The collection and publication of verbatim texts is a venerable tradition in ethnography, especially perhaps in North America, where among the best known are the voluminous records of the Bureau of American Ethnology and Boas’s texts from the Northwest Coast. And they are by no means a novelty in *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*: in its early years, between 1890 and 1901, the *Journal* published a number of texts in both New Zealand and Cook Islands Māori, some of which have recently been reprinted (*Te Ariki Tara ‘Are* 2000). For the most part these were what might be called “traditional” texts—foundational accounts of particular societies mixing both the obviously fabulous and the plausibly factual and cast in the idiom of an original relationship between supernatural and human actors and the subsequent historical differentiation of features of both the natural and social worlds. They have been widely used—in the past largely as evidence for migration theories of one sort or another and, more recently, for studies more closely attuned to historical and ethnographic evidence (Reilly 2003, 2009; *Te Ariki Tara ‘Are* 2000) or of a more structuralist persuasion (Siikala 1991).

Many of these studies, especially those concerned with migrations, are no longer in vogue. Yet the texts have an enduring value—which, as Geertz (1983: 56) has pointed out, is an epistemological one. They have acquired an authority deriving from their age and from their having been told (or in some cases written down) by those who knew directly of the nature of things before the transformations of belief and practice wrought by mission teachers and other contacts with the outside world. For better or for worse, they are taken to record, however opaquely in some instances, “the native point of view”, the traditional representation of the nature of reality. Such a view is of course altogether too simplistic. Traditional representations of “reality” have an inherently problematic relationship with what may be called the “actualities” of the past; traditions may be invented, contested, and altered to benefit some people or collectivities at the expense of others—while at the same time not losing any of their value as direct representations of “the native point of view”.

Although the Tokelau fishing texts presented here are concerned with what may be regarded as “traditional” fishing, they date only from the early 1970s, so can hardly be called ancient. Furthermore, they do not deal at all with origins, and neither do they contain any elements of the fabulous. They are
simply records of speeches and writings occasioned by a particular episode on the atoll of Fakaofo in 1971, and have a very explicit instructional and ideological intent.

Forty or so years ago, in the early 1970s, Tokelau was not as closely integrated with the outside world as it has since become. Subsistence production played a large part in the local economies and the elders retained much of their authority in the local island councils. There had already been some emigration to New Zealand (resulting in a drop in population from 1870 in 1961 to 1646 in 1971) and the number of Administration wage and salaried workers had increased markedly. The per capita annual income was only about $NZ50, and much of the people’s subsistence came from local resources of fish, breadfruit, coconuts, cytosperma, pandanus, pigs and chickens. The only links with the outside world were by radio telephone and a ship from Samoa every three months or so. Houses were made very largely of local materials; there was no electricity, and no outboard motors apart from one on each atoll provided for the use of itinerant New Zealand administration officials. Transport within each atoll was by locally made sailing canoes.

Fakaofo, the southernmost atoll, was at the time the most populous. In 1971, it had a population of 656 divided among some 70 household groups, and there were about 30 wage and salary earners—mainly teachers, medical staff and a work gang engaged in the construction of new village facilities (Hooper 1993). Fishing was a preoccupation of almost all men, governed by the weather and their knowledge of fish behaviour through the lunar and annual cycles. The gear used was as modern as the men could afford, which meant nylon monofilament lines, store-bought hooks and stainless steel trace. Two main items of traditional gear survived—circular Polynesian hooks (forged iron rather than shell) and pearlshell lures rigged to lengthy wooden or bamboo poles. Along with this preoccupation men talked incessantly about fishing, both in chance encounters and in gatherings for many diverse purposes: “Where did you go?”, “Who with?”, “How was the current?” A lot of useful information was passed on in this way.

There were other kinds of fishing talk as well. On occasions when groups of men were gathered (particularly in the evenings for a task like making a net) one of the older men would sometimes relieve the tedium by telling the story of a particular fishing expedition in the past. These “yarns” were highly stylised, always including the names of all the crew, exactly where they went, the night of the moon and the notable events of the expedition. Hovdhaugen’s 1992 paper on “Fishing Stories” presents a classic example of this genre, paralleling exactly many other similar stories that I heard. Neither the “chat” nor the stylised “yarns” contained any detailed discussion of methods or techniques—mainly because all men knew roughly how the
major named kinds of fishing were carried out, and also because any detailed discussion of methods and techniques were secret, or if not secret, at least closely guarded. As the Tokelau saying goes, *E nā ko te ataliki moni lava te fakapuku tomu e te tautai i nā muna o te moana*, ‘It is only to a real son that a fisherman truthfully reveals his special knowledge and the ways of doing things at sea’. (The term *fakapuku* used here also refers to the act of a bird feeding a nestling.) There were also, however, relatively rare public occasions when an elder would stand and give a short speech revealing some special knowledge that he had. An appropriate occasion might be a convivial wedding feast or a village dance with two ‘sides’ (*fāitū*) opposing one another at opposite ends of the meeting house. Especially after a cricket game when the sides were openly competing with dances, taunts and challenges, an elder might stand and, moved by the excitement and banter, speak of something special that he knew. Such speeches were regarded as very special “blessings” on the occasion.

The first text presented here is made up of speeches of this special kind delivered by various elders at a village ceremony marking the conclusion of two exciting and extraordinary weeks of communal fishing for skipjack. The fishing was extraordinary because there had been no significant schools of skipjack in the waters around the atoll for at least 20 years and a whole generation of men had come to maturity without having learned all the techniques and customs involved in skipjack fishing. Excitement in the village ran high. It was rapidly decided that the fishing would be done in the traditional way, communally and using traditional gear. The elders pronounced a ban on all other kinds of fishing and took charge of the activities of all the able-bodied men. As the canoes began returning with significant catches the women of the village organised themselves to wade out with refreshments for the crews, before grabbing the fish, clutching them in twos and threes by their tails and taking them off to the *malae* for distribution to the whole village. There were also crowded meetings every evening at which the men pressed the elders for answers to all sorts of questions that they had about customary practices and beliefs. Over the following two weeks some 1100 skipjack were caught and distributed to the village.

Finally, once the skipjack had moved away from the atoll and the catches had diminished sharply, the elders lifted their ban on other sorts of fishing and declared that there would be a *kaukumete* ceremony for all those who had participated in the fishing. The *kaukumete* is a Tokelau ceremony held to recognise a man’s competence to handle a fishing canoe and its crew in any circumstances. In the “old days” it involved a man’s *kāiga* ‘descent group’ preparing food for the assembled village elders who in turn gave him gifts of pearl shell and lures and their recognition of him as a *tautai,*
Figure 1. Bringing in a hooked skipjack. The fisherman is Uili Simona and his companion in the foreground is Elisala Sese. Photograph by Antony Hooper.

Figure 2. Sese Faiva, a renowned tautai in his day, demonstrating ways to bring in a skipjack using a simple pole with a coconut attached. The canoe is not a skipjack canoe, but a small household canoe brought up from the shore for the purpose. Photograph by Marti Friedlander.
Figures 3 and 4. Women carrying skipjack to the malae for later distribution. Both photographs by Marti Friedlander.
entitled to lead a fishing expedition from the honoured position at the stern of a canoe. *Tautai* is commonly translated as ‘master fisherman’ or ‘expert fisherman’. But, as this text and more particularly the following one show, this recognition involved more than the candidate’s technical skills and knowledge of fishing techniques. It also implied honour, trust and something akin to the old European virtues of chivalry. In the old days the ceremony probably would not have involved any sort of formal instruction or examination of the candidates. The elders would have already been thoroughly familiar with their capacities and accomplishments.

The 1971 *kaukumete* was a more demotic gathering. Many of the young men involved had never even held a skipjack rod, much less caught a skipjack on rod and lure. Nevertheless, the whole community responded with enthusiasm and gathered 495 baskets of vegetable foods (over 250 kilos), 13 cooked pigs, 12 tins of cabin bread, one chicken and NZ$6 in cash. Thirty-nine men, most of them in their 30s, but three over 40, were granted the status of *tautai*. Everyone knew that all this was far from the way that things were done in the old days, but they saw it all as being more than just a diversion and participated with enthusiasm and an air of high seriousness. It was also acknowledged that only one of the elders present had ever been much of a skipjack expert (one of the few who had ever hooked more than 100 fish from a single *tulaga* ‘stand’). Nevertheless, the other elders involved were certainly venerable and knew how things had been done in the past.

The speeches began with a few words from the village *pulenuku* ‘mayor’ which were not recorded. The text begins shortly after the first elder began speaking.

**TEXTS**

**TEXT 1. Speeches at the Kaukumete Ceremony, Fakaofo 5 May 1971**

*Iona Lapana*

E moni lava e vēia ia ki tātou na manatu fakatauvā ki na fāiga nei a ō tātou tuā. Fātōā feagai nei ki tātou ma ni uiga vē nei i ō tātou tupulaga. E hē matuā manino foki ia te ki mātou ka ko nā tū iēnei nae fai e ō tātou tuā kua mavae. E fai lava vēia he fākamanuiga e ō koutou tāuleleka ka nofo muli vaka i nā faiva. Nā hē manatu fakatalanoa là.

Certainly, we seem to have been thinking little of these things of our forefathers. This is the first time we have faced up to things like this in our generation. They are not very clear to us, but these customs were practiced by our forefathers who have passed away. They are done as a blessing for you young men who will sit in the canoe sterns when fishing. Do not think lightly of them.
This occasion, we feel strongly, is a way of blessing you who will do the fishing. Not only the fishing for skipjack, but also the other kinds of fishing done by tautai—noosing wahoo and the other techniques we know. In recent times, you have not been restricted in the kinds of fishing you have been allowed to do. Truly your attempts have been remarkable. You have been doing your own thing.

But now with this fishing we are faced with a different kind of fish, the skipjack, which have been gone for years—and so a day like this has been arranged so you can all come together in good spirits and with encouragement from the elders; including the servants of God who are able to join us, with the idea of us all improving your efforts while you are still young men.

Now—just a few comments—some advice that we all must take to our hearts, to improve your efforts in fishing. I shall speak briefly. We are thankful to you young men, especially when we see the great amount of stuff you have poured onto our common table. And also—your families are every one of them also happy that this great amount of food has been obtained. May the love of God be with us. There will now be time for you to listen to advice from the servants of God and from these assembled elders. May we have blessings for this day.

