

A HISTORY OF NIUE

THESIS

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BY

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CONTENTS

Introduction

PAGE

PART ONE	Ancient Niue : Origins and Migrations	
Chapter I	Divisions of the People	8
Chapter II	Origins and Migrations According to the Traditions	12
Chapter III	Cultural Affinities as an Indication of Historical Origins	38
Chapter IV	Relationship of Niuean to other Polynesian Dialects	59
Chapter V	The Niuean Religion	73
Chapter VI	The Socio-Political System of Ancient Niue	80
Chapter VII	Culture Pattern and Time	90
Chapter VIII	Internal History of Ancient Niue	109
Chapter IX	Conclusion : Niuean Prehistory	113
 PART TWO	 Bibles, Fishhooks and Stocks 1846 - 1861	
Chapter X	A Bridgehead 1846 - 1849	122
Chapter XI	A New Establishment 1849 - 1861	135
 PART THREE	 A Benevolent Theocracy 1861 - 1900	
Chapter XII	The Niuean Church State	164
Chapter XIII	The Mission : A Precipitant of Social and Economic Change	192

	<u>PAGE</u>
Chapter XIV	
Niue and the Great Powers	208
Epilogue	222
Appendix	
Copies of Petitions Requesting the Establishment of a British Protectorate on Niue	
Bibliography	
Map of Niue	
Map of the South Pacific	

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN FOOTNOTES

<u>A.J.H.R.</u>	Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives
B.P.B. Mus.Bull	Bulletin of the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, Honolulu
C. Mus.Bull	Bulletin of the Canterbury Museum
I.T.	File of the Department of Island Territories, Wellington
<u>J.A.I.</u>	Journal of the Anthropological Institute
<u>L.M.S.</u>	Records of the London Missionary Society B.x, F.y, J.z. Refer to the Box, Folder and Jacket numbers in the Archives of the London Missionary Society
<u>S.S.J.</u>	South Seas Journals of the London Missionary Society B.x, y. Refer to the Box and journal numbers in the Archives of the London Missionary Society

INTRODUCTION

"In the beginning, this island now called Niue was nothing but coral rock (he punga). . . There came a god, an aitu, from the south, a god who sailed to and fro on the face of the waters. He looked down here and saw far below on the ocean the white punga rock. He let down his hook, and hauled the punga up to the surface, and lo! there stood an island." - John Lupo. (1)

The genesis of Niue remains conjectural. The Polynesian calls in a supernatural agency, an aitu from the south, to explain the emergence of this multiplication of corals and algae from the waters of the mid-Pacific to form an island two-hundred feet high, but the story of the god and his line and hook is a local adaption of a very ancient and widespread fable, as are in varying degrees other Polynesian versions of the birth of the island. Cook advanced two further possibilities in 1777 when he speculated: "Has this

(1) Quoted by J. Cowan 'The Story of Niue : Genesis of a South Sea Island', J.P.S., vol. 32, 1923, p. 238.

island been raised by an earthquake? Or has the sea receded from it?" (1) Late evidence (2) suggests that both uplift and changes in sea - level were operative in exposing in turn the succession of encircling reefs. These exposed reefs are now discernible in one well-defined and other less easily defined terrace - levels. The present encircling reef is 50-80 yards wide and extends out from the foot of the sixty-to-eighty feet high coastal cliffs around most of Niue. It is on the coastal terrace, the Alofi terrace, that most of the modern villages stand. The island slopes gently upwards to two less easily discernible terraces and from an average height above sea level of approximately 220 feet the rim of the island, as it might be called, descends imperceptibly into an extensive central depression the brown red earth of which suggests that it was probably the shallow lagoon of the original atoll. Submarine contours show two further terraces submerged beyond the present day reef and these and others of the terrace-levels have been related by Schofield to Pleistocene stillstands of sea level. (3)

The substructure onto which the coral organisms originally attached themselves and multiplied is probably a submarine volcano. The mid-Pacific position and the isolation

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- (1) J. Cook. A Voyage Towards the South Pole and Round the World (second voyage 1772-75), London, 1777, vol.2, p.6.
 (2) J.C. Schofield. The Geology and Hydrology of Niue Island, South Pacific, N.Z. Geological Survey Bulletin n.s.62, Wellington, 1959, pp.15-22
 (3) ibid. p.17

of the island suggest this, and it is borne out by magnetic surveys of the island which show a crater-like mass of presumably basaltic rock underlying the limestone. (1) A reported finding of a basalt outcrop in a deep cave (by a member of the New Zealand Administration Staff in 1959) will, if substantiated, confirm the volcanic nature of the basal structure. Traces of volcanic ash in the limestone are possibly wind-borne from elsewhere. An interesting phenomenon is the high radioactivity level of the limestone.

The soils of Niue are mainly loose-structured residue from weathered limestone and volcanic ash deposits. They are heavily leached and a soil reconnaissance has disclosed that today "the soil resources of Niue are, to say the least slender" (2) Much of the original topsoils have been washed into low-lying depressions, crevices and caves so that cultivable patches are not extensive. Coral outcrops and the rugged nature of much of the terrain further restrict the area suitable for cultivation - a recent estimate is that nearly half of the island is bare rock. It has been said truly that a plough would be an anachronism on Niue.

(1) ibid. pp. 17-18

(2) A.C.S. Wright. Soils and Agriculture on Niue Island,
Soil Bureau Bulletin No.17, D.S.I.R. publication (in press)

Limestone soils are highly permeable and on Niue water does not collect in readily accessible underground reservoirs. In these conditions a well-distributed and reliable rainfall is important to sustain food-plants. The average annual rainfall is 78-80 inches, apparently an adequate enough total in this latitude. This is however distributed unevenly over the year, one half falling in the "wet season" December - March, while the months June - September average less than four-and-a-half inches each. This again would be adequate were it fully reliable but falls between April and September are on occasions less than an inch, and the total rainfall for a year falls to less than forty inches. Rainwater is nowadays collected from the corrugated-iron catchments of the church and other roofs and stored in tanks and concrete reservoirs, and there is a deep well at Fonuakula and plans for more, but shortages still occur. It can easily be imagined that shortage of drinking water was a recurrent problem of gravest importance to the ancient Niuean - in times of drought great inroads were made into the coconut crop for the milk.

Niue lies on the edge of the hurricane belt and is visited about once in every eight or ten years by these high winds. The prevailing east-south-easterlies blow home for eight months of the twelve, with variable and at times strong westerlies, north-westerlies and northerlies during

the summer months.

The relatively unfavourable ecological conditions on Niue have their effect upon the food productivity. Of conditions in the eighteen-fifties Rev. W.W. Gill observed that in animal and vegetable production Niue was "decidedly inferior" to islands nearby. Breadfruit and coconut trees were scarce he said and when Niue was first visited there were "no pigs, dogs, cats, or fowls, but the people subsisted on taro, banana, arrowroot, and fish."⁽¹⁾ The lack of domestic animals in former times aggravated the position in periods of drought or hurricane and consequent famine, and apparently that most important Polynesian supplementary food source, fish, is not as plentiful as elsewhere owing to the impossibility of fishing off the east coast, the weather shore, for most of the year. Nor are the natural inadequacies aided by the native system of shifting agriculture with frequent burnings-off.

The reality of food shortage to dwellers on Niue is often attested in the myths and missionary records. Loeb's informants⁽²⁾ tell of special foods prepared for such occasions, and of the extreme measures to which people were put to survive. Wild yams, banana roots, the roots of the

(1) W.W. Gill. Gems from the Coral Islands. Philadelphia, circa 1856, p.271

(2) Edwin M. Loeb. History and Traditions of Niue, B.P.B. Mus. Bull. 32, Honolulu, 1926, pp.111-112 (Hereafter : Loeb. History).

luku fern, pia (arrowroot), and the drupes of the pandanus were all eaten in famine times. In later days the missionaries felt the pinch too when native food was scarce, despite their supplementary supplies of imported European lines.

Rev. W.G. Lawes complains in 1869 that food is often scarce and Rev. F.E. Lawes makes frequent reference to this subject in the later years of the nineteenth century. He wrote plaintively home to the Secretary of the London Mission Society in 1886 that native food had been scarce "for two years" and hence his financial embarrassments . . . In 1896 he records that copra is a precarious crop for it is badly affected by drought and is set back for two to three years by one hurricane; in 1897 there was a low rainfall and hence bananas and taro "the staff of life" had failed." (2)

These experiences are further authenticated by agricultural experts who have visited Niue in recent years. As one concludes: "Due to the less fortunate ecological conditions the food-position in Niue has always required more attention than in other islands, where foodcrops are plentiful throughout the year and are easily grown." (3)

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- (1) W.G. Lawes. Letter to Dr Mullens, L.M.S., B.32, F.3, J.C, 6 July
 - (2) F.E. Lawes. Letters to R.W. Thompson, L.M.S., B.39, F.3, J.C, 14 September 1886; B.44, F.2, J.D, 24 Nov. 1896 & 14 Dec. 1897
 - (3) J.S. Gerlach. Report on an Agricultural Survey of Niue Island, N.Z. Department of Agriculture, unpublished report (circa 1952)

It is not to be understood that Niue in former times was continually or even consistently suffering from a drastic food shortage. Under adequate conditions of rainfall the island's not infertile soil pockets produce a good living, but here men had to labour regularly for their food and face famine on occasion, a condition of life as Churchill⁽¹⁾ has wryly observed "not without its moral effect upon the people". It is precisely this moral effect which the low food productivity seems to have had upon the people of Niue and the evolution of human society on the island which renders the physical environment of more than passing interest to the historian.

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(1) W. Churchill. Niue : A Reconnaissance, Bulletin of the American Geographical Society, New York, 1908, pp.150-156.

P A R T O N E

ANCIENT NIUE

ORIGINS AND THE MIGRATIONS

CHAPTER I

Divisions of the People

"The earliest Niueans were as big as the big black ants, whose place was taken by the smaller ant of brown . . . " Toafolia. (1)

Early missionary visitors to Niue failed to record any observations of differences in physical type among the Niueans, but they note in the early years of penetration the division of the island into hostile moieties. Reporting on a mission visit to Niue in 1840, A.W. Murray says that he ". . . could not even land natives on shore away from their own district due to continual wars" and he refers later to "an extensive war . . . between the two divisions [of the island] ." (2) Murray calls attention to the two "independent districts" again on his

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- (1) Quoted by W.W. Boulton. Records of Island Territories Department, Wellington, Niue general file, December 1941.
(2) A.W. Murray. Pagopago to Savage Island, L.M.S. S.S.J., B.9, 127, 24 June - 12 July 1840.

visit in 1849,⁽¹⁾ but G. Turner and H. Nisbet (1848) refer to three districts⁽²⁾ - which disparity serves to illustrate the loose-knit nature of the "districts".

The observers who visited Niue in the early years of this century noted two fairly distinct physical types of Niueans, as well as recording many stories of strife in olden times between the Motu people of the northern part of the island, and the Tafiti people of the south. That both physical types are a branch of the Polynesian race is undoubted, but in the Tafiti people S.P. Smith detected a slightly greater admixture of what he calls ". . . Melanesian or Papuan blood."⁽³⁾ Speaking of the Tafiti people, Smith amplifies the Toafolia tradition quoted above:

"Here is to be seen a type that is somewhat shorter and broader, with large wide jaws, a low forehead, and a generally more morose expression of face than the others, who exhibit the characteristics of the true Polynesian, tall, broad-shouldered, intellectual looking faces, of cheerful demeanour, and altogether of a pleasanter mien."⁽⁴⁾

(1) Upolu to Savage Island, L.M.S., B.22, F.3, J.D., 6 October 1849.

(2) Journal of a Voyage from Upolu to New Hebrides, New Caledonia and Savage Island, L.M.S.S.S.J., B.10, 143, 28 August.

(3) S.P. Smith. Niue-Fekai (or Savage) Island and its People, Wellington, 1903, p.29. (From J.F.S. vols.11 and 12, 1902 and 1903, hereafter Smith, Niue)

(4) ibid, p.30

Smith explains that there is no strong line of demarcation to be seen between these two types for the one graduates into the other - a natural enough development where the peoples are thrown together in a small island community where inter-marriages were constant. Smith concludes that it is not to be understood that there has been "a migration of Melanesians to the island - not at all; those who exhibit to a larger extent than others, the Melanesian characteristics, acquired them through their ancestors long before they came to Niue, and probably in Fiji, which was the headquarters of the race for many centuries." (1)

Thomson (2) and Loeb (3) support Smith's observations and Loeb states further that minor differences in mythology and language were apparent even in 1924. "All the white residents of the island" are said to admit the differences in physiognomy even at that late date.

Thomson notes also that the people of Avatele, on the south-west coast were a shorter, more thickset people than most Niueans, with thick lips and a sing-song voice. (4)

(1) ibid. p.30

(2) Basil Thomson. Savage Island, London, 1902, pp.88-90 (hereafter Thomson S.I.)

(3) Loeb, History, pp.23-24

(4) Thomson S.I. pp.89-90

The hostility between the people of several districts of the island observed by the early missionary visitors, when associated with ancient stories of long-standing conflict between the people of Motu and Tafiiti and modern observations of physiognomical differences, suggests a clash of cultures and may indicate not only that the Niuean ancestors arrived in more than one migration but that they were drawn from more than one source.

CHAPTER II

Origins and Migrations According to the Traditions

The culture - pattern of the Niuean, the way he dresses, the way he cooks and fights and builds his shelter and canoe and even fashions his fish-hooks and shapes his adze, his vocabulary and syntax, his gods and hero-cycles and traditions, identify him as one of a branch of the South Pacific island-dwelling peoples called Polynesian. Only the physical characteristics of a minority of the population noted above indicate that there may be a slight admixture of apparently Melanesian blood. But the immediate origins of the Niuean are disputable. The island is low-lying and

inconspicuous compared with the volcanic islands of Tonga, Samoa and Rarotonga at least; it is isolated even in the Pacific context. To the east, three hundred and sixty and more miles away and scattered over thousands of square miles of ocean lies the Cook Group; to the north and west lie Manua, Tutuila, Upolu and Savaii of the Samoas, the nearest point (on Tutuila) being two hundred and seventy miles distant; directly to the west is the Tonga Group, the closest land at two hundred and forty miles distance; and to the south there is nothing but the specks of the Kermadec Islands intervening between Niue and New Zealand fifteen hundred miles away.

The set of ocean currents around Niue is from the north-east while the trade winds, which blow steadily for eight months of the year, are sou' sou' easterlies. There are some strong westerly and north-westerly gales in the summer months. Planned migrations aside, the odds are that most of those who chanced upon the island indirectly, being blown off-course in transit between islands of other groups or having drifted with the ocean currents, were from the east i.e. from the area of the Cook Islands.

Useful clues as to the whence of the Niueans may be discovered on analysis of migration traditions of this and proximate island groups. Pulekula, a teacher at

Tama-ha-le-leka, has furnished the fullest account extant of the Niuean traditions.⁽¹⁾ Five gods (tupua) fled to Niue in olden times from "Motu-galo" (or according to one account, "Tonga").⁽²⁾ The so-called gods are almost certainly deified ancestors, for the text lapses at once into calling them men - and men with very human failings. They are said to have been idlers who took no part in the preparation of feasts in their homeland, and were therefore not invited to partake. This to the Polynesian was an insult which could not be borne and hence, being too few in number to avenge themselves in blood, as might usually have been done, they fled the island. Their names were Fao, Faka-hoko, Huanaki, Lage-iki and Lagi-atea, and they are said to have either swum to Niue or emerged from a pool in the reef. Loeb⁽³⁾ notes a local variation of the story in Avatele according to which the gods "lived at Avatele under the earth." Huanaki and Fao, the two more prominent of the five tupuas (Turner,⁽⁴⁾

(1) Smith, Niue, pp. 90-124

(2) Thomson, S.I., p.86

(3) Loeb, History, p.157

(4) G. Turner. Samoa A Hundred Years Ago and Long Before, London, 1884, p.304. (Hereafter Turner, Samoa)

Hood, ⁽¹⁾ and Thomson ⁽²⁾ mention these two only and they may have been two chiefs possibly) raised the island above the waves, apparently by stamping on the reef lying awash. They were followed by female tupuas, and the island was populated with their joint progeny. These latter were all endowed with glory and goodness and ruled over all natural things.

One writer ⁽³⁾ has questioned whether this myth has any historical significance, on the grounds that "many, if not most, of the gods of Niue are not deified ancestors but rather animated natural objects" and that the mention of the lower regions of the earth as being the place of emigration of the tupua (see the Avatele version above) discredits the whole story. As to the latter point, it seems that Loeb has received a perhaps partisan version of an otherwise well accepted story - that the tupuas fled from another island over the horizons. And concerning the first point, he almost contradicts himself later in stating that the five gods "bear names unconnected with natural phenomena." ⁽⁴⁾

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- (1) T.H. Hood. Notes of a Cruise in HMS "Fawn" in the Western Pacific in the Year 1862, Edinburgh, 1863, p.24
 (2) Thomson, loc.cit.
 (3) Loeb, History, p.158
 (4) ibid. p.164

Again, he goes to some lengths to prove that ancestor worship was in fact practised and that dead people were elevated to the position of tupuas.⁽¹⁾ To disregard the text of the reliable Pulekula, there is always a distinct possibility in myth histories that stories such as this of Fao and Huanaki have no historical basis or even connection in fact, but in this case the wide acceptance of the story and the close identity of most versions make it a strong probability that this is the story of the arrival of some of the first settlers in Niue. Loeb acknowledges that the Niueans themselves believe that the five tupua are in fact ancestors.

As to where these (assumed) ancestors came from, the text gives three accounts - that they came from Fonua-galo (also referred to as Motu-galo), from Tulia or from Tonga and "some other islands."⁽²⁾ The confusion is not made any the less by the explanation that Fonua-galo means "lost-land", and that "Tonga" does not necessarily imply the island or group of that name today. Smith says the term was used of all foreign lands by the Niuean and this is borne out in a tradition to be examined later - which purports to refer to Tonga but from circumstantial evidence and from the occurrence of the specific story in Samoan myth histories probably refers to Samoa. Smith deduces from this use of the word

(1) ibid. p.165

(2) Smith, Niue, p.90

that in their former homeland the Niuean ancestors used the term Tonga of foreign parts with which they had frequent dealings and hence the former residence may have been Samoa. This seems somewhat far fetched, for when they moved from Samoa to Niue surely any settlers would have had a specific name for their homeland and would not merely have classified it with another group of islands of specific title? Whatever the reason, 'Tonga' and 'Tongans' are titles loosely used by Niuean storytellers and should not always be assumed to mean Tonga-tapu Island or the group, and its inhabitants.

Tulia, the third homeland named, is not an islands now known but it is the name of a place on the western end of Savaii Island in Samoa.

A significant feature of the Huanaki and Fao saga is that in most versions the landing and subsequent establishment are said to have taken place in the northern part of the island in Motu. Avatele is in two cases cited as the point from which human settlement spread, but neither account is fully reliable and they may be confused versions of the arrival of different migrations altogether. ⁽¹⁾ The first of these two accounts acknowledges anyway that Huanaki dwelt at Mutulau in the north. This point is examined more closely below. The Pulekula version of their advent has them emerging from a pool in the reef at a part of the sea-shore still called Motu (they are also, it may be noted, said

(1) ibid. p.124 and Loeb, History, pp.157-158

to have come from "Motu-galo", among other places). A likeness of Huanaki was made of stone on the northern coast at Vai-hoko, near Mutulau, and the former village is said to have been his final dwelling place. A former village of the north end of Niue was called Fao Fao.⁽¹⁾ Names of the central and northern villages Liku and Lakepa are also said to have been given by Huanaki and Fao - all of which indicates that the people of the north, of Motu, have probably a closer connection with these first settlers than have the people of Tafiti. If there is scientific justification for the differences observed in the physiognomy of Niueans of Motu and Tafiti stock - the independent observations on this matter are in complete accord, see above, and are corroborated by Niuean traditions - then these first settlers may have been of the "purer Polynesian" strain of Motu.

In summary, it seems a likelihood that the story of the five tupua, and especially of the two more frequently mentioned, Huanaki and Fao, has a historical basis. Reference in the texts indicate that they settled in the northern end of the island, which may mean that they were of the so-called purer Polynesian stock of Motu. As to their immediate homeland, it is merely noted at this point that the only identifiable spot mentioned in the traditions is Tulia on Savaii Island and this may not be the correct reference.

(1) Smith, Niue, p.74

"Tonga" probably means little in this context, and the point mentioned by Smith,⁽¹⁾ that the name Fao appears to be not uncommon in Samoa, seems of little value. There may be some substance in Thomson's speculation⁽²⁾ that the short thickset people of Avatele, with the "large mouth and thick lips", the "peculiar sing-song" voices, and a "high reputation for bravery" are the remnants of an early migration from a very different source than Huanaki and Fao. As mentioned above, two informants cite Avatele as the point of first settlement, but the text supplied by Mohe-lagi of Alofi⁽³⁾ is otherwise very incomplete and not over much reliance can be placed upon its coverage, and it is the people of Avatele themselves who claim that "the gods lived at Avatele under the earth."⁽⁴⁾ Moreover this latter story is the local variation of the Huanaki and Fao legend - which does not point to a different origin for the Avatele people, or not one known by the modern inhabitants of that village anyway. No version of the Huanaki and Fao legend admits to there being any prior inhabitants on the island, although a small colony on this other extremity of the island from where the tupuas are commonly supposed to have dwelt might have gone unnoticed

(1) ibid. p.71
 (2) Thomson, S.I. pp.89-90
 (3) Smith, Niue, p.124
 (4) Loeb, History, p.157

for a long time. No other observers have noted the singularity of the people of Avatele, but Thomson says that they had several words not used in the other villages and were opposed by the "whole island" in former times, being saved from extermination only by their fortress at Tapa Point, which was said to be impregnable.⁽¹⁾ If these people are in fact the descendants of early migrants, there is no indication of their origins and Thomson merely states that the type is not "Melanesian" and may be a "Micronesian" element drifted from the Gilbert Islands. There are of course few postulations of occupation of the central Pacific islands by a period prior to the Polynesians.

Of the later recorded accessions to the island's population the three most completely authenticated are of groups of "Tongans". The term 'group' is assumed in the case of one Mutulau, as only the name of the leader is actually recorded - but his exploits on landing at Niue would reasonably have required the backing of a number of followers. Here is provided the best illustration of migrants termed "Tongans" probably coming from other than the islands of the Tonga group, for the story of Laufoli's exploits is recorded in Samoan traditions as being staged

(1) Thomson, loc.cit.

on those islands and circumstantial evidence noted below confirms this. The third of these groups was a "Tongan" war expedition which fought the people of Niue at Anatoga.

Niuean traditions treat very fully of this figure Mutulau. There is no trace of him in the myth-histories of other island groups. A woman of Niue named Gigi-fale, said in one account ⁽¹⁾ to be Matagigifale, daughter of Tihimau II, a chief of the island, was carried off in the belly of a whale and stranded on "an island called Toga." Taken to wife by a local chief, she produced a male child and named him Mutulau. The latter learned in time that his mother came from Niue and felt desirous of visiting the homeland of his mother. Presumably with a band of followers, he sailed to Niue and landing, carried all before him and eventually came face to face with Tihimau, "the king" (Loeb says that this Tihimau was Mutulau's grandfather and was a chief of the north end of the island by conquest). A native informant (Uea) states ⁽²⁾ that in a battle of wits between Tihimau and Mutulau, the latter got the better of his rival through his superior knowledge of the elaborate ceremonial associated in most island groups of the southwest Pacific with kava-drinking. This custom was unknown on Niue at the time and is not now practised, but it was an

(1) Loeb, History, p.24

(2) Loeb, History, pp.26-28

important part of chiefly ceremonies in Tonga and Samoa for example, and a status-ceremony of great significance in those parts. The people of Niue are said to have been "pleased with Mutulau" after this exhibition, and followed after him, although the exact significance of the exhibition must have been lost upon them.

Apart from some mythological embellishments, as the conveyance of Gigi-fale to Tonga in the belly of a whale, the substance of this story is probably fairly accurate history. As Smith concludes, the legend "contains no doubt the germs of a true story of a further accession to the inhabitants of the island." (1)

One of the chiefs whom Mutulau slew in conquering the island was Matuku-hife. Informants are agreed that it was the action of the two sons of the slain warrior, Lepokafatu and Lepokanifo, in seeking out and killing Mutulau in turn which was the beginning of the law of blood revenge (lukototo) on Niue. (2)

This suggests a clash of cultures as much as a clash of personalities and it may be that Mutulau and his band were some of the first of that section of later migrants which

(1) Smith, Niue, p.75

(2) ibid., and Loeb History, p.28

was opposed to the Motu people, the original inhabitants. The apparent circumstance that there was no widespread knowledge of kava ceremonies in Niue before Mutulau's time supports this view.

There is some dispute as to whether the adventures of Laufoli and the incident of Anatoga occurred before or after the arrival of Mutulau. The latter is often linked with the introduction of the Niuean "patuiki" or "kingship" system and for this reason Loeb has placed his coming at the end of the seventeenth century when, it is estimated on the evidence of genealogies, the so-called kingship was established as a reasonably stable institution in the life of Niue. ⁽¹⁾ However, Smith links Mutulau with Tihimau, the "first king" in his lists, who is said to have lived a considerable time before the other "kings", and he estimates that Mutulau arrived before the incident of Anatonga (which Basil Thomson, on the basis of Tongan genealogies, has dated at 1535) ⁽²⁾ and perhaps not very long after the thirteenth century. ⁽³⁾ He does not claim that Mutulau was the first of the Tافiti people to arrive, but his advent probably had the greatest impact upon the culture pattern of Niue. If,

(1) Loeb, loc.cit. p.24
 (2) Thomson, S.I. p.20
 (3) Smith, Niue, p.75

in fact Mutulau arrived after the Laufoli adventures and the Anatoga incident (the matter will never be established and is not of key importance) it might be assumed that these earlier arrivals had been absorbed into the population without setting up long-standing antagonisms. This writer is inclined on the basis of the evident culture clash to the view that Mutulau was one of the first of the "Tafiti" people to arrive on Niue. The theoretical possibility of this is explored below.

The Samoan traditions collected from Tofo by the Rev. T. Powell⁽¹⁾ in 1871 tell of the visit to Niue of two Manu'ans, Veu and Veu, and the birth of their son Fiti-au-mua. The latter is brought up by a Niuean woman whose son is a figure well known in Niuean traditions, Laufoli.⁽²⁾

According to the Samoan tradition, when Fiti-au-mua went to Manu'a the home of his parents, and did not return to Niue, Laufoli went in search of him. The Niuean version makes no mention of Veu and Veu or their son by name and merely says that a party of "Tongans" visiting Niue persuaded Laufoli to return with them to their homeland "Tonga". Both accounts are in agreement that Laufoli performed many

(1) J. Fraser, 'Folk-songs and Myths from Samoa', J.P.S. vol.9, pp.125-6

(2) Smith, Niue, p.77 and Loeb History, pp.148-51

redoubtable and warlike deeds, even to subduing the people of several islands in the Samoan group according to the Samoans themselves, and that he eventually returned to Niue. There is no mention of the saga in Tongan myth-histories and Loeb's contention ⁽¹⁾ that it could have been Tonga not Samoa that Laufoli visited has no basis on the evidence. In fact of the names which Loeb claims as evidence of a Tongan connection, the first, Tolea, is the name of a place on the north-west point of Upolu in Samoa, and the terms Taputoga and Tuitoga, although they could indicate a passing call on Tonga, are almost as likely to be the interpolations of Loeb's informant. In view of the unreliability of the latter, further proven by the corroborative evidence of Samoan traditions on this Laufoli story, the "genealogy" which Loeb produces as evidence of the recency of the Laufoli story is not acceptable.

The corroborative traditions of Niue and Samoa indicate that a Niuean named Laufoli visited the Samoan islands, probably including Manua, Tutuila, Upolu and Savaii, at some time in the centuries before European settlement. There seems little justification in any of the accounts heard by this author for either Loeb's postulation that he visited Tonga or Smith's that he visited

(1) Loeb. loc.cit.

Fiji in addition to Samoa. Tofo (1) says that Fiti-au-mau, the foster brother, went to Fiji, but no mention is made of Laufoli's having done so. Mohe-lagi's account (2) of the Laufoli story, in describing the latter's return to his homeland, notes incidentally: "Then some men of Toga who came with him gazed at him as he rose up" Evidently a party of supporters had returned to Laufoli's homeland with him from their own land - a further accretion of settlers. One authority on mythology is of the opinion that the Laufoli story is of a pattern in Polynesian mythology.⁽³⁾ This may mean that the story is not a chronicle of an actual event but an adaptation of one of the Maui stories - Maui is known to the Niueans. However, the exclusive name (Laufoli), the circumstantial details and the fact that the story occurs also in Samoan traditions, indicate rather that this is an assimilation of an actual historic event to a literary pattern - a process acknowledged⁽⁴⁾ to be a major factor influencing the growth of hero-cycles.

(1) J. Fraser. 'Folk-songs and Myths from Samoa', J.P.S. vol.9, p.126.

(2) Smith. loc.cit. p.128

(3) Katharine Luomala. Notes on the Development of Polynesian Hero-cycles in Memoirs of the Polynesian Society, Wellington, vol.17, p.182

(4) ibid. p.183

Another migration of those of which we have record was that of a Tongan - correctly designated - expedition which came ashore on the west coast at a place now called Anatoga ("the cave of the Tongans"). The basic facts of this story - that a Tongan expedition encountered and fought a party of Niueans and many were killed in falling or being thrown into the deep chasm there - are recounted in both Niuean and Tongan histories, the only point of difference being that each side today claims an overwhelming victory for its own ancestors in the encounter. Whichever may be the more accurate, and it is unlikely that any such battle would have been as one-sided as these respective histories relate, it appears probable that Niue acquired a number of Tongan migrants through the landing. As mentioned above (p.23) Thomson ~~has~~ placed this incident, on the basis of Tongan genealogies, at about 1535 A.D.

There are several more traditions of the coming of small parties of "Tongans" to Niue. Ninifale, a woman, led a band of followers and settled near where Tama-kau-toga is now situated.⁽¹⁾ A man named Vaea came to Niue when his own island was suffering from famine.⁽²⁾ A "Tongan" Chief named Teiloa made a landing at Tuapa and according to

(1) Smith, Niue, p.79

(2) Loeb, History, p.29

the Niuean account sprained his leg chasing one Palafounuku.⁽¹⁾ Basil Thomson notes that "there is still current in Tonga a fragmentary tradition of a canoe belonging to the Tui Tonga having drifted to Niue in comparatively modern times"⁽²⁾ and he states further that the Niueans had a traditional horror of "Tongans" as man eaters - which is taken as an indication that the tie was remote which allowed Polynesians to speak thus of their supposed kinsmen. There is mention of the Tui Tonga in the old chants.⁽³⁾ At the turn of this century there were living in Niue the great-grandchildren of some Tongan women captured during a raid on Niue, and F.E. Lawes (the younger of the two brothers who were the first European missionaries to live on Niue for any length of time) told Smith that in the latter years of the last century might be seen the rotting remains of a large Tongan canoe not far from Liku.⁽⁴⁾

There were contacts apart from migratory groups between Niue and the islands to the west. Two Niueans, Vai-Matagi and Vai-Fualolo, are said to have visited Tutuila

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- (1) ibid.
 (2) Thomson, S.I. p.88
 (3) Loeb, History, p.224
 (4) Smith, Niue, p.79

at one time and returned to Niue with the first coconuts.⁽¹⁾ Rarotongan traditions tell of a passing call on Niue by one of their ancestors (then living in Samoa) one Tangia⁽²⁾ but several commentators⁽³⁾ have thrown doubts upon the authenticity of the Tangia voyages and hence Smith's deductions,⁽⁴⁾ including the dating at 1250, are rather questionable. It is interesting to note that in Cook's list of islands known to the Tongans in 1777, there is no name which resembles Niue.⁽⁵⁾

As is mentioned above, the set of current and winds around Niue is from the northeast and southeast respectively. The accounts we have of migration down-wind and with the current from the east and north, chance or otherwise, are however not as full as those for the west. There is a tradition of a wreck on the east side of the island of a canoe containing several men and a woman, of whom only the

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- (1) ibid. p.20
 (2) J. Stair, 'Floatsam (sic) and Jetsam from the Great Ocean, J.P.S. vol.4, p.104.
 (3) A. Metraux. Ethnology of Easter Island, B.P.B. Mus. Bull.160, Honolulu, 1940, pp.33-34 and A. Sharp, Ancient Voyagers in the Pacific, Wellington, 1956 p.110, [London, 1784].* (Hereafter Sharp, Ancient Voyagers)
 (4) Smith, Niue, p.76
 (5) James Cook. A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean,*vol.I pp.368-369

latter was spared.⁽¹⁾ The landing on the east side does not necessarily imply that they came from the eastern islands of course but this is a likelihood, given the prevailing winds and currents. There seem to be no Niuean traditions of voyages or migrations from any identifiable islands to the east or north.

The most positive accounts of contacts and migrations from islands to the east or nother of Niue are found in the legends of Pukapuka. In a tradition recorded in 1904, a native informant named Ura declared that the Pukapukans went to many lands in ancient times - and one of the lands was Niue.⁽²⁾

From informants approached in 1934-35 the Beagleholes⁽³⁾ recorded more precise details of the voyages. Sometime in the late sixteenth century, according to calculations based upon genealogical tables, two adventurous Pukapukans, Te Nana and Yi, sailed away from their homeland. The two met on Niue after Yi had visited Tonga and Te Nana, "Yayake". After a long and idle sojourn on Niue the two decided to return to Pukapuka. However they incurred the wrath of the Niueans and were attacked as they were about to

(1) Thomson, S.I. p.90

(2) Rev. J.J.K. Hutchin. 'Traditions and some words of the language of Danger or Pukapuka Island' J.P.S. vol.13, 1904, p.173.

(3) E. and P. Beaglehole. Ethnology of Pukapuka, B.P.B. Mus. Bull. 150, Honolulu, 1938.

launch their outriggers. Te Nana burned to death in the flames of his blazing canoe but Yi managed to escape and recount the story of Te Nana's demise to his countrymen.⁽¹⁾

Some decades later a fleet of Pukapukan canoes from Muliwutu, said to contain about a hundred crewmen, sailed to the southwest in search of the members of a missing expedition. The fleet reached Niue and although they did not find the missing men (the latter were subsequently reported to have been annihilated in Tonga) were "apparently so well treated in Niue that most of them decided to stay there. A canoe came back from Niue to report the decision; nothing more was ever heard of the migrants, and it is supposed that they settled down in Niue and intermarried with the people".⁽²⁾ The Beagleholes found little reason to doubt that there was a reasonable degree of historical authenticity to the Pukapukan legends⁽³⁾ and are of the opinion that little information about traditional history had been lost in the years intervening between 1877, when a brief account of Pukapukan traditions was first related, and 1935, when they were on the island.⁽⁴⁾ It seems probable that the Pukapukan tradition of a migration to

(1) ibid. pp.402-05

(2) ibid. p.407

(3) ibid. p.400

(4) ibid. p.375

Niue recorded above was an actual historical event, although there is no record of an intrusion from such a source in Niuean traditions. The incoming Pukapukans were presumably labelled "Tongans", in the usual sense of foreigners.

