Chapter VI
Death in heaven
Myths and rites of kinship in Tongan kingship
(1989)

During his visit to Tonga in the period 1773–77, Captain James Cook was baffled by the political system of the archipelago. “No less than three people,” remarked one of his companions, “were pointed to us as kings” (Ellis 1783, I: 73). Cook could see that one of the three, Paulaho (whom he decided to identify as “the king”), was supreme because he received the greater marks of respect; but he also noticed that the other two, Maenuia and Tupou acted “each like petty sovereigns and frequently thwarted the measures of the king of which he often complained. Neither is his court more splendent than those of the two firsts, who are the two most powerfull cheifs [sic] in the islands” (Cook in Beaglehole 1967, I: 175). As if this were not enough to confuse the poor English, who expected to find a king like theirs, supreme both in personal rank and power, Paulaho gave to a number of politically insignificant men and women the same marks of respect that he received from his own inferiors (Cook in Beaglehole 1967, I: 178–89; cf. Anderson in Beaglehole 1967, II: 954).

Cook and his men “had in fact been presented with all the pieces of the puzzle but were unable to put them together correctly” (Cummins 1977: 66). What allows us to put them together correctly is the recognition that a principle of diarchy applied to both political and consanguineal relations, with some overlap between the two, particularly at the top of the society. Paulaho was the Tu‘i Tonga, the semi-divine supreme ruler of the entire Tongan archipelago. The other two chiefs were associated with him as Hau “ruling lords” (Rutherford 1977: 35) or “ruling princes” (Gifford 1929: 41): Maenuia bore the title of Tu‘i Ha'atakalaua, while Tupou’s title was Tu‘i Kanokupolu. According to Tongan tradition, this diarchy was instituted compara-
tively late: the Tu‘i Ha‘atakalaua title was created by the twenty-fourth Tu‘i Tonga and the Tu‘i Kanokupolu title was first acquired by a son of the sixth Tu‘i Ha‘atakalaua. The second Hau title dates, according to those who believe in the historical value of the genealogies, back to the early seventeenth century (Gifford 1929: 86). Thus up to a relatively recent time the prerogatives of kingship were undivided.¹

The man and the “two or three women” (Cook in Beaglehole 1967, I: 178) to whom the Tu‘i Tonga paid homage were his Tamahā, that is the children of his sacred sister, the Tu‘i Tonga Fefine (“Female Tu‘i Tonga”) (Kaeppler 1971: 183). In showing respect to them, the Tu‘i Tonga was following a custom that applied to every Tongan male, to whom his sister (irrespective of birth order, Gifford 1929: 17; Bott 1981: 17) and even more so her children (referred to as lāhu “above the law”) were superior. The pair Tu‘i Tonga/Hau is in certain respects analogous to the pairs sister/brother and sister’s child/mother’s brother. As the Tu‘i Tonga was “fed” with the offerings that were handed to him by the Hau (Gifford 1929: 98), so the sister and her children were fed by the brother and his sons (Rogers 1977: 162; Bott 1981: 17). As he was more sacred than the Hau, and capable of influencing the prosperity of the nation by purely religious means, so the sister was more sacred than the brother and had the power of cursing him and his children (Rogers 1977: 162-65; Biersack 1982: 187-90). The analogy between the political diarchy and the “diarchy” formed by cross-sex siblings and their children is further proved by the fact that the latter diarchy was used to reinforce the former. Indeed, the Tu‘i Tonga was succeeded by his eldest son with a wife, called moheofo, who was the daughter or the sister of the domi-

¹. In the late eighteenth century a process of reunification of the kingship began. The Tu‘i Ha‘atakalaua title became extinct in 1799 and the last Tu‘i Tonga died in 1865. From that date on the Tu‘i Kanokupolu became sole king of Tonga and claimed to cumulate the main prerogatives of the other two kingly titles. The Tu‘i Kanokupolu was converted by Wesleyan missionaries in 1826 and his people followed suit little by little. Perpetuating old contrasts in new terms, the Tu‘i Tonga and his people became Catholic in the 1840s. The Tongan monarchy continues today in a modified form, which is a development of the one created by the Tu‘i Kanokupolu George Tupou I. This ruler was succeeded by his great-grandson Tupou II, who was in turn succeeded by his daughter Sālote Tupou III in 1918. Her son Tāufa‘ahau Tupou IV acceded to the throne in 1965 (Bott 1981: 54-55). These developments should be kept in mind, but are beyond the scope of my analysis, which concerns the system as witnessed by Cook.
nant Hau. This implied that the Hau was the Tu'i Tonga’s mother’s brother or his matrilateral cross-cousin, and thus subordinated to him in kinship terms as well as in political ones (Gifford 1929; Bott 1981: 33–34).

However, pushing the analogy between the two forms of diarchy too far would mean failing to acknowledge a profound difference between them. The sister does not hold political title: thus her superiority over the brother is in personal rank only (Kaeppler 1971: 178). In contrast, both Tu'i Tonga and Hau hold political title. What is more, their respective titles cannot be viewed only as complementary opposites: they also have one common dimension, since they are part of a hierarchy of titles which, being all ultimately derived from the Tu'i Tonga’s title by segmentation, and being contained in it, is homogeneous. Their sanctity thus reflects in different degrees the sanctity of the Tu'i Tonga title. At the same time, of course, they may reflect different and complementary aspects of it. This is particularly true of the contrast between Tu'i Tonga and Hau titles, as we shall see.

The distinction between personal rank and titular rank is absolutely fundamental. Personal rank is determined with reference to both parents (Bott 1981: 19), in contrast to titular rank, which is purely patrilineal. Furthermore, personal rank depends on seniority and sex (Bott 1972: 218). Since one can be, say, a sister’s son and a brother’s son relative to different people, personal superiority or inferiority varies with context (Bott 1981: 19). Thus a very high ranking person may find himself in a very low position in certain occasions, for instance at the funeral of his father’s sister (Bott 1981: 188; Kaeppler 1971: 188). But the position of a title in the titular hierarchy is theoretically fixed, since it is supposed to have been forever determined by the original seniority relation existing between the first holder of a title and the titled person from whom that title was derived by segmentation (a rule called “positional succession” by Richards 1950).²

² In this way the Tongan status lineage avoided the “sinking status effect” produced by the passage of generations, and its accompanying ambiguities (cf. Valeri 1972). On positional succession in Tonga see Gifford (1929: 128; 140) and Bott (1972: 211). Elisabeth Bott (1981: 24) quotes the Tongan saying that puts the system in a nutshell: “Our titles are brothers but we are not related.”
High personal rank only commands respect, whereas a title involves by definition the control of a territory and authority over the people who reside in it. These are conventionally referred to as “kin” of the title-holder, although genealogical relations between them and him do not always exist (Bott 1981: 40; 1982: 69). Note also that, with the exception of the great aristocrats, who may use their personal rank “to request food” (Bott 1981: 78 n.2) and to acquire influence (Bott 1981: 40ff.), personal rank is mostly operative in ego’s *kāinga*, his “personal kindred,” not in the society at large. This distinction between personal rank and titular rank explains why Paulaho showed respect to his Tamahā in *kāinga* contexts (for instance he did not take his meals in their presence, Bott 1982: 59) but not (with rare exceptions, see below) in the context of the political-ritual structure connected with the title system. This was remarked by one of Cook’s companions, when he wrote that Latunipulu, Paulaho’s male Tamahā, participated in the ‘*inasi* (the pan-Tongan first-fruits ritual that manifested the paramountship of the Tu‘i Tonga) “only in the same manner as the other principle men” (Anderson in Beaglehole 1967, 2: 954), that is in the hierarchical position that pertained to his title, Tu‘i Lakepa (Bott 1981: 33; cf. Kaeppler 1971: 182–83), which was inferior to the Tu‘i Tonga title. Nevertheless we shall see that the *kāinga* relations of the Tu‘i Tonga were symbolically important for the society as a whole, and thus part of the definition of kingship.

In this paper I shall attempt to explain the features of Tongan kingship that so puzzled Cook, and others that remained unrecognized by him. My main evidence will be the mythical traditions on the origin and partition of kingship, and their connection with a most revealing rite: the kava, in which the kings (and in fact all title-holders) are installed. I will pay special attention to the “Oedipal” and cannibalistic themes that loom so large in those traditions and attempt to go beyond their existing interpretations. However, limitations of space make it impossible to discuss more than a few cases in which my views differ from previous ones. I especially regret that I cannot evaluate here the important essay by Edmund Leach (1972). Those who are familiar with it will see that, while my conclusions are very different, I have greatly benefitted from reading it.
The mythical origins of kingship and diarchy*

**M1: The earliest Tu’i Tonga.**

Tangaloa-atulongolongo, the youngest of the five sky gods, all named Tangaloa, is ordered by his elder brothers to explore the ocean and see if he can find any land. He takes his plover form and discovers a reef still covered by the sea. The reef eventually emerges and becomes the first island: ‘Ata, now situated in the lagoon of the island of Tongatapu. Tangaloa-‘eiki (“Tangaloa the chief”) presents Tangaloa-atulongolongo with the seed of a creeper to plant. This sprouts and soon covers the entire island. Then Tangaloa-atulongolongo is ordered by his brothers to break the root (or the stem) of the plant. It rots and a maggot is born of it. When the youngest Tangaloa severs it in two with his beak, the pieces become the first humans. The front part is named Kohai (“who?”), the back part Koau (“it is me!”) and last a fragment that sticks to the god’s beak is called Momo (“fragment”). Youngest of the three men, Momo becomes the first Tu’i Tonga.’ (See Reiter 1907: 438–45; Collocott 1919: 236–38; Caillot 1914: 247–52; and the somewhat different version of Thomas ms.: 27–28.)

**M2: ‘Aho’eitu**

The sky is still near the earth and communication between them is kept by means of a very high toa (Casuarina) tree. One of the Tangaloa gods, ‘Eitumatupu’a, descends along the tree in a small island in the lagoon of Tongatapu, where a virgin named ‘Ilaheva collects shellfish. He makes love to her. She becomes pregnant and eventually delivers a son whom the god names ‘Aho’eitu. Having done this, the god ceases to visit ‘Ilaheva.

When ‘Aho’eitu is grown up he asks his mother about his father. She willingly teaches him his identity and how to reach him. ‘Aho’eitu then climbs the tree and meets his father who takes him for such an

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3. Most of the texts summarized in this section were collected in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, even if some were published later (for instance by Gifford 1924). The manuscript versions of Thomas are the earliest (mid-nineteenth century) and derive from the Tamahā Amelia. The most recent versions are those given by Queen Sālote to Elisabeth Bott in the late fifties.

4. In other versions, it is Kohai who becomes the first Tu’i Tonga (Gifford 1924: 25, 38; Bott 1982: 90).
exalted personage that he sits down respectfully (Gifford 1924: 40, 277). After ‘Aho’eitu makes himself known, ‘Eitumatupu’a invites him home and offers him kava and food. Then he tells him to go and play a game with his elder half-brothers (the god’s sons with the goddess Tamaopo’uli (Rutherford 1977: 28) in the malae (green) (in Thomas’ version he himself accompanies his son there). The public is impressed with ‘Aho’eitu: “they liked him because he was very handsome and well formed” (Gifford 1929: 27). Furthermore, he learns the games and beats his divine elder brothers at it. The jealous brothers tear him to pieces and eat him. They throw the head into a shrub called hoi, which as a result becomes poisonous (Gifford 1924: 40; cf. 1924: 27).