I also stand before you. It was all different previously, in the old days. I must pay my respects: respects to you tautai and elders, respects to—Tony, and also to the pastors. Long ago, it was different, it was done differently. With respects—this is how we asked for blessings. Ioooooa! Ioooooa!
Kikila ake au ki tō lagi ke fakamanuia mai te kau nofo muli vaka. Mea o te tai: he tai palu; he tāi pāla—fakamolemale kua fāi tamotu atu e au nā mea. Ka ko ona pō kua loa e hohoko lava te lauga o ika—o te fakamanuia. He tai paaalala! He tai aaaaatu! Tēnei kua maua ai e ki tātu ia atu i ona pō nei, auā næ galo ia atu. Fakahaga ake au ki tō laaaaagi! Ko te ulululu. He tai ulaaaaafi! He tai laeeeea! He tai ufuatuuuua! He tai patuuuuuki! He tai kakakaaaaaa! He tai hagahagatteeeea! He tai talaaau! He tai manooooko! Fakamanuia mai te Atua kia te koutou. Toutou o atu, te mea e fano ki e i te tagata, mafaufau ki e i.

Fakahaga ake au ki tō ulufanuuuuua! He tai fuifaaala! He tai huuuuua! He tai uuuto! Helauniiiiiu! he tai makaaaaave! he tai kauloooolo! he tai tauuuume! ke fakamanuia mai te Atua kia te koutou.

Lelei. Te faiva nei, auā te faiva nei kua pā mai kia te ki tātu—ia atu—e hē ki tātu iloa nei pe kafai e pakē atu ki aho o te ē—e ēilā fai ai foki e ki tātu te atu. E momoli atu e au taku kupu kia te koutou, fakaaloalo i luga o te moana. Ko te fakaaloalo, ko te mea hili i ona leleie—e ēva te tahi ki te tahi—e ēva te tahi ki te tahi. Ke mafola ō lima i te moana, ka nā hē kukuma. Ka matala o lima i te moana, ko ē logo iēnā. Kā kukuma ō lima, hēai, e hē ni ō logo.

E lua ia ika hā o te moana: ko te fonu, ko te hakulā. E kehe foki ia faiga o te fonu ma te hakulā. Ko au lā e lea atu kia te koutou tautai fou—ka kitea e koutou he fonu, he ulugaika, he hakulā—tiaki—auā ni otigātagata.

look to your heaven for blessings on those who who sit in the canoe sterns. Things of the sea. A season of ruvettus, a season of wahoo—please, I have cut the list of things short. But in the old days they went through a whole list of fish—for blessings. A season of waaaaahoo! A season of skiiiiipjack! The skipjack we have caught recently, because they have been long gone. I look to your heaven. The reef. A season of ulaaaafi!9 A season of laeeea! A season of patuuuuki! A season of kakakaaaa! A season of hagahagatteeeea! A season of talaaau! A season of manooooko! May God bless you all. When we go, wherever any of us goes, think about these things.

Turning now to your forests. A season of fuifaaala! A season of huuuuua! A season of uuuto! A season of healauniiiiiu! A season of makaaaaave! A season of tauuuume! May God bless you all.

Good. This present fishing, the fishing that concerns us now—for skipjack—we don’t yet know whether it will continue until the days of the ō 10 and we still have the skipjack. I give you my advice, be respectful on the ocean. Courtesy is the best thing—the respect of each one for the other—each for the other. Let your hands be open at sea, and do not be close-fisted. If you are open-handed at sea, you will be renowned for it. But if you are close-fisted, you will have no renown.

There are two sacred fish of the sea: the turtle and the billfish. The ways of the turtle and the billfish are also different. Let me tell you novice tautai—if you see a turtle, a pair of them mating, or a billfish—leave them alone—because they are the death of men.
Only when there are a lot of canoes around will you be able to catch your turtle. The noosing line—the noosing line is not coiled—you may remember the story of our brother, the old man who has passed away.11 The line was coiled, coiled in the hand; there were three in the crew; they swam, and a buoy was fastened to the line. The line [should be] eight fathoms; it is bad if it is too long—the turtle is able to stay deep; but if it is short the turtle is overcome.

Marlin, if you go for them—if you have the guts—drag the line; the line should not be coiled. Because when you come to the fish—drop [the coil of line]—you’re lost [tangled in the coil]. Marlin—brave and confident man can noose a marlin. He must know how. Marlin, the noosing line for them is eight fathoms. It is not long for marlin. If the line...there, you see a marlin! The handling of the baitfish is different. A flying fish or a skipjack is tied to a pole, and the fisherman sits like this. The noose is tied to a flying fish and the baitfish is dragged [toward the noose], and there you are getting ready, because the marlin’s ways are different from those of the wahoo, which enters [the noose] well down. But the marlin is attracted only to the baitfish. It is not like the wahoo, the wahoo that enters the noose well down in the water. The swordfish—snapped! [i.e. the line attaching the baitfish to the noose]. It [the noose] is not jerked. If it is jerked, everyone in the crew is wiped out [into the sea]. When the fish enters give the line only a small, gentle pull. The canoe! Turn it in the direction towards which the fish is going, because if you are slow in turning it—the outrigger! Capsized! But turn the canoe, straighten it in the direction the fish is going.
Hāloa ia tautai, tautai fātoa nofo mulivaka. E—ke alofa o te Atua ke fākamanuia mai koutou, tautout olo ki te moana, manuia mo tātou—ia—te Atua fākasoaga o hō tātou manuia, ke manuia lava ia toaina, manuia foki te kau haofai—ia—manuia foki lava tefai kau kumete.

Poor *tautai*, *tautai* sitting for the first time in the canoe stern. Look—may God bless you and your going to sea for the benefit of the whole village—yes—God will provide our share of his blessings, blessed be the elders, and blessed also be the initiates—those who are having their *kau kumete*.

*Simeona Setu*

Huhuga a te Feagaiga, huhuga a te Faipule, Pulenü, Toeaina. Kae tū atu au nei ke fai atu hoku manatu, e vē ko nā muna iēnei kua fai atu e te toaina, muna fakapuke e ā te tamana.

Your honour the pastor, your honour the *Faipule*, *Pulenü*, and elders. I stand before you to say my thoughts, rather like the ideas of the previous elder—a father’s ideas handed on.

Ko au nae nofo liu i toku tamana. Te lūlū—nā he hōna faia te lūlū. Te taeao pō, tolu hefulu gafa—fakahnoga a te tamana. E vē ake te lā, ono hefulu gafa; tū tonu, lau. E tolu ia tukulaga; tahi tino hōhō ki lalo e hakili pe ifēa te īka. Tahi tukulaga a te tino e nofo I luga, tahi tukulaga a te tino e hōhō ki luga, hakili ai ā lā pe ko ai te tino e lōgona ai, kave loa ki ei nā tukulaga. Tēnā, te lūlū.

I sat in the bailer’s position in my father’s canoe. The *lūlū*—don’t make a mess of the *lūlū*. Early in the morning, thirty fathoms—as my father told me. When the sun is so high, sixty fathoms, at midday, a hundred fathoms. Put three lines at different depths, one right down deep seeking where the fish are, one a bit further up, and another still further up, seeking who will get a bite, and then set all the lines at that depth. There! That’s the *lūlū*.

Ia. Koutou, kua tofu ma te tipa pāla—nā kupu fākakuku nī? Ko au e nofo liu. E koutou iloa te taua o te ane fakatau. Lea mai toku tamana, te ane fakatau e he hōna faia, e togi lava te ane fakatau feagai tonu ma te ulu kiato. E togi ki e i te ane, ane fakatau. Lea mai lā koutou, i he ā? Te ane o te kupega e i e i, e tatao tau kupega, hau loa te pāla, kai te ane te, oho mai loa ki te ane o te kupega. Kae hōvē ia ko koutou e togi ki kō, togi ki kō te ane fakatau—hēai. Kupu fākakuku nī?

Now. All of you have been noosing wahoo—some words of instruction, OK? I am sitting in the bailer’s position. You know how to throw the *ane fakatau*. My father told me that the *ane fakatau* must not be dealt with carelessly, it must be thrown directly at the head of the crosspiece of the outrigger boom. That’s where the *ane fakatau* is thrown. Why? you say. The bait for the noose is in place where the noose is set down, the wahoo comes, eats the *ane fakatau*, and is then on its way to the noose bait. But I suppose you people throw the *ane fakatau* just here and there—no. Words of advice, eh?

Nê mea uma iêna e fâfao i loto i he tuluma. Ko au e lea atu ko toku tamana, he tuluma lahi, e i loto nê uka hi fâpuku, hi ono, nê matau hi humu, na matau hi fâpuku. Fano lâ ko e moana. E hêai ni atu, nofo loa koe, hêa ta te fêao kä fai—e kave ki o latou kâiga? He áa te tautai—a te kâiga, hêa te mea a te kâiga ka maua mai e au? Nofo loa koe. Ko au ka fano hi fâpuku, e i ai nê matau. Ko au ka fano oî kave te afo, e i ei nê matau. Ko au ka fano oî kave te matau lûlû, ko au kâ fano hi humu, e i ei na kafilo hi humu i loto i te tuluma. Hô he faiva, fâfao ki loto i te tuluma; e kino mai te faiva te, kae e i ei te faiva e maua ai tau ika. Te te faiga o nê faiva.

The ane fakatau is always thrown in line with the cross beam where the tautai sits, then the noose is laid down. The wahoo comes, takes the ane fakatau and then takes the noose bait—strike. Do not overdo it, the arm simply goes like this, that’s all. How, then, is the wahoo caught? Ask me! When you jerk the noose line, the noose is like this, the tail of the fish is then caught in the noose. The noose itself is two fathoms. A question which I asked was how the wahoo gets caught when the noose is so large. The technique is that the line is pulled only when the wahoo has entered the noose, and the tail is caught in the noose. And another thing, hâloa! It is not just because of the skipjack that you are undergoing your kau kumete. It is things such as, do you know how to prepare skipjack lures. Do you know how to lash the alaalaloa? Do you know how to catch fâpuku? Do you know how to catch palu? Do you know makomako? Do you know the part of the sea where the ono are? Do you know how to catch humu?

All the gear for this is put into a tuluma. I tell you, my father had a large tuluma, and in it were lines for both fâpuku and ono, hooks for humu, hooks for fâpuku. The when you go to sea and there are no skipjack, you sit and think what can the crew do—to take to their families? What about you as tautai of the family, what will the family get from me? You sit [and think]. I shall go and use the afo, there are hooks for it. I shall go and use the lûlû hooks, I shall go and catch humu, there are humu hooks in the tuluma. Put all sorts of fishing gear in your tuluma, so if one sort of fishing is no good, there are other kinds where you can catch fish. That’s the way you should fish.

Savini Mika
Toku leo e fai atu e vē ko te kupu a Himeona. Te ane fakatau; ko te ane fakatau, e hē tukua ki ei, kae togi fakahihipa ki kō.

Simeona Setu
Ni muna foki ni?