The only other direct mention of any intercourses occurs in a tradition recorded in 1894 by an inhabitant of Aitutaki, one John Pakoti.⁽¹⁾ An Aitutakian, Maro-una, apparently sailed to Niue in former times to obtain warriors for a domestic battle. "After a great deal of fighting he succeeded in getting the warrior Titia, and returned to Aitutaki" - this seems a poor return for a hazardous journey. John Pakoti used the term "Vare-a-tao" of the island raided and we have only the belief of the translator Henry Nicholas to establish that this Vare-a-tao was in fact Niue.

There is a piece of indirect evidence that the existence and situation of Niue was known to the Tahitians hundreds of miles to the east. In his chart "representing the isles of the South Sea, according to the Notions of the Inhabitants of O-Taheitee and the Neighbouring Isles, chiefly collected from the accounts of Tupaya", J.P. Forster, a naturalist accompanying Cook on his second voyage, selects an island which Tupaya calls O-Hitte-potto as the island which Cook

(1) John Pakoti, 'The First Inhabitants of Aitutaki; the History of Ru', J.P.S. vol.4, p.65

discovered in 1774 and named Savage Island.⁽¹⁾ The island however is shown to be in a virtual archipelago of similarly large islands and none of the islands nearby have names at all similar to those of the Cook, Samoan or Tonga groups. It is unlikely that this island O-Hitte-potto is actually Savage, or as it is now called, Niue Island. Forster's Chart has been shown⁽²⁾ to suffer from the drafter's misunderstanding of his native informants, so that he mistook their north for south and vice versa. He identifies O-Hitte-potto as Savage Island or Niue not on Tupaya's word but on the grounds that it "corresponds with the situation of Savage Island." The landmarks on which he based this correspondence are however misplaced from north to south. Percy Smith contends that O-Hitte-potto is actually an island of the Fiji group.⁽³⁾

There are a number of identifiable islands sustaining their pre-European names and among them these are four of the main Samoan islands of Savaii (Oheavai), Upolu (Ouporree),

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- (1) J.P. Forster. Observations made during a Voyage round the World, London, 1777, facing p.513.
 - (2) H. Hale. United States Exploring Expedition during the years 1838-1842, Philadelphia, 1846, p.122 and A.Lesson. Les Polynesiens, Paris, 1880-4, vol.4, pp.16-17.
 - (3) S.P. Smith. Notes on the Geographical Knowledge of the Polynesians, pub. by Australian Association for the Advancement of Science, Sydney, 1899, p.14

Tutuila (Tootoo-erre) and Manua (Manu'a) to the north west of Tahiti and Tumutevarovaro (identified as the modern Rarotonga) which are the nearest islands to the southwest of the Tahiti group.⁽¹⁾ In precisely the correct geographical location of Niue relative to the Samoan and Tonga groups, and to Rarotonga, is an island here named Eito-nooe. The evidence is strong that this is the modern Niue - not Forster's O-Hitte-potto. In the Tahitian dialect of Tupaya the modern spelling of "eito",⁽²⁾ the prefix of "Eito-nooe" means equality, which does not strike a chord. An affix usually appended to the name Niue on formal occasions in Niue itself is "fekai" - meaning fierce. There is a Tahitian word now spelt "aitoa"⁽³⁾ meaning fierce or warlike which, allowing for differences in European phonetic interpretation, is fairly close to "eito" and could be assumed to be the same word. From the close identity of the title and the location in relation to other identifiable island groups it is probable that Forster was wrong in identifying O-Hitte-potto and not Eito-nooe as Cook's Savage Island. Percy Smith could not place "Eito-nooe" as any modern island.⁽⁴⁾

(1) A. Sharp. Ancient Voyagers, p.25

(2) Tahitian and English Dictionary, London Mission Society compilation, London, 1851, p.58

(3) ibid. p.18

(4) S.P. Smith. Notes on the Geographical Knowledge of the Polynesians, A.A.A.S., p.12

If this is so, it appears that the Tahitians probably knew of the existence and approximate location of Niue in pre-European times and although it does not necessarily follow that there was even two-way contact, let alone regular intercourse, or migration, apparently at least one Niuean castaway or voyager had reached the islands to the east or else a Tahitian had been in direct or indirect contact with Niue, and the presumption is that there would have been a few others over the centuries.

We have touched on the question of the historical significance of the Huanaki and Fao tradition above (pp.15-16). Perhaps these were not the first settlers on Niue - the story would have had to have been preserved for many centuries in the memories of men if it were - but that Huanaki and Fao are usually connected with the Motu people, believed to have been the first migration stratum, lends the story some authenticity. Neither this story nor the Mutulau one are corroborated in the traditions of other island groups; circumstantial details alone lend them their authenticity as they stand. On the other hand, the Laufoli visit to Samoa and the Anatoga incident are corroborated by traditions of Samoa and Tonga respectively. Of course these two stories were recorded subsequent to the establishment of European missionary and whaler contact between Niue and Samoa-Tonga. It is thus conceivable that they were engrafted onto the "corroboration" myth-history (the traffic could have been either way) in historical times, but the

widespread acceptance of the stories belies such recent introduction.

Of the other traditions, the story of the voyage of Vai-matangi and Vai-fualoto to Tutuila (and/or Manua) has significant circumstantial details (references to the Moa ruling family and their power of the "evil eye").⁽¹⁾ As related (p.31) the Beagleholes found little reason to doubt that there was a reasonable degree of historical authenticity to the Pukapukan legends. There are no strictly corroborative Niuean legends of Pukapukan landings, but Loeb records the place-name Pukapuka on his map.⁽²⁾ Tahitian traditions record what may be a reference to Niue but no recognizable Tongan reference to Niue was given to Cook (see above p.29).

In short, a number of Niuean traditions have significant circumstantial details included and others are corroborated by the traditions of other island groups. It is not to give oneself the benefit of all doubts to state that as they stand there is a qualified degree of authenticity to Niuean traditions.

Which raises the associated controversy aroused by the theories of Andrew Sharp as to whether the migrations were 'planned' or otherwise. The canoe said to have drifted from Tonga (see above p.28) was moving in the face of the prevailing winds and currents and was presumably driven by an autumnal westerly gale. It is very interesting to note that a motive is

(1) Smith. Niue, pp.20-21

(2) Loeb. History, end-piece

ascribed to practically all the migrants in the traditions (Huanaki and Fao were fleeing from insult in their homeland, Matulau wished to visit his mother's home, Laufoli and the Pukapukans were searching for others, the Tongans at Anatoga were a war party, and Vaea was fleeing famine at home).

This constant citing of motives could be merely an embellishment but this is to stretch disbelief far. There is some support for chance settlement of Niue in that there were no pigs, fowls or dogs on Niue in the early nineteenth century. This could be explained in turn, however, by extinction of domestic animals in times of great famine - a short-sighted policy to be sure. By 1800 the Niueans had virtually lost the art of off-shore voyaging - but they told Smith that they formerly built ocean-going double canoes, for which they have a name.⁽¹⁾ There is no Niuean account such as the Beagleholes found in Pukapukan traditions of the use of the stars and the seasonal westerlies in voyages. The evidence for and against planned migration to Niue is conflicting but as migration from the traditional homelands to the west was in the face of the prevailing winds and against the currents, and as a motive is nearly always ascribed to these migrants, the authentication or otherwise of Niuean traditions through other means will settle to some degree the question of planned or involuntary migration.

In summary, the traditions tell most frequently of

(1) Smith. Niue, p.21

migration from the west and circumstantial details and corroborative traditions of Samoa and Tonga impart some authenticity to these accounts. On the other hand, the proven looseness of the terms "Tonga" and "Tongans" as used by the Niueans, the mention of migration to Niue in well-accepted Fikapukan traditions, the inclusion of what is probably Niue in a list of islands known to the Tahitians, and the absence of Niue in a similar list provided Cook by the Tongans, and the fact that there were no fowls, pigs or dogs on Niue at the advent of the European, show that involuntary or planned migration from the up-wind and up-current islands to the east and north are a distinct possibility. It must be ascertained how far the findings based upon traditions stand up to a more scientific examination, and hence how accurate and authentic is this section of the much-maligned Polynesian traditions.

CHAPTER III

Cultural Affinities As An Indication of Historical Origins

For the purpose of this study it is accepted that the peoples of Polynesia have a wide range of cultural features in common and that this indicates at least a common swarming area; there are nevertheless discernible differences, of technique and emphasis and in the linguistic field perhaps most noticeably, of evolution and usage, in culture patterns within Polynesia of such significance as to suggest that there were probably several migration strata, separated in time and using different dispersal routes. In the absence of a conclusive lead to Niuean origins from Polynesian traditions, it is proposed to examine other types of evidence and endeavour to deduce more positive links with the immediate homelands. This procedure rests upon the assumption that distinct resemblances between the whole sweep of cultural features of geographically adjacent areas

may be taken to indicate a close historical relationship. The comparative analysis of the Niuean culture pattern will cover in succession the material culture, linguistic usage and vocabulary, and nomenclature, the store of folklore and legend and finally the political, religious and social usages and customs. The cautionary note contained in the preface can usefully be repeated here - that much of the evidence was not secured in Niue until well after the advent of the European (late though this was) and that pastors of Samoan birth and upbringing were on Niue ten years before the first missionary settled.

Material Culture

This latter circumstance is the incalculable factor which renders the evidence of the material culture of Niue less conclusive in the matter of origins than it might otherwise have been. For the extent of the influence these Polynesian bearers of a European religious creed had upon the material existence of the Niuean is a matter for speculation. They certainly brought about an apparently spectacular change in the dwelling-places of the Niuean and in his mode of dress. From living in "round low huts"⁽¹⁾ scattered in the bush, the Niueans were induced to build "the Samoan model of large

(1) G. Turner. Samoa, p.305

houses" (1) strung out along the roads of villages on the coast and from being "naked except round the waist" (2) they were cajoled into wearing "at least, a wrapper or kilt of some sort, from the waist down below the knee". (3) Indeed Murray and Sunderland found in 1852 that the wearing of "an article of dress" was an acknowledgment that one had accepted Christianity. (4)

But change may have been more apparent than real in some cases for Basil Thomson records that in 1900 when he visited the island the neat thatched cottages with limewashed walls and the windows closed with 'Venetian blind' devices (the latter probably adapted by the Samoan teachers from "some European house in their own islands") had thatched hovels in the rear. The missionary, F.E. Lawes " . . . confessed that the older natives keep these cottages for show, preferring to live on weekdays in the thatched hovels that contented their ancestors." (5)

The re-grouping, re-housing and clothing of the Niueans by the first bearers of Christianity were largely a response

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- (1) W.G. Lawes, L.M.S., B.29,F.2,J.E, 19 April 1862
 (2) J. Cook, A Voyage Towards the South Pole and Round the World; (second voyage 1772-75), London, 1777, vol.2,p.6. (Hereafter Cook. Second Voyage)
 (3) A.W. Murray and J.P. Sunderland. S.S.J., B.10,147,1 January 1854
 (4) A.W. Murray and J.P. Sunderland. Deputation from Apia to New Hebrides, L.M.S., S.S.J., B.10,146, 30 June 1852
 (5) Thomson. S.I. pp.14-15

to the organisational requirements of the church and the sense of propriety which the Samoan teachers had acquired and brought with them - and instilled into their converts as best they might. Their adoption by the Niuean was a recognized outward manifestation of conversion. There appears otherwise to have been little interference with the material way of life of the Niuean - with the implements of cultivation, food preparation, fishing, or personal adornment for example. A feature of canoes of the later nineteenth century, the indirect attachment of the outrigger to the booms by five stanchions, is apparently a Samoan introduction, but in this case, as will be shown below, we have evidence as to the original forms. Material evidence of course is able to be preserved and did not disappear as did some of the social customs of the Niueans upon Christianization, infanticide for example.

The circumstance of the presence of Samoan and European Christians on Niue before trained observers visited the island should put the investigator on guard in assessing the significance of cultural affinities on the island but should not inhibit his making an assessment altogether.

A most comprehensive and authoritative endeavour systematically to relate the culture patterns of Polynesian islands and groups was made by Edwin G. Burrows in his work, Western Polynesia. A Study in Cultural Differentiation. ⁽¹⁾

(1) Published in Honolulu, 1938. (Hereafter Burrows. West Polynesia)

On the basis of his comparison of over fifty cultural 'traits', ranging from fishhook forms to kinship terms and beliefs in the origin of mankind, Burrows has classed Niue as intermediate in character between two main regions, 'western' Polynesia (Tonga, Samoa, Uvea and Futuna) and 'central marginal' Polynesia (including the Society, Hawaiian, Southern Cook and Marquesan groups and New Zealand). Other islands classed as 'intermediate' are the Tokelau and Ellice groups, Tongareva and Rakahanga, Manikiki and Pukapuka of the Northern Cooks. It is pointed out by the author that there are no sharply defined cultural boundaries.

As is inevitable in such an ambitious and far-ranging task, Burrows made a number of mis-classifications and in respect of Niue at least is to a degree the victim of the restricted sources he uses (he does not use either Miles,⁽¹⁾ Erskine⁽²⁾ or Hood,⁽³⁾ or any of the very useful London Mission Society records). His occasionally rather arbitrary tabulation systems are also misleading in some cases and particularly is this so for Niue. Thus of the sixty or so cultural traits examined, Niuean sources used by Burrows provide material for only fifteen positive traces and four of these are widespread and hence provide little in this context. Of the thirteen Niuean traits said to be central-marginal, at

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- (1) G.P.L. Miles. Notes on the material culture of Niue, Ethnologica Cranmorensis, Chislehurst, No.3, 1958.
 (2) J.E. Erskine. Journal of a cruise among the islands of the Western Pacific, London, 1853.
 (3) Hood. op.cit.

least six are what might be called negative evidence i.e. a cultural feature typical of the western region is not present. But the absence of a trait associated with one of the regions does not necessarily indicate a cultural affinity with the other, for the absence may be traceable to inadequate records or local disappearance through some form of cultural atrophy or the vagaries of the physical environment. As far as can be ascertained from Burrows' material, the only positive Niuean affinities with the so-called central-marginal area which are not also found in the western area are the occurrence of double-pointed clubs and the nomenclature for nights of the moon and kinship terms - but in the latter two cases the findings are indecisive for the particular Niuean terms of the nights of the moon are a counting series common only to the intermediate islands, and two of the seven kinship terms examined are exclusively western. On the other hand, a third of the eighteen traits listed as western are negative evidence and there are eight traits which are found exclusively in the western or western-intermediate areas (e.g. right-angle plaiting, low-ended canoe hulls with toothed projections, indirect attachment of outriggers, composite dart, a chiefs' language, a belief in Tangaroa as the primal god with little mention of Tu, Tane or Rongo of the eastern Pantheon, and the kinship term "taskete" for the first-born sibling of the same sex as the speaker, and 'maa'

for an affinal relative of the same sex as the speaker).⁽¹⁾
 Even this cursory check indicates that some of Burrows' findings are misleading and that pre-Christian Niuean culture may have borne a much closer resemblance to the western area than Burrows calculated.

Nevertheless, this study is the most comprehensive and authoritative yet written and offers a convenient framework or context within which to re-examine the material culture of Niue.

Houses

The particular features of Polynesian houses which have been used by P.H. Buck⁽²⁾ and Burrows⁽³⁾ as criteria in distribution studies are the presence of rounded ends, and kingposts - the latter a method of ridge-pole support. Allegedly on the basis of Loeb's findings, Niuean houses are said by Burrows to have kingposts and therefore are deduced to be of Western origin. This is however a case of misclassification, as in pre-Christian times (i.e. before the Samoan pastors landed) there appear to have been no houses of sufficient size to justify the use of a kingpost. There is no kingpost in Loeb's description of the old style native house⁽⁴⁾ and he may have been misinterpreted by Burrows.

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- (1) Burrows. West Polynesia distribution diagrams nos.1-19
 - (2) P.H. Buck. The Technology of Polynesian Houses as a Key to Diffusion, manuscript in Bishop Museum, Honolulu, cited by Burrows.
 - (3) West Polynesia, p.29
 - (4) Loeb. History, p.90

Neither Cook (1777), Williams (1830), nor A.W. Murray (1840) saw any sign of habitations near the coast, and the first mention we have is from George Turner who visited the island in 1848 (i.e. before the Samoan pastors had landed) and later interviewed a Niuean convert, Peniamina. According to the latter, "The houses were round, low huts", ⁽¹⁾ and in 1859 after the Samoan pastors had been landed Turner reported that: "The pig-sty dwellings are fast giving way to the Samoan model of large houses, well spread with mats."⁽²⁾ The fullest description we have of the pre-Christian dwelling notes: "The native huts are miserable things. They are only about six feet from the floor to the ridge-pole and two-and-a-half feet from the ground to the eaves . . ."⁽³⁾ These were "fast being superseded however by houses of a really superior character after the Samoan model." The new style of house and the churches "erected under the directions of the Samoan teachers"⁽⁴⁾ doubtless incorporated kingposts, but there are none recorded of ancient Niue. Peniamina's mention of the "roundness" of the huts may however indicate a 'western' ⁽⁵⁾ influence, and possibly an indirect Melanesian influence.

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- (1) G. Turner. Samoa, p.305
 (2) G. Turner. A Voyage to New Hebrides, Loyalty Islands etc. in the "John Williams", L.M.S., S.S.J., B.10, 151
 (3) A.W. Murray. The "John Williams" among the islands of Western Polynesia, L.M.S., S.S.J., B.10, 152, 1861
 (4) Hood. op.cit., 1862
 (5) Burrows. West Polynesia, p.101

Sacred Structures

There is no evidence that there were at any time on Niue special buildings of a permanent nature set aside for religious purposes akin to the god-houses of Samoa, Tonga, the Tokelaus, Pukapuka and Uvea. The places set aside on Niue for performance of religious rites were, according to Smith, artificial hillocks fifty to seventy feet long by twenty to forty feet wide.⁽¹⁾ Smith speculates that there may have been some sort of buildings on them formerly, but the early missionary observers were particularly interested in the ancient religion and made no mention of any such structures. The evidence is inconclusive and the hillocks or tutu (a term possibly related to the New Zealand term "tuahu" for a sacred open place with an erect post or stones at one end) may have been either the site of god-houses or more probably raised platforms characteristic of central-marginal Polynesia.

It may be noted that in the stone seats to be found near Tuapa, said to be where the chiefs sat in council with the 'king' in former times, and the stone pillar on a platform nearby where the 'king' was said to be anointed, Smith was reminded of the place called Arai-te-tonga, in Rarotonga, where is a pillar and stone seats "of the same king as those of Niue"⁽²⁾ - but whereas the Rarotongans could tell the whole history of Arai-te-tonga, the Niueans knew little about their version. In contrast, two archaeologists who visited Niue

(1) Smith. Niue, p.48

(2) ibid. p.40

in 1959 inspected a coral mound which they found similar to structures known in Tonga and Samoa. ⁽¹⁾

Idols

In his study of the material culture of Niue, Miles stated that there were no idols in Niue, but two of the early European missionaries would probably have disputed this. George Turner observes: "They say that a long time ago they paid religious homage to an image which had legs like a man, but in time of a great epidemic, and thinking the sickness was caused by the idol, they broke it in pieces and threw it away." ⁽²⁾ George Lawes noted in 1862 that: "Idols they had none in recent times though they have a word in their language for an idol which would seem to indicate that they must have had them at some previous date." ⁽³⁾ Finally, one of Loeb's informants, Falani, signifies that idols of the gods were placed in households, ⁽⁴⁾ Smith records that the natives made an image of Huanaki out of stone at Vaihoko, ⁽⁵⁾ and Loeb ⁽⁶⁾ that an image of the god Limaia was killed in certain Niuean dances. (Loeb has a photograph of an unlikely looking modern representation of

(1) Letter to the Author from J. Golson, Auckland University, 1960.

(2) G. Turner, Samoa, p.306

(3) W.G. Lawes. Letter to Dr Tidman, L.M.S., B.29, F.2, J.E., 19 April.

(4) Loeb. History, p.159

(5) Smith. Niue, p.92

(6) Loeb. History, p.125

Lamaua on Plate XIII).

With no authenticated examples of ancient idols or carved human figure recorded, the evidence rests upon hearsay and must be regarded as inconclusive. It may merely be noted that Burrows has adjudged presence of carved human figures a general characteristic of central-marginal Polynesian culture.

Canoes

The variable features of Polynesian outrigger canoes are apparently the design and decoration of the ends of the hull (low with toothed projections in the west, and high with no toothed projections in the central-marginal area), the type of lashing used to join the planks of composite canoes, the number of outrigger booms, the method of attaching the outrigger booms to the float, and the form of sail.⁽¹⁾

Cook commented on Niuean canoes. He saw four drawn up on a beach on the west coast and says "the canoes were precisely like those of Amsterdam; with the addition of a little rising like a gunwale on each side of the open part; and had some carving about them which showed that these people are full as ingenious".⁽²⁾ Amsterdam is Tongatabu Island and the Tongan canoes are described by Cook as having two outrigger booms. Cook notes also that the canoes agree well with de Bougainville's description of Samoan canoes. Erskine described the Niuean

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- (1) A.C. Haddon and J. Hornell. Canoes of Oceania, Honolulu, 1937-38, vol.1, p.442 (Hereafter Haddon and Hornell, Canoes)
- (2) James Cook. Second Voyage, vol.2, p.7

canoes in 1849 as fourman canoes, twenty to twenty-four feet long "made apparently of a single tree with raised washstreaks, the fore and aft parts covered over and handsomely carved."⁽¹⁾ The outriggers were supported by three booms. A sketch included in the text shows a low-ended hull, and three outrigger booms with a unique form of indirect attachment. By the time of Smith in the early years of this century, two outrigger booms were usual.⁽²⁾

The low-ended hull of the Niuean canoe shows a western influence, and beyond that either a Fijian or Gilbert Islands strain perhaps.⁽³⁾ As to the so-called toothed projections, Haddon and Hornell note that in "the larger and better-finished canoes, a medium row of pyramidal knobs is carved from the solid along the center of each end decking, a vestigial survival or the knobs adorned with egg-cowries on Tongan and Samoan bonito canoes, from which this Niue type appears to have been derived."⁽⁴⁾

The occurrence of right-through lashing in Niuean canoes has little specific significance as it is universal in Polynesia. The indirect method of attaching outrigger booms to the float (with intermediate connectives, usually sticks) is characteristic of western Polynesia but is not exclusively so. Burrows concludes that it is likely that the indirect attachment form "spread into western Polynesia from Melanesia, probably

(1) Erskine. op.cit. p.

(2) Smith. Niue, p.65

(3) Burrows. West Polynesia, p.97

(4) Haddon and Hornell, Canoes, vol.1, p.276

from Fiji." (1)

In treatment of the number of outrigger booms, it is interesting to note that while Burrows states categorically that use of only two booms "prevails in Niue and from there eastward, with a few exceptions" (2) Erskine noted three booms in 1849 and Haddon and Hornell say that in the larger size of Niuean canoes found in European museums (Berlin, Hamburg and Pitts-River Museum, Oxford) three or four booms are usual - and this number is characteristic of Melanesian canoes according to them. There is however no record of the five or more booms found in Fiji, the Tokelau and Ellice Islands and Tonga and Samoa. [There is insufficient information to ascertain clearly what form Niuean canoe sails formerly took.]

In addition to the vestigial nature of the rows of carved knobs noted above, there are two features of Niuean canoes of last century which seem to indicate that the designers of Niue used a fairly ancient blueprint. First, in the hulls of the larger canoes, attached to each boom is a deeply bent spreader "disposed vertically and transversely usually in the form of a U and more rarely in that of a V with curved arms". (3) This has been supposed to be a degenerate or vestigial form of the inserted transverse frames found in Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, the Gilbert and Society Islands, and (also in a degenerate or vestigial form) in Hawaii and elsewhere. It

(1) West Polynesia, p.98 (2) ibid. p.39
 (3) Haddon and Hornell. Canoes, vol.I, p.277

is regarded as a possibility at least that this is a survival of Niue of a supposed original feature of proto-Polynesian canoe construction - plank built canoes with inserted ribs.

Cook's "little rising like a gunwhale on each side of the open part" and Erskine's "raised washstreaks" may also be vestigial features of Niuean plank-built canoes, retained in the dugout for the utilitarian purpose of increasing the freeboard.

A unique feature of old Niuean canoes is the method of indirect attachment of boom to outrigger float by a single upright stanchion on each side of the boom instead of five stanchions. This method is observed in the older model canoes of Niue in European museums and in the sketch shown by Erskine and it seems likely indeed that the modern method of attachment with five stanchions may be a modification "through increased contact with Samoa in recent years".⁽¹⁾ Haddon and Hornell conclude that "if this be an older method of attachment than where five stanchions are used, it may be a relic of a very ancient and primitive type." It appears, as Andrew Sharp has concluded,⁽²⁾ that over the centuries the people of Niue lost the art of off-shore voyaging. On one of the most isolated islands in the Pacific, with no other islands in sight or within reasonable reach, the Niueans used their canoes largely for fishing and even here they were restricted,

(1) ibid. p.278

(2) Sharp. Ancient Voyagers, p.186

for the east coast was nearly always under a heavy swell, there was no off-shore barrier reef, and round the whole island the oceanic shelf went down so abruptly that bottom fishing was confined to a narrow area. The nature of the fringing reef restricted the size of the canoes, in that the narrow chasms which were used as passages could not accommodate more than the smallest of canoes and it would have been difficult to drag heavy canoes over the reef. Loeb mentions that there used to be six-seated canoes but that they were rare.⁽¹⁾ The small size of the canoes and their restricted use may account for the lack of information on Niuean use of sails. Little credence should be accorded Loeb's mention of Niuean contact with New Zealand in ancient times by canoe.

In summary it may be said that Niuean canoes of the immediately pre-Christian and early Christian era exhibit most of the features of Tongan and Samoan canoes but that there are several features, the vestigial form of inserted transverse frame and the unique form of indirect attachment of the outrigger spar, which seem to indicate survivals of an ancient individual design.

Adzes

Adze types have been classified most recently by Roger Duff.⁽²⁾ He notes a western Polynesian area of Samoa, Tonga,

(1) Loeb. History, p.92

(2) R. Duff. The Moa-Hunter Period of Maori Culture, C.Mus. Bull.1, Wellington, 1950.

Lau, Futuna, Uvea, Ellice and Tokelau Islands, Pukapuka and Niue-almost coincident, [as he acknowledges] ⁽¹⁾ with Burrows' intermediate and western areas combined. On Niue, where there is no native stone (on the surface at least) the common adze is Type 2, Variety C in Duff's classification - a narrow, quadrangular-faced and tangless adze. This is widely known as the Samoan Type, as it comprises over ninety per cent of all adzes recorded from Samoa and is found in a range of groups peripheral to Samoa. Noting that rare examples are found in the South Island of New Zealand and on Pitcairn, and that this is an ancient variety, Duff emphasises "the remarkable family resemblance of the western Polynesian examples, and the probability in most cases that the adzes themselves rather than the basaltic stone, were obtained by trade from Samoa." ⁽²⁾ Percy Smith's reference to a discovery of worked New Zealand nephrite (greenstone) on Niue is attributed by Duff to post-European dispersal. ⁽³⁾

Weapons

Niueans, like all Polynesians, fought with spears, clubs and stones. Cook met with a very hostile reception on landing and a spear thrown by one of the inhabitants from a distance of five paces whistled over his shoulder. ⁽⁴⁾ John Williams

(1) ibid. p.156

(2) ibid. p.171

(3) ibid. p.244

(4) Cook, Second Voyage, vol.2, p.5

also found the Niueans drawn up in hostile array on the beach and says that "each of them had 3 or 4 spears, with his sling and a belt full of large stones."⁽¹⁾ And twenty-three years later it was "spears, single and double-headed, the latter like pitch-forks, all very nicely made and ornamented with a few feathers" and double handed sabres 7 to 8 feet long with a flat blade like a paddle.⁽²⁾

Both the modern observers Smith and Loeb note many types of spears and clubs including double-headed spears and double-pointed clubs but not the throwing club. Burrows has found that the double-pointed club is characteristic of central marginal Polynesia and is not found in western Polynesia at all. He is of the opinion from the distribution pattern that this form of weapon is a local development in the central-marginal area (Cook, Society and other islands). The distinctive Melanesian throwing club is only found on Samoa, Tonga, Futuna and Uvea - its absence on Niue seems significant.

Niuean arms are those common to all Polynesian then but show a presumed influence from the east in the double-pointed club.

Composite darts

There is no mention in early Niue texts of the practice of the widespread Polynesian game (ta-tika) of throwing javelin-

(1) J. Williams. A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands, London, 1839, pp.292-93

(2) Erskine. op.cit. p.

like sticks or darts, but Smith says that this was the most noteworthy of their ancient games.⁽¹⁾ Its significance from the point of view of cultural diffusion is that the forms of the dart used (and possibly the method of throwing) varied. Thus Samoa, Tonga, the Ellice group, Pukapuka, Uvea and Futuna had in common with Niue the composite dart of a handwood head and a shaft of reed about five feet long.⁽²⁾ Both Davidson and Burrows regard this as an example of local development in the west from the more simple dart common elsewhere. Introduction of the composite dart in post-Christian times is of course possible.

Fish-hooks

The information on Niuean fish-hooks is not detailed, but we may note Burrow's findings that in view of the widespread use of the simple (one-piece) fish-hook in central-marginal Polynesia and its absence in Tonga and Samoa, the absence of examples from Niue has some significance. The presence of the so-called Ruvettus hook, with a bound-on barb or gauge, is interesting as it is not found in Samoa and is not typical of western Polynesian culture though found widely to the east.

Bonito fishing with a pearl shell hook, and the catching of crayfish and cuttlefish by the use of an imitation rat, are arts acknowledged by Loeb to have been introduced by a missionary from Samoa.⁽³⁾

(1) Niue, p.67

(2) D.S. Davidson. The Pacific and Circum-Pacific Appearances of the Dart-Game, J.F.S. vol. 45, 1956, pp.99-114

(3) Loeb, History, p.97

Bark Cloth and Fabric Techniques

Adequate information is again lacking in respect of Niue, but the old Polynesian method of making bark-cloth by felting was apparently practised in Niue. Neither of the distinctively western techniques of joining the sheets by pasting and decoration by rubbing over a design tablet were practised on Niue and the central-marginal techniques of stamping (although Smith has a vague reference to some said technique)⁽¹⁾ and water-marking also appear to be missing. Niuean techniques are simple and found over a wide area and are hence probably ancient.

As to plaiting and twining techniques, Loeb notes that . . . "modern basket weaving was taught by the Samoans" ⁽²⁾ which renders the evidence unreliable. Burrows found a specimen of western right-angle plaiting in a Niuean mat in the Bishop Museum but again this method may have been Samoan-taught in post-Christian times.

Musical Instruments

Two observers ⁽³⁾ describe the nose flute of Niue, a musical instrument almost universal in Polynesia, and Smith the wooden slit-gong. ⁽⁴⁾ The slit-gong is Melanesian in origin and found in all western Polynesia and east to the Cook and Society Islands. Again post-Christian introduction can not be ruled out as a possibility.

(1) Smith, Niue, p.64 (2) ibid. p.94
 (3) Hood, op.cit. and Miles, op.cit.
 (4) Smith, Niue, p.66

Personal Articles of Adornment

Little of significance is derived from the forms of the wooden combs described by Smith, Loeb and Miles, although the latter adjudges that they are "plainer than any other type in Polynesia" and unusual in being cut out of a solid piece of wood. Miles observes that the development of art in general is not great on Niue.

A girdle of white cowrie shells worn around the waist or on the upper arm is described by Smith as "a Melanesian rather than a Polynesian custom."⁽¹⁾ The hair and feather girdles, though not peculiar to Niue, are highly valued. Smith sees a resemblance between the hair girdles of Niue and the dyed flax ones of the Urewera Maoris, a somewhat tenuous link.

In general it can be said that fully reliable information on many objects and techniques of the prehistoric material culture of Niue is lacking, but where we have early observations or examples of the early forms the affinity is most often towards the west (the notable examples being in the canoe and adze designs, the wooden slit-gong and the composite dart). There is also however a slight influence from the east to be seen, in the two-pointed spear for example. Because of this latter element Burrows' classification (which includes wider cultural elements) of the Niuean culture pattern as intermediate

(1) ibid. p.64

in character between those of east and west Polynesia is justifiable in his generalized classification but, as illustrated by the elements of the material culture examined here, the bent is more pronouncedly to the west. How far this bent extends will be determined by extending the search beyond the material culture.

Two interesting features of the findings are that a (presumably indirect) Melanesian influence is often found (the "round" hut, the low ends and indirect outrigger attachment of the canoe, the wooden slit-gong, and the wearing of a girdle of white cowrie shells around the waist or upper arm), and many of the forms are certainly or are supposed to have been, ancient (the "raised gunwhales" and the in-built spreader of the canoe being thought survivals of a proto-Polynesian plank-built canoe with inserted ribs, and the common adze form being found in Moa-hunter sites in New Zealand).

CHAPTER IV

Relationship of Niuean to Other Polynesian Dialects

Again the influence of the Samoan pastors, in this instance upon the vocabulary and grammatical forms of Niuean, requires scrutiny. They were the first interpreters of the Niuean dialect and it should be noted at once that the pastors did have to interpret and translate. In order to get through to their initially illiterate pastorate they had to learn to use a new dialect. Samoan was not even close enough to Niuean to enable the pastors to use Samoan texts directly, but using these as their authority they had translated by 1861, when the first European missionaries landed, a spelling book, a hymn book, a Doctrinal Catechism and Scripture history, a commentary on the Book of Matthew and translations of Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts and Philippians. Pratt commented disparagingly of the hymns in 1861 that they were "monstrous",

being merely "slavish prose translation of their own Samoan hymns."⁽¹⁾ The pastors, says Pratt, were not poets. It was doubtless at this time that the introduction of English (and Greek) words relating to the Church and transliterated into Polynesian occurred (e.g. epikopo, a bishop and ekalesia, a church), and that some Samoan terms for phenomena associated with the Church were also acquired, (e.g. 'aitu' meaning the souls of the dead, or an ordinary ghost, and 'eke poa', a priest)*

Subsequent to 1861 all translation work seems to have been done by the European missionaries, and work already done by the Samoan pastors was checked and revised by Pratt and Lawes. Pratt checked the translations of Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts and Philippines in 1862, and Lawes completed his translation of the New Testament in October 1866,⁽²⁾ including a careful revision of previous material. Thus excessive use of Samoan terms for everyday objects and institutions in the original works was probably eradicated, or superseded in the works of missionaries (the Lawes brothers) who came direct from England with no prior knowledge of any Polynesian dialect (Samoan or otherwise). With the numbers of Samoan pastors dropping to only two by 1869

* The misunderstandings arising out of the use of these latter Polynesian words for Christian concepts are discussed in Part II below.

