

**Network of Islands:  
Historical Linkages Among the Islands of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa.**

By

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B.A. Queen's University, 2003

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of Pacific and Asian Studies

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

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## Abstract

This study presents an analysis of the interactions observed among the West Polynesia islands of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, using concepts of regional systems and trade networks. The connections between these island groups in the period between the 1770s and the 1870s are examined in extensive detail. In particular, this analysis takes the theoretical framework of the world-systems approach of Chase-Dunn and Hall and applies a method involving networks of exchange to this region. These networks include the information network, the bulk products network, the political/ military network and the network of prestige valuables. Archival data show the operation and content of these networks and demonstrate that with the influx of European products in the early colonial period, there was an efflorescence of long-distance exchange in this region. This analysis of networks linking the island groups suggest that Fiji, Tonga and Samoa should be viewed as a regional unit instead of three distinct societies for many subjects of investigation.

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## Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
Maps and Tables.....	vi
Dedication.....	vii
Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
Main Argument.....	2
Significance and Method.....	5
Explaining the archival and fieldwork data used.....	8
Outline of the Content of the Thesis.....	10
Chapter Two: Theoretical Approach and Ethnographic Context.....	14
Expanding the World-systems approach into the Pacific Basin.....	14
Spatially Bounding World-systems.....	15
The Theory of Gift and the Theory of Commodities.....	18
West Polynesia Regional Circuit.....	21
Geographical Situation of the Islands.....	22
Political History of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa.....	25
Ethnographic Documentation of Trade in the Area.....	29
Chapter Three: Food and Knowledge in Interregional Exchange.....	35
Bulk Products.....	36
Why Bulk Products Must Be Redefined.....	37
Redefinition of Bulk Products Network for Oceania.....	38
Transportation of Vegetation.....	39
The Information Network.....	40
Substantive Definition for the Information Network in Oceania.....	41
Legends.....	42
Songs and Dances.....	45
Customs.....	47
Efflorescence of the information network.....	51
Chapter Four: War and Peace in West Polynesia.....	52
Political/Military Network.....	52
Political interaction within Fiji, Tonga and Samoa.....	53
Ceremonial similarities and interaction.....	58
Ma'afu, the Expansionary Chief.....	61
Military Interactions: Warfare.....	62
Weapons - Prestige and War.....	68
Canoes - Construction and Materials.....	73
Chapter Five: Prestige Valuables in West Polynesia.....	77
Prestige Valuables in Oceania.....	78
Flow of Trade.....	79

Whale's Teeth- Sources and Value of <i>Tabua</i> .....	81
Kava - Regional Value and Ceremony.....	83
Red Feather Trade.....	85
Description of the Kula bird.....	86
Importance of Red Feathers.....	88
Value Differences.....	91
The Centre of the Red Feather Trade.....	91
Efflorescence of the Prestige Valuables Network.....	92
Chapter Six: Conclusion.....	97
Methodology.....	98
Empirical Findings.....	100
Networks of Interaction.....	102
The Efflorescence of Trade and Exchange.....	103
General Conclusions.....	109
Bibliography.....	110

## Maps and Tables

Map 1: The West Polynesia Regional Circuit.....	23
Map 2: Marriage Links and Warfare Actions.....	60
Map 3: Flow of Red Feathers and Fine Mats.....	90
Map 4: Network Flows in the West Polynesia Regional Circuit.....	93
Table 1: Classification of Exchanges and Products into Networks.....	17

To Marc:

For all his love and support

## Chapter One Introduction

The *kula*...to the people of Vuna, it is only through its trade with Tonga that we became interested in this particular bird. (Tui Vuna, Personal Communication, September 2005)<sup>1</sup>

This opening passage by the late Tui Vuna, the hereditary leader of the 'Minor State of Vuna' on Taveuni, Fiji, (Hocart, 1952:61-68) highlights the theme of long distance trade in prestige valuables among the islands of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa in the West Polynesia regional circuit. This thesis examines the various aspects of the trade in prestige valuables and other products among the islands of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa during the period of the 1770s to the 1870s. Recent research using world-systems approaches has underlined the importance of regional systems of production and exchange for understanding of social transformation (Friedman 1994:6; Frank 1998; Marks 2000). The approach is to take a theoretical framework from world-systems theory and apply it and to show how the connections among the islands of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa changed over time. This study takes up from the works of Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997, 2000) because their concepts of interconnected networks of exchange are the best way to see how the interactions among the islands constituted a regional system.

In chapter one, the introductory materials set out the main argument of the thesis. This section will also look at the reasoning for examining the era from 1773-1874. A brief opening to method and theory shows how the world-systems approach can be expanded to include Oceania. The second section of chapter one, discusses world-systems approaches and the use of Chase-Dunn and Hall's theoretical framework as a basis for the methodology of the thesis. The next section describes the sources used for data collection. These include both

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<sup>1</sup> Personal statement given by the Tui Vuna during my fieldwork observations at Vuna in southern Taveuni, Fiji in September 2005. This Tui Vuna died in April 2006 (personal communication with relatives of the Tui Vuna).

ethnographic and archival sources as well as a brief fieldwork trip to the region. The final section of chapter one describes the outline to the chapters that follows and highlights the argument that will be discussed in detail below. The chapters that follow examine the relations between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa in the first hundred years of contact. I will discuss the history of the connection between culture and pre-modern trade in the South Pacific. It has become important to understand regional systems of production and exchange in order to comprehend the social transformation of these societies. This thesis has two main foci: the analysis of the networks of interaction as described by Chase-Dunn and Hall in order to demonstrate that the world-systems approach can be applied to Oceania and the observations of changes to these networks in the post contact period. This study will suggest that one must fully examine the area of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa as a regional unit in order to study the networks of interaction<sup>2</sup> that existed during this era.

### **Main Argument**

In the analysis of the various connections among the islands of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, trade will be used as a general term to refer to the transfer of products and services that includes specific forms such as gifts and commodities. Exchange, on the other hand, will be used to describe specific cultural trade in the region. One goal of this study is to show how the complex networks of pre-modern trade between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa were illustrated through the flow of prestige valuables and political/military interaction. The aspects of social exchange in these societies emphasized the relation between trade and marriage. Ultimately, as Adrienne Kaeppler's (1978) seminal paper showed, the Tongan elite social structure was maintained by long distance intermarriages whereby

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<sup>2</sup> There are four networks of interaction that will be analyzed: the bulk goods, information, political/military and prestige goods networks.

certain Tongan women would marry Fijian men and Tongan men would marry Samoan women. One reason for this marriage interaction is because the traditional Tongan societal system was upheld by external marriages. A male chief's children would be outranked by his sister's children. The maintenance of the Tongan social structure was upheld through the marriage of the highest chief's sister (Tu'i Tonga Fefine) to the Tui Lakeba of Fiji (Gifford 1929:79-80). Because of the patrilineal<sup>3</sup> emphasis, political inheritances of the children of the Tu'i Tonga Fefine belonged to the Fijian line of the father and therefore did not compete with the heirs of the Tu'i Tonga. This system was institutionalized within the Tongan society so that the *Fale Fisi*, or Fijian 'house' of the Tu'i Lakepa that derived from these marriages, became a recognized part of the Tongan societal structure (Kaeppler 1978:246-52).<sup>4</sup>

The interactions among Fiji Tonga and Samoa changed over time with the influx of Europeans and their products. This study will show that the items traded and the connections in West Polynesia effloresced from the late 1830s until the cession of Fiji in the 1870s.<sup>5</sup> This material shows an increase or efflorescence of gift exchange in this region (Gregory 1982:116, 1997; Salisbury 1962).

The period analyzed in this thesis is based on the archival sources available from this period. Regular written accounts commence in the 1770s, so this decade is my historical starting point and indigenous trade closed off by the 1870s. Therefore the historical thesis period is from the 1770s to the 1870s. The

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<sup>3</sup> Determining descent through the male line

<sup>4</sup> To illustrate the substance of this trade it is helpful at this point to draw on Kaeppler (1978) who observed that in marriages between Fijians and Tongans the Fijians would give canoes, wooden bowls, wooden neck rests, slit gongs and sandalwood. The Fijians would receive from the Tongans mats, bark cloth, sennit, whale teeth, pearl shells and stingray barbs. In marriages between Samoans and Tongans, the Samoans would exchange fine mats for these prestige items and the Tongans would give bark cloth, large sleeping mats and red feathers to the Samoans (Kaeppler 1978: 248, 249, 252).

<sup>5</sup> The cession of Fiji to Britain, and later, the colonization of Samoa by the Germans and Americans, led to the creation of borders which prevented the type of long-distance trade that had existed for generations.

leadership structure that was integral to the connections between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa existed from the 1600s to the 1800s (Aswani and Graves 1998; Barns and Hunt 2005; Gunson 1993; Kaeppler 1976; Spurway 2002; Tuimaleali'ifano 1990). During this period, leadership and exchange relations were linked within these island groups. The cession of Fiji to the British in 1874 marked the end of these exchange relations.

This thesis will extend world-systems approaches, which examine regional trade systems, into the Pacific Basin. World-systems approaches demonstrate that the world and regions should be taken as a unit of analysis, rather than local areas whose boundaries were often arbitrarily assigned during colonial times. World-systems theorists debate issues of importance to the operation of regional trade systems in the pre-modern period. R. B. Marks in his book *The Origins of the Modern World: a Global and Ecological Narrative* elucidates that one should use regions as a unit of analysis rather than focus on individual countries.<sup>6</sup> In his description of the world-systems approach, Marks carefully notes in a footnote that for the purposes of his book, "the world" for the time being, excludes the Americas, southern Africa and much of Oceania (Marks 2002:42 fn.). I believe that Marks' coverage opens the door for further research in these other areas of the world not explicitly discussed in the world-systems theory (Marks 2002:42). Because there has not been explicit research in Oceania with the world-systems approach in mind, several issues come up when one takes this overall theoretical approach. Therefore, in order to apply this approach to Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, one must use other authors who explicitly discuss the intricacies of Oceanic society to fill in the gaps. The works of Gregory (1982,

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<sup>6</sup>Marks argues, for example, that although the Industrial Revolution began in Britain, it was not because of English pluck, inventiveness, or politics, but rather because of global developments that included India, China and the New World colonies. In other words, the Industrial Revolution was historically contingent on global forces (Marks 2002:15). See map of the eight circuits of the 13<sup>th</sup> century World System (Marks 2002: 34).

1997) and Mauss (1990) define the concepts of gift and commodity exchange as well as the values and social relations behind exchange in Oceanic societies. These works, along with several others,<sup>7</sup> will allow me to explain the system of exchange in West Polynesia during the early modern era.

### Significance and Method

Expanding the world-systems approach into West Polynesia is innovative because these island groups have traditionally been analyzed as particular societies and cultures instead of as parts of a regional unit. There has been a tendency in the literature to examine these islands as closed societies in one simple part because of a tendency to see the distances between the islands as a barrier to travel and trade. This attitude has changed in recent years as several ethnographers have begun to document the deep connections between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa (Aswani and Graves 1998; Barns and Hunt 2005; Gunson 1993; Kaeppler, 1978; Spurway 2002, 2004; Tuimaleali'ifano 1990). Even though the connections in this region have begun to be documented, there has been little attempt to place these connections into a wider theoretical framework. This study will show how this theory of world-systems can be applied to the Fiji-Tonga-Samoa triangle.<sup>8</sup>

A central critique made by all world-systems theory is studies that look only at single groups, societies, or states are doomed to misunderstand social change, because much of it originates in the interactive and structured relations

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<sup>7</sup> Please see attached bibliography for further theoretical references.

<sup>8</sup> In addition to world-systems theory, the ecological perspective should be understood because of its importance for comprehending the interconnections in the West Polynesia regional circuit. Kirch (1994) explores the problem of agricultural intensification in relation to environment, technology, population and socio-political structures among the tropical cultivators of Polynesia. Kirch couples the ethnography of agricultural practice with archaeological studies of agricultural exchange over the long term. (Kirch 1994:8-11). This theory is important because it recognizes that there is an ecological component to world-systems. The particular form that this environmental contrast takes in Oceania involves the difference in resources available in Fiji, Tonga and Samoa respectively.

among the units (Chase-Dunn and Hall 2000:85-86). In the majority of the world-systems literature, Oceania has not been explicitly examined. Many world-systems theorists (Frank 1998; Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997, 2000) describe the regional exchange systems of Asia and Europe more frequently than other areas. Therefore, the analysis of Pacific material is an addition to the literature because existing studies are of an ethnographic nature and this thesis study uses world-system concepts to extend coverage using this approach to a new region.<sup>9</sup>

The main method I use is analysis of archival materials from the era between the 1770s and the 1870s. To get an understanding of the era, this work will examine primary sources of various types including voyager, missionary and beachcomber accounts of the region.<sup>10</sup> The theoretical framework I use is based on the world-systems approach described by Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997, 2000). In his theory, he discusses four spatially bound networks that are the basis for my data collection. This study uses this particular world-systems theorist in order to bring this theoretical framework into Oceania because the break down of the connections between societies into various forms of interaction provides a method to analyze data from archival and ethnographic sources. The scheme of networks was used to catalogue the data. These elements include: bulk products, information, political/military interaction and prestige valuables (Chase-Dunn and Hall, 2000:88-90). In order to apply these elements to Oceania, I had to modify these four networks and create several categories within them. In the bulk products network, I placed planting materials and root crops into this category. Since the majority of communication in this region was oral, I chose the categories of legends, songs, dances and customs to demonstrate contact in this region within the information network. Political/military interaction is a very

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<sup>9</sup> The works of Malinowski 1922; Fortune 1932; Harding 1967; Alkire 1972, 1978 looked at systems of regional exchange in parts of Oceania. These studies employed an ethnographic methodology rather than a theoretical concept of world-systems.

<sup>10</sup> For detailed information please see attached bibliography.

large category in the West Polynesia regional circuit. Under political interaction, I put references to leaders interacting with each other, ceremonial interactions like marriage<sup>11</sup> and Ma'afu, the Tongan chief.<sup>12</sup> In the category of military interaction, I divided the section into three areas: combat, weapons<sup>13</sup> and canoes. The prestige valuables network was another significant network in this region. In this network, I examined whale's teeth, *kava*<sup>14</sup> and the trade of red feathers.<sup>15</sup> In order to demonstrate the frequency of exchange in this regional circuit, I described the presence or absence of these elements in the data. Upon examination of these networks of exchange, one can demonstrate how the West Polynesia regional circuit can be understood from the world-systems perspective.

Aside from archival sources, I conducted a brief privately-funded excursion to Taveuni, Fiji, in order to gather information from the indigenous population that was not available to me in the sources from Canada. I chose to examine Taveuni in detail because it was the historical centre of the red feather trade. One goal was to find the present location of the ancient town of Nasea, which was the historical capital of the red feather trade (Derrick 1951:246). While I was in Taveuni, I was introduced to the Tui Vuna<sup>16</sup> and was invited into several villages, where I experienced the Fijian way of life first hand. Although my field observations were brief, they certainly enhanced my understanding of the region and its people, and provided original data on specific points central to the thesis.

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<sup>11</sup> I decided to place marriage in this category because of its importance for maintaining the social structure in Tonga.

<sup>12</sup> Ma'afu, a Tongan chief, was placed in this category because of his great influence on Fijian society from the 1850s to the 1870s.

<sup>13</sup> Although there were weapons in this region that were used for ceremonial purposes, I decided that a weapon is a weapon, whether or not it was used for warfare.

<sup>14</sup> *Kava* was placed into this category because of the significance it carries in this region.

<sup>15</sup> The trade of red feathers in the West Polynesia regional circuit will be examined in greater detail because the exchange of these feathers can be seen as a metaphor for the flow of trade among the islands of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa.

<sup>16</sup> This man was the title holder for the southwest part of Taveuni. He was a man of great importance and it was an honour to be able to meet with him and share a conversation about the culture and history of the Vuna area.

Another goal of my fieldwork in the region was to answer some questions that arose out of the data that I collected from archival sources. Since the majority of the archival sources are written by Europeans, I wished to gather information on how the indigenous population felt about this trade connection and their role in the region. The fieldwork that I was able to carry out in the region offers original data to the existing material and demonstrates that these connections are still visible even 130 years after the majority of the trade ceased.

### **Explaining the archival and fieldwork data used**

The majority of information that was gathered for this thesis was collected from archival and ethnographic sources on the region. Beginning in the 1770s voyagers regularly came first to Tonga and Fiji, then to Samoa and described their travels in journals. These journals have become important primary archival sources on these regions. One of the more important sources this thesis examined was the Journals of Captain James Cook. Cook offers a detailed perspective of Tonga and the local population. In these records, there is evidence of Fijians and Tongans interacting with each other. He provides early evidence of prestige valuable trade in this region. Cook observed the trade of red feathers in Tonga and documented the reverence this item was given by the local population:

The parrot feathers on [the] Tongan chiefly regalia all come from Feegee, as also some of their finest striped and chequered [bark] cloth, the *masi* or *siapo* and a few other articles' (Cook 1784: 145). The demand for red feathers was 'so great that it frequently occasions quarrels for if the people of Feegee refused to trade, the others rather than go without will fight for them' (Cook 1784: 147). Carriage of the feathers to Samoa depended on Tongan seafarers who returned home with finely woven Samoan kilts. (Cook 1784: 145-147)

After the explorers came, several European travellers came to the South Pacific to live as beachcombers and escape the restrictions of European life. One of the most famous beachcombers in Tonga was William Mariner. Mariner's account of his travels offers a wealth of information on Tongan society during the early nineteenth century, when the connections between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa were at their height. Mariner's knowledge of Tongan language and customs offers a unique insight into Tongan society that no other European was able to provide before or since (Martin 1991). Mariner observed the trade of sandalwood and the feathers of the red collared lory in return for axes and chisels or whales' teeth. He also described the Tongan trade for canoes and other weapons of war from Fiji in exchange for stingray barbs (Martin, 1991:189-191).

An observer who spent a lot of time in the Fiji islands was Mary Wallis. Wallis was the wife of a beche-de-mer trader in Fiji and she went with her husband on several trips from 1844-1853 and observed the local population's engagement in trade (Wallis 1983, 1994). Her journals offer a woman's perspective of Fijian society and customs. Wallis gives detailed accounts of a Tongan presence in Fiji, and describes both conflict and trade amongst the local population (Wallis 1983: 23-27,63-71,77-89,93-108,165-214,235-287).

During the nineteenth century many missionaries went to the South Pacific in order to convert 'the savages' to Christianity. Many of the travellers wrote of their experiences and observations in the region. Some of the more notable contributions to the literature include John Thomas (1852), Walter Lawry (1850), John Williams (1858), Shirley Baker (1951) as well as the botanist, Berthold Seemann (1860). All of these personal journals discuss the historical contact between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa in various details.

Beyond primary accounts of interactions between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, there are also scores of ethnographic accounts of the region. The sources that demonstrate the clearest connections between the islands groups are of various types.<sup>17</sup> All of these sources describe the various connections linking Fiji, Tonga and Samoa; including conflict, trade and marriage. This thesis will take this ethnographic material and draw out examples of the general patterns in the connections between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa.

### Outline of the Content of the Thesis

In chapter two, I will discuss the theoretical framework for the thesis as well as an ethnographic analysis of the region as a whole. The first section of chapter two examines the theoretical framework of the world-systems approach and explains how this will be applied to West Polynesia. In the second section of chapter two, I will discuss the complexity of this trade system by combining the various elements of the world-systems approach and the theory of gift exchange. I will then introduce the geographic area of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa and define the West Polynesia regional circuit. In the next section of chapter two, I will discuss specific geographical differences within the region. Finally this chapter will examine the ethnographic documentation of trade in this region and show some of the documented connections among the West Polynesia regional circuit.

The third chapter will examine the bulk products<sup>18</sup> and information networks.<sup>19</sup> This study will combine these two networks because as of this

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<sup>17</sup> Key sources on Taveuni in Fiji include: R. Derrick (1951), A. M. Hocart (1913, 1929, 1927 and 1952), N. Thomas (1986, 1991), and D. Rouledge (1985). These are authors that did their ethnographic work in Fiji. I. C. Campbell (1992), E. Ferdon (1987), E. W. Gifford (1929), P. Van der Grijp (1995) are authors that examine Tonga before the twentieth century and M. Mead ([1930] 1969), Freeman (1983 and 1994), F. Henry (1980), A. Krämer (1994), M. Meleisea (1987) R. Watson (1918) examine the ethnography Samoa during this same period. R. Ewins, K. Howe, A. Kaeppler (1970, 1978, 1996 and 1999), A. Lessin, and P. Lessin (1970), M. Sahlins, J. Spurway (2002 and 2004) and M. Tuimaleal'ifano (1990) combine either both or all three of the island groups in their ethnographic study of the region. For detailed references to the sources by these writers, please see the attached bibliography.

<sup>18</sup> This network is also known as bulk goods. It is one of Chase-Dunn and Hall's networks of interaction. This network encompasses trade in large quantity of staple foods or products (Chase-Dunn and Hall, 1997, 2000).

writing, I have not found the trade of bulk goods on a large scale in this part of the South Pacific. I have found that unlike the exchange of bulk goods, the exchange of information was quite common in the period from the 1770s to the 1870s. During this period, information such as dances, stories and customs were exchanged through marriage and other links among Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. These exchanges of information demonstrate that the linkages among these island groups had existed long before European contact. In the final section of this chapter, I will look at how the information network effloresced in this region.

In the fourth chapter, I will examine the political/military network as defined by Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997, 2000) and apply this concept to the West Polynesia. This chapter will examine the various instances of trade connections with respect to military goods such as clubs and spears as well as political alliances and marriages that existed within the region. In the fourth chapter I will also discuss some of the fieldwork data that I was able to gather on my short trip to Fiji. This chapter will also examine the relative value of these items as described by Mauss (1990). The environment will be discussed in this chapter because it had a direct impact on what each island group was able to produce. I will also examine what changes, if any, occurred over time to look at the question of efflorescence<sup>20</sup> as described by Gregory (1982, 1997). The political/military network is particularly important for the understanding of the region because many of the connections stem from these political/military interactions.

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<sup>19</sup> "Information networks" is one of Chase-Dunn and Hall's networks of interaction. This network encompasses communication among groups.

<sup>20</sup> Efflorescence is the expansion of trade and exchange in an area (Gregory 1982). In this thesis I will apply the idea of efflorescence for each of Chase-Dunn's networks of interaction. Efflorescence of the information network includes the addition of written communication. In the political/military network, efflorescence involves the addition of European weaponry and materials such as iron and guns. Efflorescence of the prestige valuable network includes the incorporation of foreign items into this regional trade circuit.

In the fifth chapter I will examine the final network that is described by Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997, 2000), the prestige valuable network. Prestige valuables were the most important items in this sub-world system<sup>21</sup>. These valuables included such items as mats, sandalwood and red feathers from the collared lory. The fifth chapter will first map out the flow of trade in the region. It will also examine the trade of one prestige valuable in particular: the red feather. Throughout the literature, there are various detailed descriptions of the red feathers from the collared lory (*Phigys solitarius*) being traded within the region. The exchange of this feather is important because it is indicative of the trade system as a whole. These birds were very common in Fiji and were not given the same value that the Tongans and Samoans allocated to them. The Tongans prized these feathers very highly and there are descriptions in the literature of wars being fought over these precious feathers. The Tongans acquired these red feathers from Fiji and traded them to the Samoans who put some of them into their highly decorative mats which were then traded back to Tonga and Fiji. In this chapter, I will utilize both the fieldwork data that I collected while I was in Fiji and the extensive archival data I have examined to formulate the descriptions of this triangular exchange.

