

# UNDER THE *TOA* TREE: The Genealogy of the Tongan Chiefs

Aletta Biersack  
University of Oregon

The redirection of Polynesian research — away from structural and structural-functional obsessions with the inert and toward an awareness of contradictions, heterogeneities, and system-based dynamics — is by now a matter of history. Not that descent has been forgotten. Rather, it has been subordinated to a more global, temporalized order grounded in dual dimensions of kingship.

Hocart's formulation of this duality in *Kings and Councillors* is the classic — albeit the most abstract and most opaque — one. There Hocart pairs two contrasting kinds of rulers: the one passive, senior, and associated with ritual, the other active, junior, and sometimes (though not necessarily) associated with war (Hocart 1970: 164). Since “He who acts holds the power” (*ibid.*), “it is not infrequent that the junior chief was the real master, leaving to his senior no more than a sacred precedence” (*ibid.*).

Sahlins' essay on the “stranger-king” elaborates Hocart's duality in critical ways. At the “State” pole, the king represents strangeness and divinity (the king originates from above or beyond), violence, excess, criminality, and *celeritas*, “the youthful, active, disorderly, magical, and creative violence of conquering princes” (Sahlins 1985: 90). At the “Society” pole, kingship rests on an accommodation to “the people's own moral order” (*ibid.*) — kinship, that is — and represents *gravitas*, “the venerable, staid, judicious, priestly, peaceful, and productive dispositions of an established people” (*ibid.*). Howard similarly notes the “paradoxes” (Howard 1985: 71) upon which Rotuman chieftaincy is founded: “that chiefs are gods,

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but are [also] human; that they are of the people, but are different from them; that they represent the unity of the polity, but have parochial interests...“ (*ibid.*). While Valeri’s formulation of the duality sometimes rests upon a distinction between a pacific and a war-mongering king (1989: 234–35, this volume; cf. Gunson 1979 and for Hawai‘i, Valeri 1982: 10–12), at other times he contrasts a genealogical mode, which legitimates the king as a god, with a contractual (Valeri 1985) and/or narrative (Valeri 1990) mode, which legitimates the ruler on the grounds of his exemplariness and/or heroism.

If contract and narrative cement ties between “overlord” and “vassal” in Valeri’s formulation (1985), in Marcus’ the audience for whom the performance side of chieftaincy matters is significantly widened. In his recent overview of chieftaincy in Polynesia (1989), Marcus elaborates Sahlins’ foreign/domestic polarity as a distinction between kingly (genealogical, divine) and populist modes of legitimation — an elaboration that immediately makes sense in light of the alignment in Polynesian cosmologies of divine/human, sky/earth, foreign (beyond the horizon)/domestic, and sea/land, given the identification of the land with commoners, “the people” (*kau kakai*). Chiefs are “powerful aliens in their own society. Yet however much this is recognized on ritual occasions, chiefs are also people” (*ibid.*: 150). On the one hand, paramounts legitimate themselves mythically and through a sometimes rapacious exertion of power as unbridled outsiders; on the other, they are subject to the routine moral evaluations of daily life. Chiefs “range... ambivalently between kingly glory... and a secular idiom and heroic populism...” (*ibid.*: 155), operating now as “mystified symbol” (*ibid.*: 170), now as exemplary human being.

The present paper examines the dualistic foundations of Tongan kingship by way of exploring the historicity of the Tongan polity. While paramounts allegedly descend “from the sky” and the god or gods living there, they are also kinsmen (*kāinga*) of the villagers or “the people” living under them (Bott 1958–59, 1: 66, 1981: 20–27; Gifford 1929: 113) and are appraised as such. The historicity of the Tongan polity follows from the necessity of negotiating the terms of sovereignty, a negotiation that embroils the entire polity, top to bottom. In this negotiation, scanting the contractual and populist side of the ledger imperils any regime. Diarchy, which institutionalizes the duality — ossification of any kind — is a sign of a breakdown in this negotiation. But the problem of center-formation and this negotiation remains. Usurpation may be viewed as a strategic intervention attempting to rescue and rehabilitate the polity by shifting negotiation to a more promising site within it. As

a chapter in the history of negotiation, usurpation is an implication of the duality itself, not only because genealogical precedence spawns “status rivalry” (Goldman 1970; cf. Sahlins 1981; Thomas 1986:chs. 3, 5) but because, unlike genealogical modes, contractual modes of legitimation allow no monopoly and offer a career open to the talents among juniors (who are also divine [Valeri this volume]) as well as seniors.

Whether by way of reproducing or transforming a political field, the mediation of duality requires human work, a practice and performance of kingship. Structure is *always* sedimented in and through events (Giddens 1979; Sahlins 1981; Thomas 1986: ch. 1). But as between reproduction and transformation, usurpation provides the more panoramic window on the symbolic and practical complexities of polity formation (Valeri 1982, 1985) and political pathologies, for acts of usurpation are condensed sites of breakdown and renewal, the betrayal yet resurgence of an ideal — ones, moreover, that open the political order to the entire world of events unfolding within and also lying without. Furthermore, if vindicated, usurpation is also a just reformation, one that is fully embedded within a populist politics of kinship. The study of usurpation exposes the voice of “the people” and provides a context for examining points of juncture between elite and commoner histories.

The word *genealogy* in the title bears the burden of the entire argument. Referring directly to history, it enters into tension with the patrilineal and structural models of the past. The history to which it refers, in turn, is set in motion by the dual foundations of kingship: idioms and ideologies of divinity but as these exist in tension with the “leveling forces” (Marcus 1980, 1989) of contractual modes of legitimation. The term also gestures toward a Foucaultian appreciation of the politics of representation — in particular, to the event-like, cause-like status of historical narrative, which, in justifying resistance and revolt, legitimates transformation. *Genealogy* is thus identified with Valeri’s anterior mode of legitimation: narratives of celebration and denigration that elevate and debase through the power of their rhetoric.

My aim is to develop a framework adequate to the task of interpreting the revolution of the 19th century, when Tāufa‘āhau, a secondary chief, suppressed the Tu‘i Tonga title of his superior; created a superordinate one, the royal title of the constitutional monarchy he in part designed; and converted to Christianity — sweeping reforms at once chiefly and populist (Marcus 1980). The third monarch of the Tupou dynasty Tāufa‘āhau founded, Queen Sālote Tupou III, figures prominently in these pages as an

ideologue. In the stories she tells about her Tupou forebearers and the chiefs whom they supplanted, she unwittingly discloses rhetorical strategies for defending and celebrating the conquests and reforms of the 19th century. In her often veiled and diplomatic disparagement of the leaders of the past, Queen Sālote provides a window upon the genealogical politics this paper addresses.