(1) G. Pratt. L.M.S., B.28, F.3., J.C. 16 October 1861
(2) W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., B.31., F.1., J.E., 8 October 1866

it is a likelihood that the Lawes brothers acquired through their daily and intimate contacts fairly pure Niuean.

Language forms and usages die hard: it seems that this is a field of pre-Christian Niuean culture which was relatively untouched by the twelve years of Samoan contact prior to European settlement - new terms connected with European/Christian culture apart. This supposition is borne out by the analysis of related dialects below.

The most complete and authoritative source of Niuean vocabulary and grammatical forms is the publication by E. Tregear and S.P. Smith, based upon a grammar by George Lawes (added to by Frank Lawes), a vocabulary by the latter, and all supplemented by original research.⁽¹⁾ The only attempt in the work to relate the dialect to others is found in the preface: "The dialect is an interesting one, as illustrating the original forms of many Samoan words before the latter people changed the l into s and dropped the k". The accuracy of this easy assumption will be tested below.

The first attempt to compile a list of Niuean words and place them beside those of other Polynesian dialects was made by George Turner. In his Samoa, published in 1884, Turner records 132 words in fifty-nine Polynesian dialects (a number of which would not now be termed Polynesian by any yardstick). He makes no attempt to relate the dialects.

(1) A Vocabulary and Grammar of the Niuean Dialect of the Polynesian Language, 1907 Wellington

A later study, using fuller and well-reputed sources and a plausible method supersedes Turner's. This is Samuel H. Elbert's Internal Relationships of Polynesian Languages and Dialects.⁽¹⁾

Elbert goes beyond establishing inter-relationship among the twenty dialects he compares; he makes an attempt to compute their relative nearness and distance from a reconstructed proto-ancestral language (called Proto-Polynesian) and thus arrives at a tentative Polynesian family tree. On the principle that over a long period of time languages tend to change at a relatively even rate, he makes use of his results of comparing phonological and morphological data and vocabularies to produce an estimate of dates for the separation of languages in Polynesia. Only his definition of the relationship between the twenty dialects will be studied in this section - the attempt to fasten definite dates on a sequence of separations will be taken up later.

Elbert's method, briefly, is to take 202 basic English words which have equivalents in the Polynesian environment, reconstruct from the occurrence of equivalent terms over a wide area a Proto-Polynesian 'language', compare all the available equivalents of the 202 words in the twenty Polynesian dialects studied and deduce phonemic shifts and cognate relationships. Each of the twenty dialects is compared with all the

(1) Southwestern Journal of Anthropology, vol.9, 1953

others and the number of apparent cognates for each language pair is tabulated, and the whole totalled and converted to a percentage basis to express the cognate relationships. The twenty dialects compared were those of Futuna, Uvea, Tonga, Tikopia, Ellice Islands, Samoa, Easter Island, Mangareva, Marquesas, Rarotonga, Tuamotus, Maori of New Zealand, Hawaii, Tahiti, Sikiana, Fila, Ongtong Java, Nukuoro and Kapingamarangi, in addition to Niuean. Regrettably, from the point of view of this study at least, insufficient data was available to include the Fukapuka, Penrhyn, Manihiki, or Tokelau Islands. Elbert uses Smith and Tregear, and Loeb in deriving the Niuean equivalents of the 202 basic English words.

By inspection of cognate pairs, a set of phonemic shifts was tentatively established for the twenty Polynesian dialects and a Proto-Polynesian phonemic system was reconstructed (Table 1, p. 148). These findings are of considerable significance to the Niuean historian for not only do phoneme correspondences indicate a distinct division between an eastern region (including Rarotonga, Tahiti and the Marquesas and islands east and north) and a western region (including Niue, Tonga, Samoa, Futuna, Uvea, Tikopia and the Ellice Islands), but there is also a close correspondence of the phonemes of Futunan, Uvean, Niuean and Tongan which is not so easily discernible of thoses and the phonemes of Tikopian, Ellice Islands and Samoan. Thus thirteen phonemes are identical in Niuean, Tongan and Samoan while Rarotongan and

Tahitian for example frequently differ even in these instances. But the identical Niuean and Tongan k is ' in Samoan, for the Samoan a the other two have h while there is no such phoneme in Samoan, and for the Niuean and Tongan a/e, a and a/o there is only Samoan a. The Proto-Polynesian r represents an l missing in Tongan and sometimes missing in Niuean but present in Samoan and other languages.

It should be noted that the Tongan ' is only found elsewhere in Futuna and Uvea in corresponding positions.

No conclusive distinction can be made on the data presented between Samoan, Tongan and Niuean phoneme correspondence with reconstructed Proto-Polynesian, although Tongan seems to correspond more closely with Proto-Polynesian than either of the others.

The results of the vocabulary comparisons in terms of cognate percentages shows a clear enough East-West schism (Table 3) and subdivisions within the West and East regions, but more clearly in the latter. Niuean cognate percentages with other Western dialects vary from 61 to 72, while with Eastern dialects the percentage varies from Rarotongan (56) to Marquesan (47). It may be noted that the Niuean percentage of shared cognates with other western dialects is uniformly the lowest of their percentages in the western area (the exception is the Uvean/Samoan percentage which is two per cent lower than the Uvean/Niuean). Uvean (72) has

the highest cognate percentage with Niuean, while Tikopian (68) Tongan (64), Samoan (63), Futunan (62), Ellice Islands (61), Filan (59) and Rarotongan (56) follow.

Viewed by themselves these percentages indicate only that Niuean was a Western dialect - no clear enough distinctions are shown to indicate divisions within the western area. This close identity is largely attributable to the fact that in compiling the lists of cognates, phonemic shifts were ignored and phonemic differences thus minimized. When viewed in association with phoneme correspondences related to a reconstructed Proto-Polynesian phonemic system the indications are strong that Niuean bears a much closer resemblance to Tongan than Samoan.

Polynesian morphology is an almost unexplored field and as Elbert says "awaits adequate descriptive grammars". Elbert finds that western dialects have usually a rather more complex morphological structure than the eastern dialects. Niue is an exception and in its morphological simplicity as revealed by the meagre evidence available resembles the east more than the west. When this is placed beside the facts that although cognate percentages of Niuean are higher relative to the west than east they are in general the lowest percentages in the west and also that in phoneme correspondences Niuean is distinctively western, then it may be deduced not that Niuean had ties with the east but that it also parted

company from the parent language at a fairly early date and had comparatively infrequent contact in subsequent times.

The parallel with the findings in respect of material culture affinities is striking. Again features which are common to most islands of the west are missing in some degree on Niue and to the east; but that this does not indicate a tie between Niue and the east is illustrated by the non-occurrence on Niue of virtually all features uniquely eastern. Again one must conclude that the early Niueans left the immediate swarming area at an early date. It may be noted at this point that Elbert estimates that Polynesians may have settled Niue before the seventh century.

A parallel is drawn by Elbert between phonology, morphology, flora and fauna. Increasing distances from the Asiatic homeland he says is accompanied in Polynesia by increasing sparseness of forms: "The most complex and archaic language phonemically is Tongan. Only by consideration of Tongan (and its satellites, Uvean, Futunan and Niuean) can there be any reconstruction of Proto-Polynesian i, h and r, as these phonemes are lost elsewhere by replacement by, zero, or by uniting with another phoneme." The order of increasing sparseness of forms is Tongan, Samoan and the east but Samoa might still have been the homeland "with the Samoan simplifications occurring after the separation of the Tongans."

On the basis of his phonological, vocabulary cognates and morphological findings, Elbert constructs a tentative

family tree for Polynesia. From the Proto-Polynesian root two main branches go out, the one a Proto-Tongan ancestral language, from which springs Futuan, Uvean, Niuean and modern Tongan, and the other a combined Proto-Samoan-Outlier-and-Easter Island ancestral language from which sprang the dialects of the east, and that Proto-Samoan which gave rise to modern Tikopian, Ellice Islands and Samoan.

The value of these findings to the Polynesian historian is considerable. Elbert's study will be superseded only by those which compare total vocabulary, have as a check a complete single-cognate analysis (i.e. eradicating obsolete or rare terms) for all dialects, make use of as yet unwritten compilations of the vocabularies and grammars of all Polynesian and related Micronesian, Melanesian and Indonesian dialects, and finally, attempt to distinguish between migration strata on individual islands, i.e. take cognizance of the possibility of a later introduced language over-laying the early one. As it is the study establishes a definite linguistic schism on consistent lines between seven Western dialects and the dialects studied to the east. Within the Western area it advances a very strong case, especially on phonemic grounds for the colonisation of Futuna, Uvea and Niue from Tonga, and Tikopia and the Ellice Islands from Samoa. Finally it confirms the supposition that Niue has been settled from a very early date.

A brief comparison of the place names of Tonga⁽¹⁾ and Samoa,⁽²⁾ with those of Niue⁽³⁾ shows that Niue has approximately forty-five names in common with the former and between thirty and thirty-five (allowing for phonemic shifts) in common with the latter. In addition, six place names of Niue include a reference to "toga" (usually meaning 'pertaining to Tonga or Tongans', although of course it has been shown that Tonga is a general term for foreign places). The totals are too close to be in any way conclusive but the bias is towards Tonga.

The native informant Toafolia, says that the first race on Niue were Lukiloans, followed by Lomeaans, Tegameaans and Ihakaans.⁽⁴⁾ A variation of this mentions also "generations of Ikatea".⁽⁵⁾ The present race are described as Tolotoloaans. The only word which could be said to resemble place-names in adjacent islands is Tototoloaan, which may have a connection with Solosolo on the north coast of Upolu - possibly an introduction from a nostalgic Samoan pastor.

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- (1) E.W. Gifford. Tongan Place Names, B.P.B. Mus. Bull. 6
 - (2) A. Kramer. Die Samoa-Inseln, Stuttgart, 1902, index; and miscellaneous maps.
 - (3) Loeb. History, pp.14-22
 - (4) Quoted by W.W. Boulton. Collected Miscellanies of Niuean Lore, General file, Island Territories Department, December, 1941
 - (5) Loeb. History, p.164

A confirmation that there was probably contact in the past between Niue and Pukapuka and an indication that a comparative study of Niuean and Pukapukan might be rewarding is furnished by Burrows.⁽¹⁾ There is a series of names for nights of the lunar month common in most respects to the Ellice Islands, the Tokelaus, and Pukapuka. Burrows is of the opinion that a note in Loeb⁽²⁾ of the possible former existence of a series of this type in Niue suggests a historical connection. The restricted distribution of this system in these four 'intermediate' islands seems a little unlikely geographically speaking but the traditions speak of contact between Niue and Pukapuka, and the Ellice and Tokelau groups are of course in approximately the same latitude as Pukapuka. There is a place on the north-west coast of Niue called Pukapuka. Beaglehole states that linguistically the dialect of Pukapuka and its phonetic material is allied to both eastern and western dialects.⁽³⁾

Kinship terminology is of particular interest in view of the traditions of Pukapukan migration to Niue, for the two terminologies bear a distinct resemblance. It must be said that the Niuean kinship terminology is otherwise confusing, for elements of both eastern and western terminology

(1) Burrows. West Polynesia, p.84

(2) Loeb. History, p.188

(3) E. and P. Beaglehole. Pukapuka, p.414

are found.⁽¹⁾ Thus the western terms (Uvea, Futuna and Tonga only) for the senior sibling of the speaker's *six* (*taokete*) and for the sibling-in-law of the speaker's *sex* (*maa*) are used on Niue. In Pukapuka and to the east *taokete* means the sibling-in-law of the speaker's *sex*. On the other hand, Niue, with Pukapuka, has the eastern terms for father (*matua tane*), mother (*matua fefine*), and child-in-law (*fingona* in Niue, *hungonga* or something similar elsewhere to the east, no term in the west). With Pukapuka, Niue has two words to distinguish a son (*tama tane*) and daughter (*tama fefine*, with no distinction between man or woman speaking as in the west, nor the contraction into one word *tamahine*, as in the east), and parents-in-law (*matua fugavai*, no term in the west, usually one word *hungavai* or *hungawai* in the east). As in Pukapuka, and the Cook, Society, Tuamotuan and Hawaiian groups, Niue has no distinctive terminology recorded for the collateral terms, so important in the west in view of the functions of their holders, for mother's brother, father's sister, or brother's child (woman speaking) and sister's child (man speaking). Pukapukan has a term for the latter when adopted.

In general it can be said that Niuean has usually the Pukapukan or eastern form of what are largely related Polynesian lineal kinship terms, (but compare *taokete*), shares with Pukapuka, and the Cook, Society, Tuamotuan and Hawaiian

(1) Loeb. History, pp.60-64; Smith. Niue, pp.35-36, and especially Burrows. West Polynesia, pp.56-60 and pp.136-151, and

groups a paucity of distinctive collateral kinship terms, and in affinal terms has an unique term (ngomea, for parents of a child's spouse), one term specifically western (maa, for sibling-in-law, speaker's sex, the only affinal term in the west), one term close to the Pukapukan, Manihiki-Rakahangan and Mangarevan version of a general eastern term (matua fugavai) and one term close to the general eastern term for child-in-law (fingona).⁽¹⁾

The result is inconclusive, for Niuean kinship terminology is a compound from several sources but it can be said that the correlation between Pukapukan and Niuean terms is close enough as to make it doubtful if this is coincidental, hence indicating possible historical contact of a fairly intimate nature. The absence of the western collateral terms is also significant. The western collateral terms for mother's brother, father's sister and brother's child (woman speaking) are not present in any recognisable form in the eastern or even marginal or intermediate areas. This suggests that these were late introductions, and Firth⁽²⁾ says that in western Polynesia (excluding Niue) the role of father's sister and of mother's brother takes on a more formal character. "In these

(1) Burrows, West Polynesia, Table 2, facing p.56, and Smith, loc.cit. and Loeb, loc.cit.

(2) Firth, R. We, the Tikopia, London, 1936, p.281

communities special terms reflect this institutional crystallization This respect for a father's sister and the control she is apt to exercise over the children of her brother are obviously related to an attitude widespread in western Polynesia and in parts of Melanesia".⁽¹⁾ Indeed it is a commonplace that the emphasis upon collateral relationships and associated phenomena in Samoa and Tonga is the result of diffusion from Fiji.

Customs associated with this collateral kinship complex are discussed below.

The paucity of affinal terms in the west is probably attributable to abandonment. The emphasis on certain close collateral relations presumably indicates reduced interest in relationships by marriage. In this connection it is interesting to note that the only affinal term in general use in western Polynesia occurs elsewhere only on the Ellice Islands and Niue. This, together with the use of the term taokete indicates some contact between Niue and the western islands after the introduction of the kinship complex there.

(1) ibid • P.210

CHAPTER V

The Niuean Religion

The first mention we have of the religious beliefs of the ancient Niuean, corroborated as this is by subsequent evidence, is of considerable importance in establishing the sources of inspiration of Niuean religion. The Niuean, says A.W. Murray (1840) worshipped Tagaloa.⁽¹⁾ No authority except Smith⁽²⁾ mentions any other of the four primal gods known in Polynesia, and he makes an incidental reference to Tu being an albino god on Niue. Tagaloa (or Tangaloa or Tangaroa) was the only primal god in Tonga, Futuna and Uvea, but in Samoa also there is mention of Tu. Elsewhere in Polynesia there were four gods of the same general standing: Tu, Tane and Rongo in addition to Tangaloa.⁽³⁾

Of the other religious beliefs of the Niuean it may be noted that Sa-le-vao, a wellknown Samean god, was worshipped (as Ha-le-vao) in Niue. There may be significance in the sacred or semi-sacred character of the moko lizard, the shark,

(1) A.W. Murray, S.S.J., B.9, 127, 24 June - 12 July 1840
 (2) Smith, Niue, pp.45-46 (3) Burrows, West Polynesia

the turtle, the flying fox (for these were totems elsewhere in Polynesia) ⁽¹⁾ but no conclusive study has yet apparently been made of the subject. A missionary at the turn of the century commented of the Niuean belief in the spirits of the departed returning to trouble the living: "This belief as to the malign influence of departed relatives I never found in Samoa. In this respect the Niueans are more allied to the Maoris of New Zealand and the Cook Group than either to Samoa or Tonga". ⁽²⁾ This is interesting but so much of a generalization as not to be very useful here. Other authors have attributed this very belief to the Samoan influence. ⁽³⁾

According to beliefs recorded by both Thomson ⁽⁴⁾ and Smith, ⁽⁵⁾ man was born from a tree - the ti-mata-alea for the root or stalk of which the pregnant woman longs. Huanaki and Fao, the tupuas of old, are said in one account to have fashioned man and woman from the ti plant, but here the traditions have become overlaid. An apparently genealogical version of the origin of mankind ⁽⁶⁾ is classed with the origin from the ti-tree as evolutionary by Burrows. ⁽⁷⁾ There is a further story of less authenticity which accounts for the

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- (1) R.W. Williamson. The Social and Political Systems of Central Polynesia, Cambridge, 1924, vol.II, pp.291-92
 (2) A.H. Davies. L.M.S., B.38, Film 67, 27 December 1904.
 (3) Loeb. History, p.37 (4) Thomson. S.I., p.86
 (5) Smith. Niue, p.53 (6) Loeb. History, p.164
 (7) Western Polynesia, p.69

120

birth of mankind from the union of a woman and a whale.⁽¹⁾
The most authoritative analyst of Polynesian beliefs in the origin of mankind classes the Niuean belief in birth from a ti-tree, the most widely known, as an evolutionary myth,⁽²⁾ a type common only to the Cook Islands, Pukapuka, Niue and islands west.

This is probably an instance in which the Samoan pastor influence or the stories of Niuean labourers returning from other islands in the later nineteenth century can be largely discounted, for the story has a distinctively Niuean flavour.

Two other widely held beliefs of a religious flavour, the Fulotu concept of an island in the west, home of the gods and the elect after death and common Samoa, Tonga, Uvea and Futuna, and the concept of Hawaiki as an underworld or ancestral home held by the inhabitants of all of the islands of the central-marginal area to the east, are not known on Niue, or Pukapuka, or the Ellice and Tokelau groups and Tongareva.⁽³⁾ Smith lists Hawaiki⁽⁴⁾ as a place name of Niue, as does the 1957 map produced by the New Zealand Soil Bureau.⁽⁵⁾ Both concepts are regarded by Burrows as local developments in their region.

Not strictly religious beliefs, but conveniently glanced at here are the Niuean hero-cycles. There are a number of stories of the works and mis-deeds of Maui, the

(1) Loeb. History, p.165 (2) R.B.Dixon. Oceanic Mythology
Boston, 1914, vol.4, p.30 (3) Burrows, West Polynesia,
pp.73-76. (4) Smith. Niue, p.73 (5) Soil Map of Niue
Island, S.B. 318L, pub. D.S.I.R., N.Z., 1958

great Polynesian myth-hero, recorded of Niue. The stereotype stories of raising the heavens, fishing up islands with line and hook, and stealing fire from the underworld for the benefit of mankind are all here, although compared with those of other islands such accounts in Niuean folk-lore are few and unembellished.

In an analysis of the Maui cycle of tales, one authority has divided Polynesia into two areas, according to the incidents described.⁽¹⁾ The eastern area is identical with that of Burrows with the addition of the latter's "intermediate" islands of Pukapuka, Manihiki-Rakahanga, and Tongareva, while the remaining "intermediate" islands of the Ellice and Tokelau groups and Niue, are included in the western area.

This result is rendered inconclusive in respect of Niue by the presence of the Samoan pastors and particularly the recording in 1901 of two so-called Niuean Maui myths by one John Lupo, a Samoan pastor who had been on Niue for over thirty years.⁽²⁾ As Luomala concludes, a myth told by such an authority may represent either a Niuean or Samoan version of the myth, or a combination of the two.⁽³⁾

The ancient priesthood of Niue is seldom mentioned by the early callers to the island. Turner and Nisbet say that

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- (1) K. Luomala. The Maui Hero-Cycle in Oceania, M.S.S. quoted by E.G. Burrows in Culture Areas of Polynesia, Memoirs of the Polynesian Society, vol. 17, p. 170
- (2) J. Cowan. op.cit. J.P.S., vol. 32, 1923
- (3) K. Luomala. 'Maui-of-a-thousand tricks', B.P.B. Mus. Bull. 198, p. 248.

"the priests tried the sorceries of their craft to put him [the first convert] to death" (1) Murray and Sunderland note that "their sacred characters are not priests properly so called for they offer no sacrifices. They present prayers to the god or gods, not regularly, but when something is particularly needed such as rain" (2) W.G. Lawes adds: "For some years previous to the introduction of Christianity the people seem to have lost faith in their gods and priests" (3) From these accounts it is apparent that at the time of first contact with Christianity the Niuean priesthood did not have a prominent role in society.

According to Thomson the office of the priesthood (taulaatua) was hereditary. (4) Elsewhere he says: "The priests, both male and female, had much political influence, and the "toa" found to their advantage to be on good terms with them, although they themselves had the power of invoking the gods without the intermediary of a priest". (5) He also says that the priests drank kava before going into an inspired frenzy. (6)

(1) G. Turner and H. Nisbet. S.S.J., B.10, 143, 28 August 1848.

(2) Murray and Sunderland. S.S.J., B.10, 146, 30 June 1852

(3) W.G. Lawes, L.M.S., B.29, F.2, J.E., 19 April 1862

(4) Thomson. S.I., p.95

(5) Basil Thomson. Note upon the Natives of Savage Island or Niue, J.A.I. vol.32, (Hereafter Thomson, J.A.I.)

(6) Basil Thomson. S.I., p.95

This latter contention is not recorded in any other text and, since kava drinking was never a custom of the people or chiefs of Niue, it is rather suspect. The most exhaustive treatment of the taulaatua of Niue is Loeb's work The Shaman of Niue.⁽¹⁾

Noting that the name is widespread in the Pacific (Tongan, taulu-otua, but Samoan, taula-aitu), Loeb states that the functions of the taulaatua of Niue differ greatly from the functions of the ordinary priesthood of Polynesia: "There were no classes of the Niuean taulaatua, but every individual was capable of performing all of the duties incumbent upon his profession; those of bewitching, curing, prophesying, and cursing the enemy". He is also a rain-maker and many an ancient taulaatua had to talk fast to escape death if he failed to break a drought, according to tradition.⁽²⁾ The Niuean taulaatua, Loeb considers, is more like the shaman of Siberia than a priest. The people themselves are said to have performed many of the duties elsewhere carried out by the priest-hood, e.g., offering gifts to the gods.

One authority only says that the priest-hood was hereditary (Thomson, see above); Loeb denies this. The usual badge of office lay in the liability of the man or woman to be subject to epileptic fits or at least temporary insanity - this being interpreted as an indication of possession by the gods.⁽³⁾ Thus without being necessarily

(1) American Anthropologist, vol.26, pp.393-402

(2) Toafolia, quoted by W.W. Boulton. I.T. file, December 1941

(3) E.M. Loeb. 'The Shaman of Niue'

hereditary, the profession would tend to run in families because of genetical factors. A generation might be normal and hence not assume the functions of office - Loeb gives a modern example where this is reputed to have happened.⁽¹⁾

The priest-hood of Niue was then a relatively unprivileged and uninfluential group compared with those of Hawaii, the Society Islands, Samoa and Tonga for example. It was not a hereditary group in the usual sense of the term and there seems never to have been a priest-hood class similar to the kahuna of Hawaii or any specialisation within the priest-hood as recorded by Stair of Samoa.⁽²⁾ Indeed there seems to have been no organisation at all of a "priest-hood". A European missionary remarks that they took the offerings to the gods as their own perquisites,⁽³⁾ but there is no evidence that they were ever supported, as were the Samoan pastors in the early years of Christianity, by the products of the people's toil. They seem to have been an almost casual phenomenon, taking up their general functions and receiving respect because of physical or mental abnormalities. Far from receiving universal respect, they were apparently subject at times to the wrath of the populace if they failed in their duties, particularly those of rain-making. It was not an attractive office and seems unique in Polynesia in this form.

(1) ibid. p.399

(2) J.E. Stair. Old Samoa or Flotsam and Jetsam from the Pacific Ocean, London, 1897, p.70

(3) W.G. Lawes, L.M.S., B.29, F.2, J.E., 19 April 1862

CHAPTER VI

The Socio-Political System of Ancient Niue

Attention has already been drawn to the division of the island in ancient times into hostile moieties (above p.8). At the time of the introduction of Christianity there was conflict between two or three "independent" districts and a man from one district could not be landed in another, nor could the inhabitants of one district speak for those of another. In the light of subsequent testimony it appears that the orderly minds of the early European missionary visitors (who if they landed at all, stayed only a few days) fresh from acquaintance with the well-ordered society of Samoa, imposed in their writings rather more of a patterned socio-political system on Niue than in fact existed. These loosely-knit groups of kin, united only by a powerful warrior or in the face of a common foe, could scarcely be termed "independent districts". Later resident missionaries appreciated more truly the nature of Niuean society.

The first we hear of any governing figure on Niue is

from Aaron Buzacott (1842),⁽¹⁾ On enquiring for the chief or chiefs of the island he was given two names but these people would not undertake to protect the missionaries without referring the request to the populace. These were probably only two of the local patus, or elders. A chief Togia in Alofi is mentioned in 1852 but the comment is made that : "The chiefs have very little influence: the man who renders himself most formidable by warlike deeds is generally the man of greatest consideration and influence".⁽²⁾ This lack of strong chiefs hindered the work of the Samoan pastors for there was no authority exerting any great influence through whom they might work. Again we learn that: "The strongest man is the greatest chief".⁽³⁾

The first European observer who lived on the island for any length of time says that formerly the Niueans were ruled by chiefs but that these have all long since been killed. The people, he says, were not satisfied with their governors, so they rebelled and killed them all. It is almost needless to say, he adds, that none have aspired to the office since. In the place of chiefs, the "heads of families make laws, and enforce them".⁽⁴⁾ An independent observer says in the same

(1) Aaron Buzacott, S.S.J., B.9, 133, 31 March to 20 July 1842.

(2) Murray and Sunderland. S.S.J., B.10, 146, 30 June 1852

(3) A.W. Murray and J.P. Sunderland. S.S.J., B.10, 147, 1 January 1854.

(4) W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., B.29, F.2, J.E., 19 April 1862

year that the form of government is patriarchal. ⁽¹⁾

Lawes notes in 1865 "the old custom of each village making its own laws independent of others" (this is probably not pre-Christian practice for the nucleated villages along the coast of which Lawes is speaking were a creation of the Samoan pastors). Murray's contention in 1852 that the Niueans are "impetuous and ungovernable" is echoed in Lawes' final despairing comment: "Niueans have the least possible idea of order and government". Turner adds: "In war and other matters the heads of families formed the deliberative assembly or government for the time being". ⁽²⁾

A picture emerges from these early accounts of a loose-structured society in which the source of authority (such as it is) is the warrior (toa) and the head of the family (patu). One early observer is of the opinion that the form of government was formerly "aristocratic" or "feudal" but in a revolt at a comparatively recent date the chiefs were all slain and the society had become "in some sort patriarchal". ⁽³⁾ This is so close to W.G. Lawes' account that it is apparent that it was he who was Brenchley's informant and the latter has loosely imposed European terms inappropriate to the Niuean context upon Lawes' "rule by chiefs".

The most detailed examination of the stratification of Niuean society as it was in ancient times indicates that there were a good many "chiefs" in Niue, who are called either

(1) Hood. op.cit., p.17

(2) Turner. Samoa, p.305

(3) J.L. Brenchley. Jottings during the Cruise of HMS Curacao Among the South Sea Islands in 1865, London, 1873, pp. 28-29.

(1) iki or patu. The former is not a common expression but the name patu is used of the head of the fagai, the extended family group. The patus now form the members of the local fonos or village councils but it is not clear whether the fonos (a Samoan expression) existed as an institution prior to Christian times. The existence near Tuapa of an arrangement of eleven seats formed of upright stones with backs to them where the chiefs are said to have sat in council suggests that at some time in the past some such deliberative body did exist, though how formal, powerful, or long-lasting the institution was is debatable. (2) The lack of information as to the builders or users of the seats suggests indifference to the matter for many generations. Smith says: "The attitude of the lower orders towards the king and the chiefs was always one of deference, for which they have a word (maimaina), and this is so at this day. No one of the common people (lalo tagata) approaches a chief or passes before him without stooping in a humble attitude . . . and, like the Samoans, they sit down cross-legged (fakatoga, which really means tonga fashion) to prefer any request". (3) This habit of deference seems to have been an outgrowth of respect for a conqueror. Loeb divides the people of Niue into three classes, the toa, or warriors, the fekafekau, or servants of the toa, and the lalo tagata, or low people, of Smith. Membership of the toa "class", as the texts of the missionary records affirm, was open to those of a strong arm. There were "no hard and fast

(1) Smith. Niue, pp.36-44 (2) ibid., p.40
 (3) ibid. p.43

caste distinctions".⁽¹⁾ Classes of "servants" are also described but the term is too specific - these were people with some tie to the local toa. There seems never to have been on Niue any specialised or craft groupings, such as canoe-builders or carvers, as existed elsewhere in Polynesia.

Smith's contention⁽²⁾ that the patus and ikis exercised "supreme" power over the lower orders is an overstatement of the position outlined by all other informants. As Lawes said, the Niueans had the least possible idea of order and government and the Samoan pastors found no such "supreme" authority through whom to work. Loeb concludes that "their political and social organization was far less highly differentiated than the social and political organization of other Polynesian people, for not only was a well developed system of government lacking on the island, but even the people themselves were not grouped according to their crafts and occupations".⁽³⁾

Mention has been made of a "king". The term is not strictly applicable to the office, now defunct, known usually on Niue as patuiki (chief of chiefs) for what power this personage was supposed to wield was more spiritual (or rather meteorological) than temporal. The first occasion on which such an office, or rather the lack thereof, was observed was on the earlier visit of George Turner to Niue. He recorded later that "when I was there in 1845 they had no king. Of

(1) Loeb. History, pp.56-58

(2) Smith. Niue, p.44

(3) Loeb. History, p.59

old they had kings, but as they were the high priests as well, and were supposed to cause the food to grow, the people got angry with them in times of scarcity, and killed them; and as one after another was killed, the end of it was that no one wished to be king".⁽¹⁾ The institution was not hereditary and there was never a continuous line of kings. One authority says inconsequential men might be chosen for the position,⁽²⁾ while another says that the candidate was chosen by the whole of the people from one of the leading families, and subsequently by the villages militarily ascendant at the time, but the position was "elective" and must be agreed to "by all" to be valid.⁽³⁾ The functions of the patuiki are similar to those ascribed to the taulaatua: to ensure ample rainfall and hence good crops. He seems also to have presided over a council of chiefs of the island on occasion,⁽⁴⁾ had agents in some of the villages and been entrusted with guarding sacred objects. The killing of the king for neglect of duty in times of famine is a custom peculiar to Niue and illustrates both the sacerdotal nature of the office and the scant respect paid the incumbent's person.⁽⁵⁾ Chiefs were not killed for their lack of super-natural powers for they were not reputed to have any. (Nor it may be noted were the latter invested, as in Hawaii, Tonga and Samoa for example, with a divine or semi-divine aura).

(1) Turner. Samoa, pp.304-305
 (2) Loeb. History, p.57
 (3) Smith. Niue, p.37
 (4) ibid. p.40
 (5) Turner. Samoa, p.305; and Loeb. History, p.55

All sources are agreed that the patuiki office did not become in any way an established feature of the Niuean scene until approximately 150 years before the advent of Christianity, although Smith is convinced that the first king dwelt at a much earlier period.⁽¹⁾ In any event this was not an office at all akin to the systems prevailing in Samoa or Tonga. It bears a faint resemblance to the system found on Mangaia Island in the Cook Group, where the office was also elective in some degree and non-hereditary.⁽²⁾

It has been said that the institutions of Niue seem always to have been republican.⁽³⁾ This is an exaggeration of the position but it is probable enough that no autocratic political system, lasting in the same line more than one generation or so anyway, no complex hierarchy of divinely ordained and hereditary chiefs,* no hereditary line of

* N.B. The tentative conclusion which Williamson reaches (op.cit. vol.II, pp.401-402) on an examination of Smith's evidence alone, that there were two distinct ranks of chiefs below the putuiki, the patu, head of a lower social group, and the iki, head of a social group "the aristocracy" is probably erroneous. There is little evidence that such distinctions existed in Niuean society.

(1) Smith. Niue, pp.37 and 74

(2) ibid. p.37

(3) Thomson. J.A.I. vol.31, p.138

priests, no alliance between the spiritual and temporal powers, no stratification into more than a few primitive classes within reach of virtually all, no specialised crafts, groups or guilds living upon the produce of others, ever existed on Niue as established institutions. We have seen that the traditions tell more often of contact with the island groups of Tonga and Samoa than elsewhere in ancient times, and that this is authenticated fairly consistently by a comparative examination of material cultures, hero-cycles, religious beliefs and dialects, but here on Niue we find none of the complex socio-political structure, the powerful alliance of autocratic and hereditary divine chief and hereditary priest, the rigid gradations of society, the whole kinship complex, associated with these island groups to the west over the last six centuries at least. Here is none of the complex privilege systems, the relationship of vasu allowed between men and their mother's brothers to confiscate property and wives, the privileged position allowed fathers' sisters to curse a brother's children who fail in their duties, the brother-sister avoidance behaviour pattern, the whole emphasis on collateral relationships and what they betoken, or the elaborate kava ceremonial, characteristic of Samoa, Tonga, Uvea and Futuna.⁽¹⁾ True enough, there is a rudimentary

(1) Burrows. West Polynesia, pp.51-64

chiefs' (or more properly, courtesy) language recorded in
which Tongan, Futunan, and Samoan words preponderate. ⁽¹⁾

One authority says that the taulaatua of Niue drank kava to inspire them, and another that the chiefs may have imbibed on sacred occasions. ⁽²⁾ References in old chants to the tuitonga suggest that the Niueans of old had heard of this institution and presumably the hierarchy with which it was linked. There is even a tradition recorded of conquest by one who was acquainted with the (assumed) Tongan polity, ⁽³⁾ and some of the forms and ideas of western Polynesian society and government were known and adopted (the institution of the patuiki probably developed from a Tongan model, in addition to the customs noted above) but such adoptions were given a distinctively Niuean twist (the killing of the patuiki at times of famine and the possible drinking of kava by the taulaatua) and always represented a dilution of the original.