The conclusion of this thesis will analyze the previous chapters and contribute new ideas to the literature. It brings the analysis of Chase-Dunn and Hall's networks together and shows that the political/military network had the most frequent interaction in the region. The conclusion will also show why Fiji, Tonga and Samoa should be seen as part of a larger social system and examine the efflorescence of these networks during the post-contact period.

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<sup>21</sup> Whereas world-systems are defined as regional divisions of labour composed of several different cultural groups, sub-world systems are defined as "small-scale systems" covering a limited geographical area, within which all that is essential for the survival of the collective is done (Chase-Dunn 1997:13).



## Chapter Two

### Theoretical Approach and Ethnographic Context

It is important to situate the connections between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa into a wider context. This research project will examine Pacific trade between the 1770s and the 1870s. The following chapter will outline the theoretical framework of the thesis as well as the geographical and political history of West Polynesia. In the first section in chapter two, the study will look at the world-systems approach as the theoretical framework for the thesis. Since research of this nature has not previously been done, one must demonstrate that this theory can be applied to this region. In the second section of chapter two, I will explain the details of the theory of gifts and commodities and show why it must be examined alongside the world-systems approach in this region. In the third section of chapter two, I will describe the West Polynesia regional circuit and demonstrate why it is an important area of study. In the fourth section of chapter two, I will look at the geographical situation of the islands. In the fifth section of chapter two, I will examine the political history of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. In the final section of chapter two, I will look at the ethnographic documentation of trade in the region. In order to comprehend the reasoning behind applying the world-systems approach into Oceania, one must first understand the environment and history of the region. The interaction within the West Polynesia regional circuit is demonstrated through the analysis of network connections that existed in this area.

#### **Expanding the world-systems approach into the Pacific Basin**

The world-systems approach emphasizes connections among countries and regions that were previously understood through the study of their internal dynamics. Up until recently, the focus of this theoretical framework has been the Afro-Eurasia region. However, Marks, (2002) explicitly points out that in the

original conception of the world-systems approach, the formulation excluded the Americas, southern Africa and much of Oceania (Marks 2002:42). I believe that Marks's coverage opens the door for further research in these other areas of the world that are not explicitly discussed among current world-systems theorists (Marks, 2002:42). Because there has not been explicit research in Oceania with the world-systems approach in mind, several issues come up when one takes this overall theoretical approach. Therefore, in order to apply Fiji, Tonga and Samoa to this approach, one must use other authors who explicitly discuss the intricacies of Oceanic society to fill in the gaps. The works of Gregory (1982, 1997) and Mauss (1990) describe the concepts of gift and commodity exchange as well as the form and reason for exchange in archaic societies. These works, along with several others,<sup>22</sup> will allow me to explain the system of exchange and associated regional relationships that existed in West Polynesia during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **Spatially Bounding World-Systems**

The world-systems approach suggests that there is a connection between culture and trade in the world and sub-world economic systems. Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997, 2000) describe how world-systems generally come in four types: kin-based, tributary, capitalist, and socialist. Each type of system operates based on different ideas but each generates four types of interaction networks: bulk goods, prestige goods, political/military and information. Chase-Dunn and Hall argue that kin-based world-systems can be traced back 10-12,000 years but have gradually become a sub-set of tributary and capitalist systems (Chase-Dunn and Hall 2000:89-91). The expansion and contraction of these networks of exchange demonstrate that over time these systems can effloresce and change. In the West Polynesia regional circuit, the interactions and exchanges effloresced during the

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<sup>22</sup> Please see attached bibliography for further theoretical references.

early western contact and trade period, only eventually to cease with the creation of borders and impact of other forces during the colonial period.

Intermarriage networks are also central institutions of interconnectedness in many systems, but especially in kin-based systems where they are a fundamental basis of geo-politics and geo-economics (Collins 1992:376) Furthermore, marriage exchanges in kin-based systems are almost always associated with exchanges of prestige valuables (Chase-Dunn and Hall 2000: 88-89). This association between marriage and prestige valuables was common in the West Polynesia regional circuit.

In Chase-Dunn and Hall's theoretical framework, they used regularized political/military interaction to explain how various regions were connected through politics and warfare. Typically, this political/military network tended to differ from the bulk materials network and the prestige valuables network because these networks were mostly about the exchange of items, not people or ideas. Chase-Dunn and Hall also note that the information network is present alongside the other networks of interaction. With these criteria, Chase-Dunn and Hall proposed four networks of interaction: bulk-materials exchange network, prestige-valuables exchange network, political/military exchange network and the information exchange network (Chase-Dunn and Hall 2000: 89-91).<sup>23</sup> These four interaction networks will be used in later chapters as part of the methodology to expand the world-systems approach into Oceania. The accompanying table lists the categories of these products.

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<sup>23</sup> Although other options for an analytical approach are available to further develop this scheme and increase the number of categories, I have chosen to maintain the integrity of Chase-Dunn's original model. I have done this in order to show that the existing model is applicable to Oceania I have applied it in an unmodified form. Using this scheme also has advantages of making this area applicable for comparisons with other areas.

Table 1  
**Classification of Exchanges and Products into Networks**

Bulk Products	Information	Political/Military	Prestige Valuables
Lamp Black	Songs	Weapons	Red Feathers
Seed Yams	Dances	Warfare Actions	Whales' Teeth
Subsistence Food	Legends	Canoes	Kava
	Customs	Cultural Similarities	Mats
		Political Alliance Support	
		Ma'afu's Territorial Expansion	

Source: Developed using the categories of networks from Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997, 2000).

Often, these networks will define a set of interconnected boundaries. Generally, bulk materials will compose the smallest regional interaction net. Political/military interaction will compose a larger net which may include more than one bulk materials net and prestige valuables exchanges will link even larger regions which may contain one or more political/military networks. Even though it may be counterintuitive, Chase-Dunn and Hall proposed that the information net could be either larger or smaller than the prestige valuables net (Chase-Dunn and Hall 2000: 89-90). This phenomenon is due to the fact that sometimes valuables can be exchanged beyond the range of information. For example, when trade goes from partner to partner the physical objects may travel much further than the information attached to these items. Also, during times of severe warfare the political/military boundary may cut the flow of information even while prestige valuables cross the boundary via winding down-the-line

exchanges<sup>24</sup> (Chase-Dunn and Hall 2000: 88-91). The interactions between these four networks are important for understanding the various connections within this regional system of trade. The following chapters will demonstrate the existence of these exchange networks in Oceania. Since the economy in this region is one of gift-exchange, there will be modifications to Chase-Dunn and Hall's model in order to reflect the economic and geographical differences in this region.

### Theory of the Gift and Theory of Commodities

The world-systems approach is based upon the world economic system, which is, for the most part, a currency based system (Marks 2002:46). In West Polynesia, however, Mauss (1990) noted that there is little evidence of currency or currency based markets. The markets that take place in this region are those that involve trade with the exchange of valuables instead of currency. This situation creates a problem for placing the world-systems approach in this region because the exchange values appear to be reciprocity based rather than commodity based. In Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, during the pre-colonial period, the form of long distance trade was gift exchange rather than commodity<sup>25</sup> transactions. Therefore, in order to go beyond this world-systems view, this thesis will also look at the theory of the gift (Gregory 1982, 1997) with respect to pre-modern Polynesia because this theory explicitly examines both Melanesian and Polynesian societies.

Mauss (1990) observes that gift exchange is generally associated with kin-based societies and not class-based societies and that gift giving places the debtor

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<sup>24</sup> "Down-the-line exchanges" means objects that start in one area and are traded to another area then traded to yet a different area. This is similar to the way that the red feathers of the *kula* bird in Fiji were traded to Tonga, who then traded these red feathers to Samoa. Fiji did not trade the red feathers directly to Samoa, it was only through Tonga that the Samoans received these feathers.

<sup>25</sup> A commodity is defined as a socially desirable thing with a use-value and an exchange value (Gregory, 1982:10). The aim of the transactor in this economy is to maximize his profit and use the concept of money as a social relation.

in a subordinate position (Mauss 1990:63). Therefore gift-exchange is a means by which the relations of domination and control are established in a clan-based economy. In his classic study of exchange in pre-modern societies Mauss describes the concept of a system of total services as practiced among Polynesian societies, in particular, among the Samoans, Maori, Tahitians, Tongans and Mangarevans (Mauss 1990:8-10). Mauss argues that while Polynesian societies are systems of total services, they were not of the "antagonistic" type found among the groups of the American Northwest. The Polynesian societies appeared to Mauss to lack the elements of rivalry, destruction and combat found in many Melanesian groups (Mauss 1990:8,18). Instead, Mauss places the emphasis on the other elements of the potlatch. First, the system of contractual gifts in Samoa extends not only to its prominence in relation to marriage, but also to other significant occasions such as: birth, circumcision, sickness, female puberty, funerals and trade. Second, two elements can be distinguished: the honour, prestige and *mana* conferred by wealth; and the absolute obligation to reciprocate these gifts under pain of losing that authority (Mauss 1990:8). Mauss therefore identifies the mechanism for the obligation of reciprocity of the gift in Polynesia as a moral and spiritual one associated with the concepts of *mana*, *taonga* and *hau* (Mauss 1990:8-13). Although the presence of gift exchange in Polynesia is established in the literature, I am open to the idea of the existence of a limited type of commodity exchange existing within a reciprocity-based gift exchange society.

Gregory (1982), attempts to explain the paradox brought about by colonisation and the efflorescence of gift exchange in a world dominated by commodity production and exchange. Efflorescence involves the increase in the amount and frequency of gift exchange and the incorporation of Western commodities into local exchange systems (Gregory 1982: 4, 115, 166). It is my proposition that this process occurred in 19<sup>th</sup> century Polynesia under conditions

of new mercantile trade. Gregory mentioned that this process is noted in Papua New Guinea in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Gift exchange relations, in contrast to commodity transactions, are based on a debt economy where the aim of the individual conducting the transaction was to acquire as many gift-debtors as they possibly can in order to perpetuate their status. This establishes a relationship between the objects exchanged. Gift exchange tends to be between people who are closely related, whereas commodity exchange tends to occur with people who have fewer familial ties (Gregory 1982: 9-11). In addition, commodity exchange is a price-forming process, a system of purchase and sale. Gift exchange is not. Although Mauss (1990) noted that with gift exchange, "it is wrong to speak...of alienation, for these things are loans rather than sold and ceded" (Mauss 1990:42). An inalienable thing that is given away must be returned. Thus a gift creates a debt that has to be repaid. This type of exchange was common from the 1770s to the 1870s in the West Polynesia regional circuit.

Since the connections in this region are based upon gift exchange relations, the theory of goods is too vague to apply to this region. The theory of goods, by definition, has no objective empirical basis for distinguishing between different economic systems.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, gift exchange establishes an unequal relationship of obligation between the transactors. The aim of the transactor in this economy is to acquire as many gift-debtors as they can in order to create personal relationships instead of maximizing profit. Gregory's (1982, 1997) theory combined the ideas of commodities and gifts, while attempting to debunk the theory of goods in order to create his framework which tried to explain non-monetary interaction in Papua New Guinea (Gregory 1997:45-50). This definition can also be applied to other parts of Oceania where non-monetary economic systems are present. The world-systems theory, which is a top-down

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<sup>26</sup> Although Gregory (1997) redefines his concept of goods as land, in his later work, he takes his focus from PNG to India and argues that land is the supreme good and that it must not be completely discounted.

global approach, and gift-commodity theory, which is a bottom-up local approach, are combined in order to test this regional model. This overview of theoretical ideas from world-systems theory and gift and commodity theory is designed to show that the concepts can be put together and applied to the analysis of societies in Oceania. The next part of this chapter describes the societies under study to give empirical meaning to the concepts set out here. Fiji, Tonga and Samoa made up a regional system of non-monetary gift-type exchange.

### **The West Polynesia regional circuit**

The major archipelagos of West Polynesia, offer a favourable environment for interaction and voyaging. Seasonal winds and sea currents are advantageous for both outgoing and return voyages between most islands in the region (Irwin 1992:28-30). The distances among the islands, involved days or at most a few weeks' sail by traditional vessels. From Tonga to the nearest islands of the Lau Group in Fiji is about 300 km, the same distance as from the Lau group to the largest Fijian island of Viti Levu (Routledge 1985:6). The distance from Samoa to Niuatoputapu, the northernmost island of Tonga, is approximately 320km and considerably less than the total length of the Tongan archipelago and about the same distance as from Savai'i to Manu'a (Davidson 1997:82-94). Viewed in a wider setting of the western Pacific, these islands of West Polynesia, as a cluster, were relatively isolated from other populations in the Pacific and the islands constituted a distinct circuit of trade and exchange.

The West Polynesia regional circuit was made up of several island groups. These groups include the Fiji Islands, the Tongan Islands and the Samoan Islands

as well as Niue, Futuna and 'Uvea.<sup>27</sup> These latter three islands were occupied by people speaking closely related dialects (Campbell 1992:1). Even though Niue, Futuna, Rotuma and 'Uvea were a part of this exchange network, the majority of the interaction in this circuit was between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa (Kirch 1984: 25; Scarr 1990:67; Campbell 1992:1,5,10-13; Howe [1984] 1990:32-36). The analysis via available sources will concentrate on the links among the Fiji Islands, the Tongan Islands and the Samoan Islands since the data on these show the main components<sup>28</sup> of the network of relations.

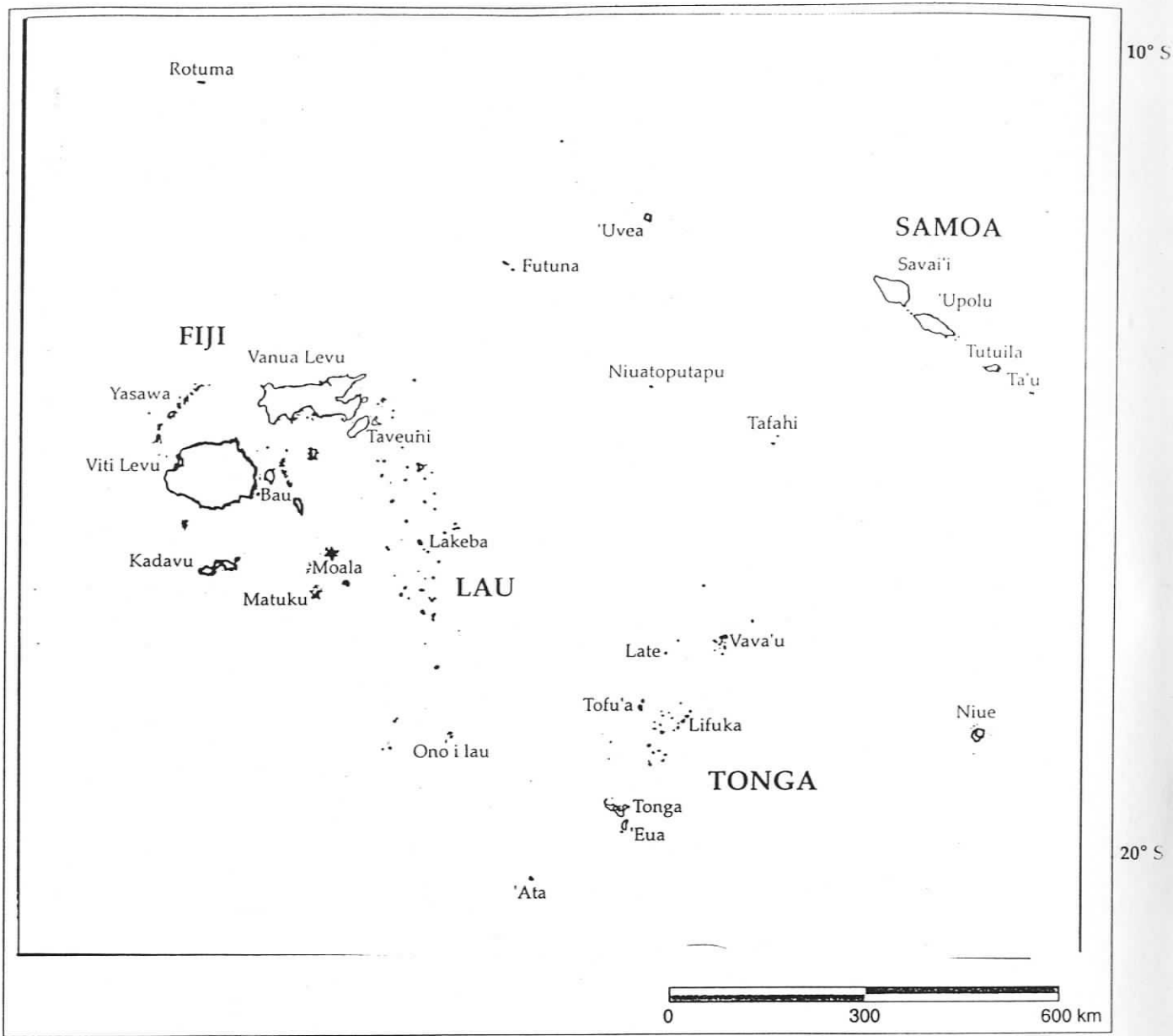
### **Geographical Situation of the Islands**

The West Polynesia regional circuit included three main island groups with varying environmental conditions. The Fiji archipelago is located west of Tonga and extends between longitudes 176° 53' E and 178° 12' W. The archipelago occupies about 332 islands, of which 110 are permanently inhabited (Central Intelligence Agency 2006). The two major islands, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, have the greatest land mass. In the north and west of the Fijian archipelago, Taveuni and the Lau Islands are locations with close ties to the Tongan Islands (Scarr 1990:20-22). The main islands of Fiji, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, are of continental origin, with more complex geological and ecological histories than the other two archipelagos (Kirch 1984:15-17; Oliver 1989:8-10). The Fiji Islands stand on a horse-shoe shaped continental platform centered on the Koro Sea (Routledge 1985:14).

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<sup>27</sup> See map in Kirch 1984:18 and Campbell 1992:xiv.

<sup>28</sup> These components include: marriage, warfare, prestige valuables, legends, weapons etc.



**Map 1: The West Polynesia Regional Circuit**

Tonga, also called the "Friendly Islands", lie east south-east of Fiji, and consists of about 169 islands; about 36 of which are inhabited (Central Intelligence Agency 2006). The majority of islands are situated between 18° and 22° S latitudes, (Poulsen 1977:4). Only the isolated Niuafu'ou, Niuatoputapu in the north of the group and 'Ata in the south being beyond these latitudinal limits. The total land area is 700 square kilometres (Central Intelligence Agency 2006). The main islands of Tonga generally fall into three groups: the southern Tongatapu group, the central Ha'apai group and the northern Vava'u group. The Tongan islands are mostly made up of raised atolls and volcanic islands (Kirch 1984: 217-219).

Samoa is made up of a volcanic shield archipelago (Kirch and Green 2001:35-39). It is the native name of the group of islands in central Polynesia which were known to Europeans in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as the "Navigators Islands". Samoa is a group of islands in the South Pacific Ocean, about one-half of the way from Hawaii to New Zealand (Central Intelligence Agency 2006). They are situated between the parallels of 13° and 15° S and 168° and 173° W (Central Intelligence Agency 2006). There are two main islands and several smaller islands and uninhabited islets. The principal islands of the group are Savai'i, Upolu and Tutuila, further east of Tutuila is the little group known as Manu'a, comprising of the islands of Ta'u, Ofu and Olosega. Further east and south of this group lies the small uninhabited Rose Island (Tuimaleali'ifano 1990:8-9).

These three main archipelagos of West Polynesia have varied geological origins, with consequences for resource availability in the respective groups. The main islands of Fiji, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, are of continental origin<sup>29</sup>, with more complex geological and ecological histories than the other two archipelagos

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<sup>29</sup> The term 'continental origin' means islands that developed from continents or other bodies of land. Other islands originate from volcanoes or raised coral atolls.

(Kirch 1984:15-17; Oliver 1989:8-10). The Fiji Islands stand on a horse-shoe shaped continental platform<sup>30</sup> centered on the Koro Sea (Routledge 1985:14). Tonga, on the other hand, is mostly made up of raised atolls and volcanic islands; whereas Samoa is made up of a volcanic shield archipelago<sup>31</sup> (Kirch and Green 2001:35-39). Due to this difference in geology, Fiji is able to support a larger variety of plants and animals than either Tonga or Samoa. Fiji possesses many different species of colourful birds and exceptionally large hardwoods such as the important merbau (*Intsia palembanica*).<sup>32</sup> These items are scarcely found on other archipelagos in the region (Davidson 1977:82-94; Geraghty 1995:3-7; Kaeppler, 1978:246-52; Morgan 1999). On the eastern end of the species range throughout the Indo-Pacific, Fiji is the richest location for merbau hardwood in the West Polynesia. This particular wood is remarkably strong; the trees can grow up to 25 meters tall, making them well suited for canoe manufacture (Smith 1985:23-46). In addition to the geographical differences among the island groups, there are also other environmental differences that affected the way that the people of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa interacted with each other.

### **Political History of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa**

This study will now focus of the history of the region to further account for the structure in the area and the connections at local and regional levels among the Fiji, Tonga and Samoa Islands. In order to understand the complex exchange relations of the West Polynesia regional circuit, one must first

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<sup>30</sup> Continental platforms are the regions adjacent to and surrounding the continental shields. They are typically a relatively thin veneer of sedimentary rock that buries the edges of the shields. Continental shields are broad areas of exposed ancient crystalline rocks in the cores of the Earth's continents. These rocks are typically the oldest on the continents, many more than 2.5 billion years old.

<sup>31</sup> Volcanic shields are places where volcanoes extrude huge quantities of basaltic lava that gradually build a wide mountain with a shield-like profile. Their lava flows are generally very hot and very fluid, contributing to long flows of lava. The Samoan and Hawaiian islands are examples of these types of islands.

<sup>32</sup> Merbau is a type of tree. It is a large tree and often has a rather short, thick bole, sometimes to 50 ft, often fluted; trunk diameters to 5 ft above large spreading buttresses.

comprehend the political and historical context in which these interactions took place. This section will first examine the social structure of Fiji which will be followed by the descriptions of the social structures of both Tonga and Samoa.

