SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DYNAMICS IN EARLY MARQUESAN HISTORY

By

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Declaration

Except where otherwise indicated

this thesis is my own work.

Nicholas Thomas
February 1986
Preface and acknowledgements

This study of the early history of the Marquesas Islands in eastern Polynesia involves reconstruction of social relations in parts of the group just before 1800, and deals with early contact transformations, particularly on the islands of Tahuata and Hiva Oa, up to 1842, when the Marquesas were annexed by France. Rather than providing an account of events, the thesis attempts to link information about acts, relationships and notions to wider issues in social analysis and Pacific studies.

Although informed by a stay of five months in French Polynesia, the study is primarily based on research on early published and unpublished accounts of Marquesan life. These sources are discussed in Appendix A.

Place names follow those on the current range of French official charts, except where these fail to reflect more widely established usage. Some readers may be surprised to find the southernmost inhabited island in the group spelt Fatuiva rather than Fatu Hiva. Although there is now some dispute in the islands about the name, reliable nineteenth century writers asserted that the form which I have adopted was correct.1

The bibliography has been divided into unpublished and published source materials, and other works. The second section, of published sources relating to the Marquesas, includes books and periodical articles directly concerned with the Marquesas before about 1843, although some slightly later works (as well as a number related to the history of Fatuiva in the 1850s, which is discussed in chapter 7) are included. The third section of the bibliography covers historical and anthropological studies and some early accounts of places other than the Marquesas which have been cited in the text. A few relevant works not cited are also included. Theses and recent unpublished papers by scholars appear in this section, rather than with the source manuscripts. For published works the Harvard system has been used, while unpublished works are cited by short titles. The name of a writer followed by a date (Caret, 13 May 1840) refers to a letter, although this has been made explicit when confusion with journal entries could occur. Where the name of a letter’s recipient is of some significance, the form Chaulet to Tautain has been used. In some cases it has been desirable to indicate that the publication date of a work differs

1Bicknell, Marquesan papers, 31 January 1859; Chaulet, Notice additionnelle sur l’île Fatuiva.
considerably from that of its composition; in these cases dates are in brackets (Fanning [1924]).

Since I commenced research on Marquesan history in February 1983 I have incurred many debts.

The Australian National University provided facilities, generously funded field and archival work, and made it possible for me to attend conferences in Adelaide in August 1983 and in Suva in June and July 1985. The Commonwealth Department of Education supported me with a Postgraduate Research Award.

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My work would not have been possible without the help of staff at the Mitchell Library, the National Library of Australia, the Outre-Mer section of the Archives Nationales in Paris, the British Library and the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, the Houghton Library at Harvard University, the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Peabody Museum, Salem, the Bancroft Library, Berkeley, and the Bernice P. Bishop Museum in Honolulu.

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In the Department of Pacific and Southeast Asian History, I must first thank Niel Gunson, my supervisor, who has generously devoted much time to advising me generally and reading drafts. I am also grateful to my advisors, Gavan Daws and Roger Keesing, for their comments on various chapters. Dorothy McIntosh and Tony Reid were extremely helpful with practical and administrative matters. I also thank members of both the Pacific and Southeast Asian History and Anthropology departments who attended and commented upon papers I presented at seminars.

Special thanks to Margaret Jolly for her intellectual help and encouragement.
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Abstract

This study is concerned with the early social and political history of the Marquesas Islands in eastern Polynesia. This history is seen in part as a cultural process, and as one which cannot be dissociated from a wider Polynesian context of development and transformation.

The first part reconstructs indigenous Marquesan social relations, drawing particularly upon evidence from Taiohae, Nukuhiva, and Tahuata. Although Marquesan societies could be described as 'chiefdoms', chiefs lacked potency because they were not associated with vital prosperity rituals - arguably the basis of chiefly power in many parts of Polynesia. Various other individuals, particularly landholders and shamanistic priests, appeared to have benefitted from an erosion of chiefly power. The interpenetration of a diffuse power structure and gender relations is examined.

In chapter 4 it is argued that a particular system existed in which the process of competitive feasting played a key role in producing and maintaining prestige. Variations within the Marquesas are examined. In chapter 5 the apparent association between weak chiefs and powerful shamanistic priests is discussed. On the basis of evidence from various parts of Polynesia it is argued that important shamans are generally found where political devolution - specifically, a contraction of chiefly agency - has taken place. Where a strong ideology of hierarchical chiefly encompassment persists, shamans are non-existent or marginal.

Chapters 6 and 7 deal with the transformations of the system during the first decades of intensive contact. Captain David Porter, who occupied the islands and involved himself in local disputes in 1813, was perceived as a conqueror chief and caused a new interest to develop on the part of Marquesan chiefs in links with Europeans and European weapons. The consequences of this reorientation on Tahuata in the 1830s and on Fatuiva in the 1850s are discussed.

Chapter 8 moves to a consideration of the consequences of famine for the Marquesan polity and the longer term process of social transformation. Marquesan society is seen to reflect an earlier process of stratification which entailed the formation of a group of landholders subordinate to chiefs which was followed by an erosion of chiefly agency leaving unequal economic relations intact. The pertinence of this process for
gender relations is considered, and theories of Polynesian social evolution are reconsidered in the light of the Marquesan material.

The prologue and epilogue explore the peculiarities of the Marquesan case in the context of myth. Some Marquesan stories of predatory female characters reflect a wider concern with invasion, displacement and ravaging - a preoccupation which is explicable given periodic social crises involving the breakdown of reciprocal relationships.
# Table of Contents

Declaration ii  
Preface and acknowledgements iii  
Abstract vi  
Prologue 1  
1. Introduction: prehistory, geography, and social groups 6  
**I. EARLY MARQUESAN SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DYNAMICS** 22  
2. Chieftainship, social relations, and hierarchy 22  
3. Unstable categories: tapu and gender 45  
4. Feasting and warfare 65  
5. Tau’a and kaha: ritual agency and the diffusion of power 86  
**II. SHORT-TERM TRANSFORMATIONS** 107  
6. Opoti: the reorientation of Marquesan chiefly practice 107  
7. Southern Marquesan transformations 118  
**III. LONGER TERM DYNAMICS** 140  
8. Crises and social transformations 140  
Epilogue 156  
Appendix A. Sources 159  
Appendix B. Polyandry and demography 166  
Appendix C. Political unity on 'Ua Pou 169  
Glossary 170  
Abbreviations 171  
Bibliography 172
Prologue

Invasive acts: the story of Kopuhoroto'e

This study is concerned with the early social and political history of the Marquesas Islands in eastern Polynesia. This history is seen in part as a cultural process, and as one which cannot be dissociated from a wider Polynesian context of longer-term development and transformation. The analysis seeks to define the characteristics and structure of hierarchy in the indigenous Marquesan system, and postulates mechanisms and institutions which allowed for, or generated, competition, fluidity, and instability within that hierarchy. Notions, myths, and various events, major and minor, are treated as manifestations of the system, which is seen to change in certain ways during the period leading up to the French annexation of the Marquesas in 1842.

Elements of a Marquesan conception of power and society are implied by narratives concerning ve'ineha'e, savage non-human or semi-human female beings, whose wildness was often expressed in their kidnapping of young handsome men, of small children, in cannibalism, and also in uncontrollable appetites for certain kinds of non-human food. The predatory activities of these figures, which usually hinged upon trickery and impersonation, were often the substance of myths. However, ve'ineha'e were not confined to mythical realms and, along with various other ghosts and spirits, were occasionally propitiated and widely feared. Modern Marquesans say that their parents often warned them about particular paths or gardens thought to be frequented by these or other malevolent beings. In 1923, the ethnographer E.S.C. Handy wrote that

On account of the belief that [ve'ineha'e] were abroad at night, there is now, and probably has always been, very little promenading in the Marquesas by night except by bright moonlight. Today it is fear of vehine hae that makes natives close up their houses as tightly as possible when they sleep.2

1The name, which was probably first recorded by Lieutenant Shillibeer in 1814 (1817: 40), is a contraction of vehine ha'e which simply means a wild or savage woman. Although the word was sometimes glossed as 'spectre' or 'phantôme' in foreigners' accounts, there is no evidence that ve'ineha'e were considered to be the spirits of particular dead individuals. In more recent times they have been confused to some extent with another category of malevolent female spirits called hanaua, the ghosts of women who had died during childbirth (Delmas 1927: 35; Handy 1923: 253-56).

2Handy 1923: 256.
Female figures with names cognate with *ve'inaha'e* do not appear to be found elsewhere in Oceania, but there was a specific type of savage woman who played comparable roles in various eastern Polynesian stories. We encounter one of these characters in a myth about a woman called Maiotera, her husband, and Kopuhoroto'e, a *ve'inaha'e*.

This man Tuteanuanua and his wife Maiotera lived in their country, Teahuoto. The man made a canoe for going fishing, and when it was finished they both went to fish with lines. They paddled and arrived at a fishing place. They fished but did not catch anything. There was a *ve'inaha'e* there who had tied their hook to a piece of coral. They pulled and pulled but it would not come up. The man told his wife: 'Dive and get our hook.' The woman said, 'I won't get there.' The husband: 'Yes, it is shallow.' The wife: 'If I dive and a woman comes up in front of the canoe, don't let her come in. If she comes up in front of you, that will be me. There is a *ve'inaha'e* here called Kopuhoroto'e. We can't get the hook because she has attached it to the coral.' Then the woman dived, the real wife was below the canoe. The *ve'inaha'e* came to the surface before the canoe. Tuteanuanua told her, 'I won't take you, you are a *ve'inaha'e*.' She disappeared and then came to the surface behind the canoe with the face of the real wife. She said, 'Take me quick, let's go, or we'll be caught by Kopuhoroto'e.' She climbed into the canoe; the man paddled and away they went. Then the real wife reached the surface. She called after them: 'Come back, canoe! That's Kopuhoroto'e, you cannot make love with her, I'm Maiotera here.' The real wife was pregnant but so was the *ve'inaha'e*. They kept paddling, arrived at the beach, went back to the house, and lived together. The current took Maiotera away.

In another valley there was a man without a woman, who lived by himself (*he enana tokotahi*), who raised the pigs of Tuteanuanua and Maiotera. The current brought Maiotera to this valley. She hid because she had lost her clothes in the sea. Soon after the *hakai puaka* (pig raiser) had brought the pigs' food, they began to grunt because the woman had eaten their food herself. The *hakai puaka* was surprised that they had seemed to have eaten so quickly, so he hid and watched the next time that he brought food. He saw the woman chase away the pigs and take the food. The *hakai puaka* saw that it was the wife of Tuteanuanua and asked her why she had come and why she was eating the pigs' food. She said, 'I was left in the sea by Tu. He now lives with a *ve'inaha'e*.' The man went and got a *hami* (cloth) for her. They went to the house, he gave her good food. They lived together, Maiotera became the wife of the *hakai puaka*. Later her child, a boy, was born. They lived there, the boy grew up. Occasionally Tuteanuanua came to get a pig to eat. Then the young woman hid; only the *hakai puaka* showed himself. Kopuhoroto'e never had her child; the real child was ten years old.

One day the boy went wandering and came to the valley of his father, where there were many children, who he met. They went and told Tuteanuanua that there was a young man, they did not know where he came from. The boy was brought to him, and Tuteanuanua found out his name, that his father was the *hakai puaka*, that his mother was Maiotera. He told the boy to go and bring his mother back, having realised that the woman he lived with was a *ve'inaha'e*. He went and found her and kicked her in the stomach. She ran to the sea and gave birth to an eel, a black sea urchin, a piece of coral, and a pencil urchin. Then the man brought his wife back; she and the *hakai puaka* cried bitterly; they had lived together for a long time. When she came back to Tu, he cried a lot. Maiotera asked him, 'Where is the woman who was with you?' Tu said, 'I have sent her away, she was a demon (*tiaporo*).³ There were all sorts of sea things in

³*Tiaporo* is a missionary neologism (from *diabolo*).
her stomach; I never knew she was a ve‘ineha‘e.’ His wife said, ‘How did you not know when ten years passed without her giving birth? It takes nine months to have a child. I called to you, “Canoe, come back! It’s Kopuhoroto‘e. You cannot make love with her!”’ Said Tu, ‘You’re right, how did I not know I lived with a ve‘ineha‘e?’

This story is essentially about invasion and displacement: the movement of the ve‘ineha‘e from outside society into the group, and the expulsion of the true wife (te vehine toitoi). While both the husband, Tuteanuanua, and the hakai puaka are relatively inactive, the positions of the women shift from one oppositional relationship to another (see figure). Initially the ve‘ineha‘e is isolated at sea, external to society; the true wife is socially bound on land, in the ordinary human world. While the wife is forced to dive, the ve‘ineha‘e rises to the surface. She tricks the husband and enters the canoe, while Maiotera is left at sea. They paddle away, while Maiotera is taken by the current; their purposive action is contrasted with her uncontrolled drifting. The ve‘ineha‘e is taken to the house, while Maiotera is isolated without clothes and has to steal pigs’ food. Thus while the ve‘ineha‘e has forced her way into society, Maiotera has been thrown outside it. She is restored at least to its fringes by her and her husband’s servant, a raiser of pigs. The fact that he lived alone (tokotahi) is an expression of low status, since dependants or landless people often did not have a proper marriage or a separate household. It is also significant that he is referred to throughout as the hakai puaka, emphasising his particular role as a servant. Hence, two abnormal marriages are established: Tu and the ve‘ineha‘e, and Maiotera and her servant. The former is clearly unnatural but socially overt; although the latter is merely semi-legitimate it is hidden from society.

Although both women are pregnant, only the real wife has her child. The growth of the son corresponds with Kopuhoroto‘e’s unnaturally prolonged pregnancy. This unresolved situation persists for ten years and is only altered by the return of the son to his father’s valley, to the social group. The father realises that he has been deceived and kicks the ve‘ineha‘e in the stomach. This precipitates a dramatic expression of her non-humanity: she gives birth to things from the bottom of the sea, returns to the water herself and does not come back. The dissolution of the second improper union and a restoration of the original situation becomes possible.

Two elements of the narrative - the fact that Tu took Kopuhoroto‘e home despite his wife’s reappearance, and his failure to realise that she should not have remained pregnant for fully ten years - emphasize the deceptive capacities of ve‘ineha‘e.

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4 Slightly abridged from Lavondes 1964: 25-32.

5 In most texts the name of a male character, and expressions such as hua ‘enana (this person) or te vahana (the man or the husband), would be used indiscriminately.
Versions of this story, featuring a female ‘ghost’ called Kio, were ‘well known throughout the eastern Tuamotuan archipelago’, which is not surprising since those islands clearly had some contact with the Marquesas in prehistoric times. The paths of the female spirit and the real wife are opposed less precisely in these texts, but the basic process of displacement is the same.

The couple go fishing and catch quite a number of fish. The husband, Tu, decides that they have enough, but Kuhi-Kiave, the wife, dives once more. At this point the spirit comes to the surface, impersonating the wife, even having swallowed coral to appear pregnant. Kuhi-Kiave also comes to the surface and they argue about which is the true wife, but Tu is deceived and paddles away with Kio. Kuhi-Kiave swims away; in one instance she goes to land at another place; and in another keeps swimming towards the east and is cared for by the sun. Kio goes back to Tu’s house, but his children become aware of the deception because they are fed excrement and have only rainwater to drink. When Tu realises that he has been tricked he shuts Kio up in the house and sets fire to it. She is burnt and the pieces of shell and coral inside her explode. The sons then go in search of their mother but find that she has become like a spirit, who lives in a cave, or in the sea; however they capture her and take her back and the original situation is restored.

In this version the invasive female spirit immediately displays her anti-social and non-human character by providing non-food or anti-food. The consequence of displacement is more extreme than in the Marquesan variant, although the woman is ultimately brought back. While Maiotera occupies a largely uninhabited valley with her servant husband - a place intermediate between the genuinely social inhabited valley and the sea from which the ve’ineha’e comes - Kuhi-Kiave goes either to a very distant part of the sea or to a cave, the paradigmatic residence of semi-human beings.

Contrasting versions of this myth were recorded from as far away as the outliers of Rennell and Bellona, south of Guadalcanal. In these stories, which are related more closely to the Tuamotuan than the Marquesan variants, the female spirit is simply called a god (atua). The husband dives while the female spirit comes into the canoe and throws out the real wife, who then drifts off to another land and brings up two sons. They cry because they have no father and are sent off in search of him by their mother. They find him and he gives a raw banana to the older brother and a cooked one to the younger; when the former observes that his is raw, the younger brother tells him to leave it and shares his own. This provides evidence that the boys are of good character and are in fact the man’s sons. They then burn the false wife and her womb explodes: shells, stones,

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6Emory 1949: 312.
snakes, firewood and *tapa* (barkcloth) beaters are exposed. In one version, further events concern the way in which the husband and true wife are eventually reconciled. Although the key elements of the eastern Polynesian story are maintained, the emphasis is quite different, relating more to an affirmation of fraternal solidarity than the expulsion and return of the wife. It is not surprising that the actual incident of displacement, where the true wife and the female spirit argue about their identities, is presented in an elaborate and detailed way in the Tuamotuan and Marquesan texts, but is reduced to a single phrase in both of the outlier versions.

The basic versions of these myths are no doubt very ancient. However, variants, which differ from island to island and group to group in Polynesia, have obviously evolved locally within the last thousand or two thousand years, and relate in some ways to the development of particular island societies. The Marquesan myths, and to some extent texts from elsewhere in eastern Polynesia, display a pronounced concern with the dynamics of invasion and displacement - which seem intimately associated with problematic circumstances under which sociality or humanity is at risk or at issue. I will argue that through a cluster of symbols these myths express a deeply ambivalent attitude towards an institution central to all Polynesian societies, rule by hereditary chiefs. While such leaders were generally perceived as paternal and benevolent, under some circumstances they became seen more as rapacious despots who stood above and preyed upon society. Such perceptions were manifest in Marquesan culture and practice, although they were not central to it: the political notions of these Polynesians cannot be condensed in a single proverb or even in one chain of associations. Foreign observers and analysts have found Marquesan society as a totality somewhat intractable, perhaps because it ambivalently reflects both centralisation in chieftainship and a diffusion of special competences and capacities. As Greg Dening has observed, ‘in one perspective *haka‘iki* lay at the centre of all social life; in another there was a dispersal of political and economic powers.’ What is referred to was not simply a discontinuity between perceptions and practices: various forms of ritual proficiency had social bases independent of the chieftainship. This apparent paradox of Marquesan history and society is explored in what follows, which eventually brings us back to further consideration of the invasive acts of Kopuhoroto‘e, among others.

8 ‘Kopuhoroto‘e’ is only one of a number of myths which clearly focus upon invasive processes; for another, arguably more extreme example, see ‘Tepoeaheiotaona’ in Handy 1930, and discussion in Thomas n.d.(a).

CHAPTER 1

Introduction: prehistory, geography, and social groups

I

The Marquesas Islands, named 'las Marquesas de Mendoca' by Mendana in 1595, consists of six substantial inhabited islands, and a number of islets, some of which were occasionally visited and possibly intermittently inhabited for the exploitation of certain resources in the period before European contact. The islands are situated between eight and eleven degrees south, and are about 1400 kilometres northeast of Tahiti, while the Hawaiian chain is over 3000 kilometres to the northwest. The closest inhabited islands were atolls in the Tuamotu archipelago, about 450 kilometres to the south and southeast.

The Marquesas have usually been divided by scholars, and by many other Europeans, into northwestern and southeastern groups, consisting respectively of Nukuhiva, 'Ua Pou, and 'Ua Huka, and Hiva Oa, Tahuata, and Fatuiva. Missionary-linguists and other researchers have also assumed that this division corresponded with linguistic and cultural diversity: people in the south said, and say, *fenua*, *'enata*, *hana*, and *ani* for land, person, bay and sky; people in the north *henua*, *'enana*, *haka* and *aki*. Marquesan texts and current (1984) usage, however, suggest that the pattern of past and present dialect differences is somewhat more complex: residents of Hiva Oa appear to have used a mixture of 'southern' and 'northern' forms, while in parts of the northern group, different forms, such as *mongo* and *angi* for shark and sky, instead of *moko* and

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1 Quiros 1904-1905.
2 Dordillon 1904, 1931, 1932. These dictionaries were in fact collective works.
3 Especially some of those collected by Thomas Lawson from a 'priest' named Vehe-iti who resided at Puamau. Handy (1923: 328-329) pointed out that some of these chants are almost certainly Lawson's own compositions; while I share his reservations about some of the material, I believe that at least some of the texts are certainly authentic. Informants at Taiohae recognized the material as old songs, but had great difficulty in understanding them.
4 The only systematic published study of dialect variation thus far is that of Lavondès and Randall (1978).
aki, were current. Variation thus cut across the northwest-southeast dichotomy, which, one might suspect, rather reflects stages in the European discovery of the group. Although Mendana and Cook visited the southeastern islands in 1595 and 1774 the first European visit to the northern group did not take place until 1791. In the first half of the nineteenth century the northwestern islands were often regarded as a separate group, 'the Washington Islands', but there have never been Marquesan categories which divided the islands in this manner.

Although the Marquesas are close to the equator, the presence of cool ocean currents makes the climate comparatively mild, temperatures ranging between 20 and 30 degrees centigrade. The cool currents, and probably also the lack of shallow surrounding shelves, account for the absence of fringing coral reefs; most bays were thus unprotected from heavy seas. 'Wet' and 'dry' seasons, roughly from November to March and April to October, are not clearly marked, although climatic differences between different sides of islands were much more significant. Essentially, southern and eastern areas are wetter, and, particularly in valley bottoms, well vegetated, while northern and western shores are drier, and support little more than grasses and bracken on the slopes. As was the case elsewhere in eastern Polynesia, land fauna was depauperate; the first Polynesian settlers, however, brought with them rats, pigs, dogs, and fowl, among other animals. European pigs, cats, goats and various other animals were introduced by visitors in the first decades of frequent contact, that is, from the 1790s.

Since this study is concerned primarily with the indigenous social system, rather than with later colonial history, the focus must necessarily be upon the earliest period for which there is extensive documentation of indigenous circumstances, namely 1797-1812. From 1813 the visit of Captain David Porter of the U.S. Navy, his occupation of part of Taiohae, and interference in local conflicts on Nukuhiva, had far reaching consequences. Many chiefs oriented themselves towards visiting Europeans, and muskets acquired great significance as weapons and as prestige goods. Some sandalwood trading took place, and

5 The mata'cina'a ('tribe') of Te-ava-angi in Taipi valley, Nukuhiva, was the main group employing this variation, although there is some evidence (Lawson, Songs) that at one time it was also current among speakers on 'Ua Huka. Now only one family in Taipi valley still speaks in this way.

6 Marquesan terms for territorial units related mainly to divisions of islands, principally ka'avai or valleys, and islands themselves. There appears to have been no pre-contact term for the group as a whole. Lavondès noted (1964: 40) that te tau henua Nukuhiva nei (these lands of Nukuhiva) was employed in the early 1960s; this appropriately reflects Taiohae's centrality and dominance from early colonial times onward. Now Te Fenua 'Enata (or Te Henua 'Enana) is current.

7 Geographical information is summarised by Ottino 1981, 1984. See also Decker 1970.

8 Food plants were essentially confined to valley bottoms and lower, gentle slopes.

9 Called Opoti by the Marquesans. See chapter 6.
many whalers and traders were provisioned. As a result of various elements of this process of contact, Marquesan society changed considerably during the three decades after Porter's visit.

Before 1830, missionary activity was limited to a number of brief attempts on the part of the London Missionary Society to establish stations. On its first voyage the missionary ship *Duff* left William Pascoe Crook at Vaitahu on Tahuata in June 1797. He stayed there until May of the following year when he was taken to Nukuhiva by Captain Edmund Fanning of the *Betsy*. Conditions were less difficult for Crook at Taiohae than at Tahuata but nonetheless his missionary efforts were getting nowhere and he left the group early in 1799. Daniel Tyerman and George Bennett, who made an investigative voyage for the London Missionary Society from 1821 to 1829, visiting many South Seas stations, wanted to go the Marquesas, but abandoned the notion amid reports - exemplifying perceptions at the time - of the Marquesans' untempered savagery, specifically the alleged kidnapping and ransoming of Captain Riggs of the *General Gates*. In 1825 and 1826 there were unsuccessful attempts to establish missions consisting of Tahitian teachers at Tahuata and 'Ua Pou, and a few years later at Fatuiva and again at Tahuata. A more sustained attempt involving white missionaries was made at Vaitahu from 1834, but lack of progress led to the abandonment of the station in 1841. A mission consisting of indigenous Hawaiians was established at Omoa on Fatuiva in 1853, and later at other islands. Although the Hawaiian Missionary Society withdrew its support for the mission, some teachers and their wives stayed on, making some converts, with the result that today there are a few Protestant enclaves in what has become an overwhelmingly Catholic community.

Members of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, then based in Paris, commenced work at Tahuata in 1838, and soon afterwards set up stations on most other islands. They experienced great difficulties over many years, but eventually established themselves through persistence and strength of numbers; by 1900 a large proportion of the population was nominally Catholic.

The French annexation of 1842 had an initially catastrophic effect upon Marquesan society, at least on the two islands where garrisons were established. Chiefs were

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10 For the background to LMS activity see Gunson 1978.
11 Tyerman & Bennett 1831, II: 44-45. John Williams wrote in 1823 that the Marquesans were 'so lewd a people' that only unmarried missionaries could be sent to the group (Letter, 21 August 1823).
12 Many Protestant families are in fact direct descendants of the Hawaiian missionaries.
13 Also known as the Picpus Fathers.
14 See chapter 7.
displaced by colonial officials, and although the French presence was later very much reduced, the indigenous political system seems essentially to have been fractured. While some depopulation took place between 1800 and 1840, the 1840-1880 period was one of catastrophic decline. Abel Dupetit-Thouars, the commander of the French naval force which took possession of the islands, gave an overall figure of 20,200, which was probably more accurate than any earlier estimate. The population fell to about 5000 during the 1880s and reached a low point of less than 2000 during the 1920s.

This study focuses upon the relatively short period for which there is extensive documentation of the indigenous social system as an actuality, rather than an abstraction hazily reconstituted by a small number of informants. But the emphasis upon this period, 1797-1812, should not obscure its context in the history of contact, outlined above and discussed more fully later, and also in the much longer time frame of the prehistory of the islands, and of their settlers’ ancestors elsewhere in Oceania.

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15 See Jouan 1890 and Tautain 1898 (among numerous others) for discussions of depopulation.
16 Vincendon-Dumoulin & Desgraz 1843: 196.
II

The later prehistory and history of eastern Polynesia cannot be dissociated from earlier cultural developments and population movements in island Melanesia. From the viewpoint of eastern Oceania, the key process was undoubtedly the movement of people and culture associated with the development and expansion of the Lapita cultural complex. The diagnostic element of the archaeological assemblages thus identified is a distinctive, dentate stamped pottery style, which was first noted at a New Britain site by Father Otto Meyer in 1909. Lapita sites have also been found in the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Fiji, Samoa, and Tonga, and date between about 1600 and 500 BC. Although archaeologists have concentrated on the ceramics, a range of other artifacts have been recovered, including fish hooks, spear points, chert and obsidian flake implements, various adzes, shell ornaments, and tattooing needles.17

The populations associated with this material culture appear to have been speakers of proto-Oceanic (or a sub-group of it), which is ancestral to all the Polynesian languages and to all non-Papuan Melanesian languages.18 Evidence from settlement sites and from linguistics suggests that the people were sedentary coast dwellers who exploited a range of marine resources, but also practised horticulture and animal husbandry. Obsidian sourcing has indicated that some communities were also involved in long-distance exchange, and it is probable that at some stages in their history the widely separated areas settled by Lapita colonists maintained contact and communication. However, it is likely that once the Fiji-Western Polynesia area was settled (which took place by about 1000 BC) later developments there were largely independent of those to the west. The initial colonization of this area seems to have been followed by a pause, during which a distinctively ‘Polynesian’ culture developed, before further colonizing movements eastward took place.19 On the basis of archaeological data, comparative ethnography, and historical linguistics, Kirch has suggested that this ancestral Polynesian society can be described as follows:

the organising principles of the society were those of the conical clan, with rank based upon genealogical distance from the founding ancestor. A system of hereditary chieftainship was already established, with clan deities consisting of apotheosized chiefly ancestors. These chiefs were both sacred and secular rulers, whose perceived efficacy depended upon mana from the gods. The rank differential between chiefs and commoners was not, at this stage however,

18 And also the Nuclear Micronesian languages (Gilbertese, Trukese, Kosraen, Marshallese, etc.).
19 This view has recently been challenged by Irwin (1981). However, the notion that settlement was continuous remains largely unsupported, and in my view cannot account for the relative homogeneity of eastern Polynesia.
reflected in elaborate material or behavioural terms. Land was controlled and utilized by corporate non-unilinear descent groups or ramosages.\(^{20}\)

There has been considerable debate as to whether Lapita had its origins in a migration from south-east Asia or developed \textit{in situ} in western Melanesia.\(^{21}\) The former notion tends to be associated with an idea of a rapid movement through Melanesia on the part of a distinct, lighter skinned, non-Melanesian population, as though there was a need to dissociate civilized Polynesians from their darker and less advanced neighbours, emphasizing putative links with more respectable south-east Asian civilizations.\(^{22}\)

Postulating a common origin for Melanesians and Polynesians appears to fly in the face of the traditionally perceived contrasts between Melanesian and Polynesian societies and cultures: between small scale, egalitarian communities, and hierarchical chiefdoms, and between an area of high diversity and linguistic homogeneity, and one of relative homogeneity in linguistic and cultural terms. To some extent these dichotomies have been shown to be false: although Melanesian societies were generally unstratified, numerous cases of chieftainship, and a variety of other hierarchical forms, have been documented, while some Polynesian societies were minimally ranked.\(^{23}\) It has been suggested, however, that as island Melanesian Lapita communities grew, and began to inhabit inland and upland areas, a more localised orientation developed. Formerly wide-ranging exchange systems which permitted monopolisation and inequality became denser, and hierarchies became more localised, or broke down altogether. This process led to the linguistic fragmentation apparent at contact, which had also developed to a lesser extent in an area on the Melanesian-Polynesian boundary, namely, Fiji. It thus appears that the older picture could be inverted: while Melanesian societies have changed a great deal in the last 1000 years, Polynesian societies were relatively 'archaic', having spatially extensive hierarchical forms. What might be called a process of devolution has perhaps taken place in one area, but not the other.\(^{24}\)

One issue to be discussed here is whether or not Marquesan history, and the histories of other eastern Oceanic societies, can be related to these broader processes; their more specific implications will thus be considered later. The argument does not mean, of course, that Polynesian societies did not change during the relatively short courses of their pre-colonial histories.

\(^{21}\)Recent contributions include Allen 1984, Spriggs 1984, and Bellwood 1985.  
\(^{22}\)Cf. Guiart 1981.  
\(^{24}\)Pawley 1981; cf. Friedman 1981. This is a general proposition; it will be argued later that some devolution did take place in Polynesia, particularly in the east.
The Marquesas appear to have been occupied before any other part of eastern Polynesia. Some dates obtained from the Marquesas are as early as 200 BC +/-150, although their accuracy has been disputed. Most other island groups appear not to have been settled before 300-400 AD; while peripheral areas such as New Zealand were uninhabited until about 1000 AD. This pattern gave rise to theories proposing that the Marquesas played the role of a ‘dispersal centre’ for the settlement of other parts of eastern Polynesia. Even if further work reveals that other island groups, such as the Societies, were in fact settled as early as the Marquesas, there is no doubt that Marquesan society has one of the longest histories in the region, and that it had ancestrally a direct link with central Oceania: analysis of temper sands in pottery fragments from early sites on both Nukuhiva and 'Ua Huka revealed that at least some of the material had been transported from the Rewa delta in southeastern Viti Levu, Fiji, perhaps directly, or more likely via either Samoa or Tonga.

Archaeological research has established several distinct cultural phases for the Marquesas, although there has been dispute about their definition and dating. Suggs argued for four periods: ‘Settlement’, ‘Developmental’, ‘Expansion’, and ‘Classic.’ The period of initial settlement lasted from about 150 BC to 100 AD, during which the population was presumably very small, and was confined to settlements near the shore on the most favourable parts of the main islands - namely the wetter southern and eastern shores. This, and the archaeologically established link with the western Polynesia/Fiji area, is consistent with a tradition reported by Porter, which says that the deities Atea and Ananuna came from 'Vavao' (perhaps Vava'u in Tonga), ‘an island underneath Nooaheevah’ and settled at Taiohae. They had many children, who subsequently populated other parts of Nukuhiva. The relatively long period of Marquesan settlement is perhaps reflected by the fact that some different traditions, as in those from Samoa, postulated an autochthonous origin. It appears that the northern group was settled first, although relatively few dates are available from southern sites.
This phase was characterised by a gradual growth of population, with some settlements increasing substantially in size, although the less hospitable areas of islands remained uninhabited. Some changes in material culture were apparent and there was a shift from oval houses to paved *paepae* or platforms.

The expansion period (AD 1100-1400), was characterised by a dramatic increase in population, and by movement into a number of arid previously unoccupied areas, such as western Nukuhiva and northwestern Hiva Oa. Ceremonial centres became much more extensive, and there was a movement of settlements away from stream mouths towards the interior of valleys, which were less vulnerable to raiding from enemy groups in canoes. Warfare certainly increased in significance during the Classic period (1400 to the time of contact): various fortifications were in use during the early contact period, although it is difficult to establish when they were first constructed.

An efflorescence of ceremonial structures and the development of a genuinely megalithic style of *paepae* construction are also apparent from the Classic period; these changes were probably associated with an intensification of prestige rivalry. By this time also there was a strong emphasis upon the cultivation and storage in pits of breadfruit, although taro terraces, some of which remain in use, are found in restricted areas in many valleys. Throughout the sequence pigs appear: Suggs noted that the remains of particularly large pigs were generally found around ceremonial sites, which is consistent with the important role played by pork in mortuary feasts evident from contact-period sources.\(^3^4\) Canine remains appear through most of the sequence, but the dog became extinct at some stage before contact.

The evidence concerning exchange and trade within the group is very limited. Adze stone from Eiao was circulated throughout the group, and certain other scarce articles, such as feathers from Nukuhiva, also appear to have been traded as were some plants such as *kava* which grew better in some places than others. Edward Robarts suggested that voyages were made every year from Nukuhiva to the southern part of the group to distribute turmeric in exchange for other articles. Interaction between the more widely separated parts of the group was therefore hardly frequent, but some communication took place which helps account for the relatively high degree of homogeneity which did exist.\(^3^5\) Between neighbouring islands, such as 'Ua Pou and Nukuhiva, and Hiva Oa and Tahuata,

\(^{34}\) E.g. Lawson, 'The names of Marquesan mythology'.
\(^{35}\) The question of diversity within the group is discussed in the latter part of Chapter 4.
there seems to have been intensive contact. Whether the Marquesas were entirely isolated during later stages of prehistory is unclear. Without doubt there were numerous voyages from the Marquesas, mainly prompted by warfare and famine, and it is probable that some of the parties involved arrived safely at other islands, such as Mangareva, the Tuamotus, and the Societies.

Traditions from Mangareva record arrivals from the Marquesas, while a Tuamotuan chief reported that his clan was descended from Marquesans, and was able to list place names on the island of Hiva Oa, which had reputedly been passed down in tradition. The presence in Marquesan sites of certain artifacts of Tahitian types, such as conical stone poi pounders, does suggest some contact, as does the fact that the institution of the ʻariʻoi or kaʻiʻoi society existed in both places. But even if these scraps of evidence are given more weight than they really deserve, it could only be said that there was evidence for sporadic contact between Marquesans and other eastern Polynesian populations.

Marquesan perceptions of the origins of people and things in general, and of particular social groups, were linked with genealogical traditions characterised by a binary logic of sexual procreation: certain static states or agents were brought into opposition with new conditions, leading to some novel situation or process. Traditions about the creation (te pepena), for example, indicate that initially everything was semi-darkness, over which Tanaoa reigned. From him emerged Atea (daylight) who created vigorous and powerful light, which he shed over Tanaoa’s darkness and cold. From Atea emerged sound; subsequently he coupled with Atanua, and other elements and ‘children’ had their origin.

Another tradition dealt with the more immediate origins of local groups (mataʻeinaʻa). A group of brothers was trapped in rocks at the sea’s edge. One, Tokohiti, said he could feel the sea moving, which meant that there must be land, and that since it was tedious being imprisoned in the rocks, they should break out and leave. One by one the brothers tried to break the rocks, but failed. Finally Tokohiti tried, and the rock shattered. Then the ancestors of the people of the various islands emerged.

In the south eastern group, virtually all the tribes were supposed to be descended

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36 Most of the islands are intervisible: from the southern coast of Nukuhiva, 'Ua Pou and 'Ua Huka are easily seen; from various parts of 'Ua Pou, Nukuhiva, 'Ua Huka, Hiva Oa, and Tahuata, can be seen, and even from Fatuiva, the most isolated of the inhabited islands, Tahuata and Hiva Oa are sometimes visible.


39 Lawson, Songs of the Marquesans.

40 Chaulet, Notes sur les croyances des Marquisiens, (‘Générations...’). Variants have Atea or Tane instead of Tokohiti.
either from Nuku or from his younger brother Tane. The Naiki, Tiu, and Pi‘ina or Pikina, who occupied the valleys of Atuona, Ta’aoa, and Hanamenu respectively, were all descended from Nuku, as were the Mioi and Hema of Vaitahu, and several groups on Fatuiva. ‘Les habitants de ces diverses vallées pouvaient se visiter reciprocuellement sans craindre d’être maltraités, tués, mangés... à cause de leur souche commune’, wrote Père Pierre Chaulet, a missionary belonging to the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts.41

Similarly, the Pa’ahatai, Etuoho, Vaiui, Moea, and Ha’amau, who respectively occupied the valleys of Puamau, Anapaoa, Hanaiapa, Hekeani, and Hanamate, among others, were (notionally) descended from Tane. The inhabitants of Hapatoni were the only people on Tahuata attributed by Chaulet to the Tane division, although there were probably others. One implication of the account is that rivalry between brothers, or between elder and younger, was eternal and unresolvable. This mythic statement could be seen in the context of inheritance rules, which gave everything to the first born, and presumably therefore created tension, but my concern here is with the general character of social groups in the Marquesas, particularly how they were related, and whether or not there were two clear and exclusive types of relationship as Chaulet implied: one involving alliances of various kinds, and reciprocal feasting, and another involving hostility, raiding, and occasional outbreaks of more serious fighting.

Events in the Tahuata - Hiva Oa area up to about 1798 indicate that there were several levels at which groups were temporarily or permanently unified to the extent that they acted as parties in conflict with other groups.

The most important social grouping was a mata‘eina‘a or ‘tribe’, which was usually coterminous with a valley population. There were, however, some cases in which a mata‘eina‘a occupied more than one valley or ka‘avai and others where large valleys were occupied by more than one mata‘eina‘a. In the Ta’aoa area of south-western Hiva Oa, there are several small valleys entering into a large embayment, rather than one discrete topographic unit: these ka‘avai were occupied by different groups: the Tiu, the Ahunia, the Tapai, and the Pikina. The Pikina lived mainly in the inland part of Ta’aoa, apparently having no land by the shore in that bay, although they also occupied the valley on Hanamenu, across the ridge from Ta’aoa, which opened onto the northern shore of the island. On the other hand the Tiu, who in 1798 had ‘been greatly reduced’ through conflict with their neighbours, and were ‘very small in number’, were also represented in some small, marginal valleys on the south-eastern end of Fatuiva.42

41Deuxième cahier. Marquises. Supplément aux traditions kanaques..., 11. Chaulet’s work is discussed in Appendix A.
42[Crook], An Account of the Marquesas Islands (hereinafter Crook, Account), 187.
On Tahuata a protracted and serious conflict had taken place around, or shortly after, the time of Cook’s visit in 1774. The Hema of Vaitahu had allied themselves with the Ahutini of Hanatetena, and had forced out or exterminated the Tupohi, who had occupied the southern part of the island. This took place despite the fact that the Tupohi alliance, occupying several valleys, was the single largest group, and was linked with the Hema by marriage: Puoua, the Tupohi chief, was married to Tehea-avei, the niece of Honu, the Hema chief. It is not obvious how the conflict related to the major dual division: Hema were Nuku, and Ahutini Tane, but the affiliations of the dispossessed groups of the southern part of the island are unknown.

Subsequently, the Ahutini occupied most of the southern part of Tahuata.

These nations have frequently since been involved in mutual hostilities; which however do not prevent them from intermarrying, & making friendly visits at Intervals of peace; nor from renewing their alliance, when they judge it more expedient to attack a neighbouring Island, than to revive their mutual conflicts. Such an alliance was developed during 1798, which was extended to the Pikina group on Hiva Oa, with a view to defeating the Naiki, the inhabitants of Atuona valley. The alliance between the Hema and the Pikina was established by the marriage or betrothal of the eight year old son of Teinae, the Hema chief, to the Pikina chief’s infant daughter.

An immediate cause of the Hema’s military involvement in Hiva Oa was the presence of a Hawaiian, called Tama by the Marquesans, who persuaded the Hema that the Hawaiian practice of larger scale warfare involving broader alliances and action against more distant enemies, ought to be emulated. It is clear, however, that there was nothing novel in conflict between groups on Tahuata and Hiva Oa. Around the time of Cook’s visit, the Pikina had devastated Vaitahu, and during the period immediately before Tama’s arrival, several raids took place. One was prompted by the need to obtain a commemorative human sacrifice for a recently deceased tau’a, Manua-hema; later writers often noted that the need to procure such victims was a frequent cause of outbreaks of fighting.

Marriage alliances between certain groups also indicate that residents of one island were much involved in the affairs of the other: the daughters of a prominent individual at Moea, Tafito and Hopepa, were married respectively to a chief at Hanatetena, and

43 Called Buauou by Crook. I have attempted to rewrite names of Marquesans into standard orthography (as established by Dordillon); in cases where this has been impossible I have used whatever names are provided by sources in inverted commas.
44 Crook, Account, 136.
45 Who, incidentally, had been brought to the islands in the Alexander (under Captain Asa Dodge) in 1798.
Mouwatete, ‘a principal Man of Witahhu.’ Teinae’s wife was from the Tapai group of Ta’aaoa; later accounts indicate that his successor, lotete, also married a woman, Titiutu, from that area if not that particular group.

Hence marriage alliances were made by several Hiva Oa groups with several Tahuatan groups. There seems to have been a pattern whereby the Hema took wives from the Pikina and other groups in that area, although no other evidence would suggest that this was a manifestation of an asymmetrical relationship between these areas. Given the political importance of marriage elsewhere in the Pacific, the extent to which these alliances did not create a bond is significant: although a marriage could initiate or express an alliance between certain groups, it provided no guarantee that an alliance would persist. The Pikina-Hema case (1797-98), and the earlier Hema-Tupohi conflict, show that a major struggle, and not simply minor quarrels, could take place between groups linked by marriage.

The fluid and ephemeral character of alliances was testified to by the fact that the Hema and Ahutini ended up fighting their allies, the Pikina, rather than the Naiki, the object of their expedition. In a remote part of Pikina territory a minor quarrel developed which resulted in the deaths of four Ahutini men; ‘multitudes’ of the Pikina were killed in revenge. This led to a severance of relations, but later evidence indicates that alliances were periodically renewed.

These situations suggest also that on Tahuata and Hiva Oa the extent to which the ancestral dual division of the tribes structured warfare was in fact rather limited. While some conflicts did reflect the traditionally specified antagonism, on some occasions, at least on Tahuata, circumstances led to the formation of alliances which overrode that opposition. Conflict within the divisions, and within mata’eina’a, was in any case rife.

In several respects relations between groups on Nukuhiva during this period seem to have been different. Nevertheless, a similar dual structure existed in that the residents of Taipi valley and various smaller valleys on the eastern and northeastern part of the island belonged to the Taipi division, whereas the inhabitants of Hapa’a, Taiohae, and Hakaui on the south coast, and Pua and Akapa’a on the north coast, belonged to the Tei’i. As with the Hiva Oa/Tahuata groups, there was a tradition that these mata’eina’a were descended from eponymous brothers who had quarrelled, allegedly because the younger

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46Crook, Account, 112, 132.
47Bennett 1840, I: 320.
48Crook, Account, 178.
49Darling Journal, passim; see chapter 7 below.
50Discussed in chapter 2.
had circumcised the elder, ‘it being a disgrace to him being the first born’.\textsuperscript{51}

On Nukuhiva, this division seems to have played a clearer role in structuring warfare than it did upon other islands. Many hostile acts were recorded between Taipi groups and the Tei’i, particularly the Taiohae area tribes - although this must principally reflect the greater frequency of European visits to and therefore fuller documentation of the southeastern part of the island. During 1792 the Taipi invaded parts of the northern coast of the island, including Pua, and the desert area known as Henua Ataha,\textsuperscript{52} which was occupied by fishers from the Taioa of Hakau valley.

During 1798, a battle took place on the Tovi’i plateau between the Tei’i and the Taipi. Later the Puhi-ooho, one of the Hatheu tribes, a Taipi group, attacked and killed a number of Akapa’a people. Some conflict did take place within each division: some Tei’i, who were visiting the Pua, had quarrelled, and a few had been killed. Taking revenge, the Tei’i slaughtered a number of the Pua people and devastated part of their territory. As often happened during warfare, there was a direct attack upon resources: breadfruit trees were ring-barked, and the hearts of coconut trees were beaten to inhibit or prevent further growth.\textsuperscript{53} Later conflicts, such as those in which Porter became involved in 1813, were usually direct struggles between Taiohae groups and Taipi valley tribes. Since these groups occasionally presented each other with feasts, Chaulet seems to have been mistaken in supposing that valleys were \textit{either} allied \textit{or} antagonistic; rather, as a number of writers have observed, competitive feasting often amounts to ‘fighting with food’.\textsuperscript{54} Warfare and ‘potlatch’ style feasting seem to have been complementary and not opposed, both in systemic and particular senses.\textsuperscript{55} In the Marquesas, the connection can be illustrated by a single sentence from a whaler’s log:

\begin{quote}
At sunset 6 large war canoes came in from the next bay (Typee) for a grand feast given by the natives of this bay.\textsuperscript{56}
\end{quote}

It will be argued later that feasting was central to the Marquesan process of social reproduction.

\textsuperscript{51}Robarts [1974]: 258.
\textsuperscript{52}Now the site of the main airport in the Marquesas and known as Nuku Ataha or the ‘Terre Deserte’.
\textsuperscript{53}Crook, Account, 258b.
\textsuperscript{54}Young 1971.
\textsuperscript{55}Thomas Williams, a Wesleyan missionary stationed in Fiji, not so far from where the fragments of pottery later recovered from Marquesan sand dunes originated, noted that at Fijian feasts, ‘A misarrangement or impropriety would cause a hundred bright eyes to flash with anger, which, though supressed then, would burst forth with a deadlier effect on a future day.’ (Williams 1858 [1884]: 128).
\textsuperscript{56}Anon, Log of the Rosalie, 10 May 1840. ‘This bay’ was Taiohae.
The effects of geographical conditions upon Marquesan political organisation have been seen by some writers as crucial. Specifically, ethnographers have linked the topography, and particularly a perceived isolation of valleys and their populations, with the lack of supra-local or centralised chiefly authority. This association was implied by some earlier writers, such as the American missionary Titus Coan, who listed among the major obstacles to the work of the Hawaiian teachers, the Marquesans' 'isolation in deep and almost inaccessible valleys... [and] their clanish jealousies.'\textsuperscript{57} But impressions of this kind were virtually transformed into a theory of Marquesan life by the ethnographer E.S.C. Handy, who spent nine months in the group in 1920-21, and who published an encyclopaedic reconstruction of the 'native culture':

The marked influence of environment on the people and on their culture may be noted briefly. The isolation of deep valleys, inaccessibility by land and by sea, had much to do with the tribal development, continuous warfare, and the lack of a nationalistic tendency in political organisation such as that which developed in Tonga, Tahiti, the Cook group, and Hawaii... much that distinguishes the natives of the Marquesas and their culture from the peoples and cultures of other groups in Polynesia - the square solidity of the men, certain characteristics of harshness and aggressiveness in their natures which contrast strikingly with the softness of other Polynesians, the quantity and massiveness of their stone construction... - is a direct result of the nature of the islands in which they lived. The environment is massive, strong, and vigorous: the people and their culture are to be characterised by the same terms.\textsuperscript{58}

The key issue here is of the facility, or possibility, of movement between valleys, which was certainly more difficult than on other islands such as Tahiti, where one could easily walk around strips of flat coastal land. But while movement in the Marquesas was difficult, because it was and is normally necessary to climb 700 metres or more over ridges to cross from one valley to another, intercourse has never been impossible, and because of the relatively short distances involved, was usually arduous rather than prohibitively time consuming. Handy's statement implies that all ka'auai were precipitous ravines which could only be entered or left by sea; in fact, although it is true that large cliffs dominate some approaches to valleys, and many are surrounded by steep slopes, in almost all cases there were several paths or routes leading out of valleys in different directions. Some adjacent bays, such as Hakamoui and Hakahau on the northeastern side of 'Ua Pou, are separated by no more than an hour's walk on a modern road which takes a less direct route than the older paths.\textsuperscript{59} The accounts of both Crook and Robarts indicate that trips

\textsuperscript{57}Coan 1860: 4; Cf. Jouan n.d.[1880s?]: 120.

