

PACIFIC STUDIES

Vol. 10, No. 1

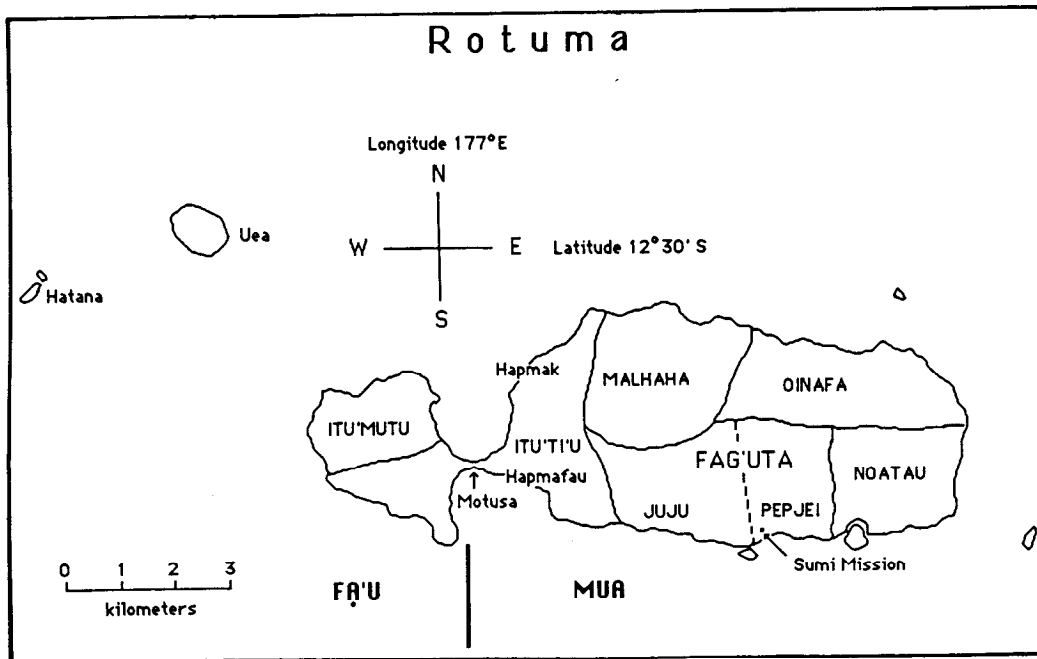
November 1986

CANNIBAL CHIEFS AND THE CHARTER FOR REBELLION IN ROTUMAN MYTH

Alan Howard
University of Hawaii

A prominent theme in Rotuman myth concerns rebellion against oppressive chiefs. Encoded in the myths are strong oppositions between “chiefs” and “people of the land,” chiefs being associated with the sky, sea, east, north, and coast; people of the land with the earth, land, west, south, and inland. An analysis of available narratives suggests that chiefs are in an ambiguous position since their role requires a combination of vitality, expressed in the form of demands upon their subjects, and domestication, expressed through generosity. Excesses of the latter characteristic imply chiefly impotence, excesses of the former, oppression. The narratives suggest that supernatural supports are available for insurrections against oppressive chiefs, who are the conceptual equivalents of cannibals, and for usurpation of their authority by successful rebels. The instrumental role of women as victim provocateurs, mediators with the supernatural, and leaders of rebellion is also detailed. It is argued that the myths explore various permutations of the dilemma of chieftainship and provide a charter for rebellion against chiefs whose demands are perceived as excessive.

The island of Rotuma lies approximately three hundred miles north of Fiji, on the western fringe of Polynesia, Linguistic evidence suggests that Rotuman belongs in a subgrouping (Central Pacific) that includes Fijian and the Polynesian languages, and that within this group there is a special relationship between Rotuman and the languages of western Fiji (Pawley 1979). However, the vocabulary shows a considerable degree of borrowing from Polynesian languages (Biggs 1965; Pawley 1962), and Rotuman cultural patterns fall well within the range of those



characteristic of Western Polynesia. The island is of volcanic origin, with a number of craters rising to heights of 200 to 500 meters above sea level. It is divided into two main parts joined by an isthmus of sand, forming a configuration about 13 kilometers long and at its widest nearly 5 kilometers across, with its lengthwise axis running almost due east and west. The total land area is approximately 67.5 square kilometers, and it has been estimated that at the time of initial contact with Europeans (1791) the population was between 3,000 and 5,000 (Gardiner 1898:496-497).

Rotuman myths provide supporting evidence for prominent contact with Western Polynesia, particularly Samoa and Tonga (Churchward 1938). At a more basic level, the myths have a distinctively Polynesian focus, that is, the establishment and enactment of chieftainship, with stories centering on the intrigues and activities of various characters who shape chiefly institutions. A number of overlapping themes can be identified within this general focus, including the one that is of primary concern here: the theme of rebellion by indigenous people against their chiefs. This article explores the conditions of rebellion as they appear in the narratives and attempts to explicate their implications for relations between rulers and their subjects, the constitution of authority, and the legitimate use of power.

The first systematic account of Rotuman oral history, recorded about 1873, is found in the journal of Father Trouillet, a French priest who

arrived at Rotuma in 1868 and remained there for many years. His account, in French, was never published and his journals were transported to the Vatican archives just prior to my arrival in 1960. Fortunately, however, copies were made by Gordon MacGregor, an anthropologist who visited the island in 1932, and by H. S. Evans, an Englishman who served as district officer on Rotuma from 1949 to 1952. In places it is apparent that the copier had difficulty transcribing Fr. Trouillet's handwriting, and in addition to discrepancies between the two copies there are inconsistencies in the spelling of Rotuman words and names. Nevertheless, Trouillet's account is remarkable for its chronological ordering of fabled events and sets a framework for the study of Rotuman mythology. When presenting segments of this text I use an English translation of the Evans version.¹

In the years following Trouillet's initial account several other visitors to the island collected texts of Rotuman myths, many of which provide alternative versions or elaborations of Trouillet's narrative. These include accounts by Romilly (1893), Gardiner (1898), Hocart (1912), MacGregor (1932), Churchward (1937-1939), and Russell (1942). Of the published accounts only that of Churchward includes Rotuman texts; the rest appear only in English.²

Trouillet's narratives relate the history of Rotuman chieftainship beginning with the purported founding of the island by a chief from Samoa (Savai'i or Savaiki in other versions)³ named Raho (Rao). They focus exclusively on three categories of chiefly positions: the "grand chief *vakoi*" (*fakpure*), the *mua*, and the *sau*. All three were positions of significance for the entire island, which was divided into autonomous districts headed by district chiefs, or *gagaj 'es itu'u*.⁴ In Trouillet's account the island progressively differentiated through time until there were seven districts, as there are contemporarily. The *vakoi* is described by Trouillet as the chief of the dominant district, as determined by success in the episodic wars that permeate the oral history. He was therefore perceived as a conquering warrior whose authority was sanctioned by the evident support of supernatural beings, his success in warfare being testimony to his potency (*mana*). The privileges and responsibilities of the *vakoi* included, according to Trouillet, the right to bring together all the other district chiefs in council in order to make peace between them; the right to bestow the status of *sau* on various individuals; and the responsibility of seeing to it that the *sau* was cared for properly. The *sau* was, as the sign of dominant authority, an object of veneration. He was treated as a god while in office and was fed prodigious amounts of food and *kava*.⁵ He was also presented with large quantities of produce at feasts held during the six-month ceremonial cycle. The

third position was that of *mua*, which is described by Trouillet as less feared than the *sau* but more sacred. The *mua*'s role also centered on the ritual cycle, which was specifically oriented toward bringing prosperity to the island by tapping the power of supernatural beings (*'aitu*, *'atua*). There are several parallels in the symbolism associated with the *sau* and *mua*; indeed, Trouillet describes a historical sequence in which the position of *mua* is initially established by Raho, the founding ancestor, and then superseded several generations later when the position of *sau* is established following a rebellion against the eighth *mua*. The positions of *sau* and *mua* thus appear to symbolize complementary aspects of sacred chieftainship, with the latter representing that component of authority which derives from the principle of first occupancy, traced back to Raho, and the former representing that component of authority derived from conquest and usurpation. The counterpart of Raho, the founder of Rotuma, is Tokainiua, the warrior chief who arrives from overseas (Fiji or Tonga, depending on the version) and successfully challenges Raho's claim to preeminence. Thus, in the myths:

