

Psychological Anthropology

(1975)

MOUTON



Change in Rank and Status in the Polynesian Kingdom of Tonga

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There is a certain amount of timelessness inherent in some ethnographic reports: a timelessness which stems from the quest of the synchronic description *cum* analysis of culture. This timelessness is present even though I am in agreement with Locher's basic point that "there is a new interest in the relation between anthropology and history" (Locher 1967: 77). Unfortunately, this relationship has yet to be intensified.

Change obviously takes place over time, yet all too often statements in the published accounts have compressed many of the unique aspects of Tongan culture into a homogenized whole. The massive work of Gifford (1929) has various points in it where one is not certain what was aboriginal Tonga and what was the Tonga of Gifford's research period of 1920-1921. In order to describe aboriginal Tonga and analyze changes in Tonga, one must "begin at the beginning" and gather the most reputable information on aboriginal Tonga, i.e. early-contacted Tonga. By itself, twentieth-century "memory culture" of what aboriginal Tonga was like (from which most researchers get their idealistic ethnographic base lines) is not sufficient to say what Tonga was like in the past. Memory culture descriptions,

Funding for the research partially presented in this paper was provided, in part, by an NDEA (Title IV) Fellowship and an NIH Traineeship (PHS Grant No. 5 T01 GM01382-05). Field work was conducted in Tonga from July to October of 1970 and from August to October of 1971. In the intervening months archival research was conducted in the major libraries of Fiji, New Zealand, and Australia, with most of the research being done in the Mitchell Library, Sydney, Australia. Assistance and data provided by all of the individuals contacted in Tonga, especially those connected with the *Komiti Talafakafonua 'o Tonga* (Tongan Traditions Committee), and by the individuals of the research institutions, is greatly appreciated.

in numerous respects, are not superior to reputable eye-witness descriptions of aboriginal Tonga.¹

CONTACT AND DESCRIPTIONS

Part of the Tongan archipelago was first contacted by the Dutch navigators Schouten and Le Maire in 1616, and various contacts with Europeans followed: 1643 (Tasman), 1767 (Wallis), 1773, 1774, and 1777 (Cook), 1781 (Maurelle), 1787 (La Perouse), 1789 (Bligh), 1793 (D'Entrecasteaux and Labillardière), and 1793 (Malaspina) (see Colson 1885; Tudor 1968: 125-127). These contacts between Europeans and Tongans lasted for periods of a few days to several weeks. The accounts of these men made Europeans aware of Tonga and placed Tonga on Europe's map. The accounts spurred Europeans to send men to proselytize the peoples of the Pacific. Tonga, along with Tahiti, was one of the first island groups to be sent European missionaries in the late eighteenth century.

The first missionaries were of the Missionary Society of London (form-

¹ Tonga, named by Captain James Cook "The Friendly Islands," is composed of some 150 to 200 islands and islets with perhaps only 25 percent of those being inhabited. The islands are a form of raised limestone, or volcanic formations and limestone formations (Anonymous 1944: 16). The most recent work indicates that the total land area of the archipelago is 256.42 square miles, with the Tongatapu Group (the main island of Tongatapu with surrounding small islands but excluding the island of 'Eua) having 100.37 square miles of that total or some 39.1 percent (Maude 1965: 218). Tongatapu Island is approximately 99 square miles in area. The estimated population for the entire archipelago for December 31, 1970 was 86,055 (Tapa 1971: 4).

The territorial boundaries of the Kingdom of Tonga were proclaimed by King George Tupou I to be 15°S and 23°S and 173°W and 177°W (*Tonga Government Gazette*, 2: 55, August 24, 1887). The islands of the Kingdom thus fall within a rectangle of the South Pacific some 596 miles North-South by 264 miles East-West, with the outer islands of the Kingdom being Niua Fo'ou Island to the North at 15°34'S and 175°40'W, and 'Ata Island to the South at 22°20'S and 176°12'W. 'Ata Island is approximately 100 miles southeast of the main island of Tongatapu and Niua Fo'ou Island is approximately 232 miles northwest of the Vava'u group of Islands.

