wife was also a daughter of the ruling Tu'i Kanokupolu.

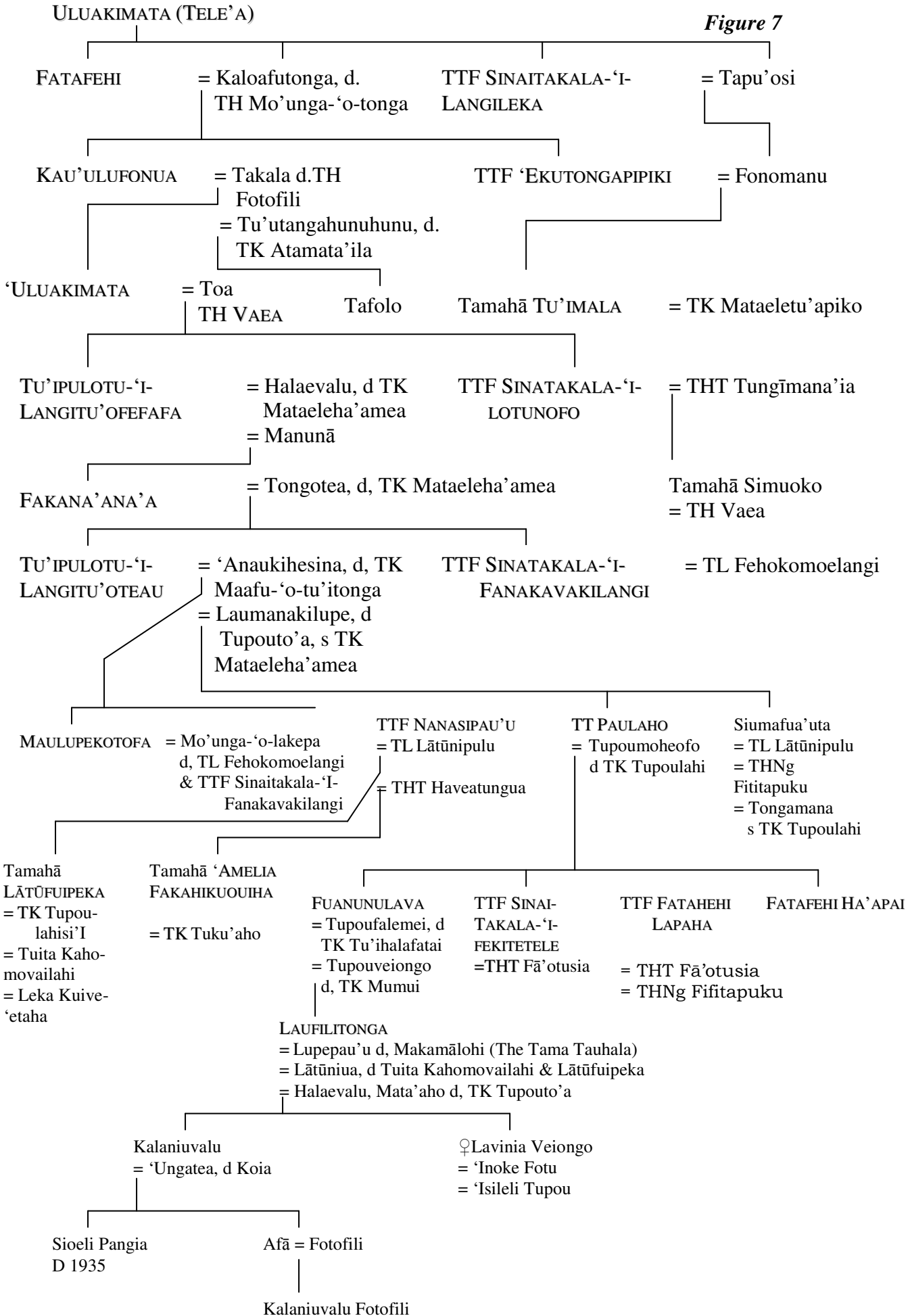
The first *mohefo* was *Halaevalumohefo* the eldest daughter of the 4<sup>th</sup> Tu'i Kanokupolu *Mataeleha'amea* who married TT *Tu'ipulotu'ilangitu'ofefafa* and she was the one who adopted the son of a secondary wife by the name of *Manuna* from *Ha'apai*. By this strategy she escaped the fate of being strangled and buried together with her husband because tradition prescribed that should the principal wife be barren then she would have no one to look after her plus the fact that she cannot remarry due to the tapu imposed on her and her fate therefore was sealed to accompany her husband. *Halaevalu's* adopted son *Fakana'ana'a* was appointed Tu'i Tonga. His mohefo was a younger sister of her adopted mother known as *Tongotea*. This was an effort to bind the descendants of *Fakana'ana'a* to *Halaevalumohefo's* lineage so that the next Tu'i Tonga would be well within the influence of the *Kanokupolu* chieftainships. His son *Tu'ipulotu'ilangitu'oteau* first married *Tu'ilokamana* a daughter of TK Vuna. Vuna was a full brother TK *Mataeleha'amea* the father of *Halaevalumohefo*. When brothers in the matai type chieftain happened to hold the Tu'i Kanokupolu title – at different times of course – their offspring would form separate lineages and this normally resulted in detaching mutual alliance in favour of each strengthening his own cause.