Savini Mika
E hau te ika e inu mai ki te ane, fāliu, fāliu loa ki loto i te kupega. Ka ko te fano ki kō, e hihipa te ika, e fano loa te ika i ana fanoga. E vē ko manatu o te toeaina. Ka ko te mea e iei, ko te ane na hē tuku maia—e kē iloa e saoloto ai koe. Ko te pāla e vē ko nā pulufana—te pāla—kafai e lata mai te kupega e lata mai te ane fakatau. Tuku mamo ke kē kitea atu te hau a te pāla, fātoā tipi ai. Ka ko te—ko te ane—ko te ane o te kupega e fakahuaefa, ko te ane poapoa,—te ane fakatau fakataigole aua kua hahamu te pāla. Tēnei toku leo e fai ki—toeaina nei.

Simeona Setu
Mālō. E vē lā ko te leo o te toeaina nei ki te ane poapoa ni? E ihi lua te io atu o te ane poapoa, ka ko te ane o te kupega e hē ihiluaiga (Savini: Fai kātoa) Auā lā te ane poapoa, ia, kati mai te mea tē, kati te mea tē, nā he fai umagia auā e vave uma, kae ihi lua te io atu. Fai atu, na faiga, ni?

As I mentioned to the elder, respect one another at sea. Have compassion for one another in your fishing. When you have bait, share it with the other canoes, because it might be your day today, but another person’s on another day. Have compassion for one another, young men. Those are my small words that I stood up to say, the things I was hand fed with, I now present to you. Blessings on you all.

My words concerning what Himeona has said. About the ane fakatau, the ane fakatau is not put there, but is thrown at an angle over there.

Special expertise, eh?

The fish comes and takes the ane [fakatau], then turns, turns straight into the noose. But when it [the ane fakatau], the fish is at an angle, and goes directly on its way. As for what the elder has just said…But the problem is, do not put the ane fakatau too close—you know you will miss. The wahoo is like a bullet—the wahoo—if the noose is too close to the ane fakatau. Place the ane fakatau at a distance so you can see the wahoo coming, and you can noose it. About the noose bait—it should be large, and the ane fakatau small because the wahoo has tasted and smelled the food. Those are my words to the elder here [Simeona].

Well said. Now, about what the elder was saying about the ane poapoa, eh. The back steak of a skipjack is cut in two for the ane poapoa, but the noose bait is not. (Havini: Use the whole lot). Because with the ane poapoa, you bite off a piece, then another piece, so do not use whole
Iona Lapana

E fai nōfoi nei lava na toeaina kae kikila atu lava ki to tātou lā kua fanaifo, kua pō. Ona kua tautalagia nā faiva iēna. Ko taku kupu moni e lea atu au, ienei kua fai atu e vē ni fāfanua i outou taliga i te fālogo mai ki ei. Kua kikila foki koutou ki toutou faiva nā mea mae fai nei, ko te hīga o atu, kua mātama koutou kou e ki e. Ia, ka ko taku kupu moni e lea atu au, tofotofotó lā. Kua koutou fakalogogia ma kikilagia i moana, te tīno tē ma ana hī atu, ma te tīno tē ma ana hī atu, vē foki ko te faiva tēnā kua hula atu, ko te tipa pāla.

Let me tell you, nobody can get anything for nothing. We have to get ourselves together, get going, you will learn simply by doing. True, words are spoken, as mine are now, like a map for you to look at. But go, young men who have not been to sea, go as crew for tautai so you can see how the different kinds of fishing are done. And, let me stress, this wahoo noosing, go and try it. There are certain areas of the sea where the wahoo come right to the surface, different areas according the current. Even though there might be a canoe perhaps as far away as Peleila’s house, and you are fishing here, and you see him stand again and again to noose, but cannot catch a fish. But where you are, you catch one, another one and then another one. It is because of the different sets of the currents. The current is good where you are.

I have tried it. Words should not be held back, why hold advice back? You are weary with caring for our village and

Ma te tahi mea, te kupu a te toeaina, tamana o Havini. Fai tonu, ko au kua tofotofotó au ki e. E hē toe taofiofia ni kupu, e taofī ke a? Ko koutou kua fitatā i te tauhiga o tō tātou fenua ma ā tātou pieces because it will soon be used up, but instead use half pieces. I simply mention this, the way it is done.

The elders are slow, yet we see that the sun is going down and it will soon be dark. Because these kinds of fishing have been talked about. I speak to you truthfully, these words that have been spoken have been put into your ears like maps. You have listened to all that has been mentioned, the fishing for skipjack you have all seen done. I tell you honestly, try them out. You have heard about them, and seen at sea this man and his skipjack fishing, that man and his skipjack fishing, as well as that other kind of fishing that was mentioned, noosing wahoo.

Fanatu ia Fala i tō ma aho na olo ai ki māua. Ka ko hēki oho te lā, fanatu kua lua aku pāla i lugā ka ko hē ki oho te lā. Tēnā, e ala vēnā. Ko te poa—e hē ko te poa—e apati ki lalo, ko te ulu e apati ki te nofoa a nofo ai koe. E hē apati mamoa. E kē kitea i fo loa te mea tēnā—kē kitea i fo—he pāla. Io, oi e lea mai lā, fakalulu koi pōpō.

Ka tipa, taofi tū vē mai lava te pāla ko te fakaika, tā. Nā he toe tukua. E mau loa lava, taofi tū. He fakalūlū tena o pāla. E vē lā ko taku kupu, olo ake faiakia. E maua to malamalama i au gāioioiga i ō faiava e fai, e vē lava ko te poto e maua e koe ma au talatalaiga e fai i gauta i te mātūtū o te kelekele. Hō he faiva e fai e maua ai tō malamalama. Ia, ko koutou koi tutupu ake, nā täulelea kua nofo muli vaka nei, fai nā faiva. Ka nā he fakatamala. Ko te ika fōki he ika fakama takutaku te pāla—e oho ki luga o te vaka. Ia, na popoki taku pāla luga o te tololutuama—he vaka ō mātou ma te fatfeau ko Uale. Na gahae te potu o te kie o te faifeau; na lave ki te ave o te te pala. Oi tū lava au, kua nofo mai i luga, tago atu au ki te pāla oi taofi i luga o te our children. He [Havini’s father] said to me, sink the uli20 very early in the morning. You have seen that at dawn there is luminescence, long before the sun comes up. Very very tiny, when you move your paddle you can see this luminescence. When you see that it is a fish. You can’t see the wahoo, but you see the luminescence. Honestly, I have tried it and have proved the old man’s words. I also sometimes went fishing with him and have proved the old man’s words.

One day Fala and I went fishing, each with our own crews. He came up in his canoe before the sun was up and I already had two wahoo in my canoe—before the sun was up. That was how I did it. The bait pieces—not the bait pieces—are sent down, and the baitfish is dropped right where you are sitting. It is not thrown far away. Then you will see, see below you, this luminescence—a wahoo. They say, fakalūlū while it is still dark.

When you have noosed a fish, hold it close behind the stern. Don’t let it run. Once it is caught, hang on tight. That is fakalūlū of wahoo. As I said, go and try it. You will get your knowledge of fishing as you do it, just like the knowledge you get of carving from doing it on dry land. You get experience from any kind of fishing.

Indeed, you who are still developing, you who are sitting in the stern, do all sorts of fishing. But do be careful. The wahoo is a dangerous fish—it can jump onto the canoe. I once caught one on the tololutuama21—a canoe of ours with the pastor Uale. The pastor had the end of his lavalava torn; struck by the wahoo’s tail. I was standing, and I grabbed the wahoo and held it on the tololutuama. Grabbed

It by hand. I was dragging the baitfish in—here’s another thing, pity those who sit in the bilge next to the tautai. Tautai, take care of your crew. Get somebody who is familiar with fishing to throw your ulu. Do not pull the ulu toward you. Because you are standing. Pull it, pull it and when it is close pull it between you and the tautai or on the other side. If the wahoo leaps from the water, it does not dodge—you will be hurt. That’s the way it was with the wahoo in my story. When I remembered I had already pulled the ulu between myself and the pastor. The surface of the sea exploded. The wahoo leapt, grabbed the flying fish and its tail cut the lavalava of the pastor. I was just in time to catch it on the tolutoluama. Don’t be careless. Do the fishing, but be mindful of the children in the canoe. Take care of the crew because they have had no experience.

Yes, those are various kinds of fishing. As for skipjack, I was never much good at that fishing. But do it so that you bring the fish in. Why hurry and mess it up? Drag it in gently and make sure of getting it.

Yes, those are my few brief words, yet time has gone by while you have been listening to the thoughts and ideas that the elders have told you young men about. You have fished—haven’t you; you have fished, you have fished for wahoo on hooks, noosed wahoo and fished for skipjack. But there is no fishing that cannot be improved. It depends on your judgement, your ideas and your thoughts, whether you return safely with your crew, and with a catch commensurate with the efforts involved. May the Lord help us. Think of what I have told you of my thoughts as like maps for you to examine. But go and try them out. You
Two Tokelau Fishing Texts

E manuia lava i tō taumafai ma tō filigā i au faiga e fai i tō faiva. Ia, ko toku leo laitiiti tēnā e toe fakaopoopo atu. Ke manuia lava...

Kolo Elisala
... e hē vaohia; hau pe ni fehili manunā outou tamana iēnei.

Itieli Pereira
Kua uma nā kupu o tō tātou taimi nei. Tātou tuli taimi auā e kino foki te mea tēnā e veia ona kau mai. Tēnā kua fakalogo koutou ki nā leo o nā toeaina, ko ki lātou lava iēnā, fai atu, e veia ona kikila ki tātou mai mua, te gahologa o ō tātou tupuaga. Na tāu matua lava e fai atu na—ia tēnā kua uma. E kō iloa ko ona pō nei kua lahi foki te mālamalama kua kehe, he mālamalama fou kua maua e koutou e maua ai lava te mafua a te tautai. Kae vē ko nā fakaeteetega a te tautai lava ia ki tona fāoa, na ika o te moana—ia—ko tē lava e veia ona fakaalia i te aluma o nā mea vēnei ā tātou. E tatau lā lava ona tauhi ki ei ma mataala ki ei koutou ko nofo muli vaka.

Ma te tahi lā e vē ona hula atu i te toeaina—i te moana, i te olo ki te moana. Io, ko mea fou uma, kua tofū fakalogo uma ki tātou ki ei. Ko ona pō nei kua kehe, kaifufū i te moana o te tautai. Kua fakalogo pea ki koutou ki ei.

Fai mai te tala a tahi tautai, toeaina, vaka fā ki lātou na fano ki te akau. Ko te hahave, ko te fotugaika, e hēai lele he ika e vē vē ake. Olo ai ki lātou kale te tau manu; kave, kave, kave, kave ki lātou. Te vaka tolu, hē logona. Fanake te vakāmuli, lōgona.

may have good fortune in your trials and perserverance in whatever you do in your fishing. May we be blessed....

...there are no restrictions; ask any questions, remembering that these here are your fathers.