Tonga derived its name from the principal island of the group, Tongatapu Island or 'sacred' Tonga. The *tapu* was probably appended to the Tonga because this island became the residence of the leaders of the archipelago. Tongatapu Island was the focal point for the political and religious system in the archipelago prior to and after European contact. The Polynesians who settled the archipelago appear to have chosen this relatively flat island because of terrain and climate. The middle, or Ha'apai group of islands are a series of low islets. The northernmost island group of Vava'u has relatively high hills, with most of the land being at least one hundred feet above sea level (as opposed to Tongatapu Island which is no higher than two hundred feet along the southern or *liku* coast). Vava'u was, and is, subject to more destructive hurricanes than Tongatapu during the hurricane season and it was only on Tongatapu that relative permanency of Tongan culture and continuity of leadership could be maintained for generations.

ed in 1795 and later termed the London Missionary Society, or LMS) and they arrived at Tongatapu on April 10, 1797 (Benson 1960: 113; Wilson 1799: 96). Ten male missionaries landed and some remained until 1800, but the attempt at religious conversion ended in a debacle. One missionary, Vason, married a Tongan woman and was converted to the *anga-faka-Tonga* or 'Tongan way of life' (Vason 1810). The Wesleyan Missionary Society established a mission station on Tongatapu in August of 1822 manned by one missionary, Walter Lawry, who was accompanied by his wife and several servants (including Europeans and a Marquesan islander) (see Lawry's *Diary* for August, 1822). This attempt at Christian conversion also ended in failure with Lawry being ordered by London to be "removed from Tonga to Van Diemen's Land" (Lawry, *Diary*: July 26, 1823). Lawry eventually left the island in October of 1823, and it wasn't until 1826 that a second Wesleyan mission was attempted in the archipelago. In June of 1826 the Wesleyan missionaries John Thomas and John Hutchinson arrived, with their wives, and this mission eventually proved successful. From 1826 onwards Tongans entered into sustained European contact.

The various published accounts of the individuals of this period (1616-1826), combined with twentieth-century field work, have allowed us to make inferences about aboriginal Tongan culture (Coult 1959, for example), yet no systematic attempt had ever been made to incorporate manuscript materials into (1) an aboriginal ethnographic base line, and (2) an analysis of changing Tongan culture. What were the processes by which the aboriginal Tongan culture of 1800 developed into the Constitutional Monarchy of 1875?

The date of 1875 is extremely important in Tongan studies, for in many respects the Tonga of pre-1875 was not the same as the Tonga of post-1875. In 1875 the Tongan Constitution was promulgated by the *Tu'i Kanokupolu* King George Tupou I, with the help of European advice. The Constitution was the result of Western influence on Tonga and the culmination of all of the written Tongan law codes in effect in the archipelago since 1839. The date of 1850 given in Murdock's *Ethnographic atlas* (1967) for Tonga, for cross-cultural research of a certain type, can be extremely misleading, for by this time two major wars (as a result of nineteenth-century Western influence) had been fought in the archipelago (1837 and 1840), the Tongan language reduced to a systematic orthography (c. 1830), and a European-induced codified system of laws had already been in effect for certain parts of the archipelago for many years (in the island groups of Vava'u and Ha'apai). Certainly Goldman's most recent work which suggests 1800 as the "terminal date" for aboriginal Polynesian

society merits closer consideration than 1850 for Tonga (Goldman 1970: xxviii).

Utilizing 1800 as a reference date for Tonga, one has a dynamically operating and changing Polynesian society, with an elaborate system of rank (based on kinship ties) and status (based on kinship and achievement). Changes in the rank and status systems resulted from Western contact but these have not always been successfully analyzed or reported in ethnographic accounts.²

ABORIGINAL TONGA

There are four major titles in Tonga with which we are concerned: *Tu'i Tonga*, *Tu'i Ha'a Takalaua*, *Tu'i Kanokupolu*, and *Tamaha*. When the various missionaries arrived in the archipelago, they grasped part of the cultural system of ranking. The Wesleyan missionary Lawry recorded in his diary for September 13, 1823, that

the following is the order in which the present Chiefs of the Friendly Islands rank, viz: -

1. Tootonga [*Tu'i Tonga*]
2. Tooihatacalowa [*Tu'i Ha'a Takalaua*]
3. Toocanacabooloo [*Tu'i Kanokupolu*]

Another Wesleyan missionary, John Thomas (in the archipelago from

² The only way in which a researcher can attempt a reconstruction of aboriginal culture is for that researcher to examine the earliest extant documentation pertaining to that culture and then make comparisons between the old information and new information gathered by contemporary field work. Urbanowicz (1972) provides a detailed explication of the methodology of the documentary research.