When ‘Aho’eitu cannot be found, “Eitumatupu’a thought at once that his sons had killed the boy” (Gifford 1924: 41). He forces them to vomit into a wooden bowl, where the boy’s head and his bones are also put. They pour water onto the flesh and blood, until ‘Aho’eitu’s body is reconstituted and he lives again. In Thomas’ version, the event is described thus:

when asked what had become of their brother, they professed not to know anything about him: but it appeared their father knew all they had done. He then ordered a kumeti [kumete: a kava bowl] or large bowl to be brought, and water to be poured into it, which being done, his offending sons were required to drink the water, the orders were promptly obeyed, and it being an emitic [sic], soon began to act, and in a short time, the atoms of which the body of their brother had been composed, with his blood, were seen floating in the vessel, which was now filled, and ordered to be covered over, and set aside. (Thomas ms.: 31)

After ‘Aho’eitu has been resuscitated, ‘Eitumatupu’a tells his elder sons that, because they have killed their younger half-brother, he will send him back to earth as the king of Tonga (Tū’i Tonga) (Gifford 1924: 28). Thus “it is the descendants of Ahoeitu, he who was murdered in the sky, who have successively been Tui Tonga” (Gifford 1924: 29), displacing “the offspring of the worm,” that is of Momo, the original Tu’i Tonga (ibid.: 42). Later, ‘Aho’eitu’s elder brothers join him on earth and, as a punishment for having assassinated him (Rutherford 1977: 28), they become his subordinates in various capacities (Gifford 1929: 52). Four of them become the Tū’i Tonga’s first Falefā, “House of four” (the four titled groups that act as the king’s assistants). The fifth and eldest brother—Talafale—acquires the
title of Tu'i Pelehake. He remains the closest rival of the Tu'i Tonga, since he is closest to him in rank. Indeed, he is also called Tu'i Faleua, “Lord of the Second House” (Kaeppler 1971: 181; cf. Gifford 1929: 33, 41, 59, 119, 123, 157, 160, 162, 182, 327). But his father tells him: “Talafale, you will never be Tu'i Tonga, because you are a murderer” (Gifford 1924: 42). (See: Thomas ms.: 29–32; Gifford 1924: 25–29, 38–43; Rutherford 1977; Bott 1982: 90–91.)

**M3: The origin of the moheofo and of kava**

Tradition records nothing, except their names, about the successors of ‘Aho'eitu, until Momo, the tenth Tu'i Tonga (Gifford 1929: 32). Gifford (ibid.) has this to say about him:

If the account is to be trusted, Momo chose as his chief wife Nua, the daughter of Loau, the Tui Haamea of central Tongatabu. This custom of selecting the daughter of a powerful chief of Tongatabu as wife and mother of the new king prevailed henceforth throughout the whole history of the dynasty. Within the last four centuries the daughter of the Tui Haatakalaua or of the Tui Kanokupolu was selected. The mythical origin of the kava would seem to be connected with Momo’s reign, inasmuch as it is the chief Loau of Haamea who plays a leading part in the tale. However, as there seems to have been more than one chief with the name Loau this is not absolutely certain.

Momo’s reign, thus, sees the institution of the moheofo (see above) and of the kava ritual, in which the Tu'i Tonga is installed. Lo'au is involved in the constitution of both means of reproducing kingship. The origin myth of the kava deserves special mention. Gifford gives four versions, which are fairly similar. Lo'au visits his “attendant” (takanga, 1929: 71), Fevanga, and his wife, Fefafa, in the island of ‘Eueiki. Since they have no food to offer their lord, they kill their leprous daughter Kava and roast her together with a kape (Alocasia macrorrhiza) plant. Lo'au refuses to eat her and orders her head cut off and buried separately from the rest of her body. Two plants, kava and sugarcane, sprout from her remains (both from the head in one version [ibid.: 73], the kava from the head, the sugarcane from the intestines, in another [ibid.: 72]). Fevanga tends the plants, until one day he sees a rat

5. According to Adrienne Kaeppler (1971: 183) Faleua is considered almost the equal of the Tu'i Tonga. Thus, “when the Tu'i Tonga is absent, the head of Faleua takes his place” (Kaeppler 1971: 182).
chewing first the kava and becoming partly paralyzed; then the sugar cane and recovering. “This showed that the sugarcane had to be eaten with the kava” (ibid.: 72).

When the two plants are big, Fevanga and his wife Fefaфа take them to Lo‘au, who then institutes the kava ritual (Gifford 1924: 72). In two of the versions published by Gifford (1924: 74–75), Lo‘au is called the Tu‘i Tonga; in another one, he is just identified as Lo‘au. The fourth (and oldest) version simply mentions the Tu‘i Tonga as the one to whom a “little child” (sex unspecified) is offered as food. Obviously the versions that identify Lo‘au and the Tu‘i Tonga raise a problem, since Lo‘au’s name is not found in any list of Tu‘i Tonga. On the other hand, the version that does not mention Lo‘au at all raises a problem too, since this chief is associated by tradition with the origin of the kava ritual.

The version which Bott obtained from Queen Sālote resolves these problems, in that it gives a role both to Lo‘au and to the Tu‘i Tonga. According to the Queen, the girl was killed to feed not Lo‘au but the Tu‘i Tonga. When the king learned of it he was “deeply touched by their sacrifice, and rose up immediately and returned to Tonga, leaving the old couple to bury their child properly” (Bott 1982: 93). Kava and sugar cane grew from the grave, one at the head end and the other at the foot. Later Lo‘au visits ‘Eueiki and instructs Kava’s parents to bring the plants to the Tu‘i Tonga in Tongatapu and to tell him how to carry out the kava ritual (Bott 1982: 93. cf. 1972: 215–17).”

Because the Queen’s version seems to be designed to resolve certain contradictions among the versions previously published by Gifford, it probably does not represent an independent tradition. Also, it introduces an element not present in the other versions and which may have a modern flavor: the king’s emotion at his subjects’ sacrifice.

**M4: Tu‘i Tātui**

Several points of the mythical traditions about the Tu‘i Tonga Tu‘i Tātui, the son of Momo and Nua, are relevant for my analysis. He is said to have indulged in cannibalism, as well as incest with his virgin

6. Queen Sālote’s rendering of this myth is derived from Gifford (see Bott 1982: 90–91; 165 n. 23). In the version collected by Rutherford (1977: 27), ‘Ilaheva is said to have come from Niutatoputapu, a small island at the extreme northeast of the Tongan archipelago.
sister, the Female Tu'i Tonga (Gifford 1924: 29, 46, 120). He also gave the sitting arrangement in the kava circle its present form. Previously, the chiefs were surrounded by the people during the kava rite and thus the Tu'i Tonga could easily be murdered. Tu'i Tātūi put them at the opposite side of the one where the Tu'i Tonga sat. It is also said that he had a long stick with which he used to beat the knees of those who came too close to him. “This made them move away and keep at a distance from him, and they called him Tūi Tatūi (tu'i, king; ta, to strike; tu'i, the knee)” (Gifford 1924: 47; cf. Thomas ms.: 34–35).

**M5: The murder of Takalaua and the origin of diarchy**

The Tu'i Tonga Takalaua orders his people to build for him a tomb that surpasses those of all his forefathers. He harshly makes them work even during planting time (thus presumably creating the conditions for a famine). When he orders the Tu'i Pelehake’s people to drag an impossibly large stone, they decide to murder him. Two old men, Tamosia and Malofa, “met him in the path as he went to bathe, and slew him there, and cut up the body so that none might know it, and hung the limbs in a tree” (Thomson 1894: 301).

Takalaua had a very beautiful wife. He had ordered all her children separated from her at birth and taken to another district, lest she would suckle them and her beauty be spoiled. Only the fourth and last child, Lotowai, had been allowed to stay with his mother (at her insistence) and thus knew his father. When the exiled brothers return, they must ask Lotowai to attempt to establish if the pieces of flesh in the basket are their father’s dismembered body. The boy is able to do so because he recognizes one particularly huge piece: his father’s severed penis.

Then the brothers, under the leadership of the eldest, Kau'ulufonua, pursue the two old men from island to island, thereby

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7. See: Thomson (1894: 293–305) and Gifford (1924: 60–67).

8. According to Bott (1982: 95) Tamosia and Malofafa are “supposedly descendants of ‘Aho'eitu’s oldest brother Talafala.” This is of course implied by the fact that they belong to the Tu'i Pelehake group.

9. In his English version, Thomson writes for the uninitiated that he recognized him from his “face.” In a footnote in Latin, he gives the truth: “Penem etiam patris per granditatem mirabilem recognovit” (1894: 302). An example, I would say, of the importance of knowing Latin in the field of Polynesian studies!
establishing the Tongan Empire (cf. Bott 1982: 95). Finally, the assassins are captured in ‘Uvea and brought back to the island of Tongatapu. During the great kava rite in which Kau'ulufonua is installed as the new Tu'i Tonga, the two old men “were placed in the center of the ring” (Gifford 1924: 67), an expression indicating that they are sacrificed and eaten (cf. ibid.: 64). Their teeth are knocked out and they are forced to chew the kava root with their bleeding gums; then they are gradually cut to pieces alive and eaten as a relish during the kava drinking (Gifford 1924: 67).

Having succeeded his father as Tu'i Tonga, Kau'ulufonua called his brothers to him and he said, “I am the chief, but this people have dared to slay the Tu'i Tonga. What will they not dare? And how shall this land stand fast if the chief is slain? Now therefore it is my mind to set a chief over the people to govern them, and I will be supreme lord of the soil only, and of the offerings.” And he made his brother, Mouna-motua, lord over the people, and sent him to the peninsula, calling him Tui Haatakalaua.

Since that day, though there have been wars in Tonga, and chief has fought against chief, yet the Tui Tonga has passed unharmed through them all, for he was lord of the soil only and of the offerings” (Thomson 1894: 304–5).

M6: The origin of the second Hau
A further division of kingship is brought about by Mo'ungatonga, the sixth Tu'i Ha'atakalaua, who appoints his eldest son (Fotofili) as his successor and one of his younger sons, Ngata, as Tu'i Kanokupolu (Gifford 1929: 83, 87; Bott 1982: 116). A myth tells how this came to pass:

Mo'ungatonga has three sons, Vaoloa, Halakitaua, and Ngata. Each has a different mother and Ngata’s is from Samoa. One day

10. “All of the conquered islands came under the rule of the Tui Tonga,” comments Baker’s version of the myth (in Gifford 1929: 55).

11. Note that in Samoa, Kau'ulufonua is known under the epithet of Tuitoga Faisautele, “grosen Menschenfrass machend” (the Tu'i Tonga “making a big cannibal meal”) (Kraemer 1902, I: 468).

12. Besides making his younger brother “lord of the people,” Kau'ulufonua sent governors to rule the peoples of the various islands he had conquered while pursuing the assassins of his father (Gifford 1924: 62, 67; 1929: 55).
The living being are their father sends them to Western Tongatapu, in the district of Hihiifo (which became the traditional domain of the Tu'i Kanokupolu) “to make kava” for the local chief.

They [the brothers] treated Vaoloa as the highest chief of the first kava ceremony. For the next one, they made Halakitaua the highest chief and the kava consequently belonged to him. At the third kava ceremony they made the youngest brother, Ngata, the highest chief. The boy was so young he did not know how to command his kava to be returned to his elder brothers in the same way they had given it to him, so he simply remained silent and of course the kava has been his ever since. (Gifford 1929: 102)

Returning to their father, the boys report what has happened. “The Tui Haatakalaua was amused, and said, ‘It is all right. Let him have your kava, for his mother was a stranger [Samoan] to this place’” (ibid.). So Ngata was sent to rule Hihiifo as the first Tu'i Kanokupolu, while his two elder brothers, who respectively acquired the titles Nuku and Niukapu, became inferior to him. The lineages descended from these two brothers are called Ha'a Latuhifo “which means lineage of descending chiefs,” because of their fall in rank. Together, the three titles Tu'i Kanokupolu, Nuku, and Niukapu are referred to as ‘Ulutolol, or “three heads” (ibid.).

Queen Sālote’s version of this story is quite different. Instead of depicting the three brothers as rivals, it represents them as so close that they “looked like one man with three heads” (Bott 1982: 115). Also, Ngata does not receive the third kava but the first one: his brothers lift the cup simultaneously to his lips, thus making him Tu'i Kanokupolu (Bott 1982: 115–16). Clearly, this version is an innovation meant to match the new custom (for which Sālote was responsible) of giving the first cup to the Tu'i Kanokupolu. All other sources report that he traditionally received the third cup, not the first. The Queen apparently transformed into formal practice a custom that existed in comparatively informal kava parties at the beginning of her reign (cf. Collocott 1927: 34).

