Abstract. — In this final article of a three-part series, a number of Samoan texts on historical subjects are analyzed, and their importance for the study of Samoan history and culture is discussed. Several suggestions are made for the proper use of Samoan texts in historical reconstruction, and a tentative outline of Samoan history is sketched on the basis of the earlier discussions. Finally, the body of literature around the major figure Pili is described, and some directions for further research in Samoan literature are suggested. {Polynesia, Samoan literature, historical subjects, bodies of literature}

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In “Aspects of Samoan Literature I” (Charlot 1990), I analyzed the structure of Samoan stories — optional title or titular sentence, introduction, optional time reference, narrative, optional conclusion, and optional terminal phrase or sentence — and showed how they could be combined to create larger complexes. In “Aspects of Samoan Literature II” (Charlot 1991), I discussed genealogies and the narrations developed from them as well as texts on the origin of the universe. In this article, I will complete my partial study of Samoan literature by examining texts on historical subjects and bodies of literature.

1. Texts on Historical Subjects

Like other Polynesian literatures, Samoan displays a major interest in history, as seen in the large number of texts dealing with the past. The interest of these texts is apparent from an examination of their content. Samoans use the past to explain and justify the current political and religious order; texts on historical subjects are thus influenced by and witnesses to the situation in which they originate.¹ Even after conversion to Christianity, the terms of the discussion remained those of pre-contact times. The gods of alliances and extended families played central roles in the explanations of seizures of power.

Samoan texts also study the extraordinary characteristics of those who have made history. The chief Fua’aautaua spurns the fearful, conservative, and conformist advice of his elders with the words: *ti‘u maia pea ia te ‘a’u* ‘hand it over to me,’ and raises a revolt against the Tongan rule on Tutuila.² In the important complex “*O Tamafaiaga. O Malietoa Tavita*” ‘Tamafaiaga. Malietoa Tavita’ (Stuebel 1896/1973: 175/15 ff.; referred to as Tamafaiga) a brilliant portrait is drawn of the outstanding chief Tamafaiga, whose numerous impression was explained by Samoans from his *iti aitu*, the godly side of his descent and person.³

In the conventional historical assessment of the period, Malietoa Tavita, the first patron of the missionaries, is regarded as the enlightened successor of a Tamafaiga who embodies everything evil in pre-Christian Sāmoa (e.g., Turner 1986: 5 ff.; Stair 1895: 50). In Tamafaiga, however, that chief is presented as the worthy son and successor of the great Le‘ataua, and is called an *aitu* very positively. His many wives cement his extended family relations and alliances. His enemies criticize Tamafaiga’s many affairs as due to his abuse of power;

¹ Bastian 1894: 10 f.; Bülow 1898a: 7; 1899b: 141. I will not discuss all genres used for historical subjects or devices; e.g., Moyle 1984: 164, 221, collections of stones were used to keep count of battle victories. — For technical information on the presentation of texts in this article, see Charlot 1990: 416 f.
but although this is in part acknowledged, the one affair described is explicitly of mutual consent. Tama'igā does submit those he has vanquished to indignities, violations, and forced labor, but he is capable of sending displaced persons back to their homes. In accordance with this positive view of Tama'igā, the complex focuses its attention on the cruelty and derision of those who kill him in A'ana and divide his corpse. Mālietoa himself is shown to be politically self-seeking, even in his relation to his family, and, as a leader of the war of revenge against Tama'igā's killers, at least partly responsible for one of the worst atrocities in Samoan history: the burning of a large part of the population of A'ana. In this reversal of judgement, Tama'igā is certainly a protest against the conventional historical view, the tendency of which was to favor the Christian period over the pagan.

Certain Samoan texts can be compared with Western sources on the same subjects. For instance, the great nineteenth-century chief Mālietoa Vaünupō urged the missionary John Williams to work through him to convert Sāmoa:

... Mālietoa wished the Teachers for the various Islands to be brought to him first & then those Chiefs who wished to become Christians were to apply to him. He said that if it was otherwise there would be many different systems in the Islands but if all came from one place which was to be a kind of head quarters there would be one head to look to which would destroy at once any difference of system. We plainly saw the drift of this reasoning. It was to give him a kind of supremacy over the whole of the Islands ... (Moyle 1984: 123; cf. 119 ff., 149 ff.).

A Samoan text on Mālietoa, who was given the Christian name Tavita "David," states:

ona pule ai lea o Tavita i Samoa uma ua sa le malo o le Atua i Samoa ona tanuu lava lea ia Tavita, ona lua lea o malo e ia Tavita o le malo o Samoa ma le malo o le Atua ... "Tavita ruled over all Sāmoa. The mālō ['government, alliance in power'] of the God came to Sāmoa. Then it reached unto David. Then there were two mālō that belonged to David: the mālō of Sāmoa and the mālō of the God."4

Such congruence of Western and Samoan texts reinforces the impression that the latter are important sources certainly for recent history. Discussions among chiefs on many such issues were public, and the views of the important chiefs involved would have been widely known.

An accurate understanding of Samoan historical texts depends naturally on an analysis of their literary forms. Samoan historical traditions are transmitted and communicated in several genres, such as traditional sayings and descriptions, discussed in the first article of this series. In Samoan discussions of history, chants and genealogies - as memorized pieces handed down in the oral tradition over generations - play the role of "primary sources" or "historical documents" to be used and interpreted in later prose genres, such as tūlāgi 'explanations of chants'.5

a) Māvāega

Another such historical "document" is the māvāega "last or parting words, testament, or arrangements." These can be quite famous; for instance, they can be provided with titles that suffice to call them to mind. In one Samoan text, the māvāega of the eel to his human brother is followed by the sentence ona ia ai lea o le muagagana e faapea o le mavaega na i le onē 'There is therefore the proverbial expression: the māvāega from the sand.'6

4 Stuebel 1896/1973: 237/77. This text provides a basis for understanding the line in a chant composed in Williams' honor at a village allied to Mālietoa: Toe ole malo, ma le Atua na tasi, translated in a kind of pāinj "For we all malo, for we have all one God," Moyle 1984: 152 ff.; cf. his interpretation in note 126. That is, the new religion was immediately being used to unify Sāmoa under Mālietoa. In a footnote, Williams explains the key term very well: "Malo is a term used for a people who carry the sway being victorious in war in contradiction to vaivai - a conquered or beaten people." To'ilalo is a synonym for this sense of vaivai.

I would reconstruct the next line in the chant, Sa i mea u ma faiva o papalagi: Sā i mea u ma faiva o papalagi; and translate "The occupation of the foreigners is to make everything sā 'sacred or forbidden'"; see, e.g., 120, 171. Cf.

5 Moyle's translation, 152, and the rough explanation, not a translation, apparently provided Williams by the Samoans, 153.

The Samoan text studied in Charlot 1988b can be compared to Moyle 1984: 138, 152 (but see 281), 159.

A number of practices recorded in Samoan texts on historical subjects can be found in other parts of the literature, for instance, coloring women with lega 'turmeric,' as done in a famous episode in the struggle against the Tongans, Stuebel 1896/1973: 181/21; cf. Krāmer 1903: 275 ff.; Brown 1914: 422; Schultz 1965: number 436.


6 Stuebel 1896/1973: 236/76. Later in the complex, it is stated ona tanuu ai lea o le mavaega a le pusi ma Utufumanase'e e na fai i le onē o le fetai tai i tu o goa 'therefore was realized the māvāega of the eel and Utufumanase'e that was made in the sand: the meeting at the end of the genealogy.' See also Schultz 1965; number 430; Krāmer 1902: 106 f., 'o mavaega na i le tai. The famous parting māvāega of the Tui Tonga can be referred to by its first words, Mālie tau, mālie toa, or its title 'O le mavaega na i le Tukatalä. Pratt 1960: 14 at āului; also Krāmer 1902: 259. Cf. Krāmer 1902: 116. Pola mavaega na i tua pula! Nai can be interpreted as "from" or reconstructed as na i "that took place in/at." On the māvāega of the eel to Sina, see Charlot 1988a: 309. Krāmer 1902: 115,
Māvæega were usually given publicly; in fact, commands and public calls have been recorded for the assembly of those who should hear the māvæega of the tofiga-type, one of two to be discussed below.