*Losaline Fatafehi* listed *Tu'ilokamana* as principal wife while referring to '*Anaukihesina* as *fokonofa* (secondary wife). If that was the case then TK *Vuna's* line would have been out-muscled by his younger brother's lineage that became king before him. This is a good illustration of how the quasi-Sāmoan system operates. I believe that if *Tu'ilokamana* was mohefo and the support for her son from her father's lineage was not strong enough then the possibility of rearranging the *mohefo* was a reality. This interpretation is supported by the fact that *Alaivahamama'o* the son of the assumed *mohefo* *Tu'ilokamana* is not cited in any source as a possible contender for succession in competition with *Ma'ulupekotofa* and *Pau*. TK *Vuna* was the last in his line to become Tu'i Kanokupolu; his descendants resorted to becoming Tu'i Vava'u instead but their bid for power was not successful there either. My argument here is supported by the fact that it was TK *Mataeleha'amea's* descendants based in *Hihifo* who had full control in determining the future of the Tu'i Kanokupolu title. Tu'i Kanokupolu *Mataeleha'amea's* son *Ma'afu-'o-tu'itonga* became Tu'i Kanokupolu as did his son *Tupoulahi*, daughter *Tupoumohefo*, grandson *Tu'ihalafatai*, and great grandson *Tupoulahisi'i* and also his full brother *Maealiuaki* and his nephew *Mulikiha'amea*.

As mentioned above *Mataeleha'amea's* direct descendants produced two full brothers (*Tupoulahi* and *Maealiuaki*) and a half brother (*Mumui*) as *Tu'i Kanokupolu*. But surprisingly, descendants of the full brothers seemed to exhibit an early split within the same lineage. This became manifest when TK *Tupoulahi* died. It looked as if the hihifo chiefs were responsible for the appointment of the younger brother *Maealiuaki* as successor of his elder brother. However, I believe that what happened after the appointment of *Maealiuaki* to the office of *Tu'i Kanokupolu* was a very interesting turning point in history where an uncle who held a kingly title was deposed by a niece who was a *mohefo* of the *Tu'i Tonga*. This event is well recorded in history (Bott 1982, Latukefu 1974 and 1975, Herda 1988, Campbell 1989 and 1992, Rutherford 1977) but the only point that is commonly shared by the authorities is that *Tupoumohefo* took precedence in her father's lineage by ensuring that the title was bestowed on her brother *Tu'ihalafatai* so that *Maealiuaki's* offspring could not have a firm grip on it as it would have proved difficult to get it back.

There is also the issue whereby the *Tu'i Ha'atakalaua* title was forced out of TH *Fuatakifolaha's* line that had successfully claimed the title through *Longo* a daughter TH *Vaea*. *Tu'i Ha'atakalaua Vaea* had another younger daughter *Kaloafutonga* who married TK *Mataeleha'amea* the paternal great grandfather of *Tupoumohefo*. The apparent strength of *Mataeleha'amea's* lineage made it possible for *Tupoumohefo* to bestow on her uncle *Maealiuaki* the *Tu'i Ha'atakalaua* title an honour that was almost worthless at the time and I wonder why *Manulevu* son of TH *Fuatakifolaha* did not object much to the takeover. The important issue here is this: if the *Tu'i Ha'atakalaua* was already worthless; why should *Tupoumohefo* bother to claim it for her own lineage? A possible answer would be that she was plotting a greater takeover. I believe that her intention was to usurp all the three kingly titles to be conferred on her son *Fuanunuiava*. But why should she think along these lines? It is possible that *Maealiuaki* was a real threat to her family on two fronts. First, if *Maealiuaki* had plotted with *Ma'ulupekotofa* to depose *Paulaho* then *Fuanunuiava's* future would definitely be uncertain. Second, should the *Tu'i Kanokupolu* title fall to *Maealiuaki's* line it would be difficult to get the support of other *Kanokupolu* lineages to restore the title back to her family. TK *Tupoumohefo* would have foreseen that either way the fate of TK *Tupoulahi's* lineage was destined to disappear from the political limelight: should *Ma'ulupekotofa* be appointed *Tu'i Tonga* or should *Mulikiha'amea* be appointed *Tu'i Kanokupolu*, her son *Fuanunuiava* would have no inheritance.

Figure 7



## Chapter 8

### TT Fuanunuiava's bizarre ambition

The family background of TT Fuanunuiava's parents is of great interest in the study of the political transformation that shook Tonga in late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Historians are still befuddled by the unfolding of a political reality in which the appointment of the Tu'i Tonga had deviated from the usual dictates of tradition. Apparently, TT Paulaho (the father of Fuanunuiava) and his half elder brother Ma'ulupekotofa were both related to Fuanunuiava's mother Tupoumohefo. As shown in [figure 7] Ma'ulupekotofa's mother was 'Anaukivesina a daughter of TK Ma'afu-'o-tu'itonga, who in turn was a full brother of Tupoumohefo's father TK Tupoulahi. Paulaho's mother Laumanukilupe was a daughter of Tupouto'a, a younger brother of TK Ma'afu-'o-tu'itonga. The oddity of appointing Paulaho as Tu'i Tonga was further compounded by not appointing his full sister Siumafua'uta as Tu'i Tonga fefine, to the utter humiliation of Pau.

More bizarre still, it was Ma'ulupekotofa's sister who was appointed Tu'i Tonga fefine. Now we have a Tu'i Tonga whose sister was not a Tu'i Tonga fefine alongside an elder half brother who was not even Tu'i Tonga at the time but whose full sister Nanasipau'u was Tu'i Tonga fefine. It is hard enough to comprehend a situation where Ma'ulupekotofa the eldest son of a mohefo was not given the Tu'i Tonga title but to confer the title on Pau a son of a fokonofa is almost unbelievable. Furthermore, TTF Nanasipau'u acquired the title according to a prescription that is consistent with traditional protocol of Kauhala'uta but again the overlooking of her full brother Ma'ulupekotofa from his traditional kingship right is another matter. Ian Campbell summed up this problem nicely;

“Paulaho was a surprise as Tu'i Tonga: he was not the son of a mohefo but a secondary wife. How he came to be Tu'i Tonga is unknown, and it seems that his elder brother, Ma'ulupekotofa, who succeeded him, was the rightful heir” (Campbell 1989:17, citing Bott 1982: 99, as source).