The speeches are over for now. We are short of time, and those were stupid things that were said. There, you have heard the elders speak; they are the ones, as we know, from long ago, from our ancestors. The oldest ones are those who say [incomplete: words of the day?] and there, they have finished. I know that nowadays there is a lot of different knowledge, new knowledge acquired through which a fisherman can get their catches. But as for the care of the tautai for his crew [against] fish of the sea—there, it is as explained to you on all our occasions such as this. We should all remember them, and you at the canoe sterns should be careful.

And another thing that was mentioned by the elders—at sea, on your going out there. Yes there are new things, and we have all heard them. Things are different nowadays, tautai are stingy at sea. We have all heard about it.

One old fisherman told us a story about four canoes that went to the leeward fishing grounds. They were using flying fish as the ulu for noosing wahoo, but no wahoo were coming up. So they went after a school of skipjack, paddling for a long way. The first three canoes didn’t catch any, but then the last canoe came and caught some.
Lögona lava tēnā a te vakāmuli, fano ki gāuta tautau ifo ai. Fanake te vakāmua ki ei—e aihi ki ei ke hēai he poaopo—heiäi. Fanaifo te vaka tēnā kale te taumanu, kave, kave, kave, kave kua toe fanake tahi vaka, fanake foki ki ei kave, kave, kave, kave—heiäi. E hēki iei lava he mea. Ko te foki ifo o te vaka tēnā ki te vaka lua tēnā i gātai—o latou kua hau te tulaga nā tulaga. Hi atu! E tau atu ia e faikaifo atu ia kae fakaauake; fanake, to ake, kae nofo mai ia. E lilii ifo tēnā ka ko te vaka tēnei i gāuta kua fanaifo. Tēnei e hau (fai) mai tana tulaga, e hēki pā ifo kae kala te te tau tē ai e te vaka lua i gaua „Lölö!“; e hēki tukua foki e ia. Na lölō ifo lava tona kofe, vē ifo lava.

As soon as the last canoe had caught some it went and anchored inshore. The first canoe went up to him and asked for some bait—but no. So this canoe went back to chase the skipjack school, and was joined by another of the canoes that had no bait—but still no luck. There was nothing. Then when the third canoe with no bait was on its way to join them they started catching skipjack. Lots of skipjack! The three canoes were all bringing in skipjack and the fourth canoe saw what was happening and came out to join the others. When the first three canoes saw that this canoe was nearing them, the first two tautai yelled Lölö! The third tautai did not hesitate. As soon as he dipped his rod into the sea the school disappeared.

There is no other explanation for this but the lack of generosity of the canoe that first caught a skipjack. So they repaid him by doing that. As such as this happened, the canoe turned toward land and sailed home. But the other canoes stayed and they laughed about the incident. That was the main reason, as we have heard and we understand. The word these days is that some people with bait still will not give it away to others who know that they have bait. Now, new tautai, I have told you just as the elders have—if you are open-handed at sea, your canoe will be blessed.

Now concerning our time—because we are trying to catch up. I know what the elders have said is enough, so let us get down to the food. And then the elders will get on with other business afterwards, because some of us have to go across to the other island, and it is getting late. But as for us who live here—well, let this elder, the pulenuku, bring the elders’ gifts—which will not, so he says, be
Simeona Setu
Fakamolemole atu tu tautai kafai ti tâtou e tauhihi ti te mea maua, pai te mea mai mua. Ka hele hau atu i moana, pe he atu, pe he moou, pe he â—ko te ivi e â te foemua, nâ he tino e tago ki te ivi, e â te foemua te ivi. Ko te piho e â te tautai. E pâ mai loa te vaka ki te matâfaga faanafo te tamaiti a te tautai—i a, têna tau piho. Ka nâ he fakagaoa te ivi auâ e â te foemua. Te faiga ia a tåtou mai mua—e â te foemua te ivi. Ko te piho e â te tautai. Kae ota lâ e te fâoa te—nâ io atu. Please—tautai, if we want to keep the old ways, practice them. When you cut open a skipjack at sea, a skipjack or any other sort of fish, the backbone is for the bow paddler, no-one else gets the backbone, it is for the bow paddler. The head goes to the tautai. As soon as the canoe gets back to shore, when the tautai’s child comes down, give him the head—here, there’s your head. Don’t touch the backbone because it goes to the bow paddler. That’s our way from the old days, the backbone for the bow paddler. The head for the tautai. While the crew eats the flesh raw at sea.

Itieli Pereira
Ko te tai-ika e vê ko te â. Ia kae kua kikila koulua ki kope o tautai—te hêai ni â lâtou pâ—te kino foki o â latou pâ. Ia, atonu lava ko koutuâ—e vê ko koe, e fanatu fano ki kô, fano ki kô, fano ki kô. Hôvê lava koe e tau ake koe ki ni mea vênâ—ni tifa—i nà mea e fano koe ki ei—ki nâ fenua e fano koe ki ei. E talohaga atu lâ na toea ina nei kia te koulua. Kafai lava e tau ake i oulu anala—i ni mea e havavali ai koulua—pe olo koulua ki he mea—pe ko fea te itu o te lalalagi, kaue tau ake lava taulua kikila ke te mea e takua ko te tifa, ni pâ, ni mea vênâ—ni maga—he una. Hô he mea lava e fano koe ki ei—pe fano ki Niuhila pe ko fea, kaue kitea ai he mea vênâ, ke kê manatua loa te tai-atu na fai i What can a flush of skipjack be compared to? Yes, you2 have seen the equipment of the tautai. They have no lures, and what they have are of poor quality. Maybe you when you leave you go here, you go there. Perhaps you will run into things like these—pearlshell—in the places that you go to—in the different countries you visit. These elders have a request to make of you. When you see any in your travels in any part of the world, when your gaze lights upon something called pearlshell, lures or things like that, skipjack hooks or turtle shell. Anywhere you go, whether New Zealand or anywhere else, and you see anything like that, remember the skipjack flush at Fakaofo, and how
Fakaofo; ka ko nā pā ma na maga a tautai o Fakaof, te kino. Ke kikila ake koutou ki eie—ke koutou manatua vave lava—fiafi ake lava ki he mea—ia—fakatuatuhi mai ai ki Fakaof—Tā mātou mea alofa tēnā mo tautai o Fakaofo mo nā hīga atu a lātou." Ia, ko te talohaga tēnā kua fakapā atu. Kae fakamoemoe lava ki mātou—e he vēake e hē maua. Ia, manuia.

At this point women served everyone present their food on individual platters, with the novices who were sitting on mats just outside the meeting house getting especially generous helpings. The village mayor passed them a small basket of lures and unworked pearl shells, apologising for their poor quality and asking the eldest among them to divide them among the group. Several young men were dispatched to one of the canoe slips to carry up a small canoe and set it on the ground close to novices. A small and rather frail elder then stood in the canoe’s stern with a simple pole set up with a dry coconut to represent a hooked skipjack, and proceeded to demonstrate the various named ways of bringing a fish in to land in the canoe at his feet. This was watched with particular interest because the elder (who was a particularly shy and retiring man and had not contributed in any way to the speeches) had been an expert fisherman in his younger days.

TEXT 2. From an audiotape made by Peato Perez in Auckland, 1977

Peato Perez (1904-1980) was an accomplished tautai, one of the few Fakaof men who had ever caught over 100 skipjack (in his case, 107) in a single tulaga ‘standing’. His father, born on the neighbouring atoll of Nukunonu, was the son of a Portuguese trader on that island and his mother the daughter of one of the first Catholic converts in Fakaof. After training in Samoa he spent from 1928 until 1945 as a catechist in Fakaofo, before being transferred to Nukunonu. He migrated to New Zealand in 1968 to join his children, who were already established in Wellington. Peato spent several weeks at the University of Auckland during 1977, regaling my colleague Judith Huntsman and me with his accounts of Tokelau history. He had already written fairly extensively on this history, using an old typewriter that had been given to him years before, and had passed copies of these texts on to us. After listening a couple of times to the audiotapes which are the basis of Text 1 above, he wrote up a brief outline of a speech suitable for a kaukumete, asked for a tape recorder and then sat down and recorded it all without any audience. He then passed the tapes on to us to use as we pleased.
I am Peato Perez, and I am speaking at the University of Auckland on the twenty sixth of August, nineteen seventy seven.

I give my sincere respects to tautai, for the matter I am going to talk about. It concerns the seas beyond the reefs. We have a proverbial saying which goes as follows, ‘It is only to his real son that a father speaks truthfully.’ Because in our old customs these matters were hidden and not revealed. They were certainly not spoken about indiscriminately. Matters concerning fishing were told only to true sons; although daughters were told matters concerning women. Another familiar saying is that a tautai is not [necessarily] a clever man or a strong man. He was, however, said to be, ‘A man skilled at dealing with difficulties with fish, hakulā, turtle or other dangerous fish.’

The first thing to be said is that if you meet with such a difficulty, you should first of all control your feelings and force yourself to be calm. If you are afraid, scared, you know well enough, and will no longer be sure of what should be done. When you meet with such things, the decision is up to you, the tautai as to whether to take action or leave it alone. Our saying is that if you, the tautai, do decide to go ahead, whether it be with capturing mating turtles, or dealing with a school of hakulā or other dangerous fish, that decision is yours alone, and you should not leave it up a member of the crew. You alone, as the tautai, must make it. It is most ugly if one of the crew were to be killed, while you, the tautai, come safely home to shore. It is much better that the tautai should die while the crew all return to shore.
With mating turtles, the decision rests entirely with you. With *hakulā*, the decision is yours. And when you come across a fish which threatens to damage the canoe, the canoe must not just drift, because if the canoe is paddled there is nothing that the fish can do. But if you allow the canoe to just drift the fish will bite the outrigger float and shake it and shake it until the canoe is disabled. That is a disaster which happened to some canoes that I know of. Their outrigger floats were completely destroyed, and all through this mistake.

If you have fish on board your canoe when a fish like that appears, then feed it bits of fish. Throw the bits well out while you order the crew to paddle quickly toward the shore. If, though, you have nothing like that on board, but have a water bottle, then pour out the water until the bottle is half full and throw it into the sea. The fish will go for it. It will attack it and the bottle will jump up; attack, and the bottle will bounce up again. The fish won’t get it, but will keep attacking until perhaps the canoe is close to shore.

I shall speak of things about this fish called skipjack. There are many other matters, but let us leave them until another day and I will talk about them then. But I shall turn my attention today to talking about this fish called skipjack.

My words here are concerned with two kinds of fish, skipjack and wahoo. These fish are spoken of as *tākina*, ‘shy, easily led away.’ If the first skipjack causes a *tamate*, or gets off the hook, it means that the whole shoal becomes shy, because these fish are *tākina*. It is the same with wahoo. The noose line must not break. A noose line is long, as we well know, and when

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Ko te ulugāfonu, kua ia te koe lava te tonu. Ko he hakulā, e ia te koe lava te tonu. Kae kafai koe e fetaui ma he ika e vē ka kāmata ona hāuā ki te vaka, te vaka nāhe fakaopeapea, kaе hālo te vaka, e hēai ai he mea a te ika e mafai. Kae kafai e fakaopeope e koe te vaka, e hau te ika oи kati te ama, kati te mea, oи lue, lue etc. kave, kave lava oи fāfāia. Ko tēnā te fakalavelave na tupu ki ni iētahi vaka na kō iлoagia. Na matuā malepe te ama. Ko te mea lā ko te hehē tēnā.