Raho: Tokainiua: :*mua*: *sau*

Raho and Tokainiua symbolize a series of systemic oppositions that pervade Rotuman myths: land and sea, earth and sky, inland and coast. Of central importance here is that as a collectivity the common people are associated with the land (as indigenous planters of the soil), while chiefs are associated with the sea/sky, the presumed sources of supernatural potency that sanctify their authority. Parallel oppositions are encoded into the geography of place names on the island. The fundamental division is between the east, or sunrise side of the island, and the west, or sunset side. East is associated with chieftainship, and particularly with conquering chiefs who come from outside Rotuma and thus are conceptualized as strangers to the land.⁶ The main source of potency for "foreign" chiefs emanates from "Tonga,"⁷ to the east, while the indigenous people gain their potency from the spirits of their ancestors (*'atua*), whose abode is in Limari (*'Oroi*), located by Rotumans under the sea off the west end of the island.

Within Rotuma the geographical code is based on a division of the island into three segments along the east-west axis, and a north-south division. That portion of the island to the west of the isthmus is called *Fa'u*, "back," and is strongly associated with the indigenous people. This contrasts with the remainder of the island, which is termed *Mua*, "front." (The west end of the island is also referred to as *sio*, "down," the

east end as *se'e*, “up.”) The eastern segment is further divided into an end and middle section. The end section includes Oinafa and Noatau, which, being at the extreme eastern part of the island, is most closely associated with stranger-chiefs. The midsection includes Malhaha, Fag'uta, and the portion of Itu'ti'u east of the isthmus. In the myths, contrasts between the extremities of the island (e.g., between Oinafa/Noatau and Fā'u) imply strong opposition; contrasts between either end and the midsection a somewhat weaker form.

Another opposition is between north and south, north being associated with chieftainship, south with common status. This opposition is dramatized in some versions of the founding legend. In these accounts Raho “plants” Rotuma by pouring earth from two separate baskets. The first pouring is from a ceremonial presentation basket at Malhaha on the north side of the island where Raho established his chiefly home (*nohoag gagaja*); the second pouring is from a common basket tipped out in Pepjei on the south side of the island where Raho's seat of government (*nohoag pure*) was established (see Churchward 1937:109).⁸ Whereas east is used to signify externally derived chieftainship, north is a marker for indigenously derived chiefs. The north-south distinction is only used in reference to the middle part of the island, exclusive of Fā'u to the west, Oinafa and Noatau to the east. The exclusion of the extreme east and west ends implies a weaker form of opposition.

By locating individuals and events in specific localities Rotumans are thus able to construct a range of strong to weak oppositions between chiefs and commoners. The four main levels of opposition occurring in the myths are illustrated in figure 1. For each level of contrast the chiefly side appears in capital letters, with the strongest contrast appearing at the top of the diagram (Rotuma/TONGA), the weakest at the bottom. Because of the importance of this geographic code, place names will be identified in my commentary by placing directional indicators in parentheses according to the implied level of contrast. Thus a contrast between Oinafa (E) and Itu' Mutu (W) shows a strong level of opposition, whereas a contrast between Malhaha (n) and Fag'uta (s) is marked to show weaker opposition. (The place names used in the myths are often specific locations within these districts, but their significance is of the same order and they will be marked in the same manner.) In addition to this directional code, further elaborations are possible by locating persons or events on or near the coast (*ufaga*), signifying chieftainship, or inland (*loga*), signifying people of the land. This may be a strong or weak form of opposition, depending on context, and allows for the expression of additional subtleties.

Figure 1

CONTRAST LEVELS OF ROTUMAN PLACE NAMES

Level 1	Rotuma		TONGA			
Level 2	Fa'u (W)		OINAFAN NOATAU (E)			
Level 3	Fa'u (w)		ITU'TI'U* MALHAHA (e) FAG'UTA	Itu'ti'u* Malhaha (w) Fag'uta		OINAFAN NOATAU (e)
Level 4	Hapmafau (s)		HAPMAK (n)	Fag'uta (s)		MALHAHA (n)

* That portion of Itu'ti'u east of the isthmus of Motusa

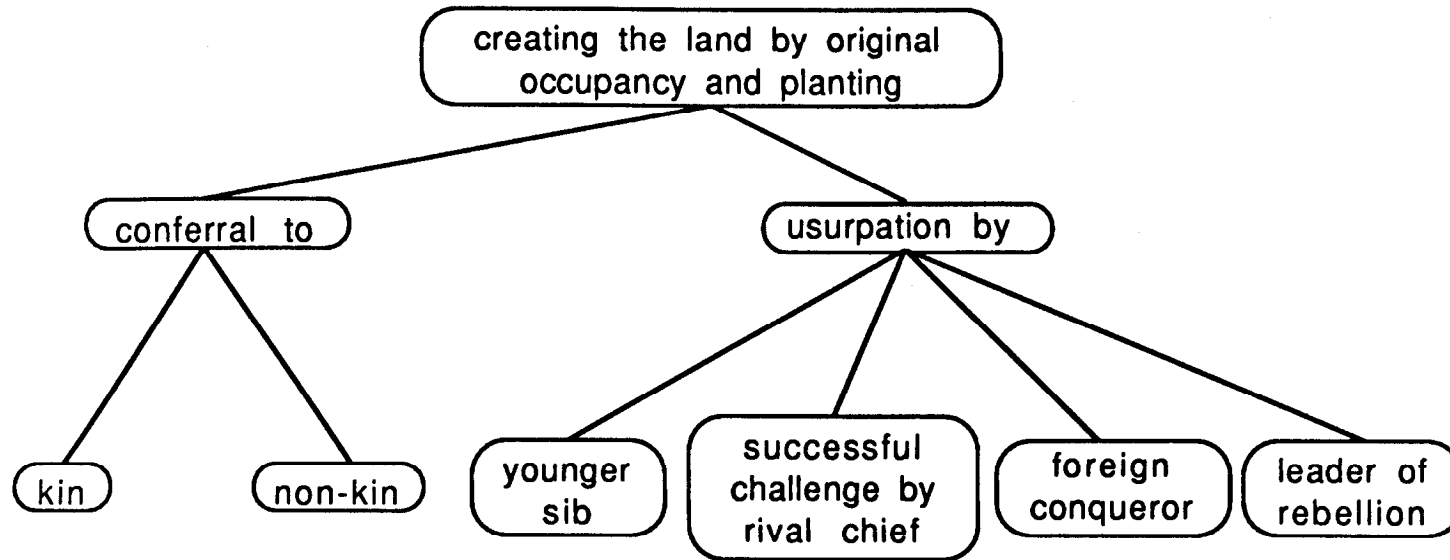
The Issue of Succession

Before approaching the topic of rebellion directly it will be helpful to examine briefly the variety of ways positions of authority are assumed in Rotuman myth. These can be represented diagrammatically (see fig. 2). At the top of the diagram are the primary means by which authority is established—by original occupancy and usufruct. The legend describing the founding of Rotuma is related by Trouillet.