Bott and Campbell have both discussed the pattern of the Tu'i Kanokupolu succession and they might have discerned the comparable difference between that system and the appointment protocol inherent in the Tu'i Tonga and the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua systems. It is clearly laid out in various genealogies that both senior dynasties practiced father to son succession of kingly titles and it is rare to find brothers who were installed as Tu'i Tonga or Tu'i Ha'atakalaua. When this succession rarity happens it can be traced to the effect of the Sāmoan hereditary practices that the hihifo political system invigorated in each generation. Both Bott (1982)

and Campbell (1991) were unable to account for Paulaho's appointment and Bott in particular arrived at a conclusion that Ma'ulupekotofa was the rightful heir but she does not mention why Tu'ipulotu-'i-langitu'oteau's first mohefo Tu'ilokamana, the daughter of TK Vuna vanished with her son Alaivahamama'o from the picture altogether. The possible answer would be that Tu'ilokamana was mohefo during the reign of her father TK Vuna but her status as *mohefo* would have been overshadowed by the marriage of Anaukhesina daughter of TK Ma'afu-'o-Tu'itonga, successor of TK Vuna. Anaukhesina is named by HM Queen Salote (in Bott 1982) as *mohefo* but nothing is said about Tu'ilokamana. It must have been an unusual situation for a *mohefo* to be replaced while she is still alive. It does seem that TT Tu'ipulotu-'i-Langitu'oteau was the first Tu'i Tonga to have married to daughters of successive Tu'i Kanokupolu i.e. TK Vuna and TK Ma'afu-'o-tu'itonga. In theory, there can only be one mohefo as principal wife of the Tu'i Tonga and the first ever *mohefo* was the daughter of TK Mataeleha'amea: the legendary Halaevalu *mohefo* who was the principal wife of TT Tu'ipulotu-'i-Langitu'ofefafa. Her adopted son Fakana'ana'a had her adopted mother's younger sister Tongotea as his *mohefo* undoubtedly instigated by Halaevalu *mohefo* herself as she wanted her sister to be the bearer of the next Tu'i Tonga and also for her family to retain the right to choose each future *mohefo*. However, the provision of the *mohefo* unfolds a significant element about the *matai* political life whereby every chiefly line would split up in every generation depending on how seriously their status was threatened; even in cases among brothers feuding over title is common.

I believe that in order for us to have a better understanding of the Tu'i Kanokupolu pattern of kingship tradition we must recapitulate the ways in which the actual Matai system works. If we look at the genealogical table (figure 2) it provides a basic feature of ancient Sāmoan matai practices whereby titles are gifts bestowed by families on members who are adept and able in the trade of leadership. Since time immemorial the bestowal of titles in Sāmoa has not been based on a model of primogeniture whereby the eldest son or daughter are guaranteed special privileges like the one that the Tu'i Tonga system had practiced in Tonga for centuries.

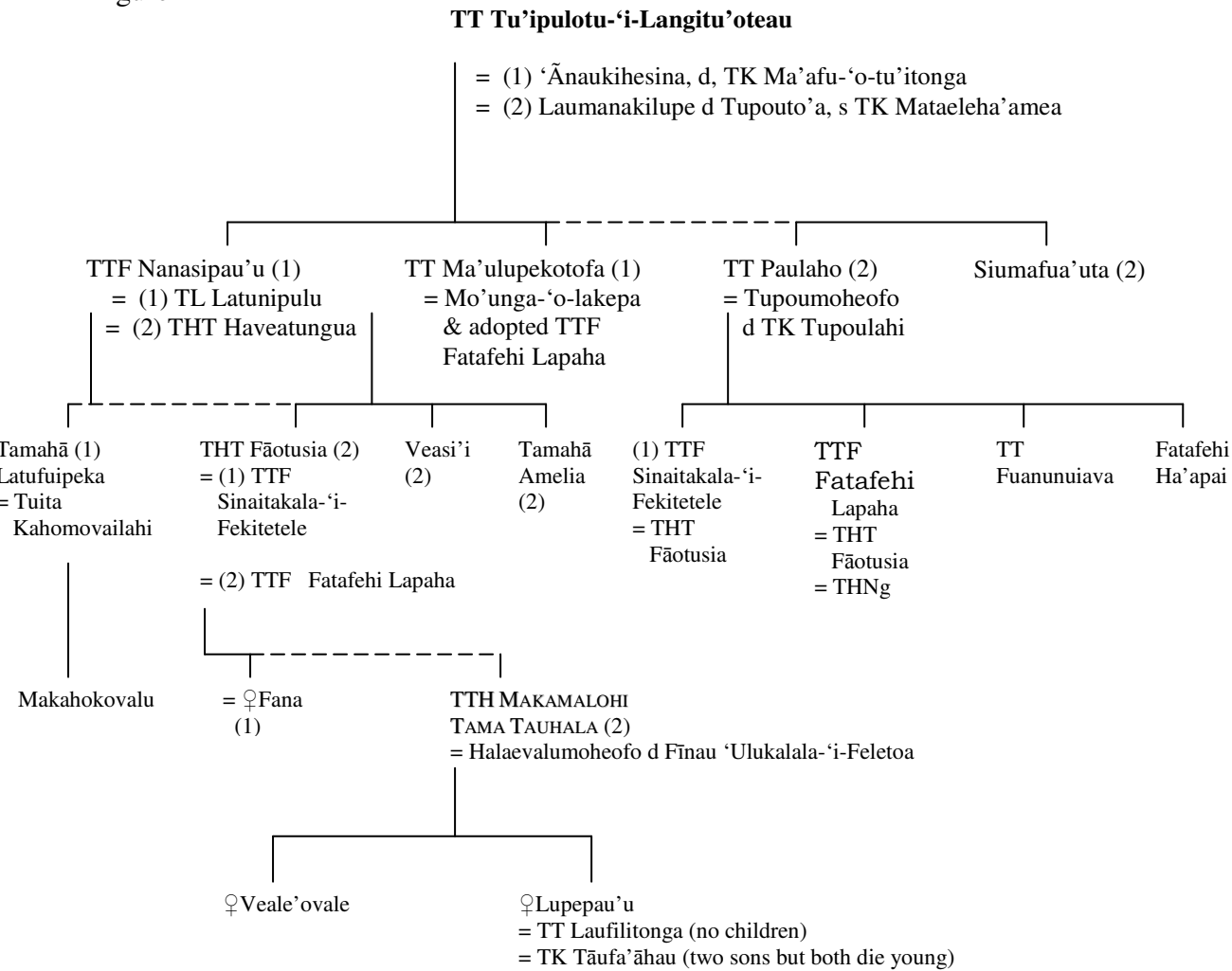
TT Paulaho was the son of a fokonofo (secondary wife) of TT Tu'ipulotu-'i-langitu'oteau while Fuanunuiava's mother was the highest ranking female of kauhalalalo and a daughter of Tu'i Kanokupolu Tupoulahi. Apparently, the division that had existed between the lineages of TK Mataeleha'amea and his elder brother TK Vuna had resurfaced in the same way between the lineages of TK Tupoulahi and his full brother TK Maealiuaki and later on with the descendants of TK Mumui. Leading actors in these lineages