Kafai foki e i luga ni ika i tō vaka kae hula he ika vēnā, oи poapoa. Toli mamao kae fakatonu te fāoа ke keu te vaka ki gāuta. Kafai lā e hēai he mea vēnā ia te koe kae e i eи faguvaи, līligi te faguvaи ke afa oи togi ki te tai. Ko te ika lā kуa fano ki eи. E tāmafua ake, oи fiti te fagu ki luga. E tāmafua, oи fiti te fagu ki luga E hē iа maуa lele. E fai peя tēnā mea, kae ko tō vaka hōvē kуa lata ki gāuta.

Ko au ka tautala atu ki nā mea tau ki te ika tēnei ko te atu. E lahi foki ieitahi mea, kae tuku mua ki te tahi аho ои toe tautala atu аi аu. Kae ko au ka fakahaga аtu аu lava i te aho nei ke tautala atu аi аu ki nā mea tau ki te ika tenei ko atu.

E lua lava iа ika e fai ki ei te kupu tēnei, ko atu ma pāla. Ko nā ika iēnei e takua vēia ni ika e tākina. Ko tona uiga, kāfai ko nā atu mua e fai tamate, pe fai tiaki, ko tona uiga kua fakahetonuga loa te taumanu i te taimi tēnā; аuа ko te ika e tākina. E vēnā foki iа pāla. Ko te kupega lava nā motu. E motu loa lava he kupega, kua ki tātou iloa, ko te fanatuga lava o te

Antony Hooper

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ika tēnā kua motu ki ei te kupega, ko tona uiga ko te fotugāika foki kua tākina.

Kāfai koe kua tonu i te afiafi nei ko koe e fano e ālo taeao, ko te mea muamua lava e tatau ona kē faia i te afiafi tēnā, ko koe ke kai ke mākona lelei lava. Ke lava tau meakai i te ōmoe auā koe e fano o i ālo taeao. Kāfai e lava tau meakai i te pō, e fano te aho kātoa e hē kē lagona he fiakai, kaē nā ko te fono. Ko te mea ia e kē lagonagia i te aho e ālo ai koe, ka ko he fiakai, e hē ke lagona, pe kāfai lava e lava tau meakai. Kae kāfai foki e hē lava tau meakai, ko tona uiga, kā lahi lele nā mea ka tutupu mai kia te koe, Pe he kunefoea, ia, kua tupu mai loa ma te fakalavelave, e hē kē toe mafāiā he mea. E mafāiā foki ia te koe ona kakailoa atu ki tau āfoa nā kupu lava īnei. ‘Ko ki tātou e ēlo e ēlo taeao. Kae fakalelei, ke lava tau meakai i te afiafi i te ōmoe’. Kāfai e tutuha uma koe ma te āfoa i nā faiga īnei, e aunoa koe ma he fakalavelave e kē mauagia i te taimi tēnā; auā ka hē lava foki te meakai a te āfoa i o lātou ōmoe, ko tona uiga, kafai e mataloa te kalega o atu, ko tona uiga, ka tutupu mai ai te mea tēnā e takua ko te kunefoea.

I am certain that this remedy is better than all others for such exhaustion. Do not crave a drink so much that you drink sea water. Do not crave sea water if there is no fresh water. Do not crave sea water because it will make you still weaker and incapable of doing anything. This remedy, I am sure, is the very best for exhaustion. Make the person jump overboard and swim in the sea. His former strength will return. But if you mistakenly tell him to drink sea water that will cause trouble and there will be nothing more that you can do for him. This alone is the cure to apply; make the person who is kunefoea jump in the sea and swim. His desire to drink
lava tona tino vaivai. Ka kē kiteagia kua mālohi o i lea ki ei ke fanake ki luga i te vaka. Kafai foki lava e kē kitea atu e toe tupu mai te mea tēnā o i toe fakaoho ki te tai ke kaukau ai. Ko to tagafiti tēnā, he mea kua kō maultino.

I have already told you on another of my tapes that it is no use entering a shoal in the darkness, but better to wait until the sun comes up, and then enter.

When you see that he is strong again tell him to come again onto the canoe. If then you see that thing coming over him again, make him jump into the sea and swim once more. That is the remedy, and it is matter that I am sure about.

Kua uma foki ona tautala atu ai au i te tahi lipine a aku. Ko atu e he agā lava te ino pōpō ka e tuku lava ke nofo mai te lā, fatoa ino ai.

I have already told you on another of my tapes that it is no use entering a shoal in the darkness, but better to wait until the sun comes up, and then enter.

Kafai e ino na vaka alo, kua uma foki lava ona taku atu. Ko te tino matua lava, ko ia lava te fano, e ia inoagia te taumanu. Ona lava ko te itū tēnei, e hē agā ona ino e he tamaiti, he tino e hē iloa hī atu, e hēki lava foki tona mālamalama. Kafai e faiiaki, faiiaki ma faiamate, faiamate; ko te mouatuga lava tēnā o atu e hē toe lalaga i te aho kātoa. Ko te mea ia e lelei ai ke tuku ke ino e he tautai kua iloa. He tautai e iloa faifai mālie ma fai ke maua, kaʻe hē hōna faia auā e kino nā ia atu e fakahētonuga i te aho tēnā.

When the canoes enter a shoal, as I have already told you, it is the eldest man, and only he, who goes and enters the shoal. Only for this reason, that it is no use for a child to enter the shoal, or a person who does not know skipjack fishing, and who doesn’t have sufficient knowledge. If he allows the fish to throw the hook repeatedly, and then fall back into the water, that will mean the skipjack stop biting and then not shoal again for the rest of the day. That is why it is better to leave it to a knowledgeable tautai to enter the shoal. A tautai who knows how to do things calmly and in a way that allows catches to be made, and is not careless, since that is bad, and makes the skipjack uncertain on that day.

Kafai e ala mai te taumanu i te taeao e fanake ki gāuta e fakavaegalua, e i e i ta tātou kupu veia, ‘E fanaifo te vaka e fanifo ki te vailālua.’ Ko tona uiga, fanaifo ki te vā. Ia koe nā fano ki he itū pe fano koe ki te tahi itū auā e fano fano lava o i mou te tahi itū, kaʻe lalaga te tahi itū. Ko tona uiga, ko koe e lōgona ake nā vaka kaʻe ko koe e mamo lele.

When the shoal forms in the morning and comes shoreward in two parts, we say ‘When the canoe comes, it comes to the vailālua’, which means, comes to the gap. Don’t you go to one side or the other, because in due course one side will stop biting while the other is still rising. Which means that other canoes will be catching fish while you are far away.

Ko te uiga o te fai mai o te laga tēnā a atu e hau mai gātai, ko tona uiga, ko te mafua e malepe. E hau malepe ki gāuta te mafua.

The meaning of that sort of rise of skipjack coming in from offshore; it means that the baitfish have divided. The baitfish are...
Ko te pogai tēnā e vēnā ai, e hau-kogalua, pe hau-kogatolu ki gāuta. Ke kē manatua e koe te tautai, ko te mafua e malepe; kae i ei lava te taimi e fakatalitali ai koe ki ei e maopo ai te mafua. Na mēake e lōgona mai te fuāvaka, kae ko koe e mamo lele. Kae kafai e ala mai ia atu i te taea ma fanake ki gāuta e laga tutuku, ke kē iloagia, ko te itūkaiga inafo tēnā e hī. E hī te itūkaiga inafo tēnā pe kafai lava koe e lototele.


That is the laga tutuku. You should remember, the baitfish are scattered. With a laga tutuku, they appear first here and then there. Don’t worry greatly about that. Instead the thing you can do is to encourage your crew. There is this saying, ‘Hē nūtia!’ which means ‘Don’t worry, the fish have checked their rise.’ The thing is that one should keep following that kind of shoal. There will come the time of gathering together, when the baitfish are stopped. At that time, you will see the point of your encouragement.

Please, those of you who are listening, recall the word nūtia. It is wrong! This is the correct expression, ‘E hē lotia mea. He ika e mou laga.’ This means that after awhile the baitfish will gather together again. When you reach them the baitfish are rising. That is skipjack!

During the time when there is still a laga tutuku, there is only one thing to say to the crew, ‘Don’t make your paddles shudder [with the exertion],’ meaning ‘Don’t strain, because there is plenty of time.’ That is what you say to encourage the crew, ‘Don’t make your paddles shudder. Go gently with your paddles. The time will come.’
When the baitfish are gathered together, as I told you, the baitfish ‘rise’. (Then, we have all surely heard this, ‘The sea is ripped.’ For it is as though thick new cloth were being ripped. The ripping of the sea sounds like that, something like that.) I have seen this kind of rise twice. You couldn’t hear a voice. You couldn’t hear a conversation. The baitfish cluster round the canoe. While the skipjack rip the sea.

At that time, what the *tautai* does is to inspire the crew. (There is this saying: ‘Let your paddles be firm!’ Which means that the eddies made by the paddles should be continuous. ‘Get there, you! Haul the canoe there! Kikila koutou ki te fulufiluga o te läkau!’ [Look at the log rolling?]) These are the words that the *tautai* says to his crew to strengthen and encourage them. ‘Get me there!’ or ‘Another swell [of the sea] and the canoe will sink [with the catch].’ These words are meant to make the crew glad, because, as you know about the crew, they are all familiar with the skipjack fishing style of the *tautai*. Then, thud, thud, thud, thud, thud—and the canoe sinks.

There are two ways that *tautai* usually do things. When close to the place that the baitfish are rising, one *tautai* will generally throw out his lure while still a distance away. Then, a skipjack bites and the *tautai* stands and brings it in. (Remember this, the *tautai* is not paddling; the man for’ard of him is not paddling, but is dealing with the skipjack that have been caught. Thus your feeling ‘When will I get to the centre of the shoal?’ Because there is a racket at the stern, and you stand and pull a fish in. Again a racket at the stern, and you stand and pull it in. Then you go off again. You sit down but there is a racket at the stern.