The institutions of Niue, the nominal head of largely sacerdotal function, the patuiki, leading a tenuous existence, the patus guiding small kinship groups, all dominated by the military power of the currently ascendant toas, were hardly republican in the specialised European sense of the term but this society was shaped on vaguely egalitarian lines - descending at times to anarchy. It is as close an approach as is achieved in Polynesia to a truly egalitarian society;

(1) Smith. Niue, p.43

(2) Loeb. History, p.28

(3) ibid. pp.27-29

it is far removed from the complex stratified systems existing in Tonga and Samoa at the time of European contact.

CHAPTER VIICulture Pattern and Time

An apparent contradiction has been uncovered in the material above. A society whose traditions tell more often of migration from the island groups of Tonga and Samoa to the west than from the up-current and up-wind eastern islands and whose affinities in material culture in general though not exclusively, and linguistics and religious beliefs certainly, largely affirm such an origin, displays a socio-political system with very little in common with the complex societies to the west. How is this circumstance to be explained? Three possibilities suggest themselves, namely:

(1) that migratory groups sailed or were blown from the western island groups in ancient times and before those societies had crystallized into the complex stratified forms they eventually assumed, established a society akin to the (assumed) relatively unstructured ones they had left behind, and in the isolation of Niue failed to evolve socially and politically in a way parallel to that of the home peoples, rejecting or accepting in a Niuean form such contact ideas as filtered through; or

(11) that migratory groups left the homeland societies at a time when they had evolved into their final complex structure, but the migrants, perhaps castaways blown off-course by the strong westerlies and north-westerlies of late summer while fishing or making passage between islands of

the Tonga or Samoa groups or between the groups themselves or perhaps expelled from thence for committing offences or by a conquering party, had on board their canoes no men of exalted rank, chiefly or priestly, and hence presumed not to set up a full model of the home society, or wished not possibly; or

(iii) that the limitations of the near-atoll environment of Niue, with its low food productivity, its liability to drought and consequent famine, and its lack of a consistent agricultural surplus upon which a leisured governing and redistributive class, or allied priesthood and skilled craft groups might exist, precluded the perpetuation, or growth of a society dominated by them.

It is apparent that neither of the first two possibilities is mutually exclusive of the last. There remains the task of deciding which of the first two possibilities or which of these in combination with the last is likely to have produced the unique society of pre-Christian Niue.

A factor of primary importance in such an exercise is the time span of Niuean pre-history. Only by establishing an approximate chronology will it be possible to determine whether the first alternative, early settlement of Niue from a less complex home society in Tonga and Samoa, is a feasible hypothesis.

There are at present of course very few ways of establishing a chronology for any island in Oceania. It is doubly difficult for Niue. In the absence of written histories,

the traditions and especially the genealogies of the Polynesian peoples have some standing although even the genealogical lists are often suspect because of manipulation in the cause of personal prestige. Niuean traditions are thin and vague and their recorded genealogies go back a scant five generations and hence have little significance. It has already been noted that Pukapukan genealogies indicate contact with Niue around the end of the seventeenth century. Further clues to the pre-history may lie in some ancient chants written down by Percy Smith and others. These await close study by an expert for they are often incomprehensible to the modern Niuean.

It was occasionally remarked in the course of the examination of the material culture that certain objects or techniques appeared to be of a more ancient character than the rest. All but one (simple fishhooks) of the traits found by Burrows to be widespread in Polynesia and hence probably ancient appear in Niue - tangless adzes, right-through lashing of canoe planks, two outrigger booms and bark cloth felting.⁽¹⁾ The Samoan-type adzes of Niue were adjudged by Duff to be "as old as the so-called 'Tongan' invasion of the thirteenth century" at least and yet older for he notes their presence in such remote eastern outposts as New Zealand and Pitcairn. In New Zealand the type was found in the moa-hunter sites of Wairau. The ancient blue-print of the Niuean canoe is manifest in the vestigial form of inserted transverse frame and the unique form of indirect attachment of the outrigger spar. These features

(1) Burrows. West Polynesia, p.87

can be accepted as no more than supporting evidence of ancient settlement of Niue.

The modern scientific method of determining the approximate dates of first settlements, radio-carbon dating, is unfortunately likely to have very little direct applicability to Niue. As was mentioned in the preface, the ground radio-activity of Niue is unusually high; this apparently interferes with the process of radioactive change and hence rules out accurate carbon dating⁽¹⁾. Dates obtained from neighbouring island groups are of some relevance of course and we may note in this regard that, as of 1959, carbon testing had revealed human settlement on Samoa at least during the whole period of the Christian era, on the Marquesas at an even earlier time⁽²⁾ (as the comparative dates at present stand) and on Easter Island away to the east from about the fourth century A.D.⁽³⁾

A further means of estimating lapse of time is the calculation of approximate dates by measurement of change in language since dispersals within Polynesia commenced. This technique is based upon the principle that over long periods of time languages tend to change at a relatively even rate. We have seen above how Elbert⁽⁴⁾ uses his glottochronological method of counting likenesses in basic vocabularies of related

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- (1) J. Golson. Letter to author, 18 August 1960.
 - (2) J. Golson and R.C. Green. Radio-carbon dates for Oceania, Auckland, 1959.
 - (3) Thor Heyerdahl. Aku-Aku, the Secret of Easter Island, London, 1958, p.127.
 - (4) Samuel H. Elbert. Internal Relationships of Polynesian Languages and Dialects, South western Journal of Anthropology, vol.9, pp.147-73. (Hereafter, Elbert. Polynesian Lang.)

languages to compute the relative nearness and farness of these languages with reference to a reconstructed proto-ancestral language. He has attempted to make further use of the computations to establish a chronological table for the dispersals within Polynesia. It has been estimated on this basis that 'proto-Tongan' became separated from the assumed parent language, proto-Polynesian, before 300 A.D., and that Niuean in turn broke away from 'proto-Tongan' between 300 A.D. and 530 A.D.

Niue has the lowest percentage of cognate words with the other Western dialects (this is strikingly shown in Elbert's Chronological Table) thus illustrating its early breakaway. Surprisingly, the cognate percentages between Uvean and Niuean (72), and Tikopian and Niuean (68) are the highest of the Niuean percentages. Geographically it seems unlikely that a late separation occurred between these two dialects and Niuean. The point is clarified when it is seen that both Uvean and Tikopian have generally high percentages; Niuean is the lowest of the Tikopian percentages and only Samoa has a lower percentage than Uvea of shared words with Niuean.

The glottochronological method of dating is obviously not a watertight technique. The computation of the rate of language change was made on the basis of change in European and Mediterranean languages - but these were written languages whereas Polynesian was never recorded in this way in pre-historical times. It seems a possibility that the Polynesian language evolved at a different rate than did written languages, since no reference could be made to past practice by

the Polynesian, except as was supplied him by word of mouth. Also, as Elbert acknowledges, diffusion increases percentages of vocabulary agreement and therefore lessens time depths. The low percentage agreements of Niue may be attributed in part to the isolation of its geographical position; it is possible that the Niueans in fact migrated from the Tongan area at a slightly more recent date than is suggested by comparison of dialects. On the other hand, the high cognate percentage between Uvea and Tonga may be attributed to frequent contact over the centuries rather than a very recent separation.

One way in which the accuracy of the glottochronological method may be checked is to compare the results thus obtained with those calculated by other means. Data from three sources are reasonably comparable for first settlement (or in the case of carbon-dates, well-established settlement) on Hawaii: genealogies say 1050 A.D., carbon-dating indicates 818-1190 A.D., and glottochronology 930 to 1300 A.D.⁽¹⁾ Traditions of the Maori put the heaviest infiltration in New Zealand at about 1350 A.D., with some settlements considerably earlier, and carbon dating at present indicates established settlement by 1000-1100, while glottochronology indicates 750-950.⁽²⁾ Easter Island is a significant example, for the percentage of shared words with other Eastern dialects is approximately the same as Niuean with Western dialects. Traditions are of little use, but carbon-dating indicates that Easter Island sheltered humans about the fourth century,⁽³⁾ while glottochronologies indicated

(1) Elbert. Polynesian Lang. (2) Duff. op.cit.

(3) Heyerdahl. loc.cit.

between 300 and 500. Glottochronological techniques indicate that the Marquesans separated from the other Eastern Polynesians between 600 and 900. Radio-carbon dates extend back to the first century before Christianity. Moving west we find that Samoan carbon¹⁴-dates reach back at present to the first century of the Christian era. Glottochronologies indicate that the Outlier and Eastern dialects broke away from 'proto-Samoan' before 300 A.D.

The Marquesan radio-carbon dates at the beginning of the Christian era suggest that many of the dates further west may one day be extended back in time, although first settlements on these far eastern islands could have been from the American continent.

Although radio-carbon dates are not yet available for most of the islands of Polynesia and those available will be supplemented, there is a fairly close correlation between the dates thus obtained and those gained through glottochronological methods. The correlation is close enough, except in the case of the Marquesas, to confer a large degree of accuracy upon the glottochronological method. Archaeological work on Niue may one day provide corroborative material of a conclusive nature but in the absence of radio-carbon dates and reliable genealogies, the dates arrived at by glottochronological methods, made more feasible as they are by the occurrence of presumed ancient cultural features, may be accepted as an approximation of Niuean first settlement times.

That Samoa was settled at the beginning of the Christian

era (radio-carbon dates) and Tonga and Niue probably colonized from thence (on linguistic evidence) illustrates that the glottochronological dates for Niue are a historical possibility. We may accept that Niue was probably settled at some time between the fourth and eighth centuries. We should note incidentally, that Percy Smith has tentatively calculated on the basis of his reconstruction of the traditional history of the Polynesian race that Niue was first occupied about A.D.700 - after the time that Smith believes Eastern Polynesia to have been discovered. "The reason I fix on this date, is that the people have many of the traditions common to the race, the period of which is prior to A.D.700, but so far as I gathered, none of a later date that are not merely local. Many of the great heroes of Polynesian history are unknown to Niue".⁽¹⁾ The postulation is phrased in such general terms that it is impossible to check its authenticity in the light of more recent findings.

The possibility of human settlement on Niue in what appears at present to be early Polynesian times is then proven distinctly feasible. It remains to determine whether the introduction at this time of a comparatively simple socio-political system is a possibility in terms of accepted patterns of Polynesian pre-history. The conclusion of those who have studied the traditions of the people and regional similarities and differences in culture is generally that there were two (sometimes three are postulated) migrations into Polynesia of

(1) Smith, Niue pp.71-72

a people of similar stock. Of the earlier so-called 'purer Polynesian' migrants, known variously as the proto-Samoans, the pre-Tangaroans or the pre-Rarotongans, little is known, but the culture of the later migrant groups is marked by contact with the Indonesian and more especially the Melanesian peoples. Authorities can not agree as to whether the latter elements are to be attributed to migratory routes passing through these areas or to diffusion east, but the matter is largely irrelevant here. What is important is that the later migratory group, the Tongafiti of Smith⁽¹⁾ and Churchill⁽²⁾ (and Samoan traditions), the Tangaroans of Williamson⁽³⁾ and the Arii of Handy⁽⁴⁾ had evolved or acquired a more complex society than their predecessors. As Haddon and Hornell conclude this migration stratum "raised Polynesian society to its highest pitch"⁽⁵⁾. Handy notes significantly in his summary of the contrasting elements typical of the early and later cultural strata of Tahiti that the "old Tahitian" society was organized in "communal democratic clans and tribes", while the society of the Arii (characterized as "a late incoming ruling caste"⁽⁶⁾) featured stable political institutions, court etiquette, dynastic traditions, insignia, social ceremonialism and "castes"⁽⁷⁾. Through the centuries Tonga-Samoan societies maintained closer links than the islands east with the Fijian islands, for obvious geographical reasons, and diffusion

(1) Smith. Niue, p.71 (2) W. Churchill. The Polynesian Wanderings, Washington, 1911 (3) Williamson op.cit. Vol.1, p.30
 (4) E.S.C. Handy. History and Culture in the Society Islands pp.66-67 (5) Haddon and Hornell. op.cit. pp.342-43. (6) Ibid. (7) Handy loc.cit.

imprinted upon these societies to the west of Niue further features characteristic of the complex Melanesian culture pattern, including a powerful socio-political hierarchical structure and systems of kinship privilege.

It is not intended to deduce a strict parallel between evidence of distinct migration strata and society structures in other islands of Polynesia, and Niue, but it is drawn from the conclusions of observers of other islands of Polynesia that the complex socio-political systems of Tonga, Samoa and Tahiti for example were preceded by somewhat simpler and less stratified societies. The same seems a probability for Niue; it appears likely that the island was settled at an early date by a migratory group coming from a relatively simple unstructured home society in the island groups to the west. In support of this we may note Smith's comment that the absence of a king in ancient Niue - before the comparatively recent introduction of the patuiki office - is due to the fact that Niue was settled from Samoa before 1250 A.D. ie. before Samoa itself had a king. This author would only add the qualification that there is no conclusive evidence that Niue was first settled from Samoa as opposed to Tonga. The first tuitonga did not reign until 950 A.D. according to genealogies and hence the argument for settlement from a "no king" society still stands.

There are however traces of implements, customs and institutions usually associated with the later Melanesian - influenced society of the Tongan-Samoan area to be detected on Niue. Some of these traces were noted above: a rudimentary

chiefs' language is found and there is some sketchy evidence that the custom of kava-drinking, though none of the ceremonial or the special equipment associated with the practice to the west, was known on Niue. References in old chants to the tuitonga seem to indicate that the Niueans knew of the office and perhaps even of the hierarchy associated with it - the Niuean institution of patuiki may have been derived originally from the Tongan model before acquiring its specifically Niuean twist. There is a tradition recorded of a migrant familiar with the Tongan polity and the kava ceremonial. In the field of material culture, the lowended canoes with their indirectly attached outrigger booms, and the wooden slit-gong, indicate contact with the western island groups in the later period - characterized by widespread diffusion from Melanesia. The apparently Melanesian characteristics noted by Smith in the Tafiti People of Niue are significant too here. But if there are these traces of contact, none of the more basic customs and ideas imported from coastal Fiji by the Tongans and Samoans over the centuries seem to have found acceptance on Niue. The importance of the chieftainship and the divinity attributed to the chiefs, ⁽¹⁾ the brother-sister avoidance pattern and its implications, the power ('vasu' in Fijian, 'fahu' in Tongan) of the sister's children, the whole emphasis upon collateral as contrasted with affinal kinship links ⁽²⁾,

(1) Burrows. West-Polynesia, pp.136-45

(2) P.H. Buck. Vikings, pp.301-2; Burrows. West-Polynesia, pp.136-145.

are concepts which if they reached the shores of Niue did not find acceptance there. Two customs of Samoa and Tonga attributed by Smith to contact with the Melanesians of Fiji, cannibalism and tattooing, are also not found on Niue. (3)

Before discussing possible explanations of these facts it is of interest to note that it is calculated on the basis of genealogies that it was about the twelfth or thirteenth century and a little earlier that the close connection of the western Polynesians with Melanesians in the Fiji group "when intercourse was frequent and intermarriage constant" occurred. (2) An authority quoted above estimates that the first tuitonga ruled in 950 A.D. ie. thirty-five generations before 1865. (3) According to our chronology Niue was probably settled some centuries before this time.

How is it possible to explain the evident contact between the island groups of Tonga and Samoa, and Niue, in the centuries of Melanesian diffusion to the former island groups, and yet the lack of any but incidental forms in the Niuean polity to show that contact had been made? The second possibility (1) advanced at the beginning of this chapter, that the peculiar Niuean socio-political system was a result of first settlement by a migratory group which left the homeland society when it had evolved into its final complex structure, but the migrants for various reasons desisted from setting up a model of this home society, has been rendered improbable by the evidence examined

(1) Smith. Niue, pp.72-73 (2) Smith. Niue, p.75
 (3) P.H. Buck. Vikings, p.292

in support of an earlier settlement(i). That such groups did come (the Tafiti people) is evident, but their influence was relatively unimportant. It would seem that the lack of established cultural forms and institutions on Niue indicating Melanesian diffusion through Tonga and Samoa may be attributed both to the contacts being of a fairly intermittent character owing to the isolation of the island, and also to the presumed circumstance that the established cultural pattern on Niue was sufficiently well entrenched and suited to the inhabitants and the environment as to render innovations of the Melanesian character unattractive or indeed even unworkable.

It does seem that the environmental factor (iii) is an important element in Niuean cultural evolution and hence, history. In the Introduction it was briefly illustrated that the limitations of the near-atoll environment of Niue precluded consistent high food-productivity. Here are to be found few of those conditions necessary for such productivity: the rainfall is unreliable and unevenly distributed throughout the year; the soils are porous and leached, and there are no deep volcanic soil areas; irrigation is well-nigh impossible; there is little variety of environmental zones such as are found on the high volcanic islands to the west; and the dependence on a shifting form of horticulture was almost total before the pig and the fowl were introduced (or re-introduced) in Christian times. Fishing resources are not as adequate as in most lagoon atolls. The drought and the hurricane brought famine in their wake fairly frequently.

The study of the relationship between environmental factors and socio-political systems in Polynesia is exciting but at present is in its infancy. Polynesian societies are of course regarded as derived from a common ancestral society. These genetically related cultures were subject but little to outside influence until European contact and hence are uniquely suited to study of the importance of environmental or ecological factors in socio-political evolution. The part of ecological factors should not be exaggerated: the roles of migrations and military conquests, of personalities thrown up in any one society, of historical accidents occurring in the course of migration and warfare, and in western Polynesia particularly of diffusion over a period, must all be taken into account. But in the comparative isolation for many centuries of Polynesia, the varying carrying capacities of the islands and island groups brought a significant pressure to bear upon the development of social stratification in the various societies, especially where those societies were as isolated as on Niue and were settled from as early a period.

This is brought out most forcefully and convincingly in the work of M.D. Sahlins,⁽¹⁾ Social Stratification in Polynesia. To put his case at its most simple, Sahlins compares the productivity of fourteen islands and groups in Polynesia with their social stratification (using in both calculations his own criteria) and contends with success on

(1) Published Seattle, 1958.
(hereafter, Sahlins, Stratification)

the basis of his methodology that other factors being constant, the degree of stratification in the selected islands varies directly with productivity. The link between the two he sees as the chief. The greater the surplus production, the greater the chief's re-distributive functions, and hence the greater his powers. Upon surplus productions specialized classes can exist, a leisured governing class, a priesthood, and canoe and house builders. Obviously much of the validity of Sahlins' contention lies within the qualification, "other factors being constant". Migration, war, individuals, historical accidents in general, and diffusion have their roles as is pointed out above. Also Sahlins' various criteria have been questioned to some effect and he has been accused in some degree of circular reasoning in the selection of these criteria⁽¹⁾ but the final conclusion, set as it is in general terms, is almost unquestionable on the evidence presented i.e. "adaptation is....seen to be a major orienting factor in cultural evolution..."⁽²⁾

Niue was not selected as a subject for analysis by Sahlins because of the lack of information available on economic and social organizations (he apparently only consulted Loeb in this matter⁽³⁾). By applying his criteria as far as we are able to Niue we find that the relationship between social stratification and ecology fits very well into the Sahlins pattern of findings. Niue had a low food productivity by

(1) W.H. Goodenough. J.P.S., vol.68, No.3, September 1959, pp.255-58. (2) Sahlins. Stratification. p.253

(3) ibid. p.xii

these comparative standards, lacking most of the environmental requirements for producing a surplus, as enumerated above. And the degree of social stratification is rudimentary. As far as we have ascertained for example the power to determine the utilization of strategic resources, control and supervision of production, dependence on the subsistence activities of others, power to expropriate surplus production of others, elaboration of special privileges as prerogatives and badges of rank, power to make important decisions without consulting others, use of physical force as against reliance on supernatural sanctions to enforce decisions or punish infringements of status rights, tendency to intra-status marriage, elaboration of tabus surrounding persons of rank, elaboration of respect behaviour, and elaboration of life crisis rites for persons of rank as contrasted with others, were concepts well-nigh foreign to the Niuean by the time of European contact - and we presume for centuries before. Where any of these powers and customs did exist on Niue they were imposed on occasion by force of arms (an assumed right not a prerogative as above) or else existed in a dilute or vestigial form. The strong toa apparently raided the food stocks of others in times of scarcity and was undoubtedly never loath to appropriate the production of the conquered surplus or otherwise, but this is far removed from an inherent right to do so. We have noted that a form of obeisance was paid the influential man, including the

missionary in later times, but on the other hand no divine or semi-divine aura surrounded him and there seems to have been no distinctive badges of rank like the magnificent cloaks of Hawaii and New Zealand or the fly-whisk or staff of Samoa. Indeed there was scant respect at all for the person of the nominal head of Niuean society - the patuiki was occasionally killed in drought times and one even died of eating rats in famine time according to tradition. It is of interest that the Samoan pastors and the missionaries, in early years at least, were largely supported in their food requirements by their flocks. This was made possible by the introduction of fowl and pig breeding stock, and also by the more ordered society which emerged.

Niue then falls into the least stratified Group III, with Pukapuka, Ontong Java and the Tokelaus - all coral atolls with the ecological limitations of Niue's near-atoll environment. It is correspondingly true of Niue that: "Familial specialization of production is prohibited by small surpluses and the consequent limitations on exchanges of strategic goods. Every type of resource is of vital importance to the continued existence of the society..... without the possibility of producing large surpluses and hence of specialization, every person would have to be a member of each type of [social] grouping."⁽¹⁾ It seems apparent on the evidence available that a horizontally fairly complex society of interlocking social groupings eventuated

(1) Sahlins. ibid. pp.251-53

on Niue, as elsewhere, in conditions of long occupation and low productivity. Certainly there are elements of both matriarchy and patriarchy in Niuean kinship customs, the importance of the patus, the elders, shows an age grade system, and the people seem to have been further divided in ancient times into both extended family groups (tama or fagai, into which "persons stranger to the blood"⁽¹⁾ are sometimes admitted) and also on a territorial basis (witness the long-standing conflicts between the Motu people of the north and the Tafiti of the south). Admittedly the evidence is not full in this regard and there is certainly not the multiplicity of cross-cutting organizations found on Pukapuka⁽²⁾.

The conclusion drawn from this is that the third possibility (iii) above, that ecological factors precluded the growth or perpetuation of a complex stratified socio-political system on Niue, is distinctly feasible. In support of this we may recall again the imprint which recurring drought and famine imposed upon the institutions of Niue - the priests, such as they were, were more rain-makers than sacrifice offerers, or media to the gods, and the patuiki, the king, in a custom unique in Oceania, performed a similar rain-making function and was on occasion killed in times of famine for dereliction of duty.

We may conclude at least that, in combination with the circumstance that Niue was probably first settled in very ancient times by a people with a comparatively unstructured socio-political system and remained always in comparative

(1) Smith, Niue, p. 34 (2) Sahlins, Stratification, p. 253

isolation from the currents of ideas flowing back and forth between Fiji and the rest of Western Polynesia, the ecological factor has played a major part in determining the modern socio-political structure of Niue. Such of the ideas and institutions of the later complex structured and stratified societies of Samoa and Tonga as reached Niue were either rejected or adapted to fulfil a distinctly Niueal function.

CHAPTER VIII

Internal History of Ancient Niue

No extensive archaeological work has yet been carried out on Niue. Only when this has been done will something concrete be known of the sequence of life and events in prehistoric Niue to corroborate the wholly inadequate and frequently contradictory traditions on record. From what has been preserved an incomplete mosaic emerges of chronic guerrilla war fed by self-perpetuating family feuds and the rivalry between Motu and Tafiti. It is full of brave and craven warriors and wise and foolish men, times of abundance when the rain fell and times of drought and famine when men starved and suffered greatly, military campaigns and minor skirmishes, trials of strength and skill between man and god and beast and beast, the works of cave gods and blow hole gods, and involved but appealing explanations of the origin of such natural phenomena as the shortness of the owl's beak. The only thread running through the accounts which gives any coherent sequence is the succession of patuikis which only covers the period of one hundred years up to the beginning of the nineteenth century and differs in points of detail and even in lists of patuikis.

It is a matter of opinion whether Tihimau or Mutulau were true patuiki. Tihimau is described in most lists as the first king, but Loeb says he was merely a chief of the north end of the island by conquest.⁽¹⁾ Mutulau's claim also is

(1) Loeb. History, p.26

based upon military conquest and if we are to regard the office as a vaguely elective one these first two do not count. The five generally accepted holders of the office in pre-historic times were first Punimata, then Patuavalu, Galiaga (or Galigaaiki), Fokimata and Pakieto.

Punimata is said to have been anointed at Papatea, near Hakupu in the south east. He lived at Fatuaua inland from Taupa and may have built the circle of stone seats seen by Smith⁽¹⁾. He died of old age. After an interregnum of interminable length, a warrior Tagelagi was selected but he modestly stepped down in favour of Patuavalu. The latter was "bathed" at Puato near Makefu on the north west coast. There was great peace during this reign. All the trees bore fruit, the pigeons came out of the bush to roost on the house tops and there was a superabundance of fish in the sea. Patuavalu also died of old age.

No such fate awaited the unfortunate Galiaga. A man of Liku, he was anointed by Mohelagi at Paluki, an ancient centre of some sacred and (one would deduce from its position in the middle of the island) some strategic importance. Loeb calculates that he came to office at about halfway through the eighteenth century.⁽²⁾ There was peace at the beginning of his reign, but Galiaga was killed, somewhat illogically, by Tinomata in revenge for the theft of tale from his plantation by another. Famine stalked the land, and the family of the thief was exterminated. "after this everybody was afraid, and nobody wished for the office of patuiki, lest he be killed as was

1. Smith. Niue, p.40

2. Loeb. History, p.52

Galiaga."(1)

After the death of Galiaga, two candidates offered themselves for the office of "king" but neither was chosen. Tokimata, a man from the eastern side of the island, lived at Fatuaua as had Punimata. Wars are said to have arisen between two important families, the Mohelagi and the Palalagi, and subsequently the conflict broadened into a Motu versus Tafiti struggle. The king was protected by the troops of Motu where he dwelt, but he was eventually assassinated by troops from the eastern coast, supposedly jealous of his residence in the west.

The last king of Niue in vaha pouli, the period of darkness, was Pakieto. He too met his death violently, reportedly within a year of assuming office. A severe drought and famine fell upon the island and the king was deserted by his friends and died of starvation in the bush. According to one tradition Pakieto was a man of lowly birth who achieved high office through his force of character and strength. His position was always suspect because: "The common people had no say..."(2) A strange reflection this last to be found in a Polynesian history.

A brief interval of peace followed Pakieto's death, the first relief from war since the beginning of the reign of Tokimata. Then disputes arose once more between various factions including the Mohelagi and Palalagi families, and rule by the patus and toas held sway until the introduction of

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1. W.W.Boulton. Collected miscellanies of Niuean Lore. general file of December 1941, Dept. of Island Territories.
 2. Boulton loc.cit.

Christianity resulted in the abolition of war and the setting up of a new line of "kings" with rather changed functions.

These are the meagre gleanings which come down to us from the many centuries of Polynesian habitation of Niue. Archaeological work, particularly at the three sites which seem to have been most significant in ancient Niue, Paluki, Fatuaua and the seldom-mentioned Fetuna inland from Fatuaua (I do not think they are the same) may reveal a little more, but most of what must have been at times a rich and colourful tale is lost. The ancient Niueans had little respect for persons, and, as a regrettable corollary of their socio-political outlook, even less for history.

CHAPTER IX

Conclusion : Niuean Prehistory

The marrying of the traditions of the Niuean as far as we have accepted them and findings based upon the examination of the culture pattern of Niue at the advent of the historic era is the final step in the attempt to draw together a coherent prehistory of Niue. The dangers of attempting this are increasingly apparent and from the nature and paucity of the evidence available broad generalizations only are possible.

The traditions, backed by missionary records, tell of a division of the island in ancient times into two mutually hostile, constantly warring groups - the Motu people of the north and the Tafiti of the south. Physiognomical differences observed between these two peoples suggest that they may have been drawn from more than one source and the apparent clash of cultures detected in the stories of the reception of later arrivals suggests also at least two migration strata. The examination of traditional and circumstantial evidence indicated the likelihood that the Motu people of the north, those of

so-called "purer Polynesian" blood, settled Niue first, while the Taiti people with the presumed Melanesian admixture were later arrivals. The traditions, backed by incidental references in old chants, to the tuitonga and "Maletoa" for example, and confirmed as they are by the myth-histories of Tonga and Samoa, tell of two-way contact and migration between Niue and these island groups to the west. The loose use of the term tonga as meaning foreign lands in general rather than the island group of that name in particular, gives rise to ambiguities; migration from up-wind and up-current islands to the east and north could not be excluded on the basis of an examination of the traditions. In fact a migration from Pukapuka to Niue is recorded in the traditions of the former island and there is indirect evidence that the Tahitians for example knew of the existence of Niue.

How far can these myth-histories be reconciled with the story indirectly revealed by examination of the culture-pattern of Niue? An analysis of the material culture showed indeed a preponderant influence from the Tonga-Samoa area (notably in the canoe and adze designs, the wooden slit-gong and the composite dart) but a slight influence from the east is seen, in the two-pointed spear for example. Comparative analysis of the Niuean dialect, especially the percentages of cognate words and phoneme correspondences, conclusively confirmed the western origin and also showed a closer link between the modern Niuean dialect and Tongan, rather than

Samoan. The place-names supported the western origin and less conclusively the link between Tonga and Niue. There was further evidence of another element in Niuean society, in all probability to be attributed to the contact with Pukapuka recorded in tradition, in the system of names for nights of the lunar month (not conclusive but probably shared with the Ellice and Tokelau islands and Pukapuka) and in the kinship terminology. The hero-cycles were largely West Polynesian in form but here the influence of the Samoan pastors rendered the findings suspect. Finally the fact of the primal (and only important) god being Tagaloa showed a further definite western orientation and the Niuean evolutionary myth of the origin of mankind was similar in most respects to those of Pukapuka, the Cooks and islands west. These Niuean and Pukapukan sections of the frequently-despised Polynesian traditions are thus largely confirmed in that a preponderant Tongan-Samoan influence appeared in the culture pattern while a trace of another influence was detected which in the terminology of the days of the lunar month and of kinship relationships was sufficiently close to the Pukapukan model as to seem not coincidental. Because there was this latter element, Burrows' classification of the Niuean culture pattern as intermediate in character between those of east and west Polynesia is justifiable in a broad classification such as this, but the bent was much more pronouncedly toward the west. The Niuean use of the term 'Tongan' to mean all foreigners was not then as

undiscriminating as at first appears. As was found above (pp.36-37) a motive is frequently ascribed to the migrants and the authentication of the traditions in large part confirms that these were probably planned migrations.

It should be interpolated here that Smith's belief⁽¹⁾ that Niue was first settled from Samoa as contrasted with Tonga could not be confirmed on the evidence herein examined. The evidence of dialect and place-names was that Niue was settled more probably from Tonga. Although this could be attributed to a Tongan overlay of a Samoan-derived original culture, it throws sufficient doubt upon Smith's belief to render it necessary to class the two closely associated island groups together as the homeland of the first Niuean migrants. As we have seen above, Smith's argument that the existence of a system of chiefs on Niue with no king shows that the migrants came from Samoa before the incident known as Mata-mata-me in Samoan history (i.e. before the twelfth or thirteenth centuries when Samoa first acquired a king of the whole group) holds no water in this matter, for the first Tongan king (Tuitonga) did not establish his hold on Tonga until the tenth century or so either. The use of the word maunga for a mountain is also inconclusive for Tonga's mountains rival those of Savaii. The only real clue in favour of first settlement from Samoa is the name Tulia, found in some versions of the Huanaki and Fao story. None of this is meant to exclude the probability that Tonga itself was probably settled through Samoa.

If Niue was then largely settled from the Samoa-Tonga area, how is it that the socio-political system of Niue, characterized as it is by a vague egalitarianism and a horizontally inter-locking structure, a nominal head of largely sacerdotal function

(1) Smith. Niue, p.72

over extended family groups led by the patus or the militarily ascendant toas, differed so widely from the complex stratified systems obtaining in Tonga and Samoa over the last five or six centuries at least? It was calculated by glottochronological methods, supported by the traces of ancient blueprints in the material culture and by carbon-dates from adjacent island groups, that Niue was first settled between the fourth and eighth centuries A.D., and it was postulated from parallels nearby that the introduced socio-political system would have been a fairly simple and unstructured one. Evidence of contact between the Tonga-Samoa groups and Niue in the centuries (the twelfth and thirteenth and a little earlier) when the former islands are thought to have been closely associated with the Melanesians of coastal Fiji was however detected (the rudimentary chiefs' language, the low-ended canoes with indirectly attached outrigger booms, and the wooden slit-gong being the most notable examples). In face of this the perpetuation of the assumed original simple-structured socio-political system of Niue was attributed to its established position on the island (although this did not apply on Pylstaart Island, athwart the routes between Tonga and Fiji, where Tongan castaways are said to have established a "complete aristocracy on the complicated Tongan model"⁽¹⁾), to the isolation of Niue, and most important of all to the suitability of the system to the difficult ecological conditions on Niue. In an environment where low food productivity was endemic, there was no consistently-produced agricultural surplus upon which leisured governing and skilled classes could exist.

(1) Thomson S.I., p.91

This later influx of people from the west may be assumed to be the Tafiti people of tradition. The link between the presumed Melanesian features of the Tafiti and the Melanesian-influenced society of these later migrants is more than coincidental; the very name itself of the group is an old Polynesian name for Fiji. Because the disputes of Mutulau are said to have been the origin of the system of blood revenge⁽¹⁾ on Niue and because of the circumstance that there appears to have been no knowledge of kava drinking or ceremonials on Niue prior to his landing suggests a culture clash. Perhaps Mutulau was one of the first of the Melanesian-⁽²⁾influenced Tafiti people to settle on Niue. Loeb would dispute the century of Mutulau's arrival but the connection between the newcomer Mutulau and the Niuean chief Tihimau, does not necessarily mean that Mutulau was a comparatively recent arrival. It is widely acknowledged that Tihimau, whether the first "king" or not, lived sometime before the period of a reasonably continuous line of kings (i.e. before the end of the seventeenth century). If the supposition above, that Mutulau was among the first of the Tafiti to land on Niue is accurate he may have come several centuries before the seventeenth. It is probable that the institution of the patuiki on Niue was a typically Niuean adaptation of an idea imported by the Tafiti people from the more developed societies to the west.