Myth 1

According to fabled tradition, the actual location of Rotuma at first was nothing more than open sea. At that time, Rao [Raho], whose parents are not known, inhabited Soma [Samoa] with his brother, and each one of them had one child: Rao's child was called Maive.⁹ One day the children of the two brothers began to quarrel over a wad of coconuts; in the heat of the quarrel the unknown [presumably Rao's brother's child] said to Maive: Go away from here, go seek your fortune elsewhere. Saddened, Maive went to relate the affair to his father, Rao, who took his child's side and, not being able to come to an understanding with his brother, resolved to leave. A rock serves him as a vessel and is called Vakuta; it is still at Malaa [Malhaha], at a place called Pe[]raua where Rao landed. Two women with wings, called Leprua [*lep he rua*], and a great number of inhabitants known by the name of []Sua, offered to lead him. The two women took along an earth basket filled with sand called (*la*). Having arrived at a certain spot, one of the women began to drop the sand, but the other one, having flown up saw Fiji and let Rao know about it, and he ordered them to proceed further because he wanted to conceal the island; they stopped dropping the sand so that there was not enough of it to emerge above the water and it is this sandbank that one can find a short distance from here, to the south, and which starts opposite Solokope [off Noatau (E)] and continues to where it is opposite Atana [Hatana, off Fa'u (W)]—it is called Sao or Voirnoan Tigrua ["watercourse formed by dragging hand"] of Rao. The voyagers then continued north and arrived at the spot which today is called Vakpero at Malaa [Malhaha]; they dropped the foundations of the island from north to southwest, but since the tradewinds blow from east to

Figure 2



west, Rao feared that vessels might find it too soon, and that is why he gave orders to place the island lengthwise from east to west, as it is located today; but with all the mishaps the basket of sand had become depleted and that is why the island is so small. Here, then, is the founding of the island with reasons given for its small size and its lengthwise position from east to west. Its founder and first chief, then, was Rao. (Sumi Mission Station, Rotuma Ms.)

Transmission of authority by conferral to kin constitutes the “normal” means of succession insofar as rules of succession are specified. In Rotuma the rule is from eldest brother to younger brother, then in the next generation from first son of elder brother to next-born son down to the last-born son of the last-born brother. The priority of sibling succession is clearly manifest in Churchward’s account of the “Story of the First Rotuman Kings” (Churchward 1937:247-255). In the same myth chieftainship is conferred on a non-kinsman as a reward for aid in warfare, and in other myths conferrals are made to non-kin, in one case in response to supernatural omens (Churchward 1938:357-360) and in another as an act of supreme generosity to a visiting chief (Churchward 1938:356-357). However, in all versions of the founding myth, usurpation precedes the orderly transfer of authority. Thus Raho is followed to Rotuma by Tokainiua, who successfully challenges his precedence through deception and guile and thereby assumes a position of dominance. Trouillet’s version reads as follows:

[Myth 1 continued]: Rao established Maive as Mua; besides the two women, called Leprua, there was one other, called Anetemaus [hānit e māʻus, “woman of the bush”]; they stayed on the island during the entire period of paganism. Rao’s other companions on the voyage were settled in the middle of the island. Maive brought from Samoa a tree called Fesi, which he planted in Vakper at Malaa [Malhaha] upon his arrival; after it bore fruit it was planted all over the island; from then on this tree was distinguished from all others; it was used for making seats and sailing craft for the chiefs; it even became the synonym for the chief whom the Rotumans called their Fesi. Such was the first generation of Rotuma. At that time Fiji had been inhabited for a long time; there was a family whose principal names were as follows: Tokaniua [Tokainiua], Arar, Fuanaru, Fuakili-vao, Fuakasia; they had finished making their fishing net when

Arar's wife complained about the division of the catch; Arar, ashamed of his wife's behavior, tore up the *vao* [fishing net] and carried the center, which is called Rek ["the pocket or middle part of a seine"] into the firmament; these are the stars placed close to each other in a circle, with one star in the middle: the star in the middle is Arar, the other stars are the *rek* of the net. Arar, from his new position, saw the Rotuma of Rao and he informed his brothers and Tokaniua immediately makes a vessel which he names Vaksair and proceeds toward Rotuma with his people. He soon arrives opposite Nuatau [Noatau]; at a place called Lepri he encounters [] Leprua [the two women with wings] and asks them where Rao is; they answer that he is at Oinafa. Tokaniua at once proceeds toward the opposite side to the west [in a clockwise circuit]¹⁰ and distributes his people in all the countries that he encounters. He leaves his vessel at Saukamo [Saukama]; that is the black rock which is located in the south of this country, facing the house called *utmarei*. He continues on his way toward Itutiu and Malaa [Malhaha] and arrives at Oinafa, where he meets Rao.

Tokaniua accosts Rao, saying to him: This country, to whom does it belong?—It is my country, answers Rae.—But where are your subjects? says Tokaniua.—They are in the interior, responds Rao. —But, says Rao in his turn, where are your subjects?—They are on the seashore, replies Tokaniua. Let us go see, says Rao, and together they go around Rotuma. Rao notices that indeed the country is inhabited and upon their return to Oinafa the quarrel becomes livelier.

Rao tries at first to embarrass Tokaniua. He goes down to the sea, brings back an immense basket of sand which he spreads on a mat and tells Tokaniua to count the grains. Tokaniua accepts the challenge and right then pulls from his breast two small serpents which he had brought with him; one of them sprawls in the sand and the other counts the grains. The one who counted the grains first then sprawls in his turn and the other counts the grains, and so it goes until the contents of the basket had been counted entirely. Tokaniua gives an account to Rao who has nothing to say. From that moment on the two Leprua women, displeased by Rao's conduct and by his lack of success, abandon him and even help Tokaniua to embarrass Rao; they advise him to tell Rao to count the waves of the sea which constantly come onto the rocks, which are called Vos. Tokaniua follows this advice and Rao accepts; he therefore goes to the seashore, he

counts one full day and one whole night, but the waves keep succeeding each other. At last he is tired out and in confusion he flees; his foot is caught in the serpent who is called Kine; he falls down, gets up, and full of shame he escapes to Atana [Hatana]. From then on Tokaniua is sole master of the island. (Sumi Mission Station, Rotuma Ms.)

Full explication of the symbolism in this myth would take more space than is here available and would lead into other avenues of interpretation. For the purpose of this article two subthemes stand out: the clear association of Raho with the land:inland:agriculture and Tokainiua with the sky:sea:coast:fish¹¹ and the shift of allegiance by the supernatural female figures following their recognition of Raho's impotence. Tokainiua's usurpation is thus supernaturally sanctioned, suggesting its ultimate legitimacy.