From dismembered son to dismembered father

The myths that I have just summarized form the most important chapters of the history of Tongan kingship and of its transformations until it acquired the form that Cook witnessed. Clearly, the narratives
form one single complex and display a great number of common themes and motifs. The most important seem to me the following:

1) Although succession to title follows the rule of seniority, particularly in the Tu‘i Tonga’s case, the first holders of two out of three kingly titles (the earliest Momo, ‘Aho‘eitu, and Ngata) are younger brothers who usurp the rights of their elder brothers. And even if Mo‘ungāmotua’s accession to his title is ordered by his elder brother, the latter loses several of his prerogatives as a result. Note also that the most important transformations reported in the myths are due to younger brothers (the god Tangaloa-atulongolongo, besides the three above mentioned humans). One of these younger brothers, Ngata, is also a foreigner from his mother’s side. He shares these foreign associations with another transformer in these myths, Lo‘au (Cummins 1977: 68; Bott 1982: 125);

2) In two cases (‘Aho‘eitu and Mo‘ungāmotua), the younger brother’s acquisition of power is made possible by an act of violence. In the third case (Ngata), it is made possible by a subversion of the rules. In all three cases, however, the younger brother is either not responsible for these disordered actions or is himself initially their victim. Thus ‘Aho‘eitu becomes king because he has been killed by his elder brothers; Mo‘ungāmotua becomes Tu‘i Ha‘atakalaaua because he has been orphaned by rivals of his father; Ngata becomes Tu‘i Kanokupolu because, being too little a child to know the proper rules, he innocently subverts them;

3) The acts of violence connected with the various stages of the constitution of kingship take the form of dismemberment (of the primordial maggott; of ‘Aho‘eitu; of the girl Kava; of Takalaua) and cannibal devoration (‘Aho‘eitu is devoured by his brothers; Kava is offered to Lo‘au or to the Tu‘i Tonga to eat; Kau‘ulufonua, Mo‘ungāmotua and Tu‘i Tātui are cannibals);

4) The myths of ‘Aho‘eitu and Kava are particularly close in this respect, because in both of them death by dismemberment (with actual cannibalization in the case of ‘Aho‘eitu, symbolic cannibalization in the case of Kava) is followed by resurrection in a higher and more sacred state (respectively king and kava plant). These two myths, furthermore, are connected with the kava ritual. This is obvious in the case of the origin myth of the kava plant; but an association also exists with ‘Aho‘eitu’s myth which “almost paraphrases some of the events of the kava ceremony” (Bott 1972: 227).
That these themes are important and probably interconnected is clear. What is not clear is how they should be interpreted and, specifically, what they reveal about Tongan kingship. We may start from the most striking and gruesome feature of these myths: murder, dismemberment (in one case castration is explicitly mentioned, in another it is probably alluded to), and even cannibalism—*all among relatives* (except in the case of Tu'i Tātui, who does not eat a relative but commits incest with her).

The presence of these themes may indicate that Oedipal fantasies are played out in these myths. This is precisely what Bott (1972) claims about one of them, ‘Aho‘eitu’s. In her interpretation, ‘Aho‘eitu’s father’s jealousy for his son is indicated by the fact that he believes him superior in rank (that is why he sits down in his presence) and that he sends him away to his fierce other sons without introduction. I may add that in one of the versions cited above, the father himself brings ‘Aho‘eitu to the field where his brothers are playing, but does not protect him. Bott adds that “he immediately suspects his other sons of murder and cannibalism, as if the thought were not far from his own mind” (ibid.: 229). Besides an interpretation stressing the “cannibalistic destruction of an envied object” (ibid.), others are possible—says Bott. For instance, she views the sev-ering of ‘Aho‘eitu’s head in one version as “a way of talking about castration” (ibid.: 230). She also points out that

there is a great deal of ambiguity in the myth about who is killing whom. Obviously the half-brothers kill ‘Aho‘eitu, but he is the father’s favorite, so they are attacking the father as well. The father himself sends ‘Aho‘eitu to his death, as I have indicated above. And what of the mother in far away Tonga? ‘Aho‘eitu is her only son, so she is being attacked and perhaps destroyed. But it is she who tells ‘Aho‘eitu how to get to heaven in the first place. And what of the link with the kava myth itself in which a daughter is destroyed? Is it a daughter only or also a mother in disguise? (ibid.: 230–31)

While some of these interpretations (particularly those concerning ‘Aho‘eitu’s mother and her supposed equivalence with the girl Kava) seem far-fetched indeed, others make more sense. Bott’s interpretations, however, remain impressionistic and purely intuitive, as Leach (1972: 241) remarks. She ignores the fact that ‘Aho‘eitu’s myth is systematically related to others, and that one way of distinguishing real from spurious associations is to analyze these myths together. A com-
plete analysis of this mythology is beyond the scope of this paper. But I propose to consider some very important systematic relations between ‘Aho‘eitu’s myth (M2) and the myth of Takalaua (M5), which have been completely ignored by Bott and by Leach in his reanalysis of Bott’s and Gifford’s data.

There are two remarkable symmetries between the two myths. In M2, the dismembered victim is the son, whereas in M5, it is the father. Correlatively, in M2 the senior category is split into a “bad” component (the murdering elder brothers) and a “good” one (the father who resuscitates and rewards the murdered son), whereas in M5 it is the junior category that is so split. There, the “bad” ones are Takalaua’s assassins who, as members of the house of Tu‘i Pelehake, rank as close junior siblings of their victim; the “good” ones are Takalaua’s sons, who avenge their father before daring to succeed him.

Thus M2 emphasizes the son’s point of view in the Oedipal relation and the ambiguous status of the “father” (loving and threatening) in his imagination; whereas M5 emphasizes the father’s point of view and thus the analogous ambiguity of the “son” for him. Interestingly, in both myths the “bad” component is represented by the siblings who, moreover, form a direct link between them, since the junior relatives who assassinate Takalaua descend from the eldest of ‘Aho‘eitu’s brothers. (cf. Gifford 1929: 33–34; Rutherford 1977: 35; Bott 1982: 95). Indeed the dismembering of ‘Aho‘eitu by his eldest brother Talafale is exactly replicated by the dismembering of Takalaua, ‘Aho‘eitu’s descendant, by Pelehake, Talafale’s descendant. There is one difference, however; Takalaua is not eaten by his murderers.

By definition, an Oedipal drama involves a female figure who is the object of rivalry between a senior and a junior male. In M5 this component—and its correlate, castration of the rival—are clearly present. Takalaua exiles his children because he does not want to share their mother with them; he is jealous of them. Among the sons, only the youngest has been allowed to experience his mother’s love (at her insistent request) and the obtrusive presence of the father; thus he is perhaps the one who most feels jealousy in return. Certainly, the fact that he is able to recognize his father’s severed penis from its superior dimensions indicates that he has remarked them before, perhaps with envy; moreover his identification of the dead parent from this severed organ may also indicate that, to borrow Bott’s words, the idea of the castrated father was “not far from his own mind.”
Rivalry for the mother is not so evident in M2, but perhaps it is possible to interpret as an act due to jealousy—‘Eitumatupu’a’s interruption of his relationship with ‘Aho’eitu’s mother after the child is born. His behavior could thus be interpreted as the inverse of Takalua’s: jealousy for his son would prompt him to separate from his wife instead of separating him from her. Equally oblique is the expression of the theme of castration in this myth: as we have seen, the beheading of ‘Aho’eitu may be interpreted as a way of speaking about it. All in all, it is clear that while the two myths, taken together, do seem to reflect Oedipal fantasies; M5 does it more clearly and directly than M2. In particular, the sexual component, which is so prominent in Takalua’s myth, is almost absent or very hidden in ‘Aho’eitu’s myth.

We find ourselves, then, with three interrelated questions to answer: why are these myths about the origin of kingly authority and its allocation so permeated with Oedipal symbolism? Why is this symbolism more subdued in M2 and very much in evidence in M5? Why does M2 stage the son as the victim of the Oedipal drama, while M5 stages the father?

Recently Robert Paul has claimed that “political and sacred authority (which I take to be aspects of the same thing, the ‘center’ of the society) are always accompanied by Oedipal symbolism, which is itself concerned directly with the problem of the succession of generations” (Paul 1982: 7). Thus for Paul the Oedipal drama is a drama of succession, and since succession is a major concern of any kingship, Oedipal imagery permeates the myths and rites of kingship. This preoccupation with succession, of course, is not a feature of kingship alone: it is also found in every institution which involves authority and its transmission (for instance: the family, the lineage, etc.). From this point of view, the Oedipal drama of the king represents the Oedipal dramas experienced by his subjects:

The career of the ruler is not simply an individual life story but a public paradigmatic scenario, in which the king enacts the part of metonymic representative of all subjects and of the society as a unitary whole. This is all the more possible since the king is, after all, a man like everyone else, and therefore subject to the same problems and conflicts. But it is precisely his task to solve those conflicts on behalf of his subjects. Having done so, he vicariously relieves the populace of the burden, and frees it from excessive guilt and conflict so that it may pursue the work of society. It follows that the king like all men, has an Oedipal problem. Unlike
Succession is a process of substitution, and thus of elimination of the predecessor. Reciprocally, avoiding being replaced by a successor implies his elimination. This elimination may involve actual killing or the fantasy of killing (besides the cannibalistic fantasy of incorporation and identification), which produces guilt. This guilt component explains, in Paul’s view, why in the mythological or ritual representations of the drama of succession two figures are intercalated between predecessor and successor. The successor is legitimate only if he is innocent of having displaced the predecessor: hence the task of usurping his place, and the equally guilty task of taking revenge on this usurpation, must fall to others (Paul 1982: 24, 35, 41). Paul has little difficulty showing that quadripartite structure is found in Shakespeare’s “tragedies of order” (ibid.: 15–17) and, with some convolutions, in the Tibetan royal legends that are his main subject (ibid.: 258–59, 269–70). It seems impossible, however, to apply his quadripartite scheme to the Tongan royal traditions.

To take the most favorable case first: the succession of Takalaua involves a separation between killer and successor, but not one between avenger and successor. On the contrary, the cruel and bloody revenge of Takalaua’s sons is emphasized. But this is precisely because revenge is a filial duty and as such legitimizes succession. Paul’s idea that revenge is delegitimizing simply because it is violent reflects a system of values that applies well to the Christian influenced ideas of Shakespeare or to the Buddhist influenced Tibetan traditions, but less well to Tonga.

As for ‘Aho‘eitu’s myth, it hardly corresponds to Paul’s scheme. There is no substitute usurper figure in the myth, nor a transformation of the son from “usurper” to “legitimate.” ‘Aho‘eitu’s threat to the father is acknowledged only to be denied. Thus, although the hero makes his father, overcome by a sense of inferiority to the son, literally “fall” to the ground when he first meets him, he acknowledges his father’s superiority. The threat to the father is thus defused by the son’s manifestation of respect. ‘Aho‘eitu allows himself to show his superiority only over his elder brothers, that is over minor authority figures. But his threat to them is devoid of any violence, since it occurs in games and in physical attractiveness.
The denial that ‘Aho‘eitu’s challenge to his seniors implies any violence is expressed most strongly, though, by the fact that he is the victim of their violence, not they of his. Indeed, he succeeds to his brothers’ superior position not because he has killed them but because he has been killed by them. Of course, this succession would not have been possible if the hero’s death had not been voided by his resurrection at the hand of his father. But this resurrection is accompanied by a denial of ‘Aho‘eitu’s right of succession: he is sent away from Heaven and thus ceases to be a threat to his father. One could argue, therefore, that this myth does not so much represent a denial of the guilt involved in succession by disguising the murderer as murdered (indeed this disguise may only apply to ‘Aho‘eitu’s usurpation of his elder brothers’ rank), as a denial of the possibility of succession to the father. ‘Aho‘eitu has been unable—or rather unwilling—to succeed his heavenly father. He only succeeds to him partially, by becoming his representative on earth. Indeed, if he had succeeded to him fully, there would be no distinction between the immortal gods and the mortal humans, between the celestial father (Tangaloa ‘Eitumatupu’a) and the earthly one.