The organization of Fijian society was hierarchical, with the chiefly elites ruling the bulk of the population. Fijians as a whole were grouped into related families called *tokatoka* (sub clans) which formed the basis for village life. These were in turn members of a larger unit, *mataqali*, literally 'men who are twisted together' (a clan) (Frost 1979:61-2). Each *mataqali* was responsible for a ritual function concerned with food-producing or weapon-bearing (Routledge 1984: 28). Five or six of these *mataqali* made up the *yavusa* or tribe, which was both a territorial and political unit (Frost 1979:61-81). Towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a new order of federation developed, as powerful chiefs increased still further the sphere of their influence by conquest and the formalization of tributary or even less dignified relationships for the conquered. *Matanitu*, as these 'confederations' were called, were flexible and fragile alliances, held together by force (Burns 1963; Nayacakalou 1975; Routledge 1985; Thomas 1986). On the eve of the nineteenth century, Fiji was divided into at least seven relatively small *vanua*<sup>33</sup> (Routledge 1984:15,28). These *vanua* were called Naitasiri, Rewa, Bau, Verata, Bua, Macuata Cakaudrove and Lau.<sup>34</sup> The *vanua* of Cakaudrove, Bau, Rewa and Lau had the closest ties to Tonga. During the struggle between Rewa and Bau the Tongans even sided with Rewa in 1855 in the decade-long struggle for power in Fiji<sup>35</sup> (Routledge 1984:86). The Tongan influence in Fijian politics during this period will be described in greater detail in the following chapters.

<sup>33</sup> *Vanua* is a grouping of villages (Routledge, 1985:28).

<sup>34</sup> See Routledge 1984:15 for map.

<sup>35</sup> The presence of Tongans in Fijian battles demonstrates the deep connections between these two island groups. These connections will be further discussed in chapter four.

After examining the Fijian political history, this study will now focus on Tonga and show how alliances were very important for maintaining the social structure of this island group. Tonga had a long established hierarchy around the central chief (Howe [1984] 1990:177). By at least the tenth century AD the scattered islands of Tonga were brought under the rule of the Tu'i Tonga line of chiefs.<sup>36</sup> A long succession of *Tu'i Tonga* maintained their supremacy until the fifteenth century, about which time, due to political strife and population increases, the Tu'i Tonga lost unitary authority as the structure of the society divided into a dual chiefdom (Herda 1995:52). During this period, many Tu'i Tongas were assassinated by aspiring rivals. Oral accounts tell that the twenty fourth Tu'i Tonga, Kau'ulufonua Fekai created a new position, the *hau*, (Gunson 1979, 28-29) to assist the Tu'i Tonga by taking care of temporal affairs in order to confine the Tu'i Tonga to the sacred duties (Campbell 1992: 32).

In time this new position became part of the Tongan social structure and eventually the office of the *hau* went to the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua dynasty. Early in the seventeenth century a member of the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua dynasty created another title, the Tu'i Kanokupolu, in order to keep control of the growing population of Tongatapu<sup>37</sup> (Ferdon 1987: 48). Over time, the holders of the Tu'i Kanokupolu title gradually took over the administration of the whole of Tonga and became effective holders of the *hau*. The Tu'i Ha'atakalaua remained only nominally in charge of administrative matters. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Tonga had a tripartite form of government (Gerstle 1973: 32-34).

Unlike Tonga, where settlement was commonly non-nucleated and areas of political control were fairly large, incorporating regions or whole islands,

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<sup>36</sup> Legend has it that the first Tu'i Tonga, 'Aho'eitu, was the son of the sky god Tangaloa and a human mother, hence the justification of the Tu'i Tonga's absolute authority in both sacred and secular matters (Campbell, 1992:7, 14).

<sup>37</sup> Tongatapu is the main island of Tonga where the capital Nuku'alofa is located.

Samoa settlement patterns were highly nucleated into villages and the everyday political authority was localized at the village level in the *fono* council (Howe [1984] 1990: 232). The Samoan people are divided into families, or *'āiga*, which again are split into groups or branches (Freeman 1994: 96).

Each village consisted of a number of extended families. Relationships among these families were carefully defined in terms of kinship and social status and were constantly reinforced. Each family was headed by a *matai* who was chosen or elected by his family (Barns and Hunt 2005:228). Each village has a principal or head *matai*, chosen or elected from the most able candidates based on oratory skills and intelligence. There were two types of *matai*: the *ali'i* and the *tulafale* (Henry 1980: 45-46). The Samoan *ali'i* was a chief who held status derived from real or proclaimed lines of descent. On the other hand, the *tulafale* was the *ali'i*'s spokesman and executive officer. The *tulafale*'s standing resulted from his oratory skills and his knowledge of the oral traditions (Freeman 1994: 99). Since status in Samoa was based on genealogical background, those who controlled the knowledge of the past used it to influence the present by conferring high chiefly titles upon candidates that were deemed most worthy.

The above section demonstrated that the social structure of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa varied among these three groups. Although these island groups had different social structures, these organizations were connected in this system. Tonga needed both Fiji and Samoa as part of their social system in order to perpetuate their cultural system (Kaeppler 1978: 249). The different cultural social systems in this region linked into one larger entity that went beyond marriage and included other aspects of interaction like trade and warfare, which will be described in detail in the following chapters.

### Ethnographic Documentation of Trade in the Area

Many observers have seen and noted the trade and connections among Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. This section demonstrates that these interconnections are well documented and are important for understanding the region.<sup>38</sup> Routledge (1985) argues that the contact between the Lau Islands of Fiji and Tonga was extensive in the period immediately before Europeans found their way to Fiji in any numbers, and may have been of considerable antiquity (Geraghty 1995:7). In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, contact was frequent with the western islands. Lauans and Tongans were extensively involved in the political processes of the larger Fiji Islands. The *vesi*, the sacred hardwood was extremely important for the construction of the great war canoes of both Tonga and Fiji, certain other chiefly and priestly objects such as wooden slit drums, kava bowls and a range of weapons, and motivated particular trade links (Routledge 1985:17-19).

In the beginning, Tongans carried bark-cloth, coconut oil, whale-ivory ornaments and other dry products to Fiji in return for wood for canoe construction. The manufacture of the elaborate canoes was the work of several years, with the result that the Tongan settlements came to be established more or less permanently in the Lau Islands (Campbell 1992:17-18). In addition to these exchanges, there are also several oral accounts that demonstrate the deep interactions amongst the islands in this area.

Oral accounts in the form of legends and genealogies tell of common traditions and frequent intermarriages among Samoans, Tongans and Fijians. Kaepler sets out this marital relationship in her seminal article Exchange Patterns in Goods and Spouses: Fiji, Tonga and Samoa (1978:247-252). Kaepler

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<sup>38</sup> Evidence suggests that the flow of trade in this region was connected to the environmental differences of the area (Kirch, 1994). Fiji and Samoa receive more rainfall than Tonga does. The Tongans travelled to the other islands in search of products that were not available in their own island group. This is an important aspect of this trade but it will be left for another research project.

was able to interview the late Queen Sālote of Tonga and get the Tongan point of view of the interaction in the region. Queen Sālote sees Fiji and Samoa as 'spouse-givers' to Tonga. While each archipelago is culturally distinct, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa form a larger social system (Kaeppler 1978:250). According to Kaeppler, in this system, Fiji became a male 'spouse giver' to Tonga. With such a spouse came valuables associated with males such as canoes, wooden bowls, wooden neck rests, slit gongs and sandalwood (Kaeppler 1978:250). These items are not readily available in Tonga because of the lack of appropriate trees. Importing a Fijian was a method not only of marrying off a female too high in rank to marry a Tongan, but also for keeping her children from trying to usurp power on the basis of rank (Kaeppler 1978:248). In this system, Samoans became female 'spouse givers', giving high-ranking women who brought with them female marriage goods, which included fine mats (Kaeppler 1978: 250). Perpetuation of the Tongan social structure was a major interaction in this region, however, there were also several other connections through exchange and warfare.

One cannot mention the connections between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa without describing the deep rivalry between Cakobau and Ma'afu for power in Fiji. J. Spurway describes how Ma'afu, a cousin of Tupou I, formerly Taufa'ahau, grew up in Tonga during unprecedented political and social change (Spurway 2002:8). After the succession of Taufa'ahau as Tu'i Kanokupolu and king of a reunited Tonga, Ma'afu, then a young man, was restrained by the social discipline imposed by the new regime and by the unrelenting hostility of John Thomas, a Wesleyan missionary in Nuku'alofa (Spurway 2002: 5-7). Ma'afu was also seen as a potential rival so in 1847 he left Tonga to live in Lakeba, Fiji with his kinsmen Tui Nayau. Ma'afu found himself among his own kin in the Lau islands. He was following a path to Fiji that members of his family and countless other Tongans had travelled before him. Spurway argues that Ma'afu was part of

a Tongan delegation on a friendly and informal visit to Bau,<sup>39</sup> whose purpose could not be shown to be anything more than a timely reminder of Tongan interest in Bau and in Fijian affairs generally (Spurway 2002:20-23). However, when Ma'afu came to Fiji, he managed to establish a power base in the Lau islands which was to shake the polity of Fiji to its foundations. Within little more than a decade, Ma'afu had made himself the most powerful chief in his adopted country and was able to challenge the supremacy of Cakobau, hitherto Fiji's most powerful chief<sup>40</sup> (Spurway 2002:5-23). Ma'afu's rise to power is another demonstration of the deep connections between Fiji and Tonga. Without these interactions, Ma'afu would not have gone to Fiji and been able to challenge Cakobau's power.

Beyond ethnographic documentation of the interactions between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, one of the most accurate accounts of life in Tonga during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century offers a glimpse of what life was like prior to the missionary and colonial influence in the region. These relations were described by the beachcomber William Mariner ([1827] 1991) during the period of 1806-1810.<sup>41</sup> Mariner's observations give valuable insight into this period in Tongan history. During Mariner's stay, he left a detailed account that the principal and perhaps only trade items coming from Samoa were extremely fine woven mats (Martin 1991: 1:121, 142, 316; 2:51). On the other hand, Fijian trade goods were far more common but often of less prestigious value. Up to Mariner's time this trade consisted of decorated bark cloth, clubs, spears, variegated mats (Martin 1991: 2:199). Of greater value were the special red feathers to be used in decorating and aromatic sandalwood used in perfuming coconut oil and the large double sailing

<sup>39</sup> Bau is a small island in Fiji off the coast of Viti Levu. It was the seat of power of the Vunivalu of Bau, Seru Epenisa Cakobau, which was the most powerful chief in Fiji.

<sup>40</sup> The title of Tui Lau, an innovation in the Fijian polity, was created in 1869 expressly for Ma'afu. It recognized the power he had gained in Lau during his twenty two years in Fiji and completed his transformation from a Tongan chief to a chief of Fiji (Spurway, 2002:15).

<sup>41</sup> Everyone on the ship perished except him and he was taken in by Finau 'Ulukalala, a Tongan high chief, where he learned a lot about the Tongan traditions and culture from 1806-1810.

canoes (Martin 1991:70, 77, 257, 267-68). For these items, the Tongans traded bark cloth, mats for sails, coconut fibre cordage and the stingers from stingray fish that were used for spears and whale teeth (Martin 1990:253, 267-8). In addition to this trade, Mariner also noted that some of the songs and dances of Tonga were from Samoan origin as well as the design of their houses (Martin 1990:144-45, 215, 220). By 1806-1810, there were a few Samoans living in Tonga and there was at least one instance of a young Tongan chief returning home from an extended visit in Samoa (Martin 1991:107-9). According to Mariner, this Tongan brought with him not only a Samoan wife, but a number of Samoan friends as well. In contrast, Fijians came to Tonga more regularly for both alliances and trade activities; Mariner's account also notes several Fijians living in the Tonga Islands during this period (Martin 1991:91, 107-9, 207-8, 278-79).<sup>42</sup> These important observations demonstrate the deep political and military connections between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa prior to missionary and colonial influences.

In addition to political and military interconnections, the West Polynesia regional circuit also traded prestige valuables and other products. Tonga exchanged both items and services to both Fiji and Samoa. Fijian and Tongan traditions record that Tongans were often the source for highly prized whale teeth (*tabua*) in Fiji (Aswani and Graves 1998:135-146). Tongan bark cloth seemed to have been as prized throughout the region as the fine Samoan mats were (Kaepler 1978:248-51). In addition to trade objects, Tongans had a long tradition of offering their services as mercenaries in intra-archipelago warfare (Aswani and Graves 1998:153-161). Tonga also appears to have played an important intermediary role in the movement of products and ideas among these West Polynesia area islands.

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<sup>42</sup> A full account of William Mariner's observations will be described in later chapters.

Travel and the exchange of products and services led to a mixture of people and ideas. Intra-island trade between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa is evident in the finely woven kilts, *'ie toga/kie hingoa* (Derrick 1946:5). Those worn by both Samoans and Tongans of rank were adorned with the brilliant feathers from Fijian parrots which Fijians exchanged with the Samoans who wove the scarlet feathers into their *'ie toga* and other decorated mantles worn by the chiefs on ceremonial occasions. Green feathers were woven into the Samoan headdresses of the *taupou*, the village maiden (See illustration in Freeman 1983:143). So keen was the demand that the Samoans kept the Fijian parrots in captivity, plucking an annual crop of feathers from the live birds (Derrick 1946:20). The Samoan *pale'ula* or red crown coronet, symbolizing the insignia of rank, were made from Fijian parrots. Similar feathers were found in Samoa but the most prized were from Fiji (Stair 1897:126). The exchange of these red feathers is an important illustration of the flow of trade in this region. It also demonstrates that the demand for particular valuables was dependent upon its availability in a particular geographic region and the ability for these objects to be transported to other islands.

From the red feathers that were traded, the Samoans created fine mats that incorporated these feathers as decoration. Samoan fine mats were highly prized throughout West Polynesia (Kaepler 1999:169-70). They were manufactured in Samoa, adorned with imported Fijian feathers and distributed throughout the region. An example is the fine mat "*Maneafaiga'a*", which is said to have come to Tonga from Samoa twenty-two generations ago and was used in the investiture ceremony of the current king of Tonga in 1967 (Kaepler 1999:182-84). Indeed, many of these heirloom mats exchanged in pre-contact times are reported to be still in the possession of families in Tonga and Samoa (Kaepler 1999:184-86).

Chapter two provided an overview of the theoretical framework for the analysis of long-distance exchange among West Polynesia societies. It also described the region and demonstrated that the interconnections in West Polynesia are well documented and are important for understanding the area. Then, chapter two discussed important geographical differences between the islands. Finally, chapter two examined the political history of the region and looked at the ethnographic records of exchange in the area to introduce the logic behind bringing the world-systems approach into Oceania.

### Chapter Three

#### Food and Knowledge in Interregional Exchange

The following three chapters will examine how the world-systems approach can be applied to Oceania through the method of world-system networks' analysis offered by Chase-Dunn and Hall. The four networks distinguished in the method provide a framework to discuss and demonstrate the deep connections among Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. It is efficient to discuss these two together as a way to give a sense of the totality of the linkages, which involved both material and immaterial exchanges. This chapter describes and analyzes both the bulk materials network and the information network, as defined in earlier chapters. In this Oceania world-system, the bulk products network was limited, while the information network was far larger and more developed. The data presented in this chapter substantiate and explain some aspects of the bulk products and information networks in the Fiji, Tonga and Samoa region.

In order to facilitate the comprehension of these data and the application to the world-systems approach, this chapter is divided into two major sections. The first section in chapter three will examine bulk products as one of the four interconnected networks as described by Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997 and 2000). It will demonstrate the low importance of bulk products in this regional trade circuit and show the specific forms that this network takes within this region and develop the concept of bulk products for Oceania. The second section of chapter three will look at the information network and show it to have been larger than the bulk products network. This section will define information in empirical terms for this region. The analysis will demonstrate how the flow of information coincided with the flow of other products and valuables. This network is extremely important for understanding this region because it offers insights into

an era long before the written word and demonstrates that the connections between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa existed long before European contact.

### **Bulk Products**

In order to set out the method behind this section, I briefly return to the works of Chase-Dunn and Hall and their description of the bulk products network. According to Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997), in comparative perspective, bulk products generally compose the smallest regional interaction network. Bulk product networks however were linked in important ways with the other three networks. As a classic example, they argue that the bulk-products network of the Roman Empire was smaller than the system of regularized military interactions of which the Romans were a part (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997:53). Structures of circulation vary. Within many world-systems, bulk products have tended to be 'down the line' interactions.<sup>43</sup> Bulk products networks varied according to dominant modes of agriculture and industry in different regional and world-systems.

The bulk products network in the West Polynesia regional circuit was limited in both its scale and importance for regular food supplies; local areas and near archipelagos were self-sufficient in staple foods. The form of the bulk products in this region was distinctive to root crop agriculture; it was found to involve planting materials, along with specific resources and I describe one example of these resources, namely "lamp black" soot carbon used for ink and paint manufacture.

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<sup>43</sup> When trade goes from partner to partner, the physical objects may move along unaltered, even though it may be beyond the range of information (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997: 53, 146).

In Chase-Dunn and Hall's (1997, 2000) original model they define bulk products as staple foods that could travel over long distances and help maintain societies in areas where certain food supplies are lacking. Bulk food products are items consumed by the general population as a main source of food. In Afro-Eurasia, for example, the bulk products that were traded within this region were rice, grain and other staple foodstuffs.

### **Why Bulk Products must be redefined**

Chase-Dunn and Hall's (1997, 2000) definition of bulk products as food staples may work for Asia and Europe but it does not work for this region of the world. There are three main reasons for the lack of bulk products traded within Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. In their premodern economies, all these island groups had an abundance of root crops, tree crops, fruits, fishes and some pigs, etc. The abundance of both taro and yams in particular in Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa made it unnecessary to trade foodstuffs in large quantities. Long-distance exchange of subsistence food is not part of the record of trade in this region. The island groups were self-sufficient in regular supplies and long-distance exchange mainly involved imported planting materials to add new varieties of known crops to the existing agricultural assemblage.

Another elementary reason for the dearth of bulk products in the trade in this region was the challenge faced by shipping quantities of bulk items over long distances by canoe. While large and impressive vessels of their type, the Tongan *kalia* and Fijian *drua* canoes were far smaller in capacity than many ocean vessels in other areas of the world. Even though there was frequent travel between the island groups, especially Fiji and Tonga, the vessels were generally small and light to facilitate navigation on the open ocean and piloting on reef shores. Simply because the canoes had limited capacity, it would have been

difficult to carry large quantities of bulk products on these vessels that travelled between the island groups. The agricultural system and the shipment technology are general features to understand in reference to the forms of trade in Oceania, and the bulk products concepts can be elaborated in consideration of these features of the region.

### **Redefinition of Bulk Products network for Oceania**

To apply this model to Polynesia, it is necessary to give a substantive meaning to the definition of the concepts of trade circuits and the bulk products network. Within West Polynesia, there are only a few products that could be classified under the bulk products network. To represent the basic foodstuffs, I decided to classify planting materials for the main root crops as bulk products. Some of the main items that were traded in this manner were seed yams and seed taro. These are basically specific roots and parts that were carried often by kin from one island group to another to provide for different subspecies and varieties of root crops to grow on the various islands. The beachcomber, Mariner in just before 1810, describes certain yams in Tonga that originated in the Fiji islands (Martin 1991:216-217). In the 1840s, Turner, a missionary in Samoa, observed some of these seed yams and taro arriving from Tonga.

Several Tongans arrived today [on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1846] in Feejee they brought with them several items...including seed taro and seed yams, which will be a welcome addition in the following season to the native crops already in place (Turner 1884: 46-47).

These materials were to transportable and storable, which made them ideal for long distance trade

Another item that was traded in bulk was lamp black. Lamp black has been in use since prehistoric times, and is probably the oldest pigment known to humankind. It is a type of black carbon obtained from the soot of burned fat, oil, tar, or resin. Lamp black is a soft brownish- or bluish-black pigment that is very

stable and unaffected by light, acids and alkalis (Jennings 2003: 77). Hocart noted that a main exportable product of Vuna on Taveuni in Fiji was lampblack. "They produce no mats or barkcloth painted by the Lauan method of rubbings. The other people of Taveuni bring nets in order to get their lampblack and the nets are taken to Lau to get sheets of barkcloth made with rubbings" (Hocart 1952: 290). This item was traded within Fiji, Tonga and Samoa in order to pigment their mats, bark cloth and other prestige items.

### Transportation of Vegetation

In addition to planting materials, there is evidence of various trees and plants that were transported from one part of the region to another. The majority of these items have retained the clue to their origins through the names given to them by the indigenous population. Since it is difficult to attribute the origin and mode of transportation of these plants, I have elected to describe it as a deliberate intervention by the indigenous population and place it within the bulk products network.<sup>44</sup> Seeman, a botanist who visited Fiji in the 1860s offers the most descriptive information of this phenomenon from all of the sources (Cook 1995-67; La Pérouse 1989; Bligh 1789; Martin 1991; Vason 1810; Orange 1840; Baker L. and S. Baker 1951; Lawry 1850; Lundie 1864; Moister 1871; Rutherford 1971; Smythe 1864; 1983; Williams 1858; Turner 1864; Waterhouse 1866). He discusses the presence of "a kind of Upas tree, (*Antiaris bennetti*, Seem.), commonly termed *Mavu ni Tonga*, probably because it has been introduced from the Tonga islands...and is now to be found in towns and villages" (Seeman, 1861: 334). In addition, Seeman also discusses the possibility of the *Masaue* plant being imported from Tonga to Fiji. "The *Masaue* or *Vasili Toga* (*Tracaena* sp.), is a shrub with obviate leaves, cultivated, and perhaps, judging from the name *Vasili Toga* (=Tonga) it bears in some parts of the group, an importation from the Tongan

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<sup>44</sup> Due to the lack of reliable sources in this period, one cannot speculate if the movement of these items was deliberate or accidental.

islands" (Seeman 1860: 306). Further evidence of yams transported from one island group to another is found in Whitcombe's (1930) ethnology of Tonga. In his ethnology, there is linguistic evidence of yam varieties in Tonga that come from other areas. There is the *Ufi Fiji* (Fiji yam), *Lakaloka futuna* (yam from Futuna island), *Ufi Fiji Kula* (red Fiji yam), *Ufi Uvea* (Uvea yam) and *Ufi Hammoa* (Samoan yam) (Whitcombe 1930: 20). The Oceania evidence show some forms of bulk product trade different from those Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997, 2000) describe for Asia. These variations were associated with particular technology and the agricultural production mode, along with geographical distance between the islands, the evidence show particular form of bulk product trade occurring in this region.

### **The Information Network**

Compared to the bulk-products network, the information network was far more developed in this region. In the description of this network in their original model, Chase-Dunn and Hall describe the information network as comprising various forms including ideology, religion, and technological information (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997: 52).

In Chase-Dunn and Hall's (1997) original model, they argue that the use of multiple bounding criteria often will result in nested levels of system boundedness.<sup>45</sup> System boundedness shows how the interactions in a society are connected with each other. Therefore, the boundaries between the networks are not always clear. Often the boundaries between the networks will cross over each other. For example, the information network is located outside the bulk products network and inside the prestige valuable network. It is well known amongst ethnographers and anthropologists that valuables can be exchanged beyond the range of information. First is down-the-line trade. When trade goes from

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<sup>45</sup> See figure 3.1 *Nesting of the Boundaries of the Four Networks of Exchange* in (Chase-Dunn, 1997:54).

partner to partner, the physical objects may move along unaltered, but information about the trade item may be lost. Occasionally when warfare is severe, the political/military boundary may cut the flow of information even while prestige valuables may effectively cross the boundary via indirect down-the-line exchanges (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997: 53). This is important because it demonstrates that the trade of valuables does not always correspond with the flow of information. The remainder of this chapter will describe how these interactions were developed through the information network in the West Polynesia regional circuit.