turned against each other in attempting to determine the future of the Tu'i Kanokupolu title once and for all. The inclusion of Mumui in this desperate race for political supremacy was triggered by the increasing divide between TK Tupoulahi's line and his brother's son Mulikiha'amea. As mentioned above both Maealiuaki and his son were installed Tu'i Kanokupolu then the title was removed from them but both were reinstated with the less significant title of the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua.

In short, Tupoumohefo became Tu'i Kanokupolu in the process of which Fuanunuiava was now a son of a Tu'i Tonga and a Tu'i Kanokupolu fefine. This development would have been a promising result for Fuanunuiava as I tend to feel that he would have learned how the matai lineages split up in previous generations and such practice could only bring a dark future not only for Tonga but most importantly for the existence of the sacred office he expected to have as his traditional right. He would have sensed that should his mother's title become his it would be hard for any contender to challenge his status for the Tu'i Kanokupolu title. It would also be an opportunity to put an end to any further establishment of more lineages and thereby to the very element that fostered political divisions and fuelled rivalries within the Kanokupolu or hihifo tradition. Even when the title was ripped off his mother Tupoumohefo by TK Mumui's son Tuku'aho, the heir in waiting Fatafehi Fuanunuiava still had hopes of being named by the hihifo chiefs as Tu'i Kanokupolu.

Figure 4



Vason, who was an eyewitness to Tongan affairs following the death of Mumui in 1797, was informed that Fuanunuiava held hopes of being appointed to the title of Tu'i Kanokupolu.

“Fatafehi had entertained the hope of regaining, by the vote of this general assembly, the family authority, which his mother had lost; as Toogahowe was elected the Dugonagaboola, by the voice of the chiefs, he thought it best quietly to acquiesce in their decision” ( Snow, 1840: 109)

The story of Fuanunuiava reflects the kind of liberty exercised by the Tu'i Kanokupolu towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. He was still a young chief with no experience whose parents were involved in working out schemes to secure a place for him as threats from both the Tu'i Tonga and the Tu'i Kanokupolu contenders were real enough to destroy the chances he could have of becoming a future leader. Campbell has rightly pointed out that the ceremony Cook witnessed was one of Tupoumoheofo's attempts to elevate her son

prematurely in view of a possible claim to the Tu'i Tonga title by Ma'ulupekotofa the elder brother of his father TT Paulaho (Campbell 1989: 18).

With the death of Tu'i Kanokupolu Mumui Fuanunuiava will have realised that to appoint him Tu'i Kanokupolu would be an advantage and also the only answer he could ever dream of having in light of securing his claim for the Tu'i Tonga title. His advisors on the side would also have known that his chances were slim.

Although Gunson (1987) and Herda (1988) argue that Tupoumohefo is not Fuainunuava's mother by suggesting a Vava'u woman as his real mother it is information from one genealogy only, which anyone could consider as a possibility but it stands against almost all the known genealogies that name Tupoumohefo as the mother. Campbell on the other hand has acknowledged without unease that Fuanunuiava's mother is Tupoumohefo due perhaps to the fact that she went to great lengths in her desperate effort to secure her son's future. I myself would without hesitation agree with Campbell in view of what Tupoumohefo did especially the risk she took in naming herself Tu'i Kanokupolu just in case her son would need real power behind him should he have to challenge his uncle Ma'ulupekotofa in the battle field. As it turned out Ma'ulupekotofa did become Tu'i Tonga and Fuanunuiava did not become Tu'i Kanokupolu. The electoral college of Hihifo chiefs chose for TK Mumui's son Tuku'aho, the chief who had deposed Fuanunuiava's mother Tupoumohefo.