It thus seems that, far from situating the Tu‘i Tonga’s power in his ability to be the only man who resolves the Oedipus complex (as Paul would have it), the myth situates it in the fact that the Tu‘i Tonga is exemplary of everyman’s ultimate impossibility of resolving it—that is, of overcoming the belief in a celestial father who can never be substituted and succeeded to and thus never dies (cf. Freud 1939). On the other hand, the myth also shows that the Tu‘i Tonga is the man who comes closest to the resolution of the Oedipus complex, to taking the divine father’s place, and thus to becoming himself to some extent a god. In this way it justifies this king’s mediating position between divine and human, between the god as the ideal subject and all concrete approximations to it. Even from a Freudian perspective, then, it appears that ‘Aho‘eitu’s myth is not so much about the problem of succession in kingship as about the constitution of kingship: about the fact that what constitutes kingship in the first place is the ultimate impossibility of succeeding to the archetypal authority figure. This is precisely why the Oedipal element, and particularly the theme of the sexual rivalry between father and son is so subdued in M2. In contrast, Takalaua’s myth brings these themes directly to the fore precisely because it refers to an already constituted human kingship, that is to a situation where it is possible and necessary to succeed to the
father. This is also why it stages the father’s death, not the son’s, in contrast to ‘Aho‘eitu’s myth. Indeed, ‘Aho‘eitu’s death in heaven, because of the mere hint of a challenge to the father, stands as a demonstration that the celestial father cannot ever be replaced, cannot ever die. But it also shows that this divine father cannot do without his earthly son, since without him he would lose his very identity as a father; he must thus resuscitate him.

That the father/son relation is crucial in the constitution of Tongan kingship is confirmed by the fact that it is the son of one of the celestial gods who really founds the Tu‘i Tongaship, displacing the original Tu‘i Tonga, Momo, who is nobody’s son, since he derives—with a minimum of divine intervention—from a worm that is spontaneously generated. Thus, mythology contrasts the father/son conflict, which is constitutive of the real, present-day kingship, with its absence, which implies a mythical, perhaps utopian, pre-kingship. This contrast seems to suggest the impossibility of a self-constituting, spontaneously generated authority, of a king who has no father and who is not ultimately subordinated to him.

It also indicates, of course, that kingship reflects and enshrines the basic institution of society at large—patriarchal authority. Indeed that the Tu‘i Tonga “was the sacred father of the whole nation” (Bott 1981: 32) is correlated with the fact that “the relation between father and son is the basic model of authority-conformity” (Bott 1981: 15–16, cf. 17, 19). The relations between father and son are not defined by their normative content alone, however. They imply a deep emotional ambivalence. Garth Rogers, for instance, notes that “communication between father and mature sons in Tonga was observed to be difficult, strained and in some cases almost totally non-verbal. A general familiarity between young boys and their fathers gave way to avoidance as sons become youths to return only after the father became aged, senile or unproductive” (Rogers 1977: 159). Bott (1981: 15–16) adds: "Between fathers and their adult sons there is virtually an avoidance relationship."

Accordingly, kingship enshrines not only the normative aspect of the father/son relation as model of all authority relations, but also its ambivalence and its “Oedipal” undertones. However, different aspects of this “Oedipal” structure are emphasized or toned down depending on the particular message about authority that the royal myths wish to convey, as I have shown. This in itself shows that myths do not “reflect” a psychological structure as such, but transform it by
organizing it in their own structure, although they are at the same time powerfully motivated and oriented by it.

Eating and being eaten

**Cannibalism and sacrifice**

A similar conclusion is suggested by the theme of cannibalistic devouring of rival kinsmen. Bott interprets ‘Aho’eitu’s devouring by his divine kinsmen as “psychic cannibalism, representing a desire both to get possession of the qualities of the beautiful envied brother and son and to destroy him” (Bott 1972: 229). She sees in this mythical theme an analogue of the “cannibalistic fantasies of patients” (ibid.). I would maintain that this aspect of the meaning of cannibalism in ‘Aho’eitu’s myth is less important than another one, which cannot be derived from psychological associations external to the myth itself. When we look at the meaning of cannibalism in the narrative, that is when we establish what other narrated events it brings about, we see that we can almost reverse Bott’s interpretation. Cannibalization by his elder brothers has the effect of transferring to ‘Aho’eitu their seniority and their divine attributes. In other words, cannibalism in this particular myth implies the transfer of the cannibal’s qualities to the cannibalized, not vice-versa. If there is a vice-versa, it is not the acquisition of the desirable qualities of ‘Aho’eitu, but of the undesirable ones: inferior rank and human status. It seems, then, that cannibalism involves here an exchange of qualities between eater and eaten in which the eater is the losing party and the eaten is the winning one. He would not be, of course, if he were not resuscitated: but then the fact that the value of cannibalism in the myth is inseparable from resuscitation demonstrates once again that it is arbitrary to interpret an element in isolation and through associations external to the text, as Bott does.

Of course, it is possible to say that Bott’s view of the cannibalization of ‘Aho’eitu by his divine brothers captures one aspect of the ambiguous relationship between man and god illustrated by the myth: the gods, although superior to men, seem to envy them and to be dependent on them, on feeding on them. But it is the other, more overt aspect, that is emphasized in M2: human dependence on divine power, on being encompassed, “eaten” by it. In illustrating the ambivalence of the man-god relationship through the ambivalences of the eaten-eater relationship, and at the same time emphasizing human

In a sacrifice, the offering—which is a substitute of the sacrifier—is eaten by the god and thus feeds him. But it also becomes part of him and thus participates in his powers. Insofar as part of the offering so transformed returns to the sacrifier to feed him, he acquires part of the divine powers. The sacrifier may be viewed as undergoing, through his substitute, symbolic cannibalization and resuscitation: he is transformed by being eaten, incorporated by the god.

Seen in these terms, ‘Aho’eitu’s myth can be said to describe a sacrifice without substitute. ‘Aho’eitu is his own offering, he himself dies and is reborn as a higher, semi-divine person. In the myth, then, cannibalism signifies less the god’s desire to incorporate the life and qualities of a human, than the participation of that human in the divine qualities through encompassment. The dismembering, devouring, vomiting and rebirth of ‘Aho’eitu must thus be seen as the metaphor of his incorporation into the divine and of his restitution to the human realm in a transformed state. This transformed state is that of “divine” king—of mediator between divine and human realms. Indeed that the cannibalization of ‘Aho’eitu, and not simply his descent from ‘Eitumatupu’a, is what makes him Tu’i Tonga, i.e. a “divine” king, is explicitly indicated by the myth and by the comment that concludes one of the versions: “It is the descendants of ‘Aho’eitu, he who was murdered in the sky, who have successively been Tu’i Tonga” (Gifford 1924: 29, emphasis added; cf. ibid.: 28).\(^{13}\)

Overtly, the sacrificial tapping of divine powers by humans seems to have no negative effect on the gods; but covertly, it is viewed as a loss for them at least in the sense that they are forced to share their powers with humans. Indeed, the whole point of sacrificing is that the gods preserve their power and yet constantly lose it to the sacrifiers. M2 parallels sacrifice even in this ambiguity, since, as we have seen, it splits the divine into an intangible father to whom it is impossible to succeed and divine brothers, who experience total loss of their powers to the human interloper, and thus end up exchanging their identity with his.

\(^{13}\) In another version of the myth ‘Eitumatupu’a speaks to his sons thus: “Here you have been cruel to Ahoeitu, and you killed him. Therefore I will let him go down to earth and become Tu’i Tonga” (Gifford 1924: 41).
The kava rite
That M2 is structurally equivalent to a sacrifice in which the first Tu'i Tonga is divinized is further confirmed by the close parallelism that exists between it and the kava, a sacrifice-like rite in which the successors of that first Tu'i Tonga, and those whose titles depend, directly or indirectly, on him, are installed."

This rite is very much about hierarchy, which is displayed, in the first place, by the sitting arrangement of the participants. There are two crucial positions in a kava party: that of the bowl in which the beverage is prepared and that of the presiding chief, the one with the highest title in the company. The president and the bowl face each other and delimit, respectively, the upper and lower parts of the circle formed by those who sit at the rite. On the right and left hands of the president sit his two matāpule, that is his ceremonial attendants. One of them directs the rite. The other chiefs, each separated from the other by a matāpule, sit in an order which more or less reflects the rank of their titles: the closer in rank one title is to that of the president, the nearer spatially its holder is to that of the president. The exact indication of the rank, however, is given temporally and not spatially: by the order in which the cups of kava after the one given to the president are served (Mariner 1817, II: 185). The ring thus extends on both sides of the presiding chief to reach the kava bowl. In William Mariner’s words,

about one third of the ring which constitutes the bottom, is generally occupied by the young chiefs and sons of matabooles belonging to the chief who presides; and in the middle of these, exactly opposite the chief, sits [facing the president from behind the bowl] the man who is to mix and prepare the cava after it is chewed. . . . Behind those at the bottom of the ring, sits the body of the people, which, on extraordinary occasions, may consist of three or four thousand individuals, chiefly men; the number of women being comparatively small. (ibid.: 186)

14. “Although the blood of the heir-apparent preordained him as the future ruler of the country, he did not automatically become king upon the death of his father. The actual installation in office seems to take place upon the calling of the new title by the person officiating as announcer at the kava-drinking ceremony, a method of installation followed for all title-holders in Tonga” (Gifford 1929: 61). As the following analysis will demonstrate, the Tu'i Tongaship is acquired through the symbolic repetition of 'Aho'eitu’s sacrifice in the kava rite.
Mariner calls the bottom of the ring “the inferior circle,” and the remaining two thirds of it “the superior circle” (ibid.: 187). The superior circle is composed of the senior titled chiefs and “consists of but a single row of individuals,” whereas the inferior circle includes titles that are junior relative to the senior titles and the untitled sons of the senior title-holders (cf. Bott 1972: 212). Mariner distinguishes a third section, which he calls “the exterior circle,” sitting, apparently, behind the kava bowl—the position which Thomson (1894: 52) calls “the place of dishonour”—and includes “the body of the people, who are closely seated together indiscriminately” (Mariner 1817, II: 185) This circle seems to be simply the continuation of the inferior circle (cf. Williamson 1937: 74).

Bott’s description, which reflects modern kava ceremonies, is slightly different from Mariner’s: according to her, the juniors (holders of junior titles, untitled children, and even grandchildren of high personal rank of the main title holders) all sit in the group behind the kava bowl, where they form an “outer group” (tou’a) which is contrasted to the main circle (‘alofi) proper. All these people serve as attendants in the rite (Mariner 1817, II: 187–88; Bott 1972: 211–12).

After people had seated themselves, kava plants and sometimes food (the traditional food is sugarcane) are presented to the presiding chief and placed at the center of the circle. Then the presiding matāpule asks somebody from the outer group to take one of the kava plants in front of the president and to bring it near to the bowl (Bott 1972: 212). There it is split with an axe by the man behind the kava bowl and those around him. Thus divided into small pieces “it is handed out to those sitting in the inferior and exterior circle, to be chewed” (Mariner 1817, II: 189). All the people in this group shout to get some kava to chew, and the noise “forms a curious contrast to the silence that reigned before” (ibid.: 190). Even women “assist” (ibid.).

The chewed kava is spit on banana leaves and put into the bowl, which is then tilted towards the presiding chief (Mariner 1817, II: 191). If the amount is sufficient the matāpule gives the order to mix the

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15. Sons cannot sit in the superior circle when their fathers sit there. They either sit in the inferior circle (Mariner 1817, II: 187) or avoid participating in the rite altogether (Rogers 1977: 159). Analogously, the title-holding fathers must sit in the inferior circle when the gods participate in the rite by possessing priestly mediums (Mariner 1817, II: 205). This shows that, as is the case in M2, gods are equivalents of fathers: the father/son relationship is the model of the authority relationship at all levels.
chewed kava with water. This is, according to Bott (1972: 213) “one of the most sacred moments of the ceremony and all conversation stops” (cf. Thomson 1894: 54). Then the kava is strained and in the meanwhile speeches are made, “and if there is food some of it is ceremonially divided and distributed to each title holder in the main circle. They do not eat this food but give it to their grandchildren of high rank” in the outer group (Bott 1972: 213). Then the kava is served in the appropriate order—and the rite may end.