## 'Aho'eitu

According to legend, the first Tu'i Tonga is the son of the god 'Eitumatupu'a and an earth-mother named Va'epopua or 'Ilaheva. One day 'Eitumatupu'a descends from the sky and impregnates Va'epopua; then he withdraws. The mother rears 'Aho'eitu alone, presumably surrounded by her own people. As 'Aho'eitu matures, he wishes to meet his father; and his mother tells him to climb a *toa* or *casuarina* (ironwood) tree to find him. Up in the sky, 'Aho'eitu finds not only his father but his older brothers, who, jealous of him, murder and eat him. When he cannot find 'Aho'eitu, 'Eitumatupu'a suspects what has happened and orders his sons to vomit up the remains. He then revivifies 'Aho'eitu and names him the first Tu'i Tonga, sending him back home to govern. Four of his older brothers are sent along with him to serve him as his *matāpules* or ceremonial attendants (*falefā*, “the four houses”). The oldest brother is made the “king of the second house” (Tu'i Faleua) rather than the paramount because he murdered 'Aho'eitu. He is told, however, that his line will replace the Tu'i Tonga's line should that line falter (Bott 1982: 91; Gifford 1929: 59).

In the 'Aho'eitu myth, 'Eitumatupu'a descends but then quickly ascends, divinity being constituted as an absence. By virtue of his divine associations, 'Aho'eitu was “most sacred” (*toputapu*), and the *tapus* hedging contact with him effectively removed him from ordinary interaction and its time. Of the Tu'i Tonga, Her Majesty Queen Sālote wrote that his person (*sino* or “body”) was “truly sacred” (*toputapu*) (H.M. Queen Sālote, “Ko e Ngaahi Ha'a 'o Tonga,” from “Ko e Ngaahi Me'a mei he Tohi 'a 'Ene 'Afio,” BSP 11/2/7).<sup>1</sup> Because the body of a Tu'i Tonga could not be touched, his hair could not be cut, and he could not be circumcised once he had become a king. He also had to go to Samoa to be tattooed, since the Samoans, as foreigners, were able to shed the Tu'i Tonga's blood as Tongans could not (*ibid.*). By way of emphasizing the fearsome power the Tu'i Tonga had, the late Queen told the story of how the bodies of some of these Samoans swelled despite their alien status

and they died. “When anything touched the body of the Tu‘i Tonga, it became *tapu* and could not be used by anyone else. He was fed by someone else. He did not touch his own food, and even then the leftovers were *tapu-ed*” (*ibid.*: 7–8).

If the body is viewed as an interactional instrument rather than as a natural entity, then the *tapus* in effect disembodied the Tu‘i Tonga, constituting him (like ‘Eitumatupu‘a) as an absence rather than as a presence. Those who did approach the Tu‘i Tonga had to show their respect by performing the ceremony of *moemoe*. This involved touching the soles of the Tu‘i Tonga’s feet upon first entering his house, “so that one might be at liberty to sit down in the house, on the occasion of a kava party or other gathering. And when wishing to go outside of the house it was done again, after the completion of the kava ceremonies or entertainment...” (Gifford 1929: 118). Mariner provides a more detailed and more generalized description:

This ceremony consists in touching the soles of any superior chief’s feet with the hands, first applying the palm, then the back of each hand; after which the hands must be rinsed in a little water, or, if there be no water near, they may be rubbed with any part of the stem of the plantain or banana tree, the moisture of which will do instead of washing. He may then feed himself without danger of any disease, which would otherwise happen, as they think, from eating with tabooed hands (Martin’s Mariner 1981: 355).

*Matāpules* mark chiefly *proxemically*, through an exotic intimacy with the king. The personal attendants who surrounded the Tu‘i Tonga — the *falefā* and the “king of the second house” — were foreign, “from the sky.” Their descendants and the class of *matāpules* in general have tended to be Fijian, Samoan, Rotuman, and Tokelauan (Gifford 1929: 140). “The reason assigned for the employment of foreigners as *matāpules* is that they are exempt from *tapu* which separate a Tongan chief and his purely Tongan relatives” (*ibid.*: 141). Thus, *matāpules* served as companions (H.M. Queen Sālote, “Ko e Ngaahi Ha’a ‘o Tonga,” from “Ko e Ngaahi Me’a mei he Tohi ‘a ‘Ene ‘Afio,” BSP 11/2/7; see also Bott 1982: 118–19) as well as ceremonial attendants, being present at the king’s informal as well as at his formal kava ceremonies. The *matāpule* Soakai, Fijian in origin, had as his special privilege the right to eat and smoke with the Tu‘i Tonga, something others could not do (Gifford 1929: 65, 141). Her Majesty observed that “it didn’t matter who they [the *matāpules*] were but there had to be someone with the

king” (H.M. Queen Sālote, “Ko e Ngaahi Ha’a ’o Tonga,” from “Ko e Ngaahi Me’a mei he Tohi ’a ’Ene ’Afio,” BSP 11/2/7). *Matāpules* then and now create a cocoon of sociality insulating and isolating the king.

The divinity of the Tu’i Tonga was marked also by the burial practices of the Tu’i Tonga, said to be those of ‘Eitumatupu’a himself (Gifford 1924: 42), by the fact that the tomb the Tu’i Tonga was buried in was called *langi* or sky, and by the fact that the Tu’i Tonga himself could be referred to as *langi* (Gifford 1929: 74). *Langi* is also the royal word for “eye(s), face, mouth, ears, or head” (Churchward 1959: 282). When a paramount dies, it is said that the sun has set; when the Tu’i Tonga died, it was said, “The heavens are void” (*ibid.*: 74).

The Tu’i Tonga served a sacerdotal function as an intermediary between the toilers of the soil, on the one hand, and the source of its fertility, the god or goddess Hikule’o, on the other. In relation to this sacerdotal function, and also because the god ‘Eitumatupu’a had named him the high chief of Tonga, the Tu’i Tonga had “supreme control of the soil” (Valeri 1989: 234), of which ‘*inasi* tribute was the principal symbol (*ibid.*). First fruit ‘*inasi* tribute was given annually, to thank Hikule’o (identified sometimes as a male, sometimes as a female [Gifford 1924: 153, 1929: 291]) for the fecundity of the soil. Such tribute was believed essential to prosperity. “... failure to carry out the ‘*inasi* festival would result in national disaster” (Martin’s Mariner 1981: 67). The missionary John Thomas expounds upon the character of the exchange. First fruits were given

as an acknowledgment of their [the people’s] dependance [*sic*] upon him [Hikule’o] and the gods, as the owners of the earth — the sea, and all things, and to unite to supplicate the gods... to send them suitable weather of rain and sky, that the yam seeds may bring forth a crop, and that thus laboring may not be in vain (Thomas n.d.: 262; see also Farmer 1855: 96, 130; Lātūkefu 1980: 67).

This simple transaction — fertility downward for first fruit tributes upward — exercises (if it does not also constitute) the sky-earth axis of the ‘Aho’eitu myth. The gifts of the first yam and the soil to grow it in ‘Eitumatupu’a made to his earth-wife (Thomas 1879: 231) are precedents for this exchange, as well as for the Tu’i Tonga’s proprietorship of the soil and his position as an “intermediary between the people and the gods” (Bott 1982: 91). The yam and the soil, Thomas remarks, are seen as “favours from the good of the

sky” (*ibid.*). These favors were iterated annually in the harvest and reciprocated in annual *‘inasi* tributes.<sup>3</sup>

## Diarchy and usurpation

‘Aho‘eitu is more than divine. Through his mother he is also human. Descending from the sky to rule over his mother’s people, ‘Aho‘eitu’s kingship is constituted also as a *presence*.