\textsuperscript{58}Handy 1923: 8-9. The notion was reiterated by Kellum-Ottino (1971: 28-29) among others.

\textsuperscript{59}Rollin's suggestion (1974 [1929]: 29) that tracks did not exist prior to the French occupation is manifestly nonsense.
to kōina or feasts, and other excursions, were frequently made; even during his brief stay on Tahuata, Crook seems to have accompanied chiefs to almost all the main valleys on that island, as well as some on Hiva Oa.\(^{60}\)

Also significant in this context is the fact that some mata′eina′a overlapped the supposedly isolated territorial units, as did patterns of landholding: some prominent people had land in valleys other than those in which they resided.\(^{61}\) The thesis that Marquesan valleys were socially isolated cannot be sustained. It is understandable that European visitors should see the terrain as a spectacle, rather than as a landscape for use, and that their attention should be captured by precipices and peaks. But of course the inhabitants of the islands always walked around, rather than over, these features, and the impression of ruggedness is thus somewhat misleading. The system of political relationships must be seen as a field of problems in itself, rather than as a simple effect of geographical conditions.

\(^{60}\) On Nukuhiva, he visited virtually all of those allied with the people of Taiohae, but none of those in the Taipi division, a fact which supports the suggestion made above that such divisions had greater practical effect in Nukuhiva than in the southern islands.

\(^{61}\) This applied particularly with smaller valleys which did not support autonomous tribes.
PART I

Early Marquesan social and cultural dynamics
CHAPTER 2
Chieftainship, social relations, and hierarchy

Polynesian societies were all hierarchical to a greater or lesser degree, and all possessed some institution of chieftainship or a chiefly class. The term 'chiefdom' however suggests more than the mere presence of a form of leadership; it implies that that form had some central structuring role for the rest of society. A more specific account of particular chiefdoms must deal with a number of questions: what were the roles of Marquesan chiefs or haka'iki? Were they central to the group as a whole, or to elites? Were other individuals also significant? And how did property relate to chieftainship, and to other forms of hierarchy?

The institution of chieftainship seems to have existed not only in ancestral Polynesian society but also in some of its antecedents. A fundamental characteristic of the underlying notion of chieftainship in many parts of the world might be called hierarchical encompassment. In English, the word 'chief' has older senses meaning a person's head, or the top part of something, such as the top end of a hall (OED). As the word 'head' can signify a political leader, there is the connotation of a chief being a part of a body, and particularly being a special or principal part. As a Fijian in Vanua Levu told A.M. Hocart, 'the chief is the stem, the matanngali [or 'clan'] the branch.' In some cases, the chief may have had this centrality in practice, that is, it may have amounted to

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1 The Marquesan term differs from the proto-Polynesian word for chief, ariki, in the addition of the causative (ha'a or haka). Handy made much of the fact that Marquesan haka'iki were literally 'made-chiefs' (1923: 45) and linked this with the fluid character of Marquesan society. He suggested that 'there was nothing to prevent any man or woman in the tribe from rising to the highest positions, those of chief and inspirational priest' (1923: 36-37). Inspirational priests were precisely those who were inspired, irrespective of prior social status, but the weaknesses of Handy's ahistorical approach emerge in relation to chiefs. Instances of common people becoming haka'iki appear to be restricted very much to a period after chieftainship had lost much of its significance (Robert Louis Stevenson, who visited the group in 1888, noted a case, for example [1900: 44-46]). In the latter part of the nineteenth century, haka'iki were sometimes elected; a Catholic priest mentioned two cases of mission-sponsored candidates being 'elected' unanimously (Acar, Journal, 25 August 1895). Handy's informants may not have clearly distinguished this situation from that which existed fifty or one hundred years earlier; in any case, it is often erroneous to assume that linguistic forms directly reflect deeper concepts (cf. Keesing n.d.). The causative is also attached to the cognate term in Mangareva, which has not been regarded as a particularly fluid system (Buck 1938: 151).

more than a cultural postulate. In other cases, perhaps even the cultural construct was lacking: chieftainship had been transformed or rendered non-functional in some way. But what was the basis of this encompassment, where it did exist?

A key element of this classic type of chiefly system is a genealogical and mythological construction of rank on the basis of successive primogeniture which is traced all the way back to ancestor deities who are thus linked in a direct way with the chiefly line and in a mediated way with the rest of society. Rank order is pervasive such that there are differences in seniority between the heads of lineages and clans. A head - lineage relationship exists at several levels and in fact there are no structural differences between sub-lineages, lineages, clans, and tribes, although the social significance of boundaries and group activity at different levels obviously varies considerably, one consequence of this being an emphasis upon one descent group and its leader over and above both less inclusive units and possibly also over any higher level unit. The position of the chief is thus not something of itself but is absolutely indissociable from the structure of rank order which differentially links living people with ancestor deities.

This hierarchy is linked to an iconography of agricultural production and fishing whereby such activities do not simply happen but are dependent upon certain kinds of ritual work associated with specific ancestor deities. These rituals are seasonal and are connected with particular crops, phases of fishing, and so forth. The ritual knowledge upon which this work is based and the ritual practices themselves, are generally monopolised either by a single chief or by a group of chiefs. While there is often a differentiation of priestly and chiefly functions at high rank levels, an association between genealogy, cosmology, and living power still typically exists. Particularly, the difference between priest-chiefs and other senior individuals (such as members of relatively recent branches from the chiefly line) is a qualitative one, involving more than a greater degree of sanctity.

While, like most ideal types, this construct finds relatively few clear empirical manifestations, Tikopian society, for instance, did provide an example of a Polynesian chiefdom within which the chief had a ritual centrality of this kind, from which a pivotal economic and political position was perceived to arise. It is very clear from a number of statements in Firth's studies of Tikopian society that the chiefly ritual role, which was indissociable from a privileged and unique genealogical situation, was absolutely critical to the overall structuring of a socio-religious hierarchy which centred upon the chief.

The chief is the head of the clan, its representative with the gods, mediator for his people in regard to the fertility of their crops. Hence his control of supernatural forces in the interests of his people on the one hand should be matched by his control of their material resources on the other. So we get the proposition frequently expressed by chief and commoner alike that the orchards
of the people are the orchards of their leader. A native expression is, 'They stand in the clan but they are the orchards of the chief.'

It is clear in this case that the chief as an individual with power was largely constituted by his ritual capacities; these were what his mana was based upon. The tapu state, which was more directly connected with his special links with ancestors and deities, related more to sanctity than agency. In the Tikopia instance, such a distinction is irrelevant because priest-chiefs were unitary subjects. The pertinence of the distinction emerges from consideration of other Oceanic societies which developed in a different manner.

As the Tikopia example indicates, the chief's ritual agency in respect of production was critical to conceptions of ownership and prestations. The essential role of the chief in ensuring prosperity was conducive to a kind of general ownership over everything of much significance for the clan. With respect to any particular object, such as a tract of land, there was a combination of two sets of rights: an abstract or titular ownership on the part of the chief, and contingent but immediate tenure on the part of users. As Firth observed in relation to sacred canoes:

The ownership of these vessels is complex. Theoretically they are the property of the chief of the clan, despite the fact that the immediate possessor in each case has ordered the building of the craft, paid the craftsman for it, shelters it in his own canoe shed, has full rights of use over it, and is fully responsible for its upkeep and repair. The expression is, 'The canoe of the chief is resting with So-and-so.' This is in accordance with the general principle of the centralization of ownership. All valued property of the people of a clan, including their houses, canoes, land and bonito hooks, is held in theory at the disposal of the chief. It is theirs, but ultimately it is his too; in the last resort their interest in it will give way to his. Moreover, in case of crisis the theory becomes actual practice; no member of a clan can hold property against his chief.

This general, abstract ownership was associated with a flow of goods toward the chief; some were ritual first-fruits in direct acknowledgement of 'the work of the gods'; others were related to his status in a more general way. These prestations had a particular character which differs from that of the gift. Gift-giving, the paradigmatic transaction between equals or near equals in clan societies, involves the creation of debts: the receiver becomes indebted to the giver and is obliged to return, at some stage, another gift of equivalent or greater rank. These prestations do not generally cancel each other out; rather, a persisting relationship of indebtedness is developed, part of a network of bonds of social value within a particular system. Within an economy based upon gift-

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3Firth 1957: 333.
4Firth 1967: 55.
giving of this type, agents (or at least male agents)\(^5\) are qualitatively if not quantitatively equal. This is to say that although some individuals may have more pigs than others, there is nothing about their status as transactors which structurally advantages an individual with more pigs over another with fewer. A critical feature of this system conceived generally is thus that, in contrast with a commodity economy in which transactors are independent and unfettered by social bonds, gift-givers and receivers are reciprocally and mutually dependent.\(^6\)

A chiefly system of the Tikopia type is entirely different to such a reciprocal system, simply because of the titular ownership held over all land, and the primary if abstract right of the chief to all that is produced. Since the survival and prosperity of the group as a whole was dependent upon the work of the chief there was a sense in which everyone was indebted to him; what the chief did for the group in general was categorically different from anything any individual member of the clan or even the clan as a whole could do for the chief. Because of this open-ended indebtedness, and because the chief in a sense already owned everything, the system entailed *asymmetrical* rather than mutual or reciprocal dependence, and presentations to the chief had the characteristics of *offerings* rather than those of the gift. However, when a chief gave these goods away, their value as gifts was not limited or negated, and the chief was credited with generosity. This 'generosity', arising from a culturally structured characterisation of certain prestations, was an important element of the ideological construction of the chief as a paternal and fundamentally benevolent figure. This stereotype of the chiefdom thus centralises the chief in perceptions of political and economic organisation, and probably also in political and economic actuality. Chieftainship as a set of relations and conceptions could thus be highly coherent and cohesive: it could function as a genuinely encompassing hierarchical social form.

The general properties of this type of system have been discussed at some length because it probably corresponds closely with the societies ancestral to most of the indigenous systems documented historically and ethnographically in eastern Oceania, many of which, of course, developed in singular ways with outcomes bearing little resemblance to this postulated ancestral system. In some cases this logic was precluded by a dualistic structure within which chiefs were characterised as conquering immigrants, associated with the sea, and opposed to priests, who were 'indigenous', of the the land, and associated with prosperity rituals. In other cases, centralised and hierarchical polities

\(^5\)I have discussed the problems of integrating transactions between men and women into a gift exchange model elsewhere (Thomas 1985).

\(^6\)Gregory 1982: 42 and *passim*.
developed, such that chiefs became an elite stratum socially and spatially detached from the commoner population. Under such circumstances, offerings of the first-fruits type tended to become secularized and more like tithes or tribute than ritual presentations.

Marquesan society in the early contact period was characterised neither by dualism nor class formation, but in a different way bore little resemblance to the classic type of chiefdom. However, genealogical links were an important element of chiefly status, as Porter observed in relation to the position of Keatonui, an important chief at Taiohae.

they take much pride in tracing their ancestry. Gattanewa [Keatonui] traces his for eighty-eight generations back... which reaches to the period when the island was first peopled. According to tradition, Oataia [Atea], or day-light, and Ananoona his wife, came from Vavao, an island underneath Nooaheevah, and brought with them bread-fruit and sugar cane, and a great variety of other plants. They had forty children, who were all named after the plants they brought with them, with the exception of the first son, who was called Po or night. They settled in the valley of Tieuhoy [Taiohae]; but soon becoming very populous, they went off to other parts of the island, taking with them plants of different kinds, and inhabited the valleys. Be this tradition true or fabulous, it is certain that Gattanewa draws his greatest consideration from inheriting the honours of the great Oataia.7

Whether this set of notions was connected with an overall hierarchy based upon birth order will be considered later. The question here is whether or not this genealogical status was connected with authority in practice, and if so, of what kind. Here a critical difference emerges between the situation in the Marquesas and the situation which provided for priest-chiefs. It is emphasized from the earliest sources that Marquesan religious action was the province of 'priests', or in fact was divided between two entirely distinct classes of religious specialists: *tuhuna o'ono* and *tau'a*.

*Tuhuna* was the general term for specialist; other *tuhuna* were canoe builders, tattooers, stone workers,8 and so forth, although the priests were in a distinct and special group. They were experts in traditions and performed chants such as the *vanana* and *pu'e* or creation songs, and were associated with certain deities, being the only ones allowed to eat food offered to some *etua*. This position was reached usually through apprenticeship rather than succession,9 and all *tuhuna o'ono* were male.

*Tau'a* (who might be either male or female) were connected with a far more inspirational set of notions and practices. They were essentially shamans who sometimes inherited the position and were possessed by particular *etua*. The soul and seat of the emotions was thought to be in the intestines (*koekoe*); of *tau'a* it was said 'u *ho'oka te

7 Porter 1822, II:30.
8 For a detailed list, see Handy 1923: 144.
9 Although a son or a nephew might often be apprenticed.
etua io he kopu o [name]' the god has eaten into a person’s stomach, or lives in their stomach.\textsuperscript{10} The potency of tau’a varied considerably; this related in part to whether or not the god was perceived to reside in them temporarily or permanently. Some, particularly many of the female tau’a, practised relatively minor spirit manipulation associated with illness, childbirth, and so forth. Others were far more powerful, and much more closely associated with important etua; Crook and Temoteitei suggested that some were in fact regarded as living etua, in which case they were often extremely secluded, usually celibate, living ‘ia uta, deep in valleys, where they were provided for by u’u, servants who were also tapu and celibate.\textsuperscript{11}

The key point in relation to the question of chiefly status is that some tau’a were regarded ‘as the dispensers of fertility to the Vegetables on which their support depends.’\textsuperscript{12} This observation clearly referred to a tau’a named Tamapuameini, who was still alive at the time of Crook’s residence on Tahuata.

Tamapuameini... is reverenced, both by the Ahhoutinne & the Hemma, as superior to all their other deities; & is firmly believed to dispense fertility to their Bread Fruit Trees, by his power over the Elements and the Seasons. He is now of a great age, & has from his childhood lived at Anateiteina [Hanatetena], in a large house, surrounded with an Inclosure, called the ‘A. In the house, is an Altar; & from the beams of the house, & the trees within the Inclosure, are human carcasses, with their heads downward, & scalped. No one enters the premises but his Servant, except when human sacrifices are to be performed there. Of these, more are offered to him than to any Atua, & he frequently seats himself on a scaffold, & calls for 2 or 3 more at a time. He is invoked in all parts of the Island; & Offerings made to him, are sent to Anateiteina.\textsuperscript{13}

Curiously, there are few references in the literature, either early or late, to ceremonies associated with harvests or fertility of the kind well known from elsewhere in Polynesia, so it is not clear exactly what Tamapuameini did which had the effect of ‘dispensing fertility’ to the staple, ‘their Bread Fruit Trees.’ But even if such ceremonies were less significant than elsewhere, it is clear that some tau’a were credited with some instrumental role in fertility, since they received first fruits, special portions of feasts, and other prémices. As Robarts noted, organisers of a feast ‘always send some of the feast to the prophets Moria [me‘ae] where there is some of the Pagan fraternity to eat what is sent.’\textsuperscript{14} The importance of tau’a is underlined by the fact that although evidence for any

\textsuperscript{10}Chaulet, Archipel des Marquises. Supplément, 106; Dordillon 1931: 171.
\textsuperscript{11}Anon. 1800: 9.
\textsuperscript{12}Crook, Account, 35.
\textsuperscript{13}Crook, Account, 137-138.
\textsuperscript{14}Robarts [1974]: 57. Robarts would have understood the difference between tuhuna o’ono and tau’a; his references to ‘prophets’ are clearly to the latter.
supra-local chiefly authority in early-contact period is lacking,\(^{15}\) the potency of some tau'a appears to have been recognized in more than one valley; that of Tamapuameini was acknowledged over a whole island.\(^{16}\) Although few tau'a are likely to have had as much potency as Tamapuameini, similar capacities, if developed to any extent, imply a limitation of chiefly agency.

Hence both haka'iki and tau'a were clearly and radically disconnected from central elements of an integrative chiefly role.\(^{17}\) The essential element of chiefly status appears to have been the fact that chiefs were particularly tapu by reason of their privileged and unique proximity to etua through the senior line of tupuna or ancestors. This tapu character led to them being separated in various ways from the rest of the population. In particular, other individuals had to take care that their everyday action, eating and movement did not impinge upon the chief's tapu character, which also inhered in various ways in his or her personal property and food.\(^{18}\) Hence an ordinary person had to take care not to walk over a chief's garment, or pass over anything that had been above the chief. If a breadfruit tree overshadowed the house of seclusion of a chiefly child, then it too was tapu; the fruit could not be eaten.\(^{19}\) Thus what distinguished the chief had no enabling element: it related above all to a state, rather than to special or unique capacities. In fact an observation made about a particular Fijian chiefly family by Ratu Deve Toganivalu could well have applied to many Marquesan haka'iki: 'now they are nobles in the centre of the village, but do not have the decision in anything.'\(^{20}\)

Here practical questions of the situations of particular chiefs and other significant people within wide patterns of alliance, succession, and political power must be considered in detail. Did society in any sense revolve around chiefs and chiefly families, or were they less significant than the stereotypic notion of the 'chiefdom' would lead one to anticipate? Relations at Taiohae, Nukuhiva, are focussed upon, because the most detailed documentation concerns that area. The question of how representative the situation in

\(^{15}\)For all islands apart from 'Ua Pou - an exception discussed in part III of chapter 4.

\(^{16}\)Lists of local deities indicate that in several cases particular dead tau'a were recognized (and presumably propitiated and invoked) at me'ae in different valleys (Chaulet, Notices, 129-130).

\(^{17}\)Although the same individual was often a tuhuna and a haka'iki, cases of a person being both haka'iki and tau'a are considerably more unusual. Tau'ahanea (a man) and Tau'samataheva of Hakaui valley (Nukuhiva), a woman, provide rare examples. The latter may have been the former's direct successor (Finch, Narrative; Lawson, Sorcery). The fact that in a few instances these responsibilities were integrated in one person does not affect the general point, that there was a rupture between the activities of these classes of people.

\(^{18}\)Tapu is discussed more fully in chapter 3.

\(^{19}\)Chaulet, Notices, 168.

\(^{20}\)Quoted in Hocart, The heart of Fiji, 342.
southeast Nukuhiva was is addressed later.\textsuperscript{21}

An important factor connected with patterns of authority at Taiohae is that the four or five groups which made up the larger Tei'i unit at Taiohae occupied an ambiguous position between clearly subordinate sub-tribes and more autonomous units. On some occasions it seems to have been clear that one haka'i'ki was recognised as the chief of several 'sub-tribes' whereas in other instances the smaller groups had separate haka'i'ki. Hence the grandfathers of Keatonui were both chiefs of several Taiohae groups: Puakakahu, his father's father, was associated with the Havau and Pakiu, while Moana was chief of the others. The critical point at which sovereignty was consolidated was the marriage of Keatonui's mother, Putahaie, with Temotei'i, presumably the first-born son of Puakakahu. Putahaie was not, strictly speaking, an eldest child, but her only senior sibling, a brother was mentally defective, and was thus disqualified. The practice of bypassing manifestly unsuitable individuals was so general in Oceanic chiefdoms that it can hardly be seen as a bending of rules.

Putahaie, who was probably about fifty years old in 1800, was undoubtably a woman of stature and influence. It appears that from the time of her father’s death to Keatonui’s attainment of maturity, she was a chief in her own right. Her paepae, which was subsequently occupied by Keatonui, and by Vaekehu, a later Nukuhivan ‘queen’, is striking as a material manifestation of her situation. It is considerably larger than almost all other dwelling paepae, and includes a row of vertical ke’etu, dressed slabs of light red volcanic rock. These, standing on edge, form the step separating the raised and covered rear part of the platform, from the more open front part. Ke’etu, which had to be transported from some distance away, and obviously required a significant amount of labour, were an expression of prestige. While it is not unusual to see two or three ke’etu, occasionally with figures or knobs in relief, in the centre of the vertical row, it is much rarer to see the whole row composed of such slabs, which also, in the case of Putahaie’s paepae, form a middle course in the main wall around most of the structure.\textsuperscript{22} In addition, Putahaie ‘owned’ a substantial area of land from the paepae to the western end of the bay.\textsuperscript{23}

Since Keatonui was probably about thirty in 1800, he may well have been

\textsuperscript{21}See chapter 4, part III.

\textsuperscript{22}A photograph of Putahaie’s paepae appears in Steinen 1925-28, III: alpha J, Nr. 3; the other statements in the paragraph are based upon my own observations and upon the work of Pierre Ottino, 1981, 1984.

\textsuperscript{23}Since it is not clear how far inland her land extended, it is impossible to estimate the area, or what proportion of Taiohae was accounted for by her terrain, which must however have included a quarter of the foreshore, which is significant since the bay is one of the largest in the group. The question of landownership is discussed below.
discussed in this paper. For a more extensive treatment, see Dornum [94].
The data used is very selective and only includes occupational groups.

Figure 2. Some relationships around Takamuku in 1798.
effectively *haka 'iki* for some time prior to that date. However, Putahaie remained very influential. In October 1805, several men deserted from the whaler *Leviathan*, taking a whale boat with them. Edward Robarts prevented them from being relieved of the boat by the residents of a nearby bay and helped them settle at Taiohae.

Some time after [Putahaie], the Kings mother, wanted to send her nephew to *Towatta* with some loaves of Baked Tumeric on sale. She asked me if the Boat was trust worthy. I surveyd the boat and found her shook to pieces, wanting a deal of repairing. I askd the crew if they had any objection to let the boat go, as it would please the old lady and by that means be obligeing themselves, as the favour of the old lady was worth the favour of the Whole family. Her word was a law. They even did not go to war without her consent. She was a woman of sound reason, her intellects Keen, and firm in her resolutions. They consented for the Boat to go.24

Putahaie's position was probably strengthened by the fact that one brother, 'Paiu'epo', was an important priest, and two of her sisters were married to chiefs of the Taipi and Hapa'a valleys. It is probable, however, that these alliances had little content unless they were actively maintained or deployed in some manner. The links with enemy groups, in particular, seem to have been largely non-functional.

The nature of Keatonui's status at about 1798 likewise suggests that while an individual might have an array of relationships and affiliations, only those which were persistently paraded and developed actually had a role in the making and remaking of a person and a position. Links tended to be renewed: Henateiane, the daughter of the chief of the Te-ava-angi (a Taipi tribe) and a sister of Putahaie's was married to Tuitoua, Keatonui's eldest grandson. Henateiane25 was described as a 'middle aged woman' who had many *pekio* or secondary husbands; her first son, Pakouteie, was counted as a child of Tuitoua's, despite his infancy. This child's relationship with the Te-ava-angi appears to have counted for very little, and certainly did nothing to bring about greater political unity in south-eastern Nukuhiva, as Keatonui's common descent from chiefs in Taiohae had done for that area.

Keatonui's eldest daughter, Tahatapu, was married to 'Mouwateie', a son of the chief of the Hapa'a, who resided with her at Taiohae. Uxorilocal marriage was relatively uncommon; later, however, he became *haka 'iki*, and they both moved to Hapa'a.

Some alliances extended beyond Nukuhiva: Kamohei, the sister of a significant and propertied man on 'Ua Huka, lived with Tamati, Keatonui's youngest brother.26 Given the frequency of intercourse with 'Ua Pou, it is likely that similar links existed with chiefly families on that island.

25 Also called Taihonotutuake.
26 Crook, Account, 212.
Of greater importance appears to have been a relatively dense structure of links within Taiohae. It was often noted that a secondary husband, who was usually a servant, came to ‘belong’ as much to the husband, or the husband’s part of the family, as to the wife and the wife’s; hence we find reference to the ‘the chief’s Pekkeyo’, Peueinui, who unlike most pekio, had considerable property, and was a member of the tapu class, to which servants and various other undistinguished men did not belong. He occupied the office of toa or chief warrior, which generally involved wearing a particular range of ornaments, and to some extent directing others in battle. The roles of haka ‘iki and toa were sometimes shared by the same individual, which probably accounts for the fact that the ornaments that Peueinui wore in battle actually belonged to Keatonui; in many cases, however, toa could be entirely independent of chiefs, and sometimes took different sides in an internal dispute.

Keatonui had a double link with Peueinui, because a child of his by his wife’s sister, U’uwei, who was married to the chief at Hakaui, had been adopted by Peueinui as his heir. Peueinui could not have had any children of his own, except in a biological sense, since the paternal role of secondary husbands was socially unrecognised: all Teheatioa’s children would have been treated as daughters and sons of her primary husband, Keatonui. It was exceptional for prominent men such as a toa to act as pekio, since this station normally involved a servile role and a lack of sanctity. Although Crook suggested that it was anomalous that Peueinui remained in ‘the Tabbu class’ it is probably the case that the servile role rather than the pekio situation - insofar as the latter can be disconnected from the former - was what would have been inconsistent with tapu. One would not expect that Peueinui acted as servant, and in fact there is no evidence that he did. It is impossible to know who was responsible for initiating this relationship: it is clear, however, that its existence did give concert to two distinct and otherwise potentially antagonistic power bases.

Another crucial link was with two men who were jointly much involved in fishing, one of whom, Tahieinui, was Keatonui’s younger brother while the other, Pahouahetu, had a younger brother married to one of Keatonui’s sisters. Since the Marquesan system classified spouses with spouse’s siblings of the same sex, this relationship would have been a closer one than its equivalent in western kinship systems. These two men had ‘the joint property of the sea in the bay, in front of their house, & own more canoes than the chief himself.’ Although they were noted for their skill in catching ‘Devil fish’ (rays) it is probable that much of the actual labour was done by landless persons dependent upon those who controlled resources such as fishing grounds and canoes.

27Crook, Account, 228.
Another person of some importance was one of Keatonui's mother's brothers, 'Paiuvepo', described as a 'priest', apparently a *tu huna* or specialist rather than a shamanistic priest or *tau'a*. Although not regarded as an independent chief, he was said to be the *haka'yki* of the upper part of Hoata valley, part of Taiohae.

Another person of property associated with Keatonui was Pahutahau, an old man who owned land along the shore near Pakiu, who was married to another of Keatonui's sisters. Their son also owned a good deal of land, and was married to the daughter of the chief at Hakai, Poutini. His wife was U'uei, a sister of Keatonui's wife Taheapetioa; another daughter of theirs lived with a principal man of Havau, named Muaketu. A younger brother of Keatonui, Tamati, had been given land by Putahaie, in a small valley named Uauka, between Taiohae and Hakai.

What emerges from this survey is the density and multiplicity of the links among a certain group of people. It appears that almost any association between Keatonui and another person usually involved several distinct bonds, often entailing different intermediate people and different kinds of links. These associations suggest that there was a lack of formal unity or coherence in *mata'eina'a* or in their elites; *toa* and warriors, priestly individuals, 'persons of property', and the chiefly families, seem to have been contingently rather than structurally associated. While at Taiohae links by marriage, adoption, and the incorporation of persons into households as *pekio* in fact produced one relatively closely knit group, not enough is known about Taiohae to establish whether other similar groupings existed.

By 1805-6 this elite appears to have become less consolidated; a dispute over land suggests that these links within elites created what might be called 'factions' which were in competition and conflict with each other in various ways. These groups were constituted partly on the basis of alliance, filiation, and descent, and partly upon other relations.

One of the major parties in a dispute which probably occurred early in 1806 was a group called 'the warriors' [*sic*] by Robarts. A group of this kind probably consisted of a few key individuals and their supporters and dependants. Keatonui was in a somewhat ambiguous position with respect to the group, which contrived in some way to draw him into a 'war' with his elder sister, probably Teheaviane or Muei. It was the warriors, rather than Keatonui, however, who seized her land, although his son, Tuitoua, a member of the group, acquired a small portion.

Edward Robarts, who held land himself through his relationship by marriage with a

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28It is not clear whether Peueinui was still alive, or still occupying the position of *toa*. Robarts claimed to have been 'their head in war'; if this is true, perhaps he had replaced Peueinui.
sister of Keatonui, claimed to have been moved by the unfortunate circumstances of the sister, who, with some dependants, had been forced to move to another part of the island. Robarts, with the support of Putahaie, attempted to have at least a part of the land restored to her, and took her to the part which had passed into the hands of Tuitoua, and called upon people to help her build a house. But no-one did so, and

Some warriers came and said, so that she might hear, that there was no land for her: she had her time; it was theirs now, and they would Keep it. I turn about and sternly told them it would be but for a short time, and then I walkd to the stone wall and pushd the stones down and made gaps in the enclosure. This was the token that a war would commence.29

Despite the fact that Keatonui had initially quarrelled with his sister, he drifted towards a position of non-interference, or passive compliance with Robarts’ efforts to alter the situation. But despite the repute of Putahaie, and Robarts’ own stature as a warrior, these efforts led to nothing until it occured to him to draw on his own connections: ‘the Kings eldest daughter was married to a powerfull chieftain, and I was her adopted son.’ The daughter was Tahatapu, and the ‘chieftain’ was Mouwateie; in Crook’s time he was ‘the son of the chief’ of Hapa’a, and then resided with his wife at Taiohae. Presumably he had moved back to his own valley on his father’s death in order to become haka’iki.

Tahatapu was at first pessimistic about the prospects for altering the situation: ‘My mother says: “You see how it was when you went before. No one offerd to build a shelter for her.”’30 Tahatapu did, however, urge Mouwateie to do what Robarts asked and some while later his ‘father’s tribe picked a Quarrell with the people which refused to give up land to the Kings sister.’ It was planned that Putahaie, with her daughter31 & most of the Royal family’ would move onto the land, and raise the question again of who would support the sister.

The warriors were taken by suprise, but since some Hapa’a fighters, headed by Robarts’ adopted father, were assembled on a hill above the land, prepared for war, after some consultation it was agreed that the land should be restored:

Their prophet came and the usual ceremony [was] performd, untill they came to the part which mentions and particularizes the names of such & such lotts of lands. They only mentioned the lott on which we stood. The King sat at a small distance from the spot. I sent him a Broken stick. This denoted that only a part of the land would be restord. He sent me in return a whole stick. This denoted that all must be restord, or else a war. I then refused the single lott and told them in plain &: clear terms that all the land - with the springs of water, with

30Robarts [1974]: 155.
31Robarts’ reference to the ‘old queen’ and her ‘grand daughters tenants’ ([1974]: 155) is likely to be a slip, rather than a reference to the involvement of another group of people.
the sea beach belonging thereto - which they had unjustly taken, must be
restored. One thing I would grant, that what food they had in store they might
take away, not any to remain in any part of the Princesses land, and that the
trees should remain as they was, not a bread fruit or coco nullet that was on the
trees should be broken. If they consented one and all, it was all I wanted. If not,
the war would momentarily commence. The Drum stood before me, ready to the
alarm. My fathers tribe on the mountain side [was] waiting the result of our
meeting. They then proceeded with the ceremony to give up the whole.\textsuperscript{32}

There is little doubt that the initial act of appropriation took place because the
more powerful group, the warriors, were capable of getting away with it; they made no
particular attempt to legitimize their action. This was not uncommon: Crook noted that
'Touwattea', one of the tau'a, had increased his property in land 'by encroaching upon
that of Heehue, a sensible and respectable man, who is a dependant of the chief.'\textsuperscript{33} More
generally, he observed that 'Property in land, or trees, altho' accurately known by the
owner, is exposed to the encroachments of powerful superiors.\textsuperscript{34} These events point to a
dynamic and fluid system in which appeals to legitimacy and highly structured roles and
alliances were not important. Although, when later missionaries observed that might was
right in the Marquesas,\textsuperscript{35} they were seeking to characterize Marquesan society as amoral
and immoral, thereby legitimating their own efforts to change it, it was true that in some
contexts, stronger groups did prey upon weaker in a relatively unrestrained way.

Specific relationships such as siblingship and adoption thus seem to have had little
predetermined content: as is indicated by the pattern of political alliances for 1798, the
1805 conflict involving many of the same people reveals that associations and connections
acquired their significance in practice. They were open to being twisted this way or that,
and could be quite devoid of meaning if the people concerned failed to sustain or
reinvigorate the link. Thus, while siblingship sometimes created an important bond, on
many occasions siblings were members of antagonistic factions.

These relationships and groupings do not reflect clear social organizational
principles or a situation in which chiefs were specially prominent. While chiefs clearly
were important, they were not the only power brokers, and it appears that a variety of
individuals and groups could act in forceful and significant ways. It is often noted that

\textsuperscript{32}Robarts [1974]: 156.
\textsuperscript{33}Crook, Account, 232.
\textsuperscript{34}Crook, Account, 98. Rocquefeuil (1823, I: 317-18) also gives a detailed account of a dispute
about land.
\textsuperscript{35}Chaulet, Archipel des îles Marquises ou de Mendana, 33.
prominent people had 'dependants' over whom they exercised some authority; 36 these
groupings of supporters were the building blocks out of which factional groupings within
mata'ina'a were constituted. But before political dynamics can be treated further, it is
necessary to explore economic relations and clarify what made dependants dependent.

Although some Europeans, perhaps knowing something of other Pacific chiefdoms,
assumed that there was some general chiefly ownership of all land, 37 it is clear from both
general and specific statements in the early literature, that while parcels of land appear to
have been individually owned, there was no privileged chiefly titular ownership. This is
not surprising, since it seemed from the Tikopia instance that the chief's titular ownership
was indissociable from his ritual situation: in the Marquesan case, the absence of one
seems to have been connected with the absence of the other. As Robarts noted, 'No
chieftain can force a tribute from anyone excepting those on his own private estate.' 38 A
much later missionary writer, who however relied upon well-informed tuhuna and others
for information, and who had spent decades in the group, was similarly emphatic:

J'ai quelquefois oui'dire par des étrangers qui veulent parler des Marquises sans
en connaître les usages que le chef est le maître de sa vallée et qu'il peut en
disposer comme il veut. C'est une erreur, j'ai toujours oui'dire le contraire par
les canaques; j'ai toujours vu le contraire, c'est tout naturel, c'est conforme à la
justice qui dit: personne ne peut donner ce que ne lui appartient point; un chef
qui agirait autrement ce serait certainment jadis attiré une guerre. 39

This is not to say that chiefly men and women did not own certain parcels of land:
Putahaie clearly possessed a great deal, since in Crook's time she owned the western part
of the bay, and must have had additional holdings in some of the small valleys further to

36 Every chief seems to have considerable power over his own dependants in a certain way'
(Darling, Journal, 10 April 1835). This was probably as true of 'akatia as it was of chiefs. The
many writers who noted that Marquesan chiefs lacked authority probably expected to see some
kind of general sovereignty and neglected the nature of these smaller groups (e.g. Orlebar 1833: 27;
Gordon, Journal, 96-97; Ryder, Notes on places visited, 32; Kabris [1982]: 111; Porter 1822, II: 64;

37 Lawson 1862 [1936]: 41; cf. Handy 1923: 57.

38 Robarts [1974]: 266. The only secure evidence for any kind of generalized chiefly ownership is
provided by Crook, who noted that haka'i'iki sometimes claimed the ridges between valleys
(Account, 95-96) - the unproductive character of which would have rendered questions of ownership
unimportant.

took place about the nature of indigenous Marquesan property relations at various times late in the
nineteenth century and early in the twentieth century when the administration sought to regularize
land arrangements and came into conflict with the Catholic mission over its holdings, some of
which had been presented to it by chiefs. Unfortunately, no apparent effort was made at this time
to obtain information from Marquesans about the earlier system: although various assertions that
chiefs owned everything, or that there was no real owner, were either unsubstantiated, or supported
through reference to writers such as Dupetit-Thouars (see e.g. Delmas, Le livre de Dr. Rollin; 11
October 1902; Langomazins, Consultation pour Mgr. Martin; and other papers in dossiers 50-5 and
50-6 ('Biens de la mission'), SS.CC.).
the west, between Taiohae and Hakaui, since she gave some tracts in the valley of Uauka to her youngest son, Tamati. Keatonui's house and property were further inland, in the valley of Meao. However, the husband of Keatonui's sister Taheipu, Pahoutahau, who was not otherwise associated with the chieftainship, owned another part of the bay near Pakiu, one of the smaller valleys constituting the huge basin of Taiohae. One of Keatonui's brothers, and one of his brothers-in-law, who were involved in fishing, were said to have 'joint property of the sea in the bay.' Among others, the toa, Peueinui, was also 'a man of large property.' There is no suggestion that there was some larger system of tenure, or a kind of more general or more fundamental ownership on the part of a chief such as Keatonui, which rendered the property rights of these individuals in any way contingent.

Although this feature of Marquesan society escaped the attention of many observers, it was in fact noted as early as 1792 by Josiah Roberts, an American trader who visited both Tahuata and Nukuhiva. His observations were reported to a French traveller in the United States, La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, who represented them in the following way:

Indépendamment du roi, qui est héréditaire, et des chiefs de village qui le sont aussi, il y a encore une certaine inégalité dans les familles, qui toutes donnent au roi et aux chefs de grands témoignages de respect. La propriété est reconnue et respectée dans cette île; le nombre des domestiques, et des esclaves est proportionné à cette propriété.

It is significant here that whereas many foreigners refer to any people, or at least any males, of apparent distinction, as 'chiefs', Crook used the expression, 'persons of property'. If he was translating a Marquesan category, it was probably 'akatia' which was cognate with ra'atira in Tahitian and various other Polynesian words which meant landholders. It is generally ambiguous as to whether the persons so designated were landholders by right of some intermediate genealogical situation between chiefs and commoners, or were simply landholders in their own right, independent of questions of overall rank. While many references to Tahitian ra'atira identified them as propriétaires fonciers, or in terms of European class categories such as 'gentry', the basis of this social position remains unclarified. They 'held their land, not from the gift of the King, but

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40 Crook, Account, 228.
41 Crook, Account, 225.
42 La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt 1799, III: 21. Other accounts of the voyage (Roberts, Journal; Magee, Journal) do not refer to this matter.
43 Or 'anatia in the 'southern' Marquesan dialects.
from their ancestors," but Moerenhout noted that a proportion of the produce went to higher ranking *ari‘i*. Perhaps the ambiguity of the Tahitian situation reflects tensions between different sets of relations, some genealogically founded, and others having a more immediate economic basis in the actual control of resources.

In the Marquesan case, there is simply no evidence for a pervasive rank structure based upon successive birth order, within which junior and intermediate positions were defined. There was undoubtedly an emphasis upon primogeniture within families, and (albeit somewhat flexibly) upon the chiefly line, but it was not necessary for these concerns to have been linked, as indeed they appear not to have been linked, with a broader rank structure of the type which probably existed in ancestral Polynesian society. It appears as though *`anatia* were a distinct group of landholders whose position was defined simply by their ownership of land; it was not contingent upon some other status or rank position. There was thus a contrast between this situation and more typical Polynesian hierarchal land relations, which generally hinged upon the principal that ‘each right to a piece of land is contained in a higher, more encompassing, right.’ The effect of the appropriation of prosperity functions by *tau‘a* was that this overarching chiefly encompassment became incomplete.

Land was acquired mainly through inheritance, which can only be understood through reference to later sources. Radiguet placed unqualified emphasis upon primogeniture:

> Quand un *akaiki* a plusieurs enfants, c’est l’*āhe*, garçon ou fille, qui hérite le titre et des propriétés; les autres enfants restent *kikino*.

An 1840 account of the situation of a young man at Hakamoui, 'Ua Pou, however supports this general statement:

> [Kauani] eut pour père, un prêtre des idoles... comme celui-ci n’était pas l’*āhe* de la famille, il n’avait aucun privilège et très peu de bien. Lorsque nous vîmes a Vapu ['Ua Pou]... il vivait en qualité de domestique, chez un nièce du Roi.

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44Ellis 1829, II: 343-44.
451837, II: 11-12.
46Valeri 1985b: 154. It is obscure as to how ‘ownership’ in the Marquesas was conceived. There was a word for property, *ha‘ina* or *ha‘ika*, which perhaps specifically meant estates or domains (Dordillon 1931: 99) but there is no information as to how the word was used, nor how it was associated with other relevant terms.
47Radiguet n.d. [1860]: 156. Radiguet’s account of Marquesan hierarchy, although consistent in many respects with other sources, provides a clear example of the confusion of chiefs with landholders. The quoted passage probably relates to inheritance in general, rather than simply succession within chiefly families.
48Caret, 13 May 1840.
Robarts' very brief reference to inheritance implied a more flexible situation, whereby although the first born - whether male or female - received the largest portion, younger siblings also received some allotments.\(^4^9\)

It is certainly the case that use-rights in land were often granted, and may sometimes have been maintained to the extent that the land was regarded as the property of the user and was passed on to his or her descendants. But it seems more often to have been the case that such use rights were perceived to be clearly distinct from a more fundamental kind of ownership, and lapsed on the death of either party.\(^5^0\)

A sentence quoted in Dordillon's dictionary has some bearing on this question: "A kai 'oe 'i te henua nei, e kai anaiko ta 'oe, avai te henua to'u." Dordillon translated this rather freely as 'Je vous donne l'usage de cette terre, mais je m'en réserve la propriété.'\(^5^1\) A closer version could read, 'you eat this land, it is yours merely to eat, I retain [the ownership of] the land for myself.' The different possessives (ta 'oe and to'u) indicate that the 'eater' has a loose or contingent relationship to the land, while the other party has a stronger, more intimate or inalienable relationship with it.\(^5^2\) Robarts' account of the dispute over a tract of land involving Keatonui, Teheaviane, and 'the warriers' makes it clear that certain ceremonies existed which had the purpose of transferring land, or confirming it in the hands of a new owner.\(^5^3\) These rituals must have created the particular link which constituted the relationship as an inalienable one.

However, the lack of significance attached to the legitimacy of claims in these contexts induced Robarts to impute a logic of simple force to these relations: 'You may as well attempt to take a Kid from a tyger; for, when a war of this Kind happens, the conquering warriers divides the Land among themselves;' '[There are] others who have

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\(^4^9\)Crook also observed that the sex of the child was not supposed to make any difference (Crook, Account, 12).

\(^5^0\)This took place when land was granted to Europeans resident at Vaitahu in the 1850s (Darling, Journal, 9 June, 15 June 1855).

\(^5^1\)Dordillon 1932: 418.

\(^5^2\)Like other Polynesian languages, Marquesan possessed two series of possessives, one relating to an intimate or very strong relationship between object and possessor, which would be used in relation to parts of the body, certain classes of inherited personal property, etc., and another implying a more accidental or contingent relationship, such as with bought or otherwise acquired property (cf. Tryon 1970: 30f.). Ta'oe means yours (acquired) whereas to'u means mine (inalienable). Macintyre (1984) has analysed the use of such possessives on Tubetube (in the Massim region) in detail. Goodenough (1951: 61-64) has pointed out that certain forms can remain linguistically current without having more than a very limited connection with actual property relations. While Marquesan concepts are difficult to analyse because they have changed very considerably, and early usage was only recorded to a very limited extent, the consistency between the usage and other evidence suggests in the Marquesan case that the grammar of possession played some role in structuring perceptions.

\(^5^3\)See Rodgerson 1838 and discussion in chapter 7 for references to similar ceremonies at a later date.
lost their lands in quarrels, for the weakest is sure to loose. 54 'Powerful superiors' often appropriated portions of the lands of others. 55 Apart from piecemeal expropriation of individuals' land by individuals, there were also instances of whole valley populations being dispossessed during warfare: this occurred, as was mentioned earlier, on Tahuata, probably during the 1770s; specific cases are well documented on Tahuata in 1837, and at Fatuiva during the 1850s. There were no doubt many other similar but unreported events. It was thus relatively common for individuals or groups to be dispossessed, and for specific patterns of landholding to change significantly in short periods as a result of local or larger scale disputes.

Land could be acquired through marriage into a group, or through taking over the estate of a family which had died out, as Robarts' own circumstances illustrate:

I was well situated. My family lived on their own plantation, and I had a large one of my own that I had purchased. My servants took care of it and one that I took possession of, as the family that it belonged to was all dead. I had a right to it, as I took possession first after the decease of the family. No one dare dispute my right. I was their head in war. I headed them in war against their enemies and was at every battle in the heat of it. 56

Robarts gives away something about his own perceptions of the indigenous system - and perhaps something about that system itself - in the conjunction of phrases 'I had a right to it' and 'No one dare dispute my right.' The former endeavours to create a sense of legitimacy, but the latter is elaborated upon; the basis of his stature is explained, and the reader is left with the sense that this stature, rather than questions of the legitimacy of holdings, was the heart of the matter. The question of who would 'dare' to make or resist a challenge was obviously not a 'psychological' one: it relates to a local political situation constituted not only by networks of alliance, but also by patterns of their effective and ineffective use. It is evident from Robarts' account of the Teheaviane incident that the existence of a link was less important than the ways in which it was drawn on and drawn into situations of conflict.

A situation in which land is controlled by a grouping of landholders and another certain group is obliged (in some way) to work that land, playing an economically dependent role, is predicated either upon a situation of absolute land shortage, or upon repressive mechanisms or other constraints which prevent people from moving onto unused land and developing it themselves. Although questions about the carrying capacity of the islands are technical, it can be said that there is little doubt that, given

55 Crook, Account, 98.
the array of forms of cultivation and food procurement, populations were typically close to a limit. In terms of space, it is obvious to a visitor, as Handy pointed out, that all valleys were densely occupied: dwelling paepae are found a long way from valley mouths and sometimes at inconvenient distances from water sources.57

There were a number of distinct dependent statuses. The main division appears to have been between those who worked around a household, and who were attached to it in some way,58 who collected wood, got water, prepared food, and carried out other miscellaneous tasks, and on the other hand, those who were described as ‘tenants’, who lived on land owned by others, sometimes at some distance from the landholder, which presumably influenced the extent and frequency of tributary appropriation. Marquesan servants were not forcibly bonded to particular families; their relationship with their masters was like that of the feudal ‘vassal’ in the sense that it implied a contractual link which did not persist beyond the death of either party, and which entailed obligations on both sides. The master provided food or the means for producing it, while the dependant provided labour, and supported the master when conflict arose.59 A significant difference between servants and tenants was that the former were individuals incorporated into domestic groups, while tenants usually constituted separate domestic groups. The Kopuhoroto'e myth suggests that this was not always the case: the hakai puaka or feeder of pigs lives by himself in one valley where he takes care of pigs belonging to other people.60 Perhaps the principal occasion for the levying of the titleholder’s entitlement was prior to a presentation or feast. As Porter noted

Gattanewa [Keatonui] owns much land, and his tenants pay him in kind. When presents are due to be made, he calls upon them for his due in hogs, cocoanuts, bananas or breadfruit; other landholders follow his example.61

It will be shown later that, for any one group, major feasts were relatively infrequent; however, smaller scale koina, not involving persons from other valleys, seem to have taken place with great frequency for a bewildering array of reasons. Hence modest demands for supplies for such occasions many have been made by 'akatio, say, every few weeks. It is also likely that there was some kind of levy upon ‘eaters of the land’ whenever breadfruit was harvested: Lisiansky suggested that in abundant seasons, landholders

571923: 9.
58Dumont D'Urville (1847: Atlas, plate 54) illustrates a house at Nukuhiva, showing a small lean-to against the side of the main house platform, which may well have been where dependants slept.
60Lavondès 1964: 25-32.
61Porter 1822, II: 64.
received a quarter of the crop, and an 'apportionment according to circumstances' at
other times. While this statement probably has some basis, it has to be pointed out
that there is no clear documentation of regularized appropriation.