Ethnohistorical techniques were used to extract ethnographic information of the past from the documentary materials. Ethnohistory is thus the application of historical method to a body of documents specifically chosen for the construction of an historical ethnography (See Fenton 1962; Sturtevant 1966). The ethnohistorian focuses on the "ethno-" in the term, in presenting an ethnography of a given group of people; the "-history" refers not to the writing of history, but to the application of historical method to gather verifiable ethnographic facts of the past. Ethnohistory is not a study of change per se, although it eventually contributes to studies of change. The term ethnohistory as used by ethnographers is not synonymous with culture history, as the distinguished Pacific historian H. E. Maude has written (1971: 21).

Every ethnographer is, in essence, an ethnohistorian, since every ethnographer must read background material prior to beginning field work and must weigh and assess previous research reports; and every ethnohistorian is at heart an ethnographer, combining archival research with field work among the contemporary people. This is why I went to Tonga. Also see Cohn 1968; Dodge 1968; and Lurie 1961. Original orthography has been maintained throughout this paper.

1826 to 1850 and again from 1855 to 1859) wrote in one of his manuscript accounts:

Formerly there were three ranks of nobles in Tonga to which the term *Eiki* or Lord applied, of these the Tuitonga stood first, then the Tamaha, and next the Hau or civil ruler (Thomas ms. 5:1).

The *Tamaha* was the title given to the female child of the sister of the *Tu'i Tonga*, who herself had the title of *Tu'i Tonga Fefine*. The different ranking of the *'eiki* for Thomas and Lawry stems from the fact that there were *Tamaha* before there were *hau*. Included in the *hau* at various points in time were the titled individuals *Tu'i Ha'a Takalaua* and *Tu'i Kanokupolu*.

The *Tu'i Tonga* was the embodiment of the sacred and the secular in aboriginal Tonga and the nominal leader of all Tongans. In approximately the fifteenth century, however, a division was made between the sacred and secular aspects of leadership and the *Tu'i Tonga* Kau'ulufonua delegated his secular authorities to a brother, and the title of *Tu'i Ha'a Takalaua* was begun. A description from a manuscript account, ostensibly "written by [the last] *Tamaha* Amelia, and begun in May the 27th, day of the year 1844" (Collocott ms. 2: 19) provides some basic information on this title. The *Tamaha*, who was described as "the living oracle of the Tongans" (Thomas ms. 5: 59), probably dictated the account since she was well over sixty years of age in the 1840's. The *Tamaha* spoke of the *Tu'i Tonga* Kau'ulufonua and how "he portioned out to each of his brothers an island to be king over" and how he:

appointed Mougamotua Tui Haatakalaua, and he was to reside at Fonuamotu as he was to be protector of the Tuitonga (as the Tuitongas were apt to be assassinated), and the Tuitonga was safe because his younger brother kept guard over him (Collocott ms. 2:21).

Mo'ungamotu'a was thus the first *Tu'i Ha'a Takalaua*.

In approximately the seventeenth century a *Tu'i Ha'a Takalaua* delegated some of his secular responsibilities to a son, and the title of *Tu'i Kanokupolu* was created. The *Tu'i Ha'a Takalaua Mo'ungatonga* gave his son Ngata the title of *Tu'i Kanokupolu* and also "royal estates at the West end of Tonga [tapu] called Hihifo" (Thomas, ms. 5: 1).

With the *Tu'i Tonga* responsible for the sacred matters of leadership and the *hau* (either the *Tu'i Ha'a Takalaua* or *Tu'i Kanokupolu*, depending on what period one is speaking about) responsible for secular matters, the *Tu'i Tonga* eventually became dependent on the *hau* for his titled position. The *hau* literally had to have the strength and authority to "install" the *Tu'i Tonga* with the title. Consensus and flexibility were always key aspects

of aboriginal Tongan culture and a leader needed the support of the people around him. Such support came from numerous plural marriages and successful leadership. Laufilitonga, the last individual to hold the title of *Tu'i Tonga*, was delayed in being appointed to his position in the early part of the nineteenth century because of the inability of a secular ruler to support him. Thomas wrote of the *hau* as King, that:

It is said had the King's party been successful in the war in the Anga, it was the intention of the King to have presented his daughter Halaevalu to Laufilitonga as his wife, and to have appointed him to office as Tuitonga but though a battle was fought and many fell on both sides — no victory was gained — The evils they had hoped to have removed were allowed to remain — as the King could not remove them — his daughter was therefore not so given — neither was the chief appointed to office, but remained at Vavau where he had been brought up (Thomas MS. 4:192).