Billow 1898b: 116. ia potopo pe. Alofi.
Krämer 1902: 217. ia potopo pe mai... ou vaivai.
255. ia potopo pe ia moe Tautau.

Such commands and calls can be given in the narrative instead of in quotation. A special term, tint, designates the person who carries the message that the chief is ill, Krämer 1902: 217.

Similarly, an address or a call for attention to the relevant people present is often placed before both types of māvæega.

Fraser 1896: 180. Sua ta, ina.
Billow 1898b: 116. Pūtūtū ai ia. 'Hear me.'
Krämer 1902: 207. Afo (afo) a'ia u a'ia funon.
217. sa'afasofaga pe 'a a'ia atu.
211. 337. Solè.
199. Funa.
255. Va'a' a'ia mai.
260. Funa e.
399. Sua ta ina.

Such an address or call can also be placed before or more sections of a māvæega.

Krämer 1902: 208, Samoà ... sa'afasofaga ... t e a'ia 'upu.
Billow 1900b: 60, sau ia ina'ia (text regularized); placed before the two sections of the māvæega for the phrase, cf. 63.

Given publicly, the māvæega was then memorized – a process aided by the frequent parallel form – and transmitted either independently or in stories or prose complexes, as discussed in the first article of this series. The māvæega was then interpreted and used as a basis for action or social, political, or religious order. Because of their practical importance, the transmission, use, and interpretation of māvæega are closely controlled, as seen in the expressive textual unity of those published in different sources and the infrequent native challenges to the authenticity of claimed māvæega.8 Māvæega are, therefore, among the most reliable texts available to the student of Samoan history.

Their reliability can be extended to some degree to the frequent-first-person introductory statements of the chief's dying state.

Krämer 1902: 249. 'Usa' ou vaivai,
217. 'o le a' a'ia atu.

Some degree of reliability could be argued also for the stated reasons for the māvæega.

Billow 1898b: 113. Tafofa ... ou a'ia vaivai, the reason is given not in first-person quotation, but in narration.
Krämer 1902: 119, trine la lua te tō te fia!
211. 'ou aou, ou e tumua lelei.

Both reference to state of health and reasons can be combined: Krämer 1902: 384, 'O ou aou a'io a'ia ou aou vaivai. 'Wegen des Todes und was mich betrifft, ich bin schwach.' Because of the title and – as to me – I am weak.' A further reason is given at the end of the māvæega, and 'o tama'ai tētē 'ou a'io te tēto, tēto ina 'because these two women are pregnant.'

To a lesser degree, the reliability of māvæega can be extended to the stories or sections of complexes in which they are transmitted.

Māvæega can be divided into two types. The first is an arranging or ordering of the government, ceremonial privileges, and ritual institutions; this is usually done as a last testament. This type is sometimes called a tofiga, and both words can be used together: māvæega as the encompassing term and tofiga denoting the particular type.9 Such māvæega are most often arranged as a list in at least partially parallel form, usually parallel sentences.

The most famous example is the māvæega of Pili distributing implements, powers, and responsibilities to his three sons and his daughter (in some traditions), TolulALE; arranged in four parallel sentences:

8 I know of only one case, the authenticity of the māvæega in Stuebel 1886/1973: 187/27, a'io e fonu... foe ma papi, was challenged by a chief in Billow 1898b: 113 f. (see also 117 f.; cf. Krämer 1902: 254. Cf. above, note 7; Billow 1898b: 115 f., and Henry 1983: 121 f. – Billow (1898a: 18) himself questions Stuebel’s version of the Pili māvæega.
9 On the practice, see Krämer 1902: 11, 480, 1903: 103. On the use of the terms together, see Billow 1898b: 114; Stuebel 1886/1973: 187/27, e ou le māvæega na tōfa a... 'his was the māvæega that determined...”
 País avatu o le oso e toto ai tiapula i a Tua, ua tofai a i o le faiva o Pilipolo o le gale.

País avatu o le toto a fetaiga i a Saga. –

País avatu o le tao ma le swago i a aña; na rotug i o i le faiva tau e fanaumalu ai o lona auno e tausia ai o le loto tiafase.

País avatu o le aisi upega i a Tolufale ma le tofo e tausi ma varaui [sic] ai ma matamata ai o lono turgane tos tolle.

‘The digging stick to plant taro is given to Tua; to him is assigned the occupation of Pilipolo: work.

The oration stuff is given to Saga. –

The spear and the club are given to Aaa; to him is assigned the occupation of war to protect his brothers and care for their sister.

The handle of the fishing net is given to Tolufale along with the assignment to care for and see to and look after her three brothers.”

Similarly, the first part of the māvaega of Leitaiatau, arranging the religio-political order, is formulated in three parallel sections: iafe faatupu ma’a le malo i ... o leleiiaiou alolalei ... tampilkani taua. . . .

The following is a list of māvaega of this first type found in the Samoan-language literature consulted along with brief descriptions; beginning and endings of texts are provided only when not clear from text and translation.

Stuebel 1896/1973: 177/17, the māvaega of Māleia: Tavita, o Malo . . . o le a Māleia; three-part with loose parallelism; assigns titles, residences, and relations.


11 Stuebel 1896/1973: 176/16. On the phrase fapanu na'a, see Charlot 1991: 139 note 71. – Cf. the following texts to those given in the body of the article:

Bülow 1898b: 114, tofai; a report rather than a māvaega story (113 f.); not clearly quoting or paraphrasing statement.

115, the māvaega remained a fragment because the chief was stopped before he could complete it. The portion he did declare was adhered to. 115 f.; the meaning of the māvaega depends partly on a gesture designating a woman whose child is referred to.

Bülow 1900: 64, distributes places of residence: the sentences display parallelism. Onatona tofa [ai] teao, but seem to be absorbed into the narration, rather than being a direct quotation.

Krämer 1902: 115, a māvaega expressed completely in gestures; called ‘o māvaega tususi ‘pointing māvaega.

119. Funa ... Salevaluana; Funa is an address; three-part with partial parallelism, ‘Aolao ... [name] ... laile tama ... ‘o le a sasa’a ... onafoi sta iail ... ; this seems to be an example of the first or tophi-type māvaega, but in its occasion and manner of proclamation, it resembles the second type.

187/27, address and reason for māvaega; afai e fanau ... fa‘ai ma papu; three-part, with some parallelism in the first two, fa‘ai a‘aa ... fanau ... fa‘ai ... papu (see above, note 8).

Bülow 1898b: 114, O Papu a tu au ... maoto o le Tuianono; assigns titles, fine mats, and places to put mats in case titles are conferred: some loose parallelism, na paia.

116 f., names successor to title with a long command to continue arrangement with the German government; regulates relations of those under his own control to Māleia.

Bülow 1900: 60, called both māvaega and tofga; last testament; two short parallel sections, nofo ... fanaumalu ... fale ali, introduced by calls for attention, sawa ‘ia ina (text regularized; see also 63); distributes places of residence, ceremonial house, and responsibilities.

53, not called māvaega or tofga; not last words; call for attention; confirms title, ceremonial vessel, and two talking chiefs.

Krämer 1902: 207, ‘O papu to end; some parallelism at beginning and in closing curse; in a compact, legalistic style; assigns titles and ceremonial privileges.

108, called tofga; Lafahefa ... toulou; address and call for attention: ‘O he Salevaluana ... tuop fio su ono ali’i; parallelism at beginning; establishes relations and assigns fine mats and privileges.