Relations of dependency also existed in respect of fishing:

Others are regularly occupied in catching fish, usually under the control of
Persons of Property, who furnish them with canoes for the purpose, and barter
the fish thus obtained for other needful articles, out of which they supply the
fishermen as they find occasion.

While Robarts did not explicitly suggest that fishers or *tuhuna ava ika* were dependent
upon others for the means of production, he noted that they were 'mostly a set of people
who have little or no land,' who lived 'in huts on or near the beach' and who supported
'their families by fishing, which they exchange for food and cloth. In many bays,
fishers' paepae are still found, often literally on the beach, although these platforms
were for the periodic ritual seclusion of fishermen themselves: normally they must have
lived with their families in more flimsy structures which have not survived.

There were various types of fishing: women sometimes used lines from rocks, or
collected from along the shore, but both of these activities were only conducted
occasionally, and probably were of limited importance for subsistence. Fishing from
canoes, using either lines or nets, was a more regular activity, and was strictly the
province of men. Even today in the Marquesas, where the division of labour is loose, and
women often garden with their husbands, or go collecting *mape* or Tahitian chestnuts,
women virtually never go out in fishing canoes.

A prestige value was attached to particular seafoods, such as sharks (*moko* or
*mako*), rays (*haha* 'ua), and the turtle (*honu*), which was depicted in petroglyphs and
seems to have provided an alternative to human sacrifices on some occasions. In some
areas, certain fish could only be eaten by chiefs or priests; otherwise they tended, like
pork, to be consumed mainly at commemorative feasts or *mau*. While the *tapu* character
of much fishing, and the prestige attached to certain quarry might lead one to assume
that fishing generally was a high status activity, it seems that the most prestigious

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62 Lisiansky 1814: 80.
63 Because Lisiansky's source was almost certainly Edward Robarts.
64 Crook, Account, 3.
66 A photograph of those at Hoho'i, 'Ua Pou, appears in Ottino 1984: 31.
67 Often called Devil fish in early sources.
68 The ritual importance of turtles and rays probably arises from their anomalous position in
relation to categories: the former are breathing animals that live in the sea, and the latter are
activities were monopolised by the principal fishermen, or the ‘Persons of Property’. Crook recorded that Tahieinui and Pahouahetu, who in some sense ‘owned’ the sea in the bay, as well as many canoes, were ‘famed for their dexterity in fishing, catching more Devil-fish than any other people.’ Since rays were probably speared, there would have been clear divisions of technique, and many dependant fishermen may have been restricted to more mundane, but perhaps more steadily rewarding, forms of fishing.

This emerging picture of Marquesan society is at variance not only with the construct of ancestral Oceanic chiefdom, but also with many tribal economies: property appears privatised to an unusual degree, and the control that some ‘persons of property’ exercised over the means of production enabled them to appropriate the surplus labour of people who did not own their own land or canoes. Those called tenants had to surrender a tithe, while a disconnection between cultural and economic status is evident from the situation of fishermen: while they were tuhuna, specialist practitioners of tapu work, their position was more like that of a worker in a capitalist economy than that of the ‘servant’ or ‘tenant’. Their masters apparently appropriated the whole catch, and later returned a portion of the value to them in another form. The process implies a dissociation of products from their producers which seems foreign to a virtually unstratified small scale society.

Although these relations of dependence were culturally represented by Marquesans in certain ways, the most important indigenous conception of hierarchy seems to have centred upon a different set of relations and categories less directly connected with economic inequalities. Many observers of Marquesan life noted that tapu elevated and rendered distinct certain individuals (most obviously the chiefs), and separated men and women, but only one, William Pascoe Crook, provided information which shows that tapu actually provided the basis for a pervasive hierarchy, which created inequality among men and among women, as well as between sexes.

Just as certain rules often precluded women from eating with men, or from going onto certain sacred precincts, some men were themselves separated off: whereas men in general were tapu in relation to women, who were generally meʻie or common, most men were meʻie in relation to smaller, more ‘sacred’ groups:

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69 Crook, Account, 229.

70 Krusenstern (1813: 163) indicated that fishing generally was ‘an occupation despised by those who possess a piece of land of any extent.’

71 Differences in ‘wealth’ were, incidentally, reflected in diet: ‘the poorer women’ were those who collected shellfish; and only ‘the poorest people’ ever ate rats (Crook, Account, 55, 60). On the other hand, kava was said to be drunk exclusively by ‘chiefs’ (La Rochebutoncauld-Liancourt 1799, III: 21; Shillibeer 1817: 53). This restriction, unlike those on rays and certain other fish, does not appear to have had any ritual basis.
Besides the general tabbu Class of men...there are subdivisions of the tabbu class, distinct from each other, & of a higher order than those men who are not included in any of them... These are allowed to feast with each other; & they may also partake of food with the general tabbu Class; but the latter are not admitted to eat with, or partake of, food belonging to, any of the superior classes.\textsuperscript{72}

Crook suggested three that such classes were general to the group:\textsuperscript{75} the \textit{tuhuna o'ono}, the \textit{tau'a}, and \textit{u'u}, who were essentially servants of \textit{tau'a} at \textit{me'ae} or sacred places. But he indicated that there were a number of others, such as the \textit{mata puovo}, which was only found at Nukuhiwa, and consisted of 'few persons, most of whom are old men.'\textsuperscript{74} This 'class' was 'superior to all the others':

none of the other Tabbu Classes is allowed to partake of food prepared for them, or that has been in the house where they keep their feasts; but the Matta-buovo may partake of that which belongs to others.

While this leaves obscure the basis of recruitment to classes other than those based upon occupations such as the priesthood, it indicates that the unity and exclusiveness of the groups was expressed through their meals or \textit{koina}, and that there was some kind of clubhouse which gave a group some tangible form and continuity.\textsuperscript{75} Since men did not normally eat with their wives, they may have eaten in these clubhouses daily; some \textit{tapu} grades must however have met only occasionally: evidence from Tahuata in the 1830s suggests that one group of this type, the \textit{huipo}, consisted of men from different valleys, who were gathered together every few weeks or months, rather than on a daily basis.\textsuperscript{76}

While there is no explicit evidence that the \textit{huipo} comprised a \textit{tapu} grade or 'class', it is significant that what distinguished them was a dark band of tattooing across the eyes: Crook noted that one grade at Nukuhiwa, consisting of men who were common but distinguished for their property, were called \textit{mata toitoi}, and were 'punctured \textit{[tattooed]} entirely round their eyes.'\textsuperscript{77} He added that membership of other \textit{tapu} 'classes' was signified 'by the peculiar manner in which their Eyelids, \& parts adjacent, are punctured.' Ryazanov (a participant in the Russian voyage) directly linked particular tattoos and feasting groups, noting that occasionally 'all those with the same pattern of tattoo or

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{72}Account, 27-28.
\item \textsuperscript{73}Although his experience would really only have permitted statements about Tahuata and Nukuhiwa.
\item \textsuperscript{74}Account, 118.
\item \textsuperscript{75}Cf. Crook, Account, 50-51.
\item \textsuperscript{76}Darling, Journal, 31 March 1835.
\item \textsuperscript{77}Account, 118. Keatonui's youngest brother, Tamati, was the leader of this group (Account, 229b).
\end{itemize}
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decoration come together for a meal.\textsuperscript{78}

Later missionary inquiry established that certain groups of women, particularly women ‘of condition’ (or rank), often congregated in certain houses for feasts from which other women were excluded;\textsuperscript{79} Crook also noted that ‘there is a distinction of class among the women’, which he linked with food, ‘some not being admitted to eat of food that has been in the basket or gourd belonging to others.’\textsuperscript{80}

There is no information as to how many tapu grades existed: nor is it clear whether they were ranked in any strict way. It may be that rather than there being a particular hierarchical order, there were a number of groups, some of which were acknowledged as superior to others, these perceptions perhaps changing as the composition of particular groups changed.

What is significant for an analysis of hierarchy, though, is that while chieftainship did not occupy a central structuring position in society, groups were not amorphous arrays of statuses and relationships: all men and all women had some place within linked tapu/me'ie oppositions. These situations were often contextual, in the sense that a person who was me'ie in respect of one person or group might be effectively tapu in respect of another. Thus the tapu system constituted a unitary and encompassing cultural hierarchy, a set of coherent, ideal categories. Given this general framework, a number of problems are opened up, about the nature of tapu, and its implications for social relations and inequality, between people in general, and between men and women, in ideal and material contexts.

\textsuperscript{78}1825: 89. Krusenstern left a somewhat confused account of ‘associations’ or ‘clubs’ of persons who ate together, which were distinguished by particular tattoos. A link with apparently flexible hierarchy was evident: ‘the admittance into them is a distinction that many seek to obtain’ (1813: 160). Apart from his references to the huipo, Darling did not identify these groups, but did point out (Journal, 8 January 1835) that certain species of fish were restricted to those tattooed in a certain manner.

\textsuperscript{79}Chaulet, Notices, 92.

CHAPTER 3

Unstable categories: tapu and gender

Formerly people did not know about natural birth, a Tahuatan sorcerer told David Darling. When their time came, women were cut open and their children taken out, this situation only changing when 'some great person came among them from Tahiti.'\(^1\) Kae, a haka'iki whose heroic exploits were related in myth, once confronted such a situation on Motu Ha'a or Pandanus Island. *Tenei hena 'e vehine 'i oto; a'o'e he vahana:* on this island there were women; there were no men.\(^2\)

For husbands the women had pandanus roots. The children weren't born. The pandanus roots gave the women children; they grew; a demon who lived on the island came and cut open the stomach. The mother died; the child lived; all the children were girls. So, on this island, there were women and no men, except this demon.\(^3\)

Kae arrived and encountered the chief of the women. She took him back to her house and lived with him. When she told him why there were no men, and about how the demon cut open the women, Kae said it must stop. He chased away the demon and told the women how to give birth. They were happy: *'u hanau meitai te tama* (the birth of children was good). Kae's woman, the *ha'atepe*i'\(u\), became pregnant, and gave birth to a male child.\(^4\)

These elements of a narrative imply a doctrine that the existence of an exclusively female population can only be associated with manifestly evil things. When there are no men, children are produced in an undesirable, unnecessarily violent manner; the arrival of a man, and the end of the unisexual society, lead directly to the abandonment of this horrible procedure. A sexual complementarity, which is hierarchical, and male agency,

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\(^1\)Darling, Journal, 3 July 1835.

\(^2\)What is related here is part of the Kae myth (Lavondès 1964: 57-74). Handy (1930: 56-58) has another version of the story, and Steinen (1933-34) recorded two: 'the island of women' and 'Kae'. Although more elaborate, these texts do not differ in points of substance (except on the point mentioned in the following note).

\(^3\)Lavondès 1964: 59. Lavondès translates tahutahu (not in the dictionaries) as 'sorcier'; since the teller used *tiaporo* in another place, I have preferred 'demon'. It is clearly not a question of sorcery in any strict sense. Handy's version indicates that apparently male *tahuna* cut the women open; in both Steinen's versions it was done by two female *etua*.

appear to be celebrated: people are generally better off because Kae has told them what to do. He assumes a position of dominance and seems to displace the female chief: the ha'atepei'u becomes simply te vehine 'a Kae, the wife of Kae.

It is impossible to say whether the sorcerer who told Darling this story, or some similar myth, was conscious of these themes. It could easily be assumed that the narrative had a message, that it effectively legitimated sexual inequality. The Maori myth in which the hero Maui is crushed between the legs of Hina of the underworld in a vain attempt to secure immortality for humankind has been interpreted as a rationalisation for male dominance among the Maori: ‘la société Maori reposait sur l’exclusion des femmes, justifiées par la cruauté d’Hine nui te Po.’ But the inferred morality of cosmology is not necessarily the morality of practice. Polynesians drew upon, referred to, and recreated cosmology and tradition continuously, but the ways in which they did so were selective and manipulative. To deduce what are essentially political tenets about male-female relations from cosmology and mythology is, at best, a precarious exercise, especially because eastern Polynesian culture makes so much of sexual metaphors and sexual difference, and of hierarchical dualism.

A theory that religious notions could legitimate sexual inequality was, however, implicit in the observations of some early visitors to the Marquesas. While some acknowledged that certain women had considerable status and power, most saw women generally as constrained and degraded, the crucial apparatus generating this

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5 Dunis 1984: 211. The Marquesan account of the origin of death is, incidentally, somewhat different and more ambivalent in any allocation of blame: Tiki, the father of all people, was an ordinary person, but his wife Hina was very different: she had bones outside her flesh like shellfish. Hina was old, and once when they were by the sea Tiki saw that she was covered with wrinkles. Angered he smashed her shell; she leapt out of it and for a moment appeared young and beautiful; then she jumped into the sea and soon grew a new shell. Tiki thought that people should not be like Hina, so he made their bones covered with flesh. That’s why people die; if they had been made like Hina they would live forever, like the rocks (abstracted from Fournon, Letter, 29 January 1849; comparable incidents take place, but are not explicitly linked with death, in Steinen’s ‘Kae’).

subordination being the *tapu* system.\(^7\)

This is a complicated system; it affects every movement in society; selfishness and the desire to degrade women appear to be the basis of it.\(^8\)

In the broader Polynesian context it has often been supposed that women represented a ‘threat’ to what was *tapu*: an equation has generally been made by Polynesianists between male/female and *tapu/noa*, the latter term often being glossed as ‘profane’. In the Marquesan case the word *noa* did not exist,\(^9\) and the opposed term to *tapu*, *meʻie* means unrestricted or clear (hence, free of *tapu*), rather than profane or impure.

However, it is not difficult to see how observers gained the impression that beliefs in female impurity were pervasive: early visitors thought that women were precluded from entering canoes, eating pork, moving onto sacred precincts, and participating in *koina*.\(^10\)

Later lists of *tapu* included many prohibitions relating to women. They could not

- pass over the body of a person
- pass over mens’ clothes or mats

\(^7\)Some confusion in sources has arisen from a transference to eastern Polynesia of what are essentially western Polynesian notions of *tapu*, which were made known in Europe through the publications of Cook’s voyages. Whereas in the west, *tabu* and various cognates often referred to a temporary restriction upon the use of certain resources, generally imposed by a chief, in places such as the Society Islands and the Marquesas, this type of restriction was a *rahui* or ‘*ahui*, and was not connected with the larger *tapu* system (this confusion is perpetuated in a recent analysis of Maori culture [Dunis 1984: 62-63]). However, one of the signs of such restrictions, a piece of *tapa* or a coconut frond wrapped around a stick, or a tree, was used in many parts of the Pacific (cf. Fortune 1932: 138; Firth 1965: 204); this may partly explain why so many visitors to the Marquesas assumed that ‘*ahui* were *tapu* (e.g. Krusenstern 1814: 172; Dumont D’Urville 1847, III: 300; Lawson, The Names of Marquesan Mythology). Crook (Account, 122) provides an unambiguous explanation of ‘*ahui*’. Modern eastern Polynesian usage might appear to reflect an imposition of foreign meanings: *tapu* in French Polynesia, and *kapu* in Hawaii, appear on signs and mean ‘keep out’ or ‘private property’ (cf. plate after p. 306 in Pinchot 1930); Keesing (n.d.: 16) suggests that this is consistent with the core of the Oceanic meaning, i.e. ‘off-limits’.

\(^8\)Bicknell 1855: 27. Cf. Darling: ‘their *tabu* [they] keep up... almost on purpose to keep the women under the men’ (Journal, 28 March 1835; cf. 9 February 1835).

\(^9\)Except perhaps in compound forms such as *tupenoa* and *maunoa*, words Handy suggested referred to social inferiority, but which are undocumented prior to his work during 1920-21 and thus perhaps represent borrowings from other Polynesian languages.

\(^10\)E.g. Dumont D’Urville 1847, III: 290; Smith 1856: 53; Coan 1860: 6. However, as will be indicated below, in many instances writers assumed that prohibitions which might have applied only to some women, or to all women on some occasions, were absolute. Some missionary accounts exaggerated the repressive nature of *tapu* rules, since this legitimated their efforts to abolish the system. Commenting on Coan’s list of prohibitions, Lawson wrote ‘when the war is Tabu the women are not confined to their houses &c. [as Coan had asserted] but quite the contrary they mostly go to see the fight but they are prohibited from making mats and using the Henna ‘Tumeric’ hair oil & flowers & even this Tabu does not last all the war’ (Lawson, Letter to Gullick, April 1861 [BPBM]).
- pass over domestic utensils
- pass over objects made by men
- pass over places set aside for cutting hair
- eat *popoi* prepared by a man
- eat in places reserved for men
- use fire lit by a man
- sit upon a box or any domestic utensil.11

Several of these rules relate to a general property of *tapu*, namely its capacity to be extended or transmitted from *tapu* people to their work, or to objects otherwise associated with them.12 French colonial officials punished wrongdoers on Fatuiva in the 1880s by forcing them to build paved paths; this punishment was perceived by the Marquesans as particularly severe, not only because of the work itself, but also because women would be among those who walked over their work.13 However not all products of male labour remained *tapu*: normally there was some rite which had the effect of *tapu* removal. Ordinary dwelling *paepae* were, for instance, freed of *tapu*. The rules also illustrate the key role of the spatial categories of above and below. Women were obliged to avoid passing over male bodies, or in the cases of chiefs, over mediating objects: proximity itself was not particularly important.14 David Darling's account of the system implies a diffuse field of rules, suggesting several interacting principles; however, he, like Bicknell, gave great emphasis to the circumscription of female action:

almost every thing has a *tapu* attached to it less or more. The Tapu is the making of a thing or person sacred, or separating them from another thing or person, a prohibition the breaking of which is often punished with death but sometimes only with disease according to the natives account. The *Tapus* are connected almost with everything they do: sometimes they are only for a time and then removed; Other *Tapus* are continual, such as sacred places called *taha tapu*, the women are never allowed to go on sacred ground, or enter a sacred house called *fae* /faˈɛ/ *tapu*. *Tapus* are attached to persons, to food, to times and to things. Many persons are *tapu* made so on particular occasions some few are always so: - these *tapus* allow the Men to do what the women are not allowed to do; and to go where they are not [allowed] or at least dare not go: there is a great deal of ceremony about the food at the Marquesas many kinds the women are not allowed to touch the men alone can eat it, other

11 Abstracted from Anon [Probably Chaulet or Dordillon], Iles Marquises. *Tapus*.
12 Crook, Account, 51-52; Stewart 1831, I: 242.
13 Schulte, *La mission catholique à La Madeleine*, I.
14 The particularly *tapu* character of the head was reflected in the practice of occasionally scalping enemies and sending them back to their own districts, instead of killing them. This must, however, have been almost equivalent as an attack upon their person (Crook, Account, 95).
kinds are eaten by both sexes, sometimes together and at other times separately: even in the making of the Maa or Sour breadfruit the men have pits in many instances different from the Women in which they keep their food. All the Koinas or ceremonies at feasts &c are all attended with tapus of different kinds and lasts for days, and sometimes for weeks together, at these times the Men are very strick in the observance of the tapu they never go to their own homes all the time the tapu lasts, and they keep themselves from their wives. Some tapus are on account of rank and some are from a kind of sacredness with reference to the gods; there are tapus also which refer to the time a child is born; and to different periods of life; and also some at the time of death. Almost all things have tapu about them: such as the building of a house; the learning of a song or tradition, the getting of the body tatooid or marked with the tatau &c. The fire that cooks the mens food must not be taken to light the fire with for cooking the womens food; the men may eat the womens food but the women must not eat that which belongs to the men, or of that which is cooked or beat up by the men; the [men] may smoke tobacco that is got by the women, but the women may not smoke that which belongs to the men or is got by them. the women must not wear any of the cloth that has been worn as undergarments by the Men, the Men never wear any belonging to the women; the men are so particular in this respect that they always burn all their old rags in case the women should get hold of them and wear them, they think that they would then be overtaken with disease.15

Chaulet explicitly posed the question of the basis of the exclusion of women from certain places and activities:

Les Marquisiens regardent la femme comme un être impur, et pour ce motif une foule de choses leur étaient interdites, même souvent sous peine de mort. Pour quel motif? A cause de ses purgations mensuelles.16

While a clear theory here links menstruation, profaneness, and a range of constraints upon female action, a number of key problems are passed over in silence. It is not clear why menstruation should be associated with impurity, nor what exactly 'impurity' amounted to in the Marquesas, nor why impurity, whatever it was, should have destabilised tapu or threatened etua.17 While it is of course the case that notions of female pollution are widespread, this does not explain a link between bleeding and impurity in a particular case. Even if it were supposed that such an association was virtually universal, it would have to be acknowledged that the degree to which menstruating women are or were perceived to be threatening is highly variable. In many Papuan societies, for instance, women were obliged to seclude themselves in huts on village peripheries for the period of bleeding, and had to undergo some purifying ritual

15Darling, Remarks, unpaginated.
16Chaulet, Archipel des Marquises. Supplément, 46.
17The term atua has been used where Polynesian cosmology in general is being considered, and etua where the context is specifically Marquesan. (The sound shift is a regular one: cf. vahine, vehine, etc.).
before returning to ordinary activities. Such huts of seclusion, with the periodic expulsion of women from society that they imply, were only rarely found in Polynesian societies, although of course other forms of sexual segregation, not principally associated with menstruation, did exist.

In fact, theories of conception from some areas suggest that bleeding itself cannot have been considered particularly dangerous to men, since conception was thought only to take place during the menstrual period. Some notions also suggest that the apparent antinomy between the 'profaneness' of women and genital bleeding, and tapu and atua, could be altered or inverted in some contexts. Even E.S.C. Handy, a strong proponent of the impurity thesis expressed by Chaulet, acknowledged that 'the term atua could sometimes be applied to menses.'

Concepts of tapu and the apparent system of pollution beliefs must be seen in the context of broader eastern Polynesian cosmology, which was strongly dualistic. There was a basic division between the world of the living and of light, ao, and po, the other world of spirits, gods, ghosts, and night. This was a temporal division in several senses: the periods of creation and the activities of gods belonged in the po, while subsequent human ancestors, or tupuna, belonged to the ao. The first human being, Tiki, was hanau po, that is, born from the po, but marked the beginning of the ao. In another temporal frame, all dead people belonged to the po, and only the living were present in the ao. More immediately, po was night. However, the division was not strictly temporal, since in another sense, po coexisted with ao: virtually everything that happened in this world was seen as consequential upon the activities of other-worldly agents: accidents were often thought to have been caused by atua who had been offended by violations of tapu, for instance.

Living people constantly had to maintain particular relations with atua, in order to achieve various objectives. The basis of tapu seems to have been the influence in the ao of atua. Some kinds of natural growth, and various forms of work, required the presence of

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19 Babadzan 1981: 170-71 (in respect of Rurutu); Best 1905: 214 (in respect of the Maori). Valeri's account (1985a: 80) of the Hawaiian myth of 'Umi indicates that women were thought to be more fertile during their menstrual periods, although it is implied that this was not the only time conception was thought to take place. Chaulet's references to Marquesan conception theory (Notices, 165) neither support nor preclude the existence of such notions in the Marquesas.
20 Handy 1927: 47.
21 The following discussion draws extensively from some recent reinterpretations of Maori culture (Hanson 1982; Hanson and Hanson 1983) although various modifications appropriate to the Marquesan context have been made.
23 Lawson 1862 [1935]: 42.
atua, and were tapu. Haka’iki had strong genealogical connections with etua; tau’a had etua in their stomachs; both classes of individuals were tapu. A traditional chant, makes a direct link between the establishment or institution (ha’atutina) of the tapu, and one of the most important deities, Atea:

Te etua one te pu
Tu-tu ana to 'oe pu
A tani 'ua te fatu Atea
Tahi 'ua hatutia te tapu.

The god of the conch
Sound your conch
Sound: the lord Atea
Sound: the tapu is established. 24

Many particular tasks associated with particular etua were tapu and entailed various prohibitions and sexual segregation. A number of men engaged in making a fishing net at Vaitahu in 1834 were secluded in a tapu place and could not have any contact with their wives until the net was finished and first used, at which time a ceremony to remove the tapu of the product took place. 25 Some forms of women’s work, such as learning songs, were also tapu and required a period of seclusion. 26

Tapu was thus a state which characterised some places or people almost permanently, and other people and activities temporarily. Tapu removal was an essential element of the system, since some objects which were produced through tapu work had to be rendered free of tapu for common use. Under certain circumstances haka’iki rendered themselves common in order to be able to attend certain ceremonies (such as sexually expressive ka’ioi performances). 27 A consequence of this essential potential for tapu removal was, however, that tapu was generally unfixed: there were circumstances under which it could be lost or absorbed back into the po in certain ways.

Human orifices played a key role in movement between the po and ao, and

24Lawson, Songs of the Marquesans, 34-35. Translation slightly modified; Lawson has ‘trumpet’ for pu, while Dordillon (1931: 337) refers to ‘wind instrument’; in the pre-contact context these are likely to have been shells (cf. Darling, Journal, 21 March 1835). Handy (Notes on Marquesan lore, file 2.6) has a similar chant in English only.

25Darling, Journal, 14 December 1834. People also became tapu in order to be tattooed (Darling, Journal, 17 July 1835; Heurtel, Letter, 30 July 1839) and at war time (Lecornu, Letter, 15 February 1854).

26Darling, Journal, 30 June 1835; Stewart 1831, II: 260; cf. Desgraz in Dumont D’Urville 1847, III: 260. The dictionary also includes the phrase A'o'e e noho [name] me te vahana, ‘ua hihi, meaning ‘[name] does not cohabit with men, she has become tapu’ (Dordillon 1931: 163). The dictionary translates ‘ua hihi as ‘elle est tapu’ which is misleading since the verb refers to a process of being rendered tapu, presumably for some specific work or occasion. Women who were tapu because of their high rank were not permanently secluded from men.

27Both Iotete and Keatonui were reported to have done this (Darling, Journal, 19 July 1835; Crook, Account, 257).
particularly in the movement of tapu between these realms. The vagina was clearly the most potent of these channels, perhaps because it was through the vagina that children emerged from the po. The importance of this channel and substances moving through it in relation to atua is illustrated by the Tahitian metaphorical expression, te ara atua, ‘the path of the gods’, and the fact that still-born children were known as tuta'e atua, the excrement of gods, in the Society Islands.  

Women were used in various contexts to effect a controlled removal of tapu. The problem was that the same operations could take place in an uncontrolled way. It seems that the vagina was dangerous because tapu could be absorbed back into the po through it. If a woman passed over a chief’s body, or over some tapu product, it was as though his condition, or that of the maker or user of the product, could evaporate or somehow be absorbed back into the po: he would become blind, leprous or infirm. There were thus numerous ways in which women, or particularly the vagina, had to be distanced from, or kept ‘below’, tapu persons or objects to which a tapu state had been extended.

Sometimes, however, the vagina could function as a channel through which tapu could be restored. In Maori culture, illnesses were sometimes cured by women pressing their genitals against the affected part of the person’s body; in the Marquesas, a ritual existed known as hakatahetahe (to splash, or to make flow):

Pour se préserver de la lèpre lorsqu’on avait été souillé ou qu’on se croyait souillé, on allait chercher la femme qui l’avait souillé (vraie ou soupconnée) on se rendait dans le ruisseau, la femme du côté de la montagne, la personne souillée du côté de la mer (tout nus), la femme prenait avec ses deux mains l’eau qui touchait à son pudenda (vai toto a [blood water]) et la jetait sur la personne souillée, dès lors elle était hors de danger de venir lépreuse.

The reference to ‘blood water’ suggests that menses were perceived to be highly charged, perhaps in ambiguous ways, rather than simply defiling as substances. Any danger for men probably arose not from a possibility of some kind of contamination, but rather from the fact that an uncontrolled movement between po and ao made that channel for

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28 Hank Driessen, personal communication. In Samoa, a converse identification was made: ‘many prominent aitus [worshipped guardian spirits] were born by human beings as lumps of blood (abortion)’ (Hjarnér 1979/80: 112). This notion also existed in Mangareva (Buck 1938: 85, 119, 426-27, 446).

29 After the service yesterday morning, Lotete wished me to give out that the women might go into our new house, as it is sacred in consequence of the men having carried the timber on their shoulders, no women have ever entered it... after some time two of the principal chief women ventured in, many others soon followed, and thus our house became meie or common...’ (Darling, Journal, 22 December 1834).

30 Chaulet, Deuxième cahier, 34. This custom has been noted by various writers, all of whom however drew their information directly or indirectly from Chaulet (Handy 1923: 269 [quoted by Hanson 1982]; Suggs 1966: 28; Delmas 1927: 66).
movement active. The risk that a tapu state could be destroyed was presumably increased.

The first menstruation of a chiefly woman was attended with major ceremonies, during which she was secluded. Chaulet indicated that the woman was kept entirely by herself, and that anyone who entered the house risked blindness or leprosy. Food was not taken inside, but left at the door. The period of seclusion seems to have been about a fortnight, after which the woman was carried to the shore on her uncles’ shoulders, where she bathed herself. While it could be suggested that the woman’s impure state required her isolation, it is curious that she was carried effectively ‘above’ her mother’s brothers before she was actually bathed. Also, if her state was actually one of defilement it is hard to see that this should have been an occasion for great celebration; but for the duration of the seclusion drumming and chants were kept up in her honour. David Darling was at Vaitahu while such a ceremony took place for the daughter of Iotete; he thought that its purpose was to

exalt or invest the Kings daughter with power according to their custom.

Everything here is sacred... The King has said that the tapu or the prohibition will be taken off as soon as the people from the other districts... return to their land and all things shall be common.

While exactly what was meant by ‘exalting’ or ‘investing’ Iotete’s daughter ‘with power’ is obscure, it seems that there was a celebration of a certain kind of potency, rather than an exclusion of something impure. It is unclear whether this potency was associated primarily with a manifestation of the woman’s procreative capacities, or her links with etua; but, to at least some extent, the latter were important. Such links might have conferred a particularly tapu state or status upon the woman at the time, which could indicate why, subsequently, her condition became non-threatening to those men who carried her.

Sometimes the reversal of normal relationships of ‘above’ and ‘below’ between a tapu part of the body, and an orifice, or substances moving between po and ao, seems to have had an inverted, unthreatening, significance. A Tikopian invocation included the following lines

That is your kava, Taureperangi,

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31 These were presumably her mother’s brothers, since father’s brothers were categorised with the father.
32 Chaulet, Notices, 81.
33 ‘Even the period is used as a date to reckon time, to some distance afterward’ (Crook, Account, 49).
34 Darling, Journal, 10 October 1834, cf. Letter, 14 October 1834.
I eat your excrement  
Rise with power from Taumako for welfare.  

while a recital praising a chief at a feast could include phrases such as  

Pa Kafika! Excrete hither for me to eat, for me to drink...  

These inversions are simply a product of rank: where a certain difference in sanctity exists, a non-*tapu* thing associated with one person becomes more *tapu* than the lesser person. This appears to be the basis of a Marquesan practice reported by Crook:  

At the first Childbearing of a young Woman of distinction, her principal male relations sometimes prostrate themselves, so that their kinswoman may be seated upon their heads, while delivered of her child; all being covered by the Cloth. If the men are of the tabbu Class, they first render themselves common, for this purpose. Others, who remain in a tabbu state, are present on the occasion. 

This general observation was undoubtedly based upon a specific incident which took place while Crook was visiting various valleys on Tahuata with the prominent Hema chief, Teinae. Teinae's sister's daughter, Hanou, who resided with her spouse at Hanateio, was giving birth, and Teinae, his brother Puta, and a cousin of theirs were among those who prostrated themselves.  

This action probably primarily expressed the status of the child, but may also have entailed a transfer of some of its *tapu* to those over whom it was born.  

The capacities of women to destroy male *tapu*, or *tapu* associated with particular work, imply a potential for female power over men. In a discussion of female impurity in Huaulu culture Valeri argued that  

The powerlessness of Huaulu women relative to the generative processes of their own bodies implies in fact a fearsome power over men. It is the power to show men that ultimately they are unable to completely control the natural conditions of the success of their social projects... It is men who feel victims of women, not women of men... Huaulu women enjoy their destructive power over men and culture perhaps as much as their creative role (in the production of children).  

It is true that a system of rules reflects not only the power of those able to impose constraints, but also that of those who are restricted - if they posed no threat there would be no need for an explicit framework of circumscription and domination. In the

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35 Firth 1970: 82.  
36 Firth 1970: 256.  
37 Account, 51.  
38 Account, 174-75.  
39 In Seram, Eastern Indonesia.  
40 Valeri n.d.: 30-31; cf. 39 n.12.
Marquesas, the normally supressed power was expressed and realised in some contexts. Women could, for instance, use their capacity to remove tapu associated with a state of war to prevent specific engagements:

Les femmes pouvaient empêcher une guerre, pour cela il suffisait qu'une d'elles dit: le chemin par laquelle vous allez est mon pudendum. Par des paroles le chemin était profane, et les guerriers ne pouvaient aller sans être massacrés.41

However the factor neglected by Valeri is the broader situation of power, and particularly the availability of force, which gives the subordinating form of power the edge that it has over that which is subordinated. In any context where rules constraining potency are reinforced by violence, it is inappropriate to suggest that men and women simply have ‘different kinds’ of power.42 Tapu rules were in fact to some extent backed by force: the killing of women who violated major tapu, such as those connected with canoes, was occasionally reported. Women did not, however, often attempt to turn tapu against men. Such action would suppose an overall situation of sexual antagonism which did not exist in the Marquesas. A sense that men and women constituted opposed groups could not have existed because gender as a hierarchical principle was cut across and muted in various ways. If the non-tapu character of women related to the dynamics of movement between the po and the ao, rather than to any essential female substance, it is understandable that certain women, particularly those with personal tapu, were less constrained than others by the prohibitions of the tapu system.

Some women in the early contact period were active in political and religious realms in much the same way as men.43 This possibility was and is manifested conceptually in Marquesan expressions of action: the most common way of talking about situations or acts involves referring to 'enana, that is, to people, rather than to men or women.44 Thus there was a basic notion of agency, rather than a division between male and female action which was linguistically necessary or current.45

Examination of political relations and events at Tahuata and Hiva Oa during the

41Chaulet, Archipel des Marquises. Supplément, unpaginated section.
43The wife of Keoenui, a prominent chief at Vaitahu in the 1830s was, for instance, 'of rather higher rank than some others and is exempt from some things in the tapu that others are subject to' (Darling, Journal, 6 May 1835).
44Enana sometimes meant men as opposed to women, and often now means Marquesans as opposed to other Polynesians, or hao'e (whites). I would claim, however, that the primary meaning is 'person'. One informant was quite emphatic that the word meant 'ni homme, ni femme, mais tous les deux.' For further discussion of the term, see Kirkpatrick 1983: 77f. and passim.
45Today in the Marquesas, and for that matter elsewhere in French Polynesia, this notion is associated with an absence of strict categories of male and female work. While notions certainly exist regarding what men and women do, they are flexible, and do not prevent women from entering a range of forms of paid labour. Cf. Kirkpatrick 1983.
1797-99 period reveals that a number of powerful women were active in various ways. Perhaps the most significant was a female tau’a named Taheatu’au. She was the daughter of a prominent male tau’a, whose capacities had apparently been largely inherited by her brother, Tamapuameini, to whom human sacrifices were offered. However he was probably celibate and highly secluded; she may have had greater influence in practice, especially since a son of hers was also a significant tau’a at Hapatoni. At some time shortly after May, 1798, an important male tuhuna from Vaitahu named Takaka or Takaha offended her in some way.

This woman, in revenge, rubbed her hands together, between which she thus designed to smother the soul of Takahha. To this operation, the Natives attributed the death of the latter, soon afterward; although he was killed by a blow on the head with a club...

Sorcery was prevalent, but individuals thought to be responsible for the deaths of important people were often killed. Teheatu’au would presumably have been particularly vulnerable to attack, since she belonged to the Ahutini rather than the Hema; the fact that no-one attempted to revenge the act, and the importance of the victim, indicate that she had very considerable status.

The occasional participation of chiefly women in typically ‘male’ activities is illustrated by the behaviour of Vehine-tapu, who was the first-born child of Honu, the chief at Vaitahu at the time of Cook’s visit, and Tuiani. She and two sisters were bypassed in the succession to the haka’iki title, which Teinae, Honu’s fourth child and first-born son, acquired. Vehine-tapu did, however, participate in attacks upon enemy matae’ina at Hiva Oa, which presumably involved travelling in tapu war canoes. She was evidently involved in the actual fighting, since she was killed in an engagement early in 1798.

Women of the very highest rank were not the only ones who could be influential and sometimes act forcefully in disputes. Fitiatupu, for example, was a woman from Hanaiapa on the north coast of Hiva Oa, who may or may not have come from a chiefly family. She

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46 Account, 137-38.
47 Account, 178-79.
48 This took place, for instance, when a man from Hapatoni was accused of bringing about the death of Titiutu, Iotete’s wife, in 1836. Darling, Report, 31.
49 Whose name, of course, reflects her rank.
50 This does not mean that Vehine-tapu lacked authority in practice. Compare Morrison on Ino Metua of Tahiti: ‘This woman being the first Born has the right of the Sovereignty of Taheite but having no child she had Transferd the right to her Brother during her Absence, and now Continues it to his son; tho she is not out of Power herself by it when she visits Taheite...’ (1935: 101, cited in Gunson 1964).
51 Account, 139, 175.
was married to a younger brother of Teinae's called Puaka and lived with him at Vaitahu. A woman named Titifau, who had apparently been a servant of Fitiatupu's before she left Hiva Oa, was among captives seized by Hema warriors during an attack upon that island. All were to be put to death, but Fitiatupu intervened, aiming to save Titifau:

When the Victims were passing by to the place of slaughter, she ran out of her house, laid hold of Diddefau, & used every intreaty and argument she could, to save her life; but without success. Tahite, who had made [the] Woman prisoner, refused on any account to give her up, carried her off, & bound her naked to a tree, to put her to death. At this crisis, a torrent of rain bursting upon the crowd, drove them to their houses. Moenene, fetteatubus pekkeyo [pekio], at his Mistress's desire, seized the opportunity of unbinding Diddefaa, & conveyed her to Taheiwei, where she remained concealed for a time. Moutwatete, in resentment for his brothers [i.e. Tahite's] loss, quarelled with Buakka; but no threat or intreaty could influence Fetteatubu to desert her friend; whom she kept in her house some months, till she had an opportunity of sending her safely back to her own Country.

This incident hardly suggests that a woman such as Fitiatupu could easily thwart important men. It is significant, however, that after the woman had been concealed, she was able to continue to protect her, apparently as much against the wishes of her husband as those of other men, and also that all this took place not among her own group, but in one that she had married into. It seems that she must have developed some new following, or basis for support, independent of her husband; otherwise there would have been no reason for her acts to have been accepted.

Women such as Putahaie and Tahatatapu at Taiohae provide similar examples of independent and effective female agency.

To some extent these women of high status were less constrained than others by tapu which applied to women in general. Female tau'a were a special case, since etua were resident in their stomachs they, as much as their male counterparts, were categorically different from people generally, and could freely move onto me’ae and other sacred spaces. Chaulet was aware of five female tau'a who had officiated at human sacrifices, and one other who killed the victims herself. In some cases, other prominent women seem simply to have been able to defy tapu. For instance, the daughter of Heato,
principal chief on 'Ua Pou, is said to have ventured onto me 'ae. While a number of observers have suggested that there was an absolute prohibition on women travelling in canoes, chiefly women who moved to other islands for marriage obviously made some use of them. It appears also that substantial groups of non-chiefly women sometimes travelled between Tahuata and Hiva Oa in fishing canoes, which may have been less tapu than warriors' craft. While most accounts suggest that the tapu system consisted of a set of rules which were generally accepted and abided by, a myth about a tau'a called Vehine-etua implies that rules could be contested or negotiated.

The woman, who lived at Atuona, was asked by a Nukuhiva chief to help collect stones for a commemorative platform for his father. She agreed, with the condition that she and her husband be permitted to travel back to Nukuhiva in his canoe. He was most reluctant to accept this condition because the stones had to be tapu and women were not normally permitted to travel in canoes in any case. She insisted and forced him to accept, but when the canoe was between 'Ua Pou and Nukuhiva he had her and her husband thrown into the sea. Vehine-etua told her husband to break a gourd full of sandflies which he had brought with him; half went to Nukuhiva and half to 'Ua Pou; they both were taken ashore, by her priestly staff, a thing of great mana, and then a violent storm came up and destroyed the canoes and the people they contained. The implication of this tale is not so much that tapu violation is disastrous, but rather that it is folly to attempt to thwart powerful women: how minatory they could be is testified to by the fact that the story accounts for the presence of sandflies (nono) on two islands. These insects did, and still do, cause great discomfort, particularly during wetter times.

Tapu rules appear to have sometimes been resisted in practice. A Catholic priest on Tahuata was asked by women for some pork; they urged him not to tell any of the men that they had been given some, which they intended to eat. Women were also always keen to avail themselves of offers of transport in whale boats, which provided a way around the canoe tapu. Lawson described a domestic dispute in which tapu rules were at issue:

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56 Chaulet, Notices, 183. In time of famine, Edward Robarts' wife, a younger sister of Keatonui, was given 'a plantation that no women was [sic] allowed to walk on' (Robarts [1974]: 123).
57 In some myths (e.g. Kopuhoroto'e in Lavondes 1964 - see Prologue) women are described as travelling in, or fishing from, canoes; this was certainly not inconceivable for Marquesans.
58 This is one of very few references to mana in the Marquesan literature, the analysis of which leads one to suspect that the importance of the concept has been greatly overemphasized by Pacific scholars (cf. Keesing 1982; Valeri 1985b: 95f.).
59 Handy 1930: 134.
60 Desvaux, 28 November 1839, 12. For similar events in Hawai'i, see Linnekin n.d., 7.
61 E.g. Stewart 1831, I: 240.
Ohotini... came up from the beach & told his mother not to drink any more kava because the fishermen who where [sic] in taboo at the time getting ready their Nets & Canoes where very angry & wanted to know how they could expect to have any luck a fishing when women where drinking the Taboo Kava so she said she would drink no more but the next morning she had a man chewing kava for her this set her husband very angry & [he] said unto her Woman did you not hear what your son said unto [you] last night she replied yes then why dont you pay attention to him & again drink the taboo kava she replied I am not going to drink kava Ono is only chewing up a few small rootlets for himself Teohe then broke out in a furious passion & caught her by the arm and dragged her out of the House on to the stones & said dont you lie to me dont I know well that you are going to drink but you shall not drink in my house and bring scandal on me but if you are determined to drink you may do so here outside (and she did drink & then went & laid down).

It is thus important to recognise that there was never a simple, homogeneous 'Marquesan culture' which embodied a set of beliefs and rules to which everyone subscribed to the same extent. Societies in which there is a process of overt political debate are not the only ones in which there is dispute about hierarchy and dominance. While the tapu system was not exactly a system which 'degraded' or subordinated women, one complex of tapu rules did restrict the action of most women. To some extent this complex was passively accepted, but it was also met with some resistance. As the system changed in the longer term, some rules must have become less current; perhaps others were adopted; in effect, there was an implicit process of renegotiation.

Just as there were women of high status, with particular personal tapu, there were also some men of low status, who were me'ie in terms of the general tapu/me'ie division. In particular, pekio or secondary husbands seem generally to have fallen into this category. Many writers have neglected the social context of polyandry, and have simply seen it as a form of marriage arising from a demographic imbalance, from a shortage of women. While a minor imbalance probably existed, secure documentation for a severe imbalance, or for any of its proposed causes, is lacking.

Rather, the institution seems to have been inextricably associated with larger social and economic relations. Lisiansky stated that it was the women in 'rich' families who had more than one husband, and it seems that the women who had several were those of the highest status. There were several ways in which a woman might acquire pekio or

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62Lawson, Sorcery, 9-10.
63See Appendix B.
64Lisiansky 1814: 83.
65Although not all women of rank chose to have more than one husband. The observers who reported that all women had two or more husbands were generally less reliable than those who indicated that the practice was confined to the elite. It is easy to see that such a misconception might arise, since foreigners generally had much more contact with chiefly families than with ordinary people.
secondary husbands. Political marriages were often made between chiefly women and infant males from other prominent families; in these cases, pekio seem to have been substitute husbands who remained part of the household even if the sexual relationship ceased. For the purposes of inheritance and succession, all children were considered as sons or daughters of the primary husband or vahana haka'i ki even if he could not biologically have been the father. In other cases, men who had been the woman’s partners during adolescence remained with her when she married an older and wealthier man.

The more substantial households thus consisted of a principal husband and wife, children, some of whom were probably adopted, perhaps other kin, and one or more pekio. In some cases there were also female pekio, although Heato of 'Ua Pou is the only individual known definitely to have had more than one wife in the early contact period.

If an aspect of the pekio relationship is to be singled out, then it would be that of servitude, rather than the conjugal role. A sexual relationship was a necessary component of the situation, but a man could remain a pekio after the sexual relationship ceased. On the other hand, virtually all pekio were drawn from the kikino, the landless servant group, and were generally involved in domestic work. In fact one list of social grades or strata in Marquesan society, described the pekio as those who received subsistence from chiefs in exchange for agricultural or domestic work, without even alluding to their roles as ‘husbands’ or sexual partners. This aspect was also emphasized by Mary Ann Alexander, the wife of one of the New England missionaries who resided at Nukuhiva for a short period in 1832 and 1833:

The women... are abused by their husbands, often beaten cruelly, yet they will plead for having five or six husbands. They say, who will prepare their food? The first husband is a chief and he must not work and it is not proper for the second and therefore they must have five or six.

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66 Robarts [1974]: 270.
67 Account, 5. It is also suggested that two men sometimes jointly offered themselves to a woman, who nominated one as the vahana haka'i ki and the other as the pekio (Lisiansky 1814: 83. Cf. Melville 1846: 261). This seems to be a speculative reconstruction on the part of these writers, which is somewhat implausible in view of the rank difference which generally existed between the primary husband and any secondary husband(s). Of course, the character of the institution probably changed in the course of the contact process, as the demographic imbalance may have developed, and relations of service broke down. There is, however, no specific evidence as to exactly how polyandry changed.
68 Vincendon-Dumoulin, Notes. While even Heato, who died in 1844, does not really belong to the earliest period of intensive contact, 'Ua Pou was much less visited than islands such as Nukuhiva and Tahuata up until the 1840s.
69 Vincendon-Dumoulin & Desgraz 1843: 231.
70 Quoted in Alexander 1934: 134.
It is implied here that the *pekio* were not equal amongst themselves, that the second husband, or first *pekio*, should not work. Lisiansky observed that:

In rich families, every woman has two husbands; of whom one may be called the assistant husband. This last, when the other is at home, is nothing more than the head servant of the house.\(^{71}\)

Crook noted that *pekio* were regarded as superior to other male servants 'not thus privileged'.\(^{72}\) This suggests that there was some competition among male servants to become *pekio*, and perhaps some competition among *pekio* for pre-eminence within the servant body in a particular household. The existence of a possibility for movement within the servant group into a more intimate and higher status position close to the elite would have muted the potential for antagonism which exists in any society divided between those who hold their own land and other resources, and those who do not.