The myth says relatively little about ‘Aho‘eitu’s duties as the chief of a *place* — the Tu‘i Tonga — and not just a divine abstraction. A transformation occurring somewhere in the 15th century provides some indications. The split was triggered when two “old men” assassinated the Tu‘i Tonga Takalaua.<sup>3</sup> The Tu‘i Tonga’s oldest son and heir, Kau‘ulufonua, pursued the assassins as they fled to other islands, catching them finally in Futuna. Not content simply to murder the assassins, Kau‘ulufonua extracted a crueler punishment. According to one of Gifford’s accounts, he ordered a kava ceremony to be held and served the assassins as the food or *fono*, telling those in attendance: “These two old men will furnish the relish to our kava. Each of us may take the part that he desires as his relis” (Gifford 1924: 67). Gifford continues: “The kava drinking proceeded and those who wished cut and tore from the living old men the parts that they desired as relish. Gradually the two men died a most painful death” (*ibid.*). According to another account, Kau‘ulufonua ordered the old men to prepare kava by chewing it, despite their having no teeth.

Now the murderers were old men and had no teeth, and when they were brought before Kau-ulu-fonua, he ordered hard dry kava to be brought, and made them chew it before him, so that their mouths were filled with blood. And he bade them pour water into the bowl, and knead and strain the kava, and he drank the draught alone. Therefore he was named Kau-ulu-fonua-fekai (Kau-ulu-fonua the savage); and he slew his father’s murderers in Futuna and returned to Tonga (Thomson 1894: 304).

The narrative the late Honorable Ve‘ehala and Tupou Posesi Fanua supplied Rutherford combines these two atrocities.

He knocked out the teeth of his captives and then forced them to chew with their bleeding gums the dry kava root which was to be used for the kava ceremony to celebrate their

capture; then they are dispatched and their bodies cut up to serve as the *fono* food for the same celebration (Ve'ehala and Tupou Posesi Fanua 1977: 35).

The assassination of the Tu'i Tonga Takalaua is deviant as much for the breach of the bodily *tapus* as for the murder. As Ve'ehala and Tupou Posesi Fanua diplomatically express the matter, "In spite of the sanctity and theoretical inviolability of the Tu'i Tonga's person it seems that he was often in danger of his life" (*ibid.*: 34).<sup>4</sup> Fearing a recurrence, Kau'ulufonua abdicated his administrative duties, reserving for himself the privileges of sanctity and the impregnability of divinity disincarnate.

"I am the chief [he told his brothers], but this people have dared to slay the Tui Tonga. What will they not dare? And how shall the land stand fast if the chief be slain? Now therefore it is my mind to set a chief over the people to govern them, and I will be supreme lord of the soil only, and of the offerings" (Thomson 1894: 304).

Then he made his younger brother, Mo'ungamotu'a, "lord over the people" (*ibid.*: 305), the Tu'i Tonga effectively retreating (like 'Eitumatupu'a) to the sky.

In contrast, the burdens (*fatongia*, "duties") and responsibilities of participating in the full range of social and political action and as its pivotal figure (Valeri this volume) fell to the Tu'i Ha'atalaua, who reigned as the "working chief" (*tu'i ngāue'*), present and not absent. Whereas the sacred chief held the land in trust from the gods, the "working chief" supervised the practices that unleashed its fertility. Loyal to the Tu'i Tonga, the Tu'i Ha'atalaua guarded and protected him (*ibid.*: 109) and also (since he mediated the relationship between the Tu'i Tonga and "the people") assumed crucial responsibilities toward commoners. In supervising agriculture, the "working chief" oversaw the generation of the surpluses that served as tribute for the Tu'i Tonga (through whom divine generative powers were channeled) and the god or gods he represented. Though not himself holding the land in trust from the gods, the "working chief," "entrusted with the running of the people and the land" (the Honorable Ve'ehala, personal communication), was a "popular" king (Valeri this volume). He also parcelled out the land; "... and because of this he was sometimes called Tu'i Kelekele 'Lord of the Lands'" (Bott 1982: 90; see H. M. Queen Sālote, "Ko e Ngaahi Ha'a'o Tonga," from "Ko e Ngaahi Me'a mei he Tohi 'a 'Ene 'Afio," BSP 11/2/2). Bott expands upon her point:



The chief told his people what to plant and when. He informed them when contributions of food were needed, when a *tapu* was to be placed on certain foods so that they would have time to mature, when he needed labour for building his house or helping a senior chief or the king from whom his title and position were derived (Bott 1982: 71).

At the most mundane level, the “working chief” “supervised planting and other activities for the real king or Tui Tonga” (Gifford 1929: 98; also, *ibid.*: 84–5).

From then on, the Tu‘i Tongaship is described in almost wholly negative terms. Gifford was told, for example, that “The Tui Tongas were the spiritual rulers of the country and did not interest themselves with the ordinary government of the country” (Gifford 1929: 48). Thomas also described the Tu‘i Tonga’s functions as residual. His office became one “purely of a religious nature — he represented the god Hikuleo, as well as the other gods, and... he was treated more as a divinity than as a man...” (Thomas, n.d.: 259). Mariner, too, depicts the Tu‘i Tonga as a shadow of his former self. The Tu‘i Tonga was “a *divine* chief of the highest rank, but having no power or authority in affairs belonging to the king” (Martin’s Mariner 1981: 315–16). Collocott’s description is patronizing: “... to the Tui Tonga were reserved the dignity and prestige of supreme chiefs, with the material concomitants of abundant food and fair ladies, but little work” (Collocott 1924: 178). Futa Helu’s is openly disdainful. “In pre-contact time, all *fatongia*, in a real sense, were ultimately directed at the Tu‘i Tonga,” he writes (n.d.). But “after the Tu‘i Ha’atakalaua was instituted, the Tu‘i Tonga ceased to have any *fatongia* at all though he enjoyed every right under the sun including the right to deprive persons especially the *tu’a* [commoners] of their so-called inalienable rights” (*ibid.*).

Two centuries later and under less dramatic circumstances, the Tu‘i Ha’atakalaua himself yielded to a junior line headed by the Tu‘i Kanokupolu. Thomson recounts that the Tu‘i Ha’atakalaua

saw that [the people] did not honour the chief whom they obeyed [that is, the “working chief”], but only him to whom they gave the offerings; and he made his son Ngata lord over the people and his descendants, and called him Tui Kanokubolu, and he himself was content to receive the offerings only (Thomson 1894: 305)

The late Queen Sālote dated the demise of the T’ui Ha’atakalauaship from the appointment of the first T’ui Kanokupolu, attributing the appointment to an inexplicable

enervation of the Tu'i Ha'atala line ("Ko e Ngaahi Ha'a 'o Tonga," from "Ko e Ngaahi Me'a mei he Tohi 'a 'Ene 'Afiu," BSP 11/2/2-3).