Usurpation by rivalrous chiefs and younger brothers is also a common theme in Trouillet's account and has resonance with other collections of Rotuman myth. Imputed motives include anger over slights, the incumbent chiefs misconduct, and sheer ambition. By implication, usurpation of this kind substitutes a more vital chief for a less vital one, and so enhances the symbolic potency of the office. But although potency is a central attribute of chieftainship, it poses a dilemma. In order to demonstrate that he is potent and thereby the recipient of supernatural favors, a chief must test the limits of his authority, for it is precisely by testing those limits that he demonstrates his affinity to the gods. The logic of his position thus encourages provocative behavior, severity of demands, and perhaps even cruelty. One of the terms that substitutes for *sau* in Rotuma is *mam'asa*, which in its noun form translates as "monster" or "giant," in its adjectival form as "cruel" (Churchward 1940:259). But cruelty and oppression on the part of chiefs are also an invitation to the people to rebel, since a chief's primary obligation is to use his powers to insure the prosperity of the land. There is a tension, therefore, between a chief's need to display power and the legitimate object of its utilization. It is this tension that is at the thematic heart of the narratives to be examined.

The Sequence of Rebellions in Trouillet's Narrative

Myth 2: The First Rebellion

The first rebellion¹² in the sequence presented by Trouillet takes place soon after Tokainiua's usurpation of Raho's precedence. A *mua* by the

name of Iftuag ignores a group of five brothers in the distribution of food at a feast, provoking the brothers to ravage nearby plantations, which leads to retaliation by the *mua*'s supporters, which in turn incites a rebellion led by the brothers. Assisted by Tokainiua, whose aid was solicited by their mother's ghost after she had strangled herself, the brothers conquer the *mua*'s army and kill him, subsequently installing one of their relatives in his place.

This particular incident, as related, hints at some of the basic features of the rebellion theme. To begin with, the incident is motivated by a failure on the part of the *mua* to distribute the fruits of the land in a just manner, implicitly justifying a rebellious act—ravaging, and presumably taking the produce from, the *mua*'s plantations. This is followed by an act of retaliatory destruction by the *mua*'s supporters, underscoring his parochialism as contrasted with his rightful representation of the general welfare. The important role of supernatural support for a successful rebellion is also dramatized. Thus the mother of the offended brothers transforms herself into a spirit in order to elicit aid from the demigod-warrior Tokainiua. Two other features commonly found in stories of rebellion are the mediating role of women and the usurpation of office by successful rebels.

Myth 3: The Prototypical Rebel

Whereas Raho, the "planter" of the island, was the initial *fakpure*, and Tokainiua, the overseas usurper, was the second, the third in Trouillet's account is Foouma (Fouma, Fuge), the indigenous rebel. The person against whom the rebellion takes place is the fifth *mua*, whose name is Saurotuam ("Rotuman king"), one of the original rebels who deposed Iftuag.¹³ Trouillet's terse account is as follows:

Saurotuam behaved better [than his predecessors] and was able to build his house; it was barely finished when some individuals from Fau [Fā'u (W)], namely Sauragpor, Tifao, and Maragfau, established a *Mua* in opposition to the one at Nuatau [Noatau (E)]. In order to make his authority recognized, Saurotuam orders them to bring a rock from Fau; they accept and start off. When they arrive at Tuakoi [in Hapmafau (s)] two giants of Tarasua [Hapmafau] oppose them, force them to abandon the rock and instead to go make war at Nuatau; they go and are vanquished. They flee, but Sauragpor, in his shame, does not want to return to his district; he stops at Tuakoi, lifts an enor-

mous rock called Mofuak,¹⁴ which still exists, and he disappears at the spot where he had lifted the rock, after having announced to his wife who was pregnant that after the child is born he should be given the name of Fuge, which was done. After the child called Fuge grew up he took up his father's quarrel and went to wage war against Nuatau, which this time was vanquished, and Fuge took on the authority of the great chief Vakoi of Rotuma. Fuge established another Mua called Tofak whom he took away to Fau. (Sumi Mission Station, Rotuma Ms.)

This story utilizes a strong form of opposition between Fā'u (W) and Noatau (E) to symbolize the conflict between chiefs and people of the land. The *mua* from Noatau is portrayed as oppressive through his demand that a rock be carried from Fā'u, but the justification for the initial rebellion and the reasons for its ultimate success are unclear from this cursory account. The cultural logic comes into focus, however, when Romilly's amplified version is examined. In this account the theme of oppression is much more explicit.

A long time ago the Motusa [(w)] people were conquered by the Noatau [(e)] people, and suffered the most abject slavery at their hands. They had to do the most degrading work and had no time to attend to their own gardens, or to build houses for themselves. This went on for a long time, and at last they got an order to bring big stones down to Noatau. Accordingly they made rafts and in this manner carried down a large number of stones. At last the work became too heavy for them, and they made up their minds to fight Noatau again. So one day, instead of taking stones, they went in a body to fight. After a severe battle they got beaten and had to run away. Fighting with the Motusa people there was a man called Sourangpol. This man had two wives. One he left at Motusa, and the other went to the fight with him to bring food. While Sourangpol had been collecting stones on the reef he had pulled up a big one and found a cave leading down under the island. Accordingly when he ran away he went with his wife to this place and descended underneath the ground. Down there he met a man who came up and spoke to him. Sourangpol said, "Who are you, and what is the name of this place?" The strange man replied, "This place is called 'Limarai,' and I am the king of it. My name is Narangsau." Narangsau then asked Sourangpol what he wanted.

Sourangpol replied that he had something very particular to say, "that he had been beaten in war, and badly treated, and that he had thereupon brought his wife to this place for protection." Narangsau at once pressed him to stay with him. Sourangpol, however, was uneasy about his other wife whom he had left at Motusa, and said he expected a child to be born. Narangsau said, "How soon?" and the answer was, "In about ten months." Sourangpol found himself so well off down in Limarai, that he decided not to revisit the upper earth any more. When, however, his child was born, he was informed of it by spirits. Limarai was the place where all the dead men's spirits went to. He sent a messenger back by the spirits, telling his wife to build a house in the bush for the boy, and promising that the spirits should look after him. This was done, and the child was put into it and left there. The food of the spirits agreed with him so well that the boy grew at a great pace, and at the end of a year was too big for the house. The house at that time was only a fathom long, and was not closed up at the ends. The mother was then ordered by the spirits to add another fathom to the house, but leave it open at the ends as before. At the end of another year the boy had grown too big again, and the house had to be enlarged another fathom. This went on for eight years, the boy growing a fathom every year, and the house being enlarged proportionately. He was now therefore eight fathoms long. When he had attained this size, and the spirits had reported the fact to Narangsau and Sourangpol, Narangsau said, "Eight fathoms is plenty long enough for that boy; if we allow him to go on growing, he will soon be too big, so don't lengthen the house anymore, but stop up the ends of it to prevent his growing." He then sent word by them that the boy's name was Foouma. No one but the father and mother knew of the child, as he had been kept in the bush. He soon began to walk about and to get very knowing. At this time the whole population of the island was being made to build a house for the chief at Noatau. Each village, however, left a few men to cook food to bring to them every day. Foouma came across some of them one day while he was taking a walk, and said, "Who are you, and what are you doing?" They said they were relations of his, and were cooking food for the people of Noatau. "What sort of food?" said he; they said, "Fish and puddings." Foouma then said, "I should like some fish and I should