The probable etymology of the word *pekio* supports an emphasis on the relations of servitude. The word has no resemblance to other Polynesian words for husband, and there are no direct cognates for *pekio* itself. However, the word *kio* has connotations of servitude, low status, or defeated groups in various eastern Polynesian languages. In Mangarevan and Rapan, for instance, *kio* was glossed as servant, slave, or tiller of the soil. *Pe* has various senses, one of which was the verb to copulate; hence *pekio* probably simply meant originally 'a servant who copulates'.\(^{73}\) But there were numerous other words for servant, and the position had clearly become institutionalized to a greater degree than this simple gloss would imply.

Occasionally, more than one man of chiefly rank was married to one woman. The case of Peueinui, the *toa* at Taiohae, a co-husband of Keatonui's, has already been discussed. Rather later, Paetini, perhaps Keatonui's first-born grand-daughter, had three chiefly husbands. One was from Taiohae; another was a Hapa'a chief, by whom she had a son, Manao, 'the heir apparent to that valley'.\(^{74}\) Lieutenant Browning mistakenly believed that she was also the mother of Temoana, and observed that she would thus 'shortly be the mother of two kings.'\(^{75}\) The third chiefly husband was Opuia, of the Taipi, by whom she had (in 1832) no children. This unusual situation was probably linked with Porter's 1813 intervention in the long-standing Taipi/Tei'i conflict.\(^{76}\) His military

\(^{71}\)Lisiansky 1814: 83.

\(^{72}\)Account, 5.


\(^{74}\)Browning, Notes, 12.

\(^{75}\)In fact she was an 'aunt' of Temoana's (Dumont D'Urville 1847, III: 29, 290).

\(^{76}\)Porter 1822; Shillibeer 1817; *infra*, chapter 6.
humiliation of the Taipi seems to have conferred status upon the Tei’i, and particularly upon Keatonui who had exchanged names with Porter, and perhaps also especially upon Paetini, who had ‘been Com. Porters girl aged twelve.’ Under these circumstances, it would not be surprising if chiefs from other areas wished to have a particularly direct link with that line of haka’iki. Clearly marriage to a prominent woman such as Paetini created a stronger link than other forms of alliance, such as adoption or the marriage of offspring. While a desire for a similarly strong link may have motivated Peueinui to become a secondary husband, it appears that he actually was a pekio, whereas Paetini’s chiefly husbands were probably not so considered. Paetini had a number of other husbands, who no doubt were genuine pekio of servile status.

There were thus very few exceptions to the general rule that pekio were domestic servants. How much control women actually exercised over these men is unclear. Crook implies that after marriage to a primary husband, the pekio ‘belonged as much’ to the husband’s side of the family as the wife’s, and speaks occasionally of ‘the chief’s pekkeyo’, implying that the chief, rather than the wife, determined what the servant did. However, Crook’s account of Fitiatupu’s actions (discussed above) suggests that the pekio might be more of a personal attendant, who would be directed to carry out various tasks by the woman. It may also be inferred that if the vahana haka’iki spent most of his time in male tapu houses, the woman would have de facto control over any domestic servants.

The constitution of domestic groups clearly varied within Marquesan society. Chiefly households, and wealthy non-chiefly establishments, incorporated a number of pekio, as well as domestic servants who were not pekio. The households of many commoners presumably had no servants, while Thomson indicated that, as one would have expected, an intermediate category existed consisting of a man, a wife, one pekio, and, presumably, children.

The economic aspect of the male/female relationship had a very different character in each of these contexts, since much of the work done by women among commoners, would have been done by pekio and other servants among the elite. Perhaps these duties were generally light; there certainly does not appear to have been any antagonism on the part of servants towards those who benefited from their largely unremunerated labour. It is unlikely, however, that the relationship was perceived as one in which the servants' work was appropriated by the master or mistress: various stages of the process of producing food, for instance, such as planting, harvesting, storing, and cooking, were

77 Browning, Notes, 12.
78 Thomson [1841]: 26. Whereas among higher status households, a male servant might or might not be a pekio, Thomson implies that in these cases, the latter position was consequent upon the former: ‘his master’s wife becomes the joint wife of both.’
separated from one another by relatively long periods of time (especially in the case of breadfruit) and were often the responsibilities of different individuals. These practical factors would have facilitated a separation of the products of labour from the producers themselves.

There were also cultural factors which generated an undervaluing of the work of domestic servants. A notion about eating which emerges from some of the tapu rules is that food was associated rather more with consumers or prospective consumers than with those who had produced or prepared it. There is some ambiguity and variability about these identifications, since in some cases tapu rules did proscribe the eating by one sex of food which had been prepared by the other. Sometimes even plantations and storage pits were separate. In other cases, however, the fact that food was prepared by non-tapu servants, or by common women, seems to have been unimportant, although it was vital that persons who were me 'ie in relation to a particular group not eat with them, nor sometimes even be eating the same kind of food at the same time. Women could prepare breadfruit for men such as their husbands, but if they did so they could not partake of any of it; in fact, only the male could taste it to make sure that it was satisfactory. His tapu state had thus already been extended to the food. A similar extension of tapu was reported by one of the Russian visitors to Nukuhiva in 1804: a chiefly child had trees set aside for it from birth, and no-one except the child could eat fruit picked from them. Women made sinnet, out of which men made fishing nets. It seems that because the second form of work was tapu the connection that the women had with the product was dissolved: the nets were associated more with the second phase of work, and with their male users.

These elements of the tapu system identified objects for consumption with consumers, and negated the work of the domestic servants, and to a lesser extent, of the 'tenants' who actually supported non-labouring members of the elite. If what was to be eaten was generally identified with the eater, there was a relationship of appropriation, a culturally structured alienation of products from producers. Certainly when servants passed on prepared food to their masters, the logic of gift-giving did not apply: they did not create a debt on the part of the master; they were not so much giving as giving up or surrendering food, and what the master provided in return had not the character of a

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79 Darling, Remarks (quoted above).
80 Chaulet, Notices, 191.
81 Ryazanov 1825: 87. Other rules relating to food clearly identify the products with the prospective eater: 'meats cannot be partaken of by any person of an inferior class to him for whom they are provided' (Account, 52).
82 Gracia 1843: 70.
return gift, but was rather perceived as a manifestation of generosity. When Robarts noted that 'a great man that has plenty of provisions can have plenty of servants, for their food is all the pay they look for' he omitted to mention that the plenitude of provisions derived from servant labour. In failing to make this link, he may have been presenting, or sharing, the Marquesans' own mystifications.

These economic implications of the tapu system were associated at once with asymmetries between servants and non-labouring people of both sexes in elite households, and equally with asymmetries between women and their husbands in commoner families. In general, only men could eat what was prepared by the other sex. This fact created the potential for a degree of female subordination which was only systematically realised within commoner families. In both lower and higher status groups, gender was less important than other factors. Among the elite, both sexes were more or less exempt from domestic tasks, while those of lower status were servants.

Women of higher rank were less sharply distinguished from men than common women in respect of tapu rules, and political action, as well as economically. While gender was important as a differentiating principle in economic relations, and for tapu, the extent to which it was important was determined by the rank of the parties involved. This is not to say that status structures determined the Marquesan pattern of gender relations. The basic asymmetries between men and women which existed among commoners cannot be predicted on the basis of the rank structure and must ultimately be explained in some more general way. The local interpenetration of domestic groups, a hierarchical system, and male-female relations, must qualify the pertinence of wider cultural structures to an analysis of gender inequality, but leaves unexplained the persistence of albeit partial or qualified asymmetries, across and between regions.

83 Robarts [1974]: 257.
CHAPTER 4
Feasting and warfare

I

Polynesian societies have long been conceived of as small scale aristocracies in which the statuses of individuals were defined, prior to their birth, by rank, and particularly by their genealogical proximity to 'royal' or chiefly families, although it was always acknowledged that certain people such as warriors could create status through their expertise. Marquesan society accorded with this view to a certain extent. Certainly, as elsewhere, chiefly status was prescribed genealogically, albeit neither finally nor unambiguously. While the near absence of polygyny and the clear difference in status between husbands meant that Marquesan elites were not characterised by feuding within chiefly families to nearly the same degree as, say, the Fijian nobility, there were instances of divergence from the rule of primogeniture. In the context of the larger group, however, the way chiefly people both stood above society and in a sense embodied it, was given in a prior, cultural sense. The status of haka'i'iki was tied to genealogy and cosmology, to ancestors and deities. When the first-born daughter of a chief came of age, there was no question that this was an event to be celebrated on a grander and different scale to the puberty of simply any woman.

Marquesan society however entailed varieties of difference and inequality unconnected with the sanctity of the papa haka'i'iki. These were not simply associated with the individual brilliance of a warrior or a craft specialist. There were, in addition, several religious statuses, particularly those of tau'a and nani kaha which undeniably involved some power over the lives and deaths of others. More significantly, a whole system of property relations was not directly connected with chieftainship and the cultural categories which constituted it. Property in land could be expropriated in

2 Since most tuhuna had to be apprenticed, and had to remunerate their teachers (if they were not closely related) with substantial material presentations, craft specialists do not exemplify a process of achievement-based social mobility independent of other hierarchies: only those initially well-placed would have been in a position to get themselves started.
3 See Chapter 5 for more extensive discussion of nani kaha and tau'a.
defiance of recognized property rights, but such acts of seizure were dependent on the statuses of the parties involved. Neither force nor sanctity was crucial. Rather, what mattered were networks of active alliances, which themselves depended upon some kind of prestige, since obviously persons of low status could not simply promote themselves through associations with already prominent people. To some extent, marriages, adoptions, and other links, reflected existing positions. The problem facing an analysis is thus one of identifying which institutions or practices were instrumental rather than dependent in the causal circuits involved in generating prestige.

It will be argued that the institution of the feast, and particularly a certain type, the commemorative mau, was central to this process of hierarchical reproduction in the Marquesas, although certain other institutions were also important.

Many early observers witnessed feasts, and were impressed by the quantities of food, and by the ornaments and clothing of the participants, even if the purposes of the occasions often eluded their understanding. Isaac Iselin witnessed a koina at Vaitahu in 1806, which appeared to centre upon a woman of rank, perhaps one of Teinae’s sisters:

Following up the valley by a narrow path along the hill, we arrived at a romantic spot, where an immense number of Indians of all ages and both sexes, were collected. They had a kind of feast of which a female seemed to be the Queen, as they were tying around her, while she was seated, or almost buried, wrapped in or surrounded by a pile of their home clothes or stuff of all colours. A number of chief warriors were squatted on the floor, in an immense hut, eating a kind of pap, of sourish taste, while each had his attendant exerting his jaws to chew the ‘kava’ the juice of which they spit from their mouths into cocoanut shells out of which the chiefs drink it... It was a bewildering, almost frightful sight that of those savages, in noisy feasting, surrounded by a few dozen large hogs entire, roasted, hung up round the walls of the hut, while along it were ranged several canoes Filled with that kind of pap. I was told that they were to remain together till the whole was devoured!

An account of preparations for another feast in the same valley thirty years later paid more attention to another critical component of most feasts, music and chants:

went with Messrs. Rodgerson & Stallworthy to the sacred place where most of the people were assembled to rehearse their heathenish songs. They are busily engaged preparing for a feast, which is to take place in about a week. Their songs are similar to the Tahitian pahes. It is more like drawling than singing. The voice is accompanied with clapping of the hands and beating of drums, in which they keep excellent time, but the noise thus made is anything but pleasant to the ear. While the chief and about 100 others were thus vociferating & clapping their hands, an old man, dressed in the most fantastic manner imaginable, was dancing... After the man had been [thus] engaged for a considerable time, a number of females commenced and went through their ‘vain repetitions’ just in the same way as the men had done but with less violence. We

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could not help noticing the lively interest they seemed to take in the service in which they were engaged. Not a word omitted, not a stroke of the hands out of time... On the Sabbath, when the missionary enters the pulpit, but few of the natives are to be seen. When they assemble to engage in their heathenish practices, scarcely an individual is absent.⁵

Of course, these occasions were not all of exactly the same type. Under the very general term koïna⁶ were grouped many minor and major types of feast, some of which were more restricted than others.

Certain koïna were highly exclusive, only a few men or women being permitted to eat. Participants often probably belonged to the same tapu grade, and the purpose was perhaps simply to emphasize the high status of, and the alliances linking, those involved. Women of high rank, particularly, often presented such feasts to each other.⁷ An occasion of this type was witnessed by David Darling at Vaitahu in 1835; it was organised by Tititiutu, the wife of lotete. ‘Many of the people’ were involved in preparing food, although the feast itself was to be presented to only ‘two or three of her equals in rank, by way of returning a feast that one chief woman gave her some considerable time ago.’¹⁸ The status of these women was such that the tapu on women eating pork obviously did not apply: ‘one very large pig has been [fed] as a buaka [puaka] tapu for the purpose.’ The feast, which lasted for more than ten days,¹⁹ did not mark any particular rite or occasion: Darling emphasized that it was ‘purely a feast of honour... there is nothing of an idolatrous nature any further than it being set apart only for the purpose of showing the rank of those for whom it was designed.’ He identified it as a mau veahua,¹⁰ a ‘feast given in return for one given formerly by the person who is the principal guest of the day.’

While feasts were generally less restricted, most were nonetheless tapu and involved the exclusion of certain groups, typically women, or at least non-chiefly women, and male servants. Many were associated with the commencement or completion of particular tasks or activities, such as the building of a house, the making of a net, circumcision, tattooing

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⁶Or koïka in the ‘northern’ dialects.
⁷Chaulet, Notices, 92.
⁸Darling, Journal, 17, 18 July 1835.
⁹Darling, Journal, 28 July 1835.
¹⁰The term mau has usually been associated specifically with commemorative feasts (v. infra), but it appears that it in fact is simply a general term, which may usually have been understood to refer to mau tupapaku or tupapa‘u or feasts for the dead or for spirits. Whether categorically koïna subsumed mau is unclear; the dictionary (Dordillon 1931) implies that the former meant ‘celebration’ and the latter ‘feast’ or ‘meal’ (repas) which could imply that two sides of the same occasion were referred to by the different terms, rather than different categories of events.
or going to war.\textsuperscript{11} These \textit{koina} were usually \textit{tapu}, although they often had the function of removing the \textit{tapu} condition of products so as to permit their ordinary use.\textsuperscript{12} Other \textit{koina}, particularly those associated with sexual \textit{ka'ioi} or \textit{hoki} performances, were \textit{me'ie}. Such at least were some of the prosperity feasts associated with harvests, which unfortunately are poorly documented for the Marquesas. Mathias Gracia suggested that at one of the feasts at the time of what he thought was the principal breadfruit harvest in June\textsuperscript{13} \textit{tapu} on food were suspended, permitting women to partake of foods that were normally proscribed.\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Tapu} people underwent rites effecting temporary \textit{tapu} removal to permit their attendance at \textit{me'ie} feasts.\textsuperscript{15}

The most important feasts seem to have been either rites of passage for chiefly people, or commemorative feasts for \textit{tau'a}, \textit{haka'i}, and other prominent individuals. The former of course fell into several categories, such as the \textit{kohihika}, the feasts and ceremonies associated with the birth of a chiefly child, and the ceremonies discussed above associated with the puberty of chiefly daughters. Essentially, these feasts served to elevate chiefly people, and indirectly expressed the status of the \textit{mata'eina'a} they represented.

Here the \textit{mau tupapaku} are concentrated upon because of their connection with political competition. Feasts of this type might be carried out for any dead person, although in practice their scale was closely associated with rank and status. While for \textit{haka'i} and \textit{tau'a}, a sequence of large scale feasts took place, persons of common or intermediate status would probably have only been commemorated at one, smaller scale event, while the deaths of \textit{kikino} and similarly unfortunate people were usually entirely unmarked.

The manner of commemoration was of great importance for the subsequent fortunes of the spirit. The Marquesans believed in an internally differentiated underworld, known, as it was elsewhere in eastern Polynesia, as Havai'i, which was reached by spirits after they had spent some time wandering about the islands. When a group of some size was assembled at Kiukiu, a cape at the western end of Hiva Oa, the sea opened up, and the spirits descended into Havai'i. The water was said to froth up and become red on these

\textsuperscript{11}For instance, in relation to feasts associated with tattooing, see Ryazanov 1825: 80 (an account from the Russian visit of 1804).
\textsuperscript{12}Darling, Journal, 26 December 1834.
\textsuperscript{13}There were said to be four harvests a year, of which the most important were in January and June (Gracia 1843: 69; Chaulet (Notices, 24-25; Crook, Account, 109; Darling, Journal, 19 January 1834).
\textsuperscript{14}Gracia 1843: 69-70.
\textsuperscript{15}Darling, Journal, 19 July 1835.
occasions.16

Père Amable Petithomme, who was on the island of Tahuata at the time of Iotete’s
death, saw the haka‘iki’s wife removing the skin from the body, and found that this was
because the ‘grande déesse’ Oupu, who ruled over Havai’i, or part of it, excluded those
who carried any trace of tattooing. Her part of Havai’i was a beautiful country around a
lake, in which many varieties of fruit were abundant; but only those who had had
servants, and who had possessed many pigs, were permitted to stay there and bathe in
the lake. Those less fortunate were sent to another part of Havai’i, where there was
nothing but muddy water.17 Other sources indicate that the fate of the spirit depended
upon how many pigs were sacrificed at the time of death, and particularly whether a pig,
or a pigs’ head, which was an offering to certain deities, was placed next to the body
while it was being exposed. It was thought that two etua in Havai’i were specifically
occupied with tearing to pieces the spirits of kikino and others for whom no pigs had been
offered; it is also suggested that kikino were completely excluded from Havai’i.18 There
was also a danger that spirits for whom no presentations had been made sometimes
remained about and acted malevolently. Hanaua, the ghosts of women who had died
during childbirth, were especially dangerous.19 The incomplete character of the key
process of birth perhaps made such persons especially anomalous with respect to the
po/ao boundary. But any kind of lack of propitiation or tapu violation could render
malevolent tupapaku or etua. Thus mau were perhaps important as much because they
checked certain threatening potencies as because they honoured prominent individuals.

These mau in fact consisted of sequences of about nine feasts20 named as follows:

1. Menava haka noho

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16 Kauwealoha, undated letter in Kauwealoha file [late 1850s]; Amable Petithomme, 28
September 1844, SS.CC. (There are two versions, which vary somewhat; the relevant details are in
the 4-page version). An informant at Hakahau, ‘Ua Pou, thought that there were other places on
parts of the coast on each island, rather than only one in the whole group, by which the spirits
plunged into the sea. The notions described here accord closely with those reported from the Cook
Islands by William Wyatt Gill (Gill 1876: esp. chapters 8 & 9).

17 Petithomme, ibid, both versions. The process of death to some extent mirrors the process of
birth: in both cases the act of bathing is a critical part of the ritual. Cf. Chaulet’s account of
kohihiki, Notices, 77-80.

18 Chaulet, Notices, 126a; Archipel des Marquises ou de Mendana, 18; Darling, Journal, 14
January 1835; Letter, 27 February 1835.

19 Chaulet, Notices, 126; Delmas 1927: 135.

20 Robarts ([1974]: 57) accords with Chaulet in indicating that more than one feast was made,
although implies that such feasts were restricted, while Chaulet indicates that the whole group
(peuplade, presumably the mata‘eina‘a) would participate. Of course, feasts may have involved
several distinct occasions for consumption, some of which may have been more exclusive than
others.
2. Tia hahati
3. Vai kaukau
4. Vai mata
5. Haoka
6. Menava tu
7. Iki hae
8. Tahioa
9. Kahe kaika

Meanings of some of the names of the feasts may be inferred, but there is no clear information as to how these occasions differed.

When feasts took place on such a large scale, each landholder contributed in proportion to their dependants. Pork and popoi were the main foodstuffs presented, although an effort was made to obtain other special items. Lawson's account indicates how much labour and resources might go into a koina:

The Koinas are made by the whole tribe to which the Taua belongs and they generally require several years to get through with the whole of them and there is a great deal of work to be done... such as House building canoe and net making planting tapa trees making head dresses & ornaments & feeding of pigs &c &c and by rights they ought to have a human sacrifice or sacrifices at each koina but in late years owing to the great difficulty of procuring a human sacrifice from an opposition tribe they have to use turtle in the lieu & in some instances Dogs at one of the Koina's on this island ["Ua Huka] for Taua Kanaau over 60 dogs where [sic] killed

The Maus for the dead are made as fast as the relatives can provide Pigs to kill for the feast from 2 to 6 large Hogs is required for each Mau the Preists [sic] precide over the feasts & all the deceased's relatives are invited to come and eat something strange such as a purpose [porpoise] Cowfish Terpain or other strange animal is highly prized on such occasions At the Koinas other tribes are invited and sometimes over 100 pigs are killed at one koina in providing for one Koina I have known the Tabu to be put on the pigs from 1 to 7 years & during which

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21 Chaulet, Supplément, section headed 'Repas pour les morts. Mau tupapaku.'

22 Menava haka noho can be glossed as 'put breathing to rest'; vai kaukau as 'bathing water'; vai mata as 'tears'; haoka - to shape or mould; iki hae perhaps as small house, although the word order is irregular; and kahe kaika as 'much property'.

23 In another section of the same document, Chaulet gave an alternative sequence of only three commemorative feasts. The first, the koika oke, involved a day of drumming and chanting, and a meal in which everyone (presumably including women) took part. The two subsequent feasts, the vaihopu and the u'upua, were characterised by dancing Chaulet regarded as obscene, and by wild imitations of human sacrifice, death, and miscarriage. Chaulet, Archipel des Marquises. Supplément, section headed 'Fêtes'.

24 Thomson [1978]: 35. Craig misreads 'dependants' as 'descendants.' Sheahan's transcription (1952) in Marquesan source materials is more accurate.
time there is no pigs killed or sole [sic] out of the Tribe.25

It is clear that on all occasions of this type prominent individuals from other valleys were invited to attend. Indeed, a grave offence was committed if at least a few from each valley did not go.26 However, it also appears that upon many occasions the feast was specifically presented to another mata'eina'a: that is to say, usually a whole valley population, many or most of whom must have come from their valley to attend the mau. As Chaulet explained it, on at least some occasions there was a potlatch style dynamic of competitive presentation involved in these feasts:

Un peuple donne toujours la fête à un autre peuple; un particulier donne ordinairement à un particulier d'un autre vallée. Rarement on refuse cet honneur: le refuser revient à dire qu'on n'a pas de quoi rendre ce qui est offert, ce qui est un sujet de honte pour ce peuple qui ne sait ce que c'est que d'être humble... Lorsqu'il y a rivalité dans le mau on tâche d'offrir des choses rares et le plus grande nombre de cochons, afin que ceux à qui on offre la fête soient embarrassés pour les rendre; on donne surtout beaucoup de popoi, et ceux qui ont accepté la fête sont tenus, sur leur honneur de la manger, leur faudrait-il pour cela plusieurs mois. C'est, pour un chef, une grande honte de ne pas rendre, dans son mau, ce qu'il a reçu, et surtout de ne pas terminer la popoi qui lui a été offerte; on ne manque jamais, en pareil cas, de lui reproche d'avoir eu le dessous, d'avoir été vaincu.27

Apart from the indication that a competitive element was clearly present in the aspect of consumption, as well as that of presentation, this kind of feast has a great deal in common with competitive feasts documented elsewhere. An account from Aneityum in southern Vanuatu noted for instance that

Feasts are common, and in the estimation of the natives, are events of great importance... One district gives a feast to another, and receives one in return, - but the two parties do not eat together. When a chief concludes to feast the people of another division of the island, a restriction is laid on several kinds of food; and this often continues for six months or more. After the restriction is removed, an immense gathering is made of cocoaanut, taro, sugar cane, pigs, fish, &c. The whole is collected on a spot prepared for the purpose... On a fixed day the people to be feasted are invited to come to the place where the food has been gathered... After a variety of ceremonies... there is a transfer of all the food from the one party to the other, who carry it to their own land, where it is divided among the several families...As the importance of a chief is judged of by the quantity of food collected on such occasions, the common people are most heavily taxed in order to support his dignity...28

The differences between these situations are minor. In the Marquesas, the tapu character

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25Lawson, The names of Marquesan mythology.
26Darling, Journal, 22 April 1835.
27Chaulet, Notices, 92.
of mau required that the food was all consumed in the one place, presumably the me'ae with which the commemorated person was associated; the participants were not supposed to leave until everything had been finished. It seems that in both instances, presentations of food were not normally transported to the receivers' ka'āvai: the guests came to the presenters' valley. The presentation as a whole was associated with the chief: he or she might lead some kind of procession to the place where the feast was to take place. Porter, at Taiohae, noted that when an offering was to be made, Keatonui and other 'akatia collected produce from their 'tenants'; all was assembled before his house, and then he or 'his son, or grandson' took the lead and a procession was formed. Hence the offering was made by the mata'ēina'a, and the haka'i ki, or a representative of the haka'i ki line, stood for the group, and probably had some role in distribution. Chaulet indicated that a number of men might be involved in distribution: as food was presented to each person their name was loudly called out. Under some circumstances, this process, te hakahiti 'i te mau, 'the distribution or naming of the feast' took place in a different way: when the feast was to honour some person in particular, the whole presentation was made to them, and they then divided up the mau. This would probably have occurred, not so much in commemorative mau, as at the sort described by Darling as mau veahua; feasts offered by prominent people to each other, which were presented primarily to whoever had offered the previous feast.

Although some competitive mau were clearly not mau tupapaku, it is not clear whether all mau had a competitive character. Also, some koīna were evidently competitive events. While passing through Hanamenu valley, Hiva Oa, Darling found that a koīna hui was in progress: 'there are two parties, and each try who shall out do

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30 Porter 1822, II: 64. Porter here was speaking of offerings being made to himself and his occupying forces, but since the organisation of the contributions was apparently determined by the chiefs upon whom demands were made, it is highly likely that they simply did as they would have done, when making large scale presentations of food in the indigenous context.
31 Notices, 91.
32 The dictionary (Dordillon 1931: 167) takes this to refer simply to the process of distribution, but since hakahiti can mean 'to name', it probably refers more specifically to the process of naming different portions.
33 Darling, Journal, 18 July 1835. A Marquesan statement which conveys something of the organisation of feasts is recorded in the Catholic missionaries' dictionary: 'ia pao kahau, 'u haka hiti, 'ia pao te haka hiti, 'u pahee, 'ia pae te pahee, 'ua tuha.' (Dordillon 1931: 199): 'When the kahau (shouts of invitation) are made, then there is haka hiti (the naming of portions); when the haka hiti is finished, then there is the pahee, the sharing out. When the pahee is finished, there is the tuha, the sharing out.' Perhaps pahee and tuha refer to larger scale and smaller scale processes of distribution respectively: to household heads in the first instance and then by them to people associated with them. The dictionary, however, does not differentiate these terms.
the other in quantities of food; and in chanting, beating hands, and drumming. During his relatively brief residence at Taiohae, Crook accompanied Keatonui and others from that valley to two large scale events, which seem to have been more koina than mau, insofar as such a distinction can be made. While some food was clearly consumed on both occasions, it appears that the concern of the participants was focussed more upon the dancing and chanting, than upon any exchanges of food. The more substantial of the two koina was clearly one which took place at Aakapa valley in October 1798. Ritual steps were taken toward securing fine weather: Keatonui and others were secluded for a week in a tapu house ‘praying to Moanna and Buakakahhu’, and fowl were presented or sacrificed to a tau’a. However, the weather was bad, which made the trip across the island difficult, for Crook if not for the islanders. The party stopped one night at Hakaea valley; the following morning Keatonui bathed in the sea and thus ‘put an end to his restricted [tapu] condition.’ Whether this tapu state was simply connected with endeavours to ensure that the weather was congenial is difficult to know. Its removal was probably connected with the fact that the feast seems to have been me’ie: some women certainly participated. The next day the group crossed the ridge into Aakapa valley, where they found ‘a vast concourse of people’, including those from Pua, Hakauai, Hapa’a, ‘and others of the [Tei’i]’, as well as the visitors from Taiohae and the inhabitants of Aakapa themselves. Evidently no groups belonging to the Taipi division participated; this occasion, at any rate, seems to have underlined the cohesion of one of the divisions and the antagonism which existed between them.

Crook thought that the number assembled was around 10,000; even if this, like most other such estimates, was much exaggerated, the scale of the occasion was undoubtably great. Ceremonies and chants took place in each of three tohua; one series of songs concerned the visit of the Daedalus five years earlier. Although some food - the breadfruit preparations ma and poke - had been brought by the Taiohae people from their own valleys and from Hakaea, Crook makes no mention of eating on a large scale. While these koina do not correspond to the competitive feasts described by Chaulet, competition was probably not entirely absent. Prominent individuals associated (perhaps

\[34^\text{Journal, 15 May 1835.}\]
\[35^\text{Account, 253.}\]
\[36^\text{Account, 256.}\]
\[37^\text{Account, 258b.}\]
\[38^\text{Account, 258a.}\]
\[39^\text{He in fact says that only kava was provided ‘amidst these exertions’, that is, during the ceremonies. These may not, however, have been continuous, and eating perhaps took place at other times.}\]
in some sense as patrons) with performing groups seem to have derived prestige from the performances. When rehearsals for similar performances were taking place on Tahuata in 1835, Darling noted that 'it all arises from a spirit in Iotete to show as it were his greatness.'

The absence of detailed descriptions of competition at koina or mau does not however indicate that such competition was not a significant process. As the number of people likely to be commemorated on a grand scale from any one valley would probably have only numbered three or four, one would hardly expect such events to have been particularly frequent. Studies of societies in the New Guinea highlands however show that widely spaced events could constitute ceremonial exchange cycles demonstrably central to social reproduction. It is my contention that while there is no direct evidence for the systemic significance of competition at mau tupapaku and other feasts other practices and circumstances indicate that this process of competition was crucial to the pursuit of prestige.

Land was occasionally seized by warriors, or appropriated from conquered groups, and redistributed. Those who acquired land would have had a basis for status, but only one which had to be developed and in some way expressed. Abstract wealth obviously was not a form of prestige in Polynesian societies. When mau occurred, all landholders made a contribution, which was not simply in proportion to the size of their estates or the number of their dependents, but was rather a statement about their situation in relation to other landholders. More particularly, it was an offering of kai - the most multivalent Polynesian symbol - which directly fed the status of the mata'eina'a, and specifically the honour of the commemorated person, the haka'iki or tau'a. Thus, ceremonies directed towards a type of social unity, a hierarchical solidarity constituted by common submission to one celebrated person, in practice were the means employed in a play of rivalry, in which persons making prestige based on property in land, rather than sanctity or ritual, attempted to alter their situations. Their self-assertion in turn depended upon homage, upon entailment in a group hierarchically encompassed by haka'iki and tau'a. It was as though two sets of social relations drew on each other's shadows, as though different social forms predicated themselves on their opposites.

Of course, the differences of status among 'akatia were expressed again in the way

40 Darling, Journal, 10 August 1835.
41 Andrew Strathern noted that the return presentations for a moka chain which took place in 1964-65 were not made until 1974 (A. Strathern 1971 [1975 edn. with postscript]: 134-36). Of course, other smaller scale presentations were being made during the intervening period.
42 See chapter 2.
43 Cf. Sahlins 1985a: 45-46.
food was divided up when a return feast was received. These occasions would also have provided an opportunity for prominent transactors to express their generosity towards their dependents and 'tenants', that is, towards those who had provided the substance of initial contributions. It is important that on no occasion apart from feasts would as full a range of relationships within mata'ena'a be made manifest. The medium of food, its movements, and the differing qualities and quantities of particular presentations, must have, as a totality, provided an index to almost everybody's situation of power or dependency.44

44 The importance of tau'a and certain other people would not have emerged on these occasions.
The characteristics of some forms of Marquesan warfare support this emphasis on feasting. There were perhaps three basic types of violent interaction between *mata'eina'a* - raiding, attempts to take land, and the devastation of resources. Raiding for victims to be used as human sacrifices for *tau'a* and *haka'iki* hardly qualifies as warfare, since it usually involved the seizure of undefended people in gardens or on beaches, by groups of three or four warriors. These incidents generally prompted revenge raids which were not associated with particular sacrifices.\(^4^5\)

The other two varieties of conflict were more connected, systemically, with feasting. While large scale fighting often only resulted in two or three deaths, some wars involved an all-out commitment to dispossess or massacre an opposed group or groups. The events reported by Crook, which probably took place during the 1770s, involving the ‘extirpation’ of the Tupohi,\(^4^6\) provide a perhaps extreme example of such serious conflict. Two similar sequences of conflicts took place on Tahuata and Hiva Oa in the 1830s. One involved the Naiki of Atuona, and residents of Ta’aaoa: the former were allegedly attempting to expel the latter. A man from Ta’aaoa visiting Vaitahu told Darling that ‘they did not wish for war, but the other party had come to drive them away from their land and take possession of it.’\(^4^7\) Earlier, Darling had formed the opinion that land ‘almost is the cause of all their wars in these islands.’\(^4^8\) A few years later, struggles between the valleys of Vaitahu and Hapatoni led to the dispossession of the inhabitants of the latter, along with some of their allies from other valleys.\(^4^9\) While in some cases the defeated population was massacred, or forced to take to the sea, the inhabitants of Hapatoni valley were able to settle with friends on Hiva Oa. A comparable conflict on Fatuiva involving an apparent intention on the part of the Omoa valley groups to dispossess those of Hanavave, took place in 1855.\(^5^0\)

The distribution of names of Marquesan *mata'eina'a* around the group suggests that there were numerous instances of population movement. The name Tiu occurs both in the Ta’aaoa area, and in several small valleys around the south-eastern end of Fatuiva. From one variant of the myth of the large eel and the small eel it appears that the Tiu were initially a Fatuiva group. A small eel from Hanavave went to Nukuhiwa and invited

\(^{45}\)Chauilet described signs of an unfulfilled desire for revenge, such as a long lock of hair on one side of the head, hanging from which were fishes’ teeth (Notices, 52).

\(^{46}\)See chapter 2.

\(^{47}\)Darling, Journal, 9 June 1835.

\(^{48}\)Darling, Journal, 19 October 1834.

\(^{49}\)Both these conflicts are discussed more fully in chapter 7.

\(^{50}\)Bicknell 1856: 21; Smith 1856: 54. These incidents are discussed at length in chapter 7.
a large eel (from Hakaui or Taipi) to visit. Travelling up to the small eel’s abode, a high rock crevice in Hanavave valley, the large eel became stuck, was unable to escape, and died. He was cut up and consumed by people from the various districts of Fatuiva. When people from Nukuhiva found out that this had happened, they went to Fatuiva, allied themselves with the Anainoa (who, in the nineteenth century, were the principal mata'eina’a of Omoa valley) and defeated the Moota and the Tiu in revenge. The Moota stayed on the island but most of the Tiu went to Ta’aaoa. Steinen, who collected the myth late in the nineteenth century, pointed out that a very similar myth accounted for the locations of certain groups in the North Island of New Zealand. In each case struggles in traditional history were preceded by the deaths of important creatures in some way identified with groups of people. Historical events thus provided the narrative closure for a mythological death which had to be avenged.51

The name Naiki was also held in common by groups in several valleys. Mata’eina’a so named were located at Hakahau valley, ’Ua Pou, Vaipee valley, ’Ua Huka, Pua and Hapa’a, Nukuhiva, and, as was noted before, at Atuona on Hiva Oa.52 Given that none of these valleys are obviously marginal places likely to be occupied by a refugee group, and that in the 1830s the Naiki of Atuona were regarded as militarily formidable (even being known later as the ‘Typees of Hiva Oa’)53 this distribution may reflect patterns of conquest or at least colonization rather than flight and resettlement. But since the relevant movements of people may be quite ancient, it is hardly possible to extrapolate the reputed prowess of the group back in time with any certainty.

The landscape itself was seen to reflect events of struggle, destruction, and conquest. Particular topographic features, such as islets, and the broken tops of hills, were seen as remnants of fights between mountains.

These inferred events and perceptions suggest that the associations between particular mata’eina’a and particular ka’avai were not eternal nor even long-standing: strong forces motivated groups to risk their own situations in order to acquire more resources, in order to get more land to eat. Although the frequency of these events was to some extent connected with the overpopulation factor, this should not be seen to be independent of social causes. There must have been a connection with the ways in which land was used. In a different kind of system, in which what was important was the

51Koeenui and Koeetiti’ in Steinen 1933-34.
52Chaulet, Notes sur les croyances des Marquisiens, (unpaginated). A direct link can be made between the Pua population and that at Vaipee, since one Tau’atomikohu was associated with me’a in both valleys. Similarly, Tohotika was noted as being among local etua at both Hapa’a and Atuona.
53Bicknell, 15 January 1860, in Marquesan papers.
exchange of certain types of prestige goods, warfare would be unlikely to be primarily
directed towards the seizure of land. In Fiji, the desired outcome of military struggle was
usually the replacement of the ruling faction of the elite by another party favourable to
and dependent upon the conquering group. Tribute was collected, but often only
occasionally: the critical objective was political control rather than the occupation of
land, or direct control over production and produce. Because the Marquesan system, by
contrast, revolved around the large scale presentation of food at feasts, there appears to
have been a direct emphasis upon the seizure of the means to produce food, land.

Another key strategy in warfare associated with the dynamic of production and
mau was the practice of destroying the resources of other groups:

Their battles, indeed are not bloody, but still the mode they pursue is often
productive of great calamity; for they frequently go by night into their enemy’s
district and destroy the bark from every bread-fruit or cocoa-nut tree they meet,
which being their general food, a ravage of this kind is certain to involve the
whole district in want, for several succeeding years, for after these trees have
been injured in this way, they will not bear fruit again for five years.55

Crook noted that both breadfruit and coconut trees ‘suffer greatly from hostile incursions,
the invaders destroying the breadfruit tree by stripping off the bark, & the Cocoa Nut
tree by beating to pieces the heart which grows between the branches.56 He also noted
that people attending koina often did not expect much food from their hosts ‘as perhaps
not long before, the same visitors have laid waste the scene of their transient amusements,
by hostile incursions.57 The practice seems to have been as current at Tahuata as
Nukuhiva,58 although Crook’s closest observation of its context and effects took place
during the trip across Nukuhiva to a koina described above. In fact, it is clear that his
general statement quoted above clearly derived from what he was told, and what he saw,
when he went to Pua and Hakaea on the northwest coast of Nukuhiva. Provisions were
limited at Pua because, some short time before, some Tei’i visiting Hakaea had quarreled
with some Pua people also visiting that valley, with the result that a few of the Tei’i were
killed. In revenge the Tei’i mounted a surprise attack upon Pua territory, and ‘slaughtered
a considerable number of them, and laid their Country waste; barking the Breadfruit, and

54 Thomas n.d. (b): chap. 3.
55 Anon. 1824: 43. Other writers who remarked on this practice include Shillibeer 1817: 37-38,
and Robarts [1974]: 115.
56 Account, 64.
57 Account, 88-89.
58 Since Crook, in the course of his short trip with Captain Edmund Fanning from the former
island to the latter, told him about warfare and the ‘attendant’ state of famine he had observed
(Fanning [1924]: 99-100).
beating the hearts of the Cocoa Nut Trees.\textsuperscript{59}

The deaths arising from the quarrel may have been the immediate cause of the conflict, but it is significant that advantage was taken of the opportunity to attack the resource base of a group generally allied with (or at least in the same general division as) the Tei'i of Taiohae. Since, being allied, these groups probably made mau for each other occasionally, the effect of the ravages can only have been to reduce the ability of the Pua to compete, to undermine their performances. It may even be the case that at the koina Crook describes, the reputation of the Pua was substantially damaged precisely because they were unable to provide for their visitors. There were clearly systemic connections between these attacks upon resources and competition between mata'eina'a at mau. An important, but probably unanswerable, question is whether these effects were explicitly articulated by the Marquesans themselves. In any case, the fact that energy was expended upon such a manifestly destructive practice suggests the importance of undermining the capacity of other groups to perform well at feasts.

This system of competitive feasts was clearly inflationary. Prestige depended not upon simply returning the equivalent of what had been previously received, but upon giving more, and particularly more than the receivers could eat. It appears that if the receiving party could consume the whole presentation they had, in some sense, encompassed it: eating seems to have been tied up with a cluster of meanings of circumscription, of absorption, perhaps even of conquering.\textsuperscript{60} While these notions are inferred rather than clearly documented, Chaulet explicitly stated their converse, that failure to eat the whole gift was perceived as disgraceful, as a defeat.

For those making a presentation, there was thus always pressure to offer more, which of course meant creating or finding more from within the mata'eina'a. In the longer term, this could promote or motivate intensification of agricultural systems, or of fishing technologies.\textsuperscript{61}

Escalation in the shorter term, from the point of view of the particular contributor, rather than that of the whole group, could be achieved in several ways. More land could be obtained, assuming that people to work it were also attracted: alternatively, a larger number of labourers could make greater use of existing resources. In general, land could probably only be acquired through seizure; even taking up tracts which had become vacant often entailed conflict with other prospective users. While the apparent frequency of quarrels over land within mata'eina'a is more explicable if thus linked to the key

\textsuperscript{59} Account, 258b.
\textsuperscript{60} Chaulet, Notices, 92.
process of feasting, under many circumstances 'akatia would presumably often have preferred to avoid potentially violent conflicts. The other option, of attracting more 'dependants', must to some extent have been self-defeating, since it appears that the 'generosity' of a master was the basis for drawing people to one landholder rather than another. Reduced demands made upon 'servants', and more generous provisions for them, would to some extent have negated the value of having a larger number of such people associated with the landholder. It is also doubtful that it would always have been easy to attract more people. Although servants were clearly not bonded to particular 'akatia, in practice many may have stayed with particular households for long periods, especially where kin connections or other factors applied, or where the dependants in question were pekio.

It would thus seem that the most effective way of obtaining more simply involved extracting more from the same group of providers, from one's 'tenants' and 'servants'. Apart from using food directly in presentations, on some occasions 'akatia might also want to use some to pay tuhuna for wooden articles or ornaments to be offered as well as food.

The system of feasting entailed a demand for escalation, and the demand for escalation entailed a potential for 'akatia and haka'iki to become too extractive, to demand too much. There was, fundamentally, a contradiction between the way in which prominent transactors maintained their positions, that is by providing for dependants with gifts of food, and the pressure under some circumstances to draw off more and more. Given the length of preparations for mau, the times when 'tenants' were preyed upon and when demands might be pressing would not simply have been occasional or isolated. Edward Robarts summed up these deeply anomalous requirements and pressures of Marquesan society:

When a Chieftain is mild and generous among his subjects, he gains the love and esteem of his people and in time of plenty Keeps his Altar well supplyd with food, fish and, at times, a large Hog roasted. This is open to the petty Chiefs and warriers. By this means he secures their attachment, but if he is selfish and pressing on his people, they frequently revolt against him and, in the end, him and his family are drove from their Inheritance.

There is no doubt that prominent people were rejected from time to time. Porter noted that a 'relation' of Keatonui's, who had been a chief of Havau (part of Taiohae), had been expelled by the people because he was

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63 Crook, Account, 96; Lallour, Notes, vol. 1, 27.
64 Robarts [1974]: 266.
a notorious glutton. His offence, it appears, was the frequently waylaying the children of the poorer class, on their return from fishing, and taking from them their fish: they therefore rose in a body, and drove him from the valley. He took refuge with Gattanewa [i.e. Keatonui], where he now lives.\footnote{Porter 1822, II: 29-30.}

One might wonder whether what was unacceptable about this chief's behaviour was as particular as this, or whether in fact what is described was a way of talking about a more general form of 'overeating'. As Sahlins noted, Hawaiian chiefs were inclined 'to “eat the power of the government too much”; that is, to oppress the people economically.'\footnote{1974: 144.} Malo noted that 'many kings have been put to death by the people because of their oppression of the makaainana.'\footnote{1951: 195.} Tahitian history similarly provides examples of chiefs who ate people ('ai ta'ata), this being to some extent a metaphor for cruel and extractive behaviour.\footnote{E.g. Henry 1928: 619.}

In the Marquesas, then, a particular system existed, which was in some ways characteristically Polynesian, and in other ways peculiarly Marquesan. The most significant feature of this system was the existence of a propertied class, the 'akatia, which had, unlike their counterparts in Tahiti and certain other groups, broken from the haka'iki: their rights and tenure were not contingent or dependent upon a higher unity or sovereignty in any way. The chieftainship was imperfect in the sense that it lacked a generalised association with the produce of the land. This independent basis for status in property was associated with the critical role of feasts in the validation of positions and expression of prestige. Expansionary competition generated intense conflict over resources, and pushed social relations beyond their limits: Some persons of property, chiefs or 'akatia, tended to move like sharks over the land,\footnote{Cf. the Hawaiian proverb (Handy & Pukui 1971), cited by Sahlins 1981: 112: 'A chief is a shark who travels on land.'} and brought about their own expulsion. There were thus instabilities and contradictions at the heart of the system.
The foregoing discussion depends very much upon evidence from two localities, Tahuata, particularly Vaitahu, and Nukuhiva, particularly Taiohae - from which the most detailed evidence, and much of the experience of those who made general statements, was derived. It must be asked to what extent this construct of a system is applicable to the whole group, and, perhaps more significantly, to what extent variations existed within the group which illuminate aspects of the structure. In answering these questions to the extent that is possible, it is necessary to abandon the focus on the period before Porter. Indeed, for some islands documentation for any time before 1900 is very limited.

Although the island of Fatuiva appears to have been the first place in Polynesia visited by Europeans, and although whalers and traders occasionally called at Hanavave or Omoa in the first decades of the nineteenth century, the earliest detailed accounts of circumstances there only date from the 1850s, when a mission consisting mainly of indigenous Hawaiians was established.

Representatives of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions did, however, form the impression in 1832 that chiefs on Fatuiva were less distinguished from the rest of the population than was so elsewhere in the group. Samuel Whitney maintained that 'there is no chief, or in other words, every man is a chief. There are no common people.' This view is somewhat overstated. During the 1850s, several male chiefs were prominent agents, notably Matunui, and his nephew Pua, who went to Hawai‘i to obtain missionaries to assist them, they hoped, in their struggles with other chiefs. The more detailed accounts and descriptions of wars and other events from 1853 onward add very little to the general impression that social relations and practices were similar to those which existed on other southern islands and in the rest of the group. Although inequality does appear less marked, the actions of one so-called 'grand-chief' named Tau‘ahapai‘ani in the late 1870s suggest that under certain circumstances one

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70 See, for example, Faucon, Journal on board the Plant, which visited Hanavave in June 1829. The ship was visited by ‘the King and Queen’ (18 June), and another vessel, the Sir Charles Price Morgan, was seen going into the bay ‘for refreshments’ as the Plant was departing (19 June) - which does indicate that there was substantially more contact during this period than the very sparse record would indicate.

71 See Chapter 7.

72 Whitney, Journal of a visit..., 21 October 1832. The collective report essentially agreed: ‘Almost every valley [in the whole group] has a chief, - in some there are several... At Fatuuhiva we were informed that there was a chief in every house.’ (Whitney, Tinker and Alexander, Report of a deputation..., 85.).

73 Anon 1853: 23 ; Chaulet, Notice additionnelle sur l’île Fatuiva, 1. The situation is discussed more fully in Chapter 7.
person combining the roles of *haka'i'iki* and *tau'a* could consolidate political power to some degree. While there is no documentation of the hierarchy of *tapu* grades, the *'anatia* status, or of polyandry, this does not mean that these institutions did not exist on Fatuiva.

William Pascoe Crook recorded some differences between Tahuata and Nukuhiva of which he was aware. He was mainly concerned with linguistic differences but did note that warfare was more endemic, and that offerings of human sacrifices took place more frequently at Tahuata than at Nukuhiva; that there were differences in the treatment of infants; in certain *tapu*; and in the degree to which certain garments were restricted to *tau'a* and *tuhuna*. It is indicated that at least two *tapu* grades, the *matatoitoi* (persons distinguished by property but otherwise common) and the *matapuovo* (a very exclusive group) existed at Nukuhiva but not at Tahuata. Since most of Crook’s specific observations about the hierarchy of *tapu* grades relate to Taiohae, it may be inferred that the whole system of grades was much more developed on Nukuhiva. The *'ahui*, a temporary restriction on the use of certain resources, was virtually unknown at Tahuata but current at Nukuhiva, being applied by *'akatia* in respect of their domains and ‘in some instances’ by chiefs in relation to ‘a district.’ It seems that out of these two islands, it was only at Nukuhiva that people held property in fishing grounds; persons who did own ‘the Sea in the Bays’ could apply an *'ahui* in respect of the fish.