The orthodox interpretation of the origin of the "working chief" is that the Tu'i Tonga desired to place "a buffer between himself and his subjects" by way of securing "not only his own safety from popular outbreak, but an increased reverence for the rigid tabu that begins to environ him" (Thomson 1894: 306; see also Gifford 1929: 48, 85). The missionary Thomas West elaborates:

Ultimately the right of the Tuitogans, to the exercise of supreme government, was not only annulled by conquest, but by their own abnegation of it. This they did on condition that they should enjoy certain sacred honours and immunities, in perpetuity both from the ruling chiefs and the bulk of the people; whilst on their part they solemnly engaged never to intermeddle with the political administration of the country, or even in its civil affairs (West 1865: 55).

If the oral traditions are to be believed, a historical precedent for this retreat came in the reign of the eleventh Tu'i Tonga, Tu'itātui, who had two *langi* tombs — the *Langi Heketa* and the *Langi Mo'ungalafa*, both in eastern Tongatapu (Ve'ehala and Tupou Posesi Fanua 1977: 33) — and the famous trilithon *Ha'amonga a Maui* (*ibid.*) or "Burden of Maui" (Gifford 1924: 49) built. The labor for the trilithon — incredibly intensive (Dirk Spenneman, personal communication) — "was shared among the people of Tonga, Rotuma, Futuna, 'Uvea, Niuafo'ou, Niuatoputapu, and Samoa" (Gifford 1924: 49). Tu'itātui means "'king who strikes a knee,' referring to the Tui Tonga's custom of hitting with a long stick the knees of his *matāpule* when they came too close" (Gifford 1929: 53). The Tu'i Tonga did so out of a "fear of assassination, because several [*sic*] Tui Tonga had been killed at kava ceremonies by their *matāpule*" (*ibid.*; Gifford 1924: 47). That he is alleged to have committed incest with a half-sister (Gifford 1924: 46-47; see also Valeri 1989: 215, 236-37), possibly losing his life because of it (Ve'ehala and Tupou Posesi Fanua 1977: 33), feeds his notoriety. He was "feared by people throughout the archipelago" (Gifford 1924: 47).

Campbell argues that the account of the origin of the Tu'i Ha'atala should not be taken at face value. "If a king is simply weary of office he may abdicate, or delegate his powers; he does not need to establish a new dynasty and thus renounce power on the part of his heirs as well as himself" (Campbell 1982: 181). Moreover,

it is unlikely that twice in six generations “such an extraordinary event” would have happened (*ibid.*). While Campbell finds very little positive evidence to support this interpretation, positive evidence substantiating the orthodox view is also lacking. Campbell concludes that diarchy was the usurper’s rather than the senior’s strategy, a way of wresting control but without establishing the dangerous precedent of having done so (*ibid.* 1982: 180). The narrative is an “*ex post facto* [explanation] to validate an irregular transfer of power...” (*ibid.*; see also Herda 1988: 51–55). In retaining the practice of giving ‘*inasi* tribute to the Tu‘i Tonga, diarchy inscribes the usurper within a sky-rooted genealogy at the same time it renders unto Caesar only what is Caesar’s, affirming the Tu‘i Tonga’s *ritual* leadership while depriving him of *instrumental* control. Without “duties” (*fatongia*), the Tu‘i Tonga ceased to be a political agent and (whether coerced to do so or voluntarily) he yielded the historical stage to another.

Arguably, a diarchic form of government was reinstitutionalized, though weakly, at the time the constitutional monarchy was founded. The person who would be the last Tu‘i Tonga was defeated at the Battle of Velata (Ha‘apai) in 1826 (Lātūkefu 1974: 90). The *coup de grace*, however, concerned marriage and procreation. Tāufa‘āhau was to have given his sister to Laufilitonga as *moheofo*, his principal wife and the mother of his successor. The *moheofo* had to be a virgin; and wanting to deprive Laufilitonga of an heir, Tāufa‘āhau tendered his sister to another chief to bear a child before giving her to Laufilitonga (Ve‘ehala, personal communication; also: Bott 1958–59, 1: 31, Lātūkefu 1974: 90 and 90, n.; cf. Ellem 1981: 64–66). Without a successor, Laufilitonga capitulated his kava privileges — “the treasures of his position” (H.M. Queen Sālote, “Ko e Ngaahi Ha‘a ‘o Tonga,” from “Ko e Ngaahi Me‘a mei he Tohi ‘a ‘Ene ‘Afio,” BSP 11/2/8) — to the Tu‘i Pelehake Fatafehitoutai. Thus was the mythic injunction fulfilled: the Tu‘i Pelehake, descendant of ‘Aho‘eitu’s oldest brother and “king of the second house,” replaced the Tu‘i Tonga when the Tu‘i Tonga line failed (Bott 1981: 81–82, 1958–59, 1: 48; Gifford 1929: 62; H.M. Queen Sālote, “Ko e Ngaahi Ha‘a ‘o Tonga,” from “Ko e Ngaahi Me‘a mei he Tohi ‘a ‘Ene ‘Afio,” BSP 11/2/9). These kava privileges consisted in the right to have the side of the kava bowl from which the bowl was hung when it was not in use (the *taunga*) facing him, the right to receive the second cup of kava in silence, and the right to use the ‘*Ēi* (yes [Churchward 1959: 557]), which was spoken to the Tu‘i Tonga alone (Gifford 1929: 59, H.M. Queen Sālote, “Ko e Ngaahi Ha‘a ‘o Tonga,” from “Ko e Ngaahi Me‘a mei he Tohi ‘a ‘Ene ‘Afio,” BSP 11/2/9) rather than the *Ko e*. From that time on, the Tu‘i

Pelehake has represented the dignity of the Tu‘i Tonga (or Kauhala‘uta) side.

When the last Tu‘i Tonga died, the Tu‘i Pelehake, along with Soakai, entreated Tāufa‘āhau to take the Tu‘i Tonga’s kava *tapus*, but he refused, insisting upon ruling as a “working chief” (Ve‘ehala, personal communication; cf. Bott 1972: 224, 1958–59, 1: 48; Gifford 1929: 62) and having a “working kava” (*kava ngāue*) instead (Mafi Malanga, personal communication).

Tāufa‘āhau’s strategy is transparent. Diarchy emasculates the senior by way of honoring him, thereby upholding the crucial value of “respect” (*faka‘apa‘apa*) (Lātūkefu 1980: 65). More than one person has cited the deference Tāufa‘āhau showed to the Tu‘i Tonga in demonstrating his suitability for leadership to me. Diarchy makes available to a usurping line the “symbolic capital” of the vanquished. In acknowledging his senior’s greater prestige, Tāufa‘āhau could appropriate a symbolic resource and bask in a reflected glory. Simultaneously, Tāufa‘āhau undercut the symbolic strength of the Tu‘i Tonga by destroying the temples and idols of paganism and converting to Christianity (Lātūkefu 1974), thus subverting the diarchic dimensions of his own reforms and setting the stage for a renovated monarchy.