211, short; names successor; orders treaty/arrangements with two groups.

217, call for attention and mention of sickness; ‘o le a tafea ... ‘ua fa‘afua ia utu; names successor and calms worries.

255, short; called māvaega; call for attention; ‘o le tana ... moton ao; three-part with parallelism, ‘o le a; names successor, orders giving of fine mats, and makes chief’s son’s name a title (the giving of the name was mentioned earlier).

266, Ta lea talia ... mo le ali’i; confirms authority and right to fine mats.

337, called tofga; address; ‘o le a lalai i uma, ‘a ‘o le a su otoamai i Tiu ‘You will both be chiefs, and Tiu will be tapo; ‘ two sections with parallelism, ‘o le ‘ia; not last words.

339, Ta lea talia ‘o le a tiga ia Gauntote; not called māvaega; confirms title.

Teping 1970: 168, not called a māvaega, although its character as a testament is implied; introduction, O tofga nei o le fanua o Tua faiga ‘These are the tofga of the offspring of Tua faiga; places of residence listed by letter and with parallelism, [name] o le a nipo ... i ... assigns responsibilities and authority.

Examples of the second type of māvaega ‘parting words,’ are usually short, even single-sentence statements expressing a promise, warning, or prohibition, in all but a few cases made by someone who is not on the point of dying. The most famous example is that of the Tui Tonga Tala’aife’i as he left Sāmoa after being defeated in an uprising. He congratulates the victors – Mālie tao, mālie toa ‘Well fought, good warrior(s)” – in words that are the origin of the Māleia title. He then promises in parallel sentences that if he ever returns, it will not be in war, but in peace.

Two versions of the famous parting words of the eel to Ulufanua‘ese’e – in which it admits its wrong and says they both should go their own
way to meet at the end of the genealogy — illustrate the verbal agreement of different traditions of a māvaea (Stuebel 1896/1973: 234/74 and 236/76):

ia sau ia ai e moni a ce ta ou agaleaga a o ona tai o le ai alu e saili so'v nun i le ilulagi tea e a te fetasi i tu a gafa.

se sau ia e moni a ce, a o ona tuaga — le ou alu i Puletu ou te nofo mai ai, a e tu a fetausi i tu a gafa. 13

The following is a list of māvaea of the second type from the Samoan-language literature consulted along with brief descriptions:

Pratt 1889: 459, called māvaea; one-sentence parting command of someone not dying.

Fraser 1892: 175, section 42, called māvaea; warning by Tagaloa to respect Manu’a with sanctioning curse.

Fraser 1896: 180, section 16, fa'amavaeae; call for attention, Sava ia; ina; promise and warning to spare Manu’a from war, with sanctioning curse.

Stuebel 1896/1973: 164/4, ua lelei ... seu ai; promise by someone not dying: not called a māvaea.

168/8, called māvaea; afia e ai ... Atite; parting command of sick person who survives; two-part with parallelism, afia e ... le va’o le va’o.

168/8, called māvaea, ana lana nei ... o d’a lana ia men; dying command.

177/17, called māvaea; le teo ni mai ... o ni maluga; promise and sanctioning curse by someone not dying.

229/69, called māvaea; ia tane fantasi o ia ma lana manu ‘he should be buried with his bird’; dying command, reported in third person; also Krämer 1902: 430.

12 Stuebel 1896/1973: 181/21, quoted in full in the first text; only the ending is quoted in the second and in reverse order. Bitlow 1895: 366, in German. The order of the first line has been reversed to make it fit a rimed scheme in -au in the almost chanter-like versions in Schultz 1965: number 384 (page 94) and Krämer 1902: 259.

13 See above, note 6, Krämer 1902: 106 f.; paraphrases the statement, emphasizing its similarity to the first type māvaea: the assignment of places to stay. For the māvaea of the eel to Sina, see Charlot 1988a: 305 f. — Cf. the following texts to those given in the body of the article: Fraser 1896: 178, stone given as parting gift called māvaea.

Stuebel 1896/1973: 230/70, called tufoa; o lo oulu na mua ... le malua; promise by someone not dying.

Bitlow 1896a: 11, Pili’s parting words, fa'amava, announcing fact and purpose of his leaving.

Bitlow 1896b: 113, ia aau lau gafa, ia fa‘uhaulua ina oe; a blessing; this passage seems to be what is referred to as a māvaea in the title, but the word is not used at the locus itself. Krämer 1902: 351, called māvaea; a prose māvaea inserted into a chant.

413, verb māvaenavea; parting commands in a chant.

452, māvaea used for the decision of a council; parting words to messenger from Tul’ofu, saying they will not join him in war.

Bülows 1896a: 14, called māvaea; two-sentence command of someone not dying.

Krämer 1902: 112 f., called māvaea; short parting command in chant of someone not dying: ‘A se tamateina, pupe Fale’afa a se tamataane igou a Apiolefaga, ana Tul’u a bigafoa.

249, called māvaea; dying command; five lines timing in -oi, the first giving the reason of the command to treat child well and feed others.

259, called māvaea; address; ia e ve’ali ... fanae; parting command of someone not dying; legendary context.

304, called māvaea; short command or prophecy.

382, called māvaea; Ae nofo ... i a o’una; parting command of someone not dying.

384, called māvaea; reason for command, command itself, and then more reason.

Sierich 1900: 234, called māvaea on 235; dying parents’ long command.

Hovdaughen 1987: 38, called māvaea; parting command.

b) Complexes on Historical Subjects

Just as historical subjects could be treated in story form, so such stories can be combined to form larger complexes. Indeed, multigenerational complexes, discussed earlier, are one type of such texts. A complex is constructed by combining redactionally a number of traditional pieces, such as single stories (the most common), māvaega, sayings, and chants. These are placed within a framework, which has been either received from the tradition — like a genealogy or a well-known historical sequence — or devised by the redactor. Once a complex has been composed, it can itself be handed down as a tradition and further redactional work can be performed on it. Complexes display, therefore, a number of levels — originally independent materials and the redactional use of them — and must be interpreted accordingly (e.g., Charlot 1977: 493 f.). Each level of composition has its own tendency, which may or may not be consonant with others in the same complex.

Important examples of Samoan complexes on historical subjects are “O le talu a Safotulafai” ‘The Story of Safotula’afai’ (Stuebel 1896/1973: 234/74 f.; referred to as Safotula’afai), “Salailua L. aokuso 1890” ‘Salailua, August 1, 1890’ (Stuebel 1896/1973: 235/75 ff.; referred to as Salailua), and Tanu’afiga. The two former texts provide a religio-political justification for the malo “victorious and ruling alliance,” led by Māiletea Vai- nupō Tavita, by tracing or formulating its history,

Anthropos 87,1992

completely or partially, from Savae Sī’uleo, god of the underworld, Pulotu, through the twin goddesses Tamaū and Tilaifaga, Nāfanau, Lei’ataua, and Tamafaiga, to Mālieotua. The texts can, therefore, be described as Mālieotua propaganda, which has left its traces in other Stuebel texts as well. As mentioned above, Mālieotua Vainuupō received the missionary John Williams, who has provided a contemporaneous, non-Samoan record of some of the events reported in the Samoan texts.

The politically tendentious character of the two complexes is clear when an examination of the accounts of the majority tradition reveals no connection to Mālieotua. Moreover, the two texts simply omit any reference to the famous chiefs normally connected with Nāfanau: Tamālelagi and Salamuana, who was the person invested with power by the god’s representative, Auva’a, in flat contradiction to the Mālieotua version. In fact, according to the majority tradition, Mālieotua belonged to the to’italo ‘the subjected side,’ in the historical period under discussion. Safotulaifai and Salaitua simply project into the past the situation prevailing at their time of composition. The blatancy of the Mālieotua tendency of the complexes may be due to their being composed for Oskar Stuebel, the German consul in Samoa; as a foreigner, he would be supposedly less able to recognize the divergencies from the majority tradition, and as a German official, his valuable support might be won for Mālieotua against his chiefly rivals. In any case, the strong and divergent redactional tendency of the complexes makes them easily analyzable into originally independent materials and redactional work.