The final nail in the coffin of the Tu'i Tonga was put in by TK Taufu'ahau Tupou 1 in taking TT Laufilitonga's wife Lupepau'u as one of his wives. King George Tupou 1 had his eyes on cementing the authority, power and rank in his offspring and taking Lupepau'u was one step towards achieving his task. [As we can see, the office of the Tu'i Tonga fefine is never conferred on two ladies while they are both alive. But Paulaho's daughters both became Tu'i Tonga fefine and this was another deviation from tradition. Whereas Paulaho's eldest daughter Sinaitakala-'i-fekiteletele held the title Tu'i Tonga fefine, her sister Fatafehi-o-Lapaha became Tu'i Tonga fefine also because she was adopted by Ma'ulupekotofa and his high ranking wife Mo'unga-'o-Lakepa. This must have happened when Ma'ulupekotofa succeeded his brother Paulaho. The fact that TTF Fatafehi-o-Lapaha outranked her sister TTF Sinaitakala-'i-Fekiteletele through the status of her adopted parents seems logical enough but considerably out of the ordinary practice. They both married THT Vuna Fa'otusia.

Fuanunuiava was prepared to give up everything just to have the Tu'i Kanokupolu title. His instinct was right in vying for the ultimate title of the day for he knew that in order for the Tu'i Tonga to survive he must possess the Tu'i Kanokupolu first so that his authority could be restored and the future of the Tu'i Tonga will remain forever.

## Chapter 9

### Conclusion

I have outlined events in history, which the three kingly lines in pre-contact Tonga endured in their prolonged coexistence that was eventually witnessed by European explorers in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The information recorded in the early contact period has described Tongan society in a way dissimilar to the wealth of narratives preserved through folk and oral traditions. Oral tradition depicts Tonga's past as a highly stable and well-ordered social network that was buttressed by a centralized government under the headship of the Tu'i Tonga. Reference to homogeneity of elite traditions coincides with a number of principles that are said to be quintessentially Tongan and unique throughout Polynesia: as *per se* the father to eldest son succession said to be regularly practiced by the Tu'i Tonga line; the rigid hierarchy and stratified structure of its social system; and the centralized character of its political system to mention a few (Kirch 1984: 217, see also Sahlins 1958 and Goldman 1970).

These images have been corrected as ahistorical due to a politically uninformed reading of Tonga's past (Herda 1995: 37 in Huntsman et al, see also James 1995 and Huntsman 1995 in the same edition). As has been discussed in chapters 4, 5 and 6 the true character of Tongan society is much more complicated to decipher than the highly monolithic approaches used in determining its social and political systems. Although there are grounds for critiques of the apparently homogenous essence of oral traditions, the fact still remains that contemporary authorities on Tongan society have been unable to notice the existence of at least two distinct systems, the one operated under the Tu'i Tonga polity and the other the colonizing matai system established under the titular rulership of the Tu'i Kanokupolu.

I have discussed throughout this work a political transformation in Tonga which started from the new hegemonic structure established by the Tu'i Tonga dynasty as early as 450 AD, at which eventually was unable to sustain the constant onslaught of the matai counter hegemony around 1500 AD. The Sāmoan title system prevailed in influencing and taking over control of the religio-political order of the Tu'i Tonga around 1600 AD after three generations from the actual inception of the Tu'i Kanokupolu in Hihifo about 1500-1550 AD.

I have unfolded the ability of the Tu'i Tonga line to counter successfully the ruling hegemony of the matai system. The title of Tu'i Tonga fefine was created with the purpose of 'putting the Tu'i Kanokupolu at bay' so to speak. The Tu'i Tonga counter hegemony was achieved by the insertion of the Fijian Falefisi into the predominantly quasi-Sāmoan equation that was empowering the Tu'i Kanokupolu. I also note some significant contributing factors that the existence of the Falefisi brought forth in sustaining the survival of the Tu'i Tonga line. While the Tu'i Kanokupolu was forbidden to marry the Tu'i Tonga Fefine, who was progeny of the indigenous and sacred Tu'i Tonga, he was permitted to marry the tamahā, progeny of the foreign Ha'a Falefisi. This strategy nullified the advances of the Tu'i Kanokupolu from achieving religious supremacy, as a successful execution of that development would have brought an end to the cause of the Tu'i Tonga. Simultaneously the strategy managed to defuse a possible doubling or even tripling of the tamahā status for, by allowing Tu'i Kanokupolu access to marry the tamahā; her offspring were excluded from ascending beyond the mother's rank.

I have argued that a quasi-Sāmoan system was 'Trojan-horsed' into the so-called impenetrable 'ideological wall' of Tonga's sacred polity. Along with other scholars (see Bott 1982), I have attributed the eventual fragmentation of the centralised political system under the Tu'i Tonga to the historical expansion of the Kanokupolu government through which the existence of a Tu'i Vava'u, Tu'i Ha'apai, Tu'i 'Eua are directly traced to titled chiefs of ha'a Ngata, ha'a Havea lahi, ha'a Ngata tupu and ha'a Ma'afu, all of which originated from the second, fourth, eighth and ninth generations of the Tu'i Kanokupolu line (although Bott did not know about the matai establishment in hihifo). Disputes over these new titles gave rise to the beginning of civil unrest that climaxed in many civil wars during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. This is the first record of civil war on Tongan soil. It eventually engaged Tu'i Tonga Pau and Tu'i Tonga Laufilitonga in duals for political supremacy an ambition uncharacteristic of persons of this status.

I have also argued that the tradition of regular succession practiced by the Tu'i Tonga lineage was finally put under the discretionary wish of the ruling Kanokupolu lineages. By the time of Tu'i Tonga Paulaho who hosted Captain Cook in 1777, the mohefo tradition, whereby the daughter of the Tu'i Kanokupolu is given as principal wife to the Tu'i Tonga, had transcended the sacred boundary it traditionally represented. The world of the Tu'i Tonga was overturned when the Tu'i Kanokupolu held the office of choosing the successor for the Tu'i Tonga title (see chapter 7).