As far as can be ascertained from the evidence herein examined, the island of Niue was first settled by Polynesian migrants from the island groups of Tonga and Samoa to the

(1) Smith, op.cit. p. 15. Loeb op.cit. p. 28 (2) Loeb 1914 p. 24-26

to the west between the fourth and eighth centuries of the Christian era. They probably brought with them a simple almost unstructured socio-political system in which there was little division of labour and such authority as there was desired from the patus, the elders, or from the militarily ascendant toas or warriors. Isolated even in the Pacific context, Niue was relatively untouched by that evolution of ideas and institutions which transformed Tahiti into the cultural centre of distinctive eastern Polynesian societies or by that transformation of Tongan and Samoan society which owed its inspiration to diffusion of Melanesian concepts and techniques from coastal Fiji. Traces of the latter movement do however appear in the features and culture ideas of a later stratum of migrants to Niue, the Taiti people. Arriving in scattered groups over the centuries after about the twelfth or thirteenth, these Melanesian-influenced Polynesians often met with a hostile reception and were absorbed gradually into Niuean life, such of their new techniques as were thought useful being acquired and such of their socio-political concepts as appealed being adapted to a specifically Niuean purpose, sometimes almost beyond recognition as in the patuiki institution. Yet a third element lending indirect contact with the east may have come from Pukapuka, up-current to the north and east, in about the seventeenth century.

Conditioned by isolation and by the comparatively demanding physical environment, human society on Niue evolved over long centuries into an egalitarian not to say anarchical form unique in Polynesia.

P A R T T W O

BIBLES, FISHHOOKS AND STOCKS

1846 - 1861

CHAPTER X

A Bridgehead

1846 - 1849

The first effective contact between the inhabitants of Niue and the European missionaries of the London Missionary Society, the harbingers of a new faith and a new order for many island-peoples of the western Pacific, occurred in 1846 when a Niuean convert was landed on the island after some years of religious instruction in Samoa. The preceding decades had witnessed a perfunctory call from a European explorer, intermittent contacts with European or American whalers and a number of abortive attempts on the part of the London Missionary Society to land Polynesian pastors.

In the late afternoon of 20 June 1774, land was sighted from the masthead of H.B.M.S. Resolution, Commander, Captain James Cook, R.N. Cook landed on the coast three times the next day but was repulsed on the first and last occasions by

groups of wild-looking natives who came upon the invaders with "the ferocity of wild boars."⁽¹⁾ Cook pulled off to his ship and sailed away "seeing no good was to be got with these people". He was sufficiently impressed with their conduct and aspect to name his discovery Savage Island. No lasting impact was made upon the life of the Niueans by the visit although it was a happening dramatic enough to be recounted in legend.

This was the first recorded European contact. The reason given for the hostile reception extended to Cook and subsequent visitors until the mid-nineteenth century is always that the Niueans feared the introduction of disease. This is feasible enough in the decades after 1774 when the crews of whalers landing for supplies may have introduced a catastrophic epidemic disease. The reality of the Niueans' fear of disease in these later times is attested by the fact that for years after they began to venture out to ships they would not immediately use anything obtained, but hung it up in the bush in quarantine for weeks,⁽²⁾ and they rejected foreign contacts by what has been called a system of "murderous quarantine".⁽³⁾

At the time of Cook however, no-one who might have borne the feared European diseases had been on Niue as far

(1) James Cook. A Voyage Towards the South Pole and Round the World. (Second voyage 1772-75), London, 1777, vol.2, p.7

(2) Turner. Samoa, p.306 (3) Thomson. S.I., p.75

as is known and hence this explanation for Cook's uncomfortable reception seems unlikely. Modern Niueans are sensitive upon this topic and resent Cook's title of 'Savage Island'. Perhaps the fear-of-disease explanation is only modern whitewashing of that hostility felt toward foreigners, with its roots in the aggressive fears and suspicions of a belligerent and warring people, which Abel Tasman for one encountered to his loss elsewhere in Polynesia. Savage Island is no more attractive as a title than Murderers' Bay: both have gone out of vogue. It is of course a possibility that the Niueans' dread of disease derived from some Polynesian-introduced epidemic in the island's prehistory, in which case the Niuean explanation for Cook's reception may be absolutely valid. In any event the later epidemic history of Niue shows how devastating new diseases could be and hence how justified some system of quarantine was on Niue.

Occasional whalers called in the early years of the nineteenth century. Evidence was found in 1830 that the Niueans had cut off and murdered the boat's crew of a passing vessel some time before - one of the natives seen in 1830 wore part of an old clasp-knife handle dangling from his waist.⁽¹⁾ An eye-witness later told a missionary of a member of the crew of a passing whaler who had been thrown overboard

(1) J. Williams. A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands, London, 1839, p.255 (hereafter: Williams, Miss. Enterprises)

by his captain (apparently in the early years of the century). The Niueans brought the man ashore and although some were for killing him immediately in accord with established practice it was decided to give him a canoe victualled with bananas and coconuts and send him to sea. Returning to the coast under cover of night the sailor was later taken off by another whaler "with a different number of masts" from his own vessel. (1)

On Saturday 19 June, 1830, the pioneer missionary of the London Mission Society, Rev. John Williams, called at Niue in the hope of landing two Aitutakian teachers on the island. Twice the ship's boat landed and attempts were made to establish friendly relations with the Niueans but the latter appeared so warlike and "wretchedly degraded" that the teachers from Aitutaki and their wives were reluctant to remain on shore and requested to be taken on to the Society Islands. Williams says that the Aitutakians were "handled, smelt and all but tasted" but he adds that he did not think that their lives would have been in danger, although they would probably have been plundered of all they possessed. He himself did not land but was much impressed by the "truly terrific" appearance of an old chieftain induced on board. The latter was given a hatchet, a knife, a looking-glass and a pair of scissors but prized more a large mother-of-pearl shell which he seized from one of the crew. (2)

(1) W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., B.29, F.2, J.E., 19 April 1862.

(2) Williams. Miss. Enterprises, p.255

"The only way that now remained by which we might in some degree accomplish the object of our visit", writes Williams "was to endeavour to induce a native or two to accompany us to the Society Islands, keep them for a short time, load them with presents of useful articles, and then restore them to their homes. This we succeeded, after considerable difficulty, in effecting".⁽¹⁾ He kidnapped two youths, who went frantic with grief upon seeing Niue disappearing below the horizon. This high handed action of Williams, whatever the motive, can not have contributed to the Niueans' faith in foreigners.

The two youths whom Williams abducted were taken to Samoa. They stayed some months with Williams in Samoa and re-embarked with him in August 1830 to return to their island. "Very favourable impressions had been made on one of them, but the other had resisted every effort to instruct him". Unable to reach Niue because of calms and contrary winds, the ship landed the youths at Raitatea. A few months later they were landed at Niue by Rev. Crook and Williams saw no more of them.⁽²⁾

The lads names were Uea and Niumanga according to a Niuean narrative.⁽³⁾ (Rev. Buzacott speaks of "Fanea and his wife" but he must have been mistaken.)⁽⁴⁾ They experienced some trouble upon landing, because of their association with foreigners supposedly, and the outbreak of

(1) ibid. p.257

(2) ibid. p.308

(3) Smith. Niue, p.85

(4) A. Buzacott. S.S.J., B.9, 133,
31 March - 20 July 1842

an epidemic - shortly after was attributed, probably (1)
 correctly, to them. One account says that both were killed,
 but it appears from native and other missionary accounts that
 Uea and his father were killed, while Niumanga, who dwelt at
 Alofi, was spared. (2) Reprisals followed and the hope that
 had been entertained of these two "that they would be of some
 use in preparing the way for the introduction of the gospel
 among their countrymen" was not realized. (3) Indeed the
 Niueans must have been confirmed with justification in their
 prejudices against any form of intercourse with foreigners.
 The introduced disease is variously said to have been
 influenza (4) or kafa kala, resembling syphilis. (5)

Subsequently, Niumanga is said to have left Niue with
 two others Niukai and Peniamina (possibly Peniamina Nukai,
 one person only?) (6) on a timber ship, and thus reached Samoa. (7)
 The boy Peniamina fell into the hands of the missionaries there
 and he became a servant of Dr Turner in the Malua Mission
 School. He became converted, learnt to read and write, and
 doubtless acquired many of the ways of the European in the
 course of a sojourn of some years duration. Another
 Niuean called Fakafiti-enua (or Fakafiti-fonua) also reached
 Samoa at about this time.

(1) A.W. Murray. L.M.S., B.14, F.5, J.B., 12 February 1841

(2) Thomson. S.I., p.75; and Smith. Niue, p.85

(3) Murray. 1841, L.M.S., B.14, F.5, J.B.

(4) Thomson. S.I., p.75 (5) Loeb. History, p.33

(6) Loeb. loc.cit; Thomson. S.I., p.75

(7) Smith. Niue, p.85

The first visit of a missionary vessel to Niue after the return of Uea and Niimanga was in 1840, when A.W. Murray called in the hope that he might be able to land. Recording a black picture of naked and untamed savages, continual wars, "deep and deplorable degradation" and "wild barbarism", he returned to Samoa without landing a native. He comments in faith: "I . . . trust . . . that the day is not distant when the Blessed 'Sun of Righteousness' shall arise on this island - When the dark places at present full of the habitations of cruelty, shall be filled with the Light of Life - and when its now fierce and barbarous inhabitants - - - shall be transformed into mild, humble, affectionate followers of the Lamb".⁽¹⁾ He adds in a businesslike manner that the London Missionary Society must "come to an agreement" with the Wesleyans over Savage Island. Apparently some agreement over spheres of influence was subsequently arrived at, for no other mention of a Wesleyan interest in Niue occurs during the nineteenth century.

No further progress was made in mid-1842 when Aaron Buzacott negotiated for the protection of native evangelists - the Niuean, Peniamina was among them. Using a technique found so successful in Rarotonga and Aitutaki, Buzacott made inquiries about the chief or chiefs of the island and sent a small axe as a present to the "head chief". The Niuean chiefs were not powerful enough to undertake to protect the

(1) A.W. Murray. S.S.J., B.9, 127, 24 June - 12 July 1840

missionaries, even if they had so inclined, and requested time to have a meeting with the people respecting the matter. A plot was afoot to "lure a party onshore" but it was revealed to Buzacott by "Beniamina's brother" and again the missionary ships left Niue without reward. Buzacott concluded: "We do not see the least prospect of introducing Christianity here, for the natives will neither allow foreigners to reside among them nor their own people to return lest they introduce foreign Diseases among them."⁽¹⁾

The first crucial break-through in the missionaries' struggle to reach the Niueans came four years later. In October 1846, Peniamina, the Niuean trained at Malua by Dr Turner, was landed on his home island from the missionary vessel "John Williams" and survived to prepare the way for others. When the missionaries G. Turner and H. Nisbet visited Niue in 1848 they found a beginning made to Christianisation and a desire at Mutulau and possibly elsewhere for a Samoan teacher.⁽²⁾ A Samoan named Paulo, who had had three years training at Malua, was landed on 23 October 1849.⁽³⁾ The first fifteen years of evangelization was carried out solely by Polynesian, that is, Niuean and Samoan teachers.

Although he "fell from grace" subsequently, acting inconsistently" and eloping with another man's wife, Peniamina

(1) A. Buzacott. S.S.J., B.9, 133, 31 March - 20 July 1842

(2) S.S.J., B.10, 143, 3 July - 28 August 1848

(3) A.W. Murray and C. Hardie. L.M.S., B.22, F.3, J.D. 23 October 1849

performed an important role in the Christianization of Niue by establishing a bridgehead for the new faith. That he was able to land and survive the first twenty-four hours may be attributed to the sponsorship of Fakafiti-enua "a man of some influence on shore" who had accompanied him from Samoa, to his being a Niuean himself with full knowledge of the beliefs and psychology of his fellow-countrymen, and to the dispensing of an entire boxfull of wondrous European goods. That he survived after the first days was due primarily to the circumstance that Peniamina was luckily not a carrier of an epidemic raging elsewhere in Christian settlements in the Pacific. The importance of this last, chance, factor is difficult to over-estimate. That he succeeded in implanting the seeds of Christianity may be attributed to his own faith in part, though this was proved liable to fluctuation, to the attractions of a new and colourful code which preached peace, mercy and goodwill to a chronically warring and insecure people and finally to the demonstrated ineffectiveness of the sorceries of the old faith to put down the new one. As the Niuean fear of foreign contact diminished, the material benefits associated with the new religion were fully appreciated.

The story told by Turner and Nisbet of Peniamina's first few months on Niue is absorbing: "He was in great danger when he landed and for some time after. The first day crowds assembled (around? indistinct word) and wishing

to kill him: fearing that disease would be the consequence of his return. The canoe we gave him and his box and property they wished sent back to the vessel saying that that foreign wood would raise disease among them. He reasoned with them and told them to examine the wood and they would see it was the very same that grew on their own island, and has never caused sickness among them. "As to myself", he said, "you know this is my country - I am not a god - I am just like yourselves and have no control over disease - that belongs to God".

He then told them about the new religion - immortality, heaven, hell and salvation by Christ, and had prayer with them. The hearts of many were touched, and they wished him to be spared. But others insisted on his being put to death. "Do it now", they said, "while he is single, and before disease breaks out, by and by others will join him, and then it will be difficult".

Night came on and he had no place to lay his head. The people were afraid to let him sleep in their houses".

He was directed to a deserted fortress for shelter, where he wandered about in the rain until one man, moved either by compassion or scepticism, ventured to give him asylum for the night. Next day he began to display the treasures in his chest, winning many friends at the cost of his whole outfit.

"Finding that his friends daily increased and the

consequent difficult of killing him openly, the priests tried the sorceries of their craft to put him to death secretly. But all was in vain. The word of God grew and prevailed . . . (Peniamina) seems now to have gained their confidence and be a favourite among the people".⁽¹⁾

The opposition of the old priests, their attempt to get rid of the new religion and its propagators in view of its dangers to their own beliefs and livelihoods, the failure of their attempts and the consequent enhancement of the prestige of the new faith, is a familiar pattern in the early missionary period in the Pacific. The challenge seems to have been weaker on Niue because of the comparatively low status of the taula-atua in the first place.

The nature and extent of the reform Peniamina had worked in the immediate neighbourhood of Mutulau in the two years after 1846 can be traced from the records. For the last eighteen months there has been little fighting say Turner and Nisbet in 1848 "and that owing to the new religion". But it is acknowledged that the Mutulau people still live on hostile terms with other "tribes".⁽²⁾ The people around Mutulau "gave up working on the Sabbath, and commenced attending religious services on that day. Family prayer was begun and also the practice of asking a blessing on their meals . . ." No educational or Biblical instruction was given, except orally that is, for there were no spelling

(1) G. Turner and H. Nisbet. S.S.J., B.10, 143, 28 August 1848

(2) ibid.

books in the dialect. Obviously some of the forms, the ceremonials and the observances of the Christian life were being maintained, but from what one can infer of the character, faith and understanding of Peniamina the instructor, one is led to doubt the fullness of the Christian life his flock led. The hard-headed missionaries suffered few illusions: "A desire for property is the principal motive at present for their wish for teachers", write Turner and Nisbet "Time, and an efficient labourer or two will, under the Divine blessing, give other results". The confusion surrounding the true nature of the new religion is illustrated by the attitude of some who awaited the return of the "John Williams" as a turning point and a proof that the new religion was true. A chief who spent a night on board the "John Williams" was being more perceptive than this when he commented: "We now know you must have great love for us in thus coming and showing kindness without price: for whoever gave anything without receiving something for it in return?"⁽¹⁾

By the time the first Samoan teacher arrived on Niue in October 1849 Peniamina had turned an indeterminable number of the people of the district around Mutulau away from their heathen practices and toward a Christian form of daily life. He had established a precedent in this and had above all so far broken down the prejudices of his fellow-countrymen against foreigners that they were desirous of obtaining more

teachers and were embarrassing in their enthusiasm for the material goods of the European, especially hatchets, fishhooks and beads. The missionary visitors in 1849, Murray and Hardie, reported that the people "are quite convinced we are seeking their good and are desirous to have teachers to live amongst them . . ." (1) The not unmixed motives of the Niuteans in this desire for teachers (Peniamina is said to be at the headquarters of one of the two independent districts and another must be appointed to "remove envy, jealousy and strife") attest also to the prestige the often-battered Peniamina had succeeded in building up for the new faith - associated as it was also with material benefits.

Commodore J.E. Erskine, who visited Niue in H.B.M.S. "Havannah" in 1849, found no mistrust of the white man among the Niueans who surrounded his ship in four-man outriggers. They were keen to exchange weapons of various sorts, mainly spears, for knives, fishhooks and black bottles (2) To what purpose they put the latter is highly conjectural.

(1) A. Murray and C. Hardie. L.M.S., B.22, F.3, J.D. 23
October 1849

(2) Journal of a Cruise Among the Islands of the Western
Pacific

CHAPTER XII

A New Establishment

On 23 October 1849, began that era of expansion of Christianity, establishment of a new order, and technological advance which in its total effect was revolutionary for the life of Niue. On that date the first Samoan teacher made acquaintance with his future flock. Niue was fortunate enough in the character of the first Samoan pastor. Paulo was a devout and (important consideration) consistent Christian who had spent three years training at the Malua mission school in Samoa and had sufficient education and ability to make a translation of a number of the books of the New Testament from the Samoan into the Niuean dialect. A missionary said of Paulo upon his death: "He was the Apostle of Niue, and the finest Polynesian missionary I have ever known",⁽¹⁾ And later ". . . a noble example of a native teacher who wielded remarkable power and did a great work both as a teacher and translator". The contrast between Paulo and some of his fellow pastors will become apparent below.

Paulo settled at Peniamina's station of Mutulau on the

(1) J. King. W.G. Lawes of Savage Island and New Guinea, London, 1909, p.21. (Quote from W.G. Lawes).

north-east coast, one of the more important settlements of the Tafiti people. According to a native account: "The Mutulau people at that time were in the ascendant, and through their means he (Paulo) got the people of the island together at a place between Liku and Lakepa, and there persuaded them to make peace, which has lasted to this day".⁽¹⁾

The latter contention is a slight exaggeration as will be related. Paulo directed the building of a house for himself after the Samoan style and a wooden-planked chapel with a thatched roof of pandanus, forty-two feet by thirty feet. In 1852, when A.W. Murray returned on a missionary visit, he found that for five miles along the coast in the vicinity of the teacher the lotu (the Word, literally) had been received: "Heathen practices have been abandoned, and a very encouraging measure of attention is given to the outward observances of Christianity. Family worship is generally observed and many are accustomed to retire to the bush for secret prayer. The Sabbath congregations average upwards of 100".⁽²⁾ Those wearing the article of dress thus displayed their acceptance of Christianity, but the naked "heathen party" is still the "great majority".

It was on this 1852 visit that it was found that

(1) Smith. Niue, pp. 85-6

(2) A.W. Murray and J.P. Sunderland. S.S.J., B, 10, 146, 30 June 1852.

Peniamina had acted "inconsistently" and had left the island. Two further Samoan pastors Nose and Halefa, were landed at Alofi, where Peniamina had settled after the arrival of Paulo, on 2 July in encouraging circumstances. The Chief of Alofi, Togia, gave "to place them on his head and on the palms of his hands" - apparently a promise to take care of them. He was "vastly pleased with the small present we gave him".⁽¹⁾

Within the next two years, Paulo, with the assistance of a Niuean, Laumahina, who had spent the years 1849 to 1852 at Malua, had so consolidated their position at Mutulau that all were now professed Christians in the village, fifty had learnt to read well and upwards of twenty of the most hopeful enquirers were formed into a "select club". The people refuse to go to war or "anything contrary to the lotu" and are said to supply the teacher gratuitously with food. The station is in a "promising state".⁽²⁾ Reports are less enthusiastic of the Alofi station, but most of the people there had on an article of clothing, the "public avowal of the acceptance of the lotu", and there was a considerable outward change, with a house and temporary chapel built, and services and school lessons being held. One hundred are said to attend the Sabbath service, with twenty at day school. The reason for the marked lack of enthusiasm over the Alofi station and the neglect of the Alofi teacher's name in the

(1) ibid.

(2) A.W. Murray and J.P. Sunderland. S.S.J., B.10, 147, 1 January 1854.

foregoing narrative becomes apparent in a report of November of the same year (1854).⁽¹⁾ The teacher was suspended during the year for "improper conduct" thus hindering the work of the station. This teacher must have been Mose. A new teacher and his wife were left in place of the fallen one.

In this report of the visit to Niue in November 1854, Hardie and Sunderland speak of a new station, which from later references may have been Avatele on the south-west coast. The progress made was described as encouraging, with a chapel and two out-stations. Avatele is described in later accounts as being manned by a Samoan teacher named Samuela and there was established a further station called Tamahatava manned by a Samoan Paula, but no reference seems to have been made as to when these latter two Samoans were landed. It may have been on the earlier visit in 1854.

This progress made in the first few years of Christianity on Niue was endangered by an incident which occurred in 1853. A Spanish or Portugese vessel foundered off the south-west point of Niue. The crew drifted ashore at Avatele on a raft and eventually reached Samoa. In the meantime however an English man-of-war, HMS Calliope, commanded by Sir E. Horne, called on Niue enquiring after the castaways. According to the missionary account some of the Niueans who came off in their canoes to barter stole hatchets and knives⁽²⁾ but another source says that a "misunderstanding" arose and the

(1) C. Hardie and J.P. Sunderland. S.S.J., B.10, 148, 24 November 1854

(2) Murray and Sunderland. S.S.J., B.10, 147, 1 January 1854

man-of-war captain believed the crew of the foundered vessel were detained prisoners inland.⁽¹⁾ Whatever the reason, and the latter one seems unlikely in that no attempt was launched to save the supposed imprisoned castaways, the English man-of-war decided to detain a number of the Niueans and lowered boats to run down and ram canoes heading for the shore. Shots rang out and one Niuean died in the sea of wounds. Nine of the detained Niueans who were released out to sea drowned or were killed by hostile Niueans on landing. The Alofi people made war on those of Avatele on suspicion of having killed survivors, the actual chief was killed for his troubles, and the wife of Togia committed suicide by jumping off a high cliff on learning of her husband's death in the fracas. (Togia was the Alofi chief who a year earlier had undertaken to protect Mose). Altogether fifteen people were killed directly or indirectly by the precipitate and indiscriminating action of the man-of-war crew. Murray says in the account noted above that by the "mismanagement" of those on board the ship great difficulties were thrown in the way of the teachers in "the accomplishment of their benevolent work amongst this people". He adds, significantly: "When once the evil passions of an ignorant and heathen people have been excited and blood shed, it is most difficult to restrain the contesting parties".

The faith of the Niuean converts held firm however and Charles Hardie noted that by late 1854 the "bad feelings" over

(1) Smith. Niue, p.87

the "Calliope" incident had subsided.⁽¹⁾ He comments further that "with very trifling exceptions, heathenism had been abandoned throughout the whole island" - a rather premature claim but understandable. People could for the first time circulate freely around the island.

Over the next seven years the process of conversion continued apace. In 1857 two more Samoans were landed with their families (Sakaio and Amosa), two thousand attended a service at which daughters of Paulo and Peniamina were baptised, and the people are described as anxious to learn. A "large proportion" of the population is claimed to read and a large number of individuals manifest a "steady consistency of conduct" which "gives reason to hope that they really have embraced the truth". On the Sabbath no canoes are uncovered. There were three stations now: (Tamaha) mutulau where Paulo labours and there are 240 enquirers; Avatele, the home of Samuela, where there are 284 enquirers; and Tamahatava, Paula's field with 153 enquirers. The population is 4,276 and on the increase and a plea is made for two missionaries (i.e. Europeans).⁽²⁾ A year later a new four hundred capacity chapel had gone up at Tamahatava and Sakaio had been settled at Makifu (Makefu, north of Alofi). Forty men and twelve women were baptised and a church formed.⁽³⁾ A further year and George Turner visiting Niue found a six-foot

(1) Hardie and Sunderland. S.S.J., B.10, 148

(2) W. Harbutt and G. Drummond. S.S.J., B.9, 149, 1 August 1857

(3) G. Stallworthy and G. Gill. S.S.J., B.10, 150, 14 August 1858

wide road all the way around the island and six school-houses between the five large chapels (Mutulau, Tamahatava, Makefu, Alofi and Avatele presumably) and settled villages around the teachers' stations. After 31 men and 19 women had been admitted, there were 102 in the Church fellowship, and all on Niue are "Christians" except some ten (?) who "still stand aloof". Turner describes a service in the Alofi chapel with 1,100 present inside and out. Again a plea is made for white missionaries: "Soon may God grant to them the desire of their hearts!" (1) Two years later and the desire was satisfied.

When the Rev. W.G. Lawes landed on Niue on 24 August 1861 there was on his assessment "not an outward vestige of heathenism remaining". (2) He enthuses that: "As soon as the excitement of our landing had subsided a little, a joyful sound broke upon our ears in the stillness of the evening hour. It was the voice of praise and prayer ascending from around the family altars of a people but fifteen years ago degraded savages". (3) In the twelve years since Peniamina had established a bridgehead for Christianity on Niue, the half-dozen or so Samoan pastors, headed by Paulo, had turned the people away from their heathen practices and had turned

(1) G. Turner. S.S.J., B.10, 151, 12 December 1859

(2) W.G. Lawes. L.N.S., B.28, F.3, J.C., 17 October 1861

(3) ibid.

most into nominal Christians at least. We must examine more closely how this was done, the genuineness of the conversions and the impact of the personalities, the ideas and the technology of the handful of Samoans on the social, political and economic life of Niue.

The speed of Christianisation on Niue once contact was firmly established was startling. In New Zealand the endeavours and prayers of the European missionaries failed to gain a single convert in the first ten years of missionary labour, ⁽¹⁾ while on Niue the majority of the population of nearly five thousand had abandoned the forms of heathenism and nominally embraced the new faith and over a hundred and thirty had been admitted to a full church membership within fifteen years. Apart from the factor of a small concentrated population on Niue, the swiftness of the change may be attributed largely to the fact that the agents of the new faith, the Samoan pastors, were Polynesians like the Niueans themselves with a similar culture pattern, customs and a dialect close enough to the Niuean to be able to make themselves intelligible in a short time. There was no necessity for the agents to become acculturated before they could get through to their flock as had the European missionaries in New Zealand. The pastors understood the prejudices and beliefs of the Niueans and hence how easiest to undermine them

(1) Harrison M. Wright. New Zealand, 1769-1840: Early Years of Western Contact, Cambridge (U.S.A.), 1959, p.127.

and they knew how to use most fruitfully the weapons of fear and reward implicit in the new religion. Also, as we shall see, they conveyed to the Niueans a pre-digested version of Christianity.

A final factor was that while sharing a common cultural background with the Niueans the Samoan pastors had the advantage of prior contact with European accomplishments and technology: the Samoans had European possessions, from muslin-curtained beds to mirrors, axes, chisels and planes, and the technical knowledge as to how to use these latter implements; they wore European cotton clothing (doubtful advantage though this was, it set them apart from and apparently above the unclothed); they built and lived in European-style houses; and they could both read and write, an achievement of novelty and prestige value.

The conviction of a Paulo, when reinforced by the demonstrated ineffectiveness of Niuean gods in discomfiting or dislodging him and set beside the demonstrably superior technology he brought with him, was too strong an attraction for the Niueans to resist long.

The process was made easier by the nature of Niuean society and religious life. Once the initial fear of the introduction of disease had been broken down and the native gods found powerless against the new God, there was little to stand in the way of the advance of Christianity. It was said in 1862 that for "some years previous to the introduction of Christianity, the people seem to have lost faith in their Gods and priests - God seems to have been preparing the minds

(1)
 of the people for some years to receive his word . . .".
 Niuean beliefs had apparently never been fanatical nor had the practice of religion been well-organised. There were no idols for the missionaries to burn, and a pragmatic approach was adopted toward the numerous lesser deities. As we have seen the priest-hood was an ill-organised, non-hereditary institution with little of the status or powers found elsewhere in Polynesia. As there were no strong chiefs and no patuiki in the early nineteenth century and the island was divided against itself there was no person or institution around whom (or which) an opposition to Christianity might polarize. The toas, the warriors, threw up no personality and where there was a locally-recognised man of authority, like Togia at Alofi, he was usually won over by a few gifts, (2)
 The taulaatua, with their occupation and status in jeopardy, were the main impediments to the advance of Christianity and they survive to this day with modified functions. According to Loeb their survival after their sources of inspiration - the tupua, the Polynesian gods - were no longer believed in by the majority of the population . . . can be explained by their substitution of aitu, ghosts or spirits, as their source of inspiration. "These aitu were a Samoan importation, and when once brought over by the credulous Samoan missionaries, they soon took root in the Niuean mind to a far greater extent than the former agaaga, or indigenous

(1) W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., B.29, F.2, J.E., 19 April 1862

(2) Murray and Sunderland. S.S.J., B.10, 146, 30 June 1852

ghost, had ever done".⁽¹⁾ The taulaatua exist alongside Christianity as a curious vestige of pre-historic days. They are still consulted as an important avenue of escape from physical and mental ailments. The Samoan pastors did not find Niue a religious vacuum as the quotation from W.G. Lawes above intimates, but their operations were not seriously impeded by the old faith or its priests.

For this anarchical, war-ridden, insecure society the new religion itself possessed attractions. To a people engaged in chronic guerilla warfare it preached the sinfulness of killing and the extension of mercy and goodwill to all men. To those at least with no vested interest in warfare and the insecurity it bred, these principles appeared admirable. It was a positive and demanding code. And the ceremonial which accompanied it, the fact of its dogma being contained in a book, and the chapel-building for example, had a novelty value and lent it colour.

It was also adaptable, in the form the pastors practised and introduced it, to Niuean concepts. The vague beliefs in the land of Maui under the earth to which the spirits of the departed betook themselves, and in the land of Hina in the heavens were made use of: the land of Maui became the land of Po, or eternal night (Hell) and the land of eternal daylight became the land of eternal bliss with God (Heaven).⁽²⁾ The potential for the weapons of fear and reward

(1) Loeb. History, p.37

(2) ibid. p.37

was retained.

In pre-historic Niue the words 'tupua' and 'atua' for a god were interchangeable. The Samoan pastors introduced the concept of 'Atua he Lagi' (God in the Heavens) and the tupua (including Tagaloa now) are referred to as the works of Satan. 'Atua he Lagi' was a god in Samoan mythology before its position in the heavens rendered it suitable for use by Christianity. As we have seen (above, p.60), the pastors introduced the work 'aitu' for the soul of the departed, and the old work 'agaaga' (the indigenous ghost) is used in the term 'agaaga Tapu' for the Holy Ghost.⁽¹⁾ The grasping of Christian concepts by the Niueans was made easier by this accommodation of the new concepts within old Niuean or imported Polynesian terms - but accuracy suffered and when the European missionaries came especially the mutual misunderstandings must have been considerable.

The motive of material self-interest can not be disregarded in an explanation of the ready acceptance of Christianity by the Niueans. In 1840 the natives came off to the missionary ship for fishhooks - but were not prepared to accept visitors on shore.⁽²⁾ In 1848 it was observed that: "A desire for property is the principal motive at present for their wish for teachers",⁽³⁾ A year later Erskine found that their articles of traffic were entirely

(1) *ibid.* pp.158-9

(2) A.W. Murray. *S.S.J.*, B.9, 127

(3) Turner and Nisbet. *S.S.J.*, B.10, 143

weapons, for which they desired knives, fishhooks and black bottles in return.⁽¹⁾ One of the reasons for Peniamina's success in remaining alive in the first two or three days of his return was, we found, the distribution of his newly acquired possessions. Togia was "vastly pleased" with the "small present" given him on assuming responsibility for the lives of Mose and Halefa, and in 1852 Murray remarked that "their desire for foreign property (hatchets, fishhooks and beads) is unbounded and when they come into contact with foreigners their one and only object seems to be to possess themselves of these".⁽²⁾ Obviously the acquisitive instincts of the Niueans played a major part in inducing them to accept agents of Christianity amongst them. The pastors were the main access to supplies of ironware and baubery in the early years especially. This factor can however be overplayed - there is no suggestion that a general distribution of largesse occurred either before or after conversion for example. The material goods given or traded smoothed the way for the introduction of Christian teachers and thus brought the Niueans into close contact with propagators of the new faith.

A further factor aiding a swift advance to Christian practice was the prestige factor. The Samoan pastors were

(1) J.E. Erskine, Journal of a Cruise Among the Islands of the Western Pacific, London, 1855, p.26

(2) S.S.J., B.10, 146.

men to be respected by-and-large. They were accomplished and rich by Niuean standards. It became a matter of pride to have one around. The old rivalries and jealousies of Motu and Tafiiti and lesser divisions came to the fore - the Tafiiti people of Mutulau had the first teacher and it became necessary to settle others in Alofi and Avatele in Motu territory to remove these jealousies. A native account says: "Then the news spread around the island, thusly, 'the people of Mutulau are very glad because they know of a new God'⁽¹⁾". As more and more embraced the new faith it undoubtedly became fashionable so to do and eventually even a matter of conforming. There was a mana about achieving admission to the church and the elite angle is stressed in Hardie's note in 1854 that: "Upwards of twenty of the most hopeful enquirers have been formed into a select club"⁽²⁾. It was also recognised as a new and exciting accomplishment to be able to read and this might only be learnt in the pastors' school-houses with their Old Testament exercises and their newly translated books of the New Testament as sole reading matter in the Niuean dialect.

It is dangerous from this distance and without full information to generalise upon a subject such as this of the reasons for the comparatively swift conversion on Niue from heathenism to Christian practices. Rather than attempt to place the many contributory factors in an order of importance the author will recapitulate them in a chronological sequence:

(1) Loeb. History, p.34 (2) S.S.J., B.10, 148

Niuean self-interest allowed the propagators of the new faith to make effective contact with the people; the fact that the agents were Polynesians themselves gave them an initial insight into the culture and psychology of the Niueans which not only made the acceptance of the Samoan pastors in Niuean society more ready but directed them to the shortest and most effective ways of undermining the old faith and establishing the new; the possession of a knowledge of European technology and accomplishments enhanced the prestige of the Samoan pastors and hence of their faith; and finally, the new, demanding and colourful code which preached mercy and goodwill to all men struck a responsive chord in the hearts of many in this anarchical, war-ridden, insecure society, especially in the re-digested and 'acculturated' form in which it was presented here. Eventually the movement developed a momentum of its own and, fed by domestic rivalries and jealousies of long standing and the fashionable mana it acquired, swept the island by the eighteen-sixties.