like some puddings.” His relations, however, begged him not to eat at once, but that if he came back early in the morning he should have his fish and pudding. Foouma agreed to this, and came back in the morning, but his relations had taken their departure during the night, and had taken the food with them. He at once followed them down to the beach and launched a canoe to get to Motusa [(e) from Fā‘u (w)], as the two islands were not at that time joined together. The canoe was small and sank with his weight; accordingly he walked across, as the sea was not deep at that place. He saw the canoes of his relations on the other side, and their footmarks going along the beach. These he followed till he caught them up. At the last town, before getting to Noatau, he said, “Why do you run away, when you promised to give me fish and pudding? You have got the food you promised me there, and I will eat it.” They begged him not to, as they were afraid of the Noatau people, but Foouma ate most of it, but left some for the chief. He then told them to go on to the chief of Noatau along the beach, while he would go by the bush-road. After they had gone he pulled up a big tree for a club, and went on to Noatau by the bush-road. When he got there, the people were thatching the house. His relations, who had got there first, had told their own people to stand on one side so as not to get into trouble. Foouma at once began to kill the Noatau people with his club, beginning with those on the top of the house. Many of them ran away. After he had killed the people, he began knocking the houses over. Foouma beat the whole island that day. He then asked his own people, “When you came to Noatau, who treated you so kindly?” They said, “Only one man, Amoi.” Foouma said, “As I have killed the king, we might as well make Amoi king.” But Amoi was frightened, and did not wish to be king. He said, “Make my friend Tafoki king instead.” So Foouma took Tafoki, and made him Sau, and brought him to Itumutu [(W)]. He built a house for him there, and then went on himself to Sororoa.¹⁶ (Quoted in Romilly 1893:129-134)

The narrative is rich in symbolism and metaphor, but the focus here will be on just a few aspects that are of special significance for this article. Perhaps most important is the clear identification of Foouma with the people of the land (he is born in the interior of the west side of the island) and his nurturance by the spirits from Limarai, the underworld

abode of ancestral spirits. His growth is geared to an annual cycle, like the ritual associated with fertility (Gardiner 1898:460-466). Although the food of the spirits fosters his rapid growth, it is not allowed to go on uncontrolled, but is kept within “domestic” limits by means of a house. His potency, which derives from the ancestral spirits, is thus kept within the bounds of the social order—Foouma is superhuman, but human nevertheless. His encounter with relatives, who had prepared food for the people of Noatau (E), seems to encode a strong statement about the apportionment of resources between chiefs and people of the land, and perhaps about the ultimate source of legitimacy for chieftainship. The food is of the category *i’ini*, which contrasts with *tē la ‘ā* (“starchy vegetables”). *i’ini* includes both fish and puddings, and is the chiefly component of a feast.¹⁷ This sequence appears to assert the people’s priority rights—that by producing and preparing this food they form the foundation upon which chieftainship is constructed, a theme more directly symbolized by their contribution of stones for the chiefs house-site. It is noteworthy that Foouma eats most of the food but leaves some for the chief he is destined to kill, indicating a commitment to a just distribution of resources between chiefs and people. Finally, Foouma’s selection of a “kindly” person to be “king” (*sau* or *mua*) stands in marked contrast to the deposed oppressor. The selected man’s refusal is subject to a number of possible interpretations, one being that kindness, though desirable from the people’s standpoint, must combine with strength and potency rather than fearfulness for a chief to be effective. Foouma (Fuge), it will be recalled, assumes the position of great chief *vakoi* (*fakpure*) in Trouillet’s account. In both versions he takes Tofak (Tafoki), whom he installs as “king,” to Fā’u on the western end of the island, thus symbolically usurping the position on behalf of the people of the land.

Myth 4: The Defense against Invasion

There follows an incident that pits Foouma against a visitor from overseas named Seremoana and an invading group of Tongans under the leadership of a strong man named Raviak. Foouma and his “uncle,” named Unufanua, engage the Tongans in tests of strength and ultimately in combat, defeating them and driving them off. The two men then proceed to slay Seremoana, who harbored the Tongans, despite the fact that his daughter had married Tafoki, the *sau* (Romilly 1893:134-138; Gardiner 1898:510-512). The gist of the story is that Foouma, the rebel, is also the defender of the land against assault from invading

usurpers. It is significant that Foouma, a man from the western end of the island, teams with a senior kinsman (in Romilly's version) from the eastern side of the island to defeat the Tongans. In the opposition of Rotuman versus Tongan, therefore, chiefly potency (represented by Unufanua, the senior kin) combines with the potency of the people of the land (represented by Foouma, the junior kin) to generate sufficient power to ward off conquest by an outside usurper. Thus, whereas the initial myth places the people of the land in opposition to the tyranny of chieftainship, in its sequel the powers of the people are reunited with the powers of the chiefs to restore properly constituted authority to its central position.

Myth 5: The Prototypical Oppressor

According to Trouillet's oral history, it was during the reign of Savoiat, the sixth *fakpure*, that Malafu (Ma'afu) arrived in Rotuma from Tonga with a company of people and settled in Noatau. Malafu waged war against Varomua, the *sau* in office, and replaced him with his own man, Toipo, who was then wounded in battle and replaced by Tiu. Sometime later Malafu is reported to have killed Tiu and taken his place as *sau*. Trouillet relates the following account of the subsequent rebellion:

During the reign of Malafu, Pau, daughter of Katoagtau who was killed in the war, married Malafu's son who abandoned her; soon the country began to tire of Malafu's ways. Pau took advantage of that to take her revenge. The country stood behind her and all of Rotuma took up arms with the intention of waging war against Malafu and of getting rid of him and of all his people. Rotuma divided up into two armies, one in the north and the other in the south, and both proceeded toward Nuatau in the east. The army of the south encountered Malafu at Niufol [Pepjei] and there was a battle; Malafu was on the verge of being beaten when one of his old associates wounded him in the ribs and crossed over to the enemy.¹⁸ Vanquished and betrayed, Malafu fled to Nuatau [(e)] to organize a new army. The two Rotuman armies fell back and got together at Itutiu [(w)] to await Malafu, who came there again with the rest of his people; they fought desperately, but crushed by superior numbers Malafu was vanquished and killed and buried at Gasav [Itutiu]; Pau, the heroine of the war, was named Sau on the spot. (Sumi Mission Station, Rotuma Ms.)

Three features of this account are particularly significant. First, the statement that “the country began to tire of Malafu’s ways” implies transgressions—left indefinite in this account—against the rules of decorum for a sau. Second, Malafu’s son takes a woman of the land only to abandon her, implying a breach in the kinship connection between Malafu’s group and the indigenous Rotumans. And third, it is a woman—the very woman who was wronged—who leads the rebellion and ultimately replaces Malafu as sau. Thus the contrast is sharply drawn between a foreign male oppressor and an indigenous female liberator. The geographic code again lends emphasis to this opposition. Rotuma divides up into two armies, one in the north, representing the indigenous chiefly side, the other in the south, representing the people’s side. The armies initially move from the western (indigenous) end of the island to the eastern (chiefly, foreign) end, where the southern army forces Malafu into ignominious retreat. This seems to emphasize the fact that this is a people’s rebellion. The final victory takes place on the western end of the island, where the combined armies vanquish Malafu and bury him. Thus the indigenous component of the rebellion is again underscored, in this case by the location of the final triumph; but at the same time the combining of the northern and southern Rotuman armies speaks to the importance of merging chiefly and landed potency for the proper constitution of islandwide authority. This repeats the theme of Foouma’s repulsion of the Tongan invaders.