Antony Hooper
Ko iētahi tautai i te faiga tēnā, kafai kua
togi mamao tana pā, e tīgā e kai he atu,
e hē tokaga lele ki e iē kē tago ke kaumaia.
E alo lava tana vaka. Ko te tautai poto lā
tēnā. E tīgā e fakaofo mai e nā vaka i te
atu e mau e hē tokaga tele ki e kai kēafu
lava te vaka ki te mea e i e i ia atu. Ko te
mahan to iētahi tauti, e hē togia tana pā.
E fufut lava te vaka ke lata ki te unafi.
Kafai lava kua lata atu ki te unafi, fātoā
togi ai te pā; i te amioga a te tahi itūkaiaga
o tautai. Ko te tofiga lā tēnā o te pā, oī tū
loā ki luga kae kua lea atu ki te fāoa, ‘Nā
he toe hāloa te vaka.’ Ko tana kupu lava
ia, ‘E hē toe hāloa te vaka,’ ko te mea a
te fāoa e fai, kua matamata ki te mea a te
tautai kua faī. E vē ona lea atu ai au ki ta
tātou kupu e vēia, ‘E malua tahi kae gōto
te vaka.’ Ko tona uiga, kua tago te tautai
ki tona faiva.

Pakē, pakē, pakē, pakē, pake—gōto te
vaka. Ko koe kua tū ki luga auā kua āu
tau tulaga. Ko nā mea la iēnei e fa e tako
atu e au. Ko te mea muamua tāpunī tō
gutu. Pupuni te gutu. E hē toe i e hai
poliī e tagi. Pupuni te gutu. Ko te ea pe
ko tau mānava e hē toe hōna fakafoana.
Teia lā, nā he toe i e i le e hai poliī e tagi,
kae fai lava talu galeuga tēnā; fufutī mālie
tau mānava, tukutuku mālie tau mānava.
Ko te taimi e hī mai ai te atu ko te taimi
tēnā e fufutī ai tau mānava, oī taofi. Ko
taimi e fakī ai tau atu oī tukutuku
mālie tau mānava. Ko te taimi tēnā kua
tukutuku mālie mai ai kī fāfo. Nā he hōna

Stand and pull it in. But just remember,
those two are not paddling. When is the
arrival? You think then, when do you
arrive at the centre of the shoal? When
do you get to the fish?

Another tautai in the same situation, if
he has thrown out his lure, it doesn’t
matter if a skipjack takes it, he has no
interest in taking hold and bringing it
in. He just paddles his canoe. That is a
smart tautai. In spite of the signals made
to him from other canoes that he has a
skipjack hooked, he pays no attention,
but just paddles his canoe to where the
shoal is. It is the practice of still other
tautai to not throw out their lures at all,
but to paddle the canoe until it is close to
the centre of the shoal. And only when it
is close is the lure thrown out, is the way
that those tautai do things. Then when he
does throw out the lure, and stands up,
he says to his crew ‘Stop paddling the
canoe.’ Those are his very words, ‘Stop
paddling.’ What the crew does is watch
what the tautai is doing. As I told you,
our saying is ‘One swell and the canoe
swamps [with skipjack]’. That means that
the tautai has begun fishing.

Thud, thud, thud, thud, thud—the canoe
swamps. You stand, because you have
reached your position. I will tell you four
things. Firstly, shut your mouth. Shut
the mouth. No longer whistle a polili.27
Keep the mouth shut. Don’t let your air,
your breath, just go. But thus, no longer
on any account whistle a polili, but just
do that—draw your breath gently and let
your breath out gently. When you haul
your skipjack towards you, at that moment
draw in your breath, and hold it. As you
release your skipjack from the lure, exhale
gently. At that time you let it out gently.
Don’t just let your breath out anyhow. If


Ka hī mai lá te atu, e i ei ta tātou kupu e vēia, ‘E hī mai te atu kaue kua tō te pā.’ He kupu, e hī mai te atu kaue kua tō te pā (kae ko hēki pā mai). E hē vē ake kua tō te pā, e hēai. Ko tona uīga, e puna loa te atu, ko tau mea e fai, pe puku pe lahi te vāega o te pā e hula mai ki fafo. Kua kē iloaagia ai foki tau fakaui kā fai. E lua lava ia mea e mafai ona vave ai koe, ko te fai māua ma tona lua, ko te fakaui va ke vave. Ke manatuva foki e koe nā mea iēnei, ko te atu a hī mai e fakamaga tona gutu. Kafai foki te atu e hau e hē mafai i te pā ona mau i te itū i kō o te atu, e mau lava i te itū nei. Tīgā te pā e tūhī ki te tahi itū o te atu, ko te taimi e hau ai te atu, e kikila atu lava koe, kua mafuli mai te pā o i pito mai ki a te koe. Kua ke iloa ai tau fakaui ka fai ki e. E kō mafaia foki o fakaali atu i taku tautalaga tēnei te fakaui e māhani ai au. Kae vēnei, kafai e kikila atu au ko te atu e hau e lahi te vāega o te you don’t take care about this, I’m telling you, there is a saying of ours, ‘It won’t be long, you won’t have landed ten skipjack and your nose will be snorting [you will be puffing].’ Mark this saying well. I speak of things that I am certain of, and things that I have heard spoken about, and then have gone and tried them out so that I know whether they are any good or not. What I have told you is good.

Let me remind you again. Don’t breathe just any way. Your mouth, shut it. Don’t talk. Keep your mouth shut. Don’t talk any more. Shut your mouth. And I will remand you yet again, draw your breath in gently. Don’t do it carelessly. You breathe in at the time you are swinging in your skipjack. And you let it out gently as you pluck the lure from the fish. There are many people we have heard of who don’t last long before their noses are snorting.

We have a saying about when you swing the skipjack in. ‘The skipjack is pulled in and the lure is free.’ A saying: the skipjack is pulled in and the lure is free (before the fish has reached you). It is not as though the lure is unstuck, not at all. The meaning is that as soon as the skipjack emerges from the surface of the water, what you do is look at the lure, to see whether it has been swallowed or whether most of it is sticking out of the fish’s mouth. By this you know how to free it from the fish’s mouth. There are two things you must quickly decide about, making sure the fish is landed, and dislodging the lure quickly. Remember these points. When the skipjack is coming toward you, its mouth is open. When the skipjack comes, it cannot be that the lure is stuck on that side of the fish, it is stuck on this side. Although the hook may have pierced one side of the skipjack, when it


Ko te taimi tēnei e kai ai te atu kae koi au lava tau tūlaga. E kehekehehā nā tūlaga. E vēnei. Ko te tahi itūkaiga o nā tūlaga, e comes toward you, you look at it and see that the end of the lure is pointed towards you. You know the way to dislodge it. I can reveal in this talk the techniques for dislodging the lure that I am familiar with. As follows: if I see that the skipjack is coming toward me with the greater part of the lure protruding from its mouth, I crook my thumb; at the time the skipjack is plucked from the lure I bend my thumb and hit the head of the lure. If the skipjack is one like that, with most of the lure protruding, twist the thumb. And as soon as you twist, the lure is dislodged and free. But if the lure has been swallowed and is stuck right in the fish’s mouth, stick your thumb in, twist it, and the lure is dislodged. These things are done before the skipjack drops into the bilge water. Remember that when the fish does drop into the canoe, it closes its mouth.

If the lure hasn’t been dislodged, (aha!) you will have a time trying to free it. When it comes to these matters, do your dislodging before the skipjack falls into the canoe, while its mouth is still open, and the lure is easily plucked out. Don’t ever do this—pluck and let go so that the skipjack falls into the bilge water, because its mouth will then close. But if the lure has been completely swallowed, what can you do? It’s like this. You have landed two, three or four skipjack and there you are trying to dislodge the lure, because of the faki tuku and tossing it into the bilge. No! Let me speak of things I am certain of. Try and free the lure before the skipjack drops into the bilge, remembering that at that time the fish’s mouth is still open. Easily dislodged.

At the time when the skipjack bite you are still in the middle of a tūlaga. Tūlaga differ—in this way. In one sort of tūlaga
the lure is cast out, and skipped along, and [a fish] leaps! Caught! This means that you should take care. That is the time that the skipjack bite. [The lure] just drops [onto the surface] and just like that, a bite! Just drops, and just like that, a bite!

Another sort of tūlaga (among the different kinds that I am sure about). You cast out, skip the lure along, and there’s a rise. Skipped further, and the lure is right on the starboard beam, when there’s a bite. The significance of this is that that is the every spot that skipjacks are biting. Take great care. You just cast out and a skipjack rises repeatedly until it gets to that place where they bite, and it is hooked. That’s the absolute truth, what I have just told you. My way, with things that I have heard about or tried out, is that if they are true I believe them and use them. And I tell others about them too. But to these things told to me which are untrue, I pay no attention. But I do some research on them, and what I have just told you is true.

Tūlaga are different, one from another, so take care. You just throw [the line] out and it’s taken. Yes, that means it will continue like that. Cast out, and it’s taken, as soon as it hits the water—truly. But at other times you throw out and there is no bite, and you skip the lure along and there’s a rise but no bite, another rise and still another, but still no bite—until you get to that place where they do bite, and there’s a bite. Be prepared. Once the lure gets to that place, be prepared because there will be another. When you are skipping the lure in there will be continual rises until there comes the time when the lure changes direction as you are about to make another cast. That’s the time the skipjack bites. Watch for that moment, and be prepared. The lure comes in and
in and eventually turns, and then the rise and the bite; but you are not paying attention. That’s the reason for not getting the fish, simply not being aware of when it is going to bite.

I asked the person who told me about this why it was that skipjack behaved this way. His reply to this was as follows: Consider a lure. When you look at it, and see its lustre, like rays of the sun, you turn it over and over, and from one angle there is no lustre. Twist it round a bit, and the lustre shines forth. Yes, that’s the time. It’s caused by the [position of] the sun. That’s the explanation that was given to me.

The skipjack rises, and bites, and you strike. But in which direction do you make your strike [to set the hook]? We all know the ways of fish, and of fishing with both small and large rods. With humu, you strike backhand, with gatala you strike backhand. For each kind of fish there is a distinct way of striking. With humu there are two ways of striking, backhand, or jerking straight towards you. People choose their own way of doing it. But I do neither of these. My strike is forehand. I strike in the direction the skipjack is jumping. There is another opinion, which is like this, about the strike for skipjack—just so you will know. When a skipjack rises up to bite it appears on the surface and then dives head first. This is another view which I have heard, which is that one
My strike for skipjack is forehand, in the direction that the fish takes as it is going down, which I know is the kind of strike that really holds. Please yourself, but what I have told you is something I am certain of. Strike to the forehand. That was my way. There is also our word gauafoa [used of a fishing line that goes slack]. The significance of this is if you strike upwards, or backhand, just remember that the skipjack is jumping toward you underneath the rod. If then you make a backhand movement, you will see the meaning of that word gauafoa. The leader goes slack, which is the meaning of our word, not taut.