After the separation of sacred from secular matters in aboriginal Tonga, the *Tu'i Tonga* was still esteemed and revered but more as an intercessor with the Tongan deities. Thomas wrote of the *Tu'i Tonga*:

The office of the Tuitonga was still esteemed, and became one of vast importance, even as the connective link between the gods and the people; he was not a high priest but a friend, or representative of the gods, his office as with his person was considered sacred (Thomas MS. 5:1).

Other eye-witnesses of the early nineteenth century corroborated this, as the Wesleyan missionary N. Turner relates:

Many were present at the service this afternoon and were very attentive. The Tui Toga was there, who is by birth and rank according to their former superstitions the greatest Man in all these islands. Tho the nature of his office forbids him to have anything to do with public affairs. According to the ancient customs of Toga he is altogether a sacred person (N. Turner, Letter-Journal dated November 29, 1828, reporting events of October 28, 1828).

Eventually, however, as a result of Western contact (specifically the Wesleyan missionaries in the nineteenth century) the position of the *Tu'i Tonga* was totally eclipsed by that of the *Tu'i Kanokupolu*. Laufilitonga, the last *Tu'i Tonga*, had eventually been installed in his office in 1827 and held the title until his death in 1865. Although he requested that a *Tu'i Tonga* be appointed after his death, no such appointment was made by the *Tu'i Kanokupolu* King George Tupou. As a point of fact, at a Tongan parliamentary meeting in 1875 King George Tupou stated:

You must remember that I was conferred with the following two titles during the meeting that was held in Vava'u, Tu'itonga and Tu'iha'atakalaua together with my own title of Tu'ikanokupolu (Hunter 1963:4).

This was the ultimate consolidation of King George's rise to power. A recent assessment by Latukefu of King George, or Taufa'ahau, is worth considering:

It appears, however, that Taufa'ahau's initial acceptance of Christianity was only a part of his general desire to adopt the ways of the white man, his wealth, superior knowledge and weapons of war, and also [incidentally] his religion, to achieve his ambitions (Latukefu 1970:61).

With the eventual decline in the rank and status of the *Tu'i Tonga* and the concomitant rise of the *Tu'i Kanokupolu*, the position of the *Tamaha* also suffered a decline. Where the titles of *Tu'i Tonga* and *Tu'i Kanokupolu* meant that the individual so invested was responsible, respectively, for sacred and secular matters, Thomas has pointed out that in aboriginal Tonga the *Tamaha* "is more a title of honour than office" (MS. 4: 30). Although the *Tamaha* was usually held by a female, Thomas also pointed out that "there may, in the absence of a female, be a male *Tamaha* — which thing has been known to occur, but generally it is a female" (ibid.).

The rank and status associated with that of the *Tamaha* was extremely high in Tongan culture, and early nineteenth-century observers were astute enough to point this out. The French navigator, Dumont D'Urville reported of his 1827 visit to Tongatapu:

all the people of Tonga, without exception, even the toui-tonga and the toui-Kana-Kabolo themselves, had to accord the homage of *moe-moe*, while she was not obliged to honour anyone in this way (n.d.:27).

The *moemoe'i* was the indication of respect that an inferior had to show to a superior, with the inferior person bowing down to touch the head to the soles of the superior person's feet.

Dumont D'Urville, however, was also aware of the fact that by showing deferential respect one did not necessarily acknowledge power and authority, and he pointed out that the *Tamaha* "was revered in the islands although she only had any real authority over her personal property and her people in Ardeo" (ibid.). She not only had authority over "Ardeo," or *Ha'ateiho* (an area on Tongatapu), but it also extended into the Ha'apai islands. Of the person designated the *Tamaha*, Thomas wrote:

while it raised the individual in the estimation of all her friends, she was by this means brought so near to the gods, as to be a kind of divinity herself to the people, and was much sought unto as such (Thomas ms. 5:4).