Churchward’s published version of this myth amplifies the earlier, abbreviated account reported by Trouillet. In this version Malafu (Ma’afu) conquers Rotuma and proceeds to appoint a Tongan as chief over each district in Rotuma. The oppression of these chiefs, and the indignities to which they subject Rotumans, are described in the following text:

Now all the Tongan chiefs that were living in the various districts of Rotuma were all the time giving difficult tasks to the people who served them, tasks which they had to perform day after day, [getting for the Tongans] things which they wanted to eat or things which they wanted to possess. And no matter how outrageously difficult the things ordered appeared to be, they had to be carried out all the same. Why, it is even said that the man who was stationed at *Tägmea* [Itu’ti’u] made it his invariable practice, every time a canoe was being paddled from the western end of the island to the eastern end, to compel it to turn in to *Tägmea*, whereupon, beginning with the man on the front

seat, and ending with the man who was steering, he would dig his finger-nails into their heads, before allowing the canoe to proceed on its journey. And if a canoe should happen to come from the eastern end to the western end, he would act in just the same way: first making the canoe turn in, and then digging in his finger-nails to the heads of each occupant in turn, and only after that would he let the canoe go on. It was impossible for him to see a canoe going past *Tägmea* without turning it aside to dig his nails into the heads of the occupants.

Now the man who was stationed at *Itu' Mutu* lived at *Ofoagsau*. And this district also was continually ill-treated by its man, just the same as each of the remaining districts in Rotuma. It is said that these men were all alike in their harsh treatment of the Rotumans. And this continued until the whole of Rotuma became afraid of the foreigners.¹⁹ (Churchward 1937:258)

One might interpret the action of the Tongan at *Tägmea* as a symbolic degradation of Rotumans attempting to connect the people of the land (on the western end of the island) with their indigenous chiefs (on the eastern end) so as to constitute a viable threat to the invaders. The narrative proceeds to recount how a very strong man of chiefly rank from Oinafa (E), named Fä'äfe, joined forces with a man from *Itu' Mutu* (W), named Alili. They arranged, upon the lighting of a signal fire on top of Mount Sororoa—the same mountain on which Foouma took up residence in *Itu' Mutu*—for the people in each district to slay the Tongan chiefs assigned to them. Thereupon a battle ensued in which the southern wing of the Rotuman army was led by Alili, the northern wing by Fä'äfe. After Malafu fell, Alili turned on Fä'äfe, caught him unaware, and killed him. The story ends with the following commentary:

The reason why *Alili* did this was that he saw that Fä'äfe was stronger than he, and he thought that when the war was over, then, if Fä'äfe was not dead, Rotuma would become Fä'äfe's instead of his. It was for that reason that he left his own wing to go over to [the] Hapmaka [wing] to kill *Fä'äfe*.

[This story is the origin of the saying, often heard even today], "*Alili* says that each one is to slay his own oppressor." (Churchward 1937:260, brackets and italics in original)

Thus in Churchward's version the theme of rebellion is doubly underscored. The people of the land not only rise up to slay the foreign Tongan oppressors, they also slay the indigenous chief whose potency

they required for success. Fä'äfe's power is portrayed in a fearful way, as in the account of his arrival by canoe at Itu' Mutu:

So they turned their canoe, and went ashore at *Faniua*. And just at that time the women of *Maftoa* came down to get some salt water. And this party of women arrived at the shore to find a canoe pulled up on to the shore, and *Fä'äfe* and his boatmen, having alighted on the beach, standing [there]. And the women saw what sort of man he was—his face, his body, his arms, and his legs, nothing but one mass of hair. And they were afraid, and turned on their heels and ran. (Churchward 1937:259)

The suggestion is that his power was untamed, and therefore dangerous. His acquisition of paramount chieftainship would presumably lead to another form of oppression, in this case an indigenous one. It should be pointed out in this regard that the system of local chieftainship instituted by the Tongans in the story—the placing of alien chiefs to rule over districts—is antithetical to the Rotuman system of drawing upon persons from within each district to serve as *gagaj 'es itu'u*. The story thus contains a powerful message affirming the rights of the people to domestic(ated) chiefs, especially at the district level. Although the Churchward version does not specify Alili's fate, in Trouillet's account he succeeds to the position of *vakoi*.

Thematic Variations: Other Rebellions in Churchward's Legends

Several other examples of rebellion can be found in Churchward's published collection and help amplify various aspects of Rotuman conceptions. These examples are summarized below, followed by comments about their possible significance.

Myth 6: Möstötō

The legend of **Möstötō** is about a cannibalistic *sau* who, out of jealousy for his wife's praise of **Möstötō**, sends the hero on a series of dangerous expeditions. Her praise stemmed from **Möstötō's** substitution of pigs and kava for human sacrificial victims, thereby ending the custom of cannibalism. He was led to do this by his elder sister, whose bones were transformed into the pigs and kava after she had been eaten by the *sau*. In the end the hero slays the *sau*, whose behavior can be construed as oppressive both on the grounds that cannibalism is a strong symbol for victimization and that the demands he made upon **Möstötō** were unreasonably arduous (Churchward 1939:462-468).

Myth 7: The Two Albinos

The chief villain in this story is a man named Fikimarä'e, from Malhaha. The two albinos, who had come from Tonga, learned that Hapmak and Fa'u were in a very bad way because Fikimarä'e was exercising his power in a despotic manner, sending his men to ravage the countryside in search of food. In their forays they would do whatever they wanted to the people's gardens and livestock. Through deception the albinos learn the secret of Fikimarä'e's invincibility at spear-throwing, and then announce to the people at the western end of the island that he could be defeated if someone were willing to sacrifice himself in combat. A man named Titupu volunteers, saying, "I'll be the victim! I will undertake to let Fikimarä'e spear me, caring only that our wives and little ones who will live after us may live in peace" (Churchward 1938:354).

Under the chiefs from the western end an army is equipped and sent to Malhaha. Titupu leads the charge while the two albinos lie in ambush, and after Titupu is hit and killed by Fikimarä'e's last spear, the albinos chase him down and kill him (Churchward 1938:351-355).

Myth 8: Tiaftoto

The right of rebellion is symbolized in another form in the story of Tiaftoto, the girl who lived in an oyster shell. She lived with her brother Miarmiartoto in a village that wandered about, attaching itself to other villages. Tiaftoto never went outside, never worked, and was treated with the greatest indulgence. Once, when the village attached itself to the sau's village on the other side of the island,²⁰ it was discovered by Tinrau, the sau's son.²¹ After initiating an exchange of feasts, Tinrau requests that Miarmiartoto give him his sister in marriage. This is arranged, but as a result of Tinrau's philandering the girl returns to her brother. Tinrau goes after her, but finds that the village has moved away, whereupon he weeps bitterly but finally has to give up the quest (Churchward 1939:331-335).

Myth 9: Masia and His Companions

The story of "Masia and His Companions" depicts, in contrast, the extreme form of chiefly domestication. Interestingly, Masia is not described as a chief, but rather as a "chiefly man" (*fā gagaj*). He was the leader of a "band of comrades" in his village when a great famine struck the land. On account of their hunger some men contemplated stealing,

but Masia called his companions together and expressed to them his desire that no one steal. "Let us think, gentlemen, of our own personal honour, and of the honour of our land," he said.