Note what takes place in fishing for humu. When you cast out, and a humu approaches, you see that the line is taut when it gets to the bait. You can’t make a mistake about this, because the humu is a fish which nibbles very quickly and can then just as quickly spit the bait out. If your line is slack at this time, you will be discouraged; you strike and it gets away, strike again and again the fish escapes. It’s like that. In my view, skipjack are also like that. Don’t move in the backhand direction lest you cause gauafoa with the leader going slack. Remember to make your strike forehand while the skipjack is jumping toward you underneath the rod.
Fakamolemole mua ia tautai, kae ko au ka tautala atu ki te matåkupu tênei e uiga ki nã kupu o te tuåkau, e tuha ma te vâ o koe ma toeaina. Ko koe te tautai e mahani i tuåkau. Pe he â là ni au kikilaga ma ni au hukehuega, ma ni ai lipoti e kave ki gâuta i na toeaina. Fakamolemole ko au ka tautala tahi atu i te mea têia.

Kafai he aho kua lalaga te taumanu oï fano ai he vaka oï alo; kua hî ia atu. Kafai e hî mai ia atu ka kikila ifo koe ko te tino o te atu e gahelehele, ma te tahi fakailoga, e fâki ifo loa lava te atu, pakû ki te liû oì tatapa loa (tafiti loa) ni fakailoga iênã e tatau ona kë fakamâuagia e tuha ma tau lipoti ka kave ki gauta ki toeaina pe kafai kua maua ni taki heaoa i te aho tênã. Kafai koe e kikila ifo ki te tino o atu e i eî nã uiga iênã, e gâhelehele ma te pakû loa oï tafiti loa, kikila ake, e hê he taumanu. Kae kafai e fehili atu nã toeaina, ‘He â tau kikila ki nã atu kua kaumai neï?’ E mafai koe ona talî vê atu ki ei, ‘Kikila! Ko nã mea galigalima lava o te utua. Tênã e gahelehele ai, auû e lalaga i aho uma, aho uma.’ E mafai foki ona kë fakaaogagia te kupu tênei, ‘Ni atu gâuta.’ E kë kitea ifo lava e gahelehele ma te mea lava tênã, e tafiti. Kafai là e fehili atu nã toeaina, ‘He â là kua kaumai ai he taki heaoa kafai ni atu gâuta?’ Ko tau tali e fai ki ei e vê, ‘Mahalo lava ni halaga e ô te mafua kua hala ake ki gâuta i te aho tenã.’ Pe ni halaga e o te mafua kua fanake ki gâuta.

That is my understanding, don’t move backhand to strike, but to the forehand, in the direction which keeps the leader taut. In that way the skipjack cannot get off.

With apologies to the tautai, I shall now talk about a piece of ocean lore concerning your relationship with the elders. You are a tautai, familiar with the open sea. What, though, should you take note of, what should you study in order to report back to the elders on shore? Excuse me, but I shall just mention this matter.

Suppose one a day a flock of feeding seabirds appears and a canoe goes out. Skipjack are caught. When skipjack are caught look to see if their bodies are cut and scratched all over, and as another piece of evidence, note if when they are detached from the hook and fall into the bilge water, they start trembling and shaking and jumping round. These are signs which you should note for reporting to the elders on shore once you have all got your couple of fish for the day. When you look at the skipjacks’ bodies and see that they are that way, scratched, and that when landed they immediately start jumping round, you know they are not from a skipjack school. So when the elders ask you, ‘What’s your view on those skipjack you have brought back?’ you can reply as follows, ‘Look, these are just regular inhabitants of the reef point. That’s why they are all scratched because they have been rising and feeding day after day’. You can also put it this way, ‘Inshore skipjack.’ You look and see they are scratched and also that they are jumping around. If though the elders were to then ask you, ‘Why though have you each brought back only a couple if they are inshore skipjack?’ What you should reply is, ‘Maybe some strays from
Ko te tahi mea kua ki tatou mautinoagia, he mafua kua lafi ake ki he otaota. Pe ni launiu, pe ni polapola otaota. E māhani te mafua o malu ki ei kafai e kai e ni ika, o tafea ake ai lava nā mea iēnā. Kua fia foki ia mea vēnā e maua ai ia atu e ni tino. Ko te mafua e lafi ki ni launiu, pe ni kaulama e tāfeafea, ko atu foki e takamilo ai ki te mea tēnā. Kua hī ia atu, pe taki tinoagafulu pe ko te tai-tinolua. Ni halaga lā vēnā. Ko tau tali lā, ‘Mahalo ni halaga e o he mafua kua hala ake ki gāuta.’

Kae kafai e hī mai e koe nā atu e gigila o lātou tino, ma paku ifo ki loto i te vaka o fakalologo kae fātoa tafiti lele mulimuli, fakamolemole, taofi nā mea iēnā. Kua kē iloagia kua ni fakailoga e o he tai-atu kua ake mai. Taofi nā mea iēnā ke fai ma au lipoti ki toeaina i gāuta. Kae tahi lā te mea e vave ona fakamaonia i na fakailoga iēnā. Kafai e gigila na tino o na atu ko tona uiga ni atu fou, ma te pākī ifo ki loto i te vaka e hē tafiti, ko tona uiga e fekai ki te pā (tana mafua); ma te mea tēnā, fātoa tafiti lele mulimuli.

Kae tahi te mea, e hēki fakamaonia. Fakatali auā e i ei te mea i loto i te atu e tatau ona maua ai e koe te fakamaoniga. Kafai kua maua he tonu i nā tautai mātutua, ka kavake ki te malae, kua kē iloagia ai kua hēai hau togafiti e kē iloa the school of baitfish that day, and which have wandered inshore’, or ‘After some baitfish which strayed inshore.’

Another thing which we know about is that they be after baitfish which came here with floating rubbish, such as a coconut frond or baskets of trash tipped into the sea. Baitfish will normally seek such shelter if attacked by larger fish, and drift along with it. How many times have people caught skipjack from these circumstances. The baitfish shelter among the coconut fronds, either green or dry, which are drifting, and the skipjack circle round and round. We have all seen it often, and have caught ten or perhaps twenty skipjack. Strays of that sort. So your reply should be, ‘Perhaps some strays from the baitfish which have drifted inshore.’

But if you land skipjack which have glistening bodies, and which when they drop into the bottom of the canoe just lie there and then only start jumping around much later, do please take note of that. You will know that this is a sign of a skipjack school which has only recently formed. Remember those points to report to the elders on shore. There is but one thing that these signs point to. If the skipjack bodies are glistening that means they are young fish, and when they drop into the canoes and don’t jump around that means they are still fiercely excited by the lure. And then only later do they jump around.

One thing though is still not proven. Just wait, because there is something inside the skipjack from which you should get proof. If the older tautai make a decision to take all the fish to the malae [for distribution to the village] then you know that there is no
When some skipjack are cut open, you, the tautai, should say, ‘Just give me some of the roe.’ It is not that you want to eat the roe, but just that you need to examine it, with reference to the two signs which you noticed previously.

If the roe is brought to you and it is newly formed, that means the school has only just formed. It is also a school which has just come inshore. If, when the roe is brought to you, you see that it is immature (a good clear white) take it and bite it. If when you bite it, it is watery, then there is a school. It is a sign of a newly-formed school which has just come.

By this procedure you will [also] know that the school is about to end. It is by this same thing that you will learn when the laga is about to change—from your examination of the inside of the roe.

Get the roe. You look at it and see that it is sort of golden skinned. Bite it. Take hold of it and bite. You feel that it is watery but with clots in it, and when you look at the top of the roe sac you see that there are stripes of different colour on it. Turn it over to the other side and you will see
tahi itū o te tama, e kikila ifo koe ki ei, kua i ei nā hele iēna i te itū ki lalo o te tama. Kua i ei foki nā hele vē ni mea kua kulakula, e vēia ni uaua kukula. Ko tona uiuga, he tai-atu lava; kae ko te mea lā kua fakaholo kā uma, mai te fakailoga tēnā. Kae kafai e kaumai nā tama e kikila ifo koe kua tama pula, e kati foki. Tago foki oī kati. Kafai e fakapāpā atu nā fua i loto kae fakapāpā-gofie, he tai-atu lava; kae tahi te mea kua fakaau atu lava ka uma.


Kua olo ki fea? Kae ko ai foki kō te iōa ia vae o ika! Kae ko te kupu lava na kō lagonagia, kua olo ki gātai i tua atu lava o palega (ki moana vàvàloloa). E vē lava ona ki tātou iōa te kupu palega, ko te kogamoana tēnā e hēai ai ni faiva e fai ai auā e hēai ni ika. Ko tona uiuga kua olo ia atu ki kina o i tukufua ai (fānanau ai). E vē lava ona ki tātou lagona, na tuku mai e te Atua ki te tagata, e alofa ma hakili e ia he mea lelei ke fānau ai ana tama. E muhu ka tauale. E vēnā lava ia ika o te tai. E tutuha lelei lelei ma te tagata.

Those stripes on the lower side. There are also some stripes almost reddish in colour, like red veins. This means that it is a real school, but it is getting on toward the end. When, however, the roe is brought to you and you see that it is ripe, bite it too. Grab it and bite. If the eggs inside burst out readily, it is indeed a school, but also one that is getting on toward its end.

Again, if mature roe is brought, bite it also. If when it bursts it is hard, you know it is right up to the point. You know it right at the time and you can say, ‘The skipjack are at the point of departure.’ It is also at this time that the laga change. You know that the laga will change as follows, to fakalelei, takafakauli, fakapula and fakaliki.28 Those are the ones. The skipjack change [their behaviour] because they are about to leave. You will also know from this that there is only one laga lef, which is when the fish glide smoothly along near the tops of the swells with their bodies sort of reddish. This sort of laga means that the skipjack are departing and that in two or three days the season will be over. Finished, with no more laga, because they are gone.

Where have they gone? Who is there, after all, who knows the wanderings of fish? What I have heard said is that they go off out to sea, beyond palega, to the open ocean. As we know, palega refers to that part of the sea where no fishing is done, because there are no fish. The skipjack go there to lay their eggs (to give birth). As we know, it was ordained by God that mankind should love and then seek a suitable place to bear children, avoiding sickness [and misfortune]. It is the same with the fishes of the sea. Exactly as with people.
Kikila foki ki te ő, he ika e ő lalo i te takele moana; kae kafai e ō nanau e āke lele ki gauta, e ake lele ki luga e ō nanau ai; auā ka ō nanau i lalo e tumu ai ia īka kehekehe e ki lātou kaia na tama a a te ő. Ko te hahave, e vēnā foki. He īka e ő te moana hauhau; kae kafai e ō nanau, e āke lele ki gāuta ki luga i nā matautua ma loto o nā ava oi ō nanau ai. Aiheā? E mumuhu oi ō nanau i te moana auā nā īka e olo o ī kai. E moni lava, e kai nā tama a te hahave pe ko te ő e ni ika, kae tahī te mea, e taikole. E ki tātou iloa lele; ko te lahī o īka e i lalo i te moana. Kae ko nā īka iēnā, ko te eve, ko te gata, ko te fāloa ma e hula ai foki ma nā magō. E vēnā foki lā te fonu. Kua iloa foki e ki tātou, kafai e ō nanau te fonu, e fano ki gāuta oi ō nanau ai auā e muhu oi ō nanau i te tai. E vēnā foki lā i a atu, e fano lava ki te kōgā-moana e hēāi ai ni īka e kaia a latou tama.