It is possible that marriage was linked with hierarchy at Nukuhiva in a way that it was not in the southern part of the group. Porter observed that ‘an alliance with [Keatonui] is sought by every family of any considerable rank in the island. The chiefs, and the sons and grandsons of every chief in the island, are married to his sisters, his daughters, or his granddaughters.’ It is clearly implied here that wife-givers ranked higher than wife-takers, which is consistent with the apparent imbalance of marriage

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74 Chaulet, Notice additionnelle, 5; Travaux de la mission catholique, 5-7.
75 One very late reference to *'anatia* at Omoa, Fatuiva: ‘a considerable amount of cotton has been planted by the *'Anatia* (Maori Rangatira) or land-holders of the neighbourhood’ (Christian 1910: 137).
76 Account, 113-122.
77 Given the brevity of his visits in both places, this observation cannot be assumed to reflect general patterns, rather than the situation at a particular time.
78 These are both discussed in the concluding section of Chapter 2.
79 Cf. Tahitian *rahui*.
80 Account, 122.
81 Porter 1822, II: 30. This statement is generally supported by the pattern of marriage links between Keatonui’s group and others discussed in chapter 2.
presentations in favour of the former. The role of the presentations in structuring hierarchy was, however, probably limited even at Nukuhiva, because they seem to have been made only once, at the time of the actual marriage, rather than periodically throughout the duration of the relationship. However, there was a general sense in which 'akatia and haka'i ki were in a stronger position in the northern part of the group than in the southern; they clearly monopolised resources to a greater extent there.

On the other hand, the position of both tau'a and tuhuna seems to have been more privileged on Tahuata than Nukuhiva. Crook noted that turtle and two species of fish were restricted to priests at Tahuata, but at Nukuhiva, 'the other superior Classes likewise share in the treat.' A kind of cap, which might have been worn by anyone at Taiohae, was evidently clearly restricted to the tuhuna and tau'a at Tahuata. It is also significant that no other tau'a appear to have had as much status as Tamapuameini of Tahuata, whose power was recognised over the whole island.

'Ta Pou presents a different picture. There is strong evidence not only for hierarchy, but also for centralisation. One line of chiefs, who normally resided at Hakamoui, appear to have had some kind of authority over the whole island. Crook's statement to this effect is particularly noteworthy, since his information came from the valley of Hakata'o, on the opposite side of the island; but a number of later, reliable sources, also support the proposition, such as several of the Catholic missionaries who noted that the tapu relating to the death of one paramount, Heato, were observed over the whole island. However, next to nothing is known about the practical content of this supra-local authority. 'Ua Pou evidence does lend support to the notion that on that island, or perhaps in the

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82 Ryazanov (1825: 88), who only visited Nukuhiva, said that the bride's parents received a pig from the husband's family; Handy (1923: 211-12), on the basis of information from Puamau, Hiva Oa, described various ceremonies which were qualitatively balanced (first the husband's side offered food, and the wife's side ornaments, then vice versa) but quantitatively imbalanced, because the husband's side had to give twice as much. Such an imbalance is not, however, significant if groups exchange spouses; it is significant if groups take from one group, and give to another (cf. Leach 1951). These transactions are, for the Marquesas, poorly documented, and it is not possible to say as much about them as would be desirable from the point of view of the analysis.

83 A problem arises in accounting for the receiving of wives by the group supposedly at the apex of the hierarchy, namely Keatonui's family. In any case, some specific marriages (cf. chapter 2) indicate that the Tei'i acted as wife-takers for other Nukuhiva groups.

84 Christian evidently acquired the impression (1910: 207) that tau'a were only found in the southern part of the group. Although obviously wrong, this supports the notion that they were more prominent there than in the north.

85 Which was of considerable ritual importance, and was sometimes substituted for people in sacrifices (Lawson, The names of Marquesan mythology; Crook, Account, 155).

86 Account, 119-120.

87 Account, 119.


89 See Appendix C.
northern group generally, hierarchical property relations, and relations of servitude, were more developed than in the southern islands: a journal kept by the priest Orens Fréchou, who resided initially at Hakamoui and Hakahau valleys, and subsequently at Tahuata, demonstrates the contrast. There are many references to servantes, domestiques and kikino in the 'Ua Pou section of the journal, but none whatsoever in the Tahuatan section. It is also notable that in Hakahetau valley one mata'eina'a was known as the papa haka'iki, that is, the chiefly level, a term which implies a greater opposition or categorical difference between chiefly people and commoners than is implied elsewhere. A group known as the papa haka'iki was also found at Vaipee valley on 'Ua Huka. A statement of Crook's that a relative by marriage of Keatonui's 'owned' a substantial part of that island perhaps implies also that property there was monopolised to a similar extent as on Nukuhiva and 'Ua Pou.

The evidence permits a few very general statements: in the northern part of the group, the system of tapu grades, and economic inequalities involving 'akatia and kikino were more developed than in the south. Authority seems to have been most concentrated upon 'Ua Pou, although evidence from the Taiohae area is also indicative of a tightly bonded elite with widely dispersed links. How 'Ua Huka differed is particularly uncertain. While elites were less concentrated on Tahuata and Hiva Oa, it is highly probable that essentially the same complex of social relations existed. Fatuiva appears to have been the least hierarchical of the Marquesan societies, but it should not be inferred that there was a straightforward north-south continuum from greatest to least inequality, since it appears that tau'a particularly, and priests generally, had greater power on Tahuata, if not within the southern group generally, than elsewhere. The logic of this distribution requires a fuller investigation of the significance of tau'a. It seems that they represented a form of power which implied one kind of inequality, and which developed at the expense of another kind.

90Cf. Handy 1923: 37.
91 Fréchou, Journal commencé à Ua Pou, 10 April, 12 May, 28 July, 30 August 1844.
92 Account, 212. In Lawson's 1867 census of 'Ua Huka (see Appendix B) one man, 'Teiki-moetina', is described as the 'Head chief of Uauna' (i.e. of 'Ua Huka) (Lawson, Census, 25) but it turns out that Lawson himself had gone to some trouble to have this particular man generally acknowledged as paramount chief, with a view to maintaining a state of peace and order (Lawson to Gulick, January 1868 [HMCS]). In another document Lawson suggested that 'All the landed property belonging to the clan is invested in the chief.' (1852 [1936]: 41). Although typical of many misinterpretations, it is possible that the statement reflects specific features of society on 'Ua Huka, perhaps indicating that landownership there was more consolidated in the chiefainship, rather than being dispersed among 'akatia, at least within individual valleys, than elsewhere.
93 After all, a southern form of the term for landholder, 'anatia, is documented (Dordillon 1931).
CHAPTER 5

Tau’ā and kaha: ritual agency and the diffusion of power

I

In contrast with ancestral eastern Oceanic societies, in which chieftainship was highly coherent and socially encompassing, in the Marquesas different capacities and privileged forms of agency were diffused among different persons, who might or might not have been closely associated. While the elite at Taiohae in 1800 was closely integrated, that at Tahuata at the same time seems to have been less tightly knit. The question of the dispersion of power and its lack of consolidation in a structure of hierarchical solidarity can be pursued further through an examination of the activities of tau’ā and those of another group of religious specialists, sorcerers or nani kaha and umuko.

The evidence concerning tau’ā bears out Eliade’s statement that ‘shamanistic techniques are found in Polynesia in more or less sporadic fashion.’ Some features of the classic central Asian type of shamanism such as the notion that the shaman’s spirit goes on journeys through celestial realms and underworlds are absent or marginal, while the Oceanic practitioners often had additional capacities not generally associated with shamans. There are various islands from which ecstatic performances associated with possession by a spirit or deity are reported. William Mariner, who was in Tonga between 1806 and 1810, gave the following general description:

When he speaks, he generally begins in a low and very altered tone of voice, which gradually rises to nearly its natural pitch, though sometimes a little above it. All that he said is supposed to be the declaration of the god, and he accordingly speaks in the first person as if he were the god. All this is done generally without any apparent inward emotion or outward agitation; but on some occasions his countenance becomes fierce, and, as it were, inflamed, and his whole frame agitated with inward feeling. He is seized with a universal trembling; the perspiration breaks out on his forehead and his lips, turning black, are convulsed; at length, tears start in floods from his eyes, his breast

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1Eliade 1964: 373.
2See particularly Shirokogorov 1935 - a fieldwork-based study of Tungus shamanism which, despite being one of the most detailed ethnographic studies of a religious system ever produced, has been rarely drawn upon by anthropologists or historians of religion.
heaves with great emotion, and his utterance is choked.³

Often such people were called *taura* or a cognate term.⁴ In the Society Islands they were clearly differentiated from other types of priests; when possessed by a god they ‘became violently agitated... the muscles of the limbs seemed convulsed, the body swelled... the eyes wild and strained... he often rolled on the earth, foaming at the mouth’ emitting incoherent sounds which were interpreted by other priests present.⁵

In Mangareva, a shifting of terms is apparent: *taura* were essentially official, hereditary priests who performed chants, while ‘*akarata* were persons of no particular prior social standing who suddenly declared themselves possessed by an *aitu* (an abortion deity), and could subsequently act as prophets.⁶

Marquesan *tau’a* were both male and female, and performed an array of tasks, ranging from simple curing and divining (which did not usually entail trance or ecstasy) to expressing the desire of *etua* for human sacrifices. The capacity was to a limited extent hereditary⁷ although any person, even ‘une femme quelconque’⁸ could be chosen by the *etua*. In fact, those who were chosen were generally regarded as more potent than those who had simply inherited the capacities of another *tau’a*.

Becoming a *tau’a* involved a period of crisis, during which the future mediator between people and deities was abstracted from the ordinary human world and taken away by *etua*: the person would run furiously, emitting loud and incoherent cries, leaping and bounding up and down the valley, collapse from exhaustion, and then begin to leap and run again, with even greater vigour, suggesting a more extreme state of possession.⁹ The possessed person would travel to other *ka’avai*, performing in the same way, and would explain subsequently that *etua* had taken them among deserted places and

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³Martin 1827, I: 101.
⁴*Taula* was used in Samos and Tokelau (Stair 1897; Macgregor 1937: 63; cf. Huntsman & Hooper 1975: 427); *taura* in the Society Islands and Mangareva, and *tau’a* in the Marquesas. However in some cases the term referred to a non-inspirational, hereditary priesthood; elsewhere, persons filling such institutionalized positions were usually *tohunga, tuhuna, kahuna*, etc. Among the pre-Christian Maori *taura* apparently referred to a particular stage in the apprenticeship of a priest, rather than a distinct type of activity (Best [1976]: 266). The Hawaiian *kaula*, described by Malo (1951: 114) as ‘a very eccentric class of people [who] lived apart in desert places’ were inspirational priests akin to, but socially less significant than, the Marquesan *tau’a*. An account of what it clearly a shamanic performance of some kind on Vaitupu (in the Ellice Islands - now Tuvalu) appears in the 1850 journal of a ship’s doctor, Albert Osbun (1966: 141-42).
⁶Buck 1938: 443-444.
⁷Crook, Account, 45; Chaulet, Notices, 140.
⁸Chaulet, Letter to Tautain, 3 September 1893, 4.
⁹Chaulet, Notices, 139.
precipices. By some accounts, the initial possession of the tau’a could only be terminated through an offering:

When the Taua receives his calling he is shook all over with trembling he stares and looks wild & mumbles out incoherent sentences and the people then try & endeavour to get a human victim for him in order to drive out the spirits who have got possession of him. 10

It is thus implied that the initial period of possession was uncontrolled and dangerous. While the tau’a was running around, the whole valley was tapu, and no-one could leave their house, nor light a fire, nor make a noise, without exposing themselves to the danger of being put to death by the etua. 11 On no other occasion were such restrictive tapu applied. When this state of extreme possession was over, older tau’a conducted the person to the me’ae, where tuhuna o’ono performed chants which recognised the new tau’a. Subsequently, possession was generally deliberately induced and controlled by the tau’a. Some distinction was clearly made between extreme or active states of possession, which were manifested by shaking, trembling, and hysterical symptoms; and a more general or perhaps ‘passive’ condition of possession which characterised more potent tau’a permanently.

The moment of possession figures in the myth of Tohetika, listed among particular gods of tau’a. 12 A chief, Kopa, was searching for Tohetika, the perpetrator of a number of destructive acts. 13 With the help of a vision, Kopa discovered that his prey was hiding under a piece of tapa being made by an old woman. He

found things exactly as they had been reflected in the water, and with the help of the old woman succeeded in putting the notorious Tohe-tika into a sack. He then carried him to Paao where a great feast was being celebrated, and as they danced with glee, the sack was cautiously opened. Tohe-tika immediately entered into Kopa’s brother, and from that time on he has descended from father to son. 14

The subsequent practice of the tau’a could involve a number of related activities. Illness was seen as the result of either soul loss or possession. 15 In the case of soul loss, the tau’a would attend the afflicted person, apply herbal preparations, perform chants and invocations, and attempt to lure the soul back to the person through offerings of food. Once the soul was close to the person, the tau’a would catch it in his or her hands

10 Lawson, Sorcery, 18.
11 Chaulet, Notices, 140.
12 Chaulet, Archipel des Marquises. Supplément, 76.
13 The myth is in some senses a recapitulation of that of Ono, discussed in the Epilogue.
15 The former could be the result of sorcery, which is considered separately later in the chapter.
and put it back into the invalid through their ear. The soul would then have to be fed: the tau’a would wrap a piece of fish in a leaf, place it close to the sick person’s ear, and produce noises intended to suggest the soul eating. The tau’a would then substitute an empty wrapped leaf and maintain that the soul had eaten the fish. Food would also be left in a small, specially constructed cabinet next to the invalid, from which the soul would eat. The tau’a would disturb some of the food, point to the fact that the soul had eaten, and inform the ill person that he or she was recovering. Alternatively, the tau’a might say that he or she had hurt their foot, which was a sign that the the etua did not want the invalid to recover, and abandon treatment.16

In cases of possession the tau’a usually interrogated the victim and established that the illness was the result of some violation of tapu.17 Herbal preparations were applied and the affected part massaged vigorously; the tau’a then contrived to extract the etua which was usually simply thrown away. Sometimes the tau’a put the etua into his or her mouth and scratched the gum with a fingernail; the blood was asserted to be that of the etua which had been bitten.18 In other cases, harmful objects placed in the victim’s body by angry etua were extracted:

A short time ago a native, living a few paces from me, ate a piece of tabued hog, and took sick shortly afterwards. A priestess from a neighbouring bay undertook to cure him. She told him, in the first place, that he had offended the gods by eating one of the tabued pigs. One of his legs being much swelled, she said it was the pig - the gods had put it into his leg - and in order to cure him, she must extract it! She commenced the work of extraction by drawing forth the bristles of the hog; afterwards, she successively drew forth the firewood, stones, and the leaves used in roasting it - but its body she was unable to find... Previous to this, another priestess took out cocoanut leaves, sticks, stones, and several baskets of dirt, from a woman’s eye. The natives tell this for a fact.19

In other cases, the tau’a acted essentially as a medium. A session would begin in a house in the evening with various chants and invocations. The house would be sealed and all lights extinguished. After an interval, when it had become properly dark, a kuhane (spirit) or an etua would make its presence known through rustling noises in the thatch, and then begin to speak through the tau’a, whose voice would alter rapidly in pitch.20 Sometimes the tau’a would enter into a dialogue with the etua, for instance about the

17Lallour, Notes, 49: ‘Sur la natte d’un malade il commence par s’enquérir s’il a des ennemis,... s’il a violé quelque tabou; il lui demande enfin toute autre chose que ce qui peut concerner la souffrance qu’il a éprouvé.’
18Chaulet, Notices, 135.
19Bicknell 1855: 27.
20Such persons... when lying down at night... cry out in a shrill voice and then answer in their natural tone, as if two persons were conversing’ (Account, 45).
causes of a particular illness; at other times, other people present asked questions. It appears that mediumship was particularly the province of female tau'a:

the night time is her time of action the lights are put out and the door of the house is closed at those times the spirits of the gods & the dead enter her and she speaks as the spirit gives her utterances She also changes her voice modulating it from a small still voice upwards to a loud screech & puts one in mind of a puppet show man in England when he acts punch & Judy a prophetess will sometimes entertain a company for two or three hours at time owing to the people plying her with questions & sometimes arguing the points with the gods.21

Tau'a might be used to consult etua about many matters, such as war, peace, and the timing of feasts, although illnesses seem to have been the most common matter raised.22

There was to some degree a gender division in the various functions of tau'a: usually those conducting healing rituals were women; tau'a vahana had other tasks such as manipulating weapons in warfare, and announcing a god's demand for a human sacrifice.23 On occasions such as the latter possession was reflected through agitation and trembling. It was supposed that it was the etua who cried out 'tu'u 'enana, e hoa!' (friend, for me, a person!). The actual sacrifices were usually conducted by another priest, a tuhuna o'ono, but in some cases the tau'a was identified with the god, and was the one who actually consumed the victim.24 The eating took place in a trance, that is, in a state of possession. In other contexts, an equation was made between tau'a and etua:

Dreams are one of the greatest taxes on property. If a Marquesan dreams about a pig, or a bunch of bananas, or breadfruit, it is a tribute to the gods, and must be offered. The bananas and breadfruit are carried to the burying-grounds, and generally falls a prey to the priests.25

Particularly potent and aged tau'a might actually be regarded as living etua. Such persons lived in great seclusion at me'ae, were provided with human sacrifices, and were

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21 Lawson, Sorcery, 17.
22 Chaulet, Notices, 135; Lallour, Notes, 50.
23 Chaulet, Letter to Tautain, 1893. The gender division was not, however, rigid; some women demanded sacrifices (Chaulet, Archipel des Marquises. Supplément, 76).
24 On some occasions when an offering was specifically being made to a god (rather than it simply being a case of a revenge victim being ceremonially killed) the body was left uneaten at the me'ae (W. C. Handy, Notes).
25 Bicknell 1855: 27.
associated with the perpetuation of prosperity. While the number who claimed this ritual promotion was very small, there was clearly a general identification between more potent tau'a and etua, which applied not only to men: some tau'a vehine were ‘presque déesses elles-mêmes.’

The distinctive agency of the tau'a was like that of the shaman in the sense that tau'a could voluntarily enter into or produce a hysterical or epileptoid state, which was equated with a deity’s presence in them or possession of them. The tau'a was unlike the shaman in the sense that most tau'a acted essentially as mediums, as ‘bodies for the gods’; they did not themselves go on journeys into the underworld in search of lost souls. Further, some tau'a evidently had the power to ensure or encourage the growth of ‘Vegetables’ including the staple, breadfruit. While the ritual content of this power is obscure, such a capacity falls clearly outside the range of typically shamanistic powers.

In most societies mystical techniques can be, or must be, used to achieve various routine and less routine objectives. In many systems the knowledge which makes the use

26 Account, 46. Tamapuameini of Tahuata, described by Crook and Temoteitei (Anon 1800: 9), is the only individual known definitely to have fallen into this class. C.S. Stewart, an American missionary, who had read Crook’s account, clearly discussed this matter with informants during a visit to Nukuhiva in 1829, and to some extent confirmed the notion that there were people regarded as living etua. However, he noted that ‘there is none at present in the near vicinity of Taiohae, though the former abode of such an individual is pointed out at the foot of a bold cliff, high in the mountains’ (Stewart 1831, I: 268). Caves, rocks deep in valleys, and other mountain locations were typical sites for action on the fringes of sociality and the living world. Cf. Valeri 1985a: 96, and the use of such locations in the Marquesan myth of Temoonieve and Huuti (see Epilogue). Dumont D’Urville, who could however have been drawing upon Stewart, wrote that ‘lorsque leurs prêtres sont parvenus à un age avancé, il arrive souvent que même de leur vivant on leur donne des titres et les pouvoirs des dieux (atoua)’ (1847, III: 11). Fleurieu’s account of Marchand’s visit suggests that they mistook an ‘otoouh’ (= etua?) for ‘the king’ (Fleurieu 1801, I: 37). William Dalton reported that at ‘Ua Pou the Phoenix was circled repeatedly by a canoe containing ‘a native standing up and making a hideous noise and several antics’ who he later learnt ‘was one of their gods’ (Journal, 27 December - 1 January 1824).

27 Chaulet, Archipel des Marquises. Supplément, 137-38. As was noted in Chapter 3, several female tau'a were known to have officiated at human sacrifices.

28 Cf. Layard 1930: 527 n.2. The medical character of the state is not an important question here. Even if the nature of shamanistic conditions elsewhere was adequately defined, it would be unclear whether such findings applied in the eastern Pacific, where the practices are generally no longer prevalent.

29 Darling, Letter, 7 October 1835.

30 Except in Samoa in so far as taula 'aitu and Siovili prophets were said to fly above trees and travel long distances by supernatural means (Niel Gunson pers. comm.). Eliade (1964: 190f.) indicates that the ability of the shaman to move in subterranean and celestial realms was a central feature of the central Asian complexes. In cases where some shamans could make such journeys and others could not, the former were considered significantly more potent: ‘a distinction is made between shamans who could only ‘see’ the ancestors and those who could really travel to the sky; some say that only the great shamans of the past could travel’ (Hugh-Jones 1979: 62 [concerning the Piri-parana Indians of northwest Amazonia]).

31 In relation to prosperity in hunting, Eliade wrote that ‘In the Far North of Asia, when game becomes scarce, the shaman’s intervention is sometimes sought... but these hunting rites cannot be regarded as properly shamanic...’ (1964: 184).
of these techniques possible is not general, even among members of the same sex. Often, it is monopolised by persons who in some way are defined as practitioners or specialists. These individuals stand between the people in general, and an array of vital forces or agencies. A mediating role, and a relationship of dependence, is culturally constituted.  

The capacity to become possessed, to act as a medium, or to move into certain realms not accessible to ordinary people is a privileged and special capacity. The constitution of shamanic agency is simultaneously the disqualification or the disabling of people in general as agents in respect of certain vital acts, which are made the province of a few. It is not necessarily the case that shamans are privileged economically or politically as a result of their peculiar and essential activities. In fact, their particular agency is highly and ambivalently charged: they are often peripheral, needed and rejected by society at the same time. In many cases shamans derived little material benefit from their capacity:

Among the Tungus of Manchuria the shamans never receive any remuneration... although they cannot refuse to shamanize... It may thus be said that candidates to shamanship are not stimulated by any material interest, from the point of view of which they are in an inferior position that sometimes makes their lives a constant suffering from poverty.

Under other circumstances, however, religious specialists could translate their capacities into a quasi-professional, relatively lucrative practice. In fact, sometimes similar specialists were suspected of being mere tricksters who practised in order to secure rewards. E.E. Evans-Pritchard wrote of comparable Zande healers that

Many people say that the great majority of witch-doctors are liars whose sole concern is to acquire wealth... it was quite a normal belief among Azande that many of the practitioners are charlatans who make up any reply which they think will please their questioner, and whose sole inspiration is love of gain.

Marquesan tau’a were generally well remunerated for their services: pigs, other food, or ornaments, might be provided by the relatives of an afflicted person. Thus tau’a were only called upon to facilitate birth by ‘families that have property. The gifts were, however, exchanged for particular services; while there may have been a general stream of offerings to tau’a at the me’ae, the extent to which other tau’a were rewarded no doubt varied very considerably. Lawson gives an account of an important female tau’a, also the chief of the Taioa of Hakaui valley, who somewhat cynically used her special abilities to acquire some pigs on one occasion:

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33 Shirokogorov 1935: 379.
34 Evans-Pritchard 1937: 183.
35 Account, 45.
Taua-Mata-Heva the late High Chiefess or Goddess of Taioa on Nukuhiva a few years ago being in want of some pigs. She was too proud & independant to ask the people to give them to her & was too poor to buy them so she set her wits to work & schemed to have them presented to her a Koina Vaihopo or large feast of atonement in the valley of Taiohae was at hand & the tribes from all parts of the island was invited to the feast Tauamataheva & her people where [sic] all there at the feast now during the height the old women was taken (or pretended to be) very ill & she desired her people to take her away Home she continued to be ill all night & the next day not feeling any better she determined to make an enquiry of the gods about the cause of her illness so that evening the whole Tribe of Taioa assembled at her House & she called up from Havaii the patron gods of Taioa & asked them what was the reason she was taken sick at the feast & why her sickness did not leave her seeing that this was now the second day the gods replied that as how one of the young men belonging to the bay of Oomi that had been playing court to her during the evening previous to the feast had stolen a piece [sic] of her garment & had given it to the Sorcerer of his tribe who had put the spell on it & that unless the spell was speedily taken off she would most assuredly die the Taioa people then made enquiries about getting it taken off & the Gods told them to make forty pigs fast the next day & bring them to the house of their Chiefess & then they would give them further instructions so the next day the pigs where brought to the House besides various ornaments & Taioa was in high glee under the supisition that the pigs &c where to be carried to Oomi where they intended to have a good time of it in drinking kava & feasting & courting but they where most sadly dissapointed for that night the gods told themselves not to trouble themselves any more about the spell because they had sent a Rat to eat up the momouC the folk then dispersed each to his own Home & left their pigs &c with the old Woman a many of them would have liked to have carried their pigs back with them but where ashamed to do so so the old Woman got the whole of the pigs &c & recovered of her Illness in this case Taua Mataheva stood her own prophetess as just what she had a mind to so as to suit her own ends.

Perhaps this manipulative behaviour reflects the circumstances of the later contact period: belief in the tapu system and in the efficacy of old etua was being undermined. Although specialists’ privileges are often mystified or obscured, a distinction must be made between particular uses of techniques and attitudes toward certain practices; and the extent to which a whole system, a cosmology and a way of perceiving action, is actually subject to doubt. Evans-Pritchard made it clear that while people were sceptical about the majority of practitioners, no-one ‘disbelieves in witch-doctorhood’; that is, no-one in such a culture regards the whole array of activities as unfounded or fraudulent. In the Marquesas, the structure of symbolic inequality was tied to fundamental Polynesian concepts, and to notions linking action in the po with effects in the living world. If the soul is perceived as a thing which may be lost, or entered into and

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36 The package incorporating something associated with the victim which was the substance of an act of sorcery. Cf. infra.
37 I.e. acted as a ‘prophet’ for herself.
38 Lawson, Sorcery, 7-8.
39 1937: 185.
manipulated, then an array of practices (such as soul-fixing) are liable to be conceived of essentially as concrete physical acts. While such acts were special and extraordinary because they required agency which was situated in a highly particular way in relation to *po* and *ao*, entailing rapport with *etua*, they were not seen as supra-normal or supernatural. It is even misleading to describe the notions and categories associated with shamanistic practice as ‘beliefs’, or to suggest that they were ‘deeply held’, because these turns of phrase imply that people could come to such ideas and consider whether or not they were fit to adopt, whereas in fact such cultural structures, like language, are prior to and conditioning of the subjectivity of any particular person.

Although in a sense *tau’a* do illuminate the mystification of privilege, such an issue - like any inquiry dealing explicitly or implicitly with legitimation - only pertains to the cultural constitution of power at a superficial level.

The classic type of shamanism has a deeply paradoxical character, in the sense that it reflects a kind of inequality and privilege which is, however, somewhat arbitrarily assigned. Recruitment is not through birth into a particular lineage, as it is in the case of chieftainship and often institutionalised priesthood. Nor is the status of a shaman arrived at through channels which typically permit individuals to acquire ‘achieved’ status by using resources, entering into alliances, or becoming an apprentice of some kind. If there was any prior factor which made a a person likely to receive a ‘calling’, then it was a physical propensity for epilepsy or some associated condition - which was, of course, an arbitrary factor from the viewpoint of social relations. Unlike other special individuals, a shaman enters a field of power as a new volcano erupts on a landscape: while a (geological) sub-structure defines the possibility of such an event, to whom it happens, and where it happens, are essentially accidental. Once it has happened, the capacities of a particular person, and the kinds of support and influence they can muster, become dependent to some extent upon prior abilities and associations. But the fact that these

40 While people could sometimes deliberately attempt to become *tau’a* (or elsewhere become shamans), such persons generally were acknowledged to have substantially less power than those who had received a ‘calling’, those who had been chosen by the spirits (Eliade 1964: 13). While, in some cases, inspirational shamanism was transformed over a period into an institutionalised, hereditary position, in the Marquesas, and in many other cases, the capacity could usually only be inherited in a weaker form for one or two generations. Especially potent *tau’a* and those considered as *etua* were usually celibate, although it appears that siblings’ children could inherit. While Tamapuameini and Teheauté’a of Tahuata received their capacities from their father, Crook (Account, 138) noted that ‘it is not supposed, that at the death of Tamapuameine, any one will inherit his honours.’

41 Cf. Loeb (writing of Niue): a particular shaman was ‘unkempt in appearance... suffered from elephantiasis [and] was subject to epileptic fits, and it was this fact which accounted for his official position in life’ (1926: 398-399). However, I accept Eliade’s point that ‘It is not to the fact that he is subject to epileptic attacks that [he] owes his power and prestige; it is to the fact that he can control his epilepsy’ (1964: 29).
pre-existing relations can be effectively used rests upon an explosive, arbitrary incident: only the particular character of the consequences upon the social landscape is determined by prior potentialities.

It is obvious that there are only certain circumstances under which shamanistic or quasi-shamanistic practices may become of great importance to the community. Shamanic techniques clearly have some part in the religious lives of many societies, including modern industrial ones, but in many cases such techniques are marginal and unimportant or are only important for certain arguably marginal groups. Polynesian evidence suggests that inspirational priests were insignificant as a class of persons in some societies and more or less marginal in others.

In the Society Islands, for instance, *taura* seem to have been occasionally consulted, but clearly played no part in most major religious ceremonies, which took place at *marae* and at which *tahu’a* (cf. *tuhuna*) officiated. Such ceremonies were generally closely associated with *ari’i* and consisted mainly in the recitation of chants, the learning of which was the substance of the apprenticeship of the *tahu’a*. Apart from in a few contexts such as war, there is no indication that *taura* played an important role in any of the numerous large scale ceremonies discussed in Tahitian sources. The few passing references to the activities of *taura* and, in Hawai’i, of *kaua* suggest that in both island groups their capacities, while recognised as exceptional, were not assigned any special importance.

Any encompassing chieftainship must tie key ritual practices to its own apparatus and to its own channels, which are essentially genealogical links with ancestors and deities. Chiefs may perform the rituals themselves, or, if for instance their sanctity leads them to withdraw from action, hereditary priests who are closely associated with chiefs perform rites. In these contexts the *tuhuna* are likely to be perceived essentially as ritual servants of the chief, just as in Hawaii, *konohiki* are stewards of the land who coordinate work on behalf of the *ali‘i*. Thus in Mangaia, ‘though priests carried out the ceremonies, the chief who built a marae and his heirs after him really owned the marae and his position as the source (*pu*) from which the marae sprung was recognized.’ In a structure of hierarchical solidarity, kings are jealous gods: an encompassing chiefly unity does not admit much dispersion or diversion of ritual power.

Shamanism thus implies a kind of vacuum that has been left by the collapse or erosion of another structure of privilege. This is precisely what took place in the

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43 As they did in Tikopia, cf. Firth 1970: 34f.
44 Buck 1934: 176.
Marquesas. Ancestral Polynesian societies entailed an encompassing, unitary chieftainship. This structure of hierarchical solidarity was variously developed, fractured, and transformed. In most cases, in particular localized incarnations, it persisted, although on a number of islands what might be called a process of devolution took place, through which chieftainship was eroded or diminished in importance. It can be shown that some of the islands (such as Niue and Easter Island) where inspirational priests were important, were also those in which hierarchical structures had contracted, or, more particularly, where the relationship between chief and society had lost its encompassing character.

There can be little doubt that Polynesian society on the island of Niue had, in the centuries up to about 1700, undergone a process whereby distinctions of rank and status became substantially less significant.

In a land where there is so little division of labour, where an inherited priesthood and kingship is unknown, and where anyone, no matter how poorly born, can rise up and gain the high rank of toa by his own strength and courage, the use of the word aristocracy is indeed a misnomer.

Loeb added that '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.' Loeb assumed that the explanation for these conditions was that Niue was settled before the Polynesians 'converted to theocratical rule.' Given that it is clear that Polynesian chieftainship antedates the settlement of Polynesia, the correct interpretation can only be the reverse: that chieftainship, and a more elaborate rank structure, existed at one stage, but for some reason were not reproduced. It is not suprising under these circumstances, that taula atua, 'a class of people subject to inspirational spasms', played an important role, which was not restricted to healing practices:

In a pre-war ceremony known as TUGI E MAMA (lighting the fires) the Taula-atua (shaman or priest) who was supposed to be the leader of the ceremony, first appeared in the fore-ground feverishly calling out in a language of his own to his gods, to come together and aid the troops who were about to enter the battle

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45 These processes are discussed more in fully in chapter 8.
46 Niue is a small island about 400 kilometres east of Vava'u in the Tongan group. Its population in 1875 was about 5000. The main source other than Loeb is Smith and Pulekula (1902-1903). For a modern Niuean perspective, see Chapman et. al. 1982.
47 Loeb 1926: 45.
48 1926: 59.
49 Readers familiar with Irving Goldman's arguments (1970) would note that I am effectively suggesting that his 'Open' societies represent contracted 'Traditional' or 'Stratified' systems, rather than an evolutionary stage between the former and the latter. This issue is addressed in chapter 8.
50 Loeb 1926: 166.
fields for fighting.51

The same authors disputed the gloss 'shaman' 'for in real Niuean thinking, the true functions of a taula-atua could be numerous.'52 Prior to about 1700, the taula atua believed to have powers over the weather and the growth of crops, just as some tau'a did in the Marquesas. At about that date, a new line of chiefs or kings was installed from Tonga;53 they appropriated (or recovered) these capacities for the chieftainship. Thus it seems that taula had more or less extensive powers (and presumably practical influence) depending on the strength of chieftainship at the time.

Rapanui (Easter Island) provides a clear case of political contraction. Genealogically ascribed rank had declined substantially in importance, and an overtly competitive warrior-chief cult had become central. Each year, warriors competed in a race to swim out to a rocky islet and bring back the first egg of the manu tara or sooty fern; the winner became the tangata manu or birdman, the paramount warrior chief for the following year.54 The information about 'priests' on Rapanui is very limited, but it is clear that they were both male and female.55 This fact suggests that the main practitioners were inspirational priests, because women might be chosen by atua, but were very rarely admitted to hereditary institutional orders of tuhuna. More significantly, practice involved mediumship. A trance or perhaps an ecstatic state was induced through dizziness, and the priest spoke in a shrill voice: 'In the legend of the young man who pretended to be Makemake, it is said that "... they made their voice like that of a god (hakaatua i te reo)."'56 There are thus clear indications that approximately shamanic activities were the dominant form of specialized religious practice.

It thus appears that, as kingship weakened, various functions, such as those associated with natural production, might be taken over by inspirational priests; but if the potency of chiefs was restored, these capacities might again be absorbed by the chieftainship. Niue provides the clearest example of the growth of one of the two forms of power at the expense of the other. There are other instances, such as that of Pukapuka in the northern Cook Islands, where there is no clear evidence for the erosion of chiefly

51Etuata & Tamaki 1982: 99.
521982: 99-100.
53It is true, of course, that in some cases the tradition of a stranger king was not associated with actual events of conquest (cf. Sahlins 1981a). In the case of Niue, however, the traditions are detailed and specific, and concern comparatively recent events. Loeb, at any rate, had no doubt that Tongan involvement was an actuality as well as an idea (1926: 26f.).
54Métraux 1940: 331-341.
55Métraux 1940: 324.
56Métraux 1940: 325. The term for priest, ivi atua (bones of the gods) also suggests the notion found elsewhere of the shamanistic priest as the body for the god.
power, but where there appears to have been a general compatibility between limited chiefly authority and the importance of inspirational priests. On the other hand, where kingship was strongly developed, in Tahiti and Hawai'i, taura and kaula were not powerful, although, precisely as one would expect, they were important in socially peripheral areas such as the small island on Nihau, at the western end of the Hawaiian chain:

there are at Neehow many priests and, what we have not seen at any other of these Islands, priestesses, who all act as if they were inspired by some supernatural power, performing numberless strange and mad pranks.

In Tikopia, where a strong ideology of chiefly encompassment had persisted, tauratua played a role, but one which was clearly subordinated to the chiefs: on one ritual occasion a chief told the medium what to do, while it appears that the ecstatic dimension of the performance was clearly formalised and attenuated. The thesis being advanced is not that a contraction of chiefly capacities necessarily led to the rise of more potent inspirational taura. The argument is rather that this was one line of social transformation undergone by a number of central and eastern Polynesian societies.

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57 E. and P. Beaglehole 1938: 234f., 321f. There is some evidence (ibid: 253-34) for a drift away from genealogically prescribed rank towards a structure of age grades.

58 It is significant that Tahitian taura were most obviously important in the context of the millenarian mamaia cult of 1826-1841 (Gunson 1962: 210-211).


60 Firth 1970: 267.

61 Ibid: 269.
Like quasi-shamanistic practices, sorcery was prevalent in Oceania, although it varied considerably in social and historical importance. In several eastern Polynesian island groups, a term cognate with *nani kaha* referred to the principal type of sorcery. The significance of the practice in the Marquesas is widely attested to. Robarts noted that ‘the people in general’ were ‘very much afraid’ of sorcerers, who were ‘mostly old men’ who lived mainly at me’ae ‘or other altars. Robarts himself was convinced of the efficacy of *kaha*: Krusenstern noted with some disappointment that ‘in these charms of the priests, Roberts, who appeared in other respects a sensible man, placed implicit confidence. In fact, another beachcomber, Joseph Kabris, Robarts’ bitter enemy, had attempted to acquire knowledge of the formulae to use against him. Virtually all deaths which were not attributed to *etua* angered by *tapu* violation were thought to have been caused by some form of sorcery.

if a person dies a natural death by reason of old age or fever or consumption or any other disease they will say it was the kaha if a person falls out of a tree or is drowned or shot in battle it is common for them to say he was under the influence of the kaha if a woman has a miscarriage or a child still born it is still the same cry the kaha in the womans womb if anyone is ailing with a temporary cold or bowel complaint it is the same cry either the umoko or the kaha so that either directly or indirectly there is scarcely an illness or a death amongst these islanders but what is attributed either to the umoko or the kaha.

Unlike other *tau’a*, sorcerers underwent a lengthy apprenticeship. In some cases a person paid an established *tau’a nani kaha* to train them; more often, it seems, the practitioner passed on the craft to a relative:

an old sorcerer will adopt one of his grandchildren & bring him up from childhood and as he advances in years he will begin to teach him the Sorcerers prayers and at certain times they will dwell alone in a taboo house and abstain from women & bathe daily in the salt water for at least three to four months at

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62 For a review of the vast array of Melanesian evidence, see Patterson 1974-74.

63 Henry (1928: 203) indicates that reduplicative forms, *nanati 'aha* and *natinati 'aha* were in use in the Society Islands; Buck (1938: 473) gave *nati ka'a* as the Mangarevan term. In Mangareva, as in the Marquesas, sorcerers were regarded as a class of *taura* and *tau'a* respectively; hence the practitioners of what Henry called ‘the Black art’ were *tau'a nani kaha* and *taura nati ka'a*. However, the methods employed in the Society Islands and in Mangareva were quite different, although not conceptually alien to, those used in the Marquesas. Sorcery was practised in Hawai'i in a different manner again (Malo 1951: 112-113).

64 Robarts [1974]: 254.

65 Krusensetern 1813, II: 174.

66 Darling, Journal, 5 February 1835.

67 Lawson, Sorcery, 1. The text was published in an abridged form by Palmer (1877).
This form of recruitment and training had a great deal more in common with the specialized practices of *tuhuna* than *tau'a*: the training and the work of the former usually took place in *tapu* houses. Sorcery was not an 'inspirational' activity.\(^6\)

There were a number of different procedures. *Nani kaha* essentially involved obtaining a thing or substance associated with the intended victim, fixing or securing it, and performing certain chants which invoked an *etua*, Tupa'amo, whose help was evidently vital in bringing sickness or death upon a person. A piece of clothing or food could be used for this purpose, but saliva, excrement or urine were preferred because there was less likelihood of harming the wrong person, and perhaps also because such substances were more directly linked to the intended victim. This substance was called the *momo*.\(^7\) The *momo* was generally wrapped up in a coconut fronds, or a package of other leaves, tied tightly with sinnet, and usually buried in a secluded place.\(^8\) Further chants to Tupa'amo were recited at this point, and by some accounts the *tau'a nani kaha* danced naked around the *momo*. Some of the chants were recited in a *tapu* house; like some other kinds of *tapu* work, in order for *kaha* to be successful, the practitioner had to be celibate and fast, in this case for seven days. However sometimes the sorcerer only fasted for one or two days, and then fulfilled the requirement by retiring and rising five times in one further day.\(^9\) The victim usually became ill as soon as the *momo* was buried.

In some cases a different initial procedure was followed. The wrapped *momo* was placed in the chest band of a small sinnet figure, which was then hung up in the *tapu*

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\(^6\)Lawson, Sorcery, 2.

\(^7\)It is curious that although Chaulet (Notices, 140f. and elsewhere) and Lecornu (Notes sur les dieux) unambiguously identified sorcerers as *tau'a*, the Catholic mission’s dictionary refers at one point to them as *tuhuka nati kaha* (Dordillon 1931: 198). Such an identification would be consistent with the Mangarevan parallel, since there *taura* were not shamanistic, inspirational priests, but officials who learned chants and performed rites like those of Marquesan *tuhuna o’ono*. However, the fact that *tuhuna* and *tau’a* were clearly discrete and mutually exclusive classes of practitioners (cf. Crook, Account, 44) makes it hard to envisage blurring or ambiguity in the assignation of one set of practices to one group or the other.

\(^8\)Lawson, Sorcery, 2; Lecornu, Notes sur les dieux, section titled ‘Taua Nanikaha’; Chaulet, Notices, 141-141a.

\(^9\)Dominique Fournon, Letter (from Nukuhiva), 11 June 1858. Robarts describes a more complicated procedure: having secured the *momo* the *tau’a nani kaha* would ‘go into some secret place and make a fire and burn what they have got with some dry leaves of a tree. They take stinging nettles and pound them and mix with the ashes of what they have burnt. There is something else that they mix that I am not acquainted with. It is then made up into seven parts and bound up very secure. One part they bury under the fire on their altar... the others is buryd in secret places until they operate, which will be about a month’ (Robarts [1974]: 254).

\(^{72}\)Chaulet, Archipel des Marquises. Supplément, 143.
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house of the tau'a nani kaha. As soon it was hung up, the victim became ill; later the momo was buried and death followed sooner or later according to how deeply it was placed. If three or four feet below the surface, then the victim would die in less than ten days; if shallower, somewhat longer. Sometimes people might attempt to locate the momo: on a walk in Hakaui valley Max Radiguet encountered a man who told him that his child’s spirit had informed him that the momo of his wife was hidden at a certain me'ae. The relatives of the victim (or, in the case of chiefs, the mata'eina'a) usually attempted to save the person through presenting gifts to the presumed sorcerer (who might be identified with the help of another tau’a acting as a medium). If the tau’a nani kaha was satisfied with the gift (typically one or more pigs) the momo would be uncovered and the person would recover. In some cases the tau’a demanded further gifts before allowing the victim to live. In other cases the momo was tied to a heavy piece of wood and thrown into the sea, in which case there is no recovery. The person will lay three or four days in the greatest agony and then dies. This I have seen and know to be true. The efficacy of the practices was no doubt at least partly related to extreme fear and partly to the fact that a person knowing they had been struck at, usually stopped eating.

The tau’a umuko used somewhat different methods to entrap the soul. After an offering of pork, popoi, or fish had been made at a me’ae, an object such as a leaf could be placed on a path or outside the house of the intended victim; when the person passed over the object, the apea, their spirit became stuck to it. Sometimes the loss of the soul was sufficient to cause fatal illness; in other cases the apea was later taken away by the tau’a umuko and placed with various herbs in a fire, around which the tau’a danced naked, ‘en lançant des imprécations contre l’âme de sa victime’ and calling upon the etua to cause the person’s death as soon as possible.

It was also thought that wandering kuhane took the form of grasshoppers; a tau’a could catch one, kill it with a stone, and dance naked, chanting and calling for the etua to put the intended victim to death. A soul might also, with the aid of spells, be captured in

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73 Lawson, Sorcery, 3-4.
74 Radiguet n.d.: 250-251.
75 Langsdorff 1813, II: 157. Langsdorff suggests also that failure on the part of a sorcerer to confess when confronted with an accusation constituted tapu violation and resulted in ‘immediate death, according to his own belief.’ This statement is unsupported by other accounts and inconsistent with typical Marquesan notions of tapu violation.
77 Lawson, Sorcery, 1; Chaulet, Notices, 141b.
78 Chaulet, Notices, 141b.
A similar method was employed to catch the soul of a thief: after having made an offering, the tau'a umuko would hold some water in a taro or kape leaf, stare fixedly at it, and see the thief's soul, which could then be caught in another leaf and tied up and buried. Usually the soul would be released if what was stolen was returned and an appropriate gift made to the tau'a.\(^80\) The coconut leaf of a tau'a umuko was sometimes left near valued property as a preventative measure against theft 'on the same principal as Mantraps & Spring guns are used in Civilized Countries.'\(^81\)

Although both tau'a umuko and tau'a nani kaha propitiated the same etua, Tupa'amo, the two classes of practitioners were 'distinct from each other the one not knowing the arts of the other.'\(^82\) The practice in both cases involved three key steps: first, capturing the soul; second, enlisting the support of etua; and third, imprisoning the soul in such a way as to temporarily or permanently prevent its return to the body, causing illness or death respectively. The physical steps were clearly insufficient in themselves; the aid of Tupa'amo and in some cases other deities was clearly an essential part of bringing death or disease upon the victim. In some cases, mainly associated with umuko, there was a slight variation in that once the soul had been seized, it was wrapped up and battered with a stone.\(^83\) The essential difference between nani kaha and umuko was that the former used a corporeal substance (the momo) to work upon the kuhane, while umuko used indirect methods to entrap the spirit.

A distinct practice enabled male and female tau'a to take revenge on persons who had had sexual relations with their spouses. A fire was lit at the me'ae and a pig cooked and offered, along with other food, to local etua. The tau'a would then strike a coconut filled with part of this offering a number of times (presumably to attract the gods' attention) and then anger the etua by identifying the offending man or woman with their heads, evidently the most tapu part of divine as well as human bodies, and call upon them to kill or make sick (ha'amate) that person.\(^84\) Anyone else could pay a tau'a to take this action upon their behalf.

This practice, ahī poo'i (fire lighting?) is the only form of sorcery which, it is explicitly stated, could be practised by women; it is generally implied in sources that all tau'a nani kaha and tau'a umuko were men.

\(^{79}\)Lawson, Sorcery, 2.
\(^{80}\)Chaulet, Notices, 142.
\(^{81}\)Lawson, Sorcery, 3.
\(^{82}\)Lawson, Sorcery, 2; Chaulet suggested that tau'a umuko also consulted another deity, Pupuke.
\(^{83}\)This also took place in a further form of sorcery, where the soul was caught, with the help of chants, between two halves of a coconut, which was then smashed to pieces (Lecornu, Notes sur les dieux, section titled 'Tau'a tiha ipu' ['the tau'a who closes the coconut']).
\(^{84}\)Chaulet, Notices, 144.
A *tuhuka* was believed to be able to prepare an antidote to *kaha*. Seven rings were made out of sinnet; the seventh was discarded, and the others burnt. The ashes were collected and made into a drink with coconut milk and 'roses de Chine'. According to Chaulet, anyone who had drunk this preparation could not be affected by the *kaha*, and those who had been struck would recover. It is impossible to accept this statement in an unqualified form. If correct, it would completely undermine the basis of *nati kaha*. It is not uncommon to find that the efficacy of magical formulae was thought to vary, and although there is no reason to doubt the existence of the preparation described, the overall pattern of evidence suggests that it must have been generally unsuccessful or of limited value for some other reason.