He then took twenty men, who pledged to die rather than steal, on a circuit of the island, recruiting followers along the way. When they reached the village of **Māisi** in Oinafa, Masia suggested to his followers that they remain there until they die, and all eventually succumbed (Churchward 1938:361-363).

Summary and Conclusions

Before drawing out the implications of these myths, it is necessary to comment on their relationship to history. One might construe the narratives as an attempt by Rotumans to record significant events from the past—that they are intended as history in our sense. In my opinion the evidence does not warrant such a conclusion. Whether or not certain incidents related in the narratives are based on actual events, they have been processed through such a powerful semiotic system that their validity as history must be dismissed. The power of the geographic code itself is enough to invalidate any claims to historical accuracy. A more defensible view is that chronological sequencing is part of the semiotic structure within which these myths are embedded. Thus the succession of *fakpure* in Trouillet's narrative—from Raho the founder, to Tokainuia the overseas usurper, to Foouma the indigenous rebel—is to be seen as a statement about the cultural logic of priorities in the constitution and reconstitution of the social order, rather than about a putative sequence of historical events. In general, Rotuman myths are preoccupied with relations between chiefs and the people over whom they rule, and the stories appear to represent explorations of various permutations of the problem.

The myths are quite clear with regard to the basic constitution of authority. It requires a combination of chiefly potency derived from external spirits, including high gods, who dwell either overseas to the east or in the heavens, and indigenous powers derived from the people's ancestral spirits who dwell in a netherworld to the west of the island. But to be effective, and legitimate, potency must be tempered by domestication. Collectively the stories reveal the pitfalls of either extreme. Those chiefs whose ambitions are unconstrained by concern for the populace bring hardship and misfortune. Their vitality is misdirected. But someone like Masia (myth 9), considerate as he is of the people's plight, is also unable to bring prosperity. He lacks divinely

derived vitality, or *mana* (signified in the myth by his lack of chiefly designation), and so can only preside over an honorable demise. Thus domestication without potency is also a formula for disaster.

A proper chief is one whose *mana* is potent but sufficiently domesticated to be directed toward the welfare of the entire population under his dominion. He eases rather than exacerbates the burdens of his subjects. He is entitled to first fruits and a reasonable portion of the produce of the land, but he cannot demand too much. The core of the issue lies in the requirement that a chief demonstrate his *mana*, which encourages the exercise of power in the form of demands. To be able to make strong demands and back them up is to display potency, but it also intensifies the tension between chiefs and their subjects. Chiefs who go too far are the conceptual equivalents of cannibals—they ravage their people by consuming their crops and labor. They also fail to inseminate the land, endangering fertility and prosperity, as symbolized by Malafu's abandonment of his indigenous wife in myth 5 and the philandering of Tinrau in myth 8.

These excesses, and others described in the narratives, justify rebellion in the context of Rotuman cultural logic. Of course, in a certain sense any *successful* rebellion is justified in Polynesian thought. Success is, in essence, the concrete expression of *mana*, which emanates from the gods, and it is the will of the gods that provides the ultimate legitimation of authority. A successful usurpation is therefore its own justification. In the narratives described previously the role of supernatural beings is quite explicit in insuring the success of rebellions. In myth 2 a female relative of the abused party transforms herself into an *'atua*, then solicits the assistance of the demigod Tokainiua in order to overthrow the offending chief; in myth 3 Foouma, the rebel, is nurtured by the spirits of the netherworld until he is potent enough to depose the *sau*. Foouma's supernatural powers are also evident in myth 4, although there they are supplemented by the potency, also supernaturally derived, of an indigenous chief. In myth 5 omens play an important role, indirectly suggesting supernatural favor, and in myth 7 supernatural support presents itself in the form of two albinos from Tonga. Albinos, like all anomalous creatures, are considered to be *'atua*; their being from "Tonga" underscores this association. The hero of myth 6, **Mös-tōtō**, slays his oppressor without explicit assistance from supernatural sources, but significantly, his is a surreptitious act of regicide and is not followed by a usurpation of authority. Nevertheless, even in that case, his deceased sister plays an important role insofar as her bones are transformed into the pigs and kava that bring an end to cannibalism, and

hence symbolically, to oppression. The absence of explicit supernatural intervention in myth 8 is likewise coupled with an absence of usurpation; the victimized people simply move away.

A final theme that pervades these myths is the instrumental role of women in generating rebellions. Women play roles as victim provocateurs (myths 5, 8), as mediators with the supernatural (myths 2, 3, 6), and as leaders of rebellion involving direct usurpation (myth 5). In a very powerful symbolic sense women are the antitheses of chiefs, whose potency is a manifestation of the male principle (Handy 1927:37). Women represent the opposing principle of domesticity, and it is from the interplay of these two forces that the narratives gain much of their dramatic appeal. A proper chief is potent enough to inseminate both the land and an indigenous woman in the interests of fertility and abundance, but he must be sufficiently domesticated so that he does not appropriate too much of the produce for himself. An oppressive chief is one whose behavior reflects an overplaying of the male principle of vitality, to the detriment of the people. It is therefore structurally appropriate for women to act as rebels who symbolically neutralize the abusive power of male chiefs.²²

By playing upon this theme Rotuman myths communicate to chiefs and people alike that there are limits to the lengths to which chiefs can go in the exercise of power. Beyond those limits the myths provide a charter for rebellion, and insinuate that supernatural supports are available to render them successful.

NOTES

This paper was inspired by participation in a seminar on Polynesian chieftainship held at the University of Hawaii during the spring of 1981. All participants in the seminar contributed to the interpretations presented in this paper, but I am especially indebted to Professor Marshall Sahlins, whose brilliant work on Fijian and Hawaiian cultures provided the theoretical framework for discussion.

I conducted fieldwork on Rotuma and among Rotumans in Fiji from October 1959 through June 1961. I wish to acknowledge the generosity of Dr. H. S. Evans, who made the Sumi Mission documents available to me. I am also deeply indebted to the many Rotumans who facilitated my research and treated me so warmly, and to the National Institute of Mental Health, which sponsored the research.

1. I am grateful to Ella Wiswell, who translated Trouillet's narratives into English at my request. Trouillet's text is inconsistent in some of its features, including tense. These are reflected in the English translation to preserve its basic flavor.

2. Hocart collected texts in Rotuman, but these were neither translated nor published; they remain with his collection of field notes. Throughout this paper I use Churchward's

orthography except when quoting directly from another source. (Place names used on the map and in figure 1, however, use standard orthography.) He offers the following guide to pronunciation, using English equivalents: a as clan, but shorter, unless written *ā*; *ā* as in want; *ā* as in cat; *ā* as in fan; e as in bet; f as in fish; g as *ng* in sing; h as in heart; i as in sit; j as *tch* in pitch; k as in rake; l as in laugh; m as in mask; n as in nine; o as in obey; *ö* pronounced as in German, somewhat like *er* in her; p pronounced as in English, but blunted somewhat toward b; r pronounced with a slight trill; s between English *s* and *sh*; t pronounced strictly dental, the tip of the tongue being pressed against the back of the top teeth; u as in put; *ii* pronounced as in German; this sound may be approximated by endeavoring to pronounce *ee* as in see, with the lips rounded; v as in vat; when *v* falls at the end of a word, particularly when following an *a*, it is often imperfectly articulated and sounds like *o*; ‘ glottal stop (Churchward 1940: Part 2, p. 13).