The kava as subject and as lord

This rite seems to have the structure of a sacrifice in which an offering (the kava plant) is transformed (cut into pieces, chewed, made into a beverage), then incorporated by drinking. The transformed offering appears to have a sacramental value: it transforms an ordinary person into a title holder, indeed into his title (cf. Bott 1981: 23–24) or re-confirms such identification. It also reconfirms the integrity and sacredness of the hierarchy which the title-holders form, in that they all partake together, but in the order of their titular rank, of the beverage (cf. Bott 1972: 217–21). From this point of view the kava is a sacrificial communion. In a normal sacrifice it is the contact established between the god and the offering that gives the latter its sacramental value. The kava rite, however, seems to transform the offering into a

16. This is because only the kava is connected with titular rank. Food is connected with personal rank and thus goes to descendants of sisters, who are superior to the title-holders in this respect. The association of kava and food with titular rank and personal rank respectively is made evident by the fact that in distributing food and everything which is not kava, the recipient chief’s title is never called, but only the name of his matāpule (Collocott 1927: 36). This is because the matāpule is charged with distributing the food among the relatives of the title-holder who have higher personal rank than his. Indeed the title-holder is supposed to feed his sister and her descendants.

17. The sacramental value of the beverage and its connection with chieftaincy are underscored by a remark by Hocart: “In Lau and Tonga it is forbidden to throw away the kota [dregs] after the first time as they do in Samoa, because it is treasured as a chiefly thing. In Tonga should a lowborn man come and carry off the dregs of a nobleman’s kava he is clubbed” (Hocart 1929: 61).

18. “In the kava ceremony titles are what matter, and power and personal rank play a very minor role” (Bott 1972: 220). “Many Tongan told me, ‘Everything in the kava ceremony goes by titles’” (Bott 1972: 217).
sacrament without the direct intervention of a god. At least this is the case in the historically documented state of the rite.  

How, then, does the kava rite produce its effects? How is it able to give the men sitting in the upper circle the divine authority of their titles? By representing, I would argue, some of the basic mechanisms through which authority is constituted. At the most superficial level, the rite represents the title holders’ (particularly the president’s) encompassment of land and people. This encompassment is symbolized by the drinking of the kava which, as an offering from the people, is a ritual symbol of them, of their work to produce the plant, and also a symbol of the land where they grow it. In a sense, then, drinking the kava is equivalent to “eating” the people and the land, a frequent metaphor for having authority over them. The authority of the title-holders is thus constituted by the people’s willing subordination to them, symbolized by their offering of kava plants.

Indeed, kava is the prescribed presentation to signal allegiance, or to atone for an offence to an authority, be it a god or a chief (Gifford 1929: 124–5, 310). This aspect of the signification of the rite is confirmed by the origin myth of the plant, in which the subjects of a Tu’i Tonga or of his representative (Lo‘au) offer him their own child, that is the closest approximation to themselves, to eat as a sign of allegiance. That the child is female in all versions but one (where its sex is unspecified) can probably be interpreted as an indication that it also represents the land, which is usually viewed as female vis-à-vis the

19. The gods seem to participate in the rite only as consumers of a few drops from the cup of their human representatives in the circle (Collocott 1927: 39). This drinking thus reproduces the hierarchy of the gods parallel to the hierarchy of men. The gods do not seem to have a privileged power of transformation (as, for instance, in the hierarchy-reproducing sacrifices of Hawaii) relative to humans in the kava ritual: rather, this power appears to be squarely situated in the ritual process as a whole, in which gods figure mostly as doubles of their human counterparts. I do not think that this is due to a process of “secularization” of the ritual due to conversion to Christianity (cf. Firth 1970: 203). The detailed descriptions of the ritual in pre-Christian times, and comparative data on the kava ritual in Central Polynesia (which I hope to discuss elsewhere) show that there is real continuity between past and present on this score.

20. The cannibalistic overtones of chewing the kava are made very clear in one version of M3. When the plant was brought to Lo‘au, he “laughed and said: ‘Chewing Kava, a leper from Faimata (in ‘Eueiki), the child of Fevanga and Fefafa [Father and mother of Kava] . . . ’” (Gifford 1924: 72).
It may also emphasize the passive status of the subjects. In this sense, the “eating” of the girl Kava by the chief may also have an implicit sexual component as surmised by Leach (1972: 259).

The origin myth of the kava, however, does not parallel the rite as closely as the myth of ‘Aho‘eitu (M2) which, ostensibly, is not about kava, but about the constitution of royal authority through death and resurrection. This parallelism between M2 and kava rite seems to indicate that the “devouring” of land and people by the king is made possible by the reversal of just the opposite process: the devouring of the king. Indeed the central and crucial stage of the rite, when the kava is transformed from mere offering to the king into a sacrament that gives him authority, consists of a repetition of ‘Aho‘eitu’s drama. Like ‘Aho‘eitu in the myth, the kava is dismembered and chewed. Then the process of devouring is reversed: as ‘Aho‘eitu was vomited into the kava bowl, so the chewed kava is spat on a leaf and put into the kava bowl. And as the chewed ‘Aho‘eitu was resuscitated as king by pouring water into the bowl, so the chewed kava becomes a king-creating (and more generally title-creating) substance, by pouring life-giving water (cf. Hocart 1929: 64–65; Sahlins 1985: 96) on it. Clearly, then, the rite does not only imply a symbolic equivalence of the king’s subjects with the kava; it also presupposes a symbolic equivalence of the kava with the king (as successor to ‘Aho‘eitu), which is emphasized in its crucial, central part.

The equivalence of ‘Aho‘eitu and kava is explicitly suggested by the close parallelism that exists between the plots of M2 and M3. Indeed M3 seems to function as a bridge between M2 and the kava rite. Basically, the plot of the origin myth of the kava is as follows: a lowly leprous child is killed by its parents and given to eat to a high chief (Lo‘au or the Tu‘i Tonga), who refuses to eat it. The buried child is reborn as kava, a plant that has the power of making the king and the other titled chiefs in their installation rituals. This plot is structurally similar to that of M2: a lowly (earthly) child is killed by his elder brothers and eaten by them. But their father forces them to vomit him in a kava bowl. From it the child is reborn as an exalted titled chief, the Tu‘i Tonga.

21. See also M2, where ‘Aho‘eitu’s father is connected with the sky, whereas his mother is connected with the earth, in true Polynesian fashion. Note also that the Tu‘i Tonga may be called langi, “sky” (Gifford 1929: 77).
In both myths, the authority figure is split into a “bad” one (from the point of view of the child) and a “good” one. In M2 the bad ones who kill the child are his elder brothers, the good one who forces them to vomit the child and therefore to “uneat” him is the father. In M3 the bad ones who kill the child are his own parents, whereas the good one who refuses to eat it and thus makes it possible for it to re-suscitate in a higher form, is the chief. Note also that in one myth cannibalism is negated by vomiting the victim; in the other it is negated by refusing to eat it. But of course, this refusal to eat the victim in its human form is what makes it possible to eat it in kava form. Thus taken together, the two myths seem to say: actual cannibalism is incompatible with being chief (M2), but symbolic cannibalism is necessary for it (M3). In fact, they even go further: they seem to say that it is not simply because the chief refuses actual cannibalism that he can practice symbolic cannibalism; it is also because he has himself been the victim (in the person of his ancestor) of cannibalism, but has survived it.

Thus the comparison of the two myths does not simply confirm that the kava symbolizes both the people who give it and the king who receives it; it also provides indirect confirmation for the existence of

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22. The two myths correspond to each other also in various details. For instance, from both ‘Aho‘eitu’s and Kava’s severed heads originate plants that are considered poisonous: The kava in M3 and the hoi in M2. This is a further indication of the symbolic analogy between the girl Kava and ‘Aho‘eitu. Other parallels between M2 and M3 have been noted by Leach (1972: 257–58). There are also some significant contrasts, however. The murdered child from which the kava plant sprouts is female (in most versions) and ugly (leprous), whereas the child-hero of M2 is male and handsome. These contrasts reflect the two complementary faces of the kava ritual (as we have just seen): the passivity and imperfection of the subject, and the activity and perfection of the lord. The contrast leprous/perfect also reflects two other complementary sides of the kava which I shall discuss in more detail below: the kava “poisons” (thus “kills”) the king in order to bring about his “rebirth” as the embodiment of his divine title. For a similar death-resurrection idea in the Fijian kava ritual, see Sahlins (1985: 98). There are however, considerable differences between Tongan and Fijian kava, which parallel different conceptions of kingship. The corresponding differences in mythology are all the more striking because the basic plot of the Fijian myths seem to have been borrowed from the Tongan myths of ‘Aho‘eitu and Kava.

23. The equivalence of kava and king is made clear by one version of M3, in which the child offered to the Tu‘i Tonga to eat is given, on his orders, “a chief’s burial” (Gifford 1924: 75). This seems to indicate that the child has become...
the ritual structure that requires this double identification in the first place: the king is able to symbolically devour land and people—and thus be king—only after the devouring and rebirth of ‘Aho’eitu, his prototype, have been symbolically repeated. Let us consider in more detail how this structure is realized in the course of the rite.

When the kava plant is brought as an offering into the middle of the circle, it is metonymically identified with the donor. But after it has been put in front of the presiding chief to whom it is offered, it signifies him (cf. Leach 1972: 263). Remember, in this connection, that objects that enter in contact or proximity with the Tu’i Tonga and other sacred chiefs become extensions of them; this is precisely why they are tabooed or destroyed (cf. examples in Gifford 1929: 72; Mariner 1817, II: 142). The connection between presiding chief and kava becomes even more evident when the plant used in the rite comes—as it often does—“from the chief’s house” (Mariner 1817, II: 189, 203). This symbolic equation established, the drama of ‘Aho’eitu can be reenacted. The plant (and thus the president) is brought to the lower side of the circle and there transformed in a way which is perfectly analogous to the transformation of ‘Aho’eitu in the myth. Then the movement of the cup from the bowl to the chief’s lips marks his symbolic return from the lower side of the circle, where he is symbolically killed and devoured, to the upper side, where he is triumphantly installed. The speeches made at this stage provide a verbal clarification of the visual symbolism, in that they emphasize the various aspects of the authority of the chief over the people; and since they are made after the kava has been transformed, they also indirectly indicate that his authority is only established after that transformation (cf. Collocott 1927: 31–33; Gifford 1929: 95, 97–98; Bott 1972: 213).

**Hierarchy and reversal**

In sum, the rite closely corresponds with the myth not only in each of its stages, but also because it describes (and brings about) the passage of the chief from a state where he is like ‘Aho’eitu and Kava before their transformation, a “child,” a “junior” without powers, to a state where he becomes powerful and more specifically associated with
authority. In this sense, the kava is a classical rite of passage, in which the movement from one role to another is mediated by a stage of dissolution, of undifferentiation that makes transformation possible. In M2, the transformation is made possible by a failed encompassment of the junior by the seniors: they eat him, thereby affirming their superiority, but are forced to vomit him, thus demonstrating their actual inferiority. This is precisely what makes them juniors from seniors that they initially, were.

The same thing happens in the rite. When the people in the inferior circle chew the kava, they encompass the chief represented by the plant, and thus become superior to him. The lower circle implicitly becomes the “upper” one, and the upper one the “lower.” But the encompassment does not last: the kava is spit, the reversal of authority relations is renounced. The “rebirth” of the chief as senior, as title-holder having authority on those who “ate” him as kava, is made possible, precisely, by this reversal of a reversal of authority relations. Thus the transformation of one side from junior to senior is made possible, in rite as in myth, by the inverse transformation of the opposite side, from senior to junior, from encompassing to encompassed.