## Between privilege and responsibility

The story of Kau‘ulufonua’s revenge is deeply symbolic, reminiscent of the ‘Aho‘eitu myth (Herda 1988: 48–52, Valeri 1989: 231). ‘Aho‘eitu’s brothers kill and cannibalize him. Rejecting the act and the outcome, ‘Eitumatupu‘a, their father, makes ‘Aho‘eitu’s older brothers vomit into a kava bowl; and from these regurgitated remains ‘Aho‘eitu is reconstituted and crowned. In yet another story, cannibalism acquires this same connotation of a breach of kinship, albeit between leader and led. This is the story of the origin of kava. A high chief (identified in most versions as the Tu‘i Tonga) arrives unannounced at an offshore island ravaged by famine. To extend hospitality properly, despite a lack of resources, the couple living on the island kill their daughter, bake her in an earth oven, and serve her to the chief. The chief refuses to eat the daughter and instructs the couple to bury her instead. Out of her interred body grows the first kava plant, accompanied (in most versions) by sugar cane. A figure (usually identified as Lo‘au, soon to be discussed) invents the ceremony commemorative of Kava‘onau’s death.

As the kava ceremony is the ceremony of chiefly installation, the kava ritual can be said more generally to commemorate the pact between leader and led the Kava'onau story revolves around. In preparing a feast for the visiting high chief, Kava'onau's parents fulfilled their obligations to him. The chief, in turn, honored his obligations to them in refusing the gift his status entitled him to, thus exhibiting his unwillingness to press his advantages to the point of exploiting "the people" (Biersack 1991). In assassinating the Tu'i Tonga, the two murderers broke this pact. Consuming his kin back, as it were, Kau'ulufonua's revenge returns an eye for an eye as he indulges himself in the very excesses of privilege the high chief in the Kava'onau myth benevolently spurns. He kills and cannibalizes his people.

According to Thomson, the assassination triggering this revenge was motivated by a commensurate breach of kinship.

And as the years passed the Tui Tonga's face was changed towards his people, and he laid heavy tasks upon them, even in the planting-time, when every man should be in his own yam-garden. For he built a tomb for himself in the burying-place of his fathers; but he would surpass them all, and bade the people hew great stones from the reef, greater than any of his fathers had taken for their *malae*. And the stone-cutters hewed a huge stone upon the Liku, like an island for greatness; and the Tui Tonga sent to the people of Belehake, saying, "Go, and drag the stone for the side of my malae; so I shall not be forgotten hereafter."

They toiled at the stone all day, sore at heart, for it was planting-time, and in the evening they sent to Tui Tonga, praying that he would suffer them first to plant their yams; and afterwards return to drag the stone, for that it would take many days, and the time for yam-planting was far spent. But he returned answer that they were idle and dishonoured his commands. And the people were afraid when they heard his answer, and gathered together to the stone before it was yet day. And the sun rose on their toil, but the stone was so heavy that when it was low in the west they had only reached the cave Anameama, on the Liku, where there is fresh water. Their throats were dried up with thirst, and they crowded one upon the other in their haste to drink; but so many were they that when they had all drunk the pool was dry, and they licked the mud, and cursed their kin in their hearts.

Then one said, "How long shall we suffer this? He has other tasks in his mind for us, and who knows whether we shall live or die, and our wives be given to others? Shall we not take rest?" So they conspired that night to kill the Tui Tonga... (Thomson 1894: 300-01).

The net effect of these tales is to justify diarchy (as a transfer of agency to the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua) in terms of the deplorable performance of the line of rulers diarchy effectively retires from the historical stage (cf. Valeri 1990). More than chronicles, these narratives criticize and defame. The Tu'i Tonga Takalaua is represented as having placed his interests above those of his people, squandering on a monument to his own divinity — a *langi* (“sky”) or tomb — the labor his people required for agricultural production (see Mahina 1986: 103; Williamson 1924/1967: 143).

In her overview of Tongan history, the late Queen Sālote attributed the series of usurpations to the failure of these various kings to reciprocate the sacrifices of the people with sacrifices of their own, to exchange responsibility for responsibility, labor for labor, to govern as kin and not just as gods. Of the various holders of the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua title and the titles associated with it, Her Majesty said:

The beginning of their downfall is not known. It was from shirking their responsibilities... They tried to get others to shoulder them... The Ha'atakalauas were created by the Tu'i Tonga to help in safeguarding his regime and to bear the *fatongia*, not to lie down and give the burden to others... This group started to decline once they began to pay attention only to their own chiefly grandeur [*faka'ei'eiki*, “like or pertaining to a chief, chiefly in a chiefly or grandiose or formal manner” (Churchward 1959: 130)] and their duty to the country and the people came second (H. M. Queen Sālote, “Ko e Ngaahi Ha'a 'o Tonga,” from “Ko e Ngaahi Me'a mei he Tohi 'a 'Ene 'Afio,” BSP 11/2/5).

Recognized in her own time as an expert on Tongan tradition, Her Majesty repeatedly acknowledged that effective governance was concentrated in the hands of chiefs who had responsibilities (*fatongia*) and not just privileges (*tapus*). Without duties, the *ha'as* (or titles and leaders clustering around a ranking title and its holder [Bott 1981: 28–32]) became weak.

In former times,... the people looked after the chiefs. That was a great mistake, and no wonder the destruction that ensued; the rulership was transferred to another line, and they declined very quickly. From Takalaua to Laufilitonga [the Tu'i Tongas of the diarchic era] the Tu'i Tongas were like that: they did no work. The Tu'i Ha'atakalauas tried to do that too, and they quickly deteriorated and came to their end (H.M. Queen Sālote, “Ko e Ngaahi Fatongia Kehekehe,” from “Ko e Ngaahi Me'a mei he Tohi 'a 'Ene 'Afio,” BSP 11/2/1).

Then she pointed out that some Tu‘i Kanokupolus, her own forebearers, had failed to work as well and that the fourteenth holder of the title (“cruel and rapacious,” according to the late Honorable Ve‘ehala and Tupou Posesi Fanua [1977: 37]) was eventually assassinated (*ibid.*). But Tāufa‘āhau’s reign and that of his father’s, Tupouto‘a, were exemplary. Tupouto‘a

happily was not influenced by the bad ways of former chiefs, and his son Tupou I took after him. It was he who consolidated the lands and helped the people by dividing the land, introducing Christianity, and establishing various communications with the outside world. He had but one desire, which was to work diligently in cultivating the soil and in building and improving his house. He was wise and knew his rightful *fatongia*, which was to take care of and lead the people (H.M. Queen Sālote, “Ko e Ngaahi Fatongia Kehek-ehe,” from “Ko e Ngaahi Me‘a mei he Tohi ‘a ‘Ene ‘Afio,” BSP 11/2/1).