I have discussed how the Tu'i Kanokupolu followers in hihifo established the Sāmoan matai system as means for their own survival. I also argue that the creation of the *sa* institution as main engine for propelling their course had proved too powerful for the other senior dynasties to do something about. I further argue that despite the occurrence of major changes like the creation of the *hau* line in about 1350 AD, and the reshuffling of the falefā by TT Kau'ulufonuafeikai which included the two new houses fale-'o-Tu'i Talau and the fale-'o-Tu'i Amanave as replacements for the fale – 'o-Tu'i Folaha and Matakehe, there was no real threat that could shake the foundation to which these ruling lines was anchored. I also show how the hegemony of the Tu'i Tonga was well embedded and flourished for eleven centuries before the real counter-hegemony challenged its whole existence around 1550 AD. Its fate was sealed with the death of Laufilitonga the last Tu'i Tonga in 1865.

All in all, I have addressed a theory that the political vacuum left behind by the demise of Tongan rule in Sāmoa had been partially filled by Malietoa in creating the papa fafine titles and also by Nafanua in usurping the four papa to establish the new office of the tafa'i fa whereby the four great titles were held by one person. The early establishment of Tamasōali'i as titular ruler of Safata was not a smooth transition as she was challenged and war broke out, whereby she was victorious in the end. **I also argue that if it was not for the demise of Ama in the Safata war, Tonga would not have dramatically changed as the office of the Tu'i Kanokupolu would not have come into existence. I also believe that the sanctifying of the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua office by Mo'unga'otonga was a direct effect of Ama's ambitious visit which opened an opportunity to challenge the sacred status of the Tu'i Tonga over a Sāmoan Taupou. Despite the inevitable course of change as a social phenomenon, the Tu'i Tonga political system proved durable in facing new developments that threatened its hitherto fragile existence. The solid foundation that had held the might of the Tu'i Tonga for over a thousand years (i.e. from 450 AD to 1550 AD) served this dynasty well, and even in the absence of political power the Tu'i Tonga survived on the ideological strength of his sacred status.**

To *really* understand Tongan society both anthropologists and historians must *really* know the dynamics that constitute the coexistence of its three ruling dynasties. It follows therefore, that to fully understand hierarchy and stratification in ancient Tonga anthropologists must also be historically knowledgeable about the two polities under the Tu'i Tonga and the Tu'i Kanokupolu respectively. Failure to apply both disciplines would definitely negate the possibility of constructing an accurate account of Tongan society that could logically underpin the realities there are with regard to the true nature of Tongan society in general

and its historical class traditions in particular. So far, none of the present works have demonstrated the capacity to close this huge gap.

One of the apparent weaknesses on the part of Tonganologist historians that I have successfully identified is the prevalence of committing the fallacy of anachronising history. It is common in the works of experts on Tongan society to record their findings in a form of anachronism. As so happened, Tongan history is now, if I may use one of the popular expression around, “reading from back to front”, a problem that is well outlined by Meleisea (1995) in his critique of current ethnographic approaches and works on Polynesia:

The notion of the ‘ethnographic present’ has allowed a number of influential anthropological works on Polynesia to be based upon comparison of the social institutions of various islands polities; however, the records on which these pseudo-scientific comparisons are based were made at different times (as much as fifty years or even a century apart). This allowed, for example, the Sāmoan ‘ainga as described in 1970 to be likened to the Maori hapu as described in 1870”. (1995: in ‘Tonga and Sāmoa: Images of Gender and Polity’, Huntsman et al)

The sources for Tongan history before the 1830’s are circumlocutory and the same thing could be said of the period pre-1550 A D. Such sources consist for the most part of the inherited oral traditions, only some of which have been written down at various times during and after the nineteenth century by Western observers. The trustworthiness of the information they recorded is predisposed by the understanding and memory of the informants they shrewdly approached. But, as often happen, the treatment of concepts and events as distinct state of affairs are not always historically linked.

I have traced the most significant change in Tonga’s political history to a centralization process took place in Sāmoa around 1500 AD. I also discussed how the last war in Safata determined the outcome of political change in Tonga. I have argued that the Tu’i Kanokupolu practiced a Sāmoan style government through the creation of titles for important families in Hihifo and through time this matai development shook up the very foundation to which the Tu’i Tonga and the Tu’i Ha’atakalaua held fast i.e. religious authority. This development led to an inevitable creation of various institutions and new status systems in Tonga that did not exist before like Tu’i Tonga fefine, Tamahā, Falefisi, Sina’e ‘eiki to name a few. I also show how Tonga was fragmented by the spread of the Matai system where people in all corners of Tonga were ruled by chiefs of the Tu’i Kanokupolu line. I also link the irregularity in the Tu’i Tonga hereditary succession to unavoidable dictates of the Tu’i Kanokupolu in appointing the candidate whom the mohefo married. The demise of Fuanunuiava had made him wish to become Tu’i Kanokupolu with a view to putting an end to the



fury of fighting over the control of that title. Tonga at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century looked like another version of ancient Sāmoa as villages everywhere came to be controlled in a Matai fashion as chiefs' authority became absolute and their subjects organized along Sāmoan aiga principles.

All in all, Commentators on Tonga who have assumed that Tonga and Sāmoa should be more similar rather than different have been found wanting in this study. By use of the genealogies of the elite class in both societies I have shown that homogeneity in Tonga was a reality whereas at the same era Sāmoa was divided as ever. Only later did Sāmoan influence in Tongan politics make Tonga resemble Sāmoa while a centralization process taking place in Sāmoa made Sāmoan polity look more organized. But as always it did not last and divisions in Sāmoa reignited in the 1860's until Germany and U.S.A put an end to the never ending struggle for political supremacy in Sāmoa. Tonga's fate was determined by Fuanunuiava's failure to unite the three kingly titles of Tonga by missing out in his contention for the Tu'i Kanokupolu title the ultimate prize at that point in Tongan history.