While this structure is identical in myth and rite, they are one the reverse of the other in one important aspect. In the myth, a real junior is transformed into a real senior by a process which involves the reciprocal transformation of real seniors into real juniors. In the rite, the chief is senior, genealogically speaking, even before being made fully and officially so by the installation kava. And of course this is even more the case in all subsequent kavas. Thus he is treated as a junior only fictitiously. Analogously, those who “devour” him in the lower circle, are senior only fictitiously: they are in fact juniors—the sons or junior relatives of the title-holder.

24. According to Collocott (1927: 38) “the essence of the installation of a chief is the calling him into his place in the kava-ring, to receive his cup by his new title.” He sits in the tou’a until the kava is brewed; then he is called to his new place in the kava ring. If this is true the passage from the “junior” to the “senior” category is represented in the rite even more directly than my analysis presupposes. But none of the descriptions of royal installations that I have seen confirm Collocott’s statement: They all say that the person soon to become king already sits at the head of the upper circle when the rite begins (cf. West 1865: 59; Gifford 1929: 93, 94–95; Bott 1982: 100, 124).
While, then, in myth there is a real exchange of positions, in rite this exchange is fictitious: ‘Aho‘eitu’s elder brothers are represented by the chief’s younger brothers and sons, and ‘Aho‘eitu, the younger brother, is represented by the chief. Yet the link between myth and rite, past and present, is preserved by the fact that the lower circle’s “cannibalization” and “vomiting” of the chief is made on orders of the presiding matāpule who, in the Tu‘i Tonga’s kava, is none other than one of the descendants of ‘Aho‘eitu’s elder brothers.25 This matāpule, then, reproduces his “juniority” relative to the Tu‘i Tonga, by reproducing how it came about: through an exchange of status between his ancestors and the Tu‘i Tonga’s ancestors. For him and for the Tu‘i Tonga in his relationship to him, then, the connection between myth and rite is closer than for everybody else.

But what does the rite represent for the junior relatives of the chief who, for a moment, turn the tables and become his senior relatives? Almost a symbolic revolt, the rite may represent—in Gluckmanian

25. The kava of the Tu‘i Tonga was directed by the Falefā (“House of four”). Originally all its four members descended from ‘Aho‘eitu’s elder brothers. Two eventually became extinct; two (Tu‘i Loloko and Maliepō) survive today (Gifford 1929: 64). But Maliepō and his matāpule title Lauaki were transferred to the Tu‘i Kanokupolu when the latter title was created (ibid.). The Falefā was reorganized by adding three foreigners (from Samoa and Fiji) to Tu‘i Loloko. Strictly speaking, then, only the principal member of the Tu‘i Tonga’s Falefā was still a descendant of one of ‘Aho‘eitu’s elder brothers after this reorganization. Nevertheless, it seems likely that the Falefā as an institution continued to be associated with ‘Aho‘eitu’s celestial half-brothers. Furthermore, “celestial” and “foreigner” are interchangeable categories in many contexts (as it would be easy to demonstrate; cf. also, with regard to the matāpule, Kaeppler 1971: 179–80), making foreigners appropriate substitutes for the original members of the Falefā.

That the Falefā directed the king’s kava and were the assistants of the Tu‘i Tonga indicates that they had matāpule or matāpule-like status. Indeed, Bott (on information from Queen Sālobe) writes that “their duties are like those of other matāpule” (Bott 1982: 97). However, titled persons specifically said to be matāpule are attached to the Falefā (Gifford 1929: 63, 66). But they are reported to be matāpule of the Tu‘i Tonga as well. For instance, Malupō, second matāpule to the Tu‘i Loloko, is called by Gifford (1929: 159) a “matāpule to the Tu‘i Tonga. This Maliepō descended from the Sky with his brothers Tu‘i Loloko and ‘Aho‘eitu” (Gifford 1929: 64, 65). Analogously Lauaki—the matāpule of Maliepō—“is reputed to have descended from the sky with this brother Ahoeitu” (Gifford 1929: 140). Clearly the matāpule of the Tu‘i Tonga (whether they were the Falefā in person or the Falefā’s own matāpule substitutes) were considered the descendants of ‘Aho‘eitu’s celestial elder brothers.
fashion—an outlet for their hostility toward those who have authority over them. The rite is also an act of allegiance to their seniors, all the more eloquent because it takes the form of a renunciation of acquiring that authority for themselves. But an affirmation that takes the form of the negation of a negation preserves a representation of what it negates: here, the possibility of not reversing the process of cannibalization of authority, or really usurping it and—at any rate—the inevitability of the father’s death, and of the son’s substitution for him. There will be a time when the son will “eat” the father (rather: his authority, his title) for good. Analogously, to the chief, to the father, the fact that his authority rests on the reversal of a rebellion, of a cannibalization by the son (more generally: by a junior), is a memento of its fragility and of his own mortality. In the meantime, his authority feeds on a cup in which the kava does not simply represent himself transformed from junior to senior: it also includes the juniors themselves who, by renouncing eating the senior, accept being eaten, that is encompassed by him. At the end of the process, then, the transformed kava preserves in part its connection with the junior category. Indeed, the junior transformed into a senior is a senior precisely because he is allowed to encompass all juniors who have not been so transformed.

The fragility of the title-holder’s authority and the fact that his grip on the title is constituted or reconstituted through a symbolic death is probably also indicated by the kava’s association with poison and leprosy (documented by M3 and by Bott’s informants: cf. Bott 1972: 216–17). There seems to have also been a fear—traditionally not unjustified—that the symbolic death in the kava rite could turn into a real one. This is testified by the tradition according to which Tu’i Tātu gives the kava circle its present form to avoid the frequent murder of the Tu’i Tonga and other title-holders. Since the kava reconstituted the hierarchy of titles, it is obvious that it also provided the context in which it could be challenged. Even today, it reveals profound tensions and antagonisms (cf. Bott 1972: 225–26). No wonder, then, that the

26. Gifford (1929: 53, cf. 62) notes that certain of the Falefā were induced to assassinate the Tu’i Tonga “at kava ceremonies.” Generally speaking, “assassinations and other executions for political reasons were exceedingly common in Tonga” (Gifford 1929: 183). Interestingly, one version of M5 gives to the assassins of Takalaua the same names (Fevanga and Fefafa) of the parents of the girl Kava, from whose body sprouts the kava that “poisons” the king (Gifford 1929: 55).
kava is the focus of poisoning and more generally death fears and that it may as a consequence induce nausea and vomiting (Bott 1972: 216). These effects are clearly due not to pharmacological reasons, but to culturally formed expectations: if Tongans “treat kava as if it were strong stuff,” “the strength comes from society, not from the vegetable kingdom” (Bott 1972: 207). Note, finally, that the supposedly nauseating properties of kava indirectly confirm what is shown by the symbolic analysis alone: that the rite has cannibalistic overtones. Nausea is also associated by Tongans with “attempts to copy the Fijian custom of actually eating human flesh” (Bott 1972: 216). The connection between kava drinking and cannibalism is at any rate made clear by the fact that they could be combined, as shown, for instance, by M5, where the assassins of Takalaua are forced to chew the kava with their bleeding gums (thus kava is drunk mixed with blood) and are eaten alive as relish when the cups of the beverage are distributed.

My interpretation of the establishment of hierarchical relations in the kava through their symbolic reversal has the advantage of making sense of the order in which the first two or three cups (that is the “chief kavas” (Gifford 1929: 90) are given. In the kava circle of the Tu‘i Tonga the latter receives the second cup, whereas the Tu‘i Kanokupolu receives the third in his own kava circle.

This order seems to contradict the rule that kava is served in the strict order of rank; It has therefore always puzzled observers. The most common explanation given is that the custom originated as a precautionary measure, to avoid the poisoning of the presiding chief (Thomson 1894: 55–56; Williamson 1937: 81–82; Bott 1981: 25). The explanation, which derives from Tongan informants, demonstrates that kava is associated in the Tongan mind with the idea of killing the chief, taking his place, etc.—all symbolic acts which, it is felt, may become real, as I have mentioned. But it cannot be taken seriously as an explanation of the custom, for a number of obvious reasons. First, it does not explain why the Tu‘i Tonga is given the second cup and the Tu‘i Kanokupolu the third. Second, if the explanation were true, why is the first cup given to the presiding chief when a second kava is brewed immediately after the first, and most ritualized, has been completely drunk? Could not the chief be poisoned at this kava too? Thirdly, and most importantly, why is the first cup given not to some unimportant chief or servant to taste, but to a very specific and important person? In the Tu‘i Tonga’s kava this was the presiding matāpule, who was the descendant of one of ‘Aho‘eitu’s formerly elder
brothers (cf. Bott 1982: 25). In fact, it appears that the correct procedure was to bring the first cup to the Tu'i Tonga who would then give it to the *matāpule* (Cook in Beaglehole 1967, I: 123–24).

I interpret this turning of the first cup to the *matāpule* as an evocation of the original hierarchical relation occurring between his ancestor and that of the Tu'i Tonga, and thus of the fact that the one that was eventually established and continues now to exist between their descendants is its inversion. Here again the rite reproduces hierarchy by representing it as a reversal of the relation senior/junior and thus as a usurpation.

An analogous point can be made to interpret the order of the first three cups in the Tu'i Kanokupolu’s kava. The first cup does not go to the presiding *matāpule* (Motu’apuaka) but to Lauaki, a *matāpule* who, as I have mentioned, descends from one of the celestial brothers of ‘Aho'eitu and was transferred from the Tu'i Tonga to the Tu'i Kanokupolu when the latter title was created. The granting of the first cup to Lauaki, then, is equivalent to the granting of the first cup to the presiding *matāpule* in the Tu'i Tonga’s kava. I would argue that this equivalence signals the ultimate dependence of the Tu'i Kanokupolu’s title on the Tu'i Tonga’s title, and thus on the reversal from elder to younger that constituted the Tu'i Tonga title in the first place. An analogous reversal constituted the Tu'i Kanokupolu title itself: this is why the second cup goes to Niukapu (one of the former elder brothers of Ngata, the first Tu'i Kanokupolu, as explained in M6) and the third to the Tu'i Kanokupolu, who is now his senior (Collocott 1927: 34).

The order in which the cups are served, then, instantiates the same principle by which hierarchy is reproduced in the kava ritual as a whole: through reversal. In the rite as a whole, though, reversal is followed by a representation of its effect, which is the superordination of the title-holder category to the “junior” category. Instead, the first two cups in the Tu'i Tonga’s circle, and the first three in that of the Tu'i Kanokupolu, represent only the reversal, leaving the effect implicit. On the other hand the parallelism becomes complete if we take into account the fact that when the brew from a second kava plant (and all subsequent ones) is served in the rite, *the presiding chief is served first*. At this stage, the order of the serving cups represents the effect of the previous stage, and thus the hierarchical order as it is now.
Diarchy and usurpation

The royal traditions make it clear that until the creation of the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua title, the Tu'i Tonga held undivided all prerogatives of kingship. Before attempting to explain their division from the perspective gained through the combined analysis of royal legends and ritual, it is necessary to say a few things about the diarchy itself.

The Tu'i Tonga is often contrasted to the Hau, an office occupied by the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua or the Tu'i Kanokupolu (depending on their relative power), as a “spiritual” or “sacred” king to a “ secular” or “temporal” king (e.g. Thomson 1894: 292; Kaeppler 1971: 180; Bott 1981: 32; Hanson 1982: 353; Kirch 1984: 219). This definition of their contrast is clearly inappropriate, not only because it presupposes an opposition between “spiritual” and “temporal” which is quite foreign to Tongan culture (as has been repeatedly remarked by Williamson 1924, I: 418; Hocart [1936] 1970: 163; Gifford 1929: 48, cf. 82), but more importantly because it is in contradiction with the fact that all political titles were in some measure sacred (Bott 1981: 23).