The effects in terms of cultural dislocation on Niue were far-reaching. The outlawing of warfare was probably the most spectacular change. To be sure this was not totally effective in the eighteen fifties. In 1852 when "the heathen part was still the great majority", the shipwrecked crew of twenty-one from the Lagerdmain, a vessel of 800 tons en route from California to New South Wales, reached Niue. The "heathens" robbed them and they escaped in their long boat in fear of their lives. (1) It has already been seen what the

(1) Murray and Sunderland. S.E.J., B.10, 146, 30 June 1852

effect of the Calliope incident of November 1853 was upon relations between Alofi and Avatele - open hostilities resulted. But subsequent to these outbreaks there is no record of a return to war over the last century. By breaking the vicious circle of the law of blood revenge (lukutoto) the pastors started a chain reaction. The toa class declined in prestige and the weight of governmental influence reverted to the patus insofar as it did not pass to the pastors. The people, hitherto living in scattered caves and fortifications inland, were enabled to emerge and live in communities on the coast. This process was encouraged by the pastors for administrative reasons; by 1859 Turner says there was a six-foot wide road all around the island. Thus "free intercourse is the rule, all over the island". The warfare practised by the Niueans had never been of the nature of head-on clashes and there was little indiscriminate slaughter ("the originators of the war and those possessed of authority are almost the exclusive objects of vengeance"⁽¹⁾) but insecurity had been rife and much of the considerable energies of the people had been sapped by it.

In associated reforms, infanticide (very common in time of famine), suicide (prevalent to a pathological degree by report)⁽²⁾ and the more inhuman punishments like sending a man to sea in a canoe to perish or lying in wait to assassinate him were done away with. Other customs too disappeared or

(1) ibid.

(2) ibid.

remained in different forms: the dead were buried in the earth instead of being wrapped in bark cloth and placed in a sitting position in caves or sent out to sea in their canoes; and polygamy was covered up where it occurred.

The effects of contact with the Europeanised Samoans on the Niuean material culture and economy were also considerable. Not only did the Niueans migrate to the coasts, but they started building "houses of a really superior character after the Samoan model". That is, "large houses, well spread with mats", ⁽¹⁾ and "nice, plastered cottages". ⁽²⁾ The extent of this movement is unclear and it seems probable that by 1860 not very many of the population had built themselves the new houses. As to clothing, the wearing of some article (mostly at first a calico shirt or skirt to the knees, but later all manner of incongruous European cast-offs) ⁽³⁾ was "a public avowal of their reception of the lotu" ⁽⁴⁾ and hence by 1861 the majority were "decently clothed" - a reform tending usually neither to comfort, attractiveness nor hygiene. The cropping of the long flowing hair of the men was a more justifiable development on these grounds.

In these early years of the mission on Niue there seem to have been no epidemics worth noting and the population was on the increase. Both Harbutt in 1857 and Turner in 1859

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- (1) Turner. S.S.J., B.10, 151, 12 December 1859
 (2) W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., B.29, F.2, J.R., 19 April 1862
 (3) Thomson, S.I., p.78
 (4) Murray. S.S.J., B.10, 147, 1 January 1854

note this latter trend and Turner adds that children were everywhere. This may be attributed to two factors: the abolition of infanticide ("there was fearful destruction of children in the days of heathenism, principally before birth")⁽¹⁾ and increased food productivity.

The latter development may be explained in turn by the more stable conditions on the island and the consequent freedom to cultivate in peace, and also by the abolition of the heathen custom whereby all the plantations and fruit trees of a person who died were destroyed "that they might go with him". According to Loeb ⁽²⁾ there is a vestige of this custom remaining in that the trees of a dead person are often tapu for a period of six months after the owner's death, but at least the trees are then brought back immediately into production instead of taking perhaps years to re-establish themselves as formerly. Food stocks were also now supplemented and given more variety by the breeding of fowls and pigs. In 1840 there were none of these on the island; ⁽³⁾ at some time between that year and 1859 they were introduced and by the latter year had multiplied in sufficient numbers to be used in barter deals with visitors and as part of "gifts" to the missionary ship. (In 1859 a gift of 1,540 yams, 10 pigs and 50 fowls was made, and 50 pigs and 120 fowls were purchased in addition by the crew of the "John Williams"). In the later fifties up to 2,000 pounds a year of arrowroot

(1) Turner. S.S.I., B.10, 151, 1859

(2) Loeb. History, p.89

(3) Murray. S.S.I., B.9, 127

was paid over for copies of books of the Bible ⁽¹⁾ and the Samoan pastors were supplied "gratuitously" with food ⁽²⁾ from the moment they landed.

Perhaps the only drawbacks to cultivation of the period were the prohibition on Sunday work and the increasing distances of plantations from habitations as urbanisation (if such a high-sounding term can be used of the small villages here) proceeded.

We may note that the Niueans traded not for tobacco, muskets or liquor "but exclusively for such useful articles as calico, shirts, knives, hatchets, etc." ⁽³⁾

The economy of Niue was not really basically altered by the advent of the Samoan pastor and the increasing contacts with passing vessels during the eighteen-fifties. True enough, in the new conditions of peace the Niuean could cultivate without fear of expropriation or destruction of his crop, there were now incentives for producing an agricultural surplus for barter, and the introduction of pig and fowl breeding stock lent diversification to the economy and protein and volume to the diet. These elements apart, however, no new crops and no new agricultural techniques appear to have been introduced from the high volcanic islands of Samoa. No new industries appeared and the newly-acquired European-style fishhooks and hatchets and knives were after all only a few degrees more efficient than the native articles. The thin

(1) Harbutt and Hammond, 1857, Stallworthy and Gill, 1858, Turner, 1859.

(2) Murray and Sunderland. S.S.J., B.10, 147, 1 January 1854

(3) Turner. 1859.

leached soils and the vagaries of the climate placed limitations upon the food productivity of Niue for a century after 1849 and no widely effective advances have yet been made in soil enrichment, conservation or irrigation.

The economic life of Niue had only incidental relevance to the advancement of the mission, and besides, the pastors from Samoa, where food was more easily wrested from nature, had little useful contribution to make to Niuean agricultural technology.

The same was not true in the socio-political sphere. Missionaries throughout the Pacific understood that the winning over of those wielding power in the native society was a short cut to the achievement of mass conversion. The technique was employed consciously and with few traces of misgiving by European and Polynesian missionary alike. On Niue we have seen that the first move made by John Williams was to inveigle "an old chieftain" on board the "Messenger of Peace" and load him with presents. Twelve years after, Aaron Buzacott did likewise: "Inquiries were made about the chief or chiefs of the island. Two names were given by the messenger - Pakoko and Vihikula (pronounced vehicular). A small axe was sent as a present to the head chief". But the scheme came unstuck because the chiefs could not take upon themselves the responsibility of permitting teachers to wettle; while they were said to be consulting with the people about the matter treachery was afoot and Buzacott had to sail away for fear of the lives and property of the

native teachers. Peniamina in 1846 was said to have been sponsored as it were by Fakafiti-enua ". . a man of some influence on shore". Laumahina, the Niuean convert who was of much service to Paulo at Mutulau was styled a "chief" by the missionaries, though we have only their word for the matter. Togia, a man of authority at Alofi, undertook to take care of Mose and Halefa when they were landed in 1852 and accepted a "small present". Infiltration through the media of the native authorities was then consistently attempted in the early years before it was realised that on Niue there was no one with the authority of a Tuitonga on Tonga, a Malietoa or a Tamasese on Samoa, or a Makea on Rarotonga. Occasionally a local patu extended some form of patronage to the new teachers, as Togia for example, but there was not the opportunity to convert one man and thus a population.

The realisation of this came first when the pastors actually landed and lived with the people. On the first visit after Paulo had been landed it was reported that: "The chiefs have very little influence: the man who renders himself most formidable by warlike deeds is generally the man of greatest consideration and influence".⁽¹⁾ Two years later the impediment this constituted was acknowledged: "The teachers say the work is very difficult owing to political circumstances. There are no chiefs who can exert any great influence amongst

(1) Murray and Sunderland. S.S.J., B.10, 146, 30 June 1852

(1)
 them". The difficulty of course was not solely that there was no-one whose conversion would sway the whole island or even large parts of it but that the most favourable conditions for propagating Christianity among these people were conditions of peace and especially order. It was a well-nigh impossible task to attempt conversion on a large scale when the people were scattered inland in isolated positions in the bush, with no widely recognised leaders and no consistent or accepted system of maintaining order.

The pastors of necessity worked what amounted to a minor revolution. They brought the population out of the bush to settle in villages together, they arranged a peace between warring parties, and they instituted a rudimentary system of law and provided for its enforcement. By 1859 Turner could say "the whole framework of their political and social life is changed their wars (are) ended free intercourse is the rule Instead of living in single families, and migrating here and there in the bush, the five teachers' stations (sic) are fast becoming the nuclei of settled villages, with magistrates and laws . . ." His approval is manifest: "I have never seen a more inviting field of missionary labour". (2)

Turner's enthusiasm over the change wrought since 1848 is understandable but the European terms and concepts of "magistrate" and "laws" are rather grand and imprecisely used

(1) Murray and Sunderland. S.S.J., B.10, 147, 1 January 1854
 (2) Turner. S.S.J., B.10, 151, 12 December 1859

here. There is no suggestion that the Samoan pastors actually drew up a code of written laws for example. We have little indication of what wrong-doings by European Christian values were singled out for judgment. Presumably as elsewhere in Polynesia and as recorded subsequently of Niue by Lawes, the chief "crimes" were adultery, pre-marital intercourse and stealing - none of which, with the possible exception of stealing from a friend, was formerly regarded as a crime in Polynesian society. Sabbath-breaking was also punishable undoubtedly. The forms of punishment introduced at this time were less harsh than the retribution existing beforehand but they were not lenient by modern standards. Loeb tells of the introduction of stocks. They were placed in dark caves in order that imprisoned persons' fear of situ would work upon their nerves. Thomson saw one of these stocks in a cave near Tuapa in 1900.⁽¹⁾ Hood states that in 1862 when he visited Niue a boy had been lashed hand and foot to a bamboo for several days with just enough food to keep the life in him, as a punishment for tattooing himself after the Samoan fashion. Loeb comments: "Needless to say, this was an ancient punishment; only it was an ancient punishment of Samoa not of Niue. It was the missionaries, and not the natives who objected to the tattooing".⁽²⁾ Turner tells of sentences of "2, 5, 10 or even 50 fathoms of road-making" for "stealing or other crimes". A native informant

(1) Thomson. S.I., p.65

(2) Loeb. History, p.39

says that having built a road fifty fathoms in length, two men were tied to trees and flogged and finally they were imprisoned in a cave for thirty days".⁽¹⁾ The non-Polynesian nature of these punishments reveals their origin.

As to who administered the laws (Turner's "magistrates") it seems that this function devolved upon the patus. Lawes says "the heads of families make laws, and enforce them".⁽²⁾ The conspicuous lack of any systematic administration in former times and the nature of the punishments meted out tell of inspiration by the teachers. Whether the pastors used the traditionally influential men of the village or appointed the most reliable in the eyes of the faith is conjectural.

There seems little doubt that in the five villages with a teacher, the latter was the most influential person around. Not only are the stations the "nuclei" of the villages but they are the most imposing buildings, with the chapels, on the island. Samuela lived in "quite a palace of a place, 80 feet by 30, divided into seven apartments, well plastered". It was furnished with venetians, sofas, and a muslin-curtained bedstead, and there were blankets and sheets on the bed. By comparison, the Avatele chapel hard by was ninety feet by twenty-four, slightly smaller in area.⁽³⁾ In 1860 the captain of a whaler had spent five days on Niue - he lived in the teacher's house as a matter of course.⁽⁴⁾ The

(1) ibid. p.38

(2) W.G.Lawes, L.M.S., B.29, P.2, J.E., 19 April 1862

(3) Turner. 1859

(4) G. Pratt. L.M.S., B.28, P.3, J.C., 16 October 1861

last word on the position achieved in the late fifties by the Samoans on Niue is Pratt's: "Each teacher has a mansion to dwell in - is fed on the fat of the land, and has a tribe of servants to wait on him. Besides this I can't find that they have abused their position " ⁽¹⁾

We need only compare this with what we know of the situation of the patuiki in former times to comprehend the snugness of the niche the pastors had carved out for themselves. They had the greatest store of those European material possessions so valued by the Niuean and they had access to supplies of such goods, they lived in the most pretentious dwellings, they had numbers working for them, they introduced and interpreted the new arts of reading and writing, they directed the schools, occupied the pulpits, were the arbiters of Christian doctrine and the inspiration behind the new legal order. One can not doubt that theirs was the effective authority in the land by 1861. It is interesting to speculate upon their exact role in the formulation of the enquiry made of Turner in 1859. The latter reported thus: "The teachers said the chiefs wished to know how they could obtain a protectorate from the British Government" ⁽²⁾. The only means of learning of such an institution as a protectorate was through visiting whalers or through the pastors and the crews of the former hardly had sufficient contact to sow the seed. Since the most recent contact with an agent of the

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) Turner. *S.S.J.*, B.10, 151, 12 December 1859

British Government had been the massacre on the occasion of the visit of H.B.M.S. Calliope, the Samoan pastors must have spoken convincingly to have induced "the chiefs" to supplicate thus. It was more than likely the idea of the pastors or Turner himself - perhaps as a measure to forestall interference of French "Papists" on Niue.

Before examining the impact of the advent of a white missionary, an assessment should be attempted of the genuineness of the conversion worked by the pastors. That the forms and observances of heathenism had been largely abandoned by 1861 is undoubted. Hardie had reported this state attained in 1854 but he was exaggerating. We can accept Lawes' similar but more guarded assertion seven years later. "So far as I have been able to ascertain there is not a vestige (outwardly) of heathenism remaining. All has crumbled away before the power of God's word".⁽¹⁾ In place of the forms and observances of heathenism the great majority of the population seem to have practised many of the forms and observances of Christianity. Lawes records of his first day on Niue: "As soon as the excitement of our landing had subsided a little, a joyful sound broke upon our ears in the stillness of the evening hour. It was the voice of prayer and praise ascending from around the family altars of a people but fifteen years ago degraded savages. Although there was not much poetry in their hymns or music in their song, it was a joyful sound to us". The practices were not confined to the

(1) W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., B.28, F.3, J.C., 17 October 1861

five teachers' stations, for "all the population" are said to attend "all the services".⁽¹⁾

But the comprehension of the spiritual truths of Christianity on Niue was, one suspects, restricted as elsewhere through the ages by the imperfections and the misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the human agents of Christian propagation. Most of the Samoan pastors lived reasonably "correct" lives even by European Victorian standards (although Alofi was said in 1862^{never} to have had a good teacher, the four successive incumbents all having "got into trouble in consequence of being single"⁽²⁾ but we have seen above how they adopted for Christian uses too easily a Polynesian heathen concept or term (intended originally to aid the understanding of the Niueans) and thus brought about a confusion and impreciseness in the minds of the Niueans which took many decades to correct and eradicate if this has been achieved yet. The teachers' understanding of the Christian life and dogma was also far from complete and their educational inadequacies and isolation from mission stations hampered their further enlightenment. Nor, as the pretentiousness of the dwellings they designed and their "tribes of servants" attest, were these men of full Christian humility. The results showed among their flock and were observed and appreciated by some of the European missionary visitors. Outlining in 1857 the need for European missionaries

(1) W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., B.29, F.2, J.E., 1 May 1862

(2) G. Pratt. L.M.S., B.29, F.2, J.E., 9 April 1862

on the island, Harbutt and Drummond contended that "the teachers have gone to the extent of their ability". They are given the credit for having taught "the saving truth of the gospel" but "the people generally are anxious to learn more". The forms are observed for no canoes are left uncovered on the Sabbath and "every family as far as the teacher's knowledge extends has family prayer" but as the occasional realism of the European missionary reveals, "a large number of individuals" (not the whole population or even a majority) "manifests a steady consistency of conduct which gives reason to hope that they really have embraced the truth".⁽¹⁾ Turner's claim two years later that all except a dozen or so are "Christians" is an evasion of the issue of conversion. When George Lawes landed on Niue approximately one in every twenty-five of the population had been examined and admitted to full church membership. As this straightforward and devoted man adjudged, the Niuean Christians were "great" compared with what they were previously "but they are not to be compared with older converts".⁽²⁾

(1) Harbutt and Drummond. S.S.J., B.9, 149, 1 August 1857

(2) W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., B.29, F.2, J.E., 19 April 1862

P A R T T H R E E

A BENEVOLENT THEOCRACY

1861 - 1900

CHAPTER XII

The Niuean Church State

For just under half a century Niuean life was dominated in turn by the personalities of two English brothers, the Congregational missionaries George and Frank Lawes. George Lawes conducted the mission alone between 1861 and 1868, when he was joined by his younger brother. The two worked together for four years and then George left on furlough and was posted to New Guinea. Frank Lawes was in sole charge of the mission for the thirty eight years between 1872 and his retirement in 1910. Until the arrival of a New Zealand Government Resident following annexation in 1900, there was no authority in the land rivalling that of the English Congregational missionary, although over the last quarter century he tended to work indirectly through the medium of mission-inspired institutions and in the last three years of the period an obstructive potential in these institutions

/was

was realized in the person of an obstinate and querulous old Niuean man. After 1900 the political power of successive missionaries, discreetly guarded or openly flouted according to the personality of the incumbent, at least challenged that of the Government Resident for another five-and-a-half decades - when the Congregational monopoly of Niuean religion and conscience was finally broken by a long-delayed free influx of priests of all denominations.

Obviously the background of the two Lawes brothers deserves some attention in a Niuean history.

William George Lawes was born on 1 July, 1839, at Aldermaston, near Mortimer West in the English county of Berkshire. He and his younger brother by four years, Francis Edwin Lawes, were nurtured "in a home, school, and Church, where the effects of the eighteenth evangelical revival were still felt¹". The family was dissenting and lower middle-class, the church was Congregational, and symbolically enough the schoolhouse was surrounded by the same enclosure as the church. George Lawes is said to have become early a "sincere disciple of Jesus Christ". Apprenticed at the age of fourteen to a "place of business" at Reading, he fell under the ministry of a pastor who emphasized strongly the missionary obligation; he

1 J. King. W.G. Lawes of Savage Island and New Guinea, London, 1909, p.2. (Hereafter: King. Lawes)

responded to the message of a Rarotongan convert visiting Reading with Rev. William Gill by entering upon training for London Mission Society work at the Missionary College at Bedford.

At the age of twenty-two, ordained, and married to another Congregationalist Fanny Wickham, he landed on 'Savage Island' in the South Pacific to become the first European to reside there permanently.

Frank Lawes trained at Bedford Missionary College also and went on to Highgate. He was ordained in 1867, married another Congregationalist, Sarah Elgar, in the same year and in response to many entreaties from his brother sailed for Niue in late 1867.

The character of two men is revealed by their writings and the observations of others. Both were men of considerable force of character and integrity and were rather better educated, more enlightened and less pompous than many of their London Missionary Society fellows. The elder brother was more brilliant than Frank, more retiring, more patient and less worldly.

The more distinctive characteristics of the Congregational missionaries in the South Pacific as a class, the intolerance of the dominant values of the upper class aristocratic English society that they left behind them with its sexual freedom, worldliness and religious conformity masking absence of religious belief, the traditional pattern of the local church as a community integrating institution rather than a one-day-

a-week ornamental activity, have been pointed out elsewhere¹. A qualification which should be made in respect of Niue is that the character of the first two missionaries determined that here the building of a mission-inspired theocracy was carried out with more tolerance and more moderation than on Rarotonga and Aitutaki several hundred miles to the east for example. The form of government existing on Niue when the New Zealand Government Resident arrived on the island was still a mission-inspired theocracy - but it was a benevolent theocracy and the beginnings of an independent administration were slowly taking shape.

George Lawes reported these impressions to the L.M.S. Secretary, Dr Tidman, after eight months on Niue: "The more we see and know of the people, the more we are convinced that God has been working mightily in their midst. Distinguished in former times for their savage cruelty, they are now no less distinguished for their zeal in the cause of God. When we came seven or eight only were heathen; these have since renounced heathenism. Fifteen years ago a foreigner would not have dared to land, nor been suffered to live on the island. Now foreigners are treated with hospitality and kindness. Fifteen years ago they lived in the bush like brutes; now, in plastered cottages and villages. Fifteen years ago anarchy, war, and bloodshed prevailed throughout the island; now, law, order and peace. Fifteen years ago they had no written

1 E. Beaglehole. Social Change in the South Pacific: Aitutaki and Rarotonga Aberdeen, 1951, pp 27-28
(hereafter: Beaglehole. Social Change)

language; now, they have the Gospel and other books, with two thousand readers. Fifteen years ago they were all before God dead in sin; now, there are 360 in church fellowship, living to his glory, besides many who, we have reason to hope, are new creatures in Jesus Christ.¹

This is obviously a rather rose-coloured spectacle. Julius Brenchley has most effectively illustrated how prone the missionary visitors to Niue were to exaggerating the difficulties of their task before 1860.² It was a familiar failing of the Pacific missionary to paint the pre-historic picture in rather blacker colours than the situation often merited. It is not to cast aspersions upon the sincerity of the missionaries to note that the missionary picture thereby appeared by contrast to be more dazzlingly white. Their evangelistic fervour merely obscured their vision a little. But already after eight months Lawes was having to face the dilemma which confronts all who attempt to implant a Christian pattern of life and behaviour upon a society but recently emerged from a heathen state.

In the same letter as the extract above is taken from, George Lawes graphically poses the dilemma and at the same time justifies subsequent action on functional grounds. This is the most frank and searching analysis of the political and

1 W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., B.29, F.2, J.E., 19 April 1862.
(Hereafter: W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., 1862)

2 J.L. Brenchley. Jottings during the cruise of H.M.S. Curacao among the South Sea Islands in 1865. London, 1873, pp.29-35
(Hereafter: Brenchley. Jottings)

administrative difficulties facing the bearers of the Christian creed on Niue.

Prefacing his account with the comment that the heads of families make laws, and enforce them, Lawes explains: "Our great difficulty at present is a political one. I have already said the land is governed by the heads of families. Generally their laws work well, but there are a few bad characters, who are inclined to be troublesome and set the "powers that be" at defiance. They live by stealing and it is of no use to fine them for they have nothing to pay, it's of no use to sentence them to build (burn?) roads for they will die rather than do it. If they are not punished law and order are at an end. What to do with them is the question. They would quickly have settled the matter a few years ago, by either clubbing them or sending them out to sea in a little canoe. But now the old men come to us and say, what are we to do. A few years ago we should have killed these men, but now we know that it is not right and we have come to know what the word of God says and what you do in your country". What can we tell them? If we say make a prison and put them in, they say, who is to feed them. They don't know enough of political economy that it is to their interest to feed them. Confinement would be just another word for starvation. One of these thieves was very cruelly handled the other day, and died under their treatment. A war was hardly prevented in consequence.

* My underlining

You will easily see our difficulty, while we sedulously avoid interference in political matters it is impossible to stand aloof from such a thing as this".

The underlined phrases constitute the basic criteria followed in Niuean constitutional practice for the succeeding forty years. That the two are not synonymous is apparent; with the aid of skilful compromise and doubtless at the price of some confusion in the minds of the Niuean, Scriptural methods of governance and English constitutional practice were rendered compatible. The latter was the less emphasised of the two criteria. The important factor is that both were left to the exclusive interpretation of the missionary, initially at least.

Having come to the conclusion that it was impossible to stand aloof, George Lawes set about his imposed task of achieving greater order in Niuean society.

Two months after the resolve was made, T.H. Hood visited Niue on H.M.S. "Fawn" and found that: "Mr Lawes has done a great deal since his arrival. He is prime minister, doctor, instructor in divers trades, as well as religious teacher in the island, and both he and his wife appear to have influence"¹. Hood says that the form of government was patriarchal and "the chiefs, or rather heads of families..... meet together at stated times in each district, and arrange its public affairs"².

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1. T.H. Hood. Notes of a cruise in H.M.S. "Fawn" in the Western Pacific in the year 1862, Edinburgh, 1863, p.18.
 2. Ibid, p.16.

It is uncertain to what degree this meeting of those in authority on a local basis was a Samoan importation or an adaptation of an old Niuean practice. The circle of stone seats near Tuapa are an indication that some such meeting of authorities was once an institution on Niue, but it is seldom mentioned in tradition. The modern word for the meetings, fono, is a Samoan word. This is the first occasion on which the meetings are mentioned and it seems probable that they were instituted in their modern form at least by George Lawes - perhaps on the suggestion of George Pratt, his mentor for the first few months on Niue, who was acquainted with the Samoan model. The only suggestion of functions at this stage is that as punishment for evildoers labour on the roads was substituted for the old practice of being tied up without food, eating arid fruits and the like.

We might note that Mrs Lawes had twelve hand maidens, each of whom was very anxious to please her.....

The institution of a district meeting of patus was insufficient to maintain order it seems. The next year (1863) there were still a few wild young men "who would rejoice in the subversion of all order,". But the deficiency was made up to some extent by the recruitment of all as informers for the maintenance of the law. In a reference hinting a little of that 'overseeing' system which gave almost unlimited power to church members in the control of peoples' thought and behaviour on

Rarotonga,¹ Lawes recorded (1864) that: "We have plenty of 'sheepdogs' here - If a sheep wanders ever so little from the fold there is an instant clamour. The least inconsistency is soon blazed abroad".² The lack of a clear distinction between civil and religious crimes lasted until Basil Thomson drafted Niue's first true civil code in 1900.³

The establishment of the Niuean polity as it stood in all but one essential until the turn of the century was completed in the year 1865. The motivation for the innovations was ostensibly that a better machinery was required to control evil-doers and that the old system of local autonomy in the law-making led to dispute. But the centralization of authority which resulted, however ineffective it might prove, enabled the missionary to keep a tighter rein upon important developments throughout the island and was doubtless partly designed to serve this purpose.

"One of the principal events of the past year" writes Lawes⁴ "has been the appointment of constables and judges as a terror to evildoers, and connected with this a monthly meeting of these in authority. A deputation of six from each of the six settlements meets here (Alofi) once a month to make laws etc.

1 Beaglehole. Social Change, p.47
 2 W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., B.30, F.2., J.C., 17 May 1864
 3 Thomson. S.I., p.113
 4 W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., B.30, F.5., J.B., 10 May 1865

This is an improvement on the old custom of each village making its own laws independent of others. Collisions were frequent and differences not always easy to be settled amicably".

The appointment of constables and judges was presumably made by the missionary in collaboration with the local teacher or deacon and perhaps with the agreement of the patus. Since many of the chief crimes were solely transgressions against the Church, Sabbath-breaking for instance, only those reliable on religious grounds as it were would have been eligible. Who exactly made^{up} the deputations of six from each village is not made clear. Lawes denigrates his own role in the establishment of the all-Niue fono: "I give them what help I can without being in any way a judge or a ruler over them". He adds that they hope to see "good fruit" from these new institutions but are not very sanguine about it. Niueans have "the least possible idea of order and government". He is protesting a little too much in his final statement that "It has been the people's own work and not ours".¹

Thus a centralized organisation with largely deliberative powers was set up under missionary inspiration. It survived in roughly the same form but with a modified basis of selection and function until 1901.

The new agents of law enforcement donned a uniform to invest themselves with more authority. All Niueans of both sexes went bareheaded with the exception of "the missionary's

1 ibid.

policemen, who wear a four-cornered hat; sometimes black with a white or red cross, sometimes in silk with a front of red or white paper".¹ The observer adds: "which said police officials, I must own, looked to me like 'regular guys'." But it was the missionary who influenced the building of the thirty-three mile road around the island and "it is owing to him that it is kept in good repair by means of natives condemned to hard labour for crimes or offences".² Brenchley was only on Niue for a day in mid-1865 so that he could not have formed a clear picture of conditions but he says that the form of government is patriarchal "under the missionary's direction".³

The chief subjects which are mentioned as coming before the fono for action during these early years of its history were the labour trade, the holding of land by Europeans and the sale of spirits. In respect of the latter two questions, the sale of spirits or land was prohibited absolutely and here the control of the fono seems to have been extremely effective. The two questions were intimately connected and the arrangement was so skilful that there is little doubt whose idea it first was. When the Mission Society made enquiries about the title deed to the land his house was on, George Lawes replied that the Niueans refuse to sign away land for merchants and alienate it as in Samoa".⁴ He doubts whether any title deeds could be obtained

1 Brenchley. Jottings, p.27 (1865)

2 ibid., p.24

3 ibid., pp 28-29

4 W.G. Lawes. L.N.S., B32,F.3,J.C, 6 July 1869

therefore and obviously regards it as unnecessary. The subtlety of the scheme was that: "Merchant agents hence have to obey native laws (for example regarding spirits) for fear of being evicted".¹ The stranglehold this gave to the native authority meant that the traders on Niue were not the problem that they were elsewhere. It was only in the last years of the century that they caused any trouble at all. It is thus not true of Niue that the aid of an outside power had to be invoked when the traders got beyond the control of the native authorities - this was only a secondary factor in such invocations.

It is in the attempt to control the labour trade, the emigration of young men overseas, that the limitations of the fono's effectiveness show most markedly. As early as 1865 the missionary had reported that their greatest trial was a mania among the young men for emigration to Samoa to labour on the cotton plantations. Hundreds are said to have gone but neither the missionary "nor the chiefs" can stop it.² In 1868 a Mr Charles McFarland of Apia called and took on board his schooner 60 men and 20 or more women. The taking of women was "contrary to the laws of Niue" and "the judges met in council and demanded that the women should be brought on shore".³ When McFarland refused to comply with this ruling, native constables were sent to fetch them. The constables were fired

* There is no reason to suppose that "the chiefs" received any commission/emigrants until very late in the century.

1 ibid

2 W.G. Lawes. L.M.S. B.30,F.5,J.B, 10 May 1865

3 G.F. Scott. L.M.S., letter dated Tutuila, Samoa, 20 October, 1868.

upon by the ship's officers according to the missionary account. The ship sailed off with its cargo. In this year two hundred would have gone but for the opposition of the native authorities.¹ Some measure of control was finally obtained in 1869 and 1870 through the imposition of "stringent laws" that none shall go away in ships and through writing letters to this effect to traders in Samoa and Tahiti, but Frank Lawes was of the opinion that the success of this control was due more to the availability of stores from local traders than to obedience to authorities.² If a headstrong young man wished to go off to seek his fortune then there was precious little the fono could do about the matter. Noting that were it not for control the island would be depopulated George Lawes exclaims: "And for what? That the resources of Queensland may be developed, that Tahitian planters may be made fat, and that Fijian colonists may be hastily rich".³

One of the few accounts we have about the fono at this time was supplied by Commodore Goodenough, who visited Niue in 1873. The fono happened to be meeting and he went along to watch and was asked to speak. He found it "sitting under a grove of cocoa-nut trees, and occupying a circle at least thirty-five yards in diameter, not sitting in a circle, but the men from one village in a group together, then those of another village a little apart, all squatting on the ground, and dressed generally

1 W.G. Lawes L.M.S., B.31, F.7, J.B, 14 September 1868

2 F.E. Lawes L.M.S., B.32, F.3, J.C., 15 November, 1869

3 W.G. Lawes L.M.S., B.33, F.2, J.D, 28 December 1871

in straw hats, and blue or red flannel shirts....."¹ Having described the great change in clothing, education and housing since Cook's time, Goodenough told the patus that they owed all this to the missionaries and gave them the unsolicited advice to attend to the "words and counsel" of Mr Lawes. We gain a glimpse of the current difficulties next: "I have asked him (Lawes) what it is you are consulting upon, and wherein you want advice, and he tells me this: that the proper respect is not paid to the judges. Now I say this to you: you that are young men must pay respect to the magistrates, and you that are old must see that the young have good counsel in this matter". He adds patronisingly: "I ought to have said something to them about peace, and the missionary afterwards told me that there were two other questions: one was the introduction of spirits, the sale of which has hitherto been forbidden, and one other is the question of the sale of land, which the natives have been very much averse to hitherto, and have constantly refused". The redoubtable Commodore had his answer to both matters. He told the missionary to advise the chiefs on no account to admit liquor to be sold and that, as to land, they had better set about ascertaining ownership and so avoiding strife. Also they should keep large reserves as a common possession forever.²

That the English naval officer and the missionary were in collaboration is obvious. It is therefore rather revealing that the Commodore thought it salutary to enumerate to the fono the

1 Mrs V.H. Goodenough (edit.) Memoir and Journal of Commodore Goodenough, London, 1876, pp188-90
(Hereafter: Goodenough, Memoir)

2 *ibid* p.190

advantages, particularly the material ones, the missionaries had brought and to advise the people to pay attention to Mr Lawes' words and render more respect to the magistrates.

In the course of the succeeding quarter century the European missionary came more and more to work through the medium of the institutions which he had largely inspired: as a corollary his grip on temporal affairs slipped a little. The extent of this assumption of some of the missionary's secular powers should not be exaggerated for it was more in appearance than reality. By the end of the nineteenth century it was still true that the secular power on Niue used its sanctions in support of spiritual values and behaviour decreed by the Congregational missionary - but the nature and functions of the secular power itself had changed and the fono, presided over by a so-called king, was no longer merely the missionary's rubber stamp. It had acquired some limited standing of its own.

In part the change may be attributed to the nature of Niuean society and the character of the Lawes brothers. Niue had no tradition of strong central government; in fact, it had little tradition of any strong government. The missionaries stepped into what was, apart from the strictly localized and theocratic administration established by the Samoan pastors, virtually a governmental vacuum. As noted above (p 173) W.G. Lawes found that the Niueans had the "least possible" idea of order and government. The missionary inspired the setting up of a magistracy, constabulary and council, but this never

became a ruthless machine for enforcing his will alone for not only were there no precedents of autocracy here but the gentle and forbearing character of the two missionary brothers forbade a resort to total "ecclesiastical tyranny" - as an anonymous author described the Rarotongan system in the years before the protectorate.¹

The assumption of some of the administrative powers of the missionary by institutions was also a corollary of a decline, small but perceptible nevertheless, in the missionary's spiritual power and the strength of the Church in general. The reasons for the backsliding after the first flush of conversion had subsided will be examined in the next chapter but it might be observed here that it was largely an outcome of wider contact with alternative European ways of life apparently tolerated within Christianity and of such human factors as disillusionment and reversion to old ways as the novelty of the new faith wore off and its demands upon a Polynesian morality were appreciated.

On Niue no organized opposition seems to have manifested itself following the establishment of the mission. No dispossessed chiefs or priests, overtly at least, flouted the missionary's ways and such opposition as there was appeared chiefly among the young men returning from labouring elsewhere and manifested itself simply in living an immoral life, and that apparently largely in clandestine.