Like shamanistic tau’a, *tau’a nani kaha* were potent figures who had a basis for special action divorced from the chieftainship. Their mastery of witchcraft did not simply privilege them in a ritual sense, either. Sorcery was 'un metier bien lucratif':

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As a general rule the sorcerer never puts the spell on any one on his own account but is hired by others to do so for which they must pay him according to their means & before the spell is taken off again the Sorcerer demands a costly present so the family who has a sorcerer belonging to them gains many valuable presents from year to year.
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The general thesis that I wish to advance concerning Marquesan sorcery is along essentially the same lines as the above argument concerning the varying incidence and importance of shamans. *Tau’a nani kaha* and *tau’a umuko* possessed a power to deprive life which could be employed against anyone; although they ran the risk of being assassinated in revenge for acts attributed to them, they were certainly powerful individuals who benefited materially from their practice, and who were essentially independent of *haka’iki*. There is a contradiction between developed chiefly authority and the presence of such powerful individuals. A situation whereby the unity of a social group lies in its acknowledgement of one divine or semi-divine politico-religious leader cannot be sustained if other persons have very considerable, independently based, ritual and material power. It was proposed above that, to some extent, shamanistic tau’a and hierarchical chiefly encompassment were inversely significant in eastern Oceania: the

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85 Chaulet, Archipel des Marquises. Supplément, 142.
86 Dominique Fournon, 11 June 1858.
87 Lawson, Sorcery, 2.
88 Robarts observed that ‘Every Chieftain has more or less of these people about him’ ([1974]: 254). However, in general chiefs do not appear to have had any monopoly over their services, although like *‘akatia* and other more ‘wealthy’ people, they would have been better situated to remunerate sorcerers than commoners. More significantly, as will be discussed below, chiefs were often sorcerers' victims.
strength of one was the weakness of the other. The same thesis can be advanced in respect
of sorcery. In the more coherent Polynesian chiefdoms - that is, those unified around an
elementary hierarchical principal of chieftainship - the practice of sorcery appears to have
been substantially less significant than on those islands where chieftainship had been
eroded or fractured. The pattern is less clear than in the case of shamanistic techniques,
partly because sorcery seems to have been practised almost everywhere and partly
because most descriptions do not enable one to get a sense of the comparative importance
of the practice. Death and illness was generally seen as either punishment for tapu
violation or as the result of sorcery; it seems that in Mangaia, in the Tokelaus, in
Pukapuka, in the Society Islands, and in Mangareva, which were all areas in which
chieftainship was strong, the emphasis was clearly placed upon tapu violation rather than
upon sorcery.89 On the other hand, the societies in which sorcery was emphasized were
also those in which some devolution arguably occurred - the Marquesas, New Zealand,
and Rapanui.90 Thus we find in the Marquesas the view strongly expressed that many or
nearly all deaths and many other illnesses and misfortunes were caused by nani kaha or
umuko.

A more specific opposition also existed in the Marquesas Islands between
chieftainship and sorcery. Pierre Chaulet observed that chiefs were often killed by kaha;91
in fact, several of the most prominent chiefs of the early contact period were threatened if
not actually assassinated in this way. Lieutenant Gamble, who stayed on at Taiohae after
Porter left, reported that on 15 January 1814, Keatonui 'was extremely ill, and much
alarmed' because

The Happah tribe [had] by some means or another, stolen a lock of his hair, and
buried it with a plantain leaf, for the purpose of taking his life.92

Keatonui had been prepared to surrender 'the greater part of his property' in return for
having the kaha undone, but the Hapa'a 'were inexorable, and bent upon his destruction.'
Keatonui was quite desperate, and 'complained of an excessive pain in the head, breast,
and sides': he was only saved by Gamble, who provided medicine and bled him. The
efficacy of these measures may have derived largely from the fact that Porter, and things
and persons associated with him, were regarded as tremendously potent. It is hard to
know what the significance of the practice of bleeding for the Marquesans was, but there
is little doubt that it provided a great ritual occasion: when Lieutenant Gamble arrived at
Keatonui's house he found

91Notices, 141a.
92Porter, 1822, II: 188.
at least three hundred men, women, and children collected together, to witness the operation. After taking about seven ounces of blood from him, he fainted, and the spectators immediately called out to know whether [Gamble] had killed him.93

Although Keatonui did not have great faith in this treatment, he had recovered two days later. other types of priests; when possessed by a god they 'became violently

The Tahuatan chief Iotete was similarly threatened on at least one occasion during David Darling's residence at Vaitahu: the antagonistic valley of Hapatoni was blamed.94

When Iotete's wife died a few years later, John Rodgerson and George Stallworthy were disappointed when they were unable to convince the people that her death had not been 'occasioned by sorcery'.95

The structural antipathy that I have identified finds its clearest expression in the case of the 'king' of 'Ua Pou, Heato. The line of *haka'iki* he represented came closest to developing a unified island-chiefdom. When he was killed by a *tau'a nani kaha*, that unity could not, under the circumstances of the contact period, be reconstructed. The Marquesan expression 'ua tua te ao'a, 'ua hiki te kuku' meant literally 'when the banyan is struck, the turtledoves take flight.' The figurative meaning was 'when the chief dies, the people disperse.'96 When the sorcerer kills the king, the group is fractured, and a society based upon hierachical encompassment is, in a sense, dissolved.

Heatu the Old King of Uapou a short time before his death had the Kaha put upon him six times within a month and it cost him a large present each time to get it taken off at last it was determined to put it on in such a manner that it could not be taken off again for his enemies where determined upon his death A momo of Spittal was procured & carried to Tama-tai the Nanikaha of Hakamaii & instead of burying it in the ground they tied it fast to a stone & buried it away out to sea about two miles from the land in deep water the next day it was made public that Tama-tai had put the spell upon the king a man was imediately [sic] sent to Tamatai [to ask] what he wanted in order to take the spell off Tamatai replied I want nothing that the King has to give me all I want is the Kings death he then told him what had been done with the Kaha and that it could not be recovered & as how the King would die in six days hence & sure enough the King died on the sixth day thus died Heatu the Herdatary Chief of Atipapa & Kea Naiki the Conqueror King of Uapou.97

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93Porter 1822, II: 188-189.
95Rodgerson 1838: 59.
96Dordillon 1931: 107, 164.
97Lawson, Sorcery, 6-7.
PART II

Short-term transformations
CHAPTER 6
Opoti: the reorientation of Marquesan chiefly practice

In various parts of Polynesia, perceptions of those who arrived in 'outriggerless canoes'\(^1\) and the novel forms of barter which developed between islanders and Europeans had all sorts of ramifications for political relations and the cultural order. Among the consequences were extensions of chiefly power and the formation of political units of apparently unprecedented size in the Society Islands, in Hawai‘i and elsewhere.\(^2\)

Before and during the first decade of the nineteenth century, barter between hao‘e on visiting ships and Marquesans seems to have had limited consequences. Although the islanders were keen to obtain iron, cloth, knives, and various other objects, these seem to have had little more than curiosity value. The technological properties of European axes were far less relevant to Marquesans than to certain other Pacific peoples, because the former did not practice swidden cultivation.\(^3\) Although the construction of canoes required a considerable amount of adze work,\(^4\) most other craft activities would have been made marginally rather than overwhelmingly easier with iron technology.\(^5\) Iron was, however, used in weapons, which given the ostentatious and theatrical character of Marquesan fighting,\(^6\) would have been important expressions of the identity of Marquesan warriors.\(^7\) Despite this, no European objects were valued as highly as pigs: traders

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\(^1\)Driessen 1982.
\(^2\)For the Hawaiian case, see Daws 1968, Sahlins 1981b; for Tahiti, Newbury 1967 and Gunson 1969. This chapter, and that which follows, focus upon these exchange relations, their associations with Marquesan perceptions, and the consequences in terms of political transformations (a) on Tahuata and Hiva Oa up to 1842 and (b) on Fatuiva in the 1850s. My concern has been particularly with these processes, and I have not attempted to review the broader pattern of contact history, which was covered in detail by Dening (1980).
\(^3\)Cf. Ralston 1984: 28-29, n. 31 on Hawai‘i.
\(^4\)As it still does in some parts of the Marquesas. On 'Ua Pou, although not in the southern Marquesas, dugout canoes are still manufactured.
\(^5\)House building, for instance, generally involved thatching, binding bamboo, etc., rather than work which required heavy cutting or shaping (Crook, Account, 75f.). For information about such matters in general, see Linton 1923.
\(^6\)Cf. Crook, Account, 93.
\(^7\)Ryazanov (1825: 81) (a participant in the first Russian circumnavigation) reported that some men at Taiohae expected war and were anxious to obtain iron for this purpose.
reported that whales' teeth, already valuables within the indigenous system, were the only objects accepted by Marquesans in exchange for their animals.\(^8\) Isaac Iselin, who passed through the group in November 1806, noted that although 'hogs [were] pretty abundant' they could not get 'a very great supply' because they carried no whales' teeth.\(^9\)

While some members of the Russian expedition assumed that pigs were very scarce, and Korobitsyn even wrote that there were no more than fifty in the whole Taiohae locality, the 'clerk' Shemelin discovered that in fact the Marquesans had deliberately taken all the pigs away from the area near the sea, and were keeping them deep in the valley until the Russians had left, specifically in order to avoid being obliged to barter them.\(^10\) At one point, Keatonui even expressed some scorn toward one of the Russians, who offered an axe in exchange for a pig, saying that he already had several axes. The interest manifested by Marquesans in barter was thus restricted to transactions involving abundant objects or foods of limited value to them, or their own services; they actively resisted trading pork, a scarce resource of considerable value.

It is unlikely that barter in this early period substantially affected Marquesan patterns of social status. Although chiefs received objects perceived by Europeans to be finer than those distributed more widely, there was no monopolisation of the process of barter. Marquesan men received gifts in exchange for various tasks, such as carrying water, while women were rewarded for sexual services; probably both sexes traded vegetables and fruit.

After 1810 ships' visits became more frequent,\(^11\) but it was not this quantitative change in the pattern of contact which altered the face of Marquesan politics. In the latter part of 1813, Captain David Porter of the U.S. Navy, who had captured several British whaling vessels, established a base at Taiohae, and constructed a large fortified settlement.\(^12\) He exchanged names (haka ikoa) with Keatonui; from then on, both

\(^8\)Appleton, Journal of a voyage, 10 October 1801; Iselin n.d.: 39. Even in the early days of Porter's visit, Porter noted that 'the natives did not appear to be willing to traffic for fruit or hogs; [he] was induced to believe, there was considerable scarcity of both in the valley [Taiohae]... no persuasion could induce them to sell any to us, even for articles which were held in the highest estimation by them' (1822, II: 28).

\(^9\)Iselin n.d.: 39, 43.

\(^10\)Korobitsyn [1944]: 170; Shemelin 1815-1818, I: 134.

\(^11\)A convenient guide to the numbers of visits at different times is provided by Dening (1980: 296-301). See also Langdon (ed.) 1984: 168f.) for a narrower, although island-specific, listing.

\(^12\)Because both a detailed discussion (Dening 1980: 26-31) and the principal primary source (Porter 1822) are readily available, I have not thought it necessary to restate details peripheral to my argument, which is essentially that the violence perpetrated by Porter, perceived as a conquering chief, led to a strong association in the minds of haka 'iki between their own political advancement, links with Europeans, and a particular set of European objects, namely, muskets and their accoutrements. On Porter generally, see Long 1970.
Marquesans and hao'e attempted to impose various expectations upon the other party. Keatonui immediately informed Opoti, as Porter was called, that he should help him repulse the Hapa’a, with whom the Tei’i had evidently been fighting: ‘he told me they had cursed the bones of his mother, who had died but a short time since; that as we had exchanged names, she was now my mother, and I was bound to espouse her cause.’\(^{13}\)

Although Opoti claimed to have been initially reluctant to become involved, his sense of military dignity poorly resisted the accusations of cowardice levelled by his Tei’i allies. The Hapa’a maintained a hostile attitude toward him as well as the Tei’i, and Opoti determined that ‘the sooner they were convinced of their folly, the better.’\(^{14}\) An engagement took place on the hills above Taiohae,\(^{15}\) and a number of Hapa’a were killed with muskets. The Tei’i then descended upon and ravaged Hapa’a settlements. Porter, no doubt with his audience at home in mind, emphasized that the detachment had been provoked by ‘the utmost contempt and derision;’ ‘they scoffed at our men, and exposed their posteriors to them.’\(^{11}\)

Since it appears that political divisions and the balance of forces between groupings were more stable at Nukuhiva\(^{17}\) than at Tahuata,\(^{18}\) such a clear cut military outcome was something remarkable. Indeed, Opoti and his men ‘had gained a victory, which, to [Keatonui], seemed incredible.’\(^{19}\) Shortly afterwards, Porter met Mouwateie,\(^{20}\) and agreed to be at peace, provided that the Hapa’a supplied pork and fruit on a weekly basis, for which they would ‘be compensated in iron, and such other articles as would be most useful to them.’\(^{21}\)

Everyone called Opoti haka’iki, so it is not surprising that whereas Marquesans had dictated the terms of barter to previous visitors, he now imposed new terms upon them.\(^{22}\) Within the next two days, envoys from most other mata’eina’a similarly paid homage to Opoti and began to bring offerings: the hao’e ‘rioted in luxuries

\(^{13}\)Porter, 1822, II: 27.
\(^{14}\)Porter 1822, II: 27.
\(^{15}\)Apparently a frequent place for battles. A photograph of a deep defensive ditch, most likely to have been the place of this engagement, was reproduced by Bellwood (1978: fig. 12.2).
\(^{16}\)1822, II: 36.
\(^{17}\)At least in the southeastern part of the island.
\(^{18}\)Crook’s report of the political turmoil which took place in the decades prior to 1800 was discussed in the introductory chapter.
\(^{19}\)1822, II: 38.
\(^{20}\)Formerly Edward Robarts’ father in law. See chapter 2 for discussion of his place in the earlier pattern of relationships.
\(^{21}\)Porter 1822, II: 55-56.
\(^{22}\)Porter indicates that he was called hekai; it would be consistent with his somewhat erratic orthography to read this as haka’iki, which is all that makes sense since a title and not a name is clearly referred to.
which the island afforded.'

Offerings from the Taipi, were, however, conspicuously absent. Some time later, Opoti found it necessary to inform Tema'a Taipi, the haka'iki of Hooumi, 'that [he] had noticed his neglect' in the matter of offerings, and that he, the Hooumi chief, 'might take his choice, either peace or war.'

After some stalling, the chief made it known to Porter that he had been prevented from making presentations by the occupants of the main valley of Taipi (which lies between Hooumi and Taiohae, and is only separated from the former by a low and narrow ridge). Porter presented them with similar options; in response they indicated that they could see no reason to bring pork or fruit; the fact that they were asked for merely expressed Opoti's inability to come and take them, the Taipi said. The toa at Taiohae, 'Mouina', was furious and wanted to make war at once, but Keatonui was saddened and regarded the Taipi's brave words as merely an expression of their ignorance 'of the dreadful effects of the bouhies', that is, of puhí or muskets.

Keatonui's son went to Taipi, in a further effort to persuade the people there that they should submit themselves to Opoti's authority, but returned with an amplified account of the view from Taipi:

all the people of the valley of Tieuhoy... they were cowards - that we had beat the Happahs because the Happahs were cowards; that as to myself and my people, we were white lizards, mere dirt; and as the most contemptuous epithet which they could apply, said we were the posteriors and the privates of the Taeehs [Tei'i]. We were, said they, incapable of standing fatigue, overcome by the slightest heat and want of water, and could not climb the mountains without Indians to assist us and carry our arms. Yet we talked of chastising the Typees, a tribe which had never been driven by an enemy, and as their gods informed them were never to be beaten. They dared us to come into their valley, and said they would convince us they did not dread our bouhies as much as they were dreaded by the cowardly tribes of the Taeehs, Happahs, and Shouemes.

Keatonui then favoured war, and the toa, upon hearing of the report, came into the settlement 'boiling with rage, and in a rather peremptory tone insisted on immediate hostilities.' Porter, envisaging 'difficulty in keeping them in that subjection by which only we could render ourselves secure', thought it necessary to assert his authority over Mouina.

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23 1822, II: 56.
24 Or perhaps Tama Taipi, which might imply a relationship of dependence (or a simpler one of descent) between the Hooumi haka'iki and the people of Taipi.
25 1822, II: 57.
26 1822, II: 69. Puhí seems to have become the standard word and appears, for instance, in Lallour's vocabulary, compiled in the 1840s (Lallour, Notes, vol. 5); cf. Dumont D'Urville 1847, III: 227-28.
27 1822, II: 69. 'Shouemes' refers to the inhabitants of Hooumi.
28 1822, II: 70.
I told him, therefore, that I did not need his advice, and that I should go to war or make peace when I thought proper, without consulting him; that it was only necessary that he should do as I directed him, and every thing must be left to my management. I further told him to leave our village until he could learn to conduct himself more respectfully. He walked off a few paces among the crowd, then turning round, coolly said, he believed I was a great coward.

For a second time, Porter was imprisoned by his own dispositions, and by the Marquesans' expectations of the warrior-chief Opoti - a construct Porter had been complicit in creating.

Forgetting that this was the observation of a mere Indian, I seized a musket and pursued him; he retreated among the crowd, and on my approaching him, presenting the musket and threatening him with destruction, upon the repetition of such expression, terror was marked on his countenance.

Ironically if predictably, the views of the toa had almost immediate effect: Opoti issued instructions to prepare for war.

On 1 December 1813, an attack was mounted upon Taipi valley from the beach. The outcome, however, was embarrassingly unsuccessful: a number of Porter's men were wounded, and only two Taipi killed. Although the hao'e were able to venture some way up the valley, they were unable to fight effectively in the thick brush, and were obliged to retreat after a short period. Opoti's situation then became difficult: "the Typees have driven the white men," was the constant topic of conversation. Expecting that his allies would turn upon him, Opoti immediately organised a second offensive. A larger force climbed the mountain overnight, descended for a day to rest with the Hapa'a, where Opoti had to reassert his authority, and then proceeded into Taipi valley. After protracted fighting the upper end of the valley was reached. Although 'astonished' by the 'beauty and regularity' of the settlement - apparently the principal one of the valley - Opoti set fire to it. Cult objects, including 'large and elegant war canoes', as well as drums and houses, were destroyed; later, several villages closer to the sea were also burned.

The immediate consequence of this violence was a recognition of Opoti's sovereignty over the whole island, and a temporary state of peace. Some later visitors assumed that the longer term consequences on Nukuhiva were

29 1822, II: 70.
30 1822, II: 86-92.
31 1822, II: 93.
32 1822, II: 98-104.
33 1822, II: 105-107.
that the line of *haka'iki* from Taiohae acquired authority over the whole island. There is no doubt that the association between these people and Opoti was a basis for unique and considerable status: Keatonui, who had of course exchanged names with Porter, continued to be called Opoti until 1817 if not until his death. After Porter's great victory, numerous others linked themselves to him in a similar way:

The chiefs, the priests, and the principal persons of the tribes, affected to be very solicitous of forming a relationship with me by an exchange of names with some of my family. Some wished to bear the name of my brother, my son-in-law, my son, my brother-in-law, &c. and when all the male stock were exhausted, they as anxiously solicited the names of the other sex, and as many bore the names of the females of my family as of the males.

Another kind of association with Opoti was later emphasized by Paetini, who boasted to Lieutenant Browning as late as 1836 'of having been Com. Porter's girl aged twelve.' This assertion conflicts with Porter's own account, in which he indicated that his attentions were rebuffed 'with sternness' by 'this dignified personage.' Whatever the truth of the matter, Paetini's assertion accorded with a construct of Opoti in terms of the more general Polynesian notion of the invasive warrior chief who comes in some sense from foreign territory and whose usurpation of the kingdom is marked by an appropriation of indigenous women. While Marquesan *haka'iki* were not typically seen in these terms, the fact that Heato on 'Ua Pou was referred to as a 'Conqueror King' despite an apparently orderly succession to his father's paramount position suggests that this was, at some level, a way of conceptualising kingship. Notions of usurpation and warrior-chiefship emerge also from the myth of Ono, a violent deity who is killed and resurrected. At one point Ono competes with a great priest, Tohetika, whose capacities fail him; Ono terrifies everybody by suddenly becoming a giant. 'Thus it was that the mana and also the name of Tohetika came to his vanquisher Ono.' Later Ono went to Mohotani, where Mataoa was chief.

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34 E.g. Stewart 1831, I: 303.
35 The date of which is uncertain.
36 Porter 1822, II: 107.
37 Browning, Notes on the South Sea Islands, 11.
38 1822, II: 20.
39 Valeri 1985a; Sahlins 1981a, 1985a, *passim*. Of course the idea of 'the stranger king' is not precisely the same as that of the 'king as conqueror.'
40 Lawson, Sorcery, 7; Thomson 1978 [1841]: 45.
41 The accounts of the visiting American missionaries (Whitney, Tinker and Alexander, Report; Whitney, Journal; Tinker, Letter in form of a diary) and Darling's letters, derived from brief visits, suggest nothing other than stability on 'Ua Pou during this period (1832-36).
42 Discussed more fully in the Epilogue.
43 Handy 1930: 107.
Ono searched and searched until he found the ancestral skull pit of Mata-oa. (Such a pit containing skulls of ancestors was a sign of proprietorship.) In the pit he found two skulls. He then went to Mata-oa and surprised him by laying claim himself to proprietorship of the land, basing his claim on the statement that a skull belonging to him lay beneath - and hence was prior to - that belonging to Mata-oa. Mata-oa of course demanded proof of this assertion and so the two chiefs and the people went up to the skull pit. There Mata-oa pointed out that his skull was the only one visible in the pit, that below it there was nothing but rock. But Ono triumphantly removed a piece of rock from the bottom of the pit and revealed his ancestor's skull below it. Thus came the island of Mohotani into the possession of Ono, and there he dwelt thereafter.44

At various points in the myth Ono conquers through direct force, trickery, and magical potency. The fact that more specific and direct expressions of the notion of the conqueror king were restricted to 'Ua Pou probably simply reflected the absence of supra-local chiefly power in other parts of the group.

Opoti became the focus of a cult which persisted for several decades. During the visit of the U.S. Navy ship *Brandywine* in 1829, the visitors learnt there would be a celebration:

Tomorrow there will be a great dance and feast in commemoration of Commodore Porter’s victory over the Happah’s indeed they think that Porter is king of all the world; they venerate his name.45

The celebration probably took place while the hao’e were in the bay precisely because the Marquesans hoped to engineer a repetition of Opoti’s partisan involvement. Indeed the visitors observed that ‘our friends the [Tei’i] are solicitous that we should join sides with them.’46

Captain Paulding found that, in a more general sense, people at Taiohae stressed their links with Porter. A chief told him

that his father had been a great warrior and a friend of Opotee* [Com. Porter]47 Before his door was a swivel and a number of shot, that he said he had obtained from Opotee. He prized them very highly, although they could not be of the least use to him, except as they served to gratify his vanity.48

44Handy 1930: 107. This, incidentally, is the only reference I have encountered to such material expressions of rights to land in the Marquesas.
45Dornin, Journal, undated entry, late July 1829. Dornin’s account is exceptional in that it refers to Opoti’s conquest of the Hapa’a rather than the more spectacular and destructive attack upon the Taipi.
46Dornin, Journal, undated entry late July 1829. The participation in the current war of those on the *Vincennes*, another American naval ship which visited at about the same time, was also invited (Finch, Narrative of proceedings). Similarly, the Dutch visitors of 1825 were asked by their friends at Taiohae to help them fight the Taipi (Troost 1829: 191, 207).
47Paulding’s footnote.
48Paulding 1831: 59-60.
Even at this date, sixteen years after Porter's visit, the Marquesans were manifestly deeply preoccupied with Opoti, and with muskets, and it is surprising that Paulding did not recognize that the material remnants of the intervention should not have a 'use' in the expression of a prestigious association, the value of which was hardly captured by the notion of 'vanity'. But part of the construct of barbarian aristocrats was, of course, that they were irrational and vain, being easily impressed with finery and trinkets.

It was also noted that all American vessels were known as Opoti's ships and that Taiohae was called 'Porter's bay' by Marquesans. It is not surprising that those most aware of these connections were themselves on American naval vessels. However this cultural potency did not give those associated with Porter at Taiohae any novel power in practice. While it is conceivable that Keatonui's position may have been to some extent enhanced, he was already old and weak in 1813; successors such as Paetini appear not to have inherited any special authority from him, and like other haka'iki, were said to lack authority outside their own valleys. The opinion in the 1840s of a reliable French observer was that the 'king' Temoana (Keatonui's great-grandson) was clearly a French imposition upon a pre-existing 'feudal' structure, not an incipient kingdom created by earlier events. There is certainly no evidence that warfare became less frequent in the longer term as a result of Opoti's acts.

Even in the short term, the reaction of the Taipi was anger rather than submission. A British visitor in 1814 noted that 'te kino Porter mate mate Taipi' was 'a general expression' and reported many complaints about Opoti's unreasonable demands upon their stock of pigs:

these poor, but friendly people complained in the most bitter terms about the barbarity they had experienced from Captain Porter, and pointed out the spot where he came with a devastating and ruthless hand, and not content with burning their villages, destroying their trees, shot cold bloodedly, fourteen of their defenceless brethren. In speaking of him their countenance became quite ferocious... their joy at hearing that he was taken prisoner, was excessive...

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49Stewart 1831, I: 227, & 217-350 passim; Alexander [1934]: 172; Paulding 1831: 49.
50Darling, Journal, 23 April 1835.
51Browning, Notes, 11; cf. Dumont D'Urville 1847, III: 15. Paetini's continuing cultivation of foreign status was perhaps reflected in the facts that she was called quini, and that she had 'un aventurier espagnol' for a lover and servant.
52Lallour, Notes, section on 'Gouvernement'.
53See e.g. Troost 1829: 207; Stewart 1831, I: 223, for references to typical states of hostility.
54Shillibeer 1817: 59, 66, 67. The sentence was translated rather floridly as 'wicked and brutal [or, in another place, barbarous] Porter murdered the Typees.' Kino in fact simply means 'bad'.
55Shillibeer 1817: 66. Porter was taken prisoner shortly after his time in the Marquesas after a naval battle at Valparaiso (cf. Dening 1983). Shillibeer's whole account was, of course, coloured by anti-American prejudice arising from the late war.
An incident of Lieutenant Shillibeer's visit to Taiohae points to the more general and profound change in Marquesan perceptions brought about by Opoti's dramatic if short-lived invasion. At that bay, Shillibeer and two companions were annoyed by having their clothing pulled at and their skin touched; one of them fired a pistol into the air, with the result that

the whole assembly [of 'more than five hundred'] fell prostrate and in which attitude they remained a considerable time, or until they thought the shot had reached its destination. When they were about to rise, a second was fired, which was productive of the same effect. This scene was so truly ludicrous... when they had recovered, at their request, the pistols were several times discharged...56

Quite rapidly after Porter's time in the islands, a set of ideas developed within which muskets had a privileged place. Ambitious persons, particularly male chiefs and warriors, began to associate their prospects for advancement strongly with personal links with hao'e such as ships' captains, and especially with their own access to muskets. Although, in the southern part of the group, these notions did not involve specific reference to Opoti, there was clearly an unprecedented sense that puhi were vital. Before Porter, pigs were difficult for visiting ships to obtain; after Porter, almost anything could be exchanged for muskets or poura (gunpowder).

As early as 1816, a sandalwood trader noted that

Firearms & ammunition [are] the staple trade at the Islds. and red broad-cloth next in esteem A variety of cutlery and beeds feathers & other articles & ornaments should be provided, and a few whale's teeth (the longer the better) may sometimes produce sandal wood & generally proove [sic] a good article for purchasing hogs & other provisions.57

Rocquefeuil, who visited both the southern and northern parts of the group in 1817, similarly noted that muskets were the basis of trade, adding that they were likely to remain so, 'vu l'état continuel d'hostilité dans lequel vivent ces peuplades.'58 The rates of exchange were

Pour un fusil, 500 liv. de sandal, pour deux livres et quart de poudre, 100 liv.; un hachet, 45 liv.; une dent de baleine 100 liv.59

Seven years later at Hiva Oa, a visitor noted that 'they gave ten and twelve hogs for a musket; vegetables and fruit for musket cartridges.'60 A novel pattern of exchange

56 Shillibeer 1817: 64-65.
57 Forbes, Voyage around Cape Horn [in the ship Indus], undated entry entry headed 'Marquesas Islands.'
58 Rocquefeuil 1823, I: 299.
59 1823, I: 300.
60 Dalton, Journal, January 3-5, 1824.
relations had clearly been established.\(^6\)

Although the interest in muskets clearly derived ultimately from their perceived efficacy, the weapons seem to have rapidly become prestige objects for display, rather than mere tools of warfare. Paulding, who visited Nukuhiva in 1825, observed about one chief that

His rank and importance was displayed in the possession of six muskets, and two casks of powder that hung directly fronting the door, and which the chief took occasion to point out to me soon after I entered. To him they were a treasure, and, in fact, the wealth and consequence of every individual seemed to be estimated by this standard alone. The powder was covered over with canvas, and the muskets highly polished.\(^6\)

Porter reported that traditional weapons such as spears and clubs acquired the name of a warrior who had been killed with them, or whose blood had stained them, the value of the weapons thereby being ‘greatly enhanced.’\(^6\) This practice, and the logic of tapu in general, was extended to incorporate puhi, probably soon after the weapons began to be used extensively:

When a man from one bay shoots one from another the gun is tapu. He can’t have connection with women for two days.\(^6\)4 They give the gun the name of the man that was shot with it. One of the tribe from the bay of the man that was shot comes to buy the gun and takes it to the priest. The priest puts a tapu on it and if it is used to shoot animals the women can’t eat any of the flesh of the animal - it is tapu.\(^6\)

But the cultural system thus extended, was also transformed. Suddenly, links with hao‘e had unprecedented importance: muskets were an index of these links. The complicated histories of political change in particular localities\(^6\) suggest that not all Marquesans were equally committed to the new order which accorded such importance to foreigners. A number of violent encounters at Ta‘aoa, which became known as ‘Traitors

\(^6\)For further references to similar transactions, or the preoccupation of Marquesans with muskets during the period, see also Faucon, Journal on board the Plant, 17 June 1829 (Fatuiva); Guthrie in Waldegrave 1833: 171 (Nukuhiva); Anon. 1836: 495 (Tahuata); Anon., Log of the Benjamin Rush, 24 July 1838 (Hiva Oa); Ellis, Journal of the whale ship William Thompson, 4 November 1843 (Hiva Oa); Paulding 1831: 40, 54, 63. Unfortunately many ships’ logs mention receiving vegetables or pork without indicating what was given in exchange. Compare Frederick Maning’s observation on the Maori: ‘Muskets, muskets, muskets! - nothing but muskets! was the first demand of the Maori - muskets and gunpowder at any cost’ (Maning 1862 [1930]: 20).

\(^6\)Porter 1831: 59.

\(^6\)Porter 1822, II: 37.

\(^6\)This is generally consistent with rules relating to any tapu work, although the emphasis is usually placed upon restrictions prior to the event (which of course applied before fighting).

\(^6\)Dordillon, Ms. on Marquesan customs in Marquesan, in Handy, Notes on Marquesan lore, file 1.1.

\(^6\)See the next chapter.
Bay suggest that residents of that area were not interested in making allies of particular hao'e.

In early contact Marquesan society, chiefly authority was diffused and decentralised. A general consequence of the process of contact was a limited degree of centralisation. Although ships’ captains and visitors of lesser status rarely expressed their expectations about the nature of Polynesian society, they appear to have assumed that each valley had one chief who was a ruler, if a weak one with restricted power. If they realized that there was more than one chief, it was supposed that all but one were junior or subordinate. While it was often perceived that ‘priests’ were important, the significance of akatia was rarely appreciated. Chiefly women were typically seen as passive if noble beings to whom gifts and respect were due; their importance as political agents usually passed unrecognized.

Edward Robarts’ activities, and, one might expect, those of other resident beachcombers, drew on a wide array of political links, with women as well as men. In contrast, Porter attempted to secure his political objectives by giving directives to a few chiefly men. Later, ships’ captains, who became important to Marquesans particularly because they might provide muskets, behaved in a similar manner, although of course they lacked Porter’s interest in restructuring the Marquesan polity, being simply concerned to trade or provision their vessels. Because links with Europeans became important, it can be assumed that the centrality accorded chiefs by visitors had some effect, but this probably amounted to little more than a generalized increase of personal status, rather than a substantial modification to what haka’iki could do. The southern Marquesan case reveals, however, that the broader pattern of contact, and particularly the monopolisation by some groups of supplies of muskets, effectively transformed the indigenous political system.

67 A name which still appears (in French) upon official naval charts.
CHAPTER 7
Southern Marquesan transformations

Ships' visits to bays in the southern Marquesas were not geographically concentrated in the decade following Porter's incursion. Some vessels went to Vaitahu, which was sheltered under most weather conditions, but others called at Ta'aoa or other parts of Hiva Oa, where sandalwood was more abundant. During the 1820s, Vaitahu became increasingly favoured because of the proclivity for violence attributed to the Marquesans at Hiva Oa. One of the more notorious events was the killing of ten crew members from the *Coquette* in about October 1821. On a later visit some information about the fate of the sailors was obtained through 'Captain Guliver' of the *Barkley*.

his people told us that by what they could understand of the savages that they took our unfortunate shipmates and bound them all together and making a ring around them they danced & sung till the chief took up his club & killed them one by one till they were all dead and then divided there [sic] limbs amongst them and then finished this horrid scene by roasting and eating them.

Since this description accords roughly with later, fuller accounts of the sacrifice of revenge victims, it is probable that the Marquesans involved were reacting to earlier incidents, and perceived relations between themselves and hao'e in the model of hostile relations between mata'eina'a. Like such states of latent and intermittent conflict in the indigenous context, the situation was a persistent one: a few years later, the difference in this respect between Tahuata and Hiva Oa was manifest. Crew members bartered and were 'not molested' at Tahuata, but

at Dominique Island... the natives made an attempt to take our boats, but luckily did not succeed. Our people fired upon them but did not know whether

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1 Of Hanamenu Darling wrote 'ships used to anchor at this place some years before [they] killed a boats crew... no ship has ever anchored in the bay since' (Journal, 18 March 1835). If untrue categorically, this statement accurately reflects perceptions of Hiva Oa.

2 Probably in fact a New Bedford vessel, the *Barclay*, under Captain Glover (Starbuck 1878, I: 238-39).


4 E.g. Chaulet, Archipel des Marquises.Supplément, 126ff. The 'chief' who despatched the victims with a club was probably in fact a *tuhuna* (who might, of course, also have been a *haka'i ki*).
they had wounded any or not.  

William Dalton, surgeon on the *Phoenix*, gained similar impressions of the contrast between the islands three years later:

I went ashore here [at Tahuata] repeatedly and was justly welcomed by the natives. The natives of this island had declared peace. There is a good anchorage at Resolution Bay, where wood, and water can be obtained. Proceeded to Dominique Island to trade for Pigs and other refreshments, having found them scarce at the other islands. The natives of this island are as wild and savage as ever.

The earliest account of political relationships in the 1820s was provided by William Pascoe Crook, who made a second trip to the group in 1825, in order to establish a mission consisting of indigenous Tahitian teachers, who however abandoned the station after a short stay.

Crook visted Hanatetena, on the eastern side of Tahuata, and met Tetupa, the son of the chief of the Ahutini group at the time of his first visit in 1797. The interest in muskets and gunpowder was manifest: walking up the valley he encountered Tetupa’s daughter Tetiutiu, who was complaining that she had been unable to obtain any of either. He also met Iotete, the chief of the Hema people of Vaitahu. Iotete was probably born about 1790, and so would have been around 35 at the time of this visit. Later in life he was always described as an enormous, heavily tattooed man; his physical stature rarely failed to impress foreigners, one of whom even gained the impression that ‘the King and chiefs appear to be selected from their size, as the king was the largest man in the island, and the chiefs next to him in size.’ By visitors such as missionaries, he was generally perceived as shrewd and calculating, as extremely ‘covetous’ of European property. There is no doubt that, probably from before this early date, Iotete was strongly oriented toward links with Europeans. He was very keen to associate himself with Crook and Captain Sibrell, a trader who was trying to collect sandalwood: ‘He says he is an Englishman, and that Vaitahu is Pikitani (or Britain) where we may do as we please.’

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5Dalton, Journal, 3-5 January 1824.  
7Crook 1825-26: 231.  
8Dupetit-Thouars 1840, II: 351.  
9Russell 1838: 515. If Russell’s observation was correct, it could be assumed that a practice documented from Mangareva, among other parts of Polynesia, also existed in the Marquesas - the fattening of chiefly children (Buck 1938: 117).  
10E.g. Darling, Report, 35.  
11Not to be confused with Ebrill, another trader operating at the same period.  
12Crook 1825-26: 232.
They presented lotete with a musket, but he said he would prefer a cask of gunpowder, which he was then given instead. He was very interested in what quantities of muskets and gunpowder they possessed; Crook ‘found it very difficult to convince him that we were not to be judged of by this standard.’

Iotete’s interest in muskets had not flagged by 1829, when George Pritchard and Alexander Simpson visited Tahuata on an investigative trip for the London Missionary Society. Trying to discuss a proposed mission with him, they found that ‘it was no easy task to command his attention, for Guns and Gunpowder had taken sole possession of his mind.’ They noted that the island was ‘visited more by ships than any other in the Windward group, but even here few come to Anchor.’ Visits gradually became more frequent: whereas during the 1820s only forty one visits to the group as a whole are documented, during the 1830s there were generally more than ten a year, with twenty five recorded during 1835. Although Vaitahu was strategically situated with respect to foreign visitors, the consequences of this situation appear to have been limited while Tetupa exercised authority at Hanatetena.

This was noted by Reuben Tinker, Samuel Whitney, and William Patterson Alexander, from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, which, like the London Missionary Society, was concerned to do more toward the evangelization of the Marquesas. In 1832 they noted that Iotete was ‘a chief of importance in Resolution Bay, though he has a powerful rival [namely Tetupa] in a neighbouring valley.’ Iotete had adopted an Irish beachcomber named Charles Robinson who was facilitating relations with Europeans. Robinson was still on Tahuata many years later, at the time of the French occupation, but appears not to have remained so close to Iotete. The chief saw that missionaries could also be of use in respect of foreign shipping and expressed his eagerness for a mission to the ABCFM delegation, although he insisted that missionaries be white men rather than Tahitians or Hawaiians. The stated reason for his concern was the behaviour of some Tahitian teachers left by David Darling in 1831; they had ‘committed adultery’ with the women and abandoned the mission after a short stay. The real reason was that such teachers would have been no more able than any Marquesan to persuade ships’ captains to present the haka’iki with muskets or other

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13 Ibid.
14 Pritchard and Simpson, Letter, 28 April 1829.
15 Dening 1980: 296-301.
17 Dupetit-Thouars 1840, II: 336.
18 Whitney, Journal, 22 October 1832.
objects. Whitney noted that lotete controlled about half the island, ‘the other half subject to many chiefs, who are now talking of making war upon him. He was anxious to obtain guns, powder &c. but did not appear to dread the war.’

This war was presumably that later referred to by Darling, the veteran missionary who had arrived at Vaitahu from Tahiti late in 1834, with his son and two younger missionaries, John Rodgerson, who was accompanied by his wife, and George Stallworthy. Darling was to stay at Vaitahu for a year, to help Rodgerson and Stallworthy establish the mission. He observed that there had been an attack ‘upon this side but Iotete’s party conquered and brought them into subjection.’ Tetupa had died and was possibly killed in the actual fighting; his son, the new chief, acknowledged Iotete ‘as king of their bay.’ Darling reported that this struggle took place about two years prior to their arrival, so very soon after the visit of the ABCFM deputation. Tetupa was evidently a very significant individual: one of the Catholic priests was told eight years later that two war captives were sacrificed at the mau commemorating his death, and he was numbered among the local etua at Hanatetena in a list probably compiled in the 1880s. But while Tetupa remained important as an ancestor, his removal from the scene as a living haka‘iki seems to have cleared the way for the ascendancy of the Hema and their chief.

Iotete was not the only haka‘iki who resided at Vaitahu. ‘Keoenui’, Tupeui, Vahanatihiti, and ‘several others’ were also of some importance within either Vaitahu valley proper or Hanamiai, which also entered into Vaitahu bay. While there is no particular reason to question Darling’s statement that Iotete was ‘acknowledged to be the greatest’, the other chiefs were independent, and of lesser status, rather than actually subordinate. Keoenui was in some sense a rival: apparently because of ‘a kind of jealousy, or pride, on account of [the missionaries] living on Iotete’s side of the bay’ he refused to attend services on Sundays, with the result that his people also avoided them; ‘they say that if he was to come they would also.’ It is probable that all the other haka‘iki were engaged in various political manoeuvres independent of Iotete, which are largely undocumented because that chief successfully monopolised the attention of foreigners.

19 As Iotete acknowledged to Bennett some years later: ‘He complained that the Tahitians did not conform to the customs of his country, and that they had no gunpowder to give him’ (Bennett 1840, I: 323).
21 Darling, Journal, 6 October 1834; cf. Letter, 7 October 1835.
22 Darling, Journal, 23 October 1834.
23 Caret, 13 May 1840.
24 Chaulet, Notes sur les croyances des Marquisiens, (unpaginated).
25 Darling, Letter, 7 October 1835.
26 Darling, Journal, 12 January 1835.
People from all over the island, including Hanatetena, attended ceremonies marking the coming of age of Iotete’s daughter in October 1834. The scale of the ceremonies suggests that she could only have been his first-born child; the rituals lasted for more than two weeks, and involved almost continuous chanting and drumming. Ceremonies of this type, which were as much an expression of the status of the whole mata’ena’a as of that of the chiefly family, would always have been attended by at least a few people from other districts, although probably not as many as appear to have been involved on this occasion. The attendance thus perhaps reflects Vaitahu’s emerging pre-eminence.

Darling observed that although there were independent *haka ‘iki* in each valley, Iotete was ‘acknowledged as a kind of superior.’ He was occasionally brought special gifts - such as a very large fish from the other side of the island, or kava roots - and also, according to Darling, established a new system of reciprocal feasts with other chiefs ‘in order to unite the people to him.’ Since such expressions of association between allied elites were long established, these feasts could only have been novel in their inclusiveness.

The Marquesans at Vaitahu had obviously acquired a very sophisticated understanding of the ways in which they could manipulate missionaries and traders. The well-being, security, and prospects of the former were highly dependent upon Iotete’s initial personal support and continuing interest. He could prevent theft from them, and could ensure that they were not harrassed. The extent of attendance at services depended upon his encouragement or dissuasion. He was very careful to lead the missionaries on, by promising from time to time that a chapel would be built in the future, or by agreeing to their requests that some ‘heathen’ ceremonies not proceed, or at least be suspended on the sabbath. But his assistance was altogether conditional upon a continuous flow of goods from them or from traders. If such gifts were unforthcoming the Marquesans became difficult and unco-operative and made circumstances uncomfortable for the missionaries in one way or another; hence they were usually quick to encourage traders to give the islanders what they wanted.

Iotete seems to have been particularly concerned to prevent theft from the missionaries. When some keys belonging to George Stallworthy were taken he went to some effort to have them returned, apparently worried that the missionaries would give

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27 Darling, Journal, 7 October 1834.
28 A quotation from Darling’s journal referring to the ceremony appears in chapter 3.
29 Journal, 3 November 1834.
30 Darling, Journal, 2 May 1835.
31 Journal, 18 December 1834.
32 Darling, Journal, 3 April 1835.
an unfavourable account of his character to mariners.\(^{33}\) On one occasion when Lotete was away, Darling’s sheets vanished, from which he concluded that ‘were it not for the influence of the chief we should have much of our property stolen.’\(^{34}\) The fact that people told the missionaries that they would only adopt the gospel if Lotete did so first, reinforced their multi-faceted dependence upon him, and led to a state of affairs whereby their relationships with the Marquesan population were in most cases mediated by him - a situation which Lotete clearly sought to perpetuate. On one occasion Rodgerson employed a chief from another district to assist him in various tasks, which infuriated Lotete, who said that unless the man was sent away, he would forbid people from the part of the valley to which the man belonged coming to the services. Even though the man was dismissed, Lotete remained estranged for several days, and relations only improved after he was given various objects including a large axe.\(^{35}\) Lotete’s strength in this context arose essentially from the fact that, while he depended upon the missionaries to some extent, since they facilitated his access to European shipping, they were in an insecure position and were far more dependent upon him.

Difficulties sometimes arose directly from the divergent cultural constructs of particular relationships. Poihe, a chief at Hanamiai considered ‘himself a particular friend of Mr. [Rodgerson] according to their custom of taking and giving the name’ and expected various gifts. They quarrelled about a blanket - which pleased Lotete who did not welcome close associations between the missionaries and haka’iki other than himself. Later ‘Mr. R. wanted the particular friendship to be broken off, at which the chief was much displeased, and has influenced the people to stop away from worship.’\(^{36}\)

Not everyone at Vaitahu was convinced of the desirability of orienting themselves toward hao’e. During the stay of the second group of Tahitian teachers in 1831, one chief had urged Lotete not to ‘embrace the new word brought by the Tahitians’ on the grounds that their land ‘would become the land of King Pomare.’\(^{37}\) Perhaps there was some sense here that the adoption of a new cult involved recognition of distant me’a’ae or foreign lines of tupuna, whose living representatives would thereby acquire some authority at Vaitahu. People were also probably aware that Pomare’s authority had in fact spread with

\(^{33}\) Darling, Journal, 13 December 1834.
\(^{34}\) Journal, 1 December 1834.
\(^{35}\) Darling, Journal, 24-26 December 1834.
\(^{36}\) Darling, Journal, 13, 15 February, 27 March 1835.
\(^{37}\) Darling, Letter, 23 March 1832.
Christianity into the Austral and Tuamotu Islands.\textsuperscript{38}

Iotete had to demonstrate that his strategy was rewarding. Because he had linked his own prestige and advancement so closely with European allies and their gifts, he was open to criticism and even ridicule whenever these channels failed to deliver as much as was expected. On one occasion when Captain Ebrill did not give him a musket, Iotete told Darling that

the people on shore began to say to him that it was worse now with him than it was before he had teachers on shore with him; they said that he could get property formerly but now he was refused, he was so ashamed and hurt.\textsuperscript{39}

Although this complaint was to some extent a (successful) device to induce Darling to intercede with Ebrill upon Iotete's behalf, a genuine problem was reflected; the pressures upon chiefs were complex and contradictory, and tended to escalate and expand, because they had so much less in the way of desired property than the sea captains with whom they sought to identify. Because they were aware of Hawaiian and Tahitian kings who were reputed to have ships and cannons of their own, these chiefs were drawn into an open-ended pursuit of wealth and power. By March, 1835, Iotete was receiving a musket from each captain who visited the bay as a fee for collecting water.\textsuperscript{40} Muskets, gunpowder, and gun-flints were also received in exchange for food and firewood. The most important use to which these prestige objects were put was probably neither actual military use nor simple display but redistribution.