### **Substantive Definition for the Information Network in Oceania**

In order to take Chase-Dunn and Hall's model and apply it to West Polynesia, one must underscore what this network entails in this regional system. Unlike bulk products, the definition for the information network is fairly similar to Chase-Dunn and Hall's model with some slight modifications. In this region, the information network involved both the transfer of information and belief in similar customs. The majority of information in West Polynesia was transferred through legends, songs and dances, as well as various customs. These similarities demonstrate the deep connections between these island groups that have existed for thousands of years. The next part of the chapter will be split into three main parts. I will first discuss the many legends of the region. Second, I will look at the songs and dances that were common throughout the region. Finally, I will examine the various customs<sup>46</sup> that travelled from one area to another. The information network in Oceania is an important part of the whole system of regional exchange.

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<sup>46</sup> In this chapter, 'customs' means cultural practices such as tattooing and burial techniques.

## Legends

The legends and stories of this region offer insight into the history and culture of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa that would not be possible through other means. These oral traditions clearly demonstrate that the connections between these areas are far reaching and pervasive. Although there are far too many legends to recount in such a small space, this section will highlight some of the oral histories which discuss the other island groups. The first legend to be examined is the origin of *kava* as described by Mary Wallis during her voyage to Fiji.

The Feejeeans give the following account of the origin of this root: - they say that a man and his wife started many years ago from Tonga, in a canoe, for the purpose of trying to catch the sun for a *tombe*, or neck ornament. They thought they should find the place where it sets, by sailing towards it, and they kept on until they arrived in Feejee.<sup>47</sup> Over time, the woman became pregnant and had a child in this new land. One day, the child fell ill and died. Their child was buried on an island near Bau. From the grave, the first root of *yanggona* ever known in Feejee sprang up (Wallis 1983: 348).

Just as the above account of the origin of kava in Fiji describes a connection with Tonga, the Samoan account of the origin of the kava root cites a link with Fiji:

In the village of Vailele, there lived a man named Faleaseu. One day while he is out pigeon hunting, his daughters Tinupoula and Sina'afua went to look for him. They searched all the way across 'Upolu and finally came to Mulifanua where they met a boat that was about to return to Fiji. The Fijians had come to Samoa in search of a healer to cure Tuifiti (the king of Fiji) who was ill. The Fijians thought the girls might be healers and took them to Fiji. Along the way, the girls drank some coconuts and filled the shells with seawater. When they arrived in Fiji, they were presented to Tuifiti who was suffering from stomach pains. The girls gave him the coconuts filled with seawater to drink and he was cured. Tuifiti then told all his other wives to go home and announced that he would marry Tinupoula and Sina'afua.

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<sup>47</sup> This is the way that Fiji was written in the archival sources.

They were married and the first-born son was named Suasamiava'ava. However, the boy soon became ill. He told his mother that if he should die, she should take whatever plant grows from his grave to Samoa. The boy died and after he was buried, a strange plant that looked like a human bone was seen growing from his grave. This was the first kava plant and the girls took it back to Samoa as the boy had requested (Faatonu 1998: 41-42).

It is interesting to note that both stories describe Fiji as the place where the kava root originated, even though its genesis is mythical in these stories. In addition, the origin of kava shows that there is a difference between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. Kava was established in the Fiji and Tonga islands and arrived in Samoa through long distance trade.

Another Fijian legend is the story of how mats came to Samoa. This story is very interesting because Samoan mats are highly prized in the region, yet this legend describes how this knowledge came from Fiji:

There is a story told of a Fijian chief called *Fulualea*, Feathers-of-the-Sun, who came with his daughter to visit Samoa. He had heard of the beauty of the islands and their handsome inhabitants, and thought he might find here a husband chief for his daughter. He was greatly surprised; however, to discover that while the islands were lovely, and the people attractive, they had no mats in their houses, but slept on dried grass like pigs. He could not think of leaving his daughter; but when he returned to Fiji he made up a present of fine mats, native cloth, and scented oil, as if it were his daughter's dowry, and went back to Samoa with the generous gift, adding also pandanus and paper mulberry plants with which to stock Samoa with material for making such household comforts as mats and native cloth. And hence it is said that ever since the gift of Feathers-of-the-Sun from Fiji, Samoa has had the luxuries of mats to sleep on, and sheets of native cloth to cover them (Turner 1884: 123).

Yet another important oral tradition from early Polynesian history is a story told by Watson of how the connections between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa came to pass as he discovered during his missionary voyage to Samoa.

Fijian conquerors are said to have established themselves in Manu'a in the dawn of known Samoan history, and to have received tribute from all Samoa. There are many Samoan legends which have heroes and heroines' princes and princesses of Fiji-legends which show ancient knowledge of the Fijian people and customs and indicate intercourse between Samoa and Fiji. Later the Tongans, probably after many raids, established themselves on Savaii, crossed into Upolu, and were eventually beaten from the group by the first Malietoa who arranged between Tonga and Samoa a treaty of peace which has been continuously observed by over twenty generations of the Malietoa family (Watson 1918: 21).

In addition, some stories also describe how various islands were named around the archipelagos of Samoa. This legend tells of the various ways that Manono originated. This story is recounted by the missionary Turner during his voyages to Samoa.

Nono came from Fiji. He was the son of Tuiolautala, king of Fiji. There came with him Sa'uma, the brother of the king, and Tupuivao, the god of Fiji...Then Tupuivao vomited a quantity of land he had swallowed at Fiji, and so made Manono and its neighbouring island Apolima...the chief Lautala came from Fiji on a war expedition. He first touched at Manu'a and then came and conquered Upolu. After that he lived on Manono... [Another legend of Manono] Lautala was the name of an island at Fiji and noted for war. It broke away from Fiji, and was brought sailing along the ocean to Samoa by the chief Nono, who came to seek a suitable place for carrying on war...Hence it is said that Manono is not a part of Samoa, but a fragment of Fiji, and that of old there was not land between Upolu and Savaii (Turner 1884: 228-229).

Besides the origin of Manono, Turner also describes the origin of the name Amoa in north-east Samoa.

Some say its name originated in the fort of the chief Moe which was there during the Tongan invasion; others trace it to a foreign courtship. Of old, they say, the women courted the men, but it is the reverse. A lady from Fiji called Moe came to seek a husband, and found one in a chief called Nonu, and hence the place was called Amoa, or the settlement of Lady Moe (Turner 1884: 255).

These stories, histories and ideas were brought down from generation to generation because writing as a form of communication was not used until the missionary period. These legends demonstrate that the interactions in this region have gone on for several generations. They also show connections between Fiji and Samoa that were not as common during the pre-colonial period in the other networks of interaction.

### Songs and Dances

During Mariner's stay in Tonga, he observed many ceremonies of both marriage and burial. During one marriage ceremony, he saw Samoan songs and dances used as part of the ritual. Mariner also describes how he often heard the Tongans sing Samoan songs even though many did not know the translations to them.

The young chiefs and their companions from Hamoa,<sup>48</sup> then beating time with their hands, sung the following song, in the language of the Navigator's Islands. Mr. Mariner was so much in the habit of hearing the Tonga people sing in that language, which they affect to admire, though very few understand, he neglected to inquire the meaning of this song...while this singing and these acclamations were going forward, the prince led his brides to the bottom of the malai with a slow and dignified step, and re-seated them upon the bales of gnato; after which he commenced a dance on the malai with the young chiefs, who had put on turbans. This dance was also after the manner of the Navigator's Islands, and seemed to afford the people much entertainment (Martin 1991: 111).

In addition to these songs and dances, marriage ceremonies during this period often involved club fighting and wrestling amongst the young men. During this particular marriage, however, Mariner observed that the guests fought in both the Tongan and the Samoan fashion.

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<sup>48</sup> This is the spelling of Samoa in the archival sources.

They next determined whether they would fight after the Tonga or Hamoa fashion; the difference of which is, that the Hamoa custom allows a man to beat his antagonist after he is knocked down, as long as he perceives signs of motion; while the Tongan mode only allows him to flourish his club over his fallen foe, and the fight is ended (Martin 1991: 110).

These observations from Mariner demonstrate that the awareness of the differences in the fighting styles between Tonga and Samoa suggest that voyaging among Fiji, Tonga and Samoa was common and that the deep interconnections in this region had existed long before European contact.

After Mariner's time, the missionaries continued to describe Samoan songs and dances for several decades afterward. West, a missionary in Tonga observes how the names of several places as well as various dancing and singing styles have evolved from Samoa.

Some also of the Tonguese songs and traditions indicate that Samoa has been the source from whence several of the chieftain families have sprung, and from whence also the names of several of the most important localities in Tonga have been derived (West 1865: 250).

One reason these songs travelled from one region to another is due to intermarriage between the groups (Kaepler 1978). Later the same decade in Samoa, Turner observes Fijian characters within the love songs that were popular in the island group. The story is about two sisters named Sinaleuuna and Sinaeteva who wished they had a brother. When their wish is granted they go to Fiji in order to find their brother a mate. When they arrive there, they are treated badly by a local woman named Sina. When Maluafiti, their brother, finds out, he is infuriated and goes to Fiji to confront the woman. When Sina sees Maluafiti's beauty she is dumbstruck and immediately attempts to apologise for her actions. In his rage, Maluafiti decides to leave Fiji forever. Sina sees this and attempts to

swim after his canoe. Even though she is a strong swimmer, Maluafiti does not let her in the canoe and as a result she eventually drowns (Turner 1884: 98-101).

Songs and dances are important because they demonstrate the role that Samoa played in this regional exchange circuit. As Kaeppler (1978) describes, Samoa is a 'spouse-giver' to Tonga.<sup>49</sup> In addition, Samoa is also the source of several songs and dances in Tonga that probably came to this island group with the marriage of Samoan women to Tongan men.<sup>50</sup>

### Customs

In addition to legends, songs and dances having similarities in this region, several of the customs in the area travelled from one island group to another. One main custom of this region is tattooing. In West Polynesia, especially Samoa, tattooing was a mark of rank. It is interesting to note that in Fiji, the women are tattooed, while in Samoa the men are tattooed. Seeman notes, "in Polynesia tattooing seems to have attained its culminating point in the Society Islands and the Marqueses, where both men and women submitted to it; preceding thence eastward to Samoa and Tonga, we find it restricted to the men; in Fiji to the women...Yet strange to add, Polynesian tradition asserts that the custom was known in Fiji before its being adopted in Samoa and Tonga" (Seeman 1860: 113). There are several ancient legends describing why this is the case. The first story describes how tattooing came from Fiji to Samoa.

Tuifiti [king of Fiji] taught his two daughters named Tupou and Fileleu the art of tattoo. The two Fijian girls travelled to Samoa in search of Samoan hospitality. As they sailed, they sang their song of tattooing "Tattoo the women and not the men". As they approached Falealupo in Savai'i, they spotted a large clam in the ocean and dove in to catch it. They were very tired after these exertions and they continued to sing their song but they had mixed up the words in their tired state to say, "Tattoo the men and not the women." The two girls travelled around

<sup>49</sup> Kaeppler (1978) also describes Fiji as 'spouse-takers' because the Tongan women would travel to Fiji and marry Fijian men.

<sup>50</sup> The examination of the connection between gender and trade in this region could be discussed in future research.

Savai'i but were not satisfied with the hospitality. They finally arrived in the village of Lefaga in 'Upolu. Here they were given a very warm reception by Sua, who provided them with everything they could need. The girls were so impressed with Sua's hospitality that they taught him the art of the tattoo (Fitisemanu and Wright 1970: 78).

Another story describes how the art of tattooing travelled from Fiji to Tonga, while at the same time switching genders in a similar fashion to the legend surrounding Fiji and Samoan tattooing traditions.

It is stated, that at a remote period the king of Tonga sent a mission to Fiji, in order to ascertain if, as had been reported, the women of these islands were tattooed. On reaching the island of Ogea, in the eastern part of Fiji, the mission, with some difficulty, made the natives comprehend that they wished to find out what sex was tattooed (qia); to which the Fijians replied, "Qia na alewa" (women are tattooed). In obedience to orders, the first person met had been asked, as a plain answer to a plain question had been obtained, the mission departed homewards. There were no other means of remembering the answer than by repeating it continually. This was done without interruption until their canoe reached Ogea passage, where the sea becoming rough, apprehensions about the safety of the canoe began to be entertained, and the ensuing excitement the repetition of the precious words was neglected. Suddenly the neglect was perceived, and it was asked all round what the words were. Somebody replied "Qia na tagane (men are tattooed), instead of "Qia na alewa" (women are tattooed); which mistake, passing unnoticed, was repeated until the crew reached Tonga; and on being reported to the king, he exclaimed, "Oh it is men, not women that are tattooed! Well, then, I will be tattooed at once." The example set was speedily followed; hence the custom, that in Fiji the women, in Tonga the men are tattooed (Seeman 1860: 114-115).

Both of these stories demonstrate how easily oral traditions can change from generation to generation. These stories from both Samoa and Fiji show how the art of tattooing came originally from Fiji. It also shows how the information surrounding the gender of tattooing was transferred from women to men and offers a possible explanation of why women were tattooed in Fiji while men were

tattooed in Samoa and Tonga.<sup>51</sup> This is a reversal of the male-female roles in the region. In this area, Fijians are seen as male 'spouse takers' and Samoans are seen as female 'spouse givers' by the Tongans (Kaepler 1978). Since Tonga and Samoa are both female relative to Fiji, that they both tattoo the men while the Fijians tattoo the women is a curious aspect of this interaction and could be examined further in another study (Cole, Thomas and Brown 2005; Tofaeono Tu'u'u 2001; Gell 1993; Tuimaleali'ifano 1990; Fitiseanu and Wright 1970). The practice of tattooing in West Polynesia showed how the flow of information could keep the belief system of this practice without the exchange of products and services.

Although tattooing was common in this region there were many other ways in which information was spread from one area to another. There is evidence that suggests that similar healing methods were used throughout the region. For example, West describes how the healing methods used in Tonga are similar to those described in Fiji. "In rheumatic affections, and pains of a kindred nature, the natives employ medicated embrocations, which, I believe are similar to those mentioned by Dr. Seeman as in use among the Fijians" (West 1865: 176). Additionally, many Tongans also were firm believers in sorcery and believed that someone could be cursed by violating a taboo of the other's culture. For example:

A well known young and clever chief called Netani Nauvaivai came from a long residence in Fiji to reside with his relative Ata, the chief of Hihifo. About a year after his arrival he began to complain of languor and his strength rapidly failed...his disease was undoubtedly abscess of the liver. But some of the attendants one day told me that they believed he was dying through the effects of *sausau*, or Fijian sorcery. [He had violated a *tabu* by eating a certain sugar cane and was cursed by 'heathen' Fijians] (West 1865: 258).

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<sup>51</sup> For a photograph of a Samoan tattoo go to (Gell 1993:43-44).

In addition to the previous similarities among the customs of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, death was also viewed with great importance in this region. Mariner observed that in Tonga, Samoan customs were used in burial of an important wife of a chief who was from Samoa.

The body was laid out on a beautiful and fine Hamoa mat, and then washed over with a mixture of oil and water; after which it was anointed with sandal-wood oil...the king had determined...not to bury her exactly after the Tonga fashion, but partly according to that, partially according to the custom of Hamoa...orders were issued by Finow...should dress themselves in new tapas (this is the Hamoa custom) (Martin 1991: 209).

In the burial of another important Tongan chief, Fijian customs were used in that burial as well. Mariner described how "in the evening they were buried together in the same grave, in a sitting posture, according to the Fiji custom" (Martin 1991:194). Even 50 years later, there continue to be striking similarities between Fiji and Tonga in their views on life after death. During his travels to Fiji Seeman described the similarities in the views of the hereafter in both Fiji and Tonga.

The Tonguese restricted the possession of a soul to chiefs and gentry, but the Fijians go further, allowing it not only to all mankind, but to animals, plants, and even houses, canoes and all mechanical contrivances. The ultimate destination of the soul is Bulu, identical with the Tonguese Bolotu, and the general starting-place (Cibicibi) is supposed to be at Naicobocobo, the extreme western or lee side of Vanua Levu, to which pilgrimages are occasionally made. It is not a little singular that the Fijians agree with the Tahitians, Samoans, Tonguese, and Maoris, in fixing this starting-place invariably on that side of their respective countries...it is by no means clear where Bulu, the ultimate abode of bliss, is situated, and whether it is, as in the Tonguese mythology, a distant island... (Seeman 1860: 398-399).

In addition to the similarities with their views of the hereafter, gossip was common by the 1860s. Dr. Seeman observed "but a new feature in the history of gossip is the tittle-tattle of the other groups in the pacific was dealt out as so many delicious morsels in Fiji. [The Fijian people discussed] the doings of

known personages in Tahiti, Samoa and Tonga were discussed with avidity" (Seeman 1860: 42). Although there is no mention of gossip in the Samoan and Tongan literature, this does not mean that this practice did not exist in the other island groups. This practice demonstrates the transfer of information because in order to gossip, the Fijian people must have had intimate knowledge of the people of Tahiti, Samoa and Tonga.

### **Efflorescence of the information network**

As European influence grew stronger, the information exchanged within this network grew and changed from an oral to a written form of communication. By the 1850s, King George of Tonga was writing letters to his Fijian equivalent, Cakobau. "King George wrote a letter to Thakombau, some time after his return to Tonga from Australia, imploring him to become a Christian. That letter, in fact, decided Thakombau to become a Christian on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1854" (West 1865: 397). This communication indicates that the European influence strengthened as the missionaries established themselves in this region and convinced the leaders to adopt Christianity. With the greater European influence, the traditional information network was seen as representing the old culture.

The purpose of this chapter was to define and explain the presence of bulk products and information networks in Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. This chapter examined both bulk materials and the information networks as illustrated in earlier chapters. I combined these networks because bulk products are not very common in this region. This chapter demonstrated how the information network was far more integrated than the bulk products network in this region. Beyond the flow of information and bulk products, one important interaction in the West Polynesia regional circuit is the political/military network.

## Chapter Four

### War and Peace in West Polynesia

This chapter will examine the political/military network within the West Polynesia regional system. Both politics and the military play an important part for understanding the connections between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. In the gift-relations among island leaders, politics and military were deeply connected with prestige exchange. Prestige valuables were often given to rival leaders in order to demonstrate power and secure peace. The primary historical sources show the structure and changes over time in the political and military networks of exchange in this region.

Since the political/military network was so large, I split the analysis of this network into two sections in order to facilitate the comprehension of these data and their application to the world-systems approach. This chapter will also attempt to grasp the significance of the trade that went on within this region. The first section will examine the political aspect of the exchanges between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa to demonstrate how fundamental the political connections were in this region of the world. It will also show the specific forms that politics takes within this region and applies the concept of political interaction for Oceania. The second section will look at the military aspect of this exchange network, defining the various forms of military interaction and demonstrating how this affected the region as a whole.

#### Political/Military Network

The analysis in this chapter is based on the works of Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997, 2000), who argue that both economic and political forms of interaction are important features of all world-systems networks. Intermarriage networks also are central institutions for interconnectedness in most systems, especially in kin-based systems, where the exchange of marriage partners has been a fundamental

part of regional alliances and virtually always has economic and political functions. Chase-Dunn and Hall's (1997, 2000) model distinguishes the relationships involving regularized political/military conflict and alliances in a region from the other networks of interaction (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997: 52).

Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997, 2000) recognized that in Afro-Eurasia, this network had a particular form that included interactions like intermarriage, warfare, stirrups<sup>52</sup> and gunpowder (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997: 185). When warfare is severe, the political/military boundary may cut the flow of information even while prestige valuables may effectively cross the boundary via circuitous down-the-line exchanges (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997: 52-53). This network of exchange was well developed in the West Polynesia regional exchange circuit.

Unlike the previous two networks, the political/military network that Chase-Dunn and Hall envisioned is similar to the interactions found in Oceania. The remainder of this chapter will analyze this network for western Polynesia and demonstrate that these types of interactions were extremely common. I have divided the military section into three areas: combat, weapons and canoes. In the pages that follow, I will present data to show how these interactions among Fiji, Tonga and Samoa constituted a regional political/military exchange network, and some developments in response to western interferences.

### **Political interaction within Fiji, Tonga and Samoa**

Ethnologists have long distinguished subdivisions within Polynesian culture based on geographic groupings. In West Polynesia, many

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<sup>52</sup> For horses in the cavalry.

ethnographers,<sup>53</sup> (Kaepler 1978; Sayes 1989; Tuimaleali'ifano 1990; Spurway 2002 and 2004; Barnes and Hunt 2005) have described some of the interactions that took place in this region. There seems to have been an intercourse between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa for many generations. Although the cultures of Samoa and Tonga share a common origin, similarities also result from continued contact and communication between the archipelagos throughout their history (Davidson 1969: 88-94). The Tongan islanders seeking large timber as materials for canoes regularly stayed in Fiji. Fine mats and native cloth printed in choice patterns, were exchanged for permission to cut timber and build canoes (Seeman 1860: 239).

The interconnections in West Polynesia were observed by some of the earliest explorers to the region. During his second voyage, Cook commented that "I find such affinity in the Language and Manner[s] & Customs of the different islanders that I am led to believe that they have all had one Origin" (Cook 1955-67: 275). By the time of Cook's third voyage to the region, he heard the Tongans describe Samoa, Vava'u and Fiji as being larger than Tongatapu and commented that none of these islands have been seen by any European that we know of except Abel Tasman in the seventeenth century (Cook and King 1784: 162). During this same voyage, Cook also describes Samoa and claims that this large island is also under the dominion of Tongatapu and is located two days sail to the "North of NW of Vaughwaugh" (Cook and King 1784:163). Cook also observed several Fijians in Tongatapu. Cook was also told that Fiji was not subject to Tongatapu. He was informed that Tonga and Fiji frequently make war with each other and observed that "it appeared from several circumstances that these people stand in much fear of those of Fidgee and no wonder since the one is [a] Humane and peaceable Nation whereas the other is said to be Cannibals, brave Savage and Cruel" (Cook and King 1784:163-64). La Pérouse also observed the similarities between the Samoan and the Tongan people. He describes upon

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<sup>53</sup> For more detail see Chapter 2 and attached bibliography.

arriving to Tonga that "their language, tattooing and clothing all indicate that they have the same origin as the natives of the Samoan Islands" (La Pérouse 1989: 154). These early descriptions demonstrate the existence of political interactions in the region because many of these connections came from interactions that took place in times of peace and war.

In the early part of the nineteenth century, Mariner also observed the deep connections of Fiji and Samoa to Tonga. He reported that the oldest natives could not give any account for their first discovery of the Fiji Islands, but say they went to these islands before the Fiji people had come to them. It was suggested to him that perhaps their canoes had drifted there by strong easterly winds (Martin 1991: 69). In addition to these connections with Fiji, there is accompanying evidence of connections between Tonga and Samoa during this period. Mariner describes Finau's son and heir returning from Samoa after an absence of five years.

Mongangogo arrived from Hamoa (the Navigator's Islands) accompanied by Voona, another great chief who had formerly been such at Vavaoo. They and their retinue had sailed from Hamoa in six canoes. Their arrival at Lefooga occasioned great feasting and rejoicing, which lasted many days, and served to divert the king from his immediate warlike projects (Martin 1991: 108-9).