It is ironic to witness for the first time a Tu'i Tonga like Fuanunuiava openly vying to become Tu'i Kanokupolu in order to restore political supremacy back to his kingly line, an action that would not have been thought possible unless it was decided through war as his son TT Laufilitonga eventually did against King George at the battle of Velata in 1826 where he was defeated and the fate of the Tu'i Tonga line was then sealed forever. What is important to note throughout the political history of both Tonga and Sāmoa was the utter inability of each system to cope with the force of an alien system imposed on the existing one. In the Tongan case, it was a complete disaster since the Tu'i Ha'atalalua had no answer to the advance of the Tu'i Kanokupolu matai system and things were measured out by the strategic wisdom of the more experienced Tu'i Tonga chieftain but it really was a matter of time. The one thing that the Tu'i Tonga had managed to accomplish with ease in its imperial heyday could not even have worked, that is a plot to re-centralized Tonga by usurping the three kingly titles in a Tu'i Tonga ruler. This plot came short through the failure of Tupoumoheofo to maintain the Tu'i Kanokupolu title so that her son Fuanunuiava could be endowed with all three in due time. The Sāmoan situation also enjoyed a short period of political centralization through the *Tafa'ifā* era which lasted for only three hundred years before the ancient divisions took over. Sāmoa was annexed by foreign European powers with King Mata'afa crowned in 1898 by Germany as *ali'i sili* while the Kaiser proclaimed *Tupu sili* (Unified King of Sāmoa).

Now, we can see here two societies who have shared a long history as neighbors for centuries while exhibiting dissimilar political systems. Revisionists will ask why they are so different. The short answer would be to look at the genealogies. In Tonga one can only recognize a single kingly line known as the Tu'i Tonga who ruled for 23 generations by father to son succession until a second dynasty appeared on the scene the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua. This second kingly line ruled for six generations again from father to son until a third dynasty sprang into existence. Suffice it to understand from genealogical records that a kingship succession from father to son for twenty three years would imply political centralization as the building block of such polity. It is also clear enough from the succession tradition practiced by the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua that the six rulers mentioned in the genealogy was from father to son also. There we can conclude that the Tongan socio-political organization was stylistically unique in comparison to the succession tradition practiced by the Tu'i Kanokupolu where primogeniture was not the determining factor and brothers could hold the same title in succession depending on claims or other political maneuvers. We cannot divorce ourselves from the fact that Sāmoan oral history speaks of a great number of kingly lines who rule their own dominions independently of one another. Sāmoa is different from Tonga in that since times immemorial for there have been at least six kingly lines coexisting parallel to the single line of Tu'i Tonga in Tonga. The question then is should Tonga and Sāmoa have similar polities due to geographical factors and shared history among other things? Of course not; genealogy clearly shows divisions and fragmentation in Sāmoa before and after the Tongan domination.

Our study of the traditional hegemony of the Tu'i Tonga and the counter hegemony of the Tu'i Kanokupolu reveals this important fact, that Tongan society was once a centralized and rigid state until an indirect yet powerful political influence took place about 1550 AD. The latter gradually weakened the fore for three centuries whereby the office of the sacred kings of Tonga was finally abolished after the last civil war in 1852. To assume that ancient Tongan society should replicate the Sāmoan system due to geographical and historical links truly undermines the logic of social existence where things do develop independently of our knowing them as opposed to how things are supposed to be. In that dying notes we can appreciate the fact that Tongan society did not ever resembled ancient Sāmoa no matter how close they were to each other or how long they shared a lasting history and common ancestry.

## Appendix

1. Archaeologists, Linguists and Historians have been using 950 AD [given by Wood (1932) as the approximate date for the inception of Tu'itonga line] as a guide for determining the result of their findings. It is significant to point out that Wood's approximation was based on the assertion that each generation comprises a period of about 20-25 years. This particular calculation suggests that there were five Tu'itonga in every one hundred years, bearing in mind that each one of the 39 Tu'itonga represents one generation as prescribed by the principle of *primogeniture*. My analogy of genealogical materials (either factual or hypothetical) has something else to offer.

In examining the 'factual' materials, especially the journals and other accounts written by maritime explorers, I thoroughly checked whether the pattern of primogeniture is expressive of those Tu'itonga who met Captain Cook and the like. With the exception of Ma'ulupekotofa the 37<sup>th</sup> TT, the title was passing down from father to son as so assumed by oral tradition. In short, the result I came up with suggests that a more realistic number of years for every generation is 30 rather than 25 as proposed by Wood. Supposing that my calculation is closer to the truth than Wood's, the possible year for the so-called 1<sup>st</sup> Tu'itonga is 450 AD [or even earlier still if we use the Catholic's list.].

How did I arrive at this conclusion is simply a matter of basic arithmetic. All you have to do is subtract the genealogical number of every TT (1, 2...) from 39 (the total number of TT) then multiply the result with 30 (period for each generation) and then minus that figure from the year 1800 or 1830 (the approximate date that the last TT should have begun his reign). The final figure is going to be the approximate answer. As shown above, 'Aho'eitu the 1<sup>st</sup> TT began his reign in about 650 AD. However, if we take into account Baker's List where the number of TT is 48 in total in which 'Aho'eitu is placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in the order of succession, behind TT Kohai and TT Koau, his reign would have begun (under the above formula) between 350 and 450 AD. My conclusion here is in a way still 'tentative' pending the result of my current examination of the validity of the TT genealogies in both Tongan and Sāmoan oral traditions. But for now, I can safely place 'Aho'eitu's reign around 650 AD with no hesitation at all. I have a feeling that the 1<sup>st</sup> TT in the 'Eitumatupu'a line would have reigned between 350 and 450 AD.