Safotulaifai and Salaitua are, therefore, complexes within which a number of originally independent elements have been combined within a redactional framework in order to express major themes of the Mālieotua propaganda. The composite character of Safotulaifai and Salaitua can be recognized from the fact that many of the elements used in the complexes are well known traditional pieces that can be presented independently. This can be seen both by a form-critical analysis and by a comparison with other texts.

I offer an analytic sketch of Safotulaifai, identifying the elements used and the different levels of redaction. The following is not an exhaustive interpretation of the text. The oldest elements used are the story of Savae Sī’uleo and Ulufanua e’ese, a small complex about Taemā and Tilaifaga, and another about Nāfanau. The four gods are well known in Sāmoa and subjects of considerable amount of literature. Only a selection of this material is given in the complex under discussion; for instance, Taemā and Tilaifaga are famous for their connection to tattooing, which is not mentioned in the complex.

The story of Savae Sī’uleo and Ulufanua e’ese begins with a typical genealogical introduction – o le tamā o Ala o le tinā o Tua o na fanau o le aalualuto ‘Alao was the father. Tua was the mother. Born was the immature foetus’ and ends with the māvaega nei i o onē, discussed above, i ia o gaia.

After a genealogical connection, to be discussed below, the complex about Taemā and Tilaifaga begins with a voyage-motivating story: by dropping firewood without waming, a man startes the two girls into jumping into the ocean, where the story will be told of the origin of their names.

An introduction provides information about the proper way to handle firewood, o le tua masani... faulolu, narrative, na san le tagata... na fesofo tamafai i le sami. In Salaitua, the story is told at great length but with verbal parallels to Safotulaifai: a time transition connects it to the complex ua oo i le isi asto, the introduction describes the situation ua monos... gauaule, narrative, ua ahu fo le tasi tagata... ua faosfo i le sami.

The purpose of voyage-motivating stories or episodes is to set the protagonists in motion, and the motive can appear negligible compared to the voyage: for instance, two girls go off in a Huff because they cannot find their pigeon-hunting father, Stuebel 1896/1973: 168/8. Different motivations can be used to get Taemā and Tilaifaga into the water e.g., Fraser 1896: 178; Krämer 1902: 331. More substantial stories can, however, be used for this purpose, such as that of the discovery that the husband of Taemā is an aitu with a cock’s comb.

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15 Krämer 1902: 16; Moyle 1984: 10 f., 64–84; also, above, note 3.
16 E.g., Billow 1895: 158; Fraser 1896; Ella 1897; Krämer 1902: 104–107, 198–203, 331 ff.; Hovdaugen 1987: 32–42, with references to and comparisons with other texts. See also the English-language text in Abercrombie 1891: 455–463. The material appears in other genres, e.g., Krämer 1902: 72 f., 80 f., 160 f., 317, 327 f. (fa’alupega, 96 ff., 190–193 (genealogies), 342 (description); for general information see, e.g., 16, 45, 19 f., 212 f., 222.
17 E.g., Krämer 1902: 202. For a sequential ordering of the majority traditions involved, see Henry 1943: 45–72. Incongruities can be found even within the Mālieotua propaganda itself; for instance, Salaitua goes directly from Lei’aiana to Mālieotua Taila, leaving out Tamafaiga, mentioned in Safotulaifai. Other tendencies are naturally possible; the texts concentrating on Taemā and Tilaifaga cited above emphasize the importance of Tataula and the titles connected with goddesses.

18 For instance, the material is the source of many proverbial sayings, Schultz 1955: numbers 43, 429–443, 459.
19 The introduction is similarly conventional in Salaitua: O le thuafalili... le pus. The story has been further assimilated into the whole by having the offspring be an eel, the traditional body of Savae Sī’uleo, as opposed to a focus.
The famous story of the origin of the goddesses' names begins with the short introduction: e leai ni o la i goa 'There were no names for the two,' at which point the narrative begins and continues until the two are named, o Tilafaiaga. A travel transition brings them to Tutuila—ua taumu i lana i Tutuila 'the two arrived at Tutuila'—where the story of the cock's combed husband is told.

Introduction, e leai ni togata ... ona to ai lea o Taema (situation described, the chief presented and described; the pregnancy of Taema seems tuckered into the introduction); time reference, ua oo i le tai aso; narrative, ua faapee le taioi ... ua o. The story may include an element of taunting against Tutuila chiefs who based their authority on their connection to Taema and Tilafaiaga; above, note 17.

A redactional mixture of genealogical connection and story summaries brings Tilafaiaga to Pulotu. There she marries Savea Si'uleo and gives birth to Nafanua as an immature foetus, beginning the long Nafanua complex. The elements incorporated into this complex can be distinguished. A short story summary is given of the origin of Nafanua's name: o le alualutoto 'the immature foetus,' acts as both the end of the genealogical connection and the introduction to the origin story: narrative, ona ave ... o Nafanua. A longer but verbally similar version is given in Salaihua: o le alualutoto ... Naitefenua.

The abruptly juxtaposed and extremely shortened episode of Tai'i in Satoa'afai, ona 'a'e ai lea o Taii ... le mapu a Taii ... can be compared with the longer, smoother version in Salaihua in which a description of the political situation has been expertly included: time transition, o le atuta lea; narrative, o loo 'a'e ai ... le mapu o Taii. This passage in the complexes may have been based on a story of the origin of a saying. It is used here to motivate Nafanua's intervention in the political situation. A redactional section serves the purpose of placing Nafanua's activity under the orders of Savea Si'uleo, ua fai atu Savea Si'uleo ia Nafanua ... le papaga o manu.

The passage is characteristically longer and more explanatory in Salaihua, ona misitalafo ... ala una i le tua. Note Tilafaiaga's doubts that Nafanua is sufficiently strong because the connection to Savea Si'uleo is missing in other versions, e.g., Fraser 1896: 179 f., and is a main theme of the final redactional level, to be discussed below.

A travel transition, ua sau le teine ... i Falealupo, connects the previous section to the single story of the war led by Nafanua. A typical genealogical introduction, i Falealupo ... piua moa tala, overlaps the travel transition, introduces the new characters, and explains the food tabu placed by the parents of the family in expectation of the arrival of the goddess (in Salaihua, the parents have the same name, Matuna). A time reference, ua oo i le i asi o 'one day,' connects the introduction to the narrative, which ends after many episodes at ona sui lea o le tuli.

The story ends in Salaihua with the conclusion, ona tu ai lea o le malo i le a a sisio 'Therefore the malo belonged to the west.' The story is an example of a type: Nafanua or another god goes to a place, is well or ill treated by the inhabitants, and reacts accordingly, as in the section on Lei'ataua later in the complex; also, e.g., Abercromby 1891: 461 ff., 465 ff.; Krämer 1902: 200, note 8, a story of Malietoaifaga treating Nafanua badly so that she supported the other side.

The curious passage in Satoa'afai about the misapprehension of Nafanua's sex, o Nafanua ia afiafu ... o le tone, appears to be polemic against a minority tradition that she was male. Biälow 1895: 158. I have been told by a learned chief that this is the tradition of his ancient family. See also Biälow 1895: 140; Hovdhaugen 1987: 38 f., 42. Pratt (1890: 661) records a tradition of the famous chiefess Salamäina being male! Cf. Taema covering her breasts before a battle in Fiji, Abercromby 1891: 460.

The three sections discussed above have been incorporated into a multigenerational complex. The genealogical introduction to the story of Ulufanuase'e's and Savea Si'uleo has been described above. The next connection is to Taema and Tilafaiaga, o Ulufanuase'e'se'e usu ia Sinaarafaia ... piuia tanaitai; and then to Nafanua, ona fai ai lea ma avä ... o le alualutoto. Note the use of genealogical terminology.