In fact, titled chiefs (Tu'i Ha'atakalaua and Tu'i Kanokupolu included) are said to have represented (Gifford 1929: 318) and sometimes impersonated (Wilson 1799: 276–77 and Gifford 1929: 75) their ancestral deities. Titled chiefs are even said to have been “the earthly incarnations of their deified ancestors” (Thomson 1894: 22), particularly during the kava rite (Gifford 1929: 157). Certainly because of the Tongan institution of positional succession, the present holder of a title was (and still is) considered as in a sense the same person as the founding title-holder and all his deified ancestors (Bott 1981: 23). In addition, title-holders could occasionally be possessed by their predecessors and gods (Mariner 1817, II: 112, 141, 143). Others were considered to be permanently inhabited by their principal god (Gifford 1929: 315).

Given this generic equivalence of title-holder and god or deified ancestor, it comes as no surprise to learn that the supposedly “ secular” ruler, the Hau, was legitimated by his connection with a god, Talai Tupou, by whom he was sometimes possessed (Mariner 1817, II: 112) and whom he represented in the kava circle (Gifford 1929: 157; cf. Collocott 1927: 34). Clearly, the authority of the Hau was divinely sanctioned like that of the Tu'i Tonga. Both were sacred, and differed only in the degree of their sacredness and in the aspects of kingship (and therefore the patron gods) that they represented.
The Tu'i Tonga was the more sacred of the two, “a divine chief of the highest rank” (Mariner 1817, II: 142-43). This does not mean that he was only divine, of course, but that he had divine attributes beside his human ones. Indeed, Gifford writes: “Although the Tu'i Tonga and the Tamahā were believed to approach the gods in essence, nevertheless they were human, from the Tongan point of view, inasmuch as they prayed to the gods when ill and their relatives sacrificed their little finger for them” (Gifford 1929: 289). As descendants of the sky god ‘Eitumatupu’a who was also, through ‘Aho‘eitu, the ancestor of all Tongans, the Tu'i Tonga was the embodiment of Tongan society as a whole, and the fountainhead of all chiefly titles, which derived from him by segmentation: “chieftiness is an attribute which flows from the Sovereign, the Tu'i Tonga” (Gifford 1929: 123; cf. Mariner 1817, II: 89; Kaeppler 1971: 179). Indeed, the origin myth of the Tu'i Tonga is also considered as the ultimate justification for the existence of the system of titles (Bott 1972: 227). In this sense, the Tu'i Tonga’s task is only to be. The gods whom he represents are the ultimate sources of existence: the Tangaloas (from whom he descends) and Hikule‘o, a deity that rules Pulotu (the land inhabited by most gods and by the spirits of dead people of chiefly rank), and also, through the Tu'i Tonga, this world. The Tu'i Tonga acts as “priest or intermediary” between Hikule‘o and his people in the only ritual that concerns the Tongan people collectively, the ‘ìnasi or first-fruits festival (Gifford 1929: 289). This is precisely one of the two roles attributed to the Tu'i Tonga by Kau‘ulufo‘oua, when he decides to divide the kingly functions between two rulers (M5). The other role is that of “supreme lord of the soil” and it is closely related to the first one, since the ‘ìnasi symbolizes, among other things, the Tu'i Tonga’s supreme control of all land (cf. Bott 1981: 25).

To understand what the second king is all about, it is better to start from the significations of Hau, his title. This is glossed by Gifford (1929: 122) as follows: “the attendants (takanga) of the Tu'i Tonga; a conqueror, a reigning prince.” Churchward (1959: 213) glosses: “champion, victor, or conqueror.” These significations point to two fundamental aspects of the Hau:

1) He is supposed to be the “attendant,” that is the executive of the Tu'i Tonga in his relationship with the people: for instance he has to
Indeed, in M5, Kau’ulufonua institutes the first of the Hau titles (the Tu’i Ha’atakakulaa) as a “chief over the people to govern them.” It is likely that fundamentally this implied being the chief (Tu’i) of all the people subordinated to the “set of titles” (ha’a, cf. Bott 1981: 39) derived from Takalaua, the father of both the Tu’i Tonga Kau’ulufonua and of the Tu’i Ha’atakakulaa Mo’ungāmotua (cf. Gifford 1929: 34, 55). This interpretation is confirmed by the fact that the holder of the second Hau title, Tu’i Kanokupolu, is also called Tu’i Ha’amo’unga, that is “chief of the ha’a that derives from Mo’ungātonga,” who was the father of both Ngata, the first Tu’i Kanokupolu, and Fotofili, the Tu’i Ha’atakakulaa (cf. Bott 1982: 116). There again, the younger brother takes care of the ha’a derived from the father, whereas the senior represents a more encompassing unit.

All this suggests that a Hau was the leader of the most important set of titled chiefs at a given moment, rather than the direct controller of all the people. Only the Tu’i Tonga was the king of all Tongans, but not as a controller and organizer;

2) The second fundamental aspect of the Hau is that he is a “champion” a “defender”—in other words a war chief who, appropriately, finds his counterpart in the war god Taliai Tupou (Mariner 1817, II: 112).

That the Hau is the leader of sets of political titles whose fortunes can wax or wane (as the very decline of Tu’i Ha’atakakulaa and the correlative ascent of Tu’i Kanokupolu show), and moreover a warrior who can conquer his position, but also lose it on the battlefield, explains one fundamental feature of his office: it was not strictly hereditary, contrary to the Tu’i Tongaship. Thomson (1893: 307) defines the relative instability of the Hauship with his usual lucidity:

None but a member of the reigning family could succeed, and a custom seems to have grown up of choosing the successor alternately from the families of the Tui Haatakahaua and the Tui Kanokupolu; but it was always open to the principal chiefs, who formed the electoral college, to reject any aspirant to office who was physically, mentally, or morally unfit to reign. Two conditions weighed with them—the dying wishes of the late king, and the rela-

27. “The Tongan conception of the Tu’i Kanokupolu was a ‘working king,’ the one who supervised planting and other activities for the real King or Tu’i Tonga” (Gifford 1929: 98).
tive power and popularity of the candidates. The election took place immediately after the funeral ceremonies, when the entire nation was assembled; and the election of the most influential chief was a guarantee against civil disorder.

In sum, Tongan diarchy appears to be very Hocartian, in that it connects a supreme king who “is purely passive” (Hocart 1970: 164) and who represents continuity, recurrence, even eternity—with a second king who is active and associated with discontinuity and conflict over succession. The master contrast between them is that of “peace” and “war”: the chronicles describe the Hau’s frequent waging of war, but “so far as Tongan tradition goes there seems to be no record of a Tui Tonga engaging in warfare while in office” (Gifford 1929: 205). This view of diarchy is explicitly found in the myth (M5) that accounts for the origin of the institution. According to this myth the division of powers is created to remove the Tu’i Tongaship from competition and conflict, so that the office can descend uninterruptedly from father to son. And indeed even if Tu’i Tongas were murdered, their sons usually succeeded them. The same line remained in power until the Tu’i Tongaship was abolished in 1865. The myth also says that this continuity is necessary for the land to stand “fast,” that is to stay united. Kau’ulufonua’s institution of the diarchy is presented in the myth as a reaction to the murder of his father, Takalaua, who has been cut to pieces by rebellious rivals. In a sense, this diarchic solution perpetuates the dismemberment of the father—it signifies that he cannot be reproduced entire by his sons and successors. Thus diarchy appears as a further step in the progressively imperfect succession to the father that marks the institution of kingship from the very beginning (M2). As ‘Aho’eitu could not succeed ‘Eitumatupu’a completely, so the sons of Takalaua cannot succeed their father completely. Kau’ulofonua insures the continuity of kingship at the price of his integrity, a mutilation which ultimately weakens it, as Tongan history demonstrates.

There is something else, however, that the myth does not say explicitly. This is that diarchy is an attempt to free the Tu’i Tongaship from the true cause of its instability. But this cause is also the principle that, according to the myths previously considered, constituted kingship in the first place: hierarchization as usurpation, as reversal of the junior/senior relationship given at birth. The creation of diarchy is in effect equivalent to removing the application of this definition of hierarchy from the Tu’i Tongaship and confining it to the Hauship as
much as possible. Correlatively, it implies putting emphasis on the purely genealogical criterion of legitimacy in the Tu'i Tongaship: not the junior who becomes senior by usurpation, but the direct descendant of an original junior who became senior in distant mythical times, is the legitimate successor to the Tu'i Tongaship. From this point of view, 'Aho'eitu’s drama happened once for all: it must not be re-enacted, except fictitiously in the kava rite.

Thus, my interpretation links the institution of royal kava as mere commemoration of an event irredeemably past with the institution of diarchy. The interpretation seems in contradiction with the fact that diarchy is said to have been instituted later than the kava ritual. However, M3 connects the origin of kava with an institution which already implies a first rudimentary form of diarchy. In effect Lo'au, the powerful Tu'i Ha'amea, is the originator not only of the kava rite, but also of the moheofo system, whereby the Tu'i Tonga must marry, to produce his heir, the daughter of the most powerful among his subordinate chiefs. As a result, this chief becomes the next Tu'i Tonga's mother's brother. Now the moheofo system is universally associated by our sources with diarchy. Baker, for instance, writes that the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua “assumed the actual rule as reigning prince (Hau) on condition that he and his heirs engage to maintain and defend forever the Tu'i Tonga in his sacred state of high priest; also that the Tu'i Tonga in office was always to have as his wife the daughter of the reigning prince” (quoted by Gifford 1929: 85).

It seems that in royal traditions diarchy is in fact formed in two stages, and that Lo'au is, in a sense, the first Hau. This interpretation is supported also by the fact that to a chief called Lo'au (all Lo'aus seem interchangeable in the tradition; they are like a single person living in different times, cf. Bott 1972: 216) “is attributed the revision of the government of the Tui Tonga Takalaua” (Gifford 1929: 130). Also, Lo'au is implicitly viewed as Hau when it is said that “he allotted stewards to all Tonga as far as Uvea and . . . allocated the first tasks (fatongia) among the different peoples” (Gifford 1929: 131). Remember also that Lo’au shares foreign associations with Ngata, the first Tu’i Kanokupolu Hau (Bott 1982: 123, 125; Kaeppler 1978: 248–49).

Considering the institution of the moheofo system as an index of incipient diarchy also makes it possible to interpret M4. In this myth Tu’i Tātui who, as son of Lo’au’s daughter, is the first Tu’i Tonga generated with the system of the hypergamous “royal wife,” commits
incest with his sister, a unique case in royal traditions. This act could be interpreted as an attempt to react against the mohefō custom and thus against the incipient diarchy which weakened the Tu'i Tonga-ship. Indeed, Tu'i Tātūi is represented as an unusually authoritarian Tu'i Tonga. This interpretation would be further reinforced were we to accept Leach’s claim that the text of the myth (Gifford 1924: 274) implies that the two sons of Tu'i Tātūi were born of his incestuous union (Leach 1972: 274 n. 9). However, I am not sure that the text implies this. Gifford himself does not say that Talatama, Tu'i Tātūi’s successor, was born of the incest.

Kingship and kinship: Exemplarity and anomaly
In the introduction to this paper, I have briefly discussed the relationship of the Tu'i Tonga with his sister (Tu'i Tonga Fefine) and her children (Tamahā). I have mentioned that in paying homage to them the Tu'i Tonga followed a custom that applied to all of his subjects. This fact raises two questions that must be briefly answered to round off this analysis of Tongan kingship: why should the king follow the same kinship customs as his subjects? What is the relationship between the Tu'i Tonga / Tu'i Tonga Fefine diarchy and the Tu'i Tonga / Hau diarchy?

The first question is particularly important because in other Polynesian societies of similar complexity, such as Tahiti and Hawaii, kingship was defined by, among other things, its transcendence of ordinary kinship rules. The Hawaiian king marries his sister or half-sister (Valeri 1972); but the Tongan king, like any of his subjects, renounces her. Indeed, he renounces her to such an extent that he makes her sacred, unapproachable, by attributing to her the dangerous, mystical powers of cursing, etc. (cf. Rogers 1977). Yet the royal mythology testifies to the constant temptation of a different—Hawaiian-like—relation with the sister. Only king Tu'i Tātūi manages to satisfy it; and yet it is doubtful, as I have just remarked, that his incest is connected with the reproduction of the Tu'i Tonga’s line. Even in this case, then, the tradition seems to indicate, a contrario, that the Tu'i Tonga must reproduce himself in ways that are not in contradiction with those of his subjects, but to a certain extent exemplary for them, at least as an ideal.