The third factor in the assumption of some of the missionary's

1 Anon. (E. Tregear ?) The Right Honourable R.J. Seddon's Visit to Tonga, Fiji, Savage Island, and the Cook Islands, May 1900. Wellington, 1900. p.298
(Hereafter: Seddon's Visit)

temporal powers by Niuean institutions was the change which occurred in the basis of selection of fono members, possibly also in selection of magistrates and police, and the establishment of the office of the 'king'. The former development is allied to the establishment of the king. The kingship was the notion of the Niueans themselves, and when the incumbent was a man of obstinate nature it was a source of obstructive power.

The idea of setting up a king like the patuiki of old was being floated in the early eighteen seventies. Goodenough found that this was one of the subjects before the fono in 1873: "Mr Lawes says that some of you speak of having a king. Is not your fono enough? If the men of the families of each village meet to discuss village affairs, and if the village heads speak together in the fono, is not this enough to settle all your business without a king?".¹ The missionary, who translated this gratuitous advice to the fono, was not the source of the idea. Niue had not had a king for nearly eighty years but some nostalgia for the institution is indicated in a song said to have been composed at this time:

"Assembled are the people at the hanging flag,
Seeking are the people for a king;
The island is seeking for a lord,
Seek for a king (like) Patua-valu...."²

Patuvalu's reign had been a time of plenty and he had died of old age. In the conditions of peace now obtaining there was a reasonably good chance of an incumbent's surviving to this happy

1 Goodenough. Memoirs, p.190

2 Smith. Niue, p.132.

end also. Another motivating factor may have been a desire to erect on Niue an equivalent to the Tuitonga and Malietoa of adjacent islands or the mysterious and rather glamorous "Vika" of the missionary's homeland.

Whatever the reason, Goodenough's advice was disregarded within three years and Tuitonga (Mataio), "a chief of Alofi",¹ leaned his back against two great stones standing in the square before Alofi Church and was anointed king on 2 March 1876.* The fact that his name became Tuitonga suggests that Tonga was an immediate source of inspiration. Little is recorded of his reign and he died on 14 July 1887. His influence was apparently negligible, but more is heard of his successor Fataaiki, who ruled from 21 November 1888 until 15 January 1896. He was the teacher at Hakupu and was at first reluctant to assume royal office. F.R. Lawes records: "We are rather unsettled here just now. No king has yet been elected in room of Tuitonga who died last July. Last week the rulers held a meeting to nominate a king. Nine villages were unanimous in voting for Fataaiki, the Hakupu Teacher, but Alofi and Avatele would not hear of his being king so the assembly broke up without having come to any decision. Fataaiki himself says that the work he is now doing is greater and better than that of king. "This is the work that I desire".

* Mohe-lagi (Smith, Niue, p.132) says 1875 but Pulekula (Smith Niue, p.90) and Loeb (History, p.43) say 1876

1 Thomson S.I., p.35

"I do not wish for any other work". There the matter rests and I suspect the king question is shelved for the present....."¹
Eight months later Fataaiki assumed office.

The king is henceforward associated with the fono in matters of legislation and the legislative powers extend into new fields. In 1889 "the king and rulers" made a law "that the dollar shall be reckoned at three shillings only for this year, and that next year (sic) to trade in English money". The missionary comments that they are merely following the example of Tonga and "if they are able to carry out this law" the difficulty about Chilean money will be at an end.² The decree was obeyed for the next year it is recorded that English and United States money only are current.³ It may be noted that the chief inconvenience of Chilean dollars had been to the missionary and the traders. Again in 1893 the fono acted in the interests of the mission when a threat to the Congregational monopoly of Niuean religion appeared. Seventh Day Adventists had visited Niue on 28 July and come to an agreement with the people of Avatele to return there and "proselytize". They were however later "repudiated" by the rulers of the island. Lending colour to the account, Cullen (relieving Lawes) adds: "A part of our friends' stores consisted of repeating rifles which they were anxious to sell to any who would buy at a price of \$17.50. None were bought here".⁴ The ultimate mastery of the Congregational missionary was still unchallenged.

1 F.E. Lawes. L.M.S., B.40, F.3, J.C., 28 February 1888
 2 F.E. Lawes L.M.S., B.40, F.6, J.C., 20 September 1889
 3 F.E. Lawes L.M.S., B.41, F.4, J.D., 12 February 1890
 4 J.H. Cullen L.M.S., B.42, F.7, J.C. letter to Rev. Thompson,
 9 November 1893.

This was further demonstrated three years later when a Tongan firm of traders started selling "kava spiritous liquors". This was forbidden by law¹ but since it was done, as Lawes says, "on the quiet" it was difficult to detect. When at last there was a case which "could be proven" the missionary acted: "I at once stirred up the king to write to H.M. High Commissioner at Fiji, he wrote and I translated the letter with additional footnotes. We have not yet received any reply. We took this course because Lord Stanmore, Sir A. Gordon when High Commissioner called at Niue and agreed with king and chiefs to help them to enforce the law forbidding sale of liquor, and promised to fine any Englishman breaking the law an amount no exceeding £10".² The full implications of Sir Arthur Gordon's words (spoken in November 1879 and written down at the time by Frank Lawes) will be discussed below. What is interesting at this point is the missionary's technique in exercising his influence: he kept an eye on all developments affecting the island and when the right moment to act had come in any crisis he "stirred up the king". No doubt, for example, he virtually drafted the letter mentioned above himself. We have no record of his "footnotes" but it may be that as in 1887, when the king and rulers wrote to the High Commissioner in Fiji requesting extension of a protectorate, Lawes enclosed a copy of Sir Arthur Gordon's rather loosely phrased speech of 1879 (see Appendix).

1 Thomson S.I. p.112

2 F.E. Lawes. L.M.S., B.44, P.2, J.D, 16 April, 1896

In all such communications to the outside world the hand of the European missionary is apparent.

Thomson incidentally, claims to have seen a "faded sheaf of foolscap paper" on which was recorded the "Acts of King Fataaiki". The code was simple in the extreme and is of interest as an illustration of first, the chief crimes encountered on Niue and their punishment and second, the two prohibitions the mission insisted on. Thomson summarizes it thus: "Theft and adultery were to be punished with labour on the roads; for traffic in strong liquor and the sale of land, both absolutely forbidden, no penalties were provided".¹

The death of Fataaiki and the succession, after an interregnum of two years, of Tongia mark a new and final stage in the history of the Church and State on Niue until annexation two years later in 1900. The key to the change lies in the character of the new incumbent. The first three years of the reign of Tongia were at once the hey-day (such as it was) of the modern Niuean kingship and its nemesis. By 1901 Frank Lawes had become so frustrated with the obstructionism and prevarications of the king, the first real limitation placed upon his powers since he had landed, that he welcomed the New Zealand annexation as "the only chance to save the island from its leaders..... and better now than later on".²

When an L.M.S. deputation visited Niue in 1897 following

1 Thomson S.I. p.112

2 Quoted by N. Goodall. A History of the London Missionary Society 1895-1945 London, 1954, p.404
(Hereafter: Goodall. L.M.S. History)

the death of Fataaiki it reported that "the people do not seem to be impressed with the urgent importance of filling the vacant position".¹ Thomson says that the only man who was so impressed was Tongia and he sketched a superb if rather facetious characterization of the candidate in his chapter 'The King of all Niue'.² Tongia was over seventy at this time and was by general consent an obstinate, tenacious and querulous old man. He was also a man with political acumen. The missionary says: "A most unpopular, unloved candidate for royal honours, but by continuing persistence he has managed to edge himself on to the throne".³ Despite the fact that, like Fataaiki before him, Tongia was a senior deacon of one of the villages, Lawes had few illusions about him: "The well-being of the people, is an item he and his few friends do not think of". And in a surprisingly frank afterthought: "Yet by keeping out a less worthy man the new king may be useful".⁴ This was a miscalculation.

When Percy Smith came to examine the Niuean polity in late 1901 he found that the original shape of the fono, the council, had changed somewhat and the king now nominated its members.⁵

1 ibid.

2 Thomson. S.I., pp.34-48

3 F.E. Lawes. L.M.S., B.44, F.7, J.L., 21 June 1898

4 ibid.

5 S.P. Smith. 'Letter to H.E. the Governor of New Zealand' A.J.N.R., 1901, Vol11, A-3J, 11 October 1901

The change must have occurred subsequent to 1886 for Moss recorded in that year that a council of representatives (the fono) elected every two months by the heads of families "and the nucleus of something bigger if not better hereafter" had been established.¹ It was, he says, only a partial success. The missionary was still "the adviser and confidant of every native chief, the one to whom the native naturally turns in time of public trouble or domestic difficulty".²

During the reign of Fataaiki there is no indication that the system of vaguely democratic 'elections' among the patus changed at all and it is presumed that the system which Smith describes was Tongia's own innovation: "This Council has heretofore been nominated by the Patuiki from people who are likely to support his views solely".³ But Smith may have been judging Tongia too harshly (the king refused to go to Alofi to meet the New Zealand representatives and later expressed a wish to be tied to Britain directly). Basil Thomson the year before merely recorded that the fono was attended by "all the chiefs of villages and heads of families".⁴ There is no suggestions in this that the king 'packed' the fono with his own supporters alone. Smith contended that the Fono "appears not have the confidence of the people".⁵

1 F.J. Moss Through Atolls and Islands in the Great South Sea London, 1889, p.11

2 Ibid p.12

3 Smith A.J.H.R. 1901, A-3J

4 Thomson S.I. p.111

5 Smith A.J.H.R. vol.1, 1901, A-3J

As to the functions of the fono at the turn of the century, they are said to be half-legislative and half-judicial. "Nothing is too great or too small for its attention. Has a strong man encroached on a widow's yam patch, it is to the fono that she makes her plaint.....Time was when the fono made laws, but as the only copy of these enactments is in the possession of Mr Lawes, and the magistrates have managed very well without them for many years past, legislation is a very rare part of its labours".¹ However since this was the only legislative body it was to the fono that Basil Thomson submitted his Penal Code for endorsement.²

The judicial system seems to have become a more cumbersome structure over the period. There is no indication as to who actually appointed the judges and police in 1901 but Smith ascertained that "for the eleven villages of the island with a population of 4,500 there were twenty-three magistrates and one hundred and twenty five police, who were paid by appropriating the fines to themselves!"³ He found it necessary to reduce the magistrates to five and the police to eleven and arrange for them to be paid by the state. His opinion of the existing magistrates is obvious in his comment that he felt the necessity in 1901 to appoint "capable men".⁴ An extremely

1 Thomson S.I. p.111

2 ibid p.113

3 Smith Niue, p.44, footnote

4 Smith A.J.N.R., vol.1, 1901, A-3J

arbitrary procedure is described by Thomson in which the magistrate administers justice from memory and decides rather at whim whether the accused is guilty or not. Three penalties are recognized, the making of fifty or one hundred fathoms of road, the burning of an oven of lime, and the fine. Since there is no enforcement machinery fines are the usual penalty. It is not surprising, he says that offences are on the increase.¹

By the turn of the twentieth century, on the eve of a significant change of status and government for Niue, the island could still be called a mission-inspired theocracy in that the secular power largely used its sanctions in support of spiritual values and behaviour as laid down by the Congregational missionary. The latter was still the final arbiter in both spiritual and temporal affairs and for another fifty years and more the outpourings from the pulpit of Alofi Church were to play an extremely important, at time preponderating, part in swaying the destinies of Niue. In dealings with the outside world the missionary was usually the instigating agent and always the firm guiding hand, not merely translating but interpreting and annotating those appeals to British agents or Queen "Vika" herself which after long delays justified and legalized the declaration of a protectorate. In internal conflicts between European and Niuean it was to Mr Lawes that both went and it was he who invited the patus to make an enquiry.² The entire educational system was directly supervised from the mission house

1 Thomson S.I. p.107-08

2 Thomson S.I. p.109

and undertaken by the deacons and teachers, and the missionary retained the sole prerogative of admission to and dismissal from membership of the church, the social centre as well as the religious centre of Niuean life - a state of affairs which was to survive annexation also. The strength of the missionary's position is attested by the fact that Congregationalism remained in effect the only religion on Niue for many decades after 1900 and it was not until the mid-nineteen fifties that a free influx of priests of other denominations occurred. But despite this commanding pervasion of all aspects of the life of Niue the formal authority of the missionary was not as unchallenged as it had been in the first decades of Christianization. There had never been a really strong government on Niue : the people were always impetuous and rather ungovernable and centralised government particularly was never fully effective. As a missionary account puts it: "The people are markedly independent and, although the traditional pattern of their society is communal, the larger group breaks easily into sectional loyalties and individual assertiveness is strong." ¹ The rivalry between Motu and Tafiti had subsided in great part but inter-village rivalries had taken its place - as the conflicts over selection of a king illustrate. As important, the institutions which the missionary had set up to administer the Church-State with its simple code of laws based upon Christian precepts from the sanctity of the Sabbath to the desirability of 'social purity'

1. Goodall. L.M.S. History, p.404

among unmarried women had evolved in a way differing from the missionary's original intention, notably over the last years before the protectorate. The magistracy still administered the Christian code but the ranks of the profession had become unreasonably swollen, its procedure was lax and arbitrary and it was supported by fines imposed by itself. The police too had multiplied in numbers so that there was now one such official to every thirty-six people and they too appropriated their part of the fines. The evidence is inadequate but it seems probable that the appointment of these two groups of officials had passed from the missionary to the Fono by 1901. The Fono itself had become, by report, a nominative rather than elective body once again and the nominations were now made in good part by a new authority, the king. This was an injection into the body politic of Niue which the missionary had not sought but which he had been able to use in the reigns of Tuitonga and Fataaiki for his own purposes. It had a potential for disruption however which in the last three years of 'independence' was realized in the person of an obstinate and querulous old man. True, Tongia's powers were basically negative in actual operation (one acute observer styled him the fifth wheel of the coach)¹ and applied more to matters of detail than of policy - in 1899 for example F.E. Lawes was moved to outburst against "the king and his army of obstructionists" for blocking the way, we are not told why, to a new house at Alofi for boarding boys attending the mission

1. Smith. A.J.H.R., Vol.1, 1901, A-3J.

171

school.¹ And both of the last two kings were former senior deacons of the Church and were liable, as Fataaiki discovered to his sorrow on committing adultery, to be dismissed from the Church by the missionary with scant respect for their temporal position. But this kingly institution was the first check which the Congregational missionary had experienced since Christianization, the first obstruction to realization of the full Church-State which he had met apart from the inherent individualism of the people and the strength of inter-village rivalries. The missionary was sufficiently misguided by this small frustration as to welcome the declaration of annexation by New Zealand. By 1900 the Fono had acquired sufficient of the trappings of a secular legislative body as to be consulted by the agent of the British protectorate power in the promulgation of a new civil code of laws - but it was the missionary who was entrusted with the task of translating the document, interpreting it to the Niueans, pushing it through the Fono, and suggesting that the old laws be revised and together with the new code be put into force.² The next year, when the agent of the New Zealand Government landed to put the annexation into force, he went not to the mission house at Alofi to carry out the formalities but to the corrugated-iron palace at Tuapa to meet king and Fono. The political power of the Congregational missionary was to far outlive that of Tongia, the last king of Niue, but henceforward it was to be exercised more indirectly: an agent of the New Zealand Government and an elective Council were to inherit the formal administrative powers.

¹ F.E. Lawes. L.N.S. B.45, P.5, J.D., 12 December 1899
² F.E. Lawes. Letter to Basil Thomson in S.I., p.113-14

CHAPTER XIII

The Mission : A Precipitant of Social and Economic Change

The machinery which controlled the spiritual lives of the people of Niue in the forty years between 1861 and 1901 was pyramidal in structure. At the apex stood the European missionary, below him were the teachers, at first mainly Samoan but later Niuean, below the teachers again were the deacons, and finally, at the base of the structure were the church members. The missionary was the final arbiter of Church dogma and of the religious status of the Niuean.⁽¹⁾ He retained to himself alone the prerogative of granting admission to the church - a fairly jealously guarded honour - and conducted "conversations" with those candidates approved by the teachers. W.G. Lawes regarded as his most important work the preaching and translating⁽²⁾ but in 1891 for example his successor Frank was superintending eleven teachers and twelve schools and chapels, he ran a theological seminary for twenty Niueans, and a boys' boarding school for forty, he preached three times a week, some of these outside Alofi, and was medical practitioner for the whole island.⁽³⁾ In addition, even Samoan teachers who had spent several years at the Malua

(1) W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., B.34, F.3, J.B., 19 May 1873

(2) W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., B.29, F.4, J.D., 29 May 1863

(3) J.H. Cullen. L.M.S., B.41., F.7, J.C., 30 November 1891

Institution near Apia were "dependent on me for their sermons"⁽¹⁾.

A monthly meeting of teachers was presided over by the missionary and discipline was decided upon - if needed.

Inevitably the missionary usually had to rely upon second-hand evidence in determining the sinfulness of the transgressions of church members. The "instant clamour" of the "sheepdogs" informed him "if a sheep wanders ever so little from the fold".⁽²⁾

The number of Samoan teachers dwindled during the eighteen sixties to two and finally in 1869 Samuela and the other remaining Samoan returned to the homeland, the former after fifteen years of service. The work of the Samoans, says W.G. Lawes, was great - they were "not notable for intelligence or superiority but 'by faith' they wrought great works".⁽³⁾ There were several Samoan pastors on Niue again by the turn of the century. The teachers were supported by their flocks in great part until 1875 when a supplement was given by the London Mission Society.

The deacons performed the small tasks required in the individual village churches and both they and the teachers were men of considerable influence, and were frequently Fono members. The Church members never seem to have constituted more than about one fifth of the population at the most, although in the early years especially the great majority of the population were church and school attenders.

The educational work performed by the Samoan and Niuean teachers was never of a very high standard. Over 3,725 of the

(1) W.G. Lawes. M.M.S., B.31, F.7, J.B., 6 January 1868.

(2) W.G. Lawes. L.N.S., B.30, F.2., J.C., 17 March 1864.

(3) W.G. Lawes. L.N.S., B.32, F.6., J.C., 1 February 1870

population of 5,021 attended the adult and children's schools in 1863, ⁽¹⁾ and pencils and paper were presents highly esteemed, ⁽²⁾ but the numbers fell off a little subsequently, as the novelty value declined and enthusiasm waned. Indeed by 1868 parents and children thought they were conferring a favour on the missionary by attending school twice a week. ⁽³⁾ Education work at that time, says George Lawes, was backward. Earlier he had reported that the Samoan teachers were up to the mark "except in the schools". ⁽⁴⁾ They suffered from a lack of materials and also, one might easily imagine, from a lack of enterprise and higher education themselves.

The proselytizing zeal of the Congregationalists was rubbed off onto their Niuean converts and 'May meetings' in the Exeter Hall tradition were soon organised on Niue - although they were transferred to August for hemispheric reasons. It is slightly incongruous to see a land so recently and incompletely 'converted' itself sending two of its inhabitants to the Mitchell Group as early as 1865, two more to the Tokelaus, and four to New Guinea in 1892 - to say nothing of annual contributions to the evangelical funds of the L.M.S. ⁽⁵⁾ which amounted in the sixteen years up to 1889 to about £7,200

(1) W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., B.29, F.4., J.D., 21 July 1863

(2) Hood. A. Cruise, 1862

(3) W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., B.31, F.7
J.B., 6 January 1868

(4) W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., B.29, F.4., J.D., 20 October 1863

(5) F.E. Lawes. L.M.S., B.40, F.6., J.C., 12 April 1889

The returns which this mission organisation harvested in terms of men's souls was initially great but they diminished swiftly after about 1867 or 1868. Before that time Lawes had adjudged, as we have noted above (p.162), that the Niueans were "great" compared with what they were previously, but that they were "not to be compared with older converts". In 1862 the "whole population" attended chapel and many had "an intelligent idea of the plan of salvation". They sent 530 pieces of bark-cloth hiapo to Pukapuka as a gift - which Lawes cites as evidence of the genuineness of their conversion but which may not have been, any more than the annual L.M.S. contributions, of more significance than such giving is in Western societies. In 1863 Peruvian slavers, in search of cheap labour to work the guano deposits whose value as fertilizers was newly appreciated in Europe, appeared off Niue and carried off upwards of fifty (a later account says 200 in total)⁽¹⁾ of the natives⁽²⁾

Three assistant-teachers were among them. At a prayer meeting the day after an old woman asked for mercy for the "kidnappers and murderers" lest they die in their sins. How gloriously changed from the spirit of former days comments Lawes. The conversions, he says, are not mere excitement or love of novelty, nor might nor power, but by the Holy Spirit. Satan is not yet totally vanquished however for many are still ignorant of the vital power of the truth but: "Still, we think

(1) Smith. Niue, p.88

(2) W.W. Gill, L.M.S., B.29, P.3., J.C., 18 March 1863

the form of godliness better than the power of heathenism".
This was a utilitarian approach indeed. ⁽¹⁾

The tenor of things to come first appeared in 1866 when "some of whom we expected better things" had gone astray. ⁽²⁾
The next year there was a "strong current of iniquity" among the young men and the year after there was "lukewarmness" among the Christians and "open vice" among the non-Christians. By 1869 it was reported that: "The enthusiasm of former times no longer exists". ⁽³⁾

Finally in 1870 over fifty church members had to be suspended for irregularities and George Lawes was moved to exclaim: "We long for a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit and to see a revival of God's work amongst us. We have begun the year hopefully." ⁽⁴⁾ But the hope was in vain for the enthusiasm of the first few years of Christianity did not return during that century. In 1896, 89 church members had to be dismissed for immorality and Niueans were reported prone to "sins of the flesh". They are, said Frank Lawes in 1899 "weak, miserably weak" ⁽⁵⁾ and in a rather melancholy last report in 1910 he sums up: "I would be glad in this last letter to report real progress all round, but there is an under-current; worldliness and greed for money seem to be the great power prevailing everywhere, even in the counsels and work of the Church. Immorality, amongst the young people especially,

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- (1) W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., B.29, F.4., J.D., 29 May 1863
 (2) W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., B.31, F.1., J.E., 8 October 1866
 (3) F.E. Lawes. L.M.S., B.32, F.3., J.C., 15 November 1869
 (4) W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., B.32, F.6., J.C., 1 February 1870
 (5) F.E. Lawes. L.M.S., B.45, F.5, J.D., 29 May 1899

is an awful curse, ruining both body and soul. We hoped to have seen the triumph of our Lord whilst here. This desire of our hearts has not been given us; but victory is certain⁽¹⁾.

The factors which worked against the spiritual progress of the Niueans and in fact seemed to have produced back-sliding after the early eighteen-sixties were numerous. In the first place of course the white missionaries were a little carried away by the outward transformation from heathenism in the early years and failed to appreciate fully where the Niueans fell short of the Christian ideal. After some years' residence on the island they began to realise that the Polynesian traditional ways were not very deep below the Niuean skin. The new creed and its bearers soon lost their novel appeal and were accepted; what might be called cultural inertia then began to show itself.

The standards of the missionaries were high: they forbade sexual games, dancing feasts, pre-marital relations and polygamy, and stealing from all, while the Sabbath was to be strictly observed. The latter was the most easy to accomplish for it conformed to the Polynesian tabu system in many respects, but the other precepts were rather more difficult for the Polynesian to achieve, as has often been pointed out before. Stealing from all but a friend had been veritably an achievement and the Polynesian had never associated religion and sexuality. As F.E. Lawes observed: "The girls have neither the Christian mother's example, nor

(1) F.E. Lawes. Quoted in Goodall, L.M.S. History, p.406

the unwritten iron law of society to restrain them".⁽¹⁾
 This reassertion of old ways was hastened on Niue by the labour trade, for it tipped the ratio between the sexes to a disproportionate level - in 1868 the number of women was reported to be almost twice that of the men, although this may be an exaggeration.⁽²⁾ The missionary commented: "You can imagine the state of morality when such is the case".

This was not the only effect of the labour trade on the spiritual standing of Niueans. The preservation of theocratic insulation on Niue was a prime consideration of the missionary. Throughout the Pacific however the whaling fleets and the traders followed after the missions and this island was no exception. The Niueans were enabled to see other patterns of behaviour conforming to the European (and hence by vague associations, Christian) way of life. The comparisons to be frequently found must have provoked reflections, and the numerous and conflicting Western ideals have undermined their faith. The main breakdown of theocratic insulation here occurred not so much through the fairly infrequent calls from whalers or through the behaviour of traders on the island (the Niueans controlled the land the trader built on and the missionary could bring pressure to bear on him through the Fono if necessary, although this was not always effective in the last years of the century) but through the contacts made in the course of large-scale absences

(1) F.E. Lawes. L.M.S., B.45., F.5., J.D., 29 May 1899
 (2) W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., B.31., F.7., J.B., 27 March 1868

overseas by Niuean youths after about 1865. They went as labourers to plantations in Samoa, Tahiti, Hawaii, Fiji and Queensland, and they were incorporated into whalers' crews. In 1865, when George Lawes first reported that his greatest trial was a mania for emigration among the young men, there were he says "hundreds" gone.⁽¹⁾ In 1868 there were 355 absent, in 1870 there were 457. A slight improvement in 1871 following "bad reports" from Tahiti and elsewhere was not maintained and as late as 1899 there were still 400 men away out of a population of 4433.⁽²⁾

The population figure of Niue declined after a rise from 4,500 in 1862 to a high point of 5,060 in 1868. This was due both to emigration and to several disastrous epidemics of measles which in 1898 for example carried off over forty people. After 1868 the total declined to 4,854 by 1895 and to the low point of 4,433 in 1899 - lower than the figure when the European missionary landed.

Those emigrants who returned were very seldom spiritually or morally uplifted by their experiences. In 1866 Lawes reported: "About 20 [young Niuean men] have just returned from Samoa after having graduated with honours in the Apia University of Vice. For the first time since the Creation Niue soil has been polluted by a drunken man rolling on it". The frequent procedure was for the young man to "come home with cash, off to Tonga for a horse and goods, return home,

(1) W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., B.30, F.5., J.B., 10 May 1865
 (2) F.E. Lawes. L.M.S., B.45., F.5., J.D., 29 May 1899

live in sin, and then be away again to the guano islands for 'soloa' - riches."⁽¹⁾ The frequency with which the "harvest of immorality," "the snare from without" are mentioned and the emphasis which the missionaries placed on its deleterious effects indicate that this contact with the outside world through returning emigrants was a very real root cause of the decline in Niuean morality at this time. As it was put by one: "We look in vain for the increased industry, civilization and moral elevation of character which we sometimes hear natives are to acquire by contact with foreigners."⁽²⁾

Finally, the well-developed commercial instinct of the Niuean probably militated against his spiritual progress. This instinct was noted by early missionary visitors and by Hood, Erskine and Thomson. The latter attributed it to "some dash of alien blood, as yet unrecognized".⁽³⁾ In 1866 a German schooner arrived two weeks before the Missionary meetings. Half of the collected fibre intended as contributions went for pretty calico dress materials - the temptation was too much.⁽⁴⁾ When a new store opened at Makefu in 1871 the mission contribution level plummeted.⁽⁵⁾

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- (1) F.E. Lawes. L.M.S., B.45., F.5., J.D., 29 May 1899
 (2) F.E. Lawes. L.M.S., B.33., F.2., J.D., 21 September 1871
 (3) Thomson, S.I., p.3.
 (4) W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., B.31, F.1., J.E., 8 October 1866
 (5) F.E. Lawes. L.M.S., B.33., F.2., J.D., 21 September 1870

Then in 1870 the amount of property on board the wrecked missionary ship 'John Williams' was said to have had a baneful effect for it seemed so vast that the people concluded that the missionaries must be a very rich set of people and therefore able to pay well for everything: "The prevalence of this idea has caused a marked any unfavourable change in the conduct and bearing of a great number of the people".⁽¹⁾

The missionaries had set out upon a hopeless task: they had attempted to impose a new way of life upon a heathen society in a few short years. That backsliding followed initial progress may be attributed to the strength of continuing custom in the face of innovations which at times appeared wholly non-sensical and illogical to the Polynesian mind, to the deleterious effect which contacts with alternative European ways of life produced, to the upset sex ratio which followed large-scale emigration of young men, and finally to the well-developed commercial instinct of the Niueans which tended to distract them from spiritual preoccupations.

We have seen (p.153) that the impact of the Samoan pastors upon the economic life of Niue, while considerable, was not basic. It consisted most importantly of providing peace and order for cultivation and introducing domestic breeding stock. The impact of the Lawes brothers was by contrast far-reaching and long-lasting. Their settlement was followed by that of the trader. They provided motives

(1) T. Powell. L.M.S. (J.D.F.) dated Tau, Manua, 24 July 1871

apart from the purely acquisitive for increasing production of old crops, cultivating new ones and building new industries. They introduced the means of doing this, ideas and techniques and seeds, and together with the traders they provided the outlets for surplus production.

The acquisitive instinct was well-developed. Other motives which induced the Niueans to increase production and endeavour to produce a surplus were: to provide funds for buying clothes and calico to cover their bodies fully and thus make themselves 'decent'; to provide funds for the purchase of portions of the Scripture and eventually complete translations of the New Testament; to buy tools and articles to stock the new houses the missionaries favoured; and finally, and most important, to contribute toward the overseas mission funds of the London Mission Society (and later to the British and Foreign Bible Society) and the salaries of the native pastors on Niue.

The drain which the latter requirements constituted on the economy of Niue was considerable. But it was entirely consistent with the religious beliefs of the London missionaries to promote it: apart from the accretion to the funds of the Society, the very considerable labour involved kept the Niueans from indolence and in working thus they were doing 'good works'. The annual contributions rose from a present of yams and fowls to the 'John Williams' in 1862, to £45 in kind the following year (and £112 worth of arrowroot for 'books'), to £250 plus in 1865, £340 in 1868, £419 in 1870, and £561 in

1877. After this date the world-wide depression of the late eighteen eighties, the economic recovery of the United States after the Civil War, variable weather and the debilitating effect of large-scale migration of young men from Niue, to say nothing of the decline in the position of the Church, resulted in variable contributions to the London Mission funds. In 1883 the figure was £324 and in 1886 £306 (plus £189 for the native pastors' salaries) but in 1887 "the trade depression had even reached to Savage Island" and there was "no market to speak of for copra or cotton".⁽¹⁾ In 1889 it was estimated that £7,200 had been provided by Niue for the funds over the last sixteen years. By 1891 the total was up to £325 (plus a high £303 for the pastors) and the next year the total was again over £300. But in the following years United States cotton had recaptured the world market and the contributions fell to £265 in 1896 and lower to £186 in 1899. (These statistics are all derived from L.M.S. reports between 1862 and 1899, Boxes 10 to 45, held on microfilm in the Turnbull Library).

The exact proportion of the total of Niuean surplus production which these figures constituted is difficult to establish but it was probably about half, in the early years at least. In 1866 for example about half the cotton crop went to the L.M.S. and half to the traders. In 1868 W.G.Lawes claimed that two-thirds of the cotton had gone to the L.M.S.

(1) F.E. Lawes. L.M.S., B.39, F.6., J.B., 19 November 1887

despite stores full of bright prints and guns,⁽¹⁾ and :
 1870 £419 and more was given to the Society while the t:
 sold £500 worth of cotton. No comparative figures are
 available after this date but it seems probable from the
 level of L.M.S. contributions that they were not more than
 half of the production and probably considerably less. This
 is borne out by the number of traders which grew from two in
 1866 to six in 1896 - the while there was no great increase
 in L.M.S. contributions and in fact a general decline by the
 latter date.

Obviously the presence of traders was a considerable
 stimulus to Niuean production but as far as can be ascertained
 most new crops were introduced by the Mission. Cotton first
 appeared in 1865, before the first resident trader appeared.
 Production jumped from about 350 pounds in weight that year
 to ten times that amount the following year and 204 bales
 weighing 9,950 pounds in 1870 (these being only the L.M.S.
 shares of the crop). Fungus growing wild on Niue was first
 exploited in 1870, and together with cotton (the crop of
 highest value), arrowroot and copra formed the chief exports
 until 1896 when the bottom fell out of the cotton market.
 The role of the missionary is well illustrated by an excerpt
 from a letter of F.E. Lawes to the L.M.S. Secretary of
 24 November 1896. Cotton, he says, is now no longer worth
 growing. "There is nothing to take its place. Sea island
 cotton procured from Queensland has failed. Coffee plants

(1) F.E. Lawes. L.M.S., B.39, F.6., J.B., 19 November 1887

are not yet up. The hat market may drop at any time and copra is a precarious crop. We need a new commodity for the world market to increase the London Mission Society contributions". The role was not restricted to demanding and accepting annual contributions to the funds.

The most profitable new industry on Niue also owed its introduction indirectly to the Mission. In the eighteen-nineties one of the teacher's wives who had been to the Tokelau Islands and learnt to make hats from pandanus leaves taught the Niuean women the art.⁽¹⁾ The industry developed tremendously especially in the early twentieth century and this is still a production of importance to the Niuean economy.

It is clear that W.G. Lawes' claim that "the whole of the commercial development is due to the Mission"⁽²⁾ is a justifiable exaggeration. Increasingly the traders moved in to exploit the production and markets created but the role of innovator and stimulant to production beyond the individual requirements of the Niuean was filled by the Mission.

Before this subject of the influence of the Mission on the whole life of Niue is left it should be noted that there were never any but Congregational missionaries on Niue. Theocratic insulation might be broken down by an influx of traders, contacts with passing whalers and with other European ways of life by migrants, but on Niue itself the faith of the people was never troubled by a welter of apparently

(1) King. Lawes, p.40 (2) loc.cit.

conflicting brands of Christianity. The fundamental principle of the London Missionary Society was declared to be its design "not to send Presbyterianism, Independency, Episcopacy, or any other form of church order and government... but the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, to the heathen; and that it shall be left (as it ought to be left) to the minds of the persons whom God may call into the fellowship of his Son from among them, to assume for themselves such form of church government as to them shall appear most agreeable to the word of God".⁽¹⁾

The Wesleyans did not apparently display any enthusiasm for proselytizing Niue but both Seventh Day Adventists and Roman Catholics did. The threat of 'Popish priests' was first held up to the LMS by George Lawes in 1863, but this was probably only a means of bringing pressure to bear to expand the Mission on Niue.⁽²⁾

Thirty years later Rev. J.H. Cullen, relieving Frank Lawes for a short period, records the attempt by the Adventists to "proselytize", the arrangement made with the people of Avatele to return, and the subsequent repudiation by the rulers of the island. The motivating force behind the repudiation is undoubted: Cullen expresses no regrets at the incident and, perhaps maliciously, contends that the Adventists were trying to sell repeating rifles.⁽³⁾

Three years later Frank Lawes is "discounting" the

(1) 'Fundamental Principle of the L.M.S.', prefacing Williams' Missionary Enterprises

(2) W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., B.29, F.4., J.D., 29 May 1863

(3) J.H. Cullen, L.M.S., B.42, F.7, J.C., 9 November 1893

visit from the Adventists but is in fear of the Jesuits "who have tried more than once to get here and are now watching for an opportunity to step in".⁽¹⁾ Whether the Jesuits or other Roman Catholics ever in fact tried to land on Niue itself and establish a mission is not revealed.