On Hiva Oa there was a long-standing conflict between the inhabitants of Ta'a'oa, and the Naiki of Atuona. Titiutu, Iotete's wife, came from the former group, which the Hema supported in various ways. Ta'a'oa people often came over to Vaitahu 'to beg powder & balls from Iotete.'\textsuperscript{41} The relationship between these people and the Hema was an asymmetrical one, unlike the more or less bilateral and balanced relations between groups of the earlier contact period. The haka'iki at Vaitahu had a monopoly over supplies of European goods, which had developed a crucial value above that of indigenous property; what was given in return could only have been of lesser rank. There was a drift towards a hierarchical and centralised pattern of relations, in which the receivers of muskets and their accoutrements occupied a situation of dependency which did not exist

\textsuperscript{38}William Ellis wrote in 1827 that the Marquesans were 'tolerably well acquainted with the more prominent features of the great change which within the last 12 years has taken place in the Society Islands' (25 January 1827).

\textsuperscript{39}Journal, 10 December 1834.

\textsuperscript{40}Darling, Journal, 10 March 1835.

\textsuperscript{41}Darling, Journal, 1 June 1835; cf. 11 March, 7 April, 24 May 1835, for other instances of soliciting or barter involving muskets.
in the earlier contact or late pre-contact system.\textsuperscript{42}

Although this asymmetry had a narrow basis - in the exchange relations associated with a particular class of objects - it did extend the influence of the Hema chiefs to some extent. In April 1835, some of their allies were fighting amongst themselves. There was a division in one of the Ta’aaoa valleys between an ‘inland’ and a ‘seaside’ party, which was marked by occasional open conflict.\textsuperscript{43} The situation reached a critical point when the inland group made an alliance with people from another valley and allegedly intended to expel the seaside people. Several \textit{haka’iki} including Lotete borrowed the missionaries’ boat and went over to Hiva Oa; apparently

when it was known that Lotete had come over, the party that came from another district to assist the inland party said they would return, they would not fight against Lotete’s friends, for they would have no place to flee too [sic] if they were conquered by their enemies, and no means of getting powder if they were prevented from [going] to Vaitahu.\textsuperscript{44}

Even allowing that Darling presumably obtained this information from a source favourable to the Hema, it is clear that the chiefs had a capacity to interfere in affairs upon other islands unlikely to have been enjoyed by their predecessors.

The fact that these links with the Ta’aaoa area did not persist for more than two years after these events was probably related to Titiutu’s death, which took place in April 1836. Apparently her health had steadily declined from about the beginning of that year, and she died while attempting to walk to Hanatetena to attend a marriage ceremony. Rodgerson and Stallworthy were deeply struck by the spectacular ritual displays of grief, which continued throughout the following night: everyone was wailing, and women tore their hair and cut their bodies.

Lotete and a few others were subsequently \textit{tapu} for a period of a month, while they anointed the body with turmeric and coconut oil in the usual manner. ‘Nearly all the inhabitants of Hapatoni’ and members of various other groups, including Titiutu’s own people on Hiva Oa, came to Vaitahu and presented Lotete with pigs, which were almost certainly kept for a major \textit{mau} which took place sometime in 1837. Several accusations of sorcery were levelled and it was decided that a man from Hapatoni, whom Titiutu had dreamed about shortly before she died, was the culprit, and he was put to death by a chief at Hapatoni.

\textsuperscript{42}Whether a tributary system might have existed at an earlier stage in Marquesan prehistory in considered in chapter 8.

\textsuperscript{43}The ‘seaside’ group were the Tiu; the ‘inland’ group part of the Pikina, who also occupied Hanamenu valley, which opened onto the north coast of Hiva Oa.

\textsuperscript{44}Darling, Journal, 19 April 1835.
In other respects, however, this event differed from the typical chiefly death. David Darling, who returned to the Marquesas for a brief visit in December 1836, wrote that

Iotete took me to the house where his late wife is kept, he prides himself that he has not taken her to the *taha tapu* (sacred place). She has been embalmed and is in a house near to his own, in the same house with her there are 10 or 12 muskets, which were got in her live time, these and many other things are all most sacred, and cannot be touched.45

The presence of the muskets, and the fact that the body was in a house by the shore, (to which Iotete had himself moved sometime earlier), rather than a sacred place on the fringe of society, deep in the valley, suggest that a reorientation at a deeper cultural level may have been taking place. While the basis for what Darling called Iotete’s ‘pride’ about the innovative treatment of his wife’s body is impossible to identify, it probably had some connection with the fact that the source of new forms of power and prestige, namely European shipping, was obviously associated with the sea, rather than with places such as caves and mountains with which indigenous spirits were usually associated. There was clearly some ritualisation of events typical of contact: on one occasion the missionaries persuaded some people at Vaitahu ‘to refrain from making something in the shape of a ship... for men and women to go on board in imitation of what they do when a ship comes.’46 This seems to have been part of adapted *ka'oi* ceremonies, which, Darling was told, were ‘for the worst of purposes... for both sexes to meet, they say, for... preparing the young girls for the shipping season.’47

Other sentiments expressed by Iotete to Darling during his 1836 visit make it apparent that Marquesan chiefly expectations that missionaries would provide them with guns or cannons and ships, enabling them to become like kings in Hawai‘i and Tahiti were not simple, covetous notions. Darling reported that Iotete had

got an idea that the word of God will not grow under his authority, he thinks that his skin is too much marked with tattooing, and that as it was at Tahiti when the missionaries first came, Old Bomare [sic] was taken away before the word of God took effect and grew on Tahiti. It was under Pomare’s son that Christianity was embraced. Iotete thinks that it will be under his son that the Gospel will grow at the Marquesas:- this son of his is a lad about 12 years of age called *Tmau*, he will not agree at present to have his skin marked as they do in general. I told Iotete that it was only an excuse for himself... that he might remain as he is in his heathenish state... I also told him that he ought to embrace at once; to this he made no reply.48

45 Darling, Report, 31.
46 Darling, Journal, 13 January 1835.
47 Journal, 10 January 1835.
48 Darling, Report, 35.
It is not surprising that Iotete did not respond, because he had received an unsympathetic response to what was essentially an explanation of the basis of his action for perhaps the preceding decade. His statement suggests that chiefs such as himself had transformed what they had heard of other contact histories into a kind of myth, which they consciously attempted to reproduce. Iotete did not have a drive towards a greater accumulation of European objects for their own sake, or a simple desire to control more territory; rather, he was attempting to recreate an imagined transformation which he saw as generationally staged. While he, as a tattooed man, had changed the places of some elements of Marquesan ritual practice, and had, for instance, abandoned some koina, only his son, who was not tattooed, and therefore less enmeshed in te tai 'enata, the time before hao'e, would be in a position to create a new order. No doubt there was much more to Iotete’s perception of this history. But like other tattooed haka‘yki, he lacked the opportunity and probably also the desire to write down his views.

During this period Vaitahu came to be frequented more and more, as much because of its established reputation as because of its geographical suitability. As F. D. Bennett, who visited the group in February 1835 and again twelve months later, observed, ‘but few ports in the Pacific offer greater facilities for the refreshment of ships than Resolution Bay.’49 Political preconditions, consisting in a certain degree of prior dominance on the part of the Hema, were probably more significant than the frequency of visits or geographical advantages. It is clear from Crook’s account of the situation in 1825 that Hanatetena had access to the ships; probably no monopoly developed until after Tetupa’s death in 1832. By the 1834-35 period, the Hema’s rivals were not at Hanatetena but Hapatoni.

This latter valley is the most powerful rival to Vaitahu; and Eutiti invariably requests the masters of ships, visiting his port, to supply residents on that part of the coast with as few and bad muskets as possible.50

The fact that Iotete placed a temporary prohibition (probably an ‘ahu) upon the distribution of muskets in June 1835,51 implies that his control over circulation was in fact considerable,52 and that he was altogether conscious of the ways in which it could be manipulated: not only was he concerned to restrict as far as possible weapons going to his

49Bennett 1840, I: 339.
50Bennett 1840, I: 332.
51Darling, Journal, 12 June 1835.
52Probably the only significant source of muskets in the area apart from Vaitahu was Fatuiva: apparently people came from there occasionally to exchange muskets for pigs - which suggests that their priorities were less influenced than those of the people of Tahuata by the spectre of Opoti (Darling, Journal, 4 February, 11 April 1835).
enemies, but he also realised that if he gave too many puhi away, the value of the wider network of debts incurred would be negated by the declining value of the muskets themselves.

This problem relates to another key determinant of the developing system: the nature of muskets as objects for exchange and use. A contrast is apparent with the key product in political competition in the indigenous system - food, particularly pork and breadfruit, the substance of presentations at mau. While breadfruit could be stored, and of course living pigs kept, both were offered in a form requiring almost immediate consumption: the breadfruit paste was made up into various preparations, and the pigs were roasted. Indeed, one element of competition was the requirement that receivers of mau demonstrated a capacity to consume large volumes of food. The exchange value of what was offered was thus negated, while its usefulness was limited essentially to sustaining the consumers and allowing them to put some of their own food to purposes other than self-sustenance. The basis for large scale accumulation and the political strategies thereby facilitated by, for example, durable grain crops, were obviously absent.

Exchanges of muskets between elites seem to have become more important for supra-local relations than this larger scale competition between mata'eina'a at mau. Puhi could either be used as gifts or kept. Their utility was a complex phenomenon based upon, but amounting to more than, their obvious use as weapons. The power of these objects was linked up with the tapu system, and therefore with the presence of etua. Possessors of muskets thus acquired potency and sanctity as well as enhancing their capacity to perform in war. The sound and fire of the musket must have contributed to the very significant theatrical element of fighting. The critical difference between puhi and puaka was that the former, when received, could be kept and accumulated, although accumulation had to be balanced against the desirability of creating gift-debtors. Muskets were gifts of a very special type, because unlike almost all other prestations which circulated between mata'eina'a in the Marquesas, they could not be produced in every, or nearly every, valley: only some groups had access to shipping. Indigenous weapons, although in some cases carefully and elaborately made, could not have played the musket role in the pre-contact polity, because there was no basis for their monopolisation.

This monopolisation led to an inevitable development of tension between Vaitahu and Hapatoni. As early as February, 1835, Darling noted that it was a matter of 'great jealousy'; 53 John Rodgerson and George Stallworthy, who stayed on at Vaitahu after Darling returned to Tahiti, noted that during the 1836-37 period lotete

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53Journal, 8 February 1835.
has always been afraid when a ship comes in sight, lest she should anchor at Hapatoni, and has prevented, as far as lay in his power, the people of that district from obtaining muskets or ammunition... it is probable that the chiefs of Hapatoni might express themselves in terms of disapprobation that their trading should be interfered with by Iotete.54

These words were written after the conflict had actually come to a head. On 9 May 1837, the missionaries at Vaitahu heard that the warriors of Hapatoni were going to march through their valley to attack Motupu, allegedly because that valley had sheltered a man who had offended Iotete. This story was regarded by the Vaitahu people as a cover for an attack upon their valley, because Iotete had ‘prevented them from obtaining muskets &c. from shipping.’55 The Hema’s allies from Hanamiai, Hanatetena, Haaiopu, and Motupu, along with warriors from Vaitahu itself, organised their forces and occupied the valley of Hanateio, most of whose inhabitants were allies of Hapatoni, ‘and killed 2 individuals, and banished the others to the mountains.’ The inhabitants of Hapatoni itself fled before they were attacked; their valley was occupied and their houses burnt. Hanatuuna, another small valley allied with Hapatoni towards the southern end of Tahuata, was similarly ravaged and the inhabitants dispossessed. Some of these people were captured and became domestic servants at Hanatetena or Vaitahu,56 but most escaped to Ta’aoa.

About ten years later, a woman originally from Hapatoni called ‘Mata Katau’ claimed that Iotete was the aggressor, and that his reasons for invading were that fish were more abundant at Hapatoni than elsewhere on Tahuata, and that the Hapatoni people had rarely offered him any part of their catch.57 Hapatoni is a large valley and the Hema probably were partly motivated by a desire to obtain rights over its resources.

The immediate causes of the war are, however, unimportant: it is quite clear that the imposition from Vaitahu of a new system of exchange relationships, and the exclusion of Hapatoni from that system, were the fundamental causes of the dispute. Quite apart from putting their enemies at a distance, Iotete and the other Hema chiefs and warriors achieved a great deal by expropriating the valley, since they redistributed the land within the mata’eina’a and among their allies, which presumably reinforced their support.

Ceremonies took place in December 1837 at which the land was formally confirmed in the

54Rodgerson & Stallworthy 1838: 190.
55Rodgerson, Letter, October 1837.
56Probably the only documented Marquesan instance of such relationships being established through capture.
57Baudichon, Partie non publié de ‘Recits...’, 6.
hands of new owners. From this time until the French annexation in 1842 there appears to have been no serious threat to the position of the Vaitahu chiefs from any group on Tahuata.

After their expulsion from Tahuata the Hapatoni people made various alliances on Hiva Oa apparently aimed at recapturing their land. A number of attacks and skirmishes were reported, some actual, others merely threatened or rumoured. The Hema had not only broken with the Ta‘aoa people after Tititutu’s death, but had become allied with their enemies, the Naiki of Atuona. On one occasion they were sent a canoe load of gunpowder, which the Ta‘aoa attempted unsuccessfully to intercept. Iotete regarded this as an affront, and planned further attacks. He attempted to persuade Stallworthy that his expansionist plans were justified, saying that if he could gain control of Taoa & Hanaminu, which virtually includes the whole s. western end of Dominica, there would be an end to war... he is not altogether without a desire of gaining the same influence on Dominica as he has already acquired on this island.

Hostilities persisted for several years: in 1841 one of the Catholic priests, noted that at Vaitahu two envoys of the Pikina group, who had ‘merely come to seek peace’, were killed. This was one of many minor incidents which amounted to a sustained conflict, which could not extend Iotete’s influence. Despite his ambitions on the one hand, and the efforts of the groups allied against him on the other, the positions of neither grouping changed significantly in the years before Iotete’s death. Because more groups on Hiva Oa were opposed to the Hema than had been the case before, Iotete was not in a position to mount a real campaign which could have established control over the area. On the other hand, his strength on Tahuata was secure to the extent that his enemies on Hiva Oa, including the dispossessed Hapatoni group, had little chance of capturing or recapturing territory on that island.

This stalemate must be attributed partly to a clear division between different styles of Marquesan warfare. On the one hand, the commonest form was small-scale raiding; on the other, there were occasional all-out wars, in which the objective was clearly to expel or massacre the inhabitants of a whole valley. The inability of either the Hema and their

58Stallworthy, Journal, 10 December 1837. The time lag between the act of appropriation and the ceremony was probably required for the accumulation of food. The only information about the nature of such ceremonies would be extrapolated from Robarts’ account of a situation which is not precisely analogous ([1974]: 156).
59Stallworthy, Journal, 5 November 1837, 7 February, 9 March, 12 April, 11 May, 12 June, 21 December 1838, 6 July 1839.
60Stallworthy, Journal, 11 February 1838.
61Borgella, 26-27 November 1841.
allies, or the opposed Hiva Oa groups, to make a complete commitment to dispossess at least part of the other grouping, meant that warfare was restricted to a low and inconclusive level.

The situation which had developed was a transformed one. A single mata'eina'a, the Hema, and particularly its chief, had established a degree of supremacy on the island of Tahuata. At an earlier time on that island (and in most other parts of the group) the principal channels for the advancement of powerful individuals were participation in competitive mau, and the making of alliances. Although these political strategies allowed some haka'iki or 'anatia to outdo others in the pursuit of prestige, there were no elements in this system which permitted the establishment of unequal relationships between mata'eina'a. An impressive performance at a feast created status, rather than the basis for some kind of domination. Although groups might be dispossessed as a result of warfare, tributary relations never seem to have been established as a result of conquest.

The distinctive feature of the musket economy was that it created asymmetrical relations between groups of people residing in different ka'avai.

However, the fact that in the pre-contact system there was no generalized flow of offerings to haka'iki seems to have precluded the development of any larger scale tributary network. The regionalised tributary systems incorporating several islands which developed in the Society Islands and in the Hawaiian group after contact were essentially extensions of smaller scale polities which involved some centralised flow of goods. In the Marquesas, this centralised flow through haka'iki had been replaced by more diffuse appropriation on the part of individual 'anatia and haka'iki; there was no generalised institution of extraction which could be broadened to incorporate new areas.

Iotete’s status was certainly increased, and in a general sense he, and presumably other prominent Hema people, acquired greater influence among other groups, as was apparent from the incidents at Ta’aoa, but this prestige and influence could not, by itself, have led to the creation of a new, regionalised polity. Without a flow of tribute, or a developed hierarchical marriage system, there could be no circular, self-reinforcing process which reproduced and extended relations of allegiance and domination.

The process of change toward a more centralised and powerful chieftainship was, therefore, very much truncated as a result of fundamental features of the indigenous, pre-contact, social system. The basic limitation was not the fact that chiefly authority was limited, but that chiefs were economically disconnected from a general system of ceremonial appropriation.

Iotete however continued to use the same strategies for obtaining property from the missionaries, for which there was greater scope after the arrival of members of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary to compete with the Protestants.
Iotete was initially favourable to the Catholics, partly because he was so impressed by their arrival in the Vénus with Dupetit-Thouars, who was prepared on two occasions to fire salutes and even roman candles in honour of Iotete. They also of course exchanged names:

D’après un des plus anciens usages de la Polynésie, je changeai de nom avec le roi; il fut Dupetit-Thouars, moi je fus Youtati; dès ce moment il n’eut plus rien à me refuser, j’étais le maître de l’île, surtout de sa vallée et plus particulièrement de Madame Youtati qui, dès le lendemain, vint avec le roi me faire souvenir que j’étais Youtati. Je la reçus fort poliment, mais je n’abusai point de la magnanimité d’un si bon prince.62

Once Dupetit-Thouars had departed, however, Iotete found it more rewarding to stand between the Protestants and the Catholics, leading both on with vague promises, soliciting gifts from both, but refusing to be committed either way. As one Vaitahu resident told Stallworthy, ‘it was the property they wanted, &; not the instruction; another said they would listen to me with one ear &; to the Frenchmen with another.’63 One of the Catholic priests likewise observed that the Marquesans visited neither themselves, nor Stallworthy, except when they wished to obtain a gift.64

Despite the introduction of the Catholics as a new factor, these relationships probably differed little from those Iotete had been involved in with the LMS missionaries since their arrival in 1834. However, the Catholics had an advantage in numbers, while Stallworthy was for a time by himself. In so far as Iotete was perceived to neglect the Catholics, he also ran the risk of falling into disfavour with visiting French naval officers, with whom the Catholics had a closer relationship than their Protestant counterparts had with the British navy. This enabled the Catholics to be bolder in their promises to Iotete: in August, 1838, he asked Dosithée Desvault to write to the French king upon his behalf, soliciting muskets and powder; the priest told Iotete that he would do so at the earliest opportunity, and noted that the chief ‘ne put contenir sa joie’, saying he would embrace their religion and build a church.65 Subsequently the ‘promise’ preoccupied Iotete, and he ceaselessly demanded when a French vessel would come, and how much powder, and how many muskets, it would bring. Since these objects did not appear, Iotete’s enthusiasm for the Catholics evaporated, and Felix Bernard, who visited in the Pylade in 1840, reported that he had spoken severely to the chief, after having found that Iotete had ‘forgotten’ the promises he had made to Dupetit-Thouars in respect of the missionaries. More

64Caret, 13 May 1840.
65Desvault, 28 November 1838 - 7 February 1839.
significantly, Bernard favoured Hanatetena with various gifts, noting that that valley gave ground for hope, while Vaitahu seemed 'incurable.' This amounted more to a minor gesture of protest to Iotete than a real transfer of allegiance, since Bernard did honour Iotete with a display of gunfire, as Dupetit-Thouars had done: 'Yotete et son peuple meurent d'admiration (selon son expression).' While Iotete was said to be chastened by Bernard's criticisms, all that he could be induced to do by way of making amends was to arrange to have wood transported for the construction of the missionaries' house.

Iotete continued to be effective in using associations between himself and visiting foreigners of manifest importance. The most spectacular display of his stature and foreign connections took place with Dupetit-Thouars' prise de possession of Tahuata in May 1842. Max Radiguet provided a compelling description of the impressive ceremony, which included performances by the military band, salutes fired by musket, and a further display of gunfire from the ships. While these events certainly had a theatrical character, and probably reinforced Iotete's pre-eminence within his own group, they did little to further advance his position.

The growth of the power of Vaitahu and the steady advancement of Iotete, so evident from the 1830-36 period, seems to have proceeded no further. Most Hiva Oa groups were clearly allied against Tahuata during 1837-39, and although documentation of military and political matters is poorer for 1839-42, there is no evidence that any of the old alliances were restored.

As European visits continued to become more frequent, and the absolute numbers of muskets rose, it is possible that the monopoly enjoyed by Vaitahu began to break down. Presumably it would have been eroded at some stage: the fact that no other basis for Vaitahu's pre-eminence had been created suggests that the polity which had developed between 1832 and 1836 could only have had a short life.

Because these social groups were interfered with in a dramatic way, it is impossible to know how they would have continued to change. The French annexation and occupation had highly disruptive consequences for the residents of Tahuata.

The rationale for this extension of French colonial power was essentially political and ideological, rather than economic or military: the islands held no resources that the French were interested in exploiting, nor did they have any military significance. Although there was great initial attention and enthusiasm in France regarding the
occupation of the Marquesas, international interest shifted rapidly to Tahiti, where there were disputes about the way in which the French had established a protectorate. The Marquesas, which were more costly and difficult to rule than had been anticipated, were virtually abandoned by 1850.

Immediately after occupation, however, there were military garrisons at both Taiohae and Vaitahu. Two hundred men established at Vaitahu under Governor Edouard Halley began work on a range of buildings and military installations such as earthworks and a blockhouse. Very soon after their arrival, Iotete seems to have realised that this kind of contact with Europeans, unlike his earlier associations with visiting captains, did not so much enhance as undermine his position. Iotete informed Halley that he regarded him as a more significant chief than himself, and from that point on avoided, rather than sought, any contact with the ferani, as the French became known. The occupying force created problems for the Marquesans in various ways by demanding labour, provisions, land, raw materials, and women. Under the circumstances, the ordinary soldiers are unlikely to have been content, and were probably badly behaved towards the ‘kanaks’, as they called the Marquesans. Iotete, who was ill, went to live somewhere inland, and most of the people followed him, abandoning Vaitahu. Halley complained about the situation to Iotete, who simply observed that Halley, and not himself, was the chief.

The French began to negotiate more with a nephew of Iotete, Maheono, who was essentially loyal to Iotete, but more prepared to deal with the occupying force. Halley found the evacuation of Vaitahu unacceptable, and after making various demands, and having held Iotete’s son, Timau, hostage temporarily, he decided to use military force to compel the people to return to the bay. According to missionary accounts, the Marquesans attempted to avoid a conflict, and Iotete told the warriors not to fire unless the French did so. In any case, the encounter was disastrous for the French: both Halley and his second in command were killed almost immediately, and part of the detachment retreated to the blockhouse where it was surrounded and imprisoned for more than a day. Baudichon, the Catholic bishop, however negotiated a settlement, and some of the people went back to Vaitahu. Part of the agreement seems to have been that Maheono replaced

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69 E.g. the popular publication Anon. 1843 (and also more serious items such as Vincendon-Dumoulin & Desgraz 1843; Gracia 1843); newspaper items such L’Univers, 12 January, 25 January, 25 March, 2 May, 7 May, 24 July, 12 November 1843; Magasin Pittoresque, January 1843, etc. (clippings in file 47-14, SS.CC.).
70 Radiguet n.d.: 119f.
71 ChauLET, Notes sommaires sur l’Ile Tahuata.
72 Halley, Letters to Dupetit-Thouars, 20 June, 22 July 1842.
73 Baudichon, 1882-1884: ch. 27; ChauLET, Ile Tahuata, 1-2; Notes sommaires, 4.
Iotete as ‘king’ although Iotete may not have wanted to remain haka‘iki any longer. He was not permitted to reside at Vaitahu, and moved to Hapatoni. He occasionally told Halley’s successor that the warriors of Hiva Oa would soon teach the ferani a lesson in warfare, although these threats had no discernable basis, and Iotete seems to have been resigned to his displacement. While chiefs in other areas - such as the less frequently visited parts of Hiva Oa, and Fatuiva - may well have retained the status they had in the pre-contact period through to the 1860s and 1870s, on Tahuata the conflict with the French seems to have brought about a collapse of the indigenous power structure. Iotete’s successor, Maheono, seems to have lacked authority distinct from his backing by the French forces and the mission, the latter being probably more significant than the former.

Developments on Fatuiva in the 1850s indicate that chiefs there were similary engaged in attempting to obtain muskets and cultivate links with hao‘e, in the hope that these would help them gain superiority in struggles with other groups on the island. Early in 1853, a haka‘iki from Omoa valley named Matunui, and his nephew Puu, went to Hawai‘i, claiming to want a missionary to return with them. They told people associated with the Hawaiian Missionary Society that they hoped that only improved after he was given various objects including a large missionary activity would lead to a reduction of warfare on Fatuiva; they said that there had been two wars in the previous three years, the second of which had lasted for eight months. After its resolution the chiefs of Fatuiva had met and decided to seek a missionary, it was said. Puu further claimed that Matunui was the ‘high chief’ of Fatuiva, that he had ten lesser chiefs under him, that he was related to Temoana, the ‘king’ of Nukuhiva, and even that he controlled part of Hiva Oa as well as Fatuiva.

Twelve months later, after the mission consisting of James Bicknell, and several Hawaiians and their wives had been established at Omoa, Benjamin Parker, a visiting missionary noted with some unease that it was ‘quite impossible... to know all the motives that influence the chiefs of Fatuiva to desire the residence of Christian teachers among them.’ Matunui’s real interests had probably already become clear to the

74 Radiguet n.d.: 137.
75 Cugnet to Dupetit-Thouars, 1 November 1842. Maheono seems only gradually to have acquired any confidence in his own replacement of Iotete; the latter, however, became ill and died early in 1844 (Cugnet to Dupetit-Thouars, 19 January, 20 July, 7 October 1843; La Ferrière, Rapport; Brunet, 27 February 1844; Petithomme, 28 September 1844).
77 Baldwin 1853a: 34; 1853b: 36.
78 Parker 1854: 5.
Hawaiians. As one of the stalwarts of the mission recounted nearly forty years later, when Puu had met the missionaries in Hawai'i

these were his lying words: 'the chiefs have joined with the natives of Fatuiva to send this chief, to obtain teachers, to bring an end to the wars.' You see here what a lie this was, that the explanation of what had happened on Fatuiva was very different, that it was for guns and powder, ships and canoes, money and riding horses that they came to Hawaii. There had been no meeting, no conversation between the chiefs and the natives of Fatuiva. It was only at Kealakekua that the notion was conceived, Puu being afraid and anxious, and instructing Matunui not to just say that they had come for guns and powder...

When Bicknell and the Hawaiians arrived at Omoa, they found, of course, that they had been misled. Far from controlling the whole island, Matunui seemed to lack authority in his own valley, which was clearly divided: Karoro and two other haka'iki reacted to the arrival of the Hawaiians by going to Taiohae, and asking Dordillon, the bishop, for a priest. Dordillon refused the request because the number of missionaries in the group at the time was small; he seemed not to object in principle to intertwining indigenous rivalries with the competition between Catholics and Protestants.

The missionaries found the climate on the island uncomfortable:

Every one does what is right in his own mind. Fighting is, therefore, by no means uncommon... four persons have been killed in these contests between the different tribes - one belonging to this valley and three to another valley... the people are abundantly supplied with muskets, powder and balls, procured with hogs from California ships.

A large scale conflict developed in the latter part of 1855. Various hostilities and revenge killings had taken place between the Anainoa of Omoa and the Moake of Hanavave during the earlier months of the year. In October, after extensive preparations involving large feasts, Omoa and Ivaiva together attacked Hanavave, and entered the valley, 'determined to drive their enemies into the sea.' Fighting continued for nine days, although only one Moake man was killed; the allied grouping gradually advanced into the valley, and planned to overrun it and massacre the inhabitants on the tenth day. Matunui, however, had allies among the Moake, with whom he liaised secretly. The result was that they killed a pig, and sent a 'priest' carrying part of it to Omoa.

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79 Kauwealoha, 18 February 1891, 5-6.
80 Karoro (incidentally also described as a relative of Temoana) was definitely from Omoa; the places of residence of the other two chiefs were unspecified.
81 Anon., Statistique de l'île Fatuiva; Chaulet, Notice additionnelle sur l'île Fatuiva, 1.
83 Bicknell 1855: 74.
84 Smith 1856: 54.
overnight, where it was offered as a sacrifice 'to the gods of Oomoa valley.' Although some warriors were annoyed with Matunui, they could not continue to fight after this had been done. Peace was made, but shortly afterwards the Hanavave people, apparently afraid that they would be massacred anyway, evacuated their valley and settled at Tahuata. It seems that the Moake returned at some date; fighting between them and the Anainoa, or other groups, was noted during 1859, 1860, 1862, 1865, and 1866, and probably reflected the early contact, intermittent pattern.

Far from developing greater authority, by 1862 Matunui had, for some reason, 'been deprived of his rank as a chief.' The reasons for the absence of the process of partial consolidation and centralisation which occured at Tahuata are probably twofold. Firstly, there was no geographical monopoly over foreign contacts: both of the large valleys, Oomoa and Hanavave, opened onto bays which were tolerably sheltered; both appear to have been visited extensively. Secondly, the structure of power relations at Fatuiva was probably more diffuse than that at Tahuata. Chiefs on the latter island were capable of co-ordinating activities to a significant extent, and informed observers recognized that there was a small number of haka'i ki who to some extent stood out and were actually influential. At Vaitahu, lotete and Keoenui, if not others, effectively prevented or encouraged groups of people from attending the missionaries' services. On Fatuiva, on the other hand, there appear to have been a large number of haka'i ki, none of whom clearly occupied a stronger position than the others.

The history of Tahuata between about 1826 and 1842 shows that, in a competitive society, a new complex of notions and social relations, which a few haka'i ki were able to draw upon, had extraordinary potency, which was, however, largely unrealised. Events on Fatuiva in the 1850s indicate that fundamental features of Marquesan society, such as the localised and domestic character of inequality, and the lack of mechanisms which would permit more regionally inclusive, asymmetrical social relations, prevented competitively inclined chiefs from converting the potential of associations with foreigners into new social

85Smith 1856: 54.
86Kekela, 19 January 1856; Kaiwi, Letter, 21 January 1856. This was probably the 'great war' referred to by Handy (1923: 30).
87Brown 1859: 57; Kaiwi, 25 July 1860; Baldwin, Report; Kekela, 11 August 1865; Kauwealoha, 19 November 1866; Chaulet, Travaux de la mission catholique, 4 (for 1866 events). Later Catholic accounts indicate intermittent fighting in the 1870s and 1880s; see Chaulet, Notice additionnelle sur l'Ile Fatuiva, passim.
88Baldwin, Report. Because there were no French colonial officials on the island at the time, this can only mean that Matunui had been deposed by his own group; such events were not exceptional. Since Baldwin would have obtained the information from the resident Hawaiians, there is no reason to doubt its veracity.
89Cf. discussion in chapter 4.
forms. Indigenous hierarchies were too fractured to provide the basis for unified or durable island polities.
PART III

Longer term dynamics
CHAPTER 8
Crises and social transformations

Marquesan social relations periodically engendered political crises leading to the rejection of 'akatia or chiefs. In a longer-term systematic sense, these events were connected with more severe and profound crises known also to Marquesans - periods of famine (oke or one). Pierre Chaulet listed over twenty plant foods which were resorted to during these periods; most were toxic and had to be leached and cooked extensively before they could be eaten. One of these was putahutahu, the trunk of a banana tree.*

In time of severe hunger [Edward Robarts wrote] I have cutt the body of a plantain tree up and baked it and then pounded it to get out the substance, which, after being washd and straind thro many waters, is still very bitter & cold on the stomach.2

In about 1800 'the Bread fruit on the trees began to be very scanty.'3 A subsequent famine lasted until 1803, severely affecting Nukuhiwa, 'Ua Pou, and possibly other islands. Although ma was stored in pits, it was not generally distributed;4 'the poor familys' were those who felt 'the fatal effects of famine.'5 Robarts sometimes returned gifts of food from those belonging to 'the lower class... For I well knew a poor man had but little for himself, when the great men had to spare.6 Even sharing within domestic groups broke down: men went and foraged for themselves on the mountains.7 This was reputedly a particularly hazardous activity - 'for want of nourishment' any one stronger might 'seize and devour' any one weaker.8 Since the absence of cannibalism motivated by

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1 Chaulet, Archipel des Marquises, Supplément, 21.
2 Robarts [1974]: 275.
3 Robarts [1974]: 118.
4 Robarts [1974]: 117, 274.
5 Robarts [1974]: 118.
6 Robarts [1974]: 274.
7 Robarts [1974]: 275.
8 Lisiansky 1814: 87; Chaulet, Archipel des Marquises. Supplément, 22. The risky nature of such collecting appears to be the reason why women and children did not participate, but Robarts ([1974]: 115) gives an example which indicates that they did go out foraging to some extent.
hunger was asserted, such talk was perhaps a way of expressing the breakdown of social relations occasioned by famine, rather than a description of actual events. Chaulet implies that two anti-social practices, cannibalism and incest - both signified by the word *karkaia* - were conceptually compounded: 'On dit que les parents mangeaient même les enfants.'

Between two and three hundred people died at Taiohae: the effects were evidently even more severe on parts of 'Ua Pou, since when a good harvest finally came, there were few to consume it; according to Robarts, whole valleys were depopulated, and people from Nukuhiva were able to supplement their own supplies with food transported from 'Ua Pou.

These events were not unique: Chaulet recorded the names of six major famines:

1. *Ivi omo* - seven years
2. *Kohope tita* - three years
3. *Tehi ki'i* - three years
4. *Mi'i tahia* - six years
5. *Koekoe pi'au* - one year
6. *Ki'i pokoko* - six years

It is difficult to know how frequent these events were; no information is provided which bears upon their dating or periodicity. The fact that no major famine occurred

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9 Crook, *Account*, 157. Moreover, no particular instances are documented. Robarts ([1974]: 115) mentions that a woman from an opposed group was killed during the famine, but she was (partly) eaten in the usual ritual manner by a *tau'a*. Kabris ([1982]: 111) refers to a particular incident, but his work is not on the whole a reliable source (see Terrell's queries in Kabris [1982]: 102, 104, n.22, n.33, n.55). It must be recalled, also, that references to intra-familial cannibalism are precisely what one would expect to find introduced into an account in the interest of a more lurid and commercially attractive publication - which was, in this case, actually written by someone other than Kabris, about twelve years after his departure from the Marquesas (Terrell in Kabris [1982]: 105).

10 Archipel des Marquises. Supplément, 22.

11 Lisiansky reported that Robarts told him 400 (1814: 87).


13 To suck bones - all the glosses are mine.

14 Withered fruit.

15 A stomach which can hold nothing.

16 Chapped/dried skin.

17 Archipel des Marquises. Supplément, 22. Crook recorded a famine on Tahuata in 1798 (Account, 156); on 'Ua Huka in 1862 'thousands of breadfruit trees were killed dead by the blight' (Lawson to Damon, 20 December 1862 [BPBM]; cf. Kauwealoha, 21 September 1862). There was another protracted drought and famine from about 1867 to 1877 (Kauwealoha, May 14, May 26 1877).
between 1803 and the 1860s suggests relative infrequency, although geographical records indicate that less consequential dry spells alternated with wetter periods every few years.19

Some insight into Marquesan understandings of the causes of these events may be gleaned from a metaphorical term for famine, *upoko hoho*, a withered, colourless, or whitened head. In a myth a person guilty of incest is abusively referred to as a ‘white head’ (*ouoho tea*), implying a diseased state associated with a loss or serious negation of *tapu*.20 A chant recorded and translated by Lawson depicts the state of famine as one in which the land, the sea and the sky have become entangled (*haka mau*), a condition possibly connected with *tapu* violation.

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Meie te ani meie
E tupu au e aho
I teie ani meie
A itea tu tama una Meie te ani meie
A itea tu tama iuta Meie te ani meie
A itea tu tama tae Meie te ani meie
A itea tu tama iao Meie te ani meie
A itea tu tama mua Meie te ani meie
A itea tu tama naki Meie te ani meie
A itea tu tama a-ua Meie te ani meie
Ae itea atu to au tama
E ao a-oa e ani meie
Atii ua te ani meie
I’to te oho o Atea
Atii o’Atea te Hakamau
Eia i te mate hakamau
Te tau ani nui te hakamau
I mate hakamau
Te tau atea i uta te hakamau
I mate te hakamau
Te tau atea i tai te hakamau
I mate hakamau
Te tau kavai otou te hakamau
I mate hakamau
Te henua vipu otoa te hakamau
I mate hakamau
Te Moana nui te hakamau
I mate hakamau
I tua otoa na mea te hakamau
I mate hakamau
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18 Documentation is so poor for the period between Porter’s visit and the mid-1820s that it is possible that unrecorded events took place at that time.

19 Naval Intelligence 1943: 265-66; Handy 1923: 7-8. Kabris’s assertion that famine occurred ‘every three to four years’ ([1982]: 110) perhaps reflects his experience of both the Tahuatan event of 1798 and the more severe scarcity which began on Nukuhiva two years later. There is no doubt that major famines were far less frequent.

20 Handy 1930: 27.
The weather it is fair [dry]
How can aught spring up or grow
When the weather it is fair
Ah look my son Above The weather it is fair
Ah look my son Inland The weather it is fair
Ah look my son Seaward The weather it is fair
Ah look my son Below The weather it is fair
Ah look my son Before The weather it is fair
Ah look my son All-oer The weather it is fair
Ah look my son Again The weather it is fair
And yet my son you see
It is going to be fair
The heat that instant struck
Into the Brain of Atea
So that now Atea the fastner [entangler]
In death is now made fast [entangled]
The great heavens are fastened up
In death made fast
All the Clearing's inland are fastened up
In death made fast
All the Clearings seaward are fastened up
In death made fast
The valley's all are fastened up
In death made fast
The whole land is fastened up
In death made fast
The great ocean is fastened up
In death made fast
Behind all things are fastened up
In death made fast

Te ouoho o Atea, literally Atea's hair, refers to the upper, most tapu part of his head. Since it is generally implied that tapu violation struck at or in some way offended etua, perhaps it can be assumed that what is alluded to in the text is tapu violation. In any case, it is clear that the consequence was a state of everything being 'bound up': just as when kaha had been tied or fastened, a person could not continue to live, the state of entanglement suffocated or blocked growth, producing heat, parching, hunger, and death.

21 Both the Marquesan text and Lawson's translation present considerable difficulties. The mere fact that the sky is 'clear' (me' ie) for instance does not seem significant, although one can assume that heat (usually vea or veavea) is implied. A problem also occurs in the second line, where 'e tupu au' would mean 'I grow'; presumably a negative, such as 'e tupu a' e' should be found, although the more typical word order would be 'a' e' tupu...'. In the repetitive part which follows itea is wrong; 'ite (to see or know) is presumably intended; the a must be a particle. The remainder of the quoted passage is less problematic, although i'to should certainly be i oto (into) and oho should be ouoho. Atea is usually the name of a deity and does have the meaning of light and clarity; the meaning Lawson gives - 'clearing' - can certainly be derived from this, and does make sense in the context, but is not supported by other linguistic material of which I am aware. Because there are so many divergences from dictionary usage, and since my understanding is based upon an acquaintance with modern colloquial Marquesan, which certainly differs from the sometimes arcane language of chants, I have not attempted to revise either the text or the translation. Even if Lawson's material is to some extent bowdlerized, there is no doubt that the notion of 'fastening up' is derived from Polynesian thought: the symbolism and the logic seem alien to European concepts and clearly indigenous.
The remainder of the chant indicates that the famine came to an end after a human sacrifice demanded by a tau 'a had been made. This mode of untying or disentangling the situation is consistent with what Crook reported from Tahuata: the breaking of the famine was attributed by the people there to 'the efficacy of the Sacrifices they had offered' to Manua-hema, a dead tau 'a. The severity of these events was such that life became intolerable for many Marquesans: a hazardous journey with the prospect of beginning again elsewhere was preferable to remaining in the group. Robarts travelled to 'Ua Pou with a number of people, who were going to use some property to purchase large canoes for the purpose of leaving their country to go in search of other land, where plenty of food is abounding. The prophets pretend to have seen in a dream a fine country a few days sailing distant. This the poor deluded people believe and leave in numbers the land that gave them breath.

The beachcomber Wilson informed Porter that over 800 people had left the group to his knowledge, without specifying whether famine had prompted their departures.

Localized famines were often the direct result of attacks upon resources during warfare. The overall vulnerability of the system reflects a conjunction of longer-term social and ecological processes. The Marquesan landscape before Polynesian settlement (which took place between 250 BC and 100 AD) was quite different to the inhabited, human landscape of 1800. Most slopes would have been covered by dryland forests, which were probably destroyed by fire associated with swidden cultivation and perhaps warfare soon after initial settlement. This process was irreversible, because the unprotected upland soils would have been rapidly eroded: 'torrential rains... falling upon precipitous slopes stripped of plant cover for the first time must have generated erosive floods of frightful destructiveness.' Uplands were colonized by low bracken and grass formations - all that the impoverished soils could support. It is certainly the case that in the parts of the Marquesas which have not been overrun by plants introduced since 1800 uplands vegetation is manifestly anthropogenic.

The appearance of the Soil upon these inferior ridges, was barren; & they were

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22Crook, Account, 154, 162.
23[1974]: 119.
24Porter 1822, II: 51-52. The threat of dispossession was mentioned as a reason in one case.
25Fanning [1924]: 99-100; Robarts [1974]: 115.
27One shrub, known locally as akatia (from acacia), has almost completely replaced the previous vegetation on the areas around the main settlements on 'Ua Pou and Nukuiva. 'Ua Huka and Fatuiva still appear to reflect the pre-European vegetation pattern.
only covered with burned Grass or Reeds. These are often set on fire, toward the lower part of the ridge, from whence the flame naturally spreads to the higher Ground.\textsuperscript{29}

A whole portion of the environment, which could have been used for food production to some extent early in Marquesan prehistory, was therefore rendered unproductive: the resource base was significantly contracted.

There were thus several senses in which Marquesan society tended to destroy its own conditions of existence. There was a longer term process of environmental degradation, and specific attacks upon the resources of mata'eina'a. Elite strategies were also destabilising, and periodically led to the expulsion of chiefly groupings, and probably also to the assassination through sorcery of particular 'akatia and haka'i ki.

Apart from those who actually left the Marquesas, various groups were forced out of ka' avai into marginal areas, such as Henua Ataha, the ‘desert’ of western Nukuhiva, which was too arid to sustain cultivation.

It affords neither breadfruit, Cocoa Nuts, nor water, except after rain. The Fishermen, who live in caves that swarm with Muskitoees, sometimes climb the neighbouring hills, to get fern root; but they depend, for every thing else besides fish, upon supplies which they obtain at [Hakauil; whither they carry their fish to barter, mostly after having baked it, to preserve it from putrefaction.\textsuperscript{30}

Traditional and archaeological evidence indicates that fishing groups also occupied at least intermittently the island of Eiao, which was uninhabited in the early contact period.\textsuperscript{31} Such groups were probably found in small embayments in many parts of the group, occupying areas unsuited for horticulture, and which probably had to be periodically abandoned because of a lack of water. These populations constituted a peripheral group in Marquesan society. Although fishing provided an important component of the Marquesan diet, the activity was generally ‘despised’ and had low social status.\textsuperscript{32} Full time practitioners were mostly people deprived - probably literally, by

\textsuperscript{29} Crook, Account, 247.
\textsuperscript{30} Crook, Account, 245-46; cf. 216. It was observed that some visiting sailors had ‘cohabited with the women; although the appearance of these is wretched’ (246). The fish was probably dried rather than baked.
\textsuperscript{31} Chaulet, Archipel des Marquises. Supplément, 12-13. Linton said that Eiao ‘was sparsely inhabited during the early historic period’ (1925: 106). This is not true, but the information was apparently derived from Marquesans who may have been referring to earlier times. The archaeological remains (Linton 1925: 106-7; Candelot 1980) are extensive, but do not prove that settlement was permanent rather than intermittent. There are ‘a few waterholes and one or two small streams which fail in dry seasons’ (Linton 1925: 106). Stone structures are also found on Fatu-uku and Mohotani, two smaller islets which could not have supported people for any length of time (Handy 1923: 34).
\textsuperscript{32} Krusenstern 1813: 163. There were exceptional, elite forms of fishing (such as for rays) - Crook, Account, 228.
'powerful superiors'\textsuperscript{33} - of any other means of support.

*Ka'ava* were the geographical theatres for Marquesan social life. Those who were distanced from them were elites, rejected by their people; whole populations, threatened by predatory *mata'eina'a*; and those who were disadvantaged economically to the point that they had to withdraw from the ordinary human world and adopt a marginal foraging existence. At different times, then, both possessors and dispossessed might find themselves cast outside society.

Marquesan social groups must have oscillated between times of relative stability and social coherence and periods of relative fragmentation. The consequences of famine for these dynamics were uneven. If a substantial number of people died, and land became vacant, dependants may have left their households and established themselves as independent producers. On the other hand, some people may have been inclined to link themselves more closely with persons of property, thereby guaranteeing (insofar as was possible) that they would be fed during times of scarcity.\textsuperscript{34} Some powerful people may also have taken advantage of the weaker situation of others to expand their holdings; certainly property and relations of dependence were fluid during these crises.

The fact that the consolidation of power depended upon the use of relationships, rather than their mere existence, makes it difficult to produce a general argument about how a situation of relative political unity - such as that which existed at Taiohae in 1798 - would come about. Competent individuals could always turn the potential for political coherence which existed in marriage alliances and adoptive links into an actuality; equally, less competent or ambitious persons could allow a unified grouping to break down rapidly. Marquesan prehistory must have seen many fluctuations in the fortunes of elite groups in particular *mata'eina'a*.

It is possible, however, to account for some principal features of Marquesan society in terms of a general model of longer term evolution. This rests simply upon the premise that ancestral Polynesian societies were small-scale, integrated chiefdoms. There must have been some evolution towards a more stratified and centralised society: if chieftainship in the Marquesas was always localized, there could be no reason for an independent group of landholders or land-supervisors to develop. The partial isolation of higher chiefs in a regionalized elite would, however, have created the space for *'akatia* - localized landholders initially subordinate to the higher unity of the chiefdom and to a chief in particular. This was the situation of the *ra'atira* in Tahiti, although in some cases

\textsuperscript{33}Crook, Account, 98.

\textsuperscript{34}Robarts' own reaction to the famine of 1800-1803 was to marry into Keatonui's family (1974: 122-23; cf. Krusenstern 1813: 160).
their practical control perhaps had greater weight than the formal overlordship of the ari'i.\textsuperscript{35} Then, some processes must have led to a contraction or collapse of the Marquesan chiefly hierarchy which did not affect the emergent power of 'akatia. These could well have been associated with overproduction, competition, and famine. In the ancestral Polynesian situation, chiefs were held responsible for prosperity. On most islands, ecological crises were rare events, and this ritual responsibility was a basis for a central position in the flow of goods, as well as for a generalized position of high status. However, if catastrophic crop failures were frequent, haka'iki may well have been blamed, and assassinated or rejected. The longer term result was that the association between chieftainship and prosperity was dissolved. In the early contact period there was a generalized sense in which chiefs stood for mata'eina'a, but they had become disconnected from an essential and fundamental process of ritual social reproduction. The narrowing of their ritual and economic role would have allowed for, and in fact almost entailed, the rise of 'akatia as independent persons of property. Since these landholders had no direct association with prosperity, and were never ritual guardians in any sense, it would be unlikely that they would suffer from a decline in the position of haka'iki. Although the initial basis for the status of 'akatia would have been stewardship of the land on behalf of the chief, this developed into a different basis for power in the actual control of resources.