The late queen shared many of her thoughts about what constituted a “good chief” with Elizabeth Bott, who was employed in Tonga from 1958 to 1960 to facilitate the Tonga Traditions Committee’s collection of oral traditions. A “good chief” is a leader who involves himself in the daily life of the people and is himself on the scene whenever work he has assigned is done, supervising and encouraging “the people” (Bott 1958–59, 11: 287). (A “good chief” is present, not absent.<sup>5</sup>) A chief should also participate in funerals, making prestations along with others and being on hand to grieve with members of his village (*ibid.*). Tupou Posesi Fanua and the late Honorable Ve‘ehala also stressed the importance of a chief’s being “fully handed” (in Ve‘ehala’s words), generous (cf. Sahlins 1963), giving and not just receiving, and also his availability for consultation in everyday affairs. When I asked the late Honorable Ve‘ehala what his mandate as a chief was, he said it was to “look after [*tauhi*] the land and the people.” Bott summarizes what she learned about the good chief from these and other Tongans in saying that “Tongans never stress the duties of the chief to their people other than by saying that the chief led his people and looked after them. Any food received was divided among them. He attended their weddings and funerals” (Bott 1982: 71).

In return for the people’s manual labor, a good chief performs the supervisory tasks of leadership, entering into a contract of reciprocity with his people. Himself a Tongan, Sione Lātūkefu describes this contract, as true of today’s ideology as it was of the ideology of the past:



Good citizenship was marked by the way one performed one's *fatongia* 'obligations.' Members of each social class knew his or her *fatongia* to other members of his class and to the members of other classes, particularly those of higher status. The *fatongia* involved obedience and, at times, sacrifices. The chief's obligations were to protect the group from outside interference or attack, to settle their disputes and to provide conditions under which his people would work and enjoy peace and prosperity. In return the people performed their *fatongia* to him by working his garden, providing him with the best of everything they produced or possessed and attending to whatever they might want to do. At its best the whole *fatongia* relationship was governed by the principal of reciprocity. The royal dynasties had similar *fatongia* to the whole country, the chiefs had to their own group, and the chiefs and people brought tribute to the royalty (Lātūkefu 1980: 65–66).

If a chief did not fulfill his obligations to his people, "he would find their contributions were not as large as he needed, or his people would begin slipping away to live with their wives' or mothers' people" (Bott 1982: 71). Lātūkefu adds that "The mere fact that the members of a *kāinga* [village] loyally served their chief and carried out their *fatongia* made it difficult for him to deprive them of the land or in other ways abuse his authority" (Lātūkefu 1975: 9). A chief who neglects his people, or a chief who actively exploits them, no matter what his pedigree, may himself be abandoned — or, worse, assassinated. Chiefly power is as achieved as it is ascribed, as populist as it is kingly (Marcus 1989). We can speculate that the impetus toward usurpation would gather momentum only if disaffection among the rank and file grew and "the people" shifted their allegiance from village to village and chief to chief. The constellation of forces alleged to have been in play in the 15th century — a tyrant, together with his "savage" son; a disgruntled junior chief, "king of the second house" (Bott 1982: 95; Thomson 1894: 300; n.a.); two old men pushed to regicide by years of exploitation and determined to escape further oppression; and a narrativizing strategy that defames the *ancien regime* in the name of a new dispensation — is surely paradigmatic of moments of political catharsis.

If the divinity of 'Aho'eitu concerns his *tapu* privileges, his humanity concerns his morality as kinsman. He rules as his father's son but over his mother's people. Unlike his older brothers, who in cannibalizing their own brother violated kinship's law, 'Aho'eitu arrives on the scene as the innocent sovereign of a kingdom



dedicated to upholding kinship values. His reformed older brothers, once murderers, accompany him to practice a benign kinship ethic in the mundane world below (Biersack 1991). After a series of incidents exposing the unsuitability of 'Aho'eitu's older and wholly divine brothers for kingship, 'Aho'eitu's ascends to the Tu'i Tongaship not as oldest and most divine brother but as youngest and also human son.

This reversal (Valeri 1989: 229–30; this volume) grounds kingship in kinship no less than in divinity — that is, in a duality. To be merely divine is to operate independently of the moral constraints of kinship: to engage in unspeakably rapacious acts (Howard 1985: 71; Sahlins 1985: 79), out of privilege rather than commitment. In this regard, the description of the Tu'i Tonga Williamson develops on the basis of A. Monfat's *Les Tonga* is both sardonic and propagandistic:

... the *tuitonga* partake of the nature of the divinity and we are also his priests, the representatives and living temples. The image and incarnation. In them the Civil and political power is exalted and sanctified by the divine power; wherefore their authority is boundless. They dispose of the goods, the bodies, and the consciences of their subjects, without ceremony and without rendering account to anyone. *Tuitonga* appears, and all prostrate themselves and kiss his feet. He speaks, and all are silent, listening with the most respectful attention; and when he has finished, all cry *Koe! Koe!* (It is true). The Tongans refuse him nothing, exceeding his desires. If he wishes to satisfy his anger or some cruel fancy, he sends a messenger to his victim who, far from fleeing, goes to meet his death. You will see fathers tie the rope round the necks of their children, whose death is demanded to prolong the life of his divinity; more than once you will see the child smile as it is being killed (Williamson 1967: 151–52).

Similarly, to be merely human — or, at least, terrestrial and not celestial — is also problematic. In displacing his older brothers, 'Aho'eitu also displaces a dynasty of worms, earth- and *not* sky- associated (Gifford 1924: 25, 38; Valeri 1989: 212; Williamson 1967: 137–39).

Whereas the god 'Eitumatupu'a descended from the sky but then quickly ascended, 'Aho'eitu's journey reverses the direction, combining the divine with the human (Biersack 1990), the sanctity of a remote god with the efficacy of the god's historical instantiations, integrating symbolic with political aspects of kingship. This duality is cosmically encoded as a duality of sky

(with its remoteness) and earth, where humans live; and it is ritually encoded in the distinction between a passive presiding chief, in whose honor *tapus* are observed, and “the [active] people” of the “working” component of the kava ceremony. ‘Aho‘eitu thus represents the ideal: kingship founded on a duality of sacred/working and divine/human aspects of leadership and the benevolent practices that mediate this opposition.

## Lo‘au

Lo‘au has puzzled many commentators. He figures most notably in the story concerning the origin of kava, as the person who tells the couple to bury their daughter or innovates the ceremony (Bott 1972: 215–16; 1982: 92–93; Gifford 1924: 71–72). In one version, the Tu‘i Tonga and Lo‘au are said to be the same (Gifford 1924: 74, 139–40).

Lo‘au is first mentioned as the father-in-law of the tenth Tu‘i Tonga, Momo. According to oral tradition, Nua, his daughter, is the mother of the eleventh Tu‘i Tonga, Tu‘itātui (Bott 1972: 215–16; Gifford 1924: 43–46; see also Gifford 49–54). Lo‘au resurfaces in the 15th century to ratify Kau‘ulufonua’s diarchic arrangements.