I would argue that while the Hawaiian king transcends kinship because—among other reasons—he founds a social order that has ceased to be dominated by kinship, the Tu'i Tonga follows the basic kinship
principles of his subjects because he is exemplary for a society that is still organized by kinship ideals. Thus, besides enshrining the patrilin- 
cal, indeed “patriarchal” (Gifford 1929: 20) principle that is at the basis of the system of political titles, kingship must enshrine the brother/sister diarchy that structures the kāinga (kindred) organization. In this way, it imprints both principles on the society and furthermore it connects them at the top. We have already seen an example of this connection: through the moheofō system the titular diarchy is re- 

However, as other aspects of kingship, the cross-sibling relation- 
ship enshrined in it manifests anomalous features besides exemplary ones. Let us begin with the exemplary ones. Like all his male subjects, the Tu’i Tonga paid homage to his eldest living sister (Gifford 1929: 79), called Tu’i Tonga Fefine, “Female Tu’i Tonga.” This woman was only allowed to marry a husband who had either of two titles: Tu’i Ha’a Teiho and Tu’i Lakepa (Gifford 1929: 81). All her children with these men were in some measure sacred to the Tu’i Tonga (as all sister’s children were sacred to any brother) and were generically called Tamahā. Her oldest daughter was the Tamahā par excellence and the Tu’i Tonga was required to extend special marks of respect to her.

But besides these normal and indeed exemplary aspects, the Fe- 
male Tu’i Tonga and her daughter, the Tamahā, had decidedly an-

malsal ones. First, the terms by which they were designated were quasi-titles, in that they were ritually bestowed by the Tu’i Tonga, although they did not involve the control of a land and of its inhabit-
ants, like normal titles do (Gifford 1929: 79, 82). Second, both the Tu’i Tonga Fefine and the Tamahā had—contrary to all other women—kava privileges. Indeed the Tamahā was inaugurated, like a male title-holder, in the course of a kava rite and presided over the kava circle of the Tu’i Tonga whenever she sat in it (Gifford 1929: 82, 162). In other words, these two women were the archetypes of all other sacred sisters and nieces but at the same time differed from them in that they were characterized by male privileges.

Their relation with the Tu’i Tonga was also different in important respects from the relation of an ordinary sacred sister with her brother and that of an ordinary sacred niece with her maternal uncle. The most important of these differences was that, as daughters of either a Tu’i Ha’a Teiho or a Tu’i Lakepa father—titles of Fijian origin—these women were not considered Tongans, strictly speaking. This avoided
the paradoxical bowing of the king of all Tongans to some of them. The fact was, precisely, that while all Tongan males bowed to real persons, the Tu‘i Tonga bowed to a principle, represented by a non-person, that is a foreigner.

Note also that the fact that the Tu‘i Tonga Fefine and the Tamahā were appointed by the Tu‘i Tonga indicates that he ultimately controlled them (contrary to ordinary sisters or nieces, who are not controlled by their brothers or maternal uncles) and, more importantly, that they were seen as a function of him. For the purpose for which they existed was to make evident that the king was not only the Father: he was also the Brother and the Maternal Uncle. But as a successor to ‘Aho‘eitu, the Tu‘i Tonga was conceived as the actual genealogical Father of all Tongans; whereas he was “Brother” and “Maternal Uncle” only as an exemplar, since he was so through his relationship to a sister and a niece associated with foreigners, not with Tongans. The consequence of this was that in all social interaction Tongans had to treat their king exclusively as their Father, and thus as a person who had authority over them. Nobody who was his subject could treat him as a maternal uncle or cross-sibling.28

It seems, thus, that some of the anomalies of the cross-sibling relationship as enshrined in kingship are explained by the necessity of avoiding the contradiction between the supremacy of the Tu‘i Tonga and the fact that, as supreme authority, he must also exemplify the principle of siblingship, which limits that supremacy. But more profoundly, these anomalies are explained by the fact that being exemplary necessarily implies being above the ordinary and thus contrasting with it, and not simply replicating it. For the same reason, the archetypal sister and niece enshrined in kingship assume traits that do not belong to ordinary sisters or nieces. Moreover, Tamahā and Tu‘i Tonga Fefine must assume the male attributes (titles and kava privileges) that characterize the most encompassing level of society at which they are situated. These attributes are the signs of their exalted

28. Nobody, that is, except some particularly powerful Tu‘i Kanokupolu (Gifford 1929: 99; Leach 1972: 246-47; Biersack 1982: 201), who managed to marry the Tamahā or a daughter of the Tu‘i Tonga, thereby assuming vis-a-vis him the superior status of wife-taker. But such marriages, which allowed the Tu‘i Kanokupolu to surpass the Tu‘i Tonga in personal rank, contributed to the decline of the Tu‘i Tongan dynasty.
position and thus, paradoxically, of the very fact that they enshrine female categories fundamental to the constitution of society.

In sum, non-exemplary, anomalous features may be (and usually are) the paradoxical by-products of the enshrinement of certain persons as exemplars, as personifications of social categories. There are various instances of this paradox, which characterize the Tu' i Tonga in the first place. Indeed this exemplary male is also different from other males in crucial respects: he is the only Tongan who is not circumcized and tattooed; his hair and beard are not cut but trimmed by singeing, etc. (Gifford 1929: 74–75; cf. Mariner 1817, II: 84 for other peculiarities). Yet these and other anomalies are subordinated to the exemplarity that they help sustain by making the king stand out: they frame it, so to speak; they indicate the transcendent level at which the norm is enshrined.

Of course, the anomalous status of a king may also be due to the fact that he must mediate between different and sometimes contradictory societal principles (cf. Valeri 1980 [Chapter I, this volume], 1982 [Chapter III, this volume], 1985a). Indeed, this aspect of kingly anomaly is preponderant in societies that view themselves as consisting of complementary opposites or Dumézilian “functions” (cf. Dumézil 1968–70; Vernant 1982: 42; Beidelman 1966, for examples). But not all societies analyze themselves in terms of such models or make them dominant. Many, particularly in Southeast Asia and Polynesia, emphasize another model, in which the different social units are ranked as approximations to a single, exemplary center, and are thus viewed as homogeneous rather than heterogeneous to one another (cf. Tambiah 1976; Geertz 1980; Valeri 1985a, for examples).

This typological contrast may be illustrated by the neighboring societies of Eastern Fiji and Tonga; the former, characterized by a dynamic dualism of “functions,” emphasizes the anomalous dimension of the king who must mediate them (cf. the analysis of Sahlins 1985: 73–103); the latter, fundamentally “centric” notwithstanding certain dualistic features, emphasizes the exemplary character of his king. Another illustration is offered by the contrast between the dualistic and “functional” (in Dumézil’s sense) societies of Eastern Indonesia and the more “centric” ones of Bali, Java and South Sulawesi. But it should be noted that both models of society (as consisting of homogeneous or heterogeneous units) and of kingship (as mediating or exemplary) coexist in some measure in all these societies.
Finally, we must ask what is the relationship between the two diarchies at the top of Tongan society? In my opinion they are less equivalent than complementary. The all male diarchy Tu'i Tonga / Hau is the structural core of the political order proper, in that the Hau is simply the most powerful of all title-holders, of all Lords, and represents them all vis-à-vis the Tu'i Tonga. The Tu'i Tonga himself, as the ultimate justification for all title-holders, must only be, whereas the rest must also act and fight.

The male/female diarchy Tu'i Tonga / Tu'i Tonga Fefine and Tamahā is the structural core of the kinship order, and also of its somewhat conflictual connection with the titular order. This is not a diarchy that can be reduced to the contrast of being and acting, but one defined by two aspects of mere being, of a merely symbolic existence. The male Tu'i Tonga symbolizes the archetypical “brother” and “maternal uncle”; the Female Tu'i Tonga and Tamahā are, respectively, the exemplary sister and niece. But as “brother” the Tu'i Tonga connects titular structure and kinship structure at the top, since he is both the brother of his sister and the brother of his “brothers,” that is of all other male titles. Thus, in his articulation of the two diarchies, of the two fundamental principles of personal rank and titular rank, the male Tu'i Tonga shows himself supreme.

Conclusion
In Kingship and sacrifice (Valeri 1985a), I have attempted to show that the authority of Hawaiian gods, kings and—at lower levels—chiefs and household heads ultimately rests on their exemplarity, on the fact that they personify cultural ideals. But the Tongan case shows more clearly than the Hawaiian one that the authority of these exemplars implies a basic contradiction that colors the very way they are represented. For, on the one hand, an exemplar demands to be imitated, reproduced and thus ultimately, substituted; but on the other hand, it claims that it cannot truly be reproduced and thus ever be displaced. What keeps its authority is precisely that it creates both a desire to be like it, to take its place, and a sense that it is impossible to do so.

29. One obvious difference is that the sacredness of the sister is mostly negative (Rogers 1977), whereas that of the Tu'i Tonga is mostly positive. Traditionally Tongans were not the feminists that some modern interpreters want them to be.

30. Note that there is a Tongan word (tokoua'akā) designating being related as brother or sister without regard to sex or age on either side (Churchward 1939: 491).
This contradiction colors with emotional ambivalence the relationship between authority and those who recognize it. I would argue that it is because this ambivalence evokes and revives the earlier ambivalence of the child vis-à-vis the first authority experienced by him, that of his father (as a cultural, not a biological figure, of course) that Tongan myths about authority at large borrow some of their imagery from Oedipal experiences. This borrowing is facilitated, of course, by the very definition of societal authority in “patriarchal” terms and particularly by the view that the ultimate authority, the Tu'i Tonga, is the Father of all Tongans.

But in borrowing this imagery from past experiences undergone by each individual, myth and ritual do not simply reflect them, as I have shown in this paper. Rather, they tap the emotional power of these images to add power to those cultural conceptions of authority which are not in conflict with them. This confirms that “there is no necessary contradiction between custom and emotion” (Obeyesekere 1981: 44). More importantly, it shows that the emotional correlates of authority and the experiences through which it comes to be accepted, are part of its compelling force and of its very definition. The theory of authority put forward in *Kingship and sacrifice* is thus confirmed but at the same time expanded by this study of Tongan notions.

Finally, I must again emphasize that my analysis refers to pre-Christian Tonga. The cannibalistic symbolism of the kava ritual has been greatly reduced since the plant has ceased to be chewed by the “juniors.” It is now pounded and chewed by the kava maker alone (Bott 1972: 212). Although originally it probably had no connections with it, this change seems now to felicitously correlate with the contemporary freezing of the Tongan title system, because it removes one of the most powerful symbolic expressions of challenge and reversal from the reproduction of titles in the kava rite. Some of Queen Sālote’s interpretations and even versions of the myths that we have

31. My view of the relationship between unconscious (in the Freudian sense) processes and cultural ones in the constitution of ritual and myth converges with that of Elizabeth Traube, as I discovered with pleasure after completing this paper: “The energy required to construct a ritual has social sources, yet the efficacy of the constructed rite derives in part from the cultural transfiguration of latent psychosexual desires and fears. It is no reduction of the social to the individual to concede that unconscious wishes are reworked in ritual contexts and force their way through into consciousness in culturally acceptable, sublimated forms” (Traube 1986: 241).
considered seem to reflect and sanction this shift, as we have occasion-
ally seen above (cf. also Leach 1972: 270). But nothing reveals it
better than the new custom of giving the Tu‘i Kanokupolu the first
cup of kava. Serving the third cup to the chief meant referring to his
supremacy as a reversal of an original inferiority; giving him the first
cup signifies that nowadays his supremacy is an unchallengeable given,
since it is not itself defined as a successful challenge.

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