3. Where there are multiple versions of the same name used in different accounts I have included alternative representations in parentheses.

4. The word *vakoi* (*vakai*), as a verb, translates as “to be on the look-out, to watch or look out for, to look into the distance (for or at something)” (Churchward 1940:344). Hence the reference is to the chief, who is responsible for looking after the welfare of the island as a whole. The word *fakpure* is composed of the prefix *fak-*, “pertaining to,” and *pure*, “to decide,” “rule,” “control,” “judge,” hence as a noun, “decision maker” or “governing authority” (Churchward 1940:190, 291). The word *sau*, which is cognate with the Tongan *hau*, is translated simply as “king” by Churchward (1940:307), but a clue to its core proto-Polynesian meaning is the Rennellese usage “abundance of gifts from the gods” (Elbert). The word *mua* means “to be or go in front or before or first-either in place or in time or in order of merit, etc.” (Churchward 1940:268). *Gagaj ‘es itu ‘u* translates as “person of rank or merit in possession of a district” (Churchward 1940:209). The latter were selected from among specified families within each district; see Howard 1966. It is unfortunate that we have only the undifferentiated English word “chief” to refer to all of these positions.

5. The position of *sau* was rotated, reputedly between districts, according to custom. The term of office was six months (one Rotuman year), with the same individual often serving several terms; see Williamson 1924 for a summary of published accounts.

6. In the Rotuman conception true chiefs are external and nonindigenous—they are strangers to the land. This does not necessarily mean that they are actually of foreign origin, only that the assumption of chieftainship involves symbolic entrance into the society from outside. The underlying notion is that in order to reconstitute the society a paramount chief, that is, one who represents the polity, must come from outside (see Sahlins 1981). Thus Raho, as the founder of the island, is an anomaly, being both from outside and indigenous, while indigenous Rotumans who assume chieftainship are in a similar position. The permutations of these anomalies are the subject matter of much Rotuman myth (see Howard 1985).

7. The name “Tonga” (Rotuman Toga) should not be taken literally to refer strictly to the islands of the Tongan archipelago. Rather “Tonga” for Rotumans seems to refer to a mythical, or quasi-mythical, source of supernatural potency. In some narratives Tonga is located beneath the earth or the sea. The word is also used as an adjective in reference to the southeast trade wind.

8. In Trouillet's version of the myth Rotuma was first formed so that its foundation ran from north to south, but was ordered rotated so that it would lay from east to west (see map). A clockwise rotation would shift north to east, south to west, thus suggesting their equivalence.

9. In all other versions of this myth Maive is female. It is possible that Trouillet assumed masculinity incorrectly since the Rotuman pronoun (*ia*) is ambiguous.

10. A clockwise circuit, so that one's right side is toward the territory claimed, is a common symbolic strategem by which possession is asserted in Polynesian societies (Valeri 1985).

11. The association with the sea is symbolized not only in the identification of Tokainiua's brothers as fishermen and the prominence of the fishing net imagery, but in the names of three of the brothers as well. The root prefix *fua-* refers to a "fleet" (Churchward 1940:206).

12. I use the term "rebellion" in the general sense of "opposition to one in authority or dominance" (*Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*, s.v. "rebellion"). It is thus used to cover a range of actions from symbolic gestures of defiance to usurpation.

13. The third *mua*, Fasieta, is reported to have antagonized his relatives by his bad conduct and been put to death, to be replaced by Vuatagrot, one of the original rebellious brothers. He reportedly imitated the behavior of his predecessor and suffered the same fate (Sumi Mission Station, Rotuma Ms.).

14. Probably *mofu'āk*, "rock in the sea," plus causative suffix.

15. The stones were presumably used to construct an imposing house foundation. See Romilly's amplified version.

16. A hill in Itu' Mutu.

17. As in other Polynesian societies a complete meal consists of both *tē la 'a* and *'i'ini*, just as a complete polity consists of both people of the land and chiefs.

18. In Churchward's version the turncoat is Malafu's younger brother. He removes Malafu's symbol of chieftainship, a feather-adorned headdress and returns it only after it has been stripped of all its feathers but two, whereupon he and his crew return to Tonga, abandoning Malafu to his fate. The implication is that supernatural support is being withdrawn from Malafu as a result of his failure to be appropriately nurturant (see Churchward 1937:260).

19. Lit., "voyagers." In the version of this tale told to Hocart, the indigenous people suffered additional indignities, including being bashed over the head for spilling kava during ceremonies (Hocart 1912).

20. Place names are not used in this story, but opposition between chiefs and the people of the land is implied by virtue of the village of the *sau* being located "on the other side of the island."

21. A well-known character in Polynesian legend; see Handy 1927:120, 314.

22. For a vivid mythological enactment of the neutralization of undomesticated male potency, **see** the legend of Kirkirsas (Churchward 1938:220-225). The tale involves a cannibalistic giant who arrives on the beach at Maftoa (W). He is tricked by the woman Kirkirsas, who cooks him.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Biggs, B. 1965. "Direct and Indirect Inheritance in Rotuman." *Lingua* 14:383-445.
- Churchward, C. M. 1937, 1938, 1939. "Rotuman Legends." *Oceania* 8:104-116, 247-260, 351-368; 9:326-339, 462-473.
- . 1940. *Rotuman Grammar and Dictionary*. Sydney: Australian Medical Publishing Co. for the Methodist Church of Australasia, Department of Overseas Mission.
- Gardiner, J. S. 1898. "The Natives of Rotuma." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 27:396-435, 457-524.
- Handy, E. S. C. 1927. *Polynesian Religion*. B. P. Bishop Museum Bulletin 34. Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press.
- Hocart, A. M. 1912. Field Notes, Rotuma. Turnbull Library, Wellington, N.Z.
- Howard, A. 1966. "The Rotuman District Chief: A Study in Changing Patterns of Authority." *Journal of Pacific History* 1:63-78.
- . 1985. "History, Myth and Polynesian Chieftainship: The Case of Rotuman Kings." In *Transformations of Polynesian Culture*, edited by A. Hooper and J. Huntsman. Auckland: Polynesian Society.
- MacGregor, G. 1932. Field Notes, Rotuma. B. P. Bishop Museum Library.
- Pawley, A. 1962. On the Position of Rotuman in the Austronesian Language Family. Typescript.
- . 1979. "New Evidence on the Position of Rotuman." Working Papers, Department of Anthropology, University of Auckland, N.Z.
- Romilly, H. 1893. *Letters from the Western Pacific and Mashonaland 1878-1891*. London: D. Nutt.
- Russell, W. E. 1942. "Rotuma: Its History, Traditions and Customs." *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 51:229-255.
- Sahlins, M. 1981. "The Stranger-King, or Dumézil among the Fijians." *Journal of Pacific History* 16:107-132.
- Sumi Mission Station, Rotuma. Histoire de Rotuma. Unpublished Manuscript.
- Valeri, V. 1985 *Kingship and Sacrifice: Ritual and Society in Ancient Hawaii*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Williamson, R. W. 1924. *The Social and Political Systems of Central Polynesia*. 3 volumes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.