Traditionally, it was a Loau who allotted stewards to all Tonga as far as Uvea [where Kau‘ulufonua had chased his father’s assassins], and who allotted the first tasks (*fatongia*) among the different peoples — for example, assigning to the people of Tofua the bringing of volcanic stones [for the burial of the Tu‘i Tonga]. The traditional organization of Loau persisted until the coming of the Europeans. King George I, in the Nineteenth Century, reallocated the land but with scant alteration in the old division (Gifford 1929: 131; see also *ibid.*: 68–69; Bott 1982: 97; Collocott 1924: 177–78).

Lo‘au also authorized the transfer to the Tu‘i Ha‘atakalaua of the Tu‘i Tonga’s undertaker, Lauaki (Collocott 1924: 177–78, Gifford 1929: 68; see also Bott 1982: 97). He is associated as well with the founding of the second diarchy, after the reign of the 29th Tu‘i Tonga (Her Majesty Queen Sālote, “Ko e Ngaahi Ha‘a ‘o Tonga,” from “Ko e Ngaahi Me‘a mei he Tohi ‘a ‘Ene ‘Afio,” BSP 11/2/5; see also Bott 1982: 115, Herda 1988: 36–38). Her Majesty also named Lo‘au as the grandfather of the woman who married the third Tu‘i Kanokupolu and bore the fourth Tu‘i Kanokupolu (H.M. Queen Sālote, “Ko e Pongipongi ‘o e Hingoa,” from “Ko e Ngaahi Me‘a mei he Tohi ‘a ‘Ene ‘Afio,” BSP 11/2; Bott 1982: 92). Another tale

concerns a Lo'au who "searches for the sun" (Collocott 1928: 54) or journeys to the horizon (Gifford 1924: 139–52, 1929: 130), though his historical status varies from account to account (see also Collocott and Havea 1922: 162).

Lo'au's ubiquity — in space as well as time<sup>6</sup> — and his appearance in narratives that are quasi-mythic — the kava narrative, for example — frustrate any attempt to interpret him as a historical figure. "He" is, rather, a personification.

Common to most if not all accounts is Lo'au's role as an instigator of change. Bott writes that all Lo'aus

are said to have been *tufunga fonua*, literally 'carpenters of the country', meaning the founders of custom and the regulators of social life. Whenever a major reorganisation of the country took place, the name Lo'au crops up. All three Lo'au [I count more] are supposed to have disappeared when their tasks were completed. The name has come to be used for someone who establishes customs (Bott 1982: 92).

As the "carpenter of the land," Lo'au constructs (*fa'u*). Of the block of titles (*ha'a*) associated with the Tu'i Kanokupolu, Queen Sālote observed that: "The *fa'u* [building, structure] was well-organized. It is said that Loau had alot to do with the development and organizing of this *ha'a*" (H. M. Queen Sālote, "Ko e Ngaahi Ha'a 'o Tonga," from "Ko e Ngaahi Me'a mei he Tohi 'a 'Ene 'Afio," BSP 11/ 2/5; see also Bott 1982: 115). Organization, then, entails the shaping of titular hierarchies within an overarching structure (*fa'u*), along with a corresponding distribution of land to subalterns. Lo'au's "carpentry" constitutes and reconstitutes the Tongan polity, as history requires; and it also produces a ceremony of accommodation to commemorate this structuring process (Biersack 1991; Bott 1972: 231–32).

A formula Tongans self-consciously employ for generating and regulating novelty is this: to combine the old with the new. In the 19th century, Tāufa'āhau's reforms, including the Tongan Constitution, were monuments to the power of this formula. Though Tāufa'āhau, like any "working chief," "reallotted the land" (Gifford 1929: 131), he did so "with scant alteration in the old division" (*ibid.*; see Marcus 1980).

Apart from the marriage of Queen Sālote to Tungī Mailefihi (Ellem 1981), the best example of the use of this formula in the 20th century is the kava ceremony of 1959, which was organized by Her Majesty Queen Sālote to integrate the titles associated with the Tu'i Tonga and the Tu'i Ha'atalaau, on the one hand, those associated

with the Tu‘i Kanokupolu and today’s monarchy, on the other (Bott to Spillius, Wed. August 16, 1961, BSP 5/5/8–9), thus aligning political representation with the historical achievements of the last hundred years (Bott 1982: 92). This kava ceremony was called Lo‘au, and so was the Queen. Writing to her then husband, James Spillius, Bott (who witnessed and recorded this event) said, “... remember how often we were told, ‘The Queen is our Lo‘au now’, and the way the people soon began to call this *taumafa kava* [the high, royal kava (Biersack 1991)] the ‘Lo‘au’” (Bott to Spillius, Wed. August 16, 1961, BSP 5/5/9; see also Bott 1982: 92). In the late monarch’s effort to aggregate (*fakataha*, “make one”) all titles, those representing older and those representing newer stock, the agenda of combining the old with the new was set. In the Queen’s kava, structure was openly represented as a royal artifact that absorbed changes historically accruing (Biersack 1991).

Not merely a contrivance of the present era, this formula was in operation in the 15th and 17th centuries as well. When the Tu‘i Tonga’s undertaker (Lauaki) was transferred first to the Tu‘i Ha‘atakalua, then to the Tu‘i Kanokupolu, the royal mortuary rites — in origin, ‘Eitumatupu‘a’s own (Gifford 1924: 42) — were preserved as usurpers appropriated the charisma of more ancient lines for their own purposes.

Since usurpation (or diarchy) entails symbolic conservation across political breaks, the shift from era to era and regime to regime, no matter how radical the initiative and the rhetoric, always involves continuities across discontinuities, a reaggregation of scattered elements, a mediation of the present by the past (cf. Valeri this volume). Lo‘au creates novel wholes by conserving elements of the past that consecrate but for a new order. It was “he” who ratified the transfer of Lauaki to the Tu‘i Ha‘atakalua (Gifford 1929: 68), “he” who reorganized the kava ceremony in 1959, “he” who intervenes again and again to deposit sacred vestiges at the threshold of the future. Positioned within the temporal flow and at its cathartic and revolutionary junctures, Lo‘au personifies the principles of Tongan history: that there is no structure without structuring practices (“carpentry”), that structure is honored in the breach as well as in the observance, that kingdoms themselves are performed into existence (Sahlins 1985: 26–31) and through conservative, reforming transformations (Herda 1988: 36–37; cf. Sahlins 1981).

## Myth and history

Sahlins derives the instabilities of Polynesia societies from the duality of kingship itself, arguing, as I have for Tonga, that sovereignty is only viable insofar as it partakes of both dimensions (1985: 90).

This duality of sovereignty is a condition of the “general sociology” of all such kingdoms... The sovereign is able to rule society, which is to say to mediate between its antithetical parts, insofar as the sovereign power itself partakes of the nature of the opposition, combines in itself the elementary antithesis... It is not so much the organization of the diarchy to which I call attention. More than a duality, this determination of sovereignty is an *ambiguity* that is never resolved. It becomes an historical destiny (*ibid.*: 90–91).