The redactional character of the genealogical connections can be seen from the fact that they are not found in some other versions. Salaihua has an additional unifying theme: the māvaega at the end of the story of Savea Si'uleo and Ulufanuase'e is said to be fulfilled in the marriage of the god with Tilafaiaga (this may in fact have been used as the formal conclusion of an earlier stage of the
construction of the complex that would not have included the next sections).

In none of the above original materials or levels of reduction is there any connection to Māi'ea. On the contrary, the parallel texts cited earlier show that the material was used to substantiate the claims of other chiefs. The connection to Māi'ea can be found only in a new level of reduction. In Satalia, this level is represented by a final section added after the long story that ends the Nāfanua complex. Au'aa is described as the inspired or possessed representative of the goddess, ona va'a ai lea... i a Au'aa. Then Māi'ea Fitisemanu is stated to have come to receive the maio from Nāfanua, ona sau ai lea o Māi'ea Fitisemanu... aiga o Manono. As stated above, this contradicts the received tradition that Au'aa gave the power to Tamā'elagai and then Salamāsina. Moreover, Māi'ea Fitisemanu lived generations after the events narrated. Traditions are clearly being reformulated in the service of the Māi'ea propaganda. The leap to Māi'ea Fitisemanu enables the redactor to move directly by genealogical connection to his son Māi'ea Vāinapō, o le atali o i o na po nei. A conventional terminal sentence closes the complex, Ua iu le tala 'The story is ended.'

I have argued above that the passages in both Safotula'afai and Satalia that recount Savea Si'uleo's ordering Nāfanua to intervene after Tā'i's plaint belong to the Māi'ea redaction; they support the tendency of that level of the complex to exalt Savea Si'uleo, who has a special connection to Māi'ea.22 These two points are made in an extensive introduction to the whole complex of Safotula'afai: O Savea Si'uleo... ua tino i le pusi. This general introduction is placed before the genealogical introduction of the story of Ulofanausese'e'e, which was the beginning of Satalia. The god is described—o le aitu ia e sili 'this aitu is the highest'—and he and Māi'ea are said to have exchanged names.

As in Satalia, a Māi'ea section is added by means of a travel transition, ua fei mai... Filitupulei'a, after the end of the war story that concludes the Nāfanua complex. The possession of Au'aa and transfer of power to Māi'ea, this time not further specified, is stated succinctly, o le a uhitino ta Au'aa... ulu o maio. A travel transition, ona aitu... i Manono, leads to the account of Nāfanua's meeting with Lei'ataua and his successful revolt, o loc fagota mai... Safune ma Faleata. A genealogical connection, using conventional expressions of the gene, is then made to Lei'ataua's son Tamaifai, ona usu ai lea... i a le afasine o... fia a le gafa o Tamaifai. A brief description of this chief terminates the complex.

The above analysis is not meant to be exhaustive, but only to differentiate the elements and redactional levels of the complex and recognize the same tendencies that can be ascribed to particular parties. The tendentious character of such literature—and its connection to non-historical genres, themes, and devices—raise the problems of historicity and historical reconstruction.

c) Historicity and Historical Reconstruction

I will discuss only those aspects of this large and complicated subject that are related to my earlier studies of Samoan literary forms and their uses. Those forms and uses differ from modern Western historical writing and must be correctly understood and interpreted in order to use Samoan texts on historical subjects for scholarly purposes. The task is basically the same as that faced by the historian of any premodern period, especially one dealing with oral traditions or transcriptions of such, as found in the Bible.23

The study of Samoan texts on historical subjects is particularly important in view of their major role in Samoan life and culture; not only in their practical use as bases for prestige, claims to titles, lands, honors, fine mats, and so on, but in the general historical cast of Samoan thinking, in which the contemporary situation is constantly understood by reference to the past. That is, Samoan life and culture cannot be adequately understood without an appreciation of the pervasive role played by historical thinking and discourse. That discourse cannot be evaluated without an adequate understanding of the means of thought and communication, literary forms, and life settings in which it is conducted.

Moreover, the numerous controversies about traditions and claims demonstrate that Samoans have a concept of historicity. Chants and māvaega are judged to be authentic or fabrications by such means as comparing them to conflicting

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22 Nāfanua's following Savesi'uleo's command to halt the battle at a certain point may also be attributed to this redactional tendency. The command is attributed to Nāfanua herself in Hovdaugen 1987: 38; it is missing in Bülow 1805: 158; Abercromby 1891: 461 ff.

23 Cf. on Hawaiian literature, Charlot 1977: 495-498. Samoan traditions have been used in different ways to reconstruct history by authors whose familiarity with Samoan traditions, life, and customs renders their views valuable: e.g., Kriémer 1902: 8-17; Henry 1983.
traditions and evaluating the archaic quality of their language. The genre fāgogo 'night tales,' is definitely considered non-historical fiction. Also, the Samoan capacity for disinterested discussion can be seen in the many examples of descriptions of aitu and cultural practices. Much research needs to be done on Samoan concepts of history and historicity and on traditional means of establishing consensus in disputed historical questions.

From my earlier discussions, a number of points will already be clear and need only be summarized here. A text cannot be used in isolation, but only in the context of all the available relevant texts (in fact, major historical subjects, such as the abolition of cannibalism, the Tongan war, and those discussed above, attract a number of different treatments). By this means, for instance, majority positions or traditions can be distinguished from minority ones. This is important in view of the general Samoan practice of developing one's own special traditions and devaluing those of others. Moreover, the polemical tendency of a text can be recognized and compared to the differing tendencies of other texts. Finally, an overview of all the relevant traditions establishes the Samoan parameters of the historical problem. For instance, if a claim is disputed among three chiefs, it is unlikely that a fourth would need to be considered by the historian.

The evaluation of a text can be aided by a study of Samoan responses to it. Challenges to and criticisms of a tradition or claim can be found and themselves evaluated. For instance, the version of the story of Nāfanua by Ali'ina malemanu Falē -- modernized by simplification -- was criticized by Samoans "because they found that too many details were omitted" (Hovdhaugen 1987: 32). Chiefs complained to Bülow about the Malietoa-bias in many texts recorded by Stuebel.

The genre of a text should be identified. A fāgogo should not be used as a historical text any more than a German fairy tale would be. It can of course provide material for the study of Samoan culture.

Among texts on historical subjects, some genres are treated by Samoans themselves as more reliable and therefore as bases for secondary historical works and discussion. Chants, genealogies, and māvaega play the role of "documents." Although not free of polemic and variation, those genres appear more fixed and capable of consensus than the texts based on them. A chant may be accepted without the particular tālāgā 'explanation,' attached to it; a genealogy, without some of the story versions inserted into it. The māvaega of Pili remains the same even when the story of its proclamation varies.

Interestingly, no multigenerational complexes are found, to my knowledge, in the fictional genre of fāgogo: this may be due to the fact that genealogies are considered to communicate historical information and are, therefore, inappropriate for a non-historical genre. Similarly, in fāgogo I have not found māvaega of the tofiga-type used in texts on historical subjects, but only paring words and dying commands (e.g., Sierich 1900: 224). Such observations on the precise use of genres are important in defining Samoan ideas of history.

Once a genre has been identified, the proper means of interpreting it must be developed. For instance, a tālāgā 'prose explanation of a chant,' should be studied in conjunction with the chant it explains; as should a story spun from a chant (Charlot 1988a: 302 f., 306 ff.). Prose complexes need to be analyzed into their originally independent materials and levels of redaction, each of which needs to be interpreted separately before the text as a whole can be understood. This multileveled interpretation provides in fact a history of the thinking about the subject treated.