These interactions between Tonga and Samoa continued unabated until the missionary presence altered these alliances to include the spread of Christianity. By the 1840s, the missionary presence in Tonga created the situation whereby the Tongans travelled to both Fiji and Samoa in order to preach the gospel. In 1841, King George of Tonga authorized a mission trip to Samoa after the missionary presence there failed to take hold and he was asked to intervene. Although the efforts were in vain, King George himself went to Samoa in 1842 in an attempt to retain the missionary presence there (West 1865:

200-207). In addition to visiting Samoa, King George decided to visit Thakombau in Fiji in the spirit of friendship and peace a few years later. Amongst the missionaries of both Fiji and Tonga there was concern that George was bringing too large a fleet of ships, which might be seen as threatening. Although he expressed that he would have liked to go with a fewer number of canoes, he argued that "we know what Fiji is. I feel bound to make good my promised visit to Thakombau; but it would not be safe for me or mine to go with only a few canoes. In the present state of Fiji, a weak appearance would be the signal for our destruction. [If] I take a larger number of canoes, [it is] not as a demonstration against Fiji, nor with the design of taking part in their quarrels, but for the safety of myself and people" (West 1865: 397-98). This documented statement by King George demonstrates that he was familiar with Fiji and was following an ancient protocol that other leaders, such as Finau, did before him.

The travel between Fiji and Tonga more often consisted of the latter travelling to the former. Thomas Williams writes "I never heard but one Fijian Chief who had attempted to steer his canoe to Tonga, though the people of that group, having the wind in their favour, pay yearly visits to Fiji" (Williams 1858: 85). William Daiepa also commented that when he arrived in Fiji he looked for a place "where I was sure that landing was safe in regard to the inhabitants, because a number of Tongans resided there" (Daiepa 1928: 77). By 1850, there were so many people going from Tonga to Fiji that Walter Lawry commented that "when I was at Hihifo in the Island of Tonga, there was a great stir about so many of those people going away to Feejee, where they generally act as the English in Paris - cast off restraint and live as they wish" (Lawry 1850: 128). This observation by missionaries and other travellers to the region demonstrate that it was very common for Tongans to reside in Fiji and the missionaries did not approve of the Tongan's behaviour. This also shows that the interactions in the West Polynesia regional circuit were frequent.

West (1865), another missionary in Fiji, observed that even though the Tongan presence in Fiji was valuable from a political point of view to Thakombau<sup>54</sup>, the presence of 'righteous' Tongans in Fiji hastened the conversion to Christianity in Fiji. West believes that this progress has "been the wonder of modern times in connection with the Missionary enterprises of the church of Christ" (West 1865: 404). By the 1860s, Seeman commented that "the population of Kadavu, said to number about ten thousand, is a mixture between the Fijian and Tonguese races, all of whom, with the exception of seven individuals, have nominally become Christians" (Seeman 1860: 140). The continued interactions between Fiji and Tonga were so common and widespread that these connections were used by the missionaries to hasten the progress of Christianity in the region.

The Tongan presence in Fiji was felt so acutely that Seeman (1861) argued that the Tongans living there shaped and changed the course of Fijian history. During the time when the cession of Fiji to Britain was discussed, Seeman argues that "one of the many reasons which induced the King and Chiefs of Fiji to tender a formal cession of their beautiful island to the British Crown and to ratify it with alacrity, was to escape from the insupportable exactions and tyrannies of the Tonguese" (Seeman 1860: 236). Tonga's interaction in Fijian affairs can be viewed in two ways: as a maritime empire (Campbell 1992) or as protecting land that was viewed as under Tongan control (Spurway 2002, 2004). Since many Tongans lived on the Lau Islands in eastern Fiji, I believe that many Tongans felt that this area was more a part of Tonga than of Fiji. Therefore, the Tongans' 'interference' in Fijian affairs was a result of attempting to look out for their own interests in the region.

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<sup>54</sup> Cakobau (Thakombau) was an important chief in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century in Fiji. His alliances with Tongan mercenaries allowed him to dominate over smaller and weaker regions in Fiji.

### Ceremonial similarities and interaction

In addition to looking out for their own interests politically, the Tongans used their interactions in Samoa and Fiji in order to maintain their social hierarchy. In the early twentieth century, the late Queen Sālote's, viewed Fiji and Samoa as 'spouse-givers' to Tonga.<sup>55</sup> While each archipelago is culturally distinct, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa form a larger social system (Kaeppler 1978:250). According to Queen Sālote, Fiji became a male 'spouse giver' to Tonga in this system. With such a spouse came valuables associated with males such as canoes, wooden bowls, wooden neck rests, slit gongs and sandalwood (Kaeppler 1978:250). These items are not readily available in Tonga because of the lack of appropriate trees. Importing a Fijian was a method not only of marrying off a female too high status to marry a Tongan, but also for keeping her children from trying to usurp power on the basis of rank (Kaeppler 1978:248). In this system, Samoans became female 'spouse givers', giving high-ranking women who brought with them female marriage goods, which included fine mats. In her article, Kaeppler argues that Tonga needed both Fiji and Samoa as part of their social system in order to perpetuate their social system.

As early as the 1780s, there is evidence of intermarriage between Fiji and Tonga. During his third voyage, Cook attempts to illuminate the concept of the high ranking women in Tongan society. He mentions that the female *Tamaha*, or 'sacred child', was such a woman and was the most sacred being in all of Tonga. She was the child of the female Tu'i Tonga and Tu'i Lakepa, of the Fijian house or *fale Fisi*. Cook noticed that the sacred Tu'i Tonga gave the same ceremony to this child as others did to him and that her position was so high that she could not have any recognized descendents (Cook and King 1782: 136 fn. #2). In Tongan society, sisters outrank brothers. Therefore, the children of the sister

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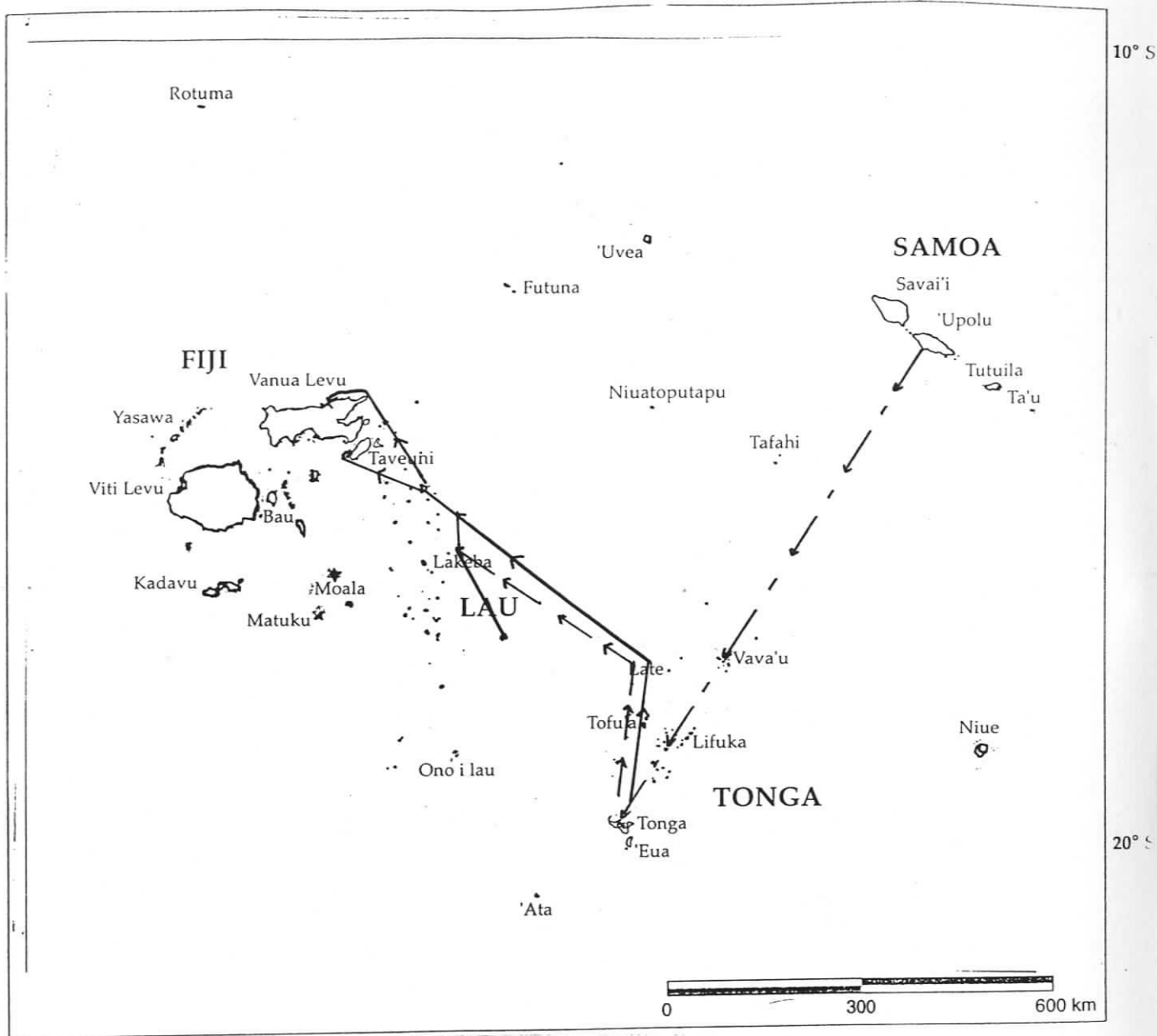
<sup>55</sup> Although this source is outside of my time period, the ethnographic evidence suggests that this social system existed in the period from the 1770s to the 1870s (Kaeppler, 1978).

would outrank the children of the brother if she married a Tongan. To get around this problem, the Tongan women would marry Fijian men so the sister's children would not outrank the brother's children.

The high rank of women in Tongan society was the main reason for Tongans to marry Samoans and Fijians (Kaepler 1978). In the early nineteenth century, while Mariner resided in Tonga, he witnessed both sides of this marriage triangle. He saw Finau's son take Samoan women as his wives. Mariner describes how Finau's son, who had been in Samoa for several years, had married some women there. When he returned to Tonga, he decided to marry two more women and have a Samoan type wedding (Martin 1991:109). During this ceremony Mariner describes various foreigners attending the wedding. He remarks how "the provisions were shared out...the next largest [portions] was shared out to all foreigners, [the] Natives of Fiji and Hammoa, the island of Fotoona etc" (Martin 1991:112). When Mariner went with Finau's men to the Fiji islands, they went to a very small island named Chichia,<sup>56</sup> which is close to Bau, because the chief was partial to Tongans because his wife came from there (Martin 1991:196). By the 1840s, the evidence of intermarriage was so prevalent that Thomas Williams observed that there were so many Fijians in Tonga that the intermixture was called 'Tongan-Fiji' (Williams 1858:104). A. M. Hocart, an ethnographer of the region, discovered that in the Lau islands of Fiji many islanders came from Tongan descendents. Although he was only able to discover seven intermarriages, he also described that "there must be many more that are not mentioned" (Hocart 1929: 230). Evidence of intermarriage in the region demonstrates the political alliances that came out of these marriages. These connections show the extent to which the political/military interaction network was developed in this region.

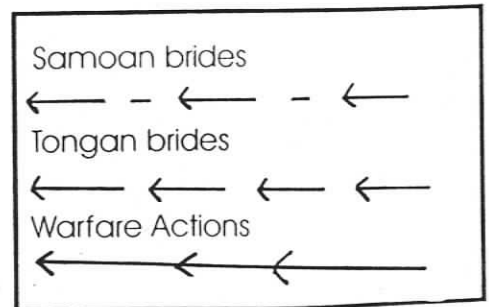
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<sup>56</sup> "Chichia" is referring to the Cicia Island (pronounced Thithia). It is located in Lau near Vanua Balavu (Morgan, 2006: Personal Communication).



**Map 2: Marriage Links and Warfare Actions**

Legend



### Ma'afu, the Expansionary Chief

The political interaction in the West Polynesia regional circuit effloresced in the 1850s and 1860s with the power that Ma'afu, a Tongan, held in Fiji. Enele Ma'afu'atuitoga, commonly known as Ma'afu, was a Tongan Prince and Fijian chief. He was born in Tongatapu, Tonga, in 1816, as the son of Aleamotu'a, 18<sup>th</sup> Tu'i Kanokupulu. In 1840 he married Elenoa Lutui, a Samoan, with whom he had one child, Siale'ataongo, in Nukualofa. Ma'afu died February 6<sup>th</sup> 1881 in Lomaloma, Vanuabalavu, Fiji (Spurway 2002: 234).

As the nephew and official representative of King George Tupou I, who wished to keep Ma'afu away from Tonga as a potential rival for the throne, Ma'afu established himself at Lakeba as leader of the Tongan community in the Lau Islands in 1848. Aligning himself with the Tui Nayau, the Paramount Chief of the Lau Islands, he went on to conquer the Moala Islands and placed them under the Tui Nayau's authority. In 1850, he traded with the Tui Cakau, the Paramount Chief of Cakaudrove, for the islands north of Cicia. He then went on to Vanua Balavu and took up residence in Lomaloma, after suppressing a religious war on the island. Using his alliance with the Tui Cakau and Tui Bua, or Paramount Chief of Bua, Ma'afu defeated Ritova, the Tui Macuata or Paramount Chief of Macuata. It was also during this period that Ma'afu extended his influence through the northern island of Vanua Levu (Seeman 1860: 243). Ma'afu's increasing influence in the region placed him in direct conflict with Thakombau for control of Fiji. It was only through the wide-spread connections with the Tongan people and the Tongan claim for sovereignty in the region that Ma'afu was able to assert his influence.

As a Christian, Ma'afu introduced Methodist Christianity to eastern Fiji. When Seru Epenisa Cakobau, the Vunivalu, or Paramount Chief, of Bau, made his first offer to cede Fiji to the United Kingdom in 1858, John Pritchard, the

British Consul, warned Ma'afu - by now the most powerful chief in northern Fiji - that under British rule, further attempts to expand his power base would not be tolerated (Seeman 1860: 251-2). Ma'afu shrewdly signed an agreement denying sovereignty over Fijians and claiming to be in the islands only to oversee the Tongan population. Following Britain's decision in 1862 not to annex Fiji, however, Ma'afu resumed his attempts to extend his rule (Seeman 1860: 139).

In June 1868, Ma'afu was faced with a crisis when the Tongan government disclaimed all sovereignty over Fijian territory, including the Lau Islands. Ma'afu could no longer exercise authority over Lau as a Tongan Prince. Lauan chiefs met in Lakeba in February 1869, and granted Ma'afu the title of Tui Lau, or King of Lau, Levuka and Ovalau. He was subsequently recognized as such by the chiefs of Cakaudrove and Bua in May 1869, but abdicated in favour of Cakobau and the united Fijian monarchy in 1871. Ma'afu later played a leading role in the cession of Fiji to the United Kingdom in 1874 (Spurway 2002:236-238). Ma'afu's influence in the region was made possible through the historical interactions and connections in West Polynesia. His active role in politics demonstrates the larger role of the political/military network in this region prior to the cession of Fiji.

### **Military Interactions:**

#### **Warfare**

Although political interactions were common in the West Polynesia regional circuit, intermittent fighting was another way that Fiji, Tonga and Samoa interacted with each other. Even though by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the main conflicts arose between Fiji and Tonga, this does not mean that Samoa did not experience warfare of this sort during an earlier period. In the oral history of Samoa there are stories of Fijian conquerors establishing themselves in Manu'a and receiving tribute from all of Samoa (Watson 1918: 21). There is also a story in Samoa about *Fitiaumua*, or Fiji the foremost. He was said to have come from the

east, was a great warrior, conquered Fiji, and in his lust for conquest came to Samoa. According to the story; "he subdued all the leeward islands of the group, reached Manu'a, and there he dwelt. All Samoa took tribute to him, and hence the place was called the Great Manu'a" (Turner 1884: 224). During the period between the 1770s and the 1870s, the main contact between Fiji and Samoa was through Tonga. As this and other oral traditions show, at one point in the past, Fiji and Samoa interacted directly with each other although this frequent contact ceased prior to the 1770s.

Even though there is no record of conflict between Tonga and Samoa during the 1770s and the 1870s, there is an oral history that suggests that warfare was once common. Through this oral tradition, the Tongans claimed to have conquered Samoa during this early pre-contact period. However, this fragment of oral history should not necessarily be interpreted as implying a conquest of all of the Samoan islands. In the sixteenth century, the Tongans established themselves on Savaii but were eventually beaten back from the group by the first Malietoa who arranged a treaty of peace between Tonga and Samoa (Tofaeono Tu'u'u 2001: 45-47). After this conflict between Tonga and Samoa, this treaty was observed by over twenty generations of the Malietoa family (Watson 1918: 21-22). In his book, the missionary Turner describes this story in detail.

When the Tongans were victorious for a time in Samoa they lived on the common at Safotu, and thither the people flocked with food and sundry other articles of tribute to the chief of the invaders, Talaaifeii. Tuna and Fata, two sons of Malietoa Savea, or Malietoa I., went with the tribute, but before returning tore up the le'ale'a, or iron-wood mooring-stick to which the Tongan king's canoe was fastened, and took it away, which was like an insult and a declaration of war. With this they made a club, roused all to battle against the invaders, gained a victory over them, which ended up in their leaving, after forming a treaty of peace between Samoa and Tonga, which for upwards of twenty generations of the Malietoa family has remained unbroken (Turner 1884: 254).

Although the evidence points to a peaceful existence between Tonga and Samoa, this does not mean that the Samoans weren't warriors who fought battles elsewhere. When La Pérouse went on his fateful journey to Samoa in the 1780s, he observed evidence of battle scars on the Samoans. He describes "great wounds - some scars, others still bleeding- betrayed the warlike, violent habits of these savages, and their features expressed the same fierceness" (La Pérouse 1989:108). It is important to note, however, that La Pérouse's assumptions were coloured by a brutal attack on his crew<sup>57</sup> (La Pérouse 1989: 110-112) and that the Samoans may not have been as warlike during this period as is claimed. Through the historical period from the 1770s to the 1870s, the interaction between Samoa and Tonga was peaceful. These peaceful communications allowed for the efflorescence of the political/military network through intermarriage and prestige valuable exchanges.

When Cook came to Tonga in the 1770s, Tonga appeared to have been enjoying a relatively peaceful existence. However, as was evidenced through the wars that began soon after, previous military expansion was observed during this period by the early explorers. William Anderson observed in 1777 that, with the exception of Fiji, "the greatest part of the islands they know have been conquered by them and now form part of their domain" (Anderson in Cook 1955-67: 880).

There can be no doubt, however, that the Fiji islands to the west were far from being dominated by Tongans. On the contrary, Tongan informants readily admitted having frequent wars with Fiji at Vanua Balavu in the Lau Islands (Ellis 1782: 117; Labillardiere 1800: 377), and David Samwell was told that only a short

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<sup>57</sup> During La Pérouse's last days in the Samoan Islands in 1787, there was a skirmish aboard the ship *Astrolabe*. Several Samoans were caught stealing and were shot. The following day, the Samoans retaliated by attacking the Frenchmen. They killed 12 men including de Langle, the commander of the *Astrolabe* (La Pérouse 1799: 110).

time before Cook's arrival in 1777 they had been in battle with the Fijians (Samwell in Cook 1955-67: 1043). One should note that during 1770s and 1780s, there was little direct contact with the Fijian and Samoan islanders. These early explorers' observations came from Tonga since these were the islands that were seen to be friendly to outsiders.

Although Cook did not observe Fiji-Tonga warfare during his second voyage, this could be due to the lack of questioning about neighbouring islands, or may have been due to a limited ability to communicate in the Tongan language. Over the years Fiji became a training ground for young and restless Tongan chiefs who went to fight on the side of one or another Fijian chief and learn the ways of battle first hand. In time, these seasoned warriors brought back to Tonga their hard-earned knowledge of Fijian methods, weapons, and attitudes regarding warfare (Martin 1991:84-5, 256, 263, 278-9). Mariner also describes the Tu'i Hala Fatai's pleasure with the Fijian warlike attitude.

They were pleased with the Fiji maxim, that war and strife were the noble employments of men, and ease and pleasure worthy to be coursed only by the weak and effeminate. Tooi Hala Fatai accordingly set sail with his followers, about 250 in number in three large canoes, for the island of Laemba; not to make an attack on the place, but to join one party or another, and rob, plunder, procure canoes and kill the natives (Martin 1991: 69).

By the 1840s, it was very common for Tongans to assist Fijians in their local wars. Thomas Williams described this during his missionary travels to Fiji. "Tongans who are visiting the Chief at the time are expected to assist him [in warfare]; to which they rarely object, their services being repaid in canoes, arms, mats, etc. In some cases Tongan Chiefs have had small islands ceded to them" (Williams 1858:45). By the 1860s, there are observations of Tongans continuing their mercenary role in Fiji. Mrs Smythe, wife of the British commissioner to Fiji, commented that "small parties of [the Tongans] have frequently lent a hand in

Fijian wars and always with success. The present chiefs of Mbau, Thakaundrove and Mbua, all owe the retention of their authority to the aid of the Tongans" (Smythe 1864:125). A few years later, West describes how the influence of George Tupou's conversion to Christianity affected the Fijian methods of warfare. "According to the practice of Fijian warfare, most of the prisoners remaining at the close of the fight would have been butchered, and many of them cooked and eaten; but, by the interposition of King George and the Tonguese, such a terrible calamity was averted; not one was injured" (West 1865: 402). This shift from indigenous to European methods of fighting demonstrates how this political/military network changed over time.

By the 1860s, the missionary influence in Tonga was so prevalent that Seeman describes the mercenary presence that the Tongans began to take after King George converted to Christianity in 1845. From being mere mercenaries, they gradually began to act on their own responsibility, "readily avenging every outrage from time to time committed against any of the countrymen on the smaller islands of the eastern group" (Seeman 1860: 240-41). Even though the Tongans had adopted a more Western approach they did not change their interactions with Fiji. Seeman (1860) described during the 1860s how, there continued to be Tongans in Fiji who assisted in feuds to chiefs that were friendly to them (Seeman, 1861: 243). These observations demonstrate the efflorescence of the political/military network in the region with the introduction of Christianity.

Although the Tongans often assisted Fijian chiefs in their inter-island wars, the Tongans also fought against the Fijians. One story of these raids happened on the island of Taveuni in Fiji. When the Fijians of Vuna saw a Tongan army coming, they put the *Salato* (*Fleurya interrupta*) plant everywhere on the shore so that the Tongans would have to walk through it. The *Salato* plant causes an allergic reaction and can be very itchy. When the Tongans finally came

to fight the Fijians, they were so itchy from this plant that the Fijians easily slaughtered them. The people of the Vuna area were able to close the whole area of Taveuni to Vuna Levu. During this period of conflict, they were not taken over by the Tongans and are proud of that fact to this day. In this period of flux, the conquered Lauans would fight with the Tongans against the Fijians.<sup>58</sup>

Even the influx of missionaries to these islands in the 1840-50s did little to dispel the age old notion that Fijians were more violent than Tongans. West observed in Fiji, after spending several years in Tonga, that the Fijians never go without arms. The Tongans, on the other hand, do not carry arms unless they are at war. West laments that in Fiji "the practice is sadly indicative of the distracted and uncertain state of political parties, and of the constant recurrence of those tribal wars which desolate these islands" (West 1865:409). The political/military network was so well established between Fiji and Tonga that most travellers to the region commented on the effect that these interactions had on the individual island groups.