The Wesleyan missionary Webb was quite correct when he wrote that "the *Tamaha* is the greatest personage in the whole group of islands" (Webb, Letter-Journal of March 1, 1843, for the events of August 12, 1842). Where the *Tu'i Tonga* was the representative of the gods on earth, the *Tamaha* herself was virtually viewed as a god.

Although the Wesleyans made numerous attempts to convert the *Tu'i Tonga* Lauflitonga to Wesleyanism, they failed (and the *Tu'i Tonga* became a Catholic); on the other hand, the *Tamaha* converted to Wesleyanism and the missionaries scored quite a coup on aboriginal religious beliefs when this happened. Thomas wrote in his Journal that "Tamma ha has turned to God — also her brother Fehokohaabai, and all the people of Tungua have turned" (Thomas, *Journal* 5, December 12, 1832). Gradually, Tongan culture changed in the nineteenth century under the pressure of the Wesleyan missionaries.

The four titles of *Tu'i Tonga*, *Tu'i Ha'a Takalaua*, *Tu'i Kanokupolu*, and *Tamaha* thus represented the core of titles of aboriginal Tongan culture. From these four titles all other titles developed and as Thomas stated (as cited earlier), "formerly there were three ranks of nobles in Tonga" for whom one would apply the term *'eiki* (Thomas ms. 5: 1). The concept of *'eiki* has changed over time in Tonga, but this change has not always been understood and interpreted by all European observers. Writing of these four core titles in the nineteenth century, one astute eyewitness to changing Tongan culture did comprehend the changes in part:

It may be noticed that the term Eiki applied to the above chiefs and their families almost exclusively in gone by days, and was a very choice word, but of later years it has become more common (Thomas ms. A1961: 7).

In aboriginal Tonga, individuals closely related to the *Tu'i Tonga* were termed the *Sino'i 'eiki*, literally 'the body of the *'eiki*' (Churchward 1959: 430). These included the *Tu'i Ha'a Takalaua*, *Tu'i Kanokupolu*, and the *Tamaha*. In aboriginal Tonga, *'eiki* was a concept of nobility, or noble birth. *'Eiki* is not immediately synonymous with 'chief' as numerous early European observers recorded.

One of the earliest voyage accounts of Schouten and Le Maire from 1616 has *Ariki* for 'King' (Dalrymple 1770-1771: II; n.p.). The various vocabularies connected with Cook's voyages have, for the Tongan vocabularies, *'Eege* as 'a chief' (Anderson, in Beaglehole 1967: 956),

Agee as 'chief' (Samwell, in Beaglehole 1967: 1045), and *Eege* as 'chief' in King's 1821 vocabulary (King 1821: 447). Mariner's 1817 edition has *E'gi* as 'a chief; a god' (II: n.p.) and with a cross-reference to 'chief' one finds in Mariner "(a noble). Egi; (chief of a district or island) to'oi; (supreme chief or king) how" (ibid.). By the time of Mariner's 1827 edition, however, some revisions had been made and for *Egi* Mariner has "a chief; a god; the head man of a party" (1827: II, lvi). This final definition roughly approximates the range of variation on the concept of *'eiki* in aboriginal Tongan culture. Not all 'chiefs' as reported by European observers were *'eiki* to the Tongans and not all *'eiki* to the Tongans were chiefs.

At one point in the past the *Tu'i Tonga* divided his lands between his kinsmen, his *'eiki*. The various *'eiki* established and belonged to their own named groups or *'eiki* of *Ha'a*, a corporate descent group. Various *'eiki* of the *Ha'a* were given titles to represent some specific aspect of the *'eiki*. When the *Tu'i Kanokupolu* Ngata received his title, he gave his own son who was named Leilua the title of *Ve'ehala* which is roughly translated as 'the wrong-footed man.' With the title of *Ve'ehala* went some land on Tongatapu. It is the title of the *'eiki* which passed on to another individual when the *'eiki* was no longer able to perform his duties. The title would not necessarily go to the oldest natural son of the *'eiki*. The title could be passed to a brother of the *'eiki*; the title could go to a son of a sister's child, or the title could go to an adopted son of the *'eiki*. In aboriginal Tonga, succession to titles (and chieftainship) depended on a variety of factors, including a joint decision of the corporate descent group on the ability of the prospective *'eiki*, as well as his age, number of wives, and the number of supporters the *'eiki* could muster if he wanted to be a chief of the corporate descent group.³