The study of literary forms is important because they are used to provide structure for the transmission of historical accounts. That structure is imposed to varying degrees on the material by the redactor. For instance, the strict parallelism of the account of Pili in Stuebel can be compared with the much looser account in Bülow. In Tanafaiaga, the earlier section on Lei'aaua is much shorter and more organized by story structural elements than the long, detailed, and loose narration about Tanafaiaga, the events of which lie a generation closer to the composition of the complex.

The use of the story structure for historical subjects is a factor in opening such texts to influences from non-historical genres that share that structure: motifs, narratorial devices, fabulous elements, tendencies, interests, and emphases (Charlot 1990: 426 f.; 1991: 134; Freeman 1947: 306). The story of Ulufanua'sese'e and Savea Si'ulei in Safotufai is largely paralleled in a fāgogo (Sierich 1905: 186). An account that seems perfectly realistic

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24 The clearly unusual cases mentioned by Moyle 1981: 312 f. can be considered the exceptions that prove the rule: abnormal extensions of the genre.


Anthropos 87.1992
to a Western reader can end with the protagonist turning into a stone. The same influences are exercised when complexes are constructed on historical subjects using the same methods and devices as used on other subjects.

Those influences can be seen also in the emphasis of historical texts on such subjects as origins of names, sayings, and customs. This practice does, however, reflect genuine Samoan concerns; the lessons and conclusions Samoans draw from their historical traditions are not always those a Westerner would find most significant. Similarly, the influence of trickster stories on historical texts reflects an observable aspect of Samoan political practice. Other passages foreign to Western sensibility — such as that on the sex of Ńāfana in Safotulafai — fulfill the function of explaining or refuting rival traditions.

The use of story devices facilitates the expression of a redactor’s interpretation of historical events, in which the activities of the gods play a major role, providing a justification for the position taken; the same means of expression can be used as in myths, legends, and aitu stories. This religious element of Samoan historical texts presents a major problem for Western historians.

Two types of accounts of godly activity can be distinguished in texts on historical subjects. In the first, the gods themselves are the protagonists and accomplish the main actions, as do Savea Sīuleo, Taemā and Tilaiga, and Ńāfana in Safotulafai and Salaitua. In the second type, human beings are the protagonists, although they stand in cooperative relation to the gods through visions, visitations, and possession or as representatives or even relatives of a god. Significantly, in complexes, passages of the first type usually occur at the beginning and in the early sections and represent an ancient period. Passages of the second type are usually found in sections that are nearer to the time of composition and perhaps ever to the living memory of the redactors and a portion of the intended audience.

These two types of accounts can be judged differently, I would argue, by the historian. The second type is acceptable as a description of Samoan life in which such religious experiences are not uncommon. Although subject to the same problems of understanding and interpretation as other texts, Samoan accounts of the political influence of religious phenomena should not be rejected on principle; on the contrary, Samoan religious life has had a documented effect on nineteenth-century history and continues to be influential today. The widely circulated reports of aitu battles in 1890 (Charlot 1988b) and the common Samoan view that Tamafaiga had an aitu side are important factors in the events of their time. Samoan religious views, sensibilities, and experiences must be taken seriously in any reconstruction of Samoan history, however the historian chooses to explain them.

In a major difference from Western thought, the first type of account must be recognized as a genuine part of historical reality in traditional Samoan thinking. That is, there is no expressed qualitative difference in the historical reality of the two types of accounts in a complex like Safotulafai and Salaitua. If such a difference were recognized or perceived, the justification being constructed for the malo of Māletoa would be fictitious rather than founded in history. This type of account joins, therefore, the many examples of Samoan myths and legends that are accepted as “true” or “real” because they provide the basis for a current state of affairs. This type of traditional thinking is not uncommon in Sāmoa today. For instance, a Western-educated Samoan student of mine declared once in class that he believed a group of young men actually turned into dolphins in the bay of Faga‘a‘a because “otherwise there would be nothing special” about his village.

Although the historicity of accounts of the first, mythic type will not be accepted by academic historians, the texts can nonetheless be recognized as important for our understanding of many aspects of Samoan culture and history; for instance, such accounts are crucial for the definition of the ideology of the party for whom they were composed. They are also essential for a history of Samoan culture; as in Hawai‘i, traditional, pre-Christian ideologies and religious practices and debates have been perpetuated into post-conversion times. That is, Samoans have achieved a bireligionism that has enabled them to be genuinely bicultural. They accomplished this apparently very early in the contact period by drawing a distinction between secular and religious and designating their religio-political, religio-cultural practices secular. The missionary John Williams reports:

27 This second type includes accounts of the observation of religious practices, tabus, and so on. For instance, in Stuebel 1896/1973: 182/22, the pursuit of the Tongans is interrupted out of respect for a local god.
During the night it rained hard, but the old Chief would not come down in the cabin as he still retains some of his superstitious notions, such as his presence renders a place sacred, and must be sprinkled with water after he has left it. If food comes near him no female must eat it. With other little customs which they say are not superstitious, or in connection with the worship of their gods, but modes of respect which they shew to superior Chiefs. 29

Samoa ideologies, polemics, tendencies, and so on, are themselves of course as much objects of historical interest as Western ones. Moreover, their close connection to contending parties in political situations enables the historian to reconstruct hypothetically the situations in which they were expressed. For instance, the Solo o le Va makes universal claims for Manu’a whereas its late haliagi, Le Tupu’ a ga o Samoa’a A’aoa, merely wishes that it be spared in war. The diminution of the importance of Manu’a between the two dates of composition seems clearly indicated (Charlot 1991: 148). Similarly, I will argue below, the tradition of Pili being unsatisfied in Manu’a and finding his home in ‘Upolu is an expression of and justification for the transfer of power and prestige to the western side of the archipelago.

In certain cases, the reconstruction of historical events can be attempted by identifying in a text the possible formative influences of tendencies and literary elements. For instance, in Tamafaiga, an inconcinnity can be found in the account of Le’a’ataua’s experience while fishing. Those he meets are first described as o tahina’am [sic] e toatua o sauali i laua o le fanau i laua a Nafana’ua ‘two ladies; they were gods; they were the offspring of Nafana’ua.’ At the end of their conversation, a story is abruptly inserted of Nafana’ua being mistreated by someone from an opposing alliance, ona sau ai lea o Nafana’ua . . .; this is a typical motivation story for Nafana’ua’s helping the other side. The story ends with ona toatuma’ai i lea o le sauali ‘the god was then angry at this,’ The text continues ma ua la toe teteva i Manono ‘and they [dual] returned in anger to Manono,’ where the final encounter with Le’a’ataua occurs. A Nafana’ua motivation-story appears to have been inserted into an account of Le’a’ataua’s meeting with two female gods. The introduction of Nafana’ua is sudden, and the connection of the end of the Nafana’ua story with the account of the two gods is grammatically impossible: the dual cannot refer to the two and Nafana’ua, nor can one of the two be Nafana’ua because they have both been identified as her offspring. The historian can speculate that

the redactor is attempting secondarily to connect the prestigious war god Nafana’ua immediately to Le’a’ataua’s experience and using a traditional story type to do so.

The academic use of Samoan texts on historical subjects is clearly problematic at the current stage of research. Much basic work needs to be done on Samoan literature and its uses. Nonetheless, the interpretation of indigenous texts is indispensable for any adequate understanding of Samoan history and culture even up to the present day.

The historical results of my own work on the particular materials discussed in these articles for religious and literary studies can be summarized as follows. The earliest recognizable stage contained already a full spectrum of religious thought from what could be called folk religion to highly intellectual speculation. The former is represented primarily by stories usually of origins with single gods of limited spheres of influence and strong emotive value. The latter is represented by cosmic origin texts based on the genealogical model and refinements and combinations of elements of the folk religion in works that explained and promoted the position of important social institutions.

One form of these is an extension of the sphere of influence of a certain god or gods, extensions that parallel social, political divisions: from the individual, through the extended family, village, and district, to alliances that involve more than one district. Much of this early Samoan religion continues into the present, with the folk level evoking as always the strongest emotional engagement.