During his travels to Tonga, West observes the inauguration of the new constitution of Tonga. During this ceremony, several chiefs and representatives from Haabai, Vavau, Niua Foou, Nuia Tobutabu, Samoa and Fiji were present (West, 1865: 435). Another interesting thing to note about this ceremony is that it was done in a European style with a banquet where the chiefs were "seated on splendid chairs, dressed in suits of European black cloth, and with white neck ties" (West 1865: 435). After this European style ceremony, another ceremony was held in the traditional Tongan style with ceremonial gifts which included native dresses, mats (both for wearing and for sitting on), rolls of native cloth, fans, combs, baskets (West 1865: 436). After this constitutional ceremony, West observes "under the spreading branches of the banyan trees sat some four or five

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<sup>58</sup>These hostilities were recalled by contemporary Fijians in field discussion.

thousand natives from Tonga, Fiji and Samoa, on Whit-Sunday 1862, assembled for public worship" (West 1865: 436-7).

By the 1860s, the internal Fijian wars that were supported by Tongan mercenaries began to draw the attention of the British because these conflicts hampered trade. When the *bêche-de-mer* trade stopped because of an internal war in Fiji that was supported by Tongans, Mr. Prichard attempted to put a stop to the affairs that went against British interests.

[Looking at] the state of affairs we found...that the combined force of the Tongans and Fijians had driven their opponent off the mainland...in these outrages the Tongans were the most prominent actors; and I may here state my opinion, that in the event of her Majesty's Government accepting the Fijis, it will be necessary, from the very first, to put a stop to the raids which the Tongans have for the last five years been in the habit of carrying into the various islands lying to the west of Lakeba...I told them through a consular interpreter, that we had no wish to injure or interfere with either the Fijians or Tongans in anyway; but that, owing to the senseless quarrels of the former, fomented by the latter, the interests of the white traders in Fiji were compromised (Seaman 1860: 271).

The Tongan military expansion into northern Fiji continued with Fijian resistance until Fiji ceded to Britain in 1874. After the cession, united under the Tui Viti, the fighting in Fiji ceased.

### **Weapons - Prestige and War**

During his second voyage, Cook commented on the lack of weapons and the friendly nature of the Tongans. "Where we were welcomed ashore by acclamations from an immense crowd of men and women not one of which has so much as a stick in their hands" (Cook in Beaglehole 1955-67:245). During the same voyage he also observed "from the high cultivated state of the isles and the friendly manner we were received by these islanders one may venture to

conjecture that they are seldom disturbed by either domestic or foreign troubles, there are however not without arms" (Cook in Beaglehole 1955-67:273-74). Cook described Tongan clubs as ranging in length from three to as much as six feet. There must have been smaller ones as well, for Mariner, explained how two chiefs were to hide "short iron wood clubs" inside their clothing (Martin, 1991:197). In addition, J. F. G. de La Pérouse, who had already witnessed the devastation in 1787 that could be wrought with Samoan clubs, derided the Tongan equivalents, proclaiming them to weigh no more than a third of those used by the natives of Tutuila. By the 1840s, these clubs were still formidable weapons. Turner, a missionary in Samoa, describes how he saw clubs that were "three feet long, from the iron-wood or something else that is heavy" (Turner 1884: 171).

Fighting spears ranged in length from about five to as much as twelve feet. Since some were thrown, and others were used by hand as thrusting spears, the shorter of these weapons no doubt represented the former category. Besides differing in size, these weapons ranged from simple, sharp pointed examples to various barbed types (Martin 1991: 194-5). Mariner also describes how the Tongans, through warfare with Fiji, "became acquainted with a better form of the spear and a superior method of holding and throwing that missile weapon" (Martin 1991: 68). Although some of the barbs may have been carved into the wood, others were formed from the tails of the stingray. Some of these spears could be quite vicious; Anderson mentioned that he once saw a spear that was surrounded with stingray spines from its point down the shaft for a distance of one foot (Anderson in Cook 1955-67: 941). These weapons were also observed in Samoa by Turner. He described spears that were "eight feet long, made from the cocoa-nut tree, and barbed with the sting of the ray fish" (Turner 1884: 171). Weapons, such as the spear, demonstrated the interaction among members of

this network through the changes that occurred with these items when these island groups quarrelled with each other.

The West Polynesia regional circuit contained differences in weaponry uses and war practices. The developments in one area affected other parts of the region. The bows and arrows described by Cook and his men during their visits to Tonga were all of a single type used for hunting small game, a point verified some thirty years later by Mariner (Anderson in Cook 1955-67: 941; Samwell in Cook 1955-67: 1312; Martin 1991: 165). The pull of this bow was so weak that both Samwell and Clerke, making their observations in 1777, agreed that the instrument would have been of little use in warfare<sup>59</sup> (Samwell in Cook 1955-67: 1037; Clerke in Cook 1955-67: 1312). During this early period, there was little description of this weapon ever being used in battle. Mariner explained that its draw was intentionally weak for the purpose of assuring that the hunter's arm would remain steady and not tremble from drawing the bowstring (Martin 1991: 228). Nonetheless, this type of bow and arrow had not always been used exclusively for hunting. Back in 1773, Cook gave descriptions of how these relatively weak weapons were employed in battle (Cook in Beaglehole 1955-67: 272-3). With a bow and one arrow, each warrior would advance on the enemy up to a certain distance, release his arrow, and charge forward to engage in hand-to-hand combat with spear and club (Cook in Beaglehole 1955-67: 271-4).

One explanation for the discontinued use of the bow and arrow in Tongan battle techniques is given by Clerke (1955-67). He had been told by the Tongans that the warriors of Fiji were the only people in that area of the Pacific who used the bow and arrow in warfare, and that the Tongans had felt their destructive power. He went on to express wonderment that the Tongans had not countered

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<sup>59</sup> Samwell and Clerke might have assumed that these weapons could have been used for hunting instead of warfare.

by improving their hunting bows so that they could be put "to nobler uses," since the Fijians had already shown them the advantage of such a modification (Clerke in Cook 1955-67: 1312). This suggests that perhaps prior to the advent of Fiji-Tongan warfare, the basically ineffectual Tongan bow and arrow had been used in Tongan internal battles as a weapon to disperse the enemy before closing in. However, when faced with the stronger and more deadly Fijian bow and arrow during the post 1773 era, the Tongans abandoned their own weaker weapon as being of little use. The abandonment of inferior weaponry demonstrates that military interaction in this region was prevalent during this period.

It took a little time, but by the turn of the century Vason could again report the use of bows and arrows in Tongan warfare (Vason 1810: 166). However, it was not until Mariner's days in Tonga that it becomes clear that this was a new weapon and not the hunting bow used previously (Martin 1991: 228). Whether this modified weapon was nothing more than a copy or adaptation of those used by the Fijians has not been determined. However, it is abundantly clear that it was inspired by Fijian warfare methods, which demonstrates that the political/ military network continued to flourish well into the nineteenth century.

Among many Polynesians, the sling was also used as a weapon of warfare. However, there is little record of this method used in Tonga prior to Mariner (Martin 1991: 96). Its late acceptance in Tonga suggests an introduction from Fiji, whose warriors were said to have used it against the Tongans as early as 1777 (Bligh 1789: 175). Although Samoa could be a likely source, these weapons more likely came from Fiji because I have found no mention of the sling in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century records for Samoa, though clubs, spears, and stone-throwing are noted (Williams 1858; Turner 1884; Tofaeono Tu'u'u 2001). The

evolution of indigenous weapons during this period, demonstrates the interactions that took place in this regional circuit.

With the influx of Europeans in the region, the trade in weapons used in Fiji, Tonga and Samoa effloresced to include European weapons. In Fiji, Williams observed that although the Fijians still employed new weapons like the battle axe and the musket, the club continued to be a favourite weapon amongst the warriors. He commented that even with these new weapons, defensive armour was not used and that many Fijians sought security against the enemy through the cover of the forest (Williams 1858:57-8). Although the weapons exchanged effloresced in the region, the indigenous weapons and methods of warfare were not abandoned with these new items of exchange.

Over in Tonga, West commented that the old weapons had been greatly supplanted with the introduction of European arms and ammunition. These new weapons created the need for change in warfare tactics and practices. Many Tongan elders did not approve of the new tactics and weaponry. West describes the lament of a grey-headed old chief who said "Musket balls do not know chiefs...musket balls may do for boys, but clubs are the weapons of men" (West 1865:266). Even though the new weapons were adapted into Tongan society, there was resistance amongst the elders because they felt that these new weapons required little skill and bravery.

In his observations of Fiji and Tonga, Thomas Williams described how the inhabitants of Tonga depended on Fiji for their canoes, spears, sail mats, pottery and mosquito curtains. The Tongans also consume large quantities of Fijian sinnet and food in exchange for whale's teeth, inlaid clubs, small white cowries, Tongan cloth, axes, muskets as well as their services in war (Williams 1858: 94).

The frequent connections and exchanges among the Fijians and the Tongans created a large political/military network of interaction in this region.

During this period in Samoa, Turner commented that when iron was introduced to these islands the Samoans created hatchets and sharp tomahawks. The latter weapon had a handle that was the length of a walking stick. After the introduction of more European weapons, the Samoans had the "civilized additions of swords, pistols, guns and bayonets" (Turner 1884:191). The addition of these new weapons into this regional interaction network demonstrates how this trade circuit changed and effloresced in the post contact period.

### **Canoes - Construction and Materials**

Within this exchange network I have examined both warfare and weapons. Although one could argue that canoes should be placed in the latter category, due to their great importance, they must be examined on their own. Canoes were used in this region as the main method of travel between and within island groups. Canoes are significant in this region due to the fact that the Tongans built these vessels on the Fiji islands because the islands in the Tonga group lack sufficient trees to create canoes of this size. Walter Lawry, a missionary in Fiji during the 1850s describes Tongans arriving to build their canoes.

Perhaps Devine Providence may overrule the coming here, from time to time, of the Tonga people to build canoes. The Tonga men are far the best carpenters, and the greater voyagers; but in Feejee only are found good timber for ship-building. [The Tongans have had] many irregularities and sins...come out of these visits [to Fiji]" (Lawry 1850: 138).

In addition, Daipea also described the presence of Tongans in Fiji in order to build canoes. He observed a large canoe that was built in Fiji by Tongan

carpenters because Tonga did not have enough large timber with which to create these great vessels (Daipea 1928: 110). These observations highlight one of the main reasons for the deep interactions between Fiji and Tonga. Since the trees on Tonga were not big enough to create large canoes, the Tongans had to travel to Fiji in order to create these vessels.

Although there is little information on the single-hulled sailing canoes of Tonga, the great double sailing craft immediately caught the eyes of Europeans. During Cook's voyage in 1777, he describes these canoes in great detail and seems impressed by their ingenuity (Cook in Beaglehole 1955-67: 263-64). Even though the canoes described by Cook were seaworthy, not all Tongan double canoes were necessarily meant for extended voyaging. The archipelago itself was reason enough to maintain such vessels for inter-island communication. However, every double canoe that was built was able to withstand the pressures of long distance travel. Cook observes that the canoes "are not only made Vessels of burden but fit for distant Navigation" (Cook in Beaglehole 1955-67: 264). This admiration of the indigenous canoes demonstrates that the Tongans were familiar with ocean travel and were well equipped to interact with their neighbours.

The fact that the Samoan and Fijian island groups, including Lau, were familiar to the Tongan navigators was well established. Cook and his officers were given both sailing directions and number of sailing days required to reach both island groups. In addition, Wilson (1799:234-235) mentioned a chief setting sail for Fiji, as did Mariner ([1827] 1991: 78-80). In the latter case, it is interesting to note that the destination was Lakemba in the Lau group, where the Fijian traders known as "the inhabitants of the water" had a settlement (Martin 1991: 77-78). The missionary Thomas Williams (1858) was told during his early work in Fiji that the largest immigration of Tongans had always been to Lakemba.

Here they were said to have participated in trade and construction of canoes. Williams also pointed out that the Tongans were frequently forced to spend months in Fiji due to the strong easterlies against which they had difficulty sailing back to their Tongan homes (Williams 1858: 215). Even though the Samoan islands were known as the "Navigator's Islands", the few ocean-going canoes Europeans saw in the possession of Samoans were double canoes of a Lau Islands design, apparently supplied to them or built for them by Tongans (Gilson 1970:65). The well established presence of the Tongan people in the Lau Islands of Fiji demonstrated the deep connections within this network of interaction. These observations also showed how the environment played an important part for determining the flow of trade in this region.

In addition to the canoes being used for distant voyaging, Williams described the different skills of canoe construction between the Tongans and the Fijians; the former are more accomplished carpenters and bolder sailors who build larger canoes, they are not equal to those of Fiji, noting that "the well built and excellently designed canoes of the Fijians were for a long time superior to those of any other islanders in the Pacific" (Williams 1858: 76). In Samoa, during his early missionary work in the 1840s, Turner describes how two or three generations back the Samoans built large double canoes like the Fijians. He claims, however, that "latterly they seldom built anything larger than a single canoe with an outrigger, which might carry from fifteen to twenty people" (Turner 1884: 164). Since canoe travel was the main method of transportation during this period, the skill with which these vessels were created had an effect on the frequency of long distance travel among the island groups.

By the 1860s, the increasing impact of the Tongan presence on the Lau islands was associated with trade for canoes. In these northern and eastern parts of Fiji, Lakeba, and the adjacent islands were those chiefly visited by the Tongans

for the purpose of building their large canoes. Since it took considerable time to construct the larger canoes, a strong influx of Tongan blood was soon perceptible in the population of those districts (Seeman 1860: 240). The combination of skill and time needed to create an ocean-worthy vessel deepened this network of interaction between Fiji and Tonga. The combination of large trees and favourable ocean currents could explain why the connections between Fiji and Tonga are stronger than those of Tonga and Samoa.

The purpose of chapter four was to define and explain the presence of political and military networks of exchange in this region. In chapter four, I looked at the political/military network linking Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. The political and military connections in this region are deeply linked to each other and are integral for understanding this regional exchange network. This network of exchange was the largest form of interaction in this region. Political and military activities effloresced with the introduction of European weapons and Christianity into this region. Even though these political/military interactions were frequent, these island groups were also deeply connected with prestige valuable exchange.

## Chapter Five

### Prestige Valuables in West Polynesia

The interactions within the West Polynesia regional circuit went beyond information, bulk products and political/military networks to include prestige valuables exchange.<sup>60</sup> The purpose of chapter five is to define and explain the presence of prestige valuable networks of exchange in this region. Prestige valuables were an important part of this trade network because the items that the Fijians, Tongans and Samoans exchanged were integrated into the political/military network. This prestige valuables network is another demonstration of the continued interaction that took place between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa during this period.

In the original theoretical framework, prestige valuables are described as symbolically important items, which are typically exotic imports, often of high value to weight ratio, that confer prestige on the owner. The prestige-valuables' economy is an exchange network in which a local leader monopolizes the supply of prestige-valuables that is used to reward subordinates for loyalty (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997: 13). These luxury items are also important for maintaining the power structure in these societies.

The other networks, which include bulk materials exchange, intermarriage and political/ military interaction, are embedded within larger networks of prestige valuable exchange in many systems (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997: 52). They also propose that prestige valuable exchanges extend over large regions and link even larger regions with one or more political/military networks. Prestige valuable networks may also cross the boundary of the

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<sup>60</sup> "Prestige goods" is a common term which Chase-Dunn uses to describe this network of exchange. In my study, I will use the term prestige valuables, and avoid 'goods' following the rejection of the theory of goods described earlier.

political/military network during times of warfare via indirect down-the-line interactions. For an Eurasian example, prestige wealth trade lines ran along the 'Silk Roads' linking the Chinese, Indian and Roman core regions in a pre-modern Afro-Eurasian prestige-valuable network (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997: 52-53). In West Polynesia, this regional exchange network was also not cut off during times of conflict and warfare. In fact, often times this conflict would create the need for new wealth items to be exchanged in this area.<sup>61</sup>

### **Prestige Valuables in Oceania**

Like the political/military network, the prestige valuables network that Chase-Dunn and Hall envisioned is similar to the interactions found in Oceania. The remainder of this chapter will take Chase-Dunn and Hall's (1997, 2000) theoretical framework and apply it to the interactions among Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. The exchange of prestige valuables was common in this region during this period. In chapter five, I will examine the flow of the trade of several prestige items and later offer an in-depth focus on a particular prestige valuable, the red feather of the *kula* bird. In the first section of chapter five, I will show the main items traded and the interactions between the island groups. In this section, I will examine a few of the prestige items that were held in particularly high regard. These items include: whales teeth and *kava*.<sup>62</sup> Next, I will closely examine the exchange of the red feathers and show how this trade illustrated the flow of trade in the West Polynesia regional circuit. Finally, I will examine European trade objects and briefly show how their introduction occasioned a historical efflorescence of exchange in the military and the prestige valuables

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<sup>61</sup> An example of a wealth item that could be used for one purpose and exchanged for another is the description of clubs that were inlaid with ivory (Waterhouse, 1866: 97-98). This made an item that was once a weapon of war into a prestige valuable.

<sup>62</sup> Kava could be seen as an item associated with politics because it was often drunk in a ceremonial fashion to demonstrate peaceful relations between two communities. Although kava is also an item that could be classified as political I have placed it in the prestige valuables category as it has exchange value and deep cultural significance as a kind of prestige drink.

network particularly between Tonga and Fiji. This chapter demonstrates the significance of prestige valuable exchange in Oceanic cultures.

### **Flow of Trade**

With the exchanges of spouses came important prestige items such as fine mats from Samoa, and finely made wooden objects, such as bowls, headrests, and drums from Fiji. In addition, there was also trade between the Tonga and Fiji islands that included canoes, rope and sail mats, sandalwood, pottery and red feathers. Tonga tended to be the link between Fiji and Samoa. There was relatively little direct contact between Fiji and Samoa during this period. Tongan trading was carried on primarily with Fijians, and it would appear, to a considerably lesser extent with Samoans (Vason 1810; Orange 1840; Hunt 1846; Lawry 1850; Lundie 1864; Seeman 1860; Gifford 1929; Mead [1930] 1969; Derrick 1946; Hocart 1952; Henry 1980; Bott 1982; Moyle 1983; Routledge 1985; Thomas 1986; Ferdon 1987; Martin 1991; Campbell 1992; Gunson 1990; Faatonu, 1998; Kaeppler 1978, 1996, 1999; Spurway 2002, 2004; Barns and Hunt 2005). In fact, if one went wholly by the historical record, the only native trade goods entering the Tongan domain prior to the beginning of the nineteenth century would seem to be those from Fiji, in spite of the Tongans' professed long-standing and intimate knowledge of Samoa (Cook in Beaglehole 1955-67:163, 957). However, this trading situation may have been more apparent than real. During Mariner's stay on Tonga from 1806 to 1810, the principal, and perhaps only, trade items coming from Samoa were extremely fine woven mats (Martin 1991: 1: 21, 142, 316; 2:51). Mariner also explained how these mats were used in Tongan marriage ceremonies. He described how "the two brides were dressed in the finest Hamoan mats, but not in such profusion as described in [the Tu'i Tonga's] marriage" (Martin 1991: 110). In addition to the use in various marriage ceremonies, Mariner described how these mats were made.

These mats are made entirely by hand, and, when very fine and large occupy two years making. This renders them exceedingly valuable. They are so exquisitely manufactured, that one would suppose them to be woven by a loom (Martin 1991: 110 post script).

Since these mats were held in the greatest esteem by higher-ranking chiefs, it is possible that their existence on the islands prior to Mariner's time was intentionally withheld from the Europeans because they were not willing to trade them for European products. At the very least, the Europeans might have assumed that these mats were attributed to Tongan craftsmanship. On the other hand, with few exceptions, Fijian trade goods were more practical. They consisted of decorated bark cloth, variegated mats and Fijian pottery. This decorated bark cloth was used as the material for the clothes of the Fijians prior to intense European contact.<sup>63</sup> Seeman observed how on the coast, this *tapa* cloth has been gradually displaced by cheap cotton prints introduced by foreign traders (Seeman 1860: 349). Seeman later described how a *tapa* cloth that has special water repellent properties, called *sausauwai*, was highly valued by fishermen, and all the people living on the coast of Fiji. He claims that the Fijians would give "twenty fathoms of white *Tapa*, and the Tonguese and Samoans as much as £1 sterling, for a single one of these elegant articles of dress" (Seeman 1860: 352).

Of greater value, at least for the chiefly class, were the special red feathers used in decorating clothing and the like and aromatic sandalwood used in perfuming coconut oil (Anderson in Cook 1955-67: 958; Cook 1955-67: 144, 164, 171, 923, 942, 958; Labillardiere 1800: 379; Martin 1991: 70, 77, 257, 267-68). Mariner described how this sandalwood did not grow in Fiji and was able to "grow to perfection only at a certain part of the island called Vooia", and was in high demand by both the Tongans and the Americans (Martin 1991: 190).

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<sup>63</sup> This cloth was created from the bark of the paper mulberry tree (*Broussonetia papyrifera*).

Mariner explained how the chiefs of the islands of "Fiji very seldom oil themselves, and consequently require very little of this wood. The Fijians, seeing the demand for this wood increase, ask for a greater number of axes and chisels for a given quantity of the wood" (Martin 1991: 189-190). Mariner observed that due to this increased demand, these metal objects were becoming scarce in Tonga and plentiful in Fiji.

In later years, Seeman described how this sandalwood (*Santalum yasi*), was highly valued in both Tonga and Samoa in order to scent their coconut oil. He explained how the Tongans often made regular trading voyages to Bau, "bringing with them printed *tapa* cloth, fine mats, and large pearl shells skilfully inlaid with pieces of whale's teeth" (Seeman, 1861: 240). The Tongans then traded these items of prestige with Samoa for their fine mats, which were then traded back to Fiji for sandalwood and red feathers.

#### **Whale's Teeth - Sources and Value of *Tabua***

Prior to European contact, before iron and other exotics became available for trading purposes, the principal items used by Tongans in trading with Fijians were *tapa* cloth, mats for sails, coconut-fibre cordage, and the stings from the stingray for use on spears. However, for Fijian chiefs the most valuable trade items the Tongans could offer were whale's teeth (Martin 1991: 253, 267-8).

By the 1840s, the ubiquitous presence of whale ships, beachcombers<sup>64</sup> and missionaries on these island groups offered further documentation of the prestige good trade in this region. During her voyage to Fiji, Mary Wallis described the presence of Tongan cloth that was used by the Fijians for both decorative and practical manners (Wallis 1994: 375). In addition to the presence of valuable Tongan cloth, William Daipea explained the high importance of

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<sup>64</sup>A beachcomber is a vagrant seaman who loiters about seaports, particularly on the shores and islands of the Pacific Ocean.

whale's teeth in Fijian society. He describes how he had to present three or four large yellow whale's teeth to an "arch-fiend of a priest" to save his friend's life (Daipea 1928:22-23).<sup>65</sup> Daipea commented on the high value of these whale's teeth, especially yellow ones. He described how "yellow [is] more valued than white, even as much as gold is valued above silver among Europeans" (Daipea 1928: 22).