Ka gata mai ai là haku tamā fakaaliga e tuha ma te mea e kō mafaiā. E hē kua mafai nei kō iēnei mea ona faali ona ko te galuegā lelei tēnei kua faia e Tony Hooper ma lutīta Huntsman. Kua ki là mafaiā ona tuhituhi ma faalā i te mea, ko te ō nanau. E vēnā foki lā te fonu, e fano lava ki te kōgā-moana e hēāi ai ni īka e kaia a latou tama. Look at the ő also, a fish of the deep bottom of the ocean. But when it spawns it comes inshore, right up to the surface to give birth, because if it spawned below then all sorts of different fish would come and eat the young. Flying fish are also like that. They are fish of the high seas, but when they spawn they come right inshore onto the fingers and channels of the outer reef and give birth. Why? They don’t want to give birth at sea because other fish will eat their young. That is true, other fish go and eat the young of both ő and flying fish while they are young. We know well all the fishes under the sea, the eve, gatala, fāloa and there are sharks also. It is like that with turtles too. As we know, when turtle give birth they come up onto the land and will not give birth at sea. It is like that also with skipjack, they go to a part of the sea where no other fish will eat their young.

So ends my brief account as far as I can take it. I would not have been able to give this account were it not for the good work of Tony Hooper and Judith Huntsman. They can write down and record Tokelau matters and can reveal these things which have been hidden.

Ka tātou iloā oia, kua uma atu ia tagata popoto anamua i te ki tātou. Kua feoti atu lava ki lātou ma a lātou lava mea. Kua pā mai ki iēnei tupulaga, kua hēāi he tautai kua ia maua tēiā tūlaga; kua hēāi he tino poto i te tāuga o fetū, kua hēāi he tino tufuga, kua hēāi he tino i nā tūlaga kehekehe uma. Aiheā? Mahalo ko te fakahētonu o ta tātou agaifanua. We know that the knowledgeable people of the old days are all gone. They are all dead, along with the things that they knew. We have come to the present generation and there is not a tautai worthy of the name. There is nobody knowledgeable about reading the stars, nobody skilled, nobody who is really expert. Why? Perhaps because of the mixing up of our customs.

E vēia ona ko taka tuagia muamua, ko nā mea uma là iēnā e kē lipotia ake ai i tau kikila ma tau hukehukega ki te tuākau e As I told you at the beginning, all the things that I have given account of concerning what has been seen and
CONCLUSION

There is a fairly extensive literature on Polynesian fishing—much of it concerned almost exclusively with descriptions of fishing gear and techniques for its use, with only passing reference to relevant social and cultural contexts. This characterises much of the sturdy ethnological tradition followed by museums and similar scholarly institutions. The Bernice P. Bishop Museum, for example, published a series of ethnological Bulletins between 1922 and about 1938, covering most of the major island groups of tropical Polynesia. They are of varying quality. In general, their authors sought “traditional” material, even though by the late 19th century (particularly in Eastern Polynesia) purely “traditional” beliefs and practices were long gone. Many of the Bulletins were also diminished because the authors had little or no personal experience of fishing. Several of them obviously fudged this lack; others were disarmingly frank about it. E.S.Craighill Handy, for example, noted in his Houses, Fishing and Boats in the Society Islands that what he had written about fishing (which was really very adequate) was “…notes of an enquirer and recorder who knows little of the science and art of fishing, either in Polynesia or elsewhere” (1932: 69). Again, Beaglehole in his description of fishing in Pukapuka, pointed out that “…lack of time and… comparative ignorance of the fieldworker in all that concerns fishing, conspired to prevent the collection of complete data on Pukapukan fishing” (1938: 51).

Ethnographers of the region, being much more focused on specific topics than the ethnologists, have not commonly had much to say about fishing either. Only Firth (1967) and Oliver (1981: 73-82), with their characteristic thoroughness, pay more than passing attention to the topic. There are, however, some notable exceptions to this generalisation in the works of authors who have approached the topic from one or another special theoretical or practical perspective (Halapua 1982, Lieber 1994, Titcomb 1972).

Virtually all the anthropological literature on fish and “traditional” fishing in tropical Polynesia has been written by academics, many of them from outside the region. Whether written by archaeologists, ethnologists or ethnographers the basic purpose has been scientific and comparative.
none has been written by Polynesian fishermen themselves, perhaps because (like fishermen everywhere) they are not given to publishing what they know. They just get on with it.

Scientific and comparative studies are one thing. Texts such as these Tokelau ones are another, reflecting a difference which goes back in anthropological literature at least as far as Boas. By the 1890s Boas had developed a position that can be clearly seen as being equivalent to the now current anthropological concept of culture (Boas 1948, 1974; Sahlins 2000; Stocking 1968). He arrived at this by consideration of what he called a “geographic” perspective, one which maintained the integrity of an experiential whole, as distinct from a perspective that broke that whole into categories dictated by particular scientific endeavours and comparative interests.

This distinction is one that can be used appropriately to point up the value of the two texts presented here. Fakaofo elders in 1971 knew something of the fishing methods used in other places they had been to, mainly Samoa, Tuvalu and Pukapuka, and were interested in them to a very limited extent. By contrast, they were vitally concerned with fishing and fishing practices in their own domain and, as these texts show, had very clear ideas of their importance. That importance was cultural, embracing an imaginative order that was at once economic, social, political and moral. Neither of the texts presented here were elicited in any direct sense. The elders who spoke at the kaukumete were addressing nobody but their youngers, telling themselves “a story about themselves” (Geertz 1975: 448) from a perspective that was “inside” rather than “outside”, “first person” rather than “third person”, “phenomenological” and “emic” (Geertz 1983: 56)—transparently a “native point of view”.

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I am most grateful to the elders and men of Fakaofo for their tolerance and their generosity in including me in many local fishing activities over the years that I spent on the atoll purportedly concentrating exclusively on other things. In Auckland, the late Ropati Simona transcribed the audiotapes and collaborated with me on the translations of them. Both Robin Hooper and my colleague Judith Huntsman have made many valuable suggestions about this paper, as they have with many other Tokelau matters. I am most grateful to Marti Friedlander for permission to use three of her photographs. I must also acknowledge with gratitude the support of a fellowship during 1999 from the Macmillan Brown Centre at the University of Canterbury, which enabled me to sketch the outlines of this paper and complete much of the translation work.
NOTES

1. The most comprehensive account of Tokelau is Huntsman and Hooper 1996. Recent changes are described in Hooper 2006, 2008a and Huntsman 2007.

2. These events and are more fully described in Hooper 1985, 2008b and Hooper and Huntsman 1991. The fish with the common English name skipjack has the scientific Latin name *Katsuwonis pelamis* and in Tokelau is *atu*.

3. Interestingly, many of the questions asked concerned whether particular customs were “really ours” or had been introduced from outside. The elders’ usual reply was that they didn’t know for sure and it didn’t really matter since they were “our customs” now.

4. The term ‘stand’ is by itself an inadequate gloss. When catching skipjack a *tautai* stands facing the stern of his canoe, and continues standing for as long as he is landing fish. If the shoal should move on out of range he will ship his rod, resume his seat, and paddle with the rest of the crew. But when the fish are plentiful he remains standing in the same position until his canoe begins to sink under the weight of the catch.

5. Also sometimes called bonito. *Katsowanus* sp.


7. The outlines of this prayer are widely known in Fakaofo. It was said by the *Aliki* and addressed to the supreme pre-Christian god. There are versions of it in Huntsman and Hooper 1996: 150-51 and *Matagi Tokelau* 1991: 48-49. The order in which the fish and other valued products included appears to be random.

8. *Palu* or oilfish (*Ruvettus pretiosus*).

9. *Ulafi*, a parrotfish (*Scarus harid*); *laea*, tattooed parrotfish (*Scarus jonesi*); *ufuātuā*, a parrotfish (*Bolbo, mepon Bicolor*); *pātuki* (*Cirrhites pinnulatus*); *kakaka* and *hagahagatea* names not in common use, perhaps obsolescent terms; *tālau* and *manoko* kinds of mudskipper. *Fuifala*, a bunch of pandanus fruit; *hua*, green drinking coconut; *uto*, germinating coconut; *healauniu*, not identified (*launiu* is coconut leaf); *makave*, fingers of coconut flower spadix; *taume*, spathe of coconut palm enclosing inflorescence.


11. The well-known story of a Fakaofo man who was dragged down by a turtle and drowned because the line by which the turtle was secured got tangled around his leg.

12. Long-lining for tuna.

13. An *ane* is a chunk of fish thrown out as *poapoa* or chum to attract a wahoo and keep it round the canoe. The *ane fakatau* is the final *ane* to be thrown out – to such a position that once the wahoo has taken it, it is on a direct course toward another *ane* which has already been set in the centre of the noose.

14. Part of a skipjack lure.

15. Marbled sea bass (*Epinephelus microdon*).


17. A long-lining technique.

18. Barracouda (*Sphyraena picuda*).
19. Triggerfish.
20. This is a fillet of fish (or more commonly a whole flying fish) which is towed about 15 metres astern of a canoe when going out to the fishing grounds for wahoo. If a wahoo doesn’t appear on the surface, the canoe is stopped and the ulu is allowed to slowly sink down.
21. Thin planks lashed fore and aft across the outrigger booms forming a slender platform close to the hull of a canoe.
22. He is referring to the previous speaker.
23. Lölö is to dunk the tip of a skipjack rod into the sea, an action which is believed to scare a whole school of skipjack away.
24. The islet of Fenuafala, close to the village islet, where a number of people live.
25. He is here addressing me directly.
26. A laga is a ‘rise’. A laga tutuku is a kind of rise that should be left alone and not fished.
27. A conventional high-pitched sound to indicate that a skipjack is on the line.
28. Names for different kinds of ‘rise’, distinguished by subtle differences in the appearance of the sea and the ways that the fish break the surface.

REFERENCES

There is a considerable anthropological literature on fishing in tropical Polynesia, but by far the greater part of it is scientific and comparative in emphasis and written from the perspective of outside observers. Very little has been published by the fishermen themselves. The greater part of this paper is taken up with two texts, written in Tokelauan with English translation, based on audiotapes of speeches occasioned...
by a fishing ceremony on the atoll of Fakaofo in 1971. The texts reveal a wholly
different perspective from the scientific, comparative concerns that have guided
outside observers. By comparison, the perspective of the texts is a wholly cultural
one, embracing an imaginative order that is at once economic, social, political and
moral—very transparently “the native point of view”.

*Keywords*: Polynesia, Tokelau, language texts, fishing, skipjack