A new chapter was begun with a religious, political, and cultural movement in Manu’a in which a claim of universal primacy was made for Tagaloa along with a parallel claim for the Tui Manu’a. Such claims are maximal extensions of the limited spheres of influence mentioned above. The principal document of this movement is the Solo o le Va. The Tagaloa thinkers made a poetic, tentative, and partial use of the creatinal thought model. Subsequently, that model was extended, refined, and combined with genealogical elements.


The claims of the Tui Manu’a are said to have extended as far as Tonga and Fiji. I would, therefore, date this movement in Manu’a before the Tongan occupation.

The influence of this Manu’a movement on classical Samoan culture requires a complete study. The va’alo ‘bonite boat,’ connected in the Solo o le Va to the Tui Manu’a and the guild of house- and canoe-builders, the S8 Tagaloa, is an easily recognized technical innovation that is endowed with prestige and reserved for chiefly activities even today: it is set apart and

29 Mayle 1984: 156. See also Charlot 1988b.
above the ordinary dug-out canoe. Similar references to the ceremonial "house" suggest that innovations might have been made in architecture as well. The Samoan ceremonial house is traditionally endowed with social, religious, and cosmic symbolism and significance, but the specific contribution of Manu’ a has not, to my knowledge, been defined. Manu’ a traditions of the same ‘uda ‘bright house,’ and other Samoan traditions about the house (e.g., Turner 1884: 152) would need to be studied. Finally, the absolute use of ipu for the kava cup of the Tui Manu’ a, Krämer 1902: 377, may indicate that innovations were made in the kava ceremony; that is, other chiefs need to name theirs in order to differentiate them from that of the Tui Manu’ a.

The influence of Manu’ a on Samoan culture may have contributed to its two-level character: a level of Tagaloa religion and literature is set above earlier types and forms; the first Tui Manu’ a was descended directly from Tagaloa whereas other chiefs derive their prestige from other factors (the Manu’ a tradition has exercised, however, varying degrees of influence); the bonito boat is more prestigious than the common canoe; and the ceremonial fale more than the common house. The Manu’ a movement was itself, however, based on earlier distinctions between social levels. In any case, this two-levelled character of the traditional culture may have been an aid in the creation of the Samoa bilingualism of the postcontact period.

The Tagaloa movement, I have argued, influenced religious developments in other island groups, Charlot 1991: 132 note 30. Further research needs to be done on the many accounts of early Samoan voyages to the islands to the east; for instance, the statement of Tu’unga that Kanika travelled from Manu’ a to Rarotonga and “Tangaroa was his God,” Crocombe and Crocombe 1968: 140 f. I am not competent to evaluate these traditions.

In a counter-movement, themes of the Tagaloa literature were adapted to the level of the earlier folk religion, while the more intellectual, genealogically oriented thinkers both felt the influence of the Tagaloa literature and attempted to absorb it into their own mental framework.

With the decline in importance of Manu’ a, the western islands developed their own accounts of the origin of their new prestige; the fully developed Pili literature served to explain the transfer of status from Manu’ a to ‘Upolu and Savai’ i. Similarly, in traditional fashion, other works provided the origins of family status, titles, the success of alliances, and so on, as seen in the texts of Mālietoa propaganda studied.

The above religious history is understandable as local development and does not require immigrants with foreign ideas. The postcontact period and the introduction of Christianity did not completely destroy traditional religion and literature; rather, it created a second sphere of thinking and practice that co-exists with the first and has created its own literature, both developments of the traditional (Charlot 1988b) and works in introduced forms, such as hymns, sermons, and drama. An entirely different subject is that of foreign-language works produced by Samoans; literature that, in the case of Albert Wendt, displays clear connections to classical Samoan religious and literary traditions. This is reportedly also true of a growing body of contemporary Samoan-language literature (Even Hvithaugen, personal communication).

The conclusions of my own studies agree largely with Samoan views of history found in early sources and articulated by a number of knowledgeable chiefs to me during my stay in ‘Upolu.

2. Bodies of Literature: Pili

Polynesian works often belong to bodies of literature; several works of different genres grouped around a protagonist. I have studied elsewhere the body of literature devoted to the Hawaiian pig god Kamapua’a (Charlot 1987). In Samoan literature, chants, stories, proverbial sayings, and even at times genealogies can be found about a single personage, as seen above.30 I have already provided a sketch of the body of literature around the god Tagaloa.

I will now offer a survey, not a complete analysis, of the considerable body of literature around Pili, which encompasses a number of genres.31 Pili is a major figure in Samoan tradition, credited with achievements in fishing and farming, with the transfer of prestige and power from Manu’ a to the western Samoan islands, and with the establishment of the political organization of ‘Upolu.32

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30 See also, for instance, on Fitiama, Charlot 1988a: 306 ff., with references; on Lau-ti-o-vuta, Fraser 1898: 21–28. The well-known works by Katharine Luomala have pioneered this subject.


Story: Krämer 1902: 438.


Māvaega and māvaega story: Charlot 1990: 426; and the section on māvaega in this article.

Chants: Fraser 1891: 258–251. English translation; Krämer 1902: 439–443. These chants include one within a story, Krämer 1902: 438, and a number based on the tradition as a whole. The emphasis in the published chants is on the Manu’ a tradition, discussed below.

The mention of Pili in Hvithaugen 1987: 72 ff., 84, seems to be a secondary substitution for another name, a common practice in Polynesian literature.
Pili is treated as a historical and human-bodied figure in Samoan texts, but through his name, "lizard," he can be connected by identity or genealogy to a mythical personage with a lizard body and thus to the many Samoan observations, beliefs, and practices related to lizards. Lizards and lizard-like beings represent an ancient level of Polynesian religion, and the use of story elements connected with them in accounts of Pili or his ancestor of the same name adds considerably to his importance. The lizard-bodied Pili's pursuit of and even mating with his sister, which seems to be based on the famous story of Sina and the eel, shows his godlike transcendent of the incest taboo and establishes his unsocialized personality. In fact, collections of stories and complexes about Pili can consist exclusively or almost exclusively of such fabulous elements. On the other hand, such elements can be almost completely eliminated from an account that concentrates on human achievements and politics (Stair 1895: 50 f.). The larger complexes about Pili, therefore, like those about Kamapua'a, usually contain a wide spectrum of materials, from the fabulous to the political.

The complex figure of Pili, like that of Kamapua'a, is obviously the result of a long development, which is suggested by an analysis of the different materials in the body of literature about him. A first distinction can be made between those materials in which Pili is lizard-bodied and those in which he is human-bodied. The former belong predominantly to traditions located mainly in Manu'a with a trip to Fiji and, as used on Manu'a, serve the purpose of exalting that location. These traditions, which can be presented independently with only slight references to materials on Pili's later actions, contain mainly fabulous elements. Pili is portrayed in them as a typical animal-bodied god of the folk religion, and the description of his relation to his sister is based on the wider traditions of the attraction of animals to human beings. Such gods are often tricky, self-willed, and socially unassimilated; at times even positive disturbers of the social order and breakers of tabus. As such they provoke amusement and ambivalent wonder. Due precisely to their unconventional characters, they can, like Māui and Kamapua'a, be enlarged into doers of gigantic deeds and even into culture heroes; a development seen in parts of the Pili body of literature.

The traditions about the human-bodied Pili can be divided first into his māvaega along with its story (above, note 31); these are typical human, political materials about a powerful chief (to these can be added, I would argue, the contiguous genealogical materials). Similarly, the accounts of his successors are couched in the conventional terms of Samoan texts on historical subjects of the periods nearer to the time of composition. The māvaega and related materials can be presented independently of the Manu'a traditions or those mentioned immediately below (Stuebel 1896/1973: 163;3).