Walter Lawry, a Tongan missionary, also describes the importance of these whale's teeth. He described how his friend was shipping whale's teeth and other riches as a present from King George of Tonga to the Fiji chiefs. This action allowed the representatives of King George safe passage in Fiji. King George had grown tired of the actions of the Tongan people who were living in the Fiji islands. As a result of this frustration, Lawry's friend, Joel, was charged with the important message that "all the Tonga people are to come away from Fiji, where they have been misbehaving, or the King will cast them off and let them be governed by the man-eating Chiefs of Feejee" (Lawry 1852: 116). Over in Fiji, West described how Mara, a rebel chief in Kamba, had presented whale's teeth to many of the chiefs of the windward islands of Fiji including Ovalau. The reason for the distribution of whale's teeth was for the purpose of inducing them to join in a war against the Tongans of Lakeba. Mara also made a special request to the people of Ovalau, that they would fire upon and destroy any Tonguese canoe of King George's fleet that might happen to touch at that island (West 1865: 400).

A decade later in Fiji, Seeman described how "whale's teeth are with the Fijians what diamonds are with us, and in former days there was no favour a chief would refuse if a number of these were offered" (Seeman 1860: 187). He also mentions how due to the influx of European and American whaling ships,

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<sup>65</sup> Daipea's friend had angered a Fijian chief and was due to be executed for his actions. To save his friend's life, Daipea presented these whale's teeth to the "arch-fiend of a priest" (Daipea 1928, 22-23).

the relative value of these items suffered considerable depreciation although they had not entirely lost their importance especially in the interior of the great island (Seeman 1860: 188). Seeman explains how the Fijian chief Kuruduadua, "on seeing us handling some money, expressed his astonishment that we should prefer coins to whale's teeth" (Seeman 1860: 188). He also told the chief that not many years would pass before his opinions would change; however, Kuruduadua thought that that day would probably never come (Seeman 1860: 188).

The importance of the whale's teeth continues even today. When I travelled to Taveuni, Fiji in September 2005, I was told by many of the locals that even today the value of a whale's tooth was so high that if you presented this item to another you could obligate him to do anything, even kill a man if you wished (Personal Communication 2005).

#### **Kava - Regional Value and Ceremony**

The ceremonial drink was viewed as an item of prestige by most islanders (Personal Communication 2005). Throughout the West Polynesia area, there was probably no single feature that was more pervasive than the ritual drinking of kava (Vason 1810: 100). It appears to have accompanied virtually every public or private religious rite. It was an aspect of warfare and peacemaking, and also everyday life (Martin 1991:151). In this analysis, I classify *kava* as a prestige object in this exchange network.

*Kava* was and is usually derived from the roots of the pepper shrub, (*Piper methysticum*) The use of this particular member of the pepper family to make an infusion for drinking has been reported in most of the high islands of Polynesia (Ferdon 1987: 51). Even though there might be some doubt about the presence of formalized kava drinking prior to the arrival of Europeans, there can be no doubt about its presence when Captain James Cook arrived in Tonga in 1773.

Bananas and Cocoa nuts were brought to us to eat and a bowl of liquor made in our presence of the Kava Plant, to drink, of which none of the gentlemen tasted but myself, the bowl was however soon emptied of its contents of which both men and women partook (Cook in Beaglehole 1955-67: 246).

After Cook returned to Tonga during his third voyage, he describes the intricacies of the *kava* ceremony. Cook explains how the root of the *kava* plant was brought before the chief, where it was split into several pieces that were masticated by both men and women. With this masticated plant, they spit into the bowl and created this liquor. Cook observed how when it came time to serve the *kava*, there was a specific ceremony to the way it was served. The first bowl was brought to the chief and the second bowl was brought to Cook, however, he did not drink it because he could not stomach the idea of the mastication process of creating the *kava* (Cook and King 1784: 121).

Even though *kava* was commonly drunk in the West Polynesia regional circuit, it was not a native plant to all of these island groups. In Samoa, Fiji is credited with the introduction of the *kava* plant.<sup>66</sup> A Samoan woman married to a Fijian returned to Samoa bringing to Savai'i the first *kava* plant which "grew with exceedingly great luxuriance which spread all over the islands" (Churchward 1887:48-9). This oral tradition demonstrates that the *kava* plant was native to Fiji but not to Samoa, even though the plant flourished there. This also demonstrates the connections among the island groups because *kava* was introduced to Samoa from Fiji as an effect of intermarriage in this area.

Beyond *kava* itself, the cups used in the ceremonies were also of great importance. In Fiji these items were called *bilo* and sometimes were held in high regard. Kleinschmidt (1984) describes how these *bilo* were often made from half to two thirds of a coconut shell. The most highly prized ones have acquired a

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<sup>66</sup> This plant is known in Samoa as *'ava Samoa* or more formerly as *le alofi*.

shiny blue patina on the inside from having been wiped each time they have been used. Aside from these shiny blue *bilos*, the enormous cups that were cut from huge Tongan coconuts are also prized (Kleinschmidt 1984: 174). Hocart observed during his fieldwork in the region, how Natewa gets its kava bowls from the people of Taveuni who, in turn, get their bowls from Lau (Hocart 1952: 290).

To this day, the *kava* ceremony holds great importance. Its importance as a political tool cannot be diminished. However, the *kava* plant is very prestigious. In many chiefly ceremonies one would find the largest *kava* plant possible and give this specimen to the chief. Often times, this plant would have been allowed to grow for several years for this purpose. Throughout the region, and especially in Fiji and Tonga, *kava* was grown and drunk in both ceremonial and informal situations. The shared use of *kava* in the West Polynesia regional circuit demonstrates a regional cultural and information pattern in this area.

### Red Feather Trade

Of all of the prestige wealth traded among these islands, one of the most fascinating valuables held in the greatest esteem in part of the network were the red feathers from the *kula* bird<sup>67</sup> (Campbell 1992: 33; Kirch 1984: 239). The trade of this prestige item can be used as an example of the interactions as well as the flow of valuables of exchange in the West Polynesia regional circuit. Within this regional exchange system, the exchange of valuables flowed in a triangular manner with Tonga at the apex (Kaeppeler 1978). During this period, these red feathers were among the set of highly prized prestige valuables and show the flow patterns and relationships involved. The trade of the feathers of the collared

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<sup>67</sup> The collared lory (*Phigs solitarius*) is a type of parrot found mostly in Fiji. In Fijian this bird is called the *kula* and in Samoan this bird is called *Vitian kakakula* and in Tongan a parrot is called *a kaka*. In Tongan the colour red is called *kulokula*. In Fijian it is *damudamu* and in Samoan it is *mumu*. Samoans used these feathers to create elaborate mats. In Samoan, these were called *'ie toga* and in Tonga they were called *kie taupo 'ou*. This was observed in: Capell, 1968: 24, Churchward 1959: 68, Milner 1966:41.

lory is an excellent example of how the trade flowed in this region. The small parrots were captured in eastern Fiji. The Fijians then plucked and sent the feathers to Tonga. The Tongans then used these red feathers to trade with Samoa, who valued these feathers as decorations for fine mats, which they then traded back to Tonga. Although the Samoans had little direct contact with Fiji, they were still able to enjoy each other's highly prized wealth items through their mutual trade with Tonga (Ferdon 1987:234-235). Although the feathers were highly valued in both Tonga and Samoa, their value was only relative to what they could be exchanged for in Fiji.

### Description of the Kula bird

Before one can examine the importance of this prestige item, one must first describe this small bird in detail. Although the historical records are not clear as to what bird exactly was used for this red feather trade, during my travels to Fiji, I discovered that the *kula* bird is actually the collared lory (*Phigys solitarius*) (Clunie and Morse 1984:58). The collared lory is not to be confused with the red throated lorikeet (*Charmosyna amabilis*) (Clunie and Morse 1984:62) which is called *kula lai lai* (little *kula*) in Fijian.

According to a personal communication with Beni from Vindawa, who works for the Buma National Heritage Park, there is a distinct difference between the *Kula* and the *Kula Lai Lai*. The *Kula* is the collared lory. It is prevalent in the majority of Fiji and especially in Taveuni. The *Kula* likes the flowers of the coconuts trees and likes to drink the nectar of the flowers that bloom on Taveuni. The *kula* bird<sup>68</sup> is the one that was traded with the Tongans. The *kula lai lai*, on the other hand, is the red throated lorikeet. It is a rare bird and it may have been hunted almost to extinction (Personal Communication, September 2005).

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<sup>68</sup> See (Clunie and Morse 1984:59) for picture of *kula* bird

The collared lory is a chunky and extremely active small parrot that is 20cm long. It is green, dark blue and brilliant red with a high, creaking cry. The bird's chin, cheeks, and under parts are bright red apart from the purple blue lower belly and thighs. The underside of the collared lory's tail is green, and often shot with orange and yellow patches. The females tend to have a more extensive green collar, and have a green sheen over the nape part of the purple blue cap. The males, on the other hand, have a more marked red collar. Their eyes are yellowish orange to red and they have a yellow bill with an orange tip. The collared lory's feet are orange pink to salmon pink. The young are duller overall, with brown eyes, brown-black bill, and purplish brown to black feet. They usually lack the orange patches in the tail, but some adult birds do as well. The collared lory eats pollen, nectar, ripe fruit, caterpillars and other insects. It is endemic to Fiji and can be found in all parts of this island group except parts of southern Lau, where the blue crowned lory replaces it (Clunie and Morse 1984: 58-59).

Unlike the *kula*, the *kula lai lai* is a bird that is rarely sighted by the indigenous population of the Fiji islands. The red throated lorikeet is a tiny, long tailed, green parakeet with red throat and thighs, and a thumb sized body. This bird is only 18cm long from tip to tail. Both the male and the female of the red throated lorikeet are identical. It is bright green above and below, with darker green flight feathers. The long tail is tipped with yellow and its throat, chin, cheeks and thighs are bright red, with a thin yellow border separating the red throat from the green breast. The red throated lorikeet is an endemic species of an otherwise Melanesian genus. Its range is from the mountain forest to the outskirts of Viti Levu, Ovalau, Vanua Levu and Taveuni (Clunie and Morse 1984: 62-63).

### Importance of Red Feathers

These red feathers were available in Fiji due to environmental reasons.<sup>69</sup> During his first voyage to Tonga, Cook observed these red feathers used to decorate aprons made of coconut fibre. By his second voyage to the island group, he was able to ascertain that these feathers were from Fiji. He observed that "they had little or no traffic either amongst themselves or with any other islands except Fidgee from which they get their red feathers" (Cook and King 1784: 171). He was told that the Fijian red feathers were of sufficient value to the Tongans that often when the Fijians refused to accept any of the Tongan trade goods for these brightly coloured items, an open fight would break out (Cook in Beaglehole 1955-67: 271,361). These early observations demonstrate that the interaction and exchange of this prestige valuable was common between Fiji and Tonga.

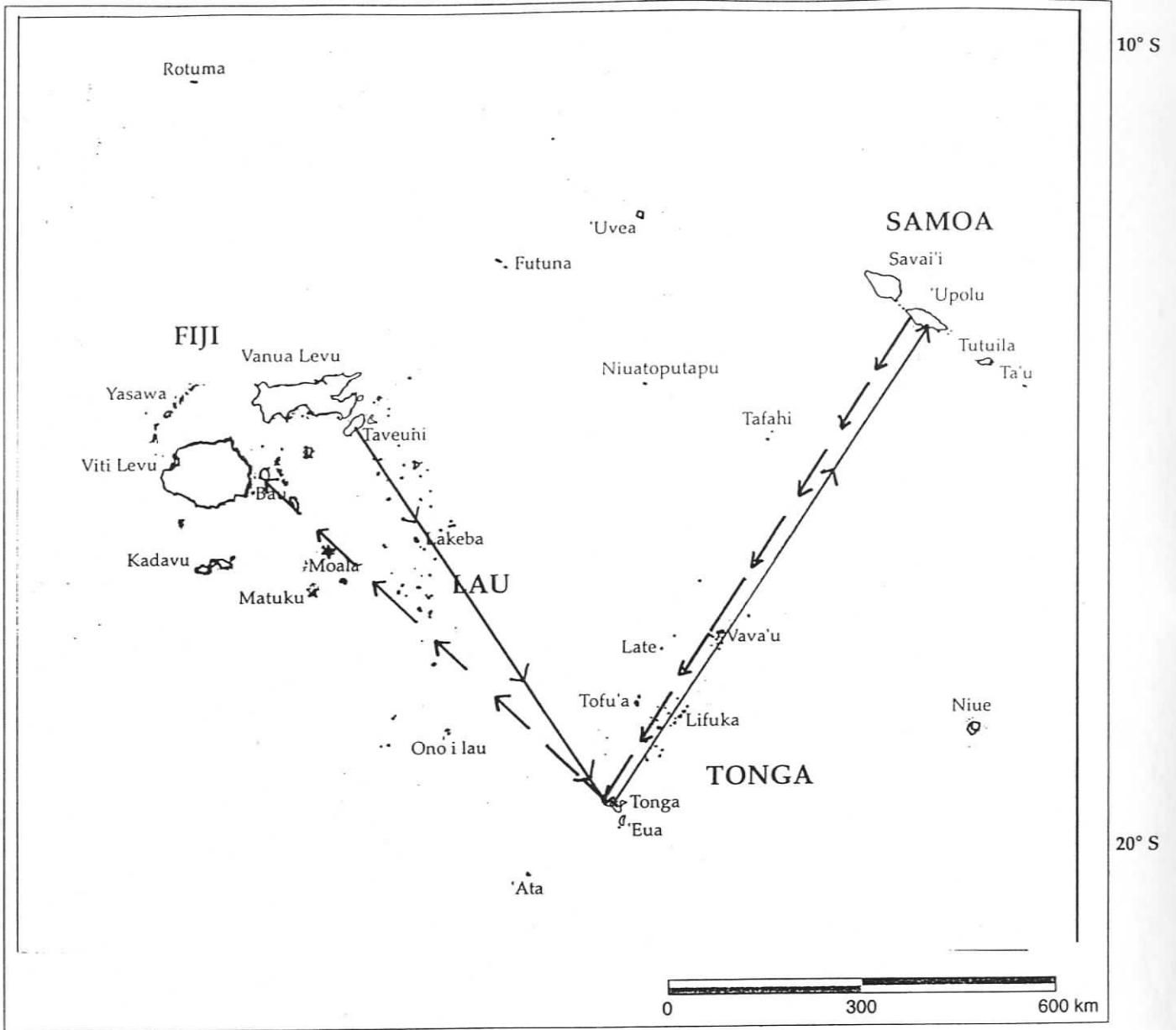
Cook also observed how Finau and his men went two days sail north of Ha'apai "in order to get some red feathered caps for me and Omai to carry to Otahetie where they are held in high esteem" (Cook and King 1784: 112). Cook describes these caps as comprised of the tail feathers of the Tropic bird, "with the red feathers of the parakeet wrought upon them. They are made so as to tie upon the forehead without any crown, and have the form of a semicircle, whose radius is eighteen or twenty inches" (Cook and King 1784: 333). Cook's observations of these red feathers demonstrate their high importance as well as their origin. He also mentions that "the red feathers so often named in this narrative all come from Fidgee, as also some of their finest striped and chequered cloths and a few other articles" (Cook and King 1784: 164). The observations of the ways in which these feathers were used and exchanged illustrate that the interactions between Fiji and Tonga were frequent during this period.

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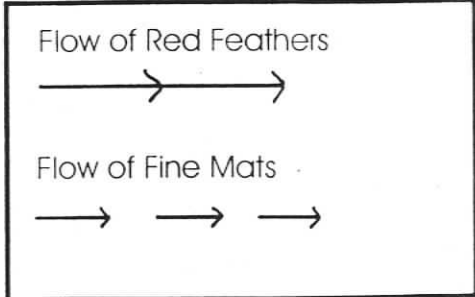
<sup>69</sup> These environmental reasons include the lack of trees and the presence of particular types of fruit which the *kula* like to eat.

In the 1810s, Mariner also observed the trade for sandalwood and the feathers of the red collared lory in return for axes and chisels or whales' teeth (Martin 1991: 189-191). The value of the red feathers for the Tongans went beyond mere decoration. There were no early records of what trade goods the Tongans used in obtaining the fine Samoan mats, but Thomas Williams, writing about Fijian culture in the first half of the nineteenth century, stated that red feathers obtained by Tongans were used by them to obtain the prestigious Samoan mats, hence the superior value of the feathers (Williams 1858: 73). Williams also mentions that for nearly one hundred years, the Tongans have traded with Fiji and the scarlet feathers of the collared lory were a leading attraction. He mentions how these birds abound in one part of Taveuni, where they were caught by nets, and purchased by the Tongans, who traded them for the fine mats of the Samoans. The Tongans paid the Fijians handsomely for the parakeet with small articles of European manufacture, bowls, and the loan of their women (Williams 1858: 94). The addition of European products to the exchange between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa demonstrate the increasing value of the red feathers during this period.

In addition to the description by Williams of this trade, Walter Lawry also observes the presence of these red feathers in 'god' valuables. These items were given to the missions in order to help their cause. These items are supposed to be the resting places of the gods when they come to visit. Even though the majority of these prestigious items were whale's teeth, Lawry mentions an "ivory necklace that is wrapped up in native cloth that is stuck full of small red feathers" (Lawry 1852: 34). Aside from using these feathers in 'god' items, Lawry also describes the presence of red feathers interwoven in a piece that was offered to the god Finau-tau-iku during human sacrifices (Lawry 1850: 36-37).



**Map 3: Flow of Red Feathers and Fine Mats**



Even by the 1860s, Seeman, who was living in Fiji, observed the *kula* in great numbers on Taveuni. He describes this bird as being “valued on account of its scarlet feathers, by the Tonguese, and still more by the Samoans, for ornamenting mats” (Seeman 1860: 19). Later in his journals, Seeman describes these mats in detail:

Occasionally neat patterns are worked in [the mats], by introducing portions of the material dyed black, whilst the borders of highly finished mats are tastefully ornamented with the bright feathers of the *Kula*...not found in the groups eastward of Fiji, and therefore highly esteemed by the inhabitants of those islands (Seeman 1860: 355).

Through examination of the red feather trade, one could surmise that the Tongans served as middlemen in this trade between Fiji and Samoa. Even though there is little evidence of interactions between Fiji and Samoa during this period, there is extensive evidence that these island groups had a common history through myths and other customs that were discussed in earlier chapters.

### **Value Differences**

After discussing the importance of this trade, one must note that the value of these feathers were not uniform throughout the region. Through conversations with the Tui Vuna (Personal Communication September 2005), I discovered that the *kula* bird was not considered prestigious amongst the people of Vuna. The collared lory is found in large numbers on the island of Taveuni. The Tui Vuna told me that the feathers of the *kula* are not significant for the people of the Vuna area and that they were only valuable because of their trade potential with the Tongans (Personal Communication September 2005).

### **The Centre of the Red Feather Trade**

The trade in the red feathers of the *kula* bird had a centre of collection and distribution on Taveuni Island, Fiji. R. A. Derrick (1955) reported before the

coming of Europeans, Taveuni was famed for its *kula*, and identified the centre of the trade in *kula* feathers as “the village of Nasea, near Bouma, on the west coast” (Derrick 1955: 261 fn).

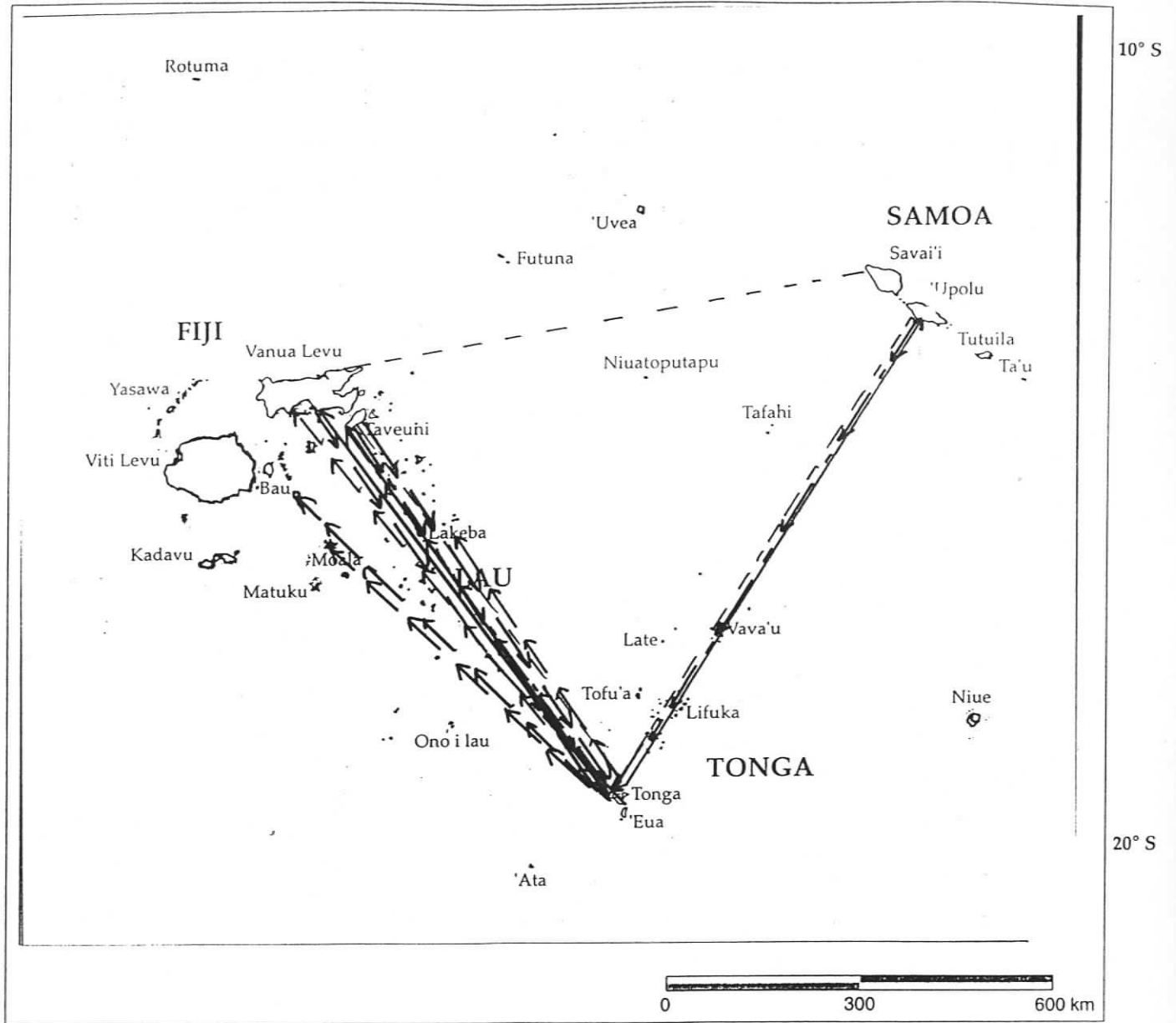
Although R. A. Derrick’s (1955) text first appears specific in his description of the location of this trade centre, unfortunately a village with the name Nasea is not found on various available maps of the region. During my 2005 observations and enquiries in Fiji, I was able to provide an identification of the possible location of this trade to the north east part of Taveuni. According to Eli Waqa, the Turaga Ni Koro of Waitabu, the village of Nasea is possibly a mispronunciation of Nasau. Nasau was the name of a community that was prominent in the area and recalled as an ancient name in the north east part of Taveuni. Eli also told me that the Wai settlement belongs to Waitambu, and it is also in the Nasau area. I also asked Sikoa, a wealthy business man who owned the only gas station on the island. He introduced me to his father who also told me that Nasea was actually Nasau, which is located near the village of Waitambu (Personal Communication September 2005). The red feather trade from Fiji to Tonga and Samoa in the form of a prestige valuable provides specific focus in the wider analysis of nets that together contribute a new understanding of the complexities of the contact between these island groups.<sup>70</sup>

### **Efflorescence of the Prestige Valuables Network**

During this period, the interaction in the prestige valuables network in West Polynesia expanded to include European items.<sup>71</sup> These items were acquired and traded amongst the indigenous population in addition to the prestige valuables that were created from local items. The advent of these European products caused the efflorescence of exchange within the Fiji-Tonga-

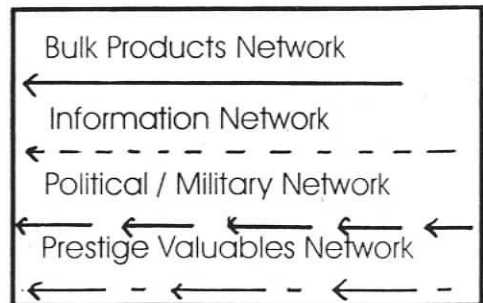
<sup>70</sup> The accompanying map summarizes the exchange flows in terms of Chase-Dunn and Hall’s four networks.