It cannot be stressed enough that in aboriginal Tonga consensus and flexibility were key concepts. An *'eiki* who wanted to be a chief of a group of people had to have the consent of the people; and a chief also needed the consent of his fellow chiefs. Even the *Tu'i Tonga* could not be appointed to the title without the consent and support of either the *Tu'i Ha'a Takalaua* or the *Tu'i Kanokupolu*. Thomas wrote in his *Journal* that "there is a union amongst the Tonga people, especially the chiefs, so that they consult each other before they determine anything" (February 11, 1826). A *Tu'i Kanokupolu* had to have the support of the various *Ha'a* of Tonga to become *Tu'i Kanokupolu*. Thomas recorded how one individual had given up the *lotoo* or Wesleyan religion:

³ See Urbanowicz (n.d. [1973]) for a description and analysis of aboriginal Tongan adoption patterns and the changes in adoption and inheritance procedures as a result of the Tongan Constitution of 1875.

This evening Hohela came today to say that Tooboo had yielded to give up lotoo and to be made the Tooicanacabola. In a few days time all the old people are to meet at this part [Hihifo on Tongatapu] to make him. This is a serious event (Journal entry of December 1, 1827).

Other nineteenth-century observers also witnessed this "consensus and flexibility" aspect of Tonga culture: Cross wrote how the "Monarch is only a superior Chief, and is absolute no longer than he is supported by others, many of whom have nearly as much power as himself, and in some instances more" (Hunt 1846: 30). One non-missionary observer of 1850 wrote:

The government of the islands is despotic, and not hereditary, but elective in the royal family. The eldest son of the king does not necessarily succeed his father, but another may be chosen from the sons of a former king, or a younger son may be elected before an elder if he be thought to have more capacity for government (Brierly 1852: 98).

Thus an 'eiki who was chosen as a chief had to have the support of the people. He was a titled 'eiki.

In aboriginal Tonga, there were also those 'eiki's who did not have a title: these would be the *Sino'i 'eiki* for whom genealogical position, and not a mere title, was the important criterion. There were also those individuals who did have a title, yet were not 'eiki. These would be *matapule* titles — titles given to an individual by an 'eiki, and the *matapule* title-holder would look after a specific spot of land for the 'eiki. Finally, in aboriginal Tonga, (as well as today), there was the bulk of the populace: non-titled, non-'eiki individuals.

In aboriginal Tonga then, 'eiki stood for a concept of noble birth and Tongans used the term appropriately. The Tongans would be able to distinguish between: titled 'eiki, such as the *Tu'i Tonga*, non-titled 'eiki, a kinsman of the *Tu'i Tonga*, titled non-'eiki, a *matapule*, and the non-titled, non-'eiki, bulk of the populace. In aboriginal Tonga, then, 'eiki was a concept of noble birth and not synonymous with 'chief.' In the nineteenth century Thomas wrote:

From this it will be seen that there are very many persons in the Friendly Islands, to whom the term *eiki* applies — persons who have nothing to do with the government of the Islands, but who had to be supported according to their rank, and many of them did receive more than civil respect — they had what may be called divine homage paid them, and some of them appeared to think that that was their proper right and due (Thomas ms. A1961: 16).

CHANGES

With sustained European contact, culminating in the Tongan Constitution of 1875, aboriginal Tongan culture changed. The Constitution was promulgated by the *Tu'i Kanokupolu* King George Tupou with the aid of European advice. King George's refusal to install a *Tu'i Tonga* after the death of Laufilitonga in 1865 has already been discussed. With the Constitution of 1875 King George totally consolidated his position (receiving the titles of *Tu'i Tonga* and *Tu'i Kanokupolu*) and removing the inherent consensus and flexibility concerning the rights of chieftainship.⁴ The flexible system of titles and inheritance passed out of existence and a rigid father-to-son inheritance system was initiated. Where before a person received a title because of ability and consensus, now a person received a title because of the law. A completely workable system of status achievement had been removed and in its place a system of ascribed status substituted.