Tau'a, who took over 'the work of the gods' for prosperity, were able to maintain potency largely without responsibility, because of the contrasting nature of their religious situation. Haka'iki made a sacrifice, which was vital and significant because they stood for the whole community and had a direct genealogical relationship with the deities. If this work failed, the chief was obviously at fault. Tau'a, on the other hand, had an unmediated relationship with etua; in fact, more potent tau'a were etua personified.\textsuperscript{36} If production failed, there was no sense in blaming the gods themselves; rather, those who offered sacrifices to the tau'a were thought to have been at fault.\textsuperscript{37}

The drift away from an encompassing chiefly hierarchy toward a more fluid and competitive system, within which 'akatia and tau'a were as prominent as haka'iki, evidently went further on some islands than others. On Nukuhiva, tau'a were less significant than at Tahuata, and prominent 'akatia were closely connected with the chiefly families. In the southern part of the group, chiefly power was less consolidated; on Fatuiva, the status of haka'iki was particularly reduced.

\textsuperscript{35}At least this is suggested by the ambiguity of the sources.

\textsuperscript{36}Cf. Valeri's discussion (1985b: 139) of the contrasting positions of kaula and kings.

\textsuperscript{37}The converse certainly took place (cf. the end of the famine on Tahuata [Crook, Account, 154, 162]). Certainly, there is no evidence that individual tau'a were ever blamed or assassinated when famine occurred.
The consolidated state of political power and apparently deeper economic inequality on 'Ua Pou could be interpreted either as the persistence of a stratified and centralised social form which was more prevalent in the group in the past, or alternatively as an indication that cycles of political expansion and contraction characterised middle and later phases of Marquesan prehistory. More unified hierarchies may have risen on certain islands for short periods and then collapsed - the pattern of consolidation and fragmentation observed in 1800 being only one phase in a changing configuration.38

No Marquesan institutions appear, however, to have had the potential to structure relations of inequality between mata’eina’a. Conquest might lead to dispossession but never appears to have made possible institutionalised dominance. The absence of local chiefly appropriation meant that there was no model for tributary appropriation which could have been extended to other valleys. Thus the later history of southern Marquesan mata’eina’a revealed that while Vaitahu acquired great status and a certain kind of diffuse influence, there were no indigenous institutions which could be adapted or extended in the formation of a larger polity. Since it was not possible for this to happen in the course of contact history, when the special stimulus of a monopoly over foreign resources uniquely advantaged the inhabitants of one valley, it is unlikely that it happened earlier. Marquesan prehistory therefore probably never saw instances of once contracted and localized chiefly authority being re-extended. Once political devolution had taken place, it was irreversible: 'Ua Pou probably therefore represents the persistence of greater hierarchy, rather than a later local process of consolidation and unification.39

These social transformations can be linked to the archaeological periods postulated by Robert Suggs.40 During the phase of initial colonization and the subsequent ‘Developmental’ period (100-1100 AD), settlements consisted of small clusters of houses around stream mouths on beaches, and were confined to the more fertile areas on islands. Since populations were small and resources relatively abundant, it is unlikely that there was pronounced social inequality. The Expansion phase (1100-1400 AD) seems to have been characterised by considerable population growth, and movement into drier, formerly uninhabited areas, such as western Nukuhiwa, and the development of larger and more

38 This was true of other island groups in which some areas were more centralised than others - the Fijian matanitu (confederations) were especially mutable systems.
39 If more was known about the nature of supra-local power on 'Ua Pou, it would be possible to be more precise about this question; there are hints in the sources (discussed in chapter 4, part III) that elements of a hierarchical generalized exchange marriage system existed, but at the time of contact this was far from having a structuring role in the reproduction of hierarchy: it was not socially pervasive, and the presentations involved were neither clearly differentiated nor clearly ranked.
complex architectural forms. The Classic period (from 1400 up to the time of contact with Europeans) involved the further development of house types, and was particularly notable for the construction of many massive megalithic paepae. During the first two phases localized chiefdoms gradually expanded and became more hierarchical as populations grew. At some time, probably at about the beginning of what Suggs called the Classic period, these hierarchical structures contracted, and social groups like those observed in the early nineteenth century developed. The proliferation of large paepae is consistent with a fluid and competitive system in which many people, rather than a single chief, or even a few chiefs, were important. The development of vast tohua (ceremonial complexes) was unparalleled elsewhere in Polynesia, and directly reflects the role of koina in the pursuit of prestige.\footnote{Cf. Kirch 1984: 14. Of course, some competitive feasts took place at me’a’e, not tohua.}

This is, of course, a hypothetical account which can hardly be supported or undermined, let alone proved, through reference to currently available archaeological data. The argument is simply that the peculiar features of Marquesan social forms and their relationship with ancestral Polynesian societies can best be accounted for if two processes are postulated: an initial development toward a more stratified society, and a later contraction, involving the displacement of chiefly ritual power and economic centrality.

The Marquesan process of devolution was not unique in Polynesia. From Rapanui (Easter Island), which has been extensively studied archaeologically,\footnote{For a recent overview see McCoy (1979), who critically discusses the arguments for American Indian influence - not a concern of this study.} there is evidence for a long period of social stability up to about AD 1500, followed by 300 years of catastrophic decline, destructive warfare, famine, and cannibalism. The earlier periods, particularly that known as the Ahu Moai phase (AD 1000-1500), saw the construction of the famous statues, which almost certainly represent ariki or other deified ancestors.\footnote{McCoy 1979: 152.} Many of the figures were incorporated into ahu, sacred structures which represented 'a remarkably elaborate and sophisticated development of the East Polynesian marae concept.'\footnote{Kirch 1984: 270. Elsewhere in Polynesia the term ahu referred to the platform at the upper end of a marae or me’a’e (McCoy 1979: 154).} Particular ahu were probably constructed by kin groups, each of which had, of course, its own celebrated ancestors. The association between these structures and those associated essentially with the worship of chiefly ancestor-deities elsewhere is particularly suggestive of a society in which groups coalesced around the activity of celebrating ariki and the line of the first-born, that is, a society encompassed by a chiefly
hierarchy.\textsuperscript{45}

During this phase on Rapanui there is no evidence for substantial warfare; the population was perhaps as high as 7000.\textsuperscript{46} The growth of population coincided, unfortunately, with environmental degradation. As in the Marquesas, dryland forests were cleared, and erosion followed. A shortage of timber probably had direct effects upon \textit{ahu} production, since long pieces of wood helped in moving the statues. Canoes became smaller: by the time of contact, most were only three metres long - which apparently reduced possibilities for, and returns from, deep sea fishing. Erosion would also have affected crop yields, and food production could not have been intensified, as it was elsewhere, through irrigation, because of the absence of perennial streams.\textsuperscript{47} This crisis led to a breakdown of hierarchy and of order:

Inter-tribal conflict, the seizure of lands and property by stronger groups from weaker, and the enslavement of conquered groups, were the outcome of this situation of an over-populated, deteriorating ecosystem... Changes in settlement pattern... reflect the chronic raiding and warfare; volcanic lava tubes and caves present throughout the island were modified for use as defensible, permanent habitations, their entrances sealed off with fortification walls, only a single, narrow passageway permitting single-file entry.\textsuperscript{48}

A whole class, the \textit{kio} or defeated, was created by the predatory behaviour of some groups. They were dependants, often described as slaves or serfs, who lived in caves, typically the sites of peripheral or marginal action in eastern Polynesian myths.\textsuperscript{49} A further consequence of the breakdown of norms is reflected in the fact that it was necessary to build stone chicken pens to discourage or minimize theft.\textsuperscript{50}

Chiefs appear to have been discredited or rejected: some of the cave walls are constructed partly of stones torn from destroyed \textit{hare paenga}, chiefly houses, and many \textit{ahu} statues were overturned, perhaps by groups opposed to those associated with particular sites, perhaps by commoners rebelling against \textit{ariki}:\textsuperscript{51} - possibly because the latter were blamed for the failure of production and for famine. A basis for leadership independent of \textit{ariki} developed in the overtly competitive birdman (\textit{tangata manu}) cult. Every year, in about September or October, when \textit{manu tara} or sooty tern were nesting on the offshore islets of Motunui and Motuiti, there was a great competition among

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{45}Cf. Kirch 1984: 272.
\item \textsuperscript{46}McCoy 1979: 160.
\item \textsuperscript{47}McCoy 1979: 139, 160-61. There is some evidence for very minor irrigation.
\item \textsuperscript{48}Kirch 1984: 274.
\item \textsuperscript{49}Métraux 1940: 139.
\item \textsuperscript{50}McCoy 1979: 161.
\item \textsuperscript{51}Kirch 1984: 276.
\end{itemize}
warriors: whoever brought back the first egg was declared *tangata manu* for the following year; he became the leader of the cult, and his group dominated the island.\(^{52}\)

This process, of course, takes society much further from the ancestral Polynesian type than it moved in the Marquesan case. On Niue\(^ {53}\) as well as on Rapanui, there was clearly an overt rejection of chieftainship; in the former case, shamanistic priests became prominent;\(^ {54}\) in the latter, warriors. The dispersion of power in the Marquesas was more diffuse. *Tau'a*, *toa* and *'akatia* all encroached to some extent upon capacities formerly inhering in chieftainship.

These areas are, of course, ecologically less rich than most in Polynesia. But it must be emphasized that the determinate processes were as much social as ecological. The Polynesian tendency towards using food to express prestige or to fight for prestige led not only to diverse forms of intensification - such as breadfruit storage, fishponds, and irrigation - but also to overexploitation of resources and landscape degradation. Elsewhere in the Pacific, erosion actually enhanced the landscape, because what was removed from slopes was redeposited within lagoons or around valley mouths, creating new areas of fertile land suitable for intensive agriculture such as pondfield taro cultivation.\(^ {55}\) This did not happen in the Marquesas because the islands lacked fringing reefs and shallow surrounding shelves: what was eroded was simply washed into deep water.

The Marquesan material calls for some re-evaluation of theories of Polynesian social evolution. In Irving Goldman's *Ancient Polynesian Society*, three major classes of Polynesian societies were proposed - Traditional, Open, and Stratified - which effectively represent evolutionary stages. The ambiguities in the ascription of status and power created status rivalry, and a tendency for political and territorial organisation to become distinct from, and overshadow, traditional, genealogically ascribed rank. Open systems were more fluid than Traditional, and placed greater emphasis upon military and political power than upon religion and the sanctity of the chiefly line. Status rivalry led eventually to a reassertion of more consolidated chiefly authority. Stratified societies were led by stronger chiefs, and the 'status differences' which began to emerge in Open societies became clear cut. Commoners were dispossessed and economic classes formed or were in the process of formation.\(^ {56}\)

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\(^{52}\)Metraux 1940: 331f.; Kirch 1984: 277. The former account suggests that servants, rather than warriors themselves, actually performed the race; the warrior, however, received the title.

\(^{53}\)See discussion in chapter 5.

\(^{54}\)Although later in Niuean history conquering chiefs regained power to some extent.

\(^{55}\)Spriggs 1985.

\(^{56}\)Goldman 1970: 20-21, 545f.
As Jonathon Friedman has pointed out, a major problem of Goldman’s analysis is its failure to incorporate the marked differences between western and eastern Polynesian systems. There is a particular contrast between the importance of inter-island exchange in prestige objects (such as scarce red feathers) and elite spouses in the west, and the lack of significance of such exchange in the east. Although chiefly families in the east did have networks of marriage alliances which incorporated links with other islands, these connections were never systematically associated with trade in hierarchically classified objects, which, as presentations, played a key role in creating and reproducing relations of asymmetry and dependence. At a crude level, it can be argued that inequality in the west was based upon the control of external exchange networks, whereas that in the east was constituted through a structure of what have been described as ‘feudal’ relationships based directly upon the control of land.

It therefore confuses the issue to group together as ‘Open’ Marquesan and Samoan societies, even if, at a very general level, they shared common properties of fluidity and a developed emphasis upon some forms of ‘achieved’ status. If an evolutionary analysis is to develop theories of specific historical transformations, rather than remaining at the overgeneralized and uninformative level of abstract processes from less developed to more developed inequality, from ‘tribe’ to ‘state’, then particular societies must be linked, not with those which are formally similar, but with those with which they are transformationally and historically associated.

Valerio Valeri’s reappraisal of the Hawaiian system has implications for the interpretation of Marquesan prehistory. Although the use of terms such as ‘feudal’ in non-European contexts is almost invariably misleading, Valeri establishes that in fact a ‘seigneurial mode of production’ and vassalage were as vital for the Hawaiian polity as they were in medieval Europe. The former simply refers to ‘le droit de prendre dans une aire d’occupation militaire.’ In Hawai‘i

a king and his nobles were, in fact, a band of warriors who associated to conquer land and booty... Both were apportioned among them on the basis of their rank and, more importantly, of their contribution to the war... Once they controlled a land, they exploited on a regular basis the cultivators working it... Essentially, they granted them the right to cultivate the land and to receive enough water for irrigation, in exchange for periodic prestations in kind and corvée labour.

In this kind of system, internal appropriation is simply a regularized form of external exploitation. The latter was not common in the Marquesas, because supra-local

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58 George Duby, quoted in Valeri 1985a: 85.
59 Valeri 1985a: 85.
dominance could not be sustained. However, in some respects what is described is reminiscent of the invasion of Hapatoni in 1837 by the Hema and their allies.60

Vassalage is an unequal but reciprocal relationship between a lord and a vassal, the former providing 'his protection... and the means of subsistence in the form of largesse (provene) or land (fief); in exchange, the vassal gives the lord his support and services (in particular, military services).61 These relationships existed in Hawai'i and, as Valeri points out, the vocabulary there was similar to that in Europe: the haku (lord or master) had kauwa, keiki or kanaka (servants, 'children' or 'men').62 The mutual but asymmetrical character of obligations in this type of relationship was reproduced in the Marquesan case, in the bonds between 'akatia and their dependants. The distinctiveness of Marquesan society was connected with the fact that a key feature of the Hawaiian and European systems was lacking, namely the reproduction of these reciprocal but hierarchical relationships at several levels. The serf was vassal to a local master, and the master to the lord of a district, just as that lord was supportive of, and dependent upon, the king. In the Marquesas, 'akatia were not (necessarily) followers and supporters of chiefs, although they might have a common engagement in a certain project.

Valeri identifies as the central dialectic of the Hawaiian system the relationship between vassalage and 'the ideology of divine kingship as the fountainhead of all authority and of the life of the entire community.'63 The basis of power in vassalage and conquering tended to be validated through the translation of contractual relationships into genealogical, divine terms. Since divine links were perceived largely through their efficacy, there was no contradiction in Hawaiian thought between divine and human sources of power.64

The element of balance in such a system is completely dependent upon the persistence of the notion that the king or chief is the source of life, that is, the one who makes production and prosperity possible. If, as a result of a combination of social and ecological processes, prosperity is often disrupted, an individual chief may be killed or rejected, but, more significantly, chieftainship itself may be fractured. One would deduce from Valeri's argument that under these circumstances relationships of vassalage would become dominant, which is, in fact, what happened in the Marquesas. The chiefs' priests

60 Cf. chapter 7.
61 Valeri 1985a: 85.
62 Valeri 1985a: 86.
63 Valeri 1985a: 88-89. This is precisely what I have referred to as hierarchical chiefly encompassment. As Sahlins has suggested, the differences between chiefs and kings are not particularly significant in this context (1985a: 35 n.3).
64 Valeri 1985a: 89f.
were also displaced by tau'a. The Marquesans used to say ‘when the banyan is struck, the
turtledoves take flight’ meaning, figuratively, ‘when the chief dies, the people disperse.’
The idiom of encompassing chieftainship thus persisted in a form without practical
import. The proverb might, however, be generalized to suggest that the fracturing of
chieftainship led to a dispersal of people, of their powers, or a fissioning of hierarchical
unity.

At least some of Goldman’s Open societies were not, therefore, half-way along a
path from Traditional to Stratified; rather, they were clearly the products of a process of
devolution, of the erosion of the unity of chieftainship so characteristic of the Traditional
system. In the cases of the Marquesas and Rapanui, the societies which formerly existed
were more ‘stratified’ than ‘traditional’, although they were presumably not on the same
scale as the paradigmatic stratified societies of the Hawaiian Islands. In eastern
Polynesia, there were thus processes akin to those which took place in much of Melanesia:
there was a longer term tendency for hereditary rank to be replaced, in some areas, by
systems in which rank was attenuated, ‘submerged’, or non-existent. At a very general
level, there are parallels between tendencies for hierarchies based on ritual grades or age
grades to develop in the place of genealogically defined rank. There are, for instance, some
similarities between Marquesan tapu grades and the graded societies of north Vanuatu,
although the ways in which people were admitted to grades differed. Prestige could be
generated through various channels which often depended on the deployment of resources
rather than prior status. The causes of devolution were, however, probably quite
different. These social transformations had profound but diverse ramifications for
gender relations. The positions of elite women in Traditional systems depended upon how
rigidly the rule of primogeniture was applied; there was little scope for female
involvement in the ‘official’ priesthood prominent in such systems, since tuhuna or

65 Dordillon 1931: 107, 164.
66 Cf. Young 1983: 45.
68 Friedman (1981: 290-91 and passim; cf. 1985) has argued that a monopoly over long-distance
exchange in prestige goods which were essential elements of hierarchical marriage systems was a
key element of early Oceanic systems. He argues that the monopoly over trade broke down in
Melanesia because networks became denser; that the prestige goods system persisted in western
Polynesia, but broke down in the east because distances between island groups became too great for
contact to be viable. A full critique of this stimulating but overgeneralized argument would require
more discussion of Melanesia and western Polynesia than can be entered into here, but two crucial
flaws should be noted. First, eastern Polynesian systems are treated by Friedman as
transformations of eighteenth or nineteenth century western Polynesian societies, whereas they
must be related to the reconstructed systems of an earlier date. Some of the key elements of
Friedman’s western Polynesian system probably did not develop until well after colonizers left the
Tonga-Samoa area for eastern Polynesia. Second, in eastern Polynesia there is no reason why
exchange within island groups could not have provided the basis for prestige goods systems.
tohunga were almost always men. Open systems created an array of possibilities, but where warriors became dominant, as they did on Rapanui, women were probably not advantaged: the few cases of female participation in warfare are significant precisely because they are exceptional. The prominence of tau’a in the Marquesas made an enormous difference. Probably a majority were women, and women were amongst those who were especially potent. A whole realm of influential and sometimes well-remunerated activity had developed which simply did not exist in those systems in which tau’a were virtually absent or marginal. Throughout Polynesia gender difference was muted and cross-cut by other factors - as must be the case in any societies in which rank, class, or ethnicity are significant. But in the Marquesas this muting was compounded by the development of a class of (mostly male) dependants - who also directly relieved some women of productive obligations.

The development of a system of tapu grades was not inconsistent with the Polynesian tapu system in general, but was peculiarly Marquesan in its particular form. The grades were partly associated with the formation of a strong group of 'akatia, which thereby acquired a kind of sanctity not dependent upon genealogical rank. This development also advantaged women, who created their own hierarchy of exclusive tapu grades.

The broader implication of this study is that the basic structural features of a society can be explained if that society is placed in a longer term context - specifically, if it is viewed as one historical transformation of a more prevalent social form. While it is certainly possible to analyse institutions in various ways without reference to wider associations or longer term transformations, it may be impossible to actually explain them if the spatial and temporal context is restricted. Most analyses proceed by identifying, at some level, the places of institutions or practices in a system or their significance in a cultural order. Such endeavours may be misguided if the logic of an institution existed in a prior system which has been transformed. In the Pacific the burden of the past was reflected not only in the indigenous social forms observed early in the course of contact history, but was also manifested in the processes of contact themselves. Hence the differences between Tahitian or Hawaiian and Marquesan histories.
Epilogue

Invasive acts reconsidered

The story of Kopuhoroto'e, among other Marquesan myths dealing with violent and disruptive acts, arrives at a re-establishment of order. Evil women are killed or definitively expelled, and their invasive acts are undone. In other myths, however, the invader is sovereign and disorder persists.

'Tepoeheirotona'\(^1\) concerns a young handsome man, the husband-to-be of an important ha'atepe'i'u. He is lured away from his marriage feast by two beautiful women who turn out to be ve'ineha'e. They take him away up the valley and are chased by the chiefly woman, who however commits suicide when she realises that he has been irrevocably lost to the ve'ineha'e. The struggle between a more or less legitimate wife and predatory women develops again when the man goes to live with the ve'ineha'e. One of them, the ve'ineha'e meitai or good wild woman, is in fact a nurturing woman who has a child, but the other, the ve'ineha'e kaikaia has cannibalistic tendencies and wants to eat both the man and his son (from a previous union). Aware that the cannibalistic ve'ineha'e is plotting to kill them, the husband and the boy flee. Their escape appears successful, but the initial elements of the story are reproduced when the son encounters a beautiful woman at a feast, sleeps with her and is to become her husband, but is stolen away during the night by two birds, the ve'ineha'e transmuted.

Given the symbolic centrality of chiefs in relation to the well being of the whole group, chiefly suicide must have been one of the most catastrophic events which could take place. The acts of the ve'ineha'e are not only disruptive in the extreme, but are also, in this case, irreversible. Not only does death render the rupture permanent, but the initial theft is even reproduced. Similarly savage and unrestrained action is attributed to a chiefly figure, Ono, in another myth.

Out of jealousy Ono's mother's pekio kills her primary husband; her grief causes Ono's premature birth in the form of an egg. He is brought up and treated as a god by his grandparents. Some time later Aio, the former pekio, and Ono's mother send one of her brothers with a gift of uua, a sacred fish.

\(^1\)Handy 1930: 45-51.
but on the way the brother ate the eyes of the fish (the eyes being the most sacred part, and hence belonging to the gods). When, therefore, he arrived, Ono tore out his eyes and killed him. Again, another brother of Kua-i-ana-nei [the mother] was sent bearing a fish of the same kind, and he too ate the eyes on the way and was killed by Ono when he arrived.²

Ono was later appeased, a third brother bringing him an intact fish. He even brought the other brothers back to life by returning their eyes to their sockets. A year later Ono followed a group of hoki performers around Hiva Oa; at one point he sought help in catching bonito 'but they mocked him, a mere lad, for his presumption.'³ By himself he went and caught a vast number of bonito, and soon afterwards wrestled with and killed a man at Ta’aoa. Then he married, and killed his wife's brother in a wrestling match. His wife's relatives attempted to find ways of killing him in revenge, but to no avail. Ono mocked their futile efforts and told them how to kill him: they went fishing, and Ono dived into the sea after their net, which he sprang into himself. They pulled in the net and cut his head off; his body became coral, but the head escaped. He lived with two sisters who became pregnant twelve times, on each occasion giving birth to parts of his new body. Ono was thus resurrected; he proceeded to terrorise his grandparents, humiliate a priest at Hatiheu (Nukuhiva) and, through trickery, displace the chief of Mohotani.⁴

The distinctive character of Ono's behaviour arises from his uncompromising demands to be treated as a chief, or as a god. His vengeful and destructive acts are caused by people neglecting his status, ignoring his requests, and taking tapu food intended for him. Later in the myth, he is angry with his grandparents because they attempt to immobilize him, to check his potency by planting a breadfruit tree over his head as he sleeps. The moral sense of the myth is ambivalent: Ono's reactions are understandable and - after he has been scorned by the hoki, for instance - sometimes justified. But there is a strong sense also that they are savage and excessive. Like Ono's non-human birth, vengeful action is socially problematic. People could drift or be forced into non-human ways, epitomized by isolation from others, eating improper food, and certain forms of violence.

These myths express, essentially, a negative judgement about invasive or predatory action - which was a kind of action chiefly people were disposed toward. Hawaiian kingship, according to Valeri, was characterized by a dynamic fusion of two elements, one involving usurpation and conquering - conceptually akin to the violence which preoccupies these myths - and the other involving stability and genealogically defined order:

²Handy 1930: 104.
³Handy 1930: 104-105.
⁴Handy 1930: 105-107.
the king’s power has two aspects: he is the ‘feudal’ lord empowered by his vassals and the divine ruler empowered by the gods... [he] is conceived as disordered and ordered, as central to society and as outside or even against it. The successful king is the one who mediates the disordered and ordered aspects of his power, who transforms a cause of disorder into a cause of order.\(^5\)

In Marquesan society the basis for the ordering role of chieftainship had been lost, and conquering and predatory practice had been generalized among 'akatia. Mythic statements tend to be veiled or obscure, and myths would be unlikely to directly express fear or rejection of chiefs or masters. There is, however, a generalised concern about ravaging behaviour, and the peculiarly Marquesan emphasis on predatory ve 'îneha'e can be seen as the transference of an ambivalent attitude towards those ‘persons of property’ who sometimes did, and sometimes did not, give others the right ‘to eat the land.’

\(^5\)Valeri 1985a: 92. Italics in original.
Appendix A

Sources

The extensive published bibliographies of French Polynesia¹ and, more particularly, of the Marquesas,² to which any researcher in the area must be deeply indebted, render unnecessary a detailed bibliographic essay. The purpose of this appendix is simply to indicate the kinds of sources upon which this study is based, and make a few comments on some particularly important bodies of work. These fall into three major categories: voyage literature, missionary writings, and accounts by other Europeans resident in the group. Although myths and chants were recorded³ there is no corpus of Marquesan writing comparable to the historical and ethnographic works by various Hawaiian and Maori writers.

Material in all three categories is, of course, highly variable in its value for historical research: some observers took a particular interest in the documentation of indigenous customs and affairs; others were uninterested, or committed nothing to paper.

The ships' visits before that of the Duff in 1797 were mostly very brief; extant information is vague and superficial. Both the Duff account⁴ and that of Fanning⁵ provide some information; the latter's description of events at Nukuhipa is useful but marred by confusion about names and relationships. The visit of the Russians in 1804 provided several texts which are valuable because they reproduce information obtained from Edward Robarts and Joseph Kabris; thus the brevity of the Russians' visit was more than compensated for by their use of these informants. Four accounts are particularly valuable;⁶ three others, although briefer, add some points.⁷

¹O'Reilly & Reitman 1967.
²Dening 1980: 310-344.
³Handy, Chants and chanting; 1930; Elbert 1941; Steinen 1933-34; Lavondès 1964, 1966; Lawson, Songs of the Marquesans. See Lavondès 1975 for a study of some myths.
⁴Wilson 1799.
⁵Fanning 1924.
⁶Krusenstern 1813; Langsdorff 1813; Lisiansky 1814; Shemelin 1815-1818.
⁷Korobitsyn [1944]; Ratmanov 1876; Ryazanov 1825. Extant unpublished accounts (cited in Tumarkin 1979: 110, n.5, n.6, n.7) were not accessible to me.
Porter’s journal\(^8\) is as valuable for ethnographic matter as it is as an account of the events of his visit.

Rocquefeuil’s journal of a visit in 1817 provides one of very few detailed accounts of the period; the information about the sandalwood-musket trade is particularly useful. Of the hundreds of whalers’ and traders’ logs, very few have more than the most cursory references to the nature of contact with islanders; the logs of the *Concord*, *Indus*, and *Plant*\(^9\) are exceptions; the last provides one of very few early descriptions of Fatuiva. Of the 1820s accounts, those associated with the visits of the *Dolphin*\(^10\) and the *Vincennes*\(^11\) are moderately informative for Nukuhiva. The ‘Journal’ of William Dalton, surgeon on the *Phoenix*, contains better than average accounts of barter on several islands. Lafond de Lurcy’s comparatively lengthy account\(^12\) is marred by the incorporation, sometimes word for word, of material from other writers such as Dupetit-Thouars. Some of the more useful sources concerning Tahuata in the 1830s were those arising from the visit of the *Actaeon* and Bennett’s whaling voyage.\(^13\) The major French visits of 1838 led to the publication of lengthy, if somewhat shallow, descriptions.\(^14\)

The general problem of sources related to ships’ visits is simply that their brevity tended to facilitate misinterpretation and precluded an understanding based upon linguistic competence and observation of a range of localities. The results are sometimes more informative about European constructs than about the Marquesans. We read that they had ‘no laws’,\(^15\) ‘no religion’,\(^16\) ‘no marriage’\(^17\) and even ‘no regular meals’.\(^18\) While some more obviously hierarchical Polynesian societies were conceived, like Asiatic states, as static despotisms,\(^19\) this discourse instead constructs Marquesan societies as anti-societies. The limited authority of chiefs was, therefore, exaggerated. However, the degree to which sources merely reflect these notions obviously varies.

It will be obvious from the annotations that I have drawn extensively on the

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\(^8\)Porter 1822 (the second, fuller edition).
\(^9\)Faucon, Journal on board the *Plant*; Forbes, *Voyage around Cape Horn* [in the *Indus*]; Appleton, *Journal of a voyage from Salem* [in the *Concord*].
\(^10\)Paulding 1831.
\(^11\)Finch, Narrative of proceedings; Stewart 1831.
\(^12\)Lafond de Lurcy 1844.
\(^13\)Russell 1836; Anon. 1856; Bennett 1840.
\(^14\)Dumont D’Urville 1847; Dupetit-Thouars 1840.
\(^15\)Troost 1829: 225; cf. Hale 1845: 7-8; Armstrong 1838.
\(^16\)Ryazanov 1825: 86.
\(^17\)Fleurieu 1801, I: 110.
\(^18\)Shillibeer 1817: 45.
'Account of the Marquesas Islands' based on William Pascoe Crook’s observations. The strengths and weaknesses of the ‘Account’ have been reviewed by Dening; in the context of the present study it is worth emphasizing that it provides a great deal of descriptive information about people and their relationships, especially at Taiohae, which is crucial for any study attempting to deal with specific situations and power relations, rather than with decontextualized generalities. It is also important that some of the information was derived from Temoteitei, who probably also helped shape Crook’s understanding. His role would have ensured a greater degree of reliability than is likely to be found in most early nineteenth century accounts of Polynesian society.

Fragments of information concerning the Marquesas in the 1820s are scattered through the South Seas Letters and Journals of the LMS; only a letter of Crook’s, apparently only extant in published form, is really informative about indigenous circumstances. The papers associated with the ABCFM deputation and the short-lived mission of 1832-33 are moderately informative, but not extensive.

By far the most valuable LMS material after Crook’s account are David Darling’s papers, particularly his Tahuatan journal. Darling gave brief indications about many ritual procedures and *tapu* rules, supplied apparently precise demographic figures, and provided abundant information about the developing musket economy on Tahuata, indigenous perceptions of change, and the associated rivalries between chiefs and between *mata’eina’a*. The journals are supplemented by letters, and most particularly, by an 1836 report of Darling’s brief return visit to the group. His main interest while at Vaitahu was the study of the language, the product of which was a ‘Tahitian-Tahuatan-English’ comparative dictionary, almost the only early vocabulary of substance clearly collected from one area in the group, and therefore of considerable value for the study of dialect variation within the group. Although Darling no doubt regarded himself as a missionary first and a recorder of words and customs second, his journal conveys the impression that these priorities were inverted in practice - to the benefit of Marquesan studies.

Darling’s information allows many slighter sources to be drawn into a picture of relationships and conflicts between *mata’eina’a* on Tahuata and Hiva Oa during the 1830s. The letters and journals of Rodgerson and Stallworthy contain important information, but are far sparser than Darling’s descriptions.

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20 The ‘Account’ was actually ‘drawn up by’ Samuel Greatheed (Crook, Letter, 25 May 1825) - a scholar associated with the LMS who compiled accounts of several islands (cf. Gunson 1978: 111).
21 1980: 142-44.
22 Crook’s Account was read and used by Stewart (1831) and Hale (1846).
23 Crook 1825-26.
The sources associated with the Catholic mission bearing directly upon southern Marquesan history up to 1842 convey a general picture, rather than details of the continuing pattern of changes illustrated by the LMS material. Although in most instances the journal entries are short, and letters (for this early period) are not numerous, there are helpful references to various indigenous practices.

Of inestimable value, on the other hand, is the corpus of ethnographic works prepared by Pierre (Gérauld) Chaulet from the 1870s onwards. The principal manuscript, ‘Notices ethnographiques, géographiques et religieuses sur les îles Marquises,’ dated 1873, seems to have been the first substantial piece of this type that Chaulet wrote, although his interest in Marquesan ritual and culture generally was apparent from his earliest letters, dating from the late 1850s.\(^{24}\) In 1873 he also completed a ‘Notice historique’ about the mission; the most substantial later piece is the ‘Supplément,’ but there are many shorter manuscripts, which often duplicate each other in sections. Although Chaulet survived until 1912, having lived for 54 years in the Marquesas, most of his writing was done in the 1870s and 1880s.

Chaulet’s texts drew principally on a few tuhuna o’ono from Nukuhiva and consist essentially of descriptions (mostly detailed) of rituals (such as sacrifices, marriages, feasts, and so forth), lists of tapu, plant names, and etua, a few summary versions of myths, and a limited amount of more sociological information. These were perhaps the fullest attempts at Marquesan ‘salvage ethnography’, because Chaulet was in the group for a long period, almost certainly had an exceptional command of the language, and carried out the work while there were still a number of people able to provide very detailed information. Chaulet’s work was rarely fully acknowledged, but was incorporated in part into several later studies of Marquesan religion and culture.\(^{25}\)

Although Chaulet had a particular moral stance, his judgements about Marquesan practices are usually distinguishable from his descriptions of them.\(^{26}\) His preoccupation with matters of detail is explicable only if one assumes that he possessed a notion of fastidious scientific recording. The principal weakness of Chaulet’s work emerges only if one judges it in somewhat anachronistic, modern anthropological terms: it depicts Marquesan culture as a mass of names and rites, rather than as a system of notions and practices possessing coherence at some level. There are other, shorter ethnographic

\(^{24}\) See Chaulet, Letters, 1 December 1858, 1 March, 13 March, 1 October 1859, which contain a few details about tapu, sorcery, the fate of the soul, etc.

\(^{25}\) Rollin [1974]; Handy 1923. Both of the works published under Delmas’s name (1927, 1929) were essentially Chaulet’s.

\(^{26}\) His 1893 letter to the administrator Tautain, is an exception: Chaulet described certain practices such as adoption in a way which he hoped would encourage Tautain to assist the mission’s campaigns against them; these motivated descriptions differed from those in the ‘Notices’.
manuscripts by Catholic missionaries; those of Lecornu and Dordillon are the most informative.

The papers associated with the Hawaiian mission of the 1850s onward make possible a basic understanding of political relations on Fatuiva at that time;\(^{27}\) they also provide various details about the *tapu* system, *tau'a*, tattooing, and about other practices. The Hawaiians saw Marquesan institutions in their own terms ('The hula is their chief concern now')\(^{28}\) and called the people 'the old residents' - a gentler term than 'canaques' or 'savages' - but, disappointingly, do not convey in their brief letters a distinctively Polynesian perspective.

The journal of Edward Robarts\(^ {29}\) is easily the most significant 'beachcomber' work relating to the Marquesas. Its strengths derive from the fact that it was based on experience early in the contact process, its length, and the fact that Robarts was integrated into Marquesan society to a greater extent than any other European who subsequently articulated their understanding.\(^ {30}\) The events associated with the dispossession of Keatonui's sister and the restoration of her to her land illustrate Robarts' *connaissance pratique* of Marquesan politics and tactics. His journal complements the 'Account of the Marquesas Islands' chronologically and to some extent also by giving a picture of a longer sequence of events - the 'Account' focusses more upon the system and a synchronic pattern of relationships.\(^ {31}\)

Of later published beachcomber accounts, only that attributed to James Morris\(^ {32}\) is especially useful.

The papers of Thomas Clifton Lawson represent a substantial and largely unexploited body of material for the study of Polynesian culture. Lawson arrived in the group in 1842 and probably died in 1872 or 1873.\(^ {33}\) With his brother William he provisioned ships from 'Invisible Bay' - Vaipee - on 'Ua Huka,\(^ {34}\) but at other times lived at or visited Hiva Oa, 'Ua Pou, and Nukuhiva. He became acquainted with some American missionaries after the Fatuiva mission was established, and corresponded with

\(^{27}\)They also provide some information about conditions on other islands, particularly Hiva Oa, but this is generally less satisfactory.

\(^{28}\)Kekela, Letter, January 19 1856.

\(^{29}\)In fact a retrospective account, not a diary.

\(^{30}\)Kabris is the only possible exception, but his extant account is brief and superficial.

\(^{31}\)Both sources are discussed in Dening 1980: 144-146; see also Dening, Introduction in Robarts [1974].

\(^{32}\)Anon. 1824.

\(^{33}\)An 1870 letter of Kauwealoha's suggest that Lawson died in 1869; however Lawson letters from as late as April 1872 are extant.

\(^{34}\)Cf. Jouan 1858: map.
them; he also passed information on to other visitors, who published some of it.\textsuperscript{35} British naval visitors in 1852 also obtained some of his papers;\textsuperscript{36} one of these documents was published.\textsuperscript{37}

Chants in Marquesan with translations were assembled in ‘Songs of the Marquesans’; a few others are found in the Bishop Museum collection. Lawson’s translations are very free, and some of the Marquesan texts appear to be his own compositions.\textsuperscript{38} Much of the material, however, appears to be authentic.

Of greater importance for this study were Lawson’s historical and ethnographic papers. His detailed accounts of the practices of tau’a and sorcerers are internally coherent and usefully corroborate and extend Chaulet’s analysis.\textsuperscript{39} A particularly valuable feature of Lawson’s account is the documentation of particular cases of sorcery and ‘witchcraft.’ Lawson’s correspondence touches upon linguistic, ethnographic, and philological matters, and complements the Catholic records and official sources in providing a picture of social conditions in the group in the 1860s - a subject outside the concerns of this thesis. His 1862 census of the island of 'Ua Huka is remarkably detailed; more general statistics are given for the other islands.

Valéry Lallour, an administrator in the Marquesas in the 1840s, left a lengthy and valuable account containing much linguistic material. Its particular value to this study lay in the attention paid to social relations, somewhat neglected in Chaulet’s and Lawson’s accounts.

The sorting-out and use of sources has essentially involved privileging earlier accounts more directly based upon prolonged, informed observation and communication over those based on later experience or briefer encounters. Some published accounts, such as those of Coulter and Torrey,\textsuperscript{40} have been neglected because they mainly reflect attempts to please a market; some missionary articles, such as those in the \textit{Friend} characterize the Marquesas in a way consciously or unconsciously designed to legitimate an attack upon, and transformation of, Marquesan religion. A specific problem arises in relation to tapu and gender, in that missionaries seem to have been tempted to depict the

\textsuperscript{35}Jouan 1894-95; Palmer 1877.
\textsuperscript{36}Miller, Letter, 14 March 1852; Moresby, Letter, 11 July 1852.
\textsuperscript{37}Lawson [1935].
\textsuperscript{38}Cf. Handy 1923: 328-329 in reference to some of the Honolulu material; some of the texts in the ‘Songs’ are also dubious.
\textsuperscript{39}While one reference of Chaulet’s (Travaux de la mission catholique, 2) indicates that there was a little contact between ‘Lausson’ and himself, there is no evidence for any real collaboration.
\textsuperscript{40}Torrey 1848; Coulter 1845; cf. Dening 1980: 147.
system as empty and irrational - 'all their tapus are just as they please to make them'\(^{41}\) - and further to exaggerate the restrictions upon women - both of which had the effect also of legitimating their efforts to change the situation.

The number of published and unpublished works having some bearing on the Marquesas is of course very substantial; most, and particularly most of those written later, are however of extremely limited value for a study of the kind attempted here. Vagueness, superficiality, prejudice, and a form of orientalism (in Edward Said's sense)\(^{42}\) characterise the bulk, which requires no further discussion here.

I have made little use of the twentieth century salvage ethnographies, most of which were generated by an ahistorical problematic; Dening's discussion\(^{43}\) renders further comment here unnecessary.

Many of the 'sources' of the analysis are, of course, theoretical; some of my debts in this regard are indicated by the third part of the Bibliography.

\(^{41}\)Darling, Journal, 6 May 1835.
\(^{42}\)Cf. Said 1978.
\(^{43}\)1980: 278-85.
Appendix B
Polyandry and demography

The interpretation of other people's institutions is, as a rule, problematic; it is especially so where matters of gender and sexuality, which cultures like to constitute as natural and eternal, are at issue. The occurrence of polyandry apparently calls into question notions of appropriate gender roles and therefore has mostly been dismissed or explained away as a mechanism for dealing with an unusual situation, such as one of sexual imbalance, when the relative number of women does not permit general monogamy. This line of explanation occurs in various early discussions of 'primitive marriage' and probably has quite a long history.1 This is essentially a variant of what has been dubbed the pis aller (last resort) theory of polyandry - in other instances economic factors are thought to preclude monogamous unions among poorer social classes.2

Linton advanced such an 'explanation' of Marquesan polyandry in an article which was riddled with exaggerations and oversimplifications.3 He claimed that there were 250 men to every hundred women, an assertion he wisely avoided documenting. Despite Marquesan denials, he suggested that they practiced selective infanticide to the extent that would account for this disparity. But several reliable observers noted that, in contrast to other parts of Polynesia, infanticide did not exist in the Marquesas.4

A limited sex imbalance is documented from later in the contact period. Darling provided some useful figures for several valleys on Tahuata and Hiva Oa:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valley</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hapatoni</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanatuuna</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 McLennan 1896: 10-11; Fison 1892: 718.
2 Hiatt 1980: 585f.
3 Linton 1938; for discussion see Dening 1980: 279-281. I have discussed the 'problem' of polyandry and the associations between Linton's explanation and the Bishop Museum worldview - which had such a profound impact upon Polynesian studies - elsewhere (n.d.[c]).
4 Darling, Remarks; Stewart 1832: 229; Chaulet, Archipel des Marquises. Supplément, 26.
5 Darling, Journal, 23 January 1835.
6 2 February 1835.
From these figures a male:female ratio of about 6:5 can be derived. There is some evidence for a ratio of close to 2:1 from 'Ua Huka in 1862, but in both the earlier and the later cases these ratios are highly likely to reflect only irregular patterns of mortality. In the 'Ua Huka case, the whole sample consisted of only 146 people which is not significant in relation to the earlier population, because that had probably fallen by over ninety percent in the preceding twenty years. Darling's estimate of the population of Tahuata was 1500; it seems to have almost halved in the 6-7 years which followed. Even conservative estimates of 35,000 for the pre-contact population would mean that there could hardly have been fewer than 4000 people on Tahuata in 1800, so that even this imbalance may not, therefore, reflect an earlier situation. Lucett's implication that there were fewer women 'in the neighbourhood of the French localities' suggests also that the causes of the imbalance were linked directly or indirectly with external contact. In an overall situation of poor or very poor health, high rates of maternal mortality could create an imbalance in themselves. Certainly, many early observers noted the existence of the institution of polyandry, without referring to any shortage of women. Any relevance that this type of reductive argument might have seems negated by the fact that, in other parts of Polynesia, where selective infanticide was practiced, and a sex imbalance did exist, polyandry was absent or at most (e.g. in the Society Islands) informal. The assumption that any form of plural marriage logically requires either a group of celibates or a demographic imbalance is less significant if it is recognized that among commoner populations in much of eastern Polynesia, cohabitation, rather than permanent marriage,

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7  4 February.
8  5 February.
9  5 February.
10 16 March.
11 17 March.
12 18 March.
13 Lawson, Census.
14 Kellum-Ottino 1971; fig. 1.
15 Caret, Letter, 10 October 1840.
16 1851, II: 196.
17 E.g. Ellis 1842, IV: 435.
was practiced: 'in an 1854 court case, an old Hawaiian woman undertook to describe the aboriginal practice: “In the old days, before the custom of marriage became general, it was moe aku, moe mai [sleep here, sleep there].”'\textsuperscript{19}

There probably was a minor imbalance in the Marquesas - perhaps caused by the fact that women, mostly deprived of pork, took in less protein than men. However, significant evidence is so sparse that the investigation of the social context of this form of marriage is clearly a more productive exercise.

\textsuperscript{19}Linnekin n.d.: 13.
Appendix C

Political unity on 'Ua Pou

Several writers\(^1\) vaguely asserted that 'Ua Pou, unlike the other islands, was under one supreme chief, without providing any clear evidence for this proposition. Handy believed that the island had been politically unified, but only by a chief named Teikitaiuao about 1860.\(^2\) There is little doubt, however, that Heato\(^3\) enjoyed relative pre-eminence during the 1830s. Catholic priests on the island at the time of his death at the end of 1844 noted that commemorative *tapu* were observed over the whole island.\(^4\)

Chaulet’s list of *etua*, *tupuna* and sacred places (circa 1880s) noted that ‘la puissance du dieu Heato, leur dernier roi, s’étend sur toute l’île.’\(^5\) Thomson alluded in passing to ‘the chief of Uapou, Feato, who has obtained the dominion of the whole island by conquest.’\(^6\)

I suggested above that the notion of conquering may have been an idiom for kingship rather than a reflection of events (page 112). It is significant, at any rate, that both David Darling and members of the ABCFM deputation who separately visited 'Ua Pou in 1832, formed the impression that one chief controlled the whole island (which is not to say that there were not lesser district chiefs below him).\(^7\) Thirty-five years earlier, Crook believed that the island ‘unlike most others in the group, has the advantage of being wholly under the same chief.’\(^8\) Crook’s observation is particularly significant since his information was obtained from Hakaotu, a valley on the side of the island opposite to the part in which the paramounts resided. There is therefore little doubt that a line of chiefs, including Hetu-uka (1798), Novaihitu (up to the early 1830s) and his son Heato (early 1830s-1844), had some recognized sovereignty over 'Ua Pou.

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\(^1\) E.g. Rollin [1974]: 75.
\(^2\) 1923: 31, 35, 37.
\(^3\) Probably born about 1816 (Vincendon-Dumoulin, Notes).
\(^4\) Chaulet, Notice historique, 17.
\(^5\) Chaulet, Notes sur les croyances, (unpaginated).
\(^6\) [1978]: 45; for other general references, see: Escoffier, Letter, 29 December 1844; Gracia, Letter, 1 May 1840; Fournon, Letter, 27 October 1855; Baudichon 1882-85, t. 18: 174.
\(^7\) Darling, Report; Whitney *et. al.*, Report of the deputation; Tinker, Letter in form of a diary, 101.
\(^8\) Account, 212.
Glossary

'akatia  person of property
ao       Polynesian: world of the living and of light
atua     PN: deity
etua     deity
ferani    French thing or person
ha'atepe'i'u  female chief
haka'iki     male chief
hao'e      foreigners
havai'i    ancestral lands; afterworld
ka'avai    valley
kai       food
kaikaia    cannibalism, incest; by implication, despotic behaviour
ka'ioi     sexually-oriented adolescent society
kikino     a person of low or dependent status
koekoe     intestines; seat of the emotions
koina      celebration or feast
kuhane     spirit
ma         preserved breadfruit
mata'eina'a group of people usually occupying a valley or part thereof recognising a
            common ancestor; 'tribe'
mau (tupapaku) (commemorative) feast
me'ae       sacred (often mortuary) place
me'ie       free of tapu; see chapter 3
momo       substance associated with a person used in sorcery
nani kaha  sorcery; see chapter 5
paepae     house platform
pekio      a secondary husband
pikitani   Britain; British thing or person
po         PN: night, darkness, otherworld
popoi      breadfruit preparation
puaka      pig
tapu       see chapter 3
tau'a       shamanistic priests; see chapter 5
toa        warrior or chief warrior
tohua      place of public assembly
tupuna     ancestors
umuko      type of sorcery; see chapter 5
u'u        the attendants of tau'a
vahana     man or husband
vehine     woman or wife
ve'ineha'e mythical savage woman
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABCFM</td>
<td>American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANSOM</td>
<td>Archives Nationales, Section Outre-Mer, Paris.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANU</td>
<td>Departmental Library, Pacific and Southeast Asian History, Australian National University, Canberra.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPBM(B)</td>
<td>Bernice P. Bishop Museum (Bulletin), Honolulu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DT</td>
<td>Archives, Diocèse de Taiohae, Nukuhiva.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMCS</td>
<td>Hawaiian Mission Children’s Society, Honolulu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JPH</td>
<td><em>Journal of Pacific History</em></td>
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<td><em>Journal of the Polynesian Society</em></td>
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<td>SSL</td>
<td>LMS South Seas Journals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turnbull</td>
<td>Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.</td>
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</table>
1. Unpublished works

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179


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