<sup>71</sup> These European items included guns, axes, glass, nails and pieces of cloth.



**Map 4: Network Flows in the West Polynesia Regional Circuit**

Legend



Samoa triangle. During Cook's first voyage to Tonga, he describes how in return for being entertained by the dancing of the indigenous women he gave each of them a necklace (Cook in Beaglehole 1955-67: 246). In another instance, Cook offered some cloth, a looking glass, beads, and nails to a man who "was a king or great man". Later, in exchange for a hog, Cook gave the chief a chequered shirt, which he subsequently put on and modeled for the rest of his countrymen (Cook in Beaglehole 1955-67: 253-255). He also describes the brisk trade for bananas coconuts, yams, pigs and fowls that were purchased with nails and pieces of cloth (Cook in Beaglehole 1955-67: 254). The addition of European products into the region, with the first voyagers to the area, caused the prestige valuables network to effloresce.

Even in this early period, Cook saw a small tool like a bradawl which had been made from a small nail. He presumed that it had been left there by Tasman. During his voyage there, he gave the islanders nails of various sizes and axes. Cook was in awe of the fact that the islanders held old jackets, shirts and even old rags in esteem (Cook in Beaglehole 1955-67: 266).

By Cook's third voyage, he found that the islanders traded fruit, roots, pigs and birds for hatchets, nails, knives, cloth and beads (Cook and King 1784: 97-105). During this time, Cook also gave a ram and three ewes to the local inhabitants. These sheep were placed in the "care of Ta-oo-fa who seemed to be proud of his charge" (Cook and King 1784: 157). In his journals, Cook described the items that are held in the highest prestige and are therefore useful for other Europeans traveling to these islands. He commented on the importance of "a high quantity of axes, hatchets, nails of all sizes, rasps, files, knives, red cloth, linen both white and coloured; looking glasses and blue beads" (Cook and King 1784: 160). Cook described how a string of these blue beads would at any time purchase a hog from the indigenous population.

In Samoa, La Pérouse found that the people were so eager to trade that they brought their canoes with pigs and fruit to trade for ironware and glass beads (La Pérouse 1989: 107). He commented on how the Samoans have achieved a high degree of skill in the practice of certain arts.

We saw how much artistry they use in constructing their homes. For a few glass beads, they sold the French large wooden tripod platters made of a single block and so highly polished they seemed to be lacquered. They also make very fine mats and some fabrics of paper and linen which the chiefs wind around their body like a skirt (La Pérouse 1799:115).

When La Pérouse went to Tonga, he found that the islanders were very eager to trade with him. He described how "they leaped into the water and brought their coconuts, which they traded for pieces of iron, nails, and small hatchets" (La Pérouse 1799: 118).

By the early nineteenth century, Mariner described how these European goods had been co-opted into traditional ceremonies. When the prince returned from Samoa, he presented Finau with fine mats and dried kava root. Mariner commented on how the kava root of the Navigator's Islands is held in great esteem (Martin 1991: 113). The gift was well received and Finaw presented the prince and his friends with three or four English wine bottles, an hour glass and some pieces of iron hoop that were made sharp in the form of chisels (Martin 1991: 113).

Commercial intercourse between Europeans and the people of Fiji began about the year 1806 with the vessels of the East India Company visiting the northeast part of Vanua Levu to procure sandalwood for the Chinese market. These traders brought iron hoop, spikes, beads, red paint and similar trifles for this aromatic wood (Williams 1858: 95).

In addition to commercial intercourse, there is also evidence of European items being exchanged during wedding ceremonies. By the 1840s, Turner (1884) described how during a Samoan wedding it was common for the groom and his friends to collect a number of goods for the bride's family. These gifts were called *oloa* and included "canoes, pigs and foreign property of any kind which might fall into their hands, such as knives, hatchets, trinkets, cloth and garments" (Turner 1884: 93). In Fiji, Mary Wallis (1983) observed a wedding where the bride received several wedding presents from the indigenous population that included several specified items of Western origin. These gifts included "mats, native cloth, sweet scented oils, baskets, beads, paint, scissors, knives, and many other things which Fijians value" (Wallis 1983: 236).

Thomas Williams also described how the first article of steel owned by the Fijians came from Tonga; Fijians named this piece of steel *Silia* and prized it highly. The steel article appeared to be half of a ship's carpenter's draw knife, reground to an edge at the broken point (Williams 1858: 94).

The introduction of European items into this region altered the value of local objects but did not eliminate them from the cycle of trade. The incorporation of new foreign items meant that the prestige valuable network effloresced in the first 100 years of regular visiting trade. This trade continued to grow until the creation of borders after the cession of Fiji to Britain in 1874 prevented the free flow of these items and effectively stopped the majority of these interactions.

## Chapter Six

### Conclusions

This thesis examined the interrelations between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa in the first hundred years of regular contact and historical observation. One goal of this work was to take the theoretical framework of the world-systems approach as described by Chase-Dunn and Hall and apply it to Oceania. The study also examined the efflorescence of trade in this region in the post-contact period. The thesis concludes with a synopsis of the three main arguments: first it analyzes the flow and content of the networks; it then goes over the methodology of bringing the world-systems approach into Oceania; and finally, it suggests that studies in this region go beyond the conventional focus on particular island groups, and analysis of internal dynamics, to the study of regional networks and their importance for the particular societies.

Through this research, I have determined that Chase-Dunn and Hall's world-systems framework can be used to describe the interaction between the island groups in West Polynesia. This study also proposed that the unit for analysis is the geographical area of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa as an integrated regional. In order to show these linkages, this thesis used the interactions of the various networks as described by Chase-Dunn and Hall among Fiji, Tonga and Samoa (Barns and Hunt, 2005:239).

One goal of this study was to demonstrate how the complex networks of pre-modern trade between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa were defined through the flow of prestige valuables, military items and marriage connections. The social exchange aspects in these societies emphasize that trade relates to marriage. Ultimately, as Adrienne Kaeppler's seminal paper showed, the long-distance intermarriages whereby certain high-rank Tongan women married into Fiji and Samoan women married into Tonga maintained the Tongan hierarchy (Kaeppler,

1978:246-52). Long-distance trade and exchange connections help to explain the social reproduction of hierarchical structures.

Within this regional exchange system, the exchange of valuables flowed in a triangular manner with Tonga at the apex. The trade of the feathers of the collared lory is an excellent example of how the trade flowed in this region and this item was a subject of special attention in the thesis. The small parrots were captured in eastern Fiji. The Fijians then plucked and sent the feathers to Tonga. The Tongans then used these red feathers to trade with Samoa, who valued these feathers as decorations for fine mats, traded back to Tonga. Although the Samoans had little direct contact with Fiji, they were still able to enjoy each other's highly prized wealth items through their circulation via Tonga (Ferdon, 1987:234-235).

### **Methodology**

For a project of this magnitude, this thesis had to incorporate several types of data. The majority of the information that has been gathered for this thesis was collected from primary historical archival and secondary ethnographic sources on the region. The main method was analysis of archival materials from the era between the 1770s and the 1870s the period when the system was still operating and was described by written observers. The work examined primary sources of various types including voyager, beachcomber, trader and missionary accounts. The theoretical framework that was used was based on the world-systems approach prescribed by Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997, 2000). In their theory, they discuss four spatially bound networks that are the basis for my data collection. I am aware that there are biases that exist both in this theory and methodology but I feel that my reasons for choosing this material and applying it in this manner are valid. First, the world-systems approach has tended to have a Euro-Asian bias. The analysis presented in this study suggests that a world-

systems framework can be applied to other regions such as parts of Oceania. Second, I am aware that I selected a theoretical framework before collecting the data. There has been a tendency amongst ethnographers in this region<sup>73</sup> to examine the data without a theoretical framework derived from comparative study. Therefore, I chose to take the former approach because I wanted to see what resulted when a world-systems concepts was applied to the region.

To analyze the information from the primary historical and ethnographic sources, I worked with the distinctions established in Chase-Dunn and Hall's four networks, and used these categories to catalogue the data. These original categories were: bulk products, political/military interaction, prestige valuables and information (Chase-Dunn and Hall, 2000:88-90). Within these general types, I placed specific aspects of interaction including: legends, songs, weapons, political alliances, marriages and warfare.

Aside from archival sources, I also conducted a brief privately-funded excursion to Taveuni, Fiji. One of the reasons that Taveuni was chosen as an area that further research could be conducted was because it was the historical centre of the red feather trade. One goal was to find the present location of the ancient town of Nasea, which was the historical capital of the red feather trade (Derrick, 1955:246). While I was in Taveuni, I established contact with the Tui Vuna and was invited into several villages, where I experienced the Fijian way of life first hand. Although my field observations were brief,<sup>74</sup> they certainly enhanced my understanding of the region and its people, and provided original data on specific points central to the thesis.

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<sup>73</sup> See bibliography.

<sup>74</sup> I was on Taveuni for a month.

## **Empirical Findings**

In the previous chapters, I developed my ideas and divided the thesis into five separate chapters. The second chapter examined the theory and ethnography of this study. Chapter two had two main foci. First, it demonstrated the theoretical framework for the thesis. It demonstrated that by adding various elements of world-systems and the theory of gift exchange one would be able to comprehend the complexity of the trade system in this region. The second point of chapter two was to offer a brief introduction to the geographic area of West Polynesia as well as detailed descriptions of the histories and political backgrounds of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa.

The third chapter of this thesis examined the bulk and information networks. The purpose of this chapter was to apply both the bulk products network and the information network for Oceania. This chapter demonstrated that the trade of bulk products did not operate on a large scale in West Polynesia. Although the evidence shows trade in bulk products was limited in this system, compared to other regional systems, there is evidence of bulk-products trade in the form mainly of planting supplies that relate to the nature of agricultural production in this region.

In addition to the bulk products network, this chapter also looked at the information network. Unlike the exchange of bulk products, the trade of information was quite common in the period from the 1770s to the 1870s. During this period, information such as dances, stories and customs were exchanged through marriage and other links between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. I discovered that through songs, dances and legends the interaction between Fiji and Samoa was stronger than through the other networks. In addition, these Samoan customs were also present in Tonga, which suggests that the interactions within the region had deep influence on local societies prior to European contact. Then as European influence grew stronger, the information transferred within this

network grew and changed from an oral to a written form of communication. Transfer of information increased with the establishment of new trade and mission ties on top of indigenous relationships.

The fourth chapter of this thesis examined the political/military network as described by Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997, 2000). The purpose of this chapter was to show how this network could be applied to West Polynesia. The fourth chapter claimed that this network comprised of a wide range of interactions including marriage, political interactions, weapons, warfare, and canoes. This network is particularly important for the understanding of the region because many of the connections stem from these interactions. In my examination of this network, I discovered that the line between prestige valuables and military items is not clear-cut. Many items that could be considered prestige valuables were often weapons of war. This chapter also demonstrated that this network was the most highly developed in the region.

The fifth chapter examined the final network that is described by Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997, 2000), the prestige valuable network. The purpose of this chapter was to operationalize this network for Oceania and show how these valuables are very important items in this sub-world system. These prestige valuables included such items as mats, sandalwood, kava and whale's teeth. This chapter mapped out the flow of trade in the region. It also discussed the relative value of these items and how these values changed with the influx of European valuables into the region. The introduction of European items into this region altered the value of native objects but did not eliminate them from the cycle of trade. The addition of these new items caused the prestige valuable network to effloresce within Fiji, Tonga and Samoa.

This chapter also looked at the trade of one prestige valuable in particular: the red feather. The purpose of this chapter was to show how the trade of this

feather was indicative of the trade system as a whole. Throughout the literature, there are various detailed descriptions of the red feathers from the collared lory being traded within the region. This chapter also examined the significance of the colour red and the relative value of these noisy animals. These birds were very common in Fiji and were not given the same value that the Tongans and Samoans allocated to them. The Tongans prized these feathers very highly and there are descriptions in the literature of wars being fought over these precious feathers. The Tongans acquired these red feathers from Fiji and traded them to the Samoans who put them into their highly decorative mats which were then traded back to Tonga. In this chapter, I utilized both the fieldwork data that were collected while in Fiji as well as the extensive archival data that has been examined to formulate my descriptions of this triangular trade.

### **Networks of Interaction**

In order to organize the large amount of data that were required for a project of this size, I separated Chase-Dunn and Hall's networks in order to study and comprehend the complexities of them. In part, the separation of the data into categories was not clear cut since both the political/military network and the prestige valuables network were intertwined. The information network, though also connected with the other two networks, was far easier to extract from the literature due to its non-tangible nature. In this region, interaction in the bulk products network is limited. This absence of long distance exchange of bulk foods may be a distinctive feature in comparison to the regional systems of Asia in the regional systems of Oceania.

Even though there was frequent interaction between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, this trade triangle was not connected the same way throughout the region. Possibly the best way to explain the deeper links between Fiji and Tonga is through environment. Tonga is the drier island group and lacks the resources

available on both Fiji and Samoa. Fiji, however, may have been easier to sail to due to the direction of the wind and the current. Its rich volcanic soil allowed for the growth of an abundance of vegetation that included large trees that were used for canoes. The importance of canoes for transportation and the length of time needed to create these masterpieces created deep ties between the Tongans and the Fijians especially those of the Lau Group. Even though marriage between Fijians and Tongans and Samoans and Tongans created alliances and connections between the three island groups, due to environmental factors the connections between Fiji and Tonga were more pervasive than those of Tonga and Samoa.

### **The Efflorescence of Trade and Exchange**

In order to comprehend the interactions between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, one should also understand how these networks changed over time with the influx of Europeans and their products. Where efflorescence is defined as the increase in the amount and frequency of gifts exchanged and incorporation of Western commodities into local exchange systems, my preposition concludes that this process occurred in 19<sup>th</sup> century Polynesia under conditions of new mercantile trade. The thesis found that the trade and the connections between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa effloresced from the late 1830s to the cession of Fiji and the establishment of colonial borders in the 1870s.

As a result of world-system contact, most of Chase-Dunn and Hall's (1997, 2000) networks effloresced in this region during the colonial period. The influx of global trade into the region created drastic changes in the regional interaction network. Some of the reasons for the efflorescence can be explained by the incorporation of global products into the system. The most pronounced features in the efflorescence of gift exchange associated with Western contacts was an increase in the circulation of whales' teeth from Tonga to Fiji as well as the incorporation of firearms and metals in this exchange system. In addition there was an increase in the frequency of inter-island visits as well as an increase in the

amount of information transmitted through the information exchange network particularly along the Samoa-Tonga and Tonga-Fiji branches. The conversion of commodities into gifts was also evident during this period. Some of these items included whales' teeth, guns, iron, clothes and nails. The bulk products network was reshaped with the influx of foreign products. The information network grew with the political/military net. As contact became more frequent, more products and weapons were created and traded. The prestige valuables network began to intertwine with the political/military network. Several items that I discussed under one heading could have easily been discussed in the other. Examples of these include weapons that were ornamented, European weaponry such as guns and knives, kava and canoes. Both the prestige valuables net and the political/military net effloresced during the colonial period. In addition to indigenous items, such as clubs, mats and *sinent*; foreign items were also adopted into this system. One item of note is the whale's tooth. With the influx of whaling ships off the coast of Tonga, whale's teeth became available to many Tongans to trade with the Fijians who had greater reverence for this sacred object.

### **General Conclusions**

This thesis has examined the various interactions between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. The final section of this thesis will discuss the overall conclusions of this work. The first thing that will be considered is the discovery of which network was most important. Second, I will discuss the methodology of operationalizing the world-systems approach into Oceania. Third, I will look at the parallels between the trade of red feathers and the exchange of spouses in this region. Finally, this thesis will argue that the study of this region must go beyond the traditional study of island groups, where each island group was examined individually, to the study of regions.

When considering the application of a general world-systems model to a new area like West Polynesia, one key question is to consider which of the

networks was had the most frequent interactions. When I first began work on this thesis, I assumed that the prestige valuable network would be the most important. In much of the literature on this region, prestige goods' or prestige valuables are the basis for the definition of the indigenous economies and its importance to Oceanic societies (Friedman 1994:26; Frank 1998; Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997, 2000). While I was researching, however, I often found it difficult to distinguish what would be considered a military item and what would be considered a prestige valuable. Even though I assumed that the interaction in the prestige valuable network would be the most frequent, I found that the interactions in the political/military network were the most common in the region. However, I have also found that the interaction between the island groups changed depending on with whom they were trading. For example, the interactions between Tonga and Fiji were mostly of a political/military nature. Even though there were interactions between Tonga and Samoa in this network, the connections between Fiji and Tonga in this network were much stronger. Due to the fact that Samoa and Tonga had agreed to a peaceful cession of military activity prior to European contact, there was no Tongan-Samoan warfare that was described during the first hundred years of contact. Although the military exchanges between Tonga and Samoa had come to an end, the Tongans and Samoans continued to interact through marriage and other life events including funerals.

Another goal of this thesis was to establish that the world-systems approach could be applied to Oceania. R. B Marks alludes to the possibility of the world-systems approach being applied to Oceania (2002:42 fn.). This thesis has analyzed Chase-Dunn and Hall's networks and applied them to Oceania where I found that I was able to distinguish the networks in this area. This thesis also demonstrated that this theoretical framework has relevance for Western Polynesia. One finding is that the bulk products network is not well developed in this region. Although bulk products are important in Europe and Asia, they

are not important in this region due to the difficulty of transporting these large items over long distances and that the islanders are able to cultivate their own food and sustain themselves. The information network is also slightly different due to the strong oral tradition of the islands. Even though there was no written communication amongst the islanders one finds considerable evidence that the Fijians, Tongans and Samoans had periodic contact with each other for several centuries. Unlike the previous two networks, the political/military and the prestige valuable network were both applied to Oceania in a similar manner to the description offered by Chase-Dunn and Hall in their works. One will hope that this new addition to the literature will perhaps offer new insight into this regional interaction network.

Within the prestige valuables network, one item of particular significance is the exchange of red feathers. One can draw parallels between the flow of the red feathers and the flow of female spouses (Kaepler, 1978) in the West Polynesia regional circuit.<sup>75</sup> This parallel is important for understanding the connections among the islands of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa because it shows both the direction of trade and the fact that Fiji and Samoa were linked through Tonga during this period. Another important aspect of this red feather trade is the demonstration that the world-systems approach is constructed through gift-exchange in this region. In examination of this prestige valuable, it is important to mention that this interaction shows some of the biases inherent in the missionary data. In my research, I found that there was abundance of evidence of the red feather trade in the early voyager and beachcomber accounts (Cook in Beaglehole 1955-67; Cook and King 1784; Vason 1810; Martin 1991). During the period of the missionary journals,<sup>76</sup> the documented evidence of this trade continues. This trade is detailed for the 1860s with the rich descriptions of Dr.

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<sup>75</sup> See map two.

<sup>76</sup> Some of these journals include: Orange 1840; Hunt 1846; Williams 1858; Lundie 1864; Waterhouse 1866; Moister 1871; Turner 1861, 1884; Murray 1884; Stair 1897; Rutherford 1971; Moyle 1983.

Seeman, (1860).<sup>77</sup> Males wrote the majority of the journal accounts. These observers were generally utility-minded and unfamiliar with the significance of prestige items and especially women's wealth. Even in the journals of Mary Wallis ([1854] 1983) and Mrs. Smythe (1864), however, there is no description of either the red feathers or the fine Samoan mats. Perhaps one could argue that Western observers of this time placed greater importance on military items and failed to see the full significance of the red feathers of the *kula* bird, mats and other prestige objects. This complex topic is one that could be examined in further research on the region.

In the ethnographic studies of this region, there has been a tendency to focus on one island group intensively. This thesis has demonstrated that one must shift the focus from the study of one island group to the study of the regional interactions if one is to fully appreciate the complexities of Oceanic societies (Hau'ofa 1993). An application of Chase-Dunn and Hall's method shows that these island groups did not rely on internal processes to maintain the hierarchy and chieftainship. Fiji, Tonga and Samoa interacted with each other through social interaction and trade, which impacted the individual island groups directly. Far from being a barrier to interaction, the ocean connected the island groups and facilitated the ways in which these groups were linked.

When one recognizes how these nets operated and the importance of the items being used, it leads one to suggest that for many subjects of investigation Fiji, Tonga and Samoa should be considered a regional unit instead of three distinct societies. Kaeppler argues "that this larger social system is still viable and important can be seen in that it still surfaces during wedding and funerals and objects again become visual manifestations of social relations between these island groups" (Kaeppler, 1978: 251-252). Although the formal trade and exchange ceased after the cession of Fiji to Britain, contemporary evidence of

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<sup>77</sup> Dr. Seeman was a botanist.

regional interactions continue today. For example, there continue to be marriages among the chiefly families of this region (Kaepler, 1978). As Kaepler (1996) observed during the investiture of 'Ukukalala VII in Tonga, this shows that the movements of prestige valuables and marriage partners are still operating in this region. Very recently, as was reported in the international media (Associated Press, September 19, 2006) representatives from Samoa and Fiji were also present at the funeral of Tonga's King George Tupou IV on September 19, a few short weeks ago in Tonga.

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