With the Constitution of 1875 King George created the hereditary class of nobles, or *nopele*, who are included in the generic gloss *hou'eiki*. The Constitution created the 'eiki *nopele*, but some of these 'eiki *nopele* were only *matapules*, or titled non-'eiki in aboriginal Tonga, and hence were only 'eiki in name and not 'eiki by noble birth.

Prior to the Constitution, no one individual could hold more than one title, since the title-holder was responsible to a specific group of people. Now, as a result of the Constitution there are men holding two titles, the most notable being Honorable Kalaniuvalu-Fotofili, and an individual has to divide his time, and hence his obligations, between two different groups of people.

In aboriginal Tonga, women always had important positions in the society, with the *Tamaha* being the classic example. With the passage of time, the descendants of the *Tamaha* have suffered (Kaeppler 1971: 183), although the *Tamaha* herself had extremely high rank and status in

⁴ It was not written into the Tongan Constitution that *Tu'i Kanokupolu* King George was given the two titles of *Tu'i Tonga* and *Tu'i Ha'a Takalaua*. King George merely said that he "was conferred" with the two additional titles; however, at the same parliamentary meeting, King George said: "However I now desire to appoint paramount chiefs for these two dynasties as well as the Hangatatu so I now confer the following titles and they are to be hereditary. (1) Tungi and his descendants to be head of the Ha'atakalaua for ever. (2) Kalaniuvalu and his descendants to be head of the Kauhala'uta [of the *Tu'i Tonga*] for ever. ..." (In Hunter 1963: 4). One of the reasons that this was done was because of the fact that it was eventually written into the Tongan Constitution that if King George Tupou I were to have no legitimate heirs, the "Crown of Tonga" was to "descend to Uiliami Tugi and his lawful heirs" (King George Tupou I in *Tonga Government Gazette*, Volume II; 35E, December 16, 1885, page 1; also see Wylie 1967: I, 21).

Tongan culture. In aboriginal Tonga, the *Tamaha* and her descendants always were well treated.

INTERPRETATION AND SUMMARY

Change obviously takes place over time and to discuss changes in Tonga one must first know what Tonga was like. Tonga is the only Polynesian island group to successfully survive into the twentieth century. It is currently a Constitutional Monarchy under His Majesty King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV. The survival and establishment of the constitutional monarchical form of government was due to a skillful and somewhat bloodthirsty unification of the archipelago in 1852 by King George Tupou, later known as "the First" and a Great-Great-Great Grandfather of his current majesty.

The unification of the archipelago after the final war in 1852 and the subsequent reorganization and codification of the laws along Western European concepts brought about changes which have had ramifications in Tonga to this day. Scarr has shown that Tongans were advised in the nineteenth century that if Tongans wanted to avoid being "taken over" by larger foreign powers, Tonga would have to take on the trappings of Westernization. This Westernization was replete with a "Western facade" of a written Constitution and codified laws (Scarr 1968: 86). Thus the Constitution of 1875 must serve as a landmark for virtually any discussions pertaining to Tongan culture.

In a volume on psychological anthropology, it only seems fitting that there be some psychological aspects to the paper: psychological aspects concerning both the Tongans and the numerous Europeans who have been in Tonga and who have written on Tonga. For aboriginal Tongans, rank was something which came about because one was born into the position. Status could be achieved by means of arranged marriages, skill at leadership or warfare, or anything which would virtually enhance an individual in the minds of fellow Tongans. The family was all important, or the genealogical relationships between individuals of the extended family. In aboriginal Tonga, politics was "kinship writ large," something which seems to exist to this day. The *Tonga Chronicle* of October 17, 1971, had the following statement in reference to the wife of His Majesty King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV:

Queen Mata'aho in an interview with the Singapore newspaper *Straits Times* explained the tradition of the people and the monarchy in Tonga is like one big family with the King and Queen looked on as parents.