2. One of my sweeping claims in this paper centres on the idea that the 1<sup>st</sup> TH was not Mo'ungamotu'a but Mo'ungatonga (the 6<sup>th</sup> hau). My theory is that events in Sāmoa really did trigger the ambition of the 6<sup>th</sup> hau to make his move towards political supremacy in Tonga. One of these events is the controversial unification of the four highest honours in Sāmoa (Tu'i A'ana, Tu'i Atua, Gatoa'itele and Tamasōali'i) a process that took at least five decades to materialise. This is better known as the *Tafa'i fa* movement instigated by a war-goddess—the legendary *Nafanua* (wife of TT Mana'ia). The approximate date for this Sāmoan political awareness is 1500 AD; the time oral traditions in Tonga speak of Tu'itonga Tapu'osi's return from Sāmoa to establish his permanent court in Tonga.

The move for political centralisation in Sāmoa initiated from *falealupo* indirectly opened up political opportunity in Tonga. The once centralised polity of the Tongan empire did witness the dawn of political division on the horizon. The creation of the Tu'iha'atakalaua was only the beginning, as we all know that Mo'ungatonga's son Ngata became the first of another line. He certainly shifted Safata to Tonga since his uncle was no longer the high chief of *alataua* for he was replaced by a newly royal designation *Tamasōali'i* [one of the two **Papa fafine** usurped by a centralised ruler of Sāmoa].

3. This study proves that 'title system' (hingoa fakanofu) was introduced to Tonga from Sāmoa *via* the creation of the Tu'i Kanokupolu dynasty between 1500 and 1550 AD. It is in fact a Sāmoan *Matai-system* and Ngata's honorific title Tu'i Ha'amo'unga, in his new role as *Hau*, is the first evidence to that effect. His *Tafa'i* or '*ulutolu* the ha'a *Latuhifo* (i.e. Nuku and Niukapu) were the first conferred titles in the Matai style, and were given immediately after they served Ngata's Kava. A *fale Kanokupolu* (which is the office of the *fale'upolu*) was created and all its members were conferred with titles. Then a *fono* was duly formed of titleholders with statuses that include the equivalent of Tu'ulafale and Tu'ulafaleali'i respectively. That is the beginning of the first Matai establishment in Tonga ever. In verifying my findings I went on and checked the historical development of the Tu'itonga imperial practices with regard to the issue of whether or not the bestowal of titles was an element of his various social and political programmes in the past. Evidence again suggests that it was not.

4. Moreover, the *matapule* class was non-existent prior to the introduction of Sāmoan politics into Tonga. *Matapule* class gained its momentum gradually in tandem with the sweeping rise of the Tu'i Kanokupolu's political power. By the time of the 3<sup>rd</sup> in line Mataeletu'apiko the faleha'akili had already

successfully sent some of its titleholders to serve the Kauhala'uta chiefly lineages – the *Tamahā*, the Tu'i Ha'ateiho and the Tu'i Lakepa.

5. The new *ha'a* system derives its original features from the Sāmoan *sa*. As shown above, the Ha'amo'unga, Ha'a Latuhifo, Ha'akili and later on Ha'a Ngata, Ha'a Havea, Ha'a Ngata tupu, Ha'a Haveasi'i and Ha'a Ma'afu were all sprung from the line of the Tu'i Hihifo. There is of course a Ha'a Vaea but it belongs to the Tu'i Ha'atalau line. Oral tradition speaks of a Ha'a Fotofili that existed prior to the establishment of the Ha'a Vaea but I doubt it very much for two basic reasons. First, the Ha'a Vaea has known titleholders that are still bestowed today and the creation of that particular ha'a was due to a direct copying of the Hihifo 'sa' organisation. Second, if there was really a Ha'a Fotofili then there must be titles to accompany the role of the holders. In fact there is no title that is known to belong to that ha'a and that is for me a good answer to disprove the alleged existence of Ha'a Fotofili.

The fact that Ha'a Mo'unga was created in honour of Mo'ungatonga has an important message to say about the dawn of a new ha'a system in Tonga. Ha'a before TK Ngata have never been designated with honorific names as titles, instead ha'a was known with regard to particular professed services, such as the two most ancient duties of *ha'a tufunga* and *ha'a toutai* which hundreds of various ha'a are derived from. For example, the professed duties of tufunga fale (skilled builders), tufunga tamaka (stone mason experts) and so many more. Moreover, there were the toutai faifolau, toutai ika of various kinds.

6. The best example of the hihifo quasi-Sāmoan practices is quite evident in the unique propagation of 'sa' organisation to all parts of Tonga and the eventual formation of political divisions. Appointment of the Tu'i Vava'u, Tu'i Ha'apai, Tu'i 'Eua and later on Tu'i Niua is well documented elsewhere but there is no suggestion in the literature that such appointment were caused by the ubiquitous growth of the Matai politics where sa and 'aiga played a significant role.

7. Tonga's Kāinga and ha'a systems now are conceived on the basis of their Sāmoan connotations and usages as people of each village are embraced as the Kāinga of the titled chief. Kāinga in the pre-Tu'i Kanokupolu era were people who are related by blood.

8. I also claim in this work that offices of *taupou*, *Sa'o tama'ita'i*, *Sa'o* and *mana'ia* were major parts of village organisation in the *Hihifo* matai system. Indications of the existence of *aualuma* and *aumaga* are known to have been factors of political expansion among *ha'a Ngata* and *ha'a Havea* title holders.

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