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32 Fishing and farming: Krämer 1903: 127. "Er war es nämlich, welcher von Manu' über alle Inseln nach Westen ziehend, die ungeschickten Samoaner mit dem Grab- und Kochgerät, dem sogenannten fatauiga bekannt machte." (He it was namely who, moving westward from Manu'a over all the islands, made the unskilled Samoans acquainted with the digging and cooking implements, the so-called fatauiga: Krämer, therefore, agrees with Bülow that Pili should be considered the progenitor of the Samoans, 167 f.; also, Mead 1969: 159; cf. Cain 1979: 209, 211 f. On the above sense of fatauiga, missing in Pratt 1960 and Milner 1996, see Bülow 1898a: 12.

33 Turner 1884: 44, 46 f.; Bülow 1898a; Cain 1979: 32. Criticizes several points in this article. The connection between Pili and lizard behavior is particularly clear in a Pili story of the origin of such behavior, Herman 1955: 25; Fitisemanu and Wright 1970: 18. Tales are told of other lizards, e.g., Herman 1955: 94, 96 f.

34 Fraser 1891: 254 f.; Krämer 1902: 438 and note 6; Mead 1969: 159. On Sina and the Eel, see Charlot 1898b: 304 f. Note the verb agreement between that text, ona ta ane lea o le apoeai [sic: 'apeva] o le tua ona faisaga ai lea o Sina e le apoeai 'Then the tail of the eel struck, and Sina was thus mated by the tail,' and Ona tagovale lea 'o si mea ite i e tameaiai': 'au lavea te teine e le apoeai o le Pili.' 'Then he grabbed criminally the little eel part in the village maiden; the girl was taken by the tail of the Lizard' (Krämer 1902: 438). Note also that: Pili is called an i'a 'fish.' in the chant based on the story, pages 439 f., lines 14, 16; Fraser 1891: 254 f. These points suggest that the story of Sina and her eel may have been appropriated to the Manu'a Pili tradition.


36 Krämer 1902: 438–443; especially, 443, lines 100–113; Bülow 1898a: 7–11; Fraser 1891: 254 f.; 258–251; Fitisemanu and Wright 1970: 17–20; note that the story of Pili's net with its resulting proverbial saying is here ascribed to the lizard-bodied Pili. (I am assuming he is such in this section because he is in the other two of this work.)

Anthropos 87, 1992
The second group of human-bodied Pili materials are those of his move from Manu’a to the western islands, with the attendant cultural achievements. These have a legendary, larger than life quality — including the folk device of gigantism — and Pili’s description can be called that of a culture hero. Pili’s moves from one location to another can be motivated by his taking offense or by his being unsatisfied; this is a story motif (e.g., Pratt 1889: 458; Krämer 1902: 435), used here to express the point that only the western islands were a worthy abode for the great Pili. The tendency of this tradition is, therefore, the opposite of those from Manu’a. These materials are dependent both on those from Manu’a, where they begin, and on the māvaea, where they end.

These three sets of materials have, therefore, different literary characters. The methods of combining them have left clear seams. The identification of the māvaea and connected story has been discussed above. The common device of a genealogy or multigenerational story can distinguish between the lizard-bodied Pili as father and the human-bodied Pili as son. In the Bülow complex (1898: 11), Pili remains the same individual, but the break between the Manu’a and later traditions is clearly marked: Pili bids a formal farewell to people in Fiji (faamavae) and states his intention of going to Tagaloaalagi, presumably in the sky, to seek an occupation. The text continues:

Ona pa’i fo lea o Pili mai itega i Manua, o lona tino o le tino a le tagata.
Ona fauiogaina lea o Pili pa’i.
Then Pili fell down from above to Manu’a. His body was the body of a human being.
He was then called Falling Pili.

The break between the traditions is thus marked by a different body and a new name.

Significantly, the incest of the Manu’a traditions is expressed more fully in those texts in which a difference of identity is established between the Manu’a Pili and a later one. Where no such distinction is made, the incest is deemphasized or even eliminated. In the Bülow complex, Pili loves his sister, but does not mate with her. Stuebel (1896/1973: 169/9) makes a vague mention of Pili’s amio leaga ‘bad behavior,’ but no sister is mentioned. In Turner (1884: 232 f.) a Sina is Pili’s mother, but he has no sister. Similarly, in Stuebel, Turner, and Herman, Pili is only human-bodied.

On the basis of the above analysis, a reconstruction of the development of the body of literature around Pili can be attempted. Two sets of materials, each different in character, appear to be independent: those developed in Manu’a about the lizard-bodied Pili and those around the chief Pili of ‘Upolu and Savaii. I would argue that the chief was identified with or genealogically connected to the Manu’a Pili for reasons of prestige; for instance, in order to establish a connection to Tagaloa and to a god-like lizard figure endowed with a number of traditions. The dependent materials of Pili’s move from Manu’a to the western islands were then developed, which expressed — and perhaps justified — the transfer of prestige and power from the traditional location to the new one. The accounts of the achievements in farming and fishing, which are an important part of these new materials, were based on folk religious practices concerning lizards, on the traditions of Pili as provider in the Manu’a-based traditions, and on the mention of the implements in the māvaea. Such a reconstruction is of course speculative.

Conclusion

Polynesian literatures form as large and important a field of study as those of other cultures that have received more scholarly attention; they are valuable both in themselves and for their potential contribution to other fields.

The limits of my study will be very obvious to students of Polynesian and Samoan literature. Firstly, I have been able to discuss only a few aspects of the very large field of literary forms and structures: little on chants and nothing on oratory or proverbs in themselves. Samoan themes, motifs, and literary devices are extremely numerous and demand study as do Samoan literary terms, theories, identifications of forms and structures.

38 Above, note 31. The related genealogical material is contiguous in Fraser 1891: 257 and Stair 1895: 51. In Bülow (1898a: 17 f.) it has been separated by the narrative of Pili’s deeds in the place.
39 Krämer 1902: 441 ff. (chants); Fraser 1891: 254 f. Cf. Stair 1895: 50 f., in which there is a difference of generations, but no mention of a lizard body.
40 Herman (1955: 25) mentions the incest in a single sentence. Just as with Tagaloa, discussions can arise on whether the many Pili-plus epithets represent individuals or just different names of a single individual; e.g., Krämer 1902: 438.
41 Folk: e.g., Bülow 1898a: 257; Turner 1884: 46 f. – Traditions: Fraser 1891: 255; Bülow 1898a: 8–11; note the emphasis on implements in Krämer 1902: 441 f.
and the settings-in-life of the different literary forms.

Secondly, my work is based primarily on the already published Samoan texts, which will of course continue to be important for future study. My principal aim has been to draw attention to the importance of structure in Samoan literature, concentrating on the major, most recognizable elements. My work will, I hope, provide support for further study of such subjects as the identification of genres and their interrelations, the construction of larger complexes, the relations between prose and poetry, and the evaluation of historical traditions.

All this will require fieldwork and extended consultation with traditional Samoan experts (even my very limited experience in Samoa discussing literature with Samoan chiefs and studying manuscripts has been essential to my understanding). Moreover, an immense amount of Samoan literature remains to be discovered in the living oral tradition and in the 'api 'chapbooks,' kept by Samoan families to record their literary heritage. Happily, work has already begun by Samoans with backgrounds both in native education and Western scholarship.

Finally, Samoan literature needs to be placed within the context of Polynesia as a whole. For instance, structure is equally important in the other Polynesian literatures I have been able to study. Indeed, the observed similarities between Samoan and Hawaiian story structures add a further argument for the close connection between Polynesian literatures and thus cultures. A thorough understanding of any particular Polynesian literature will not be possible, I would argue, without a study of them all. This will require an international team effort, which should be made before the further loss of valuable experts and materials. Such an effort will also encourage the perpetuation of those literatures without which, I believe, Polynesian cultures cannot survive. Their loss would be tragic for us all.

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