This may be how some view the monarchy today, and it would probably be consistent with a statement pertaining to aboriginal Tonga, but it is not how nineteenth-century (and earlier) Europeans viewed Tonga. Aboriginal Tonga was an extended family, with virtually everyone being able to trace kinship ties with everyone else. The concept of 'eiki or noble birth was a perfectly viable one in aboriginal Tonga, for Tongans knew who was genealogically related to whom. The fact that only a proven individual could be made a leader of men in aboriginal Tonga also made sense — but this did not make sense to European observers of the time. The Europeans, with European concepts of government, expected to find an articulating "wholeness" in Tonga; instead, as Wilson's statement makes clear, to their eyes they found chaos:

The Government of Tongataboo is so complex in itself, and the natives' account of it so different, each taking a particular pride in exalting his own chief above others, that it is difficult to come to any certainty concerning it (Wilson 1799: 269).

Cook's earlier statement from 1777 is also in keeping with this approach:

Of the nature of Government we know no more than the general outline, a subordination is established among them that resembles the feudal system; but of its subdivisions of the Constituent parts and in what manner connected to form one body politic I confess myself totally ignorant (In Beaglehole 1967: 174).

Cook was not "totally ignorant" but he was honest in his reporting.

When the missionaries arrived, particularly the Wesleyans in the nineteenth century, they too were confused — but they did something about it: they did not admit to their confusion and set out to convert a culture! They sent back fantastic reports to Sydney and to London and continued to receive money and supplies to "convert" the Tongans. It was a fortuitous moment in 1826 when the Wesleyan missionaries Thomas and Hutchinson arrived on Tongatapu: they brought their own supplies (to augment those abandoned by Lawry when that missionary left in 1823) to convert the Tongans, they capitalized on the Europeans who had been living in the archipelago for numerous years, and they also profitted from the problems of the Tongans. As Thomas relates in his Journal for 1827:

I learn from a young man here, an Englishman, that Tonga at this time is principally in the possession of petty chiefs. Some few years ago the great men departed this life and some were killed — even the King's family now have no power — but these chiefs fought and defended Tonga and they now possess the part they have rescued from their enemies, SO THAT AT THIS TIME THEY SEEM MUCH CONFUSED, HAVING NO HEAD MAN (Thomas, *Journal*, entry of January 30, 1827. Emphasis added.)

Because there was no "head man" or secular ruler, there was no Tongan with the authority to order the missionaries to leave. The mission approach was that of "divide-and-conquer" and they turned Tongan against Tongan — chief against chief. The religious wars of the nineteenth century which resulted from Wesleyan interference in aboriginal Tongan life were notorious for their ferocity. In January of 1837, the Wesleyan missionary Watkin could write of the destruction of the non-Wesleyanized-Tongan fortress of Ngeleia and how "one Christian was killed and three wounded more than 25 heathens perished" (Watkin, Journal entry for January 11, 1837). Of the 1840 battles, the Wesleyan missionary P. Turner wrote:

The heathens seem determined to die in their foolishness. I am told that they have made an oath to do so, before they will yield to the Xtians. (Turner, *Journal*, entry for July 19, 1840).

Of the ferocious 1840 wars, Thomas could write that he told the *Tu'i Kanokupolu* Jiosaia Tupou that "the heathens had acted more kind a great deal than the Christians and that they were less disposed for war" (Thomas, *Journal*, entry for August 4, 1840).

Aboriginal Tonga was forcefully pulled into the nineteenth century and more needs to be written on this distasteful period. The demise of aboriginal Tongan culture was clearly visible in 1840 when the Wesleyan missionary John Thomas, probably one of the few missionaries who ever partially "understood" Tongan culture (and who has been ridiculed for it), wrote in his *Journal* of August 4, 1840, of the titled 'eiki Ma'afu of the *Ha'a Havea*, a staunch non-Wesleyan-induced pro-indigenous Tongan individual:

Old Maafu is angry and grieved, saying like one of old, "Ye have taken away my gods, and what have I more."⁶

⁶ Thomas gathered a tremendous amount of potential ethnographic data, most of which (if not all of it) still remains in manuscript form. He realized the problems of data-gathering when he was asking specific questions and the following somewhat poignant statement from his *Journal* of 1858 is worth re-reading: "conversed with a few persons, on some little matters connected with the Tonga history. My matter accumulates — also I hope it is in a way to be corrected before it sees the light — but whatever case I may take, it is scarcely possible to avoid making some mistakes, the more so, as various opinions are formed by various persons on the same subject" (Thomas, *Journal*, entry of February 20, 1858).

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