Ambiguated, each regime strives to locate itself compellingly *between* the poles by mediating them in a negotiation of its own legitimacy. The status of chiefs, Marcus writes,

must be negotiated situationally and depends on a trade-off between recognition of the chiefs identity within the official system of chiefly status attribution and his standing as an exemplary and powerful person among the particular collectivities who see themselves as the source of a chiefs capacity to be effective or powerful (Marcus 1989: 157; cf. Howard 1985: 71–72).

This negotiation — the performance of kingship itself — opens up the system to every contingency the duality of kingship and its mediation render relevant — in the 19th century, for example, to missionization and constitutional reform — and exposes the genealogy of the kings to pressures from below, which curtail autocratic tendencies at the top. In this negotiation, “symbolic capital” appreciates or is devalued depending upon historical performance (cf. Valeri 1985: 98, 1989). In the long if not the short run, divine kings cannot be tyrants, for those who rule by privilege and in their own interests so deplete their stock that the conceit of sanctity becomes intolerable and they are assassinated, the *tapu* broken. The duality of kingship makes action if not compulsory (the temptation to rule passively, as a god, should be resisted), then pragmatic.

The only possible guarantee of dynastic strength is a mediation of the dualities in and through the practice of chiefliness. But too

many factors, unforeseen and uncontrolled, supervene; ultimately there are no guarantees. If the attempt to perform kingship has either aborted or not been made, diarchy is a recourse. As a strategy of usurpation, diarchy disrupts the relationship between sanctity and virtue, privilege and responsibility, divinity and humanity, enabling a senior to beat a strategic retreat from the arena of action and its vulnerabilities and/or a junior to cripple that senior by way of celestializing and depoliticizing him. It also reconstitutes the bond between these antitheses (and the task of mediating them in practice) but at a more exemplary site.

In so doing, it produces a “most sacred” king that has no mythic precedent. ‘Aho‘eitu is a monarch, not the Tu‘i Tonga of the diarchic era. Diarchy creates the illusion of unbroken continuity and historyless structure, but it does so in the service of ambitious usurpers. This fiction of unbroken continuity, however, is a problematic dimension of the new actuality. Though diarchy contains within itself the embryo of a renovated monarchy (if it is not already a renovated monarchy), it also inhibits the stabilization of any new regime, for it creates a “submerged aristocracy” (Marcus 1980, 1989) as a latent counterrevolutionary force.

Diarchy inevitably establishes a tension between contradictory negations: the passive element as yet *symbolically* superordinate, the active element *politically* hegemonic. Though Tāufa‘āhau advanced the cause of recentralization in the 19th century, his descendants, still striving to consolidate the Tupou legacy, do so under a cloud of opposition (Marcus 1980). Diarchy inevitably reinstates “the elementary antithesis” (Sahlins 1985: 91) it was designed to dispel. Far from expelling history from the core and exiling it to an innocuous periphery (Valeri this volume), diarchy compounds all the problems of center formation the duality of kingship creates.

Both fragile, diarchy and monarchy are alternating moments of the history the duality of kingship inaugurates. In the monarchic episodes, the two dimensions of kingship are concentrated in the hands of a single person and ability no less than pedigree is the criterion of succession. Diarchy disperses the functions, producing a postmythic para-dynasty of first-born sons, who are *ipso facto* supplanted as the negotiators of chiefly legitimacy. In this alternation, diarchy is the necessary cathartic moment, for it purges the polity of a contaminant and readies it for renewal. But because it fails to combine the two dimensions of kingship in a single person, its foundations are flawed. As in Hawai‘i, so in Tonga: “...the diarchic solution is not durable; the unity of kingship demands the unicity of the king” (Valeri 1985: 94) and “Diarchy can never be

structural, but only a contingent moment in the process of the reconstitution of monarchy” (Valeri this volume). History is thus the constitutive arena (cf. Valeri 1990) within which the Tongan polity searches for the realization of its own political ideals. The polity remains restless, mobile, self-transforming; all centers emerge and are sustained — if they do emerge and if they are sustained — only amidst a flow of events shaped by challenges from the margins and counterchallenges from the center that necessarily embroil the rank and file. Political contestation is endemic.

The ‘Aho‘eitu story models this search for the good chief and the just revolution at its heart, for ‘Aho‘eitu ascends to the Tu‘i Tongaship as a fully vindicated, fully authorized usurper (Valeri 1989: 229, this volume): a good junior displacing very bad seniors. As the son of a divine father and a human mother, as the sacred but innocent king, he combines genealogical with contractual modes of legitimation, kingship and kinship. All revolutions that justify themselves in terms of the tyrannical character of the ousted regime — the ones of the 15th, 17th, and 19th centuries, for example — despite (or perhaps because of) a symbolic continuity, become Sahlins’ metaphors of a mythical reality (Sahlins 1981) because history, as the ground of kingship’s negotiation, is already mythologized. All stable regimes are located cosmically *under* the *toa* tree, where kingship and the polity-as-cosmos are delivered unto genealogical time.

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## Notes

1. Information culled from the Bott-Spillius Papers (BSP) at the University of Auckland are indexed according to box number, folder number, and page number: for example, 1/1/1 indicates first box, first folder, first page.
2. The Tu‘i Tonga appears also to have been a thaumatergic king. Gifford reports that all official and household servants living in the Tu‘i Tonga’s compound suffered the Tu‘i Tonga to rest his foot on their heads, as a form of *moemoe*. “This was supposed to cure those of this class who were sick” (Gifford 1929: 75).
3. Thomson names these Tamasia and Malofafa (Thomson 1894: 301), but Her Majesty Queen Sālote apparently recalled them as Tamasia and Lofafa (“Ko e Ngaahi Tala ‘oku Kau Kia,” BSP<sub>11/4/</sub>). Gifford lists them as Tamosia and Malofafa (Gifford 1929: 85), as does Valeri (Valeri 1988: 7).
4. According to Churchward, the word for “to assassinate” is *moemoepō* (Churchward 1959: 360). This translates as “night *moemoe*,” which suggests a “dark” *moemoe*, malignant rather than benign.
5. Queen Sālote observed that a chief who does not live among his people has difficulty marshalling support, but the faults of a chief who does live among his people will be readily overlooked (Bott 1958–59, 11: 301–02; see also Marcus 1980: 98–99).
6. Lo‘au is as difficult to pin down in space as in time. Usually Lo‘au is identified as the Tu‘i Ha‘amea, chief of Ha‘amea, a district in Vahē Loto in central Tongatapu (Gifford 1929: 130; H.M. Queen Sālote, “Ko e Pongipongi ‘o e Hingoa,” from Ko e Ngaahi Me‘a mei he Tohi ‘a ‘Ene ‘Afi,” BSP 11/2/2). However, some identify Lo‘au with Ha‘apai and in particular with a district on that island called Ha‘a Lo‘au, “although the people of that district claim no descent from Loau” (Gifford 1929: 130).



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