No other denomination, Protestant or otherwise, was to be accepted on Niue for many a year after this. Therein lay that "cause of future dissension",⁽²⁾ which the wise framers of the London Mission Society's fundamental principle had sought to avoid by enjoining tolerance in its agents.

(1) F.E. Lawes. L.M.S., B.44., F.2., J.D., 16 April 1896
 (2) Williams. loc.cit.

CHAPTER XIV

Niue and the Great Powers

On 21 April 1900 a plenipotentiary of the British Government, Basil Thomson, signed a treaty of cession with King Tongia. The British flag was raised to the masthead at Alofi with impressive ceremony before a wondering crowd of Niueans, and a long felt wish of the missionary was fulfilled - the true wishes of the Niueans themselves are less easily discernible. Niue thereby became a Protectorate of Britain.

The first occasion on which the Niueans showed an interest in such an institution was as early as 1859. It was concluded above (p.160) that the seed had been sown by the Samoan teachers or one of the missionary visitors - although the manner in which Turner says he handled the request for information as to how to go about obtaining a protectorate suggests that he was not himself a prime instigator. "I said that it was not likely that Britain would grant their request; still it could do no harm to make known their wishes, only they must do it, not through the missionaries, but through some of H.B.M. official representatives - say the British Consul at Samoa, or the Commander

of any H.B.M. ship which may touch at the island".¹ Apparently nothing further was done on this occasion.

The missionaries emphasized the English connection frequently in the course of their duties. Thus in 1863 the first week of the year was put aside for prayer and one of the days was set aside for prayers for Christian brethren in England.² Following the visit of the Peruvian slavers in the same year, Rev. W.W. Gill, who had subsequently touched at Niue and ascertained the facts of the matter, asked through the Society's home office for British Government action in controlling the traffic.³

A German interest in Niue was first manifested in 1863 when "C.A. Unshelm, Esq. of Apia" visited Niue three times for the purpose of trading with the Niueans.⁴ Unshelm was an agent of the famous German firm, J.C. Godeffroy and Son of Hamburg, and in 1866 another of their agents established a trading store on Niue. The firm failed in 1879, as Frank Lawes recorded, but by 1883 he was requesting permission (successfully) to deal with Sudsee Inseln zu Hamburg Factorie - a "German firm who are annoyed at not being asked to deal with mission produce".⁵ In 1884 H.W. Patterson was established as the Niuean agent for Messrs. Godeffroy and Son again.⁶ The German interest in Niue represented by the

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1. G. Turner. S.S.J., B.10, 151, 12 December 1859
 2. W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., B.29, F.4., J.D., 29 May 1863
 3. W.W. Gill. L.M.S., B.29, F.3., J.C., 18 March 1863
 4. W.G. Lawes. L.M.S., B.29, F.4., J.D., 20 October 1863
 5. F.E. Lawes. L.M.S., B.37, F.5., J.B., 9 March 1883
 6. F.E. Lawes L.M.S., B.38, F.4., J.D., 22 April 1884

presence of German trading firms was to persist until 1899.

British naval vessels visited Niue occasionally in these years and Commodore Goodenough for one gave much gratuitous advice to the Niueans on many subjects but the question of a British protectorate was not raised - or no result came of it if it was.

The visit of Sir Arthur Gordon, High Commissioner in Fiji, in November 1879 did not publicly alter the international status of Niue but a rather nebulous understanding was arrived at which seems to have been only a few steps away from outright protection - indeed it is possible that it was some form of protection which Sir Arthur had in mind but for an unknown reason failed to formalize. In his memoirs,¹ he says that he had a meeting with the king and patus and he alleges that they "accepted the agreement I proposed"². Mr Head, the English trader who had settled on Niue following the wreck of a missionary ship in 1867, is said to have "accepted commission as Resident" and then Gordon went back to the Lawes' house "to make it out" ("it" was presumably Mr Head's commission). In the event, as Basil Thomson recorded,³ the letter of appointment had not arrived twenty-three years later. In appointing Mr Head as Niuean registrar to the Consul in Tonga following the extension of British protection to Niue in 1900, Thomson says that Lord Stanmore (Gordon) had offered him "a similar post" in 1879.⁴ Perhaps Sir Arthur was dissuaded from taking steps to formalize the "agreement"

1. Sir A.H. Gordon (Lord Stanmore). Fiji: Records of Private and of Public Life, 1875-1880, vol. iv, Edinburgh 1912, p. 130

2. ibid.

3. Thomson. S.I., p. 66

4. ibid.

by realization of the extent of the German interest in Niue or perhaps he was put out a little by the attitude of the Niueans for he wrote that although they showed gratitude and "accepted the agreement I proposed" they also showed "much suspicion".

The agreement was apparently only an oral one. In a speech recorded by Frank Lawes for future reference (see Appendix) Sir Arthur is purported to have said that he would not countenance any claim by an Englishman to land on Niue unless the Niueans themselves admitted and recognized the claim. Having commended the Niuean laws prohibiting the sale of spirits or land he concludes with this rather curious statement: "Though these laws are good, you are weak, and some of those who could upset them may be strong. What then I would propose to you is that you should promise and engage yourselves to the Queen of England not to break or change these laws without her consent. She is very strong, and by this means you will share her strength. If you are threatened or attempts (are?) made to persuade, or compel you to change these laws, you can (say?) 'We dare not, we have promised the Queen. We cannot change these laws without her consent'. Thus any evil result (sic) which might otherwise attend your refusal will be turned away from you". This strange formula, a sort of unilateral self-deceiving contract stopping short of a surrender of complete sovereignty, was not subsequently regarded by the British Government as establishing a formal link with Niue and has little significance in the light of subsequent events.

That Frank Lawes considered the speech of some real significance however is evidenced by the fact that he thought

fit to preserve it* and later use it in support of a petition requesting a British protectorate. Perhaps he also had some idea of waving it in the face of any non-English-speaking Frenchman or German who appeared to be entertaining pretensions in regard to Niue. Lawes later embellished the matter in saying that Sir Arthur had agreed to help enforce the liquor law and fine any Englishmen breaking it £10.¹ **

This whole episode of Sir Arthur Gordon's visit is rather strange and he in large degree invited the later accusation by F.J. Moss that he had "tried to induce the natives to add themselves to his dominions".² Moss' reason for what he calls a respectful decline of a remedy worse than the disease on the part of the Niueans (Sir Arthur himself says that they accepted "the agreement", but they are not talking of the same thing), that the Niueans had heard of "the vain regrets of the people of Rotumah

* There seems little reason to doubt the authenticity of the speech as recorded. The missionary was a man of integrity and the speech is said to have been read to the king and rulers. It was not just an ad lib affair and could have been preserved in original form (see Frank Lawes' note of 3 November 1887 accompanying the petition of that date, in the Appendix).

** This power was extended in the Pacific Islands Protection Act, 1875.

1 F.E. Lawes. L.M.S., B.44, F.2, J.D., 16 April 1896

2 F.J. Moss. Through Atolls and Islands in the Great South Sea, London, 1889, pp.9-12.

who had been persuaded into taking this course" is however rather unlikely.*

That Britain herself did not regard Sir Arthur Gordon's visit as in any way establishing a formal link between herself and Niue, or not a binding one at least, is illustrated by the negotiations which took place in Berlin in the months before 6 April 1866. On that date Britain and Germany settled, for the interim anyway, conflicts which had arisen following German expansion in the Pacific by agreeing to a demarcation of spheres of influence. Article VI of the Convention excluded Samoa, Tonga and Niue which were "to form a neutral region".¹

The Convention was to remain in force until the signature of the Samoan Convention in 1899, but this detail did not inhibit successive kings of Niue from petitioning the British Government to establish a protectorate. In 1887 Fataaiki wrote to Queen Victoria through the British High Commissioner and Consul General for the Western Pacific in this vein: "We desire to pray your Majesty and your Majesty's kingdom if it be your pleasure, to stretch out towards us your mighty hand that Niue may hide herself in it, and be safe.....We leave it however with you to do

* It was not until 14 July of this year of 1879 that the signature of the Rotuman chiefs had been secured to a 'deed of cession' and it was not until a month after he had visited Niue that Sir Arthur went to Rotuma and was enabled² to 'establish religious and social peace' on the island². There was hardly time for the "vain regrets" to have arisen and besides, communications between Rotuma and Niue were not exactly frequent.

1. G.H. Scholefield. The Pacific: Its Past and Future, London 1919, p. 104

2. W.P. Morrell. Britain in the Pacific Islands, Oxford, 1960, p. 169

what seemeth to you best. If ~~you~~you do(sic) send the British flag (to protect us), that is good; or if it be your will to send a (sic) Deputy Commissioner to reside on this island that also is g-o-o-d". (See Appendix for full text). The reasons given for the forwarding of the request were that they were "afraid lest some other powerful nation should come and trouble us, and take possession of our island, as some islands in this quarter of the world have been taken by great nations" and also that: "This land is enlightened by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, made known to us by subjects of your kingdom therefore we present the aI (?) petition". The King's letter was translated by Frank Lawes and for good measure he sent along a copy of Sir Arthur Gordon's address in 1879 in an accompanying letter. Lawes commented in the letter that: "The interest then taken in the people by H.B.M. Representative has encouraged them to hope for a Protectorate. The desire however is not of recent growth. Twenty five years ago the chiefs met together and agreed unanimously to ask for British Protection." (This latter reference is presumably to the request made of George Turner in 1859, twenty-eight years previously, although there remains the possibility of an unrecorded resolution in 1862).

There can be few doubts about who was primarily responsible for this petition in the light of the above letter, the actual text of the petition and Lawes' report of the matter in the following year. Having noted that the king question had been shelved for the present he goes on: "A more serious affair is the German movement in Samoa. Niue is spoken of as a

dependency of Samoa, than which statement nothing could be further from the truth, but the leading men here are anxious and have applied for British protection. Their petition has been sent to England by the High Commissioner, and we are waiting to hear the result".¹ The only comment to be made is that the missionary was the "leading" man on Niue.

Her Majesty's reply in 1888 was in the negative and apparently referred to the Anglo-German Convention of 1886 for in 1895, when Fataaiki again petitioned for the flag of Great Britain to float over Niue, acknowledgment is made of the existence of the agreement and the excuse for re-presentation of the request is "lest that agreement be no longer valid". (See Appendix). Again the missionary sent an accompanying letter, noting that the desire of "the king and some others" for the Flag has not lessened and calling attention to "the unsettled condition of Samoa". The acting governor of Fiji intimated that the request could not be entertained as the Anglo-German Convention was still in force.² Fataaiki's second letter may not in fact have been forwarded to Britain. Lawes was not very happy about the reply and his motive is clear in his report of 20 November that the King saw, as the people did not, that Niue was not likely to be left alone much longer and that as it was a choice of two evils they should choose England "the least (sic) rather than any other powers".³ It is revealing that the people were said to be "pleased" at

1 F.E. Lawes. L.M.S., B.40, P.3, J.C., 28 February 1858

2 F.E. Lawes. L.M.S., B.49, 20 November 1895 (Film 68)

3 ibid.

the unforthcoming reply from Fiji.

One writer¹ says that another petition went forward on 12 February 1898 but this is not recorded elsewhere and was not mentioned in Tongia's recapitulation of past action contained in his petition of 10 October 1899. Before this* Frank Lawes had "stirred up the king" to write to the High Commissioner in Fiji requesting his help, in accordance with the purported undertaking by Sir Arthur Gordon in 1879, to help enforce the liquor law which a Tongan firm was then breaking.²

The last petition for a British protectorate was framed on 10 October and again was presented on the chance that the 1886 agreement "be no longer valid". (See Appendix). The only new element is the additional reason for requiring protection: that the laws regarding sale of land and spiritous liquors "may remain in force for ever" and the land enjoy "peace and prosperity". The traders were apparently still worrying Tongia and possibly the missionary, although the extent of their misdemeanours was not very great compared with those elsewhere.

A month after this last petition the 1886 Convention was indeed no longer valid and by the Samoa Convention of 14 November 1899 Germany renounced in favour of Great Britain her rights in Tonga and Niue among other islands.³ It is only realistic to add that the supplications of Fataaiki and Tongia had played little part in determining that Niue should go to Britain. Niue was a pawn

* see above p.183

1 Smith. Niue, p.89

2 F.E. Lawes. L.M.S., B.44., F.2, J.C., 16 April 1897

3 Morrell. op.cit. p.309

in the negotiations over the partition of Samoa.

In a postscript to a letter of 12 December 1899, Frank Lawes observed laconically that: "You will have seen that in the grab all policy of the Great Powers Niue has fallen to England. Of this we are glad".⁽¹⁾ He added that it would probably not take effect at once for the High Commissioner in Fiji had replied promptly to Tongia's petition on 1 November, a fortnight before the signature of the Samoan Convention, and referred him to former replies to like petitions from the late king.

Any doubts were dispelled by the signature of the treaty of cession on 21 April 1900 and the hoisting of the Matini Peritania. It should be pointed out that the reason why Britain "took thirteen years to think it [protection] over"⁽²⁾ and give its consent was more probably because of the provisions of the Anglo-German Convention of 1886 and the Samoan Convention of 1899 than because of some higher motive or the "more precisely worded" second letter* from Niue as Basil Thomson implies.⁽³⁾ This may have been an "object lesson" of the way in which the British "blunder into Empire" but the lesson it taught in this case was not what Basil Thomson supposed.

* actually the third letter

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- (1) F.E. Lawes. L.M.S., 12 December 1899, B.45, Film 63
 - (2) Thomson. S.I., p.3.
 - (3) Thomson. S.I., p.3

Six weeks after Thomson had proclaimed the protectorate the Rt. Hon. R.J. Seddon visited Niue in the course of his well-known health cruise among the islands. He met the King and Fono¹ and remarked appreciatively on leaving that he found the people "innocent". On 17 October Lord Ranfurly proclaimed British sovereignty over Niue. In effect he prepared the way for annexation to New Zealand but such was not the understanding of the Niueans. The legal refinements only served to confuse them and so when Percy Smith arrived in 1901² and when a Parliamentary delegation made a tour in 1903³ they were told by practically all from King Tongia downwards, that they had understood that Governor Ranfurly had accepted that they wished to be connected with Great Britain directly, not New Zealand or Rarotonga. They wished to be "annexed to Great Britain, and not in any way to be connected with any part of her dominions".⁴

A document which provided some legal basis, though a thin one, for the New Zealand annexation of Niue was that signed by the five arikis of Rarotonga on 6 September 1900⁵. The arikis listed most of the Cook Islands in a request for inclusion in the federation with New Zealand and at the bottom of the list

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- 1 Anon. (E. Tregear?) The Rt. Hon. R.J. Seddon's Visit to Tonga, Fiji, Savage Island and the Cook Islands, May 1900, Wellington 1900, p.201.
 - 2 S.P. Smith to Governor Ranfurly, 11 October 1901. A.J.H.R. vol.1, 1902,A3, p.31.
 - 3 Delegation visit, A.J.H.R. vol 1, 1903, A-3B, p.27
 - 4 ibid
 - 5 A.J.H.R., 1900, vol.1, A-3J

added "...if possible, Niue". They ask this they say because the inhabitants of the islands in question are "of the same race as ourselves, and are, we believe, already British subjects". The right of Rarotonga arikis to speak thus for the Niueans existed on very thin grounds. What had moved them to include Niue then? The king and rulers early expressed their distaste of New Zealand annexation as we saw in the preceding paragraph, and although the missionary did accept this annexation once inevitable and indeed welcomed it eventually, he had always envisaged British annexation and almost certainly preferred it*. The link with Rarotonga through the Federal Council was afterward abhorred by all¹. Since the federation idea was Seddon's, and it was Gudgeon's pressure which helped the arikis to decide to petition,² the inclusion of Niue in this document is probably attributed to an initiative of one of these two, most likely Seddon following his visit to Niue.

Whatever the facts of this aspect of the matter, the New Zealand House of Representatives voted on 29 September 1900, amidst the greatest enthuseasm, to include Niue and the Cook Islands within the boundaries of New Zealand. On 11 June 1901, Lord Ranfurly read a proclamation in Auckland which put this decision into effect, desires of the Niuean people notwithstanding.

* The suspicion of Morrell (op.cit, p.295,footnote) that the inclusion of Niue in the Rarotongan arikis' petition was due to London missionary influence is probably misplaced, unless the missionaries on the Cook Islands itself dreamed the idea up.

1 F.E. Lawes. L.N.S. B.41, Film 65, 1 December 1902; and AJHR VOL.1, 1903,A-3E. 2. Morrell. op.cit

New Zealand's long-standing aspirations in the islands of the Pacific, harboured since the days of its own establishment as a British colony and stimulated and channelled by Julius Vogel, George Grey, Robert Stout and Richard John Seddon, were in part assuaged¹: it remained to be seen how these aspirations would be translated into political reality on the islands themselves.

1. A. Ross. New Zealand Aspirations in the Pacific in the Nineteenth Century, Ph.D. dissertation, Cambridge University, 1949.

EPILOGUE

The following several years witnessed a succession of administrative blunders in relation to Niue on the part of the New Zealand Government, ranging from a lack of instructions to Percy Smith in the later months of 1901¹ to the annulment on a technical detail of the laws he had enacted with the Niue Council, and a failure to ensure that Niue was in fact represented on the Federal Council in Rarotonga.² In the person of the New Zealand Resident were deposited all formal executive and judicial powers - a contravention of a great principle of English constitutional practice and a potentially dangerous concentration of power in the hands of one man.

The welcome which the missionary initially extended to the New Zealand annexation was quickly dissipated by the demonstration of incompetence. Frank Lawes had acquiesced in the emergence of the administrative organs he had in great part inspired to a position where they could stand in the eyes of an annexing power as the only recognizable depositaries of

1 S.P. Smith to Governor Ranfurly, 6 December 1901, A.J.H.R., vol. 1, 1902, A3.

2 A.J.H.R., vol.1, 1903, A-3B

of the peoples' will. He witnessed the transfer of formal political power to a re-constituted Council of Niue and the initial blunders of the New Zealand administration. By December 1902 he reported that what he had written the previous year about the new government having made a good start and being favourably regarded by the people was premature¹. He inveighs against the impracticability of Niue being administered from the Cook Group "six hundred miles to windward" (this decision was subsequently reversed and Niue administered directly from Wellington), he alleges that the new liquor laws are being circumvented, and is annoyed that talk of the New Zealand Government sending a teacher to Alofi reached him indirectly: "The 'Resident' can only walk about on crutches made in the L.M.S. factory, yet he did not think it necessary to talk over this matter with me.....". He goes on: "I need not write fully on this subject for all the New Zealand Government's works are prospective. The 'Flag' has floated over us for two years yet all improvements are to come. If the above is a sample of the rate of progress to be observed for all time, I will be able to talk over the education question with you before anything is done....." The missionary who relieved Lawes for a time in 1904 was even more disenchanted with the new Administration and noting that the LMS contributions are being maintained he says: "So you see

1 F.E. Lawes. L.M.S., B.47, Film 65, 1 December 1902

we are not without encouragement. 'The Lord reigneth' as well as Mr Seddon ('King Richard 1st of New Zealand')". He concludes: "New Zealand rule as administrator here has not been a blessing".¹

The issue was joined. A mission organisation which had brought peace and order to Niue and had enabled and in great part nurtured the transition to an almost civilized state without disastrous convulsion, was unwilling to see its achievements undermined by an inefficient or overbearing Administration. Over the next few decades the Congregational missionaries of the London Mission Society were to retain their religious and educational monopoly on Niue (the latter not entirely by choice) and were to retain also their indirectly-wielded political powers. The running battle over working the unrefrigerated banana boat on a Sunday, in which both Church and Administration displayed marked qualities of intolerance, was a typical facet of the greater struggle between the Congregational missionary and the New Zealand Resident to command ultimate authority on Niue.

1 A.H. Davies. L.M.S. B.48, Film 67, 27 December 1904

A P P E N D I X

Copies of petitions requesting the establishment of a British protectorate on Niue Island*

(A)

Niue, or Savage Island

Novr. 3. 1887.

To

His Excellency Sir C Mitchell C. M. G. Her Majesty's
High Commissioner and Consul General for the Western Pacific.

Sir,

The following is a trans(lation) of letter written
by the chi(efs) and rulers of this island to your Excellency
and through you to Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain
and Ireland

Niue.

Novr. 2. 1887.

To

Her Majesty Queen Victoria.

1. Queen of Great Britain, the fi(rst) kingdom of all
the kingdom(s) of the world.

2. We, the chiefs, and rulers, an(d) Governors of Niue-
Fekai desire to ask your Majesty and your Majesty's government,
what m(ay) be your will concerning this l(and) of ours, the
island of Niue?

* The originals are held in the Central Archives of Fiji and the
Western Pacific High Commission, Suva. Certain of these are
damaged at the edges and the letters or words here enclosed
within round brackets are based on conjecture only. Brackets
in the original text are here made square.

3. We desire to pray your Majesty and your Majesty's kingdom if it be your pleasure, to stretch out towards us yo(ur) mighty hand that Niue ma(y) hide herself in it, and be (safe?)

4. We are afraid lest some other powerful nation sh(ould) Come and trouble us, and (take) possession of our island, as some islands in this quarter of the world have been taken by great nations.

5. On account of this (we) are troubled. We leave it (how?) ever with you to do what seemeth to you best. If y(ou) you [sic] send the British flag [to protect us], that is good; or if it be your will to send a a [sic] Deputy Commissioner to reside on th(is) island that also is g-o-o-d.

6. Our king Tuitonga died on the 13th of July last, but before his death he wished to write to the kingdom of Great Britain to beg your Majesty to send the powerful flag of Great Britain to un(furl) in this island of Niue, in order that this small isla(nd) of ours may be strong.

7. It was men from your country that first came to this land to publish the name of the Lord, and t(his) land of Niue-Fekai be(came) enlightened; then this people knew that there wer(e) other lands in the world. On this account the people (of) this island rejoice in you, and in your kingdom. This la(nd) is enlightened by the Gospel (of) Jesus Christ, made known to (us) by subjects of your kingdom therefore we present the al(?) petition.

8. That is all that we h(ave) to say. May your Maj(esty) the Queen of Great Britain, a(nd) your powerful kingdom (be?) blessed to-gether with Niue in the kingdom of Heav(en)

I, 'Fataaiki' wrote this letter.

Translated by F. E Lawe(s)

Missionary. London. M. (S)

Niue, or Savage Island.

Novr 3. 1887

"To

His Excellency Sir, C. Mitchell, C. M. (G)
Her British Majesty's High Commissioner and Consul General
for the Western Pacific.

Sir,

The following is a copy of address of Sir, Arthur, Gordon's translated and read to the king and rulers of Savage Island upon the occasion of His Excellency's visit in Novr 1879. The interest then taken in the people by H.B.M. Representative has encouraged them to hope for a Protectora(te.) The desire however is not of rece(nt) growth. Twenty five years ago the chiefs met together and ag(reed) unanimously to ask for British Protection.

'My Friends'

'It has been in my mind to pay you a visit at (some?) time, for I have a good report of you among all men, and I have much wished to see you.

It has reached my ears tha(t) an Englishman has claimed (?) land in Niue, and that you have been given to understand that I mean to support his claim. This is not true. His pretent(ions) appear to me to be without foundation, and you may rest assured that I shall not countenance any claim, unless you yourselves tell me that it is on(e) you admit and recognize.'

'I am told that you have in Niue two very good and salutary laws; the one, that no land whatever in your i(sland) should be sold to strangers, or leased to them for long period the other that no intoxicating drinks should be sold at all in Niue. These are good law(s) and it is wise and fit that they should be rigidly observe(d.) But no doubt men will come among you who will try to make you break them. The(re?) will be men who covet yo(ur) land and will try to persu(ade) or to frighten you into selling it. If you do so you will l(ose?) all power over your own island and become strangers in it. So too there will be those who will try to make you permi(t) the sale of spirits. If you allow this your race will dwindle away and die out of the land.

(1v)

Though these laws are good, you are weak, and some of those who could u(p)set them may be strong. What then I would propose to you is that you should promise and engage yourselves to the Queen of England not to break or change these laws without her consent. She is very strong, and by this mea(ns) you will share her strength. If you are threatened or attempt(s) made to persuade, or compel you to change these laws, you can (say?) 'We dare not, We have promised th(e) Queen. We cannot change these laws without her consent.' Thus any evil results /sic/ which might otherwise attend your refusal will be turned away from you."

Copied by F. E. Lawes

(B)

Niue or Savage Island.

February 14. 1895.

To

His Excellency Sir John Bates Thurston K.C.M.G.
H.M. High Commissioner Western Pacific.

Sir,

The accompanying letter is from Rulers /Pule/ and King of Niue written and signed by the latter by whose request I have translated the document as literally as possible.

The letter received in 1888 conveying Her Majesty's reply to their prayer for the protection of the British Flag, did not lessen the desire of the king and some others for the Flag /Matini Peritania/. And now in the unsettled condition of Samoa, thinking possibly that the agreement by which Niue was declared neutral ground is no longer in force, they have again addressed Your Excellency on the subject of a Protectorate.

I am

Yours obedtly

Francis E Lawes, Missionary, L.M.S.

(v)

Alofi.

Niue-Fekai.

February 12. 1895.

To

His Excellency Sir John. B. Thurston, C.M.G.
Governor of Fiji and High Commissioner for
the Western Pacific.

To your excellency the Governor of Fiji and the
Ruler of this side of the world. Niue-Fekai again presents
her petition.

In the year A.D. 1887 Niue-Fekai prayed her Majesty
Queen Victoria and her kingdom to stretch forth her strong arm
for Niue to lean upon. Her Majesty's government could not at
that time grant this prayer on account of an agreement made
between the British Ambassador at Berlin and the representatives
of the German Emperor relative to is [sic] lands of the
Pacific. But now lest that agreement be no longer valid we
again present our prayer.

Niue-Fekai is still in the same mind. Desiring that
the flag of Great Britain should float over this island. To
your Excellency the High Commissioner of Western Pacific,
appointed by Her Majesty the Queen of Britain, to rule on this
side of the world we address this petition.

We first made the above request on November 3. 1887.
We again pray for the same favour on this the twelvth [sic]
day of February A.D. 1895. I Fataaiki the king of Niue-Fekai
join with the chiefs and people in praying for the protection
of the British Flag.

That is all.

May the Lord of Heaven prosper our petition.

I am

Fataaiki.

King of Niue-Fekai.

(v1)

(C)

Alofi,

Niue or Savage Island,

October 16. 1899.

To

His Excellency Sir G. T. M. O'Brien, K.C.M.G.
H.B.M. High Commissioner and Consul General of
the Western Pacific.

Sir,

The accompanying letter from the King of Niue, I
have by his request translated as literally as possible.

Your Excellency, may not have heard that Pataaiki
the king who wrote the former letters, asking for British
protection is dead.

He died Decr. 15. 1896. The writer of accompanying
letter Togia, was made king on June 30. 1898.

I am

Yours obedtly

Francis, E. Lawes.

Missionary of the London Mssy Society.

Uhomotu,

Niue.

October 10. 1899.

To

His Excellency Sir G. T. M. O'Brien, K.C.M.G.
Governor of Fiji and High Commissioner of the
Western Pacific.

Sir,

This is the letter of the King, and chiefs, and rulers of Niue Fekai, to you, the Governor of Fiji, and High Commissioner of the Western Pacific.

On November 3 A.D. 1887, again on February 12. A.D. 1895 Niue prayed Her Majesty Queen Victoria queen of Great Britain and Her great empire, "to stretch out Her strong arm" that Niue Fekai may lean upon it.

But at that time owing to an agreement made by Her Majesty's Ambassador, and the representatives of H.I.H. the Emperor of Germany, at Berlin, relative to the islands of the Pacific, Her Majesty could not grant this petition.

Now however lest that agreement be no longer valid, we again present our prayer.

Niue Fekai still desires the protection of Great Britain. And we, the King, and chiefs, and rulers of Niue Fekai pray Her Majesty Queen Victoria the Queen of Great Britain, through you Her Majestys Representative, appointed by Her Majesty, and the Government of Great Britain, to rule on this side of the world, to hoist the British Flag on this Island of Niue. We also ask your Excellency to appoint a British Representative to reside on our island, to preside over the government of the island. That He may strengthen our hands to keep the law prohibiting the sale of land; and that the law forbidding that spirituous liquors be sold, or

(viii)

given to the people of this island, may remain in force for ever. That the laws may be obeyed, and the land enjoy peace and prosperity. That all may gladly partake of the fruits of peace, which God has made to grow on this Island.

Our respectful greetings to Your Excellency.

That is all.

I am

(signed) "Tongia"

The King of Niue.Fekai.

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A Note on Sources

In a reconstruction of the prehistory of a Polynesian people through study of the traditions and the distribution of culture traits it is important to allow for known contacts between islands in historic times. Niue was initially proselytized in the years 1846 to 1849 by a Niuean convert who had spent a number of years in Samoa. Those who immediately consolidated his work were Samoan pastors. It was not until 1861 that the first European to reside on Niue, a missionary also, landed on the island. In the succeeding forty years many of the young men were employed on other islands for varying periods and by the time the first trained ethnological and anthropological observers came to Niue at the turn of this century, there had been frequent intercourse with other island peoples. Ethnological and anthropological material on Niue must therefore be closely examined for contact ideas absorbed from elsewhere in historic times and such material must always be treated with some circumspection.

Within the limitations imposed by their late advent, the three chief collectors of Niuean traditions and customs, Basil Thomson, S. Percy Smith and Edwin M. Loeb, have left useful records. The versions of the former two accord well in most places and the full traditions and accounts of ancient Niuean customs collected by Smith in particular,

however his interpretation of them may be regarded, are as accurate as are obtainable for Niue. Loeb suffers by comparison both because he went to Niue a quarter of a century later than the two others and also because he seems to have been more than them the butt of intense inter-village rivalries. As he himself says of the wars between Moehegi and Palalagi: "Both the Motu and Tafiti people were eager to furnish me with manuscript in support of their respective views". (History and Traditions of Niue, pp.151-52).

A number of the early missionary visitors were acute observers, especially A.W. Murray and George Turner, and the resident missionaries during the nineteenth century, W.G. Lawes and his younger brother F.E. Lawes, were also unusually interested in the ancient habits and customs of their flock and are reasonably reliable.

Of sources relating to historic times it may be said that missionary accounts are adequate enough (although they would be much more so if the journal written by George Lawes and referred to by his biographer were able to be tracked down). There was a paucity of independent observers visiting Niue in the late nineteenth century - the extant accounts are insufficient to serve as a truly effective supplement and check to missionary records. Niue was still too far off the beaten track for many Polynesian voyagers.

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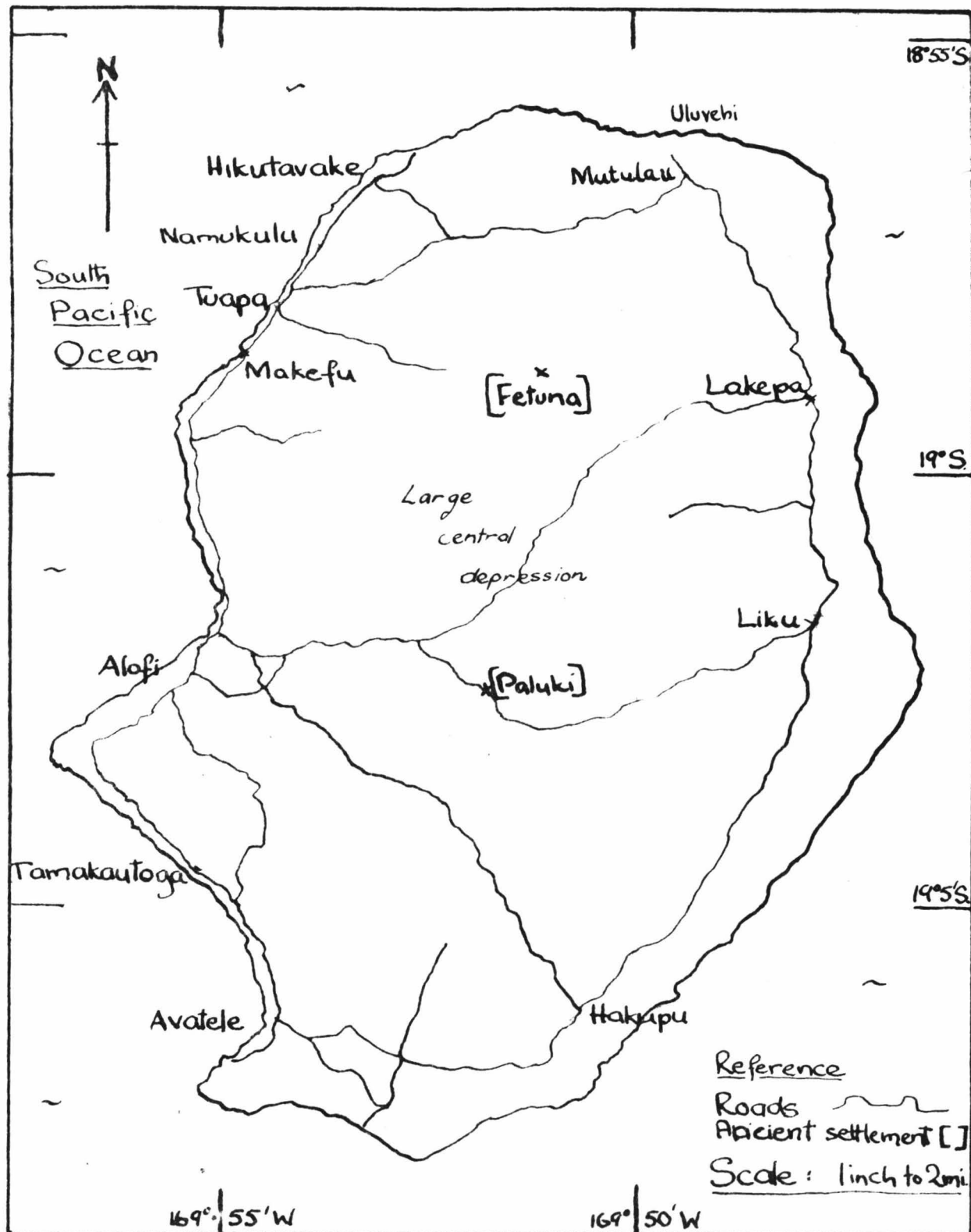
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